



**HAJI MALCOLM AND THE BUFFALO BATTLEFIELD:  
AID FOR UKRAINE AND WAR ON US**

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**DR. MAULANA KARENGA**

**Y**ET AGAIN, WE ARE CONFRONTED WITH another radically evil act of mass murder of our people, this time in Buffalo, New York, 9 out of 10 killed, 2 out of 3 wounded, and again in this war zone we call America. And again, it is made especially painful, not only because of the massive loss of life and injuries of the innocent and vulnerable each time, but also because it is so persistent and pervasive. Moreover, it is experienced as even more tragic and troubling because it is carried out in the midst of official as well as unofficial killing of us in various venues and in different ways.

Indeed, there is no sanctuary in the city or countryside, no security or exception in supermarkets, mini-markets or malls, churches, mosques or temples, schools, parks and even homes, walking down the street or driving and sitting in cars. We are all vulnerable, not exempt by our age, education, class, religion or upraised hands or pleading for our lives under the killer knee of the police or our oppressor in general. And thus, even as we mourn, we are morally obligated to continue to resist in the interest of freedom, justice and security and our very lives. We, as Black persons and a people, share in the grief of great loss and injury of the victims, their families, friends and loved ones and the Black community of Buffalo as a whole. And we stand in solidarity with them in our shared righteous anger at the inhumanity, criminality and savage injustice of this and all the unofficial and official killings of us wherever we are, and in our shared commitment to righteous and relentless resistance to end it.

We know that we are the leading target of racist terrorism and hate crimes. And we acknowledge and assert this without denying or diminishing the racist violence against

Native Americans, Latinos/as and Asians. For America is plagued with the pathology of racism, a systemic sickness that generates, sanctions and supports the domination, deprivation, degradation, abuse and elimination of others different and vulnerable. Furthermore, it is a society that embraces violence against others different not only by race, but also by religion, gender, class, sexuality, ability, age, and other categories of convenience and committed hatred. The violence might be given other names like law and order, education, religion, rehabilitation, restraint, legal removal, etc., but it is nevertheless violence. Indeed, the defining feature of racism is violence, in its thought and practice as: imposition, ideology and institutional arrangement. Thus, it begins and ends with violence.

In this month and week of El Hajj Malik El Shabazz's birth and coming into being, we are reminded of his instructive and enduring insights into what he called the cancer of racism. Haji Malcolm reminds us of what he calls this war zone of America and the awesome responsibility of our people to embrace our role as part of the rising tide of history, and through righteous and relentless struggle, end our oppression and contribute to an inclusive African and human good and the well-being of the world.

We will never get used to people hating us even when we have done nothing to them, and turning our communities of Tulsa, Charleston, Buffalo and others into battlefields to make senseless, savage and inhuman war on us. Min. Malcolm X asks us, even urges us, to face the facts of our oppression and understand that we may not be at war with others, but we are in a war zone called America and war is being made on us in the

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most racist and deadly forms. Thus, Haji Malcolm says in the racist context of America, “Wherever a Black (person) is, there is a battleline. Whether it’s in the North, South, East or West, you and I are living in a country that is a battleline for all of us.” Indeed, he says, it is vital that Black people “realize (they are) living in a war zone” and are in a “war with an enemy that is as vicious and criminal and inhuman as any war making country has ever been.” Indeed, he defines racism as a war on “dark skinned” people of the world and “vicious whiteness.”

The reasons or rather causes for this constant warring against us are complex and thus involve many aspects: gun worship and the culture of violence; cowardly, corrupt and convenient politicians; collaborating commercial and social media; and the lack of an overarching, united and effective resistance by those who position themselves against this form of domestic terrorism, racist terrorism and White supremacist terrorism. But regardless of causes listed and lectured on, conjured up and claimed, ultimately one is compelled to focus on the root causes embedded in systemic racism.

It is good to fight against hate and hate crimes, but we must again be comprehensive and include radical reconception and reconstruction of policies, practices and institutional structures. So, yes, we must take into account, expose and change social media’s open-arms policy to platforms of hatred, hate speech and calls and blueprints for racist violence. And we must hold accountable commercial media, not only for inadequately condemning and countering racist ideology and practices, but also racist violence and claims of zero-sum concepts of White replacement rather than positing ethical and social imperatives to expand the arc of inclusion, justice, equity and human good.

Politicians, the media and the academy must do more to reaffirm the equality, dignity, rights and humanity of African people, indigenous people and all people of color. This means moving beyond episodic statements of empathy, corporate and foundation performative funding of visible groups, wringing ones hands after each shooting and killing and appealing to the victims’ families and our community to be calm, consider forgiveness and forgetfulness, self-healing and forego or reframe the uncompromising demand for justice.

Haji Malcolm suggests that among “White Americans’ worst crimes are hypocrisy and deceit,” a deceit and self-delusion about themselves and others, and about the evil injustice and oppression they are imposing on others. He thus condemns a false *herrenvolk* democracy which makes Black people “victims of democracy, which is nothing but disguised hypocrisy.” Thus, he says that “there is no system more corrupt than a system that represents itself as the example of freedom, democracy and can go all over the world telling other people how to straighten out their house” and yet deny its own citizens the benefit of democracy and freedom.

Indeed, he would say it is hypocritical and unjust to give aid to Ukraine and others and then make, facilitate and allow war on us. And he would ask why are there no billions for Buffalo and Black people as a whole, no resources for reparations and recovery after this long American nightmare posed and peddled as an American dream? And this too, he would argue: Trump, Trumpism is not a new oddity, but actually the enduring monster side of America. It is an endemic expression of a history of the country that it is steeped and stuck in the racist mud and miasma of hypocrisy and deceit.

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**T**HUS, IN THE 60S HAJI MALCOLM reasoned concerning America's hypocrisy and deceit that the central problem "isn't actually Mississippi, it's America. America is Mississippi." And Mississippi is America unmasked and undressed and without the ideological finery of fake claims of freedom, justice and equality for all. He argues that we cannot let liberals "shift the weight" to outward racists, but they must be compelled to confront their complicity in all that happens in America. For in a real sense, we know they will not do this of their own free will. They will not wake up one morning and declare themselves guilty and sentence

themselves to the hard time and difficult labor of radical transformation of self and society. Our task is to hold the whole country responsible for systemic racism, liberals and conservatives alike. This inevitably leads us back to a fundamental principle of liberation which is that the oppressor is responsible for our oppression, but we are responsible for our liberation. And part of our responsibility is to hold the oppressor responsible and accountable for our oppression, which can only be achieved in righteous, relentless and radically transformative struggle which ends our oppression and poses new possibilities for history and humankind.▲

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