



Written by [Steve Byas](#) on September 12, 2016

## Clenched Fist Raised During National Anthem

Before Sunday's game with the San Diego Chargers, Kansas City Chiefs cornerback Marcus Peters raised a clenched fist, enclosed in a black glove, as part of his "solidarity" with San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick, who has been protesting America by sitting during the singing of America's national anthem, the "Star-spangled Banner." The clenched fist has been a symbol of communist solidarity for decades.



Peters did not say that he was using the clenched fist as a communist salute or, as some have suggested, in emulation of the actions of Olympic athletes Tommie Smith and John Carlos at the Mexico City games in 1968. But he did comment: "I'm just stating that I'm black and I love being black. I'm supporting Colin [Kaepernick] and what he's doing as far as raising awareness with the justice system. I don't mean anything by it. I locked arms with my teammates. I talked with coach and coach said it was OK if I wanted to express my thoughts and so I just expressed it."

Earlier in the week, Peters said he stood with Kaepernick. "I'm 100 percent behind him. I feel that what is going on in law enforcement, it does need to change. It does need to change for all, equal opportunities for everybody, not just us as black Americans. I feel that over the past year it's been displayed what's been going on across American and all over the world. Just on my piece, I don't thinking nothing's been done about it."

Peters, standing at the end of the line, was the only Chiefs player actually able to raise his fist, but the entire team linked arms during the anthem. The players released a statement, explaining that they "decided collectively to lock arms as a sign of solidarity."

"After having a number of thoughtful discussions as a group regarding our representation during the National Anthem, we decided collectively to lock arms as a sign of solidarity. It was our goal to be unified as a team and to be respectful of everyone's opinions, and the remembrance of 9/11. It's our job as professional athletes to make a positive impact on our communities and to be proactive when change is needed."

Interesting. All these years, I thought it was their job to win football games. For years, Hollywood actors have used their celebrity to support various political and social causes, and now it appears that professional athletes have decided that they are going to become more vocal. But as with those in the motion picture industry, the majority have decided to use their celebrity status to promote progressive causes. The difference between athlete entertainers and movie actors, though, is that most sports players play together as a team, and one must wonder, with such a public display of opinion on contentious public issues, if team unity could be adversely affected. Surely teammates cannot all be of one viewpoint on political and social issues.

"Together we are going to continue to have conversations, educate ourselves and others on social issues and work with law enforcement officials and leaders to make an impact on the Kansas City



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community,” the statement concluded.

The first day of the NFL season was relatively quiet in regards to protests during the National Anthem, but during the game between the Seattle Seahawks and the Miami Dolphins, the entire Seahawk team locked arms. All except defensive back Jeremy Lane stood for the “Star-spangled Banner.” Across the field, four players for the Dolphins — Arian Foster, Michael Thomas, Jalani Jenkins, and Kenny Stills — took a knee, but did put their hands over their hearts. The remainder of the team stood, as is ordinary, during the song.

Seahawk wide receiver Doug Baldwin said, “As a team we have chosen to stand and interlock arms in unity. We honor those who have fought for the freedom we cherish. And we stand to assure the riches of freedom and the security of justice for all people. Progress can and will be made only if we stand together.” Baldwin’s statement was in a video posted to his Twitter account on Friday.

Though Chiefs cornerback Peters was prolific in his support of Kaepernick’s efforts, saying, “It’s big. It’s real big what they’re doing. I salute Colin for what he’s doing. He’s standing up for a great cause,” it is not known if Peters is aware of the history of the clenched fist, which has long been associated with revolutionary activities, including communism and the violent French Revolution.

John Lautner, a former top official with the Communist Party USA, explained to *American Opinion* (the forerunner of *The New American*), in 1970 the importance of the clenched fist. “The clenched-fist salute has been used among revolutionaries for many centuries as a symbol of defiance, comradeship, and solidarity [note the statement of the Chiefs players above]. It was employed during the bloody French Revolution of 1789, and again during the industrial revolutions of 1848. At the formation of the First International in London in 1864 (known as the International Workingmen’s Association), Karl Marx and his followers gave the clenched-fist salute, as did his followers at Brussels in 1889 during the formation of the Second International, the so-called Yellow International. And it was used by the revolutionary Communards in the Paris Communes of 1871, a violent affair that led to the deaths of over 25,000 Parisians. Since the Third International, the Comintern begun at Moscow in 1919, *it has been the official salute of all Communist Parties throughout the world.*” (Emphasis added.)

In recent years, the clenched-fist salute has been seen at demonstrations against police brutality, racism, and oil and gas fracking, and in favor of minimum-wage legislation, education funding, and Occupy Wall Street.

When Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker led the battle to effectively end collective bargaining for public-sector employees, protest signs against those efforts used the clenched-fist, as well. The symbol has also been employed in the Black Lives Matter movement.

After the communists defeated the Nationalist forces in China in 1949, the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) saluted their leader, Mao Tse-tung, using the clenched-fist. When Huey Newton and Bobby Seale founded the Black Panther Party in the 1960s, they adopted the clenched-fist, as well. Newton was an avid reader of the writings of Malcolm X, Che Guevara, Vladimir Lenin, Karl Marx, and Mao Tse-tung.

The Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), also founded in the 1960s, used the clenched-fist salute, which is not surprising, since the national secretary of SDS was Mike Klonsky, the son of former Communist Party USA leader Robert Klonsky. Former SDS members Bernardine Dohrn and her husband, Bill Ayers, went on to found the Weather Underground, which was responsible for bombings in Chicago and New York City in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

When Barack Obama launched his political career in Chicago, he began with an organizational meeting



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in the home of Dohrn and Ayers. When questioned about the connection, Obama passed off Ayers as “just a guy in the neighborhood.” But he was hardly a “Mister Rogers” personality.

Not surprisingly, President Obama has expressed support for the protests of Colin Kaepernick: “I think he [Kaepernick] cares about some real, legitimate issues that have to be talked about. If nothing else, he’s generated more conversation about issues that have to be talked about.”

But would Obama and others on the Left support the athletes’ disrespect for the country if athletes didn’t agree with them? It’s doubtful.

*Related article:*

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