



**REMEMBERING TIMES OF REVOLUTION AND REVOLT:
RECAPTURING THE SPIRIT, PURSUING THE PRACTICE**

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DR. MAULANA KARENGA

IT WAS A FUNDAMENTAL TEACHING AND CENTRAL source of battlefield talk, derived and discussed in the Sixties about the motion and meaning of history. There are, we assumed and argued with no small amount of certainty, two tendencies in history, that which is rising, grounding itself and growing stronger and that which is dying, decaying and passing away. And we defiantly declared that we and other oppressed and struggling peoples of this country and of the world belong to that rising tide of history. Likewise, we asserted with equal surety that oppressors of all kinds—racists, colonialists, capitalists, imperialists—and their lackeys, collaborators, hirelings, henchmen and handmaidens, belong to the declining side of history. And they would eventually be defeated, and freedom and justice for all would emerge and triumph in the world.

Indeed, Min. Malcolm had assured us, saying “We are living in an era of revolution and revolt and the (African American) is part of the rebellion against the oppression and colonialism which has characterized this era.” Furthermore, he said “We are seeing today a global rebellion of the oppressed against the oppressor, the exploited against the exploiter.” And we inherited from him, not only this understanding of the motion and meaning of history, but also the confidence and courage in struggle that came with it.

But there has been so many reversals, times and places where revolutions turned into repressions, revolts were crushed and oppressors seemed to have resurged with a vengeance. And they have not simply rebuilt themselves, but have recruited, converted and equipped elites and militias among the people, with newer and more powerful military, political and cultural weapons, and have trained them to act against themselves and each other and especially against the vital interests of the people. And thus, we who still stand strong in the storms, defying wind, fire and seductions of every season and kind, have had to face the fact that history offers no straight line to final victory for human freedom and flourishing.

Indeed, there are twists and turns in history, and in the course of the liberation struggle, there are delays and non-final defeats; setbacks and slow recoveries; desertions, debilitating compromises and conversions to the other side; betrayals, burnouts and battle fatigue; and a constant urge and seductive incentives to abandon it all and simply seek a comfortable place in oppression. Here we remember and are reminded in countless ways that the struggle is a long, difficult, dangerous and demanding one. And as Amilcar Cabral has taught us, we must “mask no difficulties, tell no lies and claim no easy victories.”

And so, we rightfully and repeatedly ask ourselves, who now also stands still defiant, dedicated and disciplined, active and thoroughly engaged in continuing the struggle, unbudgingly Black with no self-serving or subsidized reasons not to be Black, not to fight to the finish, and achieve victory? And where are those who have not abandoned the Movement for greener, whiter, blackish, mixed-ish and other self-mutilating pastures and playgrounds? Where are the all-season soldiers who are “not wet by water or burned by fire,” as the ancient Africans of Kemet taught? And who has read or still remembers the sacred teachings of our ancestors in the *Husia* that say to us, “You are commanded to struggle against those who struggle against you.” But if a just peace is achieved, we must embrace it. “For exceedingly good is the practice of peace and there is no blame in peace for those who practice it.” Hotep.

Indeed, we are not many now. The tide, *it so often seems*, has turned against us and against the other oppressed and struggling peoples of the world. But wait, there’s more to life and struggle than the nightly news and the daily delivered dose of forgetfulness, fogginess and fear, and more than the propaganda and promise of eventual redemption and hope in the House of Representatives and miraculous coming to moral consciousness in the Senate.

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Moving beyond the borders and blinders of the U.S., we see the rising tide of history again. The heroic people of Haiti will not be humbled, will not accommodate their oppressors, but continue the revolutionary resistance that brought them into being as a nation, united and forged in the transformative fire of a unique revolution for the freedom of all. Thus, although the imperialists build their numerous and expensive embassies to brutally appropriate and exploit Haiti's rich and extensive natural resources and the vultures circle in the air and ravage on the ground, the people refuse to be frightened, defeated or forgetful of the revolutionary history that is their heritage and that serves as a light unto the world for those who love and fight for freedom. They fight on against unimaginable odds. Indeed, against an extensive assortment of thugs, armies, constant killings of the people and assassinations of leaders and intellectuals, continuous rapes and human trafficking, introduction of deadly diseases, denial of human rights, grinding poverty, puppet governments and greedy and groveling elites, the people have waged centuries of struggle and will not be submissive, seduced or subdued, regardless.

And then, there is Palestine, brutally occupied and savagely suppressed, prohibited from presence, space or speech in the corporate media, but still defiantly resistant. Posed in defiant determination against the strongest military in Western Asia and supported, financed and protected by the strongest military in the world, the people of Palestine refuse to be defeated or dispirited or deterred from their right to be free, secure, and self-sustaining. Against all odds – the occupier's indiscriminate and saturation bombings, sniper killings of peaceful demonstrators and assassination of leaders and intellectuals, destruction of housing, hospitals, schools, communications and food and water sources, and imprisonment of the

whole people, the Palestinian people fight on, unbowed and unbroken.

And other peoples are rising in revolt and rebellion all over the world against cruel, corrupt, collaborationist and military governments, against economic exploitation, deprivation, austerity measures imposed by capitalist international structures, corporate resource theft, destruction of the environment, and for real democracy. The people have risen in righteous struggle around these issues in Puerto Rico, Guinea, Ecuador, Lebanon, Hong Kong and Iraq and elsewhere in the world. These struggles are summed up in a real and meaningful way by the Indigenous Coalition in Ecuador which stated that their demonstrations and struggles are “in defense of our lives and lands (and) against greed and the destruction and exploitation of our natural resources by the state with many of our people at risk of extermination.”

IT IS INDEED, A LIFE AND DEATH STRUGGLE for ourselves, humanity and the earth itself. And again we must see ourselves in that rising tide of revolt and rebellion in the world, keep the faith, hold the line, and continue and intensify our struggle. As I've taught and teach since the Sixties, we are a key people in a key country. And our liberation will not only free us from the grotesque grasp of capitalism and racism and its other forms of oppression, but also bring the whole of humanity closer to full and final liberation. For we are in the belly of the beast, the center of a world encircling system of suppression and oppression, and we are morally obligated to resist it. And we are to resist it, not only to free ourselves, but as Mary McLeod Bethune taught us, as a self-conscious contribution to radically remaking the world, indeed, opening up new pathways, horizons and hope for human freedom, human flourishing and the well-being of the world.▲

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.