

# Piedmont Friends Fall Gathering

Oct. 11, 2025 at New Garden Friends Meeting

*Nonviolent Mass Noncooperation  
Civil Resistance Against Authoritarianism*

*Adapted from the June 1, 2025 National Urgent Call presentation by  
Daniel Hunter, Choose Democracy  
[quakercall.net](http://quakercall.net)*

# **Orienting: understanding the threat**

# What authoritarians do



**Direct  
Investigations  
Against Critics**



**Give License to  
Lawbreaking**



**Regulatory  
Retaliation**

**Deploy Military  
Domestically**



**Federal Law  
Enforcement  
Overreach**



**The Autocrat Won't  
Leave**



# The PLAYERS

1. The demagogue (aspiring dictator)

1. State and local governments

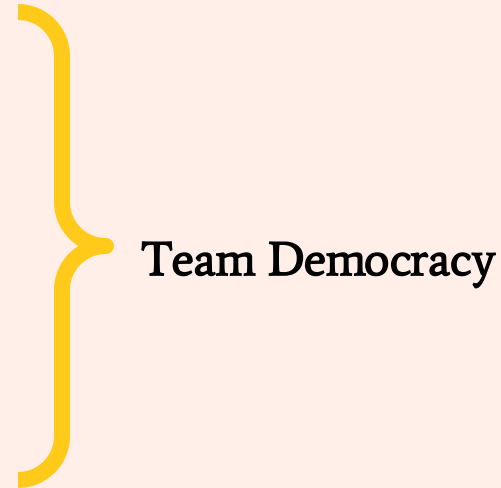
2. Federal civil servants

3. Judiciary

4. Opposition political parties

5. Civil society

6. *Education, Business, Arts*



# The DEMAGOGUE'S GOALS & TACTICS

- Divide and rule the groups on team democracy.
- Pick off one member of the team at a time. Use time to your advantage.
- Compartmentalize repression and cooptation among different groups.
- Try to maximize anticipatory obedience by relying on implied threats of repression and political violence.
- Avoid creating trigger events (salami strategy), or combine trigger events with harsh repression (terror strategy).
- Sow confusion. Distract. *"Flood the Zone"*
- PROVOKE opposition violence.

# **TEAM DEMOCRACY'S GOALS & TACTICS**

- 1. Slow it**
- 2. Stop it**
- 3. Reverse it**

# TEAM DEMOCRACY NEEDS TO:

- *Think beyond PROTESTS & DEMONSTRATIONS*
- **Play as a team.**
  - **Cultivate solidarity.**
  - **Maximize the use of the space you have. Use all of it.**
  - **Don't preemptively obey.**
  - **Push back through all channels, and synergize institutional and non-institutional efforts.**
- **Build negative coalitions.**
- **Build positive coalitions.**
- **Cut through confusion by identifying your red lines to trigger mobilization.**
- **Develop capacity for rapid, unified mobilization.**
- **REMAIN NONVIOLENT**
- **Avoid despair and dropping out — including that our efforts don't *always* synergize.**

**“The most common way people  
give up their power is by thinking  
they don’t have any.”**

*-Alice Walker, author of The Color Purple*

**NONVIOLENT Civil Resistance  
BEATS  
Violent Resistance**

**It WORKS**

# Civil Resistance vs. Violent Insurgence

1900 - 2020: 565 anti-authoritarian campaigns:

SUCCESSSES- overview of a government or territorial independence achieved

- 51% nonviolent campaigns
- 26% violent campaigns

FAILURES-

- 33% nonviolent campaigns
- 61% violent campaigns

NONVIOLENCE Out-Preforms Violence by 2-to-1 margin

# Civil Resistance - Current Trends

Since 2010 nonviolent campaigns success = 34% (violent ones=8%)

## MOVEMENTS have Changed

- More difficult building a large MASS of participation (1.3% vs. 3.5%)
- Over reliance on Protests
- Reliance on social media-digital organizing vs. fostering sustained personal engagement
- Violent fringe inclusion

## Regimes are more Savvy

- Perceive nonviolence as threatening
- Infiltrating movements, dividing
- Provoking militant responses
- Surveilling social media
- Breakdown of global order

# Anti-Coup Stages

**0**

**Utter  
Shock**

**1**

**Gathering  
Strength**

*We are  
here*

**2**

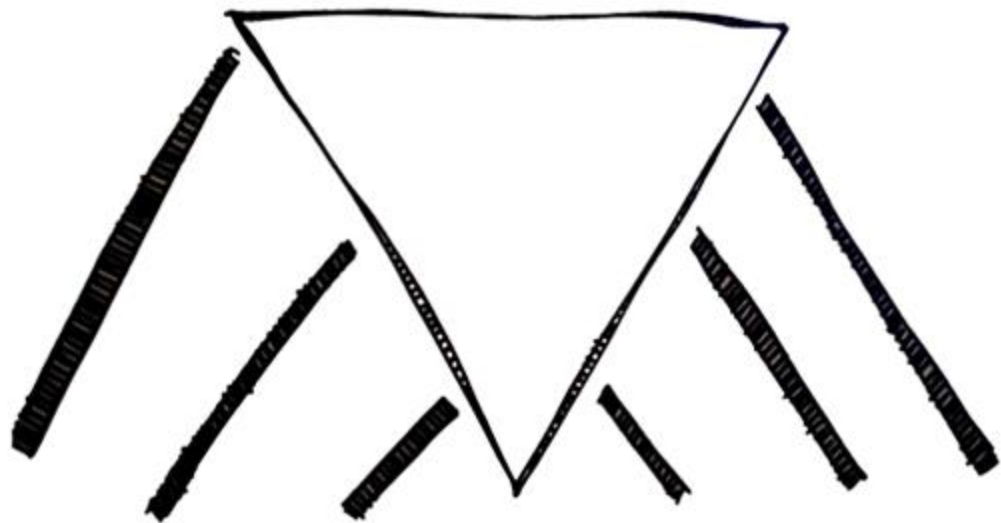
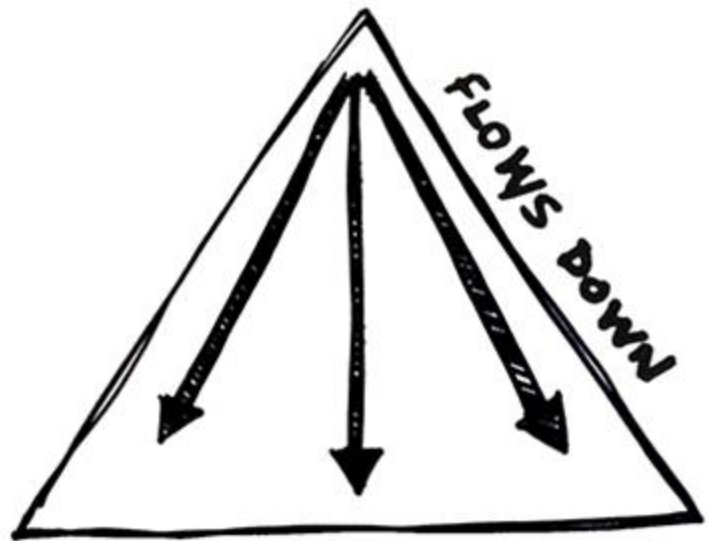
**Cycles of  
Interference**

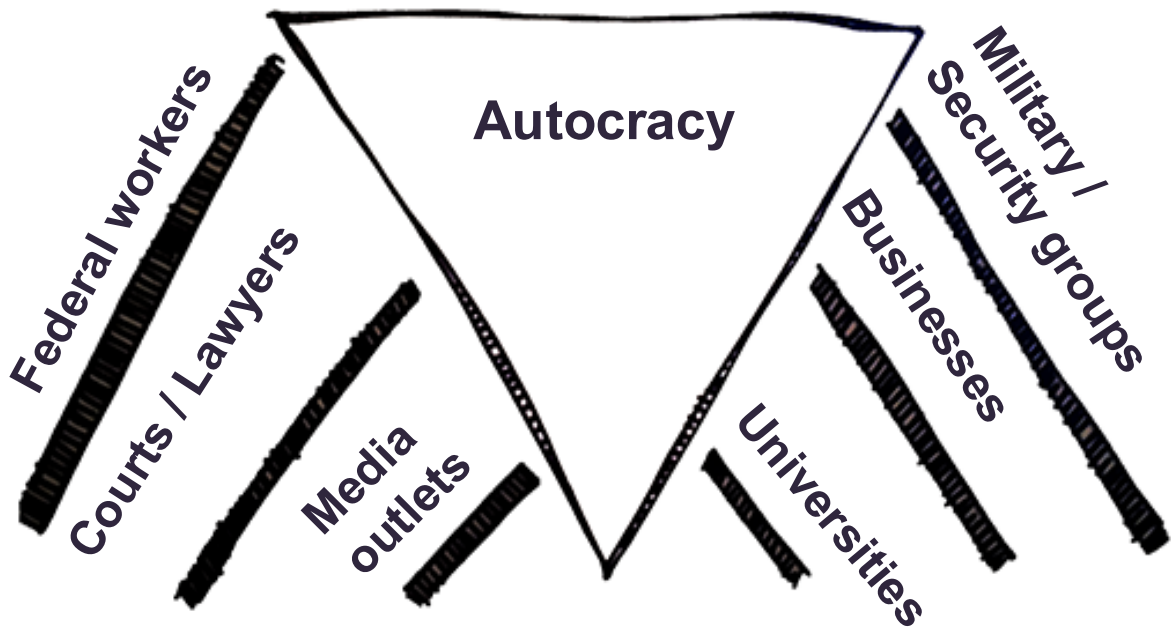
**3**

**Ready for  
Mass Action**

# PILLARS OF SUPPORT

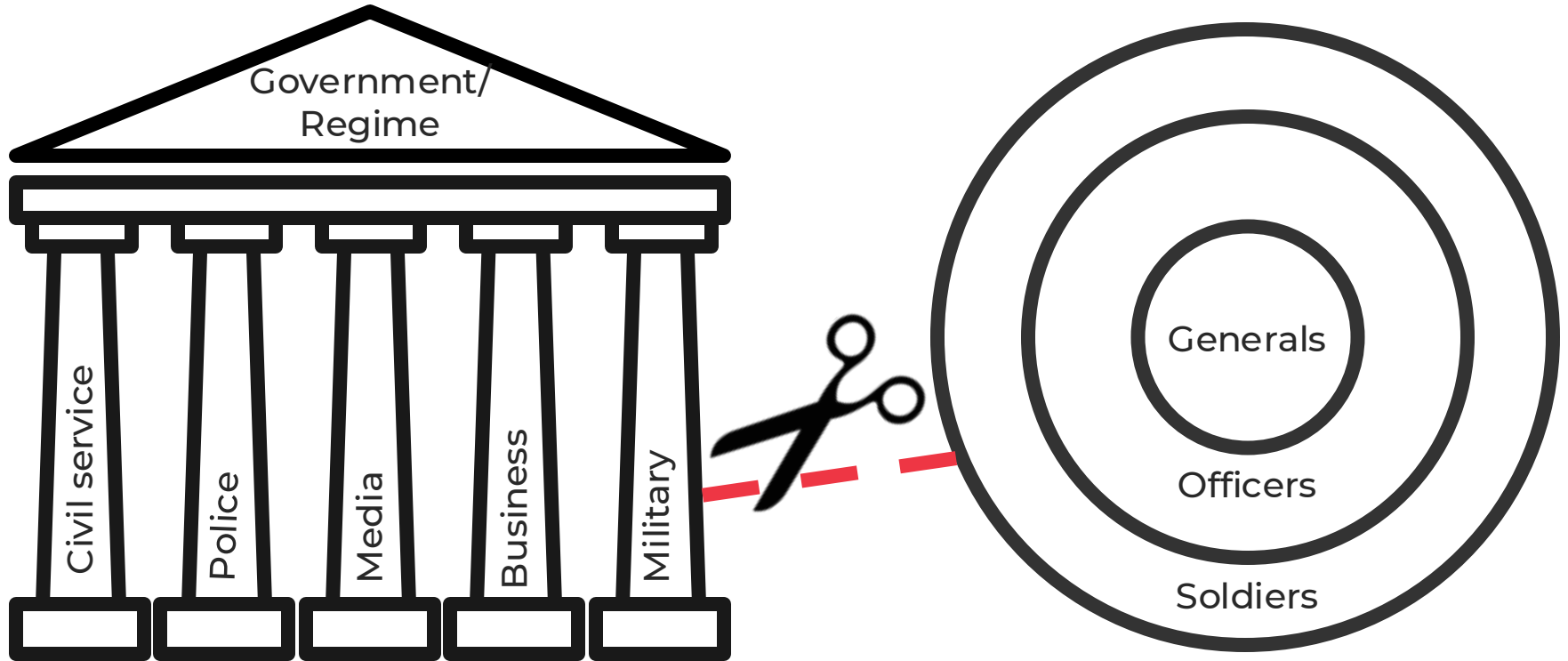






**PILLARS OF  
SUPPORT**

# Pillars of Support





“By themselves, rulers cannot collect taxes, enforce repressive laws and regulations, keep trains running on time, prepare national budgets, direct traffic, manage ports, print money, repair roads, keep markets supplied with food, make steel, build rockets, train the police and army, issue postage stamps or even milk a cow.

**People provide these services to the ruler through a variety of organizations and institutions. If people would stop providing these skills, the ruler could not rule.”**

**— Gene Sharp**

**Noncooperation** is the act of refusing to cooperate or comply with requests, demands, or orders.

Enough noncooperation will cause a pillar to completely defect — or at least be unreliable in the autocrat's aims.



# ***Mass noncooperation looks like:***

- ***Millions*** who previously bought products all agree to boycott a single company.
- ***Millions*** call out sick on the same day.
- ***Hundreds of thousands*** of kids refuse to go to school.

# What can I do?

See options at  
[www.choosedemocracy.us](http://www.choosedemocracy.us)



#1.

Get with Others to Act



#2.

Pressure a pillar of support to defect



#3.

Devote yourself to a long-term project

# NOT NORMAL TUESDAYS

BECAUSE

**This is NOT Normal**

Authoritarian regimes are allowed to rule by compliance and acquiescence from  
pillars of support:

BUSINESS – LAW ENFORCEMENT – MILITARY – MEDIA – EDUCATION

—and authoritarian regimes are taken down by *mass nonviolent resistant noncooperation*.

Join Friends in disrupting normalization on Tuesdays:

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- **NO Commerce** with corporate retailers—in-store or online
  - NO *Tap or Swipe* plastic—USE cash and BARTER only
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- **NO Driving and Flying**
  - Avoid making flight reservations and flights on Tuesdays
  - Limit driving and energy usage—be aware of our fossil fuel dependence

# NOT NORMAL TUESDAYS

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Join Friends in disrupting normalization on Tuesdays:

- **DO Wear a PAPERCLIP**
  - A paperclip on your pocket, collar, sleeve, is an innocuous sign that you are resisting and disrupting normalization. It invites solidarity with others. Carry paperclips to give to others. (Norwegians in WWII wore paperclips as a sign of resistance and that they wouldn't obey.)
- **DO Stand with those being Targeted, Threatened and Coerced**
  - Reach out to immigrant neighbors and workers, LGBTQ+ friends, people whose employment may be threatened or causing moral injury ♦ Sign-up for advocacy action with FCNL, AFSC, ACLU, etc. ♦ Talk with those you know in law enforcement, the military, the National Guard, education, civil service, journalism, scientific research

# SPECTRUM OF ALLIES

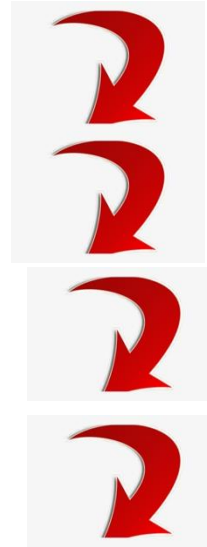
Active Opponents

Passive Opponents

Neutrals

Passive Allies

Active Allies



MOVEMENT

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- **DO Build COMMUNITY**
  - Take a Walk or Bike with a friend, share a query about resisting normalization
  - Invite others to a Tuesday “Not Normal” Potluck. Form a “Paperclip Union” for support, encouragement and mutual aid preparing for greater actions to preserve democracy and justice

# Mass NONVIOLENT Resistance - We Need the QUAKERS



George Lakey



Paul Cuffe



John Woolman



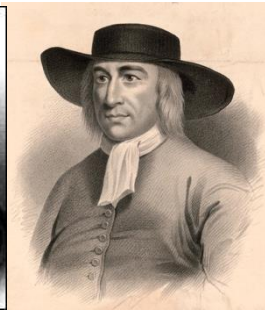
Lucretia Mott



Benjamin Lay



Margaret Fell



George Fox



Bayard Rustin

# **BREAKOUT GROUPS**

## **Count-Off**

**BREAK-** 10 Minutes

# **BREAKOUT GROUPS**

## **Queries**

## **BREAKOUT GROUPS - Query #1**

In what ways are you personally currently resisting?

## **BREAKOUT GROUPS - Query #2**

What other ways of resisting have you heard about today that you might feel led to participate in now or going forward?

## **BREAKOUT GROUPS - Query #3**

How can we encourage others to  
join resistance activities and  
build community to  
support ourselves and others?