

## Naomi Klein - This changes everything.

### *Capitalism vs the climate.*

*Edition Simon and Shcuster, 566 pages plus 74 pages of notes.*

#### Introduction

Klein often starts with a story. In this case the story of a plane that cannot start on the runway because the tyres have sunk into the soft tarmac. An example of fossil fuel-results (hot temperatures because of climate change) that are getting into the way of burning *more* fossil fuels.

Things are running out of hand.

In Copenhagen in 2009 the major polluting governments - including the US and China - signed a *non-binding* (*vrijwillig, niet verplicht*) agreement pledging to keep temperatures from increasing more than 2 degrees Celsius above where they were before we started burning coal. It was a political choice, aimed at not rocking the economic boat too much. There were angry objections from delegates who said 2 degrees was too high: it was a death sentence for many low-lying islands and for large parts of Sub-Saharan Africa.

So far temperatures have risen by 0.8 degrees and we are already experiencing many alarming impacts, such as the melting of the Greenland Ice-sheet and acidification (*verzuring*) of the oceans far more quickly than expected. In a 2012 report the World Bank said that 2 degrees target implied a gamble (*gok*): there is a risk of triggering non-linear tipping points, which would lead to further warming in the 21<sup>st</sup> century

But the bigger problem is that governments did not agree to *binding* targets; they are pretty much free to ignore their commitments. Which is precisely what is happening. Emissions are rising so rapidly that 2 degrees now look like a utopian dream. The World Bank warned in 2012 that we are *'on track for a 4 degrees warmer world by the century's end, marked by extreme heat waves, declining global food stocks, loss of ecosystems and biodiversity, and life-threatening sea-level rise..... And there is no certainty that adaptation to such a world is possible.'* It is difficult to imagine how a peaceful, ordered society could be maintained.

Plenty of mainstream analysts think that on our current emissions trajectory we are heading for maybe 6 degrees, and the evidence is that this would set in motion several major tipping points. As if every alarm in your house is going off, and in your street as well. And yet, rather than responding by doing everything to change course, many of us are continuing down the same road. She thinks we have not done the things that are necessary because those things fundamentally conflict with deregulated capitalism (*een kapitalisme waaraan weinig beperkingen worden opgelegd*), the reigning ideology in this period. We are stuck because the actions that are needed are extremely threatening to an elite minority that has a stranglehold over our economy, our political process, and most of our media outlets. Unfortunately the climate crisis coincides with the time when those elites got most power since the 1920s. The globalisation process is zooming from victory to victory.

The three policy pillars are familiar to us all:

- privatisation of the public sphere,
- deregulation of the corporate sector, and
- lower corporate taxation paid for with cuts to public spending.

The market fundamentalism has from the very first moments, systematically sabotaged our collective response to climate change. From that view the most obvious climate responses seemed politically heretical (*vloeken in de kerk*), so large parts of the environmental movement tried to adapt to it: they

compromised and teamed up with business. They tried to make the square peg of the climate crisis fit into the round hole of deregulated capitalism.

In the 1990's global emissions were going up by 1% a year. By the 2000's the annual rate of increase was 3.4% a year, which continues to this day. The effect of carbon in the air is cumulative. Now our only hope of keeping warming below 2 degrees is for wealthy countries to cut their emissions by around 8-10% a year.

The 'free' market simply cannot accomplish this task.

Only one of the sets of rules can be changed, and it's not the laws of nature. So it will have to be the economic rules. We have to think radically differently, and we have to start at once. The IAE says that if we do not get our emissions under control by 2017 our fossil economy will 'lock in' extremely dangerous warming. *'The door to reach 2 degrees is about to close. In 2017 it will be closed forever'. 'The energy-related infrastructure then in place will generate all the CO2 emissions allowed, leaving no room for additional power plants, factories and other infrastructure'.*

We have all sorts of excuses for not becoming active, but it will have to come from us, bottom-up. Change will not come from anywhere else. A 'People's shock' is needed.

Klein was jolted into reality by a woman from Bolivia, ambassador to the WTO, who told her that her country is dependent on glaciers for their drinking water, and they can see the glaciers turning grey and brown. She thinks the rich countries who caused the problem owe them help in the way of technology and money. *'We have only a decade'*. She was also jolted into realising how big the problem really is when in Copenhagen she saw a man activist who had calmly talked to the media all those days breaking apart on the last night. He sobbed uncontrollably: 'I really thought Obama understood', he kept repeating.

And another factor is that Naomi Klein herself had a child some years ago. Another reason for turning to the climate, after the book 'The Shock Doctrine'.

## **1. Bad Timing**

Is it Bad timing to start becoming active now?

Capitalism seems stronger than ever. Klein attends a conference at the Heartland Institute, where the deniers (*ontkenners - van 'to deny'*) get together. They deny there is a climate change because if they would take the climate change seriously they would have to become compassionate after all. Then they would lose the battle for their world view: neo-liberalism, 'greed is good'.

They have won the first battle; neo-liberalism is now firmly established. So they dig themselves in. They even hope to get rich off a warming world.

If we had got serious about meeting the 2 degrees goal after Rio (1992), the world would have needed to reduce its carbon emissions by about 2% per year until 2005. At that rate, wealthy countries could have much more comfortably started rolling out the technologies to replace fossil fuels, cutting carbon at home while helping to launch an ambitious green transition throughout the world.

But we didn't do any of those things. Climate change is a cumulative issue. Now we have squandered any opportunity for the 'evolutionary change'. That is largely due to the radical and aggressive vision that called for a single global economy based on the rules of free market fundamentalism, a vision incubated in the right-wing think tanks now at the forefront of climate change denial.

It is not clear where all this money that is available to the deniers comes from.

WE, the other side, are locked in: politically, physically and culturally.

Only when we identify these chains do we have a chance of breaking them, of breaking free.

## 2 Hot money

How free market fundamentalism helped overheat the planet.

In the past decades *climate* agreements and *trade* agreements have developed side by side:

1988 Hansen, head of NASA spoke to Congress, which suddenly resulted in more climate awareness.

1992 UN conference, Earth summit in Rio de Janeiro. Agreement on mitigating the planet (stay within 2 degrees hotter, not more) *but no sanctions were attached*.

1993 NAFTA Free trade agreement (US, Canada, Mexico), and in 1994 WTO trade regulation: these agreements *do* apply sanctions: in WTO as well as in trade agreements there is a 'dispute settlement body', which sets heavy fines (*boetes*) when countries don't stick to the rules. That's the big difference. Martin Khor was one of the few people who warned against this imbalance between climate and trade agreements from the beginning. There was opposition to NAFTA, but several environmental groups came on board. Clinton thanked them: without them NAFTA would probably not have happened.

1997 Kyoto protocol: the EU wanted to tax carbon emissions, but the US wanted the emissions trade as suggested by the corporations. Europe gave in. In the end the US themselves didn't sign! So the EU was landed with a system it did not want in the first place.

2001 China became a member of the WTO: vast transport, no protection for national industries, privatisations: emissions soared!

And there are more parallels.

We let good opportunities pass by. Now big reductions of carbon are needed fast.

The chances of staying within the 2 degrees temperature rise are diminishing fast. We have lost much time to weak climate policies. Wealthy countries need to start cutting their greenhouse gas emissions by something like 8 to 10% per year, and they need to start right now. Yvo de Boer, who held the UN's top climate position until 2009 said: *'the only way to achieve a 2-degree goal is to shut down the whole global economy.'* If we are to avoid chaos we have to put 'degrowth strategies' in place immediately in the US, the EU and other wealthy nations. This is impossible within the rules of capitalism as they are now constructed. That's a good argument for changing those capitalist rules.

And we need not land in 'The Great Depression', we just need 'the Great Transition'. We need to return to consumption levels of the 70's

## 3 Public and paid for

Overcoming the ideological blocks to the next economy.

Picture of the voting in Hamburg: the town votes to take over the energy grid from the company, it is now community-owned. As is the case in hundreds of towns across the country.

Then the story of hurricane Sandy (New York), with fire brigades helping in the rich areas but not in the poor areas. Health care collapsed, especially in the poor areas. Sick and elderly people just stayed in their homes and rooms, they didn't venture out into the wet streets full of debris. Volunteers (nurses etc.) stepped in and went up all those stairs to help them, and set up an emergency pharmacy. The same sort of story after floods in England. It shows that municipal services are needed, we can't rely on 'look after yourself'.

Who will pay when the climate changes? The polluters should pay, such as fossil fuel corporations, the ministry of Defence, the rich (they pollute 250% more than the poor. The 500 million rich people in the world cause 50% of the pollution.)

There are ways to get money to pay for the transition to clean energy. :

- a transaction tax on speculation would yield 650 billion,

- closing tax havens: if the estimated 30 trillion stowed away in tax havens would come to light and its *earnings* would be taxed 30% it would yield 190 b.
- a 1% billionaire's tax could raise 46 b annually
- 50 dollars tax per metric ton of CO<sub>2</sub>, in rich countries that would yield 540 billion
- phasing out fossil fuel subsidies globally would save 775 billion a year, etc.

Altogether more than 2 trillion annually - certainly enough for a healthy start to finance a great transition. Key governments would have to coordinate their responses so that corporations had nowhere to hide, a difficult task, but not impossible.

The '*corporate liberation project*' should be buried for good.

Political leadership should be willing to revive two long-lost arts:

- public planning
- saying no to powerful corporations.

#### 4 Planning and Banning

Slapping the invisible hand; building a movement. (*p.s.: the 'invisible hand of the market' that was going to put everything right, according to Adam Smith in the 18<sup>th</sup> century*)

Transformative change seemed like a real possibility in the first years of the Obama presidency, after 2009. 'Climate change is an opportunity'. What helped was the weak state of the banks. There was more power in his hands than ever since Roosevelt: the banks and the car industries were at his feet, and the stimulus bill had been agreed on. That could have been used for greening the economy and for social change (cooperatives), jobs, nationalisation of energy and transport (public transport such as transit trains, as the public wants). But Obama did not grasp the golden opportunity.

People were already protesting against new extraction methods such as fracking, and for renewable energies (POOL: Please On Our Land', as opposed to NIMBY.) In the US activists gathered around the Keystone XL pipeline, and demonstrated in Washington to influence Obama's decision. Three years later he was still hesitating. So his administration has been a disappointment.

A climate justice movement should gather strength and unite.

Communities should acquire the tools that work best for them: transit systems accountable to their riders, water systems overseen by their users, neighbourhoods planned democratically by their residents, and farming can become a decentralized sector as well as a key tool for emissions

P. 133-5 on agroecology: sustainable methods based on a combination of modern science and local knowledge. La Via Campesina: '*agroecology can solve the climate - small farmers cool the planet*'. Olivier de Schutter: 'it means *maintaining a healthy soil while producing nutritious food*'. A long line of high-level food experts have come to the same conclusion: we should move away from industrial agriculture and explore agroecological methods. Recent projects conducted in 20 African countries demonstrated a doubling of crop yields over a period of 3-10 years. That is a compelling case against the claim voiced by powerful philanthropists like Bill Gates that the world, particularly Africa, needs a 'New Green Revolution'- a reference to efforts in the mid- twentieth century to introduce industrial agriculture in Asia and Latin America. Raj Patel about that (first) Green Revolution: '*starvation continues, particularly in India. Hunger is about the ability to afford and control your food.*'

P 142-152: on the power of large fossil fuel companies, all geared to more damaging extraction in the next 30-40 years, and corrupting governments to get there.

In the key period when we need to cut our emissions the global gas-boom is constructing a network of ultra-powerful atmospheric ovens. Fracked gas emits 30% more methane, and methane has a warming potential that is 86 times greater than that of carbon dioxide. Lignite coal (brown coals, as delved in Germany., Poland and the Czech Republic) is ultra-dirty coal. And huge investments go into

tar sands and deep water drilling. Given that we have reached 'decade zero' that matters a lot. The industry has laid claims to oil, gas and carbon deposits representing 2,795 gigatons of carbon, which is five times what the planet's atmosphere can begin to absorb.

Getting serious about climate change is just not compatible with the existence of one of the most profitable industries in the world. They fight furiously to block every piece of legislation that would point us in the right emissions direction, that's why they fund the climate denier movement and why they bribe, certainly using the legal sort of bribery: in 2013 the oil and gas industry spent just under 400.000 dollars *a day* lobbying congress and government officials, and the industry gave 73 million dollars in federal campaign and political donations during the 2012 election cycle. In Canada employees of one industry organisation spoke with government officials 536 times in 4 years. In Britain at least 50 employees of companies have been placed with the British government to work on energy issues in the past 4 years. The sector is very unconcerned about the non-binding commitments made by the governments at UN summits. When the 2 degrees target was made official at the Copenhagen summit the share prices hardly reacted at all.

So challenging corruption is also an aspect of the struggle. We don't need a separate climate movement - we need to seize the climate *moment*. Put another way: if there has ever been a moment to advance a plan to heal the planet that also heals our broken economies and our shattered communities, this is it. Building a mass movement will require the broadest spectrum of allies.

A counter-movement for climate justice close to the scale that is now required is still missing. But we lack the tools that built the movements of the past: progressive political parties, strong unions, membership-based community organisations - they are all fighting for their lives. The social media offer possibilities for new communities.

## 5 Beyond extractivism

She starts with a picture of the island of Nauru, coral island. It used to be 'mined' for phosphate resulting from bird droppings ( it used to be a popular pit stop for migrating bird)s. In the middle it has all been 'mined'; from the front it is now flooding. The 'mining' made all 10.000 Naurans obscenely rich. Now there is an explosion of diabetes: most of the food is imported. They got bad investment advice and now everybody is poor. To make money it is now a money laundering island, the 21 km<sup>2</sup> square miles have 400 banks. Another source of income is an awful camp for asylum seekers. People suffer from solastalgia (a feeling when the homelands that we love are radically changed by extraction or industrialisation. Composed of 'solace', and nostalgia. It is '*the homesickness that you have when you are still at home*').

Nauru is just one example of 'extractivism' which started with Francis Bacon, 1623, who saw the earth as something to be exploited, as a woman to be had, to be 'mined'.

The industrial revolution was built on coal. With coal people were no longer dependent on water mills etc.: the factories could be brought to the towns.

Coal is like sponge, it absorbs toxins such as uranium, cadmium, mercury, which are released into the air when coal burns. That's another disadvantage besides the CO<sub>2</sub> that is released.

It is a challenge to the left (e.g. to the trade unions) NOT to extract some more, e.g. the Alberta tar sands: a lot of methane is released in the process. NOT to start fracking for 'natural gas'. Both technologies are more harmful than thought, it appears now. Or deep sea mining in the Arctic: too risky, very deep = dangerous, and it costs a lot of energy. Latin American countries were forced to choose between poverty and pollution - they chose pollution, i.e. more extracting.

Trade unions may have to face some difficult choices. The same holds good for environmental groups. The older groups were elitist - they worried about nature but also about retaining their hunting grounds; they wanted more parks.

In 1962 'Silent Spring' by Rachel Carson was a wake-up call, which led to the banning of DDT. She inspired a new, much more radical generation of environmentalists. In 1972 the Club of Rome (Bo Brundtland) published 'Limits to growth' which predicted that if natural systems continued to be depleted humanity would overshoot the planet's carrying capacity (= ability to absorb pollution) around 2015. Our footprint is already larger than that.

If we think we are going to be saved at the last minute (as in films) : that is 'magical thinking'.

## **PART 2: MAGICAL THINKING, p. 188**

(Magical thinking: 6 Business will help us. 7 The billionaires will help us. 8 Technology will help us. )

### **6 Fruits, not roots**

The disastrous merger (= *fusie*) of Big Business and Big Green

Again a story: the story of Attwater's Prairie Chickens. The organisation Nature Conservancy acquired a reservation for the last of these chickens. (before 1900 there were a million), on land in Galveston Bay donated by Mobil: the Texas Prairie Reserve. After 4 years Nature Conservancy began extracting fossil fuels in the reserve, as a source of income. They pumped oil. There are no chickens any more now. (Not clear whether this is due to the single oil pump they installed. Yet it is a telling example of the compromised movement.)

In this chapter the attitude of 'Big Green' (organisations) is denounced (*aan de kaak gesteld*): 'compromise, to catch the 'low hanging fruits'. They are not fighting the economic interests, they have merged with them. (Nature Conservancy, Conservation International, the Conservation Fund, World Wildlife Fund, etc., there is a list on p 196). They get money from fossil fuel organisations and invest in them. Not Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace etc, see p. 197, though these groups sometimes accept some 'suspicious' money to survive.

There are often linkages between Big Green and Big Fuel, e.g. at the Warsaw summit the Polish government organised a parallel summit about coal, somehow these summit got mixed up.

In the sixties and 70's, before the WTO and the Free trade agreements there was a wave of *legal* victories: Clean Air Act, Wilderness Act, Clean Water Act, Endangered Species Act, etc. -see p 202. (This was no longer possible after the Free Trade agreements: it would have been regarded as trade-impeding (*belettend*)). All in all 23 acts became law in the 1970's alone, the last one was the Superfund Act in 1976 which required industry, through a small levy (= *belasting*), to pay the cost of cleaning up areas that had become toxic.

In the 80's many environmental groups became 'respectable', e.g. when Fred Krupp took the reins of the Environmental Defense Fund, 207. New goal: 'creating markets for the bastards.' They saw 'cutting consumerism' as impossible, so they partnered with corporations. These organisations did involve the public: they were called upon to write letters, sign petitions, , turn off lights for an hour, make a giant hourglass, and to donate of course.

P. 213: Bill Clinton's new administration presented the 'sustainable energy Blueprint' which called natural gas a bridge to cleaner and renewable forms of energy such as wind and solar. A mistake. This 'bridge' should have been skipped: natural gas released by fracking yields a lot of methane, which is a lot dirtier than CO2.

p. 218: 'trading in pollution'

At Kyoto, 1996., Europe wanted to tax carbon emissions, the US wanted a *trade* in pollution (emission rights) as proposed by the corporations. The EU gave in. Then the US did not sign Kyoto So the EU was

landed with a system it did not want, which has now led to grave injustice. E.g. indigenous people are driven off their land (with compensation) because it should be a 'clean' sink for CO<sub>2</sub>. (Those people now say they live from the air). There are also cases of 'Lucrative (= *winstgevend*) pollution to get funds from the emission trade: see p 219: first make your industry extra dirty and then cash money for cleaning it up. (The fact that the US did not sign it could be seen as a narrowly dodged bullet: the emissions system could have been bigger, which means worse)

At the time of the Tea Party many corporations got out of the coalition with the environmental groups (USCAP, p. 226): they had now got a free hand anyway, they did not need the environmentalists any more.

## 7. No messiahs

### The Green Billionaires Won't Save Us

After Al Gore gave Richard Branson (of Virgin Airlines) a private presentation in 2006 Branson promised 3 billion to develop biofuels as an alternative to oil and gas, and for other technologies to battle climate change. He also promised a 25 million dollar prize, the '*Virgin Earth Challenge*' for the first inventor who would figure out how to sequester (= onttrekken) one billion tons of carbon a year from the air. All this without changing our lifestyles.

Other philanthropists are reviewed, such as Warren Buffet (233) , Tom Steyer (234) , Bloomberg (235) and Bill Gates (236), and Pickens. (With the philanthropist Pickens the fracking frenzy really took off. )

Branson started 'Virgin Fuels', and later 'Virgin Green Fund', which spent 130 million on corn ethanol. (The ethanol boom was responsible for 20-40% of the rise in food prices in 2007-9). He also supported the P.R. for jet fuel to be made from eucalyptus trees. All in all 230 million has been spent, which is not 3 Billion. Part of the money also went into 'greening' his own living quarters (two islands) and a 60.00-dollar-a-night hotel. He did start Virgin America, a brand new airline, which went from 40 flights a day in 2007 to 177 flights a day in 2013.

So Virgin's greenhouse gas emissions soared by approximately 81% between 2006 and 2013, and Virgin America by 177% between 2008 and 2012. So more fossil fuels burned instead of less. He also invested in Virgin racing (Formula 1) and in Virgin Galactic (flights into space for 250.000 dollars per person.) And he has got much richer, from 2.8 to 5.1 billion dollars.

How about the 25 million dollar prize, his 'Virgin Earth Challenge'?

The designated period of 5 years passed in 2012 but no prize has been awarded yet; there are now 11 finalists. The jury focuses on EOR: Enhanced (= *verbeterde*) Oil Recovery - a nice term for new techniques like fracking and extracting bitumen from tar sands. (US department of energy: EOR techniques are estimated to be *almost 3 x as greenhouse gas intensive* as conventional extractions).

## 8 Dimming the Sun

In March 2011 Klein attends a meeting about geo-engineering convened by the famous Royal Society, Great Britain, in a rural mansion. It is about efforts to dim the earth, in imitation of the Pinatubo earthquake in the Philippines. One technique could be: putting a long hose into the air to spray sulphur into the stratosphere. What could go wrong? Lots of things: as the histories of earlier earthquakes show: In the year(s) after there were droughts and storms and hunger. If man sprayed sulphur into the stratosphere it would be a same sort of process but it that would have even more erratic (= *grillig*) effects and it would be irreversible, so we'd better not try.

These technical 'solutions' are a continuation of Bacon's world views: we are masters of the earth, which is a centuries-long fairytale of control.

In reality the biosphere is a player, not just a responder.

In a real crisis people might grab at such a solution. Better to think them through beforehand and realise what the consequences are. 288 on travelling to Mars.  
Have we really tried plan A? (the transition to renewables)

### **PART 3: STARTING ANYWAY**

#### **9: Blockadia**

The new climate warriors are now blocking the fracking companies, the Keystone XL pipeline etc. : resistance to high-risk extraction. There are now surprising alliances, from indigenous people to farmers ('cowboys and indians' are surprised to find themselves joined in protest) and from church leaders and housewives to CEOs of oil companies. They are protesting because the pipeline passes everybody's doorstep, the extractive industries spoil everybody's water and air. Water especially is a crucial point.

p. 306 etc. about Shell in Nigeria. Since the doors to foreign investors were flung open near the end of British colonial rule, oil companies have pumped hundreds of billions of crude oil out of Nigeria. Wastewater was pumped directly into rivers, streams and the sea. Canals from the ocean were dug into the delta, turning precious freshwater sources salty, and pipelines were left exposed and unmaintained. An Exxon Valdez-worth of oil has spilled in the Delta *every year* for about fifty years, poisoning fish, animals and humans. But nothing compares with the misery that is gas flaring. If that gas had been used it could have delivered electricity for the whole of Nigeria, but it was cheaper to set it on fire. The practice is responsible for about 40% of Nigeria's total CO2 emissions (which is why some companies are absurdly trying to collect carbon credits for stopping this practice).

We all know about the Ogoni protests. In 1995 Ken Saro-Wiwa and 8 of his compatriots were tried and hanged. Byt Shell withdrew from Ogoniland before that, in 1993, and the land has slowly begun to heal. Little was heard about the 5000 young people of the Ijaw Nation who held a gathering and drew up the Kaiama Declaration in 1998. They called it Operation Climate Change. Several oil platforms were occupied; it was a peaceful protest asking for self government and resource control. No results. Afterwards they teamed up with Acción Ecológica in Ecuador to form 'Oilwatch International', with the motto 'leave the oil in the soil'. The current banditism is another matter: it is a consequence of the neglect of earlier peaceful demos.

308 etc.: water is always a sore point, that is usually under threat first.

Tar sands: Huge 'tailponds' are used in the exploitation of tar sands to contain the dirty waste water. Water is leaking from the 'tailing ponds' into the underground and from there into the Athabasca River. The extraction of 'dilbit' (diluted bitumen) from the tar sands leads to a more corrosive pipeline system than conventional crude oil, so the pipes will break down earlier. Another form of transport are the 'oil bomb trains' to the coast, from where the oil will be transported across the ocean to China in huge tankers. Communities along the coast are protesting: their fishing waters will suffer if a tanker breaks down in the treacherous water or in storms. The links between fracking and small earthquakes are also solidifying.

There is stiff opposition to protesters. A doctor who reported health problems ( increase of cancer) was accused of misconduct by the health regulators and 'struck from the list', but eventually cleared of charges and even proved right. Federal government prevents climate scientists from speaking out. ('I am available for when media relations say I am available' said one scientist)

Fracking releases a lot of methane. Bush ushered in the 'Halliburton Loophole', which exempted (= *vrijstellen*) fracking from regulation, and in the US the state owns everything that is below the surface. So the fracking companies can go anywhere. In Chalcidiki, 3 peninsulas not far from Thessaloniki in

Greece, they want to start fracking under people's homes. Compressor stations are also a potential danger.

If we compare earlier extraction (coal, oil) to a surgeon's scalpel, the current methods (fracking, tar sands, Arctic drilling) could be compared to a sledge hammer. So much oil is now being extracted in the US ('Saudi America') that the number of rail cars carrying oil has increased by 4111% in just 5 years; little wonder that there are now far more oil spills, or trains engulfed in smoking fireballs, in US rail accidents. Many towns and cities now find themselves in the path of poorly maintained, underregulated 'oil bombs'. (There are fewer and fewer railway workers on these trains transporting oil, because of cuts.) In July 2013 a train exploded in the Quebec town of Lac-Mégantic, killing 47 people and flattening half of its picturesque downtown.

In Britain, half the entire island has been designated as having fracking potential.

All these initiatives are threats to the water supply

An alliance against these sorts of extractions is building among the various outposts of 'blockadia'. (*a word which is used throughout the book: the community of people who re blocking extraction industries; they are resisting but also have a vision of another society, they want to achieve a sort of utopia/arcadia.* )

Communities are awakening. 'We are all in the sacrifice zone now'.

## **10 Love will save this place**

Democracy, Divestment and the Wins So Far

Resistance of native populations from Canada to Romania to Bolivia. They know their areas best and are most attached to them and dependent on them (e.g. for water).

337: Bella Bella, on the Canadian coast, where big ships are going to pass. About a hearing that didn't happen because the visiting committee felt threatened by a bang on a car window.

342 Chalkidici, Greece, 343 Gillette, Wyoming, 344 water. (the importance of 'love and water'. ) 348 early wins, also in China: some successes of 'blockadia'. Corporations are becoming wary (*voorzichtig*) 348 the divestment movement (no investments in dirty stuff)

358 the Democracy Crisis: corporations use the trade agreements to stop resistance. More investment disputes are being filed (*rechtszaak aanhangig gemaakt*) than ever before, with a great many initialled by fossil fuel companies. As of 2013, 60 out of 169 pending cases (*zaken die nog in de wachtlijst staan*) at the World Bank's dispute settlement tribunal concern natural resources, energy and environmental politics. Of the more than 3 billion compensation money 85% has already been awarded to fuel and energy corporations and mines. Communities standing in the way of corporations are regarded as an 'overburden' like the 'waste earth' that must be removed to access a tar sands or mineral deposit 360' Beyond fossilised democracies': CITIES are taking a stance, they are no longer waiting for federal verdicts.

The historical claims being made by indigenous peoples around the world as well as by developing countries for an honouring of historical debts have the potential to act as counterweights to increasingly undemocratic governments. But the outcome of this power struggle is by no means certain. See next chapter.

## **11 You and what army?**

Indigenous rights and the power of Keeping Our Word.

Indigenous peoples' rights may be the last resort, the last line of defence (270). The 'First nation Coalition' (various indigenous groups) opposes the Embridge Northern Gateway Pipeline. They have rights (on paper) IN the living areas assigned to them, their reservations, in exchange for services by the state. That does not mean that they have given up all their rights to the land *outside* the reservations. They need them as hunting and fishing grounds. Writs (*contracten*) were produced by some groups asserting land title (*aanspraken*) to large tracts of land that had never been acknowledged by the Canadian government. That doesn't mean that they cannot be claimed again. Some 'First Nations' are now suing (*vervolgen*) the Canadian government and claiming large sums (368). Klein accompanies two men to Standard and Poor's bank, but the men from the bank seem unimpressed, as if they said: 'How are you going to make the Canadian government keep its word? You and what army?'

In the late 90s the Supreme Court of Canada made a series of landmark (*mil;palen*) decisions, and one day Canadians woke up to a legal reality in which millions of acres of land were recognized as never having been acquired by the Crown. In another case it was confirmed that First Nations had not given up rights to their lands, they had merely agreed to *share* the lands. In the case of Alberta Tar sands Treaty 6 states that '*Indians shall have the right to pursue their vocations of hunting and fishing throughout the tract surrendered*'.

These findings resulted in racist attacks by regular Canadian fishermen etc. The Mi'kmaq Warrior Society could not fend them off. But in 2013, protesting against fracking, the situation was quite different: 'regular' Canadians joined the 'First Nation' on the barricades to prevent fracking. The Elsipogtog and the French speaking Acadian population joined hands with the English speaking Canadians. One leader: '*I believe that that our treaties are the last line of defence to save the clean water*'. Many of the planet's largest and most dangerous unexploded carbon bombs lie beneath lands and waters to which indigenous people have legitimate legal claims, for future generations: the tar sands, and the oil under the Arctic's melting ice. The livelihoods of the Inuit and Saami are threatened.

Some victories:

- A Federal Appeals court ruled *against* Shell, and *for* the First Nations. Shell announced that it was putting its Arctic plans on indefinite hold. Ben van Beurden (Shell's CEO) said he was disappointed, but he would look for further legal issues.
- In Western Australia the legal battles over native titles derailed a planned 45 billion dollars LNG (liquefied natural gas) processing plant (*fabriek*) and port.
- The Inter-American Court of Human rights is standing by Amazon groups, and the U'waan isolated tribe in Columbia's Andean cloud forests have resisted repeated attempts by oil giants to drill in their territory

It helps that the UN adopted a declaration on the Rights of Indigenous peoples in 2007. The 4 opposing votes (US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand) adopted it as well, eventually, under domestic pressure. )

Yet there is no guarantee of winning all the battles. Klein visits some members of the Beaver Lake Cree Nation who are challenging the Canadian government about the tar sands. It's a small and weak group. (p. 376) The opposition is a huge burden to bear, with shockingly little support from the rest of us.

The movements against extreme extraction are becoming pro-democracy movements.

The group 'Idle No More' sprang to the fore in 2012 to oppose two 'omnibus budget bills' (*allesomvattende begrotingen*), that cut many of the environmental money and regulations. This gave the government a free hand to ram through unpopular energy and development policies. Less than 1% of the water bodies remained under protection. Canadians were shocked. Rights-rich-but-cash-poor

people joined up with rights-poor-but -cash-rich people. Many people signed petitions, and many investors took notice. (p.s. not clear to me whether these 2 bills were repealed)

In January 2012 the old rock legend Neil Young started an *'Honour the Treaties Tour'*. He had visited the tar sands and been devastated by what he saw. He also visited the tribes. *'The cancer rates are up among all the tribes. This is not a myth, this is true'*. He raised 600.00 dollars for the legal battles within 2 months. In this way public opinion is changing, and legal decisions reflect this.

But the battles have not been won yet. 25% of First nation communities are so neglected and underfunded that they are living without sewage or running water, and getting those basic services taken care of supersedes all other priorities. Big companies coming in with offers of jobs or compensation are not resisted., e.g. on Greenland. *'Should we not accept drilling for oil, when it can buy us independence (from Denmark)?'*

BP (!) has been selected to develop Greenland's estimated 50 billion barrels of offshore oil. In the Deepwater Horizon disaster (also BP) local shrimpers and oystermen took work from the company that had just robbed them of their livelihoods - just to pay the bills. In the same way the chief of the Fort McKay first nation says *'there is no more opportunity for our people to be employed or have some benefits except the oil sands'*. A Northern Cheyenne storyteller says: *'I can't keep asking my people to suffer with me'*.

These things are causing division among the people and even in families.

If non-Native people are going to ask some of the poorest, most systematically disenfranchised people to be humanity's climate saviours, then, to put it crassly, what are we going to do for them?

## **12 Sharing the sky**

The Atmospheric Commons (*gemeenschappelijk bezit*) and the Power of Paying our Debts.

Under the rolling hills of Montana sits a whole lot of coal, good for exports to China. But if that was mined it would threaten the Tongue river, a key water source.

Klein paints a depressing picture of a visit to people trying to keep the community going. *'There is so much going on - people don't know what to fight'*. The tribe was divided about the extractive industries. Unemployment was 62%, there was poverty, addiction. While Klein is there someone reports the theft of an electric heater. Not surprising: people in the ramshackle houses pay 400 dollars a month for heating. Why couldn't there be a programme to install insulated windows and solar panels? A handful of model homes had been built: electricity bills of 19 dollars a month! So the only way to break the deadlock some community leaders thought, was to prove to the next generation of Cheyenne leaders that there is another path out of poverty.

Klein's return trip in 2011, after one year, couldn't have been more different: work and training in progress everywhere, optimism had come back. People were working on the solar panels and taking courses to insulate houses, wearing 'beyond coal' t-shirts: the fight against the mines and the coal train sprang back to life. A new generation of warriors has been born. This has shown that there is no more potent weapon in the battle against fossil fuels than the creation of real alternatives. Denmark and Germany show that it can be done.

The Black Mesa coalition helped shut down part of a mine, but the activists know there is no hope of shutting it all down until there are alternatives. So they are planning to install vast solar arrays. As usual funding is a problem. Communities should have full command over resource projects. The shift from one power system to another must be accompanied by a power correction.

p. 399 the same holds good for farmers holding on to family farms in the face of Big Ag(riculture). The competition in agriculture is so tough that many farmers and ranchers are willing to make some extra money by leasing land to fracking or pipeline companies.

But a study has shown that money spent on public transit, building retrofits and renewable energy delivers *three times as many jobs* as building a pipeline. And simultaneously helps to reduce catastrophic warming. p. 403: farmers in Nebraska built a 'Build Our Own Energy Barn' in the way of the pipeline, powered by wind and solar, and there are other examples. The resource for this just transition must ultimately come from the state. Investments by colleges, charities and pension funds and foundations must lead the way.

Klein visits Red Hook, Brooklyn, community Farm. But when the storm Sandy came the whole harvest was lost and the and the water that inundated the fields may have been toxic.

But dropping out and planting vegetables is not an option for this generation. We also have to try and change the *economic model* that is now so treacherous that nowhere is safe. *The overriding principle must be to address the twin crises of inequality and climate change at the same time.*

A super tornado ripped through Greensburg, Kansas, in 2007. Today it is a model 'Green Town', often described as the greenest in America. This is taking place in the middle of a Republican-voting county where people are not convinced that climate change is real. But that debate seems to matter little to residents in the face of their losses, and the generosity that followed.

So: the most powerful lever (*hefboom*) for change, in the North as well as in the South, is the emergence of concrete alternatives to dirty growth.

How to pay for the transition? Acción Ecológica in Ecuador suggested the international community should pay the country compensation for keeping the oil in the ground below the Yasuuni rainforest. They would use the funds (to be seen as payments for the ecological debt from North to South) for a renewable energy transition, distributed democratically at the local and global level. Developed countries (20% of the world population) have contributed 70% tot the greenhouse gas emissions. (The US, 5% of the w. population, contributed 14%). Moreover not everybody needs carbon for the same sort of things. India still has 300 million people living without electricity. So there is a debt to be fulfilled. But only 13 Million of a 3.6 Billion goal was raised for Ecuador, and in 2013 president Correa announced that he was going to allow drilling to begin.

What do we owe the poor countries, but also what do the rich owe the poor in developed countries or in countries like china?

Emissions in EU and North America still need to come down dramatically, but thanks largely to the offshoring of production promoted by free trade, emissions in the US and the EU have pretty much stopped growing. It is the fast-rising economies of the global South (China, Brazil, India and South Africa leading the pack), producing goods for us, that are mostly responsible for the surge in emissions in recent years, which is why we are racing to tipping points much more quickly than anticipated. *'the number of people going through industrialisation the first time around is like a drop in the ocean compared to the number of people going through industrialisation this time'* (p 412, physicist Alice Bows-Larkin. ) *The real battle will be won or lost by those movements in the South that are fighting their own Blockadia-style struggles, for their own clean energy revolution, and green jobs, and their own pools of carbon left in the ground.*

About one third of emissions come from buildings (heating, cooling and lighting them). Building stock in the Asia Pacific region is projected to grow in these countries by a dramatic 41 % by 2021, while remaining relatively stable in the developed world. So the structures should be built to the highest standards of 'green' efficiency. Otherwise we are all in for catastrophic emission growth,.

One proposal is for a 'global feed-in tariff' (the government pays you back for the energy you / your solar panels etc. produce), which would create an internationally administered fund to support clean energy transition throughout the developed world. And we should pay our debt by helping developing countries to develop differently. This requires international cooperation and solidarity, which is difficult so we don't hear about it from big green organisations.

This debt can be compared to the call for reparations for the slave trade (2013) . British scientists found out that when the British Parliament ruled to abolish slavery in its colonies in 1833, it pledged to compensate British *slave owners* (!) with a staggering sum (the equivalent of 16.5 billion pounds) for the loss of their human property, they did NOT compensate the victims. Much of that money went directly into the coal-powered infrastructure of the then roaring Industrial Revolution. In fact the theft is still in progress, *we are stealing the sky of the descendants of slavery*.

The poorer countries have to choose between poverty and a cleaner air, which they can't without our help. Our own survival depends on it. The think tank EcoEquity and the Stockholm Environmental Institute developed a model: *the 'Greenhouse Development rights'*. Each country's fair share is determined by two key factors; responsibility for historical emissions and capacity to contribute, based on the country's level of development. The US share could be 30%. But not all of those reductions would need to be done at home - some obligations could be met by financing and otherwise supporting the transition to low-carbon pathways in the South. There are plenty of affordable ways for Northern countries to honour the debts, e.g. erasing (*'uitgummen'*) the foreign debts currently owed by the developing countries, loosing (*vrijgeven*) green energy patents, transferring know-how etc. Most of the cost can come from corporations driving this crisis: polluter-pays measures, financial transaction tax, eliminating fossil fuel subsidies, see chapter 3.

Climate change is forcing us to look again at the injustices that we thought were safely buried in the past.

### **13 the right to regenerate**

Moving from extraction to renewal

Some personal remarks by Naomi Klein: immersing herself into the international climate justice movement had helped her to imagine various futures that were less bleak (*grimmig*) than the sort of apocalypse she had come to imagine. Maybe, just maybe, there was a future where humans could once again be part of a cycle of creation, not destruction.

So she got pregnant. But then her luck ran out: an ovarian tumor, and a miscarriage. After operations and trying again she went through an ectopic pregnancy (*buitenbaarmoederlijke zwangerschap*), and later through the ivf procedure, till she gave it that up. Then with the help of alternative treatment she came to realise that she should relax ('before you can take care of another human being you have to take care of yourself'), and she went back to where she grew up and where her parents still live, took a break, took long walks along a salmon river, and resigned herself to not having kids (though she sometimes felt uncomfortable with all this talk of 'leaving this earth to our children....').

She went to see the agroecological center of Wes Jackson in Kansas. The lesson: respect fertility, keep it going. But when humans started planting single crops that needed to be replanted year after year, the problem of fertility loss began. The way industrial agriculture deals with this problem is well known: irrigate heavily and lay on the chemicals, both to fertilise and to ward off pests and weeds, even if these chemicals have been linked to health problems for humans and animals (bees).

Wes Jackson and his colleagues at the Land institute are breeding perennial (*meerjarige*) varieties of wheat, wheatgrass, sorghum and sunflowers that do not need to be replanted every year, just like the

tall grasses that dominated the prairie at one time. *'We envision an agriculture that not only protects irreplaceable soil, but lessens our dependence on fossil fuels and damaging synthetic chemicals.'* And it is beginning to work. When she returned a year later during a severe drought period they were selling the first batch of flour made from perennial wheatgrass and the Land Institute sorghum field was the only green patch for miles around.

Klein joined actions around the BP Deep Horizon oil spill, wading knee-deep through the dirty water trying to remove the oil, and realising that young life such as the poisoned larvae and embryos of shrimps and oysters and fish are extremely vulnerable: 3 or 4 years from then there would be no fish: disasters like Deep Sea Horizon are interfering with systems at the heart of the earth's fertility cycles. And many species are finding it harder to reproduce and harder still to protect their young from the harsh new stresses of a changing climate. She gives examples of health problems in fracking areas etc. And p 429 about Mossville, Louisiana, a historic African-American town, hit by pollution from a nearby enormous industrial plant (why was it situated right there, one may ask.) A lot of cancer and respiratory illnesses occur.

Then Klein got pregnant after all, and took more walks along the salmon river, which appeared to be fed by a sort of hatchery higher up the river, managed by volunteers, who also cleared the stream of logging debris and made sure there was enough shade to protect the young fry. There are now 40% less salmon in the pacific Northwest, and in many other regions they have disappeared altogether. Volunteers are doing what they can. She gave birth to a healthy son, in spite of having stood in that dirty BP water.

Indigenous peoples say: *'our systems are designed to promote more life'*. Reading that struck Klein as the very antithesis of extractivism, where living systems as well as discarded people looking for jobs are seen as *'overburden'*. Now in *'Blockadia'* these indigenous ways of seeing are spreading in a way that has not occurred for centuries. They have created powerful new legal tools that assert the right of ecosystems not only to exist but to *'regenerate'*. In 2010 the Pittsburgh City council passed such a law, explicitly banning all natural gas extraction and stating that nature has *'inalienable and fundamental rights to flourish'*.

A similar effort in Europe is attempting to make ecocide a crime under international law:

[www.endecocide.eu](http://www.endecocide.eu)

Many people are remembering their own cultures' traditions, however deeply buried. Teenage girls are joining their grandmothers and learning from them, as in Greece. We can educate ourselves fast.

## CONCLUSION

### The Leap years

Just enough Time for Impossible.

(Leap years: in an earlier part of the book: *'we cannot go in small steps. Now we have to run like bulls'*.)

We now have an indication of what is required during climate change *'decade zero'*.

Can we force some of the most profitable companies to forfeit (verbeurd verklaren) trillions of dollars of future earnings by leaving the vast majority of fossil fuels in the ground? And come up with trillions to pay for zero-carbon transformations?

Has an economic shift of this kind, demanded from below, ever happened before in history?

She reviews several transformations: the human rights movement, especially women's rights and gay and lesbian rights, but these were not economic transformations. And Martin Luther King and the

American civil rights movement as well as the more radical wing of the second-wave feminist movement asked for economic compensation: good schooling, housing, jobs... The work of African Americans and women had been an unacknowledged market subsidy. But those battles were not won. Sharing legal status is one thing, sharing resources quite another. (An exception was the labor movement after the Great Depression, resulting eventually in Roosevelt's New Deal that made massive investments in public infrastructure.) Even the successful battle against apartheid in South Africa suffered its most significant losses on the *economic* equality front. The National Congress's Freedom Charter' stated that key sectors of the economy such as the banks and mines were to be nationalised, but that plan was sabotaged and the wealth accumulated under apartheid remained intact, with poverty deepening significantly.

There have been movements however that have been able to challenge wealth in ways that can be compared to what is needed today: the abolition of slavery and the Third World independence from colonial powers. According to historian Eric Foner '*slaves as property were worth more than all the banks, railroads and factories in the country put together*'. Freedom was won (at the cost of many lives), but the economic side of the struggle was far less successful. Slaves were promised, among other compensations '*40 acres and a mule*', but the government broke most of its promises. Instead, Haiti paid a large sum to France for loss of its workforce, and British slave-owners (NOT the slaves!) were paid large sums in compensation which went straight into the Industrial Revolution. Extortions (*uitpersingen*) are still being paid for in the form of debts, from Mozambique to Haiti.

There is still a lot of unfinished business from past liberation movements. We must get it right this time, and bring together all of these still living movements. We should choose the right 'early policy battles' that don't merely aim to change laws but change patterns of thought. (Asking for a guaranteed minimal income may be more effective than asking for a carbon tax.) New patterns of thought, debates, new stories are needed. The climate movement has yet to find its full moral voice on the world stage but it is certainly clearing its throat. Most of all the voices are coming from Blockadia.

We are not well equipped for cooperation: we are products of our age and of the dominant ideological project, with our eyes glued to smart phones, short attention spans, burdened by debts and insecurities of contract work. But we are now less isolated than many of us were even a decade ago: the new structures - from social media to worker co-ops to farmer's markets to neighbourhood sharing banks - have helped us to find community despite the fragmentation of postmodern life. There is little doubt that another crisis will see us in the streets and squares once again, taking us by surprise. It must be the catalyst to actually build the world that will keep us all safe.

*'History knocked on your door. Did you answer?'*

That's a good question for all of us.