WORKERS SOLIDARITY ALLIANCE

NEW MEMBER PACKET
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December 9, 2011

Dear Comrade,

Welcome to the Workers Solidarity Alliance. As you know, we are an anti-capitalist, antiauthoritarian organization of activists who believe that working people can build a new society and a better world based on the principles of solidarity, direct action, and self-management. The WSA was organized in 1984 and is the oldest organization of its kind in North America.

Attached are our basic documents which explain our ideas and how our organization works, to help you participate:

1. **Where We Stand** [political statement]
2. **WSA Constitution**
3. **WSA Dues Schedule** [with Treasurer’s address]
4. **WSA Formal Voting Process Between Conferences**
5. **The Role of the WSA Local Group**

WSA gives you the flexibility to work individually or by organizing Local Groups, through a community of like-minded comrades with a wide variety of knowledge and experience. We hope you will add your knowledge and experience to ours. We form working groups called Commissions to organize ongoing projects like Labor, Propaganda, and Internal Communication. As explained in our constitution, all members are encouraged to participate in these commissions.

Additionally, WSA members publish written work about ongoing projects, theory and history, individually and in our online jour-
nal *Ideas & Action*. We also collaborate with other North American class struggle anarchist organizations. As internationalists, we maintain comradely inter-organizational relationships and support libertarian worker’s struggles all over the world.

WSA is organized democratically with rotating delegates from five regions (Northeast, South, Midwest, West, and Canada), and rotating Corresponding Secretary and Treasurer positions on the Coordinating Committee. We make decisions as a group after group discussions. WSA activities are funded by individual member dues.

Any questions, ideas, requests, etc. you may have, please send to your area’s regional delegate or the Corresponding Secretary, or email over the members list.

For a world without bosses, states and bureaucrats!

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**Contact:**

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Anti-Capitalism

Capitalism is a system of oppression. A small class of capitalists owns the companies, production equipment, apartment buildings, and other economic assets. This puts them in control of our work and of the whole society. The working class is forced to rent our working abilities to the capitalists in order to live. The capitalists’ relentless drive for profits means they will speed up work, pollute the environment, or ignore unsafe conditions if it will help them make more profit.

The capitalists’ efforts to control our work and govern society led to the creation of a third class – the managers and elite professionals who staff the hierarchies of the corporations and the state. The subordination of the working class to the capitalist and bureaucratic
classes is a system of oppression because it denies us control over our lives and subordinates life to the capitalist search for profit.

The ability of the elite classes to exploit our labor and dominate us has been limited throughout the history of capitalism by revolts and mass struggles of ordinary people. The working class can liberate itself through the development of self-managed mass movements that develop through the class struggle. We thus advocate a strategy for social change “from below,” based on mass participation, direct democracy, collective direct action and self-managed mass organizations.

**The State**

The modern state is controlled by hierarchies of managers and elite professionals, and politicians drawn from the capitalist and bureaucratic classes. The top-down armed bodies provide the state’s ultimate power.

These hierarchies separate the state from authentic popular control. This enables the state to govern society in the interests of dominating classes. The armed violence of the state is the last line of defense of the elite classes.

To maintain its ability to govern, the system needs to retain legitimacy in the eyes of the population. During periods of upheaval or severe class conflict, the state may offer concessions to the oppressed. This is the origin of the “social wage” — Medicare, welfare benefits, affordable housing subsidies, public transit subsidies, and so on. The revolutions and worker rebellions of the early 20th century led to the various “welfare states” in the core capitalist countries.

Although we support struggles for reforms, how changes are fought for makes a difference. We oppose a strategy for social change centered on elections and lobbying because it focuses on political leaders gaining power in the state rather than building mass movements and collective struggle. Because the state is an institution of
class domination, there is little hope for the liberation of the working class through the capture of the state by a political party.

By building on the state, state socialism tends to empower the bureaucratic class. In the so-called “Communist” countries, such as the old Soviet Union, China and Cuba, a new dominating class emerged — political functionaries, industrial managers, elite planners, and military leaders. The capitalists were expropriated but the working class remained a subordinated and exploited class.

**Anti-Imperialism**

Capitalism has always been based on imperialism. Imperialism is a system where the elite classes in some nations use their superior economic and military power to dominate and exploit the people and resources of other countries. The elite classes of the dominant capitalist powers suck wealth out of the less powerful countries through debt, corporate investment, and unequal power in trade.

Modern imperialism is based on the division of the world into competing territorial states. The competition of states generates the arms race and war. We support popular struggles against both military and economic expressions of imperialism.

In countries resisting invasion or domination by the major capitalist powers we support movements of workers and peasants in these countries, not their local states or local elites. We oppose the U.S. embargo against Cuba, but we do not support the bureaucratic ruling class that runs the island.

In situations where a “national liberation movement” aims to oust a pro-imperialist leadership in a country or fight an occupation, we support mass movements of workers and peasants in their struggle but not the state-building project of a “national liberation” political party. Real self-determination of working people requires the development of self-managed unions and popular organizations that exercise independence in relation to boss groups.
Imperialism can only be brought to an end by a social transformation throughout the planet which eliminates the system of competing states and exploitative class systems. The human species needs to evolve a new form of world association that respects the autonomy and differences of all communities or ethnic groups while allowing for democratic decision-making, rooted in grassroots institutions such as delegate congresses, to resolve global problems.

**Internationalism**

The support of the American federal state and corporations for authoritarianism and anti-labor repression in the third world undermines the bargaining power of workers in the USA. The threat of relocation to Mexico or elsewhere has been used to extract concessions on wages and working conditions. The imperialist role of the U.S. federal state is a bi-partisan affair, supported solidly over the years by Democrats as well as Republicans. This imperialist role is against the interests of workers in the USA as well as other countries. A common struggle with workers in other countries strengthens our fight against the bosses in the USA.

Economic interdependence and global capitalist power mean that a revolution that can liberate the working class from capitalist oppression needs to spread across national borders. An international movement is needed to defeat the bosses.

As internationalists, we advocate solidarity between workers in different countries, and the development of a trans-national unionism that can coordinate struggles across borders. As such, we encourage actions by workers in the USA to support worker freedoms and worker actions in other countries. We advocate the building of links between workers across borders, especially links with independent unions, autonomous mass popular organizations, and workers organizations who are close to our perspective.

We support efforts within the unions to break the American labor movement from any alliances with the U.S. State Department or other agents of American corporations abroad. The labor move-
ment in the USA must not be used as a tool of corporate profiteering and imperialist austerity in other countries.

**Anti-Racism**

In the history of capitalism, racism has always been linked with the class system. Modern racism was developed to justify the enslavement of black people and the seizure of the lands of the indigenous inhabitants of the Americas. People of non-European origin were labeled “inferior” to justify worse treatment.

Our subordination to employers generates a constant struggle over control of our work and the division of the economic pie we produce. Discrimination creates resentments and divisions. By setting groups against each other, racism weakens our class power. All working people lose from this, including the white working class.

Racism isn’t just ideology or overt prejudice but also exists as a pattern of relative advantage or disadvantage. Racist patterns in society push people of color to the bottom. Thus struggles often have both a class and a race dimension, such as struggles against police brutality or against gentrification and evictions or struggles against anti-immigrant attacks.

We oppose racism in all its forms.

Groups that are subject to a particular form of oppression, on the basis of race or gender or nationality, will have concerns that arise from that. This is why we support autonomous social movements of specific communities. Through a process of dialogue, the specific concerns of oppressed communities can be brought into a common working class movement. The aim should be for the spirit and aspirations of groups subject to specific forms of oppression to be a part of the overall working class movement, and expressed in the life and aims of unions and other mass organizations. Incorporating the aspirations of oppressed communities benefits the working class as a whole. Greater unity makes for a stronger movement, and a stronger working class can make gains that benefit everyone.


**Anti-Sexism**

Inequality between men and women existed long before capitalism. As capitalism developed, the ability of women to earn a living outside the home was restricted. These restrictions on the entry of women into the larger economy made women dependent on men. The restricted opportunities for women in the labor market also made it easier for employers to pay women lower wages. Patriarchal capitalism has benefitted from the free labor of women in the home, raising the next generation and caring for male wage-earners. Married women who work for wages are still burdened with the “double work day.”

Society’s lack of support for the raising of children is part of the pressure that forces women into the role of primary child-raiser. Being the primary care-giver puts women at an economic disadvantage. Poverty among single mothers also affects their children. We believe that the larger society needs to provide more collective support for the raising of the next generation, such as providing free, quality child care and generous parental leaves for both men and women.

Like racism, sexism is a source of division in the working class. When people assume that men have primary responsibility for earning an income and women have primary responsibility children and maintaining the home, the struggles of women as workers, and wage equality for women, will be regarded as less important than the struggles of male wage-earners.

The struggle for the liberation of women is part of the struggle for a free and egalitarian society.

Because most women are part of the working class, the liberation of women won’t be complete without liberation from the class system. Nonetheless, women can make gains through struggles within the existing society, as women and as members of the working class. As with other specific groups within the working class, we support autonomous organization of women.
**Queer Liberation**

Patriarchal capitalist society holds most people to rigid gender roles and types of sexuality. These expectations breed homophobia and transphobia, sow divisions in the working class, and limit the possibilities for all people to have fulfilling lives.

Because oppression based on sexuality and gender is distinct from class oppression, though linked to it, we support autonomous organization to end these forms of oppression. We also urge worker and community organizations to support the struggles of people who are oppressed on the basis of gender identity and consensual sexual relationships.

We seek a social environment where people are not trapped by oppressive social norms but are free to develop sexual expressions, gender identities, and relationships that are right for them.

**Unionism**

The working class does not develop the capacity to liberate itself overnight. Through a more or less protracted process, the working class can break through fatalism and longstanding habits of going along with hierarchy, overcome internal divisions (such as along lines of race or gender), and develop the skills and self-confidence, solidarity, and organizational strength needed to mount a fundamental challenge to the dominating classes.

The economy would grind to a halt without our work. This is the source of the collective power of the working class. Large-scale solidarity such as general strikes builds in the working class a sense of our ability to change the society. Self-management of unions and other mass organizations develops in the members a sense of confidence in our abilities and of our capacity for running things ourselves. Widespread self-management of mass movements sets the stage for self-management of society.
After World War 2, control of the American unions by a hierarchical structure of paid officers and staff became entrenched. Unions limited their focus to narrow economic issues, and routine bargaining, sector by sector. The general strikes and pitched battles of the years before World War 2 were a fading memory. The labor bureaucracy’s monopolization of relations with the employers tended to make the members dependent on them. Workers came increasingly to regard the union as an external service agency. There was less emphasis on the workers’ own action “in union” with each other.

The paid hierarchies are allergic to militant action, wanting to minimize legal and financial risks to the union organization that is the basis of their career. They work to contain workers’ struggles within the framework of longstanding relationships with the employers. National unions may impose a dictatorship called a trusteeship on local unions that pursue a more independent and militant course.

To have a labor movement that can be more effective as a fighting force today, and develop the potential to replace capitalism with economic self-management, a different kind of unionism needs to be developed.

The type of unionism that we advocate is self-managed by the members, works to spread solidarity and link up with workers in other countries, encourages mass participation, fights against all forms of inequality and discrimination, and rejects any idea of “partnership” or “common interests” with the bosses.

To transform the American labor movement, we support efforts to build new self-managed unions independent of the AFL-CIO and Change to Win union federations in situations where this makes strategic sense. At the same time, we cannot hope to play a role in many workers struggles, to put forth our ideas and our program, if we remain aloof and abstain from them simply because many of them take place within the AFL-CIO or Change to Win unions. So long as workers struggles are organized through these unions, we participate in those unions and their struggles.
We also support the building of autonomous rank-and-file movements in the AFL-CIO and Change to Win unions, independent of the bureaucracy. The sort of rank-and-file opposition movements that we support should not aim at merely electing a different leadership, but should aim at changing the union into a social movement based on mass participation and member control.

For unions to be self-managing, this starts with the importance of the general meetings of the members to make decisions. To prevent the organization becoming dependent on a small number of people, executive committee posts should have term limits. This needs to be combined with a systematic approach to training members in all the tasks needed in running a union.

Full-time paid officials no longer suffer the daily indignities of subordination to the bosses. The often high salaries of union bureaucrats in the USA separate union officials from the conditions of life of union members and encourages officials to look at the union as their personal ticket out of the working class. We believe that the number of paid officials in the labor movement should be kept to a minimum. Local unions should avoid paid officers as much as possible. If workers feel that a paid officer is needed in a particular case, their pay should be limited to the average wage level of the workers. Half-time paid officers are better than full-time because at least the person still works under the bosses part of the time.

Genuine self-management of a union goes beyond the formal structure and also depends on active participation and education of members.

**Community Organizing**

The class struggle is not limited to the workplace but also spreads out into the broader community, in areas like housing, gentrification, transportation, pollution, welfare rights, police brutality. To challenge the dominating classes in society, the working class needs a movement that can address these struggles and the issues
of the day. We support the development of mass self-managed organizations in the community such as tenant organizations or transit rider unions.

Developing links between labor organizations and grassroots organizations rooted in working class communities and communities of color is a way to strengthen struggles in both areas, and prefigures the sort of working class alliance that is needed to fundamentally challenge the dominating classes for control of the society.

Workers centers are a type of community-based worker organization that has provided a grassroots alternative for workers in recent years. As with other labor organizations, we support worker control of worker centers and oppose top-down control by a paid hierarchy.

Working class communities can also develop various types of member-controlled, democratic economic institutions such as worker cooperatives, housing cooperatives, and community land trusts. Worker cooperatives can be used to provide jobs, provide services the movement needs, and illustrate the possibility of a society based on self-management. At the same time, the potential of worker cooperatives is limited by competitive pressures in an economy dominated by the big capitalist companies. Forming worker cooperatives is a useful tactic, but we don’t see this as a strategy that can liberate the working class from the class system.

**For A Self-Managed Society**

To liberate itself from subordination to dominating classes, the working class must dismantle the hierarchical structures of the corporations and the state. The working class, through its own united action, must seize and manage directly the entire system of production, distribution and services.

Self-management must not be limited to the workplaces but must be extended throughout the society and to governance of public
affairs. Self-management means that people control the decisions that affect them. The basic building blocks of a self-managed society would be assemblies of workers in workplaces and of residents in neighborhoods. These assemblies would be federated together throughout society.

The transformation of society that we seek isn’t limited to breaking down the power of dominating classes. The revolution must also unravel the state, patriarchy, white supremacy, and imperialism.

To replace capitalism, we do not support “market socialism” where workplaces are the collective private property of groups of workers. Market competition would pit workers against each other and lead to new privileges and the re-emergence of a class system. The land and means of production must become the common property of everyone in society.

The alternative to bureaucratic central planning and market exploitation is a system of grassroots social planning that begins with the participation of people where they live and work, and horizontal interaction between communities and the workplace organizations. Proposals that affect larger geographic areas or whole industries can be developed through congresses of delegates from the base assemblies.

Re-designing jobs and getting rid of dangerous or polluting technology will be priorities in a social transformation that aims at human liberation and environmental sustainability. Liberation from class domination means systematically developing the potential of all working people, and dissolving the power of the bureaucratic hierarchies of professionals and managers. To ensure that everyone can effectively participate in decision-making, jobs need to be re-designed so that conceptual and decision-making tasks are integrated with the tasks of doing the physical work.

Self-emancipation of the working class requires that the working class gain power over society. But the working class can only actually exercise power by doing so collectively through institutions of
popular self-management. A self-managing society needs a governance structure through which the people make and enforce the basic rules of the society and defend their social order. We envision regional and national congresses of delegates elected by the base assemblies that would have the basic power of making decisions about social rules and society-wide priorities. Proposals of the congresses that are particularly controversial or important should be referred back to the base assemblies for decision.

The hierarchical professional military should be replaced by an egalitarian people’s militia. During the process of social transformation, we are opposed to any armed bodies that are not under the direct control of the working class mass organizations. The working class needs to make sure that when the dust settles there’s not some hierarchical armed power that can be used by an elite to defend some new system of boss power.

Ecology

The ecological crisis of our time has its roots in the capitalist market. Companies only worry about things that have a market price. Corporations shift real human costs onto others when their pollution has ill effects on worker health, or working class neighborhoods or communities of color. Businesses pollute because they don’t have to pay for the real costs to humanity from their pollution.

We envision a world where common ownership of the earth, a socially controlled economy, and the direct democracy of communities acts as guardian of ecological sustainability.

Political Organization

We advocate the development of an anti-authoritarian political organization where membership is based on a shared political perspective. Without a shared perspective, disagreements on basic points can get in the way of joint activity and cooperation.
Political ideas and strategies need to be informed by practical experience. This means that the political organization needs to bring together activists who are rooted in working class communities and their mass organizations and struggles. Through our active presence we can learn from others. Through our participation and organizing activity, and the influence of our ideas, we can build a social base within the working class for our anti-authoritarian approach to social transformation.

Through organization activists can avoid isolation, participate in discussions with other activists who have different experiences, and get together for common political work. Through organization we can pool resources and sustain publications and other efforts to build a visible presence for our ideas.

We advocate an approach where activists work to spread widely within the rank and file of movements and mass organizations the self-confidence, knowledge, skills and opportunities for decision-making participation needed to make self-management an effective reality. We want mass organizations to be self-managing and we work for this aim in such organizations and to counteract bureaucratic or authoritarian tendencies.

We reject the Leninist theory of a “vanguard party” which seeks to manage the movement for social change as a prelude to seizing state power. This approach fails to see the danger of concentrating decision-making and expertise into the hands of a few. The liberatory social transformation that we seek will not be brought about by a political party running a hierarchical state but through the creation of institutions of collective self-management by a working class mass movement. “The emancipation of the working class must be the work of the workers themselves.”

We do not claim to have the final “correct line” or all the answers.

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The Workers Solidarity Alliance was founded in November 1984. This statement expresses our shared political perspective. If you
agree with this statement, join us!

For more information, or to join the WSA, please contact us at:

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<tr>
<th>Workers Solidarity Alliance/Alianza Solidaridad Obrera</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corresponding Secretary E-mail:</td>
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<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:wsa.corresponding.secretary@gmail.com">wsa.corresponding.secretary@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web: <a href="http://workersolidarity.org/">http://workersolidarity.org/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snail Mail (USPS): WSA, PO Box 844, Times Square Station, New York, NY 10108 USA</td>
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Article 1: Name and Structure.

Section 1. This organization shall be known as Workers Solidarity Alliance.

Section 2. The Workers Solidarity Alliance shall be comprised of wage workers, the unemployed, and those objectively a part of the working class.

Section 3. Members may organize themselves into Local Groups, Regional Organizations, Commissions and Committees.

Section 4. Local Groups and Regional Organizations shall be self-regulating and may determine their own structure so long as this is consistent with the principles and Constitution of the organization, and with democratic decision making, by majority vote when consensus cannot be reached.

Section 5. A meeting of the Local Group may only make decisions binding on the group if a quorum is present. A “quorum” is defined as a simple majority of all the current members of the Local Group.

Section 6. Local Groups and Regional Organizations shall be organized on a regional basis. All members of Local Groups and Regional Organizations shall be members of the organization.

Section 7. Local Groups and Regional Organizations shall make their geographic jurisdiction known to the Coordinating Committee and shall include only those people living and working within that jurisdiction. Local Groups and Regional Organizations shall be known as the Workers Solidarity Alliance [geographical jurisdiction] Group or Workers Solidarity Alliance Regional Organization.
Section 8. Local Groups shall be able to determine their own dues and structure so long as this Section 9. Local Groups may divide at any time they so choose and shall decide between themselves new jurisdictions. The Coordinating Committee shall be promptly notified of such changes.

Section 10. Commissions and Committees may be created to organize and carry on work in given industries and areas of interest, for mutual aid and defense, to publish and distribute literature, and to deal with such problems as may arise within the organization. [see Article 3A]

Section 11. See Article 3A, Sec. 2 (below).

Section 12. See Article 3A, Sec. 3 (below).

Section 13. Local Groups, Regional Organizations, Commissions and Committees shall be responsible for their own debts.

Article 2: Membership.

Section 1. Any working class person [as defined in Article 1.2] living in the United States or Canada may become a member by reading the W.S.A. political statement “WHERE WE STAND”, agreeing with it as written, and notifying the Corresponding Secretary that you agree with the statement and wish to become a member.

Section 1.1. Where branches exist, applicants will be reviewed and voted on before being accepted by the branch. Where no branch exists, applicants will be accepted barring objections by the general membership, wherein a vote would occur. All applicants will have a 90 day collaborative period where the organization and the applicant will work together, determine our [their] level of unity, and decide whether to take up membership, extend the collaborative period, or work together without membership to be decided by the branches or general membership. Regional delegates will engage those applicants where no branches exist.
Section 2. No body may have less than three (3) members. Whenever a body falls below that number, the remaining members shall relinquish all funds and supplies to the Coordinating Committee.

Section 3. All members shall have only one vote on any question. All members shall have equal voice and standing within the organization. All members shall receive the help and support of the organization in times of hardship and trouble.

Section 4. All new applicants shall apply for membership as individuals. Organizational affiliations to the W.S.A. shall be on an individual membership basis, except as waived by W.S.A. membership vote.

Section 5. In the event that a constituent body secedes, is suspended from, or expelled from, the organization, all members of this body shall come under review by the Coordinating Committee.

Section 6. Members who violate the Constitution or “WHERE WE STAND” of the Workers Solidarity Alliance or act contrary to the interests of the organization may be expelled. No member may be expelled without written notification sent by certified/return receipt mail. This will follow an ample discussion period and an opportunity to offer a defense. Only a Continental Conference, after a hearing, may expel a member, by a majority vote, and only if the accused member has had sixty (60) days prior notice.

Article 3: Responsibilities & Work of the Coordinating Committee.

Section 1. The Coordinating Committee shall include the Corresponding Secretary and Treasurer, who shall be elected by the general membership by a referendum vote. There shall also be one regional delegate elected by the members in each of the four regions. If there is a tie vote in the election to any position other than Corresponding Secretary, the current Corresponding Secretary shall decide by drawing lots. If there is a tie vote in the election of Corresponding Secretary, the current Treasurer shall decide by drawing lots.
Section 2. The Coordinating Committee shall exist to carry on the work of the organization between conferences, coordinate the work of the various constituent groups, adjudicate disputes between these bodies, organize conventions, coordinate and oversee publishing and generally keep the organization moving and united.

Section 3. Any member shall have voice before the Coordinating Committee. Any member may request a written explanation of procedure from any member of the Coordinating Committee and shall be provided with same promptly.

Section 4. The Corresponding Secretary will act as coordinator and recording secretary of the Coordinating Committee, and of the motions and votes of its individual members on all matters which come before it.

Section 5. The Coordinating Committee may suspend, on the basis of charges brought by Local Groups and Regional Organizations, but cannot expel, any individual, Local Group, Regional Organizations, Commission or Committee.

Section 6. The Treasurer shall be responsible for providing the membership with regular reports of the organization’s finances. The Treasurer shall dispense funds only for activities mandated by the organization and shall reimburse members promptly for expenditures mandated by the organization.

Section 7. Coordinating Committee will be responsible to the members of the organization when they are gathered in convention or through referendum. The Coordinating Committee will organize such conventions at least annually and shall issue referendums at the request of ten (10) percent of the membership.

Section 8. Members of the Coordinating Committee may be recalled by referendum initiated by Section 9. The term of office of the Coordinating Committee begins on January 1st and ends on December 31st of the same year.

Section 10. No member shall serve in the same position on the Coordinating Committee for more than two successive terms.
Article 3A: Commissions and Committees.

Section 1. Membership is open to all WSA members [see Article 2, Sec. 1] for one or any of WSA Commissions. All members will be a member of one or more WSA commissions and are encouraged to act in them to the best of their ability. These commissions are responsible for developing the educational and organizational resources necessary for the full participation of WSA members in such struggles, mutual aid and defense, to publish and distribute related literature, and to deal with such problems as may arise within the organization. The Commissions must work to give inactive interested members the resources necessary to build up their abilities, confidence, and connections necessary to help the member become engaged with or initiate mass struggle. Each Commission is charged with creating curriculum and training for WSA members to develop capable organizers in their field.

Section 2. Commissions shall be self-regulating but shall work openly and in cooperation with Local Groups, Regional Organizations and the Coordinating Committee. Committees shall be subordinate to the bodies which create them. Local branches and Regional Organizations will have the autonomy to choose amongst prioritized WSA struggles, and propose new ones to the organizations for consideration. (Amended July 17, 2010).

Section 3. Commissions shall be able to set their own dues and structure and determine their areas of work so long as these decisions do not conflict with ongoing work under the jurisdiction of other bodies within the organization and payment of dues to the organization.

Section 4. Each Commission or Committee shall issue short general monthly reports to the general members and work in coordination with the Coordinating Committee. Quarterly a more detailed report on activities will be given to the general membership.

Section 5. Within each struggle WSA members will work to confront and challenge intersecting oppressions should the opportunity arise, whether racial, sexist, homo or transphobic, and attack
the connections of oppression and exploitation. (Amended July 17, 2010).

**Section 6.** WSA collectively prioritizes work in struggles that is collectively self-managed by the members effected by the struggle, engages in direct action to achieve its aims, which has the potential for transformation of collective consciousness in struggle, and which brings us closer to autonomous class organization and revolution. Direct participation is preferred to outside solidarity, and WSA prioritizes the struggles which have the potential to build or develop mass movements organized around collective interest. (Amended July 17, 2010).

**Section 7.** New Commissions may be proposed and old ones removed by a vote by the general membership, either through referendum or a vote at a Continental Conference. Struggles in WSA commissions are an organizational priority to be based on collective activity, strength, and strategy of the membership. (Amended July 17, 2010).

**Article 4: Conferences.**

**Section 1.** Continental Conferences shall be held at least once a year in order to set policy, coordinate work, review the organization’s work and progress, deal with problems between constituent bodies, approve or redirect the work of the constituent bodies and the Coordinating Committee, and consider such problems as may come before the membership.

**Section 2.** All Coordinating Committee, Editors and Editorial Groups and activists are encouraged to report to the conferences or send a report if they are unable to attend.

**Section 3.** Continental Conferences shall be open to all members of the organization and all members will have voice and vote.

**Section 4.** Suspended members or groups shall have voice, but no vote, at conventions until their suspension has been lifted by
the body. Persons causing the suspension of members or groups shall have voice, but no vote, on issues relevant to such suspensions.

Section 5. Agendas, convention materials, information on voting and attendance shall be circulated by the Coordinating Committee, well in advance of any conference.

Section 6. Conferences will be held in locations accessible to the majority of members and at such times of year that the majority of members can attend.

Section 7. Provisions will be made for members who cannot afford to travel long distances, for day care, and for disabled members well in advance of every conference.

Section 8. Members may send proxies to anyone they feel will adequately represent them at conventions as long as their representative is a paid-up member not under suspension.

Section 9. Conferences shall be self-regulating regarding resolutions, structure, length of sessions and scope as long as democratic procedure prevails and a majority of those present agree.

Section 10. The Corresponding Secretary shall solicit nominations for the Coordinating Committee, prior to each year’s conference, with additional provision being made for nominations during the convention and mail-in nominations after the convention. The election of the Coordinating Committee, will take place after nominations have been received and accepted, and return ballots must be postmarked four (4) weeks after being mailed by the Coordinating Committee. The Corresponding Secretary shall decide any tie votes by drawing lots.

Section 11. Members of the organization who wish to dissent from the decisions of a conference can appeal the decisions of the conference through a referendum within two months of the close of the convention. Referendums may be requested by ten (10) percent of the membership and will be overseen by the Coordinat-
ing Committee, or by a special committee comprised of aggrieved members and representatives of the Coordinating Committee.

**Article 5: Dues.**

**Section 1.** Members shall pay dues directly to the Treasurer.

**Section 2.** The allocation of the organization's funds will be decided by the membership in convention and will be overseen by the Coordinating Committee. Reports on said allocations will be made to the membership directly.

**Section 3.** Dues will be based on a fiscal year beginning January 1 and ending December 31 and will be paid quarterly.

**Section 4.** Dues shall be $18 per quarter for an employed person making the equivalent of at least $8 per hour for a full workweek but less than $12 per hour. Dues shall be $24 per quarter for an employed person making the equivalent of $12 or more per hour for a full workweek. Dues shall be $12 per quarter for an employed person making the equivalent of a full workweek paid at more than $5 per hour and less than $8 per hour. Dues for a full-time student or homemaker, a retired or unemployed person, or an employed person making the equivalent of under $5 per hour for a full workweek shall be $7 per quarter.

**Section 5.** Dues shall not be waived for any member of the organization except when involved in a strike or lockout.

**Section 6.** Persons who fall two quarters behind in dues shall be considered suspended. Persons will be notified of the amount of dues they are required to pay per quarter when they are tentatively accepted for W.S.A. membership. Persons who do not pay dues at all after having joined the organization shall not be considered members of the organization. Members who fall one year behind in dues will be dropped from membership. Members are responsible for notifying the Treasurer if their quarterly wage changes sufficiently to affect their dues.
Article 6: Amendments & Conflicting Parts.

Section 1. Amendments to the Constitution can only be made after debate and discussion within the organization. Such debate and discussion will be open, cordial and serious and will be based on actual problems at hand.

Section 2. Changes in the Constitution will be undertaken by members meeting in convention or referendum, but only after sixty (60) days prior notice. The Coordinating Committee, shall see to it that such changes as are made are implemented promptly.

Section 3. All NEW conflicting parts of the Constitution shall be considered null and void until the membership decides on alternate procedures at the next conference. In the meantime, the Coordinating Committee shall oversee the affected parts of the Constitution.

Article 7: Regional Conferences.

Section 1. Local Groups, Regional Organizations, Commissions, and Committees may call such conferences as are needed in order to strengthen and coordinate work, plan for conferences, and settle disputes between members or constituent groups.

Section 2. Regional conferences shall involve all affected members and the Coordinating Committee. All members of the organization shall be eligible to speak. All members of affected Local Groups, Regional Organizations, Commissions and Committees shall be guaranteed equal voice and vote.

Section 3. Regional conferences shall be self-supporting and self-regulating. Nothing they decide upon or do shall in any way commit the organization to a policy or activity.

Section 4. Members wishing to dissent from the decisions made at regional conferences shall have the opportunity to express this dissent in follow-up mailings and at the national conference following the regional conference.
Section 5. Regional conferences shall decide on an appropriate way to make agreed upon resolutions known to the membership of the organization. Those members wishing to dissent from such agreements and resolutions shall have equal access to the membership.

Article 8: Editors & Editorial Groups.

Section 1. Editors and Editorial Groups shall be responsible to the groups which have selected them, the membership meeting in convention, and to the Coordinating Committee.

Section 2. All publications, websites and forums initiated by the W.S.A. shall exist to fulfill certain stated goals and objectives. These publications, websites and forums shall be overseen by the Coordinating Committee. Editors and Editorial Group exist to see that these goals and objectives are met.

Section 3. All publications will clearly state that they are published and overseen by the organization.

Contact us at:
Workers Solidarity Alliance/Alianza Solidaridad Obrera
Corresponding Secretary E-mail: wsa.corresponding.secretary@gmail.com
Web: http://workersolidarity.org/
Snail Mail (USPS): WSA, PO Box 844, Times Square Station, New York, NY 10108 USA
Workers Solidarity Alliance/Alianza Solidaridad Obrero
Proposal for Formal Voting Process Between Conferences
May 23, 2011 DRAFT.

The Internal Communication Committee proposes that the WSA establish a Voting Commission to handle organizational voting, which should happen (monthly / every two months / every three months) and as needed. The voting commission will investigate electronic voting and in the meantime will take votes (over the phone / by e-mail) by (delegating one person to collect votes / instructing regional delegates to collect votes).

This voting process is only for decisions that need to be made and haven’t been delegated specifically to committees or officers. The WSA has been using an informal process for things like solidarity statements, and that informal process can stay in place.

The formal voting process is as follows:

1. Member or committee (the Proposer) puts out a Draft Proposal for review or comment. Proposal is clearly listed as a “Draft” along with the date (e.g., “May 23, 2011 DRAFT”).

2. The proposal enters a Discussion Period. During the discussion period, Amendments are proposed. If the Proposer agrees with the amendment, it is considered a “Friendly Amendment” and incorporated by the proposer. If not, the following steps are taken:

   a. Whoever wants the Amendment first tries to work out a compromise with the Proposer.

   b. If no compromise can be made, whoever wants the Amendment asks for a “second” – that is, another member who agrees with the amendment.

   c. If no “second” is found, the Amendment dies.

   d. If a “second” is found, the membership must vote on
whether to incorporate the Amendment, and then the Discussion Period resumes.

3. The *Current Draft* of a proposal is always available to the membership using the communication method the WSA has chosen, whether it be over e-mail or on the forums.

4. After the *Discussion Period* has ended, the proposal is clearly marked as “*Final Draft*” and sent for a vote.

For more information about the WSA:

**Contact:**

**Workers Solidarity Alliance/Alianza Solidaridad Obrera**

Corresponding Secretary E-mail: wsa.corresponding.secretary@gmail.com

Web: http://workersolidarity.org/

Snail Mail (USPS): WSA, PO Box 844, Times Square Station, New York, NY 10108 USA
## Workers Solidarity Alliance
### Dues Schedule for Fiscal Year beginning Jan 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weekly Income</th>
<th>Over $12/hr *40hr</th>
<th>$8 – $12/hr *40hr</th>
<th>$5 – $8/hr *40hr</th>
<th>under $5/hr *40hr (1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st Quarter: Jan 1, Feb, Mar</td>
<td>$24</td>
<td>$18</td>
<td>$12</td>
<td>$7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Quarter: Apr 1, May Jun</td>
<td>$24</td>
<td>$18</td>
<td>$12</td>
<td>$7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Quarter: Jul 1, Aug, Sep</td>
<td>$24</td>
<td>$18</td>
<td>$12</td>
<td>$7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th Quarter: Oct 1, Nov, Dec</td>
<td>$24</td>
<td>$18</td>
<td>$12</td>
<td>$7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY TOTAL (2)</td>
<td>$96</td>
<td>$72</td>
<td>$48</td>
<td>$28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTES:**
1. Also, includes full time students, homemakers, retired persons or unemployed persons.
2. Pay directly to the WSA Treasurer. All spending must be approved by the membership in convention.

**Source:** Workers Solidarity Alliance, “Article 5: Dues”, *Constitution*, March 2009.

Mail dues to WSA Treasurer at:

WSA, PO Box 1313, Willimantic CT 06226 USA
The Role of the WSA Local Branch

October 2011 DRAFT

On the following pages, please find a thumbnail sketch of the role and nature of a WSA Local Branch.

This booklet is meant as a general outline of how a Local Branch might operate. We recognize that not all Local Branches will have the same size and capacities to implement each and every item in this booklet.

Recognizing that local conditions will dictate the form and implementation these concepts will take, comrades should be as flexible with the implementation as required by the local conditions. What is important is that the Local Branch be organized and act in as coherent and efficient manner as possible. The aim is not to overstructure, but to be effective in carrying out the work of the organization.

Introduction:

The WSA Local Branch is the basic and most important component of the organization. Aside from the Commissions which may be formed by the WSA, the major burden of work, action and activities rests upon the Local Branches.

Who Can Belong to a Local Branch?

Membership in a Local Branch is based on the same criteria as membership in the WSA. The member must be in agreement with our basic political statement, Where We Stand. According to our WSA Constitution, WSA membership “shall be comprised of wage workers, the unemployed, and those objectively a part of the working class.”

Membership in our organization is open to students, homemakers,
unemployed, retired and self-employed people as members. What job we have is not what unites us, but rather that we all identify as part of the same class and work together to change society.

Local Branches shall make their geographic jurisdiction known to the Coordinating Committee and shall include only those people living and working within that jurisdiction. Local Branches shall be known as the Workers Solidarity Alliance [geographical jurisdiction] Branch.

**How many members does it take to constitute a Local Branch?**

A Local Branch, states the WSA Constitution, is composed of not “less than three (3) members.”

Members are to be responsible for regular dues payments as set forth by the organization.

WSA has agreed that all new member “applicants will be accepted barring objections by the general membership, wherein a vote would occur. All applicants will have a 90 day collaborative period where the organization and the applicant will work together, determine our level of unity, and decide whether to take up membership, extend the collaborative period, or work together without membership to be decided by the branches.” This period may be waived for people who belong to affiliated groups (i.e., groups associated with the Class Struggle Anarchist Conference) or people that the local has already worked with for at least 90 days.

**How does the Local Branch function?**

A Local Branch shall be self-regulating and may determine their own structure so long as this is consistent with the principles and Constitution of the organization.

That said, for a Local Branch to be effective, it must be organized. Internal Local Branch organization should consist of having a local
Secretary. The branch secretary shall be the one who would keep notes and make reports to the WSA and convene meetings if they haven’t been set in previous meetings.

Meetings should be held on a regular basis.

A meeting functions well when there is an Agenda. It is suggested that the meeting Agenda be written and circulated in advance of meeting. Written Meeting Notes and Activity Reports are essential and should be taken. They should also be shared on a regular basis with other members of the WSA. A local internal email list is suggested to enhance regular and frequent local communication. A meeting of the Local Branch may only make decisions binding on the group if a quorum is present. A “quorum” is defined as a simple majority of all the current members of the Branch. Internal democratic decision making is by majority vote when consensus cannot be reached. Local Branches shall be able to determine their own dues and structure so long as this does not conflict with the payment of dues and the structure of the organization continentally. Local Branches may divide at any time they so choose and shall decide between themselves new jurisdictions. The Coordinating Committee shall be promptly notified of such changes.

**Local Branch Activities:**

When planning overall activities, a discussion on the positives, negatives, shortcomings, etc., should be had with an end goal of deciding what work to do and directing most of the locals time and resources into it. Local Branches should always take an honest stock of their human abilities to carry out its work and activities. Strategic planning and activities will only be successful when there is the commitment to fulfill the obligations needed to carry out the work.
Older members should make an effort to mentor newer members. Skill sharing should be circular with all members engaged in this process.

Periodic assessments of the Local Branch’s capabilities need to happen.

That said, there are certain internal and external fundamentals that each Local Branch should endeavor to engage in:

A. Internal Education.

“Study, reflection, and conversation” – Locals should read together and talk about ideas as we put them into practice—informing our theory—informing our practice. Locals should get together when possible around discussion documents and talk about them and see how they relate to their current organizing.

B. External Education.

Local Branches should hold external educationals as deemed practical. Such an educational can be on topical subjects, theoretical discussions, solidarity meetings and the like.

Our goals are to present a public face to our thinking on topics of the day, breaking down our theoretical views and acting in a manner that allows for a public discussion of the same. Our aim is to provide a public forum to present WSA views, to engage those not in the WSA, distribute literature and aim towards bringing others closer to the WSA.

An educational can serve as a forum for promoting strike support and other solidarity campaigns as well.

These educationals allow those not in the WSA to engage the WSA, to hear our views and, hopefully develop relations between ourselves and others.
**C. Website and literature.**

Where practical, Local Branches may want to consider their own website. This website should link to all relevant W.S.A. websites as well.

A local newsletter would be ideal and can be made posted on-line in pdf. Format.

**D. “Mass” work.**

The lifeblood of any organization is the “mass work” that its members engage in. Local Branches should not be oriented excessively to symbolic protests or hopping about from the latest symbolic action.

WSA defines “mass work” as membership activities in the workplace and social struggles in our communities.

The Local Branch should try to evaluate its resources and work out some sort of long-term strategic plan.

It would be best if members were involved in some kind of organizing or active involvement that has some sort of long-term potential in terms of building links to people in a particular workplace, neighborhood, area of struggle etc. If they don’t have the resources to initiate some mass organization themselves, they can get involved in organizations that do exist even if, from our point of view, they have various limitations, such as being bureaucratic, too liberal, etc..

The overall idea should be building a social base for our ideas in workplaces and in working class & oppressed communities in general, through building relationships in struggles, in mass organizations, etc..

Ideally, locals should be organizing together on some similar projects. Importantly, they should represent the organization and libertarian socialism well, be principled, but also be constant advocates
for self-organization and movement autonomy (from political orgs, non-profits, reformist “leadership”, etc.).

**E. Building relationships.**

Good relationships keep organizations together. Good relationships build productive and constructive ties with those outside our organization.

Internally, good and positive relations between comrades can enhance a well functioning Local Branch. They can also enhance the internal and external work of the Local Branch. Conversely, petty squabbles, personality clashes and a general negative attitude can be harmful to both internal development and external activities.

Externally, each WSA member is a representative of the organization. The way members conduct themselves is reflective of the whole organization. The aim of the WSA is to constructively engage others, if possible, win others to our point of view or simply allow for our In mass organizations, good, positive and constructive relationships are absolutely key to our work and every effort to act in that manner and project that image is imperative.

**Closing Comments.**

We have tried to lay out what a “model” WSA Local Branch should be. That said, we recognize that conditions will vary from local to local. Some local branches may develop additional or supplemental approaches and policies which will help them function better.

In closing, this booklet is meant as a guide and not as a bible. Members can streamline or adjust things as appropriate. The most important thing is to be a functioning and functional local branch—one that contributes and enhances to the local membership work, and the work of the W.S.A. in general.
Credits:
A number of comrades were consulted at one stage or another in the development of this document. Thanks to Abbey, Deric and Tom for their contributions.

*W.S.A. Constitution*, http://workersolidarity.org/?page_id=46

**Where We Stand**, http://workersolidarity.org/?page_id=78

Contact:

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