

Preparing for the Coming Transformation. Power of the People

"Fighting Racism, Capitalism, Imperialism and Patriarchy"

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The year 2017 has been another active year for people fighting on a wide range of fronts. The Trump administration has brought many issues that have existed for years out into the open where they are more difficult to deny – racism, colonialism, imperialism, capitalism and patriarchy and the crises they create. More people are activated and greater connections between the fronts of struggle are creating a movement of movements. These are positive developments, bright spots in difficult times. They are the seeds of transformative change that we can nurture and grow if we act with intention.

The crises we face have been building for decades. They are reaching a point of extremism that will create an even greater response by people. What that response is, where it goes and what it accomplishes are up to all of us to determine.

The overreach by [the plutocrats in power](#) may bring a boomerang effect, energizing the population to take action and demand the changes we desire and need. We may reach a moment, a turning point, when the movements for economic, racial and environmental justice, as well as peace, can win significant changes, beyond the comfort zones of those in power. The boomerang will only occur if we educate and organize for it, and its size will also depend on us.

We have no illusions that this work will be easy. Those in power will do all that they can to derail, misdirect and suppress our efforts. Our tasks are to resist their tactics and maintain our focus on our end goals. This requires understanding how social movements succeed and being clear in our demands for transformative change.

We see several key areas where people are energized to work for changes that are opportunities to expand the current movement of movements into a powerful force that will overcome the stranglehold by the corporate duopoly parties. This is the first of two articles to help prepare us for the work ahead. In the second article, we will describe these key issues in greater depth and what we need to do to create the transformative moment we need.

The Long Development of this Transformative Era

The era of transformation has been developing over many decades. If we view it through presidential administrations, a frame of reference used commonly in the United States, we see that both major parties represent the interests of the wealthy and corporations, not the majority of the population, and that they effectively divide and weaken popular movements.

After Bill Clinton's administration loosened regulations on finance, setting the stage for the 2008 crash, brought in trade agreements like NAFTA and weakened the social safety net, and George W. Bush's administration expanded military aggression around the world and the domestic security state, as well as further enriching the wealthy, people were hungry for change. Barack Obama effectively built his 'hope and change' campaign around this desire, vaguely but eloquently promising what people wanted. His words allowed people to imagine that a transformation was coming.

Obama raised expectations, but he did not fulfill them. His cabinet was made up of Wall Streeters from Citigroup. He continued and expanded foreign wars, the wealth divide grew and tens of millions went without healthcare even after his private insurance-based Affordable Care Act became law. The frustration that had been building during the Clinton-Bush years burst onto the scene with Occupy, Fight for \$15, Black Lives Matter, debt resistance, immigration reform, Idle No More and other fronts of struggle.

After Occupy, the media told us the people's struggle went away, but, as we show in the daily movement news reporting on Popular Resistance, all of those struggles expanded. The corporate media's failure to cover the national mass protest movement does not change reality — the resistance movements continue, are growing and are impacting popular opinion and policies.



Where We Are and What We Must Do

In 2013, we wrote a two part series describing the status of the movement and what the movement must do. In the December 2013 article, [Closer than We Think](#), we described the eight stages of social movements, an analysis by long-time civil rights and anti-nuclear activist, Bill Moyer. The movement had gone through the "Take-Off", Stage Four of the social movement when encampments covered the country, seemingly overnight, and brought the issues of the wealth divide, racist policing, climate change, student debt and other issues to the forefront. The meme of the 99% against the 1% illustrated the conflict between people power and the power holders. We passed through Stage Five, "the Landing," where the encampments disappeared and people asked, "What happened? Did we accomplish anything?"

Our [second article in January 2014 focused on the tasks of the movement](#) and explained

that we were now in Stage Six, the final stage before victory. This is a long-term phase that could last years where the goal is to build broad national consensus of 70% to 90% support among the public for the goals of the movement and to mobilize people as effective change agents.

During this phase, the contradictions in the system become more obvious to people. For example, as the United States and world experience the harsh realities of climate change in massive storms, widespread fires, droughts and famine, the government's response is inadequate. When Obama was president his administration was an anchor on the world, weakening international climate and trade agreements. His secretary of state, Hillary Clinton, used her influence to promote fracking. The Trump administration has gone further, denying climate change, erasing words and phrases that describe it from government reports, silencing scientists and undermining the inadequate steps made to confront climate change that were put in place in the Obama era.

The inadequate response to the climate crisis is one example of many multiple crisis situations that exist in which the government does not respond, responds inadequately or even takes actions that make these crises worse. In some cases, the power holders go too far, as we see in the [recently passed tax bill](#), designed to protect the donor class, and in abusive police practices as the racism and violence of our society are exposed. The overreaction, in the end helps build the national consensus we need to achieve our objectives.

The contradictions arise because there are obvious solutions to each crisis we face, but those in power refuse to put them in place. National consensus for these solutions grows during this phase, and the failures of the money-dominated political system become more obvious.

As a result, a transformative moment is building now. It can be seen in the 2016 presidential campaigns where people showed frustration with both corporate parties. Electoral challenges inside the parties showed populist anger based on hundreds of millions of people struggling every day to survive in an unfair economy. Donald Trump built his campaign around economic insecurity from the right and Senator Bernie Sanders did the same from the left. Now, Trump is betraying conservative populists with economic and healthcare policies that add to their insecurity and with the wealthiest cabinet in US history, serving the interests of Wall Street, the [self-interest of elected officials](#) and adding to the distrust of the DC duopoly. The realization of Trump's betrayal is only beginning to show itself in the lives of those who supported him.

The Democrats have been struggling to come to grips with how they lost to Donald Trump. A large part of the party is in denial, blaming their failures on [the fiction of Russiagate](#) — claiming the Russians were responsible for their loss rather than a widely-disliked candidate who represented Wall Street and war for her entire career. The Democrats continue their internal divide: the divide between Wall Street donors who want the party to serve their interests and voters who want the party to represent their interests. Invariably the Democrats will be unable to turn their backs on their donors and will nominate a fake change agent who will spout popular progressive rhetoric and dash those hopes when in office.

It is critical for us to step out of the limitations of two and four year election cycles and recognize that social transformation does not arise by electing the perceived least evil.

Social transformation occurs through a people-powered movement of movements that arises over decades of struggle and shifts the political reality so that the power holders must respond.

Issues Driving the Backlash

There will be a backlash. It will look to the Democrats like a backlash against Trump's extremism, but it will be broader. It will be a backlash against the extremism of the corporate duopoly. Their bi-partisan policies always put the wealthy and big business interests first. The boomerang will be built on the conflict between the necessities of the people and the planet vs. the greed of the wealthy.

There are a number of fundamental issues that are priorities for large majorities of the population, around which people are mobilizing and where national consensus is developing. They have the potential to connect our movements into a powerful force.

One of our tasks is to develop clear demands so that we cannot be side-tracked by false or partial solutions. If these fundamental issues are addressed through bold and transformative solutions, they will shift the political culture and our political system in a significant way towards the people-powered future we need. They will create change at the root causes of the crises we face.

These transformative issues include economic [inequality](#), lack of access to [health care](#), ensuring [Internet freedom and a people's media](#), confronting [climate change and environmental disasters](#), ending [US Empire](#) and militarism at home, and addressing domestic human rights abuses, whether it is exploitation of workers, mass incarceration, racism or disrespect for Indigenous sovereignty. Throughout all of these issues there is a thread of racial injustice so our struggles must not just [solidify around class issues](#), but must also solidify around the necessity of ending systemic racism.

We will address these issues and next steps in greater depth in the first newsletter of the new year. We wish all of you a peaceful week and hope you are able to spend time with loved ones. We are committed to being with you through the struggle and to doing all we can to stop the machine and create a new world.

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