A Statement of Conscience: Not in Our Name
*Not in Our Name (www.nion.org)*

Let it not be said that people in the United States did nothing when their government declared a war without limit and instituted stark new measures of repression.

The signers of this statement call on the people of the US to resist the policies and overall political direction that have emerged since September 11, 2001, and which pose grave dangers to the people of the world.

We believe that peoples and nations have the right to determine their own destiny, free from military coercion by great powers. We believe that all persons detained or prosecuted by the United States government should have the same rights of due process. We believe that questioning, criticism, and dissent must be valued and protected. We understand that such rights and values are always contested and must be fought for.

We believe that people of conscience must take responsibility for what their own governments do -- we must first of all oppose the injustice that is done in our own name. Thus we call on all Americans to RESIST the war and repression that has been loosed on the world by the Bush administration. It is unjust, immoral, and illegitimate. We choose to make common cause with the people of the world.

We too watched with shock the horrific events of September 11, 2001. We too mourned the thousands of innocent dead and shook our heads at the terrible scenes of carnage -- even as we recalled similar scenes in Baghdad, Panama City, and, a generation ago, Vietnam. We too joined the anguished questioning of millions of Americans who asked why such a thing could happen.

But the mourning had barely begun, when the highest leaders of the land unleashed a spirit of revenge. They put out a simplistic script of "good vs. evil" that was taken up by a pliant and intimidated media. They told us that asking why these terrible events had happened verged on treason. There was to be no debate. There were by definition no valid political or moral questions. The only possible answer was to be war abroad and repression at home.

In our name, the Bush administration, with near unanimity from Congress, not only attacked Afghanistan but arrogated to itself and its allies the right to rain down military force anywhere and anytime. The brutal repercussions have been felt from the Philippines to Palestine, where Israeli tanks and bulldozers have left a terrible trail of death and destruction. The government now openly
prepares to wage all-out war on Iraq -- a country which has no connection to the
horror of September 11. What kind of world will this become if the US
government has a blank check to drop commandos, assassins, and bombs
wherever it wants?

In our name, within the US, the government has created two classes of people:
those to whom the basic rights of the US legal system are at least promised,
and those who now seem to have no rights at all. The government rounded up
over 1,000 immigrants and detained them in secret and indefinitely. Hundreds
have been deported and hundreds of others still languish today in prison. This
smacks of the infamous concentration camps for Japanese-Americans in
World War 2. For the first time in decades, immigration procedures single out
certain nationalities for unequal treatment.

In our name, the government has brought down a pall of repression over
society. The President’s spokesperson warns people to “watch what they say.”
Dissident artists, intellectuals, and professors find their views distorted,
attacked, and suppressed. The so-called Patriot Act -- along with a host of
similar measures on the state level -- gives police sweeping new powers of
search and seizure, supervised if at all by secret proceedings before secret
courts.

In our name, the executive has steadily usurped the roles and functions of the
other branches of government. Military tribunals with lax rules of evidence and
no right to appeal to the regular courts are put in place by executive order.
Groups are declared “terrorist” at the stroke of a presidential pen.

We must take the highest officers of the land seriously when they talk of a war
that will last a generation and when they speak of a new domestic order. We
are confronting a new openly imperial policy towards the world and a domestic
policy that manufactures and manipulates fear to curtail rights.

There is a deadly trajectory to the events of the past months that must be seen
for what it is and resisted. Too many times in history people have waited until it
was too late to resist.

President Bush has declared: “you’re either with us or against us.” Here is our
answer: We refuse to allow you to speak for all the American people. We will
not give up our right to question. We will not hand over our consciences in
return for a hollow promise of safety. We say NOT IN OUR NAME. We refuse to
be party to these wars and we repudiate any inference that they are being
waged in our name or for our welfare. We extend a hand to those around the
world suffering from these policies; we will show our solidarity in word and
deed.
We who sign this statement call on all Americans to join together to rise to this challenge. We applaud and support the questioning and protest now going on, even as we recognize the need for much, much more to actually stop this juggernaut. We draw inspiration from the Israeli reservists who, at great personal risk, declare “there IS a limit” and refuse to serve in the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza.

We also draw on the many examples of resistance and conscience from the past of the United States: from those who fought slavery with rebellions and the underground railroad, to those who defied the Vietnam war by refusing orders, resisting the draft, and standing in solidarity with resisters.

Let us not allow the watching world today to despair of our silence and our failure to act. Instead, let the world hear our pledge: we will resist the machinery of war and repression and rally others to do everything possible to stop it.

The over 55,000 signers include...

James Abourezk, former US Senator
Rudolfo Acuna, author of Occupied America
Dr. Patch Adams
Michael Albert
Jace Alexander
Robert Altman
Aris Anagnos
Laurie Anderson
Ida Applebroog
John Ashbery
Edward Asner
Jon Robin Baitz
Thomas Balanoff, president, Local 1, SEIU
Russell Banks
John Perry Barlow, co-founder, Electronic Frontier Foundation
Rev. Willie T. Barrow, Operation Push
Sue Bauman, Mayor of Madison, WI
Rosalyn Baxandall
Joel Beinen, Professor of Middle East History, Stanford
Medea Benjamin
Phyllis Bennis, Institute for Policy Studies, New Internationalism Project
Jessica Blank & Erik Jensen, playwrights, The Exonerated
William Blum, author of Rogue State
Wayne C. Booth, professor emeritus, Chicago
Fr. Bob Bossie, SCJ, and the staff of 8th Day Center for Justice
Lawrence Brent Brilliant, M.D.
Oscar Brown, Jr.
Margaret Burroughs, founder, DuSable Museum
Judith Butler
Leslie Cagan, chair, Interim Pacifica Foundation Board
Kisha Imani Cameron
Rosemary Carroll
Sen. Gilberto Cedillo, California state legislature
Kathlenn & Henry Chalfant
Celia Chang, chairperson, Wen Ho Lee Defense Fund Steering Committee
Linda Chapman, New York Theater Workshop
Rep. Maralyn Chase, Washington state legislature
Bell & Paul Chevigny
Mel Chin
Noam Chomsky
Ann Christopherson, president, American Booksellers Assn.
Jill Ciment
Ramsey Clark
Jill Clayburgh
Marilyn Clement, Exec. Sec. for Economic Justice, United Methodist Women’s Division
Ben Cohen, cofounder, Ben and Jerry’s
David Cole, professor of law, Georgetown University
Steve Coleman
Robbie Conal
Stephanie Coontz, historian, Evergreen State College
Paula Cooper
Carlos Cortez, “Koyokuikatal”
Kia Corthron, playwright, Breath, Boom
Petah Coyne
Robert Creeley
Kimberly Crenshaw, professor of law, Columbia and UCLA
Culture Clash
John Cusack
Damen & Naomi, Musicians for Peace
Kevin Danaher, Global Exchange
Barbara Dane
Rev. Herbert Daughtry
Angela Davis
Ossie Davis
Zack de la Rocha
Sheila DeBretteville, director of studies in graphic design, Yale
Mos Def
Tony Del Plato, chef/co-owner, Moosewood Restaurant
Richard Delgado, U. of Colorado Boulder School of Law
Rev. Gregory R. Dell, Broadway United Methodist Church of Chicago
Rosalyn Deutsche
Ani Di Franco
Diane DiPrima
Mark Di Suvero
Carl Dix, Revolutionary Communist Party
Bernadine Dohrn, director, Children & Family Justice Center
Julie Dorf, International Gay & Lesbian Human Rights Commission
Carol Downey, board of directors, Chico Feminist Women's Health Center
Roma Downey
Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, professor, California State University, Hayward
Sandy Duncan
Bill Dyson, Connecticut state legislature
Michael Eric Dyson
Steve Earle
Barbara Ehrenreich
Deborah Eisenberg
Nora Eisenberg, author of The War at Home
Hector Elizondo
Daniel Ellsberg
Brian Eno
Eve Ensler
Reva Enteen, National Lawyers Guild, San Francisco
Martín Espada
Michelle Esrick
Leo Estrada, UCLA professor, Urban Planning
Robert Falls
Nina Felshin, author of But Is It Art? The Spirit of Art as Activism
James R. Fennerty, pres., National Lawyers Guild, Chicago
Frances D. Fergusson
Lawrence Ferlinghetti, City Lights Bookstore
Fifty-three Maryknoll priests and brothers
Norman G. Finkelstein, author of The Holocaust Industry
Laura Flanders
Jane Fonda
Henry Foner, former pres., Fur & Leather Workers Union
Richard Foreman
Thomas C. Fox, publisher, National Catholic Reporter
Elizabeth Frank
Mary Frank
H. Bruce Franklin, professor of American Studies, Rutgers in Newark
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Glen E. Friedman
Bill Frisell
Frank Galati
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Jorie Graham
Robert Greenwald
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John Guare
José Guerrero, director Taller Mestizarte
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Allan Gurganus
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Jessica Hagedorn
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Ann Hamilton
Suheir Hammad
Nathalie Handal
Daniel Handler (aka Lemony Snicket)
Michael Hardt, author of Empire
Christine B. Harrington, professor of politics, NYU
Lyle Ashton Harris
David Harvey, professor of anthropology, CUNY
Stanley Hauerwas
Tom Hayden
Hazel Hernder, author of Beyond Globalization
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Susannah Heschel, professor, Dartmouth
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J.P. Jones
Sarah Jones
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Sally Kirkland
C. Clark Kissinger, Refuse & Resist!
Sen. Adam Klein, Washington state legislature
Yuri Kochiyama
Michael Konopacki
Rev. Earl Kooperkamp, pastor, St. Mary’s Episcopal Church
Annisette & Thomas Koppel, Savage Rose
Barbara Kopple
David Korten, author of When Corporations Rule the World
Ron Kovic
Max, Joyce, and Nikolas Kozloff
Barbara Kruger
Tony Kushner
Rev. Peter Laarman, senior minister, Judson Memorial Church
Mike Ladd
James Lafferty, exec. dir., National Lawyers Guild/L.A.
Ray Laforest, Haiti Support Network
Beth K. Lamont
Lisa & Pilar Law
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Phil Lesh, Grateful Dead
Michael Letwin, co-convenor, NYC Labor Against the War
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Barbara Lubin, Middle East Childrens Alliance
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Jack Macrae
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Rabbi Robert Marx
Maryknoll Sisters, Western USA
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Arnold Mesches
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Paul D. Miller, DJ Spooky aka The Subliminal Kid
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Sylvia Plachy
Assemblyman Mark Pocan, Wisconsin state legislature
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Harold Prince
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Amy Ray, Indigo Girls
Rev. George Regas, Interfaith Communities United for Justice and Peace
Reno
Graeme Revell
Adrienne Rich
Judy F. Richardson, associate producer, Eyes on the Prize
David Riker, filmmaker, La Ciudad
Boots Riley, The Coup
Faith Ringgold
Sen. Fred Risser, Wisconsin state legislature
Kate Robin
Avital Ronell
Jonathan Rosenbaum, author of Movie Wars
Edgar Rosenblum
Naomi & Walter Rosenblum
James Rosenquist
Martha Rosler
Judith Rossner
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Edward Said
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David Salle
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Luc Sante
Rep. Sharon Tomiko Santos, Washington state legislature
Andy Sapora, Flying Karamozov Brothers
Susan Sarandon
Saskia Sassen, professor of sociology, Chicago
John Sayles
James Schamus, producer-writer, Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon
Jonathan Schell, fellow of the Nation Institute
Paul Schell, former mayor of Seattle
Carolee Schneemann
Juliet Schor, Professor of Sociology, Boston College
Annabella Sciorra
Pete and Toshi Seeger
Mark Selden
Peter Selz
Peter A. Serkin
Frank Serpico
Richard Serra
Betty Shamieh
Alexander Sharp, exec. dir., Protestants for the Common Good
Rev. Al Sharpton
Wallace Shawn
Charlotte Sheedy
Martin Sheen
Ron Shelton
Alex Shoumatoff
Robert J. Siegel, pres., Seattle National Lawyers Guild
Russell Simmons
Zachary Sklar
Chuck Smith, artistic associate, Goodman Theatre
Kiki Smith
Joan Snyder
Paul Soglin, former mayor of Madison, WI
Miles Solay, NION Project
Norman Solomon
Scott Spenser
Nancy Spero
Art Spiegelman
S. Peg Spindler, dir., Sojourner Truth House, Gary, IN
Starhawk
Jean Stefancic, U. of Colorado Boulder School of Law
Bob Stein
Jack Steinberger, Nobel Laureate
Gloria Steinem
Pat Steir
Oliver Stone
Mark Strand
William & Rose Styron
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Saul Williams
Victoria Williams
Standish E. Willis, Chicago Conference of Black Lawyers
S. Brian Willson
Martha Wilson, Franklin Furnace
Bob Wing, WarTimes
Krysztof Wodiczko
Alice Woldt, Church Council of Greater Seattle
Steffie Woolhandler, Harvard School of Medicine
Jeffrey Wright
Dennis Zacek, artistic director, Victory Gardens Theater
Zephyr
Mary Zimmerman
Howard Zinn
Organizations for identification only (partial list as used in New York Times, 1/27/03)
For more complete listing of signers, or to add your name to the statement, see:
www.nion.us

The Statement of Conscience website: www.nion.us