

Racism and the Collapse of Society
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Video Transcript

[Tim] Welcome everyone. Thanks for making the effort to get here on such short notice. I'm going to say a few brief things and then have Barbara come on and say what she wishes to say. I'm very pleased you are here. We are here to be part of a big beginning struggle to change the world. We are here to be part of ending racism and the policy of genocide toward indigenous people. This is one important starting place. We are here to help each other, to help each other be able to move to change the world. To change the world into one not based on mistreatment, not based on mistreatment and the exploitation of people. We have watched our societies function worse and worse for the vast majority of the people of the world. And, something in the present conditions is making everything obvious enough and somehow making the possibility of change seem within reach. Barbara, would you like to step in at this point?

[Barbara] I'm so excited about this gathering. Tim asked for us to...I forgot what you said...be calm? ...or something. I'm too excited to be calm. There's a thousand of us here because we care. A thousand of us who are committed, and dedicated, and determined to have a new world. How can I be calm and disciplined? That's what you said. How am I going to be disciplined, when there are a thousand of us who are gathered together here right now with a determined voice and mind and commitment to have a new world? This is way way way too exciting for me to be calm and disciplined about it. I was thinking about what I would say to you, and this is not an apology to the people that I've talked with in the last few weeks, but everything I'm going to say is what I've said to you already so you are not getting new pearls of wisdom. But, some of you haven't heard me say this, at least, in the last few weeks.

What's new right now - this historical moment - where the whole world seems to be on board, that is what is new and that is what is exciting, and that is what seems to open up such a powerful possibility for changing the world. Some of you were at the New York City Climate Change Summit last September. And, you probably saw a sign there that said, "A new world is possible, and she is on her way." I took that sign with me, "A new world is possible, and she is on her way." And, what's so phenomenally important about this moment is that, this is that moment when we get to usher in that new world. This is the moment we have been waiting for.

The world is burning up, and a climate change denier is in a position of power, in one of the most powerful countries in the world, the White House. There is a pandemic killer loose in the world, killing hundreds of thousands of people. And the primary concern of a bunch of people is out to get the economy open again. Extraordinary! Just extraordinary.

And, the thing that has prompted us to come together here, at this moment, racism, individual, personal, systemic, institutional racism, is on blaring display in its raw naked form. And it is more commonly understood. It is seen and understood by a greater number of people than probably at any time in our history. More people can see it, they can understand it, they recognize it as reprehensible, they recognize it as wrong, and they recognize it as needing to be changed. This is new. This is different. Now it doesn't mean that racism is new, and it doesn't mean this it hasn't shown itself in its form before, but to be seen so universally and to be recognized so universally - that is new. That is powerful. That is different. And, these three things coming together - COVID19, climate change, and this spotlight, this global spotlight on racism, is creating an unprecedented moment in history. It is, I'm calling it, "The Moment of the

Millenia.” You know, this won’t happen again, Well, who knows when it will happen again? Well, let me say, we don't need it to happen again because we are going to seize this moment to make the change that we want to make; and that is to, create a new world, to create a new world that is characterized by fairness and justice and equity. We will seize this moment to usher in that new world.

I'm calling this an existential moment. We do literally face a threat to our existence. And, the realities of the climate crisis has shown us what the struggle is going to look like. People know. They have the information about the threat posed by climate change. And, we see what they will do. The peril is clear. And, we know what needs to be done. And, people who know what needs to be done will go silent, they will deny, they will derail, they will disrupt, they will avoid, they will pretend. So, we see the nature of the struggle. There are those who could make a difference, and what do they do? They pull us out of the accords, the agreements the ultimatums to do something that could change this threat to our existence. What do they do?

They refuse to provide the funds that other nations could use to make the changes that are necessary to avert the climate crisis. They revoke regulations and policies that could make a difference. This is made so clear. This veil of ignorance has been pierced - things will never be the same again. And, this reality allows us to make the changes that are needed.

I mentioned COVID19 and what it has shown us. COVID19 has rocked the world and many people are afraid. That we call a discharge issue. That can be discharged. Probably more glaringly than the climate crisis, COVID19 has shown us the cracks and the crevices, the inequalities, the inequities in our existing societies. Frontline workers bearing the burden. And, we bang our pots and pans, we call them heroes, and we don't raise their wages, and we don't give them personal protective equipment, and we don't give them sick leave, we don't extend their vacation time. The disproportionalities revealed during COVID19 rates of infection, rates of hospitalization, rates of death, show the disproportionalities that have always been there, but which we have been able to ignore, which we have been able to slide right over. We have been able to pretend that they don't exist. That has changed. We can no longer ignore those disproportionalities.

And the death of George Floyd and, I always add the two native men Chauvin killed before he killed George Floyd, with no accountability, no consequences, the deaths of Breonna Taylor and hundreds of others, these are not unusual. They are not new. We simply, more people know about them. More people have the information. I was talking with some members of my family, my cousin, died in the hands of police just a few years ago, in a police choke hold, uttering those exact same words, “I can't breathe.” And, there was no protest because it was a common enough occurrence, it was an everyday occurrence. And there was no protest. But now this little device has made all the difference in the world. [holds up mobile phone] That information can no longer be hidden. It can no longer be disputed. And, it can be shared worldwide. And, worldwide there are people in the streets. That is different.

Two years ago, I wrote to the RC List. And, I published a roll call. It was one of these moments when someone, a Black person, a Black man had been killed in police custody with no accountability. And I published this “roll call” of Black people who had been killed in police custody with no accountability.

Someone wrote back to the [RC] list saying, “Oh, those people must have been doing something wrong in order for the police to kill them. The police would never have killed them if they hadn’t been doing something wrong.” I don’t think I would get that kind of letter today. I don’t think anyone would be mistaken in that fashion. The veil covering racism has been pulled back so that nobody can not know. So, racism which has been used to prop up the collapsing society, has been exposed, has been exposed in a way that cannot be disputed.

Racism is the vibrating factor here, vibrating globally. And, it should be, people being killed, yeah, hundreds of Indigenous Americans subjected to genocide, killed by the police routinely, spotlights on it. But, how about the French doctors who suggested that we should test the COVID-19 vaccine in Africa because they don’t have any masks and no treatments in ICU’s. And, after all, who’s going to hold them accountable? Or, how about the experience of the Zamichie Korean’s in Japan, who must respond to daily, ongoing, marginalization and persecution. ...who must respond to persecution and discrimination, and who are, right now facing the rise of ultra nationalist groups who are in opposition to them. The Zaitokukai.

Or, how about Australia? We are still trying to figure out how to build indigenous people into the nation state. Or, how about Marshall Islanders, who have no access to water because their homeland is occupied, and they have to go through the occupiers, and make an appointment to get water?

Or, how about that papal bull that ushered in the age of discovery, justify slavery, sanctioned genocide and has never been revoked?

Well, this is a global moment. Things got triggered in the US. But, it’s global. And, all over the world We are gathering. And, we are making our voices heard. We are saying that it’s time for change.

So, I always tell you to do three things. And, some of you remember those three things that I always tell you to do. And, you could repeat it along with me if you remember it. Discharge – despair, discharge discouragement. Discouragement is always old. It’s always old. It’s a discharge issue. Discharge hopelessness. Discharge powerlessness.

Then, there are three more things that I would want you to do.

One. Remember the truth. The truth about us. Remember our love, our goodness, our brilliance, our connection, our power. Remember, because this truth will be crucial to us in the days ahead.

Number two. I want you to hold out your vision of the world we want, the world we’ve been waiting for. This moment, historical moment, this moment of a millennia that you have been discharging and getting yourself ready for; this is the moment to hold out that vision of a world that works well for everyone. So, lift up your voice, share your thinking. Say what world you want. Describe it. In infinite detail.

And number three: rally the people around you. Rally the people in your workplace. Rally the people in your family. Rally the people in suburbia. Rally the people in your gentrified neighborhood. Rally your community of people to get behind you and your vision because this is the moment, and we can do this; we can do this together.

So, I’m gonna stop with this gift to you. I read the other day about the Hubble telescope. The Hubble telescope was Launched in 1990 by NASA and the European Space Agency. And, it has been sending back pictures that astound and amaze us. It was launched outside the earth’s atmosphere. They had to put it out in space so that it would not have its images distorted by the

pollution of the earth's atmosphere, the pollution of air, the pollution of light, the pollution of the atmosphere. And so, it could peer into deep space and it could send back these images that it has been sending.

One day in the 1990s an astronomer had this interesting idea. This astronomer proposed that the Hubble Telescope be pointed to an empty spot in the sky, a dark spot in the sky, where presumably nothing existed, and here's what they found. They did it. Seemed like a crazy idea. But they did it. They pointed the Hubble telescope to this dark spot in the sky. And, they found that even where the human eye sees nothing, thousands of galaxies exist. Even where the human eye sees nothing, thousands of galaxies exist.

So, here is my point. RC, the theory and the practice, is your Hubble telescope. It gives you a vantage point outside the distortions caused by an oppressive society. Outside the distortions caused by racism, and genocide, and antisemitism, and sexism, and male and domination, and classism, and ageism, and adultism; outside the distortions caused by the society characterized by disequity and inequity. You get a vantage point. Above that you get to point your vision to that spot where the world we want exists. And then, you get to do (oh Tim is here...I can't say damndest) You get to do your best to bring that world into existence. I love you. And, I'm so excited that we are all here together. Tim, back to you.

[Tim] Good. Very good. I would add one small little step in Barbara's progression of our getting out into the ...and that is the step of our getting farther out into the world. We are trying to get a clear picture of reality, in spite of the confusions thrown at us. And in spite of the confusions we carry in our head from old hurts. One thing those distresses seem to have done to us all is they have held us back from finding out about what's really going on in the world.

We are in this exceptional period where information is more available than ever. We are scared about the Coronavirus and that can tend to make us sit back and try to listen about reality. But I think we have to go out into reality to find out what reality is now, what is really going on. We have to be thoughtful about that. We have to not take unnecessary chances. But I think there are ways for all of us to challenge ourselves, where our fears have left us too scared to find out about reality.

We have many possibilities closer within our reach, than ever before, but we need real information to think with, to plan with, to take action with. If you've been too scared to go close to what is actually happening, have the sessions that are needed. Because you're scared because you got hurt, as we all did. And then, start by taking a couple steps out farther than you ever had. Barbara do you want to add any last thing here?

[Barbara] I guess the last thing is to have a session about your courage. Tim mentioned we may be scared. Of course, we are. Because the circumstances of our lives and of the world. But that's a discharge judge issue. That's something to be discharged. Notice all your feelings that you are having. Don't judge any of them. Feel them, feel them, and let them go. And, this is to all of us, and my mind is saying in particular to people of the global majority, but, actually to all of us - your rage is righteous. You're entitled to it. Feel it, discharge it. Do not be seduced by the idea that it will give you energy. Do not be seduced by the idea, the notion, that it will help you as you engage in action in the world. That's a false promise. If you don't discharge it, it will eat you up. It is to be discharged, and your natural zest and energy and power and brilliance is enough. I just want you to remember that you are enough. And, anything that whispers in your ear that you are not the one, that Barbara must be talking about those other people, not me.

That's something to be discharge. So, discharge that, because you are the one. That's all I would add.

[Tim] OK. We are here to support each other. We are here to borrow each other's resource to move ahead. We are here to remember that we get to discharge and clear our minds. We are here to change our own perspectives. We can do great things, just as any human can. We will get more chances. But, as Barbara said, this is a very special chance. None of us including those who went out protesting fifty years ago have ever seen an opportunity this big. It isn't that it's the last chance, but why would you pass up any chance?

[Barbara] I want to unmute all and hear a thousand voices saying yes. I want to tell everybody that it's ok to jump up and down and feel how absolutely powerful it is for this many of us to be of a like mind, to be committed in the same direction, to have our faces and our minds and our intention and our attention pointed in the same direction. It's ok. It's just right. And, let the rightness of our being together, this many of us, wrap around you and take it with you. That's what I want to say. And, yeah, that it's ok to believe, it's not naïve to believe, it's not stupid to believe that we can do this, that we can actually change something. I love you.

[Tim] So, yes. We get to be alive, more alive than we've dared in much of our life. And, we do have this chance to make big differences so that everybody can get the chances we've had and help change the world. We have, who knows how many people at the moment, all looking in the same direction, all knowing how to think about it well, and how to improve that as we go on. I think we have all the conditions necessary. We have work to do. We get to happily do that. And, we get to do it together. So, as a final thing, Barbara and I had talked about "unmuting" everyone, and having you see how many different people you can look at of these, at the moment, 714 participants, by sliding screen after screen, after screen, waving enthusiastically "goodbye" 'til next time.