



**DESANTIS HUSTLING OUR HISTORY AS A HOAX:  
OUR RIGHTFUL RESPONSIBILITY TO REMEMBER AND RESIST**

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**DR. MAULANA KARENGA**

**T**HE BARBARIC AND SAVAGE ENSLAVEMENT OF African people in this country and indeed, around the world tenaciously asserts itself as a unique and defining moment in the history of humanity, regardless of recent attempts to falsify, minimize, marginalize, distort and deny it. No one with a modicum of moral conscience and minimum of rational capacity can honestly or accurately deny its horrific toll on African lives, African culture and African possibilities in this country and the world. And it is our responsibility as a people and the responsibility of the peoples of this country and the world as fellow human beings to remember our history rightly and resist attempts to falsify, minimize, marginalize, distort and deny it. Indeed, this is not only morally imperative in paying rightful recognition and homage to the victims and survivors, it is also important in waging and winning the unfinished struggle for freedom from the continuing forms of oppression rooted in the history and legacy of enslavement.

There is and can be no justification for genocide, enslavement or holocaust, no moral or human-respecting reasoning or declaration to explain away or to insidiously suggest that these barbaric systems of mass atrocities and murder had or has benefit for their victims. And DeSantis and his enablers, supporters sustainers, hirelings and handmaidens all know this. The system, process and practice of enslavement was not simply “trade,” business gone bad with collateral damage, but an intentional system of extreme and pervasive violence, domination deprivation, exploitation, degradation and mass murder. It was a violent imposition of physical and social death, turning our people into objects and instruments of labor, sex and entertainment. It was what we call in Swahili, *Maangamizi*, a great and intentional destruction, the Holocaust of enslavement. For the enslavement of African people was indeed a holocaust, a morally monstrous act of genocide, not only against the targeted people, us, Africans, but also a crime against humanity. It was a morally monstrous systemic and systematic destruct-

tion of human life, human culture and human possibility. Moreover, it was a state-sanctioned, state-supported and state-protected intentional systemic savagery.

And, again, DeSantis, and his cohorts, collaborators, contributors and co-dependents in this social and moral madness know this. But he has decided to pave his way to power and the presidency, pandering and pimping a pedagogy of oppression in which Black Studies is devalued and our history is denied and distorted and hustled as a hoax. He emerges trying to outtrump Trump, adopting the “big lie,” practicing, preaching and employing lying as a way of life and a lever forward.

Of course, in the context of the pathology of racism and racist oppression, it is no surprise that he continuously targets us, Black people, as his signature sacrificial offering. For in the context of White racism and White supremacy, we are the most vulnerable to initiatives of hatred and hostility turned into public policy and socially sanctioned practice. Moreover, he and company are following a well-established and easily accessible path and practice, open, viable and valued since the Holocaust of enslavement. DeSantis’ morally repulsive assertion and calculated lie that our enslaved and honored ancestors benefitted from enslavement fits well within the enslavers’ mentally desperate and morally deformed attempt to justify enslavement by pretending it was a benefit to Africans. And like all plunderers, marauders and rapists of body and spirit, they were not satisfied with subjugating the victims, they perversely seek approval and acceptance of their utterly evil actions. They demanded that we dance and sing, demonstrate and declare we were happy with the savagery and suffering they inflicted on us. And they even required that we repeatedly declare that we love them and are grateful for our enslavement.

But where there’s oppression, there is also resistance and thus, in spite of the so-called Uncle Toms and Aunt Jemimas among us, as among all oppressed people and in every context of

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enslavement, genocide and holocaust, there immediately and inevitably arose a fierce resistance by the people. Here DeSantis and company's response is to deny our resistance or to indict it as equal violence against our murderous attackers and oppressors. Thus, he and his compliant education authority has dictated that teachers, willing or not, teach that the history of massacres and lynchings of us by White racists and White supremacists be somehow equated to our rightful resistance to them. Like their mentor and model, Donald Trump, they want us to believe there are some victims on both sides and that there is a moral equation between the victim and the victimizer and between oppressed and oppressor.

Pushed back on the immorality and irrationality of such a posture concerning enslavement as a benefit and equating and blurring oppressor and oppressed, victim and victimizer in the history of systemic and vigilante violence against Black people, DeSantis conveniently and cowardly responded claiming "I didn't do it and I wasn't involved in it." But then he tried to explain it as real by giving an equally morally repulsive example of imagined benefit of enslavement. It is as if someone would give an argument on the benefits of rape and human sexual trafficking saying at least the victims learned the tricks of the trade.

But again, and always, as African people, sons and daughters of the victims and survivors of the *Maangamizi*, we are the memory keepers, the historians, the griots and *jelis* of conscience, consciousness and commitment. It is our honored ancestors and our sacred and instructive history to be known and honored and it is our present to be engaged and improved, and our future to be

forged in the most ethical, effective and expansive ways. And this must be self-consciously done by living our shared legacy of learning the lessons of our history, absorbing its spirit of possibility and struggle, emulating its models of excellence and achievement, and practicing the morality of remembrance. Such a rightful remembrance radically rejects officially cultivated amnesia, revisionist accounts of reality and the external and internal popular calls to live lies, forget and move on. They have wounded us deeply, denied the extent of the injury and attempted to diminish the serious and sustained impact on our past and present and the need for reparative justice to address these issues. But we are injured physicians who will heal, repair, renew and remake ourselves and the world.

**W**E MUST REAFFIRM THAT TEACHING CHILDREN lies does not improve their lives, does not enhance their learning, and does not prepare them to face the real world of uncomfortable truths that must be confronted in the process and practice of developing ourselves and transforming our world. Nor is there any value or virtue in frightening and terrorizing teachers, making them afraid to teach truth and limiting the liberative power of knowledge. Therefore, as our sacred texts teach us in *The Husia*, we must, regardless, bear witness to truth and set the scales of justice in their proper place among the voiceless and the vulnerable, both the living and the dead. And through this we will in righteous and relentless struggle not only construct a truthful, mutually respectful, inclusive and liberating educational project, but also open the way for a new future to unfold for us, this country and the world.▲

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