



SPEAK OUT NOW



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Silence, they say, is the voice of complicity. But silence is impossible. Silence screams. Silence is a message, just as doing nothing is an act. Let who you are ring out and resonate in every word and every deed. Yes, become who you are. There's no sidestepping your own being or your own responsibility. What you do is who you are. You are your own comeuppance. You become your own message. You are the message. – Leonard Peltier (Born 1944), a Native American political prisoner, jailed for 40 years after participating in the occupation of Wounded Knee, South Dakota in 1973.

ISIS – Another Excuse for Endless War

On February 11th, President Obama gave a speech demanding that Congress take action by waging a wider war – once again, against terrorism. This time the target is the so-called terrorist group ISIS, the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq. ISIS has made headlines as it seizes territory in Northern Iraq and in Syria. In dramatic and theatrical acts of violence, ISIS has killed Western journalists, putting the grisly images on the internet. To combat this evil, Obama has demanded the power to wage war against ISIS in any country it operates in. The U.S. has already been carrying out a bombing campaign in Syria since September. The latest vote by the Senate enables the Obama administration to arm and train Syrian rebels, and extend U.S. military strikes into any country which ISIS is supposedly operating out of. The majority of the Senate voted in favor of these measures, applauding Obama for fighting the evil of ISIS.

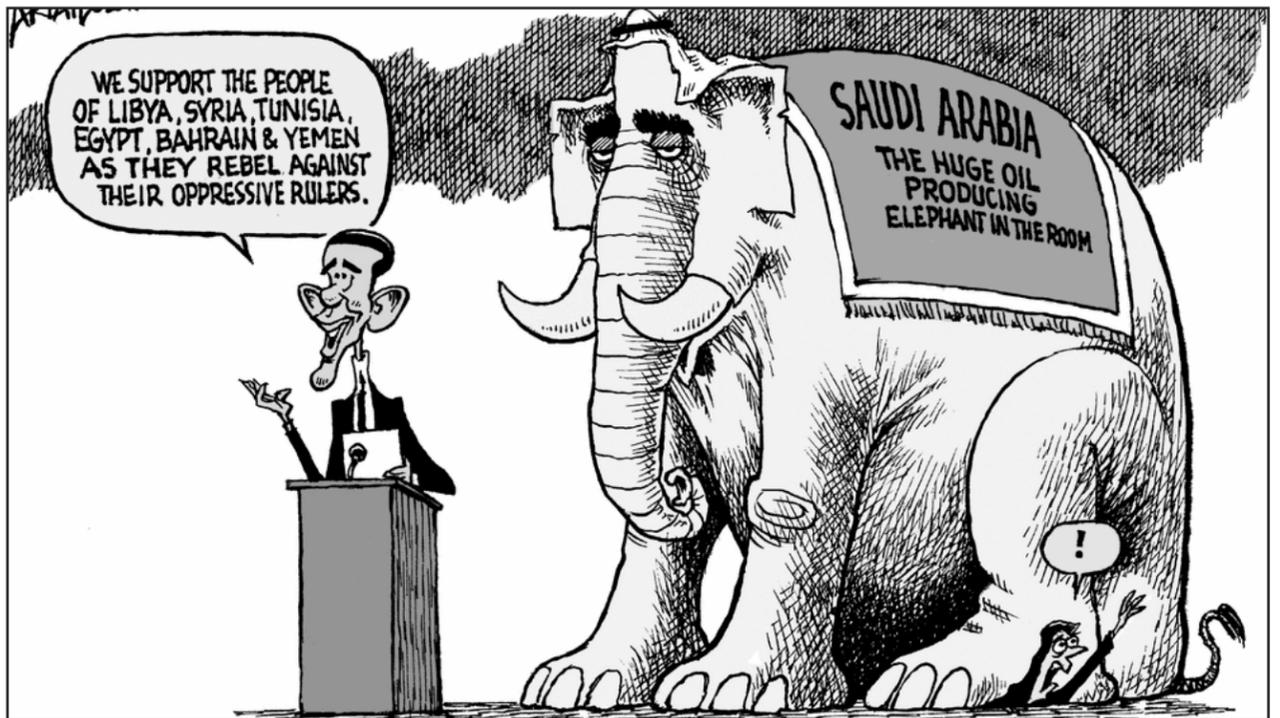
What is wrong with this picture? First, the United States government is and has been at war with the people of the Middle East as well as Africa and other countries for decades. The U.S. military has been engaged in uninterrupted attacks on Iraq since 1991, and has devastated the country over the course of two wars.

The U.S. has carried out drone and missile strikes in Somalia, Yemen, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Sudan, Syria, Libya, and many other countries. In the government's weekly counter-terrorism meeting, Obama authorizes American drones to carry out targeted assassinations worldwide, including against U.S. citizens. In the last five years, the U.S. military has carried out 2,400 such drone strikes.

Both Democratic and Republican administrations have carried on this brutality of endless war, costing millions of lives while Congress has voted continuously to supply, fund and authorize this global war. The vote in Congress last month was just one more step in an ongoing war.

There was no ISIS before the so-called "War on Terror." The U.S. war against Iraq devastated that country. Over a million people have died since 2003 from violence or disease and malnutrition. The infrastructure of the country has been shattered, and power handed to corrupt politicians from ultra-religious political parties. It is insane to look at that history and demand more violence and war as a solution.

ISIS grew up in Iraq after the U.S. invasion and spread to Syria after the population began to revolt against the government of Bashar Al-Assad. Even though ISIS is a



brutal force, it still attracts support because in some regions it is able to pose as the only force which fights the U.S. occupation and the corrupt politicians who support it.

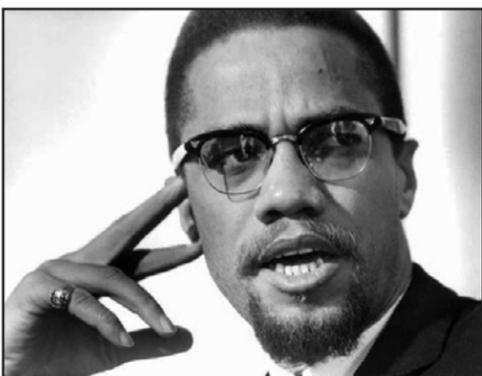
At the same as it condemns the violence of ISIS, the U.S. supports regimes whose brutality is much worse than ISIS, even if they don't broadcast their violence on the internet. Saudi Arabia is one of the most brutal dictatorships in the world. Saudi Arabia is a monarchy with not even a shred of democracy. Women face the most severe repression, unable to drive or leave the home without a male escort. Political opponents of the regime are brutally whipped in public. In 2014 over sixty people were publicly executed by beheading for crimes ranging from drug use to "sorcery." The dead bodies of the executed are displayed in public and broadcast on television. But this regime is an ally of the U.S. so it is never criticized. When Saudi King Abdullah died earlier this year, what did Obama have to say about him? Obama said that he was a great leader, devoted to "the education of his people and to greater engagement with the world." Really?! – an education in the art of brutality and oppression.

What is really at stake here for the Obama administration, the U.S. government, and the wealthy banks and corporations they serve? They want to extend and deepen their control of the world. U.S. banks and corporations rely on the U.S. military to guarantee their domination of the world economy. To maintain that domination, the U.S. military has been in constant motion since World War II, carrying out attacks, assassinations, and wars in Latin America, the Middle East, and Asia. Nothing has changed about this after Obama's speech and the latest vote by Congress.

Poor and working people in the United States have no interest in supporting or paying for the wars that are carried out in our name. The same banks and corporations who profit from war are degrading our lives here in the U.S. We have every interest in saying "NO" to war, and calling out Congress and the President for what they really are – lying, hypocritical servants of the one percent – the banks and corporations and their entire capitalist system.

Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr. – In Their Own Words

For those who are determined in their fight to bring about a society free from discrimination and inequality, their political views are rarely stagnant. The more we struggle, the more we organize with others, the more we study the past – the more our views evolve. Both Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr. were determined in their efforts, and their views continued to evolve as new events sharpened their understanding. Their lives were cut short from assassination at the age of 39, when they both still had so much more to contribute to the fight for a better world. We reprint some of their last speeches here.



Malcolm X

Born: May 19, 1925

Died: February 21, 1965

Last month marked fifty years since his assassination.

It is impossible for capitalism to survive, primarily because the system of capitalism needs some blood to suck ... it's more like a vulture and can only suck the blood of the helpless. As the nations of the world free themselves, then capitalism has less and less victims, less to suck, and it becomes weaker and weaker... You show me a capitalist, I'll

show you a bloodsucker... It's only a matter of time in my opinion before it will collapse completely. (December, 1964)

I believe that there will ultimately be a clash between the oppressed and those that do the oppressing. I believe that there will be a clash between those who want freedom, justice, and equality for everyone and those who want to continue the systems of exploitation... It is incorrect to classify the revolt of the Negro as simply a racial conflict of black against white, or as a purely American problem. Rather, we are today seeing a global rebellion of the oppressed against the oppressor, the exploited against the exploiter. (January, 1965)

Most of the countries that were colonial powers were capitalist countries and the last bulwark of capitalism today is America and it's impossible for a white person today to believe in capitalism and not believe in racism. You can't have capitalism without racism. And if you find a person without racism and you happen to get that person into conversation and they have a philosophy that makes you sure they don't have this racism in their outlook, usually they're socialists or their political Philosophy is socialism. (January, 1965)



Martin Luther King Jr.

Born: January 15, 1929

Died: April 4, 1968

The problems we are dealing with are not going to be solved until there is a radical redistribution of economic and political power. All I have been doing in trying to correct this system in America has been in vain. The whole system will have to be done away with... I knew I could never again raise my voice against the violence of the oppressed in the ghettos without having first spoken clearly to the greatest purveyor of

violence in the world today, my own government... Our only hope today lies in our ability to recapture the revolutionary spirit and go out into a sometimes hostile world declaring eternal hostility to poverty, racism, and militarism. With this powerful commitment we shall boldly challenge the status quo, we shall boldly challenge unjust mores, and thereby speed up the day when "every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the rough places shall be made plain, and the crooked places straight." (April, 1967)

There is something wrong with capitalism... The evils of capitalism are as real as the evils of militarism and racism... There are forty million poor people here, and one day we must ask the question, "Why are there forty million poor people in America?" And when you begin to ask that question, you are raising a question about the economic system, about a broader distribution of wealth. When you ask that question, you begin to question the capitalistic economy. And I'm simply saying that more and more, we've got to begin to ask questions about the whole society... When you deal with this, you begin to ask the question, "Who owns the oil?," "Who owns the iron ore?," "You begin to ask the question, "Why is it that people have to pay water bills in a world that's two-thirds water?" These are words that must be said. (August, 1967)



Fannie Lou Hamer: A Leader in the Freedom Struggle

In the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, many of the most important leaders were women. One of those leaders who stands out in history is Fannie Lou Hamer, born into a family of poor black sharecroppers in rural Mississippi on October 6, 1917. This was a time when most black people in the U.S. worked for little or nothing on plantations in the rural south. They were denied any rights, including the right to vote. Hamer, like many other black children, began working the fields when she was only six years old. The police and Ku Klux Klan stood ready with clubs, guns and lynch ropes to enforce white supremacy against black men and women who resisted oppression.



Fannie Lou Hamer was among the first poor blacks from Mississippi to organize ordinary people like herself, saying black people “were sick and tired of being sick and tired.” On August 31, 1962, she travelled with 17 of her neighbors to the county court house to register to vote, facing harassment by the police and state troopers. After being denied the right to register, she was fired from her job and evicted from her home. Fannie was not defeated. Later she told a reporter: “They kicked me off the plantation, they set me free. It’s the best thing that could happen. Now I can work for my people.”

Violence against black organizers increased in the next few years. Many were murdered and Hamer herself was arrested and beaten after attending a voter rights conference. She never fully recovered from injuries to her kidneys while being beaten in the jail. But violence simply intensified her determination, and her courage was contagious.

Hamer was one of the founders in 1964 of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP). This was a grassroots attempt to challenge the white supremacist character of the Democratic Party. The MFDP organized tens of thousands of black Mississippians, and a few whites, to demand the Democratic Party and the administration of President Johnson act immediately to enforce the constitutional rights of blacks in the south. MFDP activists traveled to the 1964 Democratic Convention to demand that the Democratic Party throw out racist, southern Democratic Party leaders, whose power was based on the denial of black participation in politics. Hamer led this effort, speaking passionately from personal experience of the system of violent oppression and poverty that black people lived under.

President Johnson, while promising to uphold the rights of blacks in the future, rejected the MFDP appeal, offering only meaningless gestures. Pressured by Democratic Party politicians and union leaders to call this a victory, Hamer still convinced the movement to reject any fake compromise. Senator Hubert Humphrey claimed that his chance at Vice President depended on the MFDP accepting the token gestures the Democrats offered. Hamer told him, “Mr. Humphrey, do you mean your position is more important to you than 400 thousand black people’s lives?” News coverage of Hamer’s speech to the Democratic Convention inspired wide awareness of the situation blacks faced in the South and inspired new black militancy throughout the country.

Fannie Lou Hamer always urged the movement to fight against poverty along side of fighting for civil rights. In 1965 she threw herself into the fight to build the Mississippi Freedom Labor Union. Not supported by most other Black leaders and ignored by the big unions, this effort ultimately failed. “These Bourgeois Negroes aren’t helping,” said Mrs. Hamer. “It’s the Ghetto Negroes who are leading the way.” In the late 60’s and early 70s, Hamer organized a co-op for small farmers in the county where she lived. Local banks and the government were hostile to this and the effort eventually failed for lack of financial support.

Fannie Lou Hamer died on March 14, 1977. As long as she could, she held on and worked hard to sustain the fight for a society based on freedom and social equality. Today when young people by the thousands are looking for ways to fight for change, her courage and convictions should be an inspiration.

For more information, you can read her biography, *This Little Light of Mine* by Kay Mills.

Citizenfour: A Film Everyone Should See

During this year’s Academy Awards, there were a few moments when real world events forced their way through the thick wall of self-obsessed stardom that typically surrounds Hollywood. One of these moments came when filmmaker Laura Poitras won the award for the best documentary for her film *Citizenfour* – a film about Edward Snowden, former National Security Agency analyst who turned whistleblower. During her speech, Poitras said the following:

The disclosures that Edward Snowden reveals don’t only expose a threat to our privacy but to our democracy itself. When the most important decisions being made affecting all of us are made in secret, we lose our ability to check the powers that control. Thank you to Edward Snowden for his courage, and for the many other whistleblowers. And I share this with Glenn Greenwald and other journalists who are exposing truth.



The very fact that Poitras was in the country to accept the award was somewhat of a protest in itself. For years she hasn’t returned to the U.S. for fear of being detained – as she has been dozens of times in the past – and being prosecuted, not only for her current work about Snowden, but also because of her earlier work as a journalist and filmmaker covering the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. *Citizenfour* was the third part of what Poitras calls her “9/11 trilogy”, following the films *My Country, My Country* and *The Oath*.

“We are building the biggest weapon for oppression in the history of mankind.”

After the award show, Edward Snowden released a statement through the American Civil Liberties Union. He wrote:

When Laura Poitras asked me if she could film our encounters, I was extremely reluctant. I’m grateful that I allowed her to persuade me. The result is a brave and brilliant film that deserves the honor and recognition it has received. My hope is that this award will encourage more people to see the film and be inspired by its message that ordinary citizens, working together, can change the world.

For those who have not seen this film, what Snowden writes is true. *Citizenfour* is a fast, tense, thriller of a documentary from the opening scene, when Poitras reads an encrypted message from Snowden after he first contacts her about leaking the documents:

From now, know that every border you cross, every purchase you make, every call you dial, every cellphone tower you pass, friend you keep, article you write, site you visit, subject line you type is in the hands of a system whose reach is unlimited but whose safeguards are not.

Citizenfour captures the vastness of the NSA’s surveillance program, one whose purpose the government actually says is to “collect it all, process it all, exploit it all, partner it all, sniff it all” and, ultimately, “know it all.” *Citizenfour* is a damning indictment of the oppressive and violent system we live under, and the limitless extent the government is willing to go to crush dissent and eliminate any obstacles to the U.S. domination of the globe.

In the film we see the moral outrage of a lifelong U.S. patriot, a loyalist who breaks from this and realizes he can no longer justify his participation or even his passive acceptance of what the government is doing. In the film, Snowden describes the government’s program as: “We are building the biggest weapon for oppression in the history of mankind.”

This is a film everyone should see, an important film, one that captures the urgency in what Snowden wrote in his recent statement: that ordinary people must work together to change the world.

Wounded Knee – An Inspiration 42 Years On

On February 27, 1973 a struggle broke out on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in North Dakota. Native peoples gathered to protest their corrupt local government officials who used their authority for their own profit. To protest the corruption, people occupied Wounded Knee, the site of a massacre of Sioux men, women and children in 1890. Led by AIM, the American Indian Movement, thousands of native people and supporters from all over the U.S. came to Wounded Knee. It became the symbol of resistance to the continued genocide of Native Americans, and a challenge to the U.S. state that was built upon that genocide.



With the occupation of Wounded Knee, Native peoples said to the world, “We will not be erased from history!” The United States Government responded by sending in the FBI and military. For 71 days people fought and died until finally the occupation was overcome by violence. But it was no defeat. Wounded Knee inspired Native people to continue their struggle against the violent destruction of their culture, to demand the right to exist from a state which was founded on their destruction.

One of the fighters at Wounded Knee, Leonard Peltier, was imprisoned on false charges. He has spent forty years as a political prisoner for taking part in this struggle – a struggle which should not be forgotten. Remember Wounded Knee! Free Leonard Peltier!

Upcoming Event

**David Bacon: Forced
Migration and the
Exploitation of
Immigrants**

**Sunday, March 15
7pm (doors 6:30)**

**Niebyl-Proctor Library
6501 Telegraph Ave.,
Oakland**

Where We Stand

The world we live in today is increasingly ruled by prejudice and fear, under a system of widespread violence and war, where exploitation and oppression are the rule, with the many dominated by the few. The name of this system is capitalism.

The Force For Change Exists Today

Everywhere, working people’s labor makes society run. Working people have the power to bring this system to a halt and bring about the changes needed. Like slavery, feudalism and other systems that enriched the minority at the expense of the majority, capitalism’s removal is long over due. The time for socialism has come.

We Stand For Socialism

- A world based on peaceful collaboration and international cooperation of working class people -- not the exploiters who rule today.
- The common ownership and sharing of the world’s resources and productive capacity.

- An egalitarian and democratic society, organized and controlled from the bottom up.
- Protection of the world’s ecological systems, putting science to work to sustain life, not destroy it.
- A society where human relations are based on respect, equality and dignity of all peoples, not racism, sexism or homophobia.

Who We Are

Speak Out Now is a revolutionary socialist group. We believe the international working class is the social force that can transform society and create a new world. But to do so, revolutionary organizations must be built in the working class. For this reason our group aims its activity primarily at workplaces, where struggles have the most potential to transform the world. Our newsletters are a tool to begin this work. What a handful of people decide today can determine our future. Join us to work for a better future – that is both necessary and possible.

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