



**RIGHTEOUS RESISTANCE: UPHOLDING THE GOOD,
UPLIFTING THE PEOPLE, UPTURNING THE WORLD**

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DR. MAULANA KARENGA

There is an increasing sense among those most thoughtful and active among us that the important issues raised and the struggle rightfully waged against the tragedy and catastrophe we call Trump, marginalizes and misses the major issues that define and drive our own righteous and relentless struggle as a people. Also, it seems that too often we find ourselves supporting groups that don't support us in a similar manner and don't involve us in the planning and leadership on critical issues of concern to all.

Such problematic practice and behavior leaves us with equally problematic options: passively supporting others without reciprocal support; struggling with reputed allies and coalition partners for rightful representation in planning and leadership and even presence and position on stage—or not participating in initiatives around issues of shared interests and not building necessary alliances and coalitions.

Clearly, non-engagement in the issues that affect our destiny and daily lives is not a serious or sensible option and neither is passive and unreciprocated support of others in a context or relationship lacking mutual respect and mutual benefit. Thus, the question unavoidably rises of what is to be done? First and foremost, we must begin and maintain all relationships of life and struggle based on four non-negotiable and non-compromisable principles: mutual respect, mutual interests, mutual support and mutual benefit.

The hub and hinge on which all relations of worth turn is mutual respect, respect for our people, our culture and our struggle. The principle of mutual or shared interest speaks to a shared concern around given issues or around principles, issues and goals. This understanding distinguishes a coalition from an alliance. A coalition is a short-term relationship based on shared interest in an issue, and an alliance is an ongoing relationship based on shared principles, interests and overarching goals. We must, therefore, understand the difference and act accordingly in uniting with others in various actions and projects.

Also, we must approach any relationship from a position of strength and self-determination and have our own agenda, an agenda reflective of the interest of our people and the demands of our struggle with due attention to the interest of humanity and the well-being of the world. For to come to the table in manifest weakness, without an agenda and without the will to exercise self-determination in thought and practice, ensure at best only a secondary role in any relationships, and at worst, a subservient or servile one. Too often, unconscious leaders and unthinking activists are simply glad to be present and be praised by those who give or deny favors and funds.

This means that we must always put forth the Black position on any given issue, while respecting other people's right and will to do likewise. Thus, for example in resistance to Trump's ban on immigrants of the first seven countries designated, it's on us to point out and put on the agenda the fact that three of these countries are in Africa; and there is a need to reflect this reality in statements issued and in representations in planning, in leadership and in actions. Moreover, it is we who should point out and advance the position that Trump's ban is not only a religious ban, but also a racial and racist one. For it is not against Jews and Christians, but against Muslims. And it's not against people considered White, but against "people other than," those "others," i.e., Arabs, Persians, Berbers and of course Africans of Somalia, Sudan, Libya and later Chad.

Likewise, on the issue of immigration, we must insert Haitians, continental Africans and other African immigrants in the considerations and conversations, in planning and petitions and in literature, leadership and social action, if we are to build coalitions and alliances that are real, relevant and mutually rewarding. In a word, it is on us to advance African interests in immigration and not accept or assent to its being simply a Latino issue. Indeed, no immigrants are treated worse than Haitian immigrants, and in the dignity-denying and mutilating hierarchy of races, Black is racistly considered less worthy in every

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area and often treated not as immigrants, refugees or asylum seekers, but as unworthy of the consideration or political support others are given by a wide range of organizations and institutions. Too often there is no sanctuary or promised citizenship for us in any form, no humane treatment or intervention by people of conscience. Thus, we cannot avoid facing the reality that liberation and salvation in this world are in our own hands and that we must have our own agenda, develop our own strength, and advance our own interests even in alliance and often alone.

For there is no comfortable place in oppression, no way to reconcile self-respect and submission, and no way to move forward in dignity-affirming and life-enhancing ways except in righteous and relentless struggle. And this requires rebuilding an overarching Movement, radical in its aims, righteous in its claims and uncompromising in its commitment to the interests of our people, human good and the well-being of the world.

There is a beautiful challenge and invitation to history that our beloved foremother, Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune, always offers us. Even if she uses different words and ways to say it, it is always a challenge and invitation to *uphold the good, uplift the people and upturn the world*. This persistent and pervasive message is in her Nine Legacies: love; hope; confidence in each other; a thirst for education; respect for the uses of power; faith, racial dignity; living harmoniously with our fellow humans; and honoring our responsibility to our young people. And this challenge and invitation to history is also in her assigning us the awesome task of remaking the world. She tells us “We are the custodians as well as the heirs of a

great civilization. We have given something to the world as a race and for this we are proud and fully conscious of our place in the total picture of (human)kind’s development.” And then she says to us in all soberness and sincerity that if we are to honor the legacy of our history, “*We must remake the world. The task is nothing less than that.*”

And again elsewhere, Dr. Bethune tells us “*Today we must upturn the world.*” For the world has been turned upside down by those who rule, ruin and destroy so many lives; plunder, pollute and deplete the earth; and falsify history denying the humanity, rights and agency of others. In the same philosophical vein, Dr. Molefi Asante, speaking to this concept of upturning the world, says that “It is about taking the globe and turning it over so that we see all the possibilities of a world where Africa, for example, is subject not object.” This means that we must assert our own agency and interests and strengthen ourselves for struggle, the long, beautiful and demanding struggle to free ourselves and be ourselves, and heal, renew and remake ourselves in the process and practice of repairing, renewing and remaking the world.

This is called in ancient Egyptian Maatian ethics *serudj ta* and in a fuller description of how we should rebuild, renew and remake ourselves and the world, *serudj ta* teaches us that it is: to raise up that which is in ruins; to repair that which is damaged; to rejoin that which is severed; to replenish that which is depleted; to strengthen that which is weakened; to set right that which is wrong; and to make flourish that which is insecure and undeveloped.

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