



**MESSAGE FROM MINISTER MALCOLM ON ALD:
SILENCING THE GUNS OF PANDEMIC OPPRESSION**

Los Angeles Sentinel, 05-28-20, p.A6

DR. MAULANA KARENGA

OUR ANNUAL REFLECTIVE AND resistance-focused celebration of the birth and life of Min. Malcolm X, May 19th and African Liberation Day, May 25th, finds us confronting an especially dangerous, difficult and demanding time. It is a taxing time of dealing with two global interrelated challenges: the pandemic of COVID-19 and the pathology of oppression in which this virus and other natural diseases and social sicknesses are rooted and replicated. Indeed, the pathology of oppression is a pandemic itself, i.e., a world-wide disease or social sickness clearly harmful to human life and even the well-being of the world.

Having this understanding of the interrelated nature of the biological disease and the social sickness in which it takes root and thrives, we know that no matter what vaccines are developed and distributed, the ultimate cure for this disease lies in a radically transformative cure of the sickness of society. Here the teachings of El Hajj Malik El Shabazz, Min. Malcolm X, noble witness to the world for our people, honored martyr and instructive model and mirror for us, offer enduring insights on the righteous and effective remedy of resistance on every level.

Malcolm, committed Seba and constant soldier that he is, tells us we must face the fact that in the context of our oppression, “wherever a Black person is there is a battle line,” a site and source of righteous and relentless struggle. He tells us that war is being waged on us constantly and everywhere and that in the context of oppression we are actually “living in a war zone.” Indeed, he says, “Racism involves a war against the dark-skinned people,” against people of color in Africa, Asia, Latin America, Native America and among African Americans in the South and North. And we have and are morally obligated to resist and defeat it.

The African Union has advanced the theme for Africa Day 2020 as “Silencing the Gun in the Context of the COVID-19.” It should be noted that the African Union renamed African Liberation Day, Africa Day, sending a signal of the mis-

reading of the meaning and demands of liberation and confusing the trappings of independence with the reality of continued covert control by former colonizers and their co-capitalist allies in America. Thus, the silencing of the gun campaign is certainly a noble and necessary goal of peace for our people. But the call for peace internally should not be promoted or used to misdirect our attention from the overarching oppression we endure and the need for the struggle for liberation from internal and external forms and forces of oppression.

Clearly, we need peace to achieve security, development and prosperity for our people. Thus, there is an urgent need to end the civil wars, the warlord banditry, the mercenaries’ murderous rampages, the collaborators’ plunder of the continent, and the internecine struggles among African peoples everywhere. Indeed, as the *Husia* says, “exceedingly good is the presence of peace, and there is no blame in peace for those who practice it.” But Malcolm teaches us that peace is impossible without freedom, justice and respect for our human rights by our oppressor. “Everyone craves a world of peace,” he said, but “all agree there can be no peace without freedom from colonialism, foreign domination, oppression and exploitation.”

Thus, there is also a need to silence the oppressor’s guns, his war against us everywhere, his brutal occupation of Haiti and other vulnerable countries, as well as his militarization of Africa with imposed bases, soldiers, mercenaries and killing machines of all kinds. And we must silence the capitalist and imperialist guns held to the head of the people and their righteous leaders, and end the violence of the invasions and political assassinations and the plunder, pollution and depletion of Africa’s human and natural resources. And here in this country and throughout the African Diaspora, we must silence the racist guns of police violence, vigilante violence and systemic violence of all kinds. Therefore, our major oppressors must not escape criticism and active confrontation and resistance by our or their

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refocusing on our collaborators who must also be defeated. For the major oppressors are the overlords of the collaborators.

We come to this point, not only as survivors of colonialism, imperialism, the Holocaust of enslavement and centuries of apartheid, racism and White supremacy, but also as seasoned-soldiers resolute, resilient and resourceful. And we are also injured physicians with the knowledge, skill and will, not only to heal, repair and renew ourselves, but also to play a decisive role with other oppressed and struggling peoples in repairing, renewing and remaking the world.

Surely, we cannot minimize the awesome toll this virus is taking on our lives here in this country where we are dying at three times the rate of Whites and also have similar infection rates. Nor do we overlook the pathology of oppression and its impact on the unequal suffering and deaths of African people in Brazil, occupied Haiti and elsewhere in the Diaspora. On the continent, we praise the African people, the doctors, nurses and other health workers, who have held back the expected tide of devastation predicted by those waiting for an opportunity to continue their racist condemnation and criminal oppression. But we also know the collective strategies and programs being planned and pursued now are necessary to hold the line and ensure the improved health, lives and future of African people.

Malcolm also taught us that we must understand our issues and struggles in both particular and global ways. Rightly conceived, he says, the Black liberation struggle “is international in nature and scope.” This is so, not only because we are a world community of African peoples with particular and global interests, but also because of the nature and scope of our oppression and the system of oppression itself are global. Malcolm

taught that our struggle around our human rights to freedom and justice are international issues and an international struggle. “Racism is a human problem and crime. And capitalism, colonialism and imperialism are part of an international system of oppression.” Thus, Malcolm teaches, “we not only see the importance of having an understanding of things local and things national, but (also) we see today the importance of having an understanding of things international, (and) . . . where our people fit in the scheme of things.”

This global conception of ourselves, our interests, our oppression and our resistance begins with pan-Africanism, a sense of shared identity and interests of African people and our commitment to discover and pursue ways to work, build and struggle in unity for the liberation of African people everywhere as our organization Us has taught and practiced since our founding in 1965.

IN CONCLUSION, IN OUR PAN-AFRICANIST strivings and struggle, Malcolm leaves us with certain additional essential insights on meeting the challenge of pandemic oppression. He tells us first that we have no obligation to suffer peacefully and to collaborate in our own oppression. And it is immoral and irrational to ask or expect this of us. And thus, in the context of the pandemic pathology of oppression, there is no real and effective remedy except resistance: righteous, radical and relentless resistance. Moreover, there is no strategy worthy of note or its name that does not prioritize, privilege and promote struggle at every level of life. And there is no righteous and promising way forward except in unity and struggle in the interest of African people, human good and the well-being of the world. ▲

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