

How We Got into Our Current Crisis – And How to Get Out

This is the most thorough (29-page) version of several documents with similar titles and subject matter.

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Introduction

Thoughtful people know that the U.S. is now suffering our nation's most serious crisis since the Civil War. This might even be more serious than the Civil War, since Trump is imposing upon us perhaps the **most extremely corrupt, mean-spirited and nihilistic** regime – with dangerously **fascist** features – beyond anything in our nation's history. Beyond the Civil War's damage, Trumpism is threatening human survival in **more existential ways** because he is **threatening the survival of everyone on earth** with nuclear weapons and escalating climate chaos.

Americans – and people worldwide – are worrying about how to get out of this mess.

This article shares some insights into:

- Recognizing some underlying problems and a confluence of trends that led to this crisis
- Recognizing that the contemporary U.S. and the U.S. Empire were not sustainable and were deteriorating anyway
- Affirming that to solve the problems we need our best values, profound nonviolence, and savvy grassroots organizing
- Removing Trump by using the constitutional provisions for impeachment and also the 25th Amendment

We must remove Trump from power. But this alone is not enough. We must also solve the long-standing underlying and systemic problems that allowed him to gain power.

How Did We Get into this Crisis?

How did we get into our nation's current crisis?

On pages 2 to 8 I summarize six of the underlying problems and trends led to our current crisis.

Since June 16, 2015, when Trump announced his presidential campaign, everything has always been about him. He used one extreme, inflammatory step after another to capture headlines and be the top news story nearly every day. Many millions of people have discovered that he is a psychiatrically disabled flimflam con artist who spent decades lying to people and defrauding people. He mismanaged his businesses into repeated bankruptcies.

Now he's in the White House with enormous power. He is incompetently filling his administration with people who are incompetent, unethical, and mean-spirited, with serious conflicts of interest. Decent people are shocked and horrified at his behavior, so millions of people are organizing to remove him from power.

But – despite his own personal dysfunctions – **Trump is really a symptom of deeper problems. A healthy democracy with a healthy opposition party and healthy news media would NOT have allowed this tragic farce to occur. Therefore, the problem is not just Trump himself, but the political, economic, and social powers that led to Trumpism and still support it.**

We must see the big picture(s). Then we must identify some strategically pivotal goals and strategies to undermine and remove those specific problems.

I've been writing articles and posting them on the "Non-violence" part of www.olympiafor.org and onto my new blog, www.parallaxperspectives.org. **I recommend a few**

articles similar to the thorough document you are reading now. You can read these articles at the “Nonviolence” part of both websites:

- **“How We Got into Our Nation's Political Crisis -- And How to Get Out”** – This 4-page summary lays it out clearly and succinctly. Click either the Word format or the .pdf format.
- **“Organizing to Stop Trumpism AND the Underlying Problem”** – This 4-page document is somewhat similar to the one above.
- **“Our Nation’s Crisis: How We Got into It – And How to Get Out”** – This is a much more thorough (19-page) version of the 4-page article above. It examines the causes and recommends nonviolent grassroots organizing solutions.

For these articles and many other relevant articles, see the “Nonviolence” parts of www.olympiaforfor.com and www.parallaxperspectives.org. Some of the articles on this latter website appear also on other relevant parts of it.

Our current crisis resulted from a number of long-term problems. These include (but are not limited to) the SIX systemic problems I’ll summarize on the next few pages.

Trump’s first few weeks in office confirmed millions of people’s worst fears. But we must recognize also that he is also a symptom of underlying problems and systems that have been getting worse for a long time. So – while **we absolutely must remove Trump from office** – this is **not enough**. We must **also fix the underlying systemic problems**.

For decades the U.S. has suffered from underlying problems including racism, sexism, anti-gay bias, anti-immigrant bias, ignorance of foreign policy, American Exceptionalism, big business’s greed and corruption, abuse of our environment and climate, economic inequality between the richest persons and everyone else, dysfunctional political parties,

and mainstream media’s simplistic reporting. **These long-term problems have been getting worse and worse over the years – and in 2016 finally produced a U.S. president.** We should not have been surprised.

Trumpism has captured the U.S. government. In order to stop **Trumpism**, we must recognize the underlying systemic problems that have resulted in this blatant presidential symptom and fix those underlying systemic problems. Demonizing one person can distract us from addressing the serious underlying problems that led to this crisis.

Also, besides organizing vigorously to solve **long-term, underlying** problems (such as the SIX I’ll discuss next), we must also take **immediate** actions to stop Trump’s **current** abuses and prevent **immediate** dangers, such as starting a nuclear war.

So we must organize nonviolent grassroots movements to accomplish all of these:

- **Prevent immediate dangers.**
- **Remove Trump from office.**
- **Solve long-term underlying problems.**

Immediate actions include (but are not limited to):

- Affirm America’s best values and rally people to support and build upon those values – and oppose attacks on our best values.
- Expose the lies and publicize the truth to all people across the entire political spectrum.
- Use satire, the arts, and creativity to expose what’s bad and propose good alternatives.
- Organize at the grassroots to resist what’s bad and build nonviolent movements for good alternatives.

Now through page 8 I summarize SIX worsening trends and underlying problems that led to our current crisis.

Underlying problem #1: Economics:

Big American oil companies have always powerfully influenced U.S. foreign policy. When Trump nominated the former CEO of ExxonMobil to be Secretary of State – the cabinet official in charge of U.S. foreign policy – this made the corruption blatantly obvious! Oil companies have had too much power for too long. Both political parties have been yielding to oil companies.

When Trump appoints big business insiders to positions of power, this is nothing new. President Bill Clinton and President Barack Obama appointed many big business insiders – and took other actions to support big business and weaken labor. But liberals who allowed Democrats to take such actions are only now aroused by such abuse because now a Republican is doing it. The problems are underlying, systemic, and bi-partisan. (On page 6 I’ll discuss **two big, corrupt and dysfunctional political parties**.)

For decades, extremely rich people and giant corporations have become excessively wealthy, while the middle and lower classes have fallen behind. Since the mid-1970s the gap in income and the gap in wealth (assets) have widened enormously because of laws and policies supported by

both political parties. Economic inequality is well documented and is a major factor in the public's sense of **loss, fear, and anger** (which I'll mention now).

Underlying problem #2: Loss, fear, and anger:

The 2016 election season exposed much of the fear, anger and divisiveness that were already existing in American society. Over the years – long before 2016 – some politicians have exploited and manipulated people's pain, fear and anger toward scapegoating other vulnerable people. People who were already hurting in various ways were further antagonized, polarized, and traumatized.

Politicians who try to make people afraid and angry – and exploit people's feelings of loss and vulnerability – distract people from solving the real underlying problems. This cynical exploitation and manipulation escalates the already serious problems with even more dangers for human rights, social and economic justice, the environment and climate, escalating militarism, governmental corruption – and for democracy itself. Many serious problems that had already existed are getting much worse. We are in for very hard times!

In order to resist and roll back the problems, we need to better understand the sources of those problems. Very often the emotions people express are actually rooted in very different (sometimes unconscious) experiences and emotions.

Some politicians cleverly manipulate people's emotions in order to serve their own political purposes.

For example, Lyndon Johnson once said, "If you can convince the lowest white man that he's better than the best colored man, he won't notice that you're picking his pocket."

The vast majority of Americans – from the middle class on down – have been suffering economically for several decades, and they know it. Economic elites and politicians of both big parties have been skewing the economy to make the rich even richer at everyone else's expense. But instead of admitting this, some politicians have been blaming scapegoats (*e.g.*, immigrants and women taking white American men's jobs).

Many Americans feel economically vulnerable. Giant corporations gobble up locally owned businesses, close our factories, and export our jobs. Giant corporations raise prices and reduce quality and service. In many ways, people experience far less control over their lives than before. This causes anxieties and feelings of **loss, fear, and anger**.

Ordinary Americans have been disempowered in other ways too, which worsen our feelings of loss fear and anger.

Services that Americans used to control through democracy (electing public school boards, electing local governments to operate public water utilities, etc.) have been **privatized**, so we can't even control many of our basic services. When extremely rich people and giant corporations fund politicians' electoral campaigns and initiative campaigns, they are actually privatizing democracy itself as a strategy toward letting them privatize more of American society.

Our environment and climate are in severe danger. Our polluted air and water have become health hazards. This makes us feel even more insecure.

Our fears are triggered and we are humiliated as we go about our daily lives, such as waiting in long lines at airports for screening passengers.

Among the world's nations, the U.S. **used to** rank at the top in terms of economic well-being, health, education, and so forth. **But now** the U.S. is far down the list in these rankings. Americans know from our own experience that we have sunk low. **We are feeling loss, fear, and anger.**

Americans have been abused in many ways, so we have perfectly legitimate reasons to be afraid and angry. We have valid reasons to feel afraid about our environmental safety, economic survival, civil rights, and so forth. However, clever politicians have tapped into those underlying fears and deceived the public by scapegoating people who are even more vulnerable. (Remember Lyndon Johnson's insight, "If you can convince the lowest white man that he's better than the best colored man, he won't notice that you're picking his pocket.")

During the long 2016 campaign season, some politicians exploited people's fears about other demographic groups, and many politicians tried to make us feel afraid about their political opponents. **None** of that fear-mongering was actually proposing constructive solutions for public policy. It simply smacked of nasty campaigning. And it displaced and projected people's justifiable fears into anger against vulnerable scapegoats.

We must understand these underlying dynamics in order to understand our current political crisis. Also, we must publicize these insights in order to help the public devise and push for smart strategies to turn things around.

In order to solve these underlying problems and turn our nation around, we must **explain the problems** in ways that ordinary Americans – **especially people who are feeling angry, afraid, and vulnerable** – can hear and understand.

We must welcome these ordinary Americans into our movements. Otherwise, the right wing will continue to exploit them and recruit them away from us.

Underlying problem #3: Despite having the world's biggest, most violent military, Americans still feel afraid in the world:

Just now I discussed how Americans are feeling **loss and fear** regarding a variety of economic and social realities. In addition, people also feel **loss** about the U.S.'s declining status in the world – and **fear** about our national security.

For more than a quarter of a century since the Soviet Union collapsed, the U.S. has been the world's only superpower. Under presidents and Congresses of **both** big political parties, we have kept thousands of nuclear weapons, a gigantic military force, the world's most modern and deadly weapons, and 700 or 800 military bases in other nations. In 2016 – under Democratic President Obama – the U.S. made military attacks (including drone attacks) on many nations, deployed elite “special forces” to 138 nations, and persisted as the world's #1 seller of military weapons to other countries. **But despite all of this extreme militarism, Americans still do not feel safe.**

Despite all of this, Trump's campaign further provoked and exploited people's feelings of insecurity, and he is significantly increasing the U.S. military budget and military violence around the world.

Why do people feel afraid?

It's because ultimately **the whole notion of military defense is a sham!** All of the U.S.'s nuclear weapons and gigantic military failed to protect the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001. The official government story is that a few guys with box cutters hijacked airliners and attacked the U.S. – indeed, the very headquarters of the U.S. military (the Pentagon) and the symbolic headquarters of global capitalism (the “World Trade Center”). The world's biggest military and thousands of nuclear weapons did not protect us.

Credible evidence debunks the official story. If so, shadowy elements within our national government are even worse than incompetent. But whether you believe the official story or the other credible evidence, it is clear that the U.S.'s gigantic military did not protect us on 9-11-2001.

Indeed, nuclear weapons themselves threaten to kill us all. But clever politicians exploit our fear for their own electoral advantage. So in 1960 when Democratic candidate John Kennedy was campaigning against Richard Nixon

(who had been Dwight Eisenhower's Vice President), Kennedy falsely claimed that Eisenhower/Nixon had failed to build enough nuclear weapons to challenge the Soviet Union and promised to build more to fill this (non-existent) “missile gap.”

During the 1980 campaign Ronald Reagan lied about an alleged U.S. shortage of weapons. Now Trump has done this too. This recurring theme fools voters because – although many Americans are afraid – the real reasons are the exact **opposite** of what the candidates claim!

As the 9-11 attacks showed, nuclear weapons and other U.S. military power cannot protect us from acts of terrorism or “Deep State” sabotage.

Indeed, the U.S.'s “war on terror” has only provoked **more** terrorism and spread it into **more** nations. The U.S.'s militarism is like a dog chasing its tail, only worse, because instead of merely circular, the dynamic is escalating. Every time a U.S. soldier attacked an Iraqi family's home – and every time a U.S. drone killed someone in any of the many countries the U.S. drones are attacking – we radicalized many of their neighbors and extended family members and recruited many more people who want to hurt the U.S.

Indeed, Osama bin Laden – who had been funded by the U.S. government to fight the Soviets Union in Afghanistan during that era pp suckered the U.S. into an endless, unwinnable “war on terror” in September 2001.

Also, ISIS cheered Trump's election and his rhetoric and policies calling for a war on Islam, because Trump is directly serving ISIS' strategy and propaganda. ISIS proclaims that the world is waging a global war against Islam, so ISIS recruits people worldwide to fight back. Under **both** Obama and Trump, the U.S. military did exactly what ISIS's propaganda claimed, thereby giving credibility to ISIS. Trump and his appointees are helping ISIS even further.

Actually, the American people's sense of loss and fear stem from the fact that the world no longer allows the U.S. to boss the world around! The U.S. Empire has lost respect and credibility! The U.S. still acts like the world's only real superpower – the world's biggest bully – but that violence does not work!

After World War II the U.S. promoted itself as the beacon of liberty and democracy and human rights. But for

many decades – under presidents and Congresses of both political parties – the U.S.’s actual foreign policy and business exploitation have taught the world not to trust the U.S.

Although the U.S. prevailed only in small military actions in Panama and Grenada, World War II was the last real war the U.S. actually won. Korea was a stalemate. The U.S. has lost the Vietnam War and all of the other wars for the past 70+ years. No wonder Trump campaigned to “make America great again.” But that’s impossible even with the U.S. having thousands of nuclear weapons and the world’s most violent military. Military “victory” and “security” and “greatness” are all shams. Military overkill cannot “make America great.”

The U.S. Empire is not sustainable, as I’ll explain below. The American peace movement can help our nation get out of our current crisis by helping the American people understand and accept the reality that the U.S. Empire never has been sustainable.

See much more information about this in the .pdf document titled “**De-Militarize U.S. Foreign Policy Workshop Handouts**” on the “ISSUES” page of www.olympiafor.org and at several parts of www.parallaxperspectives.org

Even after the Berlin Wall fell, people still assumed that the U.S./USSR Cold War would continue. Almost nobody foresaw the quick collapse of the Soviet Union.

Likewise, despite mounting evidence that the bloated U.S. Empire is finished, almost nobody in the U.S. is actually predicting the collapse of the U.S. as the world’s superpower, but this too can happen quickly when Americans and people elsewhere lose confidence in the U.S. This collapse of U.S.’s unrealistic superpower status could collapse as

quickly as the bloated stock market crashed in 1929 and led to the Great Depression.

This anxiety about the U.S.’s likely collapse exists at an unconscious level – and it gets expressed as futile “wishful thinking” that a “strong man” leader can “make America great again.”

In the Bible, this is what Proverbs 16:18 refers to as **the pride that goes before a fall**. The myth of American “greatness” is a long-standing scam, since our nation has failed to deliver on our self-praising rhetoric.

This self-serving myth is part of what led to electing Trump, who is a notorious con-man and huckster. He repeatedly promised greatness in his business dealings, but he repeatedly cheated his employees and customers, failed to deliver on his promises, and went bankrupt many times. Millions of people voted for what they wanted to hear – that a “strong man” will “make America great again.”

So instead of demonizing this one person, let’s recognize that this “America great” scam is a long-standing myth that American politicians, schools, media, and the general public have been telling ourselves for two centuries. **Trump is the logical result of a nation that has deceived itself about many things for many decades.** He is a symptom of corrupt, deceptive, egocentric problems we must fix in our national psychology and in our American culture.

So besides removing Trump through impeachment or the Constitution’s 25th Amendment (see pages 22-26), we must also make our nation and our politicians, schools and media start telling us the truth about the rest of the world and our nation’s place in it.

Underlying problem #4: Corporate-owned news media and the dumbing-down of America:

You would think that journalism would help Americans understand what’s going on. But mainstream news media are actually giant capitalist businesses that seek profit, not truth.

They failed us during the run-up to the 2003 Iraq war, when they accepted at face value – and obediently repeated – the Bush Administration’s lies that Saddam Hussein was building “weapons of mass destruction” (WMDs), even though much more credible sources debunked those claims as not true.

Likewise, during the long 2016 campaign season, mainstream news media failed to expose the lies and seek the truth. Instead they focused on trivia instead of reality.

Corporate-owned news media – newspapers, broadcasters, internet companies – are **not** committed to informing the public or supporting democracy. Nor are they committed to promoting the truth and exposing lies. Instead of supporting whistleblowers such as Edward Snowden and Chelsea Manning – who actually did expose lies and promote truth – mainstream media join the government in abusing whistleblowers.

Corporate-owned news media exist in order to sell advertising and generate profits. Les Moonves, the CEO of CBS, emphasized that political advertising produces big profits. *The Intercept*’s Lee Fang reported on Feb. 29, 2016, that Moonves had just a few days before told the Morgan Stanley Technology, Media and Telecom Conference, “Man, who would have expected the ride we’re all having right now?”

This is pretty amazing.... Who would have thought that this circus would come to town? But, you know – it may not be good for America, but it’s damn good for CBS. That’s all I got to say. So what can I say? It’s you know, the money’s rolling in, and this is fun.”

Although some mainstream media are calling out the lies, many others are “normalizing” the bizarre and cruel policies without calling them out. Even now in late 2017 Trump’s rantings and ravings are generating viewers, readers, and profits for the commercial mass media. They will **not** kill the goose that is laying golden eggs. Mainstream media will **not** save us.

Nearly all Americans – in both big political parties and swing voters alike – are so thoroughly enmeshed and trapped in cultural and political myths and misconceptions that they cannot clearly see what is really happening.

Throughout the 2016 campaign season, Trump spewed lies and hatred. His track record in business showed that for decades he routinely cheated people. Mainstream news media could – and should – have exposed these, but they chose not to expose them. There is no reason to think they mainstream media will hold Trump accountable now or in the future. Mainstream news media exist in order to earn profits by selling ads to businesses. Truth is not really important. **We people who do value the truth must take responsibility to publicize the truth ourselves** in a variety of ways, including:

- **Mainstream media:** Do various things to pressure mainstream media to expose the lies and report the truth, rather than yield to Trump’s pressure to “normalize” the extremism of him and his appointees.

Writing frequent, bold letters to editors is a start, but we must do more.

- **Conservative and right-wing media:** Do various things to counter their biases and their outright lies.
- **Alternative and progressive media:** Read, watch and financially support the good media sources. See a list near the very end of this essay. Create additional alternative and creative ways to inform the public.
- **Non-profit organizations provide accurate, useful information about issues and organizing:** Their newsletters and e-mails can inform you and help you take effective actions. They deserve our financial support too, in order to help turn things around. Look especially for non-profit organizations that work to change systems rather than merely apply band-aids. See a list near the end of this essay.

An excellent non-profit organization that monitors and critiques mainstream media is Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR) at www.fair.org. FAIR publishes a magazine that provides this smart information too.

Let’s pay attention to what is really happening, apart from Trump’s simplistic, snarky tweets and other quotations. Trump has been saying outrageous things that the media promote and people react to. That puts Trump in charge and puts us in a reactive, defensive position. **Please do not let outrageous communications distract us from working on the real political issues.** This is like magicians who distract people’s attention so they don’t see what they are actually doing or pickpockets who brush against one of your shoulders to distract you while they steal your wallet from the opposite back pocket.

Underlying problem #5: Two big, corrupt, dysfunctional political parties:

The actual track record of recent decades has shown that **BOTH** of the U.S.’s two big political parties represent special interests, **NOT** the American people’s best interests. **BOTH** of the big political parties have been deceiving us. The American people know this – and voters are angry about it! Indeed, Trump won partly by campaigning against **BOTH** parties!

In 1992 and again in 2008 voters elected candidates who campaigned explicitly for “hope” and “change.” Bill Clinton and Barack Obama campaigned as economic populists. But when they got elected they actually **governed** in support of Wall Street and the military-industrial complex. **Obama’s support for the status quo caused people to distrust the Democratic Party and turned off voters in 2016.**

In 1992 Democrat Bill Clinton was elected largely by showing how Republicans Reagan and the older Bush had

hurt the economy. Clinton campaigned as an economic populist with their main talking point, “It’s the economy, stupid.” But when Bill Clinton was elected he **continued** hurting the working class and transferring our money to the **capitalist** class, especially by taking many actions to deregulate big businesses to enrich them and reduce public protection from their abuses.

Although Barack Obama campaigned against NAFTA in 2008 and **said** he supported ordinary people, he **continued** the “free trade” mania of Bill Clinton and George W. Bush. Obama’s push for the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and other “free trade” scams caused voters to react against him and opt for Trump, who opposed those, even though Trump is absolutely loyal to Wall Street and against the working class. Hillary Clinton was a great champion of “free trade”

and the TPP until the TPP became politically toxic so she turned against it only very late in her 2016 campaign.

A few pages earlier I discussed people's feelings of loss and anger. An important factor in the losses and angers people felt during the 2016 campaign was the fact that Obama – who had campaigned in 2008 as a populist progressive for “hope” and “change” – governed for the benefit of powerful business and military interests instead of the public well-being.

In 2016 Hillary Clinton was the candidate **of** the status quo – Wall Street, big business, global “free trade,” more wars – while Trump said he opposed all of those! Trump recognized and expressed the public's **anger at the status quo**. (Of course Trump lied, but at least – unlike Clinton – he did resonate with the voters' feelings, while Clinton was utterly clueless about what the voters were feeling.)

Hillary Clinton had a long track record of subservience to Wall Street. When she served on Walmart's board of directors and served as one of Walmart's top lawyers, there is no evidence that she did anything to help Walmart's low-wage workers, many of whom were women and minorities. She did not campaign on economic populist issues until mid-2016 when she adopted a few – and only in response to Bernie Sanders' leadership on those issues. Washington State's two Democratic U.S. Senators supported the TPP. American workers saw clearly that Hillary Clinton and the Democratic Party were not on their side. Trump positioned his campaign to the left of Hillary's economic policies.

Obama and Clinton bragged about the “jobs” created during Obama's eight years, even though many of those jobs were at wages much lower than the jobs lost during the Obama administration. Obama and Clinton kept bragging about how good the economy was now, even though everybody knew the economy was terrible. Such is the self-deception and public deception of the big political parties' elite class. Voters knew that the Democratic Party was not on our side.

President Obama received good publicity for saying nice things in public about the climate and taking some climate-friendly actions, but much more of his effort – especially in low-key, behind-the-scenes ways – has supported Big Oil, but mainstream media failed to report that. Obama's “all-of-the-above” energy policy (supporting fracking, oil exports, nuclear power, etc.) was really an expanded version of Sarah Palin's contemptible “drill, baby, drill” policy.

Obama took many actions to serve Big Oil. He signed a new law that – for the first time in four decades – allows the export of crude oil from the U.S. He quietly supported and even fast-tracked several nasty pipelines. He permitted more offshore drilling and vigorously promoted fracking. He kept the Keystone XL pipeline alive for several years before finally yielding to massive sustained public pressure to stop it.

Both of the big parties have been promoting deregulation and “free market” policies. Bill Clinton vigorously supported the WTO, pushed NAFTA through to passage, led efforts to repeal the Glass-Steagall law (thereby leading to the 2007-2008 economic collapse), led efforts to deregulate giant telecommunications companies and concentrate ownership through the 1996 Telecommunications Act, and so forth. Barack Obama continued promoting George W. Bush's “free trade” deals with several nations and giant “free trade” scams equally horrible as the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). The public hates those, but in 2016 Trump was the only politician to really lambaste NAFTA and other job-killing “free trade” policies that Hillary Clinton had long supported.

Democrats who are criticizing Trump's appointees now were silent when Obama appointed Big Business insiders to powerful positions. Obama appointed a great many officials from Goldman Sachs to top positions in his administration after Goldman Sachs had been the biggest donor to his 2008 campaign.

Obama appointed one of Comcast's top lobbyist to the Federal Communications Commission, and he appointed agribusiness and Big Pharma officials to positions regulating their industries. The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) is supposed to serve the interests of the public and investors, but Obama appointed to the SEC someone who had gained prominence in protecting giant corporations from transparency and oversight. The list goes on and on.

For many years the institutional Democratic Party has been failing to deliver to its base of working class voters, but when the Republican Party wins they actually give their base what they asked for. In 2016 the Republicans won by listening to their voters and nominating the person who was generating popular support. In contrast, in 2016 the institutional Democratic Party rebuffed its populist candidate, Bernie Sanders. Bernie Sanders was generating huge public support and would have won in a landslide with long coat-tails that would have elected many Democrats to Congress and state and local governments.

Underlying problem #6: Right-wing Christianity merged with the Republican Party. This corrupted both and hurt our nation:

In the 1970s several right-wing Christian TV preachers and junk mail organizers mobilized millions of right-wing people around “culture war” issues. They worked to prevent passage of the Equal Rights Amendment, prevent equal rights for LGBTQ people, roll back abortion rights, and wage other “culture war” issues.

Because the Religious Right was reacting against Democrats’ support for those “culture war” issues, they effectively merged with the Republican Party and got much more active in electoral politics. Similar to Nixon’s 1968 “Southern Strategy, the modern Republican Party moved farther toward the extremist right wing. When Republicans got elected, they “delivered” to their electoral base. This further empowered these right-wing extremists.

Now – although Trump can’t get the Republican Congress to pass his legislative agenda – Trump actually is de-

livering powerfully to his political base by appointing extremists who support the Religious Right to a number of executive branch positions and to the federal judiciary.

For years, Republican Senate leader Mitch McConnell violated the U.S. Constitution’s intent by refusing to consider Obama’s appointees for many, many vacant positions in federal courts, including the U.S. Supreme Court. Senate Democrats let McConnell do this without raising the stink they should have raised. Now the Senate is rapidly confirming Trump’s nominees for a gigantic number of extremely right-wing nominees. Trump is appointing right-wing extremists who are young, so they will dictate federal judicial decisions for many decades. Many of these judges tilt toward the Religious Right as well as tilting toward big business, against workers, against human rights, against the environment, etc.

How Can We Get OUT of this Crisis?

We Must Help People Recognize + Understand These Problems.

To solve the various problems I’ve been discussing, we must help the American people acknowledge these underlying problems – and acknowledge that the recent U.S. was not sustainable anyway.

Also – following up from what I said about U.S. foreign and military policy – we must also help the American people acknowledge that the U.S. Empire was not sustainable either.

For decades the U.S. Empire has been overreaching and has not been sustainable. We must help the American people understand this so we can make our nation change toward more ecological – and more modest, humane and peaceful – ways to interact with the world.

Despite U.S. violence against other nations, we can no longer compel other nations’ obedience. The last war we won was World War II more than 70 years ago. The era of colonialism is long past. After the Cold War, other nations have long since stopped tolerating “the only remaining superpower.” In mid-2017 at the United Nations, 122 nations passed a treaty that would **absolutely ban all nuclear weapons worldwide**. The U.S. and other nations that do have nuclear weapons opposed it, but starting in September 2017 many of the world’s nations have been signing on. The rest of the world is sick and tired of having us threaten them.

Trump’s “America First” rhetoric reflects his **narcissism and panders to the U.S.’s own nationalistic narcissism and American Exceptionalism**. A psychologically healthy and mature person – or nation – works to get along cooperatively and harmoniously with other persons and nations, not to demand being “first.”

For example, I should not demand a “Glen Anderson First” policy that lets me crowd in front of the checkout line at the grocery store. An “America First” policy is neither fair nor sustainable nor realistic in a world with nearly 200 other nations. Narcissism is very bad public policy. The world sees this more clearly than ever now.

The climate “deniers” are denying science and denying reality. They are refusing to acknowledge the hard truth that

we and our giant business corporations are using natural resources at an unsustainable rate. This refusal to accept reality means that the U.S. is refusing to solve real-world problems. **When people deny hard realities, they prevent themselves from solving the real problems, so they are setting themselves up for catastrophic failures.**

The rest of the world **does** appreciate science, but under Trump and the Republicans in Congress, the U.S. has become a “denier” nation regarding climate and science itself. Denying climate science – just like denying human rights for women, Muslims, LGBTQ people – is preventing our nation from moving ahead to a better future. Rather than “making America great again,” this anti-science bias will do the opposite. It will make us a stupid, backward nation that will allow problems to worsen and will let other nations move ahead of us. When the U.S. underfunds education and fails to teach real science, American employers will have no alternative but to urge increased immigration from nations that do teach valid science and hire those immigrants.

The “**Loss, Fear and Anger**” discussion from earlier in this essay mentioned our nation’s declining standard of living. Already, we are far down the list of indicators of quality of life (life expectancy, access to affordable health care, etc.). Michael Moore’s clever film “Where to Invade Next” makes some interesting points and comparisons.

Would Elisabeth Kubler-Ross’s insights into five stages of dying help our nation cope with the loss of U.S. Empire

and nationalistic egocentrism? The stages are Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression, and finally Acceptance.

Someone new to Alcoholics Anonymous is told that the first step toward recovery is to acknowledge the hard reality that the person is addicted to alcohol. Likewise, **the first step for Americans to start healing our nation is to acknowledge that the U.S.’s economic system, empire, and militarism are not sustainable. They never were sustainable.** No amount of bullying and lying can change this hard reality.

Trump’s extremism is hastening the end of U.S. Empire! America’s smug nationalism is doomed! Americans need to acknowledge and internalize the truth of Proverbs 16:18: “Pride goes before destruction – and a haughty spirit before a fall.”

The USA needs a fresh, humble consciousness to actually let go of our arrogant, narcissistic overuse of natural resources, our abuse of climate, our worldwide militarism, etc. We must internalize that reality intellectually, emotionally, and in new public policy. **Only then will we be truly free to explore fresh visions for the future instead of trying to hold on to the unsustainable past.**

Let’s get real! Of course we need to reject Trump’s phony “Make America Great Again” slogan, but also we need to **reject the long-standing bi-partisan mainstream myth** that the U.S. is “the indispensable nation” that can exploit the world’s resources because that is every much as arrogant and false and Trump’s reckless boasting.

“Pride goes before destruction” (Proverbs 16:18): Trumpism is doing the OPPOSITE of “making America great.” Actually, Trump’s extremism is hastening the end of U.S. Empire.

For many decades the U.S. government, political culture and general public have felt entitled to dominate other nations politically, militarily and economically. Our government always feels entitled to violate international law because of “American exceptionalism.” On November 20, 2017, while building a rhetorical case for war against North Korea, Trump accused that nation of supporting terrorism and assassinating people on foreign soil. Actually, the U.S. has been doing this for decades! The U.S. has committed many acts of terrorism, overthrown many governments, and assassinated many foreign people – including heads of state – but Trump’s rhetoric against North Korea ignored the U.S.’s decades of those well documented crimes.

Likewise, “American exceptionalism” allows many of our fellow Americans to deny science and assume that the U.S. can extract and burn fossil fuels without suffering consequences to the climate or clean water resources. The

U.S.’s arrogant nationalism continually denies science and continues trumping reality.

When Stalin ran the USSR, he believed that the communist ideology and industrialization were so perfect that he was in denial about the USSR’s worsening environmental problems. The U.S. government is in such denial now.

This kind of bi-partisan arrogance, smugness and self-deception – accentuated even more than ever before under the new Republican-dominated government – are hastening the end of the U.S. Empire and will seriously harm our national well-being – socially, politically, economically, and environmentally. Truly, “Pride goes before destruction – and a haughty spirit before a fall,” as Proverbs 16:18 warns.

“Pride goes before destruction – and a haughty spirit before a fall.” This famous passage from Proverbs 16:18 is

relevant to Trump's arrogance in particular, but it also pertains to the U.S.'s national attitudes and behaviors overall.

Just like the SIX longstanding underlying problems I discussed, Proverbs 16:18 says the U.S.'s coming downfall is the culmination of the long-standing arrogance of U.S. Empire.

In ancient times the writers of Greek tragedies referred to this as *hubris*, the kind of arrogance that led to tragic outcomes. The U.S. keeps acting on the *hubris* of "American exceptionalism," and we will increasingly reap the tragic consequences.

Although the popular misunderstanding of the word "prophet" is someone who foretells the future, the Biblical tradition uses the word differently. A "prophet" is someone who is authorized by God to speak God's message to the people, especially when the people do not want to hear it.

God told the Old Testament prophets (Amos, Hosea, Micah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, etc.) to speak God's harsh warnings to their people. The message was that – despite the people's outward religiosity and compliance with ritual – they were violating God's deeper requirements to treat the poor fairly, to be honest in business dealings, to welcome strangers, and to trust God rather than military might. These prophets

warned that violating these serious obligations would result in their nation's destruction.

The political and religious establishment did not want the prophets to speak God's hard truth. When the establishment and the people did not stop their arrogance and did not start practicing compassion and true justice, the prophets' warnings came true. Disasters did occur, and other nations did conquer, as the prophets had warned.

The U.S.'s arrogant self-image that we now are "God's Chosen People" will not save the U.S. any more than it saved ancient Israel. The prophets speak to us too: superficial religiosity cannot mask or compensate for massive injustice. A nation that claims to follow God must practice real fairness and justice in its day-to-day life. The U.S. falls horribly short and will suffer the consequences.

How about this analogy? The 2016 election can feel like the story of "The Fall" from the Bible's book of Genesis. This was a sudden plunge into a harsh world dominated by evil. Millions of people voted for someone who promised he would make us great. We "bit the apple" and discovered not only nakedness but also racism and greed and cruelty and lies. Only radical grace and nonviolent grassroots organizing can save our nation from fascism.

How Can We Get OUT of this Crisis?

We Must Organize Nonviolent Movements to Solve the Problems.

One part of the problem is Donald Trump, so we must organize to remove him from office.

A bigger part of the problem is Trumpism – the cruelty, oppression, corruption, and fascism Trump and the Republicans are imposing upon us. We must organize against the various aspects of that nasty ism.

The SIX underlying bi-partisan systemic problems that allowed Trump to get into the White House persist. We must organize to solve those problems too so this kind of crisis will never happen again.

The SIX underlying problems I discussed on pages 2-8 are:

- #1. Economics
- #2. Loss, fear, and anger
- #3. Despite having the world's biggest, most violent military, Americans still feel afraid in the world.

#4. Corporate-owned news media and the dumbing-down of America

#5. Two big, corrupt and dysfunctional political parties

#6. Right-wing Christianity merged with the Republican Party. This corrupted both and hurt American democracy.

We must help the American people acknowledge the seriousness of our current crisis. But instead of feeling despair, we must choose to empower ourselves through nonviolent grassroots organizing.

“When we awaken to the enormity of our crisis and the magnitude of our loss, often the first response is a crushing despair. Yet on the other side of despair is fullness and an urgency to live life beautifully. We can choose a different world – the ‘more beautiful world our hearts tell us is possible.’” This is what Charles Eisenstein wrote in his 2007 book *The Ascent of Humanity*.

This is not mere “positive thinking” or “cheap grace.” It is a practical way to proceed. We must empower ourselves and generate the strength to push ahead in strategically smart ways until we win. Much of the essay you are reading – and

many resources about the power and effectiveness of organizing nonviolent grassroots resistance and movements – show that this is not “wishful thinking,” but it is actually **practical**. Let’s get on with it!

Throughout American history – from the colonial era of the 1760s and beyond – Americans have always risen up with nonviolent resistance and grassroots organizing to stop oppression and to achieve positive progress. The work we must do now is grounded in the best of American values and American experience.

Instead of piling on more “ain’t-it-awful” laments, let’s understand and organize.

Clearly, the 2016 election is causing extremely serious problems for human rights, social and economic justice, the environment and climate, escalating militarism, and governmental corruption. We are in for very hard times!

When disaster strikes, a normal human reaction is to lament the horrible event. After the 2016 election, people piled on a lot of “ain’t-it-awful” lamenting and reinforced each other’s worst fears about what awaits us. That reaction

is understandable, but it can crush our human spirit, so we must not let ourselves or our nation get stuck there. During Olympia FOR’s March 2017 TV program, one of our guests said, “**Don’t agonize. Strategize.**” Right on!

Instead of letting dread overwhelm and immobilize us, we need to think clearly and devise smart strategies for solving the problems. The rest of this essay will help us do that.

Ground ourselves in our best values, and work to meet our needs.

To make progress we must strengthen ourselves by grounding ourselves in our best values, our faith, our truth, our humanity, and our passion for peace, justice and a livable earth. Compared to the cynical and corrupt status quo, **our best values are radical and liberating!** Our best values can help us blaze a trail away from the fear, anger, negativity, and other disempowering emotions that have bogged down our nation for many years.

I produced Olympia FOR’s December 2016 TV program (“**Healing from Political Blame, Shame, and Trauma**”) to help people understand the feelings people were experiencing during the campaign season. In 2017 I produced several more of our monthly TV programs to help us move ahead. Watch them through the “TV Programs” part of

www.olympiafor.org and through the topic categories at www.parallaxperspectives.org.

- Our January 2017 program (“**Nonviolent Grassroots Remedies for our Current Crisis**”) affirms the power and practicality of grassroots nonviolent organizing to stop oppression and to make positive nonviolent progress.
- Our March 2017 program (“**Protect America’s Best Values from Attack**”) helps people do what the title urges.
- Our April 2017 program (“**How to REALLY Make America Great**”) exposes the hypocrisy of Trump’s “Make America great” campaign slogan and shows how the new administration is doing the opposite. To

really become “great,” America would need to reverse Trump’s policies and act upon our nation’s best values.

To watch these programs, visit www.olympiafor.org, click the “TV Programs” link, scroll down, and click the title of a program you want to watch. Next to the link for watching the program, click the Word and/or .pdf link to read a thorough summary of what we said during the interview. These programs are also listed in relevant categories listed at the right side of the screen at my blog, www.parallaxperspectives.org.

Our best values are absolutely crucial for organizing against Trumpism! People turn out for rally after rally against Trump in a **reactive** way. **Our nation keeps protesting the symptoms without grappling enough with the underlying causes.**

Let’s seek the roots as the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King did in his “Beyond Vietnam” speech at Riverside Church in New York City on April 4, 1967. In that speech – now 50 years ago – **King called for a “revolution of values.”** We must recapture that spirit and ground ourselves in revolutionary values of nonviolence, peace and social justice. This article is relevant and interesting: www.tinyurl.com/mu7cohv

Now is also a good time to deepen our understanding of – and commitment to – the spiritual and practical aspects of nonviolence, so we could practice nonviolence more effectively. For referrals to websites, books, films, etc. – or if you’d like a 6-session study group on Gandhi (watch the 1982 “Gandhi” movie and read/discuss two excellent books), contact me at (360) 491-9093 glenanderson@integra.net.

Using our best values, we must devise strategies and organize practical resistance and other actions that are strategically smart and nonviolent.

Everything I’ve said leading up to now discusses how a confluence of long-standing problems led to this current crisis.

Now everything from this point until the end will help us use better values and nonviolent strategies so we can get our nation out of this crisis.

Ordinary Americans can help our nation get through these hard times – and create decent solutions – if we:

1. **Recognize that we must and can indeed address the problems effectively; and**
2. **Understand how nonviolent grassroots movements are powerful ways to achieve social and political progress; and**
3. **Work strategically and nonviolently with other people to accomplish our goals.**

Ground ourselves in our best values – and our nation’s best values.

Our society seems to be suffering from escalating polarization. Do **not** assume that we are stuck with this. Some of the **apparent** polarization resulted from partisan and ideological exploitation that has appealed to people’s emotions and then stampeded them into right-wing politics.

Actually, very few Americans are as cruel as Trump’s policies and propaganda would have us believe. Ordinary Americans have more humane values. Let’s remind the public of our nation’s best values, including:

- All people are created equal.
- We are endowed by our creator with certain inalienable rights.
- Our rights include life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

- We are a nation of immigrants, and the Statue of Liberty welcomes immigrants and refugees.
- Every person deserves the right to vote.
- The First Amendment protects every person from governmental interference with his or her religion.

Any politician who would suppress or lead us astray from our nation’s best values is violating our nation’s best values.

Democracy implies that we must respect the basic humanity of every person – including the people with whom we disagree.

While we demand that the government respect our rights and values, we also as individuals must practice what we

preach. Let's always use humane, nonviolent communication in our person-to-person conversations and at the larger community and national levels.

Let's develop better skills for how to have meaningful conversations with people on the other side. Let's develop better skills for advocating for public policies. Yes, we really can find better ways to promote our issues to more effectively move the public, move the media, move the politicians, and move our society's other decision-makers. I cover some of these in the workshops I conduct about nonviolent grassroots organizing. (See a flyer about these at www.parallaxperspectives.org.)

Instead of merely reacting against bad stuff, let's ground ourselves – and help other people get grounded – in our best values so we can move forward. Watch the Olympia Fellowship of Reconciliation's **March 2017 TV program** (“**Protect America's Best Values**”) through the “TV Programs” part of www.olympiafor.org. Three savvy guests

affirm the best values that our nation has claimed over the years. They urge people to act upon these best values to solve our nation's problems.

Instead of getting trapped in partisanship and elections, let's organize nonviolent movements from the grassroots up. Watch two experienced, knowledgeable, inspiring guests – Mary Lou Finley and Glen Gersmehl – discuss the power and practicality of organizing nonviolent movements on Olympia FOR's **January 2017 TV program** (“**Nonviolent Grassroots Remedies for Our Current Crisis**”). *You can watch it at any time from anywhere* through the “TV Programs” part of www.olympiafor.org or through the link at www.parallaxperspectives.org

Next to the link for watching each TV program is a link so you can read a thorough summary of what we said during the TV interview.

Let's recognize that people across the entire political spectrum are angry and afraid.

We need to recognize and manage our emotions. We need to act on our best emotions.

I titled the Olympia FOR's December 2016 TV program, “**Healing from Political Blame, Shame, and Trauma.**” I worked with the guests to prepare the interview questions before the Nov. 2016 election, and we taped it two days after the election. We did not need to change any of the questions! I designed this program to help people “heal from political blame, shame and trauma.” You can watch it through the “TV Programs” part of www.olympiafor.org or through an issue category at www.parallaxperspectives.org. I created this program and recruited wise, compassionate guests, in order to help our nation move ahead from our current crisis. To do this, we need to understand people's emotions, build upon the ones that will help us move ahead, and deal with the ones that interfere with our moving ahead.

Powerful forces are assaulting us with many horrible things all at once. They are using “Shock and Awe” in order to overwhelm us so we will freeze like deer in a car's headlights and feel powerless to resist them. (See Naomi Klein's insightful book *The Shock Doctrine*.) But if we recognize the oppressors' tactics, we can refuse to be intimidated. Indeed, many people have arisen and are resisting. In order to prevail we will need **smart goals and strategies**, not despair, and not frantic reactive activism.

Managing our emotions is necessary so we can move ahead and sustain ourselves over the long haul while we radically change the huge, entrenched systems that have been propping up various kinds of oppression and that have led us to Trumpism.

During the 1980s millions of people were scared witless by President Reagan's reckless militarism and especially his cavalier escalation of nuclear weapons and his willingness to use them. Many people asked me whether we were doomed or whether I thought we could survive. I always replied to the person by asking what they thought. Some people said we were doomed, so I replied that if they thought that, then they were dooming us. But other people said we could organize and stop the nuclear arms race, so I agreed with them that their willingness to work for peace would indeed turn things around. In each case I told the people, “**It's all up for grabs. If we organize smartly and vigorously we can turn things around. But if we give up, it's the giving up that dooms us.**” That is precisely our crisis now.

Instead of being defensive and timid, now is the time to be bold – to demand huge changes now.

Let's recognize and deal with fear and anger. Let's practice compassion.

Our society as a whole needs healing, and so do individuals within our society. **Fear** and **anger** can impair the people who feel them. Also, these emotions can be contagious within a society and impair the society overall. Why not practice **compassion** and start an epidemic of compassion to displace fear and anger? Why not practice **empathy** in a contagious way and start an epidemic of empathy?

Let's pay attention and notice exactly what we are feeling as individuals and what feelings are widespread in society. If we recognize fear, anger, or other strong emotions, recognize that these are likely to be expressions of some underlying fears and hurts. Let's pay attention to what unmet needs exist, and find better ways to meet those needs. This can heal individuals and our society overall.

People really do feel the need for compassion and empathy and inclusiveness. During the Olympia FOR's weekly peace vigils, our sign "**All people are one human family**" produces a warm, supportive response from people who walk past or drive past. Regardless of any demographic difference or physical difference (heavy weight, many tattoos, purple spiky hair, etc.), everyone feels welcome and included. We also receive much support for signs with similar warm and welcoming messages (e.g., "**Human rights are for everyone,**" and "**We all share one earth**").

Furthermore, instead of the "politics as usual," which demonizes everyone on the other side, let's try assuming that all people are basically good, and all people are seeking what they see as best. None of us has absolute truth or all of the answers. **If we assume good will on the other person's**

part, this would open up space for a better interaction, and the other person would notice our positive vibe. So when we meet a stranger, let's assume that this person is someone of good will who wants to do what is best. If our initial connection with that stranger conveys that we see good will on the other person's part, our interaction will be more friendly, positive and productive. Ultimately, this also will incrementally improve harmony in the political dynamics of our entire society and lead to better results.

Despite the horrible things the oppressors are doing now, we must also recognize that some of them really are psychologically disabled – and spiritually disabled. They are so focused on narcissism, greed, anger, hatred and nihilism that they cannot recognize or feel normal human experiences of compassion or fairness.

During Nixon's first term his Vice President Spiro Agnew antagonized people with his extremely cruel words. But in the winter of 1971-72 I recognized that Agnew was psychologically and spiritually disabled, so I forgave him. From that moment on, he had no power over me!

We who do value compassion would be more effective in our work against America's fascists if we were to recognize that the people we are organizing against actually are psychologically and spiritually disabled. While we organize against their horrible policies, let's also recognize the humanity of even those people with whom we profoundly disagree. This will allow us to work productively instead of bogging down in reciprocal anger.

The American people are not stupid.

Despite what some people say, let's not fall into the trap of thinking that the American people are stupid. That is a self-defeating trap – a false assumption prevents us from reaching out to people and building a grassroots movement for solving problems and making progress.

Fish do not have a concept of water because they are so immersed in water that they don't even notice it. Likewise, we are so immersed in a culture of corruption, lies, injustice, oppression and violence that many people do not notice these pervasive baseline contexts for our daily lives in our society. We need to pay special attention in order to recognize the systemic problems. Mainstream news media and mainstream politicians do not alert us to these realities. That task is the responsibility of the people reading this essay. Then – if we want something better – we must specifically

organize to solve the problems and create good solutions. That's what the rest of this essay is about.

If we treat people as if they were stupid – and speak condescendingly to them or about them – we push them away rather than bring them together into solidarity to solve the underlying problems.

Instead of falling into the trap of thinking that the American people are stupid, let's reach out to people and provide good information and encouragement so we can organize the grassroots so people can figure things out and move ahead. If we show people that we trust them to take positive actions, we empower them to join with us in solving our nation's crisis. The rest of this article suggests ways to help people create solutions.

Huge public protests and resistance against Trumpism show that the public is ready to take action.

- Millions of women and others protested in the streets on the day after the inauguration.
- Millions of people have protested in various other ways before and after that.
- Many local and state governments and colleges have become “sanctuaries” that will refuse to obey anti-immigrant orders.
- Unprecedented numbers of people have phoned U.S. senators to oppose the appointments of grossly unqualified and corrupt nominees.

The list of public resistance goes on and on. These prove that the American people recognize the extreme dangers of fascist policies and horrible corruption and abuse targeting people, our environment, and democracy itself.

James Zogby, a savvy political analyst, recently said, **“The will to resist is greater than the will to repress.”**

The actress America Ferrera told a Women’s March audience, “Trump is not America.... **We** are America!”

“Dictators are never as strong as they tell you they are. People are never as weak as they think they are.”

This is the wise message from Gene Sharp, the world’s best researcher on the power of nonviolence and how to use nonviolence to remove dictators from power.

This is what we must understand in order to refuse to be intimidated by Trumpism – and in order to organize vigorous nonviolent grassroots movements to resist Trumpism and create real solutions to our nation’s real problems. See resource information at the website of Gene Sharp’s non-profit organization, www.aeinstein.org.

Trump campaigned against “crony capitalism.” But he appointed many crony capitalists to positions of power. The American people hate such hypocrisy. We can help the American people recognize and oppose Trump’s hypocrisy and corruption. Indeed, Trump’s conflicts of interest could be his Achilles heel. See www.tinyurl.com/zwdqdhw

People in other nations have exposed their oppressors’ corruption and used this as great leverage to remove them from office. We can do that in the USA too.

Use smarter insights for understanding “populism.”

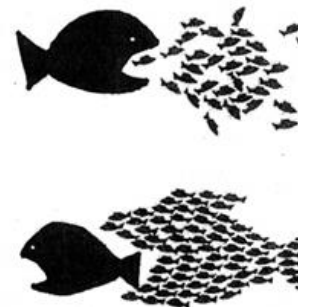
Trump campaigned as if he were a grassroots reformer seeking to disrupt the corrupt elitists and return our government to serving ordinary people. Mainstream news media and some other people fell for this shtick and kept calling Trump a “populist” – as if this billionaire elitist were really on the side of ordinary people. That image, of course, was a deliberate lie.

Political writer John Judis wrote in his book *The Populist Explosion* that populism attracts people when mainstream political parties let problems fester. Growing populism is a warning sign that a political crisis is brewing.

John Judis distinguishes between two very different kinds of populists. He wrote that **right-wing populists** bring people together against an elite that they accuse of coddling a third group that they think does not deserve support and should be kept down. **Right-wing populists** pick on vulnerable populations instead of directly confronting the elites that oppress all of us. They

whip up resentment. However, **left-wing populists** bring people together to oppose elites or the establishment above them. We need to promote this kind of populism to counter the phony right-wing exploitation that the right wing misrepresents as “populism.”

Many politicians do indeed use a “divide and conquer” strategy to pit people against each other in order to benefit those politicians. When people share a common crisis, we do come together (*e.g.*, organize sandbagging during a flood). But when **diverse** people come together, the power structure feels threatened, so the power structure wants to divide and conquer.



After protesting Trump in reactive ways, now let's get proactive.
Let's build progressive movements for what we want instead.

The anti-Trump Women's March on Saturday January 21, 2017, was the biggest inaugural day protest – and one of the biggest protest events on any issue – ever in U.S. history. We made our point clearly. But now what?

Trump's method of bullying includes saying and doing outrageous things that position him as the top news item every day. **This keeps him in charge and puts us on the defensive, reacting to his nasty tweets and provocations. If all we do is protest, we stay in the reactive mode, and he stays in control.**

As time goes on, will the numbers of protesters decline, and will Trump's fascist bullying become the new status quo? Will his corruption, fascism and oppression become “normalized”? Some liberals are already saying that we should simply play defense for the next four years and hope to elect someone better in 2020.

We can do better than merely protest or wait for the next election! We ourselves must seize the initiative NOW by asserting OUR OWN AGENDA of positive

changes we want to accomplish. If we take the proactive initiative, we can make the government, big business, mainstream media, and other parts of the establishment respond to our demands. **Let's activate the old saying, “the best defense is a good offense.”**

Most Americans already support many of our goals, (*e.g.*, get big money out of politics, significantly raise the minimum wage, protect women's rights and LGBTQ rights, protect the environment, etc.). Let's organize vigorous non-violent campaigns and movements for goals that build upon our nation's best values and majority public opinion. If we do that, we can overwhelm Trumpism with popular democracy and a truly progressive proactive agenda.

To make this progress, we must be strategically savvy and scrupulously nonviolent so we can bring millions more people – including newly awakened people of all ages – into our grassroots movements. **For information, inspiration and resources, see the resources listed near the end of this essay or ask me to send information to you by e-mail.**

Instead of being reactive, we must get proactive!
Set bold goals. Act in strategically smart, nonviolent ways.

The article at www.tinyurl.com/y9sl23kc asserts that we must mobilize in ways that actually **build power** to confront the unjust power. Public opinion polls show that majorities of Americans want progressive goals. We must organize to **build power** to achieve them.

Instead of being defensive and timid, **now is the time to be bold** – to demand huge immediate changes. **Here are three examples of timidity** that limit our ability to promote bold solutions that could actually solve problems:

- Obama's energy policy was “all of the above.” His policy was to promote renewables, but also to support nuclear power, fracking, pipelines, etc. He tried to curry favor with dirty energy industries at the same time as he publicly claimed to care about the climate. Now Trump is in power and he has entirely focused on only one side. Trump has antagonized people who care about the environment and climate. Climate expert Bill McKibben (founder of 350.org) has written, “Trump has pissed people off, and pissed-off people don't ask for small and easy progress. They demand the shifts that reality requires.” Obama was far too timid. In contrast to Obama's “all of the above” energy policy, we must move all to the good side.

- Republicans are trying to destroy Obamacare, so Democrats and many liberal groups have been rallying people to protect it. That is not nearly enough. Now is the time for us to leapfrog over Obamacare and organize massive, strong grassroots pressure for the real solution – universal single-payer! This would rally huge public energy for solving the health care problems and put Republicans (and Establishment Democrats) on the defensive.
- Some Democrats have introduced Congressional legislation to raise the federal minimum wage to \$15, but their legislation would phase it in slowly until 2024. We need a \$15/hour minimum wage now, without waiting until 2024. Timidly waiting will not attract people. We need to build a powerful grassroots movement for economic justice now. A bold, prompt goal will inspire people to join this movement!

Much of the protest against Trumpism is merely reactive and/or symbolic. We must organize in ways not merely symbolic, but in ways to **build grassroots power for a movement to change power relationships** in our nation.

I think of Archimedes, the ancient Greek engineer who said, “Give me a place to stand, and I shall move the world.”

That's how I see political organizing. Let's see the big picture, devise a big lever, and choose where to place the fulcrum. Actually, to solve the different big problems, we'll need several different fulcrums and levers. But we can do it! **Here are two examples of what we need:**

1. Recently more people have started to see the bigger picture and think more boldly, as the essay you're reading now urges. For example, Sarah Jaffe interviewed organizer James Hayes for an article she published for Truthout (www.truth-out.org) on May 26, 2017, titled, "Beyond Reactive Politics: Working Toward the Wholesale Reorganization of Society." Consider the article posted at www.tinyurl.com/ya8mhx7v. This excerpt from the middle of the article says a lot: "After the election it became even harder to have that space because of how pressing everything was. Then, after the inauguration, Trump starts signing all these executive orders one after the other and we saw people jumping into the streets. ... But this question of 'How do we actually move forward?' isn't really being addressed." James Hayes works with the Ayni Institute, which conducts savvy trainings in organizing progressive movements. See information at www.ayni.institute/splash?splash=1#
2. "America Needs a New Poor People's Campaign." The Rev. Dr. William J. Barber II, leader of North Carolina's progressive "Moral Mondays" movement, wrote an article published May 16, 2017, by

ThinkProgress (www.tinyurl.com/y9be7uyp) and republished by Common Dreams (www.tinyurl.com/y7mcxgeo). His article said, "Fifty years ago, Dr. Martin Luther King called for a 'revolution of values' in America, inviting people who had been divided to stand together against the 'triplets of evil' — militarism, racism, and economic injustice — to insist that people need not die from poverty in the richest nation to ever exist. Poor people in communities across America — black, white, brown and Native — responded by building a Poor People's Campaign that would demand a Marshall Plan for America's poor." Rev. Barber is helping to organize a new Poor People's Campaign.

Rev. Barber's article includes this: "What began with an outcry in North Carolina became a sustained movement for political change through moral, fusion organizing, led by poor and impacted people. Throughout America's history — from abolition, to women's suffrage, to labor and civil rights — real social change has come when impacted people have joined hands with allies of good will to stand together against injustice. These movements did not simply stand against partisan foes. They stood for the deep moral center of our Constitutional and faith traditions. Those deep wells sustained poor and impacted people who knew in their bones both that power concedes nothing without a fight and that, in the end, love is the greatest power to sustain a fight for what is right."

Political progress comes only from grassroots movements, not as gifts from the top down.

Oppressors like to bully and overwhelm people from the top down in order to weaken our will to resist. Instead of yielding to despair, let's empower ourselves and recognize that political and social progress always comes from movements organized at the grassroots, NOT as gifts from the top down.

Women won the right to vote by grassroots organizing. Workers won labor rights by grassroots organizing. Likewise the environmental movement, and Civil Rights movement, the LGBTQ movement, and so forth. It was the Civil Rights Movement's grassroots organizing and nonviolent

strength that convinced Congress to pass major civil rights laws in 1964 and 1965.

Also, the Civil Rights Movement produced strong ripple effects for other emerging movements. It provided significant inspiration, insight, empowerment, skills, and volunteers for other strong grassroots movements such as the peace movement, the women's rights movement, and the environmental movement. Movements learn and build from each other. This is explained very clearly in the 2016 book *This Is an Uprising* by Mark Engler and Paul Engler. (Also see their website, www.thisisanuprising.org)

Democracy is 5% voting and 95% nonviolent grassroots organizing.

Although many people assume that voting is the heart of democracy, and voting is how we choose our country's direction, actually voting is only about 5% of democracy, while 95% of democracy is community organizing and building grassroots movements.

This organizing must be nonviolent.

Typically people organize at the grassroots to urge a powerholder (in government or business or elsewhere) to do something different from what they are doing now. But the

powerholder is not really our first focus. Really, the first step is to communicate with the general public so we can build a powerful grassroots people-power movement. We alert the general public to the issue, get them to pay attention, to learn, and to understand the problems and solutions. Only then can we mobilize enough grassroots people-power to persuade – or nonviolently force – the powerholders to do what we want.

In order to reach a broad range of people, we must be credible and trustworthy. We must welcome ordinary people to join with us. This requires that we be nonviolent.

Working nonviolently also creates a safe space so people will feel safe in joining with us, including people who are totally new to our movements. If a new person is afraid that violence – or danger or even extreme rudeness – will occur,

they will not join with us. We need to welcome larger numbers of people and all ages and ability levels into our movements in order to achieve our goals. When we organize effective activities that are nonviolent and safe, more people will join with us.

Nonviolence is not weakness. Rather, it is a different kind of strength. Also, nonviolence means much more than simply not hitting someone or not fighting. **Really, nonviolence is a different way to build power – and it is more effective than the heavy-handed kinds of power we commonly see.** Many people think that heavy-handed power (political or military) is the only kind of power there is. But nonviolence is a different kind of power, and it is actually stronger than the heavy-handed kind.

Take the moral high ground. Be scrupulously nonviolent.

Trump and the right wing gained power by making people feel afraid and angry. If protesters against Trump use violence – or even tactics that can be misrepresented or misunderstood as violent – they feed into the very same fear and anger that empowered the right-wing forces of repression. Violent protest frightens the public into wanting to militarize the police, increase surveillance of dissidents, violate our First Amendment rights to speech and assembly, and add to further polarization and repression.

Whatever methods or tactics we use are actually laying the foundation for the new society we are creating. If we want a society that respects every person's human dignity, then **we** must respect every person's human dignity. If we want a society in which all kinds of people feel safe, then **we** must use methods and tactics that allow all kinds of people to feel safe. **Scrupulous nonviolence helps lay the foundation for a humane and nonviolent new society.**

Mohandas Gandhi and Martin Luther King taught and practiced ways to make this progress. Martin Luther King wrote this:

“The ultimate weakness of violence is that it is a descending spiral, begetting the very thing it seeks to destroy. Instead of diminishing evil, it multiplies it. Through violence you murder the hater, but you do not murder hate. In fact, violence merely increases hate.... Returning violence for violence multiplies violence, adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars. Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.”

We must practice what we preach! When our organizing is scrupulously nonviolent it is safe and welcoming for all kinds of people – children, old people, people with disabilities, people who are brand new to our movement, etc. – so we are laying the foundation for a safe and inclusive new society in which everyone is welcome.

Resist vigorously, but always nonviolently.

Several times in this essay I have emphasized that **profound and strategic nonviolence is practical, effective and necessary** for achieving our goals. Nonviolence is not weakness. **Nonviolence is a different kind of strength.** These points deserve emphasis again.

Oppressors expect people to roll over and submit to their oppression. But when we resist nonviolently – and preferably also with creativity and wit – we undermine and weaken the oppressors' power. The late author Jonathan Schell wrote in *The Unconquerable World*, his 2003 book about the power and effectiveness of nonviolent action, **“Violence**

is the method by which the ruthless few can subdue the passive many. Nonviolence is a means by which the active many can overcome the ruthless few.”

A number of persons and organizations have urged resistance to Trumpism, but not all of them have insisted on resisting nonviolently. Resistance that uses violence – or methods that can be misrepresented or misrepresented as violence – plays into the oppressor's propaganda that their oppression is necessary in order to protect society from “terrorism.” But scrupulous nonviolence takes away the oppressor's propaganda claim.

An article urges us to make ourselves “ungovernable” in 2017: www.tinyurl.com/hgfhy2j This article says many very smart things and offers much good advice, but it neglects to mention nonviolence as an absolutely necessary factor in our goals or our methods.

A new non-profit organization – Refuse Fascism (www.refusefascism.org) – arose to vigorously expose the fascism that Trump is imposing upon our nation – and to

organize massive resistance to it. I’ve been reading various parts of their website and have not been seeing a clear call (let alone strategic emphasis) for absolute **nonviolence**. Committing to scrupulous nonviolence would strengthen our resistance to fascism.

Kazu Haga, a savvy young organizer and trainer, explains why **not** to use any violence when opposing Trump: www.tinyurl.com/zyc327s

Nonviolence works against Nazis and other extremely brutal dictators.

Many people assume that nonviolence works only against oppressors that are not very nasty, but that nonviolence is not strong and effective enough to use against brutal dictators or Nazis. People commonly ask, “What about Hitler?”

Actually, history shows that nonviolence has been very powerful and effective in many brutal settings, including during the Nazi era. After World War II, people discovered documentation of communications among Nazi leaders expressing their utter frustration at being unable to stop the nonviolent resistance efforts and dominate the people they wanted to dominate. The Nazis knew how to fight back against violent resistance, but they were utterly flummoxed by resolutely nonviolent resistance. For example, when

Norway’s teachers refused to teach Nazi propaganda in the schools, the Nazis could not figure out a way to force them to do so.

Many, many other examples occurred in other settings, including South Africa during the apartheid era. Recently the Lutheran Peace Fellowship’s Glen Gersmehl and some other people created a list of 160 examples of nonviolent action throughout history – including a great many examples of people using nonviolence in settings of extreme violence.

Indeed, nonviolence is a radical, creative alternative to merely “fight or flight,” which we have been taught are our only two options. Nonviolence gives us a better – and more powerful – alternative!

Withdraw consent.

Thomas Jefferson recognized that “we the people” create the government – and “we the people” can change or even replace the government.

Likewise, Gene Sharp’s research (www.aeinstein.org) shows that powerful oppressors lose their power when people refuse to obey them – or at least withdraw their consent from them. Therefore, an important part of Gene Sharp’s advice is to **figure out how people can nonviolently withdraw their consent from oppressors.**

The American people worry that the Trumpist/Republican government will increase oppression, social and economic injustice, environmental abuse, and political corruption. To protect ourselves from these problems, let’s look for ways to withdraw our consent from oppressors at governmental levels – and also from oppressors in the economic sector and in other parts of our society – to weaken oppressors’ power.

Let’s study Gene Sharp’s ideas and figure out the most effective ways to de-legitimize the Trump administration and weaken its power.

Remove the “pillars” that prop up unjust or oppressive systems.

A simple model explains one way to do this. Imagine a Greek or Roman temple with columns holding up a horizontal roof. Imagine that the big horizontal roof is an oppressive system or a specific unjust political or economic practice (e.g., the death penalty, institutional racism, the U.S.’s violent foreign policy, or some kind of environmental abuse).

That specific oppressive system is propped up by a number of pillars – political or economic or cultural interest groups or institutions – social customs or norms – and so forth. First, let’s identify the pillars that prop up the unjust system. Next, for each pillar, let’s devise strategies for how to nonviolently remove or weaken that particular pillar.

Then let's carry out our plans. When we remove or weaken enough pillars, the oppressive top system will collapse.

For example, the death penalty is propped up by "pillars" such as racism, fear of criminals, a psychological need for revenge, politicians who would rather run on "tough-on-crime" platforms rather than solve the underlying problems that lead to crime, and so forth. We could identify additional "pillars" and strategize how to weaken or remove enough of them to cause the death penalty to collapse.

Another example would be to consider Trumpism overall as an oppressive system, or to consider a specific aspect of Trumpism (e.g., Trump's unjust immigration policies or his opposition to women's rights). What are the "pillars" that support that oppression? Identify the pillars. For each pillar, figure out how we could we weaken or remove that particular pillar. Organize at the grassroots to do that.

Each nonviolent grassroots movement working against an unjust or oppressive system can consider how to use the "pillars" model to strategize ways to nonviolently dismantle that particular system.

Wouldn't it be fun to gather with some savvy people and spend a few hours identifying the pillars that support Trumpism – and devising strategies to weaken or remove the pillars that support Trumpism?

Earlier in this essay I explained that the problems we face are caused not by just one politician or by one political party. The problems are systemic and interconnected. But do not let yourself feel overwhelmed. The fact that there are many interconnected problems mean that there are also many points for us to apply leverage, many handles to grab onto, and many ways for us to attack those problems. And for any given problem, we can strategically break each problem down and organize in specific pillar-by-pillar ways to solve the problem.)

Corporate corruption, endless wars, failures to address persistent social and economic injustice, and other problems – all of these are BI-PARTISAN. Therefore, we must change entire SYSTEMS, not simply replace one politician or party with another.

The six long-standing underlying problems I discussed earlier in this essay are not just about individual politicians or individual political parties. Really, these are rooted in big systems of entrenched power and wealth. **So if we want to solve the underlying problems, we need to examine those systems and institutions and figure out how to use non-violent strategies to fix or replace them.**

The U.S. is trapped in a **bipartisan status quo** that maintains the same overall power systems even while it rotates from one party to another every few years. **This partisan game-playing is an electoral illusion of democracy. It distracts people from the underlying persistence of abusive power systems.** Both of the big political parties are corrupt and dysfunctional. Such bipartisanship is part of the problem. Democrats who criticize Republican presidents give a "free pass" when Democratic presidents do the same things. (See the section earlier in this essay about **two big, corrupt and dysfunctional political parties.**)

To move forward, we must stop letting rich people and big business and the military-industrial complex dominate public policy altogether – not only when Republicans do it. **The problems are not so much partisan, but really more systemic with top-down wealth and power preventing bottom-up democracy!**

Efforts within the Democratic Party to reform it to become progressive have been beaten down by the Democratic Party's institutional insiders and corporate funders for decades. On February 25, 2017, they prevented progressive Keith Ellison from serving as chair of the Democratic National Committee. In the autumn the DNC purged some of Bernie Sanders' supporters from national party roles.

Can we use the tragic 2016 election results as a wake-up call to the underlying problems that have been hurting the U.S. for a very long time? **Instead of merely cycling from one party to another, can we focus on the underlying problems and really change the systems?**

When the federal government is negligent, state and local governments can lead the way.

Historically, the federal government has always been slow to make progress. The states have always been the experimenters and "incubators" of new ideas. After several states have shown that a new idea is workable, it becomes

politically feasible for the federal government to consider it. This is how we have made progress on a number of progressive issues. This has been happening in recent years, with local and state governments taking actions to advance

LGBTQ rights, protect the climate, raise the minimum wage, and so forth.

Now that the federal government is moving backward, local and state-level organizing and actions are even more important. Decades ago, House Majority Leader Tip O’Neill famously said, “All politics is local.” This is where we have the best access to elected officials and administrative employees. This is where people-power engagement counts more than big money campaign donations. This is where we can organize ourselves in face-to-face working relationships that build and build and build until we win.

In 1850 when Congress passed the Fugitive Slave Act that required people to help federal agents seize slaves and

return them to their owners, decent people refused to do that and instead helped slaves escape to freedom. That spirit is still alive with the 1980s Sanctuary Movement that protected Central American refugees and the new Sanctuary Cities movement in which local governments, colleges, and states are refusing to help the federal government deport immigrants who lack documentation.

In what additional ways could we urge our local and state governments to resist the federal government’s new oppression and work positively for democracy, human rights, the environment, and other worthy goals?

Urge mainstream media to expose bullying, biases and lies. Promote truth.

On pages 5-6 the section titled **Corporate-owned news media and the dumbing-down of America** summarizes that problem. We need to solve the problem in several ways.

First, in every possible way we must expose the bullying that exists and demand that all bullying stop right now!

Second, we must expose the lies and counter them with the truth.

Third, we must expose the Trumpists’ contempt for honest journalism as a strategy that fascists use, and we must affirm the absolute necessity of honest journalism for protecting democracy and a free society.

Fourth, we must expose Trump’s “tweets” and other outbursts as a form of bullying that interferes with thoughtful public discourse. He uses Twitter very heavily to throw rhetorical grenades and keep on the attack (and sucker everybody else into being merely reactive so he can stay on the attack). **Let’s not get suckered into his outbursts. Let’s encourage mainstream media and the general public to utterly disregard all of his tweets.**

Trump seems utterly incapable of well-reasoned thought. **Let’s train him by refusing to pay attention to his outbursts and say we’ll deal only with carefully reasoned position papers.** Then if he and his advisors want us to think about something they’ll have to reason it out clearly so we can have a grownup discussion about it.

Exposes right-wing Christianity as the opposite of what Jesus taught and practiced.

See underlying problem #6 on pages 7-8. Jesus’ actual teaching and practice are grounded in values that are profoundly faithful and humane and inclusive, rather than narrow or commercial or nationalistic.

He lived in a society that practiced discrimination against people who were deemed less worthy (women, foreigners, the poor, the disabled, etc.). **Jesus repeatedly broke down the social barriers and welcomed all people** into the new society he was building. When right-wing Christianity opposes equal rights for women and LGBTQ people, and when it supports the rich against the poor, and when it fails to protect the natural environment (which God created and called “good”), right-wing Christianity is violating Jesus’ clear teaching and practice.

The best modern Biblical scholars (*e.g.*, Walter Wink, Marcus Borg, and scholars in the “Jesus Seminar” movement) have written books that lift up the authentic message

of Jesus. One of Jesus’ major goals was to confront social injustices and the “conventional wisdom” that discriminated against marginalized people. He vigorously promoted equal human value for everyone – an inclusive and egalitarian society with nonviolence, forgiveness, economic justice, etc.

One good strategy for opposing Trumpism would be for people who understand and support Jesus’ authentic message to show how Trumpism and the Republican Party violate what Jesus taught and practiced.

Anyone who prioritizes racism or nationalism or commercialism above these better values is practicing idolatry and violating Jesus’ teaching and practice. Actions speak louder than words, so even if they claim to be Christian, Jesus said, “By their fruits you will know them.”

On pages 7-8 I discussed the collusion between the Republican Party and right-wing Christianity since the 1970s,

when each started influencing and corrupting each other. When the Republican Party moved toward the right wing it found they could recruit people from the “culture wars” part of right-wing Christianity into becoming Republicans. Likewise, those religious people used the Republican Party to achieve their “culture wars” goals. Each of these entities carried its baggage into the relationship, so each corrupted the other.

This collusion between right-wing politicians and right-wing religion shows thoughtful Americans why we

must protect the constitutional separation of church and state. Real historians have clearly disproved the mistaken notion that our nation’s founders wanted to create a “Christian nation,” but some people want to blur this distinction. I highly recommend the work of Americans United for the Separation of Church and State (www.au.org).

The Republican Party (and increasingly the Democratic Party too) serve the interests of big business and rich people. American Christians must take seriously Jesus’ statement, “You cannot serve both God and money.”

Trump is a NARCISSIST and a SOCIOPATH. This combination directly threatens the world’s survival.

Here is what makes Trump especially dangerous. He is a psychiatrically disabled narcissist who does everything to build his own ego and wealth. **He has been criticized for everything he has done – except the only thing that Democrats and news media praised him for was dropping the largest non-nuclear bomb in history on Afghanistan in April 2017!** This is the only thing that has given his malignant ego any positive reinforcement. People praised him for being “presidential” by using extreme military violence against a weak nation.

The narcissist has learned his lesson: the way to become popular – and feed his fragile ego – is to use even more military violence against weak nations. Why not threaten North Korea with war, including nuclear weapons?

None of this is about a sensible foreign policy! It is all about a psychiatrically disabled narcissist’s ego. He discovered that the only way he gets positive reinforcement is to use extreme military violence!

We need the peace movement now more than ever!

Strengthen our skills for working on issues.

Throughout this essay, we can see the need to strengthen our skills for working on the issues. Most of us would benefit from deepening our grounding in the theory and practice of profound nonviolence. Most of us could use better skills for organizing and strategizing. We could use better skills for communicating with people on each side of an issue (and the middle-of-the-road people who are not yet on our side).

Let’s tap into our own most humane values. Let’s help other people (those on our side, in the middle, and on the other side) tap into their own most humane values.

Let’s empower people to have confidence that they can indeed solve huge problems. Let’s help people develop better skills for organizing and advocating to make our society better. We can make progress in how we live our daily lives (doing what’s right, so we can “live the new society into being”). Also, we can make progress in how we work with other people and the media and social institutions and political systems provide leverage to improve public policies.

Yes, we really can do this! See page 29 for information about the “Nonviolent Grassroots Organizing” workshops I’m offering.

A great many excellent resources exist. Study and use them.

We can learn from history within the U.S. and from the experiences of people in other nations who have nonviolently overthrown repressive governments.

The basic principles and strategies are universal, and each population can adapt them to their own specific setting.

Some resources are mentioned below. Many more are listed at the end of this essay.

I've produced and hosted TV interview programs about nonviolent responses to our nation's current crisis. Watch them and read summaries of at the Olympia Fellowship of Reconciliation's website www.olympiafor.org and at my new blog, www.parallaxperspectives.org, which also provides more information and resources for understanding the crisis and taking positive actions.

- The first step in dealing with the dangerous time ahead is to really understand voters (and not get stuck simply fearing and blaming them). The Olympia Fellowship of Reconciliation's **December 2016** TV program, "**Healing from Political Blame, Shame, and Trauma**," offers significant help in understanding – and healing from – the traumatic 2016 election season so we can move ahead more humanely and effectively. You can watch it and/or read a thorough summary (in Word format) at the "**TV Programs**" part of www.olympiafor.org and at relevant issue categories at www.parallaxperspectives.org
- For "where-do-we-go-from-here" insights and strategies, watch the Olympia Fellowship of Reconciliation's **January 2017** TV program, "**Nonviolent Grassroots Remedies for Our Current Crisis**." Each of our TV guests and our host has half a century of experience working with the kinds of insights and strategies described in the essay you're reading now. You can watch this program – and/or read a thorough summary in .pdf format (or a very brief Word resource) – at the "**TV Programs**" part of www.olympiafor.org and at relevant issue categories at www.parallaxperspectives.org
- Our **March 2017** TV program, "**Protect America's Best Values from Attack**" helps people recognize, affirm and protect our nation's best values, which are being attacked now. Instead of cowering in fear, we can establish the moral high ground as real Americans who are protecting our nation's best values. Our diverse guests offer positive insights and encouragement. This would be a great program to share with people across the political spectrum, including middle-of-the-road and thoughtful conservative people. You can watch this program – and/or read a thorough summary in Word format – at the "**TV Programs**" part of www.olympiafor.org and at relevant issue categories at www.parallaxperspectives.org
- Some of our previous TV programs also have focused on nonviolence and/or grassroots organizing. Scroll down on the "TV Programs" part of www.olympiafor.org and click on the links for the programs that interest you, and look at relevant issue categories at www.parallaxperspectives.org for TV programs and other information resources.
- I encourage you to organize opportunities for me to present my 6-session series of interactive workshops (with many great handouts) on "Nonviolent Grassroots Organizing." See page 29 of this essay or www.parallaxperspectives.org or contact me at (360) 491-9093 glenanderson@integra.net

Bold organizing (see above) is what we really need.

Removing Trump also is necessary, but that is only one part of our agenda.

Many pundits lambaste Trump for hurting our nation in many ways: www.tinyurl.com/yeltru35

The British Amnesty International branch lists 10 ways Trump has threatened human rights: www.tinyurl.com/yev5fwhf

Trump repeatedly violattee the separation of church and state in his first 100 days: www.tinyurl.com/y7rv4gse

The movement to impeach Trump is growing:

- By October 2017 more than one million persons had signed a petition to impeach Trump.
- See info and organizing resources – including city council resolutions – at www.impeachdonaldtrumpnow.org

- U.S. Rep. Al Green (D-TX) was the first Member of Congress to speak on the House floor in support of impeachment.

An article promoting impeachment urged us to ground ourselves in opposition to "Trumpism" and the Republican Party's agenda, not simply focus on impeaching one person. On May 19, 2017, Truthdig (www.tinyurl.com/y929rgyv) posted an article by Sonali Kolhatkar, which Common Dreams picked up too: www.tinyurl.com/yckrp4at The article said "Trump is carrying out the GOP's wish list of cruel policies." The article urged the impeachment movement to oppose "the Republican Party's increasing reliance on white supremacy and military supremacy as a framework for its political power." It opposed "reviving Cold War-era rhetoric against Russia" and said, "What is playing out is an

internal battle between various branches of government over a brazen and unpredictable spoiled child with too much power.”

A week before Trump’s May 2017 international trip, the respected German periodical *Der Spiegel* published an editorial titled, “It’s Time to Get Rid of Donald Trump.” It stated, “Donald Trump has transformed the United States into a laughing stock and he is a danger to the world. He must be removed from the White House before things get even worse.” It’s at www.tinyurl.com/lnajo6o. The article identified “five theoretical solutions” to the problem and dismisses the first three as very unlikely and the fourth as too far into the future before settling upon the fifth theoretical solution:

1. Trump resigns: Won’t happen.
2. Impeachment: Won’t happen “because of the Republican thirst for power.”
3. 25th Amendment – cabinet removes Trump: Won’t happen.
4. Democrats take over both houses of Congress and impeach: 18 months away.
5. The editorial settled upon **the 5th theoretical solution**: “[T]he international community wakes up and finds a way to circumvent the White House and free itself of its dependence on the U.S. Unlike the preceding four options, the

fifth doesn’t directly solve the Trump problem, but it is nevertheless necessary - and possible.”

As Trump marginalizes himself, pulls out of the Paris climate deal (now making the U.S. the world’s only nation to rebuff it), and takes other reckless actions to make the U.S. a rogue nation, the rest of the world is moving ahead and leaving Trump’s U.S. isolated from modern civilization. They are giving the arrogant U.S. its long-overdue comeuppance, as discussed several pages earlier in this essay.

Naomi Klein lays out a creative and possibly very effective way to undermine Trump’s power. She suggests that – since everything he does is focused on his ego and making money – people can take creative actions to undermine those. Watch her 7 ½-minute video at www.tinyurl.com/kg4mysk

June 14, 2017, was a nationwide day to **BOYCOTT Trump-related businesses**: <http://bringhimdown.org>

Beware of a Deep State “soft coup” against Trump and Russia. Robert Parry has written with great knowledge and insight into the recently worsening relations between the U.S. and Russia. In this article he warns us of the danger of buying into a “soft coup” by the Deep State: www.tinyurl.com/ycj86kl9

Many petitions opposing Trump and Trumpism are available for you to sign at www.tinyurl.com/ycfur6do

Remove Trump through impeachment or the Constitution’s 25th Amendment.

Trump is violating the U.S. Constitution and breaking federal laws.

Since day one, Trump has violated the domestic and foreign emoluments clauses of the Constitution. This means he exploited his office in order to make money for his own personal profit.

More recent impeachable offenses have included obstruction of justice, incitement of violence, interference with voting rights, discrimination based on religion, illegally threatening nuclear war, and abuse of pardon power.

He keeps showing contempt for the truth, contempt for honest journalism, contempt for the rule of law, contempt for honest government, contempt for human rights, and contempt for our environment and climate.

Every day that comes along is one more day when this extremely crooked politician is destroying our nation – and one more day when this psychiatrically disabled extremist could recklessly launch nuclear weapons.

We cannot wait for the 2020 election. We cannot wait for the Trump presidency to self-destruct.

Trump shows the emotional immaturity of a 3-year-old. We would not let a 3-year-old play with a loaded gun. We would take the gun away so the child can’t hurt anyone. We need to take Trump’s power away.

The U.S. Constitution provides two explicit remedies for what Trump has been doing: impeachment or removal through the 25th Amendment.

But let’s not get stuck focusing **only** on Trump, because he is a symptom – an end product – of several worsening systemic problems, as described on pages 2-8 of this essay.

We see evidence of deeper problems everywhere. For example, during an anti-inaugural rally, Naomi Klein said the Trump regime represents a “corporate coup d’état.” She said, “What is happening under our noses is not a transition; it is a takeover of the federal government by corporatism.” She called for bold action.

Let’s not allow the current incumbent to skew our sense of what we really need in a president. It would be good for us to identify the values that we really need in a president (and in our members of Congress) and organize toward fixing our electoral systems so we can elect worthy candidates.

Let's proceed with actually removing him from office because he has been violating the U.S. Constitution, breaking laws, and showing such appalling bad judgment that shows he is mentally and psychologically unfit – and indeed a serious danger to humanity and planet earth.

On September 19, 2017, Trump gave a speech to the United Nations General Assembly. Besides criticizing how the U.N. functions, he also threatened to totally destroy North Korea and kill all of its tens of millions of people. This would make him by far the worst mass murderer in the history of the world – far worse than Pol Pot or Stalin or Hitler. But the U.S. press headlines said his speech was about reforming the U.N. and neglected to say that he proposed genocide.

The U.S. Constitution prohibits a president from using the presidency as a gimmick for his own business purposes. But Trump has done that repeatedly. He holds governmental meetings at his own properties. He makes official decisions with other nations specifically in ways that help his own businesses and his family members' businesses.

For decades he was a con artist who lied to people, cheated people, and defrauded people. Now he is running the U.S. government as a front for his own businesses and his family members' businesses. This is an impeachable offense.

We should impeach Trump, but then we'd get Pence. If we impeach Pence we'd get Ryan. Pages 2-8 of this essay explained that the problem is deeper than any of these politicians and deeper than either of the big political parties. In

order to solve our nation's enormous, persistent problems, we must dig down to the roots. We must uproot the abusive, dysfunctional systems and replace them with ethical and sustainable alternatives that are grounded in our best values. Let's figure out some strategically useful incremental steps to move us ahead.

But let's also immediately remove Trump, who is an immediate danger to the survival of humanity. A growing number of psychologists and psychiatrists are warning us that he is psychologically unfit to govern.

Nearly every decision he makes is evidence that Trump is severely mentally disabled – a sociopath with contempt for the truth, contempt for the rule of law, contempt for other people's humanity, contempt for public health and safety, and contempt for the environment.

He cares only about his own ego and how he can use his position to make more money for himself, his family, and his political and business cronies. He is probably the most blatantly corrupt person ever to live in the White House.

Trump keeps acting like a dictator. He does not understand or respect the Constitutional checks and balances. He issues executive orders to overturn laws passed by Congress, but the Constitution does not give him power to overrule Congress like that. He pardoned the extremely racist Arizona sheriff Joe Arpaio, who had repeatedly defied federal court orders. This shows that Trump has contempt for the rule of law. A legal challenge might show that Trump can't pardon Arpaio after all because Trump is trying to usurp the Court's authority. www.tinyurl.com/y7665qlw

Psychologists and psychiatrists say Trump is a serious danger to the public.

We must remove him from office so he cannot hurt any more people than he has hurt already.

Trump is a serious sociopath who endangers the entire planet. www.tinyurl.com/y9n2savx

A psychiatrically crazy person needs an "intervention."

For someone this crazy – this dishonest – this dangerous – the Constitution provides for an "intervention" through impeachment, and also through the 25th Amendment.

Impeachment begins when the U.S. House of Representatives files charges and holds hearings. Then the U.S. Senate will conduct a trial. The Senate can remove Trump from office.

We should be pushing our House members now to file impeachment charges and hold hearings.

Also, we should be pushing our Senators now to call for the House to do that so the Senate can take prompt action.

We need to understand how impeachment and the 25th Amendment could work in Trump's case – and we need to organize in savvy ways to build grassroots pressure strong enough to compel federal officials to act.

Many, many Americans want to impeach Trump, but Congress is refusing to act. By November 2017 only a few of the House's 435 members had introduced an impeachment resolution or committed to doing so.

More and more prominent individuals and non-profit organizations are calling for impeachment.

Look for information at www.FreeSpeechForPeople.org and www.RootsAction.org and other pro-impeachment organizations.

Robert Mueller seems to be working harder than ever to investigate Trump's sneaky collaborations with Russia to tilt

the 2016 election. Trump has threatened to fire Mueller before he can produce indictments against Trump and his cronies. We must protect this honest investigation from Trump's heavy-handedness and corruption. On October 9, 2017, people nationwide started holding activities supporting this investigation. Get information at www.tinyurl.com/yacp3btd

Some people want to keep Trump in office because he will hurt Republicans in the next election. But that logic is exactly like the cynical partisan game-playing that Republican Senator Mitch McConnell has been doing. McConnell has been screwing the nation for what he cynically thinks

will give his party a partisan advantage. Decent people were correct to denounce McConnell for playing his partisan games at the tragic expense of our nation's well-being. Democrats must not play partisan politics in our current crisis.

Let's inform and mobilize the public to public to remove Trump. Then we can deal with Pence next.

Trump is so extremely reckless that he poses an immediate threat with his finger on the nuclear button and more extremely corrupt appointees than Pence would do. Pence is a right-wing extremist too, but less likely to impulsively blow up the world.

Use the Constitution's 25th Amendment to remove Trump.

The U.S. Constitution includes the 25th Amendment, which allows for the removal of a president who is not able to perform the duties of president. It allows cabinet officials to initiate the process. Many of Trump's cabinet officials know that Trump is crazy and incompetent. The 25th Amendment also allows Congress to remove him without going through the impeachment process.

25th Amendment – Background info:

The 25th Amendment, proposed by Congress and ratified by the states in the aftermath of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, provides the procedures for replacing the president or vice president in the event of death, removal, resignation, or incapacitation. The Watergate scandal of the 1970s saw the application of these procedures, first when Gerald Ford replaced Spiro Agnew as vice president, then when he replaced Richard Nixon as president, and then when Nelson Rockefeller filled the resulting vacancy to become the vice president.

Section 4 says: Whenever the Vice President and a majority of either the principal officers of the executive departments or of such other body as Congress may by law provide, transmit to the President pro tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives their written declaration that the President is unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office, the Vice President shall immediately assume the powers and duties of the office as Acting President.

Closing encouragement.

An ancient Chinese proverb says, "If we do not change our direction, we are likely to end up where we are going." In many ways our nation is heading in the wrong direction. We must urgently organize at the grassroots to change our direction. Such a big radical change will not be a gift from anyone with official power. We must organize from the grassroots -- from the bottom up. In order to be effective, our organizing must be scrupulously nonviolent and strategically savvy.

I believe the U.S. is suffering our greatest existential crisis ever in our nation's history because constitutional democracy – and our human survival – are in severe danger. A narcissistic, grossly ignorant, and psychologically unstable huckster has gained enormous political power. He has appointed ignorant, corrupt, and reckless people to stop the government from serving the American people and protecting our rights and environment. He is actively destroying earth's climate and repeatedly threatening a nuclear war.

In recent years, the American voters have become increasingly angry with the status quo and the politicians who have failed to solve problems. In 2016 many people saw nobody worth voting for. Voters knew both big parties were not serving them. One big party's candidate represented the status quo. The other big party's candidate campaigned against the status quo and provoked anger and fear. Many voters did not recognize the dangers and havoc they were causing by voting for a very angry, ignorant extremist. This candidate lost the popular vote but the Electoral College chose him.

Now we are suffering extreme corruption and serious dangers for human rights, social and economic justice, the environment and climate, and escalating military violence.

These problems compound the already existing problems I mentioned in pages 2-8 above, and they add extreme urgency to our need to solve those long-standing problems.

Public opinion polls show that more and more Americans say they think our nation is on the wrong track. Most Americans do not want the bigotry and corruption that plague our nation. Rather, I believe that most Americans actually have better values, and they can be helped to understand and support peace, compassion, fairness, and honest government.

The problems and solutions are more profound than any major political party or candidate recognizes. I believe that most Americans want a future radically better than either of the big political parties has been offering. Instead of merely replacing one politician or one party with another, we need to organize for more profound changes that will actually solve the serious underlying problems.

The 2016 election gave us lemons, but we can make lemonade! We can use people's heightened awareness of this crisis to organize strategically savvy nonviolent resistance to roll back the worst stuff. And we can dig deeper and organize grassroots movements to mobilize new public opinion to actually turn major things around, create positive solutions, and make progress on what we want instead!

The ancient Greek engineer Archimedes said something about the laws of physics that we can apply toward changing our political culture. What he said translates to something like: "If I stand at the right place and have the right lever, I can move the world."

So instead of letting dread overwhelm and immobilize us, we need to think clearly and devise smart nonviolent strategies for solving the problems and achieving humane and sustainable goals such as peace, human rights for everyone, an economy that is honest and fair for everyone, an environment that is healthy and sustainable, and a society that practices nonviolence and compassion.

To build a bold new future that is honest, humane and sustainable, we must organize strategically savvy nonviolent grassroots movements. Nonviolence is bigger and bolder in vision and in methodology than anything "politics-as-usual" can offer.

Now is the time for us to:

- **Ground ourselves in our best values.**
- **Study the theory and practical uses of nonviolence.**
- **Study how to build powerful nonviolent grassroots movements for social and political change.**
- **Inform and empower large numbers of ordinary people to come together into grassroots movements that will use strategic nonviolence to solve local and national problems.**

Remember and affirm the VALUES you support – and the VALUES supported by ordinary Americans. Reach out to the public. Remind them to act upon their VALUES to save honest American democracy from Trump.

Three great quotations pertain to this crisis:

- Gene Sharp wrote: **"Dictators are never as strong as they tell you they are. People are never as weak as they think they are."**
- Jonathan Schell wrote: **"Violence is the method by which the ruthless few can subdue the passive many. Nonviolence is a means by which the active many can overcome the ruthless few."**
- Joe Hill said: **"Don't mourn. Organize!"**

Please invite me to present my series of 6 workshops on "Nonviolent Grassroots Organizing."
Please see resources on the "Nonviolence" part of www.olympiafor.org and on several parts of my new blog, www.parallaxperspectives.org.

Visit www.olympiafor.org, click the "Nonviolence" link, and scroll down to see many interesting, inspiring and practical resources. Some great resources are under these subheadings:

What Is Nonviolence?

Understanding and Using Nonviolence

Using Nonviolence in the Real World. Many articles are especially timely now. Some people have especially appreciated the .pdf document **"We Can Replace Cynicism and Despair with Empowerment and Hope"**

Also see relevant parts of www.parallaxperspectives.org (**Nonviolence, Organizing, Trump & Trumpism**, etc.).

Books and other writings:

Many, many, many books and resources are excellent for this topic. Here are just a few:

- *Why Civil Resistance Works* by Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan (2011)
- *This is an Uprising* by Mark Engler and Paul Engler (2016) (Also see www.thisisanuprising.org)
- *Doing Democracy: The MAP Model for Organizing Social Movements* by Bill Moyer, JoAnn McAllister, Mary Lou Finley, and Steven Soifer
- *A Force More Powerful* by Peter Ackerman and Jack DuVall – and the DVD/VHS series
- Books and other resources offered (some by simple downloads) by the Albert Einstein Institution, www.aeinstein.org
- Books listed as resources on nonviolence at the Lutheran Peace Fellowship's website. Visit www.lutheranpeace.org. Click the "Resources" link. Then click the "Nonviolence" link.
- Books by and about Mohandas Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr.
- Books, articles and other writings by Michael Nagler and George Lakey
- For more referrals, contact me at (360) 491-9093 glenanderson@integra.net

Non-Profit organizations:

Many non-profit organizations and their websites offer excellent information, insights, and resources. I especially recommend these:

- For decades I have been recommending the amazingly smart resources by Gene Sharp and others at The Albert Einstein Institution: www.aeinstein.org.
- Lutheran Peace Fellowship: Visit www.lutheranpeace.org. Click the "Resources" link. Then click the "Nonviolence" link.
- Nonviolence International: www.nonviolenceinternational.net
- International Center on Nonviolent Conflict: www.nonviolent-conflict.org
- Campaign Nonviolence: www.paceebene.org/programs/campaign-nonviolence
- See "2017.03 Sources of Information," a long list of non-profit organizations and other resources, on the March 2017 listing at the "TV Programs" part of www.olympiafor.org
- For more referrals, contact me at (360) 491-9093 glenanderson@integra.net

Alternative and progressive media sources:

Mainstream media have been failing us for decades. I recommend other sources of accurate news and analysis, including AlterNet, Common Dreams, Democracy Now!, Truthout, Consortium News, Reader Supported News, and CounterPunch.

An excellent non-profit organization that monitors and critiques mainstream media is Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR) at www.fair.org. FAIR publishes a magazine that provides this smart information too.

I am looking for audiences and locations where I can present my inspiring and practical 6-session workshop series on “Nonviolent Grassroots Organizing.”

It starts with a thoughtful grounding in profound nonviolence. It proceeds through the theory and practice of organizing grassroots movements, including strategizing, practical nuts & bolts, and how to get our message out to the public. Each session includes optional handouts to inform and inspire you and provide practical help for your organizing.

Each interactive session could be as short as 90 minutes, but I recommend 2 hours for each session to allow even more interaction. Consider the first 3 sessions on one Saturday and the other 3 on the next Saturday.

I can offer this for free, except a modest reimbursement for copying the printed resources.

Contact me for more information.

Glen Anderson (360) 491-9093 **glenanderson@integra.net**

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