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**April 4, 2025: California Poor People’s Campaign Public Participatory Readings of**

**Dr. Martin Luther Jr.’s April 4, 1967, speech, “Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence”**

We gather here today to honor the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on the 57th anniversary of his tragic and untimely assassination, and the 58th anniversary of his prophetic speech, “Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence.” In this prophetic speech, Dr. King declared: ***“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, extreme materialism, and militarism are incapable of being conquered.”***

[The Poor People’s Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival](http://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org) has picked up Dr. King’s unfinished work weaving the interlocking injustices of systemic racism, systemic poverty, environmental devastation, militarism and the war economy and a distorted moral narrative of Christian nationalism that blames poor people for their own poverty and claims there’s “not enough”, into one “moral fusion” campaign.

In his “Beyond Vietnam” speech, Dr. King declared: ***“A nation that continues year after year to spend more on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death.”***

Responding to a 2023 scientific study, Bishop William J. Barber II, National Co-Chair of the Poor People’s Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival, declared: “Today, poverty is the 4th leading cause of death nationwide. It is a death sentence for Americans. It is a moral travesty and a detriment to the soul of our nation that poverty kills more people than homicide yet the powers that be don’t want to address it.”

We are here to call for an end to ***all*** wars and occupations around the world, an end to militarization of police in communities across the country, an end to gun violence, an end to poverty, and an end to nationalism, racism, xenophobia, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, sexism, homophobia, and gender identity oppression. We are here to call instead for the redirection of resources from the industries of violence to providing for the wellbeing of all people everywhere and preservation of our endangered environment.

Listen to an audio recording of Dr. King delivering *“Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence”* on April 4, 1967 and read along.

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This year’s Oakland reading is sponsored by the California Poor Peoples Campaign and Western States Legal Foundation, with co-sponsors: S.F. Bay Physicians for Social Responsibility; Women's International League of Peace and Freedom, East Bay and S.F. branches; INOCHI / Plutonium Free Future; CODEPINK Bay Area and East Bay; 1000 Grandmothers for Future Generations; and Haiti Action Committee

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