



Press release - Climate Justice Camp - 28/08/2019

Climate Justice Camp: the new camp that brings together social struggles around climate change

Following recent events and meetings on climate issues, people from different movements have gathered to organise a new camp in Belgium on climate justice. This first edition of the camp will take place from 4 to 8 September in Gooik, and aims to contribute to creating a stronger, more intersectional and better connected movement.

Workshops, screenings, debates and concerts will be organised around climate issues and different struggles against systems of oppression: patriarchy, racism and colonialism, cis-heteronormativity, validism, classism, specism, etc...

A camp to define the climate justice movement

The Belgian climate movement has grown considerably in recent years, whether in the form of school strikes, climate marches, direct actions, field occupations or mass actions of civil disobedience in bordering countries. This constant focus on action and training for action has reinforced the sense of urgency that was already present in the traditional climate movement («now or never», «we have 12 years to save the planet»), but also created conflicts with other social movements. The lack of attention to other movements and their agenda has led to a weakening of what «climate justice» means.

People from different activist groups therefore thought it might be useful to take a step back and set up a space to reflect on the definition of climate justice, and what it implies. Inspired by other initiatives outside Belgium, they decided at the end of 2018 to organize a four-day self-organized camp.

This camp aims to contribute to creating a stronger, more intersectional and better connected climate justice movement. Its objective is to bring together those interested in the subject so that they can reflect together on the challenges of climate justice and other struggles, in particular the struggles against capitalism and other systems of oppression: patriarchy, racism and

colonialism, cisheteronormativity, validism, classism, specism, etc. Many workshops will be organized to question and deconstruct our privileges in order to create a space that is as inclusive as possible for the targets of these oppressions. There will also be time to discuss what common strategies can be put in place in the different struggles, and to create as many synergies as possible. A system of interpreting into French, Dutch and English will be set up.

Systemic struggles

Traditional debates on the causes of climate change and on the ways to address it tend to focus on greenhouse gas emissions and resource consumption, underestimating or completely ignoring the structural drivers of climate change and vulnerability. The failure to recognize the political, economic and social dynamics that have led to global warming (and made some people more vulnerable to its impacts) can only lead to inappropriate conclusions about the causes and solutions to climate change.

The camp organisers believe that the issue of climate justice is closely linked to capitalism and other systems of oppression, which are at the root of climate change and are reinforced by it. They are convinced that any liberation that would take place at the expense of other oppressed groups is not a true liberation. As these forms of oppression are all interconnected, they argue for interconnected forms of resistance that arise from a sincere dialogue between the different struggles.

Between March and June 2019, they therefore organised a series of events called «Shape the Camp» during which people concerned by these different forms of oppression came to share their experience and their relationship to climate change and the climate movement. They also shared some ideas on how to make the camp as inclusive and safe as possible for all. Four «Shape the Camp» sessions were organised, each focusing on either feminism, LGBTQI+ issues, anti-racism and decolonialism or ageism. The recommendations and requests from these meetings allowed the organisers to refine the shape of the camp, for example by offering vegan food, child-care facilities, non-mixed spaces and an awareness-raising team present on the camp to protect against aggression and oppressive behaviour.

Interview opportunities:

- Integration of the different struggles in the creation of the camp with Ruth
- Awareness team with Julien
- with the various stakeholders: see the programme, <http://climatejusticecamp.be/programme/>

Examples of workshops:

- Each experience is political: on 4/09 at 4pm
- Feminist self-defense / boxing class in a chosen mix: 6/09 at 10am
- Screen printing workshop: 7/09 at 10am
- Introduction to direct action and civil disobedience: 8/09 at 10am

Links

- The camp website: <http://climatejusticecamp.be>
- The program: <http://climatejusticecamp.be/programme/>
- The facebook event: <https://www.facebook.com/events/469370076965883/>

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