



INTRO to the MOVEMENT ASSESSMENT TOOL

Welcome and thank you for joining with LeftRoots to do an initial mapping of movement forces in different parts of the United States. The opportunities and challenges facing organizers and activists looking to make transformative, revolutionary change have never been greater. As a political project aiming to spark the emergence of a radical and relevant Left in the U.S., LeftRoots hopes this process will be a small step towards developing a more accurate assessment of our collective strengths and weaknesses.

We have two goals with this movement mapping process:

1. We want to gain a deeper understanding of how social movement activists see the strengths, weaknesses and questions facing movements forces in different parts of the country. As the great strategist Sun Tzu once said, knowing oneself is a core task of any grouping trying to make change. This information will inform LeftRoots' project to develop grounded strategies for socialist liberation. For more information about that project, [click here](#).
2. We hope to begin dialogue with social movement leftists in different local areas about the possibility of building strong LeftRoots branches in the coming period.

Our goal is to collect assessments from at least 5 - 7 local areas before December 15. Clearly, this will not give us a total and complete assessment of movement forces, but it will be a start that we can build from.

Your commitment to complete the Movement Assessment Tool (MAT) will be a huge contribution to our success, and we appreciate it.

THE PROCESS

LeftRoots is releasing the MAT to folks in November 2014 that we have been in dialogue with over the last year, and we hope to collect completed surveys by December 15, 2014. On November 16 at 10am PST, LeftRoots will hold an online info session about the MAT, and we'd encourage at least one person from each group planning on filling out the MAT to attend.

Ideally, groups of 3 - 5 people will work together to complete the MAT in each local area. Each group will answer all of the questions to the best of their abilities, and they will each develop the process that works best for them. For example, some groups might convene local discussion groups to solicit input on different questions. Other groups might do 1-on-1's with movement activists in their communities to collect responses. Still other groups might divide up the questions amongst themselves and come back to share their perspectives with one another before completing the MAT. Each group will figure out what works best for them and their community.

We hope that groups of people will work together to complete the MAT for a local area, but that's not a requirement. Individuals can fill the MAT out too. Also, the people completing a MAT can all be affiliated with the same organization, however in assessing whether a LeftRoots branch is immediately possible will be informed by

whether people from different organizations work together to complete the MAT. Finally, different groups can fill out more than one MAT for the same local area although we don't necessarily encourage it.

After the MATs are submitted online no later than 12pm EST on December 15 (you get bonus points for submitting them early!), the LeftRoots branch in the Bay Area (currently the only branch) will compile and figure out the best way to share the results of the MAT.

In the meantime, the LeftRoots Coordinating Committee members will have conversations with groups that submitted MATs about whether it might make sense to start a branch in that area, what the steps for that might look like and how folks can get involved in LeftRoots' work in 2015.

We recognize that you are strapped for time, so we've tried to make completing the MAT as easy as possible. The MAT is an online tool. You can access it here (<http://leftroots.net/mat/>).

COMPLETING THE MOVEMENT MAPPING TOOL

Mapping our movements' strengths and weaknesses is a messy undertaking, and there may be some questions that are confusing. We ask that you do the best that you can. Some of the questions might call for a level of research and investigation that you're not able to pull off. Others might ask for your opinions that might not be shared by a majority of movement activists in your area. We trust that you'll do the best you can, and we recognize the limitations of this process but our primary goal is to begin a dialogue with you. As this dialogue continues, we'll figure out the best way to answer these questions together

In hopes of making the process as clear as possible, the Bay Area branch of LeftRoots is doing three things:

1. We created a glossary that defines what we mean by some of the terms we use throughout the MAT;
2. We worked together to complete our own MAT for the Bay Area. Hopefully, this will give you some more of a sense of what we were trying to get out of some of the more confusing questions; and
3. We will host an online info session on Sunday, Nov. 16 at 10am PST for folks planning to complete the MAT.

THANK YOU

Thanks again for helping us map the movement and strengthening LeftRoots' attempts to spark the re-emergence of a radical and relevant Left in the U.S. We are honored and excited to be working with you because we believe that together we can build a movement guided by transformative strategy to win lasting dignity and liberation for all.



GLOSSARY for the MAT

For the purposes of the Movement Assessment Tool, here's the definitions that we're using for the following terms:

- **Movement**— sustained efforts where various groups and individuals take collective and individual action to challenge authorities, power-holders or cultural beliefs for the purpose of achieving a common goal.
- **Movement Forces**— those individuals, organizations and institutions working on any number of fronts to make radical or progressive change.
- **Left**— we've used the definition created by Chilean political scientist Marta Harnecker, "the array of forces that oppose the capitalist system and its profit motive and which are fighting for an alternative humanist, solidarity-filled society, a socialist society, the building blocks of which are the interests of the working classes." (Marta Harnecker, *Rebuilding the Left*, p. 32)
- **Social Movement Leftist**— includes movement activists who may or may not be members of Left parties or organizations. Individually, they both hold leftist ideas **and** their primary place of political activism is in mass organizations that organize and develop the capacities of people from historically oppressed and marginalized communities.
- **Local Area/Community**—the geographic area that you are assessing. For the MAT, we are defining local area as the area from which people could be expected to attend a meeting.
- **Working class(es)**— *We believe that a developing a concrete and current class analysis of U.S. society is one of the key tasks facing Leftists today, but starting from the understanding that class is defined by a group's relationship to the dominant political economy, we are using the following definition of working class(es): the class(es) which have no legal means of subsistence other than selling to capital their power to work.*
- **Revolutionary Organizations**— Political organizations whose membership is united by agreement around a political ideology. The ideologies of those organizations and the work that they might do varies greatly. Some examples of revolutionary organizations in the U.S. include the Revolutionary Community Party (RCP), the International Socialist Organization (ISO), Freedom Road Socialist Organization, Common Struggle and New Afrikan People's Organization (NAPO).
- **Political Tendency**— Common currents of thought or ideological outlook that are shared by activists so that those activists could be considered part of a common political tendency— even if they're not in the same political organization.



LEFTROOTS' MOVEMENT ASSESSMENT TOOL

1. INFO ON THE MAT TEAM

1. Each person who filled out this MAT
 - a. *Name (Note)*
 - b. *Age (Pull-down)*
 - c. *Race (Multiple Choice)*
 - d. *Gender (Pull-down)*
 - e. *Class Position (Multiple Choice)*
 - f. *Primary Language (Pull-down)*
 - g. *Interested in getting involved with LeftRoots? (Pull-down)*
2. What's the name of the local area (town, city, metro region) that this assessment describes?
 - a. Name

2. SOCIAL MOVEMENT LEFTISTS

1. About how many social movement leftists are in your local area?
 - a. 1 - 20
 - b. 21 - 50
 - c. 51 - 100
 - d. 101 - 150
 - e. 151 - 200
 - f. 201 - 300
 - g. More than 300
 - h. Notes
2. To what extent are social movement leftists in your area connected to one another?
 - a. It definitely feels like a we have a community
 - b. There are cliques but not a strong sense of community
 - c. Most folks only relate to each other through movement work
 - d. Deep tensions undermine feelings of community
 - e. *Notes*
3. Are there any particular tensions (current or historic) that are playing out now between social movement leftists?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. *Notes*
4. LeftRoots believes that our movements have a lot to learn and benefit from various political traditions and tendencies. Amongst social movement leftists in your local area, what political tendencies have the greatest influence—either in terms of organizations or in terms of ideas influencing popular thought? *Please check all that apply.*
 - a. Anarchism
 - b. Revolutionary Marxism
 - c. Revolutionary Nationalism
 - d. Some form of Identity Politics
 - e. Reformism, Liberalism
 - f. Other
5. Please list 2 - 5 questions are social movement leftists in your area currently grappling with?
 - a. *Question 1*
 - b. *Question 2*
 - c. *Question 3*
 - d. *Question 4*
 - e. *Question 5*
 - f. *Notes*
6. Thinking about different groupings of social movement leftists in your area, who are 3 - 6 influential people, bridge builders that have trust and respect amongst different sectors of social movement leftists in your area?
 - a. Name 1
 - b. Name 2
 - c. Name 3
 - d. Name 4
 - e. Name 5

- f. Name 6
- g. Notes

3. MOVEMENT HISTORY

1. Historically, which political tendency/tendencies have influenced movement thinking and attitudes in your local area? *Please check all that apply.*
 - a. Anarchism
 - b. Revolutionary Marxism
 - c. Revolutionary Nationalism
 - d. Some form of Identity Politics
 - e. Liberalism, Reformism
 - f. Other
 - g. Notes
2. To what extent does revolutionary movement history impact the character of the movement in your area today?
 - a. Scale (1 - 10):
 - i. One: It is not really present in local culture and memory
 - ii. Five: It is present in isolated pockets, subcultures of local culture and memory
 - iii. Ten: It is present in lots of different parts of local culture and memory
 - b. Notes: Please explain how.
3. Are there older movement activists and organizers in your area who are still active and willing to provide mentoring to younger activists?
 - a. Yes, there are and they function at high levels.
 - b. Yes, there are but they are not positioned to act as mentors.
 - c. There used to be, but there aren't really a lot of those folks around now.
 - d. Not really.
 - e. Notes
4. If there are experienced movement activists who serve as mentors please list some of their names.
 - a. Notes
 - b. Notes
 - c. Notes
 - d. Notes
 - e. Notes

4. MOVEMENT & ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT

1. What are the three biggest strengths of movement forces in your local area?
 - a. *Notes*
 - b. *Notes*
 - c. *Notes*
2. What are the three biggest challenges to movement forces in your local area being more effective?
 - a. *Notes*
 - b. *Notes*
 - c. *Notes*
3. What's the density of movement institutions based in your local area? (by 'movement institutions' we mean community organizations, trade unions, worker centers, training centers, research institutes, youth groups, organizational support centers, service organizations, worker coops, activist churches, etc.)
 - a. Scale (1 – 10)
 - i. One: There's barely any
 - ii. Five: There are some, but not a lot
 - iii. Ten: There's a lot
 - b. *Notes*
4. What is a rough percentages of time and energy that movement organizations devote to different approaches to social change that groups in your area?
 - a. Service Provision
 - b. Organizing
 - c. Advocacy
 - d. Electoral
 - e. Cultural Work
 - f. Alternative Institution Building (Coops, Time banks, etc.)
 - g. Political and/or popular education
 - h. Other
5. What alliances or networks are organizations connected to? *Please check all that apply.*
 - a. Jobs with Justice
 - b. Grassroots Global Justice
 - c. National Domestic Workers Alliance
 - d. NDLON
 - e. AFL-CIO
 - f. Change to Win
 - g. National Guestworkers' Alliance
 - h. National People's Action
 - i. Alliance for a Just Society
 - j. Climate Justice Alliance
 - k. PICO
 - l. IAF
 - m. Black Left Unity Network
 - n. United Workers Congress
 - o. U.S. Students' Association
 - p. *Other*

6. What communities, sectors are most organized, most connected to organizations in your local area?
 - a. Community/Sector 1
 - b. Community/Sector 2
 - c. Community/Sector 3
 - d. *Notes*
7. What communities, sectors are least organized, most connected to organizations in your local area?
 - a. Community/Sector 1
 - b. Community/Sector 2
 - c. Community/Sector 3
 - d. *Notes*
8. To what extent are movement organizations able to impact on the local policy-making process and elected officials?
 - a. Scale (1 – 10)
 - i. One: Most movement organizations avoid the governmental policy-making process and focus on other things
 - ii. Two: The organizations that interact with local government have weak impact on policy and little representation in public positions
 - iii. Five: The organizations that interact with local government have some impact on policy and representation in public positions, but the opposition has a more dominant influence
 - iv. Ten: The organizations that interact with local government have strong impact on policy and representation in public positions
 - b. *Notes*
9. If there are revolutionary organizations in your local area, how do they relate to the community organizing and movement work that you are involved in?
 - a. Scale (1 – 10)
 - i. One: We are not aware of revolutionary organizations in our area.
 - ii. Two: They only seem to appear at events that we organize.
 - iii. Five: They're here, and they do work, but we do not work together.
 - iv. Ten: We work closely together with some revolutionary organization(s)
 - b. *Notes*
10. How strong are movement education/training efforts for organizers and activists in your local area?
 - a. Scale (1 – 10)
 - i. One: There's very little, and we need some
 - ii. Five: There are some, but we need more
 - iii. Ten: Strong enough; That's not a need for our local area
 - b. *Notes*
11. LeftRoots believes that our movements have a lot to learn and benefit from various political traditions and tendencies. In the movement in your local area, what political tendencies have the greatest influence today— either in terms of organizations or in terms of ideas influencing popular thought? *Please check all that apply.*
 - a. Anarchism
 - b. Revolutionary Marxism
 - c. Revolutionary Nationalism

- d. Some form of Identity Politics
- e. Reformism, Liberalism
- f. Other

5. POLITICAL ECONOMY OF THE LOCAL AREA

1. How would you describe your area?
 - a. Rural
 - b. Suburban
 - c. City
 - d. College town
 - e. Other
2. What is the population of the local area? (Multiple Choice)
 - a. 100,000 - 500,000
 - b. 500,001 - 750,000
 - c. 750,001 - 1,000,000
 - d. 1,000,001 - 1,500,000
 - e. Larger than 1,500,000
3. What are the racial demographics of the local area? (Approximate percentages)
 - a. Indigenous/Native
 - b. Black/African descendent
 - c. Latin@/Chican@
 - d. Asian
 - e. Pacific Islander
 - f. Caribbean
 - g. White
 - h. *Notes (Please note anything relevant about understanding the racial make-up of your area, i.e., increasing displacement of African Americans, large Puerto Rican community, etc.)*
4. What is the rough percentage of immigrants in the area?
 - a. Immigrants
 - b. Undocumented immigrants
 - c. *Notes (Please note anything relevant about understanding the immigrant communities in your area, i.e., large Palestinian community, growing Mexican and Central American communities, etc.)*
5. What is the rough percentage of working class people in your area?
 - a. Percentage
 - b. Notes
6. What are three of the most dominant economic sectors in your area?
 - a. Agriculture
 - b. Military
 - c. Hi-Tech
 - d. Finance
 - e. Real Estate
 - f. Communications
 - g. Real Estate & Construction
 - h. Medical
 - i. Education & Universities
 - j. Manufacturing
 - k. Transportation
 - l. Service Sector/Retail
 - m. Government/Civil Service
 - n. Other (space for notes)

7. What's the spectrum of local politics represented by elected officials in your local area? *Please check all that apply.*
 - a. Right wing Extremists
 - b. Tea Party Republican
 - c. Corporate Republican
 - d. Liberal Republican
 - e. Libertarian
 - f. Conservative Democrat (Blue Dogs)
 - g. Centrist Democrat (Third Way, DLC Democrats)
 - h. Old "New Deal" Democrat (Pro-Regulation, Pro-Capitalism)
 - i. Progressive but Pro-Capitalist Democrats
 - j. Other (space for notes)
8. What are 1 - 2 important cultural dynamics shaping the conditions in your local area?
 - a. Notes
 - b. Notes
9. What are three of the most pressing issues facing people in your area?
 - a. Lack of quality jobs
 - b. Police harassment and brutality
 - c. Attacks on wages and working conditions
 - d. Poor education
 - e. Failing, under-developed infrastructure for public services
 - f. Lack of quality, affordable housing
 - g. Environmental toxins
 - h. Lack of quality public services
 - i. Other
 - j. Other
 - k. Other
10. Why are these the 3 most pressing area?
 - a. Notes
 - b. Notes
 - c. Notes

6. LEFTROOTS BRANCH

1. How did you first hear about LeftRoots?
 - a. *Notes*
2. What gave you the best understanding of what LeftRoots is trying to do?
 - a. 1-on-1 conversation with someone in LeftRoots
 - b. Conversation with a movement person not in LeftRoots
 - c. Large group presentation or participating in a HangOut
 - d. Reading the website or an article
 - e. *Other*
3. Have any of you participated in any of LeftRoots HangOuts?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. *Notes*
4. Which of the LeftRoots HangOuts that you joined were your favorites?
Please check all that apply.
 - a. Ear to the Ground with NTanya Lee & Steve Williams (2013.04.12)
 - b. Popular Protagonism & Political Instruments with Marta Harnecker (2013.05.15)
 - c. JusticeForTrayvon (2013.07.17)
 - d. Twenty-first Century Socialism with Michael Lebowitz (2013.09.05)
 - e. Transformation of Self & Society with Raquel Laviña, Staci Haines & Spenta Kandawalla (2013.11.08)
 - f. Venezuela & the Bolivarian Revolution with George Ciccariello-Maher (2014.04.03)
 - g. Jackson Rising with Ask-Lee Henderson & Sacajawea Hall (2014.04.29)
 - h. Grassroots Feminism with Sandra Morán (2014.06.20)
 - i. Leadership Development & the National Union of the Homeless with Willie Baptist (2014.08.15)
 - j. *Notes*
5. What did you appreciate about that HangOuts?
 - a. *Notes*
6. Based on what you know of LeftRoots' Points of Unity, our plan to develop strategy for socialist liberation and the work involved in building a branch of LeftRoots, how many social movement leftists do you think might be interested in building a branch in your local area?
 - a. 1 - 10
 - b. 11 - 20
 - c. 21 - 30
 - d. 31 - 40
 - e. 41 - 50
 - f. 50 or more
 - g. *Notes*
7. LeftRoots has a commitment to develop a membership which involves a super-majority of people from historically oppressed and exploited communities. In the Bay Area branch, this looks like a membership that is overwhelmingly made up of people of color, women and transgender

- folks. Amongst the social movement leftists in your local area, do you think that it would be possible to develop a LeftRoots branch that involves a super-majority of people from oppressed and exploited communities?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. *Notes*
8. Amongst those folks, are there active tensions that might get in the way of folks working together?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. *Notes*
9. What do you think would excite social movement leftists in your area about starting a branch of LeftRoots? *Please check all that apply.*
- a. Opportunity to build relationships with other social movement leftists and be part of a larger team
 - b. Chance to study with other social movement leftists
 - c. Project of articulating a strategy for liberation
 - d. Opportunity to improve their practice as organizers, movement builders
 - e. Having an organizational vehicle to weigh in with other social movement leftists at key moments
 - f. Chance to spark the next Left in the U.S. from the grassroots
 - g. *Notes*
10. What might be some concerns social movement leftists in your area might have about starting a branch of LeftRoots? *Please check all that apply.*
- a. Time and capacity necessary to build LeftRoots on top of existing work
 - b. Study might disconnect us from on-the-ground struggles
 - c. Never been in Left spaces before/Never had positive experience in Left spaces
 - d. National organization might squash some of the autonomy of local work
 - e. Don't have strong, trusting relationships with movement forces in other parts of the country
 - f. Scared that conditions and needs might be too different in different parts of the country
 - g. *Notes*
11. Who are 3 -6 influential social movement leftists in your area who might be willing to invest the time and energy to launch a LeftRoots branch?
- a. Name 1
 - b. Name 2
 - c. Name 3
 - d. Name 4
 - e. Name 5
 - f. Name 6
 - g. *Notes*