HKonJ People's Assembly (PA) November 15, 2008 Meeting Summary

Our 2nd HKonJ People's Assembly hosted a cross section of HKonJ partners and campus and community social activists. Organizations represented ACLU NC, WILPF, Chapel Hill Friends, NAACP Chapel Hill/Carrboro Branch, Chapel Hill Community Church UU Peace & Justice Committee, Binkley Church Board of Outreach, OC Civil Rights Defense Committee, OC Progressive Democrats, RENA/CEER; UNC CH campus student organizations, including NAACP, Young Democrats, SURGE, SAW, Students NOW, Student Coalition for College Access.

We were also invited to speak to a group of High School youth at Hargraves Community Center who have now joined our People's Assembly.

- 1. Mission. Al McSurely presented the history, mission and vision of HKonJ and local People's Assemblies, a dream of Rev. William Barber before he was elected President of the State NAACP. Once elected he began building what is now an 86 member partnership of civil rights warriors and new generations of social justice activists, who are committed to turning our North Carolina's General Assembly into a People's Assembly, driven by an anti racism, anti poverty, anti war 14 point civil rights/human rights agenda (see www.HKonJ.com). See Al's statement attached.
- 2. Missing from the Table and action steps. If we are going to fulfill the HKonJ mission of rebuilding the Civil Rights movement, we need a strong Black Brown, White alliance. We agreed we need more aggressive outreach to our Latino, Immigrant, and Muslim brothers and sisters. With ties to the Orange County Organizing Committee and our Black Churches, we also want to pursue a broader interfaith representation. Participants' suggestions both for campus and community outreach was broad and comprehensive.
- 3. Message and Action agenda around which we can organize and engage the public. Suggestions included:
 - A. Mobilizing for the January 19th Martin Luther King March from the Post office/Peace & Justice Plaza to the First Baptist Church in Chapel Hill.
 - B. Mobilizing for the Feb. 14th HKonJ March and Rally in Raleigh to press for our legislative 14 point agenda in the General Assembly; See Resources Below.
 - C. Develop a legislative agenda and start lobbying on a local level with our legislators, including our congress members BEFORE the legislature convenes in 2009. For example: the Racial Justice Act, Ending the Death Penalty, Immigration legislation; broadening the anti war resolution #14 to Ending the militarization of our society and diverting a bloated military budget to social programs like education, health care, housing and economic development and jobs. Throwing out the Jim Crow law 95-98 which denies public workers the right to collectively bargain. Also support the Federal legislation: the Employee Free Choice Act which Pres. Elect Obama is committed to signing, and which would allow workers to organize into union and penalize employers who stand in the way. We need to meet with our federal and state legislators and get their commitment to move on these points.
 - D. Support and participate in local solidarity events:
 - 1. The Rogers Road/Coalition to End Environmental Racism (RENA CEER) and its 36 year old struggle to close the dump, not locate the Transfer Station in this historically African American neighborhood and provide the community with essential services like water and sewage facilities.
 - 2. Support Workers Rights Struggles including:
 - a. Support the Moncure Plywood strike by the African American, Latino and White union members of the Chatham County IAM local now in its 5th

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- month, fighting the company's demand for a 60 hour mandatory work week, end of seniority, raising health insurance premiums to unaffordable levels.
- b. Support the UNC CH housekeepers. The University has taken away their annual Xmas party. Students Allied with Workers is organizing a community Xmas party for the housekeepers as well as challenging the University's punitive actions.
- 3. Support the ACLU and OC Civil Rights Defense Committee and other Immigration Rights groups to stop racial profiling and Latino harassment, jailings and deportation. State Troopers have set up check points and use drug dogs to harass African Americans and Immigration officers to challenge Latinos' immigrant status. NC state law has a provision against Racial Profiling but its data collection is spotty. We need to strengthen the law to address check point violations, help collect date and organize a cadre to do check point monitoring. The ACLU has tool kits. See Resources Below.
- 4. Stay tuned for Black History Month events relating to the commemoration or the 1947 Freedom Riders and the commemoration of peace & justice heroes at the Post Office's Peace & Justice Plaza.

4. Communication.

- A. Meetings. With the Martin Luther King Jr. march and rally on January 19th and the HKonJ march and rally on Feb. 14th, we decided to meet at 1pm on Saturday, Dec. 13th and again on January17th at 1pm, location to be announced.
- B. Establish a calendar. Participants were urged to share events with each other by emailing Tom Fewel at tfewel@gmail.com, subject HKonJ local calendar. Tom will publish a weekly calendar of events, and with SAW member, Dominick Powell post our information on the State HKonJ face book page. Finally we have an email address so that people can communicate with each other at hkonj-oc@googlegroups.com
- 5. Strengthening Partnerships. Steve Dear of the People of Faith Against the Death Penalty spoke of the promise of HKonJ being the most powerful movement since the civil rights movement. Our People's Assembly in Orange County is a model for other counties. We also are represented by Joe Hackney who is House Speaker. He looks to us to help build other HKonJ People's Assemblies in more conservative districts and counties so he can count on greater support. He is not likely to take leadership on many of our 14 points without the support of his more conservative colleagues. We learned that lesson when a group of 30 social justice activists and organizations in our community met with him to win his support for the collective bargaining bill. The group of 30 later became the OC HKonJ People's Assembly. We will need to broaden our outreach to allies in Chatham County. Some of our partners who work in Chapel Hill live in other counties and have promised to walk the talk.

Finally, we discussed the importance of local People's Assemblies informing the legislative agenda and helping strengthen the 14 points. An example is #14 – getting out Iraq. Our vision should be broader. Our effort must be directed to not just one war, but an attack on militarism and a military economy and a demand to redistribute our bloated military budget to social spending.

6. Resources.

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- A. ACLU has prepared a tool kit to help activists monitor police racial profiling and Latino immigrant harassment, jailing and deportation. Contact Rebecca Headen, aclulegal@nc.rr.com, 919-834-3466 if you want to join this effort.
- B. Rev. William Barber spoke recently at an event sponsored by UNC student organizations at the Campus Y. You can obtain a DVD of his presentation, including a powerful statement on the HKonJ movement. We will have copies at our next meeting. We are asking a contribution for the videographer, Yonni Chapman and the Production volunteer, Dick Paddock. Bring \$6 to the next meeting and the DVD is yours. It is a great tool to get people involved and ready to march and lobby.