

Comrades and Friends,

The Working Group of the Johannesburg Peoples Pride Movement (JHBPP), are doing the work of implementing the collective vision for a Johannesburg Peoples Pride, as articulated in the manifesto and mandated by a mass meeting of this movement. As a movement we are constantly aware that there are many areas for our collective growth and governance. We have been very attentive to how we work and have, with movement and ongoing engagement, acted to nourish the values and principles which underlie our politics and ethic. This is evidenced by the first mass meeting that produced our manifesto which is *a living document, a commitment to change, the promise of transformation*; to our organising committee meetings which are open to all and are spaces for discussion and implementation.

All decisions are made by full consensus, all ideas are debated and discussed with equal measure, all our short-falls are exposed, accounted for, and ways forward that are responsive to these are proposed and decided on by all of us who form the collective and who are committed to making the space work. In the last year we have struggled with capacity and have therefore fallen short as your committee to these ideals. We aspire to these and call on all comrades and friends to join the call in continuing to reclaim a PRIDE of POWER, of PERSISTANCE and of POLITICS

Both prior to and after the first Johannesburg Peoples Pride March on 6 October 2013, a number of statements and questions have been raised on various online platforms, directed at the movement (through its Working Group). This document serves to outline a few responses and open up discussions on the various issues raised.

### Our Name

The formation of JHBPP is a direct result of the number of acts of resistance against an exclusionary LGBTI parade that has marked JHB for the last number of years. Peoples' Pride represents a radical break from the commercialised, racist and classist JHB gay parade. Here, we raise the level of what we demand of each other within LGBTIAQ organising, what we demand of our communities and workplaces, and what we demand of the State.

We are on the margins of society, as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered, Intersexed Blacks, Women, Migrants, Workers, Disabled People and all those unlisted here, and yet suffer the burdens of not fitting into the "model person" "model family" or "model citizen". Most of us spill into and out of these identities simultaneously and, for full freedom, require that all of these oppressions be addressed simultaneously. Most of us do not live, work and interact in Queer friendly spaces, and need those spaces to transform. We recognise that unless all of us are free, none of us will be free.

This Pride is an All Peoples Pride, as opposed to the some people (wealthy, white, privileged) pride. Our LGBTIAQ identities are front and centre within this movement, together with the other identities that we occupy. Not above, not below, but simultaneously. The choice to present as the people represents all of these complexities. This, by no means, makes our space less Queer for the benefit of heteronormative comfort, but expands our articulations for the benefit of freedom for all.

Which Pride should I attend? Why do we have so many Prides and why can we not all unite?

The JHBPP movement works hand in hand with all Prides which are politically orientated and have a progressive agenda. The organising committee has used as a guiding document our collectively-drafted manifesto. In addition to many civil society organisations, collectives and individuals; some of the founding members of JHBPP are Soweto Pride, Ekurhuleni Pride and Vaal Pride. There have been a number of other Pride protests/celebrations to emerge in Gauteng and other parts of the country which have taken to the politics of claiming the streets for all. We demand of ourselves the existence of multiple sites of struggle, defiance and the claiming of space and therefore see the multiplicity of prides as something to be celebrated rather than to be seen as negative fragmentation. Unfortunately, there has also been an emergence of Prides that re-enforce the exclusionary politics that we struggle against and re-enforce difference and discrimination.

In our view, these are spaces that re-enforce single issue politics as going against the spirit of our movement. These spaces are hierarchical, oriented more toward opulence and expensive partying, hosted in inaccessible spaces for the majority of people, and require material wealth as entry.

We are reminded that spaces that endorse a capitalist agenda - such as those intimately tied with corporate wealth - are not for the people and instead serve the interests of profits over people.

We believe that through all of our bodies, the JHBPP should act as a radicalising force for change, asking the uncomfortable questions and seeking answers that advance radical transformation.

We continue to ask, if a pride expresses itself as non-political, if the space and entrance aren't free, if profit-driven corporations are sponsors, if there are VIP areas: then who is this Pride for? We ask who pride is for if it does not articulate clear anti-wealth politics and does not recognise and work against the effects of race, class and gender as oppressive forces within all spaces including those of LGBTIAQ people.

Our movement believes that diversity of voice and contestation in terms of ideologies within the broader LGBTIAQ communities is necessary. We do not view ourselves in competition with other Prides, yet will continue, *because* of our politics, to be critical of all Prides, including ourselves. **JHBPP will be Marching on the 29 November 2014**, this date falls within the 16 days of Activism of No Violence Against Women and Children. We will again reclaim this moment as an activist moment and not a moment for the state and corporate entities to pay lip service, yet again, to our struggles against violence (while daily committing acts of violence against the majority of the population).

In conclusion, our struggle has suffered the restriction of being viewed as a struggle primarily for the right to be intimate with who we want, without the fear of harassment and violence, and the rights to be free from violence directed at us on the basis of our sexual orientation and gender identity. This movement is one that recognises these two issues as very important in the experiences of all LGBTIAQ bodies, but also acknowledges and demands the recognition that the oppressions we experience as LGBTIAQ people are accompanied and exacerbated by a host of other oppressive forces that restrict us and others from being alive.

We strive for the freedom to be, to desire, and to be free from harm.

Aluta Continua

The JHB Peoples Pride Organising Committee

