



**CONFRONTING COVID, RECALLS AND GENERAL REPUBLICAN MADNESS:
NO RELIABLE REMEDY EXCEPT RESISTANCE**

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DR. MAULANA KARENGA

IN THE MIDST OF ALL THE NATURAL AND unnatural disasters plaguing the world, raging fires, floods and hurricanes, the global pandemic of COVID-19 and oppression of various subtle and savage kinds everywhere, small-mindedness, mendacity and racist madness still hold sway in “home sweet home” America. With Marvin Gaye playing in the background, “it makes us want to holler, throw up both hands, the way they do our lives,” let alone what they be doing to others. So much for the fantasy narrative of striving to become “a more perfect union.” Actually, we would settle for earnest attempts and urgent actions for a just, equitable and good society, leaving aside the illusions for movies and make-believe Hollywood is most known for.

Yet, there are people protesting the “evil” mask, dismissing its value in preserving health and saving lives, including their relatives and their own as well as others. And there are those in states and communities where hospitalization and death rates are the highest from the coronavirus, rejecting and denouncing the vaccine as conspiracy, poison or deep state pablum and propaganda, depending on the mood and mindset they and their audiences are in.

Moreover, the Republicans, not all, but the overwhelming madcap and mean-spirited majority in California are pursuing a recall, exploiting misdirected anger, counting on lack of clarity about the issues, and cultivating confusion by laying out the mad maze of lives their orange idol and White supremacist emperor nursed and nurtured them on for years. They are part of those who are working hard everywhere to deny our value and right to vote, our right to a life of dignity, free from oppression and open to limitless possibilities. Thus, they belong to a larger league of Trumpian adorers, advocates and allies. Like their model and medium, the white and orange emperor of the North and Nordics, they have, in this time of pandemic and immunity vulnerabilities, willed themselves to be immune to truth, reason and

empathy for others, and other such suspicious and suspect human emotion.

Indeed, the right wing and wrong-minded religious, political and lay leaders and persons among them seem immune to truth, though not from the fiction, fantasy and falsehood they feed and seem to flourish on. Also, they appear immune to reason, though not to rationalizations and obsessive readiness and willingness to attempt to justify the irrational, immoral and grossly unworthy of human thought and practice. And they seem immune to empathy for others, but not to the vulgar individualism that inoculates them against empathy and other moral sensitivities one rightly expects from other humans.

Indeed, it seems in this context of polarization, hatreds and hostilities on virtually every level and in every area of life, there are those who are too busy doing wrong to be bothered with such “trifles” as truth, such “rubbish” as reason and such “undermining” and “useful” emotion as human empathy. “We have to protect ourselves,” they cry out as they buy or hire the appropriate guns, board up, barricade and hunker down and ferret out and find convenient enemies everywhere they can dominate, deprive and degrade. And of course, this always means targeting and attacking the vulnerable and less powerful everywhere, in this state, this country and around the world. Likewise, it means initiating and denying unnatural disasters like climate change and fracking-caused earthquakes, as well as the unnatural disasters of racism, colonialism and imperialism and all the varied kinds of violent domination, deprivation and degradation they impose.

And this pattern and practice of rejection of truth and commitment to falsehood, this resistance to reason and embrace of irrationality and this rejection of empathy for others and the practice of callousness are evident, not only in domestic policy, but also in international policy. For evil, injustice and oppression, like charity, begins at home and spreads abroad.

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Thus, the racist hatred, hostility and violence directed continuously against Native Americans, Africans, Latina/os and Asians here finds its overseas parallels and counterparts in the occupation of Haiti, the suppression of Philippine independence, and the seizure of Hawaii and Puerto Rico, and the Pacific Island nations of Samoa, Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands. This does not include the other imperial and imperialist interventions in Latin America and around the world.

Clearly, one of the current expressions of this will to power over and deep disregard for others rather than a commitment to shared power and shared good in the world is on stark display in what Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director General of the World Health Organization calls “vaccine apartheid.” It is the hoarding of the vaccine against COVID-19 for the high-income (White dominant) countries, refusing to equitably share with the low-income (people of color) countries, and prohibiting them from producing their brands. This is playing out in Pres. Biden’s decision to give all Americans, vulnerable and well, a booster shot.

Quoting Martin Luther King, this brought the issue “in the field of (our) moral vision” in compelling ways for several reasons. First, because it does reflect a vaccine apartheid that is morally wrong, unjustifiable and unnecessary, and as Nana Anna Julia Cooper defined oppression of human beings, even “unjust and unnatural.” Indeed, Nana Anna stated, “We take our stand on the solidarity of humanity, the oneness of life and the unnaturalness and injustice of all special favoritisms, whether of sex, race, country or condition.” Clearly, there is the special favoritism of race, country and condition and ultimately sex in places where women are placed at the end of the line in medical and social services and support.

Moreover, this wrong-headed and hard-hearted decision still deprives millions of peo-

ple around the world of available vaccine, unused and in many cases, unwanted by millions of Americans for various reasons. This in turn poses long term serious risks to Americans, for they cannot remain or be healthy in a global society and world when peoples are constantly traveling, moving and coming in contact with each other. For in spite of the rants repeated from Viking shamans at the Capitol and throughout the country, science and medical experts rightly maintain that global vaccination is the only way to prevent the spread of this virus and the development and appearance of new and more deadly variants.

This position Biden has taken and many support silently or aggressively reflects a narrow concept of both health and human interests. It fails to recognize that health is a shared good and that there is no lasting safety in healthcare for a few and not for all. And they do not see or willfully refuse to see that an out-of-control virus in the world will eventually ruin even the lives of the people with high incomes but low concern for the health and lives of others.

WE ARE EVER AT THE CROSSROADS OF history, where we must listen to the voice of our ancestors, draw on our best moral and social practices and intensify the struggle to bring and sustain good in the world. Indeed, they enjoin us to stand up in the midst of savage oppression and sinister silence and bear witness to truth and set the scales of justice in their proper place among those who have no voice, the vulnerable, the devalued and disempowered. In a word, we must honor our historical and ongoing role as a moral and social vanguard in this country and the world. And we must bear witness thru words, work and struggle that oppression in any form is immoral, unjust and unnatural and there is no reliable remedy except in righteous, relentless and transformative struggle.▲

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 *Essays on Struggle: Position and Analysis*, www.AfricanAmericanCulturalCenter-LA.org; www.OfficialKwanzaaWebsite.org; www.MaulanaKarenga.org.