

Angela Davis Still Working In The Struggle

Written by Westside ID95

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Most of us can remember her round afro and fist in the air during the 1960s. Others, who were not born until years later, can recall hearing her name several times during discussions about the Black Panther Party or African American women activists. Some may have read her books, essays, or heard her give a speech before. However, not everyone gets the opportunity to be in the presence of international revolutionary Angela Yvonne Davis.

One of our nation's most profound and powerful activists, and at one time one of the FBI's 10 Most Wanted, addressed an eager crowd at the City Center's Marriott Hotel on Friday, September 17.

Although the event started at 7 pm, many people arrived early enough to stand in line to see Davis, who traveled across the country from Santa Cruz, California, to give a lecture titled ""Education, Not Incarceration: Protecting the Future of Black America."" The speech concluded this year's NOMMO Forum series, sponsored by the Givens Foundation for African American Literature.

After an informative introduction, a well-deserved standing ovation welcomed Ms. Davis on stage. Davis, who has been fighting with words for over 40 years, proved that evening that there are many things worth fighting for nonviolently, such as a better education system.

Her opening remarks centered on the controversy that Bill Cosby stirred up a few months ago. Davis said, ""I think I understand his frustration."" She admitted that the nation's failing education system and the attendant skyrocketing African American incarceration rate angered her.

Although Davis just celebrated her 60th birthday, she said she never could have foreseen the condition of African America today, when people of color comprise the majority of more than two million incarcerated. Davis offered education as a corrective against soaring incarceration rates. ""If they [youths] don't get education, they get incarceration,"" she said.

Davis is the author of several books. One of them is titled *Are Prisons Obsolete?* (Seven Stories Press, 2003), which discusses issues that she covered during this lecture. She also discussed the California prison system, stating that California has the largest public prison system in the country. She mentioned that the state has built 23 new prisons since 1983, but no universities. And what person could tell it better than someone who spent 16 months in a California state prison in the early 1970s?

She shared her perspective on how we are all collectively affected by the prison system, so we should not treat the incarcerated as if they are invisible.

Davis also stressed that it is more important to invest in education than in prisons, because investing in prisons can lead to educational funding cuts. These funding cuts deprive our youths of a substantial education, and many end up in prison wishing someone would have taught them better values.

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She believes that we need to focus on de-incarceration, or reducing the number of people going to prison. ""Those incarcerated should be allowed to vote in prison,"" said Davis.

As the event came to a close, many minds were opened. Seated behind a table just outside the ballroom after the lecture, Davis greeted the public with the same warm smile that has graced many photographs as she signed books and continued to touch lives.

Source: [Spokesman Recorder](#)