

03/25/2026

for a more equitable union

structural overhaul vs. incremental change

for congressional staffers, grassroots organizers, and civic leaders

incremental change distributes relief.
structural overhaul redistributes power.

THE GIST

there is a very american superstition that a society can be built on conquest, hierarchy, and managed scarcity and then redeemed by better management. not changed in kind, just softened in tone. more elegant euphemisms. more bipartisan sighing. more commissions, more pilot programs, more mournful acknowledgments of harms whose underlying machinery is left humming exactly as before. but manifest destiny was not a mood. it was an expansionist doctrine. lebensraum was not merely rhetoric. it was a political logic tying conquest to racial ordering. and the nuremberg laws were not an ugly digression from law but the demonstration of what law becomes when hierarchy is given administrative teeth.[1][2][3] the central claim of this paper is simple enough to sound almost childish, which is often how genuinely dangerous truths first appear: incremental change is not enough where the structure itself is the injury. the united states still organizes too much public life around domination disguised as normalcy - indigenous nations recognized and subordinated at once, workers disciplined by precarity, tenants cornered by concentrated ownership, and democratic majorities thwarted by minority choke points. the most honest long-range name for the alternative is a plural, federated anarcho-socialism: not the absence of institutions, but the end of institutions whose first principle is that ordinary people must live by rules written elsewhere, by owners or managers or guardians or permanent experts who confuse custody with wisdom.[4][6][11][12][18] the immediate 2026 program, though, is concrete. it means replacing the "domestic dependent" model of indigenous sovereignty with enforceable autonomy and consent. it means immediate universal basic income, a hard 20:1 ceo-to-worker pay cap, and an aggressive break-up of corporate housing concentration. it means abolishing the filibuster, seating tribal delegates in congress, and implementing ranked choice voting. and it means understanding that none of this will be granted because the right memo was sufficiently tasteful. it will require nonviolent direct action, general strikes where organizational conditions permit, and mutual aid robust enough to let people endure confrontation with power.[4][8][10][13][15][16][18][19][20][21][22][23][24]

ECONOMIC RECONSTRUCTION

launch universal basic income, enforce a 20:1 ceo-to-worker pay cap, and dismantle corporate housing concentration.

DEMOCRACY REFORM

abolish the filibuster for legislation and implement ranked choice voting nationwide.

THE 'NOW' STRATEGY

build mutual aid, legal defense, strike funds, nullify juries, and civilly disobey with enough exacting wrath to force negotiation.

parable: the slanted house

there is a town with a public house built on a steep angle. every year more people slide toward one wall and pile up there, bruised and short of breath. the respectable people of the town hold meetings about cushions. perhaps softer carpeting near the crash point. perhaps a pamphlet on balance. perhaps a small grant for those who have slid the furthest. then a child asks why nobody is fixing the foundation.

that is structural overhaul. it begins the moment the child's question stops sounding impolite.

THE SOVEREIGNTY GAP

u.s. law still speaks about indigenous nations in a grammar that is half recognition and half restraint, which is to say a grammar of empire. in *cherokee nation v. georgia*, the supreme court described tribes as "domestic dependent nations." in *worcester v. georgia*, the court also described indian nations as "distinct, independent political communities." meanwhile, the bureau of indian affairs lists 575 federally recognized tribes as of january 30, 2026, and the indian self-determination and education assistance act is still presented by the federal government as a vehicle for greater tribal autonomy in administering programs.[4][5][6][7] the contradiction is almost too blunt to believe: distinct political communities, yet dependent; nations, yet wards; sovereign enough to govern federal programs, but not sovereign enough to be free from a superior sovereign's final veto. this is why the usual reform language - consultation, engagement, partnership, acknowledgment - so often sounds morally serious while remaining structurally evasive. autonomy that can be overridden at the pleasure of congress is not autonomy in the full sense. treaty rights that can be abridged by later legislation are not secure rights so much as rights held on sufferance.[20] and this is the deeper colonial trick: to preserve enough nationhood to make domination look benevolent, while preserving enough supremacy to make nationhood conditional. the tibetan case is not identical, but it is clarifying. the central tibetan administration's middle-way policy seeks "genuine autonomy" within the people's republic of china rather than formal independence.[8] but recent u.s. commission on international religious freedom materials report that authorities closed tibetan monastery schools, enrolled students in state-run boarding schools to forcibly assimilate them, and indicated an intention to interfere in the dalai lama's succession by selecting and installing their own preferred successor.[9] autonomy, in other words, becomes theater when the

dominant state retains final control over the institutions that reproduce a people's language, religion, education, memory, and future leadership. the relevant lesson for the united states is not that washington and beijing are interchangeable. they are not. the lesson is that cultural survival without enforceable jurisdiction is a supervised life. and a supervised life, no matter how politely described, is not self-determination.

parable: the museum key

a museum tells a people that their drums are very important and must be preserved forever. the drums are placed behind glass. on ceremonial days the descendants are invited in to sing beside them. they are thanked for sharing their culture. a child asks whether something can still be called ours if we are not allowed to touch it. the curator answers with perfect sincerity: of course. that is what preservation means. the child is not convinced, and the child is right.

for 2026, the u.s. should move from preservationist paternalism to actual indigenous power. at minimum this means codifying free, prior, and informed consent for legislative, administrative, and project decisions affecting tribal lands, territories, and resources; expanding tribal civil and criminal jurisdiction; enforcing treaty rights as binding obligations rather than commemorative artifacts; and creating durable land-back and co-governance mechanisms where federal holdings overlap with treaty obligations and sacred sites.[10] it also means treating tribal representation as a democratic necessity, not a symbolic courtesy. the house already includes five delegates and one resident commissioner, and those delegates can speak, introduce bills, offer amendments, and serve on committees, even though they cannot vote on final passage.[19] the cherokee treaty claim is not speculative: congressional testimony notes that article 7 of the treaty of new echota states the cherokee "shall be entitled to a delegate in the house of representatives of the united states whenever congress shall make provision for the same." [20] congress should make provision now. and because the longer horizon matters too, the goal should not be merely a kinder federal guardianship. it should be a multinational democratic order in which indigenous nations, municipalities, worker institutions, and regional federations exercise real authority over the conditions of life. that, more than any commemorative rhetoric, is what decolonization would look like in practice.

ECONOMIC RECONSTRUCTION

the american economy has spent so long being narrated from the perspective of investors that many people now describe its cruelties the way one might describe humidity or hail: regrettable, yes, but natural. they are not natural. the congressional budget office reports that income growth from 1979 to 2022 was unevenly distributed, and its recent trend reporting notes that income inequality increased between 1979 and 2021.[11] the economic policy institute's current tracker says the gap between productivity and a typical worker's compensation has increased dramatically since 1979.[12] what this means in plain english is that the economy has become more capable while ordinary people have not been allowed a proportionate share of that increased capability. we have built a machine that grows, and then trained it to grow away from the people inside it. universal basic income should be implemented immediately as a matter of anti-subordination, not as a mood of philanthropic experimentation. the proposal here is a monthly federal cash floor of \$1,000 per adult and \$500 per child, indexed to inflation, universal on the front end and progressively taxed back at the top. it should not replace social security, disability benefits, medicare, medicaid, veterans' benefits, or treaty obligations. it should sit beneath them, like bedrock. the best argument for ubi is not that it will produce optimally efficient labor-market behavior, though some studies show improved employment outcomes and more stable job searching under guaranteed income.[13][14] the best argument is that cash reduces blackmail. it lets people refuse the most degrading terms. it lets them leave violent homes, predatory jobs, and humiliating forms of dependence. the 2024 nber working paper on a three-year \$1,000-per-month experiment found measurable employment effects worth taking seriously.[13] the stockton economic empowerment demonstration, by contrast, reported that recipients obtained full-time employment at more than twice the rate of non-recipients after its first year and also experienced less anxiety and depression.[14] this is not contradiction so much as reminder: human beings use freedom in different ways, and a decent economy should be built to tolerate that. a 20:1 ceo-to-worker pay ratio cap should follow. not a disclosure rule. not a shame campaign. a cap. the afl-cio's 2025 executive paywatch reports that the average ceo-to-worker pay ratio for s&p 500 companies in 2024 was 285-to-1. [15] this is not compensation. it is rank made visible. any democracy that normalizes ratios that

extreme is, whatever its constitutional poetry, quietly teaching itself to admire private nobility. the cap should be calculated honestly, which means including subcontracted, franchised, and temporary labor in the median worker figure. firms that exceed the cap should lose eligibility for federal contracts, face punitive surtaxes on excess compensation, and forfeit access to stock buybacks until they comply. housing requires even less delicacy. the government accountability office reports that institutional investors came to own large shares of the single-family rental market in many cities and that studies it reviewed found they may have contributed to increasing home prices and rents, especially where their activity was concentrated.[16] hud materials similarly note that institutional and large corporate investors are taking single-family properties off the market for individual homebuyers, concentrating purchases in low-income and historically nonwhite neighborhoods, and putting upward pressure on both sale prices and rents.[17] the federal reserve bank of philadelphia reports that investor share is higher in markets with lower housing values and higher shares of black and non-collegiate residents, and that investors raise rents at 60 percent higher rates than the average increase when first acquiring a property.[17] in other words, "the market" is not some innocent meadow here. it is enclosure. it is organized extraction from one of the few necessities people cannot indefinitely postpone.

parable: the locked pantry

there is a village in which one family owns the only pantry. every winter they announce, magnanimously, that nobody will go hungry provided the hungry complete the forms correctly, smile at the right moments, and remain just desperate enough to accept any terms. when somebody asks why bread is being governed like a luxury good, the family accuses him of introducing ideology into a practical matter. by spring the village has become fluent in the language of eligibility and has forgotten the older language of absurdity.

the 2026 response should therefore be explicit: prohibit large institutional actors above a national threshold from acquiring more 1-4 unit homes; require divestiture where neighborhood concentration becomes democratically intolerable; give tenants, tribal governments, community land trusts, and public-interest buyers rights of first refusal; finance large-scale social housing; and build public, cooperative, and municipal ownership into energy, finance, and essential infrastructure. because anarcho-socialism, in the usable rather than cartoon sense, is not merely about redistributing money after the fact. it is about changing who gets to decide. who decides

what is built, what work is worth, what rents can be charged, what risks are imposed, what scarcity is tolerated, what debt is enforceable, what counts as efficiency, and whose exhaustion is written off as a private failure. a just economy does not merely compensate people for subordination. it abolishes as much unnecessary subordination as it can.

DEMOCRACY REFORM

it is fashionable in washington to treat procedure as though it were weather. the filibuster benefits from this mystique. but the senate itself explains that unlimited debate is a tradition, that before 1917 there was no rule to end debate and force a vote, and that the cloture threshold was lowered to 60 votes in 1975.[18] which is to say: the filibuster is not a constitutional organ. it is a rule. and because it is a rule, it can be abolished. that should happen for legislation. a country cannot remain serious about democratic legitimacy while allowing a durable minority to convert delay into a governing philosophy.

parable: the bridge with sixty locks

a town catches fire. there is a bridge to the river, but the bridge has sixty locks on it, each requiring permission from someone who does not live near the flames. the people holding the keys explain that this arrangement protects stability and compels compromise. by the time the locks are opened, the town is ash. afterward, the keyholders hold a hearing on resilience.

seating tribal delegates in congress would not by itself cure the republic's representative failures, but it would puncture one especially indefensible one. the house already seats territorial delegates and a resident commissioner, and those officials possess most of the floor and committee authorities of members apart from final voting power.[19] congressional testimony prepared for the house rules committee states that article 7 of the treaty of new echota promised the cherokee a delegate whenever congress made provision for the same.[20] this matters both because treaty obligations matter and because federal indian law has always suffered from a grotesque asymmetry: congress can legislate over tribes with extraordinary reach while tribes remain structurally underrepresented in the legislature doing the legislating. the minimum repair is obvious. seat tribal delegates, beginning with treaty-promised representation and expanding toward a framework designed with tribes themselves. ranked choice voting is the cleanest available

correction to the minority-winner logic of plurality elections. the national conference of state legislatures notes that alaska and maine use ranked choice voting for statewide elections and that the system is designed to produce a majority winner without requiring a separate runoff.[21] that does not solve the entire democratic crisis, but it does force candidates to seek broader consent and reduces the extortionary logic of spoiler fear. if a government claims to derive legitimacy from the people, then it should make it harder, not easier, to win major office while opposed by most of them. but the larger argument should be stated plainly because polite democracy talk often hides it. electoral reform is necessary and still insufficient. if the workplace remains a private autocracy, if housing remains a battlefield of concentrated ownership, if basic survival depends on pleasing employers, creditors, and landlords, then the ballot takes place inside a much wider system of coerced deference. anarcho-socialism is useful here because it refuses to worship the state as the sole container of politics. congress matters. so do municipal assemblies, worker councils, tenant unions, tribal governments, school boards, public banks, neighborhood federations, and every institution in which people can directly shape the rules that shape them. the aim is not no structure. it is fewer structures built on permanent upward obedience.

THE 'NOW' STRATEGY

martin luther king jr. wrote that a nonviolent campaign proceeds through four basic steps - fact-finding, negotiation, self-purification, and direct action - and that direct action creates the kind of crisis out of which negotiation can emerge.[22] this remains a devastatingly practical description of politics. power does not usually yield because it has been embarrassed by moral eloquence. it yields when maintaining the status quo becomes more disruptive than changing it. that is not cynicism. it is one of the more reusable facts of democratic history. general strikes belong in this conversation for the simple reason that they reveal where social power actually lives. britannica defines a general strike as a stoppage of work across a substantial range of industries for economic or political objectives, and notes major u.s. examples in seattle in 1919, minneapolis and san francisco in 1934, and oakland in 1946.

britannica's seattle history page notes that the 1919 strike involved more than 60,000 workers and was settled peacefully.[23] one does not need to romanticize every strike in labor history to understand the underlying lesson: when ordinary people withdraw labor together, the alleged omnipotence of officialdom starts looking suddenly dependent on the compliance it normally takes for granted. mutual aid is the companion structure because people do not sustain confrontation on passion alone. research collected through peer-reviewed pandemic-era studies found that mutual aid and spontaneous community measures were vital to the early covid-19 response, and that such efforts often operate through horizontal, reciprocal support rather than the paternal logic of conventional charity.[24] that last point matters enormously. charity can leave hierarchy intact. mutual aid trains people in interdependence, competence, and shared power. it teaches the very habits that structural transformation will later require. and here bruce lee's philosophy becomes unexpectedly useful as political method. the official bruce lee materials frame philosophy as something to be applied rather than merely pondered.[25] jeet kune do is described as valuing simplicity, directness, freedom, and the honest self-expression of the individual over organized style, and as holding the main tenet "using no way as way; having no limitation as limitation." [26] striking thoughts is described by its publisher as spanning spirituality, personal liberation, family life, and filmmaking.[27] tao of jeet kune do is presented as combining the science and philosophy behind lee's art with material on zen and enlightenment.[28] and shannon lee's be water, my friend frames the "be water" philosophy as a practical ethic of fluidity and naturalness, a way of becoming more powerful, self-expressed, and free. [29] politically translated, this means a movement disciplined enough to coordinate, but flexible enough not to become brittle; principled enough to know what it will not do, but adaptive enough not to fetishize any single tactic; structured enough to endure, but not so rigid that it reproduces the command habits it claims to oppose. one of the reasons david foster wallace's 2005 commencement address endured, and was later published as this is water, is that it turned attention itself into an ethical question: how does a person move through ordinary life without becoming unconscious to the realities around and beneath them, and how does one get oneself out of the center long enough to become capable of compassion?[30] a movement for structural justice needs that discipline too. it has to notice

the water of domination - the assumptions so ordinary that they disappear - and then refuse to let its own internal habits of urgency turn everybody else into scenery. otherwise radical politics becomes merely a new method of not listening.

parable: the river and the gate

a village builds a gate across a river and declares victory over water. at first this seems plausible because the river pools, slows, and looks obedient. then rain comes. the water does not hold a symposium on principle. it finds seams, pressure points, neglected stones, the tired hinge, the soft earth at the edge. by morning the gate is gone. rigidity mistakes stillness for strength. water knows better.

so the "now" strategy is dual and relentless. build care, and build leverage. build strike funds, legal defense, food distribution, childcare, disability access, language access, transportation, medicine routes, tenant protection networks, and emergency communications. build labor-capable coalitions that can escalate from workplace actions to coordinated shutdowns where conditions allow. protect people first, then widen the conflict until elites have to choose between concession and disorder. and do it all without surrendering to dehumanization, because the point is not to become a harder version of the thing being opposed. the point is to make domination unworkable and solidarity ordinary.[22][23][24]

THE CONCLUSION OF A PATRIOT

the united states does not suffer from a lack of reform proposals. it suffers from an overdose of reforms that leave rank intact. what is needed now is not a more humane public-relations strategy for the same governing settlement, but a new settlement altogether: treaty-bound, materially universalist, anti-colonial, anti-oligarchic, and democratic all the way down. the warnings are already in the historical record - manifest destiny as providential expansion, lebensraum as conquest fused to racial policy, the nuremberg laws as hierarchy converted into legal status, federal indian law as nationhood wrapped in dependency.[1][2][3][4][5] the point of invoking these histories together is not melodrama. it is pattern recognition. societies become dangerous long before they sound dangerous. so yes: the direction suggested here is anarcho-socialist, though in a grounded and institutionally serious sense. use federal power, where it still exists, to dismantle colonial subordination, concentrated capital, and anti-

majoritarian blockades. then transfer power downward and outward - to indigenous nations, workers, tenants, municipalities, public institutions, and federated local forms that let people govern more of the conditions of their lives directly. this is not utopian excess. it is proportionate response. because if a system requires millions of people to remain anxious, governable, and grateful for partial humiliations, the humane answer is not to improve the system's bedside manner. it is to replace the system. i take umbrage at your tyranny, your taxation w/o representation, and the cascading failure we're left to clean up upon excising you like a cancer. this is a voice of the revolution, you've been warned.

"i hate you, i despise you, and i loathe you. everything about you DISGUSTS me. your ears, eyes, nose, mouth, tongue, legs, knees, stomach, ribs, and bottom make me want to vomit up. you're repulsive, loathsome, grotesque, and insupportable. i want to [obsolesce] you, i want to twist your nipples off and throw them to the dogs. you scum. you low, corrosive lump of fecal horror, you maniac bastardly turd. i would rather drink stale urine from norman fowler's arse-pit than remain one moment more in your defiling company. you're filth, you're cack, you're the ooze of a burst boil, i abominate you, you towering mound of corrupted slime. your every utterance is like the slithering hiss of a fat maggot in the putrid guts of a decomposing rat, your face is fouler than the unwiped inner ring of Satan's rectum." - Stephen Fry, A Bit of Fry and Laurie

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