



HERITAGE

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The Providence College Black Studies Program Newsletter

“First they came for the Jews and I did not speak out because I was not a Jew. Then they came for the Communists and I did not speak out because I was not a Communist. Then they came for the trade unionists and I did not speak out because I was not a trade unionist. Then they came for me and there was no one left to speak out for me.”
-Martin Niemöller

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An Icon Comes Alive: Reading, Listening and Experiencing Dr. Angela Davis

Angela Davis’ lecture at RISD was certainly an opportunity of a lifetime. I am truly grateful to have been given the chance to listen to the wise words of such an integral leader in black history. Her lecture topic of “Building Communities of Activism” truly spoke to the current conditions of our nation.

Through reflecting on the thoughts of Martin Luther King, Jr., Davis asserted that we should concentrate on our collective struggle through building activism in our communities. We cannot create the necessary change as individuals; instead, we must join together and imagine a future of racial, economic, and social justice. Angela Davis serves as an inspirational figure through her call to action. As college students, it is essential that we follow the legacy of individuals like Angela Davis, never settling for anything less than the equality that we all deserve.

-Dara Greenidge ‘12

Starting a week of appreciation in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s legacy, Angela Davis came and

spoke at a local Providence School, RISD. Taking a Black Studies course with Dr. Julia Jordan-Zachery, you are more than likely to read at least one article written by Angela Davis. So hearing Davis speak became surreal. I truly appreciate the opportunity I had to hear Davis’ speech.

As she entered the auditorium a huge applause was given. Who would have known that one woman could have such an impact on the audience. When Davis spoke the whole audience was truly blown away by her physical presence and her spoken word.

In her speech, Davis focused on building communities of activism and having a vision of change. Davis also called on students to become actively involved in their communities. As Black History Month comes to an end, I ask of students of Providence College to stand up and take action. As Davis ended her speech, with a quote by June Jordan, “We are the ones that

we have been waiting for”.

-Chastity Mathurin ‘15

Like many others, my original understanding of Angela Davis

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“Driving While Brown”: Immigration and Racial Profiling Dara Greenidge ‘12

Immigration in the United States is an interesting study of contradictions. Ideology says, “Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, the wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me, I lift my lamp beside the golden door!” Such words were intended to be welcoming to immigrants entering the United States since the early 1900s, as they were engraved and mounted in the Statue of Liberty. But reality, depending on the immigrant’s home country, seems to say something different.

In the past, most immigrants came to the United States to escape various forms of persecution or for economic relief. Individuals often came with the idea that they would send money home to their

struggling families. Regardless of the impetus for migration, immigrants came to the US to seek a better life—to seek the “American Dream.” We ask, does this American Dream exist for Latino immigrants? Are the afforded similar opportunities as those afforded to the Irish, and the Italian?

As a documented immigrant in the United States, the struggles of everyday life increase dramatically in comparison to native born citizens. One must adapt to a new standard of living, a new way of dress, a new set of laws, and often times, a new language. As an undocumented immigrant, the struggles are even more complex. One of these difficulties is dealing with racial profiling and the threat

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Immigration: A Professor's Reflections Marie Courtemanche, Professor of Political Science

The issue of immigration, to me, is quite fascinating and has many dimensions. For instance, Americans tend to pride themselves in the fact that they hail from a nation of immigrants. It's not uncommon to hear stories of a grandparent's route to the new country. Nor of the struggles and turmoil she faced upon arrival. Quite paradoxically however, even as Americans express pride in their immigrant roots, large swaths of the population concurrently support placing greater restrictions on immigration. For example, a 2004 survey found that roughly 47% of those interviewed preferred less immigration compared with a scant 11% wanting immigration levels to increase. Therefore, seemingly there exists a tension in beliefs. How can individuals be simultaneously proud of our immigrant heritage yet largely supportive of immigration restrictions?

This apparent conundrum propelled me to spend some time investigating the rationale behind restrictive preferences. In my dissertation I explored the extent to which attitudes were informed by self-interest. More specifically, I argued that those negatively affected on

the labor market by immigrants would be most supportive of restrictions. Overall, the results of my study were quite interesting. Both occupational type and to some extent union membership seemed to play a meaningful role in determining attitudes toward immigration. Those who experienced greater competition within the job market were more likely to support restrictions. The influence of each was weak however. The effect of prejudice on immigration preferences, however, was quite strong. Feelings toward illegal immigrants were clearly predictive of immigration preferences. The more coldly an individual felt toward illegal immigrants the greater the likelihood he would endorse greater restrictions on immigration. Moreover, negative feelings toward other group members (e.g. Asians, Blacks, homosexuals) were able to explain immigration preferences. Unfortunately this suggests strongly that prejudice is a driving force behind support for greater restrictions.

There is a glimmer of hope however. In addition to prejudice, education had a consistent and strong effect on immigration support levels. The more educated a person was, the greater

the likelihood she would support immigration. Thus, those with a college education were much less likely to support restrictions as compared to individuals with just a high school education. This is not tremendously surprising given the fact that education has been demonstrated to help foster tolerance toward different lifestyles and cultures. Consequently, the better educated are more tolerant of differences, especially those encountered through immigration. Thus in the end, students at PC are well-suited in that they will be more likely to tolerate differences now and in the future than their peers who have not attended college. Moreover, as the US population grows more educated and subsequently more tolerant the effects of prejudicial thinking should diminish. So perhaps in the near future Americans will be more supportive of immigration. Only time will tell however.



How can individuals be simultaneously proud of our immigrant heritage yet largely supportive of immigration restrictions?

No, I'm no Angela Davis; however on that day several years ago she showed me, and continues to show me, the real meaning of a scholar-activist.

An Icon Comes Alive: Reading, Listening and Experiencing Dr. Angela Davis

was embodied in her iconic afro and raised fist. Angela Davis was and is an image of the modern Black freedom struggle of the U.S. We wear her image across our chest; we strive to be her at our costume parties.

But who is Angela Davis? Well, this is not a biography, so I won't

"Revolution is a serious thing, the most serious thing about a revolutionary's life. When one commits oneself to the struggle, it must be for a lifetime."

-Angela Davis

attempt to answer that. Instead I'll reminisce on all that Angela Davis has meant to me over the years. In my early 20s I started graduate school. I envisioned myself with a Ph.D. in Economics and a desire to challenge the policies of the World Bank and the IMF. Black power and Black feminism were tangential to my educational experience. Then I met and developed an intellectual crush on Angela Davis. She gave a talk at UCONN. With my limited knowledge of Angela Davis I went to the talk out of curiosity. I left the presentation with a hunger. Dr. Davis spoke so eloquently and passionately on the Prison Industrial Complex and its implications both domestically and internationally. I walked out being ashamed of my ignorance, but with

a quest to learn more. Her lecture opened up the doors to a set of knowledge that I didn't even know existed. I soaked it in and in the meantime questioned what I wanted to do with myself—the ever apparent question of a 20 something. Eventually, I switched majors and completed my Ph.D. in Political Science. Moving forward in the story, some years later I was told not to waste my time writing about and researching Black women. Why, because this would lead me to a dead end in academia. However, I had a secret weapon—I had the writings of Angela Davis and many other Black women. As part of my "silent" protest against the control of information and knowledge I wrote the book and I continue to do the research that tells of the inequitable treatment of Black women. No, I'm no Angela Davis; however on that day several years ago she showed me, and continues to show me, the real meaning of a scholar-activist. My role is to make this real for others in the same way that Angela Davis made it real for me.

-Julia S. Jordan-Zachery, Director of Black Studies

POETRY : IMMIGRATION ON OUR MIND

Hopeful

I traveled a distance searching and hoping for a place that
 I may in fact never find
 It's a place of Equality and Acceptance that may only exist
 in my mind
 My hair is long and straight
 My eyes hazel and my complexion is light often mistaken
 for me being white
 I live a double life not desiring to choose
 Because no matter what, in the long run I'm the one who
 stands to lose
 Some say I'm different and stand out from the rest
 Nonetheless, they treat me not as an equal but rather less-
 er than less
 I don't understand why it matters that my parents are
 Black and White
 When our focus should be on stopping Discrimination,
 Injustice and Hatred
 And start treating everyone that's different Right.
 Tears shed from our eyes and blood flows through our
 veins
 For God created us all different
 However speaking we should all be treated "JUSTLY" and
 the SAME

Written by: Deborah Alexander
www.dlabooks.yolasite.com

Home Sweet Home

Here there everywhere
 Home is where the heart is
 But my heart is where the money is
 Sad, but true I have to support my family
 I have to support myself so there is no option
 People here have a growing animosity towards me
 Saying, "Go back to where you came from".
 However, it does not change my responsibility
 I would rather be comfortable where I live too
 But, being comfortable does not pay the bills, does not
 Feed my children, and does not support my lifestyle
 I would rather go back where I came from because I have an Identity
 Instead of being here where I am no one, but I represent
 An alien, an illegal, an undocumented,
 And this is the place I call, "Home"
 ~Written by: Dora Mighty

All American

close your eyes.
 imagine.
 not being able to go to college.
 not being able to get that dream job you wanted.
 remember.
 those days when in kindergarten,
 when you were asked what you wanted
 to be when you grew up?
 imagine
 if you worked hard in school,
 made good grades,
 BUT when it came time for you to apply for
 college
 you found out you weren't able to.
 imagine
 how you would feel.
 frustrated?
 angry?
 sad?
 hopeless?
 imagine
 the place you call home
 has rejected you and called you
 illegal and an alien
 imagine
 you came to america not knowing
 to young to make decisions
 you came with family members
 hoping, looking for a chance at a better life
 imagine
 you claimed america as your home
 the land of the free
 the home of the brave
 you knew no other home
 NOW open your eyes
 look around you
 can you tell me who is truly american?
 can you tell me who belongs?
 can you tell me who doesn't belong?
 in the end
 the question really is what is:
 what does it mean to be an American?

- Written by: Imani Smith Dell

“Driving While Brown”: Immigration and Racial Profiling

of deportation that is associated with this practice. What, exactly, does “driving while brown” entail? Racial profiling is the practice of having pre-determined ideas about the behaviors and the actions of an individual, solely based on their race or skin color. This applies particularly to traffic stops by police. This practice is unjust because it assumes that someone is behaving a certain way simply because they are of a certain race. It assigns these behaviors to individuals on account of their race rather than their individual behaviors.

Immigrants of color—specifically Latinos—are subject to discrimination simply due to appearance. Through the Immigration and Customs Enforcement’s Secure Communities program, which is implemented throughout the country, many legal immigrants have been discriminated against through unlawful detainment (*American Civil Liberties Union*, 2011). The program’s “detain first, investigate later” policy directly violates individuals’ Fourth Amendment rights of detaining a person without probable cause. It also takes freedoms away from United States citizens who *appear* to be immigrants in the eyes of law enforcement.

An example of racial profiling of undocumented immigrants occurred in the form of an immigration bill passed in Arizona in 2010. Governor Jan Brewer passed a state law that made seeking out and arresting undocumented immigrants a duty of the local police. This was in response to the high number of undocumented immigrants that live in and pass through Arizona each year. Adding the seizure of undocumented immigrants to the list of duties for local police simply opens the door to racial profiling. Now immigrants, or anyone who is of Latino descent, must produce documents that prove citizenship when they are asked to do so. The bill goes against the Fourth Amendment of the Bill of Rights which makes it illegal for the government to search or seize property without a warrant. Americans across the country have been protesting the new law in Arizona. President Obama has openly expressed his



disagreement with the law, commenting that the actions of the state were “misguided” and that the Arizona measure would “undermine basic notions of fairness that we cherish as Americans” (Meckler and Jordan, *Wall Street Journal* 2010).

Since the passage of the Arizona law a number of states, including Georgia and Oklahoma, have introduced and/or passed similar legislation in 2011. However, various Latino groups across the country are speaking out about these social injustices. There have been recent protests within our own city of Providence. In July, 2011 the Olneyville Neighborhood Association stood in solidarity with Georgia and Arizona to protest the racist-based immigration laws. They urged Governor Chafee to publicly denounce the Secure Communities program.

The most effective recommendation to resolve the crisis of racial profiling of undocumented Latino immigrants in the United States is to develop mechanisms that can monitor the activities and stops of the police. By collecting information about the amount and types of stops, that the police ensue, other legal officials, and even the community, will be able to help assure that equality is upheld. Data should also be collected about the background of people who are stopped in order to easily recognize if a

racial trend occurs in the information that is consumed. Another recommendation to resolve the unfair processes of immigration and racial profiling is to simply raise awareness. It is unfortunate that unjust laws that encourage racial profiling, such as in Arizona, are being carried out so openly in the United States. Nevertheless, it is essential for those who are educated about the issues of equality to become actively involved by sharing information and working to organize and raise awareness. Once people join forces against discrimination against Latino immigrants nationwide, they will be able to gain significant influence and potentially create change. As a prominent nation of the 21st Century, it is truly time for America to rethink some of its discriminatory tendencies and procedures.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Unity Week: The PC Story

Sponsored by BOMA, BMSA, BOP, Residence Life, Campus Ministry, and Student Affairs

March 26, 2012

Get a CLUE: The diverse background of American mainstream music

7-9pm, Raymond Hall

Multicultural Dinner w/ West Hall

7pm, Chapel Basement

March 27, 2012

Geo-parody
7pm, McPhail’s

March 28, 2012

Middle-Eastern Night
5-7pm, Aquinas Lounge

East Asian Education

7pm, East Campus Hall

Dore Food Festival

6pm, Dore Hall

March 29, 2012

Six Word Memoir Puzzles

11am-2pm, Outside McPhail’s

BOP Diversity Photo Contest: “What Does Diversity Mean to Me?”

Unity Center

I Won’t Stand For Rally—All Week

March 30, 2012

Closing Event – A Faculty and Staff Expose

Faculty and staff will share mini-PC-stories; showing of Six Word Memoir.

4pm, Unity Center