

Silence is not an option

The following are selected excerpts from the speech delivered by the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., on April 4, 1967, at Riverside Church in New York City regarding the escalating American war on Vietnam, growing U.S. military intervention in Central and South America, and the increasing disregard for human needs and rights, enriching the few at the expense of the many, that motivated these actions. His words are even more relevant to today's wars at home and abroad than they were then.

(For the full text of the speech, go to https://www.crmvet.org/info/mlk_viet.pdf).

Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence

Some of us who have already begun to break the silence of the night have found that the calling to speak is often a vocation of agony, but we must speak...In 1957 a sensitive American official overseas said that it seemed to him that our nation was on the wrong side of a world revolution. During the past ten years we have seen emerge a pattern of suppression which now has justified the presence of U.S. military "advisors" in Venezuela. This need to maintain social stability for our investments accounts for the counter-revolutionary action of American forces in Guatemala. It tells why American helicopters are being used against guerrillas in Colombia and why American napalm and green beret forces have already been active against rebels in Peru. It is with such activity in mind that the words of the late John F. Kennedy come back to haunt us. Five years ago, he said, "Those who make peaceful revolution impossible will make violent revolution inevitable."

...I am convinced that if we are to get on the right side of the world revolution, we as a nation must undergo a radical revolution of values. We must rapidly begin the shift from a "thing-oriented" society to a "person-oriented" society. When machines and computers, profit motives and property rights are considered more important than people, the giant triplets of racism, materialism, and militarism are incapable of being conquered. A true revolution of values will soon cause us to question the fairness and justice of many of our past and present policies.

... True compassion is more than flinging a coin to a beggar; it is not haphazard and superficial. It comes to see that an edifice which produces beggars needs restructuring. A true revolution of values will soon look uneasily on the glaring contrast of poverty and wealth. With righteous indignation, it will look across the seas and see individual capitalists of the West investing huge sums of money in Asia, Africa and South America, only to take the profits out with no concern for the social betterment of the countries, and say: "This is not just." It will look at our alliance with the landed gentry of Latin America and say: "This is not just." The Western arrogance of feeling that it has everything to teach others and nothing to learn from them is not just.

A true revolution of values will lay hands on the world order and say of war: "This way of settling differences is not just..." A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death.

...We still have a choice today; nonviolent coexistence or violent co-annihilation. We must move past indecision to action...If we do not act we shall surely be dragged down the long dark and shameful corridors of time reserved for those who possess power without compassion, might without morality, and strength without sight.

One year to the day after delivering this speech, on April 4, 1968, Dr. King was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee, where he had gone to support striking Black sanitation workers, who were fighting for respectful working conditions, union recognition, and an increase in pay over the substandard hourly wage they had been receiving.

Silence is not an option!

Resist this endless war. Resist fascism now (before it's too late.)

ABOLISH ICE

END U.S. Wars and Occupations

REMOVE the Trump Regime

New Haven Sunday Vigil for Peace and Justice:

<https://newhavensundayvigil.org>

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