

Democracy in Danger S2 E8 People Power

Will Hitchcock [00:00:03] Hello, I'm Will Hitchcock.

Siva Vaidhyanathan [00:00:05] And I'm Siva Vaidhyanathan.

Will Hitchcock [00:00:07] And from the University of Virginia's Deliberative Media Lab, this is Democracy in Danger.

Siva Vaidhyanathan [00:00:12] In the 1980s, the multiethnic Republic of Yugoslavia was a communist regime. But as Srdja Popovic says his country was not behind the Soviet Iron Curtain. It had one party rule with a relatively free and open society.

Srdja Popovic [00:00:29] So, yes, in my teens, I was mostly interested in playing guitar in a goth rock band sounding like Sisters of Mercy or Cure.

Siva Vaidhyanathan [00:00:43] All of that changed in 1989 when strongman and Serbian ultranationalist Slobodan Milosevic came to power. Now, in Germany, the Berlin Wall had recently fallen and reunification was in the air, but the Yugoslav confederacy had already been crumbling. The economy was in tatters. Independence movements arose across member states and Milosevic was going genocidal to stop them.

Srdja Popovic [00:01:14] And immediately the world turns upside down from normal middle class life. You turn into the place where your father sells petrol in the street to survive. From the brotherhood and fraternity of all the Slavic nations you end up by being mobilized and drafted for war in Croatia and Bosnia and given a gun to shoot somebody because that person is a Croat or a Bosnian. Which is kind of very bizarre because you grew up in the country with all of these nations and this like, you know, somebody from Virginia being sent to war against somebody in New Mexico and told that the New Mexicans are evil.

Will Hitchcock [00:01:52] Like many Serbs who oppose the regime, Popovich had to make an incredibly hard choice. Do you flee your homeland or stay and resist? And if you stay and resist? How? How do you oppose military might with rock and roll and 10 friends from college?

Srdja Popovic [00:02:06] We decided to take the destiny into our own hands and build a movement called the Resistance. It may sound crazy. Eleven students deciding to take on the dictator, but no, I'm not an extraordinarily brave person. The whole of my generation became activists by incident, so the situation creates the hero. When you don't have other choice, you find a strength in you to fight for the things you believe in.

Will Hitchcock [00:02:34] The only way to fight, Popovic says, was not to fight. The resistance or otpor in Serbian adopted nonviolence as a guiding principle. They held mass rallies and concerts, staged street plays lampooning the corrupt government, and they worked behind the scenes to get security forces to defect. The approach was as much practical as it was moral.

Srdja Popovic [00:02:59] Common sense teaches you that you will engage with your opponent on the battlefield of your strength and his weakness. In other words, if you if you need to face a person like Mike Tyson, the last place you are going to choose as a

battlefield is a boxing ring, because the guy will obviously eat your ears and then he will eat you.

Will Hitchcock [00:03:22] Eventually, Outpoured did help topple Milosevic. The movement grew to more than 70,000 people and they succeeded where international pressure and even the NATO bombings in 1999 did not. Milosevic resigned in 2000 amid intensifying demonstrations and six years later, he died in a prison cell in The Hague while on trial for war crimes.

Siva Vaidhyanathan [00:03:45] Srdja Popovic went on to found an organization called Canvas. Canvas teaches activists around the world how to speak truth to power and how to win by bringing people together.

Srdja Popovic [00:03:57] Let's try to make a mental experiment. To make a guerrilla movement you will need the people who are strong, healthy, had some military training ready to camp in the woods during the time of polar vortex and then, of course, ready to kill and die for what they believe in. That's very, very small percentage of your phone book. The more people participate in the movement, the more diverse people participate in the movement across the gender, across the age, across, you know, physical health and things of that kind. The more you are capable to build in different constituencies, the more you are likely to succeed.

Will Hitchcock [00:04:39] Well, if you've been following our show this season, you know, we've been looking beyond the United States more and more and we've been asking what ordinary people can do to fix ailing democracies and strengthen them, which is why we reached out to Popovic to talk to him about his own activism and what it says about progressive movements today. We asked him beyond his personal experience in Serbia, if there were any other cases of nonviolent resistance that really epitomize what he teaches activist leaders.

Srdja Popovic [00:05:10] Well, I mean, we do a lot of case studies, and especially when you teach in schools. And it's not like there is one case. The thing is, every single nonviolent struggle is different. The contexts are different. The enemies are different. The actors are different. Religious, cultural, economic, demographic backgrounds are different. So rather than taking on one case, what we spend last 15 years or so looking at are the principles that connect successful movement. And we cut these in what we call the Holy Trinity of success in nonviolent struggle. Successful movements have vision and are able to achieve unity around this vision so they know what they want and they know how to create a team to get there. Second, movements require planning. There are only two types of social change movements in this world. They are either spontaneous or successful, so they need to plan your grand strategy. You need to plan your campaign. You need to plan their tactics. And this is where planning comes in place. And last, successful movement carry on with phenomenon we call nonviolent discipline. They're capable to preach nonviolence. They're capable to teach nonviolence. They're also capable to select tactics which are less likely to end up being violent. And once again, if you want to organize the march of angry people facing the police, there are relatively big chances that there will be a violence outbreak from either of the sides as opposed to if you organize the large boycott of the largest military owned Burmese bank and you make people pull their money off their ATMs, you will make your opponent a serious financial damage. And the possibility for violence is low. I mean, the people won't break ATMs. They will start beating each other in the queues to get to the ATMs. And it's very difficult for police to suppress this as well, because what they will do, defend ATMs with their own bodies? So principles of success in

the long struggle are unity and vision, planning and discipline. Successful movements share those three. Also when you take a look at the movements which failed. They normally failed in one or two of these principles.

Siva Vaidhyanathan [00:07:19] Well, you know, we're all about failure here on Democracy in Danger. We more often than not talk about failures and frustrations and fears. So it's really lovely to think about what it takes to succeed. But I'm hoping you could reflect a bit on failure and frustration. I mean, when we look around the world right now at Belarus, at Russia, at Hong Kong, you know, despite the faces of the people in the streets who are trying to make a stand for a better tomorrow, you know, the power of the state in all of these cases seems just so overwhelming. And the prospect for any serious change, let alone revolution in the short term, seems out of the question. You know, what constitutes failure? What can you learn from failure? How do you know when a movement has lost?

Srdja Popovic [00:08:16] You know, failure is a defeat only if you don't learn something from it. And we tried it in 1992. We did that a little bit of Occupy type of thing. We organized an antiwar movement. We were singing, "all we are saying is give peace a chance" in university campuses with all the cool actors and musicians and whoo whoo whoo. While Milosevic was sending his tanks to Croatia. Obviously, we failed in mobilizing his constituency. More rural people. 1996-1997 he stole the elections. We recognized the opportunity. We protested for one hundred days, day after day after day, in 32 different cities. We succeeded. We made him recognize the elections and also failed because the opposition fell apart within a month after that. So we failed in Unity. 98, we took a different approach. We started with strategy first. Instead of doing stuff and making strategy as it goes. So you learn from your failures, you learn from other people failures. And taking a look at this, you can generalize this to all of the nonviolent movements. First of all, the fact that the campaign failed doesn't mean the movement failed. So movements fail in three different phases. Movements fail initial phase if they are not capable to mobilize numbers, build up the defined strategy and develop the elements of movement identity. Then the second stage, you look at the whole engagement phase. This is where movements have number and tactics and things of that kind. This is where they mostly fail. If the unity fails, if the oppression crushes them or they didn't figure out how to deal with the oppression. And last but not least, importance and actually of the most importance. You see this growth in numbers and it looks like stairs for a long time. So do a small thing, you recruit more people. Small thing, you recruit the more people. And then there is a big event. Elections are stolen. Military rolls down the election results in Burma. George Floyd is brutally murdered - where you have your numbers grow exponentially. This is the moment for which movements need to be prepared. This is what we call the victory point. If you take a look at the studies five years after the change, there is only 42 percent of the cases where this change is there. So you actually have more chance to screw it up in the victory phase. Sounds bizarre, but this is the statistics. Why so? It is because most of the movement's plan to oust Mubarak, most of whom is planned to oust the corrupt mayor, most of movement's plan to defund the police. So this is just a tactical victory as opposed to the systemic victory that you need to be focused on. And the truth is, once you achieve this climax of tactical victory, you know, Milosevic steps down. The oppressive law is overturn. Corrupt person steps down. You have a deflation in numbers because the people are more easier mobilized if there is a visible enemy. So normally you get to the point of your victory. It's very difficult to push it through the transition. And I, of course, experience it in my own skin. After the Serbian revolution, I went to the government and the Parliament for three years trying to reform the beasts from the inside. And I tell you that these were not the three most successful or most thrilling years of my life. Actually building independent institutions or, you know, transparent laws on public buying is far less sexy and attractive

than outrunning the police in the streets. And only some people are ready to do this. So the most difficult phase is once Mubarak is down, how you push it through the transition.

Will Hitchcock [00:11:58] You mentioned George Floyd and I wanted to just asked the summer of 2020, we saw an astonishing mobilization of Americans and in fact, a mobilization around the world against systemic racism and police brutality. What did you how did you read The Black Lives Matter movement? As an analyst, as an experienced veteran, how did you critique it? What did you think was the source of its success? And let me ask you this. Has it succeeded or are we just at the beginning? What phase is the Black Lives Matter movement at now, in your judgment?

Srdja Popovic [00:12:33] Well, first of all, a week ago, a friend of mine, an iconic pop artist, Peter Gabriel, rereleased his song Biko, some 40 years after it was made against the Apartheid movement in South Africa. He spent his life in activism and he still goes on. And we had a recent dialog about this. And I mean, this is exactly what it tells you. 40 years ago, you defeated apartheid in South Africa. Four decades after that, you are fighting against the systemic racism. This is a beast that dies tough. And once again, some of these struggles are a marathon. Things like, you know, racial inequality, things like gender inequality, things like climate change require a lot of work by global movements. So the fact that you defeated the enemy at one spot doesn't necessarily mean that it wouldn't appear its ugly head somewhere else. And it's definitely the case with the systemic racism. So speaking about this, you can take a look at the good side of it and the bad side of it, if you want, strategically. Good side of it, it's widespread. It caught fire with the people who were previously not involved in the politics, even the very conservative place. I live in Colorado Springs, which is kind of the most conservative part of the blue state of Colorado. You walk through the neighborhood, you see BLM signs and bumper stickers everywhere. So it definitely caught a lot of attention and brought in a lot of numbers. When you're addressing the phenomenon - and the systemic racism is a phenomenon - it's a multi pillar struggle. So obviously, most of the focus is on the police and law enforcement treatment of people of color. And this is very important, but it's just the symptom. Obviously, police doesn't act alone. It is something that you need to address on several different levels. You want to look at the cause of it. It's social inequality, so it needs to be addressed in the education. It is economic inequality, which is why we need equal pay for equal work for people of color. So now there is this big opportunity, for example, to address business bureau. The businesses in the US are crazy about making them more diverse, more equal. So, you know, taking on this pillar would be knocking at the open door. So strategically to plan this struggle. I will expand it from just the police and the monuments in parks. Yes, they sparked the most of the mobilization. Yes. Colonial history and slavery history pisses people off. I understand all of this. But taking a look at the long term victory, there must be a systemic change in multiple pillars. And law enforcement it is important. But this is curing the symptom. We need to cure the disease. And curing the disease requires a more strategic approach.

Siva Vaidhyanathan [00:15:31] You mentioned Peter Gabriel earlier and you mentioned his own activism, but also his song, Biko. And I was taken back to my younger days as a young man, a student at the University of Texas, becoming aware of and then involved in the campaign to divest university moneys from businesses that do work in South Africa. And part of that, for me, part of the increased awareness and motivation was music. Listening to Peter Gabriel, listening to the Specials, listening to ultimately South African artists themselves. And you yourself were a musician. Right. And so I'm wondering about your thoughts about the role of the arts, especially music, in inspiring, in educating and

motivating and solidifying these movements. How much does it matter that we move our feet or as George Clinton said, free your mind and your ass will follow.

Srdja Popovic [00:16:34] You touched so much of this, first of all. When I saw the Serbian super band, Yugoslav super band named Tukituki playing on the truck, that was the moment that I had my revelation about activism and understanding that activism is not a thing for old ladies fighting for dogs right. But this is something that can be cool and bring my generation. That was a small anti-war protest in Belgrade when I was 19. So the music and art plays a role in this. The part of our curriculum is the phenomenon we call artivism. So you can see all allies of art working on. You take a look at the Myanmar and we have a graffiti which says, fuck coup in the middle of the main highway like they painted on the highway. You want to move to the to the BLM plaza in Washington, D.C.. And one of my inspiration and BLM is call Andre Henry. He's a hip hop musician, Afro-American, Jamaican, amazingly inspirational person. He communicates through song and individual artistic events. So you cannot underestimate the role of art in this struggle. You want to take a look at the oppressive countries. You want to take a look at the Voynov in Russia or the free theater in Belarus. So, you know, artists are on the cutting edge of inspiring and mobilizing people to do stuff. Speaking of Peter Gabriel, once again, Biko video is out. Watch it. Donate to the cause. Again, after 40 years, it's it's there to unite artists and give a boost to the deprived communities. But speaking of speaking of this wider phenomenon, you mentioned something which is really interesting, which was divestment of universities from racism government in South Africa. This is a phenomenon that movements are applying more and more. It's called expanding the battlefield. It is one thing to oppose the brutal military junta in places like Sudan or in places like Myanmar. It is a completely different thing to mobilize the International Solidarity Campaign, which puts the pressure on the tentacles of businesses of Burmese and Sudanese generals, which are everywhere. Don't be lured. This is not the ideological thing. This is not a military thing. This is kleptocracy. These people are shamelessly rich and they have international businesses. So what happens is Burma now, let's take a look at the street protests. The more brutal the opponent in the country, the more you avoid mass gatherings and protest because people will get killed. You destruct and dislocate, you engage them wherever you are. So you want to help things in Burma. Take a look at the companies in Virginia, which are making their cheap apparel in Burma, and then take a look at who owns this factory in Burma. And I can put fifty dollar bet that this is somebody affiliated with the military machine. So you want to help people of Burma stop buying from this company and write an angry email to the company saying you are by maintaining this business in Burma you're effectively undermining human rights. Will is invented. We just need to apply it effectively.

Will Hitchcock [00:19:37] So I have to ask you, you have talked a lot, very powerfully about structures: follow the money, long term structural racism, the ways in which, you know, tactics to go after the pillars, the institutions. And I think that's exactly right. But the reality is in the United States, we've just gone through four years of Donald Trump and Trumpism. And it's going to take us a little while to get over the impact of this one individual on our thinking. I'd be curious to know if you think in a sense, was Trump good or bad for American democracy? You know, a lot of people sort of suddenly were reminded, oh, my goodness, millions of Americans seem perfectly comfortable with anti-democratic behavior. They would be happy to have a strong man in charge forever. On the other hand, millions of people seem to have woken up to the fragility of democracy. I mean, I know you like to think structurally, but individuals can radicalize and mobilize and polarize societies as and that happened in America in these last few years. How do you read the Trump era?

Srdja Popovic [00:20:38] It's a million dollar question, and I'm not sure if I'm I'm the best person to answer it. When speaking of American presidents, I like to quote American presidents. That makes me sound smart. Speaking about American presidents coming from Republican Party, I will quote well, not my favorite American president, I must admit, but it's a very clever quote. It was Ronald Reagan who said that democracy is always one generation far from extinction. And he told this In the era of the Cold War, remember, no Internet, no Facebook, no Twitter. So this generation, meaning 50 years, probably shrinks to 10 years. And of course, it reminds people to the fact that only because you have democratic institutions, you are not safe from this. And then let's expand. You always look at the numbers. Democracy is on the backslash where you are looking at the Freedom House Freedom Index. You can look at the last 15 years, more countries are becoming more authoritarian than more open. You want to take a look at how it impacts the economy. You want to take a look at another very interesting index called Legatum Institute, a prosperity index. The more countries are closing down and getting more authoritarian, the more people are becoming less prosperous and blah, blah, blah. Why so? It's not because the Putins of this world are capable to contain things at home. It's not because --- of this world becoming more brutal. It is because we have more and more Dutertes of Philippines in this world. You have more and more Bolsonaros of this world in Brazil.

Will Hitchcock [00:22:14] What do you mean by that? Do you mean is it corrupt?

Srdja Popovic [00:22:16] That means democratically elected leaders, which clamp on democracy from above. So this is not dictators expanding their model. OK, Putin is. It's a different game. The Russia is big player in promoting this post-truth world. This is a different topic. But it is because that if you take a look at the Freedom House, take a look at the countries where the king in democracy is coming. It's coming from Hungary, it's coming from Turkey, the countries which were looking at democracy progress in the last 10 years and are now backlashing. So for effective democracy, it is not enough to have democratic institutions, free and fair elections. You need people to participate. No free and fair elections will hold if people don't participate in it. No institution will be democratic long enough if people don't keep it accountable, people in power are like underwear. You need to change them or they become smelly. I know that I was a politician. So it's a very long answer to your question about President Trump and his assault on democracy. In many ways, it was harmful for American image. In many ways, these polarizations are radicalized, not there to stay. The plague of post-truth and conspiracy theory, which will spill out into antimasking and antivaxxing and actually endanger the public health of the people. Or worse. It's there. And it is a very bad thing. In another way, American democracy show its resilience. And the reason why we are here looking into the more brighter future, at least democracy wise in the United States, is because of the level of the participation in the elections and the mobilization of the people in different roles prior to this election. But don't forget this and then go home and just expect that the new guys will rule better only because they are new.

Siva Vaidhyathan [00:24:11] You suggest we look around the world in 2020 we saw, of course, that people around the world, activists, writers, thinkers, were all very invested in how we handled our democracy here in the United States. But, you know, Americans are often myopic and we don't always look beyond our own situation. I mean, I consider myself quite fortunate that in my early 20s, I looked at my television and I saw people my age link arms and face down soldiers in Soweto. I saw people my age scale the Berlin Wall. I saw people my age stand in front of tanks in Tiananmen Square.

Srdja Popovic [00:24:53] Oh, man, you're old.

Siva Vaidhyathan [00:24:54] And I felt, well, certainly, but I'm inspired and I remain inspired by those images. Those you know, a friend of mine called me a 1989 Democrat and I certainly am with a small D, so I sense that I was given the gift of a cosmopolitan sensibility by being that age at that time and seeing people with whom I shared some common fate around the world, taking risks that I thought I would never have to take. Now, of course, I live in Charlottesville, Virginia, and we found ourselves in perilous situations we couldn't have predicted. But what do you tell young Americans to help them invest themselves in solidarity with the people of Myanmar, with the people of India, with the people of Brazil. How can we get Americans to care more deeply about people around the world?

Srdja Popovic [00:25:49] Oh, it's once again multilayer question. It's a global political question. I think there are three things to look at it. One, restored the position of America as a beacon of democracy. So restoring democracy in America has impact on people in Burma. There is somebody to lead. So this is one way to look at it is bolstering democracy in America it's not only helping America, it's also helping others to figure out yes, this is how we want to do it. And there is somebody standing out there for our aims and goals and is ready to be engaged. It's not an island. The world is interconnected. Dictatorships are bad for businesses everywhere. So this is a global world. Step number two, take a look at the generation. That means, like you are, you are whining about your student days as I'm whining about my student days and then we'll jump in and say, you know, the time of the Peter Gabriel music really matters. And I can't agree with you more. I mean, I'm this old fart claiming that the last good songs were made at the beginning of the of the 21st century. And now we have this 14 seconds production pattern, which is unlistenable. But take a look at the generation. There is hope. I'll just point your attention to two ongoing global movements, Fridays for Future. This is where the young people are getting out of school. And I've seen them getting out of high school in Charlottesville when I was there for a presidential idea conference a few years ago. These are the teenagers. This is the generation to believe in. All across the globe, these people stand against the climate change. They tend to be more engaged into environmental struggle than the people from your and mine generation. Remember, getting engaged in the social cause makes you more likely to get engaged in other social causes. So there is no lack of awareness, especially when it comes to the climate change. Another thing, Americans are - now this will be very politically incorrect, I warn you - people make the stereotype about the Americans. And if I was given a dollar every time when people ask me where you're from and I say from Serbia, and then they say, oh, Siberia must be very cold there? I say no. In fact, it's quite warm. And it's South Europe close to Italy. But yes, you guys spend a lot of time looking into your own belly. But you need to look more carefully because there are so many great things in this belly. And recently you had this amazing movement sparked from a massacre in Parkland, Florida. Guess what? It was run by teenagers. So this is the case study of strategic approach taking on gun control, which can be used on many other means. It's exactly what you said. Look at this. After the years and years and years of school shooting, unfortunately. And then you had public protests and they have Democrats coming out, "We need more gun control." And then you have an 80 year old Republican chairing a Senate committee say, no, no, no, we need to arm the teachers that will make schools safe and then he dies. It's the same pattern all over again. Oh, I see this everywhere. So what happens now is a group of teenagers after shooting in Florida decided to take the path of the civil rights movement instead of engaging with pillars of power and especially the legislative branch, Congress and Senate and Governor.

Obviously, these people were well, at least the students consider them to be in the pocket of the source of this phenomenon, which is well known as NRA: National Rifle Association. So instead of them getting on the street where they are powerless because they can't vote, they took a look at where they have power and they have power in Amazon and in Dick's Sporting Goods and in Walmart because these companies want their money. So instead of targeting just senators and congressmen which need to decide between the bulk of inspiring young people and a thick fat check which is coming from NRA regularly for their campaigns, they decided something else. They start targeting companies. So Delta divested from NRA and then United divested from the NRA and then five or six car companies that are giving the discounts when their own members divested from the NRA. And then the Wal-Mart was faced with a boycott if they don't bring background checks. And the Dick's Sporting Goods pulled out - like I love outdoors. I'm a fishermen. I'm fanatically following these chains. These chain account for more than 50 percent of sold arms. So instead of getting to where they can't pass, they strategically targeted the companies. Results? Have more background checks. More rigid policies in the companies and, you know, always shaded by the news about who won elections, the storming of the Capitol...NRA filed for bankruptcy! And this victory was achieved by teenagers from Florida. So looking at this generation, there is no lack of strategy, no lack of passion, no lack of results. It is how you interpret it. Why, why, I hate the mainstream media in the US is because they are not paying enough attention on it, and they are playing it on this 72 hour media cycle without really following up on these stories. But this is the story of inspiration. This is a story of success and, you know, highlighting this story and putting it on the wider stage will really help not only encourage more young people to get involved in socially important issues, but also learning how to win from their peers. It was a genuine victory of a young generation. So, yes, we may be right. The music was better in 90s, but we shouldn't be very desperate and exclusive, saying it was our generation, very invested in the ABC. There is a generation which is ready to be invested in taking on the better world and we need to find a way to help them and educate it.

Will Hitchcock [00:32:02] That was Srdja Popovic. He's a guest lecturer at the University of Colorado, Boulder, and the executive director of CANVAS, the Center for Applied Nonviolent Action and Strategies based in Belgrade. He's also the author of *Blueprint for Revolution How to Use Rice Pudding, Lego Men and Other Nonviolent Techniques to Galvanize Communities, overthrow dictators or simply change the World.*

Siva Vaidhyanathan [00:32:28] Srdja Popovic was nominated in 2012 for the Nobel Peace Prize, and just last week he received the 2020 Brown Democracy Medal from Penn State University's McCourtney Institute. That's the umbrella organization for our podcast network. By the way, the Democracy Group. Visit DemocracyGroup.org to find all of our sister shows. We will be right back.

Will Hitchcock [00:33:02] Well, Siva, Srdja Popovic says the media is responsible for not giving enough attention to the stories of young people organizing, protesting, making changes. I'm not sure that he's completely right. But what do you think? Do you think we don't have enough room in our political discourse to recognize that there is another generation of remarkable courage and ingenuity and the Black Lives Matter movement is a really good example of it. I would say that the media covered it extensively, but coverage of these things can sometimes become quickly kind of cartoonish and constrained.

Siva Vaidhyanathan [00:33:33] Yeah, I've been spending a lot of time this year looking back at how we talked about the uprisings in North Africa and the Middle East 10 years ago. And I noticed a lot of what Srdja is pointing out. There was so much attention paid to

the flash, to the new, to the technological. There was no real appreciation of more than a decade of hard preparatory work done by activists in Egypt, in Tunisia, even in Syria and Libya. People who had worked with labor organizations, even soccer fans, religious groups, all of whom had been organized -discreetly in many cases - outside of the eyes of the state. But organized in a way that prepared them to be unleashed when one of those flashpoint moments arose. As Srdja pointed out. Right. So just like George Floyd's assassination, we had a similar set of events in Egypt and in Tunisia in late 2010, early 2011. And when that happens, you can harness all of that hard work and significantly expand your movement and make a difference. But of course, the larger analysis that we see through our television sets or through our social media feeds only pays attention to, hey, look what Facebook did, right? Look what Twitter did! No. it was people putting their bodies on the line and doing so after doing hard, risky work for more than a decade.

Will Hitchcock [00:35:13] Well, and you're absolutely right about the long game. And even in Serbia, you know, it was a decade - right - between the collapse of the Yugoslav Federation and the toppling of Milosevic. And 200,000 people were killed in that civil war. An absolutely brutal regime was finally toppled. It took a great deal of effort and struggle, incredible sacrifice and vision and a lot of very, very dangerous action of putting people in front of tanks to gradually pry Milosevic out of power and change Serbia and the Balkans for the good.

Siva Vaidhyanathan [00:35:45] Absolutely. And, you know, if you listen back to season one of Democracy in Danger, you can hear us talk to a series of experts who connect Black Lives Matter and the protests that occurred in the summer of 2020 to anti lynching movements, right? To reconstruction efforts. All the way through, you know, efforts to protest the Rodney King beating in the early 1990s or support for Jesse Jackson's political campaigns in the late 80s. Right. These things are all of a piece and they all speak to what has been going on - more than two hundred years of struggle for some sort of racial equality and justice in this country. That does it for this week's show next time, University of Virginia law professor Danielle Citron will join Will for a special conversation hosted by the Jefferson Scholars Foundation. It will be all about democracy and the law in our digital age.

Danielle Citron [00:36:52] I start reading and hearing about women who are being targeted online on message boards with rape threats, death threats, nude photos, terrifying reputation destroying autonomy, denying attacks.

Will Hitchcock [00:37:07] Have you been involved in nonviolent protests? Did they work? We really want to hear your stories. Tweet @dindpodcast that's DIND podcast or leave a comment on our website, DinDanger.org.

Siva Vaidhyanathan [00:37:21] We have lots of extras for you, their notes on the show, things to read and a preview of what's coming up. And while you're at it, please subscribe to this show on any audio app. Share our episodes with your family or friends and even your enemies.

Will Hitchcock [00:37:38] Democracy in Danger is produced by Robert Armengol with help from Jennifer Ludovici. Our interns are Denzel Mitchell and Jane Frankel.

Siva Vaidhyanathan [00:37:46] Support comes from the University of Virginia's Democracy Initiative and from the College of Arts and Sciences. This show is a project of

UVA's Deliberative Media Lab where distributed by the Virginia Audio Collective and WTJU Radio in Charlottesville. I'm Siva Vaidhyanathan.

Will Hitchcock [00:38:01] And I'm Will Hitchcock. We'll see you next time.