

A Legacy of Hope for the World

Paulo Freire in Community and Schools, and in Our Hearts

The Paulo Freire Democratic Project, located in Southern California and affiliated with Chapman University, is founded on principles of humanization – a praxis that engages us in the on-going struggles of the Chicana, Latinx and other communities of color, Indigenous peoples, immigrants and migrants, LGBTQIA, women of color, the homeless, and in preparing teachers and community workers to bring Paulo Freire, his work, and legacy to the next generation so that they may continue the on-going struggle for liberation.

Paulo Freire's work has had and continues to have profound implications to our search for freedom. Its emphasis on developing a humanizing pedagogy recognizes that, as human beings, we are agents of history and thus entrusted to the liberation movements of this world. Freire professed that it is the historical task of the oppressed to liberate themselves and their oppressors. By entrusting his faith and the fate of the world in the historically dehumanized peoples of the world, he lifts the veil that obscures the relations of domination that have been historically constructed to serve the few who commandeer a supremacist and misogynist undertaking of the world by dispossession, genocide, epistemicide, and cultural invasion. Through his work we learn that the most oppressed peoples of the world, by virtue of their oppression, are the more likely revolutionary Subjects to develop the impetus, solidarity, hope, and faith in each other and in our shared humanity to struggle together and change the oppressive social conditions that are destroying us all and the Earth that sustains us.

Paulo Freire's legacy has been to teach us, through world-wide outreach into communities, schools, and our very hearts, that we can change the world by changing the ways in which we "read the word and the world" and by engaging in "epistemological encounters" *in dialogue with* the Oppressed. As meaningful as this is, his legacy moves us to action – a praxis that must be dialectical in changing immediate conditions that are oppressive to particular communities, while simultaneously working toward changing the broader conditions of capitalist exploitation, racism, sexism, heteronormativity, anti-Muslim, and all other forms of oppression that deform our humanity and limit our potential to breathe literally and metaphorically.

Today's global capitalism and increasingly fascist tendencies across the world demand that we stand up as Subjects and exercise our agency. Freire's work is critical toward this humanizing transformation, and thus is always targeted by a politics of extinction seeking to remake history as a mythical permanence that belies the fact that *history is possibility*. The fascists, slave masters, corporate land grabbers, and other conservative reactionaries who seek to recreate the "greatness" of the time of lynching and genocide cannot be allowed to win. We must fight to retain Paulo Freire's legacy around the world and, particularly, in his homeland of Brazil where he first recognized his own potential for humanization as he struggled alongside Brazilian peasants who reclaim their right to be human.

We, members of the Paulo Freire Democratic Project, have been touched by the words (and some by the very hand) of Paulo Freire. Through his work, we have learned to struggle collectively and with purpose to engage in a praxis for improving the immediate oppressive social conditions that many experience in our midst, especially in this horrifying Trump era. Simultaneously, we work towards negating and breaking down, the capitalist, racist, and multi-pronged oppressive structures that define our world. We owe our hope and faith to Paulo Freire and to his humanizing pedagogy that has allowed us to see the daily evidence that, despite the horrors of our world, there is a potential goodness in our humanity that is absolutely worth fighting to liberate and love, not hate, so that we can create a better world. This is Paulo Freire's greatest gift to us and we must ensure that it is available to our children and their children. We call for respect and honor to his legacy in his homeland, in ours, and in the world.

*Presented by Dr. Lilia Monzó and Dr. Anaida Colón-Muñiz
on behalf of the [Paulo Freire Democratic Project](#)*