

# Host Committee to Promote Cornel West-Bob Avakian Dialogue on Revolution and Religion

A prestigious group of people from a variety of fields have signed a statement to be part of a Host Committee to promote **Revolution and Religion: The Fight for Emancipation and the Role of Religion; A Dialogue Between Cornel West and Bob Avakian**. Scholars, theologians, scientists, musicians, actors, filmmakers, parents of children murdered by the police who have become fighters for justice, as well as revolutionaries—all people of accomplishment and stature have joined together in a statement that says:

***Members of the Host Committee have diverse political and philosophical viewpoints, yet agree that Cornel West and Bob Avakian dialoguing on this topic at this moment will matter and that people throughout society need to know about it.***

The Host Committee signatory statement goes on to say: “We recognize that the Cornel West/Bob Avakian dialogue and the speakers could come under different types of attack and slander from the media, social media, as well as from agencies of the state. These would be attempts to keep public discourse confined within terms acceptable to and reinforcing the status quo. Host Committee signatories can play an important public role in countering slander, social and political pressure, as well as more overt attacks through utilizing our public voice.”

In various and creative ways, the Host Committee is a tremendous positive factor contributing to raising the profile and maximizing the impact of this unique and urgent dialogue—to getting the message out that nobody with an interest in human emancipation can afford to miss this dialogue.

## HOST COMMITTEE, CURRENT SIGNATORIES

**Kwame Anthony Appiah**—Professor of Philosophy and Law, New York University; author of *The Honor Code: How Moral Revolutions Happen*

**Ed Asner**—Actor, Emmy Award winner

**William Ayers**—Distinguished Professor of Education and Senior University Scholar at the University of Illinois, Chicago (retired)

**Richard Brown**—Former Black Panther and San Francisco 8 Defendant

**Rev. Dr. Meri Ka Ra (Richard Byrd)**—Krst Unity Center of Afrakan Spiritual Science, Los Angeles

**Peter Coyote**—Actor, writer

**Annie Day**—The Bob Avakian Institute

**Carl Dix**—Revolutionary Communist Party, USA and Stop Mass Incarceration Network

**Emory Douglas**—Artist and former Minister of Culture, Black Panther Party

**Carol Downer**—Author, lawyer, co-founder Federation of Feminist Women’s Health Centers

**Farah Griffin**—Professor, English and African American Studies, Columbia University

**Fredrick Harris**—Professor of Political Science, Columbia University

**Carl Hart**—Professor of Psychology, Columbia University, author of *High Price*

**Robert Hass**—Professor of Poetry and Poetics, University of California, Berkeley, Pulitzer Prize and National Book Award winner, former U.S. poet laureate

**Obery M. Hendricks, Jr.**—Ph.D, Visiting Scholar, Dept. of Religion & Institute for Research in African American Studies, Columbia University

**Nicholas Heyward**—Father of Nicholas Heyward, Jr.—murdered by New York Police Dept. in 1994; October 22 Coalition to Stop Police Brutality, Repression and the Criminalization of a Generation

**Ted Jennings**—Professor, Chicago Theological Seminary

**Serene Jones**—President, Union Theological Seminary, NYC

**Philip Kitcher**—John Dewey Chair of Philosophy, Columbia University

**Raymond Lotta**—Writer *Revolution/revcom.us*, political economist

**Rev. Cecil L. “Chip” Murray**—Professor, Center for Religion and Civic Culture, University of Southern California; Co-Founder, the Cecil Murray Center for Community Engagement, USC

**Arturo O’Farrill**—Pianist, composer, educator, founder Afro Latin Jazz Alliance, Grammy award winner

**Rev. Stephan H. Phelps**—Member, Presbytery of NYC

**Katherine Ragsdale**—President, Episcopal Divinity School, Cambridge, MA

**Saskia Sassen**—Robert S. Lynd Professor of Sociology, co-chair Committee on Global Thought, Columbia University

**Matthew Shipp**—Musician and composer

**Dr. Donald Shriver**—President Emeritus of Faculty, Union Theological Seminary, NYC

**Mark Lewis Taylor**—Educator, author, activist; Professor of Theology and Culture, Religion and Society, Princeton Theological Seminary

**Juanita Young**—Mother of Malcolm Ferguson—murdered by New York Police Dept. in 2000; October 22 Coalition to Stop Police Brutality, Repression and the Criminalization of a Generation

**Robert Young**—Filmmaker

**Andy Zee**—Spokesperson, Revolution Books, NYC

**David Zeiger**—Filmmaker

Institutional affiliations for identification purposes only.

## REVOLUTION AND RELIGION

The Fight for Emancipation  
and the Role of Religion

A Dialogue Between

**CORNEL WEST  
& BOB AVAKIAN**

**NOVEMBER 15, 2014  
3-7 PM**

**THE RIVERSIDE CHURCH,  
490 Riverside Drive,  
New York City**

## Statements from Members of the Host Committee

**A great occasion to explore how revolutionary Marxism and radical Christianity may find common ground in articulating the hope for transformation.**

If humanity is to survive and thrive we all know that there must be radical and fundamental change. The rule of avarice and violence is destroying the lives of myriads and indeed the very planetary basis for life. Two forces for this fundamental transformation are revolutionary Marxism and radical Christianity. The dialogue between Bob Avakian and Cornel West is a great occasion to explore how these movements may find common ground in articulating the hope for transformation and organizing to bring it about.

**Ted Jennings**—*Professor, Chicago Theological Seminary*

**If we really want fundamental change ... look at fundamental questions—and “Revolution and Religion” ... is as fundamental as it gets**

What kind of world do we live in? A world where Michael Brown’s murderer still walks free while we’re told to have a “conversation” about race, where oil companies rush to grab up the new oil fields exposed by the melting polar ice cap while “world leaders” make meaningless, hypocritical pledges to stop global warming, where entire families incinerated in an instant by unmanned drones is not considered barbaric, where a so-called “progressive” president has out war-mongered the war-mongers. In this insane world, why isn’t revolution on everyone’s lips? Why aren’t millions of people striving for a whole new future instead of debating the pros and cons of Hillary Clinton for president? C’mon, people. If we really want fundamental change, we have to look at fundamental questions—and “Revolution and Religion: The Fight for Emancipation and the Role of Religion” is as fundamental as it gets. I welcome it, and you should too.

**David Zeiger**—*Filmmaker*

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