

Interview with Angela Davis

National Guardian

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Following is an excerpt from an interview with Angela Davis done by the *Guardian*.

How do you see the women's movement? Also, do you consider it to have a special role for black women?

Let me begin by saying this: no revolutionary should fail to understand the underlying significance of the dictum that the success or failure of a revolution can almost always be gauged by the degree to which the status of women is altered in a radical, progressive direction. After all, Marx and Engels contended that there are two basic facts around which the history of mankind revolves: production and reproduction. The way in which people obtain their means of subsistence on one hand, and in which the family is organized on the other hand.

Further, if it is true the outcome of a revolution will reflect the manner in which it is waged, we must unremittingly challenge anachronistic bourgeois family structures and also the oppressive character of women's role in American society in general. Of course, this struggle is part and parcel of a total revolution. Led by women, the fight for the liberation of women must be embraced by men as well. The battle for women's liberation is especially critical with respect to the effort to build an effective black liberation movement. There is no question about the fact that as a group, black women constitute the most oppressed sector of society.

Historically we were constrained not only to survive on an economic level as slaves, but our sexual status was that of a breeder of property for the white slave master as well as being the object of his perverse sexual desires. Our enemies have attempted to mesmerize us, to mesmerize black people, by propounding a whole assortment of myths with respect to the black woman. We are inveterate matriarch; implying we have worked in collusion with the white oppressor to insure the emasculation of our men. Unfortunately, some black women have accepted these myths without questioning their origin and without being aware of the counterrevolutionary content and effect. They're consequently falling into behind-the-scenes positions in the movement and refuse to be aggressive and take leadership in our struggle for fear of contributing to the oppression of the black male.

As black women, we must liberate ourselves and provide the impetus for the liberation of black men from this whole network of lies around the oppression of black women which serve only to divide us, thus impeding the advance of our total liberation struggle.

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