11: SOCIAL MOVEMENTS- RESISTANCE AND SOLIDARITY



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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

11: Social Movements- Resistance and Solidarity

Learning Objectives

- Identify and evaluate social movements, labor movements, and various resistance struggles led by communities of color;
- Analyze the connections between social movements, including solidarity across ethnic groups and the influence of historical movements on contemporary activism;
- Describe principles of anti-racism and social justice, including equity, self-determination, liberation, and decolonization;
- Critically discuss the role of solidarity across liberation and resistance struggles as experienced by communities of color and how they are relevant to current issues;
- Demonstrate active engagement with anti-racism, practices and movements to build a diverse, just and equitable society beyond the classroom.

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11.1: Introduction

Ethnic Studies on Resistance and Solidarity

A major element in the discipline of Ethnic Studies is understanding but also participating in liberation struggles, particularly those resisting white supremacy, capitalism, colonialism, imperialism, and patriarchy, or any intersecting powers that have suppressed communities of color. In fact, the genesis of Ethnic Studies as an academic discipline came out of student struggle and solidarity across racial and ethnic groups, as reviewed in Chapter 2. In this chapter, the authors will first introduce frameworks of resistance, such as Indigenous sovereignty and the impact of digital and artistic activism. We will also review key influential US-based liberatory movements and organizations, such as the Black Panthers and American Indian Movement, including the role of solidarity in these organizations. In the section on labor movements, we focus on domestic workers' and agricultural workers' struggles to understand how capitalism, white supremacy, colonialism, and patriarchy function as interlocking systems of oppression. Then we examine the fight for justice for so-called "comfort women" as a transnational movement with a prominent base in the U.S. Finally, we wrap up with a section that highlights more contemporary movements with a focus on environmental justice, racial justice, and gender justice. This section also analyzes how movement work has transitioned in the 21st century and how our communities adapt to continue addressing important issues that affect our lives today.

What is incredibly inspiring about the history of struggle in the United States is that contrary to popular view, people of color have a legacy of being defiant and have fought for our freedom from the beginning. We believe it is of absolute necessity to understand our history of resistance and solidarity within an Ethnic Studies framing so that students are able to identify the ways people of color have often been at the center of these struggles. Overall, we hope that students will be able to understand our rich history of resistance and be inspired to apply our collective power to demand change and organize for a more equitable, anti-racist, and liberatory future for our communities.

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11.2: Frameworks for Action

Ethnic Studies in Action

In Ethnic Studies, there are multiple frameworks for action to address the complex process of dismantling structural hierarchies and working toward racial justice, decolonization, and equity. Activism has driven the field and community action is a recurring principle in Ethnic Studies classrooms and scholarship. These frameworks reflect the different standpoints that advocates and community organizers bring into the process of creating change and how activism takes place. The picture included in Figure 11.2.1, "I Get it From My Mama" by Melanie Cervantes highlights the importance of intergenerational knowledge in shaping social movement activism.

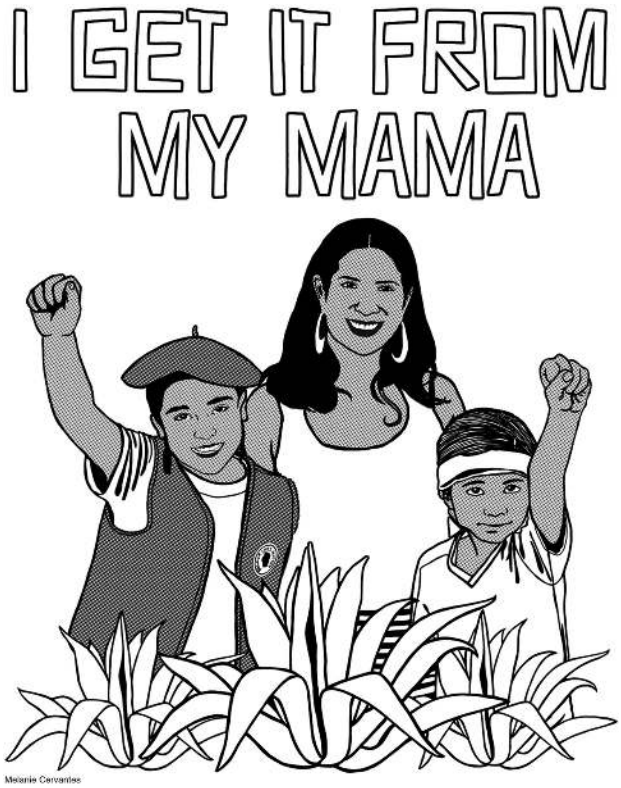


Figure 11.2.1: I Get it From My Mama. (CC BY-NC-ND 3.0; Melanie Cervantes via JustSeeds)

Indigenous Sovereignty

Indigenous sovereignty refers to the self-determination and legal standing of Native and Indigenous peoples. Sovereignty is distinct from other forms of justice because it refers to the historical relationship between peoples and governments, including the system of government within a particular society or territory. Sovereignty is an explicitly political project that concerns land rights, treaties between tribes and other governments, including the United States, and the political standing of Native Americans and Indigenous peoples. Sovereignty is also a matter of economic capacity and spiritual integrity. Native and Indigenous peoples work to ensure that there are resources to support and grow self-determination, as well as the continuation of cultural, religious, and spiritual traditions that sustain political processes and traditional knowledge.

The project of decolonization refers to the continued struggle to assert and restore tribal sovereignty in the face of settler-colonialism and systems of genocide. Decolonization is a far-reaching agenda that requires us to commit to changing how we think about ourselves and our history, in tandem with political and cultural advocacy that affirms sovereignty (Tuck and Wang 2012).

Queer and Trans of Color Critiques and Intersectionality

Intersectional and queer of color approaches to collective action have worked to address justice for historically minoritized and exploited groups by focusing on those who experience multiple forms of oppression. The term intersectionality was coined by Kimberle Crenshaw (1989) to describe the unique experiences of Black women, whose claims of illegal discrimination based on

race and sex were denied in the court system. Beyond the legal system, intersectionality has been used to highlight how mainstream narratives erase the unique experiences of women of color and other multiply marginalized groups. The notion of intersectionality resonated with other groups like Chicanas, Native and Indigenous feminists, and womanists, who have developed the framework for over 30 years. See also Chapter 8, section 8.2 "What is Intersectionality?"

The phrase intersectionality is a key term for emphasizing experiences of race, gender, sexuality, immigration status, and more. The idea behind intersectionality was developed within social movements and activist communities, including within the Black feminist lesbian tradition (Lorde 2007). The Combahee River Collective statement in 1977 articulated some of the key aspects of intersectionality, including a focus on power relations, systemic oppression, and the importance of continually taking action to make change. You can read this statement in full on the Black Past website. Similarly, Brazilian Black feminists like Lélia Gonzalez also articulated these ideas long before 1989.

These key principles are also utilized in queer and trans of color frameworks (Ferguson, 2003). For example, while many are familiar with the parades and community gatherings held for Pride celebrations today, these would not have been possible without the leadership of queer and trans people of color like Sylvia Rivera and Marsha P. Johnson. These figures were fearless advocates for the trans people of color and queer people of color experiencing vulnerability and risk based on discrimination and exclusion. Cisheteropatriarchy has been resisted within Ballroom culture, which provides a unique social setting for People of Color, including Black drag queens, to celebrate diversity and cultivate spaces to disidentify with dominant cultures (Muñoz, 1999).

Sidebar: Ballroom Culture

Ballroom culture originated in the late 20th century in big cities around the country, with Black and Latinx LGBTQ+ communities celebrating culture and community through dance, performance, and fashion. The styles of Ballroom dancing have had major impacts on popular culture, including being the source of Madonna's *Vogue* and popularizing dance moves like the "death drop" that appear in RuPaul's Drag Race and on memes circulated online. Despite this mainstream influence, many of the performers and organizers of Ball culture remain in precarious housing and economic situations, with little resources or security. The 1990 documentary, *Paris is Burning*, introduces Ball culture with a more serious consideration of participants' lived experiences. More recently, the TV series *Pose* (2018-2021) featured a popular, fictional retelling of the inner-workings of New York City Ball culture in the late 1980s.

Disability Justice Framework

Working in solidarity for social transformation includes many groups that have been marginalized and oppressed. In addition to ethnicity, race, gender, and sexuality, people with disabilities have built movements for self-representation, advocacy, and social change using a **disability justice framework**. The category of disability is broad and can include physical disabilities, emotional disabilities, and cognitive disabilities. Within any of these categories, a disability may be visible or invisible, and temporary or permanent.

The group Sins Invalid has put forward a framework to organize work for disability justice, which has ten components.

1. Disability justice must be intersectional and take into account the range of experiences and identities that overlap with disability experiences.
2. Disability justice means centering the leadership of the most impacted individuals and communities. This means prioritizing people with disabilities based on their own perspectives and not their family members, doctors, or other "experts."
3. Disability justice means taking up anti-capitalistic politics. Capitalism places value on people based on their productivity and ability to create monetary gains, and many people with disabilities cannot or do not translate their worth in terms of paid employment.
4. Disability justice is a commitment to cross-movement organizing, such as economic justice movements, racial justice, and gender justice.
5. Disability justice is recognizing wholeness. This means taking a broad perspective on our humanity, and not defining people solely based on one aspect of themselves, such as a single identity. Some people with disabilities intentionally chose "person-first" language like, "people with disabilities" as opposed to "disability-first" language like "disabled people" to emphasize humanity and wholeness. Notably, some people with disabilities choose to use terms like "disabled" so that it draws attention to the process of society disabling people through active choices and policies.
6. Disability justice is sustainability, meaning that at an individual, social, and environmental level, we must be able to sustain our movements and support ongoing activism.

7. Disability justice is a commitment to cross-disability solidarity. This means working together across different experiences of disability. People with physical disabilities, emotional disabilities, and cognitive disabilities may have little in common within their day to day experiences, however, through intentional movement building and solidarity, everyone's concerns can be brought together.
8. Disability justice is interdependence, which involves a recognition that we are all implicated with each other. It is sometimes characterized that people without disabilities are independent and people with disabilities are dependent. However, all people are both independent and dependent, and when we recognize our interdependence, we can be more effective in supporting each other.
9. Disability justice is collective access. This builds on the notion of interdependence to think beyond the individual level when considering disability issues. Collective access can mean considering how groups, families, and communities can access spaces and institutions. For example, are ramps, elevators, and sidewalk cutouts present throughout entire neighborhoods? And, which neighborhoods have these supports available in the built environment? Are caretakers and family members of people with disabilities included in accommodations and accessibility procedures?
10. Disability justice is collective liberation. This emphasizes that when working for inclusion, justice, and equity, marginalized groups can support each other to reach further and create change.

Together, these principles are essential for understanding disability justice, and they can also be applied and adapted to consider a range of social issues and movement organizing.

Sidebar: Disability Advocacy and Pop Culture

Disability justice advocates help to identify when words or phrases are exclusionary to people with disabilities. For example, in June 2022, fans discovered that Lizzo's upcoming song featured an offensive term and Twitter user @hannah_diviney posted this to express her disappointed. Many more began to join in the conversation and speak out against this particular term, along with other commonly used words that maintain derogatory meanings against people with disabilities. Lizzo revised her song and made a public apology, which was met with widespread admiration on social media. However, the reading of "spaz" as a derogatory term has been challenged by Black disabled people who recognize that it has a different history and context among Black people. However, as a non-disabled person, Lizzo acted as an ally to the people who were harmed by her word choice, a concept which is covered further in the next section.

Allies, Accomplices, and Co-Conspirators

When considering the use of these structural frameworks for sovereignty and justice, it is important to recognize that change is carried out by individual people working in community. Individuals may carry a range of marginalized or privileged statuses, including in combination. When thinking about working from the space of privileged identities, scholars and activists have described opportunities to be an accomplice, ally, or co-conspirator.

Allies are members of a dominant group who take an active role in understanding their own privilege and working to support members of a marginalized group. Some examples of actions that allies take include: educating themselves about historical and contemporary injustice, being vocal advocates for anti-racism, interrupting acts of bias, and supporting people who have experienced discrimination. There is no one right way to be an ally, but many opportunities to practice allyship when a person is operating from the standpoint of privilege. This practice builds relationships across differences and encourages listening, learning from mistakes, and continually taking action. Allies take action without centering their own identity or seeking validation of their allyhood. When individuals from a privileged standpoint recenter themselves and their own validation, they are no longer acting as an ally or working against a pattern of marginalization.

Allyship is just one component of acting in solidarity against systems of marginalization. For instance, **accomplices** go beyond supporting members of a marginalized group to take sustained and proactive action. This includes white people who actively work toward anti-racism, men committed to ending patriarchy, and straight/cisgender people who work against the oppression of LGBTQ+ people. Accomplices have already developed substantial knowledge and cultural humility to align their actions with the leadership and goals of marginalized group members. The concept of solidarity is visualized in the image contained at the end of this section. Another term that is often used to describe this kind of solidarity practice is co-conspirator. This refers to the necessity of working actively in continual collaboration with people of color and other marginalized groups and taking active risks to unsettle the status quo. In Figure 11.2.2, you can see an artistic rendition of solidarity, with a group of individuals protesting together,

including a sign that says, "We work in solidarity with everyday people impacted by U.S. wars and militarism. We prioritize solidarity with the demands of grassroots liberatory movements wherever possible, not state powers."

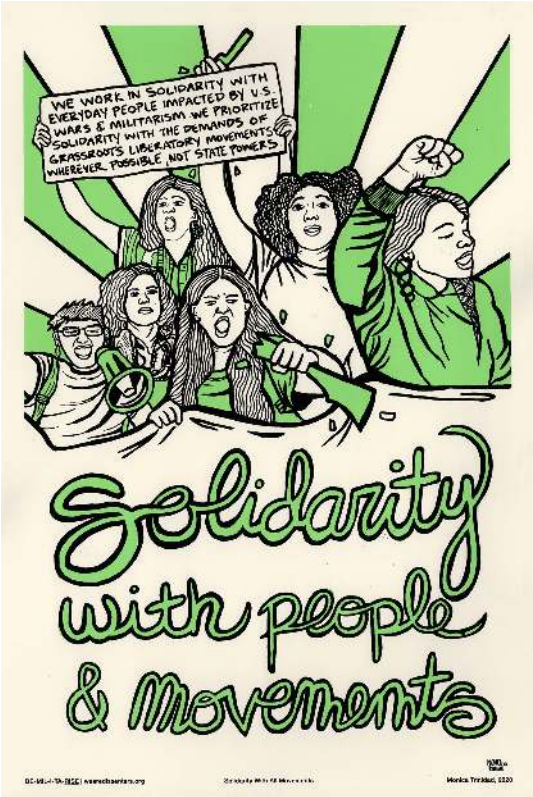


Figure 11.2.2: Solidarity with All Movements. (CC BY-NC-ND 3.0; Monica Trinidad via JustSeeds)

Digital Activism

The Internet has created many new opportunities for activism, social movement building, and connecting people together to help create change in our communities and society. In the early 21st century, Internet-enabled devices like computers, tablets, and smartphones became increasingly more accessible to the public. New forms of social media allowed for direct communication between individuals at a global scale without the same barriers and gatekeepers involved in broadcast media, like television, radio, and publishing. This became a major asset for activists in repressive countries with strict governmental controls, leading to events like the “Arab Spring” in 2010 and 2011, where activists staged massive protests against authoritarianism and corruption. In the United States, the Occupy Wall Street movement in 2011 was an early example of social media being used to spread information about protests. You can learn more about the Arab Spring from the 11-minute radio report on NPR linked here. Occupy Wall Street originated the slogan of the “99%” for economic solidarity among working-class and middle-class communities, and you can find out more about the movement on their website linked here. The tweets that brought activists together to protest capitalism and economic exploitation in New York City quickly spread around the country and eventually the globe, spawning “Occupy” demonstrations in cities and towns where people set up camps in public places that functioned on a collectivist ethic, prioritizing horizontal leadership, as well as raising awareness about economic inequalities.

Now, digital activism is included in nearly every social movement and social justice issue. According to an article by the Pew Research Center (2021), 60% of adults in the U.S. use their smartphone, computer, or tablet often. The rising popularity of social media activism has also led to critiques of what some refer to as “slack-tivism” where people post something on social media but do not engage in sustained action beyond a single post. In these instances, digital activism is mostly seen as a performance that is disconnected from the sustained work of movement building, collective action, and social change. However, digital activism emphasizes the multiple potential targets of social movement organizing. For instance, Twitter users can post messages and start hashtags that seek to raise awareness about political issues and elections, hold corporations accountable, share and critique cultural productions, and organize public discussions. Hashtags are used to raise awareness and inspire people to join in the movement and make it their own. In Figure 11.2.3, the artist has rendered the hashtag "#JusticeForGeorgeFloyd," demonstrating how social media conventions have permeated all forms of representation, including art.

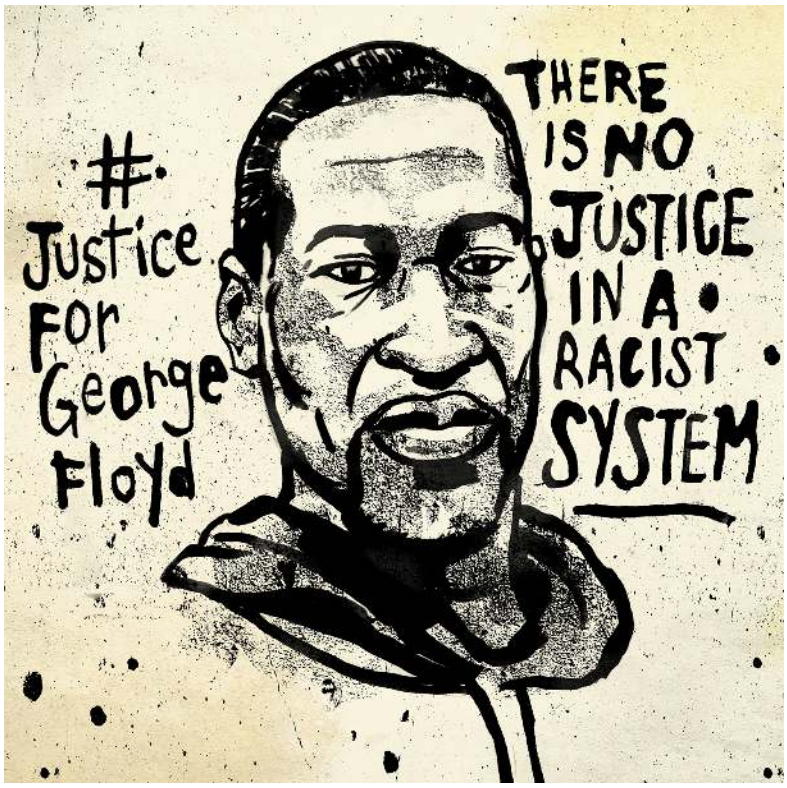


Figure 11.2.3: Justice for George Floyd. (CC BY-NC-ND 3.0; Damon Locks via JustSeeds)

Artistic Resistance

Arts and culture are vital domains for activism and social movements. Artistic expression can be used to communicate critiques of social institutions and authority structures and as a way of building and mobilizing collective identities. Art is a powerful communication tool and has the advantage of having multiple meanings for multiple audiences. Phrases and melodies used in hip-hop, poetry, and music of various genres can illuminate social structures and build connections in place of isolation. Art is also used to spread messages through the built environment through monuments, sculptures, murals, tagging, posters, and stickers.

For example, memorials are an important site of collective identity both for social movements and social institutions. For example, in the southeastern United States, many statues honor Confederate leaders and soldiers from the U.S. Civil War. The Confederacy existed from 1861-1865 as a last-ditch attempt to maintain the system of U.S. chattel slavery. However, many Confederate memorials and symbols are circulated both within and beyond the former Confederate states in the U.S. South. The supporters of these monuments often claim to recognize their historical or cultural value, but they communicate support for slavery and racism among white people. Similarly, in 2021, First Nations activists in Canada toppled a statue of both Queen Victoria and Queen Elizabeth II in response to the discovery of mass graves of Native children in the country's Boarding Schools.

Art can be powerful in conveying messages through symbols. For example, in the image shown in 11.2.4, the long shadow behind students conveys the heavy weight of fear in living in a society where school shootings are normalized.



Figure 11.2.4: Protect Students Not Guns. (CC BY-NC-ND 3.0; Pete Railand via JustSeeds)

Images can also communicate complex social realities and contradictions. For example, in the activist poster in Figure 11.2.5, a Latina migrant woman is shown looking backward over a coastal landscape with a traditional scarf, a monarch butterfly perched on her shoulder, and the circular halo associated with Catholic saints, but mirroring the color and pattern of the monarch butterfly's wings. Accompanied by the text, "Migrar es resistencia anticolonial" ("Migration is anticolonial resistance"), this image signals a transnational identity rooted in liberation and faith.



Figure 11.2.5: Migrar es Resistencia Anticolonial (Migration is Anticolonial Resistance). (CC BY-NC-ND 3.0; Pilar Emitxin via JustSeeds)

Because of art's ability to challenge conventional thinking and reveal important social realities, it has always been a crucial tool for social movements. One way this can be seen is that authoritarian regimes often target artists and scholars to help maintain social control and oppression. Creativity can be dangerous to those in power who seek to divide and exploit. Culture plays an important role in shared struggles over who we are, how we remember the past, and what that means for the future.

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11.3: U.S. Civil Rights and Liberatory Movements

The Civil Rights Movement

The Montgomery bus **boycott** of 1955 is widely recognized as the start of the modern **Civil Rights Movement** in the United States, with the arrest of Rosa Parks who refused to give her seat to a white passenger. Still, it should be noted that earlier court cases, direct actions, and civil disobedience all led to the development of this movement, and Parks was not the first to refuse giving up her seat on the bus. However, Parks' actions *did* lead to the Montgomery bus boycott becoming one of the most impactful boycotts in the U.S., ushering in a mass movement to dismantle the Jim Crow South and legal segregation of schools, businesses, and public transportation. The Civil Rights Movement also instituted voting rights for African Americans and other disenfranchised communities. This era culminated into significant legislative victories including: the U.S. Supreme Court decision of Brown v. Board of Education (1954), the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and the Fair Housing Act of 1968.

The Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. emerged as a leader for this movement, although there were many others who haven't been as widely recognized for their contributions including women and gay men. Bayard Rustin, Fannie Lou Hamer, Ella Baker, and Septima Clark, to name a select few, played instrumental roles in what is considered one of the most effective mass movements in U.S. history.

One year since the start of the boycott, buses were desegregated following a Supreme Court ruling and Dr. King quickly became a national political figure. He established the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and led multiple nonviolent protests against "the moral injustices of a segregated society" (Paulson, 2020, p. 144). Dr. King led more than 200,000 supporters of the movement in the 1963 March on Washington, D.C., and led another major protest of the movement in 1965, marching from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama to pressure Congress to pass the voting rights bill. In most instances, peaceful demonstrators were met with violence, harassment, arrests and even death by white mobs and police.



Figure 11.3.1: Civil Rights March on Washington, D.C. (Children near the Washington Monument), August 28, 1963. (Licensed under Public Domain; U.S. National Archives and Records Administration)

An earlier landmark decision was the 1954 Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, which overturned the 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* ruling on "separate but equal" in public education, making racial segregation in schools illegal (pp. 142-143). The decision was met with severe resistance from whites, with some school districts preferring to close their schools instead of integrating with African American students. When a violent white mob attempted to stop the integration of Black students in Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, President Eisenhower sent federal troops to protect the "Little Rock Nine" (p. 143). See also "Challenges to Legal Segregation" under Chapter 2.

It is important to note that the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* case was not the first to address segregation and discrimination in schools. In 1884, Chinese Americans Mary and Joseph Tape were not allowed to enroll their daughter in the San Francisco public school district because she was Chinese. The Tapes sued the school board and the landmark California Supreme Court Case, *Tape v. Hurley* (1884) ruled that all children, including children of non-white immigrants, were entitled to public education in the state.

However, the state assembly passed a law that established racially segregated schools under a separate but equal doctrine and the Tapes' daughter, enrolled in a separate school in Chinatown that was created for Chinese and other Asian American children.

The 1946 *Mendez v. Westminster* case was another landmark decision challenging school segregation, and this was a crucial precursor to *Brown v. Board of Education.* Gonzalo Mendez (Mexican American) and Felicitas Mendez (Puerto Rican) tried to their enroll their three children in a public elementary school in Orange County but were denied because the school didn't allow Mexican Americans to attend. They and 5,000 other similarly aggrieved parents filed suit against multiple Orange County schools districts and ultimately the Supreme Court declared that segregation on the basis of a Spanish surname was unconstitutional. See also "Sidebar: *Mendez vs. Westminster* and Discrimination in California's Public Schools" under Chapter 2.



Figure 11.3.2: A 2007 stamp commemorated the Mendez v. Westminster case that ended school segregation in California. (CC BY 2.0; USDA photo by Bob Nichols).

“Sit-ins” were another useful tactic for the Civil Rights movement, started by four Black college students protesting the discrimination of Black patrons at the local Woolworth’s lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina. These students and supporters formed the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in 1960, and they played an important role in voter registration drives.

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 prohibited literacy tests and an amendment in 1970 and 1975 banned literacy tests in all fifty states permanently (p.142). Literacy tests, poll taxes, white primaries and other policies were adopted in the Jim Crow South at the end of Reconstruction as a way to eliminate the African American right to vote (p. 141).

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 made it illegal to discriminate on grounds of “race, color, religion or national origin,” adding the banning of discrimination in employment practices, and it was followed up by the Civil Rights Act of 1968, also known as the Fair Housing Act, which prohibited discrimination in housing.

Black Panthers

The Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, often called the Black Panther Party (BPP) was a political organization founded in 1966 in Oakland, California by Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale. The BPP was rooted in the ideology of Black nationalism, socialism, and armed self-defense, and the organization based its practices on the logic of separatism, rather than the integration approach taken by other civil rights organizations. This debate is a profound and existential one for many activists and movements, who must decide when to operate within the systems that exist and when to challenge the system as a whole and work for transformation. Stokley Carmichael was a BPP leader who led the party to form educational and social programs, in addition to political activity. Women also played an important role in the BPP, and can be seen in formation in Figure 11.3.3.



Figure 11.3.3: Black Panthers Women. (CC BY-SA 4.0; Rainalee111 via Wikimedia Commons)

Leaders like Bobby Seale sponsored initiatives like the Free Breakfast Program, which provided meals to low-income children, helping them to be better prepared and engaged throughout their school day. This was an effective strategy because it directly helped people in need, it demonstrated the capacity and funding for a group of people to provide and distribute food for free, and it raised awareness about one way that economic condition (the ability to provide breakfast) was influencing academic outcomes (participation and engagement in school). Because of their high-profile successes, the BPP quickly became a target for the FBI, headed at the time by J. Edgar Hoover, who created the COINTELPRO program to infiltrate, surveil, and divide members to bring down and dismantle domestic organizations that challenged the status quo, including the Black Panther Party. An image showing the targeting of Black Panther Party leaders is included in Figure 11.3.4.



Figure 11.3.4: Black Panther Party poster - Featuring Black Panther Party leaders, which reads, “Revolutionary Intercommunal Day of Solidarity for Bobby Seale, Chairman of the Black Panther Party, Political Prisoner, Ericka Huggins, Black Panther Party, Political Prisoner, Angela Davis, Political Prisoner, Ruchell Magee, Political, Prisoner, and a Post-Birthday Celebration for Huey P. Newton, Minister of Defense and Supreme Commander of the Black Panther Party, Speakers: Huey P. Newton, Kathleen Cleaver, Communications Secretary, Black Panther Party, Music by the Grateful Dead, Friday March 5th, 1971, 7:00 PM to 11:00 PM, Oakland Auditorium Arena, 10-Tenth Street, Oakland, California.” (CC BY 2.0; CIR Online via Flickr)

Asian American Movement, 1960s - 1970s

In the wake of the Civil Rights Movement and Black Power, Asian Americans were inspired to forge their own way based on a pan-ethnic identity. Rejecting the label, “Oriental,” young Asian Americans of the 1960s adopted the term “Asian American” to describe their identity and movement. Resisting both the “model minority” and “yellow peril” stereotypes, they organized for economic and racial justice in education, labor, and housing, along with fighting in solidarity with Black, Brown, and Native communities who faced related oppressions rooted in white supremacy, capitalism, and imperialism.

Asian American Studies historian, Daryl Maeda, pointed out how the Asian American movement "drew heavily from the African-American movement" in order to inform Asian American subjectivity and racial commonality, such as embracing the militant style of dress, adoption of the "Black Power" slogan to "Yellow Power," and deeper connections between the Asian American and African American movements. For instance, the work of Japanese American activist Yuri Kochiyama's dedication to Back liberation struggles and close friendship with Malcolm X (Fujino, 2005) (Dhingra and Rodriguez, 2021, p. 73).



Figure 11.3.5: Illustration of Japanese American activist, Yuri Kochiyama (watercolor and collage). (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0; By Kay Fischer)

Asian American activists and organizations participated in **"serve-the-people" programs** fighting for affordable housing, access to healthcare and social services, labor rights, women's rights, and LGBTQ rights. For example, one of the major campaigns for housing was the decades-long effort to save the International Hotel (I-Hotel) in San Francisco, which primarily housed elderly Filipinx and Chinese men who lived in the single room occupancy building. When in 1969, the owners of the I-Hotel attempted to evict residents who had nowhere else to go, the Asian American movement rallied to protect the residents, even forming barricades and facing 250 riot police (Lee, 2015, p. 307 - 308).

Similar to what many other women of color activists faced in that era, Asian American women called out the sexism and secondary status they faced, being relegated to background work like taking notes, making coffee, and even cleaning toilets. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Asian Americans felt marginalized both within the mainstream white gay liberation movement and within the Asian American movement. Activist and journalist, Helen Zia remembered being put on trial by other Asian American and Black liberation activists in Boston, stating, "I had not yet come out, and they made it clear that if I did, I would also be out of the liberation community. That threatening message kept me in the closet for the next several years" (pp. 309 - 310).

The Asian American movement was uniquely transnational as well, as members organized against U.S. wars, militarism, and imperialism in Asia. For example, they protested against the Vietnam War, critiqued US military occupation in Okinawa and Korea, and aligned with other anti-colonial, anti-imperial, socialist, and communist struggles in Asia. As noted by Maeda, the Asian American movement "sought to achieve radical social change by building interracial coalitions and transnational solidarities" with the goal of dismantling interlocking systems of oppression (p. 304, p. 308).

The Asian American movement was formed across college campuses, including the Asian American Political Alliance (AAPA) started by Yuji Ichioka and Emma Gee in 1968 at UC Berkeley. They were the first organization to use the term "Asian American." AAPA was intentionally pan-ethnic, bringing together Asian Americans across generations, class, and ethnicity. AAPA also "explicitly critiqued the United States as a racist, imperialistic, and exploitative society," pointing out how Asian Americans have been systematically affected by racial injustice. AAPA also committed to interracial solidarity with other "Third World people," both abroad and within the United States. AAPA played a major role at both SF state (1968) and UC Berkeley's (1969) Third World Liberation Front (TWLF) strike to bring about Ethnic Studies at colleges and universities across the nation (pp. 304 - 305).

Young Lords (1968 - 1972)

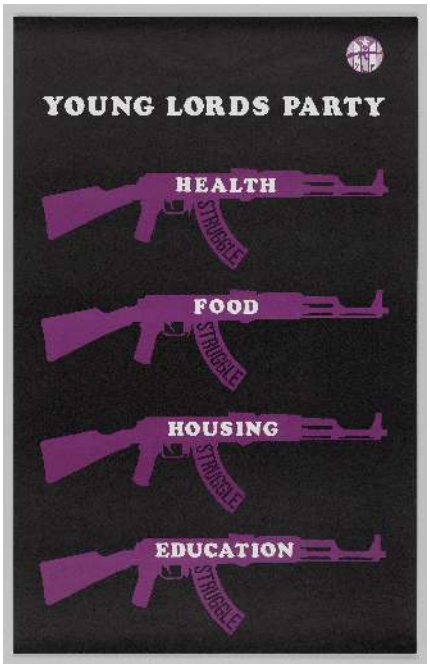


Figure 11.3.6: Young Lords Party: Health, Food, Housing, Education. (Public Domain; Smithsonian Institution)

The Young Lords started in 1968 with Puerto Rican youth in Chicago, many of whom were former gang members. The socialist organization advocated for grassroots services controlled by and for the people. They also organized for Puerto Rican independence (a U.S. territory since the 1898 Spanish-American War), including leading a march of 10,000 in 1970 in New York City. The Young Lords Organization (YLO) chapter in New York City, founded by Puerto Rican college students, became the Young Lords Party. Chapters were formed mostly o the east coast and also briefly in Hayward, California (Ruíz and Sánchez, Korrol, 2006, pp. 815 - 816). The Young Lords were inspired by global liberation struggles and the Black Panther Party (BPP). The original Chicago group gained a national spotlight when taking over a local church to provide community services for the poor. Similar to the Black Panthers, the Young Lords dressed in military style with army jackets, combat boots, and purple berets with a YLO button (Hulst, 2013, pp. 636-639).

The Young Lords' community organizing centered on the social needs of working class and poor Puerto Rican communities, including garbage collecting, free hot breakfast for children, clothing drives, child-care services, Puerto Rican history classes, health programs, and entertainment through poetry readings, music, etc. Their health offensive focused on taking over the Lincoln Hospital in the South Bronx and organizing a lead poison and tuberculosis testing site. Another offensive focused on prison conditions for incarcerated Puerto Rican and African Americans, who were reporting high suicide rates, in addition to addressing police violence, drug addiction, and the war in Vietnam (Ruíz and Sánchez Korrol, 2006, p. 816).

Puerto Rican women were active in the Young Lords from the beginning, confronting "male chauvinism" within the party. In 1971, Denise Oliver, the first woman on the Central Committee, called for women's participation, stating,

> when the Party got started, there were very few sisters….We saw that we really weren't gonna be able to do any kind of constructive organizing in the community without sisters actively involved…because most of the people that we're organizing are women with children, through the free-breakfast program and through the free-clothing drive and health care programs (Ruíz and Sánchez Korrol, 2006, p. 816).

Women in the party called out how they were often relegated to domestic and office work, such as typing, taking care of children, and being sexualized by male members. Female Young Lords formed a women's caucus, recognizing the need to discuss and dismantle machismo culture in the community. The party recognized the intersection of women's oppression, capitalism, and imperialism, and eventually revised their Thirteen Point Program to assert gender equality and an end to homophobia (Ruíz and Sánchez Korrol, 2006, p. 816). The program also addressed the group's desire for self-determination, anti-racism, community

control over institutions like hospitals, schools, and law enforcement, for Puerto Rican history and Spanish language to be taught, and they demanded a socialist and nonviolent state (Hulst, 2013, pp. 636-639).

The Young Lords didn't last a very long time, but they still made an impact by asserting Puerto Rican independence and rights for Puerto Ricans in the U.S. They experienced some divisions within the organization as well as infiltration by the FBI's COINTELPRO, similar to what happened to the BPP. In 1972, the remaining Young Lords became the Puerto Rican Revolutionary Workers Organization (Hulst, 2013 & Ruíz and Sánchez Korrol, 2006). Former members continued the fight for Puerto Rican freedom, by occupying the Statue of Liberty in 1977, demanding the release of Puerto Rican political prisoners and protesting against U.S. military exercises on the island of Vieques (Hulst, 2013, pp. 636-639).

Brown Berets

In the 1960s, heightened awareness of racial injustice inspired many groups to stand up and take action. The Brown Berets were one such group that formed among Chicana/o/x activists. It began with a group of high school students who were part of a civic participation program inspired by the Black Panther Party to take a stance of radical nationalism. Chapters formed in California and around the country, and many are still active today. The group shared ideological positions with the Black Panther Party, including resistance to police brutality, opposition to the Vietnam War, and a militant commitment to revolutionary social change. This position also made them a regular target for government interference and sabotage. They implemented free medical and food programs to help community members affected by disparities in access. The Brown Berets have always taken on a coalitional standpoint and embraced a commitment to Third World alliances with other communities of color in the U.S. and around the world. The image shown in Figure 11.3.7 features a young activist in 1994 as part of the Brown Berets preparing to participate in a protest for immigration equity and against Proposition 187.



Figure 11.3.7: 1994 No On 187 March Kings Canyon Rd Fresno. (CC BY 2.0; David Prasad via Flickr)

American Indian Movement

During the 1960s, Native American communities were dealing with many of the same issues as communities of color in the United States. The US government embraced an urban relocation model that forced Native Americans off of reservations and traditional lands into low-income jobs and neighborhoods in cities and urban areas. Although the government promised jobs, housing, and healthcare, these were few and far between. The mixture of many tribal groups in large cities led to the embracing of a pan-Indian identity united by shared experiences of settler-colonialism, genocide, and displacement. This included dealing with tensions between urban Native communities and those living on reservations, the highest unemployment rates of any racial or ethnic group, and disparate rates of child abductions and children being taken into foster care and adopted by non-Native families. The pan-Indian community acted as a support system and buffer against racism and poverty and fostered resilience. Today, there is a backlash against the pan-Indian identity because it erases cultural specificity and traditional tribal knowledge.

The American Indian Movement (AIM) was first formed in Minneapolis in 1968 before expanding to other chapters around the country. Some of the key figures in AIM include Russel Means, Dennis Banks, Clyde Bellecourt, John Trudell, Leonard Peltier, and Mary Jane Wilson. Roberta Downwind suggested the name “AIM,” which lends itself to graphic interpretation in the form of arrows and targets, signaling the legacy and importance of resistance. One major difference between AIM and other civil rights movements was that their focus was less on integration with dominant society and more on maintaining cultural integrity, the enforcement of treaty rights, and empowering tribal sovereignty. Key issues for AIM included: economic independence and opportunity, police brutality and abuse, and culturally relevant healthcare. Women leaders played a key role in speaking up to both anti-Native issues but also the unique experiences and perspectives of Native feminists. AIM was involved in many demonstrations, including the occupation of Alcatraz Island in the San Francisco Bay from 1969-1971, as well as the Longest Walk from Alcatraz to Washington, DC.

One major success of AIM was lifting the ban on Native American spiritual ceremonies that was established by U.S. law in 1884 through the American Indian Religious Freedom Act in 1978. This built on a decade of legal reform, including the 1965 Indian Self-Determination and Education Act, 1968 Indian Civil Rights Act, 1972 Indian Education Act, 1975 Indian Education Assistance and Self-Determination Act, and 1978 Indian Child Welfare Act. Like the Black Panthers and Brown Berets, AIM was targeted by the FBI for infiltration and disruption, and the national organization disbanded in 1978, although it was outlived by local chapters of AIM that continue to mobilize and inspire Native American and Indigenous activists today.

AIM was not the only organization to mobilize Native peoples from multiple tribes. For example, the National Congress of American Indians was founded in 1944 to face off against the federal government and improve the conditions of Native Americans. The group was somewhat more moderate in advocating for reforms. The National Indian Youth Council was formed in 1961 to advocate for sovereignty and human rights. Youth were dissatisfied with the advocacy and leadership of elders. Similarly, Women of All Red Nations (WARN) formed out of AIM and focused on the leadership and experiences of Native women.

Women advocates were key to many aspects of Native American and American Indian movements. For example, the occupation of Wounded Knee was a protest designed, organized, and implemented by older women. After spearheading dissent at Pine Ridge, the Oglala Lakota Sioux women took on more responsibilities, including carrying weapons. Leaders like Bisonette and Moves Camp were key elders who carried out negotiations on behalf of the movement. See also "Alcatraz, AIM and Wounded Knee" under Chapter 4.

Sidebar: Political Prisoners

As part of the strategy of intimidation and subversion, the U.S. federal government has taken activists as political prisoners. Mumia Abu-Jamal was 14 years old when we has beaten by white racists and a police officer. He found the Black Panther Party (BPP) and embraced its approach to change, moving to Oakland to live with BPP members and organize for the movement. However, he also came under surveillance by the FBI, which made him a target. He was charged and convicted with killing a police officer and has been held in prison ever since, currently serving a life sentence without parole. Similarly, Leonad Peltier was arrested shortly after his involvement in the Wounded Knee occupation and general community leadership. He was charged for the death of two police officers, although there is much evidence that was missing from the trial. Peltier maintains his innocence and substantial evidence was not reviewed in the first trial and appeal for the case. However, the targeting of activists for their outspoken advocacy can lead to a “chilling effect” where activists are less likely to take risks out of fear of imprisonment or other consequences. You can view artistic renditions of both individuals in Figure 11.3.8 and Figure 11.3.9.

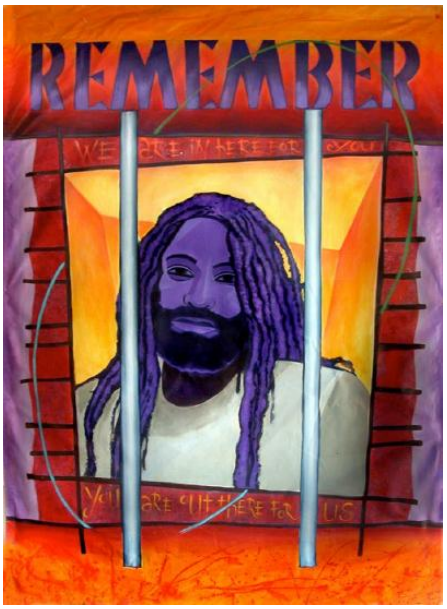


Figure 11.3.8: Mumia. (Free Cultural Works; Mike Alewitz via Wikimedia Commons)



Figure 11.3.9: Leonard Peltier. (CC BY-NC-ND 3.0; Bec Young via JustSeeds)

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11.4: Labor Movements- Domestic Workers

11.4.1: Worker-led Struggles

> Institutionalized rejection of difference is an absolute necessity in a profit economy which needs outsiders as surplus people.
>
> - Audre Lorde, 1998

Although many workers in the U.S. today might take for granted the 8-hour work day, the end of child labor and slave labor, minimum wage, and more, these basic workers' rights weren't simply handed down from our government, "generous" companies, nor bosses. These were hard-won rights that took decades and unfortunately many lives. Even when workers' rights were won, they weren't always equally applied, such as when the National Labor Relations Act was passed in 1935, and African Americans and other workers of color were largely excluded from such legislative protections until decades later. Lately however, even those important wins stemming from our rich and violent history of labor struggles have been taken away due various structural changes, including the rise of mega-corporations, the consolidation of wealth, deindustrialization, and the continued hyper-exploitation of contract, part-time, undocumented, immigrant, and female workers.

Along with the capitalist exploitation of the masses (intersecting with white supremacy and colonialism), there are worker-led struggles whose legacies have most definitely made an impact and continue to influence current workers' movements. In this section, we'll examine the domestic workers labor struggle through an Ethnic Studies lens. In the next section, agricultural workers.

11.4.2: Domestic Workers

Paramount to understanding the significance of labor movements, we should start by examining the experiences and movements of the most exploited workers, who often end up being women of color, including colonized women, enslaved women, and immigrant women of color.

In this section, we'll examine the political impact made by domestic workers movements. As pointed out by Premilla Nadasen in her book, *Household Workers Unite* (2015), social movements and activism by domestic and household workers are often ignored in the media, overshadowed by narratives of helplessness and domestic workers needing rescue. Contrary to popular discourse, women of color domestic workers have resisted oppression for hundreds of years, from colonization to slavery to modern-day systemic racism, patriarchy, and capitalism. Through it all, they have attained political power, commanded respect in their work, and continue to make significant legislative, economic, and social transformations for domestic workers.

Sidebar: "A History of Domestic Work and Worker Organizing" Timeline

Take a look at the "A History of Domestic Work and Worker Organizing" digital timeline by the National Domestic Workers Alliance and activist-scholars Jennifer Guglielmo, Michelle Joffroy, and Diana Sierra Becerra. Using vibrant images and informative text, the timeline offers an in-depth examination of the rich history of domestic workers "resilience and resistance."

11.4.3: Enslaved Indigenous and African American Domestic Workers

We start with the impact of European colonization on indigenous populations of the Americas and the congruent enslavement of people from Africa. Although approaching the first Europeans with generosity and peace, Indigenous peoples were met with perverse violence and cruelty, their estimated population of 100 million slashed severely by 95% within the first 200 hundred years of colonization. By the 1600s, the Spanish were prominent settler-colonists of the Americas and had coerced, often violently, both Indigenous and African populations into a permanent servant status. This included unpaid domestic labor at Catholic missions, where Indigenous women were abused. They resisted in both covert methods, such as slowing down work, or more openly by leading revolts and setting missions on fire. One such resistor was Toypurina, a Gabrielino Tongva medicine woman, who led an armed rebellion against the San Gabriel Mission in 1785 (Domestic Workers Make History, 2022, 03:02).

Amongst early New England settler-colonists, the developing society began to rely on enslaved African labor by the mid-18th century. Tera W. Hunter, professor of American History and African American Studies, noted that enslaved Black women were creative in "seiz[ing] time…which they weren't given" (Domestic Workers Make History, 2022, 03:59). This included passing around abolitionist newspapers in secret, joining rebellions, going on strikes, or running away from slave-owners. One of the most well known household names for abolitionists was Harriet Tubman, who was also a former domestic worker. Famous for leading

some 13 expeditions to free others from slavery, Tubman also led African American union soldiers to free over 700 enslaved people in South Carolina in 1863 (04:45).

11.4.3.1: Legacy of Slavery Among Domestic Work in the South

Despite slavery being abolished through the 13th amendment, Black domestic workers continued to labor in slave-like conditions. Although technically free people, the legacy of slavery remained steadfast (Domestic Workers Make History, 2022, 05:47). Black domestic workers organized for better pay and set parameters around their labor, such as insisting that if they were hired to be a cook, they should not have to clean the house or become a child nurse. They created mutual aid groups and pooled their resources so that they could support one another economically during times of need.

In 1881, the largest domestic workers strike of the 19th century took place in Atlanta, Georgia, where a group of 20 Black washerwomen collectively decided on a standard rate for their work. They named themselves the Washing Society and within three short weeks, they had already recruited 3,000 members (including Black cooks and housekeepers, and Irish immigrants). They threatened to go on a general strike and were met with arrests and fines as retaliation. Regardless, the movement spread and washerwomen struck across various states. In North Carolina, strikers declared: “Let the white people learn to serve themselves” (Domestic Workers Make History, 2022, 09:30).

By the 1930s when the Great Depression hit, workers and unemployed people demonstrated on the streets, demanding labor protections, soon compelling the federal government to pass some of the first labor protection laws. Professor Nadasen stated how 8 hour days and overtime pay were all a part of labor laws “that established a broad safety net for workers across the country.” Yet two categories of workers were excluded from such legislation: agricultural and domestic workers, populations that disproportionately included African American and Latina women, “so racism played a big role in how labor protections were allocated in the 1930s” ((Domestic Workers Make History, 2022, 10:30).

11.4.3.2: Kidnapping Native American Children



Figure 11.4.1: Carlisle Indian School, Carlisle, Pa. Cooking class. Frances Benjamin Johnston Photograph Collection, Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, Reproduction number LC-USZ62-26783. (Photo by Frances Benjamin Johnston)

From the late 19th century into the mid-20th century, the practice of kidnapping Indigenous children from their families and imprisoning them at government sponsored, so-called Indian Boarding Schools was common practice. The motto “Kill the Indian, Save the Man” was used to justify the violent and abusive treatment endured by 20,000 Native children at these schools, with the purpose of destroying Indigenous cultures and families. Native girls were tracked to provide domestic work, trained to do ironing, cooking, and housekeeping. Brenda Child (Red Lake Ojibwe) wrote, “Indian students in the government boarding schools were constantly bombarded with the notion that they were best suited for menial labor” (Guglielmo, et al., 2021, “Menial Labor as Civilization”). Outing programs placed Native teen girls to be live-in domestic workers in white homes across the southwest in cities like Los Angeles, Tucson, and San Francisco. The practice of separating Native American children from their parents and families continued until 1978, when the Indian Child Welfare Act gave Native American parents the legal right to resist their child’s placement in Indian Boarding Schools. See also "Assimilation, Boarding Schools and Adoption" under Chapter 4.

11.4.4: Domestic Work in the Borderlands

Indigenous and Mexican women of the borderlands had been resisting slavery, kidnappings, and deplorable working conditions as domestic workers for over 100 years. Workers fought back in various ways, from work stoppages to leaving ranchos, to violent insurrections like the one at Rancho Jamul near San Diego, California in 1837 (Guglielmo, et al., 2021, "The Rancho Jamul Raid"). After U.S. conquest (1848) led to a remapping of borders, Indigenous populations faced land-theft, removal, containment, and surveillance. Chicanx people now on U.S. territory lost property as well, being "relegated to low-paid, low-status work, such as domestic and agricultural labor" ("We Didn't Cross the Border, the Border Crossed Us").

Mexican domestic workers were paid a third of what white domestic workers (largely European immigrants) were paid for the same work. In 1933, Chicana domestic workers established the Asociación de Trabajadoras Domésticas (The Association of Domestic Workers), organizing 700 domestic workers to demand higher wages. By the 1930s, almost all domestic workers were Mexican women from El Paso, Texas or Ciudad Juarez, just south of the border in Mexico. Employers in Texas would pit domestic workers from El Paso and Juarez against one another through low wages (Guglielmo, et al., 2021, "On Strike in El Paso"). If a worker in El Paso wanted fair wages, the employer would simply hire women from Juarez and pay them even less.

Despite the perpetual threat of deportations looming over workers, domestic workers continued to organize. When the Asociación de Trabajadoras Domésticas organized a strike, employers tried to have one of the leaders deported, even though she was a U.S. citizen. But after other unions joined in support, the employers conceded and met the strikers' demands, agreeing to pay domestic workers a dollar more per week.

11.4.5: Domestic Workers in the Civil Rights Movement

The modern Civil Rights Movement in the U.S. is recognized as having started with the arrest of Rosa Parks and the Montgomery bus boycott. More than a half century later, much of the labor and leadership by African American women have been erased from historic accounts of this movement, including the role of Black domestic workers in bus boycotts. In fact, most bus riders in the South were Black domestic workers, and *they* were the ones to initiate bus boycotts to bring an end to racial segregation. Depending on public transportation to get to their place of employment, domestic workers faced abuse and patronizing treatment by drivers. If the women didn't give up their seats for a white passenger, they risked getting kicked off the bus, arrested, hit, or even killed for their resistance, as some drivers carried weapons (Guglielmo, et al., 2021, "The Struggle Against Everyday Violence").

Georgia Gilmore, a cook and maid, had stopped riding the bus in protest of her mistreatment, years before Rosa Park's famous arrest. Of the boycott, Georgia said,

> This new generation had decided that they just had taken as much as they could….After the maids and the cooks stopped riding the bus, well, the bus didn't have any need to run. And so instead of riding the bus, they would walk. And then they began to form a carpool (Domestic Workers Make History, 2022, 16:16).

Domestic workers organized their friends to join the boycott, passed out flyers, and fundraised by selling pies and other meals, leading to a successful boycott of over a year when on November 13, 1956, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld a lower court's ruling that segregation on buses violated the Fourteenth Amendment. According to Professor Nadasen,

> The Montgomery Bus Boycott was the moment that signifies the ways in which domestic workers were really the leaders of the boycott. And without their support, without their involvement, the Montgomery Bus Boycott, and much of the Civil Rights Movement would not have been possible (2022, 17:25).

11.4.6: The Rise of Workers Centers and Domestic Worker Organizing Today

Also during the 1970s and '80s, African American women began shifting out of domestic labor, as job markets started to slowly open up due to reforms that came out of the Civil Rights Movement. In the aftermath of U.S. wars, occupations, changing immigration laws, and interventions in Asia and Latin America, millions were uprooted from their homes resulting in migrations to the United States (Domestic Workers Make History, 2022, 28:05). With limited access to citizenship, women of the Caribbean, the Philippines, Mexico, and Central America were starting to find scarce opportunities for employment other than domestic work. Linda Burnham of the National Domestic Workers Alliance notes that because some of these women came as experienced organizers from their countries of origin, the domestic workers movement evolved to be primarily led by immigrant women. With this came **workers centers** - places that addressed "particularly high degrees of exploitation" that the largely undocumented immigrant labor force faced, such as wage theft and "absolutely no rights to the basics" (29:20).

Mujeres Unidas y Activas (MUA) was an early workers center, established in the Bay Area. One of their co-founders, Clara Luz Navarros, used to be a nurse and community leader in El Salvador, fled political persecution, and brought her skills to the San Francisco Bay Area (Domestic Workers Make History, 2022, 30:31). Still active today, MUA is a grassroots organization led by Latina immigrant women advocating for "personal transformation and building community power for social and economic justice" (Mujeres Unidas y Activas, "MUA mission"). MUA pushed for the California Domestic Worker Bill of Rights, which passed as state law in 2016, and continues to fight for sanctuary protections in Alameda County to advocate for women seeking asylum or facing deportation, including the right to asylum for domestic violence survivors.

11.4.6.1: Transnational Movement Building by Filipina/x Domestic Workers

In the case of the Philippines, their economy, labor, and education continue to be heavily tied to and influenced by U.S. colonialism and militarism. Asian American Studies professor, Dr. Robyn Rodriguez, argues that the Philippines has become a "labor brokerage" state that "actively mobilizes and facilitates the export of workers…because it benefits from remittances (money sent to the homeland from immigrants…working abroad)" and therefore commonly migrate to the U.S. as workers (Dhingra & Rodriguez, 2021, p. 196). Neoliberal policies that further impoverish so-called "third world" nations have made it difficult for ordinary Filipinx people to find jobs and care for their families in the Philippines, and therefore end up working in a foreign country as temporary migrant workers. This is such a phenomenon that an acronym was created: OFWs or Overseas Filipino Workers, who were at 1.77 million in 2020 (Republic of the Philippines Statistics Authority, 2021). Remittances sent from OFWs in Canada, the United States, Japan, and more are what many in the Philippines depend on for survival, and remittances sent from domestic workers abroad are the "third-largest source of tax revenue for the Philippine government" (Guglielmo, et al., 2021, "Exporting Domestic Workers for Profit"). Some are even trafficked into domestic work, tricked into false contracts, having their pay withheld, and must endure living in an abusive setting (Benitez, 2018).

The Damayan Migrant Workers Association in New York City organizes with low-wage migrant workers to end labor trafficking and demand worker rights. Lead organizer, Riya Oritz, who considers herself a product of forced migration and a child of one of Damayan's co-founders, explained how being put in a desperate situation made thousands vulnerable to placement agencies that would often exploit and profit off OFWs. Ortiz's mother, Linda Oalican, pointed out how the struggle for domestic workers rights is multifold: addressing immediate conditions for workers, but also addressing larger systems of exploitation, such as patriarchy, imperialism, neoliberalism, and white supremacy, that created oppressive conditions for domestic workers in the first place (Benitez, 2018).

11.4.6.2: Domestic Workers Bill of Rights

At the first U.S. Social Forum in Atlanta, Georgia in 2007, domestic workers across the country gathered and established the National Domestic Workers Alliance (NDWA). Along with various organizations and workers centers, they helped to pass the first comprehensive **domestic workers bill of rights** in New York in 2010, and soon similar campaigns sprang up across the nation. Silvia Gonzalez of Casa Latina, Seattle, stated (translated from Spanish): "There is more power and we start winning more bills of rights in more places. It's like popcorn when they start popping: we won one state, we won in another state" (Domestic Workers Make History, 2022, 35:05). In 2019, NDWA introduced the Domestic Workers Bill of Rights at the federal level. Central to NDWA's organizing mission is "building a multi-racial alliance to address the impact of anti-Black racism, unjust immigration policies, and other systems of oppression" (35:26). Allison Julien, of We Dream in Black, NDWA-New York, stated that she's "inspired by the domestic worker history. I'm inspired by their resilience, their ability to build community, their ability to build relationships in order to advocate for the change needed in the domestic work industry" (36:38).

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11.5: Labor Movements- Agricultural Workers

California's Dependence of Immigrant Farmworkers



Figure 11.5.1: A crew of Filipinx farmworkers cut and load lettuce in the Imperial Valley, California. 1937. Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Reproduction Number: LC-USF34-T01-016206-E. (Public Domain; Photo by Dorothea Lange)

Since the early 20th century, the California agriculture sector has largely depended on immigrant farmworkers. This started with Chinese immigrant laborers who shoveled irrigation channels and cleared the land in the Sacramento-San Joaquin River deltas, helping to transform this region into one of the most fertile farmlands in the nation. Anti-Asian racism persisted and with each iteration of Asian exclusion laws, the agricultural industry of California depended on the labor of different groups including Japanese, South Asian, Filipinx, and Mexican laborers. In the 1930s, some 400,000 white laborers impacted by the Great Depression came with the Dust Bowl migration and were also hired to work in the farm fields (Sowards, 2019, p. 19).

The Bracero Program (1942 - 1964) was another important moment in California's agriculture worker history. A joint agreement between U.S. and Mexican governments resulted in the "importation" of male agricultural laborers, also referred to as *braceros*, from Mexico to the U.S. to help fill the labor shortage during WWII. The second initiation of recruitment resulted from a U.S. executive order, and was essentially a guest worker program where *braceros* were hired cheaply to work temporarily and returned to Mexico. During such back and forth migration by Mexican workers, the lines of being documented and undocumented became blurred, resulting in a large-scale migration of undocumented workers to the United States (Quintana, 2018).



Figure 11.5.2: Mexican agricultural workers in Stockton, California in 1943. Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Reproduction Number: LC-DIG-fsa-8d29109 (Public Domain; Photography by Marjory Collins)

Growers benefited from hiring immigrant laborers with limited access to other work opportunities and civil and human rights. According to Marshall Ganz, “Growers, in other words, learned how to recruit a workforce too powerless to give them much trouble—a workforce of impoverished new immigrants, noncitizens, and people of color” (2009, p. 24). This naturally resulted in not only abysmal pay, but enormously challenging working and living conditions. In addition to the physically tasking labor of bending over repeatedly under harsh weather, workers were exposed to dangerous chemicals, and families were forced to continuously move with the crop seasons, keeping their children out of school. By the 1960s, life expectancy for farmworkers in California was around forty-nine years (Ruiz and Korrol, 2005, p. 241).

Large growers in California had developed a tried and true strategy of hiring workers of different ethnicities and pitting them against each other through segregated housing and a racially and ethnically stratified wage scale, relegating the least desirable jobs and lowest pay to those on the bottom of the racial hierarchy, often Filipinx laborers (Mabalon, 2013, p. 66). Filipinx laborers were a part of “a massive army of seasonal migratory workers toiling up and down the West Coast” (p. 69), working in what writer Carey McWilliams called “factories in the fields.” Growers claimed that Filipinx and Mexican workers were more physically suited for these harsh working conditions that oftentimes kept white workers away (Lee, 2015, p. 180).

The Start of the Delano Grape Strike

The Delano Grape Strike of 1965 is arguably the most important and successful farmworkers' strikes in California labor history. The strike was initiated by Filipinx labor leader Larry Itliong, with the eventual merging of the Filipinx union and the Mexican union headed by César Chávez and Dolores Huerta. The strike ended up lasting five long years, and Chicano Studies historian, Rudy Acuña, pointed out that César Chávez emerged as a civil rights leader and an icon for the Chicano movement (“Struggle in the Fields,” 1995, 19:05 - 19:48). This strike is also recognized by Alex Fabros, Filipino American Labor Historian, as the Filipinx “civil rights movement in California” (Delano Manongs, Arroy and McKay, 2014, 01:22 - 01:26). Yet there is a notable “historical void regarding the role of Filipinos in this important labor movement” (Scharlin and Villanueva 2000, xxv). Larry Itliong and Philip Vera Cruz, both longtime Filipinx labor organizers and farmworkers were instrumental in the development of the United Farm Workers (UFW) union and approaching César Chávez about the grape strike in Delano.

By the 1960s, Filipinx agricultural workers had spent over three decades working crop cycles up and down the west coast, striking “for a few cents more each season,” and therefore had a strong labor consciousness (Delano Manongs, Arroy and McKay, 2014, 08:19 - 08:42). Dolores Huerta, labor organizer with the National Farm Workers Association (NFWA), later with the United Farm Workers, explained how Filipinx workers had a reputation for leading many strikes and were known to be militant (07:29 - 07:52). The strikes would result in wage increases, but workers continued to face challenges because a contract was never signed, which would institute more long-term changes in favor of the workers (07:53 - 08:18).

These older Filipinx farm laborers were also affectionately called *manongs* by the 1960s, a term of respect meaning “elder brother” in the Illocano language spoken by this community (from Luzon, Philippines). The *manongs* were in their twilight years by this decade and faced discriminatory policies that banned them from owning property, voting, and the most devastating were the anti-miscegenation laws that banned interracial marriage. This caused what many call the “lost generation” - the second generation of Filipinx people that might have been, had it not been for racist laws. The *manongs* were largely bachelors with no children of their own (04:19 - 04:55). With no property, barely any savings for their retirement, and no children to rely on, the *manongs* had everything to lose if their work conditions didn’t improve.



Figure 11.5.3: A mural depicting UFW organizers, Philip Vera Cruz, Larry Itliong, and Cesar Chavez in Los Angles. (Licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0; Photo by Kenny Chang)

Filipinx workers were encouraged when they won a “wildcat” (spontaneous, grassroots) grape strike in Coachella Valley in the summer of 1965. The strikers decided to move north and attempted another grape strike in Delano, under the banner of the largely Filipinx led, Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee (AWOC), AFL-CIO (Chávez, 2005, p. 247). Philip Vera Cruz who had spent over three decades working in the fields and in canneries and restaurants, ended up an organizer with the AWOC, AFL-CIO (Lee, 2015, p. 301-302). Vera Cruz noted that this strike changed his life, reflecting that “As a Filipino it gave me the opportunity to participate in the political struggles of this country” (Scharlin and Villanueva, 2000, p. 33).

Larry Itliong, a dynamic and respected leader of the Filipinx labor movement, known to be tough and always have a cigar in his mouth, was the southern regional director of the AWOC. Like Vera Cruz, Itliong had a long history as a laborer in the United States, starting at age fifteen, working in the farmlands of California and in the Alaskan salmon canneries. Described as brave and strong, Itliong called himself “a son of a bitch…in terms of fighting for the rights of Filipinos in this country” and stated that he wasn’t scared of anyone (Delano Manongs, Arroy and McKay, 2014, 07:12 - 07:27).

On September 8, 1965, Filipinx members of the AWOC met at the Filipino Hall in Delano and made the decision to strike. The night before, Itliong warned strikers that even if they voted to strike, there were plenty of Mexican workers in Delano who would likely break the strike. He told them, “you’re going to suffer a lot of hardships, maybe you’re going to get hungry, maybe you’re going to lose your car, maybe you’re going to lose your house.” Workers replied, “We don’t care” (Mabalon, 2013, p. 261). As Itliong predicted, the strike was brutal. The growers responded with violence, used intimidation tactics, and attacked homes in the labor camps by turning off the lights, gas, and water (Delano Manongs, Arroy and McKay, 2014, 13:41 - 14:26). Strikers lost their jobs and homes, and ended up having to sleep in their cars.

The United Farm Workers: A Filipinx and Mexican labor union

The growers used race to pit workers against one another, regularly hiring Mexican workers to cross the picket line. Filipinx strikers understood that in order for their strike to be successful, they needed Mexican workers to join them. Filipinx and Mexican community members of Delano would socialize together, but out on the fields, they were segregated (Delano Manongs, Arroy and McKay, 10:09 - 10:22). Itliong knew Dolores Huerta from when she used to be an organizer for the AWOC. He approached Huerta and Chávez days after the grape strike in Delano began with a determination to convince the NFWA to join the strike. Chávez initially said no, that they needed more time to organize. Huerta pointed out that the NFWA had planned to organize discreetly and wanted five more years to organize the whole San Joaquin Valley before striking (Ruiz and Korrol, 2005, p. 247).

Itliong convincingly argued “that if the Mexicans did not stand with the Filipinas/os, if they were scabs while the Filipinas/os struck, then when the Mexicans went on strike, the Filipinas/os would be scabs” (Mabalon, 2013, p. 261). Fabros provided context

by stating,

> …you have to remember, the Filipinos were getting old. For them, for every penny, for every quarter, for every dollar, for every lug that they got paid extra, that went into the retirement fund (Delano Manongs, Arroy and McKay, 2014,15:53 - 16:30).

For Mexican workers and the NWLA, it would be risky to join the strike. They didn't have a strike fund nor any savings to support a walkout. Artist Ester Hernandez, who was a child of farmworkers during this era explained that, "...the bosses of the fields were threatening everybody left and right that they would lose their jobs, or that they would not be hired, or there were even threats of deportation….So it was pretty frightening" (The Struggle in the Fields, 1995, 09:01 - 09:25). Eliseo Medina, a labor organizer with the NFWA, remembered being moved by Chávez's words at a union meeting, sharing that he gave everyone hope that they could win despite their fears (10:17 - 10:53). Hernandez added that her family realized there was a lot at stake, but that, "even if we starved to death, that we would not be alone….we had to stay and fight because otherwise nothing was going to change" (11:28 - 11:52).



Figure 11.5.4: United Farm Workers Organizing Committee (UFW) president, César Chávez. (Licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0; By Movimiento)

Mexican workers voted to join the strike on September 16 (Mexican independence day) and then Filipinx and Mexican workers were united, fighting for the same cause. The AWOC and NFWA combined and formed a new union, the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee (UFW), with Larry Itliong as second in command under César Chávez (Delano Manongs, Arroy and McKay, 2014, 18:38 - 18:45).

Strikers met challenges on the fields, as growers brought in bus loads of replacement workers and attempted to halt the effectiveness of the strike with legal injunctions, limiting where strikers could picket. Strikers were also met with violence and arrests (The Struggle in the Field, 1995, 20:42 -22:08). Soon strike organizers orchestrated a grape **boycott** campaign, involving the average consumer who were encouraged to boycott purchasing grapes at their local supermarket until a deal was made with the UFW. Then governor of California, Ronald Reagan, would eat grapes in photo ops as often as he could, stating that he thought the boycott was immoral (Delano Manongs, Arroy and McKay, 2014, 19:38 - 1944).

With the *peregrinación* or Easter pilgrimage march in 1966, the movement gained mainstream visibility, changing "the course of American labor history" forever (Ruiz and Korrol, 2005, p. 248). A 300-mile march to the state capital resulted in Chávez emerging as the leader and the farmworkers' struggles became a symbol of the Chicano civil rights movement. Acuña emphasized that in addition to addressing the farmworkers' demands, Chávez also discussed larger economic justice issues and talked about non-violence (The Struggle in the Fields, 1995, 19:36 - 19:48).

An important aspect of this movement was non-violence, especially in contrast to the violence inflicted by growers and local police. It was important that, "Both César Chávez and Huerta adhered to the principles of Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr" (Ruiz and Korrol, 2005, p. p. 247). In an effort to maintain non-violence principles, Chávez made a decision to go on a fast on Valentine's Day, 1968. When Chávez broke his fast after 25 days, he attended mass, along with 4,000 supporters, including Senator Robert Kennedy, showing that the workers believed in Chávez's leadership (The Struggle in the Fields, 1995, 39:32 - 44:15).



Figure 11.5.5: UFW picket line urging a boycott of the Langley Park, MD Safeway Store which was carrying non-UFW grapes, Summer 1973. (Licensed under CC BY-NC 2.0; Photo by G. Dunkel/Workers World, retrieved from Washington Area Spark)

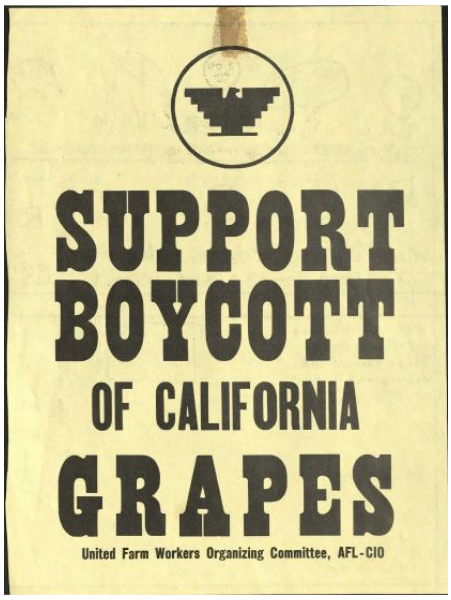


Figure 11.5.6: A UFW leaflet with the phrase "Support Boycott of California Grapes" passed out in the Washington, D.C. are circa 1969 during the years-long boycott of California table grapes in an effort to secure a labor contract for farmworkers. (Licensed under CC BY-NC 2.0; Image retrieved from Washington Area Spark)

Huerta successfully conducted an industry-wide grape boycott from 1968 - 1969, which received nationwide public support, with an estimated 17 million consumers supporting the boycott in 1970, shipments falling by 22% (Ruiz and Korrol, 2005, p. 248). After five long years of the strike, multiple growers signed contracts with the UFW and their grapes were officially union approved, stamped with the UFW label, “signaling the union’s approval to consumers” (p. 248). Twenty-six growers signed contracts with the UFW, raising wages to $1.80 an hour and $0.20 per box. They also secured hiring provisions around seniority when hiring workers, and placed strict protocols on the use of harmful pesticides (Ruiz and Korrol, 2005, p. 248 - 249).

Growers and farmworkers signed the contracts in the union hall in Delano on July 29, 1970, almost five years after the strike began. There was hope for this momentous ending to the most important farm working struggle. Eliseo Medina, a labor organizer noted the movements’ impact: “I think the greatest achievement is in the change that it made on people. Teaching them how they could fight, how they could stand up for their rights and win” (The Struggle in the Fields, 1995, 50:55 - 53:58).

For the Filipinx *manongs*, the signing of the contracts didn’t result in their favor. As the boycott gained national coverage, the media was focused on Mexican workers. Itliong commented: “To hear what’s going on, newspapers and TV and everything, it’s done by Mexicans. Nothing is being done by us. So naturally the Filipinos started drifting away” (Delano Manongs, Arroy and McKay, 2014, 20:16 - 20:28). *Manongs* left Delano in order to work the crop cycle and survive, essentially walking out of one of the longest strikes in labor history. Once contracts were signed in 1970, and the *manongs* returned to Delano for the new grape

harvest season, they found that they were pushed out of work (21:38 - 21:48). New union rules favored local farmworkers over migrant workers, so the *manongs* ended up losing their jobs. Worse still, farmers closed the labor camps so Filipinx workers lost their homes as well. Fabros explained that many of the *manongs* held Chávez in high regard and didn't want to say anything negative. He stated that ultimately the strike had achieved a union, a goal for the *manongs*, but, "I don't think it was in the image that they wanted. They didn't control it. We started it, we lost in the end" (21:49 - 22:51).

Of the frustrations Itliong faced working in the UFW, he said, "To tell you the truth, I've never taken the shit that I've been taking in this organization. But I do it, because I think it's bigger than me for the farmworkers to have an organization. It's the reason I do it" (22:51 - 23:08). Itliong eventually left the union and continued to work for the Filipinx community. He left behind a vision for a retirement home for the *manongs* and the UFW built this home in 1974. Richard Chávez commented that many volunteers came to help build it. At the opening celebration in 1975, a *manong* shared that this home gave him hope "That I'm going to be in a home that I might call my own, our own" (23:33 - 23:46).

Sidebar: Dolores Huerta



Figure 11.5.7: Dolores Huerta at the Montclair Film Festival in 2017. (Licensed under CC BY 2.0; Photo by Tony Turner/Montclair Film)

Dolores Huerta has been described by Alicia Chávez, professor of American Studies and Ethnicity, as "Unflappable as a union organizer…unapologetic as she lived against the grain…she leaves an indelible legacy of labor-organizing in U.S. history" (Ruiz and Korrol, 2005, p. 240). Huerta played an instrumental role in the success of the farmworkers movement of the 1960s, yet as noted by author Stacey K. Sowards, César Chávez is the established public figure representing the movement, and Dolores Huerta, on the other hand, had "received relatively little attention" (2019, p. 1).

Born April 10, 1930, in Dawson, New Mexico, Huerta was named Dolores Fernández. Her father was a coal miner, but also worked as a farm laborer and was involved in labor issues. When her parents divorced, Dolores moved to Stockton, California, where she was raised among the diverse farm working community of the Central San Joaquin Valley. Although Dolores was not a farmworker herself, her upbringing was influential in her decision later in life to be a labor organizer.

Dolores earned an Associate's degree and provisional teaching credentials at the College of the Pacific in Stockton and she taught English to the children of migrant farmworkers, giving her insight into their lives (Ruiz and Korrol, 2005, p. 243). But she eventually left teaching to go into community organizing. Dolores helped mobilize Chicanx communities for voter registration campaigns, addressed police harassment, and advocated for access to healthcare. After meeting César Chávez, they founded the National Farm Workers Association (NFWA) in 1962, in Delano, CA, which eventually became the United Farm Workers, or UFW. Huerta ended up dedicating 40 years of her life to this organization, playing "...an integral role in the UFW, as cofounder; vice president; key negotiator with growers; advisor to Chávez; lobbyist in Washington, DC, and Sacramento; and boycott organizer" (Sowards, 2019, p. 2).

The NFWA joined the Delano Grape Strike in 1966 and Dolores was known as an intrepid organizer, helping to formulate the UFW's base by talking to people one by one. She conducted door-to-door canvassing, traveled to speaking engagements, and became the first woman and Chicana to organize a union contract with California growers in 1970. And all while a mother to eleven children. Dolores continued lobbying for laws that would protect farmworkers, which eventually led to the passage of the Agricultural Labor Relations Act of 1975. She also spoke up for women's rights (Ruiz and Sánchez Korrol, 2005, p. 241).

Despite such major accomplishments, her leadership was largely ignored and she faced various challenges due to racial and gender discrimination. In one interview Dolores shared that she faced backlash for being an organizer from her family, farmworkers, as well as religious leaders. She had to work undercover through her husband and brother because organizing wasn't considered appropriate for women (Sowards, 2019, p. 31). Furthermore, much of Dolores's contribution to the movement "may have been misattributed to Chávez" including the slogan, "Si se puede" (p. 8).

Of Dolores's legacy, Alicia Chávez wrote: "She championed the often unrecognized skills that women brought to the union from their own life experiences, such as management of limited resources, organization, and vision for the long-term well-being of their families" (Ruiz and Korrol, 2005, p. 252). It's certainly not an overstatement to acknowledge Dolores Huerta's role and the unique skills she brought to the table in one of the most important labor movements of U.S. history.

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11.6: Transnational Organizing in the Diaspora

Justice for Comfort Women



Figure 11.6.1: "Comfort Women" - San Francisco Comfort Women Memorial, Column of Strength Statue. Statue designed by Steven Whyte. (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0; Photo by Stephanie Contreras)

"Comfort Women" is a euphemistic phrase used to describe around 200,000 women and girls (actual numbers vary according to each source, although some claim the numbers might have been as high as 400,000) who were coerced into sexual slavery by the Japanese Imperial Army in occupied territories before and during WWII (1931-1945). This was the largest institutionalized system of sexual slavery in the twentieth century. Girls as young as 10 years old and women from at least 13 countries were taken, including: Korea, China, the Philippines, Taiwan, Indonesia, Vietnam, Thailand, Burma, Malaysia, Okinawa, East Timor, Guam, and Australia.

The Japanese Imperial Army first started with early recruitment during the Russo and Sino Japanese Wars (1894 - 1895 and 1904 - 1905), but it wasn't until the Nanjing Massacre in 1937, where the "comfort woman system" became fully operational, as testimonies and reports told how women and girls were raped and systemically prostituted in Japanese "comfort stations." The justification for this system was apparently to prevent soldiers from gang-raping women in occupied Manchuria (Fukushima, 2010, p. 761). Soon, the military enacted forced "recruitment" and kidnappings across Japanese colonies. Girls and women were either directly taken by the Japanese, or by local governments and police departments who were ordered to provide women for them. They were also tricked with false promises of jobs (working in factories or hospitals) and instead, "found themselves trapped in a system of normalized sexual violence, or, rather, institutionalized rape" (p. 759).

These so-called "Comfort Women" were mostly teenagers, between the ages of 13-16. They were trafficked to comfort stations located all over occupied Japanese territory, oftentimes far from their homes, and trafficked from location to location. They were raped by some accounts up to 50 times daily, and when they resisted, the girls and women were starved, beaten, tortured, killed, and many ended up committing suicide. If they became pregnant, abortions were forced and some became infertile because of the daily systematic abuse and torture or due to STDs. It's estimated that only 10 - 35% survived, particularly after Japan's defeat in 1945 when many of the girls and women were killed by soldiers in an attempt to destroy evidence of the "comfort women" system (Fukushima, 2010, p. 761; Qiu, et al, 2013, p. 71 and p.74). The few who escaped or survived were abandoned in foreign countries, far from their homes. Many did not return home due to shame or for fear of being rejected by their families. They lived for decades in secrecy and suffered alone in silence, until 1991 when survivors began to share their testimonies publicly and confronted the Japanese government, demanding reparations and a formal apology. Three decades later, those demands have not been met.

Breaking the Silence and Justice for "Comfort Women" Movement



Figure 11.6.2: Dozens protested and marched in Berlin, to demand justice for the Korean "Comfort Women." (CC BY 2.0; Photo by Hossam el-Hamalawy)

Decades of silence and denial followed the war, but during the 1980s and 1990s, Japanese, South Korean, and Chinese activists, journalists, and feminists started to bring attention to this history. In 1991, former "comfort woman" Kim Hak-soon broke the silence and was the first to publicly testify to her experience, then others followed suit. The Japanese government denied any military and state involvement in creating a sex slavery system. Kim testified,

> For fifty years, I have had a heavy, painful feeling, but kept thinking in my heart about telling my experience some day. . . As I try to speak now, my heart pounds against my chest, because what happened in the past was something extremely unconscionable . . . Why does [the Japanese government] tell such a lie [to deny its knowledge of comfort women system]? Actually, I was made into a comfort woman, and I'm here alive (Nozaki 2005).

In 1992, Japanese historian Yoshiaki Yoshimi discovered direct evidence of the Japanese military's role in overseeing "comfort stations" despite the government's absolute silence about wartime atrocities committed during Japanese occupation in various parts of Asia. The continued denial is a struggle this movement faces, but the justice for "Comfort Women" movement remains "one of the most visible global initiatives to break the silence surrounding wartime atrocities and sexual violence" (Fukushima, 2010, p. 760). The movement to reveal the "dirty" secret of war and the use of rape as a weapon is an international human rights issue. The call for redress and reconciliation exposed the systemic role of the military in organized rape and torture, and Asian Americans in this movement have made important connections to the hypersexualization of Asian women and men, impacts of colonialism, western expansion being linked to violence, racism, and sexism, redress for war crimes, and the effects of sexual violence against women (pp. 759-760).

The movement uplifted testimonies of the brave "grandmothers," highlighting the important role of testimonies by everyday persons in the field of Ethnic Studies and understanding the history of marginalized racial groups. Professor of Ethnic Studies, University of Utah, Annie Fukushima, wrote that,

> Testimonials by surviving comfort women have shifted the paradigm of what counts as truth in Asian American history because the movement is defined by the voices of the comfort women, who suggest that there is a need to tell stories from the "ground up" and to hear the words of those who directly experience struggle. Testimonies convey that there are no words that can easily describe what the women went through. Such testimonies have proved valuable to the work of historians. Testimonies also proved critical for conveying to the Asian American movement what the comfort women experienced (2010, p. 760).

Surviving "Comfort Women" and activists have demanded a formal apology from the Japanese government, and sued for compensation. Some statements and apologies have been given by individual members of the Japanese government, such as when Prime Minister Miyazawa Kiichi officially apologized to South Korea (Nozaki 2005). But, there's yet to be an official apology directed toward all the women of various nationalities, nor major policy changing statements. There's been minimal education about "comfort women" in school textbooks in Japan. Private funds were set in 1994 to compensate survivors, but many "comfort women" activists rejected it, citing it wasn't official since money came from private donations. More recently, there have been efforts by the conservative Japanese government and revisionist organizations to interrupt memorialization efforts in the U.S., largely denying the government's involvement or claiming that "Comfort Women" were highly paid prostitutes. As of 2022, the Japanese government continues to publicly deny any involvement, including one of their most boisterous deniers, former Prime Minister of Japan, Shinzo Abe (who was assassinated on July 8, 2022).

The 2015 “Agreement” between Japan and South Korea

The so-called 2015 “Agreement” between Japan and South Korea was only an oral “agreement,” never written, and has been rejected by “Comfort Women” survivors and their supporters. The discussed fund to support “Comfort Women” was conditional, Japan demanding that South Korea stop criticizing them and remove the "comfort women" memorial in front of the Japanese Embassy in Seoul, and consider the matter a "final and irreversible resolution." This “agreement” has also faced criticism for excluding surviving “Comfort Women,” including those from 12 other nations, for negating coercion and legal responsibility by the Japanese government, and because this so-called compensation would not be paid directly to survivors.

Surviving “comfort women” filed a lawsuit against the Japanese government and in January 2021, they won the case, but the Japanese government ignored the ruling. In another verdict in April of that same year, the court granted sovereign immunity to Japan and the “comfort women” victim’s lawsuit was ended. Regardless, both trials acknowledged the survivors’ claims about the Japanese military’s role in coerced sex slavery (Hosaka, 2021).

Fighting for Justice from the U.S.



Figure 11.6.3: Author Kay Fischer and Chabot College students pose with Grandma Lee Yong-soo at the *Columns of Strength* memorial unveiling in San Francisco, September 22, 2017. (Licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0; Photo by Kay Fischer)

Activists in the United States also fought for justice for our "grandmothers," pressuring political representatives to take action. In 2007, Representative Mike Honda sponsored House Resolution 121 which expressed that the government of Japan "should formally acknowledge, apologize, and accept historical responsibility in a clear and unequivocal manner for its Imperial Armed Forces' coercion of young women into sexual slavery."

In 2015, San Francisco Board of Supervisors unanimously voted to approve a “Comfort Women” memorial to be built, becoming the first major city in the United States to have such a memorial. In addition, four more “Comfort Women” memorials exist in the U.S.: Glendale, CA, Virginia, Michigan, and New Jersey. In 2016, the California Board of Education approved the inclusion of "comfort women" in 10th grade world history curriculum. Both efforts have been supported by various human rights, feminist, and Asian American organizations, such as the "Comfort Women" Justice Coalition (CWJC), self-described as “a grassroots, multi-ethnic and multi-national group of individuals and organizations” ("Comfort Women" Justice Coalition). Author, Kay Fischer, is a member of Eclipse Rising, one of the partner organizations that participated in this coalition and in the campaign to bring about the memorial.

Prompted by the Abe administration’s “massive global PR campaign to ‘correct’ the world’s understanding of Japan’s history….‘Comfort Women’ denialism has come stateside, hitting home for Asians and Asian Americans across the diaspora” (Kim Lee, 2016). Revisionists have claimed, without evidence, that memorials prompt hate crimes towards the Japanese community, and often completely deny that such a system ever existed, asserting that “Comfort Women” were “highly paid prostitutes,” accusing these women to be liars, or disputing the number of women and children affected by this sex slavery system. American professor of Japanese Legal Studies, Harvard, Mark Ramseyer repeated such assertions in 2021, stating that Korean “comfort women” “chose prostitution.” Opponents went as far as attempting to sue the city of Glendale, CA to demand the removal of their memorial, but the

lawsuit was dismissed in 2016 (Constante, 2017). Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals Judge Kim McLane Wardlaw claimed that Glendale erected a memorial that takes a stand against human rights violations which is well within the rights and responsibilities of local governments.

In 2018, the mayor of Osaka, Japan, Hirofumi Yoshimura, severed sister-city ties with San Francisco, attempting to force the mayor, London Breed, to take down the memorial, *Column of Strength* (Ingber, 2018). The San Francisco-Osaka Sister City Association responded that the sister-city relationship is not between the two city governments, but instead a partnership between the two cities' civic organizations, nonprofits, and businesses. On the one-year anniversary of the memorial's unveiling in San Francisco, September 22, 2018, delegates from two Japanese organizations, the Kansai Network to Resolve the Comfort Women Issue and the Forum from the Improvement of Osaka, visited and participated in the ceremony. Pang Chung Ja of the Kansai Network, stated, "Even if the mayor of Osaka proceeds with the termination, I feel that our relationship with the people of San Francisco has only deepened these past few years and only continues to grow stronger….Let us work together to solve this issue" (Hirai, 2018). Hisaye Ogawa with the Osaka delegation mentioned that they came to seek an apology from their own Japanese government.

Miho Kim Lee of Eclipse Rising and the CWJC, who was instrumental in coordinating visits by the two delegations from Japan, wrote that teaching "Comfort Women" history and erecting memorials serve the long-term purpose of remembrance, but is also in and of itself a "subversive act of resistance." She continued, "...let us fight for the right to remember our beautiful and enduring legacy of suffering, courage, survival and joy, which serves as a reservoir of strength to inform our cultural identities and visions for the world" (Kim Lee, 2016).



Figure 11.6.4: "Unifying Hands" - San Francisco Comfort Women Memorial, Column of Strength Statue. (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0; Photo by Stephanie Contreras)

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11.7: Contemporary Environmental, Racial and Gender Justice Movements

21st Century Movements

Many of the core issues faced by earlier generations of activists still dominate our social world today: police brutality, war, environmental destruction, racism, gender inequities, healthcare, sovereignty, and education. Movements in the 21st century are different because we also face different challenges like Climate Change, and utilize distinct tools and technologies that are specific to our time period, like social media, Internet technology, and digital art. Ultimately, the successes and victories of these movements are still being decided today, by activists, social movement organizations, advocacy coalitions, governments, corporations, counter-movements, and countless other stakeholders. It will be up to individuals to participate and become leaders for these movements to determine if they continue to grow, and succeed in achieving justice and liberation.

Environmental Justice

Environmental justice is a common issue for movements led by communities of color and Indigenous peoples. Centuries of settler-colonialism have assaulted the land and separated Indigenous peoples from their traditional homes, cultural sites, and ecological niches. Related, environmental racism describes the pattern of environmental hazards having a disproportionate impact on communities of color. For example, the concentration of industrial waste from factories and refineries tend to pollute the air and water of low-income communities of color. In 2017, CAUSE (Central Coast Alliance for a United Sustainable Economy) led organizing efforts in Oxnard, California to prevent the building of a power plant and after years of fighting along with other community organizations managed to defeat the initiative and help enable cleaner air. The community, according to CAUSE, is home to over 85% people of color of a total of 200,000 population. Structural violence maintains its systemic force by both producing health disparities in the environment and disconnecting communities from systems of care and support that offer protection from these harmful effects. Environmental justice movements work to address the overlapping systems of environmental exploitation and racism.

Native American and Indigenous communities approach environmental justice in tandem with struggles over sovereignty and self-determination. Land Back movements have been influential in amplifying calls for Native people to be reunited with their traditional homelands. This includes both the surrender of private lands owned by individuals and corporations, as well as the restoration of land rights based on generations of treaties between the U.S. government and Native American tribes.

The NDN Collective has been a champion for Land Back movements and staged high-profile demonstrations in support of these goals. While Land Back emphasizes the harm of unrightful land ownership, Indigenous movements for the environment also focus on stewardship and the interrelations between the land, water, air, and environment as a whole. Water Protectors have become active leaders in the movements against multiple large pipeline projects in the United States, including the Dakota Access Pipeline and Line 3. See also "Standing Rock - Protests of the Dakota Access Pipeline" under Chapter 4.

These movements provide opportunities to stop the ongoing project of settler-colonialism, restore and support Indigenous sovereignty, and begin a process of healing between the people and the land. For example, the Sogorea Te' Land Trust is a project started by Corrina Gould and Johnella LaRose, along with other Native activists. The project is led by urban Indigenous women and advocates for the traditional Ohlone lands in northern California that are threatened by development and encroachment. You can learn more about their project and current initiatives on the Sogorea Te' Land Trust website online. In Figure 11.7.1, you can see an example of this type of activism in a poster of support for #NoDAPL, which reads: “We Are Not Protestors. We Are Protectors” - Iyuskin American Horse. Stop the Dakota Access Pipeline.

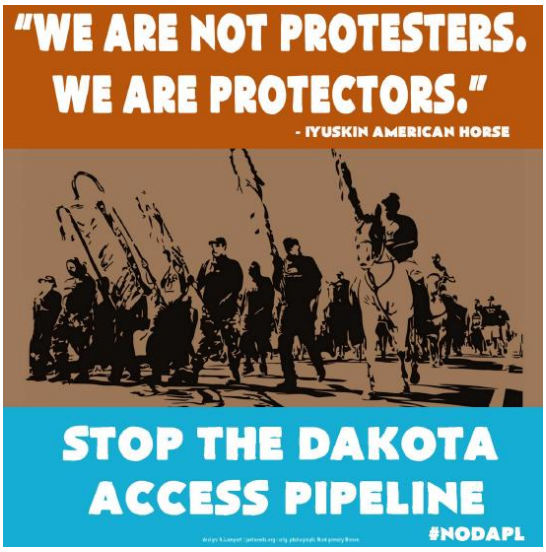


Figure 11.7.1: We Are Not Protestors. We Are Water Protectors. (CC BY-NC-ND 3.0; Nicolas Lampert via JustSeeds)

Racial Justice and Gender Justice

Racial justice struggles in the 21st century have taken a prominent role in political and cultural life, ranging from representation in politics and media to everyday people taking to the streets, sharing their opinions on social media, and engaging with new content and new perspectives. The Black Lives Matter network formed in 2013 by Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi to coordinate protest movements in response to the killing of Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, Eric Garner, and Rekia Boyd, among others. While the group responds specifically to the issue of police officers killing unarmed Black people, it also has become a platform for a range of cultural conversations about race, racism, and politics internationally. In 2014, the African American Policy Forum launched the campaign #SayHerName to bring attention to the Black women, girls, and femmes who are targeted by police violence. The growing Black Lives Matter and Say Her Name movements also elevated calls to defund the police, abolish prisons, and address systemic racism in all its forms. For more context on these issues, you can revisit Chapter 10.

The 21st Century has also seen increased anti-Asian violence and discrimination, including following the September 11 terrorist attacks (9/11) and the COVID-19 pandemic. After 9/11, the "War on Terror" amplified racist sentiments toward Arab, Arab American, Muslim, South Asian, and Southwest Asian people in the United States, as well as a generalized increase in xenophobic sentiment and anti-immigrant discrimination. See more on post-9/11 racial profiling of these communities in Chapter 10. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, individual people and political leaders have actively sponsored anti-Asian lies that scapegoat Asians and/or Asian Americans for a global public health crisis. While hatred and bigotry spread, at the same time, people have come together to stand up in support of their own communities and in alliances against xenophobia.

From an intersectional perspective, gender justice has also taken an important role in 21st century movements and politics. Gender and patriarchy deeply impact racial justice, and addressing racism is central to enacting gender equity and feminism. The Women's March, which was formed in 2016, sought to bring this vision of intersectional feminism to the center of the mainstream women's movement, which has often been critiqued for not challenging white supremacy and capitalist exploitation. These dynamics were seen in the #MeToo movement, which centrally focused on high-profile sexual predators like Jeffrey Epstein, who targeted celebrities and other affluent or middle-class women. Despite this media focus, farmworker activists and other groups utilized this same tag and movement momentum to seek justice for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence outside of the entertainment industry. Similarly, the #MMIWG2S movement brings attention to the transnational issue of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit people. In the United States, in particular, activists have also brought attention to the disproportionate murders of Black and Latina/x trans women. Trans rights remain an important part of larger struggles for gender justice and intersectional liberation. In Figure 11.7.2, there is an activist poster showing the faces of Black trans women, along with the text, "Black Trans Lives Matter" #saytheirnames.

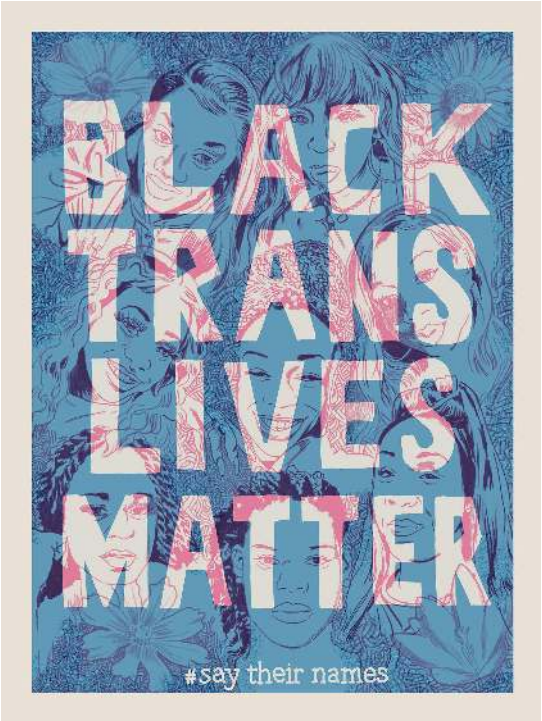


Figure 11.7.2: Black Trans Lives Mater- Say their name. (CC BY-NC-ND 3.0; José 'Primo' Hernández via JustSeeds)

Sidebar: Linda Sarsour and the Women's March



Figure 11.7.3: Linda Sarsour at the 2016 Festival of Faiths "Sacred Wisdom, Pathways to Nonviolence" panel discussion. (CC BY 2.0; Festival of Faiths via Flickr)

Linda Sarsour is a Palestinian Muslim American activist and organizer from Brooklyn, New York. She served as a national co-chair of the Women's March and a co-founder of MPower Change, a Muslim digital advocacy organization that works toward race, social, and economic justice. The Women's March in 2017 ended up being the largest single-day protest in US history at the time.

Upon Trump's victory the day after the presidential election in 2016, women across the nation were connecting online to plan a Million Women's March for the day after Inauguration Day in January of 2017. According to Sarsour's memoir, *We Are Not Here to Be Bystanders: A Memoir of LOVE and RESISTANCE* (2020), Vanessa Wruble, founder of OkayAfrica, noticed that all the people conversing online were white and reached out to a trio of women of color who "can organize in their sleep": Tamika Mallory, Carmen Perez, and Linda Sarsour (pp. 201-202). These three women ended up being national co-chairs of the Women's March alongside Bob Bland. They first changed the name of the march to simply the Women's March since the Million Women's March "echoed the name of an action" (p. 202) led by Black women in Philadelphia twenty years ago. Sarsour explains that the white women organizers weren't aware of the earlier march but in their ignorance, had offended African American women who saw this as co-opting the name of a march about the "empowerment of Black women" (p. 202). Sarsour continues, "This kind of miscommunication was why the organizers needed women of color in the mix, not just Carmen, Tamika, and me, but a whole roster of brilliant Black and brown women who now joined us at the table" (p. 202).

Sarsour discusses some of the challenges they faced while organizing the march, particularly from "white women in our group [who] were not used to answering to a fierce, bristling ball of fire in the body of a petite Black woman" (p. 204) referring to Tamika's leadership. The co-chairs pushed for a diversity of speakers who would speak to a broad audience and made sure that the march wasn't only about expressing rage, but also about "demanding change" (p. 204). In addition to gender issues, Sarsour and women of color organizers made sure that central to the vision of the march was that they were fighting for "the right for everyone to live freely and practice their religion and have economic, racial and social justice" (p. 205). They applied an intersectional framing to this vision, including the voices of people affected by immigration policies, environmental racism, and structural violence.

Sarsour and other women of color in the organizing group were accused of being divisive when intersecting racial justice with gender issues and some women of color were concerned that white women were feeling alienated. However, Sarsour reminded organizers that the…

> concern itself was problematic, because centering the experiences of marginalized women was not about upsetting white women; it was about helping them to recognize how they were consciously or unconsciously aiding and abetting the very patriarchy that they claimed to be fighting against (pp. 206-207).

On January 21, 2017, millions across the nation and the globe joined companion marches. Sarsour described that the excitement was tangible in Washington, D.C., but what moved her the most was that many were carrying posters of an image by artist Shepard Fairey of a Muslim woman in an American-flag hijab. Sarsour wrote, "My skin tingled at the sight of her, because in my country, on this day, a Muslim woman in a hijab had become a potent symbol of American freedom" (p. 211). Seven million people marched that day, and 1.2 million were in Washington. When Sarsour spoke on the stage, she brought her mother and her three children. She stated, "*Assalamu alaikum*, may peace be upon you, brothers and sisters….I stand here before you unapologetically Muslim American, unapologetically Palestinian American, unapologetically from Brooklyn, New York" (Democracy Now!, 2017; Sarsour, 2020, p. 212). When reflecting on her speech and the other women who marched and spoke on that stage on that historic day, Sarsour wrote in her memoir:

> We had put the forces of hate and division on notice that we were marching to center stage, and they'd better get ready because the reckoning was here, and we would bring our sisters, mothers, and daughters along with us, and the men who were our allies, and together we would change the world (p. 213).

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11.8: Summary/Review

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have explored the dynamics and outcomes of social movements, which drive the history of Ethnic Studies both in terms of its content and pedagogy. Movements for racial justice and decolonization have been critical in advancing civil rights, Indigenous sovereignty, improved labor conditions, and transnational solidarity. These movements have inspired change and continue in our contemporary society as agents for change and transformation. Solidarity and resistance bring together communities, and address the root causes of inequity and exclusion.

In learning about various frameworks for action, we can see that intersectionality and decolonization share many principles with other anti-oppressive systems. However, diverse communities must always leverage the resources available in their own local contexts. For instance, we learned about the role of organizing mutual support for marginalized communities within social movements, like the Black Panther Party's free breakfast for neighborhood children. Developing greater knowledge of how activists have worked toward change creates new possibilities for students, advocates, and scholars to envision and bring about more just and equitable societies, centered on the principles of anti-racism, decolonization, and solidarity. The goal of sovereignty and agency is shown visually in Figure 11.8.1, which represents a fist emerging out of the waves of the ocean, along with the words Self-Determination.



Figure 11.8.1: Self-Determination. (CC BY-NC-ND 3.0; Aaron Hughes via JustSeeds)

Key Terms

- **Indigenous sovereignty:** This refers to the self-determination and legal standing of Native and Indigenous peoples. Sovereignty refers to the historical relationship between peoples and governments and is an explicitly political project that concerns land rights, treaties between tribes and other governments, and the political standing of Native Americans and Indigenous peoples.
- **Disability Justice Framework:** A framework for social justice organizing centering people with disabilities focused on representation, advocacy, and social change.
- **Allies:** Allies are members of a dominant group who take an active role in understanding their privilege and working to support members of a marginalized group. This practice builds relationships across differences and encourages listening, learning from mistakes, and continually taking action. Allies take action without centering their own identity or seeking validation of their allyhood. Allyship is one component of acting in solidarity against systems of marginalization.
- **Accomplices:** Accomplices go beyond supporting members of a marginalized group to take sustained and proactive action, such as when white people actively work toward anti-racism, men commit to ending patriarchy, and straight/cisgender people work against the oppression of LGBTQ+ people. Accomplices have already developed substantial knowledge and cultural

humility to align their actions with the leadership and goals of marginalized group members. Another term is co-conspirator. This refers to the necessity of working actively in continual collaboration with people of color and other marginalized groups and taking active risks to unsettle the status quo.

- **Boycott:** A nonviolent action of protest, boycotts call on the masses to abstain for commercial services in order to make an economic impact. The hope is that pressure from boycotts will push those in power to negotiate with the protestors, leading to significant social transformation. For example, Black domestic workers led the Montgomery Bus Boycott in order to challenge racial segregation in public transportation. And the United Farm Workers movement urged consumers to boycott grapes in order to pressure agricultural corporations to negotiate fair contracts with farm workers.
- **Civil Rights Movement:** Considered one of the most effective mass movements, the Civil Rights Movement in the United States ushered in a series of changes to laws and practices that led to the dismantling of the Jim Crow South and legal racial segregation of schools, businesses, and public transportation. The movement also led to instituting voting rights for African Americans. The Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. emerged as a leader for this movement, although there were many others who haven't been as widely recognized for their leadership such as Bayard Rustin, Fannie Lou Hamer, Ella Baker, and Septima Clark. The Civil Rights Movement and Dr. King utilized nonviolent actions including sit-ins, protests, and marches.
- **"Serve-the-people" programs:** A core objective for various liberatory movements of the 1960s and '70s, the Asian American movement, Black Panthers, Brown Berets, American Indian Movement, and the Young Lords organized services for communities of color that the government failed to provide, such as access to affordable housing, healthcare, labor rights, free breakfast programs, women's rights and more.
- **Workers centers:** Workers centers are places and organizations that support and organize with immigrant workers who are particularly vulnerable to exploitation, such as undocumented immigrant laborers, especially women. Abuses include wage theft, no labor rights, sexual harassment, and more. These centers, like Mujeres Unidas y Activas (MUA) were established upon the arrive of immigrants with community organizing backgrounds. They work various issues including preventing deportations, supporting sanctuaries, and establishing workers rights like the Domestic Workers Bill of Rights.
- **Domestic Workers Bill of Rights:** A set of basic workplace rights and protections for domestic workers that are too often not considered. Some of these rights and protections include overtime pay, paid sick leave, legal protection from harassment and discrimination, set safety practices, rest and privacy. New York passed such a bill in 2010 and a Bill of Rights at the federal level has been introduced.
- **The Bracero Program:** The Bracero Program (1942 - 1964) started as a joint agreement between the U.S. and Mexico that led to the "importation" of male agricultural laborers, also referred to as *braceros*, from Mexico to the U.S. to help fill the labor shortage during WWII. The second initiation of recruitment resulted from a U.S. executive order, and was essentially a guest worker program where *braceros* were hired cheaply to work temporarily and returned to Mexico.
- **The Delano Grape Strike:** The Delano Grape Strike of 1965 is arguably the most important and successful farm workers strikes in California labor history. Initiated by Filipinx labor leader, Larry Itliong, he convinced the Mexican union to soon join, led by César Chávez and Dolores Huerta. The strike ended up lasting five long years, and strikers lost their homes and were met with violence and arrests. Organizers orchestrated a grape boycott campaign, encouraging millions of consumers to boycott purchasing grapes at their local supermarket until a deal was made with the United Farm Workers (a union created from Filipinx and Mexican unions). In 1970 multiple growers signed contracts with the UFW, raising wages, securing hiring provisions around seniority when hiring workers, and placing strict protocols on the use of harmful pesticides.
- **"Comfort Women":** "Comfort Women" is a euphemistic phrase used to describe around 200,000 women and girls (actual numbers might be twice as high or more) who were coerced into sexual slavery by the Japanese Imperial Army in occupied territories before and during WWII (1931-1945). This was the largest institutionalized system of sexual slavery in the twentieth century. Girls as young as 10 years old and women from at least 13 countries were taken, including: Korea, China, the Philippines, Taiwan, Indonesia, Vietnam, Thailand, Burma, Malaysia, Okinawa, East Timor, Guam, and Australia. Today, surviving "Comfort Women," affectionately called "grandmothers" and their supporters have demanded a formal apology and reparations from the Japanese government. Some members of the government, and their supporters, continue to actively deny this history and suppress calls for justice in Japan and across the globe, including in the U.S.
- **Environmental Justice:** These are movements led by communities of color and Indigenous peoples calling out the disastrous effects of centuries of environmental destruction. Environmental racism calls attention to how low-income communities of color are targets of pollution, including the dumping or leaking of hazardous waste, air and water contamination, and more. Environmental justice movements work to address the overlapping systems of environmental exploitation and racism.

Discussion Questions

1. Review the section on allies, accomplices, and co-conspirators. What are some examples of these you have seen? How have others shown up for you as an ally, accomplice, or co-conspirator?
2. When is the first time you remember learning about social movements? What was the context? How has your understanding changed over time?
3. Struggles for racial justice and decolonization have always included mass participation by everyday activists. What are some of the core reasons that people get involved in social movements? What would motivate you to protest a policy or institutional practice?

Journal Prompts

1. You've been introduced to several frameworks for action in this chapter. Summarize 2-3 key points for one of the frameworks that you're most drawn to. Then, explain why you're interested in that framework. If you've already been engaged in activism, how have you applied this framework of action to your own activist work? Or how might you want to?
2. What is significant when learning that the farmworkers movement was multiracial with Mexican and Filipinx farmers and leaders? Why do you think that more mainstream narratives around the farmworkers' movement don't include (or minimize the roles of) Dolores Huerta or Filipinx leaders?
3. Analyze two reasons why we should learn about the history of the domestic workers' movement and the role that women of color played in campaigns for workers' rights and justice.

Class Activities

Allyhood Role Play and Guided Discussion

- In this activity, you will have the opportunity to explore what it means to be an ally and an accomplice. Using what you learned in this chapter, you will be divided into groups to generate different responses to a specific scenario.
  - In your groups, you should roleplay the scenario to generate responses that are meaningful and authentic.
- For a small group, use one scenario and have two groups. The first group will discuss the ally response to the scenario, and the second group will discuss the accomplice response to the scenario.
- With larger groups, you may want to create multiple ally and accomplice groups. Then they can be paired together for a comparison of their perspectives before returning to the large group to debrief.
- Example Scenarios:
  - You are shopping with a friend at a clothing store, and the clerk is continuing to follow them and watch their movements. Consider how the dynamics between your friend and the clerk may be impacted by your actions.
  - While talking with a group of friends, someone mentions that they were surprised that their Black teacher had gone to a prestigious university and was very “articulate.”

Activist Sign-Making

- One of the main goals of political protests can be to raise awareness and influence how people perceive different social issues. Activist signs are typically carried at protests and usually include a slogan or phrase, along with some artistic representation or design. Some are quite simple, with a phrase or word in black Sharpee on a piece of ripped cardboard, or printed signs showing a group’s logo or candidate’s name. Others are quite elaborate, include mixed media, and make use of humor, puns, satire, and critique to evoke an emotional response and ensure retention.
  - For inspiration, you may want to look for examples. Some starting places can be found in the links in the following list.
    - Unforgettable Black Lives Matter Protest Signs
    - Here Are Some Of The Most Powerful Protest Posters From History
  - You can either conduct this activity in person using cardboard paper, markers, glue, and other sign-making materials, or online and have students use a service like Canva or other software.

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