



**SOLIDARITY WITH THE PEOPLE OF PALESTINE:
KING'S CALL TO CONSCIENCE**
Los Angeles Sentinel, 08-14-14, p.A6

DR. MAULANA KARENGA

PART II. It is no accident that two of the most definitive categories for Israel's system of occupation of Palestine is that of "a concentration camp" and "a giant open-air prison". Indeed, a concentration camp is a prison by another name. Oppressors always create prisons—structural prisons for their victims and conceptual prisons for their unthinking supporters. In the structural prisons, they constrain, kill, torture, terrorize, dominate, deprive and degrade. And in the conceptual prisons, they blind, mislead, close the mind, restrict and restrain the heart, and cultivate fear, hatred and hysteria, creating the basis for what King called "a solidarity in brutality" against a designated enemy. So, Palestine has for decades suffered from this creation of a solidarity in brutality against it by various active and passive supporters of Israel, its occupation of Palestine and the oppression of its people.

Indeed, the manufactured and manipulated hatred, fear and hysteria are so pervasive and deeply cultivated that the media even in finally beginning to admit the horror and slaughter inflicted on unarmed Palestinian children, women and men, and the wanton devastation of their land, still could not consistently name them as victims or the Israelis as their victimizers. Instead, they participated in the denial of Palestinian victimhood, a denial rightfully and relentlessly challenged and condemned when the slaughters, oppressions, genocides and holocausts of other peoples are involved. We think here of the recent rightful concern for and rescue of the Yazidi of Iraq, constantly called by their name and in no way diminished or redefined in their status as victims and compare this with Palestine.

Thus, the media talked of persons killed, wounded and maimed often without mentioning their national identity or that of those who killed, wounded and maimed them. Such non-naming erases the identity of the persons and people and leaves the oppressor and aggressor unnamed, unchallenged and with the opportunity to claim victimhood himself. They also placed the count of Palestinian civilians and non-combatants killed alongside the count of Israeli soldiers who came to kill and did in fact kill them, as if to suggest a similar loss and moral status for the soldiers. Indeed, there is a constant tendency to morally equate the oppressor with the oppressed or even give the oppressor a greater moral status and consideration. But no morality worth its name can equate an oppressor with the oppressed, an aggressor with their victims or claim a "complexity" that conceals or glosses over the identity of victim and victimizer.

There is also a tendency to blame the victim for their own oppression, claiming bad choices, i.e., democratically electing their own leaders and not letting others choose them; demanding a sovereign, self-determining and secure state rather than accepting a dependent and occupied patch of territories; insisting on peace with justice rather than a peace of illegitimate law and oppressive order; and choosing not to die a slow death bowed and broken under the savage weight of oppression, but to rise up in resistance in the face of overwhelming odds and extensive and asymmetrical loss. Moreover, the media talks of "civilians caught in the crossfire", but Israeli indiscriminate bombing and shelling left no safe, secure or sacred place. Again, it is a denial of the victimhood of the Palestinian people and with it

**SOLIDARITY WITH THE PEOPLE OF PALESTINE:
KING'S CALL TO CONSCIENCE, PART II**

Los Angeles Sentinel, 08-14-14, p.A6

DR. MAULANA KARENGA

their humanity, the reality of their awesome suffering and decimation and the moral obligation to show respect, compassion and concern for them as fellow human beings who have a right to life, freedom, justice, and their own land, a sovereign and secure state, their own resources, and their own self-consciously forged future.

It is important to note here that in spite of Israel's insistent claims that it's waging war against Hamas, it is really against the Palestinian people, as the horrendous count of civilians killed and their imprisonment of a whole people demonstrate. The false claim that Hamas uses the people as "human shields" is not only to discredit Hamas, but also to misdirect moral attention and condemnation from Israel's state terrorism, an indiscriminate bombing and shelling of the Palestinian population designed to kill and create pervasive fear and insecurity, which is a classic definition of terrorism.

Every guerilla resistance and liberation movement in history was/is rooted in and among the people. Are we now to believe that the French resistance and all the other resistance movements against the German occupiers in WW II were using the people as human shields by living, working and taking cover among them and that the Germans were justified in wiping out whole and parts of communities which gave them assistance, shelter and cover? And would there be justification for anyone at war with Israel to indiscriminately bomb Tel Aviv because the headquarters of the Israeli armed forces is located there or to bomb Israeli homes, hospitals, schools, synagogues, and other places where there are military sites, offices, operatives or activities, without taking due consideration of civilians and non-combatants

which international law and any real sense of morality require?

Dr. Martin Luther King says he brought the Vietnam War into the field of his moral vision for seven major reasons which speak to how we can open a way to bring Palestine into our moral vision and stand in solidarity with the people of Palestine in their righteous struggle. These include: the awesome cost in lives and resources; the cruel manipulation of the people, especially the people of color and the poor, through creating "solidarity only in brutality" and killing; the U.S. use of massive violence to solve its problems in the world while hypocritically condemning others; to save the soul of America; to affirm the brotherhood and sisterhood of humanity; a profound commitment to peace; and the moral imperative to support the weak and vulnerable.

We cannot morally justify the great cost in lives of the Palestinian people nor the waste of resources in arming Israel to maintain its occupation of Palestine. Moreover, we should not be manipulated in a solidarity of brutality and killing, but instead build a solidarity in bringing good in the world. Let us all then, for King, history, the Palestinian people, the people of Haiti and all other oppressed and struggling peoples of the world, and for ourselves, oppose the racism, materialism and militarism that King saw undergirding and informing the unjust wars plaguing the world. And let us build solidarities not in brutality, but in patient work and persistent struggle to righteously and rightfully free and empower the people, repair and remake the world, and bring into being a new history and justifiable hope for humankind.

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 and Introduction to Black Studies*, 4th Edition, www.OfficialKwanzaaWebsite.org; www.MaulanaKarenga.org.