CHAPTER FOUR

THE CLIMATE CLOCK STRIKES MIDNIGHT

Let's rewind a bit, to the week Trump won. At that moment, I was reeling from witnessing not one catastrophe, but two. And I don't think we can understand the true danger of the Trump disaster unless we grapple with both of them.

As I mentioned, I was in Australia for work, but I was also very conscious that, because of the carbon involved in that kind of travel, I might not be able to return for a long time. So I decided to visit, for the first time in my life, the Great Barrier Reef off the coast of Queensland, a World Heritage Site and the earth's largest natural structure made up of living creatures. It was simultaneously the most beautiful and the most frightening thing I had ever seen.

I spent a lot of time underwater as a kid. My father taught me to snorkel when I was six or seven, and those are some of my happiest memories. There was always something amazing to me about the intimacy of the interactions with ocean life. When you first swim up to a reef, the fish mostly scatter. But if you hang out for a few minutes, they stop seeing you as an intruder and you become part of the seascape to them—they'll swim right up to your mask, or nibble on your arm. As an anxious kid, I always found these experiences wonderfully dreamlike and peaceful.

As the Australian trip approached, I realized that my feelings about seeing the Reef were tied up in my being the mother of a four-year-old boy, Toma. As parents, we can sometimes make the mistake of exposing kids too early to all the threats and dangers facing the natural world. The first book about nature that a lot of children read is Dr. Seuss's *The Lorax*, which is all about pollution and beautiful places being turned into garbage and all the animals dying and disappearing and choking. It's really scary. I read it to Toma when he was two and watched the terror cross his face. And I thought, "No, this is completely wrong." Now we read stories about fast-talking squirrels and books that celebrate nature's beauty and wonder. Even if I know these books are about species that are on the brink of extinction, Toma doesn't need to worry about that yet. I figure that my job is to try to create as many positive experiences as possible that will attach him to the natural world. You need to love something first, before you can protect and defend it.

I also wanted to go to the Reef in my role as a journalist. Over the previous two years, something unprecedented in recorded history had happened. Because of record-breaking temperatures, more than 90 percent of the Great Barrier Reef had been impacted by what's known as a "mass bleaching event." It's hard to stress just how cataclysmic the bleaching has been. When coral is bleached, those beautiful, intensely colored creatures—an ecosystem as rich and teeming as the Amazon rain forest—turn ghostly and bone-white. Bleached coral can recover, if temperatures quickly go back down to normal levels. This time, they hadn't gone back down—so almost a quarter of the Reef has died.

It's worth underlining how little warming it took to bring about such a radical change. Ocean temperatures went up just one degree Celsius higher than the levels to which these incredible species are adapted, and that was enough for a massive die-off. Unlike many other climate change–related events, this

wasn't some dramatic storm or wildfire—just silent, watery death.

When we got to the Reef, there was still an air of unreality about the whole thing: the Port Douglas boats packed with tourists were still going out, the surface of the water was blue and beautiful, there were stretches of spectacular turquoise. But the ocean has a way of hiding humanity's worst secrets, a lesson I first learned covering BP's Deepwater Horizon disaster, and seeing how quickly the spill disappeared from the headlines once the oil began to sink, though the damage below continued unabated.

We went out on the Reef with a team of extraordinarily dedicated marine biologists (all of whom were emotionally shattered by what they had been documenting) and a film crew from the *Guardian*. We started filming the parts of the Reef that are still alive and we managed to get Toma to put on a snorkel. To be honest, I wasn't sure he was going to be able to focus on the coral at all; he had just learned to swim and was wearing floaties. But the scientists were incredibly patient with him, and there were about five solid minutes when he really was able to pull it off and have a flash of true wonder—he "saw Nemo," he saw a sea cucumber. I think he even saw a sea turtle. These parts of the Reef, the ones that are neither bleached nor dead, are only a fraction of the whole, but they are still glorious—a riot of life, of electric-colored coral and fish, sea turtles and sharks swimming by.

We didn't take Toma on the boat when we filmed the dead and bleached parts of the Reef. And it was a graveyard. It was as if a cosmic switch had been flipped and suddenly one of the most beautiful places on earth had been turned into one of the ugliest. The coral bones were covered in a goo of decaying life—a brown goo. You just wanted to get away from there. Our wetsuits stank of death.

We chose to film the Reef in this state because, for many people, there is a sense that climate change is a distant crisis, that there's still a bit of time to procrastinate before we get serious. We

wanted to show that radical changes to our planet, including parts we count on to be brimming with life, are not far off in the future—they are happening right now. And the impacts are enormous, including the fact that roughly one billion people around the world rely on the fish sustained by coral reefs for food and income.

And I wanted to try to show the disaster through Toma's eyes too. Because one of the most unjust aspects of climate disruption (and there are many) is that our actions as adults today will have their most severe impact on the lives of generations yet to come, as well as kids alive today who are too young to impact policy—kids like Toma and his friends, and their generation the world over. These children have done nothing to create the crisis, but they are the ones who will deal with the most extreme weather—the storms and droughts and fires and rising seas—and all the social and economic stresses that will flow as a result. They are the ones growing up amidst a mass extinction, robbed of so much beauty and so much of the companionship that comes from being surrounded by other life forms.

It is a form of theft, of violence—what the author and theorist Rob Nixon calls "slow violence." A clean, vibrant planet is the birthright of all living beings. That's why the Great Barrier Reef is classified as a World Heritage Site. It belongs to the world, and it is dying on our watch. I realized that the story I wanted to tell is about intergenerational theft and intergenerational justice. That's why I decided to put Toma on camera for the first time; I was reluctant, but I just couldn't tell that story without him.

By the end of the day, we were all completely wiped out. We had seen so much death, so much loss, but my son had also had this special experience. That night, tucking him into bed in our Port Douglas motel room, I said: "Toma, today is the day when you discovered there is a secret world under the sea." And he just looked up at me with an expression of pure bliss and said, "I saw

it." I burst into tears, some mixture of joy and heartbreak at the knowledge that, just as he is becoming aware of this beauty in the world, all this magic, it is being drained away.

I have to admit, I was angry too. That whole day I had not been able to stop thinking about ExxonMobil—about how this company, it has now been documented, knew about climate change as far back as the seventies. According to a groundbreaking investigation by *InsideClimate News* (nominated for a Pulitzer Prize), Exxon did its own cutting-edge empirical research, taking CO_2 samples off its oil tankers and building state-of-the art climate models that predicted the coming changes such as sea-level rise. It also received warnings from its own senior scientists, including James Black who was categorical in his reports to his employer about the "general scientific agreement that the most likely manner in which mankind is influencing the global climate is through carbon dioxide release from the burning of fossil fuels." He also wrote that "man has a time window of five to 10 years before the need for hard decisions regarding changes in energy strategies might become critical." That was in 1978.

By the time Rex Tillerson took over the job of general manager of the central production division of Exxon USA, these facts had long been known in the company, including the uncomfortable one about how little time remained. Despite this, ExxonMobil has since then lavished more than $30 million on think tanks that systematically spread doubt through the press about the reality of climate science. Mobil (before its merger with Exxon) even took out its own full-page ads in the *New York Times* casting doubt on the science. ExxonMobil is currently under investigation by the attorneys general of New York, California, and Massachusetts for these alleged deceptions. Because of this campaign of misinformation, promoted by the entire fossil fuel sector, humanity lost key decades when we could have been taking the actions necessary to move to a clean economy—the same decades in which

ExxonMobil and others opened up vast frontiers for oil and gas. If we had not lost that time, the Great Barrier Reef might still be healthy today.

But my time at the Reef didn't leave me feeling entirely helpless. Because there are dogged communities and growing movements around the world determined to get their governments to wake up and stop drilling new oil and gas fields and digging new coal mines. We rushed like mad to turn the film around in four days so it could be out on the eve of the US elections, thinking it might play some tiny part in motivating people to vote, and then in fueling the pressure to get Hillary Clinton to do more on climate. And we made it—we posted the video on November 7.

The next day, Trump won. And then ExxonMobil's CEO was named secretary of state.

Truth Time

The stakes in the 2016 election were enormously high for a great many reasons, from the millions who stood to lose their health insurance to those targeted by racist attacks as Trump fanned the flames of rising white nationalism; from the families that stood to be torn apart by cruel immigration policies to the prospect of women losing the right to decide whether or not to become mothers, to the reality of sexual assault being normalized and trivialized at the highest reaches of power. With so many lives on the line, there is nothing to be gained by ranking issues by urgency and playing "my crisis is bigger than your crisis." If it's happening to you, if it's your family being torn apart or you who is being singled out for police harassment, or your grandmother who cannot afford a life-saving treatment, or your drinking water that's laced with lead—it's all a five-alarm fire.

Climate change isn't more important than any of these other issues, but it does have a different relationship to time. When the

politics of climate change go wrong—and they are very, very wrong right now—we don't get to try again in four years. Because in four years the earth will have been radically changed by all the gases emitted in the interim, and our chances of averting an irreversible catastrophe will have shrunk.

This may sound alarmist, but I have interviewed the leading scientists in the world on this question, and their research shows that it's simply a neutral description of reality. The window during which there is time to lower emissions sufficiently to avoid truly catastrophic warming is closing rapidly. Lots of social movements have adopted Samuel Beckett's famous line "Try again. Fail again. Fail better" as a lighthearted motto. I've always liked the attitude; we can't be perfect, we won't always win, but we should strive to improve. The trouble is, Beckett's dictum doesn't work for climate—not at this stage in the game. If we keep failing to lower emissions, if we keep failing to kick-start the transition in earnest away from fossil fuels and to an economy based on renewables, if we keep dodging the question of wasteful consumption and the quest for more and more and bigger and bigger, there won't be more opportunities to fail better.

Nearly everything is moving faster than the climate change modeling projected, including Arctic sea-ice loss, ice-sheet collapse, ocean warming, sea-level rise, and coral bleaching. The next time voters in countries around the world go to the polls, more sea ice will have melted, more coastal land will have been lost, more species will have disappeared for good. The chance for us to keep temperatures below what it would take for island nations such as, say, Tuvalu or the Maldives to be saved from drowning becomes that much slimmer. These are irreversible changes—we don't get a do-over on a drowned country.

The latest peer-reviewed science tells us that if we want a good shot at protecting coastal cities in my son's lifetime—including metropolises like New York City and Mumbai—then we need to

get off fossil fuels with superhuman speed. A paper from Oxford University that came out during the campaign, published in the *Applied Energy* journal, concluded that for humanity to have a fifty-fifty chance of meeting the temperature targets set in the climate accord negotiated in Paris at the end of 2015, every new power plant would have to be zero-carbon starting in 2018. That's the second year of the Trump presidency.

For most of us—including me—this is very hard information to wrap our heads around, because we are used to narratives that reassure us about the inevitability of eventual progress. Martin Luther King Jr. said, "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice." It's a powerful idea that sadly doesn't work for the climate crisis. The wealthy governments of the world have procrastinated for so long, and made the problem so much worse in the meantime, that the arc has to bend very, very fast now—or the shot at justice is gone for good. We are almost at midnight on the climate clock.

Not Just Another Election Cycle—Epic Bad Timing

During the Democratic primaries, I was really struck by the moment when a young woman confronted Hillary Clinton on the campaign trail and asked her if—given the scale of the global warming crisis—she would pledge not to take any more money from the fossil fuel interests that are supercharging it. Up to that point, Clinton's campaign had received large sums of money from employees and registered lobbyists of fossil fuel companies—about $1.7 million, according to Greenpeace's research. Clinton looked disgusted and snapped at the young woman, saying she was "so sick" of this issue coming up. A few days later, in an interview, Clinton said young people should "do their own research." The woman who had asked the question, Eva Resnick-Day, worked as a campaigner for Greenpeace. She had done her research, she

insisted, "and that is why we are so terrified for the future. . . . What happens in the next four or eight years could determine the future of our planet and the human species."

For me, her words cut to the heart of why this was not just another election cycle. Why it was not only legitimate but necessary to question Hillary's web of corporate entanglements. Resnick-Day's comments also highlight one of the big reasons why Trump's presidency is harrowing: the most powerful man in the world is a person who says global warming is a hoax invented by the Chinese, and who is feverishly trashing the (already inadequate) restraints on fossil fuels that his country had put in place, encouraging other governments to do the same. And it's all happening at the worst possible time in human history.

We have so far warmed the planet by just one degree Celsius, and from that, we are already seeing dramatic results: the mass coral die-off, balmy Arctic weather leading to severe ice loss, the breaking apart of Antarctic ice sheets. If we continue on our current pollution trajectory, we are set to warm the planet by four to six degrees Celsius. The climate scientist and emissions expert Kevin Anderson says that four degrees of warming is "incompatible with any reasonable characterization of an organized, equitable and civilized global community." That is why governments came together in Paris and drew up an agreement to make their best efforts to get off this dangerous course, and try to limit warming to "well below" 2 degrees, pursuing efforts to keep it below 1.5 degrees. The high end of that temperature target represents double the warming we have already experienced, so it's by no means safe.

Which is why we have to try very hard to hit the lower end of that target. And that's tough. According to a September 2016 study by the Washington-based think tank Oil Change International, if governments want a solid chance of keeping temperature increases below two degrees Celsius, then all new and undeveloped fossil

fuel reserves need to stay in the ground. The problem is, even before Trump, no major economy was doing what was required. They were all still trying to have it all ways—introducing some solid green policies but then approving expanded fossil fuel extraction and new pipelines. It's like eating lots of salad and a whole lot of junk food at the same time, and expecting to lose weight.

In the United States, Obama introduced the Clean Power Plan, which was set to accelerate the retirement of the country's aging coal plants and to require new ones to capture some of their carbon emissions, but he was simultaneously presiding over a boom in natural gas fracking and fracked oil in the Bakken. In Canada, the government has introduced national carbon pricing and a coal phaseout, but it is also allowing the tar sands to expand and approved a massive new liquid gas export terminal—pretty much guaranteeing that it won't hit its Paris goals.

Even so, the fact that so many governments signed the Paris accord to great fanfare, and at least paid lip service to the need to achieve its ambitious temperature targets, gave the climate movement a lot of leverage to push for policies that were in step with the stated goal. We were trying to hold them to their word in Paris, and we were making some progress.

But now Trump is saying: Leave all that money in the ground? Are you nuts?!

A Very Oily Administration

On the campaign trail, Trump's standard stump speech reliably hit all the crowd-pleasers: build the wall, bring back the jobs, law and order, Crooked Hillary. Climate change denial usually didn't make the list (though Trump would spout off if asked). But if the issue seemed peripheral during the campaign, that changed as soon as Trump began making appointments. And since his

inauguration, taking aim at any and all climate protections has been a defining feature of the Trump administration. As if in a race against time, he and his team have set out to systematically tick off every single item on the fossil fuel industry's wish list. His top appointments, his plans to make severe budget cuts and gut environmental regulations, his conspiratorial denials of climate change, and even his entanglements with Russia—they all point in the same direction: a deep and abiding determination to kick off a no-holds-barred fossil fuel frenzy. There are many plots and intrigues swirling around Washington, most notoriously claims about the Trump team conspiring with Russia to influence the 2016 election outcome—and these are being investigated, as they should be. But make no mistake: Trump's collusion with the fossil fuel sector is the conspiracy hiding in plain sight.

Within days of taking office, he pushed through the Dakota Access pipeline, cutting off an environmental review and against the powerful opposition of the Standing Rock Sioux. He's cleared the way to approve the Keystone XL pipeline from Alberta, which Obama rejected in part because of the climate impacts. He has issued an executive order to roll back Obama's moratorium on new coal leases on federal lands, and has already announced plans to expand oil and gas drilling on the Gulf Coast. He's also killing Obama's Clean Power Plan. And as the administration rubber-stamps new fossil fuel projects, they're getting rid of all kinds of environmental regulations that made digging up and processing this carbon less profitable for companies like ExxonMobil. As a result, these projects, already disastrous from a climate perspective, are more likely to lead to industrial accidents like the Deepwater Horizon disaster—because that's what happens when regulators are missing in action.

As I write, it's not yet clear whether the US will officially withdraw from the Paris Accord; there is some disagreement about this within the administration. But whether the country stays or

leaves it's undeniable that the Trump administration is shredding the commitments made under the accord.

In addition to Rex Tillerson, Trump has stacked his administration with fossil fuel executives and political figures with extensive ties to the industry—several of whom are opposed, or at best indifferent, to the mandates of the agencies they're now in charge of running. Scott Pruitt is Trump's head of the Environmental Protection Agency—but, as attorney general of Oklahoma, he sued the EPA multiple times and, perhaps not coincidentally, has received tens of thousands of dollars from fossil fuel companies. Trump's pick for energy secretary, Rick Perry, had myriad ties to the oil industry, including serving on the boards of two of the companies behind the Dakota Access pipeline. Back in 2011, while running for the GOP nomination, Perry campaigned on eliminating the energy department entirely.

Don't Ask, Don't Tell

Together, this group of men is doing favors for oil, gas, and coal companies on multiple fronts. For instance, Trump has killed a new program that required oil and gas companies to report how much methane—a very powerful greenhouse gas—their operations were releasing, including from leaks. Industry hated the program, which was only finalized in the last weeks of Obama's administration, in part because it was poised to blow the lid off the claim that natural gas is in any way a climate change solution. Trump is handing the industry a big gift by effectively saying: don't tell us, we don't want to know. From here on in, the rest of the world will have to guess the extent to which the US is a climate renegade, because a key piece of the data won't exist.

By far the biggest threat this industry faces is the demand for real action on climate change being voiced by people around the world, and the mounting consensus that taking the crisis

seriously means a halt on new fossil fuel projects. That prospect strikes terror in the hearts of fossil fuel executives and in the governments of petro-states (like Russia), because it means that trillions of dollars' worth of proven reserves—currently propping up share prices—could become worthless overnight. This is sometimes referred to as "the carbon bubble," and by 2016 it was already beginning to deflate. Think of Trump as the guy running to the rescue with a bicycle pump, signaling to the industry that he's going to fill their bubble with a few more years' worth of toxic air. How? Easy. By making climate change disappear.

We can see it all playing out with a kind of absurd clarity. On day one, the White House website was cleansed of many of the references to climate change. There are plans to cut the NASA program that uses satellites to accumulate basic data on how the earth is changing—including disappearing glaciers and rising seas. The White House's budget director, Mick Mulvaney, was pretty blunt about all this: "Regarding the question as to climate change, I think the President was fairly straightforward—we're not spending money on that anymore. We consider that to be a waste of your money to go out and do that."

They are so determined to erase the reality of climate change that they are even aiming to wipe out programs that help communities cope with its impacts. Trump proposed cutting a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association program that helps communities protect their coasts. He also wanted to slash the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the agency charged with responding to large-scale natural disasters, and cut entirely its key program designed to help communities prepare for future crises. His plan to reduce the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) budget by over 30 percent would lay off thousands of people and eliminate the entire environmental justice program. The latter helps low-income communities—overwhelmingly African-American, Latino, and Indigenous—deal with some of the impacts

of having the most toxic industries in their backyards. And it's worth noting that many of the measures—including cuts to programs dealing with lead poisoning from pipes—would disproportionately hurt children in marginalized communities. A Congressional budget deal has delayed the worst of the EPA cuts until 2018.

So Trump's rescue plan for the fossil fuel sector is multipronged: bury the evidence that climate change is happening by stopping research and gagging agencies; cut the programs that are tasked with coping with the real-world impacts of climate disruption; and remove all barriers to an acceleration of the very activities that are fueling the crisis—drilling for more oil and gas, mining and burning more coal.

Some of this backsliding can be balanced out by bold action in large states such as California and New York, which are pledging to rapidly roll out renewables regardless of Trump's pro–fossil fuel policies. But there is one other crucial factor that may determine whether the ExxonMobil subsidiary known as the Trump administration is able to unleash an irreversible catastrophe.

Price Is Everything

There is one thing above all that is currently restraining fossil fuel companies from launching large new extraction projects, and it's not a piece of legislation that Obama introduced and Trump can reverse. What's holding them back is the price of oil and gas. As I write this in 2017, the price is much lower than when Obama took office, because there's an oversupply—more oil and gas is available than consumers want.

The reason price is such an issue for new projects is that the cheap and easy-to-access fossil fuels have been steadily running out, particularly in the US. So what's left? Stuff that's hard and expensive to get to. It costs a lot of money to drill in the Arctic, or

in very deep water, or to dig up and refine the semisolid oil found in Canada's Alberta tar sands. When the price of oil was soaring, as it was as recently as 2014, fossil fuel companies were making multi-billion dollar investments in order to go after those expensive fuel sources. With oil at $100 a barrel, they could still turn a hefty profit even with the high costs for extraction. And the development in this sector did spur economic growth, and it did create a lot of jobs. But the environmental costs were enormous: the Deepwater Horizon disaster in the Gulf of Mexico was intimately connected to the fact that these companies are drilling deeper than they ever have before. The reason the tar sands in Alberta are so controversial is that Indigenous lands and waterways have been badly contaminated by the invasive and carbon-intensive process of mining for that heavy crude.

Rex Tillerson's ExxonMobil went wild buying up high-cost heavy-oil reserves; it reached the point where fully one-third of the company's reserves were located in the Alberta tar sands. When the price of oil collapsed, it came as a major shock. Oil prices began to crash in 2014, with Brent crude—the global benchmark for oil—plummeting from $100 a barrel to $50 in just six months, and the price has hovered at around $55 a barrel ever since. As a result, we've seen a lot of companies pulling back from extreme energy projects. Fracking for oil and gas in the United States has cooled off, with devastating human costs: an estimated 170,000 oil and gas workers have lost their jobs after the 2014 price collapse. Investment in the Alberta tar sands dropped by an estimated 37 percent in the year following, and continues to fall. Shell pulled back from the Arctic and has sold most of its tar sands reserves. The French oil company Total has retreated from the tar sands as well. Even ExxonMobil has been forced to write off nearly 3.5 million barrels of tar sands oil because the market considered these reserves to be no longer worth extracting at current oil prices. Deepwater drilling is also in a lull.

For the big oil companies—particularly those that gambled on the price of oil staying high—all of this has been a disaster. And no oil major has suffered more than ExxonMobil. When prices were high, with Tillerson at the helm, the company broke the record for the highest corporate profits ever reported in the United States, earning $45 billion in 2012. Compare that to 2016, when Exxon's profits fell well shy of $8 billion. That's a more than 80 percent drop in profits in a span of just four years.

What does all this mean? It means that oil majors like ExxonMobil, and the banks that underwrote their bad bets, desperately want the price of oil to go back up—to get their super-profits back and to get the fossil fuel frenzy back on. So a very big question that needs answering is this: what is the Trump administration—aka Team ExxonMobil—going to do to achieve that?

We are already seeing some policies that appear designed to drive up oil prices. For instance, Trump moved to eliminate the Obama-era requirement that vehicles become more fuel-efficient—which means more trips to the gas station for consumers. Trump's budget plan, meanwhile, aimed to completely eliminate funding for new public transit projects, and kill funding for long-distance train services.

So far, though, the market isn't responding, at least not by much. The price of oil got a little bump after Trump was elected but has held pretty steady since. From a climate perspective, this is good news: cheap gas may encourage short-term consumption, but it discourages a lot of the long-term investments that lock us into a disastrous future. The concern—and it is a real one—is that Trump and Co. may well have more tricks up their sleeves to try to push up oil prices and realize their goal of setting off a fossil fuel frenzy.

The reason we need to have our eyes firmly fixed on this

dynamic is that nothing drives up the price of oil quite like war and other major shocks to the world market—a scenario we'll dig into in Chapter 9.

What Conservatives Understand about Global Warming—and Liberals Don't

For many years, I wondered why some people were so determined to deny global warming. It's strange at first glance. Why would you work so hard to deny the scientific facts that have been affirmed by 97 percent of climate scientists—facts whose effects we see all around us, with more confirmation in the news we consume every day? That question led me on a journey that informed my book *This Changes Everything*—and I think some of what I discovered when writing that book can help us make sense of the centrality of climate vandalism to the Trump administration.

What I found is that when hard-core conservatives deny climate change, they are not just protecting the trillions in wealth that are threatened by climate action. They are also defending something even more precious to them: an entire ideological project—neoliberalism—which holds that the market is always right, regulation is always wrong, private is good and public is bad, and taxes that support public services are the worst of all.

There is a lot of confusion around the word *neoliberalism*, and about who is a neoliberal. And understandably so. So let's break it down. Neoliberalism is an extreme form of capitalism that started to become dominant in the 1980s, under Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher, but since the 1990s has been the reigning ideology of the world's elites, regardless of partisan affiliation. Still, its strictest and most dogmatic adherents remain where the movement started: on the US Right.

Neoliberalism is shorthand for an economic project that vilifies the public sphere and anything that's not either the workings

of the market or the decisions of individual consumers. It is probably best summarized by another of Reagan's famous phrases, "The nine most terrifying words in the English language are: I'm from the government and I'm here to help." Under the neoliberal worldview, governments exist in order to create the optimal conditions for private interests to maximize their profits and wealth, based on the theory that the profits and economic growth that follow will benefit everyone in the trickle-down from the top—eventually. If it doesn't work, and stubborn inequalities remain or worsen (as they invariably do), then according to this worldview, that must be the personal failing of the individuals and communities that are suffering. They must have "a culture of crime," say, or lack a "work ethic," or perhaps it's absentee fathers, or some other racially tinged excuse for why government policy and public funds should never be used to reduce inequalities, improve lives, or address structural crises.

The primary tools of this project are all too familiar: privatization of the public sphere, deregulation of the corporate sphere, and low taxes paid for by cuts to public services, and all of this locked in under corporate-friendly trade deals. It's the same recipe everywhere, regardless of context, history, or the hopes and dreams of the people who live there. Larry Summers, when he was chief economist of the World Bank in 1991, summed up the ethos: "Spread the truth—the laws of economics are like the laws of engineering. One set of laws works everywhere." (Which is why I sometimes call neoliberalism "McGovernment.")

The 1989 collapse of the Berlin Wall was interpreted as the signal to take the campaign global. With socialism in decline, there was seemingly no longer any need to soften capitalism's edges anywhere. As Thatcher famously declared, "There is no alternative." (Another way of thinking about this is that neoliberalism is simply capitalism without competition, or capitalism lying on the couch in its undershirt saying, "What are you going to do, leave me?")

Neoliberalism is a very profitable set of ideas, which is why I am always a little hesitant to describe it as an ideology. What it really is, at its core, is a rationale for greed. That's what the American billionaire Warren Buffett meant when he made headlines a few years ago by telling CNN that "there's been class warfare going on for the last twenty years, and my class has won . . . the rich class." He was referring to the tremendous tax cuts the wealthy have enjoyed in this period, but you could extend that to the whole neoliberal policy package.

So what does this have to do with the widespread refusal by the Right to believe that climate change is happening, a refusal deeply embedded in the Trump administration? A lot. Because climate change, especially at this late date, can *only* be dealt with through collective action that sharply curtails the behavior of corporations such as ExxonMobil and Goldman Sachs. It demands investments in the public sphere—in new energy grids, public transit and light rail, and energy efficiency—on a scale not seen since the Second World War. And that can only happen by raising taxes on the wealthy and on corporations, the very people Trump is determined to shower with the most generous tax cuts, loopholes and regulatory breaks. Responding to climate change also means giving communities the freedom to prioritize local green industries—a process that often clashes directly with the corporate free trade deals that have been such an integral part of neoliberalism, and which bar "buy local" rules as protectionist. (Trump campaigned against those parts of free trade deals, but, as we will see in Chapter 6, he has no intention of rescinding those rules.)

In short, climate change detonates the ideological scaffolding on which contemporary conservatism rests. To admit that the climate crisis is real is to admit the end of the neoliberal project. That's why the Right is in a rebellion against the physical world, against science (which is what prompted hundreds of thousands of scientists around the world to participate in the March for

Science in April 2017, collectively defending a principle that really shouldn't need defending: that knowing as much as possible about our world is a good thing). But there is a reason why science has become such a battle zone—because it is revealing again and again that neoliberal business as usual leads to a species-threatening catastrophe.

What mainstream liberals have been saying for decades, by contrast, is that we simply need to tweak the existing system here and there and everything will be fine. You can have Goldman Sachs capitalism plus solar panels. But the challenge is much more fundamental than that. It requires throwing out the neoliberal rulebook, and confronting the centrality of ever-expanding consumption in how we measure economic progress. In one sense, then, the members of Trump's cabinet—with their desperate need to deny the reality of global warming, or belittle its implications—understand something that is fundamentally true: to avert climate chaos, we need to challenge the capitalist ideologies that have conquered the world since the 1980s. If you are the beneficiary of those ideologies, you are obviously going to be very unhappy about that. That's understandable. Global warming really does have radical progressive implications. If it's real—and it manifestly is—then the oligarch class cannot continue to run riot without rules. Stopping them is now a matter of humanity's collective survival.

If we fail, the death I saw at the Great Barrier Reef will spread to all corners of our collective home in ways we can scarcely imagine.

CHAPTER TEN

WHEN THE SHOCK DOCTRINE BACKFIRES

When I was in my late teens, my mother had a debilitating series of strokes, which turned out to have been caused by a brain tumor. The first stroke came as a complete shock—she was younger than I am now, physically active and professionally driven. One minute she was biking, the next she was in a neurological ICU, incapable of moving or of breathing without a respirator.

Up until my mother's stroke, I had been a pretty difficult teenager—I was withdrawn from my parents, wild with my friends, serially dishonest. I did well at school for the most part, my one saving grace, but home life was strained or worse.

In the instant that my mother's life changed forever, I did too. I discovered I knew how to be helpful. Affectionate (imagine). I grew up overnight. After brain surgery, she gradually recovered some, though far from all, of her mobility. Watching her adapt to a different life as a disabled person, I learned a lot about the power of humans to find new reserves of strength.

It is true that people can regress during times of crisis. I have seen it many times. In a shocked state, with our understanding of the world badly shaken, a great many of us can become child-like and passive, and overly trusting of people who are only too happy to abuse that trust. But I also know, from my own family's

navigation of a shocking event, that there can be the inverse response as well. We can evolve and grow up in a crisis, and set aside all kinds of bullshit—fast.

Resistance, Memory, and the Limits to No

This is true for whole societies as well. Faced with a shared trauma, or a common threat, communities can come together in defiant acts of sanity and maturity. It has happened before, and the early signs are good that it might be happening again.

The Trump administration is coming after huge sectors of the population at once: tens of millions of people impacted by proposed budget cuts, civil rights activists, artists, Indigenous tribes, immigrants, climate scientists . . . Their military belligerence and environmental arson are attacks that reach far outside US borders to wage war on global stability and planetary habitability. It's clear that, like many shock therapists before them, Trump and his gang are betting that this all-at-once strategy will overwhelm their adversaries, sending them scrambling in all directions and ultimately causing them to give up out of sheer exhaustion or a sense of futility.

This blitzkrieg strategy, though it has often worked in the past, is actually quite high-risk. The danger of starting fights on so many fronts is that if it doesn't succeed in demoralizing your opponents, it could very well unite them.

On the day Trump signed the permit approving the Keystone XL oil pipeline, Ponca Nation member Mekasi Camp Horinek shared a version of this theory with reporter Alleen Brown:

> I want to say thank you to the president for all the bad decisions that he's making—for the bad cabinet appointments that he's made and for awakening a sleeping giant. People that have never stood up for themselves, people that have never had their

voices heard, that have never put their bodies on the line are now outraged. I would like to say thank you to President Trump for his bigotry, for his sexism, for bringing all of us in this nation together to stand up and unite.

When Argentina Said No

Because shock tactics rely on the public becoming disoriented by fast-moving events, they tend to backfire most spectacularly in places where there is a strong collective memory of previous instances when fear and trauma were exploited to undermine democracy. Those memories serve as a kind of shock absorber, providing populations with shared reference points that allow them to name what's happening and fight back.

It's a lesson I learned when I glimpsed another kind of future on the streets of Buenos Aires over fifteen years ago. At the end of 2001 and the beginning of 2002, Argentina was in the grips of an economic crisis so severe that it stunned the world.

In the 1990s, the country had opened itself to corporate globalization so rapidly and so thoroughly that the International Monetary Fund held it up as a model student. The iconic logos of global banks, hotel chains, and US fast-food restaurants glowed from the Buenos Aires skyline, and its new shopping malls were so fashionable and luxurious that they frequently drew comparisons with Paris. *Time* magazine, on its cover, declared Argentina's economy a "miracle."

And then it all came crashing down. Amidst a spiraling debt crisis, the government attempted to impose a new round of economic austerity, and all those gleaming global banks had to board up their windows and doors to prevent customers rushing in to withdraw their life savings. Protests spread across the country. In the suburbs, supermarkets (owned by European chains) were looted. In the midst of this chaotic scene, Fernando de la Rúa,

then Argentina's president, went on television, his face shiny with sweat, and announced that the country was under attack from "groups that are enemies of order who are looking to spread discord and violence." He declared a thirty-day state of siege—which gave him the power to suspend a range of constitutional guarantees, including freedom of the press—and ordered everyone to stay in their homes.

For many Argentinians, the president's words sounded like a prelude to a military coup—and that proved a fatal misstep. People, no matter their age, knew their history, including the fact that when the military staged its brutal coup in 1976, the need to restore public order against internal enemies had been the pretext. The junta stayed in power until 1983, and in that time it stole the lives of some thirty thousand people.

Determined not to lose their country again, and even while de la Rúa was still on television ordering people to stay in their homes, Buenos Aires's famed central square, Plaza de Mayo, filled up with tens of thousands of people, many banging pots and pans with spoons and forks, a wordless but roaring rebuke to the president's instructions. Argentinians would not give up their basic freedoms in the name of order. Not again, not this time.

And then this great gathering found its voice, and a single rebellious cry rose up from the crowds of grandmothers and high school students, motorcycle couriers and unemployed factory workers, their words directed at the politicians, the bankers, the IMF, and every other "expert" who claimed to have the perfect recipe for Argentina's prosperity and stability: "*¡Que se vayan todos!*"—everyone must go! Demonstrators stayed in the streets even after protesters were killed in clashes with police, bringing the total who lost their lives across the country to more than twenty. Amidst the mayhem, the president was forced to lift the state of siege and flee the presidential palace in a helicopter. As a new president was appointed, the people would rise up and

reject him in disgust—again and then again, flipping through three presidents in just three weeks.

Meanwhile, in the rubble of Argentina's democracy, something strange and wonderful started to happen: neighbors poked their heads out of their apartments and houses and, in the absence of a political leadership or a stable government, began to talk to each other. To think together. A month later, there were already some 250 "*asambleas barriales*" (neighborhood assemblies, small and large) in downtown Buenos Aires alone. Picture Occupy Wall Street—but everywhere. The streets, parks, and plazas were filled with meetings as people stayed up late into the night, planning, arguing, testifying—and voting on everything from whether Argentina should pay its foreign debts, to when the next protest should be held, to how to support a group of workers who had turned their abandoned factory into a democratic cooperative.

Many of those first assemblies were as much group therapy as political meetings. Participants spoke about their experience of isolation in a city of 13 million. Academics and shopkeepers apologized for not watching out for each other, publicity managers admitted that they used to look down on unemployed factory workers, assuming they deserved their plight, never imagining that the crisis would reach the bank accounts of the cosmopolitan middle class. And apologies for present-day wrongs soon gave way to tearful confessions about events dating back to the dictatorship. I witnessed a housewife stand up and publicly admit that, three decades earlier, when she heard yet another story about someone's brother or husband being kidnapped by the junta, she had learned to close her heart to the suffering, telling herself, "*Por algo será*"—it must have been for something. They were trying to understand, together, how they had lost so much in the past, and building relationships to prevent those mistakes from ever being repeated.

And from below, they were changing the story of a nation.

The political changes that came out of Argentina's uprising were far from utopian. The government that eventually restored democracy, headed first by Néstor Kirchner and then by his wife Cristina, was masterful at reading the street, and channeled enough of its spirit and demands to preside over more than a decade of progressive (if scandal-marred) rule. To this day, debates rage about how more could have been made from that unique political moment if the popular movements had been ready with their own plan for taking power and governing differently. Yet it's undeniable that, in resisting de la Rúa's austerity plans and defying his order to stay home, Argentinians saved themselves from years of economic bloodletting.

When Spain Said No

Another example of how historical memory can serve as a powerful shock absorber took place a few years later, in Spain. On March 11, 2004, ten bombs ripped through commuter trains and rail stations in Madrid, killing nearly two hundred people. Because it was an attack on a transit system that almost everyone in Madrid used, the sense that anyone could be the next victim spread rapidly through the city, as it would in Paris more than a decade later when simultaneous attacks terrorized that city.

An official investigation found that the attacks had been staged by a terrorist cell inspired by al Qaeda, reportedly in retaliation for Spain's participation in the US-led invasion of Iraq. Yet Spain's prime minister at the time, José María Aznar, immediately went on television and told Spaniards to blame the Basque separatists and—in a bizarre non sequitur—to support his unpopular decision to participate in the Iraq War. "No negotiation is possible or desirable with these assassins who so many times have sown death all around Spain. Only with firmness can we end the attacks," Aznar said.

In the United States after 9/11, many, including most of the media, saw the "with us or with the terrorists" rhetoric of George W. Bush and Dick Cheney as evidence of strong leadership, and handed them enormous new powers to fight what would become the never-ending "war on terror." (Turkey's autocratic president, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, would pull off something even more draconian after a failed coup attempt in 2016, later locking in sweeping new powers in a referendum.) And yet when Aznar tried similar tactics on his grief-stricken population, they were not seen as evidence of strong leadership but rather as an ominous sign of a resurgent fascism. "We are still hearing the echoes of Franco," said José Antonio Martines Soler, a prominent Madrid newspaper editor who had been persecuted under Francisco Franco's dictatorship, which terrorized the country for thirty-six years. "In every act, in every gesture, in every sentence, Aznar told the people he was right, that he was the owner of the truth and those who disagreed with him were his enemies."

So, over the next two days, remembering a time when fear had governed their country, Spaniards surged into the streets in impressive numbers, saying no to fear and to terrorism—but also to government lies and the Iraq War. All of this happened to be on the eve of national elections, and voters seized the opportunity to defeat Aznar and vote in a party that promised to pull Spanish troops out of Iraq. It was the collective memory of past shocks that made Spain resistant to new ones.

9/11 and the Perils of Official Forgetting

When two planes flew into the World Trade Center in New York and another plowed into the Pentagon, on September 11, 2001, they hit a country which lacked the kind of shared memory of trauma that existed in Spain and Argentina. That's not to say US history is unmarked by repeated traumas. The United States was

founded in domestic state terror, from the genocide of Indigenous peoples to slavery through to lynching and mass incarceration; trauma has been ever-present right up to this day. Moreover, very frequently, shocks and crises have been handmaidens to the worst abuses. In the aftermath of the Civil War, the promise of land redistribution as economic reparation to freed slaves was promptly betrayed. The financial crisis of 1873, known as the Great Panic, further entrenched the excuse that the economy was too ravaged and the country too divided—and instead of reparations came a reign of terror against freed slaves in the South. During the Great Depression, amidst economic panic, as many as two million Mexicans and Mexican Americans were expelled. After the attacks on Pearl Harbor, approximately 120,000 Japanese Americans (two-thirds of whom had been born in the United States) were incarcerated in internment camps; just as in Canada almost the entire Japanese-Canadian citizenry was rounded up and forcibly interned.

So the problem after 9/11 was not that the United States had no experience of how shocking events can be harnessed to attack democracy and human rights. The problem, rather, was that these past traumatic events, while very well understood within the communities impacted, were insufficiently understood more broadly: they are not part of a shared national narrative that could have helped all Americans see the difference between reasonable security measures and leaders taking advantage of fear to advance opportunistic agendas.

That's why the Bush administration was able to mercilessly exploit the shock of the September 11 trauma to attack civil liberties at home and launch wars abroad, which we now know were justified through doctored intelligence. That's why the neglect and violence of the state during and after Katrina came as no great surprise to the city's African-American residents—yet seemed unprecedented to so many white Americans.

The split between people who were stunned by Trump's victory and those who saw it coming followed similar racial fault lines.

Shock Resistance in the USA

But one thing that's become clear since Trump took office is that the memory of how terror was exploited after September 11 lives on. Though Trump and his supporters have tried their best to use fear—of Muslims, of Mexicans, of violent "ghettos"—to control and divide the population, the tactic has backfired repeatedly. Since Trump's election, countless people have participated in political actions and gatherings for the first time in their lives, and have rushed to show solidarity with people who have been cast as the "other."

It began on Day One of the new administration. At Trump's inauguration, small groups representing different movements—from climate justice to Black Lives Matter—occupied various street intersections to block access to the ceremony. Then, the next day, came the women's marches: with some six hundred cities participating, this appears to have been the largest coordinated protest in US history, with an estimated 4.2 million people on the streets. And though large women's organizations and established activists helped with the organizing and logistics, the original idea came from a retired attorney and grandmother in Hawaii, who said to a few dozen friends on Facebook: "I think we should march."

I marched in DC with family and friends and was struck by the fact that, though women were in the majority, tens of thousands of men had shown up as well, standing up to defend the rights of their partners, mothers, sisters, daughters, and friends. And while some may have initially thought they were marching only to defend a woman's right to make decisions over her own body, as well as for pay equity, they soon discovered that, in this new era, women's

rights are far more expansive, including Black women's right to be free from police violence, and immigrant women's right to be free from fear of deportation, and trans women's right to be free from hate and harassment. As the mission statement declared: "This march is the first step towards unifying our communities, grounded in new relationships, to create change from the grassroots level up."

This same spirit of unity has been on display when specific communities have been targeted by the administration, or by the wave of hate crimes it has helped unleash. The new activism was most visible after Trump issued the first of his Muslim travel bans, and tens of thousands of people—of all faiths and none—took to the streets and airports to declare "we are all Muslims" and "let them in."

One of the countries included in the travel ban was Yemen. In New York, Yemeni-American families—who own many of the city's ubiquitous corner stores (known locally as "bodegas")—organized swiftly. This is not a community known for being politically active, nor is it one that is represented by big organizations or unions. And yet in a matter of days, the city saw its first "bodega strike," with over a thousand businesses closing down, and some shopkeepers holding outdoor Muslim prayers. Thousands of their family members, friends, and customers came out to support them.

Faith groups have been particularly active in pushing back against the divide-and-conquer tactics. When Jewish cemeteries in St. Louis and Philadelphia were vandalized, for instance, Islamic organizations raised more than $160,000—eight times their initial goal—to help pay for the repairs. And when a white nationalist opened fire in a mosque in Quebec City in January 2017, killing six people and injuring nineteen, the response in the province and across Canada was powerful, including dozens of memorials and vigils, many of them outside mosques—from Vancouver to Toronto to Iqaluit.

Small acts too can assert our common humanity in an atmosphere of fear and division. Trump supporters launched a vicious online campaign to smear Linda Sarsour, a Palestinian American who was one of the organizers of the Women's March on Washington, as a closet supporter of terrorism and an anti-Semite. Such false claims were precisely the kind of attacks that ruined lives and careers after September 11. But this time, it didn't work—an #IStandWithLinda countercampaign rose up almost instantly, so loud and large that it all but buried the smears. And when immigration officers arrested 24-year-old Daniel Ramirez Medina—who had come to the USA from Mexico with his parents as a child—organizers launched a successful campaign for his release, freeing him from a Washington state detention center after more than six weeks in custody.

On a larger scale, hundreds of cities and counties (joined by schools, campuses, churches, and restaurants) have stepped forward to declare themselves "sanctuaries" for immigrants the Trump administration would seek to deport. The sanctuary movement (which began well before the 2016 elections) is inspired by the belief that, by coming together, communities can try to prevent deportations from taking place on their watch. But as many have pointed out, this often does not prevent police and border officials from conducting raids and breaking up families. That's why the American Civil Liberties Union, which raised nearly $80 million through online donations in the first three months after election day, has been coordinating a campaign to pressure state and city governments to adopt a set of nine basic policies aimed at protecting immigrants from Trump's agenda. Within a month, over a thousand communities had already started to push their local law enforcement agencies to make these commitments. (There have been criticisms, it should be noted, that these demands do not go far enough.)

There have also been many actions designed to highlight the interdependence that exists between citizens and immigrants, which mounting xenophobia seeks to deny. In February 2017, workers across sectors and cities participated in a Day Without Immigrants, highlighting how dependent the American economy is on the people Trump is trying to kick out. As one organizer of the day's events told a reporter, "We want to make sure that people understand that this city would stop functioning if we weren't there to build, or cook, or clean." (After twelve restaurant workers in Oklahoma were fired for participating in the demonstration, at least two nearby restaurants immediately offered to hire them.)

The Revenge of Reality

Another hallmark of the Trump era is the war on facts: not only has the press been cast as an enemy of the people, but scientific information has disappeared from government websites and there has been a de facto ban on talking about climate change through official government communications channels. In response, several creative initiatives have emerged to defend objective reality. Days after the inauguration, the Badlands National Park Twitter account was the first to defect from the administration's clampdown on science, tweeting out facts about ocean acidification and the level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. The posts were taken down shortly after they were issued, but not before sparking a trend of rogue Twitter accounts.

With key scientific research mysteriously disappearing from government websites, there's been a concerted international effort to save it from the memory hole. Shortly after Trump's win, the Internet Archive, a San Francisco–based nonprofit digital library, which for the last two decades has dedicated itself to preserving Web content for the public (and already has hundreds of

billions of webpages archived), announced plans to find a backup server in Canada to preserve US data. In the days before Trump's inauguration, "data rescue" events were held in several cities, as researchers and concerned volunteers met to back up data sets from the EPA and other government websites. And in February 2017, a "hackathon" at UC Berkeley drew two hundred data defenders to help save the knowledge generated by public institutions such as the Department of Energy and NASA's earth sciences programs.

Scientists are often wary of engaging in political activism, since advocacy on the same issue you are researching can be seized upon as evidence of bias. It's an understandable caution, but faced with the Trump administration's open attacks on scientific reality and bald attempts to suppress inconvenient research, many scientists have concluded they have to take a stand. Jane Goodall, the famed primatologist, has described the attacks on science as "a trumpet call" to the scientific community.

Which is why, on Earth Day 2017, tens of thousands of scientists participated in the March for Science in Washington, while upwards of forty thousand joined science marches in Chicago and Los Angeles—and these were just the largest of more than six hundred marches held across the USA and in sixty-eight other countries. "If we cannot discuss facts openly," one Stanford biologist told the *Guardian*, "how can democracy, based on public discussions and trust in our societal truths, survive? And so we will march." (One chant that made the rounds: "What do we want? Evidence-based research. When do we want it? After peer review.") Just one week later, hundreds of thousands of us converged in the blistering heat in Washington (once again, with hundreds of satellite marches elsewhere), coming together under a banner of "climate, jobs, and justice." This time the demand was not just for science to be respected, but for it to form the basis of a bold and urgent economic and social transformation.

What has stood out in this wave of early resistance is how the barriers defining who is and who is not an "activist" or an "organizer" are completely breaking down. People are organizing mass events who have never organized anything political before. A great many are discovering that, whatever their field of expertise, whether they are lawyers or restaurant workers, they have crucial skills to share in this emerging network of resistance. And wherever they live or work, whether it's a laboratory or a bodega or a law firm or inside the home, they have the power, if they organize with others, to throw a wrench into a dangerous system.

At the same time, many of us are realizing that if we're going to rise to the urgency and magnitude of this moment, we need skills and knowledge that we currently lack—about history, about how to change the political system, and even about how to change ourselves. So, in addition to the highly visible campaigns and demonstrations, there has also been a surge of popular education. For many, a first step is relearning how democracy works. When Harvard graduate students announced an online and in-person "Resistance School," meant to equip fledgling organizers with "the tools we need to fight back at the federal, state, and local levels," over fifty thousand people—coming from all fifty states—signed up.

In the days following Trump's election, a handful of former Democratic congressional staffers drafted a twenty-four-page Google Document, distilling lessons learned from seeing the Tea Party challenge Obama's agenda district by district. They called it the Indivisible Guide. In Trump's first hundred days, over seven thousand "Indivisible" chapters were formed—most consisting not of hardened activists but of schoolteachers and retirees, furious that their elected representatives were helping

further Trump's agenda. More than a straightforward how-to manual for bottom-up democracy, the Indivisible Guide and the activism that sprang out of it have offered, as one Virginia-based Indivisible recruit and first-time organizer put it, "not just a political community, but a community that cares for you, where what's bringing you together is this shared sense of civic responsibility toward this system that's going off the rails."

There is also a growing desire among white people to do more to challenge racial biases in ourselves, our communities, and our families. Groups like Showing Up for Racial Justice have seen interest in their trainings and workshops surge. The Arab American Association of New York and other groups are hosting reliably packed trainings on how to effectively intervene in hate crimes and racist harassment.

Meanwhile, as the administration prepared the ground for slashing funding to women's shelters, family planning, and violence-against-women programs, grassroots fundraising efforts took off in response. Planned Parenthood reported an astonishing 260,000 donors in the month after the election, with nearly a quarter of the contributions coming in the name of Mike Pence (during the election campaign, the vice president had said he wanted the landmark, pro-choice *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision sent "to the ash heap of history").

All of these acts of solidarity and expressions of unity reflect the fact that, after decades of "siloed" politics, more and more people understand that we can only beat Trumpism in cooperation with one another—no one movement can win on its own. The trick is going to be to stick together, and have each other's backs as never before. That's why over fifty progressive groups, drawn from a dizzying array of struggles, greeted the start of Trump's cabinet hearings with a declaration of "United Resistance"—publicly pledging "to take action to support one another, to be accountable to one another, and to act together in solidarity, whether in the streets, in

the halls of power, or in our communities every day. When they come for one, they come for us all."

Nor can we afford to restrict our vision to any one sphere. As Angela Davis put it, concluding a rousing speech at the Women's March on Washington, "The next 1,459 days of the Trump administration will be 1,459 days of resistance: Resistance on the ground, resistance in the classrooms, resistance on the job, resistance in our art and in our music. This is just the beginning and in the words of the inimitable Ella Baker, 'We who believe in freedom cannot rest until it comes.'"

The refusal to be bullied by Trump reaches beyond US borders, across the North American continent. When the Muslim travel ban was announced, thousands of Canadians, led by Muslim and immigrant-rights groups, immediately sprang into action, demanding that Canada provide safe haven to the migrants and refugees being denied entry to the USA. There's also a burgeoning support movement to welcome the growing numbers of immigrants fleeing the States and crossing into Canada by foot, even in subzero weather (with horrifying stories of fingers and toes lost to frostbite).

Canadian refugee law currently treats the United States as a "safe" country, and therefore not a legitimate point from which to flee and seek asylum in Canada. But many are now putting pressure on the Canadian government—through petitions and demonstrations—to change those rules. As a letter from a group of law professors pointed out, Trump's actions "reflect the very bigotry, xenophobia and nativist fear-mongering that the international refugee regime was designed to counteract."

In Mexico, meanwhile, tens of thousands of people across more than a dozen cities have protested Trump's immigration policies, as well as his anti-Mexican ethnic smears. Outside North America, the pressure is on too. In the UK, nearly two million

people signed an official petition to block Trump from making a state visit to Britain (Trump, reportedly, is demanding a ride in the golden royal carriage). There is also a growing international movement calling on governments to impose trade sanctions on the United States for violating the emissions reduction pledges it made under the Paris climate accord. And the movement to jam the Trump brand is growing, including a global call to boycott companies that rent space in Trump's various towers, as well as campaigns to push developers to drop the Trump name from cities' skylines.

. . . and around the World

Nearly every country has its own white nationalist or neo-fascist movement to confront, and there are many signs that resistance is rising. In response to the anti-immigrant backlash in Europe, huge demonstrations have been held in cities across the continent—from Berlin to Helsinki—to insist that migrants are welcome. In Barcelona, more than 100,000 people heeded a call from their new mayor (a former housing rights activist) and marched through the streets under the banner *"volem acollir"* (We welcome them).

Many grassroots organizations have sprung up to provide direct aid where governments have failed. When large numbers of migrants began arriving in Greece in 2015, they encountered a people who had "endured five years of austerity shock treatment, who had seen their lives degraded and their social, political and labor rights vanishing," writes sociologist Theodoros Karyotis. And yet, rather than jealously guard what little they had left, locals met migrants with an "outpouring of solidarity." Thousands of Greeks opened their homes to refugees, millions of home-cooked meals were delivered to refugee camps, free health care was provided in community-run clinics, and a warehouse in a

worker-run factory was opened to collect donated items such as clothes and baby food.

In Germany, as proposals surfaced that migrants be housed in dodgy conditions that included school gyms, vacant office buildings, empty warehouses, army barracks, and even a former Nazi forced-labor camp, people organized an "Airbnb for refugees," matching migrant families in need of a safe place to stay with spare rooms in local houses. The effort has now spread to thirteen other countries. My country is home to a remarkable pro-refugee movement that has seen thousands of Canadians sponsor Syrian families, taking financial and interpersonal responsibility for the newcomers' needs for one year as they adjusted to a new language, culture, and climate. The *New York Times* described it as "the world's most personal resettlement program."

Most encouragingly, while the early assumption was that Trump's rise could set off a wave of far-right electoral victories, in some countries it seems to be having the opposite effect. Witnessing Trump's ugly administration in action, some electorates are deciding to stop the tide. Ahead of elections in the Netherlands in March 2017, many predicted a win for Geert Wilders and his profoundly anti-Islamic and xenophobic Freedom Party. Instead, Wilders's support suddenly collapsed and the governing party held on to the most seats. But the biggest winner in the election was the GreenLeft party, which went from holding four seats to capturing fourteen. The party's leader, Jesse Klaver, is of Moroccan and Indonesian descent and campaigned with a bold antiracist message. On election day, Klaver had advice for other politicians in Europe facing resurgent right-wing populism and racism: "Don't try to fake the populace. Stand for your principles. Be straight. Be pro-refugee. Be pro-European. . . . You can stop populism."

It's a piece of advice that many heeded in France a couple of months later, though ultimately not enough. Faced with the threat of a victory for the Far Right's Marine Le Pen, many withdrew their support from centrist candidates, fearing a repeat of Clinton vs. Trump, and lent it instead to the left populist candidate, Jean-Luc Mélenchon. He had campaigned on an anti–free trade, pro-peace, and radical economic redistribution agenda and started attracting crowds as large as seventy thousand, more than any other candidate. Against all odds, Mélenchon—who was initially reported to have the support of just 9 percent of voters—managed to capture 19.6 percent of votes cast in the first ballot, putting him within just 2 percentage points of making it to the final runoff. In the final vote, Emmanuel Macron, a neoliberal former banker, trounced Marine Le Pen, though her extremist party still received a record number of votes. And roughly one-third of eligible voters chose to express their displeasure with both Le Pen and Macron by either abstaining or spoiling their ballots. In Spain, meanwhile, candidates with deep roots in social movements have won mayoralty races in Barcelona and Madrid, and have begun introducing concrete policies that welcome refugees, battle homelessness, and fight pollution at the same time.

Will Solidarity Survive a Major Shock?

These reactions are a vast improvement over the far too successful post–September 11 divide-and-conquer politics. So far, Trump's shock tactics aren't disorienting the opposition. Instead, they are waking people up, in the United States and around the world. But of course the new alliances in the US have not yet had to face a major security crisis or a state of emergency. The real test will be whether the bravery and solidarity seen so far can be sustained when people are being told they are in imminent danger, and that

the group they're expressing solidarity with could be harboring the individual who set off a bomb last week.

Nevertheless, there is reason to believe that many of the relationships being built in these early days will be strong enough to counter the fear that inevitably sets in during a state of emergency. If Trump tries to use a crisis event to ram through draconian measures, this emerging resistance is poised to rise up and act as a human barrier to say: "No—not this time."