

## Thoughts on Political Strategy in the Age of Trumpism\*

*Trump's election highlighted many critical flaws in our democratic institutions. Recent decades have seen dramatic declines in working people's incomes and well-being and in our ability to impact policy decisions that impact our lives. This is largely a result of economic globalization, which has transferred wealth from working people to the "global 1%" and greatly enhanced the economic and political power of transnational corporations at the expense of working people. The new administration will not solve—and will likely only worsen—the problems that led so many to vote for Trump. We are calling for efforts to strengthen local alliances to enhance local democracy, address people's real needs, and build our collective power in the face of heightened threats from a federal administration headed by Donald Trump.*

### **Recognizing that:**

- Worker pay has been stagnant for the past four decades
- The prices of basic needs such as housing, health care, food and water have continued to rise
- Globalization and automation have been severely reducing the number of available jobs
- Most service sector jobs don't pay anywhere near a living wage
- The growing use and demand for energy is unsustainable and is killing our planet
- Racism has pushed most of the costs of this inhuman economy onto people of color
- Discriminatory policies, media and party politics have increased polarization and conflict in our communities and fuel racism, xenophobia, sexism, and violence
- Existing 'democratic' institutions have failed to hold political leaders accountable to the needs of our communities, and especially historically oppressed and marginalized groups
- The physical health and well-being of our communities is at stake, and dramatic changes are needed. This will require a politics that unites rather than divides us.

### **We need to build a movement for deep democracy by:**

- Taking collective control over resources through, e.g., by building a metropolitan tenants union, worker unions, community land trusts, and cooperatives;
- Taking collective control of our local political institutions by fostering mechanisms for public accountability for all public officials and workers (including especially the police); the new CEDAW ordinance and PPT's work on transit are examples and opportunities for us in this regard.
- Enhancing public participation in decisions about how our community is governed, using strategies such as participatory budgeting and organizing local electoral and policy campaigns.
- Developing a shared analysis of the *global and national forces* shaping our economy and society.
- Cultivating individual and collective skills for reclaiming and transforming our community.
- Working to raise consciousness and to show connections across issues.
- Building our collective power by strengthening our local networks, engaging in mutual support and coordinated actions, and by deepening our connections to national and international human rights movements.

\*discussion draft: compiled from conversations with activists from Pittsburgh and elsewhere by Jackie Smith, Professor of Sociology, University of Pittsburgh, Coordinator, Human Rights City Alliance, and Steering Committee member, National Human Rights City Network

**Continue this Conversation**—Please join us for a follow-up to the Summit Against Racism—**Building a Local Movement for Human Rights and Racial Justice Wednesday February 1, 2017 6:30-8:30PM**, One Smithfield Street downtown Pittsburgh 15222 (Health and Human Services Building)