



**DARING TO HOPE AND STRUGGLE BEYOND ELECTIONS:  
A RADICAL AND IRREVERSIBLE REFUSAL TO BE DEFEATED**

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**DR. MAULANA KARENGA**

**I**N TURNING-POINT TIMES AND STRUGGLES like these and those yet to come, we must not find ourselves paralyzed with anxiety and apprehension and pining over the terrible turn of events; the odds against us; or the toll these righteous struggles for our lives and future and the future of this country will take on us. Rather, we must remember and hold high the instructive, rich and rewarding lessons of our history, learned in real life and lived experience, continuous striving, and righteous and relentless struggle. And we must reason and realize that if our honored ancestors in the Holocaust of enslavement could hold on to their humanity; hope and strive for freedom; and find various ways and means to resist and embody a radical and irreversible refusal to be defeated or dispirited, we can, in good faith, do no less in the winter of vengeance and violence promised by this right-wing regime goose stepping and stomping into power.

Indeed, if fascist political thuggery is the plan and promise, and Trump moves to become the mob boss of America and mob leader of his lemming-like loyalists, enablers and supporters, they must not find us immobilized by anxiety and apprehension, unaware and unready to resist. For in the face of evil, injustice and oppression, we are morally obligated to resist, to refuse to cooperate or collaborate actively or inactively in our own oppression. Clearly, in such a context, there is no neutrality, no sanctuary or safety on the sidelines or in the rear hiding behind transparent walls of self-deluding lies, promises and hopes of exemption. This is the lesson taught by Nana Paul Robeson in the midst of the emerging fascism of WWII. He informed the world and the would-be escapists and neutralists, “The battlefield is everywhere

there is no sheltered rear”. And Nana Henry Highland Garnet urged the enslaved African then and counsels the oppressed ones now, “let your motto be resistance, resistance, resistance”. He calls across the centuries for us to rise up in resistance, “for no oppressed people have ever secured their liberty (freedom) without resistance”.

Whatever other casualties and chaos occurred and are yet to come with the right-wing capture of the reins of state power in these recent elections, no one can claim with an iota of awareness, honesty and truthfulness that Trump and his cohorts are not America, the majority representation of America, unmasked and unrepentantly committed to reversing hard won gains in the interest of freedom and justice and preventing the achievement of new ones. The timid and tepid disclaimers that he and they are not really America rings hollow in the air-conditioned caves of those gleefully planning and promising legalized vengeance, destruction and dismantlement on a large and lustful scale. Here, it appears the would-be autocrat and unhinged actor is gloatingly telling us “Welcome to the Mad Max Thunderdome”.

Surely, if we are to work our way through the righteous anger, and understandable deep disappointment in the outcome of the elections, we must craft a Black Agenda, create Black united fronts, build and rebuild our culture of struggle in which struggle is both normal and necessary for constantly expanding the realm of human freedom and justice in the world. And we must build real and mutually respectful, supportive and beneficial alliances and alternative political structures with others who also rise up and resist the limiting party and corporate established order of things. And whatever we plan and do

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with others, we must continually strengthen our own capacity for resistance everywhere oppression is proposed and practiced.

For as Nana Haji Malcolm taught, “In this country, wherever a Black (person) is, there is a battleline”. Indeed, he taught that: “whether in the North or South, the East or West, you and I are living in a country that is a battleline for all of us”. And as the battleline of struggle is everywhere, there is a parallel and compelling need for us to be always aware vigilant, and engaged on every front. Thus, our battle cry must be “Everywhere a battleline; everyday a call to struggle”, fighting fiercely, as Nana Fannie Lou Hamer urged us, “every step of the way”.

Now, when we think and speak of resistance, we must understand and engage it in its most expansive meaning. Kawaida philosophy teaches that resistance is a triple-meaning process and practice. Indeed, it is a process and practice of *opposition*, *affirmation* and *aspiration*. And we must do all three equally and simultaneously, for they are interrelated, interactive and interdependent. Resistance as opposition is opposition to the oppressor and oppression in all its forms and in every place and space we find it. Resistance as affirmation is affirming ourselves every day and in every way that is good, beautiful and strengthening. And this affirming includes personal and collective bearing witness in speech and action to our sacredness and soulfulness, our equal humanity and human rights, and our unique and equally valid and valuable African, Black, way of being human in the world. And resistance as aspiration is a motivating vision and practice that seeks to not only achieve a just and good society, but also a just, good and sustainable world, initiating, in the Fanonian sense, a new history and hope for humankind. In a word, it is to ultimately accept the task Nana

Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune assigns us saying, “Our task is to remake the world. It is nothing less than this”.

To rightfully and fruitfully reflect on the country and context in which we find ourselves and on where we go from here, we must first remember. Indeed, all real reflection requires remembering, drawing on what we already have experienced, understood and know. For us, it is an urgent need to first remember who we are as a people in the history of this country and the world. Indeed, how we understand ourselves shapes and determines how we assert ourselves in the world. We are fathers and mothers of humanity and human civilization and thus bring to the table and task before us a library of lessons in life, reflection, struggle and achievement from the longest of human histories. We are the sons and daughters of the Holocaust of enslavement, one of the greatest holocausts in human history and thus, we have valuable knowledge of savagely imposed genocidal suffering and varied ways to resist it. For we not only survived, but prevailed and turned the radically evil intentions of our oppressors into ashes of failure in their mouths.

Also, we are authors and heirs of the Re-affirmation of the Sixties, the reaffirmation of our Africanness and our liberation and social justice tradition. And thus, we are irreversibly committed to the struggle to be ourselves and free ourselves and radically reimagine and reconstruct this country in the interest of a shared and inclusive good for us and all. Also, we are a critical moral and social vanguard, whose righteous and relentless struggle to expand the realm of freedom in this country became a model and mirror for other oppressed and struggling peoples in this country and around the world. It is important to note here, that in spite of regular racist attempts to blame their losses, lives and sordid

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history on us, it is we, as a people, female and male who registered our resistance to emerging fascism in higher numbers than any other racial or ethnic group in this election. And we did it in the face of multiple efforts to suppress our vote and silence our voice in various ways.

**F**inally, as we say in Us, “This is our duty then: to know our past and honor it; to engage our present and improve it; and to imagine a whole new future and forge it in the most ethical, effective and expansive

ways”. And this too, our ancestors and history teach us, saying: “Continue the struggle. Keep the faith. Hold the line. Love and respect our people and each other. Practice the *Nguzo Saba*. Seek and speak truth. Do and demand justice. Be constantly concerned with the well-being of the world and all in it. And dare help rebuild the overarching movement that prefigures and makes possible the good world we all want and deserve to live in, and leave as a legacy worthy of the name and history African”.▲

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