



A Just Transition for Workers and Communities

A Just Transition is needed to resolve the climate emergency. We join a rising global call for a coordinated phase-out of fossil fuel production and consumption, with equity at the core of our work. We can transition from global systems of production and consumption that are energy intensive and fossil fuel dependent to systems that are sustainable, resilient, publicly-owned, and regenerative.

The workers and the communities that are dependent on or directly harmed by the fossil fuel industry are central to and must benefit from a Just Transition. Economic, health, safety, labor, and

environmental policies must be guided by Indigenous and Global Majority people* poor people, workers, those in frontline communities, and vulnerable people (people with disabilities, elderly, and very young). A Just Transition will eliminate fossil fuel policies that have made some communities “sacrifice zones.”

Indigenous and Global Majority people, poor people, workers, labor and social justice leaders, and climate justice activists share common goals and face common obstacles. Divisions abound and can be difficult to overcome. The divisions of classism, racism, sexism,

* The peoples of Africa, Asia, the Pacific Islands, the Caribbean, and Latin America, and those descended from them, and Indigenous people, are over eighty percent of the global population. These people also occupy most of the global land mass.

Using the term “Global Majority and Indigenous (GMI)” for these people acknowledges their majority status in the world and interrupts how the dominant (U.S. and European) culture assigns them a minority status.

Many Global Majority and Indigenous people living in dominant-culture countries have been assimilated into the dominant culture—by force, in order to survive, in seeking a better life for themselves and their families, or in pursuing the economic, political, or other inclusion of their communities. Calling these people “Global Majority and Indigenous” contradicts the assimilation.



anti-Semitism, and other oppression distract us from our inherent connection and power. It is in everyone's interest to come together to address the climate emergency. A key part of doing this is addressing the destructiveness of the class society.

A Just Transition must organize and form alliances to create systemic change for a regenerative future. We must broaden and strengthen our relationships with

people and groups in every sector of society. Our work must be led by Indigenous and Global Majority people, poor people, and labor, environmental justice, and youth organizations. We can create and protect jobs that meet human needs and restore damaged ecosystems. We can create long-term, career-enabling jobs with good wages, benefits that allow healthy, enjoyable lives, and high safety standards. We need strong



Sustaining All Life (SAL) is an international grassroots organization working to end the climate emergency within the context of ending all divisions among people. *United to End Racism* (UER) consists of a wide diversity of people in many different countries, who are dedicated to eliminating racism in the world and supporting the efforts of all other groups with this goal. UER and SAL are projects of and use the tools of Re-evaluation Counseling. Re-evaluation Counseling (RC) is a well-defined theory and practice that helps people of all ages and backgrounds exchange effective help with each other in order to free themselves from emotional harm resulting from oppression and other hurts. By taking turns listening to each other and encouraging the release of painful emotions, people can heal old hurts and become better able to think, to speak out, and to organize and lead others in building a world in which human beings and other life forms are valued and the environment is restored and preserved. Re-evaluation Counseling currently exists in 95 countries.



SustainingAllLife.org



UnitedToEndRacism.org



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unions for workers in the energy sector and related fields and for workers in frontline communities. We need jobs for populations previously excluded: Indigenous people, people of color, and for people with disabilities, poor, and young people.

A Just Transition encourages, trains, and supports people to do this work. We can create and fund the systems that ensure that people's essential needs are met so everyone can lead dignified lives, no matter what work they do or even when they are unable to work.

A Just Transition will invest in the communities that are located next to extractive and polluting industries as well as in other communities that are vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, underemployment, and unemployment.

A Just Transition must be global. It must be funded by wealthy nations to address the global imbalance of resource resulting from colonialism, imperialism, genocide, and oppression. We can fund the work by:

- substantially increasing taxes on corporations and the wealthy,
- redirecting money from the militaries,
- eliminating tax dodges,
- promoting stimulus spending by governments,
- eliminating the structural debt of the global South

United we can win a Just Transition!
¡ Sí, se puede!





The Work of *Sustaining All Life* and *United to End Racism*

It is possible to limit the effects of human-caused climate change and restore the environment—if we make some very large changes in our economy and the lives we live in the next decade. *Sustaining All Life* and *United to End Racism* believe the environmental crisis can be resolved only if we by simultaneously address racism, genocide of Indigenous peoples, classism, sexism, and other oppressions. The impact of environmental destruction and climate change falls most heavily on the groups targeted by these oppressions, and on other vulnerable populations (including populations of people who are elderly, disabled, and very young). Making the changes needed will require a massive movement, spanning the globe, of people of every background fighting the effects of both climate change and racism.

In *Sustaining All Life* and *United to End Racism* we believe that the barriers to building a sufficiently large and powerful movement include (1) longstanding divisions (usually caused by oppression, and especially racism and classism) between nations and between groups of people, (2) widespread feelings that it's too late and any actions will be ineffective, (3) denial of or failure to engage with the climate emergency, and (4) difficulties in effectively addressing the connections between the environmental crisis and the failures of our economic system. *Sustaining All Life* and *United to End Racism* work to address these and other issues.

The role of oppression

The economic and political forms of our societies demand growth and profit with little regard for people, other life forms, or the earth. This results in exploitation and oppression. Oppressions (such as racism, classism, sexism, and the oppression of young people) target everyone, inflicting tremendous injustices, limiting access to resources, and damaging the lives of billions of people. Once targeted by oppression, we tend to act toward others in ways that repeat the hurts that we have experienced. Much of the mental and emotional harm we experience is the result of this passing on of hurt. Though people are vulnerable to acting in oppressive

ways, oppressive behavior is not inherent, but arises only when a person has been hurt emotionally. Oppressive societies manipulate this vulnerability to establish and maintain economic exploitation.

The importance of healing personal harm

The mental and emotional harm done to us by oppression and other hurtful experiences interferes with our ability to think clearly and sets groups of people against each other. This makes it difficult for us to think about and respond effectively to the climate emergency.

Healing from the hurts that help to hold oppression in place and lead to other harmful behavior is neither quick nor easy work. Many of us resist this personal healing work. We may have survived by numbing ourselves to the harm done to us by oppression. Some of us assume that we will never be free of this harm.

In *Sustaining All Life* and *United to End Racism* we have learned that it is possible to free ourselves from these hurts and address barriers to effective organizing. We can heal from hurtful experiences if someone listens to us attentively and allows and encourages us to release the grief, fear, and other painful emotions. This happens by means of our natural healing processes—talking, crying, trembling, expressing anger, and laughing. By releasing emotional pain in a supportive network, we can stay united, hopeful, thoughtful, joyful, and committed. This in turn strengthens us in building our movements to stop the effects of climate change and racism.



Sustaining All Life



For more information, see:

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