

of the rich and powerful ahead of the needs and concerns of their constituents and the nation as a whole. It is virtually impossible to pass legislation that protects and empowers working people. Instead we are forced to watch elected politicians of both parties routinely rob the public treasury of billions of dollars, giving their rich and powerful donors tax breaks, subsidies, bailouts, and regulatory exemptions. We demand an end to this robbery.

Build a Just Transition Movement to Protect Jobs and the Environment

This Labor Party affirms its commitment to a clean and safe environment. We all need clean workplaces, clean air, and clean water. But we also need our jobs. We reject the false choice of jobs or the environment. We will not be held hostage by corporate polluters who poison our workplaces and our communities. . . .

Enforce Safety and Health Regulations with Worker Inspectors

. . . We call for national legislation to train and deputize workers to be on the job inspectors in each and every workplace. . . .

Reclaiming the Workplace: Job Design, Technology, and Skill

. . . . Corporations implement technologies and designs that make it profitable to replace full-time workers with an army of temporaries. To fight back we call for the creation of a labor-based, publicly funded Technology Democratization Commission, which will work to ensure that labor plays an important role shaping the development and implementation of technology.

4.B.10.

Black Radical Congress

“A Black Freedom Agenda for the Twenty-First Century” (1998)

Mass incarceration, police brutality, and attacks on affirmative action, welfare rights, and other gains of the civil rights movement had weakened the Black left as a national force. Bringing together diverse segments of Black progressive activists from around the country—including veterans of earlier attempts to build independent Black political organizations—the Black Radical Congress was founded as a national network in 1997. Its freedom agenda self-consciously blended the Black Panther Party’s ten-point program, the

Freedom Charter of the African National Congress, and the feminist vision of the Combahee River Collective statement.

The realization of genuine democracy in the United States requires radical solutions. To be “radical” means to get at the root of real problems, seeking effective solutions. What we want is an end to the exploitation of capitalism, white racism and every manifestation of human oppression, a revolutionary transformation of the state and society, and the realization of humanistic values. What can unite us in struggle is a common vision and agenda for the twenty-first century, reflecting our aspirations and ideals, for the construction of a new society and a new humankind.

1. *We want an end to the exploitation of corporate capitalism.*

We fight for the abolition of white supremacy and capitalist domination over our people and oppressed peoples and nations throughout the globe. Capitalism is the root cause of the major forms of social misery, hunger, and exploitation in the United States and the world.

2. *We want freedom, self-determination, and full human rights.*

We want an end to all forms of human oppression—racism, homophobia, sexism, discrimination against disabled people, anti-immigrant discrimination, class exploitation, and imperialism. We assert our right to self-determination.

3. *We want a social policy agenda which invests in human beings.*

We believe in a society in which all people have the resources to develop to their fullest potential. This can only occur when the basic needs of all people are met. At minimum, this includes free and universal health care, free child care, quality public education, lifelong access to retraining and vocational learning, and low-cost public housing.

4. *We want a comprehensive national economic policy which places the interests of people above profits.*

We believe that US corporate capitalism is structurally incapable of addressing the basic economic needs of African Americans, as well as the overwhelming majority of US working-class and poor people. Therefore, we support aggressive measures to restrict and regulate the power and resources of corporations. Government must halt the transfer of capital and jobs out of the country. Plant- and business-closing legislation should be passed which requires public hearings and direct compensation to workers who lose their jobs. Tax the rich. Zero taxes for all earning under \$30,000 a year. Replace the minimum wage with mandated “living wage” for all Americans.

5. *We want a society which allows for the healthy and positive development of our children.*

Children are society’s most precious resource. But in a racist and capitalist society, black children are frequently the first casualties. We demand quality education, health care, housing, and safety for every child.

6. *We want justice in the legal system.*

One-third of all young African American men are currently in jail and prison, on probation, parole, or awaiting trial. The US prison industrial complex has become a vast warehouse for millions of unemployed and low-wage laborers. In the past ten years, the number of black women in prison has more than doubled. Any black person is four times more likely to receive the death penalty than any white person convicted of the same crime. For these reasons, we call for the abolition of the death penalty, the twentieth century's version of lynching. We denounce the recent "three strikes" criminal justice provisions as inherently racist and discriminatory to black and poor people. We demand the release of all black prisoners convicted of nonviolent crimes. We call for full voting rights for people convicted of felonies, both in prison and after their release, and amnesty for all political prisoners, including those forced into political exile outside the United States. We demand the right of all African Americans to be tried by a jury of their peers.

7. *We want an end to police brutality and state terrorism in our communities.*

There are six hundred thousand police officers in the US, most of whom function like an occupying army in our communities. We call for the strict civilian control of our neighborhoods and citizen review boards which are empowered to discipline police misconduct. We denounce the deliberate trafficking of drugs and the proliferation of weapons in our communities by organized crime, the CIA, and other institutions of the state. We condemn the deliberate criminalization, incarceration, and execution of black youth as a clear violation of human rights.

8. *We want a clean and healthy environment for our people.*

We oppose the policy of environmental racism—the fact that three out of every five African Americans live near dangerous toxic waste sites. US industries today are pumping 2.4 billion pounds of toxic chemicals into our air and billions more into our drinking water. Thousands of black people have died prematurely and needlessly, because of corporate greed in the environment.

9. *We want full employment and a guaranteed income for all those unable to work.*

We know that twenty million US residents today are either unemployed or work part time and want full-time employment. We need a constitutional, legal right to a job, as much as a right to vote. We need governmental investment in community-based and cooperative institutions which generate jobs. We demand emergency action by the government, especially in areas of concentrated high employment, to create real jobs at living wages. We strongly support the struggles of black working women and men inside the trade union movement, fighting for economic justice.

10. *We want civil rights, affirmative action, and compensation for centuries of institutional racism.*

We defend the policies of affirmative action, race-based scholarships, and all equal opportunity legislation as absolutely essential in attacking racial inequality. We demand just compensation and reparations for the systematic brutality and exploitation our people have suffered historically and continue to experience today. We claim the legal and moral right to demand and receive just compensation for oppression which was responsible for the destruction of millions of black people's lives.

11. *We want liberation for all oppressed people throughout the world.*

The struggles of peoples of African descent are inextricably linked to the many diverse struggles of oppressed people and nations across the globe. Black liberation cannot be achieved inside the United States outside of the larger, pan-Africanist and internationalist struggle which is being waged between the haves [and] the have-nots. Our vision of black freedom in the twenty-first century must be internationalist.

12. *We want a real democracy in the United States.*

The real majority in this country consists of African Americans, Latinos, women, lesbians and gay men, workers, unemployed and low-income people, and other oppressed people. We favor the abolition of the winner-take-all electoral system and the creation of proportional representation government. We call for an end to the two-party system that functions essentially as one party of capitalism and racism. We support the creation of a new mass political party representing the interests of the overwhelming majority of US people.

Without justice there can be no peace. We are committed to the fight for the realization of a truly democratic and socially just society. We dedicate ourselves to the abolition of racism and all other forms of human oppression and the cultural integrity and political liberation of our people.

Black Student and Youth Activism in the 1990s and 2000s

Sekou M. Franklin

Throughout the 1990s and 2000s, young Black activists were instrumental in jump-starting social movements that targeted racial, economic, and social injustices. Taking on everything from voter education and police brutality to worker rights, gun violence, and the school-to-prison pipeline, these young activists advanced a new paradigm of justice beyond the civil rights movement.

One important organization that emerged in this period was the Black Student Leadership Network (BSLN). The BSLN was launched in 1991 in partnership with the Children's Defense Fund and the Black Community Crusade for Children. For six years (1991–96), the BSLN linked a national advocacy campaign with local political and commu-