

THE PROFOUND SOLIDARITY OF PAULO FREIRE

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ABSTRACT In this paper, Antonia Darder refers to her first face to face meeting with Paulo Freire while attending a conference as a graduate student. She describes Freire as someone who conveyed a deep sense of love, hope and dignity to the people he encountered on his path, in ways that opened them up and made them feel loved and appreciated. In this discussion, Freire's love is understood not as romantic or sentimental, but rather as politicizing and humanising; a love imbued with a profound sense of solidarity with others and a commitment to revolutionary struggle. She notes Freire's continuing relevance in a world characterized by the great economic disparities of capitalism, including dire inequalities of health care and life opportunities in these pandemic times. This points to a colonizing, neoliberal world that throws into sharp relief its deadly and discriminatory nature where everything is left to the vagaries of the marketplace and any semblance of public safeguards are systematically undone. Darder notes that even in the midst of such struggle, Freire's pedagogy conveys an abiding sense of hope and faith for grassroots democratic struggles. As examples, recent movements in Chile and India are cited as collective efforts that inspire hope and possibility. In so doing, she foregrounds Freire's faith in progressive social movements as significant to the large political project for economic democracy and educational justice.

RESUMEN En este artículo, Antonia Darder se refiere a su primer encuentro cara a cara con Paulo Freire cuando ella asistió una conferencia como estudiante de posgrado. Ella describe a Freire como alguien que transmitió un profundo sentido de amor, esperanza y dignidad a las personas que encontró en su camino, de una manera que las abrió y las hizo sentir amadas y apreciadas. En esta discusión, el amor de Freire no se entiende como romántico o sentimental, sino más bien como político y humanizador; un amor imbuido de un profundo sentido de solidaridad con otros y comprometido a la lucha revolucionaria. Ella señala la relevancia continua de Freire en un mundo caracterizado por las grandes disparidades económicas del capitalismo, incluso las graves desigualdades en la atención médica y las oportunidades de vida en estos tiempos de la pandemia. Esto apunta a un mundo colonizador y neoliberal que pone de obvio su naturaleza mortal y discriminatoria, donde todo se deja a los caprichos del mercado y cualquier apariencia de salvaguardias públicas se deshace de forma sistemática. Darder señala que incluso en medio de tal lucha, la pedagogía de Freire transmite un sentido perdurable de esperanza y fe para las luchas democráticas de base. Como ejemplos, los movimientos recientes en Chile e India se citan como esfuerzos colectivos que inspiran esperanza y posibilidad. Al hacerlo, pone en primer plano la fe de Freire en los movimientos sociales progresistas como algo significativo para el gran proyecto político de democracia económica y justicia educativa.

KEYWORDS solidarity, love, hope, social struggle, COVID-19

Words are not good enough to evoke all that I have learned from Paulo. Our meeting had that quality of sweetness that lingers, that lasts for a lifetime; even if you never speak to the person again, see their face, you can always return in your heart to that moment when you were together to be renewed—that is a profound solidarity.

—bell hooks (1994:58)

As any feminist of my time, I begin this brief tributary reflection about Paulo Freire by affirming that the personal is always political. In this regard, Paulo, a Brazilian man born early in the 20th century, was truly ahead of his time. He understood in deep and substantive ways that social struggle and transformative knowledge can only be built through our personal involvement in collective political struggle with others. This always began for Paulo with an openness to the world around him and through sustained dialogues about the experiences of his everyday life and lived histories. Hence, Paulo was a man who closely observed and was attentive to nature and fellow human beings around him, relishing the very act of being alive. This central feature of his pedagogical sensibility is essential to comprehending why both his work and his presence have had such an enduring sense of love and solidarity to those of us who knew him. It is also fundamental to understanding why Paulo, a consummate revolutionary intellectual, also became so internationally loved and cherished personally, pedagogically, and politically.

Meeting My Father in Struggle

Para Antonia, porque você também é como minha filha!

—Paulo Freire¹

I often ponder on the providence of meeting this extraordinary man of Recife. In life, if we are lucky, we may experience at least one exquisite moment; a moment which often passes before we know it, just like a shooting star in

¹ Inscription by Paulo Freire in my first copy of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.

the dark night sky. In 1987, I had the good fortune to experience one of those rare moments. I was attending a conference in Irvine, California, which featured the work of Paulo Freire. I was a graduate student of education and single mother of three adolescent children, living by very modest means, teaching at a small Quaker college, and completing my doctorate. Arriving late to the opening of the conference, I looked for a place to sit. The only seat available was by a lively woman, who welcomed me as I scooted past her and sat down. I did not realize it then that this moment would absolutely change my life and transform the direction of my scholarship.

The woman's name was Cristina and she and I quickly sparked a conversation and exchanged comments about the speakers, as if we had been lifelong friends. At the lunch break, she asked me to join her family for lunch. I followed her out the building toward a small group of people. Among them was Paulo Freire, who just happened to be Cristina's father. I was surprised and awed to find myself in the company of Paulo Freire! This was author of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, the book that had most sparked a fire for justice buried in my soul. Reading Paulo's book brought me into communion with a deep political force, as I had never experienced before—for the first time, I literally felt the inner power of my conscious awakening within me and the inception of a more grounded and loving understanding of the world. In essence, those days at the conference, with Paulo and others² who also sought to transform the unjust conditions of education and the world, unexpectedly awakened within me a new sense of my existence as a

² The conference at California State University Irvine was organized by Tom Wilson, a beloved comrade. In attendance were Paulo's daughters Christina and Madalena, as well as critical scholars Henry Giroux, Peter McLaren, Donaldo Macedo, Roger Simon, and others.

political subject of history and surprisingly opened new possibilities for my future contribution as an activist, teacher, and public intellectual.

From then on, any time I could spend with Paulo, I made the effort to be there. True to the inscription he penned in my book—*Para Antonia, porque você também é como minha filha*—I felt embraced by Paulo like one of his daughters. He would say that Cristina and I were very similar, in that we were quick witted and laughed easily. Paulo was a warm, calm, and compassionate man. He had the ability to make the world slow down, so that we could talk, enjoy a meal, a drive, or a walk together. Paulo was a wonderful storyteller and my great fondness for him only equaled my profound respect for the man. Paulo would speak kindly to the waiter in a restaurant, making eye contact, smiling, and speaking in a familiar way. He did not fear the company of people and in his company, people's reticence to speak seem to disappear, making one feel articulate, intelligent and respected. We all felt this way, because this is how Paulo treated the people who crossed his path.

Hence, it is not surprising that meeting Paulo remains etched in my memory as one of the most beautiful experiences in my life and one of the most affirming moments in my intellectual formation as a young woman. I say this because I was unaccustomed to feeling understood or having the strength of my ideas acknowledged within male dominated academic contexts—contexts that were often quite hostile to working class, women of color who spoke too loudly or who expressed themselves too passionately or who too easily broke into tears in the midst of a public lecture. More often, I found myself easily maligned as being too sensitive or too subjective in my way of speaking or too

fervent in my manner of engaging within these intellectual forums.

In contrast, Paulo argued that we cannot conceive of objectivity without subjectivity, in that these are inextricable to our humanity. His comfort with human vulnerabilities, along with his subjective sensibilities, wisdom, and tremendous generosity of spirit allowed him to see in people born of oppression a real capacity for struggle, which he believed needed to be cultivated and nurtured in the process of our becoming what Antonio Gramsci (1971) called organic intellectuals. It was as if the hardship, anguish, and grief Paulo endured in his early life or while in prison or in exile deepen within him a humanizing capacity to recognize and appreciate the pain of others. Paulo understood, in the flesh, that it was precisely through the power of our pain and fury that the struggle for liberation could be built.

Commitment to Loving Tolerance

[T]he more radical the person is, the more fully he or she enters into reality so that, knowing it better, he or she can transform it. This individual is not afraid to confront, to listen, to see the world unveiled. This person is not afraid to meet the people or to enter into a dialogue with them. This person does not consider himself or herself the proprietor of history or of all people, or the liberator of the oppressed; but he or she does commit himself or herself, within history, to fight at their side.

—Paulo Freire (1970:23, 24)

One of the astonishing things about Paulo was the way he genuinely lived his pedagogy and his politics, with a commitment to loving tolerance. In this sense, his wisdom and theories were as much grounded in readings, as they

were in his own experiences with others and the world. He was not afraid to enter, to listen, or confront the world, open and unveiled. Yet, to do this, requires both great humility and a strong commitment to respect one's own humanity and the humanity of others, as well as the sentient qualities of the natural world. This organic sensibility permitted Paulo to enter into the world of others with ease and tenderness, to say what he felt and thought in a conversation and yet, simultaneously remain dialectically grounded in himself, with political clarity and coherence. No matter what might be taking place, he could see beyond the obvious material circumstances of the moment, in order to access the connections between the historical and contemporary conditions that informed the present. This is a quality that was evident when listening to him speak or reading about his engagement with the world in his books; particularly in what he called *talking books*, where he sought to express and illustrate the power of dialogue. His book with Ira Shor (Shor and Freire, 1988), Antonio Faundez, (Freire and Faundez, 1989); and Myles Horton (Horton and Freire, 1990) are wonderful examples. Paulo's loving tolerance was also enhanced by his commitment to express his mind and heart, without guile, open, honest and direct. His pedagogical principles and ideas were not abstract concepts to be twirled around for public amusement or to impress others. He lived his pedagogy of love in simple and extraordinary ways.

On one occasion, I was at a critical pedagogy symposium in Boston, feeling very troubled with some of the exchanges taking place between a well-established comrade and a female scholar who had critiqued his work. The disturbing nature of the exchange got the best of me. Impetuously and with a sense of frustration, I countered what had been said in a manner that caused some anger and closed down the dialogue. Later at dinner with Paulo

and Nita, Paulo spoke to me very candidly. He said he saw in me a deep sense of commitment to struggle for justice, but that I needed to accept that, in doing this very difficult work, one must enact a certain level of tolerance founded on love, particularly with people who are comrades and allies in the struggle. He could see my surprise and difficulty with accepting his position, in that I refused to believe that tolerance of any form of injustice was the answer. Then, he looked directly into my eyes and said, “Antonia, you will be a great intellectual someday, but you must be more tolerant in your responses.” At that point, the conversation shifted and his words were left forevermore hanging in the air, never to be revisited. For a young working-class, colonized, Boricua woman who had been fighting all my life to feel valuable, I could barely understand his meaning. It is only now, after almost four decades of teaching and engaging difficult questions of political struggle and emancipatory formation, that I can more fully recognize and appreciate the gift of love that Paulo gave me that day.

As I write this, I am reminded of Paulo’s love and courageous commitment to the personal and political formation of others, not only in the classroom but in the larger arena of the everyday. Paulo’s concern for loving tolerance was indispensable to his enactment of this revolutionary love and commitment to others. In fact, he often spoke of tolerance as an *indispensable quality* (Freire, 1998b) of teachers and activists, for without it, authentic experiences of democratic life are impossible in schools or on the streets. For Paulo, tolerance did “not mean acquiescing to the intolerable; it does not mean covering up disrespect; it does not mean coddling the aggressor or disguising aggression” (ibid:43). Nor is tolerance about *playing the game*, or extending a civilized gesture of hypocrisy, or a coexistence with the unbearable. Instead,

Paulo's critical expression of tolerance was grounded on basic human principles of respect, discipline, dignity, coherence, and ethical responsibility to ourselves, one another, and the world. More importantly, his call for a tolerance encompassed a critical understanding of love as a motivational force for political struggle—a force that could serve as a powerful impetus for resistance of oppression, in the face of our dehumanization.

Love as a political force

By fighting for the restoration of our humanity we will be attempting the restoration of true generosity. And this fight, because of the purpose given it, will actually constitute an act of love.

—Paulo Freire (1970: 29)

The question of *love as a political force* is essential to understanding Paulo's revolutionary vision of consciousness and transformation. The inseparability with which he theorized the political significance of love in the evolution of consciousness and political empowerment is key to grasping accurately the depth of his meaning. Paulo felt a kinship with Eric Fromm's thesis in this regard (Fromm, 1956). As such, love was not a mere sentimental exchange between people, but rather he understood love to constitute an intentional spiritual act of consciousness, which emerges and matures through living, learning, and laboring together. Across Paulo's books is found both a beautiful and powerful view of love, often glossed over by the very people who most need to comprehend deeply its humanizing intent. Like Che Guevara before him, Paulo maintained that a revolutionary politics of love had to be the underlying force of any political project, which requires us to counter oppression daily while,

simultaneously, we seek new possibilities for social and material transformation.

As was his way, Paulo engaged a politics of love by highlighting the pedagogical power of his personal and communal exchanges, which he maintained was important to building an emancipatory relationship between teachers and students. In particular, he emphasized the power of an embodied pedagogy and politics, through which we could cultivate greater intimacy between self, others, and the world. Paulo believed that “living with [democracy] and deepening it so it has real meaning in people’s everyday lives” (1987: 12) should be a central political concern in our struggle for liberation. Here, democracy and the solidarity necessary for its evolution are made possible through a pedagogy fortified by a universal regard for the dignity and equality of all people, no matter their differences or circumstances. Paulo’s view of love as a dialectical force, which simultaneously engages unity and difference, beckons us toward a radical knowing that encompasses both emotion and reason (or mind and heart), along a kinship for all life. For Paulo, this revolutionary sensibility constitutes a socialist imperative, if we are to effectively transform conditions of inequality and disaffiliation that are the hallmark of advanced capitalism.

There is no question that Paulo’s life signaled a love and tenderness generated by a political grace born of collective consciousness and a shared curiosity, creativity, and imagination, which gave a grounded meaning to his views on resistance and revolutionary praxis. Further, Paulo believed that to affirm all human beings as free, and yet to do nothing to enact that freedom is a farce. As such, he argued that it is only through our commitment to love and labor together for a more just world that relationships of solidarity can be nurtured and political dreams of freedom be proclaimed and

built. Paulo's pedagogy of love also reminds us that we, as human beings, must unite ourselves with the world and with others in the process of social and political co-creation—so through our shared participation in the labor of struggle, our communal process can nurture and reinforce a deeper sense of our self-determination and our existence as historical beings. Hence, Freire points to a love that is born and emerges directly out of our embodied participation and unwavering political commitment to the transformation of history, so that we might claim our place as free and empowered subjects, rather than remain objects of domination.

In his writings and speeches, Paulo often touched on the essence of love as inseparable to our labor as educators and democratic citizens of the world. He wholeheartedly coincided with Fromm's view, "One loves that for which one labors, and one labors for that which one loves" (Fromm, 1056: 26). This also resonates, undeniably, with the extent to which Paulo, himself, intimately and passionately loved the world—a significant feature of both his pedagogy and personal way of being. With this in mind, we can better appreciate Paulo's preoccupation with the dehumanizing forces so prevalent in schools and society. He was adamant about the political necessity to unveil authoritarian ideologies, pedagogies, and practices that curtail the pleasure of life and deaden our capacity to love, generating in us all a sense of alienation and estrangement from self and the world. In contrast, he advocated for educational and political projects that could cultivate and nurture our political imagination, epistemological curiosity, and the joy of learning necessary to forging our struggle against racializing and neoliberal destruction.

Paulo's Critique of Colonizing Neoliberalism

We need to say no to the neoliberal fatalism that we are witnessing at the end of this century, informed by the ethics of the market, an ethics in which a minority makes most profits against the lives of majority. In other words, those who cannot compete, die. This is a perverse ethics that, in fact, lacks ethics. I insist on saying that I continue to be a human... I would then remain the last educator in the world to say no: I do accept...history as determinism. I embrace history as possibility [where] we can demystify the evil in this perverse fatalism that characterizes the neoliberal discourse in the end of this century

— (Macedo, 2000: 26)

Despite his critics on the left, Paulo's work was uncompromisingly grounded in a humanizing socialist vision. Without question, when Freire spoke of the "ruling class" or the "oppressors," he was referring to historical class distinctions and class conflict within the structure of capitalist society. For Paulo, capitalism was the root of domination. His theoretical analysis was uncompromisingly grounded in questions of class formation, particularly with respect to how national political economies relegate the great majority of workers to an exploited, colonized, and racialized class. Nevertheless, for Paulo, the struggle against economic domination could not be waged effectively without a humanizing praxis; one that could both engage the complex phenomenon of class struggle and effectively foster

conditions for critical social agency across our differences and among the masses.

Hence, it is no surprise that Paulo was an acerbic critique of neoliberalism and, as such, he would have been outspoken about the conditions we are facing in the world today. And, just as he predicted, the contemptuous policies of neoliberalism, over the last four decades, have led to unrelenting economic speculation and despicable extraction of natural and human resources, leaving the majority of the world's population scrambling for crumbs. In the midst of global empire building, human suffering is met by the contempt of the ruling class. Their market logic and neoliberal ethos enlist bootstrap notions of individual responsibility, cut-throat competition, and doctrine of "small government" to promote the glories of privatization and defend their global profiteering schemes.

Paulo (Freire, 1993) spoke out against the cart blanche impunity of conservative neoliberal promoters who sought to push back public health resources, educational spending, and labor protections, while moving fiercely to privatize health care and education and block the influence of trade union organizations. It's ironic that this willful neglect of the public welfare resulted in the woeful failure of conservative governments to respond swiftly to a pandemic that has resulted in over 100 million cases worldwide, with 2.3 million deaths³ in one year, more deaths than all the wars in the 20th century combined or any other pandemic in history.⁴ The global spread of Covid-19 has been largely due the disdain of neoliberal pursuits, which have privileged the needs of capital over the needs of people. The result is that extreme inequality is rampant. Chronic conditions of

³ See: <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/geographical-distribution-2019-ncov-cases>

⁴ See: <https://time.com/5815367/coronavirus-deaths-comparison/>

economic injustice have not only set off a global health crisis, along with its similar devastating impact on education and worker conditions, but also highlighted growing cleavages in political, economic, and racialized inequalities across societies. Job losses, evictions, food insecurity are all at an all-time high. Globally, the racialized wealth gap today is higher than it was in the 1960s⁵ and global inequality between countries mirroring the 1800s.⁶

Paulo (2002) adamantly critiqued the manner in which advocates of neoliberal excellence around the world coexist brashly indifferent to more than a billion inhabitants of the developing world living in poverty. Fast forward to 2021, conditions of those impoverished have only worsen. According to Oxfam⁷ ⁸ 8 men own more wealth than 3.6 billion people. The richest 1% have more than twice as much wealth as 6.9 billion people, while almost half of humanity survives on \$5.50 a day. It is not surprising then that Black, Latino, Asian, Indigenous, and other racialized populations globally are facing overwhelming negative consequences associated with COVID-19 and its variants in our communities, where statistics show staggering disparities in infection rates and death rates of up to four times greater, compared to our white counterparts (Booth and Barr, 2020). Moreover, for people with learning disabilities, who have always been considered problematic to capitalist accumulation, rates of death have been reported to be six

⁵ See; <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/nation/todays-racial-wealth-gap-is-wider-than-in-the-1960s>

⁶ See: <https://ourworldindata.org/global-economic-inequality>

⁷ See; <https://www.oxfam.org/en/5-shocking-facts-about-extreme-global-inequality-and-how-even-it>

⁸ See: <https://www.oxfam.org/en/press-releases/just-8-men-own-same-wealth-half-world>

times greater.⁹ There is no way to understand this from a Freirean perspective than as a crisis of humanity.

Moreover, Paulo understood unequivocally that there is no fix for global capitalism. The “post-welfare state model of social order that celebrates unhindered markets as the most effective means of achieving economic growth and public welfare” (Bell and Green, 2016) is unequivocally bankrupt to any vision of equality or justice before, during, or after the pandemic. The shameful mishandling of the coronavirus crisis has made this blatantly visible, particularly in the debacle surrounding lack of PPE for health care workers and insufficient ventilators. Yet, the same market logic is now driving the development and distribution of vaccinations. Rather than coming together in global solidarity as an international community concerned for the well-being of human life worldwide, competitive market reasoning persists among COVID-19 vaccine players who will split \$100 billion in sales and \$40 billion in profits.¹⁰ And, as would be expected, wealthier countries readily secured the majority of vaccines available, while global populations most in need had considerably less access.¹¹ Beyond access, the cost of the vaccine to different countries is of concern. South Africa, the worst hit nation on the continent is being charged 2.5 times more than European countries for doses of the Oxford-AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine (Sullivan, 2021). Thus, even with a potential treatment in sight, the world is bound to emerge from this dreadful chapter of history more unequal than ever (Goodman, 2020) unless, as Paulo proposed, people worldwide rise up collectively to oppose

⁹ See: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-54924121>

¹⁰ See: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-55170756>

¹¹ See: <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/analysis/analysis-the-consequences-of-global-Covid-vaccine-inequality/2131116>

global policies and ways of life that ultimately rob us of our humanity.

Indispensability of Hope

Without a minimum of hope, we cannot so much as start the struggle.

—Paulo Freire (Freire, 1994: 9)

For Paulo, hope was essential to political struggle. Despite his strident critiques of oppression, he refused to surrender to despair or to falter in his faith in people to transform the course of history. He recognized the power that a pedagogy of hope brings to the struggle for radical social change, whether struggles are in the classroom or in the streets. Moreover, hope is necessary if we are to radically counter, within schools or society, the forces of patriarchy, material oppression, and racism intensified under neoliberal rule. For Paulo, educational praxis does not occur in a vacuum. It is a political endeavor for liberation, in which we critically unveil the conditions that shape the lives of teachers, students, and their communities, as we seek avenues for social and material reinvention.

Paulo also recognized that the power of hope is even more essential to political struggles against global economic tyranny, where stark inequalities are politically explosive and, to the extent that the system is unable and unwilling to reverse them, it turns to ever more violent forms of containment. Increasing state control over people's lives, therefore, is bound to reflect the global capitalist reality of our time, particularly as governments more fiercely seek to impede mass movements and protests of people on the streets. With this in mind, Paulo's work encompassed a radical call to action, if we are even to dream of a more just

and equal world. He passionately argued for an education that is life affirming, where students everywhere can experience the democratic conditions to develop their critical abilities as democratic citizens of the world, who are prepared to freely engage their lived histories with self-determination, to embrace an abiding promise to global justice, and to undertake a commitment to labor together as freedom fighters and loving architects of a more just world.

Paulo often spoke of his memories of African revolutionary leader, Amilcar Cabral (Mendy, 2019), who firmly believed that all political struggles for liberation commence with the courage to dream of a world that does not yet exist. It is this ardent spirit of hope and faith in the possibility of human beings to transform the world that was overwhelmingly reflected in Paulo's pedagogy of love and in the images, stories, protests, and chants of millions of people who put their lives on the line for a collective dream. This year alone, people worldwide took to the streets in support of Black Lives Matter protests against the brutal police killing of George Floyd, an unarmed Black man in Minneapolis. The force of these protests not only intensified national debates in the U.S., but also sparked much needed international debates about anti-black racism. The far-reaching influence of the Black Lives Matter Movement underscored growing multinational resistance to state sanctioned racism, particularly against Black men and women around the world.

After years of unprecedented levels of austerity measures, state repression, and human rights violations in Chile, the people waged a mass struggle of resistance against the current government. Beginning in 2019, hundreds of thousands of people effectively launched a social uprising across sectors of the population in opposition of the Piñera government. At street protests, chanting "*El pueblo unido*

jamás será vencido!”,¹² the masses stood firm in their demand for not only changes to the national constitution, but the end of state repression. They called for explicitly incorporating into the constitution social rights related to public education, health care, housing, employment and prison reform, in an effort to end the brutal legacy of Pinochet’s dictatorship. In October 2020, after a grueling year of national political struggle, 78 percent of the people of Chile democratically voted to approve the rewriting of the Chilean constitution.

In response to neoliberal-inspired laws, farmers in India have waged one of the largest political strikes in the history of the world. Despite police repression, 250 million people marched to Delhi on November 26, 2020¹³ to join a general strike in defiance of the Modi government’s refusal to rescind initiatives aimed at a program of agrarian “modernization” that would result in the takeover of the nation’s agricultural production by large transnational corporations, destroying the independent livelihood of small farmers, who comprise 56% of India’s workforce. The farmer’s astonishing level of solidarity and organizational commitment has been accomplished through their deep faith in the collective power of workers united, despite lack of economic resources.

Paulo would have championed these inspiring examples of contemporary political struggles, in that they well-illustrate how the collective power of people’s hope can move mountains. Yet, through Paulo’s insights, we can also surmise that longstanding neoliberal assaults by racialized global capital against democratic efforts to build a humanizing and just social order are already poised to generate a fierce global class war between the oppressor and

¹² Translation: The people united, will not be defeated!

¹³ See: <https://peoplesdispatch.org/2020/11/27/250-million-people-participate-in-nationwide-strike-in-india/>

the oppressed, between the haves-and-have nots. Nevertheless, as the inhumane ideology of capital continues to fail people around the world, it is only a matter of time before the pendulum swings and political struggles—of trade unionists, climate change activists, women in struggle, peace groups, and other revolutionary organizations around the world—will coalesce, with boots on ground, to fight against the inhumanity manufactured by global capitalism. Hence, it is not surprising that Paulo argued to his death that our human survival and the survival of the planet depends on nothing less than worldwide political movements to end the barbarism of capital rule. This demands not only the reinvention of a new meaning of education, but reimagining a life-affirming, just, and loving global existence—a world where life is exceedingly more precious than the profit margins of the wealthy.

Paulo Freire: Present!

What inheritance can I leave? Exactly one. I think that it could be said when I am no longer in this world: Paulo Freire was a man who lived. He could not understand life and human existence without love and without the search for knowledge.

—Paulo Freire (Freire, 1993:136)

I will conclude here by reaffirming Paulo's very special place in my heart, as *my father in the struggle*. Even today, I remain in awe by the unique way Paulo's eyes sparkled when he spoke and his deeply affectionate manner. He made people feel strong, intelligent, appreciated, and beautiful. This quality, so seldom found in academics or intellectuals, became for me a shining example and a moral compass for my own life and revolutionary praxis out in the world. Paulo

made openness of heart seem simple and easy, but with time, I came to realize the massive strength and self-determination required for a person, any person, to enact loving humanity as a way of life and still remain politically coherent and relevant to the struggle for our liberation. Over the years, Paulo's pedagogy of love has remained with me, even during the darkest moments of my life, as I too have sought to be a just and loving mother, daughter, partner, friend, and comrade, as well as activist, teacher, cultural worker, and intellectual.

Paulo's inheritance was indeed that he lived and loved, in the most profound sense. My words, therefore, simply cannot express the love and profound solidarity I experienced in communion with him. My memories of Paulo echo deeply bell hooks' memory of Paulo. His memory lingers within me, surrounded by such a sweet tenderness—a tenderness that continues to nourish my soul even today. Most astonishing about all of this is that I never spent a great deal of time with Paulo, given he lived in Brazil and I in the U.S. Yet, I still can easily access that overwhelming feeling of solidarity I experienced with Paulo, during those few sweet moments of life I spent in his company. So, despite the fact he has been dead for more than 20 years, the beauty of his humanity, the passion of his commitment, and the coherence of his politics remains ever with me and so many others, inspiring us to live and labor with hope and faith in our collective power to realize a just and enduring socialist dream, where the well-being of human beings is indeed paramount.

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