

THE ROAD TO SOCIALISM



USA

UNITY FOR PEACE, DEMOCRACY, JOBS & EQUALITY
PROGRAM OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY USA

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UNITY FOR PEACE, DEMOCRACY, JOBS & EQUALITY

1

INTRODUCTION

Working people around the world have always sought a future without war, exploitation, inequality, and poverty. They strive to build a brighter future, one based on democracy, peace, justice, equality, cooperation, and meeting human needs. That future is socialism, a system in which working people control their own lives and destinies, and together build a better world. The Communist Party USA is dedicated to the struggle for socialism in this country. This document is our Party's program, a statement of our principals and goals and a guide to action along the road to Socialism USA.

Socialism will usher in a new era in this county. The great wealth of the U.S. will for the first time be for the benefit of all the people. Foreign policy will be based on mutual respect, peace, and solidarity. The people's democratic rights will be guaranteed and expanded. Racial, gender, and social equality will be the basis of domestic policies and practices. Socialism is not a dream, but a necessity to working people's lives. Only socialism has the solutions to the problems of capitalism in this country.

We, the working people of the United States, face tremendous problems today: exploitation, oppression, racism, sexism, a deteriorating environment and infrastructure, huge budget deficits, and a government dominated by the most vicious elements of big capital and its political operatives. This government, despite its rhetoric about making Americans safe, has wasted hundreds of billions on the invasion and occupation of Iraq while it cut money for maintaining the levees—leading directly to the disaster that Hurricane Katrina wreaked on the people of New Orleans and much of the Gulf Coast. Their callous disregard for African Americans, for poor people, for the elderly, and for all those unable to evacuate on their own exemplifies their inhumane disregard for the lives of all working people.

We as a country face serious choices: militarism and imperialism or peace, increased wealth for the few or justice and equality for the many, increased power in the hands of the super-rich or expansion of democracy for the vast majority, ultra-right domination of all branches of government which deals with problems by increasing exploitation and oppression or progressive electoral coalitions that seek real solutions in the interests of all working people.

The working class and all who work for a living—the vast majority of the people—face a relentless, vicious, and amoral enemy: the capitalist class. Our country is oppressed by one of the most controlling, despicable, entrenched capitalist ruling classes ever, concentrating enormous political, economic, and military power in the hands of a few transnational corporations. These corporations seek to steal, embezzle, extort, and scheme all wealth from the tens of millions of working people, from small businesses and family farmers, from men, women, and children, from seniors and youth, and from the employed, underemployed, and unemployed. They exploit people as workers on the job and the same people as consumers at the checkout counter. Their foremost weapon to maintain their dominance is racism, used to divide working people and achieve extra profits. They work hard to extend ultra-right control over the government and government policy.

The ultra-right is led by the most reactionary, militaristic, racist, anti-democratic sectors of the transnationals. They gain support for their ultra-right agenda from other political trends and social groups, most of which are misled as to their real interests, sometimes blinded by the propaganda of fear and scapegoating.

Every movement for change and progress is challenged by the power of the corporations. Workers face corporate power in every contract negotiation. African Americans, Mexican Americans and all other Latinos, Native Americans, Asian Americans, and women all face corporate power when

they seek real equality on the job and in their communities. Youth face corporate power when they seek free quality education for all. Environmental organizations face corporate power when they try to stop pollution, stop the dumping of industrial waste, or stop the ravaging of the remaining wilderness areas for profit.

The corporations and their paid hacks in the media constantly proclaim that “competition” requires lower wages, fewer benefits, fewer holidays, gutted pension plans, continuing wage differentials and discrimination, and the free export of capital and jobs to other countries. We don’t think that is so. “Free trade” agreements, placing supra-national committees of capitalists above the laws of any country, require ending environmental protections, allow the “free” export of capital and jobs, and remove the ability of countries to restrict the rights and activities of corporate managers. Such agreements are only free in that they give a “free” bonus of super-profits to the already rich and powerful at the expense of democracy, sovereignty, and workers rights.

All this is normal to the functioning of the capitalist system, but greatly intensified by the dominance of the most reactionary section of the capitalist class. The solution to this ultra-right domination lies in building the broadest, most inclusive unity among our multinational, male/female, multigenerational working class, starting with the labor movement, racially and nationally oppressed people, women, and youth. We must unite lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and straight people; professionals and intellectuals; seniors; and the disabled; and the mass people’s movements including the peace, environmental, health care, education, housing, and other movements. This all-people’s front to defeat the ultra-right is in the process of developing, learning, and being tested in giant struggles for peace, to protect social programs and services, to win health care for all, and to win control of all three branches of government from the right wing.

Our country, our people, and our environment are all being destroyed by the greed of a few obscenely wealthy capitalist groupings. Our world is threatened by the ravages of capitalist globalization, by relentless efforts to drive wages down to the lowest possible level, by attempts to destroy unions and all protections won by workers through struggle, by the spread of toxic wastes, and by imperialist war. We can’t and won’t let this continue.

We need radical solutions, real democracy, and real unity. We, the workers and our allies, need to take power from the hands of the wealthy few, their corporations, and their political operatives. We need real solutions to real problems, not the empty promises of politicians and corporate bosses. We need peace, justice, and equality. We need socialism.

The United States has a proud history of radical and revolutionary struggles, of mass movements demanding and winning economic and social programs to meet the basic needs of the people, of protecting and expanding democracy, and of uniting to overcome obstacles with initiative, energy, and innovation. The Communist Party is a proud part of this country's radical tradition.

We believe that the millions of working people have the power, if organized and united, to run this country, to create a government of, by, and for the people. The people of our country have the right and responsibility, faced with an exploitative, oppressive economic system, to alter or abolish it. We can eject the fat-cat financial donors from the election process, throw the scavengers out of the banks, eject the CEO's from their golden parachutes, and elect regular, honest working people to represent us in government instead of corporate lawyers and multi-millionaires.

The struggles for the immediate demands and reforms needed by working people today are essential steps toward our ultimate goals of the revolutionary transformation of society and the economy, toward socialism and then communism. The constant battles over issues large and small are where workers learn the lesson that more fundamental changes are necessary and that people need socialism to have a truly humane society.

We, the working people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, need socialism, a system based on people's needs, not on corporate greed.

The Communist Party has a program to get us there.

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CAPITALISM, EXPLOITATION, AND OPPRESSION

The capitalist class owns the factories, the banks, and transportation—the means of production and distribution. Workers sell their ability to work in order to acquire the necessities of life. Capitalists buy the workers' ability to labor, but pay them only a portion of the wealth they create. Because the capitalists own the means of production, they are able to keep the surplus wealth created by workers above and beyond the cost of paying worker's wages and other costs of production—unpaid labor that the capitalists appropriate and use to achieve ever-greater profits. This surplus is the source of profit. These profits are turned into capital which capitalists use to further exploit the sources of all wealth—nature and the working class.

Capitalists are compelled by competition to seek to maximize profits. The capitalist class as a whole can do that only by extracting a greater surplus from the unpaid labor of workers, by increasing exploitation—what capitalists

often call “increasing productivity.” Under capitalism, economic development happens only if it is profitable to the individual capitalists, not for any social need or good. The profit drive is inherent in capitalism, and underlies or exacerbates all major social ills of our times. With the rapid advance of technology and productivity, new forms of capitalist ownership have developed to maximize profit and exploit new markets.

The working people of our country confront serious, chronic problems because of capitalism. These chronic problems become part of the objective conditions that confront each new generation of working people.

The threat of nuclear war, which can destroy all humanity, grows with the spread of nuclear weapons, space-based weaponry, and a military doctrine that justifies their use in preemptive wars and wars without end. Since the end of World War II, the U.S. has been constantly involved in aggressive military actions both big and small. These have cost millions of lives and casualties, huge material losses, as well as trillions of U.S. taxpayer dollars. Threats to the environment continue to spiral out of control, threatening all life on our planet.

Millions of workers are unemployed, underemployed, or insecure in their jobs, even during economic upswings and periods of “recovery” from recessions. Most workers experience long years of stagnant and declining real wages, while health and education costs soar. Many workers are forced to work second and third jobs to make ends meet. Most workers now average four different occupations during their lifetime, many involuntarily moved from job to job and career to career. Often, retirement-age workers are forced to continue working just to provide health care for themselves and their families. Millions of people continuously live below the poverty level; many suffer homelessness and hunger. Public and private programs to alleviate poverty and hunger do not reach everyone, and are inadequate even for those they do reach. With capitalist globalization, jobs move from place to place as capitalists export factories and even entire industries to other countries in a relentless search for the lowest wages.

Racism remains the most potent weapon to divide working people. All workers receive lower wages when racism succeeds in dividing and disorganizing them. Institutionalized racism provides billions in extra profits for the capitalists every year due to the unequal pay racially oppressed workers receive for work of comparable value. In every aspect of economic and social life, African Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, Asians and Pacific Islanders, Arabs and Middle Eastern peoples, and other nationally and racially oppressed people experience conditions inferior to that of whites. Racist violence and the poison of racist ideas victimize all people of color no matter to which economic class they belong. Attempts to suppress and undercount the vote of

African American and other racially oppressed people are part of racism in the electoral process. Racism permeates the police, the courts and prison systems, perpetuating unequal sentencing, racial profiling, discriminatory enforcement, and police brutality.

Capitalism causes other chronic problems in addition to racism, starting with ideological poisons used to divide the working class and allies from each other: sexism and male supremacy, national chauvinism, homophobia, anti-Semitism, and anti-communism. Much of this is spread by way of the mass media, increasingly owned and dominated by monopoly corporations. The economics of the media are based on the promotion of consumerism—turning everything into a commodity and advertising to sell more goods whether they are needed or not.

The democratic, civil, and human rights of all working people are constantly under attack. These attacks range from increasingly difficult procedures for union recognition and attempts to prevent full union participation in elections, to the absence of the right to strike or even unionize for many public workers. They range from undercounting minority communities in the census to making it difficult for working people to run for office because of the domination of corporate campaign financing and the high cost of advertising. These attacks also include growing censorship and domination of the media by the ultra-right; growing restrictions and surveillance of activist social movements and the Left; open denial of basic rights to immigrants; and violations of the Geneva Conventions up to and including torture of prisoners. These abuses serve to maintain the grip of the capitalists on government power. They use this power to ensure the continued economic and political dominance of their class.

The legal system is thoroughly racist and anti-working class. U.S. prisons are bursting with over 2 million prisoners, with virtually no serious efforts at prevention or rehabilitation. Prisoners face widespread abuse and the anti-labor exploitation of prisoners for sub-minimum wages. Many are subject to the threat of the death penalty, which is never justified and which is frequently used against innocent victims. At the same time, capitalist crime is on the increase, and these “billionaire” criminals are usually not apprehended, prosecuted, or punished. Corruption, speculation, fraud, market manipulations, and theft on a massive scale are all increasing, while enforcement of laws against them is cut.

Women still face a considerable differential in wages for work of equal or comparable value. They confront barriers to promotion, physical and sexual abuse, continuing unequal workload in home and family life, and male supremacist ideology perpetuating unequal and often unsafe conditions. The constant attacks on social welfare programs severely impact single women,

single mothers, nationally and racially oppressed women, and all working class women. The reproductive rights of all women are continually under attack ideologically and politically. The ultra-right projects an ideology of Christian fundamentalism, which promotes restrictions on the role and activity of women in society. Violence against women in the home and in society at large remains a shameful fact of life in the U.S.

Youth, especially working class youth and racially and nationally oppressed youth, have inadequate public education and are increasingly priced out of higher education. Young people lack job training and face great uncertainty in the job market. Their cultural, recreational, and sports needs are largely unmet. Youth also face in their own ways racism, sexism, and attacks on civil liberties. Poverty and lack of opportunity compel large numbers of young people to enter the military and face possible loss of life in one war after another. Taken together, this constitutes a complete denial of a secure future for youth.

Seniors, retired and often no longer able to work, face shrinking and disappearing employer pension plans, while Social Security and Medicare experience repeated attacks. Seniors who have worked all their lives are threatened by the ultra-right push to end “entitlement programs” and by the lack of or exorbitant cost of health care and assisted living facilities.

Over 45 million people are continuously without medical coverage—over 70 million are without medical coverage for at least one month each year. Out-of-pocket costs are soaring even for those with coverage. Unionized workers are forced to negotiate lower wages to pay for their health benefits or face benefit reductions and increased co-payments.

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

Most of rural and small town U.S.A. is in continual recession. Hundreds of thousands of family farms have been put on the brink of extinction, squeezed by agricultural corporations, banks, wholesalers, and retailers. Thousands of family farms disappear each year to bankruptcy and sale, swallowed by agribusiness and corporate development. Predatory lenders, monopoly corporations, and the insurance industry also conspire to put the squeeze on family farms, and urban and rural small businesses, as well as professionals and intellectuals.

Capitalism in the Era of Monopoly and Imperialism

The chronic problems working people face today are rooted in the birth and history of the capitalist system itself. “Free” competitive capitalism was replaced at the end of the nineteenth century by monopoly capitalism. Great amounts of capital were assembled in a few companies in each industry, both in our country and internationally. At the same time, industrial and banking capital merged into finance capital, dominated by banking capital. These monopolies proceeded to divide up the world economically, each with their own sphere of control. To insure the stability of investment, corporations sought to dominate the governments within their spheres. The monopolies succeeded in backing up their economic division of the world with the military-political division of the world. Africa, most of Asia and Latin America, and parts of Europe were divided into colonies or semi-colonies of the U.S., Britain, Germany, France, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Belgium, and the other monopoly capitalist states.

Vladimir Lenin, founder of modern communism, predicted that wars would break out to redivide the world, making the era of monopoly capitalism also the era of modern imperialism. The then existing division of the world could not satisfy those countries whose economies were growing most rapidly. The search for economic domination led to wars and world wars, which killed and maimed millions and subjugated whole peoples under extremely repressive and inhumane conditions.

Soon the monopolies and the government in the U.S. (and the other imperialist countries) became intertwined, transforming into state monopoly capitalism. The state became a direct instrument to accumulate capital for the monopolies. As is often the case with reforms under capitalism, government regulation which resulted from popular struggles and were intended to alleviate some of the problems that afflict working people and society as a whole also had the effect of stabilizing the capitalist system and benefiting sections of monopoly capital. Some regulation has no broader social goal, but is used as a tool to partially overcome the self-destructive anarchy of private capitalist competition for the purpose of providing economic stability and greater profits for the corporations. The state also became a source of economic stimulation through tax collection from the whole people to finance military spending, “cost-plus” profits, and wars.

Internationalization of Economic Life, Transnationals and Capitalist Globalization

Following World War II, a scientific and technological revolution took place that resulted from the drive to maximize profits through advancing technology and productivity. It centered on new materials, on new means of transportation and communication, and more recently on information technology. These achievements enabled a new stage in capitalist globalization, a further socialization of world economic life, and a qualitative shift in the internationalization of production, still under private capitalist ownership.

The capitalist world economy at first could not fully utilize these new developments—the existing forms of capitalist ownership were too restrictive. Signs of economic stagnation marked the mid-1970s. The capitalist answer was the growth of monopoly corporations into transnational corporations, whose reach extends beyond any one country's sphere of influence. Stimulated by the internationalization of economic life and the scientific and technical revolution, these transnationals control many economic stages from financing to research and development, to sources of supply, to production, to wholesale and retail distribution. Internationalization gave the monopolies many more alternatives for resource extraction and production based on which country is cheapest for each operation. This enabled greater coordination and planning within the bounds of a single transnational and in temporary cartel-type arrangements with other transnationals. This process achieved a partial, temporary overcoming of some of the anarchy inherent in private capitalist ownership of production and distribution.

Today, a few more than 500 transnationals worldwide, some 300 of them based in the U.S., dominate the capitalist world economy, the capitalist governments, and their international institutions. There are transnational banks, transnational industrial manufacturers, transnational arms dealers, transnational wholesale and retail distributive monopolies, transnational entertainment and publishing giants, and transnational conglomerates which own so many businesses it is almost impossible to tell what their main business is. By the 1980s, transnationals dominated economic and political life in the U.S. and around much of the globe.

Combined with capitalist globalization, there has been the concurrent and related increase of chronic relative overproduction, unused capacity, and currency imbalances and speculation, leading to increased levels of unemployment and underemployment in all the major capitalist powers, and greater

instability in most developing countries. The gap between rich and poor is growing both internationally and within the major capitalist countries, to unprecedented levels.

World Balance of Forces

Historical Developments

The Soviet Union and the socialist countries of Eastern Europe and Mongolia collapsed at the end of the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s. This resulted from a complex combination of internal and external factors. The world communist movement and the Communist Party USA are still studying and discussing the relative importance of the various causes of the demise of the socialist states in order to best learn for the future.

Previously, when the socialist countries, the national liberation movements, and the working class and peace movements in the developed capitalist countries were united, they could significantly impact the outcome of most international struggles and win victories in many cases. The Soviet Union especially acted to prevent world nuclear war, maintained peaceful coexistence and competition between the capitalist and socialist countries, and played decisive roles in the defeat of fascism and in support of national liberation movements. The socialist countries helped make possible the victory of national independence in many countries and the emergence of the non-capitalist path of development in some developing countries. In the socialist countries, living conditions more or less steadily improved from the end of World War II. The social benefits provided in the Soviet Union were one factor in strengthening the fight of workers in developed capitalist countries for increased benefits and pressuring capitalists to consider making concessions to workers. Imperialism has been unable to end the path to socialism in countries that had socialist revolutions and are now in various stages of development: China, North Korea, Vietnam, Laos and Cuba.

During the period of struggle for peaceful coexistence between U.S. and world imperialism on the one hand, and the Soviet Union and other socialist countries on the other, our Party and the worldwide communist movement concluded that the balance of forces had reached the point where world war and smaller scale wars were not inevitable, but could be prevented by mass struggle. At the same time, it is evident that imperialism still gives rise to destructive and dangerous wars; and we have as yet been unable to prevent all wars.

Among the results of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries returning to capitalism were major setbacks for the progressive forces on a world scale

and a shift in favor of imperialism headed by the U.S. With the demise of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, Cuba, China, Vietnam, North Korea, and Laos face severe new problems. A number of former colonial countries that had chosen non-capitalist paths of development were forced back toward capitalist development.

Wars of liberation became stalemated militarily due to U.S. intervention, in some cases even prior to the Soviet Union returning to capitalism. National liberation movements had to give up much of the gains they had won, facing powerful imperialist-supported forces. The ability of new countries to choose socialist development became much more limited. The Communist and the movement toward socialism in the developed capitalist countries suffered substantial losses. The transnationals gained the possibility of direct expansion and control within the former socialist countries, whose peoples suffer drastic decreases in their standards of living. The mass immiseration of people in the former Soviet Union and Eastern European countries and the gangster capitalism there are new proof that capitalism doesn't work for the vast majority, but only enriches a handful.

With their new economic and political dominance over most of the world, a sharpening of competition developed among the few hundred gigantic transnationals for control of the new areas and to redivide economic control worldwide. The transnationals have become increasingly intertwined with the governments of the leading imperialist powers and multi-state institutions such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, and others, while coming to politically and economically dominate or divide up influence in many developing countries and in countries with a middle level of development.

The International Front for Peace and Progress

The socialist countries once formed the core of the world anti-imperialist front. With the demise of the Soviet Union, there is no longer a consistent international alliance of the forces for peace and progress against the forces for war and reaction regarding international and social issues. With each major international issue of struggle comes a new balance of forces. But there is an immense and growing front of world public opinion and of states against U.S. hegemonic power. There is growing worldwide resistance to U.S. military action, to military action by the other imperialist powers, and to solving international problems by military means. On some issues, only a handful of client states side with the U.S., because there is growing recognition that U.S. policies

threaten not only world peace but increasingly threaten the very existence of humanity. The most egregious examples are the U.S. imperialist invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan.

The peace front consists of overwhelming world public opinion in all countries against war and for peaceful solutions, along with organized peace and social movements working directly to accomplish these aims. It also consists of the existing socialist countries, and developing countries that maintain some degree of independent policies. Even most other developed imperialist powers often recognize that military options result in highly dangerous consequences and seldom bring useful or lasting results even for their imperialist aims. The peace front is increasingly reflected in the United Nations. The U.S. ultra-right ignores the existing world balance of forces for peace at the expense of weakening its general international influence.

There is also a growing resistance to U.S. international economic actions in international, bilateral, and multilateral relations, and a strengthening alliance of developing countries which resist the worst aspects of economic imperialism. Often it is the U.S. and the other big capitalist powers against the socialist countries and most of the developing world in economic relations. With nearly all of the socialist and developing countries now members of the WTO, IMF, and other international trade alliances, struggle also takes place within these organizations. Increasingly, the developing countries have challenged the trade alliances' aim to regulate international economic relations in the interests of the transnationals and their "home countries," particularly the U.S., resulting in set-backs to schemes, such as the FTAA (Free Trade Area of the Americas).

There is a growing recognition that the internationalization of economic and social life means that social problems anywhere in the world impact all countries, including the richest ones. Mass poverty and hunger; several billion people living on less than \$2 a day; extremes of wealth and poverty between classes and nations; international debt; lack of education; absence of health care in the face of pandemics, such as HIV/AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis; and the severe and growing threats to the world's environment are international problems facing all of humanity and requiring international solutions.

Some sectors of transnational capital recognize to some degree that there are problems that threaten the existence of humanity as well as their ability to maximize profits. This is also true of some imperialist powers. However, so far they have provided only limited funds for such problems as AIDS and such agreements as the Kyoto Protocol. When they do agree to take some positive action, it is usually to benefit their own bottom lines.

Other crises are virtually ignored by the major capitalist powers, such as the special plight of sub-Saharan Africa, which is suffering famine, drought, health epidemics, and malnutrition. Since there is no money to be made, it is left to private and world charities whose resources are far too limited to seriously address the problems.

The socialist countries, the developing countries, and the working class and social movements of the developed capitalist countries continue to press for real and extensive action. Gradually these forces are becoming more united and determined about the need to confront international problems. On all these issues, the U.S. ultra-right opposes any meaningful action and tries to slow and divide the pressure for real measures. There is, however, the slow growth of a common world front of states and social forces for progress.

Part of this recent positive change in the world balance of forces is the resurgence of a leftward movement in several parts of the world. This trend is most notable in much of Latin America, with the election of Left and Left-Center governments, the rejection of imperialist “free trade” schemes, the expansion of social benefits, political rejection of U.S. domination, and some countries moving in a socialist direction. In a number of the developed capitalist countries, the labor movement has become a more militant force in both economic and political arenas. There is some renewed strengthening of socialist and other Left forces—including the communist movement—associated with the international and regional progressive social and economic forums in recent years. The movement leftward is not a simple direct movement toward socialism, Marxism, and the communist parties. It is rather multi-faceted and eclectic. These are not uniform processes and there are countries where the ultra-right has gained ground, or where the ultra-right continues its political dominance, as in the U.S.

On the world scale, China, India, Brazil, and South Africa are developing as major economic and political players, mostly in a positive direction, providing some counter-balance to U.S. imperialism. China’s economic growth provides an alternative to trade with imperialist countries for developing and socialist countries, including Cuba and other progressive Latin American countries.

In Europe, there is a sharpening of inter-imperialist conflicts with the U.S. and among the European powers. There is a growing opposition by much of the labor movement and Left of further European integration at the expense of working people.

Among the countries of Asia, China, India, and Vietnam all have rapidly growing economies, and provide some moderating balance to U.S. imperialism in their region.

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

U.S. imperialism is the leader of world imperialism and home to the bulk of the dominant transnationals. It seeks control over the entire world, including its fellow imperialist powers. Under ultra-right political leadership, U.S. imperialism has immense instruments for winning its aims—ranging from its military preponderance to its various means of economic domination and political pressure, from bribery to ideological weapons. But even with all of these instruments, U.S. domination is slowly weakening.

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

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

The politics of the Communist Party are rooted in proletarian internationalism—we recognize that the working classes of the whole world have common interests in their mutual understanding, liberation, peace, and development. We share a common enemy: world imperialism, particularly U.S. imperialism, its most reactionary transnationals, and the governments they dominate. We support the broadest possible unity of the international working class. We also support international solidarity with other forces, peoples, and movements struggling for liberation worldwide.

Since the 1970s, changes in science, technology, and transportation have reinforced the dominance of transnational corporations within capitalism. The ever-more-rapid capitalist globalization of the world is an increasing threat to working people around the world. Giant transnational corporations and the governments that back them are racing to expand their markets and access to

resources. They are destroying national sovereignty, workers rights and environmental protections in order to increase their profits. Only much greater unity and solidarity by the labor and people's movements internationally can counter the ravages of capitalist globalization.

A new level of international unity and struggle emerged from the protests of the November 1999 meetings of the World Trade Organization in Seattle, Washington. Environmental groups, student organizations, women's groups, and others came together with the labor movement and allies from around the world to say "NO!" to capitalist globalization. There exists today a much higher level of international consciousness among working people and a much greater level of functional international unity than in recent memory, united in stating, "A Better World is Possible."

Present Features of Capitalism

A correct and thorough understanding of capitalism, of its essential features and durable conditions, and of the political balance of forces, is key to guiding class and democratic struggles for progress.

The absolute and relative exploitation of the working class is at an unprecedented level and continues to grow rapidly. Each transnational corporation now exploits not only its own employed workers in many countries and the entire working class of its home country, but the entire working class of the world. At the same time, the working class is growing worldwide.

The movement of capital around the world in search of maximum profit is ever faster, whether in terms of the location of production, the supply of raw materials and other resources, research and development, mass distribution, currency, or price manipulation and speculation.

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

It also sharpens the class struggle. The advance of the means of production connected with the globalization of economic and social life under domination of the transnational monopolies requires higher levels of environmental protection, education, health care, culture, housing, and family care to produce the quantity and quality of labor now needed. This is in contradiction to the greater quantities of capitalist profit needed to sustain the growth of the giant transnationals, which only comes from higher rates of exploitation of existing workers and from the exploitation of growing numbers of workers worldwide. Intensification of the class struggle and sharper attacks on the living conditions of the working class are inherent in the dominance of the transnationals. The increasing merger of the transnationals with the state in the main imperialist countries means that capitalist globalization is both an economic and a political process.

The development of modern capitalism requires the strengthening of the economic and political organizations of the working class and all working people both within our country and internationally.

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

In developing strategy and tactics for each stage of struggle, the main objective conditions must be considered. These objective conditions include the major features of today's capitalist economy. They also include the world and domestic balance of forces. These balances, reflecting the outcome of struggles of the contending class and social forces and states, place limits on what can be achieved until the balance undergoes a qualitative shift as a result of the accumulation of quantitative changes. In that sense, the overall qualities of the current stage of struggle are also an objective limitation determining what strategy and tactics can accomplish until a new political environment replaces that overall balance.

3

THE WORKING CLASS, CLASS STRUGGLE, DEMOCRATIC STRUGGLE, AND FORCES FOR PROGRESS

The Working Class and Trade Union Movement

Workers always seek to solve the chronic ills they face. Whether individual workers are conscious of it yet or not, the ultimate outcome of this struggle is socialism. To determine the strategy and tactics required for immediate progress and more basic change, it is necessary to be clear about what propels progressive change and about which struggles, classes, and social forces have the potential to play decisive roles. The history of our country and the experience of struggle worldwide in recent years confirm the Marxist assertion that the struggle of the working class against the capitalist class is the chief driving force for fundamental progressive change.

The working class is compelled to resist increased exploitation. It seeks to improve living conditions by increasing workers' share of the new value they

create at the expense of the capitalists. This class struggle takes place in the factories where commodities are produced and in the venues of distribution and sale of commodities. This is the economic side of the class struggle. The class struggle also has a political side. It plays out in struggles over governmental action or inaction, over social spending and tax policy, over elections, and ultimately over which class or formation of class and social forces becomes dominant in holding and exercising political power. The class struggle also exists in the realm of ideology, that is, between social and political ideas and values that justify the political and economic policies of the contending classes.

The class struggle starts with the fight for wages, hours, benefits, working conditions, job security, and jobs. But it also includes an endless variety of other forms for fighting specific battles: resisting speed-up, picketing, contract negotiations, strikes, demonstrations, lobbying for pro-labor legislation, elections, and even general strikes. When workers struggle against the capitalist class or any part of it on any issue with the aim of improving or defending their lives, it is part of the class struggle.

There is no limit to the range of issues that are part of the class struggle: peace, democratic liberties, for full equality and against racism, health care, decent schools, public housing, social security, environmental protection, and more. The class struggle takes on more conscious forms in strike struggles, which are expressions of trade union consciousness. The class struggle reaches full class and socialist consciousness only when the alliance of class and social forces is built under working-class leadership in order to win power and construct socialism. The activity of the Communist Party is based on building full class consciousness, which includes socialist consciousness.

The working class is the only force capable of becoming the general leader of the struggle for full social progress and socialism. Capitalism's dependence on the working class to create all wealth gives it a strategic role in the production process and great potential power.

The size of the working class and its experience of collective labor and collective struggle prepare it to lead the struggle for progress. In the words of the Communist Manifesto, the working class is "the only truly revolutionary class," because only the working class has no other interest than ending capitalism completely and replacing it with socialism. These qualities and experiences also make the working class fertile ground for the ideas of socialism and Marxism and for Communist Party membership.

The working class of the U.S. is vibrant and diverse. The working class constitutes the great bulk of the country's population, and is continually growing—workers and their families are a substantial majority of the total

population. The diversity of the working class includes skilled and unskilled labor, white-collar and blue-collar workers, people of all ages, organized and unorganized, employed, underemployed, and unemployed. Our working class is almost evenly composed of men and women. Most nationally and racially oppressed communities are more heavily working-class than the country as a whole, and together constitute more than 25% of the working class, a percentage that is rapidly increasing. Despite its increasing diversity, ours is a single working class, a class whose unity is growing and deepening.

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

The Communist Party seeks to build broad unity to achieve the strategic and tactical goals of the working class. The major obstacle to working class unity is capitalist class-promoted racism, which must be fought by all—full unity will only be built when substantial numbers of white workers participate in the fight for full equality and against racism, based on an understanding of their self-interest in class unity.

This principle is not just true in struggles in the workplace, on the campus, or in the neighborhood, but is equally true at the ballot box, in the larger political and social struggles, and in the battle for the hearts and minds of the public. Only by joining together can the working class and its allies win the larger struggles for dignity, rights, and power. The working class cannot achieve its ultimate goal—socialism—without fighting for its leading role in the context of unity with other class and social forces.

Working class unity is fundamental to all key social and political victories. It is essential to the class struggle. In recent decades there has been a decline in the percentage of people in the workforce who are union members. One of the most crucial ways of increasing the strength and unity of the working class as a whole is organizing the unorganized. Working-class unity depends on uniting all the diverse sectors of the multiracial, multinational working class in the U.S.

Likewise, unity between various unions, between unemployed and employed, between industrial and service workers, etc., will strengthen the labor movement and increase its ability to fight for bigger demands and victories. Only by uniting with workers in other countries can we successfully confront the transnationals.

The working class plays a leading role in the struggle for various demands, but many of the key needs of working people cannot be won by the trade union movement or the working class alone. Unions must engage in coalitions with community, civil rights, women's, student, senior, and other organizations in order to increase their combined ability to win against a powerful enemy. From strike struggles to legislative initiatives to the fight for the White House, labor must build unity with other social forces to achieve victory. Only the unity of millions of working people led by the working class can win a revolutionary struggle.

The unity of labor and community cannot be based solely on the demands and leadership of labor. Labor must take up the fight for the demands of its allies on the basis of mutual trust and commitment. This allows for the working class to establish its leading role among the mass movements as a whole. The Communist Party always seeks to build principled unity among the working class and all progressive social forces to further their interests and power.

New levels of unity and new alliances and coalitions have developed in the working class movement in the recent period. The common struggle against capitalist globalization has ushered in an advanced phase of working unity between the labor movement, the environmental movement, the student movement, and others. Shifts in labor's immigration policy have allowed a new level of unity with immigrant rights organizations. Labor has increased its support of and work with labor/student solidarity organizations in recent years. There is a constant need to reinforce and defend this unity on the basis of common work, mutual respect, and understanding.

At all strategic stages of struggle from the present to the construction of socialism, the working class is the most important and consistent class and the only one whose interests are entirely on the side of progress and socialism. That does not mean that at every moment, in every struggle, it will in fact be the leader. But the working class will tend more and more to become the leader of struggles for progress and socialism.

The working class, however, cannot be the sole force in these struggles, because its opponents at each stage are powerful, with great resources at their command. There are other major social forces whose interests substantially parallel those of the working class as a whole. Only with the maximum of unity and powerful alliances can victory in a peaceful manner be assured.

The labor movement is the organized sector of the working class and is the key strategic factor to achieving fundamental social change. The diversity of the labor movement is growing in composition and leadership in recent years. The working class is constantly being joined by some who were once

independent professionals—including doctors and engineers—but are now employees of vast corporations. The labor movement is no longer limited to “pure and simple” trade union struggles. It plays a major, often leading role, in legislative and electoral struggles and has developed a large and increasingly independent labor electoral apparatus. It has developed on-going relationships with organizations of the nationally and racially oppressed, women, students, and others. It is increasingly seeking forms of international labor cooperation.

Though the labor movement has shrunk in the U.S. (and some other developed capitalist countries in recent decades), labor has become the leading force for progress on many social issues and in the electoral arena. Speeding up the organization of unorganized workers is one of the most important challenges to labor and all progressive forces. For nation-wide success in new organizing, unity of the labor movement is crucial, overcoming narrow and sectarian interests in the interests of the working class as a whole. Organizing the unorganized by itself, however, is not sufficient—continuing to win unions and their memberships to class struggle trade unionism and to broad trade union unity are also required.

The overriding interests of the whole working class in confronting the power of corporations mean building trade union unity across all lines of craft and industry and across national borders.

The Democratic Struggle and Its Relation to the Class Struggle

Democratic struggles take place all the time throughout the U.S. and the world. They are struggles to enlarge democracy in every aspect of life for all working people to improve their real life options. They include the struggle to prevent deterioration of living conditions. The democratic struggle is not only about democratic rights, civil liberties, and electoral democracy. It also includes struggles for peace, equality for the racially and nationally oppressed, equality for women job creation programs, increased minimum wage, adequate health care, education, day care, housing, social security, pension and other retirement benefits, environmental protection, protection of family farms and small businesses, the needs of youth, cultural programs and independent media, progressive taxation, sharply reduced military spending, and more. The struggles of all class and social forces that seek to curb the power of the transnationals are democratic struggles.

The class struggle and the democratic struggle are closely linked; they overlap and intertwine. However, they are not identical. The class struggle in an immediate sense pits workers against a particular company or sector at the

point of production and against the capitalist class as a whole in broader social and economic struggles. The aim of the class struggle in the longer term is the winning of power in order to construct socialism. The aim of the democratic struggle is to widen the democratic space for all working people as much as possible so long as capitalism exists. The interaction of these two streams of struggle advances the struggle to the eve of socialist revolution. After a revolution, a qualitative change happens, with democracy progressing in a planned and guaranteed process in harmony with the working class as the new ruling class.

On the eve of socialism, the class struggle reaches its decisive turning point and goes beyond the limits of the democratic struggle under capitalism. The victory of socialism will open a new stage in the continual development of democracy.

Every specific class struggle is also part of the democratic struggle because in those struggles, the masses of workers seek to enlarge or protect democratic possibilities. Often, class battles are played out in the political arena where the democratic action of millions of workers can powerfully affect the battle's outcome.

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

The U.S. Constitution, as originally written, placed many restrictions on democracy, so from the time of the country's founding there has been a continual battle to extend democracy. From demanding that the Bill of Rights be included in the Constitution to legal battles to ensure that all people have inalienable rights, from eliminating property requirements for voting to outlawing poll taxes, from not only freeing the slaves but enrolling them as voters to extending the franchise to women, from the Voting Rights Act to lowering the voting age, our history has been one of masses of people demanding their right to full participation in the decisions which affect their lives. Many victories have been won in this struggle, but it is far from over. Democratic rights in a capitalist society are always under attack.

The struggle to protect and expand democracy is the way to defeat the ultra-right. It is the way to prevent fascism. It is the path of curtailing the power of the monopolies. In and through the democratic struggle, the class struggle advances toward victory. Democratic struggle is the way to bring the working class and people's forces to the brink of socialism.

Our country's revolutionary traditions and history are filled with sharp struggles to protect and expand democracy. The desire of all people to actively participate in the decision-making of society drives battles for voting rights, for expanding the electorate, for reforming the electoral system, for protecting civil liberties, for guaranteeing civil rights, for an end to all forms of discrimination, and for eliminating the power of large financial contributions, which enable the rich to dominate elections. These democratic struggles are often entered into by working-class forces that see the value to workers of expanding their political power and opportunity. The democratic struggle embraces class and social forces other than or in addition to the working class in struggles against one or another sector of the capitalist class and its dominant transnational monopolies.

The Constitution provides for political democracy, which though limited, is under attack by the ultra-right. Protecting and expanding democratic rights are crucial struggles which Communists support. But we go further—we demand economic democracy and freedom from exploitation and oppression. We want the lives of all working people to be free not only of unwarranted governmental power but also to be free of unwarranted corporate power.

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

Special Oppression and Exploitation

The most important of the potential allies of the working class are those who suffer special oppression and exploitation due to capitalism. All specially oppressed communities are well represented as part of the working class and also include people from other classes. Those who are part of the working class suffer the exploitation and social problems of all other workers, and in addition suffer from special oppression that is not solely based on class,

such as racism, national discrimination, and male supremacy. Some people experience triple and quadruple oppression since they face several layers of intense exploitation, discrimination, and oppression.

The racially and nationally oppressed, women, youth, and immigrants all face types of special oppression, as do seniors, the Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender (LGBT) community, the disabled, and the mentally ill. Many features of special oppression cut across class lines and affect to some degree all members of each oppressed social group. They affect not only those who are workers or part of the professional and small business groups but to some extent even those from sections of the capitalist class. This common experience of oppression creates a wide basis for unity within each group and among all groups facing discrimination and oppression.

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

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

The foremost potential allies of the working class, through the various stages of struggle all the way to socialism, are the nationally and racially oppressed peoples. At the same time, racism is the single most important weapon of the ruling class to weaken class and democratic struggles. It is a classic divide-and-conquer tactic. Spreading division within the working class and between the working class and its allies weakens all movements and struggles. Against this division, we must build multiracial unity with antiracism and the fight for full equality at its core. The working class is the most multiracial, multinational class in our society, and multiracial unity is key to building unity within the working class as well as in society as a whole.

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

The working class must fight against racism, for full equality of all nationally oppressed, and for affirmative action, if it is to unite internally

and enter lasting alliances with the organizations and movements of racially oppressed peoples. By the same token, the nationally and racially oppressed groups must support labor's demands in order to unite internally and to ally with labor.

The U.S. is perhaps the most multiracial and multinational country in the world, with about 300 million people including almost every race, nationality, and ethnic group on the planet. Racially and nationally oppressed people live and work in every region, in every state, and in every major city. They are primarily working-class and generally occupy the lowest-paying, most exploitative jobs. Among the nationally and racially oppressed are African Americans, Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans and other Latino peoples, Native Americans, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, and Arab and Middle Eastern peoples.

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

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

The workplace is not the only place where building multiracial unity is essential. Multiracial unity is necessary at all levels of class and democratic struggles. This is the reason for the long-standing coalition between the labor and civil rights movements. Not only do these movements have common enemies; they have a common agenda of expanding economic, so-

cial, and civil rights. The working class and racially oppressed people have common interests in housing, employment, education, and other areas.

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

African Americans

Historically and continuing today, African Americans and their organizations play a tremendous role in democratic and class struggles and in building alliances with progressive movements, especially the labor movement. As well, the struggle for equality and against racism in relation to African Americans has played a central role in the entire struggle for democracy and progress. The reasons for this key role include:

- *the central role played by slavery in providing capital for U.S. political and economic development;*
- *the central role resistance to slavery played in winning the Civil War, the “Second American Revolution”;*
- *the central role played by the Civil Rights revolution in defeating Jim Crow laws and practices, mobilizing virtually an entire people and their allies, challenging and defeating entrenched reaction in the South, forcing changes in the voting laws to expand democracy, and setting the stage for movements of other oppressed peoples, exemplified by the role played by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in the history of our country;*
- *the exceptionally high percentage of African Americans who are working class;*
- *that African Americans are among the largest of nationally oppressed peoples;*
- *the level of coordinated struggle that the labor movement and the African American people have already achieved;*
- *the bell-weather role played by the successes and the setbacks in the struggle for African American equality with respect to the struggles of all other oppressed peoples.*

The African American people play a big role in national politics. Their concentration in large urban centers, high working-class composition, heavy concentration in the labor movement, and high level of political/social

organization, including churches and mosques, civil rights organizations, and social and fraternal organizations, all make it possible for these groups to politically mobilize millions, including many beyond the African American community.

In national elections, African Americans vote overwhelmingly against the ultra-right, more than any other group. There are thousands of Black elected officials nationally; almost all run as Democrats. Because they vote almost unanimously as a block in most elections, African Americans have a level of influence beyond their actual numbers.

Mexican Americans

Mexican Americans together with African Americans are the two largest nationally oppressed peoples in the U.S., with Mexican Americans being one of the fastest growing sections of the population. The Mexican American population is concentrated in the U.S. Southwest, land that was originally stolen from Mexico, with U.S. domination being imposed on the many Native American and Mexican American people living in those areas.

Among the problems faced by Mexican Americans are language discrimination on the job and in schools, cultural suppression, anti-immigrant laws and abuses, lack of full political representation, and inferior job and social conditions in every area of life, in addition to police brutality and hate crimes.

Mexican Americans have played an important in U.S. history, from resistance to U.S. imperialist annexation to struggles for full civil rights for immigrants, from resistance to cultural domination to the struggle for a holiday honoring Caesar Chavez and his ground-breaking example in organizing farmworkers, and from community battles for bilingual education to struggles for voting rights and full participation in the electoral process, among many others.

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

Puerto Ricans

There are four million Puerto Ricans in the U.S. This oppressed national minority is the second largest Spanish-speaking Latin American population in the country, Mexicans and Mexican-Americans being the largest.

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

While concentrated in New York, especially New York City, Puerto Ricans are found in every state of the Union. New York, however, is where Puerto Ricans first organized for political and labor representation as well as for issues dealing with their homeland.

The features of the Puerto Rican national minority in the U.S. cannot be completely understood without taking into account Puerto Rico as a U.S. colonial possession. Puerto Rico is an oppressed colonial nation. Colonial oppression takes many forms, from control of the economy by subsidiaries of U.S. corporations to imposition of U.S. death penalty laws on Puerto Ricans. This colonial oppression is the main reason Puerto Ricans have been forced to immigrate to the U.S.

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

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

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

American Indians

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

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

Some tribes play an active, vigorous role in the electoral process. The growing political clout of some tribes contrasts with the most vicious effects of racism on the living conditions, education, employment, health, and survival of many American Indians, who on some reservations are subjected to the worst possible living conditions, highest infant mortality rates, highest rates of disease and suicide, and highest unemployment of any nationality. The growth of gambling casinos on many reservations has not alleviated conditions for the large majority of American Indians and is not a solution to the racism and national oppression they face.

Other Indigenous Peoples

Other indigenous peoples, including Aleuts, Inuit, and native Hawaiians, have their own cultures and traditions. Hawaii, one of the most multi-racial states, had its independent monarchy overthrown by an invading army and was a colony of the U.S. for many decades. Native Hawaiians face national oppression in addition to the problems faced by Hawaii as a whole, with distinct language, cultural, and economic issues.

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

Immigrants

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

The U.S. has large communities of immigrant workers. These workers are often super-exploited, working in the most primitive, unhealthy, non-union conditions. Each immigrant group faces its own national oppression, and many face racial oppression as well. Basic human and labor rights are often denied them. Thousands of undocumented, mainly agricultural workers crossing the border with Mexico are subjected to the murderous policies of the Border Patrol and racist vigilantes. They are hounded and chased down like criminals. Hundreds have tragically died or been murdered, especially in border areas, for simply trying to unite their families or find a better life. Many immigrants come with advanced degrees but are relegated to the lowest paid jobs, such as housekeepers, street vendors, taxicab drivers, kitchen crews, and similar occupations.

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

Many people come to the U.S. as a result of wars with either direct U.S. military involvement or surrogates financed and trained by the U.S. People from many countries emigrate to the U.S. because of dire economic situations in their home countries. Reactionaries use this immigration to bolster their claims that the U.S. is a beacon of freedom. But it is actually a condemnation of U.S. transnationals and their crass exploitation abroad. People often immigrate to the U.S. looking for economic survival, and are refugees from the economic policies of U.S. imperialism, and from the neo-colonial, neo-liberal "free trade" exploitation experienced around the world.

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

Many immigrants from the Caribbean are trying to escape the U.S. stranglehold on their home countries. They include Dominicans, Haitians, Jamaicans, and others who play vital roles in many communities in the U.S.

Haitian immigrants, from one of the poorest countries in the world, have experienced U.S. support for dictators and death squads, U.S. attempts to subvert and co-opt popular democratic movements, and direct exploitation by U.S., French, and other transnationals. Once in the U.S., they face continued impoverishment, health crises, racism and discrimination.

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

Arabs and Middle Eastern Peoples

More than six million people of Arab ancestry live in the U.S., including such nationalities as Palestinians, Iraqis, Lebanese, Syrians, Egyptians, Algerians, Yemenis, and Saudi Arabians, concentrated in communities in Michigan, Illinois, California, and New York. Most are workers, with many active in the labor movement and otherwise active politically. Thousands of Iranian Americans also live in the U.S. Some people from all these nationalities have been citizens of the U.S. for generations; at the same time, many are recent immigrants.

As a result of U.S. aggression against Afghanistan and Iraq and support of Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip and refusal to accept the existence of a co-equal Palestinian Arab state, a substantial majority of Arabs, Muslims, and South Asian peoples in the U.S. have become active opponents of the ultra-right. Discrimination against them, which dramatically increased following 9/11, has intensified their opposition to the current course of U.S. domestic policy. This heightened discrimination and oppression includes racist violence, registration with the FBI, imprisonment without due process or legal counsel, and mass deportations.

The demonization of Arabs, Muslims and South Asians does not make anyone safer. It is in reality a support for the aggressive military policies of the U.S. government and a racist justification of oppression. It has provided an excuse for stepped up racial profiling, which affects not just Arab and Middle Eastern peoples but all people of color.

Asians and Asian Americans

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

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

For several decades during the last century, the Philippines was a “protectorate” of the U.S., and many Filipinos immigrated during that time and subsequently, many to work in the agricultural and canning industries. Filipinos played important roles in early efforts to unionize farmworkers on the West Coast and in Hawaii.

Pacific Islanders also come from countries and lands with widely varying political and economic conditions, from colonies of the U. S. like Guam, to independent nations like Fiji, to hundreds of smaller islands which are still struggling to create and maintain their own national identities. Samoans, Fijians, Micronesians, and other Pacific Islander nationalities all face national discrimination and particular forms of racial discrimination.

As more recent immigrants from Asia live in this country for longer periods, they increasingly face and understand the racial and national discrimination rife in the U. S., and increasingly struggle against that oppression. The national questions faced by Asian Americans are thus complex, varied, and need specific attention.

The Complexity and Interconnection of National and Racial Oppression

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

People of many nationalities face special oppression related to their national origins—issues of language, culture, history, immigration rights and status, professional status or lack thereof, historical and colonial oppression, the various reasons and pressures for their immigration, and more. Another complexity is that though most discrimination which followed the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the U.S is directed at Arab and Middle Eastern peoples, many Latinos face racial profiling due to claims that they “look like” people from the Middle East. For example, African immigrants have their own specific national issues but also face the generalized discrimination directed against African Americans. For example, Mexican Americans whose families have been citizens for centuries face harassment from immigration authorities due to racist assumptions based on skin color.

Our purpose is not to artificially separate discrimination and oppression into either national or racial categories, but to understand the ways they are interconnected and understand these different facets of the oppression faced by individuals and peoples.

The Struggle for Full Equality for Women

Working class women suffer additional forms of oppression and exploitation than do male workers. The capitalists gain super profits as a result—billions of dollars each year. They also gain greater profits from male workers when male supremacy helps the capitalists divide male and female workers,

weakening the struggle for all workers' rights. The decrease in real wages is one of the factors forcing more women into the workforce, often into low-wage jobs or into holding two or three jobs. As a result, more women and children are pushed into poverty.

Like racism, sexism is a key tool of the ruling class against all women and against the working class as a whole. The wage differential remains between men and women in similar jobs, resulting in billions in super-profits. The gendered stratification of the job market ensures that many women are relegated to the lowest-paying, least secure jobs. Under capitalism, women workers are doubly oppressed, once as workers and again as women. Racially and nationally oppressed women face triple oppression. Women continue to be compelled to shoulder the predominate burdens of childcare and domestic household work. Treatment of women as sexual objects also brings additional profits to the capitalists and divides men and women. Cuts in social welfare programs hit single mothers and their children especially hard, with rapidly growing numbers of single mothers being driven further into poverty. Rapid increases in health care and housing costs impact single women and their children most sharply. These cuts hit women of oppressed groups even harder.

Among the forms of oppression women experience are attacks on their reproductive rights; lack of quality, affordable day care; inequality in child rearing and household work; sexual harassment on the job; and domestic and sexual violence. The special oppression of women also cuts widely across class lines, affecting promotions for women in management and networking and contract opportunities for women small business owners. This provides the potential for a progressive role for women as a whole, as an ally of the working class and the nationally oppressed. Generally, women are more politically advanced than men on many issues, including issues of war and peace and social welfare.

Women workers play a key role in assuring an alliance of the women's movement with the working class, while nationally oppressed women play such a role in the alliance with the nationally oppressed. There are long-standing and growing relationships and coalition partnering between the main women's organizations, the labor movement, and other major progressive organizations. This is an important element of building the all-people's front against the ultra-right.

There is an ultra-right ideological attack on women's role in society and the family, trying to force women to revert to a submissive role, to limit them to issues of family and children, and to assign blame for the high rate of divorce and the feminization of poverty on women. This "blame the victim" approach seeks

to divert attention from the ways the system oppresses women.

Men should take an initiating role in combating all instances of sexism and male supremacy in the labor and people's movements as well as in the family. Women need and deserve an equal place in the ranks and in the leadership of the labor movement and all the people's mass democratic movements, including the Communist Party. Men have a strong self-interest in this—greater principled unity means greater victories for all. The main expression of the unity of men and women must be in the united struggle for women's rights and equality. It is in the interests of the labor movement to stand up for the rights of working women in particular as well as of women generally. It is in the interests of all the people's movements to defend reproductive rights and basic equality for women against right-wing attack.

Youth and Students

Under capitalism, youth and students experience special oppression and exploitation. Once again capitalism gains extra profits from the special exploitation of youth by two-tier contracts providing lower wages for new hires and by extremely low minimum wages which mostly affect young workers. Capitalists also gain from pitting generations of workers against one another. Capitalism deprives youth of free access to quality education, of cultural and sports activities, and of living wage jobs and entry-level training and apprenticeship programs, and threatens young people's hope for a secure future.

Capitalism seeks to use youth as cannon fodder in its imperialist adventures. Working class youth and students are in a position to be a key link between youth and the working class; they are the core of a labor/youth alliance. Similarly, youth who are also specially oppressed can help ally youth with the other core forces in the struggle for social progress. The forces of ultra-right reaction attempt to appeal demagogically to the young generation, but increasingly the desire of youth for a secure future and their high social ideals move youth into on-going alliance with labor and its allies and push the youth movement in a leftward direction.

There is an ultra-right ideological assault on youth, especially youth of color. It attempts to criminalize the young generation, including the massive incarceration of African American and Latino males, and also attempts to pit youth against seniors and to assign blame to youth for various social ills such as drugs, crime, and sexually transmitted diseases. Simultaneously, there are efforts to mobilize youth to support the ultra-right, especially on college campuses and in the military.

Additional Social Forces for Progress

Gays and Lesbians

Gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and the transgendered—the LGBT community—face discrimination in housing and employment, lack full legal and civil rights, and are frequently the victims of hate crimes. As do all other people, gays and lesbians demand and deserve full and equal civil rights, including the right to marry.

The LGBT community consists of people from all classes, all sections of the country and economy, and increasingly votes against the ultra-right. LGBT organizations play an important role in many coalitions and are increasingly allied with many progressive organizations and the labor movement.

The ultra-right uses homophobia and attacks on gays and lesbians as wedges to divide its opposition. Using false notions of “morals” and “family values,” the right attempts to use homophobia to gain allies for its corporate agenda among the working class and other social forces.

Those leading the attack on gay rights also attack labor and advocate slashing budgets for social programs. The real threat to working families is not gay marriage but the ultra-right agenda of maximum profits and war. Homophobia was one of the weapons of the McCarthy-era attack on democracy, and continues to be called on by the ultra-right in attempts to split the growing unity against the right-wing program. Unity against homophobia and for gay rights is an important defense of basic rights for gays, lesbians, and all people, and is a key to building unity against the broad anti-democratic agenda of the right. Discrimination in housing, employment, education, as well as hate crimes against gays and lesbians, need to be punishable by law where they are not, and enforced where they are.

Farmers and the Rural Population

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

Family farmers, farm cooperatives, and workers have a heroic history of fighting common enemies—the banks and corporations. There was the Populist Party, North Dakota’s Non-Partisan League, and the Minnesota Farmer-Labor Party that embraced socialist Governor Elmer A. Benson. African American and white tenant farmers in Alabama joined the Share Croppers Union. The unity of farmers and workers was the bedrock of the New Deal.

Smashing the alliance of workers and farmers was key to the Republican right’s seizure of power over the past thirty years. Methodically they targeted progressive lawmakers in predominantly rural states, replacing them with hard-line, mostly Republican supporters of agribusiness.

We support legislation to insure fair commodity prices for farmers who today sell their commodities at prices far below the cost of production. The rightwing, pro-agribusiness majority in the House and Senate are blocking such legislation.

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

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

Seniors

Seniors and retirees are under attack by right-wing efforts to privatize Social Security, by pharmaceuticals’ price gouging, and by the divestment of pension plans by businesses eager to avoid their contractual obligations. Some aspects of our culture devalue seniors and the contributions they have made and are making to society, and devalue their rights to full participation in society. The increasing retirement age, the rapidly escalating cost of health care, the company demands that workers and retirees pay more for their health care, and the cutting of funds for social programs all make life more difficult for seniors, threatening their health and economic security.

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

The Jewish People and Anti-Semitism

The six million Jews in the U.S. continue to vote heavily (more than 70%) against the ultra-right. Jewish people constitute a national group but their special problems often appear in a religious guise. Anti-Semitism continues to be an instrument of reaction. When the right-wing danger gets stronger, anti-Semitism gets worse as an instrument of division and diversion. One of the major reasons for the opposition of most Jewish people to the ultra-right is the efforts of the latter to erase the separation of church and state to favor their Christian fundamentalist allies.

There have long been strong progressive trends among the Jewish people on a wide range of domestic issues and for peace. Most Jewish people favor a two-state solution and an end to the occupation of the Palestinian Arab lands. However, a substantial number are also influenced by right-wing Israeli demagoguery. While most Jews are workers—more now among white-collar workers—there are some in the upper echelons of the transnationals and among the so-called neo-conservatives, but they constitute a small percentage of those categories, as well as of the Jewish people as a whole.

Social Movements for Progress

There are other class and social forces, social movements, and political tendencies which play important roles in the political life of our country. These include professionals, the disabled and mentally ill, and small business people. Similarly, movements in support of improved public education and public health care, for peace, and for reforming and democratizing our electoral systems; environmental organizations; civil liberties organizations; independent media groups; various community and neighborhood organizations; and democratic progressive sections of religious denominations and organizations, all may ally themselves with the working class.

At times, one or another struggle led by these groups can be the sharpest battle in a region or in the nation as a whole, galvanizing new support, understanding, and activism. For example, the battles to protect and expand Social Security and to defend pension rights bring together not only senior organizations but also organizations of union retirees, in coalition with the labor movement and both progressive and mainstream political forces. The massive worldwide peace movement involves tens of millions directly, and hundreds of millions who support and agree with the goal of building a peaceful world.

It is not our intention to make a comprehensive estimate of all social movements, as this changes rapidly and is evaluated regularly by our National Committee. Here we give some examples of how social movements and currents are related to our estimate of the balance of forces and strategic policy.

Progressive Culture

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

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

Progressive, democratic artists and cultural workers struggle to create art that reaches and involves the working class and all people, often in the face of serious obstacles—lack of funding, difficulty being heard over the

din of commercialism, small audience base, and lack of encouragement and support for anything that challenges the dominant capitalist culture. People's artists create for picketlines, for mass movements, for various forms of independent media, and for venues outside "mainstream" commercialism, and as expressions of resistance to the system and the lack of choices and future, especially of youth. Sometimes artists who work in commercial media struggle to report or grapple with the truth, running up against the barriers the system places in their way. They search for ways of combating the anti-democratic, chauvinistic culture promoted by the ultra-right.

Developing a vibrant people's culture and an appreciation for the cultural expressions of all peoples are essential parts of building mass struggle against the system, a way of offering an alternative vision, a way of providing hope, a means of communicating working class, democratic values, and a venue for honoring all positive aspects of our multicultural society.

Health Care Struggles

In many countries, health care is a constitutional right, but not in the United States. Unionized workers are forced to negotiate lower wages to pay for their health benefits. Unorganized workers are left with little or no real access to health care, which forces them to pay for their health services out-of-pocket often beyond their means. Over 45 million people are in that position of having to make choices among critical needs such as medicines, hospital appointments, food, education, and housing. Another 40 million have woeful health insurance benefits.

In the United States health care is a big business commodity with a big price tag, comprising 14% of the US GNP. Removing profit from the Wall Street-controlled health industry can fully fund a system that puts health before profit.

Communists support a health care system that is comprehensive and free with guaranteed access to quality care whenever needed. But a health care system is more than just medical care. Health care also means prevention of occupational and community environmental hazards and infectious conditions that threaten people's health. In addition, the lack of affordable housing has become a major public health problem. A comprehensive health care system means that all health workers in hospitals and community clinics must reflect the populations they are serving—we support the aggressive application of affirmative action programs for equal access to medical, nursing, and other professional training and education programs.

Organized labor, while protecting its own hard-won benefits, is beginning

to see the need and necessity to unite with other national and community-based organizations in the fight for a national health system that provides quality, guaranteed health benefits for everyone.

Progressive and Democratic Religious Movements

Almost all forms of organized religion have within them organized segments of progressive and democratic religious activists, who seek to make their moral values of peace, equality, and justice into a positive force for progress. They increasingly confront the efforts of the ultra-right to mobilize religious groups for reaction. Many religious organizations have long traditions of progressive activism, and they increasingly ally themselves with the labor movement, the peace and justice movements, anti-capitalist globalization movements, and with all democratic movements, and participate in efforts to build people-to-people international solidarity.

There is an as yet small trend among the religious community which considers capitalism as immoral and is moving towards socialism and even Communist Party membership, in large part motivated by the high moral standards based on their religious beliefs. The Communist Party welcomes these developments and expects them to grow.

International Solidarity and the Struggle for Peace

The peace movements worldwide constitute a major force against imperialism and aggression. The unprecedented actions around the world against the start of the U.S. invasion of Iraq, the largest coordinated demonstrations in history with over 12 million participants, showed the broad appeal, mass sentiment, and willingness to struggle for peace across borders and continents.

The peace movement in the U.S. is growing beyond the traditional peace organizations to also include many other social forces and allies, including sections of the labor movement. Our people have a material interest in ending the attempts to use military power to dominate the world—the money which is used to invade and control other countries and regions is desperately needed in our country to address the pressing needs of our people. The immoral and wasteful appropriation of our tax dollars for the imperialist interests of U.S. monopoly capital drains the public treasury of money essential to guarantee adequate services, programs, and benefits for our people. The Bush administration's threats of more aggression against more countries means

that this issue will continue to be one of the over-arching issues of our time.

The U.S. government is the main imperialist power in the world and is therefore the main threat to peace worldwide. The Communist Party and progressive forces in the U.S. have a responsibility to our own people and to the people of the world to build the broadest, strongest, ever-growing peace movement opposed to U.S. imperialist aggression anywhere in the world. We have a responsibility to all past, present, and potential future victims of direct U.S. military aggression, including Cuba, Vietnam, and North Korea.

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

4

UNITY AGAINST THE ULTRA-RIGHT

To chart our path to socialism, it is necessary to estimate what qualitatively different stages the struggle will have to pass through. The Communist Party must examine the relationships among all the existing class and social forces, without exception. That requires knowing the present stage of development of the capitalist economy and social system. In the previous section, we provided a basic estimate of the objective features of the relationships between the class and social forces for progress. We now move to the examination of the political role of the transnational monopolies.

The present period of capitalist development poses a grave danger to democratic rights and civil liberties in the United States. Since the early 1980s, the Republican Party, dominated by its ultra-right wing, has controlled much of the national legislative agenda, while the leadership of the Democratic Party has often ceded ground and initiative.

Ever since the major victories for the working class during the New Deal era of the 1930s, the rich and their paid operatives have worked diligently to chip away at or destroy these concessions to the political power of

workers. They have attempted to slow down or restrict many progressive programs that benefited people's lives and to chip away at every victory for unions, civil rights, and the environment. Now the ultra-right wants to place on the agenda the complete elimination of many of these programs, which they refer to pejoratively as "entitlement" programs. They want a government that has no role except to facilitate the ruthless power of the giant monopoly corporations—the industries, the banks, the chain stores, the brokerage houses, the insurance companies, agribusiness, the pharmaceutical companies, and the arms merchants. Even many of the super-wealthy who are not part of or in support of the ultra-right gain financial rewards from these policies, and either support or mute their opposition to particular ultra-right policies which benefit them.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, capitalism in the U.S. went through a period of economic stagnation, an oil crisis which challenged U.S. corporate dominance of energy resources, the exposure of the illegal and immoral operations of U.S. intelligence agencies, and the resignation of a sitting president. Internationally, there was the renewed economic power of U.S. competitors in Europe and Japan, a continuing rise of newly independent former colonies who sought alternatives to subservience to U.S. capital, growing economic strength in the socialist community of nations, and a military defeat of U.S. imperialism in Vietnam. Underlying the new economic difficulties was a sharpening of the basic contradiction of capitalism. The scientific and technological revolution had increased the socialization of the means of production. But prior to transnational capitalist corporate ownership becoming widespread, capitalism did not have adequate forms to fully utilize the new means of production. As a result, they temporarily were unable to fully realize the potential for even greater exploitation of labor and the accumulation of capital on a more global scale. These and other challenges to U.S. capitalist dominance caused a shift in ruling class thinking and some realignment among various right-wing groupings.

Larger sections of the U.S. ruling class began to seriously fund right-wing think tanks, ultra-right political campaigns, and efforts to bring religious fundamentalists into the electoral arena in an attempt to reassert their power. They sought to reassert U.S. military dominance with massive investments in new weapons systems. They sought to break up the grand political coalition that supported the Democratic Party, starting with building their own coalition of transnationals and economic and social conservatives who worked to dominate the Republican Party. Central to their political program was the "Southern Strategy" of continuing the movement of southern whites

influenced by racism away from the Democratic Party to the Republican Party, dominating the South through disenfranchisement of African Americans, and appealing to racism using code phrases such as “law and order” and “reverse discrimination.”

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

The Ultra-Right

The first tendency represents the most reactionary section of the transnationals. It took over the Republican Party and in 1980 elected Ronald Reagan and then in 1988 George H. W. Bush as President. In the 1970s and dramatically escalating following the election of Reagan, the U.S. government increased the U.S. military build-up. Across the “mainstream” political spectrum, among most Republican and Democratic elected officials, support for capitalist globalization led to the implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the WTO, and other international trade agreements and organizations, and to increased outsourcing of union manufacturing jobs. It attacked the very existence of unions and bargaining rights, imposed tax cuts for the rich, cut social programs, demonized foreign opponents of the U.S., covertly funded the right-wing-initiated civil war in Nicaragua, and gave weapons to the Saddam Hussein dictatorship in Iraq. They picked small countries to invade, including Panama and Grenada, testing new military equipment and strategy, and breaking down resistance at home and abroad to U.S. military invasion as a policy option.

While the ultra-right suffered some setbacks during the Clinton years, it did not receive a major lasting rebuff. The election of Clinton led the ultra-right to step up attacks on Democrats, liberals, and all social programs, and to intensify their efforts in a vast right-wing conspiracy. With the elevation to the Presidency of George W. Bush in 2000, this ultra-right trend took an even further turn to the right, winning a Republican majority in both houses of Congress for the first time since 1952.

The ultra-right is dominated by the most reactionary sectors of the transnational monopolies. The ultra-right includes the military-industrial complex, the oil and energy industries, and the pharmaceuticals. It also includes sections of the high tech industry, finance capital, and massive manufacturing and distributive giants, such as Wal-Mart. The ultra-right includes the so-called “neo-conservatives,” social and fiscal conservatives, religious fundamentalists,

nativists, libertarians, and other right-wing trends. The ultra-right also includes sections of the urban and rural middle strata: farmers, large and small business people, as well as small sections of most class and social forces. The mass aspect of the ultra-right movement tends to be located more in the suburbs and exurbs, and in small cities and towns especially in the West, Midwest, and South. The ultra-right incorporates various social and political tendencies, and has achieved a mass base among sections of different class and social forces which, often against their own interests, currently support ultra-right candidates.

Alongside the difficulties of U.S. capitalism giving rise to a turn to the right of a major section of monopoly capital, the demise of the Soviet Union presented a new opportunity to the neo-conservatives and other conservative world strategists to implement their aspirations for renewed world dominance.

Domestically, their policies are openly anti-union and anti-worker and diligently promote the interests of the biggest transnationals and the wealthy, especially the most reactionary sectors, through further tax cuts and giveaways. Concurrently, the ultra-right attacks the social safety net won in the Roosevelt New Deal and since—such measures as Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, the Food Stamp program, Head Start, and environmental protections. To keep working people divided and to divide them still further, the ultra-right opposes affirmative action and has shredded the social safety net in ways that have a disproportionate affect on women and people of color and fostered police profiling and brutality.

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

The logic of these domestic and international policies is the need to undermine democratic rights in the U.S. to prevent serious opposition and electoral defeat for the ultra-right. The current success of the right wing in the electoral arena is not just the replacement of one set of politicians by another, but is a grab for control by one section of the capitalist class over all others and over the whole of society. The present ultra-right government is not an ordinary

bourgeois-democratic regime. It has a conservative-authoritarian nature, which rather than seeking to unite the capitalist class through compromise, instead seeks to dominate less militaristic sections of the capitalist class. They target other sections of capital along with working-class and people's forces in an attempt to impose the most reactionary policies on all politicians and the corporate forces they represent. The current ultra-right conservative-authoritarian policies, which chip away at democratic and constitutional rights, escalate the danger of fascism. We shouldn't overstate the fascist danger—fascism is the open terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, militarist, racist section of monopoly capital. Fascism is not inevitable, but the working class and allied forces will not be able to prevent the ultra-right section of the capitalist class from moving further towards fascism unless we combat pressures and structural changes in that direction now.

Determined to use the overwhelming military power of the United States, neo-conservative doctrine claims the right to dominate the world for U.S. capitalist economic and political-military interests. It uses the phony rationalization of spreading its own reactionary concepts of "freedom and democracy," meaning freedom for the corporations and democracy for the few. It claims the moral right to attack any country it wants, to conduct war without end until it succeeds everywhere, and even to use "tactical" nuclear weapons and militarize space. Whoever does not support the U.S. policy is condemned as an opponent. Whenever international organizations, such as the United Nations, do not support U.S. government policies, they are reluctantly tolerated until the U.S. government is able to subordinate or ignore them.

Utilizing the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, as a smokescreen, constitutional rights of free speech and assembly have been curtailed, and police powers and control of the media have accelerated. An extremely dangerous success for the neo-conservatives was a revamped National Security Strategy based on their first-strike, pre-emptive war, imperialist objectives.

Dominance by the ultra-right means constant attempts to eliminate measures that fight racism and overcome its effects. The ultra-right's open and covert uses of racism divide and weaken its opposition. It means an increase in the repressive power of the police and their racist practices. It means continual and increasing restrictions on democratic rights, including the right to vote. It demagogically uses right-wing religious prejudices and works to eliminate separation of church and state. It means a growth of military spending and of the military-industrial complex. It means a growth of nationalist ideology, jingoism, and xenophobia. It publicly declares "big government" the enemy of individual freedom and prosperity and dismantles social welfare programs in the name of

“fiscal responsibility.” At the same time, it boosts military spending drastically, cuts taxes on the rich, and provides billions in corporate welfare. This is financed by the biggest federal deficits ever, exhibiting the greatest fiscal irresponsibility.

Sharp turns in events and the activities of the democratic forces can seriously undermine the mass base of the ultra-right by exposing its real intentions and role. Most of ultra-right’s mass base is unaware of the real, complete program of the ultra-right. To pursue their aims, Bush and the most reactionary transnationals seek to maintain a mass base of support in order to hold governmental power and sustain the illusion of legitimacy.

One of their main efforts to shore up their support is their appeal to the Christian Right. This appeal has been based on a false championing of “family values” and “human life.” In reality they oppose women’s reproductive rights, attack the civil liberties of the LGBT community, oppose all affirmative action to move towards equality of the racially and nationally oppressed and women, attack all social welfare programs, and seek to undermine the separation of church and state. At the same time, they set records for immorality by repeatedly lying to the entire country and needlessly killing and maiming tens of thousands of people in pursuit of their imperialist designs.

So far, the ultra-right has been successful in establishing a mass base among large sections of Christian fundamentalists despite the reality that most members of such organizations have real material interests in opposing the basic program of reaction.

Other sections of major religious denominations oppose the direction of the ultra-right, supporting peace and democracy because of their moral beliefs and religious values. Millions of believers often vote against and actively fight the program of the ultra-right. This tendency is growing. Among the religious forces weighing in on the side of democratic struggle are the predominant church forces in the African American communities, continuing a long tradition growing out of opposition to slavery. But even here, the ultra-right actively seeks to co-opt these churches for reactionary purposes.

The ultra-right claims its international policies and increasing limitation on democratic rights at home are part of a necessary, unavoidable, unending “war on terrorism.” The ultra-right section of U.S. imperialism, represented by the Bush administration, has used the terrorist danger to justify its attempts to dictate to the world and as a weapon to beat down internal opposition. It is primarily working people, in our country and around the world, who have been the victims of terrorist attacks, including the September 11 attacks. The Bush administration uses 9/11 as a smokescreen for its real policies; constitutional rights of free speech and assembly have been curtailed and police

powers, control of the media, and surveillance of legal opposition movements have accelerated. The forces of reaction declare “big government” the enemy of individual freedom and prosperity at the same time it is increasing government powers and curtailing democratic rights.

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

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

In fact, imperialism has been a chief supporter of terrorism, both by individuals and small group actors and by states, to promote its global agenda. The targeting of civilians for military attack is just as much terrorism as an individual act of violence. U.S. imperialism’s role in promoting Osama bin Laden, state and corporate sponsored terror in Colombia, and the terror-based regimes of Gen. Pinochet, Saddam Hussein, and many others are well known. The U.S. supports the Government of Israel in its use of state military terrorism against the Palestinian Arab population of the occupied territories. U.S. imperialism has also supported, employed, and harbored terrorists, using such methods as bombing civilian airplanes, in an effort to destroy Cuba’s socialist state.

The ultra-right in the U.S. justifies its terrorist aggression and interference in many countries under the banner of “freedom” for all peoples. It claims that when all countries have freedom, the result will be world peace. It is not hard for people around the world to understand that the United States has no right to define freedom for them, nor to impose capitalist austerity measures to guarantee the “freedom” of capitalist investment and transnational domination, nor to impose any form of government against the will of the majority of people of a country.

Freedom is the right of the majority to determine the conditions of their own lives and to decide for themselves the policies and forms of their government. Freedom is of great importance to Communists. But freedom has different class and social content for different classes and social forces. The “freedom” to exploit is not freedom for the exploited. The ultra-right in the U.S. holds up the banner of “individual freedom” to justify its militaristic foreign policy and its pro-corporate attack on social programs, rights, and protections, and on people’s organizations and movements at home. Defeating the ultra-right

will expand the freedom of working people. Radically curbing the power of the transnationals will expand freedom for working people even more.

Defeating terrorism requires isolating these extremists and reactionaries from any mass support. That cannot be accomplished by police and military methods. It requires removing and solving real grievances of poverty and hunger, national oppression, and other injustices around the world. Only international solidarity, ending imperialist domination, and genuine economic and social assistance to developing nations can put an end to terrorism.

The policies of the ultra-right endanger the working class and its core allies—racially and nationally oppressed peoples, women, and youth. The working class is a particular target of the ultra-right offensive, with attacks on existing pensions and benefits, imposition of two-tier wage systems, attacks on union participation in elections, campaigns for more states to adopt “right-to-work” anti-labor legislation, presidential decrees against the right of hundreds of thousands of federal workers to unionize, Bush administration support for industries where workers are on strike, and similar anti-union measures. Similarly, Bush is pushing not only for the privatization of Social Security but also schools, prisons, and other governmental services.

The More Realistic Trend

The other tendency to emerge is that largely associated with the national Democratic Party leadership. It is willing to make some concessions to the Democratic Party’s mass base among labor and the nationally oppressed and women in order to ameliorate social discontent. It generally advocates a less unilateral, less arrogant policy in relation to both the world and domestic social forces. In pursuit of their particular imperialist interests, this sector of transnational capital and its political representatives are significantly more reluctant to use military force until other means are exhausted. They see a greater role for the United Nations and other international bodies. Domestically they see a continued need for economic regulation and social welfare programs to keep social peace and avoid the extremes of destructive capitalist competitiveness.

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

While the Democratic and Republican Parties are both capitalist institutions, they are not identical. The ultra-right currently dominates the Republican Party. The Democratic Party is not only its national leadership; it has been the main mechanism used by African American and Latino communities to gain representation, as well as the main mechanism used to elect labor, progressive, and even Left activists to public office, especially at the local level. There exists an internal struggle within the Democratic Party between centrist forces who collaborate with the right wing, and centrist forces opposed to the right wing. Those opposed to the right wing are often willing to align with progressive elements that seek to defeat the program of the ultra-right. There are struggles within both the Democratic Party and within the labor and people's movements that are reflective of the overall struggle to gain political independence from corporate dominance. Any serious strategy that hopes to win millions of people to a more advanced political program must relate to these struggles.

Defeating the Ultra-Right

The only strategy capable of defeating the ultra-right is the widest possible unity of all the class and social forces whose interests run counter to those of the most reactionary section of the transnationals. Such an all-inclusive coalition would need to be led by labor and the working class in close alliance with the nationally and racially oppressed, women, and youth. It should include seniors, family farmers, the LGBT community, professionals and the self-employed, small business owners, and the disabled—everyone except the most reactionary section of transnational capital. This unity will include an ever-growing Left-Center political coalition that includes the Democratic Party, left and progressive independents who recognize the danger the ultra-right poses, and all social movements on the major issues of our day. This all-people's front should strive to, and be able to, attract many who voted Republican in the past.

The struggle to defeat the ultra-right is a democratic struggle that advances the class struggle and that has the potential to shift the balance of forces in a direction more favorable for winning working class victories and for mounting offensive struggles.

The struggle against the ultra-right, against the most reactionary sector of the transnationals, and for achieving a defeat of its political power is of great significance. However, such a defeat alone will not end the ultra-right danger. There will still be the danger that the most extreme reactionaries, militarists, and racists in our country will seek to impose fascism—an open terrorist

dictatorship of big capital. Only the replacement of capitalism—which gives birth to these political trends—by socialism can finally do away with the ultra-right threat.

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

A major, lasting rebuff to the ultra-right, rendered by the all-people's front, will represent a qualitative change in the domestic balance of forces. It will make possible a new stage of struggle in our country. More important than the specific defeat of the ultra-right will be the growing unity of labor-led mass movements that makes such a defeat of ultra-right politics possible.

The ultra-right promotes anti-democratic electoral methods. Manipulation of the political process—including racist vote suppression, extreme partisan redistricting, and use of electronic voting machines with no paper trail for recounts—shows that the right to vote and to have every vote count has yet to be achieved. Major reforms, such as proportional representation, abolition of the Electoral College, and elimination of barriers to ballot access for minor parties, are needed to guarantee basic democratic voting rights.

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

The labor movement has made significant shifts in its organization and outlook, and now leads many coalitions for progress and change, and leads defensive struggles against the attacks of the corporations and the ultra-right. Labor's intensified participation in electoral struggles has resulted in the election of thousands of union members to office, the creation and development of labor's own independent political apparatus, and better communication with, education of, and mobilization of union membership. Increased efforts to organize workers, to build relationships with allies, and to fight in the political arena have

made labor the key element of most major progressive coalitions and election campaigns. The struggle for the unity of the labor movement on issues must be the foundation on which the broadest coalition can be built.

The labor movement has played a leadership role in building an independent, issue-based worker-to-worker political apparatus since the mid-1990s. This workplace and neighborhood outreach, which mobilized a quarter-million union members in the 2004 presidential election, is the foundation for year-round organizing and is key to electing union activists to public office. Similar issue-based door-to-door grassroots efforts by African American, Latino, Asian American, women's, youth, gay and lesbian, and environmental organizations strengthen the voice and power of the Left within the all-people's front against the ultra-right. Even with ultra-right control of the Federal government, people's legislative victories, such as increasing the minimum wage, can be won on an issue-by-issue basis locally, statewide, and even nationally.

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

The Communist Party, as part of the developing all-peoples front to defeat the ultra-right, participates fully with the labor movement and its allies in building a strong people's electoral force.

The Communist Party's approach to people's electoral politics is a basic aspect of our view that the current stage of struggle requires an all-people's front to defeat the ultra-right. This is essential strategy for this historical period, not just a temporary shift in tactics. Ultra-right political dominance challenges the vast majority of people in this country—even including some sectors of monopoly capital—and very broad unity is both possible and necessary to bring about a major political shift. Without this shift, the people's movements will be continually on the defensive. Without building this broad unity, the ultra-right will succeed in splitting their opposition, will continue to succeed in setting the priorities and agenda for the nation, and will risk ever-greater military adventurism in pursuit of an illusory global dominance. Without first defeating the ultra-right section of monopoly, the working class and its allies cannot proceed to radically curb the power of the monopolies as a whole.

Our Party makes important contributions to the struggle to defeat the ultra-right. Communists clarify who the main enemy in this period is, what the class and political nature of the main enemy is, and the need for an all-people's front. Communists help to unite the core forces of the alliance around the labor movement, and bring a high level of commitment, devotion, and activity to the struggle. The Communist Party is increasingly recognized for these contributions. The main limitation on our role has been the small size of the Party. We work to build grassroots Party clubs to expand our independent base in the working class and to expand our ability to directly mobilize workers in workplaces and neighborhoods. Communist candidates at the local and state levels are vital to building unity in the people's movement, strengthening the Left, and to organizing a strong grassroots base for a more advanced program.

In the course of its participation in anti-ultra-right struggles, the Party agitates and helps prepare for the next phase of struggle, the building of an anti-monopoly people's party, all the while educating and advocating for socialism.

Analyzing the objective stages of struggle is essential to developing correct long-term strategy; it is not a mechanical prescription. These are stages of struggle, not stages of social development from one socio-economic system to another. The social system remains capitalism through both the anti-ultra-right and anti-monopoly stages of struggle. There is no firm, complete barrier between these stages of struggle. In the current stage of struggle, while making the most reactionary sector of the transnationals the main opponent and developing an anti-ultra-right consciousness, Communists seek to spread general anti-monopoly consciousness and socialist consciousness and to wage specific anti-monopoly struggles. While the ultra-right is the focus of the overall struggle, a transnational not part of the ultra-right may be the opponent in a political fight or a labor contract or strike struggle.

Some demands and victories that begin to curb the power of monopoly as a whole may be won in part or in whole in the course of the struggle against its ultra-right section. Some essential people's demands may not be won completely or at all in the anti-monopoly stage and may have to await the succeeding stage of working people's power and the construction of a socialist society. It is not the specific demands but rather the strategy of that particular period of struggle and the level of unity that develops which are the most crucial factors in defining the stage of struggle. The shift between stages is not a mechanical calculation but rather is based on a changed balance of forces—when the people's forces gain strength and unity sufficient to administer significant defeats to the ultra-right, sufficient to decisively shift the balance of forces, advancing to the anti-monopoly stage becomes possible.

5

BUILDING THE ANTI-MONOPOLY COALITION

U.S. capitalism is presently in the monopoly capitalist, imperialist stage of development, and in the transnational monopoly phase of that stage. Once the most reactionary ultra-right transnationals, who dominate political life today, receive a major defeat, it will be both necessary and possible to take on the transnationals as a whole; it will be possible to move on to the anti-monopoly stage of struggle. Building an anti-monopoly coalition is the next key step in the road to socialism in the U.S.

The stage of radically curbing the power of monopoly as a whole will be more advanced than the current stage of struggle against the ultra-right. In the anti-monopoly coalition period, the people's democratic forces will take on the transnational monopolies as a whole, not only their most reactionary sector.

In that future period, the strategic aim will be to radically curb the power of the transnational monopolies as a whole over the political, economic and ideological life of our country. To advance a serious effort to curb that power to a substantial extent will require a broad coalition of all class and social forces whose actual interests conflict with those of the monopolies. It will need to embrace all the social movements and political tendencies who oppose these transnationals on some or many issues.

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

The core of this coalition must include our multi-national, male-female working class and its organized sector—the labor movement, the African American people as a whole as well as Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, other Latino peoples, Native Americans, Asians and Pacific Islanders, and all other nationally and racially oppressed peoples, as well as women and youth. It is also possible to win other social forces whose interests clash with those of the monopolies, including people such as seniors, members of the LGBT community, the disabled, small business owners, family farmers, and self-employed professionals, as well as multi-class social movements such as peace, environmental, health care, education, housing, and others. All share with the working class the common enemy of monopoly power. All have a stake in radically curbing the power of monopolies and in seeking to win an anti-monopoly government.

An Anti-Monopoly Program

At a future stage of struggle when the anti-monopoly people's coalition is growing and strong, that coalition will put forward a program of public policies and government practices. Struggles on many of these issues have already begun, and some may have won important victories in an earlier stage of struggle, which a developed anti-monopoly program will build on. As part of that coalition, the Communist Party will propose radical democratic demands aimed at curbing the political, economic, and ideological power of the monopolies. Our suggestions will include (unless they are already won at an earlier stage):

- *The building of a mass people's party capable of contending for governmental power, a party free of domination by any monopoly interests;*
- *Removal from the electoral system of the financial contributions of monopolies, to be replaced by public funding and guarantees of honest elections where each vote counts and all votes are counted;*
- *Replacing the foreign policy of preemptive strikes and dictating to the world in the interests of U.S.-based transnationals with a policy of international cooperation to solve problems of war and aggression, poverty, education, environment, health, and development;*
- *Full restoration and expansion of the Bill of Rights and all democratic rights; the complete separation of church and state;*
- *Full legal protection from hate crimes and racial profiling, and the outlawing of oral and written racist propaganda;*
- *Implementation of affirmative action and compensatory programs to achieve actual equality for the racially and nationally oppressed and women;*
- *Prevention of the "freedom" of monopolies to move assets in ways that harm workers and communities without full compensation; the guaranteed right to a job at living wages or full income through public works and public service jobs; the growth of public ownership of industries;*
- *Elimination of management prerogatives coupled with the expansion of workers and union rights to prevent socially harmful management decisions;*
- *Full funding for education, affordable housing programs, day care, Social Security, a universal health care program, youth job training and recreation programs, and cultural programs;*
- *Creation of a social fund starting at \$200 billion to make up for past and continuing wrongs and to help achieve equality in facilities and infrastructure for communities of the racially and nationally oppressed;*
- *No taxes for workers and low and middle income people; progressive taxation of the wealthy and private corporations;*
- *Military budget slashed to a fraction of current spending; and,*
- *All media to be free of monopoly ownership.*

A Labor-led People's Party

Currently, the organizational forms of political and electoral independence for the working class and its allies mainly utilizes support for candidates who utilize the Democratic line to run for office. Despite the variety

of new political forms and experiences of the labor and people's movements, the difficulties placed on organizing successful "third" parties remain a barrier to fully developing a political party free from control of the monopolies. Restrictions on full democracy, such as excessive signature requirements for candidates, big money for advertising, and other obstacles, need to be eliminated in order to allow the fullest democratic participation of all people.

The forms of political and organizational independence that are currently developing towards a mass people's party include:

- *labor's independent electoral apparatus;*
- *independent election financing;*
- *labor candidates;*
- *independent electoral apparatus in the African American community and other oppressed communities;*
- *progressive get-out-the-vote and voter registration campaigns;*
- *the growth of Internet-based activist networks;*
- *organizations of voters partisan to specific people's issues;*
- *movements running on the Democratic line, or on two lines, or as independents;*
- *Communists running for office—as Communists or as independents, for non-partisan offices, or as part of progressive slates; and*
- *organizational forms that provide unity among these different forces and movements.*

Independent election tickets and parties, when they support the current central objective of defeating the ultra-right and do not weaken that effort, are also part of the process that objectively prepares the ground for a powerful people's anti-monopoly party in the future.

The process of developing a national mass people's party based on the working class, the nationally oppressed, women, youth, and other progressive forces cannot mature until the anti-monopoly stage of struggle. During the current stage of struggle against the ultra-right, the strategy to win necessarily includes a section of the transnationals and the Democratic Party, in whose national leadership certain transnationals and some of the rich play a big role. In the anti-monopoly stage, a party capable of challenging for governmental power can and must be free of domination by any sector of monopoly. It must be a party in which labor and the other core forces play the leading role, acting in alliance with all working people and progressive social movements.

The struggle for a program of demands to radically curb the power of the transnationals will take place both through a people's party and through non-electoral forms at all levels—workplace grassroots forms and neighborhood, city, state, and national coalitions. These organizational forms of struggle can gradually coalesce into on-going multi-issue coalitions and a general anti-monopoly front of struggle. The methods of struggle engaged in by such a mass upsurge may include demonstrations, petitioning, picketing, boycotts, civil disobedience, and strikes, mass strikes and general strikes, in addition to electoral struggle.

It is possible and desirable that a people's party and anti-monopoly coalition win governmental control at local, city, state, and even the national level. The goal of this governmental participation is to implement those parts of the program of demands not already won through mass struggle.

Curbing the power of the monopolies weakens capitalism as a whole. The building of a people's party and the general anti-monopoly coalition shifts the balance of forces incrementally toward the qualitative change that opens the direct struggle for working people's power and socialism.

The Left in the Anti-Monopoly Coalition

Further conditions for the growth of an anti-monopoly coalition and a people's party capable of competing for governmental power are the growth of the Left, of a socialist-minded current, and of a mass Communist Party. A large and growing Left within all the class and social forces and social movements is essential to help keep the grand anti-monopoly coalition unified and moving forward. A much larger Left will help all democratic anti-monopoly forces focus on the transnational monopolies as the main enemy and will help assure a leading role of the multiracial, multinational working class in close alliance with all nationally and racially oppressed peoples, women, and youth. A mass Communist Party is simultaneously a necessary condition for an anti-monopoly coalition to develop, for overcoming obstacles placed by the transnationals and difficulties internal to the coalition, and for moving ahead to a coalition of working people's power led by the working class. The contribution of the Communist Party will help assure that the anti-monopoly coalition moves on to seeking an end to capitalism itself and the construction of socialism.

It is not possible to predict to what extent an anti-monopoly people's coalition and government will implement its radical anti-monopoly program before the lesson is learned by the millions that winning radical anti-monopoly reforms is not enough. So long as the capitalists and trans-

nationals own the means of production and are able to command political and economic power, big new social problems will emerge and old ones can be reintroduced in new forms. A full, lasting solution to modern social problems requires socialism, starting with social ownership of the key major sectors of the economy and working people's democratic power led by the working class.

The wider and deeper the unity of the anti-monopoly coalition, the more the working class and its key allies lead it, the stronger the Left and socialist-oriented sector of it are, and the bigger and more influential a mass Communist Party, the more the power of the transnationals will be curbed by radical measures, which will make easier, surer, and less painful the move to the next stage of social struggle, the socialist phase of U.S. history. This move to a new stage is made possible by a change to political power of working people led by the working class.

The more these things are accomplished the more likely it is that a transition can be accomplished without the capitalists being able to use violence to block the building of socialism. The Communist Party believes it is possible to win a peaceful transition to socialism in the U.S.

One of the major reasons for such confidence is that the working people's anti-monopoly coalition can be built on an even broader basis than the coalition against the ultra-right. It will involve an overwhelming majority of people who have learned from their experience of struggle that capitalism cannot be reformed, cannot overcome its basic anti-human qualities, and that broad unity results in people's victories. Capitalism will always and increasingly endanger life on this planet and undermine the highest ideals and needs of humankind. Capitalism will always be based on economic exploitation. Therefore, even though the coalition of working people's power and for socialism will not include any section of the monopoly capitalist class, it can be broader and deeper than all previous political coalitions of the working class and its allies, embracing in active struggle for progress nearly the entire population of each of its class, social force, and social movement components.

The Immediate Transition to Working People's Power

The Communist Party seeks a fundamental transformation of the economy, of the way decisions are made, and of the institutions that enforce discrimination, exploitation, and oppression. We pursue the replacement of the ruling class domination of society with a system of working people's power led by the working class. We think this can only be accomplished by a revolutionary movement that is embraced by a vast majority of the people of our country.

Winning such power will require a grand coalition led by the working class, in close alliance with the racially and nationally oppressed, women, and youth. Also essential to that grand coalition are all working people, such as seniors, small farmers, professionals, small business people, the LGBT community, and the disabled, as well as all of the social justice issue movements, such as the peace, environmental, progressive-minded religious and cultural movements, and all who seek a more just, more equitable society.

A mass Communist Party based on the working class, and probably other left parties for socialism, will be crucial elements for building such a grand coalition. Because of the power of the capitalist class, because of the dominant role of capitalist ideology in the media and educational systems, because of the divisions created and fostered by the agents of the capitalist class, the next major social transformation, the transition to socialism, requires a class-conscious force. Revolutionaries must be steeled in the battles of the working class for better wages and working conditions, tested in building alliances between workers and all oppressed peoples, and consistent in battling real and perceived divisions between younger and older workers, between union leaders and community activists, and between male and female, and involved with a working class which is class conscious as a whole.

We see revolution as a profoundly democratic process, one that involves the actions and decisions of the vast majority. We reject all approaches that welcome and seek violent action. We fight for and commit ourselves to building enough unity to win socialism peacefully, though we recognize that the ruling class may initiate violence against progressive and radical movements in an attempt to maintain their power. We have no illusions that the capitalists will willingly give up power and control, unless they have no alternative, no possibility of successfully stopping social transformation by initiating capitalist class-led violence. Working class power comes from the united action of tens of millions of workers and from their commitment to end exploitation and oppression. Anything short of that will be unable to succeed in bringing about a fundamental transformation of the social system and in redirecting priorities to solve people's needs, both short and long term.

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

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

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

6

BILL OF RIGHTS SOCIALISM IN THE USA

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

The Communist Party seeks to build socialism in the United States based on the revolutionary traditions and struggles of the people of our country. From before the start of the American Revolution up to today, workers, low-income people, and their allies have struggled to create and extend democracy.

Our vision is one of Bill of Rights Socialism, where people and nature come before profit. Our vision is of a country where all can participate, no matter what their religion, race, or nationality; where immigrants have the same human rights as the native-born; where the strength of our multinational, multiracial, multigenerational working class can solve the problems we face in the interests of all people; where creating a sustainable economy takes priority over profits; where the supposed “right” of companies to pollute is eliminated; where women have full rights and actual guaranteed equality; where all ethnic, national, and racial groups have full guaranteed equality and civil rights, implemented through a crash program of compensatory measures; and where fully funded quality education and programs for children are the highest priority.

Bill of Rights Socialism would maintain and extend democratic rights in the U.S.—the rights to free speech, to free assembly, to freedom of religion, to a secular government, to be free from corporate domination, and to be free of unwarranted government intervention in the lives of individuals.

A socialist United States will guarantee all the freedoms we have won over centuries of struggle, and also extend the Bill of Rights to include freedom from unemployment, from poverty, from illiteracy, and from discrimination and oppression. Socialism will guarantee the right to vote, to health care, to a job at a living wage, to decent housing. With socialism, pensions and social programs take priority over new weapons systems that protect only the profits of the “defense” industry. Socialism will bring a peaceful foreign policy that will not threaten other peoples or countries with invasion, domination, or war. Essential to achieving and maintaining socialism is a fight from the start for the complete elimination of all forms of special oppression.

Socialism would not create an instant worker’s paradise. Socialism, rather, is a phase of social-economic development during which millions of people increasingly decide their own destiny and work step-by-step to build new democratic institutions to run the economy. Socialism would provide mechanisms by which working people can all work together cooperatively to extend political democracy into substantive democracy in all spheres of social life including the economy.

Many details of the constructing of socialism will of necessity depend on the specifics of the socialist transformation, on the politics of the time, and on the wishes and demands of the majority. We can, however, predict some basic aspects with certainty. Socialism would bring social ownership of the “commanding heights” of the economy—the major industrial firms, the transnational corporations, banks and other financial institutions, the energy industry, much of the national distribution system, and the health care system—and run

them as public utilities, with publicly elected boards, responsible to and for the public good, and for long-term economic and environmental sustainability. Public programs for free health care, free education through the college level, combating illiteracy, ending malnutrition, and guaranteeing jobs would be built.

Bill of Rights Socialism would guarantee freedom of religion and separation of church and state. People of faith and religious organizations participate in all struggles for social justice, peace, and equality, up to and including socialism. The high moral standards and progressive social activism encouraged by major sections of most religious traditions bring important moral elements to struggles for justice.

Socialism is an economic system where from the beginning the decisive sectors of the economy—its “commanding heights”—are socially owned and controlled, where the anarchy and destructive competition of capitalism are replaced by a strategically planned economy. It is also a political system where working people led by the working class are the dominant political force. Socialism doesn’t only mean nationalization of key industries. There will be many forms of socialist ownership: public ownership at many different levels from national to state to municipalities, private ownership of small businesses, joint ownership of cooperatives, and other “mixed economy” forms that best fit production and social needs. And of course every individual will privately own his or her personal possessions and property.

Socialism will not only eliminate the waste of the capitalist system and the private appropriation of profit. A socialist economy must tackle issues of incentives, productivity, technological change, research and development, sustainability, and the organization of production and distribution to make the economy more effective and efficient, in order to make possible the material benefits of socialism. Capitalism uses technological improvements to further exploit the working class; socialism uses technological improvements and increases in productivity to fund social programs, to shorten the workweek, and to provide free health and education. Socialism is not a utopian system, but bases social programs on the achievements of social production.

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

The people of our country have the potential to eliminate the greedy corporations that doom working people to poverty, to speed-up, to plant closings and the export of jobs, and to wage differentials between men and women workers and between racially and nationally oppressed workers and white workers, wage

differentials that place hundreds of billions of dollars of excess profits every year in the coffers of the already obscenely wealthy. The people can thwart the power of corporations that dooms working people to elections where money speaks louder than votes, to a court system that protects the “rights” of private property over the basic human rights of the majority, and to homelessness, malnutrition, and lack of health care.

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

Society and government should have the responsibility to steadily improve the lives of the majority. Government and the people should measure progress by the improvements in human rights and justice, in living standards, in real equality, in environmental sustainability. Should the governing coalition of class and social forces led by the working class make substantial mistakes and lose the confidence of the majority of people, it could be voted out of office. The Communist Party will work hard to keep this from happening, both by working to keep the confidence of the working class and by working to win contested elections.

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

- *Consider which aspects of production and distribution will be socially owned and how;*
- *Strive for strategic planning which maintains necessary balances in the economy between the production of goods and commodities, heavy industry, and the production of machinery;*
- *Seek the proper combination of material and moral incentives at all levels of the economy—from the individual worker and work collectives in specific industries through city, state, regional, and national levels;*
- *According to circumstance, this may include market mechanisms in combination with strategic planning and regulation;*
- *Seek mechanisms for the daily functioning of the economy such that the quality, variety, flexibility, and efficiency of production are constantly increased.*

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

Many myths have been propagated about socialism. Contrary to right-wing claims, socialism would not take away the personal private property of workers, only the private ownership of major industries, financial institutions, and other large corporations, and the excessive luxuries of the super-rich. Socialism would not make all wages completely equal—socialism would end the great disparity in income between workers and the former ruling class, whose wealth is unearned, eliminating private wealth from stock speculation, from private ownership of large corporations, from the export of capital and jobs, and from the exploitation of large numbers of workers. At the same time, workers would be paid according to their contribution in quantity and quality of work. Socialism would not do away with small businesses or family farms. Small business owners, professionals, and farmers, who currently suffer from the heavy hand of monopoly, are important potential allies of the progressive majority even after the advent of socialism.

In recent decades there are two major reasons why socialism has become even more imperative for the survival of the human race. One is the development of nuclear, chemical, space-based, and biological weapons, which threaten the very existence of humanity. The war-oriented ultra-right could drive the world to the brink of destruction or even over the brink. This danger, new to the history of the world since the 1940s, dramatically escalates the dangers of war, already a horrendous and destructive force. For our very survival, we need a world in which the arms trade is curtailed and then eliminated, in which nuclear proliferation is blunted by the complete destruction of all nuclear weapons, and in which all chemical and biological weapons are destroyed. We need all nations to pledge no first-use of nuclear weapons, no preemptive nuclear war, and no extension of the arms race into space. A socialist world, in which the economic incentives for war would be eliminated, is humankind's great hope for peace and survival.

The other development is the threat to the world's environment. Tackling the solutions to air pollution, water pollution, the depletion of the ozone layer, global warming, and other environmental crises will require the combined cooperation, scientific knowledge, and research resources of all countries in the world. Any unilateral attempts to address major environmental problems are doomed to failure. The forces of nature, the laws of nature, cannot be violated without paying a heavy cost, and if the violations are serious enough, this could threaten our very existence as a species, even threaten our planet's ability to reproduce life as we know it.

Many environmental problems are rapidly approaching a turning point after which the ability of nature to regenerate and overcome problems will be forever altered. The system of capitalism, while not the sole cause of environmental problems, exacerbates and escalates these threats. For this reason too, our survival depends on establishing a system which places human needs ahead of private profit, which enables the working people of the world to together make decisions about the threats to our survival, and which takes away the ability of capitalists to make short-term profit-based decisions which threaten our long-term survival.

Communists advocate socialism as the first phase of a new stage of society, but we don't think that social and economic development will end at socialism. We see socialist society eventually leading to a higher phase—communism—where the capitalist class and all classes will have disappeared, replaced by a commonwealth of all working people, and where national and racial enmity and prejudice will be things of the past. In communist society, the essentials of life will be plentiful and readily available to all, and the repressive apparatus of government will wither away leaving purely administrative functions. In the communist phase of society, social production and distribution of wealth would be according to the principals of the motto, "From each according to their ability, to each according to their need." In the Communist Manifesto, Marx and Engels wrote, "In place of the old bourgeois [capitalist] society, with its classes and class antagonisms, we shall have an association in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all."

However, we have epic struggles ahead of us that we must first win before building a communist society. We need an organization that identifies these stages, alliances, and their interconnections.

7

THE ROLE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

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

The working class needs its own political party, a party dedicated to the interests of the whole class, dedicated to the long-term vision necessary for winning fundamental changes, dedicated not to an abstract ideal but to the people who make up the working class and their real

struggles. Even when a labor-based anti-monopoly people's party is built, the working class still needs a revolutionary party which can project strategy for the future, for socialism, more clearly and consistently than a coalition electoral party. We recognize that victory relies not on slogans, gimmicks, or conspiracies, but on the understanding of millions won in hard struggles over real issues, an understanding that grows into full class and socialist consciousness. Such consciousness cannot develop as a result of spontaneous struggle alone, but must be combined with explicitly Marxist-Leninist organization and education, tested and proved in struggle.

The Communist Party fights the abuses of the capitalist class by organizing at the grassroots and in broad coalitions for immediate needs. We expose the capitalist system as the root cause of poverty, racism, war, and human suffering and point the way to socialism as a fundamental solution. We provide timely analysis of problems in mass movements in a way that illuminates the path to the deepest, widest unity for progress. Our theory and analysis contribute to winning immediate reforms, and contribute to the creation of a new system based on people's needs rather than private profit.

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

The role of the Communist Party is to guide the struggle of the working class to its ultimate aim of winning working class political power and socialism. In the stages of struggle that lead to that ultimate aim, the Communist Party combines political, economic, organizational, and ideological struggle, the exact nature of which changes along with changes in the struggles and in the balance of power. The role of the Party during each stage of struggle leading up to socialism is to combine participation with the millions in struggles where they are at, agitation for the next phase of struggle, and propaganda for socialism, linking activism in the struggles of the present with preparation for the struggles of the future.

At the current stage of struggle, our role is to contribute toward building the broadest all-people's front to defeat the ultra-right assault against the labor movement, the working class, racially and nationally oppressed people, women, youth, seniors, the environment, and democracy. We help identify for millions that the main enemy of progress is the most reactionary section of the transnationals, working to unite in action the leading role of the labor movement and the whole working class, in close alliance with the racially and nationally oppressed, women, and youth. That unity is broadened by uniting with other class and social forces, social movements, and political tendencies. This

coalition seeks parallel action when possible with the more moderate and realistic section of the transnationals. The Party works to overcome all ideological and political obstacles to this essential broad unity, and works to build a much larger Communist Party.

When the strategic goal of a major defeat for the ultra-right has been achieved, shifting the balance of forces, the focus of the class and democratic struggles shifts to the goal of radically curbing the power of the transnationals as a whole. In this stage, the entire transnational capitalist class is the main enemy, and all sections of transnational capitalism are opponents. This coalition will work to build a mass people's party free from any domination by any monopolies, which has the goal of winning a government free of monopoly control. The Party will work to achieve mass size and influence as part of building this advanced anti-monopoly level of struggle. The Party, helping prepare for the next phase of struggle, will conduct wider agitation and propaganda for socialism.

To advance to the immediate struggle for working people's political power and the construction of socialism, the Party will seek to become the leading force or one of the leading forces among the working class and its core allies. The strategic opponent in this stage becomes the capitalist class as a whole and the system of capitalism. The alliance for socialism will have to embrace a large majority of the labor movement and the whole working class, who will have developed through their own experience of struggle, and through the activity of the Communist Party, clear class and socialist consciousness. The Party's role will include agitation and propaganda for a fully developed socialist society on the way to communism.

The Communist Party makes unique contributions toward building broad labor and working-class leadership in day-to-day struggles, efforts which are necessary to move to the next stage of struggle, to achieve an anti-monopoly coalition, political party, and possible anti-monopoly government, and then socialism.

Starting with the current stage of struggle against the ultra-right, the leading role of the Communist Party is expressed by its advanced Marxist-Leninist ideology, strategy and tactics, and socialist vision, combined with efforts to build its size and mass influence. If our policies prove sound, if we can learn from others, if we are able to develop coalition ties with mass movements and organizations, if we can learn from our mistakes, the Party will grow steadily and strengthen its leading role. As the struggle proceeds through the anti-monopoly and socialist stages, the Communist Party will reach the point where along with other socialist forces it wins the role of accepted leader of the millions of workers and their allies.

To fulfill this role, the Communist Party needs the following characteristics, first in outlook, leading to actual leadership status among the working class and all working people. The Communist Party must be:

- 1. a party of the working class, part of the class but its most advanced segment,*
- 2. a party of socialism,*
- 3. based on Marxism-Leninism,*
- 4. engaged in proletarian internationalism, and*
- 5. organized on the principle of democratic centralism.*

To accomplish all this requires a much larger Communist Party. Building Communist Party clubs with strategy, tactics, education and organization within shops, workplaces, and working-class neighborhoods, helps win day-to-day struggles. Grassroots Communist Party clubs are vital to bring the Party's vision, strategy, and tactics into local work with masses of working people. Sharing their problems and struggles, the policies of the Party are tested and honed in the clubs. The strategy of the Party becomes the property of more and more working people, eventually of millions.

Since the publication of the Communist Manifesto in 1848, the communist movement has engaged in prolonged struggle against the capitalist system, playing a conscious role in working to end exploitation, oppression, and injustice worldwide. The experiences of the world communist movement along with the experiences of our own Party since its founding in 1919, enriches our theory and practice. The Communist Party has had many victories and some defeats, accomplishments and mistakes, and successful tactics and errors from which we have learned, that enable us to play a key role in the transition to socialism.

The Communist Party has made key contributions to the working class struggle of the United States, building industrial unions, organizing for rights on the job and for a social safety net, opposing racism and bigotry and pointing the way toward full political, social and economic equality, upholding democratic rights against the threat of fascism and the far right-wing, and supporting international working class solidarity against imperialist globalization and for peace.

Firmly basing ourselves on Marxism-Leninism, we strive to apply theory to practice, with practice as the test of theory, by being the most consistent fighters for broad-based unity and against all unnecessary divisions—racism, sexism, nationalism, chauvinism, homophobia, and anti-communism. Marxism-Leninism is an ideology that not only explains how society works, it is a guide for how to change the world for the better.

Marxism-Leninism is a system of ideas that correspond to the interest of the working class. Its essential aspects consist of:

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

Taken together, along with the theory of knowledge and with the experience of the world working-class movements for justice and socialism, Marxism-Leninism provides a scientifically based guide to action. It enables the Communist Party to make important contributions at every stage of struggle, and to point the way forward. It does not make us infallible or mean we cannot learn from others. It does enable our Party to be the most consistent fighter for unity, for progress, and for socialism. The Party must wage a constant ideological battle on two fronts to keep from being pulled in either direction away from a sound Marxist analysis of the real existing conditions of struggle or away from the strategy that realistically links current struggles with the goal of socialism, focusing the main effort against the tendency that is stronger at a given moment.

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

We are first and foremost the Party of the working class, but we are also the Party of the racially and nationally oppressed, women, and youth. We seek to build our Party among workers of all races, nationalities, genders, ages, and sexual orientations, among organized and unorganized militant fighters for worker's rights, better wages, improved working conditions, and among all those who battle for social programs that benefit all. We focus on the organized sections of the working class because in organization lies strength, because

when workers are organized they have more power, and because when unions move, they move large numbers of workers with them. Similarly, we concentrate on workers in key workplaces and industries—this is our policy of industrial concentration—especially since we can't yet reach all workers at once but need to focus on those whose position in the economy gives their struggles the greatest impact. Workers in those decisive sectors can affect the profits of the ruling class as a whole because they possess the ability to shut the system down and because their actions have a huge impact on all other workers, on mass struggle, and on the entire economy. We also concentrate our work in key working class neighborhoods and in communities of the racially and nationally oppressed.

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

Democratic centralism in practice means that the national bodies take precedence over the individual collectives and state organizations, since national democratically elected bodies are an expression of the democracy of the entire Party. It means that once decisions have been made based on democratic discussion, the whole Party must strive to implement them. It means we strive for collective functioning, not just individual good work. It means encouraging and organizing the full democratic participation of all members, but with a prohibition against factional organizing. It means working to unite theory and practice and to collectively adapt theory to a constantly changing world.

Unity—of purpose, of vision, and of action—is important not just in a union, mass movement, or coalition, it is crucial for a Communist Party.

8

SUMMARY

The problems of exploitation, oppression, and survival facing humankind can only be solved, ultimately, by the elimination of the exploitative system of capitalism. Our survival depends on a transformation to socialism. The U.S. working class, with a long revolutionary history and many powerful mass movements and organizations, has the potential to make this transition happen. That means building unity for peace, for protecting and expanding democracy, for living-wage jobs, for universal health care, for real equality for all those who are nationally or racially oppressed and women, for an end to the political control of the ultra-right over our political institutions, and for an end to the economic rule of the transnational corporations. Building and strengthening organizations of and alliances between the working class and its allies, winning real unity in the course of struggle, is the path from our current struggles towards socialism.

A Communist Party is essential for Marxists to test revolutionary theory through practice. We are not a debating society wrangling over obscure texts. We are a political movement, and we welcome all who accept our program. As Marx said, “The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to change it.”

The Communist Party USA is about changing the world.

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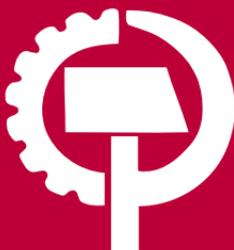
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