



**MUSING ON THE VARIED MEANINGS OF THE MIDTERMS:
CONSIDERING THE COURSE OF OUR CONTINUING STRUGGLE**

Los Angeles Sentinel, 11-10-22, p.C1

DR. MAULANA KARENGA

REGARDLESS OF THE OUTCOME OF THESE current midterm elections, favorable results for us and others will not redeem or radically change this country or save and secure the world, though it might be said it will save the day, i.e., give us better conditions to continue and expand our struggle. Nor will an unfavorable outcome end democracy or overturn the world, though it will bode ill for the well-being of the world and clearly further problematize the conditions in which we must and will continue to struggle. So, in any case or condition, we will still need to continue and expand the struggle, keep the faith, hold the line and advance our morally compelling interest in achieving African and human good and the sustained well-being of the world whenever and wherever we can.

No matter what the outcome, let us first praise our people for all they did and endured, all the walls they broke through, all the obstacles they overcame in their struggle to vote, to make their voices heard, to exercise their rights, to express their views and values, and to resist every racist and right-wing effort to discourage and deter them. Indeed, once again, they had to overcome multiple racist and mean-spirited obstacles established all over the country to deny, prevent, disqualify and otherwise suppress their vote. There was the racist and right-wing racial redistricting, gerrymandering, eliminating and absorbing districts largely populated by Blacks, reducing their voting power, denying them rightful representation and even daring in Louisiana to define who is Black in order to deny Black people their rights and representation. Moreover, these devious disrupters also launched legal challenges to disqualify voters, made laws to make it difficult to vote, purged voter

rolls, delayed mailing out early voting ballots, and falsely arrested Black voters for voter fraud and put police and vigilantes around polling places to intimidate and terrorize. And yet, we were not deterred, discouraged or defeated, and this is a narrative of defiance, determination and resistance that serves as a model and mirror worthy of the best of African and human history.

We must praise our people also to bear witness to truth to counter the customary tendency of politicians, media personalities and pundits to dismiss, diminish or divide our role when Democrats win and to blame them as a whole or Black men when the Democrats lose. There is a clear difference when they discuss other ethnic groups. Here they give Latina/os great credit if Democrats win and blame the Democrats for not adequately reaching out to them if they lose. For us there is no discussing of reaching out, asking for and responding to our agenda. It is assumed we are an ongoing gift and given. Thus, there is no similar need to reach out and the fault is ours if our inherited and unresponsive party loses.

Likewise, they don't discuss in accusatory ways Latina/os, Jews, Catholics, Mormons, White women, White LGBT persons and White youth and others that voted for Trump in higher percentages than Black people and will vote on Tuesday in similar numbers. Again, they discuss their conservative and reactionary choices as a problem for the Democrats, not the problem of these groups' unprogressive, backward, and even racist views. And thus, we must resist and radically change these conscious and unconscious biased practices going forward and insist on

**MUSING ON THE VARIED MEANINGS OF THE MIDTERMS:
CONSIDERING THE COURSE OF OUR CONTINUING STRUGGLE**

Los Angeles Sentinel, 11-10-22, p.C1

DR. MAULANA KARENGA

equitable and accurate interpretation and treatment.

As we muse on the multiple and varied meanings of the outcome of the midterm elections, taking inventory of loss and gain of seats and ground, and considering the course of our continuing struggle, let us also pay careful attention to lessons learned from the lived and living experience of struggle in the arena of American politics. Certainly, we know from long experience and continued reflection that elections, midterm or others, are no panacea or path to paradise, no magic solution to the myriad of daily problems and challenges that we and others similarly situated confront and deal with every day. Indeed, we must still bear witness to truth and set the scales of justice in their proper place among those who have no voice, have less voice, less power and status, less means and possibilities for the good and meaningful life everyone deserves. Therefore, the age old and enduring struggles must be continued to secure food for the hungry, clean water for the thirsty, housing for the homeless, rent relief and moratoriums on evictions for those who need these, healthcare and quality education for all, assured income and rightful employment, security of persons and peoples, the end of police violence and massive incarceration, and a good and expansive life for everyone.

But again, elections are critical ground on which we must struggle. For they are, as we have continuously maintained, an important means that enables us to sit at the tables of power where law and policy are made, resources allocated, agendas introduced and advanced, deals and compromises put together, and alliances are built to achieve common goals. But there is more work to be done before we get fully there and represent rightly

and practice politics effectively when we audaciously arrive as both persons and a people. For also, as we have continuously and consistently argued, *there is no substitute for an aware, organized and engaged people constantly involved in a multiplicity of activities to define, defend and advance its interests*. It is and will be no easy walk or way to freedom in the fullest sense of the word or to achieve justice and equity in this country.

As a key moral vanguard, we must face and confront the racial and racist character, structure, power and deep-rooted practice of this country. The language “we” and “our” hides or at least obscures in plain sight the fact that White people still rule this country and will not relent or share power, wealth and status willingly without a righteous and relentless struggle to compel them. But whether we, they or others want to concede it or say it, when it is said this country is divided, it means White people are divided. And in this election and others, the ruling race/class is struggling over who will control state power, power to legislate, adjudicate, allocate and yes, dominate. It is a power to impose, make war and lay waste and appropriate the land and lives of people; to steal, kill and constrain under the color and camouflage of law; and to turn their hatreds and hostilities into public policy and socially sanctioned practice.

Thus, again, regardless of the outcomes and remaining contentions, the reality of race, class, gender and oppressions of these and other kinds remain and so does the urgency and necessity for ongoing righteous and relentless struggle to resist and end them. We speak here of the enduring pathology of oppression, of systemic evil and injustice, of racism and all other forms that deny human rights and human good and thus, we speak of the right and responsibility of resistance,

**MUSING ON THE VARIED MEANINGS OF THE MIDTERMS:
CONSIDERING THE COURSE OF OUR CONTINUING STRUGGLE**

Los Angeles Sentinel, 11-10-22, p.C1

DR. MAULANA KARENGA

righteous and relentless struggle for freedom, justice and the shared good of and in the world.

But if we're not careful and self-conscious, elections can cause us to lose sight of the fact that we need to struggle on this important vital battlefield, but never confuse it with all the other battlefields we must struggle on. We are ever reminded of Nana Paul Robeson's classic assertion that "the battlefront is everywhere, there is no sheltered rear" and Haji Malcolm's equally classic teaching that regardless of where we live or what we do "this country is a battleline for all of us."

THUS, WE MUST THEN EXPAND AND CONTINUE the struggle regardless of the outcome of these and other elections. We must struggle in every place and space possible and needed: in government, corporate and

media spaces; in educational and employment places; in institutions of every kind; and in our relations with others as well as among ourselves. And that struggle must be an all-inclusive one, struggling ever to seek and speak truth; to do, demand and achieve justice; and bring and sustain good in and for the world and all in it. It is how we know ourselves, confirm our commitments to the good and realize conditions and capacities by which we can have good and meaningful lives, cooperate with others in mutually respectful, mutually supportive and mutually beneficial ways, and achieve the ancient African ethical imperative of *serudj ta*: to repair, renew and remake ourselves in the process and practice of making a new world. In a word, as Nana Messenger Elijah Muhammad taught, achieving "a new earth and a new us." ▲

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.MaulanaKarenga.org; www.AfricanAmericanCulturalCenter-LA.org; www.Us-Organization.org.