IN REMEMBRANCE AND REAFFIRMATION OF RESISTANCE:
MAINTAINING CONTINUING COMMITMENT TO OUR STRUGGLE
Los Angeles Sentinel, 01-17-19, p.A6

DR. MAULANA KARENGA

As the new year unfolds and we remember, reflect and recommit ourselves to do the work, wage the struggle and live the lives that represent and reaffirm the best of who we are and strive to be, we of the organization Us send warm greetings of solidarity and continued struggle to all those similarly committed and engaged wherever they are. We of the Movement are not many now, we who are still on the battlefront for the new world we once talked so defiantly about winning and sacrificed so selflessly to achieve. Yes, we are not many now, we who endured hardships and losses which broke so many others and drove some to disabling drugs, strong drinks and weak ways, petty grudges and pitiful whining, and others to compromised principles and unworthy practices.

Let us rush to say, however, this realization and report from the frontline in no way denies the continued existence and re-emergence of resistance across the country. Nor is it intended to deny and diminish the presence and importance of the good work and the earnest and audacious struggle being waged by those well-known, less-known and unknown. For we know that wherever and whenever people are oppressed, some among them always rise to resist, to unsettle the oppressor, organize the people and pose an alternative to the established order of things. In a word, where there is oppression there is resistance.

Also, clearly there are numerous self-defined movements: the Black Lives Matter Movement; the Reparations Movement; the MeToo Movement; the Womanist Movement; the Poor Peoples Campaign Movement; the Anti-Mass Incarceration Movement; the Kawaaida Movement; the Rites of Passage Movement; the Global Pan-Africanist Movement and many more collective and interrelated initiatives for racial and social justice. What is missed here is the sense of an overarching Movement with a self-conscious collective vocation of commitment to common principles, practices and goals and shared goods with numerous and varied approaches to realizing those aims and aspirations and yet interrelated and interconnected in various strengthening and expansive ways.

As we seek to do our best work, wage our large and small struggles and live lives that reflect and bear witness to who we are and what we strive to achieve and become, we again and always call on those who will to: Continue the struggle. Keep the faith. Hold the line. Love our people and each other. Seek and speak truth. Do and demand justice. Be constantly concerned with the well-being of the world and all in it. And dare rebuild the overarching Movement that prefigures and makes possible the good world we all want and deserve.

Clearly, our first commitment is to continue the struggle, to continue the fight on every battlefield on which we find ourselves, and any others that emerge and require our presence and active engagement. Those of us in struggle are already engaged in spaces and places we have chosen to do our work, as well as on those battlefields that have chosen us, i.e., compelled us to be present because of the importance and urgency of the issues involved. Indeed, Min. Malcolm, noble priest of fire and foresight, has taught us that the whole country we live in is a battlefield, and every place we are is a battleline. Thus, we are, in a real and sobering sense, called to be ever ready to be present and engaged wherever the struggle takes and needs us. As our honored ancestors taught us in the Odu Ifa (159:1), “The constant soldier is never unready, not even once.”

Certainly, and also, we must keep the faith (Imani), faith in the good and in our capacity to achieve it and to be it. We speak here of an ancient and ongoing faith rooted in the spiritual and moral values of our ancestors that anchor our lives and teach us ethical, insightful and upward thrusting ways to understand and assert ourselves in the world, to relate rightfully with others and the earth, and to wage righteous and relentless struggle to bring, increase and sustain good in the world. Indeed, it is a faith that finds
its meaning and measure in the good we dare
and do in the world, especially against the odds,
against the tide, against the new and popular
trends and the deceptive and disarming counsel
to cooperate, compromise and capitulate in the
terrorizing face and force of evil and injustice in
high and low places.

And this too: we must hold the line, holding
resolutely to our essential ethical and libera-
tional commitments, regardless of new fads, es-
capist fantasies and suppressive forces confront-
ing us, and refusing to give up even an inch,
ounce or iota of the good we’ve gained with
such sacrifice and suffering, casualties and costs.
For it is not only our lives on the line, but also
goods that make our lives worth living—goods
like freedom, justice, security of person and
people, food security and adequate and afford-
able housing and health care, quality education,
ources of economic sustainment and initiative,
rightful representation in all spaces and all deci-
sions affecting our destiny and daily lives, and
our right to live lives of dignity, decency and
possibilities to flourish and come into the full-
ness of ourselves.

Moreover, we are to love our people and
each other. And in loving our people and each
other, we must remember love is not simply an
emotion, but ultimately and unalterably a prac-
tice, a practice of shared goodness and service.
To talk of loving our people is to talk of caring
and committed ways to serve them, to offer
one’s life and if need be, one’s death in struggle
to free them, achieve justice for them, and se-
cure for them all the other essential goods of
life. We must, as Osagyefo Nkumah teaches us,
go to the people, start with what they know,
build on what they have, seek their advice, live
with them and learn from them and never let the
established order or misconceptions of interest
separate us from them. For indeed, their interests
are ultimately our own. This is the meaning of

Lady Ta-Aset’s ethical teaching in the Husia
that “The good we do for others we are also do-
ing for ourselves.” For we are building the good
world we all want and deserve to live in. We
must, regardless of our status, station or position
in life, work or struggle, remain consistent serv-
ants of the people, ever responsible to them and
always responsive to their needs and aspirations
for a good, meaningful and dignity-affirming
life.

Also, we must constantly seek and speak
truth, do and demand justice. Indeed, it is writ-
ten in the sacred texts of the Husia that we must
bear witness to truth and set the scales of justice
in their proper place among those who have no
voice, i.e., the poor, less powerful and vulnera-
ble here in this country and everywhere oppres-
sion and suffering deny the humanity, human
rights and well-being of people; whether in Hai-
ti, Africa, Palestine, Yemen, in China among the
Uighurs, in Myanmar among the Rohingya and
among others elsewhere.

Kawaida teaches us too we are also to be
constantly concerned with the well-being of
the world and all in it—the people, the animals,
plants and the earth itself. We must, our beloved
foremother Mary McLeod Bethune teaches,
strive to remake the world in just and caring
ways. And as always, we must strive to rebuild
the overarching Movement that includes and
combines the strength and struggles of all the
other movements, organizations and initiatives
for racial justice, social justice and radical social
change. And it will and must be self-consciously
interrelated structures of large and small initia-
tives which, united in shared principles and
practices, commonalities and diversities, prefig-
ure and make possible the good community, so-
ciety and world we all want, deserve and daily
dedicate our lives to in countless ways.

Dr. Maulana Karenga, Professor and Chair of Africana Studies, California State University—Long Beach; Executive
Director, African American Cultural Center (Us); Creator of Kwanzaa; and author of Kwanzaa: A Celebration of
Family, Community and Culture, The Message and Meaning of Kwanzaa: Bringing Good Into the World and Essays
on Struggle: Position and Analysis, www.AfricanAmericanCulturalCenter-LA.org;