



**AFRICAN LIBERATION DAY:
EVERYWHERE A BATTLELINE, EVERY DAY A CALL TO STRUGGLE**

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DR. MAULANA KARENGA

As we gather to celebrate AFRICAN LIBERATION DAY throughout the world African community, let us honor first the ancestors, the openers of the way forward, the freedom-fighters, self-sacrificers, great and small, who taught us by mind-opening words and exemplary actions, dignity-affirming freedom-loving and life-enhancing ways to understand and assert ourselves in the world. Let us also mark and measure our victories, major and small, never forgetting the costs and casualties that accompanied them. And let us honor our ancestors and the struggle they gave their lives to by continuing this struggle.

I speak here of the righteous and relentless struggle for liberation. For we are not yet free and thus the struggle does and must continue and be won. It is a life and death struggle, to free ourselves and be ourselves, and to make our way in the world as African persons and peoples without domination, deprivation and degradation in any form.

Liberation is both a practice and a condition: a practice of our freeing ourselves and a condition of freedom achieved by our practice. The historic and ongoing struggle to free Africa and African people around the world has been a hard, hazardous, demanding and decimating struggle. We have lost millions in the worldwide struggle against the Holocaust of enslavement, colonialism, apartheid, imperialism, neo-colonialism, neo-liberalism, racism and White supremacy in various other forms—hidden, disguised or arrogantly open.

Our resistance to these various forms of what Min. Malcolm X calls “oppression, exploitation and degradation” are both a testimony and template of our righteous and relentless struggle on every level and in every place and time. It is evidence of what we have done and can do, but also a call for us to continue and intensify the struggle, keep the faith and hold the line. Thus, I sum up the testimony and template for struggle with this battle cry: *Everywhere a battleline; everyday a call to struggle.*

It is a lesson learned and lifted up from the

library of teachings and life-lessons of our ancestors, but here especially from Min. Malcolm X, El Hajj Malik El Shabazz in this his month of coming-into-being. We pause to honor him as our mentor, prophet of the promise inherent in struggle, honored and uplifted martyr who gave his life for ours. It is he who taught us that “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”. And thus, as I’ve said, the battle cry must be and is “Everywhere a battleline; every day a call to struggle”. Indeed, as Paul Robeson said, in the struggle we rage against racism in its fascist or varied other forms, “the battlefront is everywhere, there is no sheltered rear”.

So, we must go to bed and rise in the morning with this motto and battle cry: “Everywhere a battleline; every day a call to struggle”. And we must understand that the struggle is on both the psychological and practical level. Thus, we advanced, as a fundamental principle of revolutionary struggle, revolutionary cultural nationalist struggle, that the cultural revolution and political revolution are the dual aspects of our struggle. We argued then and now that cultural revolution precedes and makes possible the political revolution, then parallels it and helps sustain it, especially in its most difficult days and years.

It is Sekou Toure, Frantz Fanon and Malcolm X who taught us that we must decolonize, unenslave and unbrainwash the mind or we can never achieve true liberation. And this freeing of the mind from the views and values of the oppressor is the first and unskippable step in waging the liberation struggle. Thus, it is Us, building on these teachings, that first said in the 60s that the key battle we are fighting now is the battle to win the hearts and minds of our people. And if we lose that battle we can’t hope to win any other one, especially the political revolution we wanted and worked to bring into being.

Let me sum up, then, with this fundamental Kawaida revolutionary understanding which we

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have embraced since the 1960s about African liberation. We maintain that the quality of life of a people and the success of its liberation struggle depends upon its waging cultural revolution within and political revolution without, resulting in a radical transformation of self, society and ultimately the world.

It is time, then, that we do as Kwame Nkrumah called on us to do, go back in great waves to the masses of our people, “start with what they know and build on what they have”. This Amilcar Cabral called returning to the source, for they are the source of who we are and who we will become through our work and liberation struggle. This means that we must put in place programs and practices of education, mobilization, organization, and confrontation that lead to radical transformation we once called revolution and must retrieve.

These will be programs and struggles to satisfy the needs of the masses and transform them in the process. That is to say, issues of food security, housing, clothing, healthcare, security and peace, gender equality, debt cancellation and reparations for Africans everywhere, and self-determination, human rights and real democracy for peoples of Africa and throughout the world African community.

Cabral tells us, as Malcolm, that we must also have an expansive conception of ourselves and see the importance of our role in human history, especially through our liberation struggle. He says that our liberation struggles have “a deep significance for both Africa and the world” and that therefore we must “regard ourselves as deeply committed to our people and committed to every just cause in the world” at the same time. Therefore, as a world community, we must stand

in solidarity with other oppressed and struggling peoples in the world. As serious pan-Africanists, we must speak up for and support our people struggling everywhere, especially the people of Haiti in their struggle for self-determination and the end of oppression and resource robbery by the U.S., Canada and France and their allies; the Western Saharan people’s struggle for self-determination; and our people’s struggle against enslavement in Morocco, Mauritania and Libya and anywhere else.

And we must speak up and stand in solidarity with the Native peoples of the world; the Rohingya of Burma and the people of Yemen, and all the others who are voiceless, devalued, vulnerable and oppressed and struggling to liberate themselves. And we must not be afraid to condemn and oppose the brutal Israeli occupation of Palestine, their collective punishment and imprisonment of a whole people, and the recent massacre of over a 100 unarmed people and the wounding of over 3500 who were rightfully demonstrating against the savage oppression.

Marcus Garvey, Mary McLeod Bethune and Malcolm X taught us to see ourselves in world-encompassing ways, to see ourselves as part of a global rebellion and revolutionary struggle against an international structure of power and oppression and to see ourselves as critical contributors to a new world and a new course of human history. For our task is not only to free ourselves, for even if we achieved this, we would still be surrounded and under siege. Thus, Mary McLeod Bethune teaches us that “our task is to remake the world. It is nothing less than this”. And this requires that we thoroughly embrace and assert ourselves with this understanding: everywhere a battleline and every day a call to struggle.

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