

A Zoom program to Minnesota Alliance of Peacemakers.
From Terry, May 10, 2022
Terry's notes are shared with her specific permission.

I started to watch the video of our forum and realized how many important ideas and analyses were discussed. We're going to be talking about ideas from the forum at our Tuesday meeting. Sam and Jack challenged MAP to do more on climate and democracy and building the "movement of movements." Lissa Jones will be leading us through part of the discussion.

If you have time, please do watch it. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xgr5qBLmSNU>

If you don't have time to watch the video, here are my notes on some of the key points. Hope they are helpful.

Thanks,
Terry

Jack Nelson-Pallmeyer

We are underestimating our current crisis.

The US has a horrible history of democracy in terms of our foreign policy. After WWII, the US supported dozens and dozens of military dictatorships around the world. Long history of overthrowing democracy. Jim Crow and mass incarceration policies. Money in politics. Influence of military industrial complex. Structure of US Senate, etc.

Representative democracy is what we have and it has many flaws, but within those flaws, there is still a lot of room for struggle and successes as a result of organizing.

All of the above does not provide any of us with an excuse for not recognizing how precarious our present moment is for our democracy, but also for the climate as a result of what is happening to our democracy.

Biggest change now is that we have a Republican party that at heart does not believe in democracy and sees power – gaining power and holding power as the most important thing ...that includes undermining democratic institutions.

5 prongs of GOP. 1. Make good governance impossible. 2. Create as much dysfunction as possible. 3. Suppress the vote. 4. Steal elections. 5. Pack the courts.

One of the frameworks of a peaceful society...one of the most important nonviolent things that hold a society together are free and fair elections. And when you have an authoritarian party that's committed to undermining elections, that's a different level of threat and we have to be very strategic in our solutions.

At this precarious time, we have to stop the GOP. There are 5 – 7 key Senate races in MN that we can focus on. If we flip the MN Senate, that can make a huge change in passing climate legislation. (You can contact me for more information – jacknelsonpallmeyer@gmail.com)

Some organizations cannot be partisan but there are ways to get around being partisan. These organizations CAN engage politically and frame things in ways that help Democratic candidates. Host BOTH Democratic and Republican candidates and post their positions – it's clear who should be supported.

We are moving the direction of fascism but I use "authoritarianism" because it opens more conversations than the word fascism. But, yes, we should be concerned about fascism.

In every organization, are we promoting general democracy or allowing it to be undermined? And are we taking climate change seriously? Very important to think about democracy and climate change in the same sentence, which we have been doing tonight.

Sam Grant

We are earthlings, not from nation states. We have divided ourselves arbitrarily into nations.

Democracy is a dialectical relationship between what we make it - from social movement pressure and the way that existing systems...respond to those pressures from below. It is the social movements from people who have not benefited from American democracy that have helped stage the different advances of democracy up to the present time. So it's important to sustain that principled struggle. When we look at that principled struggle and response, we think of the George Floyd uprising in that particular moment, a lot of people believed falsely that it was a new moment... In the year after George Floyd's murder, there were more police murders of Black people than in the previous 5 years...which is a symptom of extreme intransigence...so we are in a moment of pretty ridiculous intractability.

Relational organizing. People can change.

How do we make MAP equally resonant with people who don't see it as our movement. Black people have a very different environment than White people and White people have framed what the environmental movement is about. White people have clean air, good schools and parks. Blacks can't breathe. We have police shootings, community based violence.

It's important to do intercultural work. Every single day to stretch our capacity to be more intercultural.

There is an ongoing genocide of Indigenous people – 4% of the world population and they hold 80% of biodiverse land. It is critically important to honor Native lives.

We are moving towards eco-authoritarianism. Nations close their borders and steal resources and land of other peoples to take care of their own well being.

What is the alternative to eco-fascism? An intercultural, ecological democracy based on open science partnership. At every elementary, middle school, high school, community college,

university...use learning as an opportunity to pay attention to the well-being of people in ecosystems on which our lives depend. Have schools focused on well-being as opposed to helping students be robots to find some place to fit in an economy that makes more and more people across the planet increasingly precarious. Teach people how living systems work – open science work.

We might think we're enemies but we just haven't learned how to be friends yet. Make this a mantra to take in and practice.

Work past these eco-fascist divides. Make kin with all of life. Stay here until I can figure out how to relate here. Figure out a way to close the differences with people with different views.

What would it look like to create a political order in which things that concern you most and concern me most are both met?

2 join 2, then 4 join 4, then 8 join 8, then 16 join 16 – keep on populating up to increasing complexity of all these things that matter to us.

Question from audience, "How do we overcome the fear in white people?" Helping people realize that, even though we are not all the same, we have enough in common and even when we don't have things in common, we have a capacity to meet each other in the middle. Recognize that, even though we've been antagonistic, we share the earth and we have to figure out how to stay in good relation with each other. When people trust that we can have differences and remain in good relationship with each other, that dispels the fear. But as long as we live in such hyper-segregated realities where white people can go about their day to day business without ever interacting with us on an equal level, how can they not be afraid? They have benefited from a politics and structural organizing of apartheid in which fear is self organizing.

People are afraid of things they don't understand here in individualist culture. In Native cultures, there is appreciation of differences - a move to true democracy

Also many Whites struggling financially, with healthcare – find alliance with Blacks who are struggling. Fear is used to keep us apart, takes attention away from all the things that unite us.

Need to organize more middle spaces that bring us together. Convening across our differences.

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