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BLACK  
C o M M e n t a t o r**  
Commentary, analysis and investigations  
on issues affecting African Americans  
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**The U.S. Doesn't Need a Conference on Racism:  
It Attacks and Incarcerates Its "Race" Problem!  
Represent Our Resistance  
By Dr. Lenore J. Daniels, PhD  
BlackCommentator.com Editorial Board**

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It is not the scheme itself that matters,  
but consensus to adopt the scheme  
and abide by the results.

-J.M. Coetzee, [Diary of a Bad Year](#)

The U.S. won't be there!

President Barack Obama doesn't want to look back. Racism is dead. Let's move on!

So the U.S. won't be there. It has better, nobler things to do.

It plans to boycott the United Nation's World Conference on Racism scheduled for April 20-25, 2009 in Geneva, Switzerland. Unless the final document drops references to Israel and removes the topic of reparations for slavery, the Obama administration will pass up the change to ask itself (and explain to the world) why its regime insists on practicing and supporting other regimes that engage in systemic racism.

According to the Associated Press, "Obama's administration decided to assess the negotiations before making a decision on U.S. participation." And it "assessed" that, no, it's not necessary to show up! The two officials reported back to Washington D.C. that "a bad document got worse." No good! Nada! Can't do it!

"The United States has decided that it will not participate in further negotiations on the outcome document and will not participate in the conference itself on the basis of the latest text, the U.S. officials said." Obama's administration would reconsider the final document if it "improves in a number of areas including dropping references to any specific country..."

*Let's see. Could the U.S. fear being charged with human rights violations within its own borders - again!*

The Conference document would have to remove "references to deformation of religion which the U.S. views as a free speech issue..."

*Is it a violation of "free speech" to discuss Christianity and Jewish responsibility for the deaths of Muslims and not just Muslim attacks on the U.S. and Israel?*

The document would have to remove "language on reparations for slavery."

*Well, that's just too much!*

The U.S. wants to see a "shorter text" with no suggestion that the 2009 Conference in Geneva "reaffirm" the final document from the 2001 Durban Conference on Racism, a conference that witnessed the U.S. and Israel walking out in protest.

In other words, let's not look back to the past. That's just not the American Way! Move forward to Afghanistan! Continue Israeli settlement development in the West Bank. Shoot to kill Black young men on American streets.

AIPAC praises the Obama decision.

Israel isn't an ally to Black Americans. In fact, Black America has few nation-state "allies" if U.S. corporations and the U.S. military industrial complex renders political protection and financial aid that, in turn, is used to wage wars for profit and to annihilate the rights and lives of oppressed people.

Black Americans have few "allies" if this new administration is allowed to continue the policies of previous imperialist administrations and ignore the U.S.'s historical bedfellow - racism!

Recently, I came across an article written by Roger Pulvers and published at [Commondreams.org](http://Commondreams.org), March 1, 2009, titled "Obama Please Note: Those Who Fail to 'Master the Past' Are Guilty, Too." Pulvers refers to U.S. presidents, secretaries of state and defense and members of Congress's collective history of pointing out "human rights' abuses and political crimes" in other nations. "The assumption is always that the U.S. occupies the moral high ground of human dignity - allowing Americans to believe in themselves as altruistic and selfless."

History - history - is a record of "human rights' abuses" and "political crimes." Consider Chile under Pinochet, Brazil and Argentina under the tutelage of the Chicago Boys. Or consider Marcos in the Philippines, Mobuto in the Congo, Suharto in Indonesia, Iran in 1953. There was Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan, Mexico and the so-called "war on drugs," Detroit, Gary, Chicago, New York, Los Angeles, Oakland, New Orleans and the countless footprints of U.S. corporations, CIA, and military operations since the 13 colonies declared itself a nation. Oh, yes, there's that business of slavery and genocide, too. The money pipeline flows from the U.S. to dictators and foreign occupiers while politicians behind loudspeakers proclaim the high moral road to "freedom" and "democracy"! Ask any Black, Brown, Red, and Yellow person what they hear, what they see, what they have experienced when the U.S. talks of "developing nations" and "urban renewal"!

As Pulver notes, when abuses (Abu Graib) and crimes (lying to invade Iraq for oil and regime change) come to the surface, the U.S. tells itself that it simply made a mistake. The U.S. has "pure" motives and engages in "regrettable actions" that are mere "aberrations" while the others' actions are "evil" - motivated "by intolerance and greed." In fact, Pulver writes, "buried deep in America's moral high ground are the bones of millions of victims of whom most Americans seem purposefully oblivious."

Hold an election and change the personnel in Washington D.C. and all will be new again! The U.S. is moving forward!

Pulver refers to Bernhard Schlink's *Guilt About the Past*, in which the University of Berlin law professor "describes the 'long shadow' cast by the perpetrators of war crimes on their descendents." Schlink, writes Pulver, "speaks of the need to "master the past" - that is, to come to terms with your nation's crimes through law, atonement and reconciliation for all involved." Pulver suggests that Americans should heed Schlink's message: "Guilt also reaches those who do not actively separate themselves from the perpetrators and participants through dissociation, judgment or repudiation." For Pulver, it is not enough to merely "'regret' past actions and believe that 'looking forward' and 'getting the country moving again' are substitutes for atonement." Instead, future generations must "'master the past' by taking responsibility for it. Americans demand this of others - why not of themselves?"

Why not?

Its white supremacy that has allowed the U.S.'s economic prowess in the world; white supremacy motivates the U.S.'s domestic and foreign policies. White supremacy, a brew of homemade racism, arrogance, and entitlement is the foundation of all there is called *The United States of America*. Take away white supremacy and you take away the U.S.'s pedestal, and its reason for waking up in the morning. You erase the way in which the U.S. Empire relates to the world and the people in it. It speaks of *individualism* but it can only create and relate to *categories* of people: Blacks, Browns, Reds, Yellows, poor, "disadvantaged," "developing," "criminal," "barbaric," "terrorists."

No, the U.S. won't be there in Geneva next month.

The new administration is busy trying to restore capitalism to its *past* glory! Few have heard the news that the U.S. won't attend the Conference on Racism and fewer still have read the Pew Center Report on the States, released March 2, 2009, in which it states that 7.3 million people are incarcerated in the U.S. That is, 1 out of 31 U.S. citizens are behind bars - and most for non-violent crimes and most are Black Americans.

Black Americans are the target of drug enforcement, Jamie Fellner, author of the report, "Decades of Disparity: Drug Arrests and Race in the United States, told Amy Goodman, *Democracy Now!*, even though white and Black citizens use and sell drugs in equal numbers.

"Most arrests are for possession." Four in ten arrests are for marijuana possession - not for the incarceration of drug dealers or drug smugglers.

"Police aren't going into white homes, white bars, white neighborhoods, white offices." But they are in the Black neighborhoods! It is not coincidental. I think that there is a deliberate use of drug laws to - I think that there's something in this country which can be called structural racism, which doesn't require any individual policeperson or prosecutor or judge or anyone else to have malign intent. Nevertheless, there is what's called a conspiracy of forces, of assumptions, of attitudes, of behaviors, which end up with the result that blacks get the short end of the stick."

Black Americans are conveniently identifiable and easily located in the U.S.

And the so-called "war on drugs" in Columbia and Mexico isn't just coincidental either. U.S. drug enforcers don't impose the "war on drug" policy in France or England.

European countries won't tolerate "cowboy diplomacy" on their streets. Fellner associates "the victims of all this violence" in Columbia and Mexico with U.S. consumers who pay a "premium based on the drugs being illegal." "It's a Catch-22. It's a vicious circle," Fellner added. But profitable!

The prison industrial complex has been financially profitable, too. For Upstate rural areas, predominantly *white* communities, employment and revenue is too profitable to pass up. Upstate prisons acquire *free* labor from Black Americans. In addition, the largely urban Black population incarcerated in these Upstate prisons count in the census as "residents," according to Caitlin Dunklee, Coordinator of the Correctional Association's Drop the Rock campaign and interviewed on *Democracy Now!* These "residents" help Upstate legislatures maintain the numbers necessary to hold a district. These "residents" also "channel anti-poverty money from the federal government into Upstate districts," Dunklee said.

According to the Pew Center Report, the prison industrial complex "was the fastest expanding major segment of state budgets, and over the past two decades, its growth as a share of the state expenditure has been second only to Medicaid." As a result, "state corrections cost[s] now top 50 billion" annually. Now, faced with budget deficits, the states, the Pew Center Report suggests, need to reduce taxpayers dollars while "improving public safety by reducing recidivism."

And this is happening in a nation that *will not* attend the Conference on Racism in Geneva!

How do you change a theoretical perspective that begins with recognizing "evil" in others? (Poverty is Black; cocaine and marijuana is Black; crime is Black in the U.S. and it's Arab, Muslim, Asian in those other places). How do you change a systematic practice of racism and classism where Black people have always been a usable commodity for sustaining the U.S.'s dominance, politically and economically? Politicians, Black and white, bring their constituents "tough" crime and drug enforcement and financial progress on the backs of Black people. Injustice and oppressive policies are profitable! The livelihood of judges, lawyers, wardens, guards, social workers, psychologists, psychiatrists, educators, and just plain "hard working" workers are dependent on structural racism in the U.S. just as presidents, secretaries of state and defense, Congress and the military industrial complex is linked to Pax Americana and the misery and slaughter of millions.

But the U.S. doesn't have a PAST because in ignoring the past, it retains dominion over the present and future of this planet and its people - "little" people! "Master the past"? *Ignoring the past is much more profitable!*

So no, the U.S. won't appear at the Conference on Racism. No!

It's not enough for Black academics, entertainers, politicians, and activists to stand before a microphone and report with glee that they have "escaped" the "hood" and the missiles of drugs, guns, police brutality, and incarceration as if the reign of attacks is acceptable, adaptable. It's not enough to toot your own horn and stand on the deck of the Titanic, waving the past away while holding the controls of the lifeboats in your hands, listening to the voice on the loudspeaker say: *We all sink or we all rise together?* When has that been the case in the history of this nation?

Black Americans need allies who are *free* to see us restored to our rightful place in history. We have allies who are struggling to be *free* from the imperialist's stranglehold. We need to say, collectively, that we exist and that the Conference on Racism matters


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**The BlackCommentator Readers' Corner Blog**

**BlackCommentator.com** Editorial Board member, Lenore Jean Daniels, PhD, has been a writer, for over thirty years of commentary, resistance criticism and cultural theory, and short stories with a Marxist sensibility to the impact of cultural narrative violence and its antithesis, resistance narratives. With entrenched dedication to justice and equality, she has served as a coordinator of student and community resistance projects that encourage the Black Feminist idea of an equalitarian community and facilitator of student-teacher communities behind the walls of academia for the last twenty years. Dr. Daniels holds a PhD in Modern American Literatures, with a specialty in Cultural Theory (race, gender, class narratives) from Loyola University, Chicago. Click [here](#) to contact Dr. Daniels.

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