



**IN REMEMBRANCE AND REAFFIRMATION:  
HARNESSING HURRICANES AND WHIRLWINDS OF RIGHTEOUS ANGER**

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**DR. MAULANA KARENGA**

*Nine years ago, we met to celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our organization Us and of the Nguzo Saba in the wake of the awesome devastation and destruction of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans and elsewhere, augmented and extended by the criminal neglect and racist response of government officials. This month as we celebrate our 49<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we also remember and pay rightful homage again to the victims and survivors of Hurricane Katrina and its human accomplices, recognize the historic importance of the current and ongoing resistance in Ferguson against police violence, and reaffirm our uncompromising commitment to continue and intensify the struggle and to turn the hurricanes and whirlwinds of righteous anger into transformative forces of justice and good in the world.*

*So let us pause and pay rightful homage again to the thousands dead, named and unnamed; to the people for their resilience and the kindness and support given each other; their courage under water and fire and the unforgettable failure of their governments to save and serve them; to the national African American community as whole for its rapid outpouring of unity, empathy and aid and acting swiftly to issue the call for aid and mobilizing and organizing to deliver it; and to other national and local groups and persons of good will and the international community, especially Venezuela and Cuba, for their quick and valuable support. And we also pay rightful homage to the people of Ferguson for their sustained resistance and courage, struggling for justice and the end of police violence, especially against us as a people.*

*Below then, is the Chair's Message I delivered nine years ago in homage to the people of New Orleans and elsewhere and in reaffirmation and celebration of our 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of work, service, struggle and institution-building and in special attention to the Nguzo Saba as a good and upward way forward. It speaks also to the struggle in Ferguson and struggles for justice wherever we are.*

At this critical and tragic moment in our history, I can offer you no good news which is not tied to and dependent on struggle. For we know there is no real and lasting relief except in continuing resistance, no freedom from oppression except that forged in the furnace and field of constant struggle, and no justice, peace or possibility of liberation except that achieved and secured on the battlefield for a new and better world. In a word, we can only heal and repair ourselves by reordering and repairing the world.

In this context of continuous struggle, this is our charge and challenge then: to know our past and honor it, to engage the present and improve it, and to imagine the future and forge it. And we can only forge that future in the most expansive interests of our people and humankind by prefiguring in our daily lives the good world we want and deserve to live in and bringing forth from the past the best of what it means to be African and human and using it to improve our present and to forge our future. And this means for us, constantly reflecting on, practicing and promoting the *Nguzo Saba* and the philosophy of *Kawaida*.

For in a world wracked by division, alienation, hostility and hatred, the principle of *Umoja* (Unity) teaches the oneness of our

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people, the common ground of our humanity, and our shared human status as bearers of dignity and divinity. In a world where there is repeated denials and violations of persons' and peoples' rights to freedom and self-rule, the principle of *Kujichagulia* (Self-determination) upholds the right and responsibility of every people to speak their own special cultural truth, control their destiny and daily lives and make their own unique contribution to the forward flow of human history, whether in Haiti, Africa, Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan or anywhere else in the world.

In contrast, to the vulgar individualism that envelopes this country and preaches self-promotion at the expense of others, the principle of *Ujima* (Collective Work and Responsibility) teaches the constant search for common ground and cooperation for common good. In a world where corporations export their wares and waste all over the world and appropriate other people's wealth and future under the destructive practices and deceptive name of globalization, the principle of *Ujamaa* (Cooperative Economics) upholds the values of shared work and wealth and the right of all to an equitable and just share of the goods of and in the world. In a world where purposelessness is pervasive and the response "whatever" is a cover for controlled confusion, the principle of *Nia* (Purpose) teaches us the collective vocation of constantly building and developing community and the overarching ethical obligation to constantly bring good into the world.

In a world where lives and lands are regularly destroyed and persons, whole peoples and the environment are relentlessly

degraded, the principle of *Kuumba* (Creativity) puts forth the ancestral ethical teaching of *serudj ta*—the obligation to constantly heal and repair the world, making it more beautiful and beneficial than we inherited it. And in a world where faith is funded and religion is an obsequious servant of racism and of the outrageous claims of the right to rule and ruin the lives and lands of the vulnerable, *Imani* (Faith) teaches us to believe in the Good, the Right and the Possible and to join our faith with work and struggle to bring into being the good world we all want and deserve to live in.

There is a great work to be done, brothers and sisters, a hard and heroic struggle to be waged and won and a new, just and good society and world to bring into being and secure. Let's get up, then, get organized, intensify the struggle and get it all done, my people. Let's harness the hurricane of righteous anger and activism of our people in the face of this tragedy and injustice, repair our devastated and depressed communities and rebuild our Movement in the process.

Let's pick ourselves up, wipe the blood and dirt of our oppression from our faces and our future, empty our minds and hearts of the toxic residue of racism, restore our historical memory, and regain the historical initiative in determining our destiny and daily lives. For only with such an uninfected, healthy and wholesome self-understanding and self-assertion in the world can we truly know our past and honor it, engage our present and improve it, imagine our future and forge it in the dignity-affirming and life-enhancing ways worthy of the name and history African.

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