



**JUSTICE, GEORGE FLOYD AND CONTINUING STRUGGLE:
THE MORAL IMPERATIVE OF REMEMBRANCE AND RESISTANCE**

Los Angeles Sentinel, 06-01-23, p.C1

DR. MAULANA KARENGA

FOR US AS A PEOPLE, REMEMBERING AND marking this the third anniversary of the public murder of Nana George Floyd under the color and camouflage of law is an especially meaningful cultural practice and moral imperative of enduring relevance, even after the media last week gave it a moment of rushed relevance and moved on to other topics. Indeed, it is inseparably linked to the interrelated moral imperative of righteous and relentless resistance to end the crushing conditions of oppression which foster and facilitate anti-Black police violence as public policy and socially sanctioned practice. Culturally, and at our best, we do not heed the advice of society to bury the dead and move on with our lives, leaving the dead behind. For our ancestors are always with us and we move forward with them, remembering them rightfully and trying to honor them as best we can by living the lessons and legacy of their lives.

The moral imperative of remembrance and resistance, then, requires first of all that we remember rightfully, otherwise our remembering is reduced to unreflective ritual devoid of substance and fashionable references borrowed from corporate media's common place diversionary questions of personal feelings, questionable change, self-indictment and inevitable false and perfunctory praise of America the beautiful, blameless and unblemished. Likewise, it can be reduced to ritualistic social media posts seeking likes and classifications of trending rather than paying homage in more active and meaningful ways. Thus, we must remember in ways that do honor to the dead and living and reaffirm our obligation to continue the struggle, keep the faith and hold the line until victory is achieved and secured.

A rightful remembrance means we do not remember in isolation or as a passing notice of media interests. Rather, this particular expression, and all others, of police violence must be

seen, embraced and engaged as a part of our history of oppression and resistance, linking our rightful remembrance of Nana George Floyd to that of rightful remembrance of Nanas Breonna Taylor, Sandra Bland, Tamir Rice, Elijah McClain, and more recently Nana Jordan Neely, and all the others not named here from the past and those yet to be named from an unfolding future. Again, this is one of the reasons remembrance is unavoidably and inseparably linked to resistance, for the list will inevitably be longer if we do not continue and intensify the struggle.

To remember rightfully is also to remember respectfully, that is to remember with an appropriate awareness and appreciation of the worthiness of the persons and the issues under consideration. It is also to be thoughtful in our remembering, that is to say, both *reflective* and *caring*, to think and care deeply about the persons and issues that demand rightful attentiveness. Moreover, to remember rightfully is to remember in self-determined ways, neither letting our oppressor be our teacher nor even our allies be our tutor. Here it is good to remember Nana Frantz Fanon's teaching that to think and act in new liberated ways we must leave Europe "where they are never done talking of (abstract) man, yet murder (real) men and (women) everywhere they find them, at the corner of every one of their own streets and in all the corners of the globe".

Nana George Floyd and Nana Breonna Taylor are the major Black male and female faces of victims of police violence, but the list is long and constantly lengthens even as we rightly continue to resist and struggle to end the violence and radically transform the system that produces, sanctions and supports it. Indeed, in a real and constantly threatening way, all of us, Black male and female, adult and child, are potential victims of this radically evil practice of police violence which is

**JUSTICE, GEORGE FLOYD AND CONTINUING STRUGGLE:
THE MORAL IMPERATIVE OF REMEMBRANCE AND RESISTANCE**

Los Angeles Sentinel, 06-01-23, p.C1

DR. MAULANA KARENGA

symptomatic of a racist system that continuously seeks to deny our full humanity and human rights.

Nana Fannie Lou Hamer's timeless and ever-relevant teaching that we are to care deeply about those who made us possible, carried us over troubled and treacherous waters, and gave us solid and sacred ground to stand, build and do righteous battle on is applicable to Nana George Floyd and Nana Breonna Taylor and all the martyrs and victims of police violence as well as of the general and pervasive systemic violence of society. For their brutal, premature and undeserved deaths are sacrifices, even unintended, that must be honored by our making sure their deaths have heavy historical weight, not only in our memory, but also in deepening our commitment to the struggle to end the conditions and system that so savagely destroyed their lives and those of others.

They and all like them did not choose to die the undeserved and horrific deaths the murderers imposed on them. They were on their way home, sometimes only a few blocks away; in their cars hanging out or just driving to some place of life and living or in their homes rightfully expecting a security they were savagely denied. They were children playing in a park or joyriding with no thought of or reason for not returning home, or living out their full lives and looking toward tomorrow. But *the ice man cometh*, and the ice man kills without human concern or moral conscience, cultivating the *ordinariness of evil* and the negation of our lives and rights as normal. And we have no morally compelling choice, as Nana Henry Highland Garnet urged us, except to let our

motto and movement be "Resist! Resist! Resist!"

The summer soldiers that mobilized and amassed in such great numbers under the initiative of BLM have come and gone. And the brief summer has turned into a long winter of struggle, sacrifice and self-giving service to our people and only the serious and sincere remain. Thus, we, for whom the struggle for justice and liberation on a larger scale is a matter of life and death, cannot leave the battlefield except in our gravely mistaken minds. For the society brings the battlefield and their war against us to the streets, schools, supermarkets, churches, mosques, temples, and even our homes. This is the meaning of Nana Haji Malcolm's teaching that "you and I are living in a country that is a battleline for all of us".

AND THUS, WE MUST BE ALL-SEASONS soldiers, for until this wanton killing of Black people is decisively stopped, Nana Ella Baker teaches us "We who believe in freedom cannot rest". Thus, our struggle was and remains not only to secure justice for Nana George Floyd and our people as a whole, but also to secure our liberation. For again, as Haji Malcolm teaches, without freedom we cannot achieve real justice. Indeed, freedom from an oppressive system is our larger and ongoing aim and struggle, regardless of the particular battlefield, we are compelled to fight on in our awesome march and movement towards full and final liberation. And this realization and reaffirmation in righteous and relentless struggle is at the heart of the moral imperative of remembrance and resistance deeply rooted in the lives, history and culture of our people.▲

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.