

# Radical Philosophy Association Statement in Support of Angela Davis

**\*\*UPDATE:** After significant pressure, the BCRI ultimately reinstated Angela Davis as the recipient of the Fred Shuttlesworth Human Rights Award.\*\*

The Radical Philosophy Association (RPA) expresses its continual and determined support for Angela Davis, as do the undersigned. On January 5th, 2019, the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute (BCRI) rescinded its conferral of the Fred Shuttlesworth Human Rights Award to Davis due to her long-time commitment to the cause of justice in Palestine. Davis' record as an advocate of human rights is unassailable and she is clearly more than deserving of the award.

It appears that the BCRI caved to pressure from outside groups that target anyone who expresses views critical of the Israeli government or its policies. The idea that any government or its policies are beyond reproach is fundamentally anathema to the cause of human rights. Furthermore, the deliberate conflation of criticisms of the government of Israel with anti-Semitism serves, not to defend, but only to undermine respect for human dignity. In a time of rising fascism and white nationalism, we certainly take the issue of anti-Semitism very seriously. But solidarity with Palestinians and criticism of the Israeli government is not anti-Semitic.

In her statement on the matter, Davis has insisted on the indivisibility of justice. That is, the demand that the United States recognize the human rights of black people is only partial if it is not understood as part of a broader demand for the rights of all oppressed people globally. As Martin Luther King, Jr. insisted "injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." The truth of this sentiment is illustrated well by the facts that American police have received training from Israeli police forces and President Trump has referred repeatedly to the Israeli wall separating Jerusalem from the West Bank as an inspiration for his border wall. In any case, the demand for human rights – for justice – must always be universal.

Angela Davis has long been a source of inspiration for members of the RPA. She was a keynote speaker at our conference in 2008 and currently serves on the editorial board of the Radical Philosophy Review. Her example of courageous and outspoken opposition to injustice has been a guiding light for many of us in our professional and civic lives as philosophers. She is the living embodiment of a publicly engaged philosopher at the forefront of the struggle for a better world. Davis deserves the Fred Shuttlesworth Human Rights Award and we condemn those who withdrew her nomination.

Signed,

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**1. Signed (First Name Last Name -  
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