

### \*\*\* INVITATION TO A DISCUSSION \*\*\*

**This document has been prepared by Ecosocialist Horizons as an invitation to a discussion at the War Resisters' International Conference in Cape Town, July 2014. It will be presented at the theme group "Resisting the War on Mother Earth" and also on July 5th at 7pm in City Hall. We hope that with your help we can create and launch a collective call which will help to amplify, unify and deepen the global movement for climate justice.**

## **Climate Satyagraha and Ujamaa!** *The Crisis, The Calling & The Strategy*

### ***The Crisis***

The numbers are staggering: One half of all the species alive today will probably be extinct by the end of the century; already we are losing them at the rate of a dozen a day. Many millions of human beings will soon be refugees, as their homes are lost to the ocean or to the deserts. Already hundreds of thousands perish every year as a direct result. There is a name for these bewildering statistics: catastrophic climate change (C3) and it sounds far more futuristic than it really is.

There is an international scientific consensus: only by containing global warming at less than two degrees Celsius can we halt the full onslaught of C3. Once this point is passed, earth system feedback loops (for example, the release of methane trapped in permafrost and the ocean floor) will overwhelm any human effort at mitigation. A majority of the world's governments, representing billions of their citizens, are also agreed that carbon emissions must *peak* by 2015, and then experience a rapid *decline*. Both words are anathema to our current economic system, which is based on the imperative of infinite growth, and which subordinates all aspects of life to this unholy mantra. This system has a name: it is capitalism, and it is the enemy of nature.

Decades of international conferences and decades of missed opportunities demonstrate beyond reasonable doubt that neither governments nor corporations nor NGOs are either willing or capable of bringing about what every doctor has ordered. This is the nature of our terminal crisis – not only ecological and social, but also political. The world's biggest polluters, the bankers and the politicians are not capable of "peaks" and "reductions." In the 11<sup>th</sup> hour, they are building more pipelines through the last stretches of pristine land, damming the last of our rivers, and felling the last of our forests, and the NGOs can't stop them. The crisis is absolute, and threatens to consume much of the life and beauty that remains in the world. In our moment of greatest need, we hear a calling to the horizon.

### ***The Calling***

We have one year, and the ticking clock is not in your imagination. It resounds in the ears and hearts and minds of every one of us who is not content to simply wait for the coming storms, and the mass graves. To those of you who feel that pulse, we say one word: *Satyagraha*.

It means "soul force" and was first summoned by Mohandas Gandhi against two superstructures that many believed would last forever: one was the apartheid state of South Africa, the other was the British Raj in India. Both were overthrown by mass movements of civil resistance that emerged in so gigantic and spontaneous a manner that few could have anticipated their power. Today, we are up against structures that far exceed those empires in their globalised intelligence and coordinated military power. It is unthinkable to approach them in anything but massive numbers, wielding anything but those weapons Gandhi identified so many years ago: truth (satya) and firmness (agraha).

We hear a calling to join together in satyagraha, to amplify actions and movements that are ongoing. We have a vision built on beloved communities of care and trust, making use of modern technologies but returning moreover to our ancient roots of wisdom, unity and ecological balance.

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#### *The Strategy*

The tireless work of activists, well-intentioned officials and enthusiastic school children have made one thing clear: protests outside office buildings and conference centers will not turn the tide. The time for protest and for demands is over – the powers that be are deaf, dumb and deadly. The time is now to be the change we want to see in the world, to become the leaders we have been waiting for. We must not only dare to struggle, but dare to win – and for this a strategy is necessary.

If our goal is a carbon emissions peak in 2015, we must focus our dignified rage on exactly those points in the fossil fuel economy which are most vulnerable: the ports and logistics hubs, the chokepoints and bottlenecks through which the vast majority of global production passes on a daily basis. Chokepoints are everywhere, from big international ports to your local gas stations, airports, trains, or roads. An alliance of organized labor in the big ports, together with the support and coordinated local actions of communities around the world, can stop the movement of oil. By blocking these arteries, defending them, and transforming them, human soul force can bend the arc of history toward climate justice.

There is an alternative. It is being imagined and created all over the world, and now is the time for our collective metamorphosis. But what will we become? We cannot move beyond fossil fuel and capitalism without a positive vision of the world we wish to create and care for. So together with *satyagraha*, we invoke and honor the history, vision and practice of *ujamaa*. Kiswahili for “unity,” Julius Nyerere's vision of Ujamaa brought together grassroots cooperation, interconnectedness and community spirit to work together in a new economy of locally grounded ecological and egalitarian villages that prefigure a new mode of production. Our calling is for *satyagraha*, and it calls from the horizon of *ujamaa* – a revolutionary ecosocialist light at the end of the tunnel of capitalism, patriarchy and war.

We are gathered together in Cape Town at the first Pan-African conference on nonviolence, hailing from every continent, united in this call for a coordinated global uprising. We make this call in solidarity with every movement for peace and justice, with every people struggling to build a new world in the shell of the old. We believe a movement of one billion people, united for climate justice, armed with truth and love, is only a hair's breadth away. In every place, comrades are already discussing amongst themselves the necessary tactical plan to make the impossible inevitable. We believe that with a common vision, we can all meet upon a global horizon, in truth and in power, in *satyagraha*, towards *ujamaa*.

