

Thinking back over the years of my own life, it seemed impossible until the last decade that those responsible for conducting the business of American government would begin dismantling our system of civic life. After the first term of Donald Trump, and followed by his criminal activity on January 6, 2021 and his continued appropriation of classified government documents he had no legal right to retain, it seemed that we were rid of this scourge on our national life. The American people had truly had enough. Democracy was, we hoped and believed, saved and destined to go on into the future, continuing the United States of America's imperfect but functioning system of self-government.

Then came November of 2024, when a bare plurality of our fellow voters returned the convicted felon Trump to the office of the Presidency. And here we are, now, with Trump, his oligarch Musk, and a cadre of incompetent Cabinet appointees, taking apart the government in accordance with the far right theories of Project 2025.

Is the American Experiment over? Will we descend into an autocratic society like some of the worst countries of the world, places where a few extremely wealthy and powerful people will prosper while the rest of the inhabitants are exploited for their enrichment. What can we do about it? Sometimes, it seems that many Americans want to be powerless, run by a few billionaires. Looking around the world now and in history, this has never worked out to the benefit of ordinary folks.

What can we do?

We need to resist in any way we can. Lawsuits will help, but the ordinary citizens must use this time to talk to their friends and family, not in anger and retribution—those are Trump's tactics—but in dismay and with questions. Did we really sign up for this, for the power of the people to be taken away by a few of the most wealthy people in the world?

And, just maybe, if we get angry enough about the path this administration is taking, we will strike. A general strike on work, on purchasing, on driving, on everything except emergency health care and disaster response.

We have the lives of Gandhi and Martin Luther King to consider, too. Non-violent non-cooperation is still a powerful tool. It is one we must begin to think about using.

My personal thoughts turn to John Hersey's novel *White Lotus*,

the story that follows a fifteen year old girl, as she develops from a frightened, bewildered slave into a conscious and intelligent revolutionary by her Sleeping Bird protest—standing for hours on one foot, head bowed, with her other leg drawn up.

Every form of non-violent protest is now worth pursuing. Let's use our good minds to find ways to combat this takeover of our government.