



**RIGHTFULLY REMEMBERING AND RESISTING FOR TYRE NICHOLS:  
COUNTERING THE MENTALITY AND MAYHEM OF AMERICANISM**

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**DR. MAULANA KARENGA**

**T**HE SAVAGE MURDER AND MAYHEM imposed and inflicted on yet another Black man, a Black person, Tyre Nichols, on his family and community and on Black people as a whole is for each and all of us another great and grievous loss through unrestrained racist police violence. And it is no less racist because it was carried out by mostly Black police officers, for they are morally and criminally culpable collaborators and agents of the racist system which trained them *professionally as police* and cultivated them *socially as persons* to have such a depraved disregard for Black lives, Black rights and Black people. In other words, they are among those who *chose the white doll* and thus all the visceral self-hatred and hostility this choice represents and generates against themselves and other Black people.

This great and grievous loss is a shared loss for us all, for Tyre is not only a father of his son and a son of his mother and father, but also, a son and man of his people, what his mother calls “a beautiful soul”, and once a living and promising heir to the awesome legacy of his people, now cut down in a cruel, callous and most ruthless way. Thus, we, as an organization and a people reaffirm our shared sense of great loss with Tyre’s family and loved ones. And in prayerful homage we say: May the joy he brought and the good he left last forever. May his mother, Mrs. RowVaughn Wells, and his father, Mr. Rodney Wells, and all his family and loved ones be blessed with consolation, courage and peace. And may we, his people, survivors and conscientious keepers of his and our people’s legacy, continue the struggle to end the racist conditions and anti-human practices

that led to his brutally imposed and undeserved death. *Hotep. Ase. Heri.*

Indeed, even as his vicious murder is a shared loss to all of us as a people, it also poses for us a shared obligation to rightfully remember him, not only by raising his name and reaffirming his meaning to us, but also engaging in righteous and relentless struggle to end the systemic conditions that produced the mentality, policies and practices that brought about his untimely, unwarranted and undeserved death. This means that, even in the midst of our mourning, we must continue and intensify our historical and ongoing struggle to be ourselves without penalty, punishment or oppression and to free ourselves, not only from the continuing plague of police violence, but also from general systemic violence and various other kinds of oppression with which we are constantly confronted.

And although we have endured and resisted these wanton and unwarranted atrocities for centuries and anticipate continuing attacks, we must not become numb to them or accept them as normal or necessary, regardless of the assembly of lies, excuses, twisted facts, and manufactured racial and racist motives the established order conjures up and peddles. Still, whether we are recent volunteers or seasoned veterans of this taxing and toll-taking struggle, there are several things about this particular imposition of police violence that makes it difficult to understand and come to terms with it. But if we are to rightfully remember and resist for Tyre, then, we must understand his brutal murder and undeserved death in ways that put it in the right context, linking it with the police and systemic violence rooted in the founding and functioning of society. Indeed,

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Tyre's merciless murder can be seen as another expression of the mentality and mayhem of racialized Americanism with its commitment to White supremacy and to massive and continuing violence against those different and vulnerable on a national and global scale.

And yet, even understanding this, several things strike hard against us and our human and African sensitivities when we learned about this particular act of police bludgeoning and bloodletting. First, even after George Floyd and all the others maimed and murdered, we are nevertheless shocked and righteously angered by the sheer savagery and inhumanity of this murder, the murderers' depraved disregard for Black and human life, and afterwards, one blandly tying his shoe and another smoking a cigarette as if at the end of experiencing something pleasurable. Likewise, we are righteously angered that it is yet another example of raw, racist and brutal police violence against Black men and Black people under the color and camouflage of law, with the license and latitude to kill and with no easily foreseeable end.

Moreover, we are similarly righteously angered and appalled by the shared depravity and perversity of those who came to watch, co-signed and refused to intervene or assist Tyre as he lay dying a horrible death, i.e., the deputy sheriffs, the emergency medical technicians, the firefighters. As Mr. Wells said to the press, "Everyone, the fire department, the paramedics that came out, that stood around and did not do anything. They're just as guilty". Indeed, they are criminally and morally complicit and culpable and must be held accountable.

Finally, we expect in the case of police violence to see the White perpetrator and we

are understandably disappointed and even hurt by the collaborators and crime partners who are Black in color but not in consciousness. As Mrs. Wells said in an interview, "For it to be five Black officers, yes, it makes it even harsher to swallow, because they were Black and they know what we have to go through being Black already". But, again, if we understand it in its wholeness, this is not simply an expression of racial self-hatred and moral failure of the Black policemen or only a brutal demonstration of personal or group perversion. It is also a moral and social failure and intended result of the founding structure and functioning of America itself, rooted in a pathology of oppression. It is the persistent pattern and practices of an intersecting regime of racism, capitalism and empire, and other modes of oppression in which ideologies and practices of domination, deprivation and degradation of others different and vulnerable are central and sacrosanct.

The system of policing fits in this larger social system which like all systems of oppression has its perpetrators who create, maintain and benefit from the system; the collaborators who cooperate in the subjugation, suppression and oppression imposed by the perpetrators; and the victims who suffer, sustain themselves against all odds and constantly resist in various liberating and uplifting ways. One of the greatest victories of an oppressor over an oppressed people is to make the oppressed like them, and those collaborating brutalizing police are a clear example of this. And whether we recognize it or not, a person or people can collaborate in their own oppression in other ways also, i.e., accepting the oppressor's concepts of ourselves and others and acting as they define us; acting against our own interests; and refusing

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to resist evil, injustice and oppression in all their forms.

**T**HIS IS WHY WE MAINTAIN THAT OUR oppressor cannot be our teacher and that the most reliable remedy for oppression is righteous and relentless resistance on every level and everywhere. For the ultimate aim is not only to radically reform the concept and practice of policing and public safety, but also the radical reconception and reconstruction of society itself in the interests of African and human good and the well-being of the world. Yes,

we must continue to struggle against police violence and their racist and racialized training, positioning and practices as an occupying army in our community and we must end their qualified immunity protection against prosecution. But we must also continue to link it with our larger and more difficult struggle to radically transform the society that created and maintains this and other instruments and institutions of oppression and thus, open up a wider way for a new hope and history for us and the whole of humankind.▲

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