



**MALCOLM, JIHAD AND RACIAL JUSTICE
REAFFIRMING AFRICAN LIBERATION DAY**

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DR. MAULANA KARENGA

IT IS GOOD THAT THE LIBERATION leaders of Africa in the process and practice of the liberation of the Continent in the 1960s established African Liberation Day (ALD) in May, the month in which Min. Malcolm X, El Hajj Malik El-Shabazz, was born, came into being and began his sacred journey in the liberation struggle of our people, African people everywhere. For Malcolm loved Africa and held up Africa as the place of both a glorious past and a promising future, and as an unlimited and instructive source of models of human excellence and achievement we should learn and emulate. And he foresaw and predicted with his mentor, Marcus Garvey, the eventual liberation of Africa and its resuming “its place as a bright star among the constellation of nations”. Moreover, Malcolm, whose African name was *Omowale*, Yoruba for “son who returned home”, taught that we must return home to Africa “culturally, spiritually, philosophically and psychologically.” And we must extract and use its best views, values and practices to ground ourselves, enrich and expand our lives and wage our liberation struggle.

Malcolm taught us to love, respect and serve our people, especially those he called “the downtrodden”, those Fanon called “the wretched of the earth”. This he saw as not only a measure of our morality, but the indispensable way to build and sustain our liberation movements and build the good communities, societies and world we all want and deserve. Malcolm taught us to “wake up, clean up and stand up”. He called on us, he said, “to wake up to (our) humanity, (our) worth and (our) heritage” and to the possibilities within us. And he wanted us to come into critical consciousness about the world we live in, the issues confronting us, and possible ways forward in our struggle. And we are to do this practicing self-determination. Thus, he tells us to “see for yourself, listen for yourself and think for yourself”.

Malcolm taught us to “clean up”, to be morally grounded, be good persons, be good husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, to seek and speak the liberating truth and struggle for racial and social justice, avoid vices that destroy

and cultivate virtues that enrich our lives and advance our struggle as African peoples. And he taught us to stand up and wage righteous and relentless struggle, *jihād*, a righteous and relentless struggle for freedom, justice, equity and good in the world. And on this 91st anniversary of his coming into being, let us celebrate this African Liberation Day in his honor, in the honor of our people and in honor of their struggles for good in the world. And let us raise up, remember and recommit ourselves to the original aims of the unfinished fight for the liberation of African people everywhere.

In the 60s, the fires of freedom raged with revolutionary intensity on the continent and in the Diaspora, especially in the USA. And there was hope that reached toward heaven in its height and caused us all to imagine a Fanonian future, i.e., a new history for Africa and humankind. But the hurricanes and horrors of history have seemed to overwhelm us after such a hopeful, determined and bold beginning in the 60s. On the continent, ravished by imperialism, enslavement, colonialism, settlerism and the savagery that came with them, we see so much suffering of the people, famine, the pandemic of HIV/AIDS, vicious resource theft, disrupted and delayed development, continued civil wars and ethnic strife, and even genocide as dictators, collaborators and other deformities act in the image and interests of our oppressor.

And in the Diaspora in occupied Haiti, we still see a most heroic people daring to struggle, refusing to be passive in the face of the brutal invasion and intervention by the U.S., France and Canada masquerading as the U.N., seeking revenge and reparations for their devastating defeat that marked the Independence of the Haitian people in 1804. And here in the U.S., we remember New Orleans, raise up Ferguson and call for and pursue a righteous relentless struggle against police violence and all forms of systemic violence against and oppression of our people.

Indeed, within the most fierce of winters, there are always sparks and fires of freedom, stoked by the struggles of the masses to achieve justice, push their lives forward, free themselves

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and forge a future for their children. And if we are to maintain hope in the midst of the devastating hurricanes of history that bring such oppression, death, degradation and destruction, we must root it in the resiliency and resistance of our people.

At this ALD, then, we must reaffirm and reinforce the internal power and promise of the masses of our people, their capacity to endure and overcome the obstacles of history before them. And we must continue the four-prong process of political education, mobilization, organization and confrontation that intensifies and sustains the liberation struggle, without which there is no real hope or future worthy of the name African and human. We must rebuild liberation movements among African people, defiantly put forth our aims, demands and ultimate goals and dedicate our lives to realizing them.

For there is no hope for Africa or the African communities without the active engagement of the masses of their people. This requires that programs be put in place and sustained which not only satisfy human need, but transform the people in the process, making them self-conscious agents of their own life and liberation. They must have control of their lives and resources and be educated and supported in their long hard suffering-filled journey to self-determination, self-reliance and sustained development. And this, again, means rebuilding liberation movements everywhere.

Surely, we must include in these life affirming, freedom-focused, justice-seeking, power-enhancing and development-driven initiatives: life necessities for the people, i.e., food security, clothing, housing, health care, etc.; security and peace; freedom on every level; gender equality;

protection and promotion of human rights; cultural reaffirmation, preservation and renaissance; and alliance in struggle and cooperation with other peoples of the world. In addition, we must demand from our former enslavers, colonizers and current oppressors: debt cancellation for Africa; reparations for all Africans everywhere and the end of violation of the sovereignty and self-determination of the peoples of Africa, Haiti and throughout the world African community.

The project of liberation from the deformed and deadly grip of oppression, then, depends above all on the consciousness, capability and commitment of the masses of our people. It is thru them that we will weather the hurricanes of history, overcome our oppression and build unbreakable and life-protective levees against the high waves and strong winds of suppression and seduction our oppressor will constantly send against us.

In a word, we must harness the energy and activism of our people, join forces with other oppressed and progressive peoples and create in struggle a counterforce and counter-wind of history. And we, as Malcolm taught, must remember we are in struggle always and everywhere. Indeed, he says, "whether it is in the North, South, East or West, you and I are living in a country that is a battleline for all of us". And this is true for Africans everywhere and thus, there is the need to constantly reinforce and expand our people's consciousness, capacity and commitment in resistance. This is the meaning and motive force of Marcus Garvey's promised whirlwind of liberation rightfulness and justice that envelops and frees us and contributes to the freeing and flourishing of humanity as a whole.

Dr. Maulana Karenga, Professor and Chair of Africana Studies, California State University-Long Beach; Executive Director, African American Cultural Center (Us); Creator of Kwanzaa; and author of *Kwanzaa: A Celebration of Family, Community and Culture* and *Essays on Struggle: Position and Analysis*, www.AfricanAmericanCulturalCenter-LA.org; www.OfficialKwanzaaWebsite.org; www.MaulanaKarenga.org.