This is not a drill. “Houston, we have a problem,” or more historically and currently correct, “Houston, we’ve had a problem, here.” It’s not a problem of a ship in space, but rather the ship of state, setting aside its best-documents claims and making a hard right turn towards its worst-practices. And both the captain and crew are unrepentantly and defiantly doing and saying immoral, mad, mean-spirited and small-minded things.

It is a persistent, pernicious and particularly American problem. For it takes place in plain sight in America, in a land that bills and boasts itself as the land of freedom, justice and equality for all in an exceptional and almost worshipful way. Indeed, it is seen by many as something close to unforgiveable sin to criticize it. It is a problem of the imbalance and inequity of wealth, power and status, based on race, class, gender, religion and a host of other socio-biological attributes. Indeed, these socio-biological attributes are used to assign human worth, social status and opportunity for a life of dignity, decency and flourishing in the cities and rural areas and even at the border.

So, let’s stop pretending it’s only about Trump. For it is a condition larger than him; larger than the limited and distorted dimensions of his mind and his self-identifying and identifiable supporters and enablers. It is the American system, itself, that produces Trump and reflects its monster side. For Trump is an anomaly only in a personal sense. In a larger social sense, there’ve been others like him, the racists, White supremacists, the oppressors of the poor, disadvantaged and vulnerable different.

It sounds nice to say “we” and America are not like this for the nightly news, but how do we claim this when “the we” are the ones doing it, supporting it or half-heartedly resisting it. And what about those who also caution and counsel the victims, survivors and resisters of these various forms of oppression to go slow, don’t be angry at injustice, and practice healing and reconciliation with oppressors as the highest ethical act and goal.

Clearly, Trump has a special demon brew of venom, invective and viciousness toward peoples of color, not just against Reps. Elijah Cummings, Ayanna Pressley, Ilhan Omar, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Rashida Tlaib, and Rev. Al Sharpton. His supporters, enablers and even would-be neutral analysts say his attacks are not racial or racist, but directed toward all who attack him. That, of course, is a desperate use of a see-through cloth to cover a naked flasher who himself says he delights in what he does, especially to those of color who dare criticize him.

This is one of the most used claims in varied attempts to lessen the intentional injury and evil of Trump’s racist attacks on Black and Brown persons, peoples, neighborhoods and countries. But this isn’t so and it’s not just the attack; it’s also the language used, the “go back,” “get back,” “stay back,” and “be grateful” language and suppression designed especially for peoples of color over the centuries of White American domination, deprivation and degradation of them. He is regularly and rightfully criticized by Rep. Charles Schumer and Rep. Jerry Nadler who continuously advocate for his impeachment, but he does not tell them to go back to Israel, and it’s not because they are citizens. We all are. Nor does he tell Speaker Nancy Pelosi to go back to Italy. Like all bullies, he picks vulnerable targets, those who because of race and religion are least likely to be defended vigorously in concrete political ways.

Also, it is dishonest or at least self-deceiving to pretend that Trump is saying and doing such evil things simply because he’s playing to his base. This is not tenable for at least three reasons. And even if it were, it’s
still wrong. First, he has declared and they
themselves have proved, he can’t do anything
to lose them or make them less subservient to
him. From the beginning, he confidently said,
“I could stand in the middle of Fifth Avenue
and shoot somebody and I wouldn’t lose any
voters.”

Moreover, if he needed to do anything
for them, he has certainly satisfied at least
those that looked for judicial and political
dominance, and extreme financial enrich-
ment. However, some are satisfied with the
official sanction to hate and holler at rallies
of White supremacy reinforcement. And, of
course, his madman antics are not any
thought-out strategy, but rather are acts of
one who is a violator, small-minded, a hater,
insecure and at least slightly unhinged as
some psychiatrists have suggested.

Even though he pimps and panders patri-
riotism, conveniently declares an unde-
monstrated love for his country and shows no
respect for its people, especially his base, he
dares to demand others show respect for
America he doesn’t have and has not shown.
During his campaign, he was constantly he-
dogging and moaning about how low Ameri-
ca had fallen from grace and greatness, how
it was ravaged by crime and greed, left to rust
and rot by corrupt leaders, and how it had
become the laughing stock of the whole
White world.

This chaos and its porous borders, he
claims, allow the entrance of Black and
Brown undesirables and have insured “The
American dream is dead.” He repeated these
regular claims at his inaugural performance,
feigning concern about “rusted-out factories,
scattered like tombstones across the land-
scape of our country.” And he ended by call-
ing it all “American carnage.” So, no there is
no love here for America, only its condemna-
tion unless it reflects what he does, which is
always exaggerated and unerringly false in
some real and relevant way.

But if there is no end to the unhinged
and hate filled racist rants and rage of the
pretending and pretentious president Trump,
there is also no limit to the moral and verbal
contortions Republicans will perform in order
to excuse, avoid addressing and explain away
his ignorance, incompetence and daily dis-
pensed evil. Sen. Mitch McConnell wouldn’t
even defend his immigrant Chinese wife
against the Trump go-back-to-your-country
attack. Instead, he changed the subject and
stared in space as if he had lost himself on
the sacrificial altar of Trumpian support.

The lack of moral consideration, let
alone moral courage, is grossly absent here.
Their considerations are said to be “politi-
cal,” as if there is a clear and compelling
need to divorce morality from politics, and
by implication, ethics from the way we live
our lives, do our work and wage our struggle
depending upon the situation.

As I have noted elsewhere, “A socie-
ty that cannot concede its problems
cannot solve its problems. And a society that
cannot solve its problems cannot survive its
problems.” Certainly, we cannot deny Ameri-
ca, U.S. society, has a series of interrelated
self-destroying problems. And these basic
problems cannot be summed up as Trump,
although he represents them in one of their
most raw, racist and unadorned forms. The
struggle over what kind of America we will
have is still being fought on the ground in
every place and instance of oppression. Paul
Robeson is right, “The battlefront is every-
where. There is no sheltered rear.” And the
task, Fannie Lou Hamer tells us, is to con-
stantly question America, and set aside all
illusions of a “perfect union,” of freedom un-
fought for and of justice not gained and sus-
tained in righteous and relentless struggle.