

## **Roundtable A2: Can Green Jobs Drive Reindustrialization?**

Discussion Leaders: Ed Murphy, Workforce Development Institute; Kelly Bennet, Sterling Planet; Werner Schneider, Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund, (DGB)-Germany; Lee Smith, National Photovoltaic Construction Partnership; Brian Darcy, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local 18-Los Angeles; Marco Trbovich, United Steelworkers

Facilitator: Jeff Grabelsky, Cornell ILR

### **PRESENTATIONS**

**Ed Murphy with the Workforce Development Institute** explored the transition implementation necessary for reindustrialization driven by green jobs, focusing on policies, programs, budgets, and personnel. Asserting, that priorities must be practical in order to foster policy making that is congruent with the needs of the people whose lives will be disrupted by environmental redevelopment.

**Kelly Bennet with Sterling Planet** spoke about her experience as chair of the New York State **Apollo Alliance** and their progress in bringing labor, business, community and environmental justice organizations together for the purposes of green reindustrialization and just transition.

**Werner Schneider from the Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund (DGB)** explained that German trade unions were addressing these issues 15 years ago and have learned through experience that labor must not peripherally discuss climate change but instead must offer concrete methods for challenging this crisis. Mr. Werner suggested that North American labor follow the examples of Germany and other European confederations with the formation of an environmental policy bureau to exclusively represent labor's position.

**Lee Smith with the National Photovoltaic Construction Partnership** addressed the necessity to ensure that the new jobs created by green reindustrialization are jobs that provide good wages with benefits and security, calling attention to the fact that by and large environmental groups and policy makers have failed to factor these concerns into the equation. Domestic production of technical equipment and continuing research and development were expressed as being absolutely essential for achieving the proper economic balance from this transition.

**Brian Darcy of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local 18** expressed his concern about the tradition of conflict that has existed between environmental organizations and labor unions in the U.S., noting that both groups have shown a pattern of insensitivity towards the other. In spite of their differences labor and environmental coalitions based in Los Angeles have been able to report progress in a movement to tie reindustrialization to a much needed overhaul of the city's infrastructure, suggesting perhaps that these two often divergent groups are finding common ground and mutual understanding on the battleground of climate change.

**Marco Trbovich of the United Steelworkers** spoke about the **United Steelworkers** involvement in issues of environmental concern spanning the past 50 years. Most recently the union has been heavily involved with the **Apollo Alliance** and their unique focus on sustainable jobs through the emergence of renewable energy and increased energy efficiency. Thus, proclaiming that the American people are currently experiencing two crises simultaneously one being climate change and the other being the loss of the manufacturing industry now decimating the standard of living for millions. Referencing from data collected by **George Sterzinger** of the **Renewable Energy Policy Project** it was assured that these crises can be overcome with the proper balance of policy change utilizing both capital and public investment. Presently, among its many activities the **Apollo Alliance** has posited for the formation of a **Clean Energy Investment Authority** whereby the federal government, as it has done in the past to advance economic growth, would provide loan guarantees and market stabilization so that investment can flow into the development of renewable energy and job creation.

## **DISCUSSION**

This discussion facilitated by Cornell ILR's **Jeff Grabelsky**, focused on the costs of worker dislocation and the necessity for strategies that are inclusive of the poor and working class so that they too will benefit from reindustrialization. Among the questions examined by the roundtable participants were; how can green jobs drive industrialization, who will be the winners and losers, what kind of jobs will be produced (unionization), what are the limits of market based solutions, and what is the nature of the politics for advancing coherent strategies?