IN MEMORIAM TO HOWARD ZINN, January 27, 2010.

Compiled by Dick Bennett for a Culture of Peace, September 28, 2012.

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OPINION  | January 30, 2010
Op-Ed Columnist: A Radical Treasure
By BOB HERBERT
Think of what this country would be like if Howard Zinn and others like him never bothered to fight for what they believed in.

Ethan Indi, Dissent is patriotism.
The death of an idea called the First Amendment and an individual named Howard.

I just posted this piece, "Inspiration for Generations" in honor of Howard Zinn…. Peace, Mendy
http://ozarkhillpoet.blogspot.com/2010/01/inspiration-for-many-generations.html

Jill Lepore | Zinn's History 2-3-10
By Jill Lepore, The New Yorker. Zinn wanted to write a people's history because he believed that a national history serves only to justify the existence of the nation, which means, mainly, that it lies, and if it ever tells the truth, it tells it too fast, racing past atrocity to dwell on glory.
ReaderSupportedNews reply@inbound.readersupportednews.org

JEWISH VOICE FOR PEACE info@jewishvoiceforpeace.org
JVP honors the remarkable work of Howard Zinn.
As former JVP board member Penny Rosenwasser said:
Our beloved Howard Zinn died yesterday of a heart attack in Los Angeles; he was 87. What a huge loss for us as Jews, as progressives, as human beings who care deeply about the world and the people in it. Zinn was a founding member of JVP's Advisory Board and he was a tremendous supporter of our work and vision for justice and full equality in Israel and Palestine. He spoke out on behalf of the Shministim, Israel's young conscientious objectors who waited in jail for refusing to serve the occupation. He spoke frankly about the intolerable subjugation of millions of Palestinians, and how it hurt both peoples. And he stood up for the full humanity of all people everywhere. He always spoke the truth with humor and with hope. How lucky we were to share this world and this time with him.
As Zinn wrote in his autobiography, "You Can't Be Neutral on a Moving Train" (1994), "From the start, my teaching was infused with my own history. I would try to be fair to other points of view, but I
wanted more than 'objectivity'; I wanted students to leave my classes not just better informed, but more prepared to relinquish the safety of silence, more prepared to speak up, to act against injustice wherever they saw it.”
We were all his students, and we at JVP will continue to do our best to live up to his lessons.
Rebecca Vilkomerson  Executive Director  Jewish Voice for Peace

From karen kimrey

From Sue Skidmore
One of the Last Interviews of Howard Zinn//Howard Zinn Died Wed. Jan 27
I was privileged to hear him at MSU and got to shake his hand when Zinn was here in Springfield a few years ago. His DVD is coming out this month.  --Sue
December 14, 2009 at 20:56:01 one of the last interviews of Howard Zinn
Howard Zinn Talks with OpEdNews about "The People Speak"
Breaking: Howard Zinn, author of 'People's History' and left-wing historian, dies in California 27 Jan 2010 Howard Zinn, an author, teacher and political activist whose leftist "A People's History of the United States" became a million-selling alternative to mainstream texts, died Wednesday. He was 87. Zinn died of a heart attack in Santa Monica, Calif., daughter Myla Kabat-Zinn said. The historian was a resident of Auburndale, Mass.
  From Carl Barnwell
  Who will fill his shoes?

From HAW: Historians Against the Wars
Members and friends of Historians Against the War,

  For those who have not already heard, we are very sorry to pass along the news that Howard Zinn died today of a heart attack while visiting in California. He was 87. There will undoubtedly be many stories in coming days, but the following is one that appeared this evening in the on-line Boston Globe, with basic information and a number of quotes.


  Howard was a near-icon among anti-war historians, and HAW was proud to have him as a keynote speaker at our first national conference, in Austin, Texas in February 2006. We join his legion of friends and admirers worldwide who will miss his eloquent and principled voice.

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  Howard Zinn--Presente!
  From Cindy Sheehan's Soapbo to jbennet
  Today, the world lost a leading progressive voice--Howard Zinn.
  Howard was the author of many books, but his People's History of the United States was perhaps his
best-known and most influential.
His public life was exemplary, but he was also a dear, dear man and he will be sorely missed.
At the Soapbox, our hearts are broken and our love and support go out to his children and grandchildren.
Read the sad news here:
Howard Zinn dies at 87
Listen to Howard with my special guest host, Cynthia McKinney as they chatted on the Soapbox on September 29, 2009
In Howard's name we must always strive for peace, justice and truth.

US IMPERIAL TERRORISM, HOWARD ZINN, & THE PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN WAR (1899-1913)
By E. San Juan, Jr. philsci | October 2, 2010 Tags: fascism, imperialism, Philippine-American War,
State terrorism: http://wp.me/phYOK-9r
Avalanches of FBI dragnet raids, house-searches and court summons recently devastated numerous homes and traumatized families across the country, bringing back horrendous memories of the McCarthy raids and COINTELPRO assassinations of the Cold War period. Substituting the terrorist Islamic menace for the Communist bogey-men, Bush-regime arrests, “dirty trick” schemes, and other repressive measures are being revived under the Obama administration, still legitimized by the USA Patriot Act. This recalls the relentless FBI harassment of distinguished historian Howard Zinn who died last January 27. On July 31 of this year, the FBI was forced by a Freedom of Information Act request to release Zinn’s files. In 1949, the FBI began a domestic security investigation of Zinn’s alleged involvement in communist front groups, though he denied being a member of the Communist Party. Because of his campaigns against the Vietnam War, his criticisms of the FBI for failing to protect blacks against white mob violence, and his influence on Martin Luther King, Zinn was considered a high security risk, which would lead to his summary arrest if a state of emergency was declared. Today, the homeland-security state may already have declared such a state of emergency. It has criminalized the exercise of constitutional liberties by charging citizens of supporting terrorist groups. This anti-terrorism blanket charge is being used to justify the mass arrests of anti-war protesters, suppression of progressive civil-rights organizations, and intimidation of anyone critical of lethal drone attacks (in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iraq, Yemen, the Philippines). the Zionist Israeli state’s apartheid regime, and other genocidal interventions by Washington’s militarist ruling bloc panicked by fierce global resistance against US hegemony. It is thus fitting, at this critical conjuncture, to remember Zinn’s example of principled militant defiance against imperialist state terrorism during his life.

Howard Zinn is exceptional in both being an intellectual and human being. After having lived in the academy for at least five decades, it is rare to find humans inhabiting that space—careerism and all kinds of inhuman conduct distinguish the field. What saved me, and other contemporaries of mine, from the dehumanizing zone of what Bruce Franklin once called “the highest academies of the empire” (in his essay included in Louis Kampf and Paul Lauter’s The Politics of Literature), was the high tide of the anti-Vietnam war movement in the late sixties and early seventies. Our reading of Zinn was an integral part of that movement.
Coming from the U.S.’s longest held colony/neocolony, the Philippines, into the hallowed precincts of Cambridge, Mass. in the early sixties, I absorbed the ivy league’s rarefied, eviscerating atmosphere. So far was my experience from Zinn’s education in World War II, not only his bombing missions but his later investigations of how aerial bombing, culminating in Hiroshima, proved that war cannot by any means be legitimized. Zinn’s reflections in The Politics of History led to the discovery of the “history of bombing” as “a history of endless atrocities, all calmly explained by deceptive and deadly language like ‘accident,’ ‘military target,’ and ‘collateral damage.’” He inserted this reflection on his life as a heuristic signature of his teaching and writing.

Zinn not only noted the disparity between reality and language—any garden-variety deconstructionist knows that by heart. More acutely, he perceived the discrepancy between his learner’s viewpoint and the official reading of the same events, and ultimately the reason for the discrepancy, which he clearly elaborated in his essay “The Use and Abuse of History” in one of his most instructive books, Declarations of Independence. He didn’t want to follow the conventional, tradition-bound role of the academic historian. In essence, writing of history is never neutral, influenced always by the historian’s values and intentions. Zinn took account of why telling omissions, focus on elite personalities, and the technical fetish for trivia predominate among mainstream historians: “Everyone is biased, whether they know it or not, in possessing fundamental goals, purposes, and ends.” And it is these biases, call them perspectives or frameworks of mind, that explain why certain details are emphasized, ignored, enlarged or diminished, in the picture or narrative of the world. “Zinn muses about a “marketplace of subjectivities” to get at approximate objectivity. However, the final judgment on what to include and exclude depends on what we want to accomplish: “All written history is partial in two senses…partial in that it is only a tiny part of what really happened. That is a limitation that can never be overcome.” What Zinn emphasizes is the partiality entailed by its inevitable taking of sides, openly or deceptively, conscious or subconsciously. And this self-awareness is what constitutes Zinn’s humanity, his commitment to the old Enlightenment project cognizant of its hubris, ironies, dangers, and limits since Columbus set sail for the Indies.

Volumes have been written on the problem of truth and accuracy in history-writing. Citing the examples of Vico and Herder to reconcile opposing viewpoints, Isaiah Berlin (1981) suggests that relativism in history need not be opposed to uniformitarianism. Are facts simply there for one to tell a story? So analysis and argumentation, rhetoric and morality, classified by Hayden White as archetypes of metahistory, need not concern us. Gregor McLennan, in Marxism and the Methodologies of History, describes the perennial dilemmas facing historians, and the recurrent conflicts between empiricists and idealists, positivists and realists.

Such complexity may be illusory since, as Zinn points out, the problem may be reduced to the matter of critique and self-critique. In short, the writing of history is always situated and even compromised since both historian and his materials are embedded in lived experience, past and present. Indeed, both are always already inscribed in an ongoing narrative, or in multiple narratives, not of any single individual’s making. Critique implies awareness of one’s position, one’s taking sides—even the refusal to take sides, to be neutral. Everyone is in the moving train, hence what is important is to ascertain from where and to where the train is headed.

We owe Zinn this clear delineation of what history-writing is all about. We don’t need to bother with Establishment apologist Arthur Schlesinger’s threat of stigmatizing Zinn as a “polemicist.” The guy is only performing the Establishment gravitas of serving his masters. What made Zinn an exceptional historian is his taking the side of the excluded, marginalized, omitted, expunged from the history of the victors, the masters or winners. He frankly announced his commitment to change, asking questions crucial for social change, “questions relating to equality, liberty, peace, and justice, but being open to whatever answers were suggested by looking at history.” Zinn declared his partisanship “in the sense of
holding fast to certain fundamental values: the equal right of all human beings—whatever race, nationality, sex, religion—to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness….It seemed to me that devoting a life to the study of history was worthwhile only if it aimed at those ideals” (1990, 49).

Earlier, in his 1968 book Disobedience and Democracy, Zinn had already distilled in the rallying cry of “civil disobedience” those ideals and principles elaborated later on, and fully embodied in the writing of A People’s History of the United States. Before I read the latter, the former book was already a powerful inspiration for me and my contemporaries. But it was A People’s History that, for a whole generation of Filipino activists, became a pedagogical guide. The reason is that it articulated the political consciousness of those who participated in the anti-war movement, in particular, in the arduous task of organizing solidarity work for third-world struggles such as the decolonizing, national-democratic movement in the Philippines. It encapsulated an anti-imperialist sensibility and ethos beginning with the approach to Columbus and European colonialism, culminating in the key chapter 12, “The Empire and the People.”

The fact of U.S. imperialism was already well-publicized in the Sixties in the rising tide of the anti-Vietnam War movement. But for us Filipinos, the imposition of martial law in the Philippines in 1972, visibly supported and funded by Washington and the Pentagon (from Nixon to Reagan), was a classic example of what Zinn noted as the logic of imperial domination. Despite its nominal independence, the Philippines illustrated the entrenched reality of US colonial domination since the Phillippine-American War at the turn of the 20th century.

The episode of that War, usually bracketed between the years 1899 to 1902 (when Theodore Roosevelt pronounced it over, though the war continued up to 1913), was often ignored or downplayed in the standard textbooks. When I was growing up in the Philippines, from my elementary to college years, we never really knew what that conflict was all about. There may have been references in the classroom to Gen. Aguinaldo’s capture by Funston, the resistance of Macario Sakay and Miguel Malvar, but that was all. We were all grateful to America for having liberated us from the Spaniards—and later on, from the barbaric Japanese army. We sang “God bless America” in the grade schools and worshipped Hollywood stars and singers.

Our education—not only mine but also our parents, who were all grateful for Gen. Douglas McArthur for having saved us from the wicked Japanese occupiers—were thoroughly colonial; Filipinos in general are brought up and educated up to today as emergent, inchoate Americans, if not William Howard Taft’s “brown brothers.” The Americanization of the Filipino mind, of Filipino society as a whole, has been so thorough, profound, and unrelenting that not only is it the dream of every Filipino to immigrate to the metropolis, but it has also been the ongoing practice of the Filipino elite to nullify Philippine sovereignty and do everything to please the holders of power in Washington, the World Bank, the IMF and the US global corporate elite. Makati, the business center of MetroManila, strives to be a suburb of Los Angeles and the Filipino oligarchs and the subaltern intelligentsia all aspire to be featured in People Magazine or mix with their ilk in Las Vegas, New York, and Washington DC. Hence all Philippines president—Aquino III did it last week—have to make their pilgrimage to Washington to receive the blessings and anointment of the current administration.

Very few Americans know or have heard of the Philippine-American War. Although the Filipino resistance against US occupation—a small if irritating episode in that “splendid little war” with Spain recounted by Zinn—is given only a paragraph or two in US history textbooks, it could not be completely erased since the Philippines, the only US colony in Southeast Asia—the longest-held colony of the US, according to William Blum—played a major role in US interventions in Asia after World War II. Of course, the sentimental ties born from US and Philippine resistance against Japanese occupation wiped out the memory of the brutalities of the US suppression of Filipino guerillas in Batangas, Samar and the slaughter of Moros in Mindanao and Sulu. But that memory lingered on,
because the US military bases stayed on until 1992, and the US with local help suppressed the Communist-led Huk uprising in the Forties and Fifties. Col. Edward Lansdale and Ramon Magsaysay were the twin stars of the Cold War era in the Philippines, a rehearsal for Col. Lansdale’s Vietnam adventure. Except for The Beards’ New Basic History of the United States (the 1944 edition was updated by William Beard in 1968), I do not know of any general textbook that gave substantial space to the Filipino-American War. In the 1991 edition of The Reader’s Companion to American History, Eric Foner and John Garraty gave one-half page to the “Philippines,” portraying Aguinaldo’s “guerilla war” (same mistakenly call it “an insurrection”) as somehow incidental to the Spanish-American War. In contrast, the Beards summarized in four pages the Congressional and public debates over the annexation of the Philippines. But the whole affair revolved around the rivalry between McKinley and Bryan and their parties, even though quotes from Mark Twain and William Graham Sumner were used to demonstrate the intellectual opposition to the drive for conquest. We don’t really have a sense of the texture of that particular conjuncture, the multifarious events and circumstances of everyday life surrounding the debates of the political partisans. We have the same chronicle of leaders, notable personalities, military and business heroes, mixed with diplomatic affairs tabulated assiduously in order to explain how crucial decisions were made. Much earlier, Gabriel Kolko called attention to the Philippine-American War as a crucial index or touchstone for understanding the nature of U.S. power. In his 1976 book Main Currents in Modern American History, Kolko considered the exorbitant violence of the US pacification of the Philippines as a signal for the massive devastation of IndoChina: “But the first American entry—and the most ignored—was the bloody acquisition of the Philippines and the long repression, eventually costing at lest 200,000 Filipino lives [the final tally is 1.4 million], which was required when the Americans found that in order really to take the islands they had first to retrieve it by force and chicanery from a Filipino independence movement largely in control at the end of the war with Spain” (1976, 42). This “orgy of racist slaughter” is clarified by Zinn’s prismatic and polyphonic method of conveying the story of US pacification of the Philippines by departing from the “great men” viewpoint representing the elite political parties, property owners, and other moneyed stakeholders. What stimulated Filipino activists in Zinn’s account is the recovery of dissident and excluded voices so long absent from mainstream discourse, despite the rise of oral and subaltern histories together with the academic interest in popular culture. Zinn foregrounds the protest of the Anti-Imperialist League, as well as the testimonies of military officers and journalists about the brutalities and atrocities of the campaign. This is the first time, to my knowledge, that not only the impressions of ordinary American soldiers engaged in war have been introduced into the larger picture, but also those of African Americans. Zinn uses memorable passages from the letters of African American soldiers collected by Willard Gatewood in Smoked Yankees and the Struggle for Empire. For the first time, we hear of David Fagen, one of over a dozen African American soldiers who joined Aguinaldo’s revolutionary army. We hear of other members of the black 24th Infantry regiment whose sacrifices in the Cuban campaign were completely obscured in order to glorify Theodore Roosevelt and his “Rough Riders.” The reason why Zinn was able to do his inheres in his democratizing imperative: the chapters on the African American and the Native American struggles prepared the chapter on US imperial expansion to the Caribbean and the Pacific. This is clearly demonstrated by the way Mike Konopacki and Paul Buhle designed the graphic adaptation of Zinn’s book. The racism and economic crisis of the 1880s and 1890s provided the overarching context within which to view the pacification of the Philippines, as well as the annexation and domination of Cuba, Puerto Rico, Hawaii and Guam—a complicated landscape which has been much reduced to purely racial and cultural factors, due to postmodernist obscurantism and the conservative inertia of the discipline, by later chroniclers of a contentious and
fraught U.S.-Philippines relations such as Paul Kramer and Alfred McCoy. The Philippines has recently become an easy touchstone for critics of Washington’s militarist project of renewing its global hegemony at the beginning of this new millennium. When the practice of “waterboarding” hit the public headlines, Kramer and others immediately wrote about the “water-cure” widely applied by US forces during the pacification campaigns. When the Iraq war began, Max Boot and other Establishment defenders invoked the “savage wars of peace” such as the conquest of the Philippines to justify the collateral damages of the “civilizing mission.” Of course, the romantic view of US colonization of the Philippines has long been demystified by authors such as Leon Wolff, Stuart Creighton Miller, Boone Schirmer, and others.

Exposing the “lies across America,” James Loewen bewails the amnesia over one of America’s “least happy foreign adventures” in which more Americans died in combat than during the American Revolution or the War of 1812. The War is memorialized in monuments with plaques depicting a native woman with her chains broken kneeling before a U.S. soldier and sailor—an inversion of history (Loewen 1999, 136). Loewen confesses that “As a citizen who came of age politically during the war in Vietnam, I have come to regret that neither I nor most Americans recalled the Philippines War in the 1960s, for it was a lost memory that might have prevented the [Vietnam] war” (1999, 139). Loewen and other debunkers no doubt owe a lot to Zinn’s pioneering efforts to recover that buried past whose reverberations and resonance reach our present time.

Zinn’s multi-layered narration of the US pacification of the Philippines is not just a postmodern exercise in pastiche, deploying the “unsaid” and the “inarticulate” as counter-motifs to the hegemonic and dominant discourse. It was not just a construct of accidental, contingent or gratuitous items ferreted from the continuum of time. It is quite directed to a critique or interrogation of the sanctioned or sanctified ruling-class version of what happened, including its meaning and significance for today. Zinn registered the “cunning of Reason” by allowing the words of the repressed, the subaltern menials of empire and the subjugated “objects” of Benevolent Assimilation, to penetrate through the interstices of the official reports and lodge their recalcitrant and intractable deviation from what has been generally accepted. “Truth” for us, springing from truth-in-itself (to use Hegelian terminology), emerges from this dialectic of juxtapositions and montage of peoples, incidents, and diverse cultural-social forces.

For Zinn, “truth” lies in unfolding a more comprehensive and generous panorama of the historical scene. By concretely dramatizing the participation of ordinary individuals in the making of the narrative of conquest and pacification, Zinn’s history was able to educate Filipino activists in the US and the Philippines in the importance of mobilizing a united front of progressives against the Marcos dictatorship across class, race and other sectoral boundaries. Zinn’s history was indeed a united front or coalition of the multitudes of victims against a propertied minority. It is this example of understanding and interpreting the past that made Zinn’s writings such a productive and catalyzing force for us in the progressive movement of Filipinos here and in the Philippines. We took Zinn’s message earnestly: We can take hold of the train’s motor and conduct it towards the liberation of oppressed and exploited peoples everywhere. Zinn’s parting message should sustain us in our ordeals in this age of homeland-state security terrorism, while a moribund system convulsively emits its dying poison and a new order painfully struggles through the womb of tortuous contradictions:

To be hopeful in bad times is not just foolishly romantic. It is based on the fact that human history is a history not only of cruelty but also of compassion, sacrifice, courage, kindness. If we remember those times and places, and there are so many where people have behaved magnificently, this gives us the energy to act. Hope is the energy for change. The future is an infinite succession of presents….and to live now as we think human beings should live, in defiance of he worst of everything around us, is a marvelous victory.
REFERENCES

Howard Zinn Speaks: Collected Speeches 1963 to 2009. By Howard Zinn, Edited by Anthony Arnove
Howard Zinn has illuminated our history like no other U.S. historian. This collection of his speeches on protest movements, racism, war, and topics vital to our democracy will be an invaluable resource for the new generation of students who continue to discover his work, as well as the millions of people who Howard moved and informed in his lifetime.

Reviews
“Reading Howard’s spoken words I feel that I am almost hearing his voice again. Even in writing its unique appeal comes through — his stunning pitch-perfect ability to capture the moment and the concerns and needs of the audience whoever they may be, always enlightening, often stirring, an amalgam of insight, critical history, wit, blended with charm and appeal. I’ve heard Howard speak to tens of thousands at demonstrations, to small groups of homeless people, to activists enduring brutal treatment, and at many other times and places. Always just the right tone and message, always inspiring, a gift to all of us to be treasured.”
—Noam Chomsky

“Few people changed more lives than Howard Zinn. He changed them as an author, as a play write and as a filmmaker. But he also changed them face-to-face, as a speaker. With ferocious moral clarity and mischievous humor, Howard turned routine anti-war rallies
into profound explorations of state violence and he turned staid academic conferences into revival meetings for social change. Collected here for the first time, Howard’s speeches — spanning an extraordinary life of passion and principle — come to us at the moment when we need them most: just as a global network of popular uprisings searches for what comes next. We could ask for no wiser a guide than Howard Zinn.”
—Naomi Klein, author The Shock Doctrine

“Howard Zinn — there was no one like him. And to hear him speak was like listening to music that you loved — lyrical, uplifting, honest. If you never got to hear him speak, this book will move you in profound ways. Although Howard’s ‘voice’ is no longer with us, his true voice will live on forever. And I know he would love it for each of you to find your voice, too, and to be heard. Perhaps this book will provide you with some inspiration.”
—Michael Moore

“Howard Zinn was one of us, the best part of us. Enjoy these speeches. Hear his voice. Then hear your own, hear it closely.”
—Josh Brolin

“One of my favorite expressions from Nicaragua is: ‘Struggle is the highest form of song.’ In that case Howard Zinn is one of our great singers and these speeches are righteous songs filled with the boldness, vision, humor, depth and urgings of his profoundly human voice. Howard sang a different America, an invisible America, an America of the 99 percent. He sang of the lies and deceit of the government and the impossibility and horror of wars made in America’s name. He sang of a dream, a deeper dream that is now rising in the streets. I cannot think of a more important set of songs to be singing at this time.”
—Eve Ensler

“Howard Zinn’s speeches, beautifully gathered together here by Anthony Arnove, are a joy and an inspiration.”
—Marisa Tomei

“Howard Zinn’s towering legacy will forever be as a historian who made history. He made history because his books, his actions, and especially his speeches inspired ordinary people to do extraordinary things. We fight onward today in a remarkable tradition of struggle. For many of us, we first became aware of this tradition by sitting in a packed, musty meeting hall and listening to stories of heart, humor, and heroism, as communicated by Howard Zinn.”
—Dave Zirin

"The first time I heard Howard Zinn speak I was a student in the deep South, and amazed that anyone could stay alive long enough to say such things. He was completely fearless, totally relaxed, making joking asides as he went straight to the bloody heart of
Empire. How much time it has saved me, having him as a teacher my second year in college. Reading this book brings back memories of those times when Howie spoke to sometimes shocked crowds of people who, before hearing him, had thought historians should be silent about current affairs or, at most, write quiet books. Howard Zinn was a free man. Delightful because of this. Howard Zinn Speaks is a book to savor. It is wise, humorous, serious, without one moment of hesitation in tackling the basic notions about who we are as a people, a country, and a world. Elder brother, great teacher. Presenté."

–Alice Walker

"I hesitate to comment on Howard Zinn Speaks because of my unshakable and overt bias for anything Zinn. I don't think it'd be fair honestly to gloat about his work in such a way. But then again having a Zinn bias just means you favor truth and justice over lies and oppression."

–Lupe Fiasco

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