

# TO THE END



CAMPUS AND COMMUNITY DISCUSSION GUIDE



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## 3 Introduction

- 4 About the Film
- 5 Letter from the Filmmaker
- 5 Using this Guide

## 6 Pre-Screening Resources

- 7 Film Protagonists
- 9 What Is the Green New Deal?
- 11 Talking About the Climate Crisis

## 12 General Discussion Questions

## 14 Dive Deep for Courses and Conversations

- 15 Movement Strategy
  - Individual v. Collective Action
  - Political Will and the Role of Movements
  - Inside-Outside Strategy
  - Justice and Coalition-Building
- 22 History
  - Being Part of History
  - Historical Perspective and the FDR Era
  - Alignments and Paradigm Shift
- 26 Politics
  - From GND to BBB to IRA: How the Sausage is Made
  - Corporate Power in Washington
- 33 Communication, Messaging, and the Media
  - The Six Americas
  - Mainstream Media Messaging
  - Combating Cynicism
  - Climate Narratives: Apocalypse or Utopia?

## 38 Resources for Taking Action

## 39 Glossary





# INTRODUCTION

**“There’s no such thing as too late when it comes to climate. Because this isn’t an on-off switch. The future is about a spectrum of possibilities. Our job is: where are we steering the ship?”**

REPRESENTATIVE ALEXANDRIA OCASIO-CORTEZ, *TO THE END*





## ABOUT THE FILM

*To the End* is the story of four visionary young women of color who are leading the fight for a Green New Deal—a bold and ambitious plan to stop the climate crisis and make racial and economic justice part of the solution.

The film's high-profile protagonists—congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, activist leader Varshini Prakash (Sunrise Movement), political strategist Alexandra Rojas (Justice Democrats), and climate policy writer Rhiana Gunn-Wright—are each grappling with new challenges of leadership and power in the face of cynicism and uncertainty. Over four volatile years of crisis and upheaval, from street protests to the halls of Congress, these bold leaders fight to shift the narrative around climate, revealing the crisis as an opportunity to build a better society. Including up-to-the-minute footage that culminates in 2022's landmark climate bill, *To the End* lifts the veil on the battle for the future of our world, and gives audiences a front seat view of history in the making.

# LETTER FROM THE FILMMAKER

Our work on *To the End* began when the UN's 2018 report on climate change declared that the barrier to avoiding climate catastrophe is not technology or finance, but political will. Since then, we have captured a story that is both intimate and epic as our four remarkable protagonists forge a path of determination, creativity, and strength in the face of powerful opposition. As their work leads directly to the United States making the largest climate investment in history, the film offers credible inspiration in this age of anxiety.

*To the End* is about finding hope in dark times and taking action to push the horizons of political possibility. The film frames our protagonists' fight for a just and sustainable future as a coming-of-age story of courageous young women confronting multiple dystopian dimensions—climate disaster itself, the corporate media, and the Kafkaesque world of Washington politics. With a gripping cinematic narrative, the film offers both a unique document of a pivotal chapter in American history and an opportunity for viewers to imagine themselves in new roles as part of changing the future.

—Rachel Lears, Director

## USING THIS GUIDE

This Campus and Community Discussion Guide offers background materials and tailored discussion questions to assist with teaching the film in a classroom setting and leading discussions at community and campus screenings.

In *To the End*, four ideas emerge as fundamental to making political change happen—the nuances of movement strategy, the necessity of historical perspective, knowing how politics work, and effectively using the tools of communication. Exploring these ideas in depth provides a chance for students and communities to learn to exercise their political agency through a more informed lens.

This guide uses the documentary as a shared entry point to approach ideas, dialogue, and learning. Each section offers a brief overview of the topic, questions for discussion, **key terms in bold**, and links to resources for learning more. **The intention is not that all of these topics or questions would be discussed in a single sitting, but that event leaders and educators may choose which sections will serve best to spark conversation for their group.**





# PRE-SCREENING RESOURCES

# FILM PROTAGONISTS



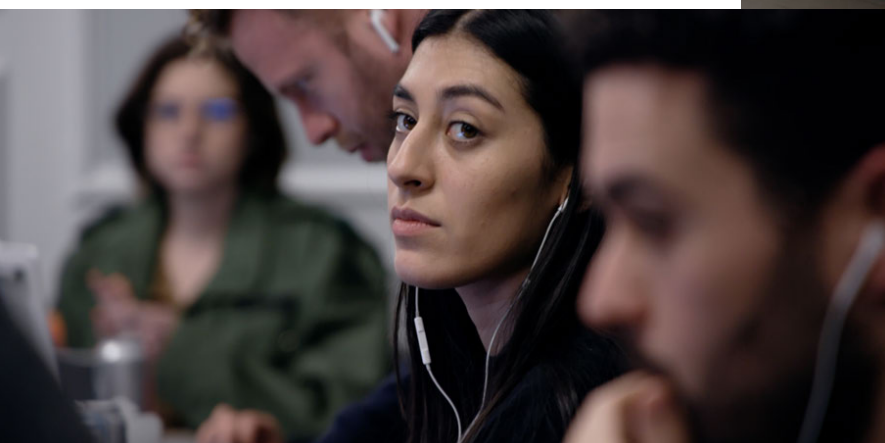
## **Varshini Prakash**

Varshini Prakash grew up outside Boston, the daughter of immigrants from Southern India. Her career in organizing around climate change issues began during her college years at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, where she led a fossil fuel divestment campaign. The university eventually became the first large public university to divest from fossil fuels. In 2017, she co-founded the [Sunrise Movement](#), a youth-led organization dedicated to building a movement to address climate change. As the 25-year-old Executive Director of Sunrise, she led the 2018 sit-in at Rep. Nancy Pelosi's office, which helped catapult the Green New Deal to public consciousness. In 2020, she sat on the Biden-Sanders Unity Task Force, helping to shape climate policy for the incoming administration.



## **Alexandra Rojas**

Alexandra Rojas grew up near Hartford, Connecticut, in a Colombian and Peruvian immigrant family. In 2016, she left college to intern on the Bernie Sanders presidential campaign. By 2018, at the age of 23, she had become the Executive Director of [Justice Democrats](#), a group that recruits and trains primary challengers—often young, working-class people of color—to unseat less progressive incumbents. Justice Democrats' mission is to elect representatives “who resemble the demographics of their districts, who reject corporate donations and embrace an uncompromisingly progressive platform that includes supporting Medicare for All, the Green New Deal, and criminal justice reform.” In 2018, they helped elect what's now known as the Squad: Reps. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Ilhan Omar, Rashida Tlaib, and Ayanna Pressley. With each new election cycle, Alexandra works to expand progressive power in Congress.







### **Rhiana Gunn-Wright**

Rhiana Gunn-Wright grew up in the South Side Chicago neighborhood of Englewood, where asthma rates are higher than average due to proximity to pollution. She majored in African-American studies at Yale University and later attended Oxford as a Rhodes scholar, where she studied social policy. In 2018, at the age of 30, she worked as policy director for Abdul El-Sayed's Michigan gubernatorial campaign and soon after joined New Consensus, a think tank dedicated to developing policy for the Green New Deal. Today she is Director of Climate Policy at the [Roosevelt Institute](#) and leads the progressive think tank's research at the intersection of climate policy, public investment, racial equity, and public power. Rhiana's young son serves as a motivation for her vision of a just and equitable society.



### **Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez**

Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez grew up in the Bronx and Westchester, New York, in a working-class Puerto Rican family. In 2018, months after quitting her day job bartending, she defeated the second most powerful Democrat in the House of Representatives in a shocking primary upset. Catapulted to international celebrity status, she was sworn in as the youngest woman and youngest Latinx person ever to serve in Congress (a story captured in Rachel Lears' prior film *Knock Down the House*). Rep. Ocasio-Cortez's first piece of legislation was the Green New Deal resolution, which envisions a 10-year national mobilization, akin to FDR's New Deal, that would put millions to work repairing the nation's infrastructure, reducing air and water pollution, and fighting the intertwined economic, social, racial, and climate crises crippling the country. A master of social media storytelling and sparring, Rep. Ocasio-Cortez (now known far and wide as AOC) has become the most public face of the Green New Deal—an inspiration to many and a lightning rod for attacks from the political right.







# WHAT IS THE GREEN NEW DEAL?

In October 2018, the [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change \(IPCC\)](#) issued a [special report](#) stating that global temperatures must not climb more than 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrialized levels to avoid the most severe impacts of a changing climate.

This will require global reductions in greenhouse gas emissions from human sources of 40 to 60 percent by 2030, net-zero global emissions by 2050, and a rapid and drastic transformation of the global economy. In 2019, in response to the urgency of the IPCC report, newly elected representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez attended a Sunrise Movement sit-in in the office of Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, demanding bold action on climate. Soon afterwards, AOC and veteran Senator Edward Markey (D-MA) introduced a [resolution](#) (a congressional statement of intent) to pursue a Green New Deal.

“THE GREEN NEW DEAL IS THE ONLY PLAN THAT MEETS THE SCALE, SPEED AND SCOPE THAT SCIENCE SAYS WE NEED TO MITIGATE THE CLIMATE CRISIS.”

RHIANNA GUNN-WRIGHT, *TO THE END*

The Green New Deal resolution laid out an overarching vision and policy agenda to shift the country away from fossil fuels, create millions of new jobs, and mitigate the worst effects of climate change while expanding the social safety net in order to build a more equitable and resilient society. It was not intended to be a single bill but a comprehensive framework requiring partnerships, policy, and legislation across the public and private sectors—in areas like transportation, buildings, agriculture, and industry—to carry out the changes that climate scientists call for. Importantly, the Green New Deal’s **intersectional** approach proposes interconnected solutions to the climate crisis and economic and racial inequality because the economic systems that undergird all these issues cannot be disentangled. Moreover, because socioeconomic inequality leads to instability, making society more equitable in the process of decarbonization will help ensure resilience and stability through the economic transition away from fossil fuels and any future climate disasters that occur.

The Green New Deal pays special attention to “frontline and vulnerable communities”—often low-income and/or BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of color) populations—that are disproportionately affected by climate change and pollution. The plan seeks to correct historical inequities and improve overall health by securing clean water, clean air, nutritious food, jobs, housing, and quality health care for all. It also promises to clean up existing contaminated and hazardous waste sites that are sources of pollution and work with communities to identify areas and projects that would be most beneficial to them. Last, the Green New Deal promises a “just transition” for fossil fuel workers, offering them the support they need to transition to new jobs in renewable energy and other green sectors.



## LEARN MORE

- >> Read the New Consensus [Brief](#) on the Green New Deal (2 pages)
- >> Read the New Consensus [Overview](#) on the Green New Deal by Rhiana Gunn-Wright and Robert Hockett: “The Green New Deal: Mobilizing for a Just, Prosperous, and Sustainable Economy” (13 pages)
- >> Read about The Roosevelt Institute and its work on the Green New Deal [here](#)
- >> Watch “[A Message From the Future with Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez](#)” (7 minutes) and “[A Message From the Future II: The Years of Repair](#)” (9 minutes) presented by The Intercept and Naomi Klein.







# TALKING ABOUT THE CLIMATE CRISIS



**Welcome your group:** At the start of any screening event, introduce yourself and explain why you are engaging in this conversation. Your personal story and commitment are an immediate touchpoint for building community. Depending upon how much time is available and the size of the group, you may elect to have audience members introduce themselves to the full group or to folks nearby to forge connections and begin to build community.



**Create an Inclusive Space for Multiple Perspectives:** Your conversation may include diverse perspectives and experiences of climate change. Before beginning, be open and clear about the parameters. An inclusive space is based on not interrupting, asking for clarification when uncertain, being attentive and listening actively with eye contact and affirming body language, and practicing the habit of **stepping back** if you are one to speak up readily, or **stepping up** if you are one that usually hangs back and lets others lead the conversation.



**The Climate Crisis Is Now:** We are in a climate emergency, and when you are in an emergency, it's necessary to act in ways that are responsive to the urgency of the moment. An overwhelming majority ([over 99 percent](#)) of climate scientists agree that climate change is real and that human actions are the [leading cause](#). It is irrefutable that extreme weather events—heat waves, fires, and flooding—are occurring more frequently and with greater intensity across the globe, and that the fossil fuel industry, large corporations, transportation, and industrial agriculture are the leading contributors to the release of carbon emissions into our atmosphere.



**Climate Justice Is an Intersectional Civil Rights Issue:** Climate change has profound implications for human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice because crises usually exacerbate existing inequalities. One essential premise to acknowledge in every screening is that, historically, the most underserved—low-income, 65 and older, and BIPOC communities—are the “frontline communities” most vulnerable to the severe effects of climate change. Worldwide, women and girls bear disproportionate effects as well. And, children and young people can also be considered especially vulnerable, as climate change will be a far greater factor in their lives than it has been for previous generations. The concept of **intersectionality** can be helpful for understanding how different kinds of inequality interact and exacerbate one another. (See Justice and Coalition Building reading in the Movement Strategy section for more information and references.)



# GENERAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



## PRE-SCREENING

Before screening *To the End*, consider introducing the documentary by asking several or all of these questions:

- >> Do you have a personal experience with climate change that you would like to share?
- >> How do you think political change occurs in the United States?
- >> What social movements in history, both within and outside of the US, do you feel achieved their goals as movements?
- >> Have you ever participated in a group—political, social, faith-based, neighborhood, etc.—that worked towards changing a policy or an injustice?
- >> What do you know or what have you heard about the Green New Deal?

## POST-SCREENING

Before turning to the section Dive Deep for Courses and Conversations, use these post-screening questions to debrief:

- >> What scene or moment from *To the End* had the most impact on you?
- >> Which of the four protagonists did you most identify with?
- >> What were some of the themes you noticed the film returned to again and again?

Return to the opening quote in *To the End* written by Italian philosopher Antonio Gramsci in the 1930s. “The old world is dying and the new world cannot quite be born. In the meantime, all kinds of dreadful things are happening.”

- >> What do you think the filmmakers were suggesting?
- >> What meaning(s) does the title *To the End* evoke for you?

For briefer or more general discussions, or to kick off a deeper dive, consider these essential questions that the film raises (all topics are discussed in more detail further in the guide):

- >> How can grassroots organizing and electoral politics function together to make change happen?
- >> What strategies and tactics can social movements use to create political will for policy change?
- >> How are equity and justice connected to the climate crisis, and to climate solutions?
- >> How does history inform and shape the development of current policy proposals?
- >> How can collective action counteract climate despair and cynicism?
- >> How are corporate interests motivated to perpetuate climate misinformation?
- >> What can I/ you/ we do to help address the climate crisis? Feel free to add a call to action, or refer to the Resources for Taking Action section at the end of this guide.



# **DIVE DEEP FOR COURSES AND CONVERSATIONS**





# MOVEMENT STRATEGY

## INDIVIDUAL V. COLLECTIVE ACTION

Many Americans still think the best way to make a difference in terms of climate is through individual consumer choices, like buying an electric vehicle. But absent rapid changes in government policy, this sort of individual lifestyle choice, even if it were within financial reach, won't accomplish change in the timeframe scientists say is necessary.

As climate activist and author Bill McKibben explains in a [NY Times](#) podcast:

“The most important thing an individual can do to work for climate justice is to act a little less as an individual and join together with others in movements that are large enough to make big changes on the political, economic, and social spheres.”

“WHEN I JOINED A MOVEMENT, IT WAS LIKE THE FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE THAT I DIDN'T FEEL ALONE.”

VARSHINI PRAKASH, *TO THE END*

*To the End* makes the case that committed people, working collectively in movements, really can alter the course of history. It's not just a selfless act; a 2022 study by the [Yale School of Public Health](#) showed that participating in collective action alleviates climate anxiety, particularly for young people.



- >> Why do you think joining the climate movement might be a better strategy for dealing with climate anxiety than trying to avoid thinking about the climate crisis?
- >> What are some ways that thinking about climate change exclusively in terms of individual consumer choices and lifestyle change might actually benefit the fossil fuel industry?

## POLITICAL WILL AND THE ROLE OF MOVEMENTS

**“JUST BECAUSE SOMETHING CAUSES PAIN, THAT DOESN'T MEAN THAT IT IS CONSIDERED A PROBLEM THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS TO ACT ON.”**

**RHIANA GUNN-WRIGHT, *TO THE END***

**“THE BOTTOM LINE IS IT'S GOING TO TAKE POLITICAL COURAGE, POLITICAL WILL IN ORDER TO GET SOMETHING DONE, AND THAT DOESN'T EXIST IN POLITICS. IT JUST DOESN'T.”**

**EXXONMOBIL LOBBYIST KEITH MCCOY, *TO THE END***

**“YOU KNOW HOW THIS STORY GOES, RIGHT? BIDEN DIDN'T JUST DECIDE OVERNIGHT TO CARE ABOUT THE CLIMATE CRISIS, RIGHT? YOU DID THAT, WE DID THAT, COLLECTIVELY.”**

**VARSHINI PRAKASH, *TO THE END***





The UN scientists behind the 2018 IPCC report state that the world already has the knowledge, money, and technology to cut carbon emissions in half by 2030. The only thing lacking is **political will**. Political will can be defined as “the extent of committed support among key decision makers for a particular policy solution to a particular problem.”

*To the End* suggests that one of the roles of movements is to create political will where it doesn't yet exist. By pushing a vision of bold solutions that actually match the scale of the problems they set out to solve, movements expand the boundaries of what's considered politically possible. Even when they fall short of their sweeping goals, movements' bold demands open up space for more modest “pragmatic” changes that would not have happened otherwise. As Varshini Prakash says after the passage of the flawed yet historic Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), “Winning is never black and white. But this would have been impossible to imagine even five years ago. We needed the fight for the Green New Deal to get to this moment.”

- What kind of political will for climate action do you think there was in the US in 2018, when the film begins? What kind of political will exists by the end of the film?
- After watching *To the End*, do you agree with Varshini that the IRA would not have passed without the fight for the Green New Deal? What are your reasons?
- Besides the activism of the climate movement, what other factors might have contributed to a change in political will for climate action over the timeframe of the film (2018–2022)?
- What factors do you think might contribute to building political will for more drastic climate policy in the future?



# INSIDE-OUTSIDE STRATEGY

## Strategies and tactics

**Strategy** can be defined as a plan of action designed to achieve a long-term or overall aim. **Tactics** are short-term steps or specific actions toward a larger goal (for example, picketing a building, phone banking for a political candidate, or appearing on TV to promote a message).

In order to create political will for climate action, the protagonists of *To the End* adopt an **inside-outside strategy**, an approach that involves applying strategic pressure from outside powerful institutions (in this case, the US government and Democratic Party), while also working for change from within them:

- >> Varshini Prakash and the Sunrise Movement work on the outside in the grassroots activism space, organizing and training young people and pressuring elected leaders through protests and direct action like the sit-in held in Nancy Pelosi's office in *To the End*.
- >> AOC works inside the government, representing New York's 14th District in the House of Representatives and navigating a maze of lobbyist influence and political deal-making. She works closely with the other members of "the Squad" (the group of closely aligned members of Congress), as well as with the broader Congressional Progressive Caucus, to exert pressure on Democratic Party leadership in Congress. In the film, these progressive blocks join with outside activists in their call for major climate legislation.
- >> Rhiana Gunn-Wright and Alexandra Rojas function as intermediaries between the inside and the outside. As a policy writer at a progressive think tank, Gunn-Wright works to get ideas from the outside movement space into government legislation. As Executive Director of Justice Democrats, Rojas works to get people from the outside movement space into the government and into the power structures of the Democratic Party. She also brings an outsider perspective to the mainstream media as a commentator on CNN.

“THE THING THAT WE CANNOT DO THAT I HAVE SEEN PROGRESSIVE MOVEMENTS DO FOR TOO LONG, IS SAY, ‘POLITICAL POWER’S TOO ICKY. IT’S MESSY, IT’S CORRUPTING. LET’S NOT ENGAGE.’ OUR ENEMY, YOU BETTER BELIEVE, IS FIGURING OUT THEIR POLITICAL STRATEGY EVERY SECOND OF EVERY DAY AND POURING BILLIONS OF DOLLARS INTO MAKING IT HAPPEN.”

VARSHINI PRAKASH, *TO THE END*

“SOMETIMES I FEEL LIKE MY JOB IS TO GET MY HANDS DIRTY, SO THAT COMMUNITY ORGANIZERS AND ACTIVISTS DON’T HAVE TO.”

REP. ALEXANDRIA OCASIO-CORTEZ, *TO THE END*



When the inside-outside strategy starts to succeed, it can be disorienting for those accustomed to agitating from outside centers of power. In his [8 Stages of Successful Social Movements](#), social change activist Bill Moyer observed that social movements are often stuck by burnout and a sense of powerlessness at the very moment that their message is beginning to go mainstream and the powerful are starting to pay attention.

- >> What strategies and tactics do the protagonists of *To the End* use to pressure government from the outside?
- >> What strategies and tactics do they use to bring about change from the inside?
- >> What strategies and tactics do they use to bring people and ideas from the outside into the inside?
- >> Can you think of other examples in history where social movements worked together with allies inside government in an inside-outside strategy to create change?
- >> Where in the film did you observe people in the climate movement feeling burnout, despair, and powerlessness? Why do you think they felt this way? What would you say to them to help encourage them to continue?



## LEARN MORE

- >> Read [Bill Moyer's Movement Action Plan](#).



## JUSTICE AND COALITION BUILDING

“THE CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENTAL PIECE IN THE GREEN NEW DEAL IS WHAT WE HAVE TO DO. THE INEQUALITY AND THE JUSTICE PIECE IS HOW WE NEED TO DO IT. THAT IS WHAT ACTUALLY MAKES IT SUSTAINABLE.”

REP. ALEXANDRIA OCASIO-CORTEZ, *TO THE END*

“IF WE’RE ACTUALLY GOING TO BUILD A POLICY THAT WORKS FOR EVERYONE, WE NEED TO GET A SLICE OF EVERYONE IN THE ROOM, AND THAT IS ACTUALLY INCREDIBLY DIFFICULT. YOU MIGHT BE TRYING TO GET FOLKS TO WORK TOGETHER WHO HAVE HAD ACTIVE BEEF FOR YEARS.”

RHIANA GUNN-WRIGHT, *TO THE END*

In *To the End*, Rhiana Gunn-Wright works to bring people together from different environmentalist and movement perspectives to collaborate on Green New Deal policy. She is aware of existing tensions within the larger movement.

**Climate justice** activists seek to highlight that the consequences of climate change do not affect everyone equally, and will disproportionately fall upon populations in **frontline communities**, i.e. low-income, BIPOC communities, and people in the Global South. They fight to ensure that decarbonization and climate mitigation are applied in a way that directly addresses these inequities.

Climate justice is connected to the **environmental justice** movement, which fights **environmental racism** and the poisoning of under-resourced communities with toxic pollution. The environmental justice movement and the mainstream climate movement both oppose the fossil fuel companies and technologies that are behind most toxic pollution, but environmental justice activists do not support any proposed solutions to climate change (such as carbon capture) that would potentially allow



toxic pollution to continue harming people. Both climate justice and environmental justice activists have been critical of the well-funded mainstream environmental movement, which has its roots in a largely white and affluent conservation tradition and has a poor record historically on issues of race and justice.

We see these tensions at play at Gunn-Wright's conference. Climate justice and environmental justice activists express doubt about carbon capture technology and raise concerns about the process of collaboration. When the white male head of an environmental NGO argues that the Green New Deal is not going to "put a complete end to white supremacy" but must focus "first and foremost on reducing global warming," a Puerto Rican climate justice activist says, "We have to look at the Black, white, and brown issue. And I'm not looking for a debate with regard to that."

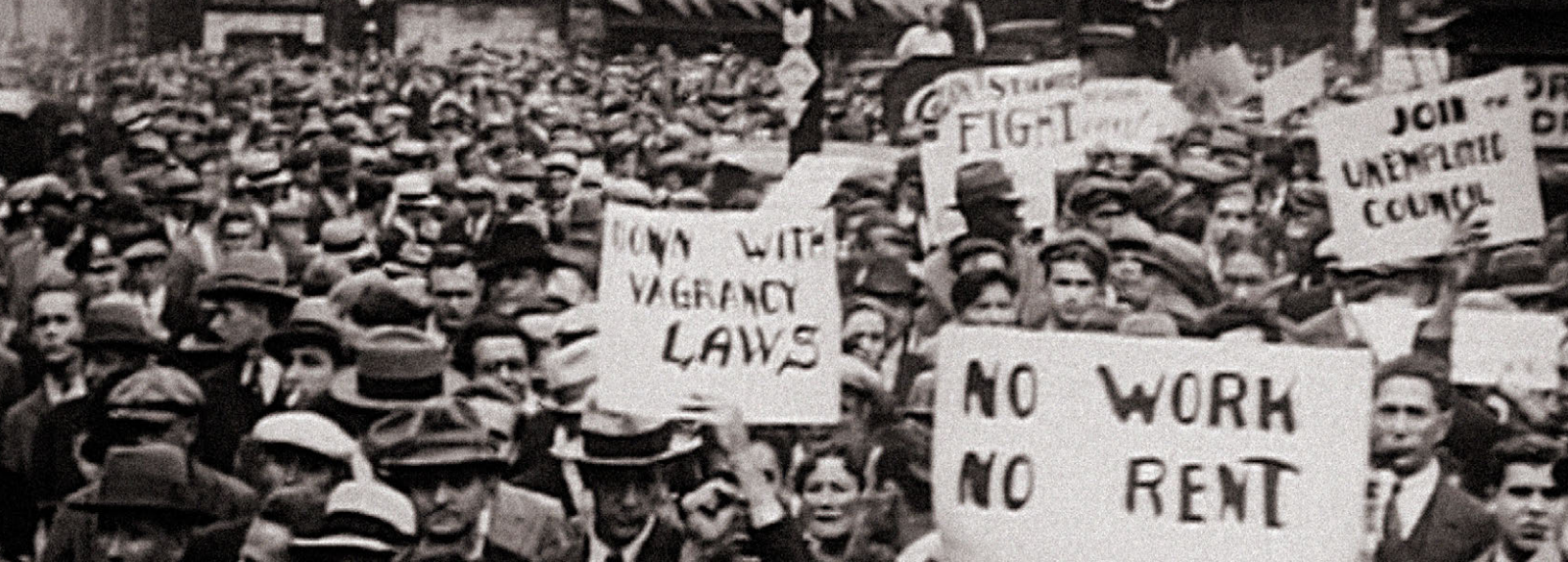
- >> Why do you think this activist believes it's important to talk about race in the context of climate change?
- >> What are some arguments for tying climate change policy to economic, social, and racial justice in the United States?
- >> Climate change is not the only pressing global crisis that humanity faces. Income and wealth inequality have been rising steeply around the world [since the 1980s](#), threatening social stability. In what ways is the global inequality crisis connected to the climate crisis?
- >> What are some other scenes where the film addresses environmental justice?
- >> How does the film connect environmental justice to the fight to stop climate change?
- >> What do you think are the largest obstacles for different constituents to overcome in order to work together?
- >> What recommendations from your point of view and lived experience would you bring to the table to move groups forward?



## LEARN MORE

- >> ["Why Climate Change is an Environmental Justice Issue," Columbia University](#)
- >> ["Climate Change and Environmental Justice: A Conversation with Dr. Robert Bullard," 2016](#)
- >> ["Climate Change and Social Vulnerability in the United States: A Focus on Six Impacts," EPA](#)
- >> ["Explainer: How gender inequality and climate change are interconnected," UNwomen.org](#)





# HISTORY

## BEING PART OF HISTORY

The protagonists in *To the End* see their role historically and appeal to history to gain perspective and insight. Sunrise Movement takes inspiration and borrows strategy, tactics, and traditions from the Civil Rights Movement (we see them singing an old spiritual in one of the film's early scenes) and from groups like [ACT UP](#), which used disruptive direct action and creative protest to draw attention to the late 1980s AIDS crisis. Justice Democrats takes inspiration from the Radical Republicans of the 19th century who helped push the more moderate members of their party (including President Lincoln) to take bolder action on slavery. All of the film's protagonists find strength in the stories of their ancestors and personal heroes from the past. And the Green New Deal itself owes much, including its name, to the New Deal of the 1930s.

“YOU LEARN ABOUT THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT, YOU LEARN ABOUT THESE MOMENTS OF TUMULT AND I REMEMBER THINKING, WHAT WOULD I HAVE DONE? WHO WOULD I HAVE BEEN? AND IT FEELS WEIRD TO BE LIKE, OH WE’RE DEFINITELY IN THAT MOMENT RIGHT NOW.”

RHIANA GUNN-WRIGHT, *TO THE END*



- Do you ever take inspiration from figures from the past or particular moments in history?
- How does studying history help us to understand the problems of the present and envision changes in the future?



## HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE AND THE FDR ERA



AMERICA HAS FACED THREATS BEFORE AND COME OUT STRONGER. AND IF WE COULD DO IT WITH THE GREAT DEPRESSION, IF WE COULD DO IT WITH WORLD WAR II, WE COULD DO IT WITH THE CLIMATE CRISIS.”

VARSHINI PRAKASH, *TO THE END*

In 1929, a stock market crash unleashed the worst economic crisis in US history. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt assumed office in 1933 on a promise to fulfill “a new deal for the American people” and in his first inaugural address he promised to “wage a war against the emergency.” Over the next decade, FDR and Congress passed laws to regulate banks, increase employment, support the poor and elderly, and empower workers to organize unions. They created programs like the Civilian Conservation Corps, which put young people to work improving America’s parks; the Works Progress Administration, which built public works and sponsored projects in the arts; and the Social Security Administration, which continues to support seniors and disabled Americans. These New Deal policies and programs did not suddenly arise within the Roosevelt administration, but came out of demands made for years by organized labor, women’s groups, and left-wing social movements.

When the US entered World War II, FDR’s government initiated a massive expansion of government spending and a rapid transformation of the country’s industries and economy to build enough aircraft, tanks, guns, and ships to defeat the Axis powers. This public-private mobilization, in which government investment allowed industry to adapt rapidly without taking on financial risk, accelerated technological innovation and productivity growth. Far from forcing Americans to sacrifice, as many expected, the massive mobilization for World War II grew the economy and lifted the country out of the Depression.

Together, the New Deal and World War II policies helped build a strong middle class and ushered in decades of prosperity, suggesting that a policy like the Green New Deal could yield similar benefits. But FDR’s policies disproportionately benefited white male workers. Agricultural and domestic workers (primarily Black, Hispanic, and female) were left out of the New Deal’s labor protections. And New Deal era housing policies institutionalized the discriminatory practice of **redlining**, in which neighborhoods with large populations of

minorities or low-income people were classified as “hazardous for investment” and denied subsidized mortgages and other services. These policies laid the foundation for a racial wealth gap that has endured to the present day. As Rhiana Gunn-Wright points out in *To the End*, redlining also made it easier for industry and utility companies to “hide” toxic infrastructure in segregated minority neighborhoods, where its health consequences were easier for white Americans to ignore.



- >> What are some ways that you and your family have benefited and continue to benefit from the policies of the FDR era?
- >> How were the crises of the Great Depression and World War II similar to the climate crisis? How were they different?
- >> What are some of the ways the Green New Deal aims to correct the problems of the original New Deal?

## ALIGNMENTS AND PARADIGM SHIFT

“MY WORST FEAR IS THAT, EVEN AFTER ALL THIS, PEOPLE WON’T BE ABLE TO IMAGINE A DIFFERENT WORLD. THEY’RE TALKING ABOUT DEFICIT NOW—WE CAN’T SPEND THAT MUCH MONEY. BUT THE COST OF NOT DOING SOMETHING IS NOT NOTHING.... WHEN A CHILD LIVES THROUGH POVERTY, THAT HAPPENED. WHEN A PERSON DIES, THAT’S OVER. THAT IS A REAL COST.”

RHIANA GUNN-WRIGHT, *TO THE END*

“MOMENTS OF CRISIS CRACK OPEN THE WINDOW OF POSSIBILITY.”


VARSHINI PRAKASH, *TO THE END*



In a scene in the first act of *To the End*, Sunrise Movement hosts a meeting with Justice Democrats, Rhiana Gunn-Wright, and a member of AOC's staff to discuss strategy and "win conditions" for a Green New Deal, which include, "vast people power, a significant amount of political power. And then an alignment of thousands of groups, think tanks, unions, businesses, and more."

This vision is based on the **alignment** that made the original New Deal possible, when various sectors of society united behind a new **paradigm**, a transformative vision of government intervention in the economy to benefit working people. Arguably, this New Deal alignment lasted until the 1970s, when a series of crises ushered in a new alignment around the **neoliberal**, business-centered policies of Ronald Reagan, which emphasized free trade, deregulated markets, tax cuts (particularly for businesses and the wealthy), and cuts to social spending.

Today the crises of climate change and skyrocketing inequality have called the neoliberal paradigm into question, with challenges emerging from both the right and left. *To the End's* protagonists and their allies are among those seeking to shift away from the neoliberal paradigm. In many ways they want a return to the values of the FDR era, when the government invested heavily in jobs and public works, but they also see the Green New Deal as an opportunity to right the New Deal's wrongs and address enduring injustices and inequities in a targeted way.

- 
- >> What are some moments in history when a crisis led to major political changes or shifts in political alignment?
  - >> To what extent do you think the protagonists of *To the End* succeeded in shifting the paradigm around climate politics over the course of the film?
  - >> In the film, we repeatedly see media pundits and politicians dismiss the investments that the protagonists call for as too costly. Consider the quote above from Rhiana Gunn-Wright about real costs. How do you think a society should decide how the government prioritizes spending?



## LEARN MORE

- >> ["How FDR's New Deal Laid the Groundwork for the Green New Deal—in Good Ways and Bad." \*Time\*, February 8, 2019.](#)
- >> ["The Economy of World War II Proved a Green New Deal is Possible." \*New York Magazine\*, September 24, 2020.](#)
- >> ["Public Spending as the Engine of Growth and Equality: Lessons from the World War II Economy," Roosevelt Institute, September 2020.](#)
- >> Read commentary on Justice Democrats, ["Are We Entering a New Political Era?" \*The New Yorker\*, May 24, 2021.](#)
- >> Read The Roosevelt Institute's report, ["The Emerging Worldview: How New Progressivism is Moving Beyond Neoliberalism," January 2020.](#)

## TIMELINE OF KEY EVENTS IN *TO THE END*

- October 2018:** Scientists at the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) release a [special report](#) warning that the world has 12 years to limit climate change catastrophe.
- November 2018:** Democrats win control of the House of Representatives. The deadly, climate-fueled Camp Fire destroys Paradise, CA. Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez joins Sunrise Movement activists in a sit-in at the office of future Speaker of the House Rep. Nancy Pelosi demanding bold climate action like a Green New Deal.
- February 2019:** AOC and Sen. Ed Markey introduce the Green New Deal resolution.
- Early 2019:** The Green New Deal is adopted by high profile Democratic presidential candidates but receives negative coverage on right wing media. Sunrise Movement expands rapidly, culminating their nationwide tour with a high-profile DC event in May 2019.
- September 2019:** Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg arrives in New York City to lead the youth climate strike. Sunrise Movement participates.
- 2019-2020:** In the Democratic presidential primary, Rhiana endorses Elizabeth Warren, while Sunrise, AOC, and (eventually) Justice Democrats endorse Bernie Sanders. All are critical of Joe Biden's initial climate plan.
- March 2020:** Justice Democrat Jessica Cisneros loses to fossil fuel-backed incumbent Rep. Henry Cuellar in a close primary. COVID-19 lockdowns begin in the US.
- April 2020:** Joe Biden defeats Bernie Sanders and becomes the Democratic presidential nominee.
- Summer 2020:** Multiple climate-related disasters coincide with a national racial reckoning following the police killing of George Floyd. Justice Democrats works with Sunrise Movement to elect Cori Bush and Jamaal Bowman. Sanders appoints Varshini Prakash and AOC to Biden's climate task force.



**June 2021:** The BIF passes the Senate. Sunrise Movement activists blockade the White House, demanding climate action and urging House progressives to “hold the line” and refuse to pass BIF alone.

**May 2021:** Sunrise Movement launches treks across climate-affected regions to call attention to the need for urgent climate action.

**Spring 2021:** Biden's agenda is split into two tracks:

>> The [Bipartisan Infrastructure Framework \(BIF\)](#) developed by Senator Joe Manchin and other moderate senators, which contains some climate adaptation and resiliency spending but would do little to reduce fossil fuel emissions.

>> The [Build Back Better Act \(BBB\)](#) a reconciliation bill with historic amounts of climate mitigation and social spending.

The House Congressional Progressive Caucus refuses to back the BIF unless Joe Manchin and the Senate will also back the BBB, leading to a stalemate.

**January 2021:** President Biden is inaugurated. He rejoins the Paris Agreement and revokes the Keystone XL pipeline's federal permit.

**November 2020:** Joe Biden narrowly defeats Donald Trump, with help from youth and BIPOC voters, including Sunrise Movement, in key states.



## TIMELINE OF KEY EVENTS IN *TO THE END* (CON'T)



- **August–October 2021:** On several separate occasions, moderate Democrats in the House attempt to force a vote on BIF. The Congressional Progressive Caucus refuses to vote for BIF unless BBB is voted on at the same time.
- **October 2021:** With the BBB still stalled in Congress, frustrated Sunrise Movement activists launch a hunger strike outside the White House. Congress calls oil company CEOs to testify in a hearing on fossil fuel misinformation.
- **November 2021:** Sunrise Movement activists confront Sen. Manchin in a parking garage. After President Biden calls upon the House to pass BIF and promises to secure the votes needed for BBB in the Senate, House Democrats vote to pass the Senate's BIF. Rep. AOC and the rest of the Squad vote against it. The House passes BBB, but it remains stalled in the Senate.



- **December 2021:** After months of negotiations and despite major concessions, Sen. Manchin declares on Fox News that he can no longer support the BBB. The bill is declared dead.
- **July–August 2022:** Sen. Manchin and Sen. Chuck Schumer announce a surprise deal on a slimmed-down version of BBB. Weeks later, President Biden signs [The Inflation Reduction Act](#) into law. The act is missing much of the BBB's social spending and contains concessions to the fossil fuel industry to ensure Manchin's support. It is nonetheless the largest investment to fight the climate crisis in world history.



## FROM GND TO BBB TO IRA: HOW THE SAUSAGE IS MADE



IT'S HARD TO KNOW WHEN YOU HAVE LEVERAGE AND WHEN YOU DON'T HAVE LEVERAGE. WHEN DO YOU HAVE POWER AND HOW DO YOU BEST USE IT? THAT IS A REALLY TOUGH THING TO FIGURE OUT IN REAL TIME.”

AMIRA HASSAN, POLITICAL DIRECTOR FOR JUSTICE DEMOCRATS, *TO THE END*

*To the End* follows the Green New Deal as it moves from a proposed idea to an influence on real-world legislation. On the way it provides some insight into the legislative process and how power works in Washington, DC.

The Green New Deal first caught the nation's attention when it was introduced as a [resolution \(H.R. 109\)](#) in 2019 by AOC and Sen. Ed Markey (D-MA). A resolution is different from a [bill](#), a proposed law. Instead it functions as a statement of intent, used to build support for policies in Congress. In the four years following the first Green New Deal resolution, lawmakers in the House and Senate have introduced dozens of Green New Deal-related bills like the [Green New Deal for Cities](#), the [Green New Deal for Public Housing](#), the [Green New Deal for Public Schools](#), and the [Civilian Climate Corps](#).

Though Joe Biden did not fully embrace the Green New Deal when he was a candidate for president, his team met with Varshini Prakash, AOC, and other Green New Deal proponents, and his subsequent climate proposals incorporated some of the Green New Deal's framing. In 2020, Democrats maintained a narrow control of the House of Representatives and took control of the 50-50 Senate through a single tie-breaking vote from Vice President Kamala Harris. In this tricky political landscape, President Biden's climate proposals were split into two separate bills: the [Bipartisan Infrastructure Framework \(BIF\)](#) and the [Build Back Better Act \(BBB\)](#).

A Senate rule called the [filibuster](#) gives the minority party the power to effectively block any bill with less than a two-thirds majority from becoming law, meaning the Democrats needed to get 10 Republican senators on board to pass legislation. President Biden worked with Sen. Joe Manchin and other moderates from both parties on the BIF, a bill with enough Republican support to pass the Senate. It included some climate resiliency spending, but would do little to drive down emissions, and many of its provisions benefited fossil fuel companies. Environmental groups pointed out that on its own, the BIF would be a [net negative for the climate](#).



Other Democratic priorities, including spending for climate mitigation and emissions reductions, were relegated to the BBB, a bill created using a special congressional budget process called **reconciliation**. Reconciliation allows the Senate to bypass the filibuster and pass legislation with a simple 51-vote majority, but the legislation must be strictly budget related, i.e., concerning government spending and taxes. Because Republicans were united in their opposition to the big climate and social spending in the BBB, Democratic leadership needed every Senate Democrat to vote for it, and Manchin posed the biggest threat to the agenda. In an attempt to force his hand, the House Progressive Caucus (with strong urging from AOC and the Squad) refused to pass the BIF in the House, promising to “hold the line” until the Senate also passed the BBB.

Ultimately, after months of stalemate and negotiations, House Democrats (with the notable exception of the Squad) passed the BIF without a guarantee that the BBB would pass the Senate. After the BBB passed the House, Manchin declared that he could not support any version of it, and the legislation was pronounced dead.

Eight months later, Senate Democrats announced they had reached a deal with Manchin on a new bill that would salvage some of the priorities from Build Back Better, including strong investments in renewable energy. The [Inflation Reduction Act \(IRA\)](#) was signed into law on August 16, 2022, by President Biden. In addition to tax reform and health care spending, the IRA allocates \$369 billion across many programs to address the climate crisis including direct consumer incentives to buy energy-efficient appliances, electric vehicle tax breaks, and domestic manufacturing of batteries and solar panels. These combined investments aim to put the US on the path to reducing carbon emissions by 40 percent by 2030. In addition, the bill makes significant investments in environmental justice, including pollution reduction and other policies designed to benefit frontline communities, although some [observers](#) have called these investments inadequate. The IRA also has been [criticized](#) by climate groups and the environmental justice community as opening the door to further expansion of fossil fuel development in the Gulf Coast region, Appalachia, and elsewhere around the United States—concessions to the industry that were added to win Manchin’s support.





- >> Why do you think Biden chose to consult with Varshini Prakash, AOC, and other Sanders supporters about climate policy after Sanders dropped out of the race?
- >> In the film AOC says, “Conservative Democrats and Republicans are not used to the progressive flank having any power. They have been thrown for a loop, because we are making some moves.” Why do you think the House progressives had more power in this moment than they’d had before?
- >> The Congressional Progressive Caucus strategy of “holding the line” and withholding their vote for the BIF succeeded in keeping climate spending in BBB, but ultimately failed to get Manchin to vote for the BBB. What worked and what didn’t about this strategy, and why?
- >> Proponents of the Green New Deal inside and outside Congress ultimately had enough power to significantly push legislation towards the aims of the Green New Deal, but not enough power to achieve more ambitious goals. What would need to happen in order for larger scale legislation to have the support needed to pass?

## Bipartisan or Partisan: Which Is a Better Path to Change?

In *To the End*, we see commentators in the media expressing lots of excitement about the bipartisanship of the BIF, but is bipartisan compromise really the best way to affect change? Some evidence suggests that bipartisan legislation tends to uphold the status quo or advance incremental change, while the most transformative laws that benefit working people are often passed along partisan lines. For this reason (and because a strong majority of elected officials in the Republican Party oppose the scientific consensus on climate), the protagonists of the film focus on getting one party to embrace their vision, then helping that party take over the presidency and Congress.

Examples of legislation that passed along entirely partisan lines:

- >> The 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments, abolishing slavery and granting civil and voting rights for African Americans
- >> Social Security
- >> Medicare

Examples of policies with strong bipartisan support:

- >> The Chinese-Exclusion Act of 1882
- >> Sending Japanese-Americans to internment camps during WWII
- >> The 1964 escalation of the Vietnam War
- >> The 2001 Patriot Act and Iraq War

Read [Five Myths About Bipartisanship](#), *The Washington Post*, January 17, 2020





## CORPORATE POWER IN WASHINGTON

One topic that comes up repeatedly in *To the End* is the influence of corporate spending and lobbyists on government policy. Special interests like the fossil fuel industry pay for “greenwashing” PR campaigns to create the appearance that they have the problem under control, fund think tanks to write corporate-friendly policy, make donations to political campaigns, and employ lobbyists to maintain close relationships with elected leaders. Senator Joe Manchin is identified in *To the End* as Congress’s top recipient of campaign donations from the oil and natural gas industries, and we hear ExxonMobil lobbyist Keith McCoy saying that he talks to Manchin’s office every week.

“IT’S REALLY WEIRD HOW WASHINGTON, DC, WORKS. THERE IS SO MUCH MONEY AND THERE IS SO MUCH INERTIA ON THE SIDE OF CORPORATE POWER. WHAT’S SO ALIENATING ABOUT IT IS THAT IT FEELS LIKE EVERYONE’S BOUGHT IN.”

REP. ALEXANDRIA OCASIO-CORTEZ,  
*TO THE END*

Toward the end of the film, we watch a Congressional hearing in which industry leaders from ExxonMobil, Chevron, Shell, and BP refuse to disavow their relationship with the American Petroleum Institute (API), a lobbying group funded by the fossil fuel industry that has been largely dedicated to circulating misinformation on climate change and blocking, stalling, or weakening environmental legislation. We see a number of Republican lawmakers passionately defend the CEOs against progressive Democrats who are questioning them. Describing fossil fuels, the Republican lawmakers, the CEOs, and the head of API repeat the words “reliable” and “affordable.” Later, when Sen. Manchin is asked if his objections to the BBB are about climate and the environment, he says, “The main thing that we need is dependability, reliability and affordability.”



- >> What point do you think the film is making by drawing attention to these repeated words?
- >> What contrast did you notice in the film between the tone and messaging of the oil company CEOs and of the Republican members of Congress who spoke to defend them? What do you think explains this contrast?
- >> What strategies and tactics did you see the fossil fuel industry use in *To the End*, and how were they successful or unsuccessful?



## LEARN MORE

- >> Visit the nonpartisan, nonprofit [Open Secrets](#) to track money in politics and its effects on policy in the U.S.
- >> Read *The Top 10 Things Every Voter Should Know About Money-In-Politics* from [OpenSecrets.org](#)





# COMMUNICATION, MESSAGING, AND MEDIA

## THE SIX AMERICAS

A common assumption about climate change communication is that the main goal should be to change the minds of skeptics and climate deniers. But recent communication research shows that that's not the best use of our time. The [Yale Program on Climate Change Communications](#) has identified [Six Americas](#) representing different audiences and how they understand and respond to climate change. A large majority of the American public, 58 percent, is either "alarmed" or "concerned" about climate change, and only 9 percent are dismissive of the threats.

As physician and science communicator Dr. Laalitha Surapaneni [writes](#): "We need to shift our way of approaching climate communication from changing minds to giving people already on board concrete tasks on which to take action."

An excellent way to visualize this is an advocacy tool called "[Spectrum of Allies](#)." This tool is based on the premise that the most effective way to create social change is not to convert vehement opponents, but to get passive supporters or neutral people to actively support your cause.

- How does the organizing and advocacy featured in *To the End* reflect these communication strategies?
- To many, the terms "climate change" and "global warming" conjure images of melting ice caps and threatened polar bears. Why do you think the Green New Deal frames its messaging around jobs and justice instead of more traditional environmental appeals involving the natural world?

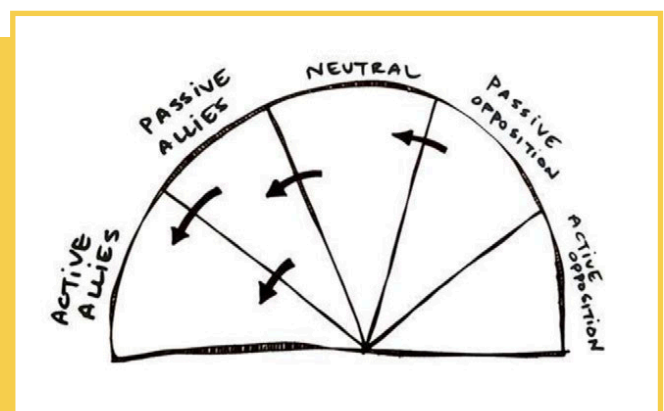
“WE ARE PAST THE TIME FOR  
CONVINCING. IT’S TIME TO ACT.”

DR. LAALITHA SURAPANENI, 2019

## SIX AMERICAS



## SPECTRUM OF ALLIES<sup>8</sup>



## MAINSTREAM MEDIA MESSAGING

“WHEN I WAS YOUNGER, I REMEMBER JUST LIKE HATING THE NEWS. IT JUST GAVE ME A VIEW OF THE WORLD THAT EVERYTHING HAPPENING OUTSIDE OF MY LITTLE BUBBLE IS DANGEROUS. IT’S SCARY. IT’S TOO BIG. IT’S OUT OF YOUR CONTROL.”

VARSHINI PRAKASH, *TO THE END*

“THE CNNs, THE MSNBs OF THE WORLD, THE MEDIA IS EXPECTING US TO FAIL.”

ALEXANDRA ROJAS, *TO THE END*

At the start of *To the End*, we hear various alarming reports on climate change from the media. After years of underreporting the problem, the US mainstream media now seems convinced that the earth and human civilization are in imminent danger. Yet when Green New Deal proponents propose a climate plan big enough to accomplish the “rapid, far-reaching, and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society” that UN scientists say are needed to avert the worst of the crisis, we see commentators from the same media companies casting the idea as “very expensive” and “totally impractical!”

Later, when Sunrise Movement activists blockade the White House, Varshini Prakash says the mainstream media “failed to make the connection” between their activism and the shocking global climate disasters happening that week. At the end of the film, when the major climate change legislation passes, many media voices attribute the victory to Democratic leadership and moderates like Sen. Manchin, without mentioning the movement that fought for years to make it a political possibility.



- >> What is the potential effect of media messaging that emphasizes scary stories about climate change but downplays or dismisses solutions and people taking collective action to solve the problem?
- >> Can you think of other moments in history where powerful leaders (often older, white, and male) got credit for changes that wouldn't have happened without youth, women, and BIPOC people pushing from the outside in social movements?
- >> What other examples did you see in the film of the mainstream media being an obstacle to positive action on climate?



## COMBATING CYNICISM

“I THINK THE BIG THING THAT WE’RE UP AGAINST, IN ADDITION TO ALL OF THESE POWERFUL FORCES, FOR OURSELVES AND FOR THE COUNTRY IS CYNICISM.”

ALEXANDRA ROJAS, *TO THE END*

“FIGHTING FOR CHANGE POLITICALLY REQUIRES FAITH. IF WE’RE TRYING TO MAKE A NEW WORLD, IF WE’RE TRYING TO CHANGE OUR FUTURE, WE HAVE TO ACT AS THOUGH THAT FUTURE IS HERE. IN SOME WAYS, LIKE MY MOM USED TO SAY, YOU SPEAK THINGS INTO EXISTENCE.”

REP. ALEXANDRIA OCASIO-CORTEZ, *TO THE END*

“THE THING THAT WE HAVE THAT THEY DON’T, IS FAITH. IS BELIEF THAT IT CAN CHANGE. THE THING THAT WE DECIDED TO DO IS TRY.”

WILL LAWRENCE, *SUNRISE MOVEMENT CO-FOUNDER, TO THE END*

*To the End* sets up a tension between **faith**, which the protagonists struggle to maintain through difficult times, and cynicism, seen in encounters with journalists, media pundits, politicians, and lobbyists. **Cynicism**, the belief that everyone is just in it for themselves or that “nothing ever changes,” is widespread in the world of politics—and often it can seem justified. But this attitude often stops people from believing it’s worthwhile to try to make a difference or get involved in changing the course of history.



- » What events in *To the End* might support or justify a cynical attitude toward politics?
- » What events in *To the End* directly challenge that cynicism?
- » How do you think the protagonists of *To the End* maintain their faith? What keeps them going?



## CLIMATE NARRATIVES: APOCALYPSE OR UTOPIA?

Another tension in the film is between feelings of doom (or fear) and hope. When the film begins in 2018, the messaging about climate change from UN scientists and from activists often takes on an urgency bordering on apocalyptic. Although Green New Deal proponents try to conjure utopian visions and talk about a “hopeful future,” it is clear that they themselves are very anxious about what will happen if they fail. At the Pelosi office sit-in, Varshini Prakash says, her voice shaking, “We have 12 years to radically transform our economy and our society to stop this crisis and protect human civilization as we know it. We’ll talk about it like that because that’s what it is.” Yet by the film’s end, AOC declares, “It’s never too late when it comes to climate.”

For people experiencing climate anxiety and are in need of mental health support the **Climate Psychology Alliance of North America** ([www.climatepsychology.us](http://www.climatepsychology.us)) and the **Climate Psychiatry Alliance of North America** ([www.climatepsychiatry.org](http://www.climatepsychiatry.org)) are two excellent resources to reach out for support.

Part of this shift in tone can be attributed to changes that came to light over the course of the film’s story. In 2019, journalist David Wallace-Wells released “The Uninhabitable Earth” which laid out terrifying scenarios of what could happen if humanity continued along its present course. In 2022, he argued in a piece called “[Beyond Catastrophe](#)” that, though there is no return to climate normalcy at this point, thanks to new modeling and decarbonization efforts already underway—including the story documented in *To the End* of movements influencing policy change in the United States—“worst-case temperature scenarios that recently seemed plausible now look much less so.” He goes on to write:

“Acknowledging that truly apocalyptic warming now looks considerably less likely than it did just a few years ago pulls the future out of the realm of myth and returns it to the plane of history: contested, combative, combining suffering and flourishing.”



- >> How does it make you feel to learn that “truly apocalyptic” global warming looks less likely now than it did a few years ago? Does it make you feel more or less motivated to take action on climate?
- >> What are the pros and cons of warning of apocalyptic doom as a messaging strategy on climate issues?
- >> What are the pros and cons of a messaging strategy that puts forward positive or utopian visions of how climate and social issues could be solved?
- >> How would you choose to talk to people suffering from climate anxiety and feeling powerless in the face of climate change? What messages make you feel more empowered to face the climate crisis and create positive change?



# RESOURCES FOR TAKING ACTION

**“Legislation is one of the most significant vehicles that we have for structural investment and change. It cannot be ignored and without it, we will lose. Without it, we have no hope. The same can be said for peoples’ movements and grassroots organizing, because legislation alone is not going to get us out of this.”**

REP. ALEXANDRIA OCASIO-CORTEZ, UNUSED INTERVIEW CLIP FROM *TO THE END*

Addressing and solving the climate crisis will require all of us to be involved with all available skills, resources, organizing, or creative ideas. This will apply to all levels of power, from the “inside” with legislative action to the “outside” with community-based actions, organizing, and support. Consider supporting and learning more from the partner organizations featured in *To the End*.

**Sunrise Movement** is a youth movement to stop climate change and create millions of good jobs in the process.

- >> Join a local Sunrise Hub near you. Find out where [here](#).
- >> Attend a weekly welcome call, and take part in active Sunrise Movement organizing campaigns. Learn how [here](#).
- >> And if you don’t identify as youth, you can still show up and be part of Sunrise Movement. Learn how [here](#).

**Justice Democrats** is a political action committee dedicated to electing the next generation of Green New Deal champions to Congress all over the country. They work to challenge the power of the fossil fuel industry in government and elect representatives who refuse corporate money. Their sister organization [Movement School](#) is working to cultivate leaders and organizers to fight on behalf of their working class communities by providing tools and resources to advocate for justice, achieve innovative, locally driven solutions to key issues, and mobilize grassroots engagement in the democratic process.

**Roosevelt Institute** is a [think tank](#) and campus network that works to move the country toward a new economy and democracy by the people, for the people. They dig deep into cutting-edge research and policy proposals around climate and economic transformation, race and democracy, and corporate power. If you’re a college student interested in a career in policy, connect with the Roosevelt Network [here](#).

For another great collection of resources check out the [Can You Hear Us?](#) campaign and their great [search feature to find a local organization](#) to connect with in your community.

# GLOSSARY

These definitions are adapted from [Yale Program on Climate Communication](#), [the University of California, Center for Climate Justice](#), [the Climate Portal at MIT](#), [Oxford Languages Dictionaries](#), and [Wikipedia](#).

**Clean energy**, often used interchangeably with **renewable energy**, comes from natural sources or processes that are constantly replenished and do not burn fossil fuels.

**Climate change** is defined as the change in global or regional climate patterns particularly apparent from the mid-to-late 20th century onwards and attributed largely to the increased levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide produced by the use and burning of fossil fuels.

**Climate justice** is the principle that the benefits reaped from activities that cause climate change and the burdens of climate change impacts should be distributed fairly.

**Climate mitigation** is a human intervention to reduce the sources of greenhouse gases.

**Direct action** is the use of strikes, demonstrations, or other public forms of protest rather than negotiation to achieve one's demands.

**Environmental justice** is a social movement to address the unfair exposure of poor and marginalized communities to harm from hazardous waste, resource extraction, and other land uses. The movement has generated hundreds of studies showing that exposure to environmental harm is inequitably distributed.

**Environmental racism** is a form of institutional racism leading to landfills, incinerators, and hazardous waste disposal being disproportionately placed in communities of color.

**Fossil fuels:** Energy that is formed from the remains of plants and animals; oil, natural gas, and coal are all fossil fuels. These resources are finite.

**Greenwashing** is defined as the practice of making a product, policy, or activity appear more environmentally friendly than it really is.

**Intersectionality** is the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.

**Just Transition** represents the transition of fossil fuel-based economies to equitable, regenerative, renewable energy-based systems. A just transition emphasizes employment in renewable energy and other green sectors, sustainable land use practices, and broader political and economic transformations.

**Neoliberalism** is a political approach that favors free-market capitalism, deregulation, and reduction in government spending.

**Paradigm** is a distinct set of concepts and thought patterns, including theories, research methods, and standards for what constitute legitimate contributions to a field.

**Reconciliation** in relation to the legislative process, enables expedited passage of a bill relating to certain matters in the federal budget by a simple majority of votes.

**Resiliency** is the ability to recover from or to adjust to adversity.

# ADDITIONAL READING LIST

## General Books about the Green New Deal

- >> *On Fire: The (Burning) Case for a Green New Deal*, Naomi Klein, 2019
- >> *A Planet to Win: Why We Need a Green New Deal*, Kate Aronoff, Alyssa Battistoni, Daniel Aldana Cohen, and Thea Riofrancos, 2019
- >> *Winning the Green New Deal: Why We Must, How We Can*, Varshini Prakash, Guido Girgenti (eds.), 2020

## Sunrise Movement Reading List on Movements and How Change Happens (2022)

- >> *Dare to Lead*, Brené Brown, 2018
- >> *Dog Whistle Politics*, Ian Haney López, 2013
- >> *The Revolution of Everyday Life*, Raoul Vaneigem, 1967
- >> *Holding Change: The Way of Emergent Strategy Facilitation and Mediation*, Adrienne Maree Brown, 2021
- >> *I've Got the Light of Freedom*, Charles Payne, 1995
- >> *Let The Record Show*, Sarah Schulman, 2021
- >> *Poor People's Movements*, Frances Fox Piven, 1977
- >> *Why David Sometimes Wins*, Marshall Ganz, 2009

## On Building a Just and Sustainable Economy

- >> New Consensus Reading List on the economic underpinnings of the Green New Deal framework (updated periodically): <https://newconsensus.com/library>
- >> Read about The Roosevelt Institute and its work on climate and economic transformation and the Green New Deal [here](#)

## On the Theme of Hope

- >> ["Is America Possible?"](#) by Vincent Harding, 2007
- >> *Hope in the Dark: Untold Histories, Wild Possibilities*, by Rebecca Solnit, 2004



# TO THE END

[www.ToTheEndFilm.com](http://www.ToTheEndFilm.com)



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