

ORGANIZE TO STOP TRUMPISM AND THE UNDERLYING SYSTEMIC PROBLEMS

by Glen Anderson

Understand what has been happening:

I believe that the United States is experiencing its worst – most existentially dangerous – political crisis since the Civil War.

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. Now many more millions have discovered that he is a psychiatrically disabled flimflam con artist, but he's in the White House with enormous power. People express shock and horror at his behavior, and 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 wrote some articles about these matters and posted them on the “Nonviolence” part of Olympia FOR’s website, www.olympiafor.org. **I highly recommend:**

- **“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.
- **“Our Nation’s Crisis: How We Got into It – And How to Get Out”** – This is a much more thorough version of the 4-page article above. It provides much more substantive information about the causes and solutions. It's in .pdf format only.

Olympia FOR’s December 2016 TV program (“**Healing from Political Blame, Shame, and Trauma**”) provides useful insights into what people were feeling during the 2016 election season. We developed the interview questions before the election and found that we did not need to change the questions at all when

we actually conducted the interview two days after the election. It provides thoughtful and compassionate ways to help us all understand and cope with the feelings people were experience during the campaign season. Visit www.olympiafor.org, click the “TV Programs” link, and scroll down to December 2016. Next to the link for watching the program is a Word document summarizing what our guests said during the interview.

The articles listed in the two bullet points above identify several root causes underlying Trumpism and our nation’s current political crisis. Various writers have examined some of these in depth, including our nation’s history of racism, the abuses of capitalism, the corrupt political parties, and mainstream media’s subservience to political and economic power.

The Deep State, of course, has grown over many decades, regardless of which party in in Congress or the White House. People who blame everything on Trump (or even on Republicans) are missing the big picture.

Removing Trump through impeachment or through the Constitution’s 25th Amendment can remove one immediate danger. But let’s not get stuck focusing only on Trump, when he is a symptom – and an end product – of several worsening systemic problems. We see evidence 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.

We should impeach Trump, but then we’d get Pence. If we impeach Pence we’d get Ryan. 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.

People across the political spectrum are angry and afraid. Let’s recognize and manage our emotions and act on our best ones:

A paragraph in the middle of the section above mentions Olympia FOR’s December 2016 TV program, “**Healing from Political Blame, Shame, and Trauma.**” In order to move ahead from our nation’s current crisis, we need to understand our 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 feel powerless to resist them. (See Naomi Klein’s insightful book *The Shock Doctrine*.) But if we recognize the strategies that the powerful forces are using, 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 frantic reactive activism. (See this article's next three sections.)

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 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.

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 justice and for 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.

After the Olympia FOR's December 2016 TV program ("Healing from Political Blame, Shame, and Trauma") dealt with feelings people were experiencing during the campaign season, we produced three TV programs to help us move ahead:

- 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 our guests said during the interview.

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 the spiritual and practical aspects of nonviolence so we could practice it 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.

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

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

1. 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.” In contrast to Obama’s “all of the above” energy policy, we must move all to one side.

2. 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.

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.

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.

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 article 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 this article: 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. Info: 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/y9be7uvp) 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.

His 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.”

**Bold organizing (see above) is what we really need.
Removing Trump is only one part of our agenda:**

Many pundits lambaste Trump for hurting our nation in many ways: www.tinyurl.com/ycltru35

The British Amnesty International branch lists 10 ways Trump has threatened human rights: www.tinyurl.com/yvc5fwhf

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

The movement to impeach Trump is growing:

- More than one million persons have 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) is 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: 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:

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.

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.”

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 him and making money – people can take creative actions to undermine those. Watch her 7 ½-minute video at www.tinyurl.com/kg4mysk

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 various aspects of Trumpism are available for you to sign at tinyurl.com/ycfur6do

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

NARCISSISM VS. PEACE

It’s the worst possible combination: A right-wing extremist in the White House does many horrible things that antagonize huge majorities of the population and antagonize the other big political party and antagonize the news media.

But there is **one exception**: He uses extreme military violence by dropping the largest non-nuclear bomb in U.S. history, and he attacks a Syrian airfield on the assumption (with highly disputed evidence) that the Syrian government had used chemical weapons.

Here is what makes that one exception especially dangerous. The extremist in the White House 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 this! Democrats and news media have praised him for his**

violent military attacks. This is the **only** thing that has given his sensitive ego any positive reinforcement. People praise him for being “presidential” by using extreme military violence against two weak nations.

The narcissist has learned his lesson: the way to become popular – and feed his sensitive 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 tender ego, and the **only** way he gets positive reinforcement.

We need the peace movement now more than ever!

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.
