

LONG-TERM AGENDA

Ratified at the May 2018 People's Assembly in Chicago, IL



BACKGROUND

OUR PRINCIPLES OF THE NEW ECONOMY & SOCIETY

Public Control of the Economy

Everyday people, not the elite or corporations will control the economy. We will dismantle this structure in which too much money is controlled by too few, and win an economy designed to benefit all people. To create a radically generative economy, we'll shift significant amounts of capital towards democratic forms of control. We will restore the public sector, build democratically-held public institutions like a federal infrastructure bank, and institute laws that favor community-held structures such as worker-owned cooperatives and community land trusts that keep wealth in our communities. We will end financial speculation and instead build a financial sector that promotes real investments in healthy, happy, and prosperous communities.

Real Democracy*

We will break the one percent's control over our government and our political process. Instead, communities will be able to fully participate in the decisions that affect their lives, creating policies that serve the public good. We will expand the meaning of democracy, and change the way democracy feels. Together, we will create new ways that people can engage in all parts of public life so that we equally get to imagine and shape the structures in which we live. That means we will win both (1) Democratic Control of Government so that our shared government works in truly democratic ways, and (2) Community Control to ensure that communities that have historically been excluded from decision-making can participate in decisions on the issues that affect their lives.

Global Sustainability

We will ensure that people and the planet never again have to bear the consequences of an economy based on corporate greed. We will topple a world where corporations can operate with no regard for the damage they created in their quest to increase profits, and we will replace it with a world where we live and work in sustainable ways that do not destroy the planet or poison our people. Transforming our economy gives us an opportunity to rethink growth and to redirect investments into green alternatives



that invest in the communities that have experienced the most devastating effects environmental destruction.

Racial Justice*

Our new economy and society will finally address persistent structural barriers to racial equity and opportunity. We will overcome the ways in which racism has been built into the economic structure of this country, repairing the historical inequities created by the intense exploitation of Black, Latino, Native and Asian communities. We will reverse the government policies that facilitate structural racism, abolishing police brutality and mass incarceration and ending deportations. We will ensure equal access to housing and education, addressing centuries of segregation and disinvestment and undoing decades of gentrification. Native nations will have real sovereignty. Our new economy and society will never come into being unless we correct these structural inequities.

Gender Justice*

We will end structural barriers to gender equity and opportunity that impact women, LGBTQ people and people who don't conform to traditional gender norms. We will overcome the ways in which women's work is systematically devalued in our economy. We will build government programs that value work in the home and provide free childcare, elder care and generous family leave. We will undo government policies that restrict the rights of women and LGBTQ people and that enable gendered harassment and violence, ending the culture of violence against women and trans people. We challenge these ongoing historic inequities today so that we don't replicate them in our new economy and society.

DIGGING IN MORE DEEPLY ON OUR PRINCIPLES

Real Democracy

The work to win "Real Democracy" includes organizing for both "Democratic Control of Government" and "Community Control." These two fronts that may sometimes be in tension with each other, but they are both important in our organizing.

Democratic Control of Government

We will advance a "people-in, money-out" agenda. We will dismantle the current money-driven political process by dismantling Citizens United and creating a public financing system for

elections. We will dramatically expand citizenship, voting rights and voting ease and accessibility. People will have meaningful opportunities to engage in decision making at the local level, and those opportunities will be available to everyone regardless of race, gender, and wealth. We will expand democracy to include participatory budgeting, exercising control over local institutions and encouraging our own people to seek elected office.

Community Control

For decades, decisions about poor communities have been made by people outside of those communities, with no meaningful input from those who have to live with the consequences. The results of this set-up have been devastating. In our new society, communities will have the power to make decisions about the allocation of resources for housing, education and health care. Decision-making structures will be built to take account of the particular needs, conditions, cultures and historic circumstances of the people who live and work in the communities that are impacted by different decisions. In our new society, the impacts of centuries of the denial of democratic right for Black, Latino, Asian and Native communities will be repaired, and Native nations will have full and meaningful sovereignty over their nations.

Race, Class and Gender

Racial justice and gender justice have been highlighted as central to our Principles for a New People's Economy and Society because they are such important fronts of struggle. But – while we are lifting them up as distinct categories – we aren't putting them in silos that are separate from the rest of our organizing work. Economic justice, racial justice and gender justice are interconnected fights. People's Action is invested in overcoming historic problems in left and progressive movements that have focused only on economic justice while ignoring structural racism and sexism AND with overcoming approaches to racial justice and gender justice that ignore class and economic inequality.

We are fighting for an economy that works for all people. Economic inequality hurts us all, but our institutions that consistently produce worse outcome for people of color, women and LGBTQ people. We won't win a new economy if we don't address the persistent structural barriers that racism, sexism and homophobia have built into our economy. As part of building toward a new economy, we will fight for and win policy reforms that include improvements for all people but that also ensure significant additional resources are targeted to communities of color to address long-standing racial disparities and to women to address ongoing gender disparities. Racial and gender justice are fundamental to our work to build a powerful economic justice movement. At the same time, we know that structural racism and sexism go beyond the economy. Racism and sexism are baked into our political system, where they limit



the rights of women and communities of color, from the restriction of voting rights to racialized police brutality. And they shape our culture, so that whiteness is seen as the norm and violence against women is seen as acceptable. We see these fronts as important, so we support organizing around political and social problems, like our work to end mass incarceration.

HOW WE ARE EVOLVING OUR ORGANIZING PRACTICES

We are a national network that thinks decades ahead about what we are trying to win and what we need to build to get there. The Long-Term Agenda is not a blueprint or a series of policy wins that will in themselves produce a new economy and a society. It is a guide that will keep us true to our course, a touchstone that challenges us to raise our game in strategic thinking. Our organizing is evolving so that we can build the power that we need to win the Long-Term Agenda. We sometimes use the term “strategic organizing practices” to describe this evolving approach to organizing.

Fight for Reforms that Shift Power

We need to aim high. Structural transformation happens through winning many small and large changes that build on one another over time until the balance of power shifts and we can win structural transformation. We sometimes call these kinds of changes “structural reforms,” because they are the stepping stones on our path of structural transformation that will ultimately change our economy and society. They are changes to laws, policies and rules that shift power relations on a structural level, taking power and wealth from corporations and the 1% and restoring it to our communities. Thinking in this way is a breakthrough because, in addition to winning campaigns that improve people’s lives and build our organizations, we are now focused on changing the rules of the game and shifting the political terrain on which the next set of fights takes place. Having a vision for structural reforms encourages us to raise the sights of our organizing. Rather than choosing our fights based on what we think we can win, we need to choose the fights that we need to win and build the capacity to win them.

Battle of Big Ideas

We aren’t only fighting to win policy changes. We are also organizing to win the “battle of big ideas.” The realm of ideas shapes the limits of what is politically possible, and our enemies have made their ideas - like boot-straps individualism and opposition to “big government” so much a part of the “common sense” that it can be hard to win on our campaigns. So we need to fight on that terrain as well, working to shift worldview in our communities and in society at large so that our ideas are the ones that are shaping the

political terrain. That means we need to go head-to-head with both corporate ideology and right-wing populism, pushing back on his racism and putting forward a real multi-racial populism that talk about real economic equality and an America that belongs to everyone who lives and works here.

Build Progressive Infrastructure

The 1% built a powerful and integrated infrastructure to move their agenda: think tanks, foundations, media outlets, training centers and membership organizations that coordinated their different capacities to change the political terrain. We also need to develop new capacities that can strengthen and supplement our organizing: deep leadership development, strong communications, policy and research capacities and more. And we will build broad and deep relationships with other progressive organizations and social movements. We can't win structural transformation on our own. We have let go of the idea of "no permanent friends, no permanent enemies," committing to building deep lasting strategic partnerships. That is what inspired us to build People's Action; we knew that as separate organizations, we did not have the power to win what needs to be won. We will keep building with our brothers and sisters in other parts of the progressive movement - with domestic workers and construction workers, with the women's movement and the movement for Black Lives, with the Dreamers and the Native movement at Standing Rock - to build the power we need to win this whole thing.

Build Towards Governing Power

We are building campaigns that fight for governing power. We are no longer content with lobbying decision-makers or even with having a seat at the table. Along with our allies, we want to run the table. This means we are serious about growing our base and developing leadership. And we will leverage our social base to move from protest to power. We are fearless about raising independent money and building electoral muscle. We will fight for and win governing power, starting by organizing to win government offices in cities and states all around this country, until we have built the ability to take this country back from the bottom up. We will encourage our leaders to run for office and won with people-powered campaigns that talk loudly about the big issues like corporate power and racial equity.

Race, Class & Gender Are Strategic Forces

Class, race and gender are all strategic fronts for building the power of poor and working people. It is morally necessary to work for economic, racial and gender justice, but they are more than moral positions. They are also strategic levers that we need to really win.

Class As a Strategic Force

There is a growing anger at the profound inequality that shapes our society as more and more poor and working people struggle with poverty, debt and downward mobility. Organizations and movements that have spoken clearly to those struggles have been able to build real momentum and power over the last decade, from our own organizing to the Sanders campaign to the wave of wildcat teachers strikes in red states. We will throw in hard with our allies to build a multi-racial populism that calls out our shared enemies and that advances a bold vision for a new economy that works for all poor and working people. We believe that clarity will unlock even greater momentum and power.

Race As a Strategic Force

We can't be silent on race in the name of maintaining unity between poor and working people; we'll only get to real unity and power if we directly challenge racial inequality. A central investment in racial justice is bottom-line if we are serious about building meaningful power and leadership in Black, Latino, Native and Asian communities, and it is also necessary to move poor and working white people. The 1% has used racism to move its agenda: using anti-Black racist messaging to convince huge numbers of poor and working white people to oppose government programs and to vote against their economic interests. We will challenge that directly so that poor and working white people can see their own self-interest in racial justice.

Gender as a Strategic Force

The 1% has used also used sexism, transphobia and homophobia to move its agenda: using conservative policies to convince huge numbers of poor and working people to vote against their economic interests and using gender discrimination to weaken labor protections for us all. We will challenge that directly. When we look at our organizing around racial and economic justice through the lens of gender, we find real potential in gendered issues that were ignored in the past, like long-term care or paid family leave. And when we have take on these fights, we have been able to organize new constituencies, develop more visionary leaders and build greater power.