

# The Right, the Far Right and the Rise of Donald Trump:

## Facilitator's Guide

For groups planning to hold sessions with all three modules in this series, we recommend that this one be second in the line-up.

The main points of this session are:

1. Since the mid to late 1960s, the populist far right has gained tremendous power by employing a powerful, independent, inside/outside strategy relative to elections and the Republican Party – and built a vast infrastructure to implement it. Racism and nativism anchor the far right's world outlook and politics.
2. In 2016 Trump has reshaped the far right on a blatantly racist and authoritarian program and led it to defeat the elite Republican right and take over the Republican Party. This is the first time in U.S. history that either of the two major parties has been taken over by populist forces in open conflict with, and defiance of, the corporate elite. The far right threatens every element of a democratic, let alone progressive, agenda.
3. Given the above, it is crucial for the left to adopt an anti-Trump, anti-right strategy that takes on racism, misogyny, nativism and authoritarianism in order to defeat Trump and the far right, but also to build the independent strength of the left and progressive forces. Only by seriously contributing to the defeat of the far right – the main immediate threat to people of color, labor, women, LGBT, environmentalists and other progressive constituencies – can the left and progressive forces gain a hearing, respect and/or a mass base. This includes voting for Hillary, since that is the only way to prevent Trump from winning the presidency. However, even if Trump is soundly defeated, the far right is powerful and not going away soon. An anti-right strategy will be crucial for the foreseeable future.

There are 22 slides in this module, to be covered in two hours, including introductions and discussion.

The first 14 slides discuss the politics, base and strategy of the right and the far right, making the distinction between the two and indicating how the far right has now eclipsed the elite right. The next six slides discuss the politics, base and strategy of Donald Trump, and how he has simultaneously moved the far right even further to the right and led it to seize the Republican Party. The final slides discuss the stakes and strategy for the left and progressives, emphasizing the importance of anti-right strategy, both inside and outside of electoral politics and the Democratic Party.

Each audience will be different. Therefore we encourage you to 'custom design' the time allotments for different sections based on your knowledge of each audience. We hope that every session will spend at least some time on each section.

For several slides the main point is explicit and we offer only minimal additional comment in the notes below. For other slides we offer additional information, highlight the "punchline" or make suggestions

that may help you as facilitator. We think it would also be helpful for facilitators to look over the Resource Guide before holding a session, and then check out whichever articles listed seem most relevant to the points you want to focus on. You might also consider printing out articles that you find especially useful, as well as the Resource Guide itself, and make copies available to people attending the session.

Finally, we think this presentation, along with the other two modules of this elections curriculum, may help people organize their thoughts on election 2016, even if they cannot or do not want to attend a discussion. Feel free to circulate this material to anyone you think might find it politically useful.

## **Comments on Slides:**

### **Slide 1: Title slide**

### **Slide 2: Who Constitutes the Right?**

This slide draws a crucial distinction between the elite right and the populist far right. These two distinct forces have mainly been in alliance since Reagan in 1980 and together make up the Republican Party. There are numerous organizations, factions, ideological differences etc. within the elite right, within the populist far right, and between the elites and the populists. Nonetheless, they have managed to stay quite united, and, until this year, the alliance between the right and far right has held, led by the elites. Here we indicate the main groupings.

### **Slide 3: The Right Is the Most Powerful Political Force in the U.S.**

Many social justice activists and organizers live in the bluest areas of the blue states and are not sufficiently aware of the power of the right. This slide is meant to make clear that the right controls about 70 percent of the territory of the U.S. along with both houses of Congress, much of the federal judiciary, the Supreme Court until the recent death of Scalia, 31 governorships and 30 state houses. They are the dominant force in the country despite the Democrats having won the last two presidential elections.

### **Slide 4: A Red Country: Geography of the Vote by County – 2012**

This map depicts the vote in the 2012 presidential election. The red counties voted for Romney, the blue for Obama.

### **Slide 5: Republicans Control 60% of State Legislatures and Governorships**

This map depicts party control of state legislatures and governorships.

### **Slide 6: Their Control of the States Doubled During Obama's Presidency**

This chart shows the change in party control of state legislatures since 1978.

### **Slide 7: The Rise of the Far Right Relative to the Elite Conservative Right**

This slide is self-explanatory about the changes in 2016.

### **Slide 8: Recent History of the Far Right**

This slide marks some of the main historical turning points in the building of the populist far right.

### **Slide 9: Why the Right is So Dangerous Now**

This slide addresses some of the reasons that the far right has gained so much power and presents such a danger in this political moment.

### **Slide 10: The Far Right's Overall Strategy**

The far right has a far-flung yet coordinated strategy. One of the cornerstones of the far right's strategy is the bid for political power. They are out for governing power, not just issue advocacy and mobilizing their base.

### **Slide 11: The Far Right's Political Strategy**

For decades the Southern white supremacists ran third party candidates for president, often winning all or most of the Southern states. However by the late 60s they realized that this was a dead-end due to the winner-take-all, two party electoral system in the U.S. They opted for an independent, inside/outside strategy relative to elections and the Republican Party.

This strategy enabled them to grow from being a fringe, geographically limited Southern faction into a nationwide political force.

### **Slide 12: The Far Right's Political Program**

Racism and xenophobia are at the heart of the far right's program.

### **Slide 13: The Demographics of their Base**

The main segments of the U.S. population that make up the base of the far right.

### **Slide 14: The Far Right's Infrastructure**

They have also built a vast infrastructure to carry out their strategy, an infrastructure that is expert at communications and politics.

### **Slide 15: Trump and the Far Right Take Over the GOP**

In the 2016 Republican primary the elite right (Bush, Christie, Kasich), perhaps the most powerful economic and political force in the U.S. and even the world since 1980, was utterly crushed by a populist far right led even further to the right by Trump. This is the first time that a populist force has taken over either of the two main political parties.

### **Slide 16: Trump and the Far Right**

Simultaneously Trump has shaken up the far right itself. He defeated the candidates of the evangelicals (Cruz) and the Tea Party (Walker, Rubio) by advancing a politics and rhetoric that is much further to the right, much more dangerous and much more erratic.

### **Slide 17: Trumpism = Racist Authoritarianism**

We believe the best overall way to characterize Trump's politics is as racist authoritarianism. His racism is much more blatant than that previously advanced by any major section of the far right, let alone the elite right. And whereas both the elite right and far right have previously stressed small government and/or state's rights, Trump has overturned that in favor of a powerful, authoritarian central government based on his personal leadership.

**Slide 18: Fascism?**

He is opening the door to fascist white supremacy.

**Slide 19: Can Trump Win?**

Despite the dismissive views of many pundits, Trump still has a real chance to win. Despite all his antics, the margin between Clinton and Trump in the polls is still less than the vote of Gary Johnson, the Libertarian, and most people who now say they will vote for Johnson will probably end up voting for Trump. There is also the very real possibility of October surprises.

**Slide 20: The Economics of Trump's Electoral Base**

Trump has a solid base of about 40% of the electorate, and while it is true that his base is somewhat less affluent than that of Romney and McCain, it is still more affluent and educated than the median for the U.S.

**Slide 21: What's at Stake**

Self-explanatory on the stakes in the election and the need to defeat Trump.

**Slide 22: The Future of the Far Right**

Whether Trump wins or loses, it is clear that there is a huge block of people, probably 40% of the electorate, who espouse his politics and are not going away any time soon. They pose an ongoing threat to democracy and social progress.

**Slide 23: Progressive Strategy**

Elements of a progressive strategy, for this election and going forward.

**Slide 24: Crush Trump**

It is crucial not only to defeat Trump at the polls, but to crush him. Only by so doing can we hope to somewhat demoralize, disperse and disorganize the far right. And if the victory goes down ballot, we can retake control of the Supreme Court and get momentum and unity among progressives for the future.

**Slide 25: Going Forward: Inside/Outside Strategy**

More on left/progressive strategy.