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Hope and Action

Contribution to GTI Forum [Can Human Solidarity Globalize?](#)

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In this time of planetary upheaval—punishing inequalities; sexual violence; global turmoil of migrants and refugees; exploding climate crises; the wars in Ethiopia, Syria, Yemen, and Palestine; and COVID-19—how does one imagine and think of possibility? Of hope? For me, solidarity has no limits, nor does its imaginaries.

Hope is not an idea, but a practice. It is always in process. It remakes itself daily. When I am asked to think about the possibility of a global solidarity emerging, I would say that it already is. Just as pain and suffering cover the globe, so, too, do the fight back and resistance. Women of every kind have taken to the streets in the hundreds of thousands demanding an end to sexual violation, especially rape—in war and in domestic confines—in Myanmar, Chile, Argentina, Peru, India, and Palestine. There are massive demonstrations across the globe demanding reproductive justice and access to abortion. It is happening, but you have to see it to know this. The West, if there is a West, has maybe the most work to do towards building the possibilities of solidarities.

We—meaning all of us, wherever we are, however different our individual and national experiences are—are closer to our own suffering, and others', today. In the US, more of us, especially white people, are feeling the need for reparations towards Blacks—to repair the foundational brutality of white supremacist slavery. Those of us involved in this work believe in possibility because we are part of the practice. Pain and suffering connect us to our own humanity and that of others. It becomes a bond for resisting oppression and claiming liberation.

In this moment, be cautious if you think you will know what solidarity looks like, in any familiar sense. So much is under siege, so much is being fought for by those in power to hold onto

their ebbing privilege. It is impossible to know exactly what might be leading to success and new mobilizations towards freedom. But much is happening.

Small steps matter. Small changes may also be big. How do we know when we are approaching a tipping point towards solidarity? The foundational nuggets of global racist patriarchy have been exposed in new ways. Privileges are crumbling. James Baldwin knew this all those years ago. White people will at some point have to look at themselves and know what they have done. That is happening to many of us.

COVID-19 opens portals so to speak on every system that was already crumbling: health care, service workers, houselessness, hunger, the academy, white supremacy. These portals cannot be shut. Why? Because those of us who are not afraid at looking at the horror and the truth are fearless. There is nothing more to hide because it is exposed and we are ready for what comes next. Whatever that is.

George Floyd was a small moment in the horrific history of racist America. The offerings of Black culture on online streaming platforms open a world of horrifying truths if we are willing to look. Germany has apologized for its racist destruction in Namibia. France is reckoning with its complicity with the Rwandan genocide. The US is beginning talks of reparations for Blacks. None of it is enough, but it is a process that allows for a new camaraderie.

None of these moments alone are enough. But it is also true that nothing remains the same. Reparations cannot repair our indecent capitalist racist patriarchal system, but reparations can begin the process of abolition and a new solidarity. Create the next world with these new partial steps.

Insurgent small steps shift the ground upon which we find our footing. Do not expect to recognize what a global solidarity will look like. It will be dispersed and concentrated. It will be jagged and hurtful. It will enrage. It will unsettle, and we will have to forgive the truth-tellers. The truth consists of the fearlessness to know ourselves, to see ourselves with others in our shared humanity. That demands a camaraderie that is inviolable.

To know that fearlessness is part of living justly makes us radically courageous. And courage is the mightiest thing any of us have. Courage is hope as a practice. Once we feel this camaraderie with others, solidarity is unstoppable.

So when you wonder whether a global solidarity is possible, ask yourself if you are ready to be a part of creating possibility and camaraderie. Do not think about camaraderie as though it is about someone else. Make it about yourself. Create the solidarity. Find your courage and share it with others in whatever liberation struggle in which you are a part. The possibility is the practice.

Not everyone is going to be a radical abolitionist for justice. But those of us who are, are fierce enough to make the changes and do the work. Stop worrying about the haters. And find your truthful love of our humanity—each and every one of us—abled, disabled, cis and trans and bi and nonbinary and Black and Brown and Yellow and White. From everywhere.

Global solidarity is coming because the planet demands it.

About the Author



Zillah Eisenstein is a political thinker, writer, and activist who is always seeking new anti-racist socialist feminist pathways. A Professor Emerita at Rochester College, she is the author of numerous books and articles on the long and continuing struggles for social, racial, economic, environmental, gender, sexual, and bodily justice by women of all colors across the planet. Her latest book is *Abolitionist Socialist Feminism: Radicalizing the Next Revolution*.

About the Publication

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