

KLEIN, from page 4

N.K.: This is part of why I wanted to get the book out before a shock like that happened – pointing out how shocks will be exploited before they happen and also connecting it to moments in U.S. history when this has happened – because historical memory is the best shock absorber of all. It is the thing that allows societies to identify patterns, and go, “Wait a minute – they did this before and they’re doing it again.” I think there is some of that post 9/11. I think people do remember the way the Bush administration exploited that shock. There are a lot of people around who vividly remember how Rudy Giuliani seemed like a great daddy figure, and that’s pretty embarrassing right now in retrospect. It’s important to remind people, yeah – maybe it was a mistake to hand over so much power to Dick Cheney and Rudy Giuliani.

I think reminding your readers of what happened after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, with the internment of Japanese Americans, and what happened during the Great Depression, with the mass deportations of Mexicans. This is history that, unfortunately, isn’t taught well enough in schools, if at all. In particular, it’s not taught as a warning for what happens in these states of crisis and hyper-jingoism. Societies that have learned that history, that can identify it early and go wait a minute, they’re doing it again, we’re not going to fall for it again. That’s the work that needs to be done before the moment of shock, because as you say, when the shock happens, that’s when people are most vulnerable.

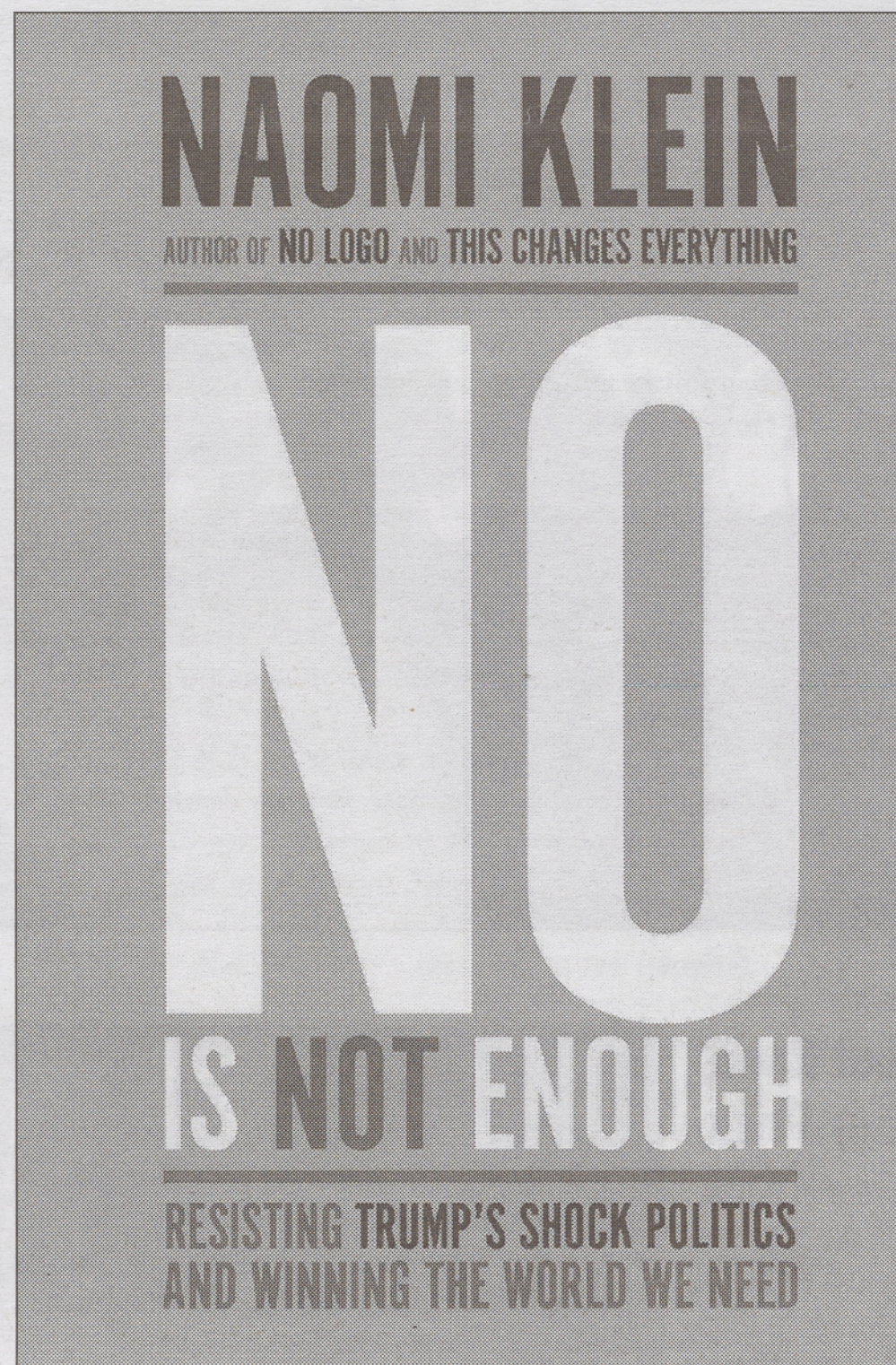
“I don’t think (Trump) enjoys being investigated by the FBI but all this is just journalistic crack. They can’t look away. The ratings for cable news have never been better. It physically pains them to spend one minute talking about healthcare, talking about what’s being done to Dodd-Frank ...”

E.G.: *How can journalists and independent media work as a shock absorber rather than just fueling the hysteria?*

N.K.: There’s no shortage of people fueling the hysteria. I think it creates a lot of space for alternative media

and independent media to focus on all the things that are being missed while the national media has its eyes fixed on the Trump show. By the Trump show, I mean the show that Trump is putting on because he’s always understood the value of distraction. And also the show that is being foisted on Trump – I don’t think he enjoys being investigated by the FBI but all this is just journalistic crack. They can’t look away. The ratings for cable news have never been better. It physically pains them to spend one minute talking about healthcare, talking about what’s being done to Dodd-Frank, talking about the economic policies that are being advanced and how that is going to impact people’s actual lives, they can’t, anymore than they couldn’t during the election campaign. They are addicted to Trump.

There was this mea culpa after the election with all of these cable news people admitting that they helped fuel and create this monster



because they just couldn’t look away, and it’s only gotten worse.

It’s not to say that there is nothing to cover, absolutely – cover the Russia investigation, cover all the investigations. The investigations should be happening, and it should be a part of the coverage, but it’s not – it’s 99 percent of the coverage. This has basically been the biggest gift of all time to Mitch McConnell. They didn’t plan this, but this has landed on their laps, and this is basically the best recipe they’ve ever had for pushing through an incredibly unpopular, damaging economic program because they have this constant distraction.

And the Democrats seem to think their best strategy is to run an impeachment into 2018. Basically, to go all-in on building the case for impeachment and then run the next election on “elect us and we’ll impeach Trump.”

I think that the vacuum for independent media is to focus on all the things that are being missed while the Trump show provides cover.

E.G.: *In the Pacific Northwest, we’ve recently experienced a string of alt-right rallies, increases in reported hate crimes, as well as renewed efforts to build fossil fuel infrastructures that activists thought had been killed. How do historically siloed causes, such as climate change and racial equity, best come together when they are all so vehemently under attack?*

N.K.: Just by doing it, and by understanding that precisely because all of our movements are under attack, we are not going to resist this onslaught on our own. It really benefits the Trumps of this world – and there are many – for us to be siloed and treat these issues as unconnected.

They’re not unconnected for Trump. He has a coherent worldview called “Make America Great Again,” which is about dominance on every level. Dominating people, women, people of color, creating this brutal hierarchy of

humanity dominating the Earth and disregarding limits of any kind – if it gets in the way, just deny reality.

I think it’s been a tremendous weakness that progressives have partitioned on issues that are all so deeply interconnected. And the reasons for that are complex. There are funding structures in place that encourage organizations to have a narrow lens and a set of demands that seem winnable in the short term. You can write a grant application and say, “I’m going to do this,” and go back a few months later and say, “I did it.” That doesn’t lend itself to political ambition or systemic change because it’s hard to write a grant application for that.

We need to find ways out of those boxes, because they are really dangerous right now.

I do believe there has been a process of metabolizing some of the lessons of 9/11, and one of them has been about the need to show up for one another. We saw that very movingly with the response to the travel ban, and frankly, what happened in this city. The fact that people witnessed a hate crime and harassment, and stepped up to intervene, I think, reflects that. They paid the ultimate price for that. But that’s why they’re being held up as heroes, because that embodies what we all need to do.

E.G.: *In November 2016, you wrote the Democratic Party needs to move away from neoliberals like the Clintons or be abandoned. In the months since, have you seen any promising alternative parties popping up or signs that would suggest it is possible to reshape the Democratic Party?*

N.K.: What I’ve seen is like a hardening of positions within the Democratic Party and a hardening around treating Bernie’s base as the enemy.

I don’t really understand what planet these people are on, like that it’s a good idea to just write off 13 million people who voted for Bernie – and the fact that he carried more than 20 states, I mean I don’t understand. But that seems to be where some powerful people in the Democratic Party are going.

In terms of whether or not the fight is within the Democratic Party or outside the Democratic Party or some space in between, I don’t really know.

It is interesting what has happened in the U.K. because Jeremy Corbyn’s leadership was fought at every single stage by the equivalent of the DNC, the Labour Party. He was sabotaged again and

again. He won because of a mass movement to join the Labour Party led by young people, and this appears to have worked. Finally, it appears that they are going to stop fighting him because he did so much better than expected in the last election.

You’re going to be fought at every stage. Of course they will undermine you and undercut you – and that means maybe you *don’t* walk away, but it’s a different structure.

It’s possible for the transition off of fossil fuels to be done in a completely brutal way. There is prison labor that is making solar panels right now.

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