

## Western New York Peace Center Annual Fundraiser:

### An Evening with Dr. Cornel West

November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020



#### **SPEAKERS**

Dr. Cornel West, Jill Clause, Victoria Ross, Dr. Brandon Absher, Samira Abdulkadhir, Katherine Slosman, Dr. Rolanda Ward, Cora Wright, Roger Cook, Jillian Hanesworth, Deidra EmEl, Jalonda Hill, Jenny Mauk, Yasmin Begum, Renee Lachajczyk, Justin Lee

#### **Victoria Ross 05:32**

Welcome, Welcome. Welcome. We're very excited to have Dr. Cornel West already with us for this wonderful celebration, the Western New York Peace Center's special evening we're spending with Dr. Cornel West. And the way we'll start off before anything, is that we have Jill Yagwoneest Clause who is going to do an indigenous opening. Jill, Tuscarora, is going to do a Haudenosaunee Gnyonyoh.

#### **Jill Clause 05:41**

Just this little bit [adjusting the laptop screen] ... I'm a little taller than her. First one we like to start off on is ..... Cwe-n nya ne-hru twant [in the Tuskaroran language: Hello All My Friends!] Wakachenih-ti wake-ke [I am happy to be together again] Kya-eh Yekwa-nihst [My name is Jill Clause] Rakwis Kisehset de' [My clan is Turtle] Ska hru ret Kya da kreh [My nation is Tuscarora] Es Kri wah neh tyeh [Please forgive me for any mistakes]. I am of the Tuscarora nation, turtle clan. And I come here tonight representing my people who - to open things with Dr. Cornel and everybody that has joined us - First we'd like to acknowledge all the people that are here, and giving thanks for everybody that's here. And then the next, as we bring our hearts and our minds together as one now we like to give things for our Mother the Earth, and everything that she has provided for us. And as we lift our eyes to creation, we give things for the sacred waters that we all have come from - those precious and Clean Waters that are still there to earth, and that we are protecting and constantly in reverence to, we give thanks. We give thanks to the medicines, medicines that keep us healthy, the small medicine plants that grow on the ground, we give thanks. And we bring our hearts and our minds together as one to give thanks for this peaceful day. And like to continue to give thanks to the - the strawberries, the leader of the berries, and the maple tree, the leader of all that are symbols of peace and justice for our people. Well honor and acknowledge the fineness of the beautiful birds and happen to hear their song and their strength and sovereignty that they have, that are no borders from the birds. And there are no differences between the birds. And they respect each other that way, as that's what they teach us. We continue to lift our eyes up through Creation. And we give thanks for the winds today. The winds that can be so powerful that they can wreck this house right now. The winds that are so powerful that can push the trees down, and are not like that, that we are able to sit here and bring our hearts and our minds together as one and give thanks and acknowledge our relatives the Trees. We continue to lift our eyes up through creation. And we give thanks for the animals that live, the four legged, and animals that walk so, and give their lives so that we may have life and we honor and acknowledge them as well. And once again, we'll bring our hearts and our minds together as one this evening to honor and acknowledge our relatives, the animals. And as we lift our eyes up to creation to the winds to the thunder beings to the Thunderers that, that strike any evil forces that are in

the ground and push them back down or to turn away that negative energy and rejuvenate and wake us up and give thanks. As we are all waking up as we, as humanity is waking up to this peaceful life that we have in this beautiful world that we have been blessed to have. We continue to give thanks and we bring our hearts and our minds as one, together as one to give thanks once again for this peace. This peace that we each and every one are sharing tonight. And as we continue up to lift our eyes up to the heavens we give thanks for the- the sun, the elder brother who gives us so much life, so much energy we are so grateful to our relatives and we speak to you all - the brother Sun - and say thank you. We continue on to give back to our grandmother the Moon. The oldest grandmother in all of the world, she leads all the women. We give thanks to our Grandmother Moon, and all the women that she has governed and all the children that we have come from, we have all come from our mother, we honor and honor and honor all the women in this world, lifting our hearts and our minds together as one to give thanks to our grandmother. And we give thanks to the stars, our relatives, that have remembered their duties to rise every night, they're always there, they guide us and protect us and tell us what time of the year it is. And we give our thanks as we gather ourselves. And our, bring our hearts and our minds together as one, to give thanks for the hearts in the stars. We give thanks to the Four Protectors, the enlightened beings that guide and protect us all around this world. We give thanks to you and the teachings to remind us that we are a peaceful people. And that we come here today to talk important things to lift your ears up. Pay attention, for the things we talk about are very important tonight. And they're listening. And we have invited them to come here to be a part of this. And we give thanks to the great life force, great Creator of all life. Lifting our hearts and our minds together as one, to give thanks to the Creator, and to hear us as we talk tonight about these things, these important matters, our future, our children's future, the seventh generation's future, that we have learned, the lessons we have learned, that we are able to talk about them tonight. And now I'm done. And we can begin.

**Victoria Ross 11:53**

Nya weh! So as we say Nya weh, as Jill says Nya weh, then we say Nyoh! [Jill: Nya weh!] [All:] Nyoh! Nyoh, Nyoh! Thank you so much, which it means Thanks. Thanks. It's a great thing! So, and thanks so much to the Creator. And thanks so much to you, dear beloved Brother West, for coming and joining us here at this time, this very, very critical time. So we're so, we can't, we're just overwhelmed that you're managing to zoom in. And so what we'll do really is to go on at - but if you could just say hello, first. I know people have been waiting for you - they've watched all of our program just waiting for you!

**Cornel West 12:50**

Oh, you mean just for me to say hello, my dear Sister?

**Victoria Ross 12:53**

dear, yes! For you to say hello - Yes! [laughing]

**Cornel West 12:55**

Oh, absolutely. And I want to embrace my precious indigenous sister with that wisdom and those insights - Indeed, indeed, Indeed! I'm so blessed to be here. Thank you, sister, Vicki. Thank you Sister!

**Deidra EmEl 13:11**

And Jill - Jill, Yagwoneest, she's done this for us so many times. [Cornel: Absolutely.] reminding us of the beauty of creation, and all that, what we were originally instructed, that deep knowledge that you talk about. So ... We also want to you also want to welcome in some student groups and student representatives. So I see that we have Jenny Mauk. Jenny, are you there?

**Jenny Mauk 13:36**

I am. How are you?

**Victoria Ross 13:38**

Thank you. Jenny is from upstate SUNY Buffalo State. We're so excited. Thank you for coming, Jenny.

**Jenny Mauk 13:46**

Of course, I appreciate the opportunity. And I'm very excited to hear Dr. West tonight.

**Deidra EmEl 13:50**

So Jenny is going to be collecting questions when we do the q&a that everybody's very excited about. Jenny will be you know, giving some her questions or other people's questions. We also have, who else do we have? Do we have ah - from from D'Youville College. Who do we have? or - Do we have anybody from UB before anything? Do you have anybody from UB? They didn't make it on from UB... Okay. Or Canisius College? Maybe they'll join us later. Okay. So from, from D'Youville, who do we have? [Brandon: Hey - I'm here!] Okay! Hey - there he is! Thank you! Well, so, Brandon, you want to introduce your beautiful wife too?

**Brandon Absher 14:35**

This is my wife Rachel and we also have two students from D'Youville on here. Katherine and Samira, do you want to say hi?

**Samira Abdulkadir and Katherine Slosman 14:41**

Hi!

**Deidra EmEl 14:44**

Hi, thank you. Welcome, welcome. Well, we're so excited. And I know Brandon has been so excited because he called me right away. And he said we want to get 40 tickets for all our students. And - but that is not the reason why I want to say that - we're giving Brandon - I - Brandon doesn't know this but he's getting the Peace Education Award. Brandon is in [Brandon: thanks so much, that's very kind!]

**Victoria Ross 15:16**

his classroom, etc. Always bringing activists into his classroom and working with Nekanesakt, the Buffalo Anti-Racism Coalition. Brandon we'll be dropping this [an award] off sometime. Okay, thank you. And then from Niagara University - First of all, we have a student right here somewhere who's been running around getting the work done, from Niagara University, Renee Lachajczyk and she is going to be, she's accompanied by - who we have here, Dr. Rolando Ward, who do we have here from NU? From NU besides you for the students? Do we have one? Well, you know what we're really - Oh, what we're really looking for - is you. Because I think you understood, I think you might have understood.... I want to say ... Rolanda and I went to

school at Boston University together. And I have watched Rolanda at every turn, she works ... With all groundbreaking work that she does in the Buffalo public schools, all the tireless.... not in front of microphone, not getting all the credit, but she deserves all the credit for all the inspiration. Rolanda - Peace Education Award - another one who said immediately when she heard - Dr. West?!! Wooohooo! So Rolanda we'll have to drop that off to you too. You'll be meeting the interns, all the interns in a minute. And then of course, we have two award for two - two for two. So I know I saw our beloved Roger Cook on the line. Roger? Here .... Roger. So Roger and June, - Oh, Dr. West, if you could meet Roger and June.... They have been the linchpins of activism in Buffalo NY, the backbone of the of the Riverside Salem UCC, which is actually the parent of the Western New York Peace Center when we were started as part of Dr. King's Clergy and Laity Against the War. And meanwhile doing all kinds of work with the Interfaith Climate Justice Community, Roger has been. And June - June has done so much. June has not, she - she only agreed to take the award if she didn't have to go on zoom. Roger, if you would want to say a few words. You... - don't you? You have to unmute.

**Roger Cook 18:10**

Yes. June's computer doesn't have video. So she's not on tonight. But she thanks you from the bottom of her heart for this award. And I'm, I'm down here in Florida, just having just finished working on the campaign. So I do have zoom and video. So that's why I'm here. So - why - so much.

**Deidra EmEl 18:29**

We're grateful for you, Roger always, you and June, really, for so many years! And the thing is, they're still doing it! They're still doing major work, both of them. So thank you. And, and from there, we have two awardees here still in the room, which is .... maybe if we start with Jalanda. Jalonda Hill. Jalonda? First of all, we've been working heavily with Jalonda - I want to ask, actually, let me ask Deidra, our office manager and coordinator, who is going to get and present the award .... She's here! You could still stay there. [Deidra: Hello! Hi, Dr. West. ]

**Jalonda Hill 19:20**

Hello!

**Cornel West 19:20**

How are you doing, my dear sisters?!

**Jalonda Hill 19:22**

Very good.

**Deidra EmEl 19:32**

So, here - Jalonda Hill who works as a paralegal for the Western New York Law Center, partners and - sorry - partnering with with Free The People, Partnership of the Public Good, and others. She is the principal organizer for the Fair Fines No Fees Coalition, which achieved a major win of getting all the new fees abolished, as well instituting a new traffic stop tool. She is also the founder and leader of Color Girls Bike Tpo, and is currently in the O'Shei Leadership Program. Jalonda is devoted to building community and solidarity and developing a spirit of learning and listening wjocj is the key to strong leadership. So this Emerging Leaders award is to Jalonda Hill

**Jalonda Hill 20:27**

Wow, okay! [Lots of cheers, clapping!] Thank you Vicki. Thank you to the Western New York Peace Center. I'm really excited to be sharing space with people like Jillian Hanesworth, Vicki Ross, and to just be acknowledged for work that I'm naturally feel called to do is such an honor. And to get the Emerging Leaders award, that's exactly where I'm at in my leadership journey. On my birthday, I'm learning and there's just so much work to do in our community. And you know, I'm definitely taking the time to invest in myself as a leader, because you can't lead a community if you don't invest in yourself first. So - yeah, I'm absolutely grateful. And yeah, thank you. And I'm absolutely, I'm even more excited to be sharing space with Dr. Cornel. [Vicki: Yes!] I'm very interested in hearing what he has to say. So I been following you, at a distance on the web. And just like - different TV shows, and to now be sharing space with you, even though it's virtually I think, is super great. So - thank you so much!!

**Deidra EmEl 21:55**

So, Jalonda, we're so grateful now here. That - one of the things it's so weird on zoom. So we've been zooming through the awards. And I feel like I really didn't give some of the awardees a chance to say anything. So what I want to ask is that definitely stay with us. So that, you know, you also can ask questions or make some comments. You know, a lot of the students when we have our very lively q&a that we're very excited about as well. So in our last thing before we get the blessing of listening and getting the vision and inspiration from you, Dr. West, is Jillian Hanesworth. So, - Jillian also has an award, it is the Alt-imate Activist Award. So it is named for Wayne Alt who was in on the day one of the creation of the Western New York Peace Center, which means, you know, in 1967, as part of Dr. King's Clergy and Laity Against the War, and Wayne is still fighting the good fight, and still tells me I need another 50 push ups. You know, but anyway, that is Wayne! so we call it the Alt-imate Activist Award. And so the person - Jillian Haynesworth - Jillian has been out there in every kind of way, where the healing work, for the truth telling work, for the taking the community, leading the community, teaching emerging leaders in through Open Buffalo - shout out to Franchelle Parker at home - and then, who's on our board, we're blessed to have her on our board, and so many great board members! Anyway, you've seen all that in our beginning program. So Jillian really just deserves every kind of kudo, every kind of appreciation. And not only is her leadership and her activism, but her poetry is really something very special for spoken word, for inspiration.... Her deep, deep commitment and love for the work and the people .... So Jillian - you're the Alt-imate Activist. [Clapping and cheers!]

**Jillian Hanesworth 24:24**

So thank you to Vicki and the WNY Peace Center for this award. I'm honored to have even been thought about let alone selected to receive this. I would like to thank all of the activists and organizers in the community simply for accepting my activism. When I got started, I didn't know anything about organizing. I didn't know about building political power. I just I have my tools in my tool chest and that was a pencil and everyone accepted that for what it was and they made space for it. So if you're thinking about getting into this work, just know that there is space for you. Whatever you have to offer, please bring that - we need that. And the only way that we are going to continue to work to liberate our people is if we do it together. So thank you so much for this and I'm looking forward to continuing to serve my community and of course to hear what Dr. West is going to say. So thank you!

**Victoria Ross 25:27**

What I didn't say, the other thing is we have a special treat of having Jillian do Spoken Words for us which is going to be a special request for "The Revolution Will Rhyme." So, Jillian...

**Jillian Hanesworth 25:47**

Before - it's called, The revolution will rhyme - It is a tribute to Gil Scott Heron, The Revolution Will Not Be Televised. The revolution will not be televised The revolution will not be streamed live on Facebook, Twitter, or IG TV. You will not be able to start it over if you missed a part And you won't need to tap it twice to see it's heart The revolution will not be brought to you by Nike, the NFL, or Jay-Z We will watch it succeed in HD without taking a knee The revolution will not be televised The revolution will be live The revolution will thrive And the revolution will rhyme The revolution will be led by black women who are just tired enough to do it ourselves It will be rhythmic enough for us to follow the beat Using drums and tambourines focusing on the two and four beats Like a secret language that comes naturally It will get louder when it's calling for the people's attention And quieter when it wants the people to listen People listen The revolution will be direct and unwavering without concern of being looked at as angry It will be as big and natural as a black panther's afro without worrying about opportunity It will be as interwoven as locs but there will be nothing dreadful about it And when light shines on the revolution it will create a halo around it The revolution will rhyme It will be syncopated It will harmonize It will be call and repeat The revolution will rhyme The revolution will leave no man behind It will not be developed just to be displaced Its purpose will not be extracted and repurposed or refocused And the burden of education and comfort will not be placed on the oppressed While understanding and tolerance is gifted to the oppressor You will not be able to binge watch the revolution Rewinding the comfortable triumphs and fast forwarding through the hurt You will not be able to DVR the revolution or avoid spoiler alerts Or save it for a day that you choose to see its worth You will not be able to mute the revolution for it will be loud And you will not be able to shame the revolution for it will be proud The revolution will rhyme It will hold your attention and retain your momentum It will float like a butterfly and sting like a bee It will hit even harder than Muhammad Ali It will stand on the shoulders of those who died on their knees Screaming "You can take me from my freedom but you can't take my freedom from me" The revolution will hold this country accountable forcing it to keep its promises Promises that guarantee life liberty and the pursuit of happiness It will be something to behold It will be so cinematic that Ava Duvernay will create a documentary about it It will be a complete overhaul not. It will hold your attention and retain your momentum it will slow like

**Cornel West 28:10**

signal.

**Jillian Hanesworth 28:21**

Just a quick fix the revolution will rhyme. It may not always be politically correct. And it will not be required to forgive and forget the revolution will remember all those who crosses his path with the message fierce enough to make the opposition fear its wrath it will march through the valley of the shadow of death without regret of its coming for what it is owed and refuses to settle for half the revolution will not be televised. The revolution will be live the Revolution will thrive and the Revolution will Rhyme. Thank you. [Applause!]

**Deidra EmEl 29:05**

So we hope you could hear all of that we were told that we froze somewhere in the middle, But, if you want to Google it. First of all, Jillian's poem has been published. So you can find it outside, and we'll have it on our on our virtual program book that can be downloaded as a PDF. So anyway, so thank you, so thanks Jillian, and please give her and all the awardees [applause]... We're proud and grateful too of Nicole Perrone who is being the master webmaster for the webinar. And of course, Deidra EmEl, and our three interns. And they're here. [Laughing] Okay, okay. So here we are - Now. But - now the moment that we're all waiting for - So, beloved brother, Cornel, where do we go from here?

**Cornel West 30:16**

Well, can you hear me all right? Is it coming through alright? Oh, wonderful, wonderful, wonderful! Well, let me just first say that I am so deeply blessed to come back to Buffalo to highlight 53 years of high quality service, love and struggle for justice, on behalf of my brothers and sisters of all colors, who have chosen to build on the legacy of the Clergy and Laity Concerned. And that's Martin Luther King, Jr. Yes. But that's also Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel. That's William Coffin, or Rick Newhouse when he was progressive, he changed his mind, but he is part of that organization. It's a whole wave of brothers and sisters that came together in the 1960s. And said, we're going to connect, we're gonna connect the struggle against white supremacy, and Pentagon militarism and Wall Street greed, and trying to degrade the environment and losing sight of the humanity of our sisters or the vast majority of humankind and highlighting the predicament of our indigenous brothers and sisters, and our Latinos. It is a humanistic solidarity that's what happening in Buffalo tonight. And I want to salute each and every one of you. Now, it's true that my dear sister Vicki, anytime she calls I come running because we've had struggles all the way back against drones and all host of things in Buffalo. And so it is true that when Sister Vicki calls I come running, but then I get a chance to meet Sister Deidra, Brother Chris, and I hit up artistry of my dear sister Jillian, and all of these magnificent recipients of these awards, but in the end, we are simply human beings who have chosen to be of service to the least of these, to the orphans, the widows, the fatherless, the motherless, the persecuted, the subjugated, the exploited, that's what we're here and that's why when we started with John Coltrane, I said to myself, I'm in the right place, because he's blowing A Love Supreme. You can hear Elvin on the drums, you can hear Jimmy on the bass. You can hear McCoy Tyner playing that piano and what they're doing is allowing the best of a tradition of a black people to be unleashed in the world in sonic form that says, you can bring chronic hatred to us - We're gonna dish out Love Warriors! Here come Ida B. Wells Barnett, here come Mary Tolbert from Buffalo, here come Aretha Franklin - talk about Respect, written by genius Otis Redding from Macon, Georgia. Here comes A. Philip Randolph. Here comes a whole wave of Love Warriors that Caravan of Love that the Isley Brothers sing about, that Love Train that the O'Jays saying about. You can bombard us with terrorism, lynch us, Jim Crow us, Jane Crow us, but here come Freedom Fighters who want freedom for everybody. We don't want a black version of the Ku Klux Klan. We want freedom for everybody. That's what Harriet Tubman is telling us. That's what Frederick - that's what Ida B. Wells is telling us! Oh, what a tradition! You can drop, You can traumatize us in every kind of way you want and wound us but we're gonna produce some wounded healers not wounded hurters. We're gonna produce folk who are bruised, but still open themselves in such a way that they can heal. And by heal, I'm not talking about reconciliation before justice. I'm talking about solidarity through justice! And that includes everybody. Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims, Mexicans, Palestinians, Jews, Russians, Ethiopians, Guatemalans, .... Western New York Peace Center, let the world just look at you! Look at yourselves. These 53 years you've been bearing that kind of witness! You mistreat our brothers and sisters in El Salvador, we're going to be there! You mistreat our brothers and

sisters in South Africa - We're going to be there! You mistreat our Jewish brothers and sisters in Russia - We're going to be there! You mistreat our Palestinians on the West Bank - we're gonna be there! You mistreat our Uyghurs in China, Muslims, we're going to be there! Our Bahai in Iran. It is a moral and a spiritual thing. And that's why we have smiles on our faces, even though we emerge out of the depths of a struggle, a difficult struggle, a prolonged struggle. And that's why Sister Jillian when she takes us back with that beautiful poetic artistry of her own, rooted in Gil Scott Heron out of Jackson, Tennessee on to New York with Brian Jackson playing the piano. And of course with Buffalo, you got to say something about Rick James. Got to say something about the Funkmaster. [Oh, yes!] No, Rick James without Dyke and the Blazers, Arlester Christian, founder of the funk genre along with James Brown with funky Broadway. We got soul! When you come to Buffalo, you got to say something about the greatest political theorists of radical democracy Sheldon F. Wolin, who happened to be my thesis advisor. He's Buffalo to the core. Gotta say something about Richard Hofstadter, the finest literary stylist in the history of American historiography. You got to say something about Harriet Emerson Fosdick, the anti pacifist, the anti war preacher in New York for over 50 years. Oh, what a coming together we have in the city of Buffalo. I know it's just not cold up there with a lot of snow. No, there's a lot of sacred fire in Buffalo. And that sacred fire is grounded in an Unarmed Truth. And the condition of truth is to allow suffering to speak. And I come from a people whose anthem is Lift Every Voice. Doesn't say lift every echo. We not extensions of an echo chamber. We not part of a group mentality. We not copies and emulations and imitations. We are originals! We have voices like our fingerprints, we have been lifting our voices in the Western New York Peace Center. What does that mean? That means that whatever identity we have, whatever the color of our skin, whatever our gender, whatever cultures and heritage, whatever sexual orientation, whatever religion or non religion, whatever identity we have, it's grounded in a moral and spiritual integrity, with a universal solidarity with all who suffer. And this is very important, because it's so easy to get - talk about different identity identities, ideally, yes, these identities are crucial. When you hear Malcolm X, you hear a free Muslim brother who has a commitment to the suffering of others. When you hear James Baldwin who's agnostic, you hear a commitment to the suffering of others. You hear an Edward Said, who's secular and atheistic. You hear a commitment to the suffering of others. When you hear a Christian, like Martin Luther King Jr, Fannie Lou Hamer, or Ida B. Wells - she was a freedom fighter and a Sunday school teacher, all her life. She's there with her Muslim brothers and sisters, with her Jewish brothers and sister, with her Catholic, with her agnostic, with her atheistic, - because it is integrity and solidarity based on a sensitivity to those who suffer and a willingness to take a risk, pay a cost - to be willing to engage in what you heard Coltrane blowing in his horn. What was he doing? He was doing that thing what we call Kenosis. That's what's been going on for 53 years and but what is Kenosis K E N O S I S it is a emptying of the self, it is a giving of the self, a donating of the self, a sacrificing of the self. So whatever our gifts, whatever they are, we use those gifts to be of service to others. Now in my own personal journey, it has much to do with the genius of Hebrew Scripture. It says to be human, is to spread Hesed, loving kindness, steadfast love, to the orphan and the widow, to the vulnerable, to the vincible, to those who are rendered invincible. That's what it is to be human - do justly, love mercy, walk humbly with thy God, that he or she will be greatest, not like Alexander the Great who conquers and dominates, not like Napoleon. Not like the presidents of the American Empire dropping bombs and drones, no - greatness will be measured by he or she, who is willing to serve, to love to promote justice, with a sense of humility. And this is very important. Because justice, any justice as only justice soon degenerates into something less than justice, if you don't have some love at the center of it, if you don't have some care at the center of it, if you don't have some concern at the center of it. So it was not just as the new lifestyle: Look at me, I'm now more marketable because everybody thinks that



I'm so popular because it's such a fad at the moment. No, no, not in the best of Buffalo! Not 53 years in Western New York Peace Center. No, no! Uh-uh - you talking about justice, that means you got a sacred fire inside a' you that can never be put out such that you're going to bear witness over against the grain, you're gonna be in the world, but not of that world, you're gonna be transforming that world, you're not gonna build conformance to that world, you're not gonna be complicitous, you're not going to be complacent, you're not going to be a coward, not going to be a coward. You're not going to sell your soul for a mess of pottage, in order to become part of somebody else's spectacle. And people can look at you and say, Oh, my God, the American dream has been achieved. Unbelievable success. I feel it, I can live my life vicariously with all of these folks at the top and they're so colorful, and all these different genders. No, the question is, if you at the top What are you doing up there to help folk at the bottom? How are you using your success for moral greatness, spiritual greatness? That's the best of the Peace Center. It's the best of my tradition. That's the best of your tradition! And here we are now, the Neo fascist moment in the American Empire, where we've been able owing to an anti fascist coalition to push out a NEO fascist gangster. When I call him a gangster, that's not just name calling. A gangster is somebody who believes Might makes Right. A gangster is somebody who believes they can say and do anything they want to get away with it. A gangster is somebody who thinks they could crush crush the weak and the vulnerable: immigrants, Muslims, black folk, women, workers, anybody who thinks they could crush it and get away with it - That's what a gangster is. And I have said on a personal note, you see, I was a thoroughgoing gangster 'fore I met Jesus and now I'm just a redeemed seller with gangster proclivities. So when I call Trump a gangster, I'm talking about something inside of me that I've got to make sure I'm not pushing back every day that I live, dying daily. In order for the best of who we are to come forward. That was Dorothy days eulogy for Martin Luther King, Jr.: April 4 1968. She wrote the Catholic Worker, Martin Luther King Jr learned how to die daily, to push the worst inside of us. Every human being has some proclivities that lean toward gangster-like activity. Oh, no, not me Brother West I'm a saint, I'm a saint. Check yourself, Check yourself, check yourself. A saint ain't nothing but a sinner who looks at the world through the lens of the heart. JOHN Coltrane was a saint because he was a sinner. But he opened his heart. And he mastered his craft. And he gave all of the best that was inside of him, even givin' his humanity, and every human being has faults, and foibles and gangster possibilities. But when you get it organized the way Trump did, so you get the hatred, the greed, the contempt, organized and institutionalized, you got Neo-fascism on the move. And that's what we've had. America has always had fascist zones - ask our indigenous brothers and sisters. Dispossession of land, killing of precious women men children - fascism across the board, slavery, Jim Crow, Jane Crow, fascist zones in Americans' Imperial democracy. But with Trump, you could have had the whole project fascist. So I'm glad we pushed him out. I'm glad to be part of that coalition. Ain't no doubt about that. We made three music videos, we gave hundreds of speeches to try to push him across the line. But in the legacy of Western New York Peace Center, we say we ain't gonna lie on Biden just because we voting for Biden. No, Biden's talking about the soul of America. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Southern Christian Leadership Conference when they met in 1957. What was what was the slogan? - the Soul of America must be saved! So he pullin' from the black tradition. I said, Ooh, ooh - Biden gonna pull from the black tradition! Oh, that's like Pat Boone trying to pull from Curtis Mayfield - you better get ready. You better get ready now. Well, the Beach Boys gonna pull from James Brown, they better come with it, now! We got some high standards. Yes, we do. And it's not a standard of racial and skin pigmentation - it is moral, it's spiritual, with political consequences. So let's look at the soul of America. What's at the center of that soul? why is it so rotten so often? Well, there's three pillars of it: greed, tied to predatory capitalism - profit, profit, profit; money, money, money; Wall Street greed, especially in the last 50 years, because the predatory

capitalist system has become highly financialized. So it's no longer an industrial capitalist order, it is a financialized capitalist order. There's no longer cars and rubber factories where the capitalist production produced products. Now it just produces deals. And a massive distribution of wealth from poor and working people of all colors, some of them, many of whom voted for Trump. They catching hell. They're hurting. They're looking for an alternative. And here comes the Neo fascist acted like he's a populist. That's one pillar of the Right in the soul of America. What's the other one? White supremacy in all of its manifestations. Hatred and contempt. Indigenous peoples and - Never let anybody tell you that the enslavement of precious Africans was America's original sin. No! That was the second one! The first one was the subordination, the dispossession of the lands of our indigenous brothers and sister - we got to tell the truth. White supremacy has a number of different manifestations. Was against the Chinese who built the railroad and then was sent back. Japanese in internment camps under FDR - liberal. Middle Eastern brothers and sisters who don't fit the black white divide, but still find themselves degraded just on it. Latino brothers and sisters - California where I grew up, used to be Mexico; and some other states, New Mexico, Arizona, portions of Colorado. So when you think of white supremacy, it has a number of different forms, but it is inseparable from predatory capitalism, profit maximizing, exploiting people's labor across the board. But then the third pillar: Militarism. And that militarism goes hand in hand, toxic masculinity projected. So you get militarism at home, too often in the household - domestic violence against sisters, degrading women's humanity. Externally, abroad: 800 military units around the world; and Russia and China together have 30? And we denied at America's an empire? The Militarism! AFRICOM in Africa; overthrowing democratic governments in Latin America, or Iran; the attempt of corporate elites to impose their will around the world. And that same militaristic orientation leads toward us viewing the earth itself as an IT to be dominated and exploited, rather than a Thou to have communion like relations, as we heard with the powerful words of our indigenous sister to begin our gathering. And let's never lose sight of our gay brothers and lesbian sisters, and our precious trans. Often objects of militaristic perception, militaristic attack. And here comes Western New York Peace Center, 53 years holding up a blood stained banner, holding up a tearsoaked banner, that says, no matter what is coming at us, we represent the best of the soul of the country, of this empire. So what do we say to Brother Biden? We say we're so glad that we help push you over. But you should recognize you have contributed to the rot. It was you who was working with Strom Thurmond and Jesse Helms, who was supporting the old Jim Crow to help set in place the New Jim Crow, the mass incarceration regime. It was you who unleashed Wall Street greed with the repealing of the Glass Steagall Act. It was you who was a major go-to man to justify the invasion and the occupation of Iraq. All three of those - the New Jim Crow, Wall Street greed crushing poor working people, and invasion of Iraq - those are crimes against humanity. Let's not deodoriz it - we'd like to keep it funky in Buffalo. You see, when you start deodorizing the discourse, everything gets sanitized. You see it on television all the time. "Well, I think he made a mistake when he supported the Iraq War" - Hundreds of thousands of people died. An Iraqi baby has exactly the same value as a white baby in Connecticut, a black baby in Buffalo, a Latino baby in Guatemala, and an indigenous baby in the Upstate of New York. Those are human beings in Iraq, just like we are human beings. We all have the same value, the same dignity, the same sanctity if you a Christian like myself, and certainly ought to be treated with the respect no matter what your religious or non religious perspective, viewpoint, actually, is. So what do we do now? Well, now, we must bring tremendous pressure on the Neo liberal Biden administration that is too tied to Wall Street and Pentagon militarism, that wants to use women and black people in a colorful way to hide and conceal the legacy of the crimes against humanity that have been operating in the soul of America before Trump, before Biden, before us. We cannot go to sleep. Too many of us went to sleep when Brother Barack Obama became

president. Everybody breakdancing, turn in flips. "Oh my God, we got a black president. How could this be, given our white supremacist history and heritage?" I was breakdancing for about half an hour because I was celebrating too! But that was a symbolic indictment of white supremacy. The structure was still in place. The predatory capitalism was still in place. The militarism was still in place. And what did Barack Obama do? First thing he did was bail Wall Street out. And the homeowners went under. Middle class lost over 45% of his wealth. Poverty rates went up. Unemployment went up. What else did he do? He extended the military budget. Drop drones. Over 20,000 bombs a year, 563 drones in eight years. Now, George Bush dropped 45 drones. And I called him a war criminal because the war crimes when you're dropping drones on innocent people. Brother Obama dropped 563! "It's over, Brother West! How come you so hard on the black brother? You, you black too, y'all supposed to be in solidarity, you're supposed to protect him against Fox News?" Yes, I agree. Fox News lied on him. When they lie on them, you tell the truth. And you better not mess with Michelle or the kids, because I'm a Christian and not a pacifist. But when you droppin' the drones, when you givin' the orders. And it's 563. And thousands of innocent folks, including children are dying in Somalia, in Libya, in Afghanistan, in Pakistan, and those children have exactly the same value as children anywhere else - those are war crimes. Just like Johnson in 1965, and '66, and '7 and '8 in Vietnam. We have to be morally and spiritually consistent if we're going to build on the best of those who came before, no matter what color, gender, national identity, we're talking about something human at the deepest level. That's Western New York Peace Center. That's why I love my brothers and sisters at the Peace Center. Because they come in all colors and genders and religious and non religious, but they say "we are here in order to bear witness to a truth and justice that's bigger than us. And it lures us and teases out the best inside of us." And that's what solidarity is. And that's what we need more than ever. Now, we must acknowledge part of that solidarity get pushed out. Brother Trump himself, the Neo fascist gangster himself, time to take a breath. You know, celebrate for a little bit, and then re-fortify ourselves. And I'm going to end on this note of fortification. Because when you fortify yourself, you fortify in order to fructify. And what is fructify? Well, my bible tells me, "By your fruits, you shall know them." Doesn't say by your foliage. Not what you wearin', not how you look. It's not your clothes that you have on, it's by your deeds. It's by your praxis, it's by your service. That's fructify. And when you fortify yourself, you put on your whole armor, the armor of your mind so you can think critically and see the relation between Black Lives Matter movement dealing with police power and police murder, and connect it to Wall Street power and Wall Street greed, and connect it to Pentagon militarism and Pentagon crimes around the world. They all are interconnected. Middle East, Latin America, Africa, Europe - and we're concerned about human beings around the world, in the language of Malcolm X, my dear Muslim brother, catchin' hell. Then we respond. And I call it prophetic bounce back, and by bounce back, I mean, we are the countervailing voices lifted, not the echoes who are conforming. We are the countervailing voices. We have countervailing ways of looking at the world. We watch the corporate television, you say, "Oh, I noticed you say very little about US foreign policy. You saying very little about the bombs drop. You don't say anything about drones. You don't say anything about the corporate interest in Africa, very little about the corporate interests in Latin America." Buffalo, Peace Center, they've been looking through those lens for a long time, a long time, indeed, to see more clearly! And then to feel more deeply. They have a sensitivity for all human suffering, and even sentient self. I know some of you probably have dogs and cats, and think maybe you can't live without your dog or cat. It's a beautiful thing. They are sentient creatures too, you feel for them, have a sensitivity to their self. So it is what our brothers and sisters in the hood, in the barrio, on the so called reservations, poor white brothers and sisters in Appalachia. And then those oppressed peoples all around the world, seeing more clearly, feeling more deeply, and then acting more

lovingly. Now, it's true that I've said often times never forget that justice is what love looks like in public. But I want to end with tenderness is what love feels like in private. Can't be a freedom fighter if you don't have a tenderness. James Baldwin used to say "Malcolm X was the most tender man I ever met." Well, you see, that's not what the mainstream views Malcolm. Because he had a righteous indignation. He was like Jesus, when Jesus went into the temple and ran out the money changers. Oh, you don't see that Jesus on the walls of too many churches, do you? You certainly don't see that Jesus on the walls of our right wing Christian evangelical churches - oh no, that Jesus would turn their world upside down! But that's why he was crucified. He ran those money changers out - out of the temple. Now what is the temple today? Wall Street, White House, Hollywood, Harvard, Yale, Princeton. All of the elite sites have money-changing-like qualities. And Jesus said, "I got to run them out in the name of poor people. I got to run them out because they're too greedy. They too avaricious, they tell too many lies to hide their crimes. I got to run them out." "Jesus, you're gonna be crucified! They go kill you as a political criminal!" "Then that's the price that I got to pay!" And you don't have to be a Christian. You don't have to be a follower of Judaism or prophetic Judaism, or any other religion to see the power of that story. It's that love, overflowing... It is the self emptying in service to others, to telling the truth, seeing the world a certain way, feeling deeply, than acting. And we've got to do that together. And we do it with a tenderness. We do it with a kindness. We do it with a soulfulness. And that's the outcome from a soulful people. Oh, yes, you just listen to a little Aretha tonight, 'n' you'll understand what I'm talking about. Soul ... and Soul ain't nothing but the sharing of a soothing sweetness against the backdrop of a grim catastrophe. No matter how much catastrophes comin' our way, we'll never have the last word. Because if you have a sacred fire inside of you the way the Peace Center has had for 53 years, and you have the tenderness and the righteous indignation and the analysis that connects predatory capitalism and white supremacy, male supremacy and Pentagon militarism, .. then you are fortified, to fructify, and all of our deeds together, can leave the world just a little better than we found it. You all have been so kind to allow me to talk so long on the zoom. But I'm willing to stay as long as you like for questions and answers - I've come here to learn, I've come here to listen. But I've come here most importantly, to rejoice for 53 years of struggle. And to acknowledge that this particular moment, with the Neo fascist gangster on the way out of the White House built primarily by enslaved Africans, Black people, that we still got a whole lot of work to do - with smiles on our faces, sacred fire in our souls, analytical tools in our minds, a willingness to come together. But to do it, with a smile, with a smile. Thank you all so much. And we're gonna have good time for dialogue. I really appreciate you all!

**Deidra EmEl** 1:06:17

[Previous clapping] Well, that was on mute, but I think we made a lot of noise - oh, how we are ready!.... So our plan for the q&a. So first of all, we don't even know how many people have joined us, but there's hundreds. And then a lot of them are having watch parties in their own little clusters. But we do have our wonderful watch parties, our panelists and our awardees. And we also have our three wonderful interns, and all of our great attendees that we're so grateful for. So what we thought we'd do is, is alternate, so I'm gonna ask Rolanda, Dr. Ward, if she would like to take the first question. Would you?

**Dr. Rolanda Ward** 1:07:13

Dr. West, I just want to say this.

**Deidra EmEl** 1:07:16

You're on mute, by the way, I think

**Dr. Rolanda Ward** 1:07:21

I think I'm unmuted

**Cornel West** 1:07:22

I could hear your lovely voice here. .

**Dr. Rolanda Ward** 1:07:25

Right. Okay. Yeah. So Dr. West, I just want to say thank you so much for being here with us today. It is such an honor and a pleasure. I read you back in Divinity School about 20 years ago. [Dr. West: Oh, Lord, yes ... ] And I remember sitting around the table with one of my professors, and he was just like, he would challenged me with your material back then. So I think one of the questions that many people are struggling with is that many folks didn't see the outgoing president as a bad person, as a person who was without morals. They saw him as a person who needed to proclaim the white supremacy message in its covertness and its overtness. So I think the question that I have for you is, given that so many people supported him, what do we say to those, half of the nation who voted saying, You know what? This isn't our work, right? They don't want to be on this train with us. So what do we say to them?

**Cornel West** 1:08:37

Ooh what a good question, I salute the work that you are doing. Absolutely. But not in the name of your professor, you will talk about was - what?

**Dr. Rolanda Ward** 1:08:46

Brian? I'm forgetting Brian's last name, but he is now one of the associate Dean's at Boston U's school of, School of Theology.

**Cornel West** 1:08:57

Wow. Okay, fantastic, fantastic! No, but what a blessing to get a chance to see you and listen to you and learn from you and your question. Because - I mean, we know that there's always been a significant number, a very visionary and courageous vanilla brothers and sisters who have been willing to fight against white supremacy, but they've got a whole lot of cousins. And a lot of those cousins haven't got the memo. And that's just what it is to be in America. What we have to do is that we have got to be able to speak to a slice of those who voted for Trump. Some of those who voted for Trump voted for my dear brother, Bernie Sanders, because they were critical of the indifference of the neo liberal elites that was hemorrhaging the wealth at the top, increasing poverty, increasing wage stagnation, and never looking for an alternative. And once Bernie got crushed by the Neo liberals and the Democratic party - once we got crushed by the Democratic, the Neo liberals in the Democratic Party, they were not going to vote for Neo liberals, so they swerved the other way. And that - now that's a slice, we just talkin about a slice - now, we got to be able to speak to them. That's very, very important. The other side of this is, is that there always some possibility of persuading even some of the most racist and sexist folk, providing a lens that they have never had a chance to look through; providing an analysis that allows them to recognize that we are in solidarity with their suffering, it's just that they express it in a xenophobic manner, in a racist manner, in a sexist and a homophobic or transphobic, or anti Jewish or

anti muslim, or whatever it is, you see. But there's always going to be, you know, white supremacist folk around, there's no doubt about that. And they will be manipulating and - but the thing is, also, you see, we've got to keep track of the forces behind these parties. And that's what I mean by Wall Street. That's what I mean by Military-Industrial, the Military-Industrial complex, and the elites, the war profiteers, and so forth, they're oftentimes invisible. So for example, we're down in Charlottesville, you know, you got the Neo fascist, sick white brothers, spitting at us, and cussing at us, and so forth, and so on. And you know, that there's a sense in which they're making those choices, but they're also foot soldiers for forces behind them. And many of those forces behind them are wearing suits and ties and living like kings and queens and their mansions and on their yachts and so forth and so on. See what I mean? So that we got to keep track of both. The good news is, is that you know, we got over 70% of Americans who support Medicare for all. We got a younger generation that if the only folks who voted in America were under 35, Bernie Sanders would be in his second term! That new generation has a new sensitivity. Largest protest demonstrations in the history of the country 4700 - 2000 cities - all colors... Well, see, that younger generation has a different sensitivity. You know, they listen to that black music, listen to that hip hop. They've been listening to young black folk... Said Oh, Lord, they' messin' with Tupac, they messin' with my Tupac. I can't - I can't have them treatin' Tupac like they treat brother Floyd, no way! Oh, man, J Blige is my girl, we might not be the same color. But she spoke to me when I was down and out. My boyfriend wasn't acting right. She was talking about real love. She changed my life. Well, of course, my generation that's what Aretha did to alot of white brothers and sisters, that's what James Brown did. That's what Motown did. There's a certain Afro-Americanizing that takes place in the culture, especially in music, that gets people to change their minds about these things, you see, and that's a beautiful thing. That's another sign of hope. But, but the point that you raise is, it's something that we must forever be aware of, we can't be naive, you know, there's always going to be strong white supremacists in America and someone will try to, you know, kill us. There's no doubt about that. And many of us live on death threat all the time, but they don't speak on behalf of the masses of white folk. They speak on behalf of too many white folk. See - then - and that makes a difference. Now, in Frederick Douglass' time, he got a different news. He putting together all the white abolitionists on the Underground Railroad in Buffalo and Rochester and so forth. He got a few thousand white folk, that's it. Good number of 'em Quakers. So they real silent and they ritual, you know they ain't making too much noise. So, Douglas is thinking, Hey, we got 90% of these white folk that want to kill us, if they're not exploiting us - that's a different situation. And he had to be cognizant of that. 50 years later, Jim Crow, it gets a little bit little further down yet. Okay, now it's about 60% up. Now is a little further down than that. You progress, but when they organize, you got big, big money behind them, you can still get a whole host of Charlottesvilles where they come out of the woodworks, you know, with their resources with their presence and so forth. But thank God, we had a number white brothers and sisters on our side. We got the clash. And that's, and that's something that I would say the same thing about the other evils same would be true in terms of, of male supremacy, because, for example, let's just look at the election briefly. 58% of white brothers voted for Trump 53% of white sisters voted for Trump. 28% of our precious queer brothers has voted for Trump. 28% of our Jewish brothers and sisters voted for Trump. If it wasn't for black folk - 97% - the country would be fascist. Here black folk come again, help save the country. 'Bout to go off the cliff. Here come Jamal and Leticia bring 'em on in... push it back! But then the question becomes, what do we do now that we not completely off the cliff, but the rot is still there, it's just slower. And we've got to transform that rot into a deeper quest for love and justice. And, and and we we've got some real momentum, with the Black Lives Movement with the Trade Union Movement coming back, we got to have an Anti War Movement that's stronger, much stronger, we got to have an Anti Imperialist Movement that's stronger.

We've got to have a movement that stresses the ecological catastrophe and the collapse of the globe, and the climate crisis, and that's getting stronger. So that - you're right, you know, we got to be honest about what we're up against. Very, very much so - got to be honest about what we're up against. I think even our Latino brothers and sisters had about 29% voted for Trump. Now, of course, you know, different kinds of Latinos. Cubans gonna be different than, than the El Salvadorians; and the Mexicans different than the Puerto Ricans, and so forth. But in terms of those categories, if it weren't for black folk, coming out in large numbers, to help with the alliance with others, Trump would've won. That's that's, that's something we had to come to terms with. Was that enough to get at your question my dear sister? I

**Dr. Rolanda Ward** 1:17:40

It is, thank you so much. I mean, I think one of the things that we have to do is to figure out that slice that you're talking about, so that it really does invite deeper conversations about where the Unity exists, and that we are not in this as opposites. Many of us are in the exact same situation. And until we see that, we'll not, we won't be able to change the policies and we'll be on the cliff again. And, and pretty much off the cliff the next time. [Dr West: That's true!] Thank you so much.

**Cornel West** 1:18:12

But that's why what what Brother Barber is doing, William Barber and Sister another sister, Theo-Harris with the Poor People's Campaign, building on what Martin King and Rabbi Heschel and what Dorothy Day and others were doing in the cinema, doing it in their own way, not imitate, we don't want to imitate, but doing it in their own way sort of coming. That's that's an example of the solidarity that I was talking about. Very much so.

**Deidra EmEl** 1:18:38

Well, it's very much what you say about that moral integrity, and that universal solidarity being the principles [Dr. West: Absolutely!] and they show, you know, so thank you so, so much! So I wanted to ask whether, maybe, Jenny Mauk, do you have a question? Are you ready for question?

1:18:59

**Jenny Mauk** 1:19:00

Always! Always ready for a question I think.

**Cornel West** 1:19:04

Where is my dear sister, Jenny here? ... Is she ... ?

**Jenny Mauk** 1:19:09

It's great to hear from you. And I love the work that we've been talking about thus far. But I'd love to ask your thoughts on what - how you think higher education, and our universities and our colleges need to recognize, you know, race and class and those differences in our curriculums and how our universities need to address diversity as a whole moving forward?

**Cornel West 1:19:33**

Absolutely. Thank you so much. And I salute you as well for the work that you were doing very, much so! But I think that - you see - to be an institution of learning, be it higher education or kindergarten, the junior high and so forth, that you know, you're trying to get young people to attend to the quest for truth, rather than be distracted by half truths and lies - that's what education is fundamentally about. It's the fight over attention. Can you convince enough folk to attend to Truth, Knowledge - let alone the Integrity, that Sister Vicki was talking about, - generosity and so forth. And too many of our schools, of course, has have historically been grounded in frameworks that have not been willing to embrace the Truth. So have you gotten in a textbook, that, well, it was the Manifest Destiny of America to engage in genocidal attempt on indigenous peoples - now, that's a lie! That was a vicious, immoral choice. Driven by greed. Tell the story. And people "Oh, that's political correctness!" No, we just want to get the Truth, that's all. Well, we noticed you're right - you got textbooks and you're hardly even mentioned slavery, how you gonna talk about your economy? If 22% of the of the population were enslaved in, in 1776? if their labor, produces the wealth, which is a precondition of your limited democracy? - Gotta tell the truth! "Oh, no, that's not like that - that's anti American." Now that's anti injustice in America. That's the quest for truth in America, that's not anti American. All the crimes of America doesn't exhaust everything about America. There's always been Americans who have been against the crimes. Why do you erase them? See what I mean? They have to be part of the curriculum. The young people have to be able to know, not just Martin King, but they got to be able to know all of those freedom fighters in Buffalo. I was talkin' bout my sister, Mary, Mary Copeland, they got to know the the truth bears, the Justice seekers in Buffalo. Because they played a role in keeping alive the legacy of truth in the schools when the schools were telling lies. And again, you know, we have to do it, we had to say that not in a self righteous way - you just had to point out "Oh, I noticed you got your book here. This book is not telling the truth. Who wrote this book?" [Vicki: Right!] You know what I mean? What, what, where is this coming from? Good God Almighty! And this is true across the board - in the arts; it's true in culture; it's true in the economy. It's true in politics, and so forth and so on. Very few people know, how many of the Supreme Court judges were slaveholders up until 1865. The vast majority of supreme court justices were and the presidents were, "Oh, that makes George Washington look so bad! And he was just such an honest man!" Sorry about that. We gonna have to tell the truth about Brother George. We're not putting George down. He won three out of nine battles and the right ones, and was part of a urban guerrilla, violent insurrection and revolution against the major Empire of the day. I'm an anti imperialist. I'm in solidarity with George Washington against the British Empire. But he's a slaveholder, too. I'm against slavery, on moral and spiritual grounds. We got to tell the truth about George, gotta tell the truth about Thomas got to tell the truth about Alexander Hamilton. On Broadway, everybody dancing, feeling good - hey, wait, wait, wait! This man got a lot of different sides to him. Let's just tell the full truth about Alexander Hamilton. You see him in his truth. That's true for us, too, for them. That has been reflected in the curriculum, faculty, administration, president, student body, staff, staff ... And in a way I, you know, I don't like the language of diversity. You know what I mean? When they start talking about diversity, equity, inclusion - I say, ooooh, that's those bureaucrats coming up with those deodorized categories again! You see, white supremacy ain't diversity, that's my grandmama getting raped. Male supremacy - that's women getting crushed! That ain't no diversity! Those are evils that we have to come to terms with. You see what I mean? The class subordination of the bosses and killing workers, and so - that's not diversity in regard to class. No, that is the vicious rule of capital over labor. Oh, we got to have some gays and lesbians. No! Stone- Stonewall was an insurrection against an evil called homophobia. People were killed. People had been closeted, people who have been traumatized, people have been spit on. This is not



"diversity" - you see what I mean? But we have to be able to tell those truths in such a way that people don't feel as if, you know, we, we, you know, we somehow we dragons or something, you know, it's like, "oh, my god, these people tell these truths just make me want to collapse and just ..." No, no, no, we - all of us recognize that there's evil inside of us. That part of the humility. The evils inside of us.... There's white supremacy inside of us. There's white supremacy inside of black people. You can't grow up in America and not be affected by it, no matter what color you are. There's male supremacy inside of women. You can't grew up in America, and not be affected by patriarchy. There's homophobia inside of gay brothers and lesbian sisters. They've been socialized into a homophobic world, taught to hate themselves. And it takes tremendous courage to break out, you see? Those are the kind of ways in which I think we need to talk about it. Those are the ways in which the transformations in the colleges, universities, high schools, junior high, all the way down. And everywhere. I mean, I've been blessed to teach in prisons for 37 years. And same kind of truths had to be taught in the prisons themselves. Where education is very important. Mind expansion, critical consciousness, and most importantly, the kind of integrity and solidarity that's been manifest at the Peace Center in Western New York for so long. Is that is that begin to get your question there?

**Jenny Mauk 1:27:15**

Yes, absolutely.

**Cornel West 1:27:16**

I said, it did, it did, you keep up the good work you're doing my dear sister.

**Jenny Mauk 1:27:21**

Thank you.

**Deidra EmEl 1:27:27**

So, one of our interns, we have Just Lee - Justin or Just Lee is right here with us in the next room. And he's taking questions. We have three - attendees who, you know, we give a shout out. We'd love to have all those questions be asked that he's gonna ask one of them now. From - Yes -

**Cornel West 1:27:49**

Beautiful, this beautiful.

**Deidra EmEl 1:27:51**

Okay. And from Damen, Damen College, by the way, Daemen College School of Social Work.

**Cornel West 1:27:57**

This is brother Justin, you say right? Yeah. I don't know if I can see - that...

**Deidra EmEl 1:28:05**

I think he's just turning on his

**Justin Lee 1:28:07**

I'm turning on the camera right now, I apologize

**Cornel West** 1:28:09

Oh, no, no, no. You take your time with your camera brother.

**Victoria Ross** 1:28:13

There he is!

**Justin Lee** 1:28:14

Hi Dr. West, So the question is -

**Cornel West** 1:28:17

Hi my brother. Yeah. Right on, right on!

**Justin Lee** 1:28:20

Nice to meet you, Dr. West. This question comes from ... Horne, what I wanted after 2008 was to be invited to the dialogue. Moving forward, how can we get ourselves at the table?

**Cornel West** 1:28:31

Oh, sure, when you when you join the Peace Center you already at the table with the food. [Laughing] Because to get at the table means you become a participant, you become active, you become a force of history, you become a subject in the world, you become an agent in the world. And therefore, when you join the Peace Center, or any other organization that's concerned about love and justice, that you are already shaping not just the table but the food to be presented on that table, how many various seats that table's going to have and so forth, you see? But the crucial thing, my dear brother, is you want to make sure that you are a participant and not a spectator. See what I mean? A participant and not a spectator. That makes all the difference in the world. Because a participant is somebody who is in the funk. See what I mean? You can't you can't be wrestling with the funk, you get sitting there looking at it all the time. You got to get down up in there. That's just like falling in love. Oh, I want to see what it's like to be in love. I'm gonna be a spectator and keep looking at everybody. No, you better get up in here. You better come on up in here and find out what this love is all about, this joy and pain that Frankie Beverly don't teach you about, you got to be a participant! And so it is in Justice! You got to be a participant in the justice. With me, you go up, you go down just like love right? Up, down, round and around, smiling one day, crying the next, got joy in your heart. And the next day, you might be listening to a little BB King--am I right? --with the blues. Good Morning, Heartache, you know, oh, that you a participant then! Oh, you know what it has been, the justice struggle. You know what it really is to be in love. But on the other hand, we already know in our own lives. I mean, one of the first thing that I always do when I go to prison, I start off, I say, "my brother, how many of you'all going to take a bullet for your mamma?" All of'em raise their hand, I say, oh, I'm in the right place! Because I got some participants! Something bigger than they ego, bigger than their narcissism, they connect to something bigger than them, they willing to sacrifice for they mamma. That's the hook. Because if you get something bigger than your ego, bigger than your narcissism, like your mommy, your daddy, your friend, your grandmama, your friend, your partners, your companions, then you're already a candidate for being a participant. Now one of the saddest features and we won't go into this right now, but one of the saddest features of our day, this is the depth of the spiritual decay and moral decrepitude, that we've got more and more people who are like Shakespeare's

Hamlet. See, Hamlet suffered from the inability to love. And that is the worst thing that could ever happen to any human being. The great Dostoyevsky called it the worst hell, to suffer from the inability to love. And what happens when you're unable to love? All you can be as a spectator, because you never want vulnerability. You'll never know what love is without being vulnerable, right? You never know what love is without being vincible You never know what love is without making a sacrifice. You never know what love is without giving something and learning how to receive. But the spectators outside of all that all the time. So that what happens is you end up with a whole culture of lust. And lust is just easy, to get the titillation, stimulation, move toward domination, feel good about yourself. And you end up with your whole life and a whole culture producing a joyless quest for insatiable pleasure. So you can get all the pleasure in the world but no joy, all the titillation in the world - no care. You remember what Aretha says in the Respect - TLC? What's that TLC stand for? Tender Love and Care. See, that's not titillation, stimulation. No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. You got to get vulnerable. You got to get in the funk. You got to be a participant. That's what it is to be an activist too my brother, a political activist. And the wonderful thing about the Peace Center is, it's been in the funk for 53 years. Right there! In that funk - is just like - your mama's womb. You were born, and when I was born, what was in that womb? Blood, sweat, tears, love, joy. That's the place to be. And of course, if you hadn't, if we hadn't been in that womb, we wouldn't have made it unless you opted for Caesarean section. We wouldn't have made it. Everybody got come through the womb, you see. You got to come through all that blood, all that love. Every human being. But we end up afraid. We end up scared. We end up too cowardly. So we everybody won't be a spectator nowadays, you see? You end up with a whole culture of peacocks. The peacock just want to be an object of the spectator. Look at me, look at me. Look at me. Look at me. No, no, no, I don't wanna be a peacock. No, not at all. All peacocks strut because they can't fly. I want to I want to get way up off the ground. I want to see what's going on in the world. See if people suffering over here, I'm gonna zero in and be in solidarity and be a participant. I see folk having a party over there on a Friday night. In the name of Jesus, I'm going with my cognac to party down, because I want to be part of that joy. I want to be part of that. You can't dance if you don't want to be vulnerable, but you mess up by trying to dance and still being a spectator. No, you better open up and start moving your soul. And so, you better go on and break down and do what you're supposed to do, on the floor. Hey, participant, I'm know I'm going on and on. But I'm giving all these examples, because thank God, your generation, already enact what I'm talking about - 4700 demonstrations. Shoot, me and my dear brother Roger. I'm seeing Brother Roger in who was in, same day with the Sister who was a recipient ... he'll tell you about what it was to be a participant - 20 years ago, 30 years ago, 40 years ago and all that hell that he caught. And yet he still got a smile on his face looking for expansion. But he had to sacrifice. Is that right brother Roger? Am I telling the truth?

**Roger Cook** 1:35:55

That's right, Brother.

**Cornel West** 1:35:56

You been a long distance runner and still got sacred fire inside of you, still got a smile on your face, my Brother.

**Roger Cook** 1:36:06

I have I have a question for you.

**Cornel West** 1:36:08

Absolutely. Yes, yes.

**Roger Cook** 1:36:09

I'm going back in time now, old timer here. Back in the late 196-70s. You remember William Winpisinger, the president of the International Association of Machinists union? And - that's me, a self avowed DSA member. We had Donahue in those days, if you remember. He got on Donahue's show. But the talk at that time was military conversion. And here you had the president of the Union, which represented workers who produced planes at Boeing, a lot of military planes. My question is, in terms of, so we had that whole demilitarisation movement, being at least talked. In Buffalo, the United Auto Workers actually hosted a meeting of union folks and peace Peace Center activists at the union hall. And Winpisinger wasn't there, but some of the IAM people were. And my question is this. Do you see the opportunity with the Green New Deal and the need to, it seems to me, demilitarize, in order to economically make the New Deal work - Do you see some opportunities here for building a coalition? Perhaps, like we had at that time? Or is this just ancient history? Am I living in the past? I'm just wondering what the opportunities might be.

**Cornel West** 1:37:39

No, I appreciate that though, Brother. And the important thing is that we can always learn from the great examples of the past. We can get great insights, as well as great witnesses. And Winpisinger, when you say his name, it reminds me with the meetings we used to have with, with my dear brother, Michael Harrington and sister Barbara Ehrenreich and Stanley Aronowitz and others concerned about trying to ensure that the trade union movement was an integral part of any serious talk about fundamental transformation of the country - and the trade union movement has to play a serious part. There's no doubt about that. And the demilitarizing is something that must come back. Many of us have been pushing this in terms of the Black Lives Matter, talking about the reallocation of funds of the police and defunding the police and so forth. See the demilitarizing and, and the radical defunding of the Pentagon, the major cuts that need to be made, so that we have some resources for education, health care, housing, and so forth. Those are those are indispensable. Brother Bernie Sanders, of course, was talking about it. But this is where the Democrats come in, because, see, most of the Democrats vote for the expansion of the military budget under Trump! Under Trump. Including some of the members of the Squad. We love the success of the Squad. But - you have to have a much more consistent Martin Luther King, Jr.-like Western New York Peace Center-like perspective on this thing. And that's what William had back then. But it's something that of course, you know, even goes much further back than him because he was building himself on a tradition. The same would be true in terms of Wall Street. You see, if you look at the - most Republicans and Democrats, they have defunded the police, in terms of regulating Wall Street. That's where they get away with murder. They get away with greed. Nobody's saying nothing about that! We raise one question about defunding police when it comes to the 'hood, where the major end and aim is containment and suppression of poor folk, for they don't spill over anywhere else - and send them quickly to jail to render them invisible in the larger society as if their lives don't have the same value as the lives of anybody else in the societies, that - you can see the hypocrisy there. You see the hypocrisy there. And that hypocrisy needs to be pointed out. It needs.... So I think that that idea has got to come back in a mighty way. Now we know Barbara Lee has been talking about that; there's a few, very few Democrats who have. And there will be more. I think that Jamal Bowman out of New York, I had endorsed him coming out of - he's going to Congress, he's going to be talking about it. There'll be a few, I think

sister Cori Bush out of - you all know, I'm talking about - out of Ferguson, that she makes these kind of connections, but they're on the edges of the corporate Senate, Democratic Party. They're part of the progressive wing of the party. And many of you know, you know, what, we're talking now about a third party, a People's Party, that Nick Brown [...] Sister Nina Turner, y'all know Sister Nina Turner, of Bernie's campaign, one of the one of the great progressive voices - exploring, and really trying to push that possibility because people have to have some alternative. And we know the Green Party has also been out there for good while. I salute them, but we've got to have serious, serious alternative that we present the people including that kind of idea. Definitely. So.

**Deidra EmEl** 1:41:41

So thank you so much. So - you know, in the in the effort, there's so many questions, and we'd love to take all and I'm sure we won't get through all of them. But so if we could just have Samira, who's up there, a panelist; and Cora .... and you can each introduce yourself just a tiny bit, and then your question, and then we'll have Renee and Yasmin.

**Cornel West** 1:42:05

Wonderful. Wonderful.

**Victoria Ross** 1:42:09

Yes.

**Samira Abdulkadhir** 1:42:09

Yeah. Hi, my name is Samira. Thanks for having me!

**Cornel West** 1:42:13

How are you doing? What a blessing to see you blessing to see you.

**Samira Abdulkadhir** 1:42:17

Nice to see you too. I'm so honored to even be here right now and have this opportunity to be able to hear you speak in front of us.

**Cornel West** 1:42:27

I'm the one that's blessed. I could tell you that very, very much so. And I know you are a powerful force for good. So I was referring to you, as well as the others when I was talking about that younger generation is - on the move, on the move!

**Samira Abdulkadhir** 1:42:46

Yeah, so that's exactly what my question is about: like, as you said, like this younger generation, like my generation, so far, like we've done like, the protest for like Black Lives Matter and like police brutality. So now, post election, like, what are some things that we can do like physically to make sure that we're not just spectators and to make an impact and to change this, like American society that has become the norm?

**Cornel West** 1:43:14

Mm hmm. No, I mean, the beautiful thing is that you've got so many powerful spokespersons like yourself and others, who see this connection between what Martin Luther King called poverty, militarism, racism and materialism. The seat of connection that we were talking about before. So when we talk about the police, you also talk about the Pentagon. When you talk about militarism, you talk about militarized police departments in the state. You talk about military units, all around the world. You talk about nuclear missiles, you talk about a whole wave of weaponry, so that you end up with a whole society not just commodified, but militarized. And as long as it's commodified, and militarized, and we're so divided, then it's hard to make the connections between police, Wall Street, patriarchy, Pentagon militarism and that way. And so I think it's just very important that young brothers and sisters of all colors remain part of organizations that have that kind of interconnectedness. Now, I know a lot of young folks these days talk about the intersectionality that my dear sister, Kimberly Crenshaw, as introduced way back in the 19 in the 19, really 90s as she's one of the most sophisticated legal minds of her generation, and she was talkin' about class, race, and, and gender especially, but we want class, race, and gender couched within predatory capitalism, Empire. And then - what are the radical democratic possibilities? By radical democratic, I just mean the empowerment of those slash don't call everyday people. And so already, as a young person, you want to be part of some network some affiliation that has that kind of vision. That's, that, to me is the crucial thing right now. Definitely. Definitely. Definitely. Does that begin to get at, get at your question, though?

**Samira Abdulkadhir** 1:45:26

Yeah, exactly. Thank you so much.

**Cornel West** 1:45:28

Yeah. Thank you, somebody, you stay strong. Stay strong. [Samira: Thank you. I will!] Indeed, indeed.

**Cora Wright** 1:45:37

Hi, Dr. West. Oh,

**Cornel West** 1:45:39

Hi, Sister Cora! Yes indeed!

**Cora Wright** 1:45:42

I can't even begin to tell you what an honor it is to be able to speak with you. Thank you so much for this opportunity! Thank you to the Western New York Peace Center for this opportunity. I, you know, I just wanted to ask, and I think that you've brought it out a few times - and I'm so happy that you bring out this idea of predatory capitalism. It's something that I'm very concerned with, and something that I tried to really study a lot about. And I'm just wondering, particularly with recent calls for defunding the police, and I think a little bit more national attention being garnered towards economic oppression and its intersection with racial oppression. Do you see this as a feasible goal on the horizon for us to sort of dismantle this predatory capitalism?

**Cornel West** 1:46:24

Yeah, that's that's a major question. Because we know it's a long process. It's a global system. And it's a very, very powerful system. And it may be the system created by our species, that could lead to our self-

destruction. Because it will be greed, and hatred. And almost every religious tradition, every secular tradition has taught us, if you don't come to terms with your greed, hatred and contempt, you're gonna undermine all the good stuff in the world - that's for your community, your family, true for the species. So there's a sense in which my dear brother Noam Chomsky says: it's internationalism, with a transformation of predatory capitalism; or it is extinction of the species. Now, when you present that to somebody, and somebody said, "Well, you know, I think I'm going up for extinction." Then you say, we're gonna have to stop you. That's what we have with Trump, right? You know, you, you rally for the democracy to self destruct, and you be a fascist. Because your greed, your contempt, your hatred is so overwhelming. But now, the United States had a civil war. They said, we would rather, out of greed and hatred, keep black people in slavery in perpetuity, than have any talk about a democracy. That democracy don't mean nothing to us. We want our profits and we're gonna keep these black people enslaved and exploited. Then you get a war. Now, you know, if the Confederacy had lost the war, different trajectory. But what did happen? Confederacy lost the war of white supremacy, won the peace in 1877. So they got a new slavery called Jim Crow, neo-slavery, so that we know the species at our worst has the capacity to say, God, this neo-capitalism is just producing so much good stuff for those at the top, we'd rather blow up everything than to share. Or - come back to the Peace Center - We are going to choose, ah, we're going to pursue an alternative that says, yes, there's a possibility for a fundamental transformation of predatory capitalism. Yes, there's a possibility of convincing people that even though they may have greedy proclivities, we're not going to deny it, even though they have greedy proclivities, that if something else that they can choose, and there's something else inside of them, that can help regulate these greedy proclivities, so they can fight for abolishing poverty, they can fight for workers' empowerment, women's empowerment, black people, brown people, and so forth, you see. But I think in all honesty, you know, it is an open question. It's an open question. I mean, you read the later works of Mark Twain. Mark Twain was one of our great, very great writers. He had strong critiques of white supremacy, strong critique of predatory capitalism. Remember that essay he wrote called "That Damn Human Race"? I don't think we gonna make it, Mark Twain said, wearing his white suit with his tie. He said we're too greedy, too hateful. And he ended up a misanthrope. He ended up almost a kind of hater of, of humanity, because he saw the night side. He saw the night side so clearly. You know Jonathan Swift would be another of the great writers who lost, lost confidence in human beings to almost do anything that was worthwhile in a significant way. And we see that kind of cynicism and that kind of pessimism growing today. And we've got to fight it, but we can't deny the evidence they're pointing to. Because what Mark Twain was pointing to was European colonization of Africa. He had a lot of evidence. You know what I mean? 10 million brothers and sisters in the Congo killed within a short amount of time. That was before our Jewish brothers and sisters in Europe. They had done to Africans what they did to Jews in Europe. And Twain saw it, and he said, this kind of imperialism is like - just - it's like a cannibalism. It just eating people, treating people like they're nothing. This is overwhelming. And so we can't deny those realities. We just don't allow those realities to dampen our fire. That's the key. As you say, you stay strong. You and Samira and all the other good, good folks. Younger generation doing a wonderful job. Wonderful job.

**Deidra EmEl** 1:51:56

Thank you. So, yes, Renee and Yasmin are, Yasmin are - our interns with us...

**Cornel West** 1:52:09

So wonderful!

**Victoria Ross** 1:52:10

... Renee from Niagara University. Yasmin is an MSW Fordham University online student. They'll be asking questions from the attendees.

**Cornel West** 1:52:26

Fantastic!

**Yasmin Begum** 1:52:39

Hi Dr. Cornel West. So I do have a question from Zahira Hempfield, and it is, if you could give advice to your 10 year-old self, what advice would you give?

**Cornel West** 1:52:50

To my - which self did they say? - 10 year-old self? Wow. Yeah, you see, I should have ... god, when I was 10 years old, I was so out of control - you know what I mean? Good God almighty, cuz you know I beat up my teacher, when I refused to salute the flag because that flag had been used to wrap one of my grand uncles when they lynched him in Texas, and so I told my teacher I wasn't gonna salute the flag, and she hit me and I hit back, and we had a little Joe Frazier, Muhammad Ali moment. Next thing you know, I'm booted out of school, no school would take me for a number of months, and my beloved mother with tears in her eyes took me to a school way on the other side of town. So I just needed Jesus on a deep level. You know what? I needed more of a venue for all of my anger and my rage and my indignation. I had to filter it through channels of love and justice, rather than hatred and revenge. And so for me, this kind of spiritual formation is very important for a 10 year-old. A 10 year-old needs to know that even though love looks like it's so weak and feeble, that in the end, it is always worthwhile in pursuing. So even then, they look at the world at 10 years old and you see the bully getting their way and you see might similarly making right and power determining morality. You say no, in the end, that is a level of appearance that must be pierced with something that is much more real, even though it seems to be much more feeble. And that's what Mom and Dad were teaching me. That's what I learned at Shiloh Baptist Church. That's what I learned being a follower of Jesus. That's what I learned in the music of a Coltrane or a Nina Simone or Gil Scott Heron, and so forth: that I needed my soul to be matured. Now, of course, you're gonna - little brother sister 10 years old, they gonna say, Brother, I just don't know what you talking about all this talk about maturation and thing. I said, No, I just, I would say, follow the Golden Rule. I want you to make sure you treat everybody the way you want to be treated. And that you try not to treat anybody the way that you know you don't want to be treated. That's a hook at 10 years old. And each time, you enact and just think that through as your moral criteria. And that becomes a way in which they begin to see through the surfaces of life, through the levels of appearance of life. And that's what I was talking about with that peacock? Sure, all of a sudden that peacock start looking a little bit different. And that Alexander the Great. All of a sudden, Alexander looks more like a gangster, then he does great. And all of a sudden, Amos, and Esther and Jesus and Fannie Lou Hamer, Rabbi Heschel, Edward Said, they started looking more great. And all of a sudden, the Peace Center becomes a center of moral, spiritual Greatness! And the White House, start looking more like Alexander the Great - power, military might, status - things that people think are most important. But things that have to be looked through and transformed and sometimes shattered, in order to stay in contact with what is great. So I tell that little 10 year old, make sure that you are always aspiring to greatness. And you're gonna be great, by your love, by your commitment to justice, by



your service to the least of all. Now, whether that 10 year old would still be there listening after all of those words, is an open question. They may have said, Well, I got to get back to my internet, I got some things I got to do. But if I had that chance to just look in their eyes, eye to eye, soul to soul, person to person. That's what I would want it to be said to me and thank God. That's what was said to me by Irene West, by Clifton West, by Reverend Willie P. Cook, by Deacon Hinton. My vacation Bible school teacher, Sara Ray, used to tell me if the kingdom of God is within you, then everywhere you go, you ought to leave a little heaven behind. I didn't really grasp it at 10 years old, but I know exactly what they talking about today. Exactly what they talking about today. The Peace Center has been leaving some heaven behind for 53 years in a cold and cruel world. At 10 years old, some of them must have heard the same thing in their own language in their own traditions. You know what I mean? Definitely! Thank you so much! I know I went on and on with that question, Sister Yasmin. But I appreciate. Appreciate that.

**Victoria Ross** 1:58:45

Amen. Thanks. So - Renee!

**Cornel West** 1:58:51

Sister Renee, Sister Renee, how're you doing there? Good to see you.

**Renee Lachajczyk** 1:58:57

Hi! I'm an intern here at the Peace Center and I'm a senior at Niagara University.

**Cornel West** 1:59:05

Wonderful.

**Renee Lachajczyk** 1:59:06

So the question I pulled out was from Gabby Goldstein: how do we change the hearts and minds of our more rural brothers and sisters? The divide between city folk and rural folk seems irreparable. Every district surrounding the city of Buffalo is deeply red. Is it too late for white boomers that voted for Trump?

**Cornel West** 1:59:27

The crucial question resonates a little bit with that first question about those 70 million and why we started with that. So I can see some overlap there. But again, you know that we live our lives every day. And we try to be examples or try to be the love and justice that we talk about. And so we just had to try to relate to people in such a way that we don't shut them down. But by our example we challenge and unsettle whatever assumptions and prejudices they have. So that is never going to be the kind of overarching thing, convincing all of these people. But when you interact with people, there are ways in which people do come together. You think for example, in, in sports, or even at Niagara University, right? Y'all got a basketball team right? Now, when you - when they all come to the gym, you got some Trump-ites going crazy about your basketball team. And oftentimes that basketball team is disproportionately chocolate. Now, I don't know what the case is in Niagara, but in most universities, you got a whole lot of black folks on that team, right? And you got Trump-ites going crazy. When the LA Lakers won. You had Trump-ites turning flips in Los Angeles, because they crazy about the LA Lakers. They have an athletic identity that transcends their skin pigmentation, their politics, their ideology, and you say, hmm, that's interesting. That's very interesting. Maybe that's a hook.

How do we provide an example of commonality that tries to push people to be able to focus on poor working people that's in the way that a basketball team can bring together all of Niagara University or Buffalo, too. Buffalo? You all still got a Buffalo football team?

**Victoria Ross 2:01:48**

The Bills! People are going crazy for the Bills.

**Cornel West 2:01:51**

Oh, yeah. Buffalo Bills. You got Trump-ites, anti Trump-ites, socialists, liberals, libertarians going crazy over a football team. You say, wow, this is very interesting! - a hook into what people have in common. I tell you, one of the strange things that I experienced in Charlottesville. We were walking from the sunrise service where a number of us had a chance to speak. And we're going through the park, where you got 21 neo-Nazis, Klan, just real sick white brothers and sisters, with twisted perceptions of the world, hating black folk and Jews and gays and so forth. They're in the park and listening to black music, listening to Motown! I said to myself, Ooh, this is a complicated situation. They reveling in the products of the very people they've come to mow down, because they came with big guns, they came with the face masks and everything. But the point I was making before, just like Niagara University basketball team, just like the Buffalo Bills. There's something that we actually do have in common - I could get into the Motown music, that the neo nazis will listen to. That - that's human and very American. Because you can't grow up in America and not be affected by sports for most people. You can't grow up in America and not be affected by black music. You can't grow up in America 'n' not be affected by university and college sports identities, right? We look at the University of Alabama, the vast majority of folk - they're voting for Trump - with a football team as chocolate as Harlem and the Southside of Chicago, the basketball team as chocolat as Jamaica, but those same white brother sisters out there going crazy. In the name of University of Alabama, University of Alabama, University - Oh, interesting! People are complicated. People got different identities, not just one, they can be moved, they can be pushed, they can be unsettled, they can be un-nerved. That's the kind of flexibility we're looking for among some of these Trump folk, among some of these right wing folk. Now, on the other hand, we also know that there's a significant slice, is not moving at all. There's just no doubt about that. You just have to hope that they can be overwhelmed by the good side, by the forces for justice. And that's what, that's what we're after. But that's the beginning of an answer to to that crucial question - that does resonate, I think with the first question of Sister Doctor Ward's question about the 71 million who voted for Trump. That's a lot of fellow citizens.

**Victoria Ross 2:03:04**

Now, Jillian wants to ask a question.

**Cornel West 2:05:22**

Absolutely. Yeah. Oh, we got the poet, the poet herself - recipient too - then! We thank you, Jillian, for those words, though. Absolutely!

**Jillian Hanesworth 2:05:34**

Thank you. So I know that you are also an artist. I know that you're a poet. I've heard your albums. So I wanted to ask you as an artist yourself, do you have any advice for those of us who are trying to specifically use the arts to build political power and strength in this movement?

**Cornel West** 2:05:57

Who, my dear sister, I think that you are grand example of what my weak words would point and refer to: One: Artist must be true to herself. All that's inside of you. All that deep stuff, rich stuff, all that funky stuff inside of you. You be true to yourself, so that your voice is always distinct from any other voice. You learn from other voices. You learn how to listen, you know, but - nobody like you! Nobody like Aretha. Nobody like Toni Morrison. Nobody likes Sarah Vaughn. Nobody like Billie Holiday. Ain't nobody like Dinah Washington. Nobody like Nancy Wilson. Phyllis Hyman. We could go on, Gladys [Knight] - all of them - what did they do? They were true to themselves. But then the political artists are true to themselves in such a way that they're willing to go the next step, which has become an integral part of social movements, y'see. That's what Aretha did with Martin Luther King Jr. That's what Mahalia Jackson did with Martin Luther King Jr. That's what Curtis Mayfield did with SNCC you see. His songs became integral to Bernice Reagon, we can go on, in all the great artists that we know. These days, we know with Kendrick [Lamar] and what have you, so that every artist might not choose to do that, you know, because that's an extra step of courage. I mean, courage is not, is not as widely chosen as we would like. And courage has different degrees and gradations. Some people say well, I'm willing to do it in the studio, but I'm not gonna hit the street. Oh, okay. Sweet Honey In The Rock right there with the bullets fly. Dorothy Love Coates. You know, Dorothy Love Coates? Oh you want to listen to her tonight! Listen to Dorothy - she's one of the great geniuses come out of Alabama. You listen to a song called Holding On - Holding on to My Face - Whooo - the level of genius ...! Now every person in the black church is not gonna be like Dorothy. Dorothy got a courage just like Martin. You know every - every preacher isn't gonna be like Martin. We just got realize that, you know what I mean? Every sister in the choir ain't gonna be like Fannie Lou Hamer. Everybody got their own different degrees and gradations - and that's all right! All right, that's the way the world is! Everybody' who they are. They're not somebody else. But Sister Jill is saying, "This is who I'm gonna be!" Now when you build on Gil Scott, Brian Jackson and them... - Gil Scott- he explicitly put himself inside of the movement. [Jillian: Yeah!] That's a very difficult thing to do in terms of courage you know, and he got all the sacrifice and the risks and so forth. But the.. So the important thing is you true to yourself because you have got something to give to the world that nobody in the whole world can give. You did that today for us - your voice, that unique singular, irreproducible, irreducible ... That is Sister Jill .... We ain't talkin' about Jill Scott, we talked about - Jill, your last name is - ? [Jill: It's Hanesworth.] Hanesworth. That's right. We love Jill Scott, you know, so you know she's on my album, was over my house - we did it. We did. [Jillian: I know!] Oh, yeah. I loved it. But, uh, so - but I think those two things as an artist - because, keep in mind, you see, what the artists do, what you all do - and you're much more an artist than I am - that, you all provide an illumination and an inspiration that authorizes a better world. It authorizes an alternative to the nightmarish reality in which people find themselves, so that the sheer performance itself touches people in such a way that they get to attend to the possibilities that are shattered in their everyday world. So they can conceive of it - Wow, wouldn't that be nice? Wow... You know a song that Lionel Richie and Brother LaPreard wrote called Zoom. You know that song about Zoom by the Commodores? "I like to fly away well I like to fly away. [Jillian: Yeah!] Well I like to fly away! Zoom, zoom, Baby, I like to - take you up ... " That was an anthem with my brothers in the prisons all the time, they love that song. I come in, I play that song. Just open everybody up. Just take us away, freed up! Love! Justice! All this world of unfreedom, injustice, hatred! Come on, Lionel Richie, Come on \_\_\_! take us away! Just like George Clinton. Take us on the mothership. I'm gonna take you away for two hours. Come on the mothership. Stay on the one! Keep the funk real, don't fake it. Be yourself. Thank you for letting me be myself - that Sly Stone i'n't it... That's what your

art does. That's what poetry does. The great painting does it. Rembrandt does it. You see this photo right here? That's what I was reading before I started - the young Rembrandt, a biography. He just empty himself on the canvas. Unprecedented in the history of Europe, that he could stay so tied to the suffering and the agony and the anguish and the heartache and the heartbreak of human beings in the Netherlands. And do it in such a way that it connects to the heartbreak of everybody around the world like Billie Holiday singing Good Morning, Heartache. You might be a black genius coming out of Baltimore City - every human being know what she's talking about. [Jillian: Yeah.] Everybody had artist! Yeah, Rembrandt does the same thing. It's that sense of connection of the great artists that's what Sister Jill - that's that that's that that's your tradition, that great humanistic tradition. Definitely. And, and - then have a good time doing because you got to get the joy in it. [Jillian: Yeah.] And like Marvin Gaye say, you know, sometimes you're singing What's going on? Sometimes you're saying let's get it all. That's all part of our humanity. Yes, that's part of our humanity! He's trying to work it out in his own way. He got his own genius in doing it, you know what I mean? [Jillian: Yeah.] Sister Jill - Jill's got the same way, sometimes she's part in, sometimes a family union, sometimes she's taking you to the heights. Absolutely. I know one could go on and on here though. But this is this is very - This is real. One essay to read is the essay by Percy Shelley. You've probably already read this - "A Defense of Poetry." [Jillian: Yes.] You know that poets are the Hierophants of unapprehended inspiration, gigantic shadows that the future cast on the present - they are the unacknowledged legislators of the World. They authorize a different world, a better world. And we Christians talk about in terms of the Kingdom of God, of Love. And how do you keep it alive in a world so much hatred? So when you hear Fannie Lou Hamer saying those gospels, she's authorizing a different world. Staple Singers say "Come go with me! Come go with me. Come on board." Curtis Mayfield say "Get ready! People get ready! Get on the train. Get on the Love Train, get on the Caravan of Love. It's gonna take you somewhere else." Now sooner or later, you got to come back. Ain't no doubt about that. But you come back fortified - the Arts. That's why for all the oppressed people - for all human beings really but especially for oppressed people... See arts are not - no marginal thing. Yeah, there are constitutive and integral - not ornamental to who we are, you see. And without the arts, we snap! Black people without music? I know I wouldn't be here! [Jillian: Yeah.] I would not be alive. I would - I mean, I might snap tonight, but no - what with all this good stuff, I won't. But - you can snap at any time. But without that music? You'd go crazy! Without your poetry - Gwendolyn Brooks, and Toni Morrison - you go crazy, you know what I mean? And so in that sense people have to recognize you know you're not like "Oh let's just have a little poetry and the artists do they thing before things really..." No, no! - This - I love how the Peace Center did this! Everything's integral: Indigenous Sister's reflection, your art, the talks, the conversation. Everything is all a part, it's like a jazz orchestra - is like Mary Lou Williams on the piano, a Duke Ellington, a Count Basie - keep raising their voices, bouncing off voices of the others, everybody playing they fundamental role. And if one person by it feels as if they don't want to be a part of it, everybody suffers because we all in it together. [Jillian: Right.] We all in it together. Absolutely! So you stay strong in your art now!

**Jillian Hanesworth 2:16:09**

Will do! Thank you so much!

**Cornel West 2:16:11**

Absolutely!

**Deidra EmEl 2:16:13**

You're gonna get us singing and everything!

**Cornel West 2:16:17**

Oh, Lord, Lord. Yes!

**Deidra EmEl 2:16:19**

So what we'd like to do here is still have - Katie hasn't gotten a chance yet. So they have Katie. And of course Jolanda. And - Justin, for we want to have at least one more question from the attendees. Do we - do you think you can do that many? Oh,

**Cornel West 2:16:38**

Absolutely. Oh, absolutely!

**Victoria Ross 2:16:42**

Okay, so - Kate, you're on! You're on, thank you!

**Katherine Slosman 2:16:45**

Hi, Dr. West!

**Cornel West 2:16:46**

How you doing, my dear Sister - good to see you!

**Katherine Slosman 2:16:48**

I am doing great! It's been incredible listening to you speak - You're such an inspirational speaker! I was wondering, we're all celebrating getting Trump out of office and getting rid of him. But there's been talk about Trump continuing to be the leader of the GOP after he's out of office. Do you think that's likely and what might that look like?

**Cornel West 2:17:11**

I think there's a very good chance my dear Sister - I think he'll probably get his own TV show. You can see he loves the spotlight. He's addicted to the spotlight. And he's got a strong base. And so he's going to continually raise his voice. And Trumpism is going to be around for good while. Trumpism is a certain kind of authoritarian populism, a certain kind of American Neo fascism. And I think it's going to be around, and that's why any thought of just pushing him out of office and everybody thinking, "Oh, we can go back to things as normal." No, no, you don't - when that kind of Neo fascism emerges, things never go back to normal, yet a different level of contestation, different level of conflict, different level of engagement, you see... And he's going to be around for for good while. The challenge might be that if there is actually a Trump-like figure who is highly intelligent, which is not what Brother Trump is, - he is not, he's not a real, sharp, smart, highly intelligent, subtle mind. That's just not him. He's below mediocre. He would be like a D or a D minus, you know, in most classes. But he's got a lot of energy, and he feels a void. And so with you - if we get somebody who was very, very talented with his same views - we've got a whole 'nother battle, and there's a possibility of that. There is a possibility. So I'm with you. We've got to be vigilant. We've got to be vigilant. We've got to

push back Neo fascism in all of its forms. Trumpism is just one particular manifestation of it. Definitely. That does make sense, to you, though, Sister?

**Katherine Slosman** 2:19:10

Yeah, absolutely. Thank you!

**Cornel West** 2:19:12

Oh, no - Indeed, indeed!

**Justin Lee** 2:19:19

Yes, I'm here. Oh,

**Deidra EmEl** 2:19:21

Just, thank you! Okay - you're next up with an attendee question.

**Justin Lee** 2:19:28

All right. So this question was from another person,

**Cornel West** 2:19:32

Okay, thanks.

**Justin Lee** 2:19:36

This person asks, What about our Black and Brown Brothers and Sisters who also support Trump?

**Cornel West** 2:19:42

No, we got we've always had conservatives in the Black community. We've always had conservatives in the Brown community. We haven't had people who would vote for Neo fascist for president like this, so it is unprecedented. But we shouldn't be surprised. We just shouldn't be surprised. We've got to fight it like anything else. So in the end, you know, we should never be surprised that any form of evil, just like we should never be paralyzed by any form of despair. That's very important. We can't be overwhelmed by - ... again, in Charlottesville, I saw a Black Brother marching with the neo nazis. I said, this brother is highly confused, to put it charitable, right? Well, that that kind of thing could happen. The Klan began anti Black, anti Jewish, anti Catholic... David Duke is a Catholic. He's the head of one of the main Klan branches. That's upward mobility, American style on the right... so we might even have Jewish members and black members, because the conservatism will shade into even a neo fascist. And, and this is, you know, this, this is just part of what it is to be human - folk get that twisted and distorted in their perceptions of the world. But we ought to be, make sure that we bring some serious serious arguments and pressure and accountability to all of our folk. But I would say the same thing about Black Neo liberals. See Black Neo liberals act as if they're not, they ought not be rendered accountable. James Clyburn gets up and says, "Well, you know, I don't really think we need Medicare for All. I don't really think that that's going to be - that's not a priority Black people have." And he's getting millions of dollars from big pharmaceutical companies. You say, "Wait, wait, wait a minute, Brother - wait a minute, you just like these other politicians! You don't think that free Medicare is going to have that strong positive effect on poor black people? What kind of evidence you got? What's that money in your

pocket?" He says, "Oh, Brother West, you shouldn't raise those kinds of issues, especially not on television. We don't want two Black men going at each other." I'm talkin' about the truth. I ain't trying to attack this Brother. I'm talking about the truth! Since when did the truth go silent, especially when people are suffering? You see what I mean? So that it's, so that on the one hand, you're right, you know, the Black neofascist... you know, Clarence Thomas, Clarence Thomas has voted 99.9% on behalf of the rich, the powerful and the corrupt. And he's a beautiful Black man, aesthetically, it's just his soul got problems. The lens of doing what that he looks at the world got problems, you see what I mean? And so we have to be able to be principled like that for any, any any Black or Brown, Conservative, or Neo Fascist and so forth and so on. I mean, it's a - I mean, I tell you another very, very delicate issue that I should probably mention at the very end is my dear Sister, Kamala Harris, who I have great respect in terms of her sharpness and her intellect. And you know, she's an AKA [Alpha Kappa Alpha] Sister. AKA Sisters mean, mean much to me and Howard University - Howard University means much to me. But given her policies, I'm very critical. And when she refuses to mention her father, that just rubs me the wrong way. Now, whatever personal relationship, they none of my business, and she got a right to conceive of her personal relationships - whatever she wants. But that's the source of her biological Blackness. You see, you can't, you can't say you a Black person and ascend to a place they everybody call you Black, and you treat the source of it like a non-entity, a non-person, you see, and he was - who? - first tenured Black professor of economics. at Stanford. He's a Marxist economist. He's still alive. He's sitting there watching television. With his daughter. He never reneged on his responsibilities. He loved her to death. And she can't even mention his - him or his name. Like he doesn't exist. It just erasing the Brother... is something that rubs me the wrong way on it, you know what I mean? It's like, Hey, wait a minute. You got to write to whatever the relationship was, but just mention, your gotta father and keep moving but you can't act like there's just a black hole in your life when this cat's walking around at Stanford right now. Now, how do you raise that kind of issue in such a way that it's truthful, but at the same time, it doesn't create any kind of, you know, controversy that goes beyond what it deserves? That's, that's the question. That's a question. But believe me, you - a whole lotta folk think about that right now. A whole lot of folk thinking about that. Because it reinforces this conception of Black men being fathers who are good for nothing. And that's a vicious White Supremacist stereotype of Black men. That the evidence is that Black men stay with the kids and connected with the kids even more so. But you would think all of the press that black men doing less. Now they're are some brothers who are just wrong and don't do it, we know that. But the way it's cast in her case, you would think that this cat didn't ever see her. And he did. They got pictures in Jamaica that gotta go - on and on and on. He say, "Hey, wait, what's going on here?" This is a Black man who had a Black daughter. If her last name was Nehru, she wouldn't be there. Her last name is Harris. Because that's a Black man's name. And she's there as a Black woman and a woman from India and a woman of color. So you try to erase the Blackness and get all the benefit from the Blackness... Somebody's got to teach me on this, somebody got to get get get give me some insight on this because it just rubs me the wrong way. It really really does. Is some something ...that's that's what I call a key sweat moment. Something - something just ain't right. Something ain't right. Somebody needs to, to explain or break it down. You say you can't you can't just sail on Blackness and erase the sources of your Blackness. Can't do it. Not in White Supremacists' America. Not in America who been hating Black men, and treating Black men like they entities, non-entities. That's that's what Biden was doing when he set up mass incarceration. These Black men, these poor Black men, they are non-entities, nobody has to worry about them suffering, we treat them any way we want. We're gonna go from 300,000 to two and a half million within a matter of years. And ain't nobody gonna say a word. They were wrong. We did say a word. Angela Davis said a word, the hosts of Buffalo.... Michelle Alexander said a word, and so forth.

Because they count. Every Black man in some sense counts. And so, you know, I stand to be, you know, rescued or corrected in form. But - does this makes sense to you, Brother? Did you pick that up too, the other night? Did you hear the speech?

**Justin Lee 2:28:28**

Yes, I did. Yes.

**Cornel West 2:28:29**

Did you pick that up too? [Justin: Yes.] That there's no reference to the to the black man at all? Yeah. You see - Lord have mercy, mm-mm. But it is what it is, you know, we pray for our Sister. If they attack we gonna defend her, you know what I mean? They they mistreat her, we gonna defend her, ain't no doubt about that. But she's on the international stage. She's on the national stage, the whole world....

**Deidra EmEl 2:29:04**

So maybe if she gets to talk with you, she'll have a little more idea about reconciliation.

**Cornel West 2:29:11**

Well, man, you know, what,

**Victoria Ross 2:29:13**

We're all learning all the time. Hopefully - that Hope... Hope - you're as a prisoner of hope. Right?

**Cornel West 2:29:20**

Because - it's true, that's true. To many, but - even - not just reconciliation, my dear Sister - if she doesn't want to reconcile with her father, that's fine. And she got her own reasons. And she I'm sure she's, she's brilliant in terms of her reason. But it's just a acknowledgement. You see, that to me, that does not mean reconciliation. [Vicki: No.] All you gotta say is, I got a Daddy who's Black. Boom. [Vicki: Right.] Acknowledge it. You can even mention his name: Dr. Donald Harris. That's true too. 'Cuz' my Harris didn't just drop out of the sky.

**Deidra EmEl 2:29:56**

Right. Right. Well, actually, in some ways, I think this is gonna relate to the question - Jalonda has a question for you.

**Cornel West 2:30:03**

Sure 'nuf. Sure 'nuf.

**Deidra EmEl 2:30:04**

Thanks. Jalonda, our Emerging Activists Awardee

**Cornel West 2:30:09**

Oh, yes. You won the award, though. Didn't you?



**Victoria Ross** 2:30:12

She did and

**Cornel West** 2:30:14

We salute you! I salute you! [Vicki: Absolutely.]

**Jalonda Hill** 2:30:17

So as I said earlier, I'm very honored to share space with you tonight. I'm - Okay. I'm very honored to share space with you tonight. Um, and - yeah, very recharged by your message. Definitely. So yeah, thank you for your message. So [Br. Cornel: Thank you!] Yeah, absolutely. So the question I have is, how do those that are Black and Brown activists, and all those that are terrified - terrorized, excuse me - by White Supremacy on the daily on a daily basis, continue to stay encouraged, and commit to self-care and the fights for liberation in this country?

**Cornel West** 2:31:01

Who, yes, indeed, indeed! Well see, I should be asking you that question too. Because I already have the sense that you got to believe in yourself, you got to respect yourself, you got to spend time with people who respect you, you got to be part of networks and community where your humanity is taken for granted! - it's not something you've got to prove all the time - taken for granted. And you got to find the context of struggle, that allows you to be yourself in that vulnerable way that we were talking about before. That's the ways in which we keep going. And each one of us have to be able to make those kind of choices, to gain access to those friendships, those comradeships, those forms of solidarity, those loving relations, those family relations, all of those relations that affirm us, and empower us and enable us. And because there's going to be so many contexts that don't do that, you know, there's gonna be so many contexts that are just coming at us tooth and nail. If we stay in those contexts all the time, we'll never make it. We'll never make it. Because I mean, one reason why Jesus said, Love your enemies, because I think he knew that anybody who's following Truth and Justice will have a whole lot of enemies. And if you allow your enemies to be your point of reference, you'll never make it. Your point of reference always has to be those sources of good in your own life, those sources of good in your community, those sources of good that allow you to be the full person that you are - Always in process now! Always in process, and all of us fallen, bouncing back, falling and bouncing back and so forth, you see. But as young Black and Brown folk, you got to make sure you have asked us to those kinds of friendships and networks where you can fully be yourself - what you are - respected and able to respect yourself. Definitely- now, does that. Does that make sense, my dear Sister?

**Jalonda Hill** 2:33:32

Absolutely. Yeah. Absolutely!

**Cornel West** 2:33:34

Oh, indeed, indeed . And it's true for everybody. But it's especially true for Black and Brown because you see, what has happened is that the uh the White Supremacy has always been the public face of the worst in America. And it is the public face of the predatory capitalism in America. And because of that, it means that young Black folk and Brown but especially Black, even, that there is a perennial war taking place, targeting Black folk, t' mass incarceration was just one manifestation of it. That's why it upsets me that the media could

just, just, just step over that when they talk about Biden, as if that's just a little mistake he made. Hey, he crushed millions of people's lives. No accountability? No responsibility? You want me to somehow say that you want - I'm gonna be responsible, but he's not responsible for his actions? That's double standard. You know what I mean? And it's, it's a war, my dear Sister, that is not just political and economic, but, as you know, it's a spiritual and a cultural war. It's a spiritual and it's culture. They don't want young Black people to have views of the world in which they could be tender and sweet and kind and gentle and concerned about Truth and Love. Because Black Love is a crime in a White Supremacist society. Just like Black hope is a joke. That's what White Supremacists want to convince young people. Black hope's a joke, Black love's a crime. Black freedom is a pipe dream. Your Black history is a curse. That's what White Supremacy tells Black young folk every day - every day! - and they come up with different institutional ways to try to do it! They attack the music! You see, when hip hop came out, it - all that powerful music - subversive, critical, Grandmaster Flash in New York City, "f" the police with IceCube - all of this unbelievable energy that was critical of the powers that be, and what did they do? They commodified that thing, commercialized that thing, directed it toward the women. And the next thing you know you get this dumbed down music in which the power structure not run by Black people for the most part. The oligarchs and plutocrats in the recording industry, in live performance, in radio and so forth - It twisted, so those energies get misdirected - that's war. Another example would be, you notice among the young brothers and sisters that they don't sing in groups no more. They don't sing soft music, 'n' sweet music, you know... When we were comin' along, you have the Delfonics "La la means I love you..." Can you remember [singing] "I showed a like for you to remember if you care" - that's that's where you are you see. As Ted Mills of Blue Magic singin' "Chasing Rainbows" - that's Russell Thompkins Jr. with Stylistics singing "Stone in love with you" Stop Look 'n' Listen, David Ruffin singing with the [Vicki: Yes!] Temptations, an' you got the Hutchinson sisters with the Emotions so I can love, the sweetness of it, the powerfulness of it. They don't want young Black people dealing with that spirituality at that level! No, u-uh! They want the body titillation. Body stimulation, you see what I mean? So it becomes a spiritual war against Black youth, even in Black youth music. And yet the genius still comes through, the talent skill comes through. But the bombardment is more intense. Because if you separate young people from their tenderness and sweetness, and kindness, and even soulfulness, in sensitivity - a delicacy of spirit - that's Nat King Cole! that's Carmen McCrea, that's Sarah Vaughn! What is it about them? They gonna touch you so deep with a delicacy that you gonna feel like you are as strong as a lion and a lioness. That's a little different than that bombardment of a lot of that dominant form of hip hop these days. So to tell you - what happens? You go to the party and they don't even slow dance no more - now I'm getting nostalgic you know, but - how you gonna go to a dance don't slow dance? What's going on? What - you gonna slow stuff down, let the whispers go, let enchantment sing, let the Main Ingredient sing. Other than Boyz II Men, they the last group! They the last ones, not not \*the\* last but I mean dominant form. And the reason is - is because you - I know some young brothers because I work with them right? And they sang beautifully. When they go to get they contracts, folk look at them like they crazy, like they crazy... Just like when I did my albums, you know, what all called Live quality. All the great ones ["Geraldyn vert lit" - indistinguishable] and they say Brother West, all we want, we want G string music. That's what we want. You go back into the studio, do G string music. We don't want political crap! We don't want that crap with tenderness - that stuff is played out! I say Since when is tenderness played out? Since when is love go out of style? Since when is gentleness played out? It ain't played out in your context - how come it's played out in the black community? That's a form of spiritual warfare. And yet our young folk - fight back... and they respond in their own way. But a lot of times even in a response, you can feel how they've incorporated some of the values themselves, right? That needs to be called

into question! That needs to be called into question. You got to be a loving, sweet, soulful people, if you're going to be freedom fighters. You have to! You can't just be gangsters, like the gangsters coming at you. Not gonna work. That ain't gonna work. So even when you win, okay, in the gangster race, the winner still a gangster, you win the rat race. The winner is still a rat. We don't want no rats, we don't want no ganstas. [Vicki: We're gonna win the human race!] We want human beings! We want folk who will straighten their backs up and fight for Love and Justice, just like the Peace Center, 53 year ... I know it's getting late. Yo, y'all ready? Oh, God is that 9:45? One last question. Cuz I got another podcast at 10 o'clock. I got to do... - one more question.

**Deidra EmEl** 2:41:22

Well, here's here's - you know if we could have one more question. I'd say I would give it to - Brandon has not gotten to ask a question.

**Cornel West** 2:41:39

Absolutely! Come right on in! Come right on in!

**Deidra EmEl** 2:41:42

- very quick. And a very quick answer because - we can't be - ... leave you too long.

**Brandon Absher** 2:41:49

Thank you so much for this very wonderful presentation. I'm honored to be here at all, and certainly to speak to you. And my goodness, that's the last question. That's no pressure at all.

**Cornel West** 2:41:59

You take your time and relax, tho Brother! {Laughing}}

**Brandon Absher** 2:42:04

Well, so, you know, like, Dr. Ward before I you know, I've been familiar with your work for very long time and to me - I've always been inspired by it. And I think the first book I read was Democracy Matters. And and, you know, I look now and on the one hand, we had this great turnout in this presidential election, which suggests in a way that we're democratizing. But the other side is, I feel like we're very sick as a society and as a democracy. And so I wonder if you could, you know, I guess maybe in just a few words, I, you know, talk about, I guess, you know, a vision for democracy, that's more than turnout. And that can can maybe talk about that radical democracy that you opened with earlier.

**Cornel West** 2:42:47

Absolutely. Now, as you ... You're right tho, Brother, that, on the one hand, it's a positive thing that at least people did show up in the midst of a pandemic, to me this is this is really quite extraordinary. But democracies have always been much more than about elections. You know, democracy is about whether people feel empowered enough to lift their voices and feel as if their voices lifted will shape their destiny. And the only way you do that is you have to have accountability and focus on power. So that the three things that I talked about in terms of Wall Street greed, what is the opposite of that? It's people's power. It's workers power, is people having access to wealth, and credit and resources, and respect and dignity, we see... Now

what's the opposite of white supremacy? Peoples of color, who've been hated and traumatized and terrorized, being treated with dignity, with decency, and then feeling that their voices, when lifted, can shape their destiny. None of the things that we're fighting against - We're fighting against poverty. The masses of people don't choose to be poor, which means that their voices are being hemorrhaged. Nobody chooses to send their kids to decrepit schools, or chooses to live in neighborhoods where bullets are flying, or chooses not to have health care, or chooses not to have decent housing. So it means their choices are being hemorrhaged and thwarted, you see. What's the opposite of the militarism? Full scale accountability to make sure that people are committed to peace, and trying to ensure that they minimize the possibilities of war and wars tied to economic interest, national interest, geopolitical interests, so that we're creating countervailing forces and movements against those particular evils, and radical democracy or at least democracy in its deepest and most genuine sense, is just this simple idea that every person is unique and singular and ought to live a life of decency and dignity, ought to live a life that allows them to flourish and, and flower to the best of their choices and the best of their cultivated capacities. You know, it's a very simple idea, but it's a revolutionary idea. It really is. Because of the masses of poor and working people, if their voices were raised in such a way that their conditions, were called into question, you talkin' about some serious revolutionary transformation, serious revolutionary transformation. And Emma Goldman, used to say, she said, "If elites believed that voting would lead toward fundamental change and revolution, they make voting illegal." There's something to that. For the most part, voting is gaining access to certain concessions, and forms of representation. But in the end, if you want fundamental transformation, it's going to take more than voting, it's gonna take a whole lot of people in the street going to jail spilling over and shaping the very climate of opinion. And the way people look at the world, you see, it's still nonviolent, but it's got to be revolutionary. It's got to get at the root. So in that sense, you know, electoral politics has always reformed us in that way. And we'll take the reforms, but we're never satisfied with the reforms. Not at all. That's what separates the radical democrats from the Neo liberals. It seems to me ...

**Victoria Ross** 2:46:58

Yes! Oh, God yes! Just exactly as you say, and from your lips to all of our ears. We have so much work to do! So much work to do, but we're doing it. [Cornel: Oh, you are!] Now. We did want to share - here, Deidra. Deidra is going to share a little bit about our next plan.

**Deidra EmEl** 2:47:18

Okay,

**Cornel West** 2:47:20

Sister Deidra!

**Deidra EmEl** 2:47:22

Thank you everyone for staying on with us. So, - and thank you, Dr. West, for just being so gracious with your time and your patience. And just, - we just love sitting with you by the fireside, and just hearing your stories and your connections to every community. And so now, we just wanted to just announce that we do have a silent auction online, it will be through Bidding Owl. Remember, this is our fundraiser. And I just want to thank you all again, for all your support! We had over 200 people come out. And I will say probably double that with everyone having people with them. So we just want to thank you all for attending! And so through

Bidding Owl, you can participate in our silent auction. And we have a few baskets [showing a couple baskets] okay, and items that are going to be on the auction. So - these are only just some samples. So we'll, we will be sending you a link to the Bidding Owl. And please stay tuned to that - it will be on for at least a week or two. So please stay tuned. And thank you so much for your support. And thank you for tonight.

**Victoria Ross 2:48:44**

And we couldn't be more thrilled, we couldn't be more grateful - with all your inspiration. And you know, and when we had our - had Jill opened us up with an Indigenous opening, then we have to close with an Indigenous opening. She had to leave. But I'm just going to share what one of - some of the things that she would say is that gratefulness, that gratitude, that - for Mother Earth, for the Creator for the Creation, for them, the love that's in all of our hearts. For, for the beauty, for the beauty that will save the world. For - for all of us, for all of our time here together, for all the Great Mystery, all the things that we don't know, all the things that we'll never know but all the ways that we will strive to have the Integrity to find the Truth. Realize, truly realize that Love and Unconditional Love that makes it all work. So we're so grateful. And so - thank you everyone. Thank you Dr. West. Thank you, Brother Cornell, from the bottom of our hearts ...

**Cornel West 2:50:00**

Thank you all! - you all stay strong in your work! It's a mighty work

**Victoria Ross 2:50:02**

We love you! We love you! We're all - Black Love, One Love!!

**Cornel West 2:50:08**

- it's a might work, in Buffalo and other places too!

**Victoria Ross 2:50:11**

don't forget about coming to - actually - after the COVID - coming and we're gonna jam out, dance out and make it all happen! The revolution will - it will rhyme! [Jillian laughs]

**Cornel West 2:50:24**

Oh, ooho - Sister Jillian there, rhyming, and it won't be televised! [Jillian: That's right!] Y'all stay strong now!

2:50:30

**Victoria Ross 2:50:30**

We love you!!

**Cornel West 2:50:31**

Thank you, thank you! Love y'all!

**Victoria Ross 2:50:38**

Thank you for coming.

**Cornel West** 2:50:39

It was wonderful. It was wonderful! [Vicki: Wonderful.]

**Deidra EmEl** 2:50:44

So sorry we didn't get to everybody's questions.

**Cornel West** 2:50:46

Yeah, I know - I apologize about that. Cuz I figured this next thing at 10 - I thought I'd have a little larger break, but that's - [Vicki - ooh, I'm sorry, so sorry! - we'd better let you go] - ooh, y'all got me so fired up! I go to this next thing, they're gonna ask me, "Ooooh - Where did you get this fire from?" I cummiWn' from Buffalo ....

**All** 2:50:55

[Laughing - especially Brother Cornel]

**Victoria Ross** 2:51:00

We'll let you go. We'll leave you the [indistinguishable].

**Cornel West** 2:51:05

All right. Love you.

**Victoria Ross** 2:51:07

Love you. Okay, everyone. Thank you so much for coming. We love you all too! We're all in this together. Yeah, we're gonna get there.

**Deidra EmEl** 2:51:17

Yes. So stay tuned. You will be receiving another email from us. And love you all - stay safe. And keep, keep, keep up the struggle. Keep up the fight. Thank you so much! Have a good night!

**Victoria Ross** 2:51:29

Okay - Thank you and goodbye, everyone. Thank you all! We love you! And - we will overcome! Si, se puede! We love you! Good night, everyone. Good night. Good night!