

TIPPING POINT NORTH SOUTH

A co-operative that supports and initiates creative, campaign-driven projects that advance the global social justice agenda, through its Film Fund and other activities

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PROJECT 2018: A POOR PEOPLE'S CALL TO ACTION

April 2018 marks 50 years since Reverend Dr Martin Luther King was assassinated. His 'last great exertion' in 1967/68 was the Poor People's Campaign and Economic Bill of Rights.

In the USA there is a renewed push to mark and re-envision the Poor People's Campaign for the present day.

We think the time is right to build on those USA efforts to internationalise the campaign *and* the 1968 Economic Bill of Rights that accompanied it.

Why? Because fifty years since his death:

- The USA, UK and many other rich nations are more unequal now than in 1968 with greater levels of poverty – in the USA with far greater levels of incarceration and war spending.
- The richest 85 people across the globe share a combined wealth of £1trillion, as much as the poorest 3.5 billion of the world's population.
- And 69 out of the world's top 100 economies are corporations.

The facts speak for themselves – as a global family, we are worse off now than in 1968. This has not happened by accident, but through 4 decades of neoliberal policy implementation designed to benefit the few at the expense of the many. 'Trickle down policies' has not worked. 'Trickle up' has. The rise of far right parties in the rich economies is also a symptom of these failed policies where the poor, migrants or refugees are scape-goated and so, in well tried and tested ways, the poor are effectively set against the poor.

Therefore, King's awareness of the damaging forces of global capital and the need for civil society to come together in the fight for different and better economic, social and political models is as relevant and urgent as it was in 1968.

"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly"

Rev Dr Martin Luther King Jnr (1963)

Dr King's lifelong quest has become our unfinished business agenda. The task of seeking justice, exposing poverty and confronting war and conflict is still a quest worth pursuing as part of our common humanity and shared future together. In a 1966 speech to his staff, Dr. King said

"You can't talk about solving the economic problem of the Negro without talking about billions of dollars. You can't talk about ending the slums without first saying profit must be taken out of slums. You're really tampering and getting on dangerous ground because you are messing with folk then. You are messing with captains of industry. Now this means that we are treading in difficult water, because it really means that we are saying that something is wrong with capitalism."

This speaks to us now, 50 years on. It speaks to the global south as well as north.

Our world has never been more prosperous, and, at the same time, more inequitable than it is today. Inequality has reached a level that we can no longer afford to ignore. People who have been submerged into poverty, driven into overwhelming debt, marginalised, and displaced are crying out with a greater sense of urgency and clarity than before. The global community must recognise the need for all of us to join hands together to do justice in the face of unparalleled and catastrophic inequalities in the distribution of wealth.

We call out the fatal intertwining of the global financial, socio-economic, climate and ecological crises accompanied in many places of the world by the suffering of people and their struggle for a decent life. We call out market deregulation and unrestrained privatisation of goods and services that exploit whole societies and dismantle social programs and services. We call out uncontrolled financial flows that destabilise the economies of an increasing number of countries all over the world. We will not accept this as a 'norm' in 2017, that is why through the Project 2018 campaign we are renewing our call for Dr King's vision embodied in the 'Economic Bill of Rights'.

Project 2018 proposes the internationalising of the 1968 Poor People's campaign with the first of 5 global mobilisations over the coming decade 2018-2028 linking USA social justice movements with other social justice movements around the world. This is the time for a global call out of governments, institutions, big corporations and business. The 50-year anniversary of the life and work left by Dr King presents us with an opportunity to join hands, voices, messages and action in our shared quest for peace and justice.

"The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice" Rev. Dr. King, August 1967

We know from history that all major struggles for freedom and justice are intergenerational, passed on like batons from one generation to the next until the goal is reached. We believe the **Economic Bill of Rights** was visionary in its breadth of demands and – fifty years on – we take up the baton again to push it forward once more.

Notes

1. Project 2018 : A Poor People's Call for Action will 'soft launch' on MLK Day, 16 January 2017
2. Project 2018 is initiated by UK non-profit Tipping Point North South and led by Dionne Gravesande and Deborah Burton (UK) and Yolande Cadore (USA)
3. Dionne and Deborah worked together at UK development and campaigning agency Christian Aid on its Trade Justice, Climate Justice and Tax Justice campaigns. Both are founder members of Tipping Point North South (TPNS)
4. Yolande Cadore has spent the last fifteen years working with grassroots organizations in New York City and nationally. She holds an undergraduate degree in Urban Policy and Advocacy, a certificate in Non-Profit Management from Columbia Business School–Institute for Not-for-Profit Management and is currently a graduate student at the School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA), Columbia University.
5. The Project 2018 team are reaching out to their colleagues and networks in the UK, USA and global south to explore potential for partnerships and collaboration as we move towards April 2018 and the 50th anniversary of the assassination of Dr. King

6. For more information

<https://tippingpointnorthsouth.org/project-2018/>

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PROJECT APRIL 2018 **A Poor People's Call to Action**

April 2018 marks 50 years since Reverend Dr Martin Luther King was assassinated. His 'last great exertion' in 1967/68 was the **Poor People's Campaign and Economic Bill of Rights**.

Project April 2018 proposes the **internationalising of the 1968 Poor People's campaign** with the first of 5 global mobilisations over the coming decade **2018-2028** linking USA social justice movements with other social justice movements around the world

Project April 2018 proposes linking these mobilisations with a renewed international recognition and call for Dr King's ambitious 1968 Economic Bill of Rights – updated for today, it offers a universal economic bill of rights fit for the 21st century that will reverse economic inequalities, racism, militarism and climate change. All these factors combined are destroying families, communities, nations and the very planet we live on.

Project April 2018 – international mobilisations **and** a renewed Economic Bill of Rights