



**MEDITATIONS ON THE MOVEMENT:
US' 48 YEARS OF RELENTLESS STRUGGLE—PART II**

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DR. MAULANA KARENGA

Now, the making of a movement, especially a liberation movement, is no minor matter, but begins in the hearts and minds of those who see the need, answer the call and dedicate themselves to making it real, revolutionary and resistant to defeat or diversion. This means making the movement unalterably people-centered, struggle-oriented and liberation-focused. And it also means understanding the process and practice of movement in an expansive way, i.e., as a self-conscious, committed, collective and ongoing struggle defined by a shared liberational vision and life-affirming values, interlocking structures, coordinated agendas and common goals, a broad and far-reaching web of communications and exchange, and an interrelated and common pool of resources from which to draw. And it is this process into which we of Us threw ourselves heart, mind, body and soul and sought to make a definitive and enduring contribution in the historic struggle for the liberation and ongoing upward thrust of our people.

Our five-point process and practice of struggle in the interest of liberation began, of necessity, with *education*, cultural and political education. It was and remains a liberated and liberating process, teaching and learning as a practice of freedom. Our “Soul Sessions” every Sunday are a signature liberational practice, and as the name suggests, a depthful engagement with ourselves and our culture on varied levels. And it is always a thrust to cultivate and bring forth the best of what it means to be African and human in the fullest sense and reaffirm the righteousness and victory of our struggle.

It is an educational process which locates us at the center of our own history, grounds us in the ancient, rich and varied

soil and substance of our own culture and lifts us up so that we might see and feel, know, conduct and celebrate the process and practice of coming into the fullness and flourishing of ourselves. This process and practice, of necessity, begins in our cultural school for children, the Limbiko Tembo School of African American Culture, continues through our Black and World News Forum, our Seba and advocacy classes, and is expressed in every organization, community and public forum and personal exchange we have.

Secondly, we set as a vital task the continuous *mobilization* of the masses around their interests, to do as Kwame Nkrumah advised us, “to go to the people, to start with what they know and build on what they have”. This requires that we recognize the masses as an infinite resource for all that is to be conceived and done, that within our people is the potential and capacity to free themselves, push their lives forward and create the context to live the free, full and good life they desire and deserve. Thus, we constantly engage the masses in ways that heighten their awareness and expand their activities and keep them continuously vigilant and in motion in numerous fields of striving and struggle through rallies, forums, workshops, media interventions, artistic initiatives and performances, etc., ever ready for the call and hour of action.

A third task we set for ourselves was and is the ongoing *organization* of the masses, to aid them in building structures that house and advance their interests and aspirations. Our style of work was/is to aid in building the structures and then leaving them to be led and further developed by the people themselves. This was our history with Ujima Village, Mafundi Institute, the

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Brotherhood Crusade, Kedren Community Health Center, the Watts Health Center, and other organizations and institutions. In the case of Untied Fronts like the Black Congress and the National Black Power Continuations Committee, then the Million Man March/Day of Absence National Organizing Committee, and more recently the Black Community, Clergy and Labor Alliance, we remained and remain a central part of the leadership. And always the challenge is to build institutions, including our own, Us and the African American Cultural Center that maintain their original and extended purpose and last as a legacy and continuing task for those who come after us.

The fourth task we assigned ourselves was to lead and join the masses in direct *confrontation* with the established order. As we have said so often, no matter how many books you read on swimming, sooner or later you have to jump in the water, if you are really going to swim. This is the meaning of Fanon's reminder that "you may speak about everything under the sun; but when you decide to speak of that unique thing in man's life that is represented by the fact of opening up new horizons, by bringing light to your own country and by raising yourself and your people to their feet, then you must collaborate on the physical plane". This means strikes, demonstrations, boycotts, defending critical community space, seizing and occupying critical public space, and interrupting and disrupting the routine running of things in various other determined and decisive ways.

And finally, it is the process of radical self- and social *transformation* towards which all our personal and collective efforts move and in which they reach fulfillment. This radical self- and social transformation expresses itself first in the people becoming self-conscious agents of their own life and liberation, waging the struggle that not only frees their hearts and minds, but also liberates the societal and world space they need in order to, as Marcus Garvey said, come into the fullness of themselves. Moreover, this liberational transformation of society finds its fulfillment in numerous visions of the future by our ancestors, i.e., Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune's world of peace, justice, fellowship and cooperative exchange for common good and Min. Malcolm X's realm of righteous men and women, self-consciously remolding themselves and their relations in freedom, justice, solidarity and rightful respect and responsibility for their obligations and actions in the world.

As I wrote in the *Black Scholar*, in midst of our organizational reassessment during the 70s, we strive to create "a body of committed people, men, women and children, capable of not only physical courage, but also of mental and moral expansiveness; a revolutionary solidarity capable of confronting and dealing successfully with problems on various levels in the struggle; a nation, conscious and committed to its role and responsibility in terms of human history, actively and emotionally associated with the continuous evolution of humankind".

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