

Introduction

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Ruth Wilson Gilmore (2022) reminds us that resistance has always been collective, resourceful, innovative, and based on radical solidarity. As Angela Valenzuela has aptly stated, “The struggle has always been built on struggle.” In her book, *Freedom Is a Constant Struggle*, Angela Davis presents her interviews with Frank Barat in addition to her own speeches. Davis gives us several reminders as we think about our role in the struggle and how we need to build keeping in mind past struggles and their demands.

Davis (2016) helps us center how the struggle builds on the struggle.

1. Believe in people’s collective power and be optimistic. Frank Barat’s introduction of Angela Davis’ interview and speeches begins by reminding us of the importance of believing in people’s collective power and being optimistic. If we do not believe we can, we can’t. Davis writes that sometimes things might seem too powerful to fight against, but we need to look at the world’s history of solidarity movements, struggle, and resistance and we will notice that “people’s will, power, sacrifices, and actions” (xii) cannot be easily destroyed.

We need to dream and believe it is possible—freedom dreaming of the possibilities of what a world can be based on freedom, love, and justice. Noam Chomsky (2022) calls this “optimism of the will” in the hopes of people willing to fight for a better future for their communities.

2. Be critical and reflective of our actions. We must be critical when organizing our actions. Inclusion into capitalist systems and hierarchies does not get us closer to freedom and it is inherently oppressive to people’s human rights to exist freely in this world. Aaron Dixon’s (2012) autobiography *My People are Rising: Memoir of a Black Panther Party Captain*, reminds us of the importance of being reflective of our actions and sometimes making tough decisions.

3. Understanding some of the freedoms we are fighting for today were also present in the Black Panther Party. The freedoms that people are fighting for today are the same things the Black Panther Party was fighting for in 1966 with their 10-point program: 1) We want freedom; 2) full employment; 3) end to capitalist robbery; 4) decent housing; 5) decent education that teaches our true history; 6) free healthcare; 7) immediate end to police brutality; 8) end to all wars of aggression; 9) Free all Black and oppressed people held in federal-military prisons; and 10) we want land, bread, housing, education, clothing, justice, peace and people’s community control of modern technology. (pp. 72–73)

As we can see Ethnic Studies is that vessel of teaching youth and college students their true history and their role in that history today. In addition, Ethnic Studies pedagogues emphasize social justice and collective solidarity. Ethnic Studies helps our movement be critical of itself. We cannot do this work without all of us as Ethnic Studies activist pedagogues committed to collective struggle and freedom movements.

4. To fight for change means we need to be committed to organizing and strategizing. Clarifying Ella Baker, who said, “strong people don’t need strong leaders” (p. 86) but this does not mean movements magically emerge; people need to be willing to put in the time and work to organize, strategize, act, and reflect on the actions taken with others in solidarity. They must be committed to the movement and organizing. Change takes time and people need to put in the time work to make it happen. Aaron Dixon’s (2012) memoir reminds us of what work in an organization fighting for freedom means: collaborating with different organizations, coalition building, reading books, being flexible with one’s tactics, organizing campaigns to electoral politics. For instance, the campaign trying to get Shirley Chisholm elected for president helped to get Jerry Brown elected for governor of California and then elect the first Black mayor of Oakland, Lionel Joseph Wilson.

5. Our struggle is interconnected globally. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said, “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere” (p. 62). Ethnic Studies as a pedagogy emphasizes the importance of solidarity with all oppressed peoples in the U.S. and the world because they understand that injustice in one space is replicated in other spaces. Naomi Klein’s *Shock Doctrine* is an excellent example of this interrelationships between our struggles and resistance in action. Davis in *Freedom is a Constant Struggle* also makes the connection on how Ferguson had global ramification: the militarization that took place in Ferguson was similar to the one used in Gaza. Palestine solidarity with Ferguson helped to activate our political and strategic kinship. Transnational Solidarity is necessary to effectively resist racism, genocide, and settler colonialism (p. 133).

6. Solidarity with Palestine. The importance of standing in solidarity with Palestine. We cannot stand idly by without demanding a stop to the genocide that we are all witnessing.

As Ana Tijoux and the Palestinian singer Shadia Mansour recount in their song, “Somos Sur,” in 2014 Palestine called for an end to the war on Gaza and West Bank which had begun in 2000. Khalidi (2020) says this was the sixth war on Palestine. The song names many of the countries of the world standing in solidarity with Palestine and wanting to be a witness of their freedom—“yo te quiero libre Palestina” [I want you free Palestine]. The song also reminds us that we are creating a culture of resistance and courageously creating a rebellion based on happiness where we are collectively dreaming of a world based on justice, freedom, and human rights.

The articles in this issue emphasize one or more of the critical lenses and lessons Angela Davis offers. All the contributors in this issue explored how Ethnic Studies pedagogies offer critiques and pedagogical solutions about how power functions within educational institutions, and how these struggles continue to be interlinked with past, present, future, and global community-based movements for social justice. With the resurgence of traditional ecological knowledge and the fugitivity of Ethnic Studies across the country, Ethnic Studies as a movement continues to critique, engage, disrupt, and/or borrow from the radical science tradition to enact cultures of rebellion in curriculum, in the classroom, at our schools, and in our communities as well.

We must know what came before us, so we understand how to not only build on the struggle but nurture academic Ethnic Studies programs, and pedagogical methods in the classroom. Remembrance of place and the people who resisted oppressive systems are central for us to understand the legacy of colonialism, private property and institutions, and how White co-conspirators show up in liberatory spaces to fight and resist. Ethnic Studies pedagogues also

critically analyze genocide within their programs and classrooms in order to take action and be in solidarity against genocide globally, specifically the one taking place today against Palestine. Altogether, the articles in this issue remind us of our rebellious historical memory that lives within us ready to act for a just movement and world. All of our actions for social justice are based on a deep love for people. This issue is gifted to its readers with love in order to further the development of our critical political consciousness. Let us resist and struggle collectively for freedom, justice, peace, and love by building collectively in local, statewide, and global movements against all forms of oppressions and oppressive forces.

References

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