

# GREEN JOBS FOR ALL – PRESENTATION

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If we could shrink the earth's population to a village of precisely 100 people, with all the existing human ratios remaining the same, it would look like the following...

There would be:

57 Asians

21 Europeans

14 from the Western Hemisphere, both north and south

8 Africans

52 would be female

48 would be male

70 would be nonwhite

30 would be white

70 would be non-Christian

30 would be Christian

89 would be heterosexual

11 would be homosexual

6 people would possess 59% of the entire world's wealth and all 6 would be from the United States

80 would live in substandard housing

70 would be unable to read

50 would suffer from malnutrition

1 would be near death; 1 would be near birth

1 (yes, only 1) would have a college education

1 would own a computer

The United States has only 4.7 percent of the world's population.

Americans produce 21 percent of all goods and services - including most of the world's weapons. They use 33 percent of the world's processed energy and mineral resources, and produce at least 33 percent of the world's pollution.

The average U.S. citizen, when compared to the average citizen of India, uses:

- 50 times more steel
- 56 times more energy
- 170 times more synthetic rubber and newsprint
- 250 times more motor fuel
- 300 times more plastic

One percent of the nation's population owns about 80 percent of the country's property and controls 90 percent of its wealth.

For 400 years economic growth has been the dominant objective of European and more recently American society. Today alone tons of persistent chemical contaminants will be added to our atmosphere, water, and soil. Over 100 square miles of rainforests globally will be eliminated. Between 30 and 85 species of plants and animals will be lost from the earth. That's just today....

1 billion people live in poverty – that's one sixth of the global population.

40,000 children will starve today

The western scientific industrial experiment of the last 150 years is psychotic. There must be a convergence in CONFRONTING the GLOBAL TRIPLE CRISIS:

### **1. Catastrophic Climate Chaos -**

Climate Chaos and Global Warming threaten the loss of much of the world's most productive lands, physical upheavals in many places from storms and rising waters, massive dislocations, decertification of many agricultural lands, and economic and social tragedy for well into the future, with problems especially severe for the poorest nations and peoples.

### **2. The End of the Era of Cheap Energy—**

The imminent end of the era of cheap energy ("peak oil"), bringing dramatic shifts in all operating assumptions of society.

### **3. Global Resource Depletion—**

The extensive depletion of other key resources basic to the industrial system as well as to human welfare; these include fresh water, genetic resources, forests, fish and wildlife, fertile soils, coral reefs, and most elements of the local, regional and global commons.

Biodiversity and cultural diversity are inextricably linked: within that cultural diversity, more specifically Indigenous cultural diversity exists highly sophisticated systems of ecosystem management developed over millennia as part of the system—the circle of life, biodiversity, or whatever you want to call it. Every time an indigenous language is lost it's like the burning of the library at Alexandria. We lose a deep understanding of the ecology of that one part of Mother Earth. What we're seeing is genocide unparalleled in the history of the earth, to replace this diversity with commodification.

For millennia upon millennia, Indigenous peoples have developed and refined traditional sustainable livelihoods and have maintained hunting, fishing, and gathering practices. All of this is based on local Indigenous knowledge handed down through the generations. These practices have enabled our Indigenous communities to achieve sustainability and food security - to adequately address hunger - providing sufficient food year after year despite fluctuations in weather patterns and natural disturbances. By adhering to these practices, our Indigenous communities have been able to retain

economic independence and self-sufficiency, and to ensure that the diversity of plant and animal species remains high.

Indigenous peoples in Canada, the United States and throughout the Americas hold valuable land and water resources that have long been exploited by the provincial, state and federal governments and by corporations trying to meet the energy needs of an industrialized world. Indigenous peoples have disproportionately suffered impacts due to the production and use of energy resources - coal mining, uranium mining, oil and gas extraction, coal bed methane, nuclear power and hydropower development – yet are among those who benefit least from these energy developments.

Indigenous peoples face inequity over the control of, and access to, sustainable energy and energy services. Territories where Indigenous peoples live are resource rich and serve as the base from which governments and corporations extract wealth yet are areas where the most severe form of poverty exists.

After a long period of resistance to colonialism and decades of devastation during the 20th century, Indigenous communities in Canada have reached a turning point. This is the culmination of specific struggles, ranging from the “White paper” struggle and resistance to development and environmental racism in Grassy Narrows, the Mackenzie Valley, and James Bay in the 1970s, through the legal and constitutional struggles of the 1980s and 1990s and a range of local struggles in the 1990s and 2000s. Indigenous communities in Canada have developed a complex ideological and legal framework for engaging with and resisting the colonial state.

Today, across Canada, an unprecedented number of communities have risen up against colonialism and the ecological devastation of their traditional lands. Here in Ontario, the communities of KI (Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug), Ardoch Algonquin and Shabot Obaadjiwan, Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory, Six Nations, Grassy Narrows, Moose Cree, and Temagami First Nations, among others, have developed organized political resistance to assert their right to say “no” to the despoiling of their traditional lands, and to govern themselves in accordance with their own traditions.

Across the country, the story is much the same, whether it is against dam developments in Manitoba or Labrador, the tar sands in Alberta, uranium in Saskatchewan, the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline in Denendeh (Northwest Territories), the Olympics in the BC lower mainland, or coal bed methane in the Skeena Valley and BC Peace. Communities have confidently asserted their inherent and treaty rights, appealing both to traditional understandings of treaty and the intent of the ancestors in signing the treaty.

There is a potential now for a broad social movement that issues a challenge to Canadian capitalism, colonialism, and ecological destruction that is as profound as the broadest social movements of the past 40 years. Part of developing this movement is creating spaces for Indigenous communities to share experiences with each other and strategize together outside of government-created bureaucracies. Also important is the creation of a large body of supporters who are able to articulate and understand the issues, and intervene in ways that support, rather than bar, the formation of a broader movement.

Climate change is having a disproportionate impact on some communities across Canada, particularly First Nation communities, communities of color and low-income and working class communities. First Nation communities experience loss of traditional lands and thereby loss of culture from climate change impacts of heat, torrential rains, and water evaporation. In addition, they experience disproportionate impacts from the fossil fuel resource extraction processes that occur on or near their communities.

People from communities of color are disproportionately represented in two groups: workers exposed to the toxic by-products of industrial processes and those of low-income. These groups, along with white members of low-income communities have less insulation from the effects of climate change. Since climate change equates to more unpredictable and potentially violent weather most of these communities do not have the resources to effectively protect themselves from extreme weather events such as heat waves or prolonged cold snaps. The goals, leadership and activities of the environmental movement do not accurately reflect the disproportionate impact of climate change according to the leadership of impacted communities. Leaders of these disproportionately affected communities feel that environmental movement leaders are proposing and advocating climate change policies that do not reflect the realities of their communities. Entire sub-populations of Canadians do not see themselves or their realities reflected in the environmental movement, which is one reason they are not engaged.

Climate justice is a movement from the grassroots to realize solutions to our climate and energy problems that ensure the right of all people to live, work, play, and pray in safe, healthy, and clean environment. Climate Justice envisions a just transition to a future free from fossils fuels that protects the most vulnerable from the impacts of climate change.

Across Canada and across mother earth we have witnessed how fragile the economy based on centralized, interdependent systems is by witnessing them come closer and closer to collapse. The process of deindustrialization which devastated the American "rust belt" was held at bay by the greater productivity of the Canadian labour force, much of which was owed to a lower dollar and lower benefit costs because of social risk pooling and socialized delivery of services (medicare e.g.). As global competitive forces intensify, and as the Canadian dollar strengthens, central Canada is being hit by an accelerating process of deindustrialization.

This has resulted in a shift of wealth and population towards the three westernmost provinces, and towards a resource (largely fossil fuel) economy. This has weakened the power of some traditional oppositional forces in Canada, specifically organized labour, and has strengthened the hand, at least temporarily, of the pro-American, right.

Here in Canada if you look at the demographics, by 2016 one out of every four workers in Canada will be native. Three quarters of our native people are under the age of 30. There is going to be fundamental shift in the labor market, and in political and economic power to Canada's Aboriginal population. So in that context there's a lot to be said about the need for the labor struggle and the indigenous struggle to come together to push for systematic change around a new and renewable energy economy and questions of climate adaptation and mitigation.

Now we are seeing a crisis in the manufacturing sector, especially in Canada's traditional economic powerhouse of Ontario. Recent numbers released by Stats Canada show that more than 50% of Canada's employment base is now represented by retail jobs. So people are paid \$12-\$15 an hour if they're lucky compared to \$25-\$30 an hour in manufacturing. Add to that the inflation that is coming, which is going to make it difficult for workers to afford fuel, rent, and transportation, and you've got a gross distortion of Canada's economy and a pretty scary reality. So I point out to folks that if we don't confront tar sands development, Canada's economy will suffer from the same resource curse that has faced other countries that have built their economies on resource extraction. I don't want to see that happen.

I don't believe that we can just steer this Titanic called capitalism. There's a whole Green capitalist movement that is emerging and is represented by the groups that talk about Green jobs but don't talk about community self-determination, let alone about ownership. They are not talking about the radical redistribution of wealth and land in this country, and until we have that conversation we are going to continue to be governed by the same economic power structures that benefit the rich and thrive on the backs of indigenous people, communities of color, and workers.

So when we talk about a "green economy" we need to ask if we imagine that British Petroleum and Shell and Exxon will be giving us green jobs? Do we mean "Green" Wal-Mart jobs? Or do we mean highly technical, community-controlled, well-paid local jobs that our communities run, that are owned by our communities, and where the wealth produced stays in the community? I think one of the things that we have to be adamant about is the need to develop regional economic models, which of course indigenous people have utilized from time immemorial. We need models based on an understanding of our local environments and our place within the sacred circle of life so that we can protect the earth for future generation.

### **Broad conclusions**

It is a time of extraordinary flux, laden with potentialities. These are the times when transformations and revolutions take place, but the energies must be harnessed and directed appropriately, and must bring together the right mix of vision, strategy, and democratic organizing with a convergence of different movements putting forward a clear vision for radical transformation.

### **A broad movement for climate justice?**

A truly broad movement with a transformational vision would include an economic, social, and political vision from the local to the international that encompassed food production systems, urban planning, transportation networks, energy production, and so on. This requires a massive linking of social and political forces from a range of constituencies. Obviously, this can't be built quickly but high quality leadership with intellectual vision and persistence has historically had a strong impact on the formation of such movements. The organic intellectuals -- the thinker-organizers rooted in struggle, the army of persuaders, etc., generally play the role of creating the mass consciousness that has the power and breadth to challenge "common sense".

This is a big piece to take on. And there are real questions around it. For example, do we really have to challenge capitalism to address climate change? It seems to me that if we are looking at the ecological question as a whole, the answer is yes, because capitalism's innate need for growth runs up against finite nature, complex interrelations of biological systems, and so on. But if we are looking only at the problem of energy and decoupling from fossil fuels, it seems entirely conceivable that with a broad social democratic strategy that incentivizes renewable energy and shuts down fossil fuel production, and with new technology like advanced sailboats and other transportation improvements, as well as with vast amounts of redistribution, some form of capitalism can probably survive for a while -- until all material inputs are fully used in a closed loop of recovery and production, at which point it can grow no further.

All those are very broad questions and require very broad and deep strategic capacity to effectively address, which is built up over many years, not a few. It seems to make more sense to me to focus on climate justice and the social factors bearing directly on it, including questions of Indigenous sovereignty and land rights, access to energy, conservation, and adaptation for the poor, a strategy for migration, incentivization of ecological urban development and renewable energy, an international redistribution system to transfer technology and pay for renewable energy development, a green jobs transition plan, the development of local food production, and international regulations to prevent carbon leakage and gaming the system, which means challenging the WTO and other trade regimes. But about all this, it seems to me what we can be part of is helping to frame the debates and generate the vision collectively in forums like this Good Green Jobs gathering here in Toronto.

Where I feel like there is uptake and traction across the country is especially around the tar sands. I can visualize a movement against the tar sands that is led by Indigenous people in Alberta in alliance with farmers, workers, and environmentalists, with people across the country acting in solidarity. The issue has traction, it's timely, and strategically, it is of the essence. We can't win on climate change without shutting down the tar sands.

To a much lesser extent, and more localized in Ontario, I see the nuclear issue also having a lot of play. These two can be related to broader social and climate issues but I think for the sake of organizing a movement it is easier to make it about stopping the tar sands than it is to make it about a whole range of things in the absence of a coherent oppositional ideological force the which does not exist at this point.

It is ironic that on the world stage, the colonial government of Canada presents itself as an emerging energy superpower, when in reality it is all but a resource colony of the military super power the United States of America. Canada has become a willing victim of USA's insatiable need for a secure energy supply to support its auto-centered transit economy and global military domination. From an indigenous perspective we understand the history of colonization and we also foresee what lay's ahead of Canada in this precarious position.

The benefits of a partnership with First Nations on a renewable energy future for Canada's major urban centre Toronto goes beyond electricity and less pollution, it represents renewable energy that supports communities and local economies and the creation of jobs and tax revenues for those communities that have been one of most disproportionately impacted historically by the fossil fuel

regime and climate change. First Nations communities which often have unemployment rates that double or triple those of the entire nation during the depths of the Great Depression could propose some massive Renewable Energy/Energy Efficiency programs to better prepare reservation infrastructure for the changes that are already here and coming in more and greater frequency and intensity.

Now is the time for this widespread collaboration of First Nations organizations, colleges, resource coalitions, Unions and allies to come together to address these issues. As Indigenous Peoples this transition to a renewable energy economy is most in line with and respectful of our traditions, our relationship to the sacredness of Mother Earth, and all our plant and animal relations.

The dream I have for us all, has its roots deep in reevaluating the relationship which industrialization has damaged most. The relationship we all share with the sacredness of mother earth. It involves deepening our understanding of systems of oppression that keep us from coming together such as race, class and gender power dynamics.

It involves us coming up with comprehensive strategies that embrace an intergenerational approach to strengthening our movement for Climate and Energy Justice. It involves us not sacrificing one population and their way of life so that another can thrive.

It involves Learning from our past, Preparing in our present, to defend our children's Future.