In Memoriam

Tribute to Joyce Canaan

*Joyce Canaan, a member of the Editorial Board who died on
9 August 2018*

For my dear friend, colleague and comrade Joyce. I write this with great sadness. Joyce fought a strong and brave battle against cancer for nearly two years, hoping that the treatments would finally end so she could get on with her life. This was my hope, too, because Joyce has so much ‘unfinished business’ – the book to complete, the articles to write and her contribution to the struggles of the land movement in Brazil to make. In a truly Freirean sense, she was building a movement with this community of farmers, teachers and academics. Joyce struggled against capitalism and its many violences and oppressions – imperialism, racism, sexism, ableism. ‘Fuck them all,’ she would say. ‘Fuck them all and let us build a better world’.

As a sociologist and feminist, Joyce researched many things over the years, including the negotiation of gender and the formation of young people’s class and racial identities. All were underpinned by her love for emancipatory possibility. In her teaching, Joyce focused on giving her students a pedagogy of hope for the future. One student wrote, ‘It was you who gave me the courage to believe that just because I was born a “second-class citizen” as a woman living in poverty, I could not only be transformed myself by education, I could also help others in a similar situation become agents of their own destiny through studying – particularly sociology.’

This courageous woman was a friend, a comrade and an academic mentor who inspired me and many, many others with her astute clarity of thought, not only in university spaces but also at demonstrations and on picket lines. Her great integrity and passion were committed to the struggle for social justice and equality.

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