

## Letter to IEER on Humanity before Nationality

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July 2004

Arjun Makhijani  
IEER  
6935 Laurel Ave  
Takoma Park MD 20912

Dear Arjun,

One of us (a veteran of the US civil rights movement) has heard you a few times on KUNM recently; the other has had longer contact with you! Your 17 December letter "Humanity before Nationality" got our attention, and several times we have enjoyed brainstorming about your questions, e.g., "What would Gandhi do today?" "What is today's equivalent of the salt march or the Montgomery bus boycott?"

Here are some results of our brainstorming.

Can a single thing (or set of things) be done about both the nuclear danger and the energy--environment crisis, or should they be treated separately, i.e., two separate movements/sets of actions/leaders/...? Americans understand the energy--environment link reasonably well, but a much smaller number of Americans understands (or would even be willing to admit) the link between military hyperpower status and energy gluttony.

Washington is too remote from much of the country for people to gather there easily in large numbers. State capitols are more accessible. Try for a day (Oct 2, 2005, if you want this to grow internationally) of 50 marches in the US, to state capitols or governor's offices? Delivering signed petitions, manifestos? Emphasis on what can actually be done at a state level to affect global affairs. Example: dramatic expansion of sister-cities programs or student-exchange programs would help connect Americans to the rest of the world. Could such a coordinated set of marches be coordinated through the network that arose to organize antiwar demonstrations before the Iraq invasion?

On the energy--environment front: One of us (SD) has seen how the Greens are regarded by Democratic and Republican lawmakers in NM as whiners, causing trouble, raising public awareness of problems but never working toward real solutions of problems, never working with others toward realistic solutions. A new color is needed. Let's pick blue. (Sky blue, ocean blue.) Blue to indicate actually doing something to mitigate the energy--environment problem---not just doing something to publicize the problem.

So let there be one day each month when people who care are supposed to actually do something to use less energy or cause less environmental damage. Such people can wear a blue armband or tie a blue ribbon on their doorknob or bike handlebar that day, so blue people can recognize other

blue people that day and share ideas. A central goal is to promote such conversations. The hope is that such conversations will stimulate widespread critical thinking about what is important and what is effective and what is practical.

People of all ages can participate and can display this simple symbol (including in particular the very young and the very old). "Action" could include things like taking the bus instead of a car, checking tire pressure, turning down the thermostat and wearing a sweater, driving 55 instead of 75, writing a letter to your Senator thanking him for supporting legislation X, buying some weatherstripping for a leaky window.....

We hope these little ideas might somehow help you when you are brainstorming with other leaders like yourself.

Best wishes,

Sharon Dogruel  
Greg Swift  
Santa Fe NM