



**IN REMEMBRANCE AND REAFFIRMATION OF RESISTANCE:
MAINTAINING CONTINUING COMMITMENT TO OUR STRUGGLE**

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DR. MAULANA KARENGA

As the new year unfolds and we remember, reflect and recommit ourselves to do the work, wage the struggle and live the lives that represent and reaffirm the best of who we are and strive to be, we of the organization Us send warm greetings of solidarity and continued struggle to all those similarly committed and engaged wherever they are. We of the Movement are not many now, we who are still on the battlefield for the new world we once talked so defiantly about winning and sacrificed so selflessly to achieve. Yes, we are not many now, we who endured hardships and losses which broke so many others and drove some to disabling drugs, strong drinks and weak ways, petty grudges and pitiful whining, and others to compromised principles and unworthy practices.

Let us rush to say, however, this realization and report from the frontline in no way denies the continued existence and re-emergence of resistance across the country. Nor is it intended to deny and diminish the presence and importance of the good work and the earnest and audacious struggle being waged by those well-known, less-known and unknown. For we know that wherever and whenever people are oppressed, some among them always rise to resist, to unsettle the oppressor, organize the people and pose an alternative to the established order of things. In a word, *where there is oppression there is resistance*.

Also, clearly there are numerous self-defined movements: the Black Lives Matter Movement; the Reparations Movement; the Me-Too Movement; the Womanist Movement; the Poor Peoples Campaign Movement; the Anti-Mass Incarceration Movement; the Kawaida Movement; the Rites of Passage Movement; the Global Pan-Africanist Movement and many more collective and interrelated initiatives for racial and social justice. What is missed here is the sense of an *overarching* Movement with a self-conscious collective vocation of commitment to common principles, practices and goals and shared goods with numerous and varied ap-

proaches to realizing those aims and aspirations and yet interrelated and interconnected in various strengthening and expansive ways.

As we seek to do our best work, wage our large and small struggles and live lives that reflect and bear witness to who we are and what we strive to achieve and become, we again and always call on those who will to: *Continue the struggle. Keep the faith. Hold the line. Love our people and each other. Seek and speak truth. Do and demand justice. Be constantly concerned with the well-being of the world and all in it. And dare rebuild the overarching Movement that prefigures and makes possible the good world we all want and deserve.*

Clearly, our first commitment is to *continue the struggle*, to continue the fight on every battlefield on which we find ourselves, and any others that emerge and require our presence and active engagement. Those of us in struggle are already engaged in spaces and places we have chosen to do our work, as well as on those battlefields that have chosen us, i.e., compelled us to be present because of the importance and urgency of the issues involved. Indeed, Min. Malcolm, noble priest of fire and foresight, has taught us that the whole country we live in is a battlefield, and every place we are is a battleline. Thus, we are, in a real and sobering sense, called to be ever ready to be present and engaged wherever the struggle takes and needs us. As our honored ancestors taught us in the *Odu Ifa* (159:1), “The constant soldier is never unready, not even once.”

Certainly, and also, we must *keep the faith (Imani)*, faith in the good and in our capacity to achieve it and to be it. We speak here of an ancient and ongoing faith rooted in the spiritual and moral values of our ancestors that anchor our lives and teach us ethical, insightful and upward thrusting ways to understand and assert ourselves in the world, to relate rightfully with others and the earth, and to wage righteous and relentless struggle to bring, increase and sustain good in the world. Indeed, it is a faith that finds

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its meaning and measure in the good we dare and do in the world, especially against the odds, against the tide, against the new and popular trends and the deceptive and disarming counsel to cooperate, compromise and capitulate in the terrorizing face and force of evil and injustice in high and low places.

And this too: we must *hold the line*, holding resolutely to our essential ethical and liberational commitments, regardless of new fads, escapist fantasies and suppressive forces confronting us, and refusing to give up even an inch, ounce or iota of the good we've gained with such sacrifice and suffering, casualties and costs. For it is not only our lives on the line, but also goods that make our lives worth living—goods like freedom, justice, security of person and people, food security and adequate and affordable housing and health care, quality education, sources of economic sustainment and initiative, rightful representation in all spaces and all decisions affecting our destiny and daily lives, and our right to live lives of dignity, decency and possibilities to flourish and come into the fullness of ourselves.

Moreover, we are to *love our people and each other*. And in loving our people and each other, we must remember love is not simply an emotion, but ultimately and unalterably a practice, a practice of shared goodness and service. To talk of loving our people is to talk of caring and committed ways to serve them, to offer one's life and if need be, one's death in struggle to free them, achieve justice for them, and secure for them all the other essential goods of life. We must, as Osagyefo Nkrumah teaches us, go to the people, start with what they know, build on what they have, seek their advice, live with them and learn from them and never let the established order or misconceptions of interest separate us from them. For indeed, their interests are ultimately our own. This is the meaning of

Lady Ta-Aset's ethical teaching in the *Husia* that "The good we do for others we are also doing for ourselves." For we are building the good world we all want and deserve to live in. We must, regardless of our status, station or position in life, work or struggle, remain consistent servants of the people, ever responsible to them and always responsive to their needs and aspirations for a good, meaningful and dignity-affirming life.

Also, we must constantly *seek and speak truth, do and demand justice*. Indeed, it is written in the sacred texts of the *Husia* that we must bear witness to truth and set the scales of justice in their proper place among those who have no voice, i.e., the poor, less powerful and vulnerable here in this country and everywhere oppression and suffering deny the humanity, human rights and well-being of people; whether in Haiti, Africa, Palestine, Yemen, in China among the Uighurs, in Myanmar among the Rohingya and among others elsewhere.

Kawaida teaches us too we are also to *be constantly concerned with the well-being of the world and all in it*—the people, the animals, plants and the earth itself. We must, our beloved foremother Mary McLeod Bethune teaches, strive to remake the world in just and caring ways. And as always, we must *strive to rebuild the overarching Movement* that includes and combines the strength and struggles of all the other movements, organizations and initiatives for racial justice, social justice and radical social change. And it will and must be self-consciously interrelated structures of large and small initiatives which, united in shared principles and practices, commonalities and diversities, prefigure and make possible the good community, society and world we all want, deserve and daily dedicate our lives to in countless ways.▲

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