I will never forget the experience of being at the main camp when the news arrived, after the months of resistance, that the Obama administration had finally denied the pipeline permit. I happened to be standing with Tokata Iron Eyes, a fiercely grounded yet playful thirteen-year-old from Standing Rock who had helped kick-start the movement against the pipeline. I turned on my phone video and asked her how she felt about the breaking news. "Like I have my future back," she replied, and then she burst into tears. I did too.

Thanks to Trump, Tokata has again lost that sense of safety. And yet his action cannot and does not erase the profound learning that took place during all those months on the land. The modeling of a form of resistance that, with one hand, said *no* to an imminent threat and, with the other, worked tirelessly to build the *yes* that is the world we want and need.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

A TIME TO LEAP
BECAUSE SMALL STEPS WON'T CUT IT

"We can't keep asking our members to sacrifice. They are losing so much. They need those pipeline jobs—we have to offer them something."

The man making this plea was an executive of a major trade union, with many members in Canada's oil and gas sector.

Sitting in a large circle, sixty people listened and shifted in their chairs. What he was saying was undeniable. Everyone has a right to a decent job. And energy workers are hurting badly.

But the people in the room knew too that the case for even one more pipeline was not a matter of bargaining with environmentalists; it was a doomed attempt to bargain with science and chemistry. It is impossible to both keep building new fossil fuel infrastructure and have a chance of keeping temperatures at anything like safe levels.

That's when Arthur Manuel took the floor. A highly respected Indigenous intellectual and former chief from the Secwepemc Nation in British Columbia, Manuel leaned forward, looked the union leader in the eye, and spoke just above a whisper. "Do you think you are the only people who have had to sacrifice? Do you know how much money, how many jobs, my people have

turned down from oil and gas and mining companies? Tens of millions of dollars.

"We do it because there are things that are more important than money."

It felt as if the whole room was holding its breath. It was one of several wrenchingly honest exchanges that happened over the course of a two-day gathering in Toronto in May 2015. In the room were leaders and organizers from Haida Gwaii on the west coast to Halifax on the east coast, representing movements across a huge spectrum of issues and identities.

We had come together to figure out what connects the crises facing us, and to try to chart a holistic vision for the future that would overcome many of the overlapping challenges at the same time. Just as in Standing Rock, more and more people are starting to see and speak about these connections—pointing out, for instance, that the economic interests pushing hardest for war, at home and abroad, are the very same forces most responsible for warming the planet. And that the economic precariousness that the union representative was speaking about, and the attacks on Indigenous land rights and on the earth itself that were referenced by Arthur Manuel (who died suddenly at the start of 2017), also flow from the same place: a corrosive values system that places profit above the well-being of people and the planet. The same system has allowed the pursuit of money to so corrode the political process in the United States that a gang of scandal-plagued plutocrats could seize control of the White House.

The connections between so many of the emergencies that compete for our time and care are clear. Glaring, even. And yet, for so many reasons—pressure from funders, a desire for "clickable" campaigns, a fear of seeming too radical and therefore doomed—many of us have learned to sever those natural connections, and work in terms of walled-off "issues" or silos. Anti-austerity people rarely talk about climate change. Climate change

people rarely talk about war or occupation. Too seldom within the environmental movement are connections made between the guns that take Black lives on the streets of cities such as Ferguson and Ottawa and the rising seas and devastating droughts destroying the homelands of Black and brown people around the world. Rarely are the dots connected between the powerful men who think they have the right to use and abuse women's bodies and the widespread notion that humans have the right to do the same thing to the earth.

So many of the crises we are facing are symptoms of the same underlying sickness: a dominance-based logic that treats so many people, and the earth itself, as disposable. We came together out of a belief that the persistence of these disconnections, of this siloed thinking, is why progressives are losing ground on virtually every front, left fighting for scraps when we all know that our historical moment demands transformative change. These divisions and compartmentalizations—the hesitancy to identify the *systems* we are up against—are robbing us of our full potential, and have trained too many to believe that lasting solutions will always be out of reach.

We also came together out of a belief that overcoming those divisions—finding and strengthening the threads that run through our various issues and movements—is our most pressing task. That out of those connections would emerge a larger and more fired-up progressive coalition than we have seen in decades, one capable of taking on not only the symptoms of a failed system, but maybe even the system itself. Our goal, and it wasn't modest, was to try to map not just the world we don't want but the one we want instead.

The diversity in the room led to plenty of tough exchanges. But with long, painful histories of failed collaborations and too much broken trust, tough is what happens when people finally decide to make space to dream together. You'd think imagining

the world we want would be fun and easy. In fact, it's the hardest work of all. It also happens to be our only hope. As we have seen, Trump and his cohorts are intent on pushing the world backward on every front, all at once. Only a competing vision that is pushing us forward on multiple fronts has a chance against a force like that. Our experiment in mapping these intersectional agendas began in Canada, but it's part of an international conversation—in the US, the UK, Australia, across Europe, and beyond—in which more and more people are arriving at the same conclusion: it's time to unite around a common agenda that can directly battle the political poison spreading through our countries. No is not enough—it's time for some big, bold yeses to rally around.

Time for a People's Shock

Ever since the 2008 financial meltdown, I have been puzzling over the question of what it would take to pull off a truly progressive populist response to the crises we face.

I had thought, at one point, that the factual revelations of climate science—if we truly understood them—might be the catalyst. After all, there couldn't be a clearer indication that our current system is failing: if business as usual is allowed to continue, ever-larger expanses of our planet will cease to be hospitable to human life. And as we've seen, responding effectively to climate change requires throwing out the entire pro-corporate economic playbook—which is one of the main reasons so many right-wing ideologues are determined to deny its reality. So it seemed to me that, just as the aftermath of the Great Crash and World War II became periods of massive social transformation, so could the climate crisis—an existential threat for humanity—become an opportunity for once-in-a-century social and economic change.

The urgency of the climate crisis also gives us something that

can be very helpful for getting big things done: a firm, unyielding science-based deadline. We are, it bears repeating, out of time. We've been kicking the can down the road for so many decades that we are just plain out of road. Which means if we want a shot at avoiding catastrophic warming, we need to start a grand economic and political transition *right now*.

And yet, as we all know, climate change doesn't play out like a market collapse or a war. With the exception of increasingly common monster storms, it's slow and grinding, making the warming dangerously easy to push away into our subconscious, behind more obvious daily emergencies. Which is why what brought us together for that meeting in the spring of 2015 wasn't only the climate crisis, but something that was grabbing front-page headlines: the collapse in oil prices, which has been such a problem for ExxonMobil, Rex Tillerson, and Vladimir Putin. For us in Canada—where governments had bet the farm on the expensive tarry oil in Alberta—the sudden drop in price was proving a devastating economic blow. Investors started fleeing from the tar sands, tens of thousands of workers were losing their jobs, and there was no Plan B—whether for creating jobs or raising government revenues.

For years, Canadians had been hearing that we had to choose between a healthy environment and a robust economy—now it turned out we had neither. Huge swaths of Alberta had been logged and contaminated to get at that heavy oil, Indigenous land rights had been grossly betrayed, and the economy was tanking anyway. Indeed, it was tanking precisely because we had pinned so much on a commodity whose price was on a roller coaster ride nobody seemed able to control.

Which was why a few of us had started discussing the idea of a national meeting, wondering if perhaps the oil price collapse, combined with the urgency of the climate crisis, might provide the catalyst for the deep transformation our society and economy

needs on so many fronts. We began imagining that we could seize this juncture of overlapping crises to advance policies that dramatically improve lives, close the gap between rich and poor, create large numbers of well-paying, low-carbon jobs, and reinvigorate democracy from the ground up. This would be the inverse of the shock doctrine. It would be a People's Shock, a blow from below.

So we sent out a letter, headed "From price shock to energy shift," and invited leaders from across the country to meet in a circle for two days and dream big. I'm sharing what happened next in the hope that the experience might be useful at a time when so many are looking for ways to bridge divides.

A Platform without a Party

In response to our invitation, they came. Heads of labor federations and unions, directors of major green groups, iconic Indigenous and feminist leaders, key organizers and theorists focused on migrant rights, open technology, food justice, housing, faith, and more. The fact that we were able to bring so many players together with only a few weeks' notice reflected a shared understanding that this was a rare political opening—not unlike the 2008 financial crisis. Only this time, people were determined not to let the opportunity pass us by.

The other factor lending urgency to our gathering was a looming federal election campaign. The Conservative Party, led by the extremely pro-oil Stephen Harper, had been in power for a decade, but the national mood was shifting and the political landscape looked likely to change. Yet, at that stage in the campaign, there wasn't a political party that had succeeded in exciting voters with a different vision for the country. On climate, both principal opposition parties—the centrist Liberals under Justin Trudeau and the center-left New Democratic Party—were running conventional campaigns that called for new tar sands

pipelines, still failing to honestly reckon with either the price collapse or the climate crisis.

So, at our gathering, we decided to do something that movements in our country had not attempted for several decades: intervene in a national election by writing a "people's platform," one that would attempt to reflect the needs not of one particular constituency, but of a great many at once.

We saw this as a chance to begin to heal not only our relationship with the planet but the colonial and racial wounds that date back to our country's founding.

We kept something else in mind too: the way of life that is leading to both climatic and economic destabilization is creating other crises as well. It's giving rise to an epidemic of anxiety and despair, expressed through everything from rising prescription drug dependence to high suicide rates, from road rage to screen addiction. So we asked ourselves to imagine: what would it take to build happier, healthier communities? And could those be the same things that would make the planet healthier?

In short, we aimed high. It felt, on some cellular level, like the only moral thing to do: for everyone in the room, whether they were working on migration or homelessness or Indigenous land rights or the climate, there had rarely been so much at stake.

The goal was to come up with a vision so concrete and inspiring that voters could, practically speaking, do two things at once. They could go to the polls to vote against what they didn't want (the disastrous government of the day); and they would still have a space, even if it was outside electoral politics, to say yes to a vision we hoped would reflect what many actually do want, by adding their names to our people's platform or otherwise voicing public support.

We figured that if we built up enough momentum behind the platform, it might exert some pressure on our elected representatives. But before that could happen, we first had to

agree on the planks of the document—and that wasn't going to be easy.

Connections, Not Competition

There were a few ground rules in that initial meeting, some unspoken, some not. The first was that no one was allowed to play "my crisis is bigger than your crisis," nor argue that, because of the urgency and scope of the climate crisis, it should take precedence over fighting poverty or racism or other major concerns. Instead of ranking issues, we started from the premise that we live in a time of multiple, intersecting crises, and since all of them are urgent, we cannot afford to fix them sequentially. What we need are *integrated* solutions, concrete ideas for how to radically bring down emissions while creating huge numbers of unionized jobs and delivering meaningful justice to those who have been abused and excluded under the current extractive economy.

Another ground rule was that respectful conflict is healthy and a necessary part of getting to new territory. Arguments mean it's working!

Many of the groups and people in the room talked about how, while they had formed coalitions before, most had been coalitions of "no"—no to a lousy pro-corporate trade deal, no to a punishing austerity agenda, no to a particularly egregious politician, no to oil pipelines or fracking. But we realized that it had been a long time since the progressive side of the political spectrum had assembled to say yes, let alone yes to a sweeping vision for the next economy. So conflicts were inevitable, especially since, like all gatherings, ours was imperfect, with people missing from the room who should have been there.

There were moments of ease and joy too, where ideas for a "just transition" flowed fast and furious. Whiteboards grew crowded with suggestions and questions:

- Free high-quality child care.
- Less driving.
- Less work, more music and gardens and family.
- Super-fast trains. Solar roads.

We also heard challenges we knew we couldn't resolve in two days but would continue puzzling over for years:

- If we don't address ownership, how can we move toward equitable justice?
- How do we move beyond the idea that what we own is what protects us? Security comes from community, from solidarity. Security is based on how solid my ties are, not how much I own.
- How do we build the public sector so we, the *public*, feel part of it? We should all feel ownership over public housing, public resources.
- How can we ensure that informal and unpaid work around caregiving, domestic work, and land care is recognized and valued in a just transition?
- What should a guaranteed basic income look like?
- Climate justice is indivisible from decolonization. How do we imagine reparations to the people most impacted by extractive industries and climate change?

And on all our minds as so many thousands of refugees continued to flee their homes in search of safety:

- Migrants are not looking at the climate crisis. They are in the climate crisis.

Lead with Values, Not Policies

My role in all this was to listen closely to the two days of conversations, notice common themes, and come up with a rough first draft, which everyone would have an opportunity to revise. It was the most challenging assignment of my writing life (I struggle to cowrite with one other person, let alone sixty). And yet some very clear common themes emerged that made a synthesis possible.

One such theme was that we have a system based on limitless taking and extracting, on maximum grabbing. Our economy takes endlessly from workers, asking more and more from them in ever-tighter time frames, even as employers offer less and less security and lower wages in return. Many of our communities are being pushed to a similar breaking point: schools, parks, transit, and other services have had resources clawed back from them over many decades, even as residents have less time to fill in the gaps. And of course we are all part of a system that takes endlessly from the earth's natural bounty, without protecting cycles of regeneration, and while paying dangerously little attention to where we are offloading pollution, whether it be into the water systems that sustain life or the atmosphere that keeps our climate system in balance.

Listening to the stories—workers being laid off after a lifetime of service, immigrants facing indefinite detention under deplorable conditions, Indigenous knowledge and culture ignored and attacked—it was clear to all of us that this is what a system addicted to short-term profits and wealth is structurally required to do: it treats people and the earth either like resources to be mined to their limits or as garbage to be disposed of far out of sight, whether deep in the ocean or deep in a prison cell.

In sharp contrast, when people spoke about the world they wanted, the words *care* and *caretaking* came up again and again—care for the land, for the planet's living systems, and for

one another. As we talked, that became a frame within which everything seemed to fit: the need for a shift from a system based on endless taking—from the earth and from one another—to a culture based on caretaking, the principle that when we take, we also take care and give back. A system in which everyone is valued, and we don't treat people or the natural world as if they were disposable.

Acting with care and consent, rather than extractively and through force, became the idea binding the whole draft together, starting with respect for the knowledge and inherent rights of Indigenous peoples, the original caretakers of the land, water, and air. Though many of us (including me) had originally thought we were convening to draft a list of policy goals, we realized that this shift in values, and indeed in morality, was at the core of what we were trying to map.

The specifics of policy all flowed from that shift. For example, when we talk about "green jobs," we usually picture a guy in a hard hat putting up a solar array. And that is one kind of green job, and an important one. But it's not the only one. Looking after elderly and sick people doesn't burn a lot of carbon. Making art doesn't burn a lot of carbon. Teaching is low-carbon. Day care is low-carbon. And yet this work, overwhelmingly done by women, tends to be undervalued and underpaid, and is frequently the target of government cutbacks. So we decided to deliberately extend the traditional definition of a green job to anything useful and enriching to our communities that doesn't burn a lot of fossil fuels. As one participant said: "Nursing is renewable energy. Education is renewable energy." It was an attempt, in short, to show how to replace an economy built on destruction with an economy built on love.

Red Lines

We tried to touch on as many issues as possible that reflected the values shift people were calling for (from welcoming many more migrants to putting an end to trade deals that force us to choose between "growth" on the one hand and protecting the environment and creating local jobs on the other). But we also decided to resist the temptation to make laundry lists that would cover every conceivable demand. Instead, we emphasized the frame that showed how so many of our challenges—and solutions—are interconnected, because the frame could then be expanded in whatever place or community the vision was applied.

At the same time, there were certain demands, specific to different groups in the room, that needed to be in the platform. For the Indigenous participants, it was crucial to call for the full implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which states that no development can take place on the land of Indigenous peoples without their "free, prior and informed consent." For the climate activists, there needed to be an acknowledgment that no new fossil fuel infrastructure can be built. For trade union participants, it was critical to call for workers to be not only retrained for new green jobs but democratic participants in that retraining.

For many people in the room, a bright red line was a rejection of nostalgia. The platform could not fall back on an idealized memory of a country that had always relied on land theft and the systematic economic and social exclusion of many communities of color. The inspiration would have to come from the picture of the future that we painted together. Ellen Gabriel, one of the coauthors of the draft and a well-known Indigenous rights activist from Kanehsatà:ke in the province of Quebec, said the process for her represented "a rebirth of humanity." Rebirth, not a resurrection.

Christina Sharpe, a Tufts professor of English who wrote a powerful book called *In the Wake* about the ongoing reverberations of the slave trade, participated in a recent discussion inspired by the platform and offered an important warning on this score: the task, she said, was "to connect but not collapse." This means that though we can and must look for points of unity and commonality across very different experiences and issues, everything cannot be blended into an indecipherable mush of lowest-common-denominator platitudes. The integrity of individual movements, the specificities of community experiences, must be reflected and protected, even as we come together in an attempt to weave a unified vision.

In It Together

In a way, we asked ourselves this: what are the qualities that we value most in people? Those included: generosity, hospitality, warmth, and wisdom. And then we asked ourselves: what do those qualities look like when expressed in public, as policy? We discovered that one of the things those qualities reflect is openness. Which means nurturing a culture that welcomes those in need, rather than greeting strangers with fear and suspicion; that values elders and the knowledge they have accumulated over lifetimes, as well as the ways of knowing that long predate this very recent invention called Canada.

Bianca Mugyenyi, who co-leads the organization that came out of the gathering, boils that principle down when it comes to climate and migration:

> The refugee flows we're seeing now are just a glimpse of what's to come. Climate change and migration are intimately linked, and we're going to see massive displacement of people caused by sea-level rise and extreme weather in the decades to come,

all around the world. So there's a question facing all of us: are we all in this together? We think most people, given the opportunity, believe that we are. You see it over and over in times of crisis, when people step up for others in their communities, but also for complete strangers. But we need our immigration, border and social support systems to catch up with this idea. The Leap is about speaking to our better selves.

Energy Reparations

Today, the energy most of us use is owned by a tiny number of corporations that generate it for the profit of their shareholders. Their primary goal, indeed their fiduciary duty, is to produce maximum profit—which is why most energy companies have been so reluctant to switch to renewables. But what, we asked, if the energy we use was owned by ordinary citizens, and controlled democratically? What if we changed the nature of the energy *and* the structure of its ownership?

So we decided that we didn't want to be buying renewable power from ExxonMobil and Shell, even if they were offering it—we wanted that power generation to be owned by the public, by communities, or by energy cooperatives. If energy systems are owned by us, democratically, then we can use the revenues to build social services needed in rural areas, towns, and cities—day cares, elder care, community centers, and transit systems (instead of wasting it on, say, $180-million retirement packages for the likes of Rex Tillerson). This turn toward community-controlled energy was pioneered in Denmark in the eighties, with government policies that encouraged and subsidized co-operatively owned wind farms, and it has been embraced on a large scale in Germany. (Roughly half of Germany's renewable energy facilities are in the hands of farmers, citizen groups, and almost nine hundred energy cooperatives; in Denmark in 2000,

roughly 85 percent of the country's wind turbines were owned by small players such as farmers and co-ops.) Both countries have shown that this model carries immense social benefits and is compatible with a very rapid transition. There are some days when Denmark generates far more power from its wind farms than it can use—so it exports the surplus to Germany and Sweden.

We were inspired by these models—and by the hundreds of thousands of jobs they have created—but we were equally inspired by examples in the United States, where, through networks like the Climate Justice Alliance, low-income communities of color have been fighting to make sure the places that have been most polluted and neglected benefit *first* from a large-scale green energy transition. In Canada, the same patterns are clear: our collective reliance on dirty energy over the past couple of hundred years has taken its highest toll on the poorest and most vulnerable people, overwhelmingly Indigenous and immigrant. That's whose lands have been stolen and poisoned by mining. That's who gets the most polluting refineries and power plants in their neighborhoods. So in addition to calling for "energy democracy" on the German model, we placed reparative justice at the center of the energy transition, calling for Indigenous and other front-line communities (such as immigrant neighborhoods where coal plants have fouled the air) to be first in line to receive public funds to own and control their own green energy projects—with the jobs, profits, and skills staying in those communities.

A justice-based transition also means that workers in high-carbon sectors—many of whom have sacrificed their health in coal mines and oil refineries—must be full and democratic participants. Our guiding principle was: no worker left behind.

In summary, our plan argued that in the process of fundamentally changing our country to make it cleaner, we also have a historic opportunity to make it a lot fairer. As we move to get off fossil fuels, we can simultaneously begin to redress

the terrible wrongs done to Indigenous peoples; radically reduce economic, racial, and gender inequalities; eliminate glaring double standards for immigrant workers; and we can create a whole lot of stable, well-paying jobs in green sectors, in land and water remediation, and in the caring professions. Kids would have an opportunity to be healthier because they wouldn't be breathing toxic air; our increasingly aging society could be provided with healthier community living; and we could spend less time stuck in traffic, working long hours, and more time with our friends and families. A happier, more balanced society, in other words, with the definition of happiness liberated from the endless cycle of ever-escalating consumption that underlies the logic of branding (and fueled the rise of Donald Trump). It sounded good to us and—in very un-Canadian fashion—we even dared to hope that the manifesto might become a model for similar broad-based alliances beyond our country's borders.

Yes, We Can Afford to Save Ourselves

We knew that the greatest obstacle our platform would face was the force of austerity logic—the message we have all received, over decades, that governments are perpetually broke, so why even bother dreaming of a genuinely equitable society? With this in mind, we worked closely with a team of economists to cost out how we could raise the revenues to pay for our plan.

The key tools included: ending fossil fuel subsidies (worth about $775 billion globally); getting a fairer share of the financial sector's massive earnings by imposing a transaction tax (which could raise $650 billion globally, according to the European Parliament); increasing royalties on fossil fuel extraction; raising income taxes on corporations and the wealthiest people (lots of room there—a one-percent billionaire's tax alone could raise

$45 billion globally, according to the United Nations); a progressive carbon tax (a $50 tax per metric ton of CO_2 emitted in developed countries would raise an estimated $450 billion annually); and making cuts to military spending (if the military budgets of the top ten military spenders globally were cut by 25 percent, that would free up $325 billion, according to numbers reported by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute). To our chagrin, we neglected to include a call to shut down tax havens, perhaps the greatest potential revenue source of all.

The math is clear: the money for this great transition is out there—we just need governments with the guts to go after it.

So that, in summary, was our vision—to invest in those sectors that tangibly improve our quality of life and create more caring societies, rather than hacking away at them in the name of that manufactured crisis called "austerity." And we were committed to embedding justice in every aspect of the transition.

The Opposite of *The Art of the Deal*

As I look back on the drafting process, it strikes me that it is about as far away from Trump's "how can I screw you" art of the deal as you can get. No one got everything they wanted, or even sought to. There were serious disagreements, but to arrive at the final document, everyone made concessions; nobody went to the wall. This give-and-take reflected the principles and values that emerged from our discussions: if the goal is to move from a society based on endless taking and depletion to one based on caretaking and renewal, then all of our relationships have to be grounded in those same principles of reciprocity and care—because our relationships with one another are our most valuable resource of all. And that's the antithesis of bullying one another into submission.

Yes to the "Yes"

After a few weeks of back-and-forth over wording, we had a final draft of the platform, acceptable to almost everyone at the original gathering. (The full text appears at the end of the book.) We also agreed on a name: *The Leap Manifesto—A Call for a Canada Based on Caring for the Earth and One Another.* We chose *leap* because it raises a defiant middle finger to centrist incrementalism—the kind that calls itself "cautious" but is in fact exquisitely dangerous at this late stage in the climate crisis. The gap between where we are and where we need to go is so great, and the time left is so short, that small steps are not going to cut it—we need to leap.

My partner, Avi Lewis, who is one of the document's coauthors, puts it like this:

> With The Leap, the scale of the plan matches the scale of the crisis. And for many of us, this comes as a cosmic relief—at last, a set of demands that actually acknowledges how much and how fast we need to change. The Leap rings true because it sees the climate crisis not as a technical problem to be solved by engineers, but as a crisis of a system and an economic philosophy. The Leap identifies the root cause of the climate crisis—and it's the dominant economic logic of our time: extractivism to feed perpetual growth rooted in ever-increasing consumption. . . . That's a scary level of change, but it's honest. And people know in their bones that it's the kind of change we need.

Before releasing it to the public, we asked many organizations and trusted public figures to become initiating signatories. Again and again, we heard: *Yes. This is who we want to be. Let's push our politicians. Cautious centrism be damned.* National icons stood with us without hesitation: Neil Young. Leonard Cohen (then still with us). The novelist Yann Martel wrote back that it should "be shouted in every square by every town crier this country has."

This was a rare document that could be signed by large organizations such as Greenpeace and Oxfam, the Canadian Union of Public Employees (the largest in the country), the head of the Canadian Labour Congress (the union of unions), as well as truly grassroots groups such as Black Lives Matter–Toronto and No One Is Illegal–Coast Salish Territories and the country's largest membership-based advocacy organization, the Council of Canadians. Original endorsers included supporters of all parties, and some who support none. All shared the belief that if the major political parties weren't offering voters a plan commensurate with the multiple crises we face, then it would have to come from outside electoral politics.

Within days of The Leap's launch, thousands of people had added their names, soon tens of thousands, and well over two hundred endorsing organizations. We were stunned. It was clear that a whole lot of people, after decades of fighting against what they don't want—tar sands pipelines, money in politics, corporate trade deals, draconian security bills—were ready to rally around the world they do want. The outpouring reminded me of a slogan I first heard in Argentina, during a raucous election campaign: "Our dreams don't fit on your ballot." That's what people were saying by signing The Leap: Yes, I am going to cast a ballot in this deeply flawed and constricted electoral system, but do not mistake that vote as an expression of the world I want. The Leap was creating a space in which to register that electoral politics at this point in history so often fails to reflect both the dreams and the very urgent needs of huge numbers of people. (But the real trick, in Canada, the United States, and everywhere else, is going to be to get those dreams *on* the ballot with a winning strategy as quickly as possible. . . .)

Exploding the Box

The reaction from the corporate press ranged from confusion (how can there be a platform without a party? why drop it in the middle of an election campaign?) to rage. One of Canada's national newspapers declared The Leap's call for a country based on caring for each other and the planet "madness"; another one deemed it "national suicide."

We weren't surprised. We knew that what we were proposing did not fit inside the box of what is considered politically possible in mainstream political discussions. But what we are trying to do with The Leap—quite explicitly—is explode the box. Because if the box doesn't leave room for the safety and possibly the survival of our species, then there is something very, very wrong with that box. If what is considered politically possible today consigns us to a future of climate chaos the day after tomorrow, then we have to change what's politically possible.

And many clearly agreed. Despite some mystified mainstream reporting, people kept signing, kept asking us for Leap lawn signs, kept self-organizing local Leap chapters in their cities, towns, schools, and unions. And they kept sending us photos of their Leap teach-ins, sit-ins, and rallies—even audio of the songs it was inspiring. A national poll found that a clear majority of supporters of all three center and center-left parties—the Liberals, the NDP, and the Green Party—were in agreement with The Leap's key demands. Even 20 percent of Conservatives said they were on board.

In the end, Canadians did vote out Stephen Harper, but the biggest loser in the election was the NDP, our center-left party. It had run an extremely cautious campaign and been outflanked on the left by Justin Trudeau's Liberals (who made up for what they lacked in specifics with dazzling progressive PR). At the NDP convention a few months later, young delegates led an

internal revolt: convinced that the party could have won if it had gone bold, they called on delegates to officially endorse the spirit of The Leap Manifesto. The resolution passed—a rare example of a major political party even considering a platform offered by outside social movements.

The Living Leap

In the months since its launch, The Leap has become a living, evolving project, with an ever-growing community of supporters constantly enriching and revising the work. Our team is also working closely with organizers around the world who are kicking off similar experiments—from the Australian group I met with on the eve of Trump's election win, to a coalition of green parties in Europe who have written their own Leap-inspired manifesto, to communities from Nunavut in the Arctic to the US Gulf South and the Bronx that are exploring how to adapt the document's framework to their local needs and most pressing crises. There is even a community of "Leapers" in prison: at a Connecticut detention facility for teenaged boys tried as adults, a group of incarcerated students has been exploring ways that a justice-based transition off fossil fuels could be part of a process that keeps young people like them out of prison.

My favorite example of what our team now calls "the Living Leap" involves the Canadian Union of Postal Workers. Like postal employees around the world, these workers have been coping with a push to shut down their workplaces, restrict mail delivery, and maybe even sell off the public postal service to FedEx. In other words, austerity and privatization as usual. But instead of fighting for the best deal they can get under this failed logic, they worked with The Leap team and a group called Friends of Public Services to put together a visionary plan for every post office in the country to become a local hub for the green transition.

Combined with the union's long-standing demand for postal banking, the proposal, called "Delivering Community Power," reimagines the post office as a twenty-first-century network where residents can recharge electric vehicles; individuals and businesses can do an end run around the big banks and get a loan to start an energy co-op; and postal workers do more than deliver the mail—they also deliver locally grown produce and check in on the elderly. In other words, they become care workers, and climate workers—and they do it all in vehicles that are electric and made in Canada.

At first there was a lot of pressure on The Leap team to start our own party, or run candidates in existing ones, using the manifesto as its platform. We resisted those calls, wanting to protect The Leap's movement roots, and not wanting it to be owned by any one party. The vitality of The Leap today, especially since Trump's election, lies in the people, inside Canada and out, who are using it more and more as the basis for their own local work and electoral platforms. For instance, in Thunder Bay, a northern Canadian city with a long reliance on logging, a local Leap group has decided to run a slate of candidates for city council, writing their own version of the manifesto and using it to lay out how their city could be a hub for green manufacturing while battling homelessness and defending Indigenous land rights. And in March 2017, in a hard-fought campaign for state representative in Pennsylvania, legendary housing and anti-poverty activist Cheri Honkala ran on a pledge to create "a platform derived from the Leap Manifesto," citing the need to address the "crises of climate change, inequality, and racism together."

Utopia—Back by Popular Demand

The Leap is part of a shift in the political zeitgeist, as many are realizing that the future depends on our ability to come together

across painful divides, and to take leadership from those who traditionally have been most excluded. We have reached the limits of siloed politics, where everyone fights in their own corner without mapping the connections between our various struggles, and without a clear idea of the concepts and values that must form the moral foundation of the future we need.

That recognition doesn't mean that resisting the very specific attacks—on families, on people's bodies, on communities, on individual rights—is suddenly optional. There is no choice but to resist, just as there is no choice but to run insurgent progressive candidates at every level of government, from federal down to the local school board. In the months and years to come, the various resistance tactics described in this book are going to be needed more than ever: the street protests, the strikes, the court challenges, the sanctuaries, the solidarity across divisions of race, gender, and sexual identity—all are going to be essential. And we will need to continue pushing institutions to divest from the industries that profit off various forms of dispossession, from fossil fuels to prisons to war and occupation. And yet even if every one of these resistance fights is victorious—and we know that's not going to be possible—we would still be standing in the same place we were before the Far Right started surging, with no better chance of addressing the root causes of the systemic crises of which Trump is but one virulent symptom.

A great many of today's movement leaders and key organizers understand this well, and are planning and acting accordingly. Alicia Garza, one of the founders of Black Lives Matter, said on the eve of Trump's inauguration that after five years of swelling social movements,

> whether it be Occupy Wall Street, whether it be the DREAMers movement or Black Lives Matter . . . there's a particular hope that I have that all of those movements will join together to become

the powerful force that we can be, that will actually govern this country. So that's what I'm focused on, and I hope that everybody else is thinking about that too.

Many people are, and as they do, we're seeing a rekindling of the kind of utopian dreaming that has been sorely missing from social movements in recent decades. More and more frequently, immediate, pressing demands—a $15-an-hour living wage, an end to police killings and deportations, a tax on carbon—are being paired with calls for a future that is not just better than a violent, untenable present, but . . . wonderful.

In the United States, the boldest and most inspiring example of this new utopianism is the Vision for Black Lives, a sweeping policy platform released in the summer of 2016 by the Movement for Black Lives. Born of a coalition of over fifty Black-led organizations, the platform states, "We reject false solutions and believe we can achieve a complete transformation of the current systems, which place profit over people and make it impossible for many of us to breathe." It goes on to place police shootings and mass incarceration in the context of an economic system that has waged war on Black and brown communities, putting them first in line for lost jobs, hacked-back social services, and environmental pollution. The result has been huge numbers of people exiled from the formal economy, preyed upon by increasingly militarized police, and warehoused in overcrowded prisons. And the platform makes a series of concrete proposals, including defunding prisons, removing police from schools, and demilitarizing police. It also lays out a program for reparations for slavery and systemic discrimination, one that includes free college education and forgiveness of student loans. There is much more—nearly forty policy demands in all, spanning changes to the tax code to breaking up the banks. The *Atlantic* magazine remarked that the platform—which was dropped smack in the middle of the

US presidential campaign—"rivals even political-party platforms in thoroughness."

In the months after Trump's inauguration, the Movement for Black Lives played a central role in deepening connections with other movements, convening dozens of groups under the banner "The Majority." The new formation kicked off with a thrilling month-long slate of actions between April 4 (the anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King's assassination) and May Day. Nationwide "Fight Racism, Raise Pay" protests linked racial justice to the fast-growing workers' campaign for a $15 minimum wage and the mounting attacks on immigrants. "In the context of Trump's presidency," the new coalition argues, "it is imperative that we put forth a true, collective vision of economic justice and worker justice, for all people."

And in June 2017, thousands of activists from diverse constituencies are descending on Chicago for the second annual People's Summit, organized by National Nurses United, to continue hashing out a broad-based "People's Agenda." Several similar state-level convergences are also under way, in Michigan as well as North Carolina, where "Moral Mondays" have been bringing movements together for several years. As one of its founders, Reverend William Barber, has said, "You have to build a movement, not a moment . . . I believe all these movements—Moral Mondays, Fight for $15, Black Lives Matter—are signs of hope that people are going to stand up and not stand down."

As it has in Canada, the climate crisis is pushing us to put plans for political transformation on a tight and unyielding deadline. A powerful and broad coalition called New York Renews is pushing hard for the state to transition entirely to renewable energy by 2050. If more US states adopt these kinds of ambitious targets, and other countries do the same (Sweden, for instance, has a target of carbon neutrality by 2045), then

Trump and Tillerson's most nefarious efforts may be insufficient to tip the planet into climate chaos.

It's becoming possible to see a genuine path forward—new political formations that, from their inception, will marry the fight for economic fairness with a deep analysis of how racism and misogyny are used as potent tools to enforce a system that further enriches the already obscenely wealthy on the backs of both people and the planet. Formations that could become home to the millions of people who are engaging in activism and organizing for the first time, knitting together a multiracial and intergenerational coalition bound by a common transformational project.

The plans that are taking shape for defeating Trumpism wherever we live go well beyond finding a progressive savior to run for office and then offering that person our blind support. Instead, communities and movements are uniting to lay out the core policies that politicians who want their support must endorse.

The people's platforms are starting to lead—and the politicians will have to follow.