NWSA Condemns the Racist Killings in Jacksonville, Florida

Dear NWSA Community,

Sixty-three years ago, on August 27, 1960, over 200 white racists, holding baseball bats and ax handles, threatened, chased, and beat Black residents in Jacksonville, Florida. This unmitigated violence was a response to a peaceful lunch counter protest organized by the Jacksonville Youth Council of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Three years before that, on August 28, 1957, over 250,000 people participated in the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. Eight years before that, on the same day, Emmett Till was murdered by two racists in Money, Mississippi. And five days ago, we witnessed yet another attack on Black life; As folks gathered in Washington, DC to commemorate the anniversary of the March on Washington and honor the life and legacy of Emmett Till, a white racist murdered three Black people—Angela Michelle Carr, Jarraid Gallion, and Anolt Joseph “AJ” Laguerre Jr.—in Jacksonville, Florida.

Stories Matter. History Matters. Teaching and speaking the truth about the ways in which white supremacy seeks to dehumanize and destroy us matters. It does not escape me that the same state where these latest racist acts of terror happened is also ground zero for the ongoing attacks against Critical Race Theory, the repeal of access to reproductive healthcare and bodily autonomy for people of all genders, and legislation that fuels harmful stereotypes against the LGBTQIA+ community. We are in the midst of a war. We are under attack. Our children and our communities are under attack. Our jobs and our academic freedom are under attack. We are reminded daily of what Coretta Scott King meant when she said, “Struggle is a never-ending process because freedom is never really won; you earn it and win it in every generation.” If we do not stand up, push back, and speak out, we will lose. As Grace Lee Boggs reminds us, “history is a story not only of the past, but of the future.” This is a fight that we cannot lose.

As a reminder, the National Women's Studies Association (NWSA) holds fast to the belief that oppression and white supremacy are intersectional. We condemn the domestic terrorist racist murderous attack that happened on August 27, 2023, and the ongoing threats, attacks, and legislation that continue to happen across the United States and beyond. We remain committed to amplifying the work our members are doing in all areas that WGS studies, informs, and disrupts. We stand with you, and we will not applaud those that have spent the last two years targeting us who are now pretending to stand with us simply because they are seeking our vote and tokenized support. We add our voice to the growing chorus of organizations and individuals speaking out against what happened in Jacksonville, FL and calling on the
world to recognize that this was not an isolated event. It was only the next step in a concentrated effort to dismantle the progress that this country has made over the last fifty years.

We invite you to join us in taking pause and holding space in memory of those who were killed last Saturday and in memory of everyone that we have lost this year in the 470+ mass shootings that have happened in the United States of America thus far in 2023. We also recognize that there are no words or adequate phrases to describe how it feels to grieve and process almost back-to-back acts of targeted violence. Please take the time you need to heal and survive. Self-care is a more than just a slogan, it is an act of resistance. We leave you with the words of our dear Sister Assata Shakur who reminds us that, “it is our duty to fight for our freedom. It is our duty to win. We must love each other and support each other. We have nothing to lose but our chains.”

In Fierce Solidarity,

The National Women’s Studies Association (NWSA)
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