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on issues affecting African Americans  
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**Cover Story**

**"So Love Me, Love Me, Love Me, I'm a Liberal,"  
but Don't Educate Me about the Somali Pirates!**

**Represent Our Resistance**

**By Dr. Lenore J. Daniels, PhD**

**BlackCommentator.com Editorial Board**

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Their first encounter was marked by violence and their existence together - that is to say the exploitation of the native by the settler - was carried out by dint of a great array of bayonets and cannons.

-Frantz Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*

The process by which captives were obtained on African soil was not trade at all. It was through warfare, trickery, banditry, and kidnapping.

-Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*

Until lions have their historians, tales of the hunt shall glorify the hunter.

-African Proverb

As Frantz Fanon wrote, "when you examine at close quarters the colonial context, it is evident that what parcels out the world is to begin with the fact of belonging to or not belonging to a given race."

The world's history is written in the language of those who control human and material resources, commerce and profits, and who wield the power to politically and culturally dominate the historical narrative...

There's such righteous talk from U.S. talk show hosts about another *violent* people - again! The *violent* people in the news now are the Somali pirates. The righteous people are the Western conservative and liberal talk show hosts. In particular, there's Mike

Malloy who on any given day talks about the arsenal of guns he has for hunting and self defense. He fancies himself in a league apart from the conservative Rush Limbaugh.

*This* liberal host *knows* Black people. On any given day, he will inform white Americans that they really don't know Black people. He does, however. Malloy lives in the northern region of Georgia and he's had some association with Black folks. He's taken the time to *observe* Black people.

The issue is *Somali* piracy. Malloy, generally a host who informs white listeners about Black people, didn't want to talk about the Somali pirates. Days before the rescue of the American seaman, a listener tried to explain the situation. Malloy said he understood that some of the pirates were fishermen trying to earn money - for lunch! Commercial break! Funny.

Did I mention that Malloy has a microphone and an audience?

On April 13, 2009, Malloy told listeners that he had received emails regarding the Somali pirates. But he restated his position: The Somali pirates are *rapists* and *killers*! In case the audience didn't hear him, he repeated three times - Somali pirates - *rapists* and *killers*!

*Violent.* These Somali fishermen are violent. Holding hostages was wrong, no matter who did it, Malloy said. Besides, the Somali pirates were not the only people dealing with contaminated fish. He, too, had to worry about contaminated fish. Americans have to deal with contaminated fish. Should he or any American take hostages?

*The Somali pirates should have taken their case to the proper authorities where their complaint would be heard!*

As of the writing of this article, there has been no report of Somali pirates raping or killing anyone.

Not so long ago, under Bill Clinton's control of Imperialist power, the government of Somali "collapsed." While its "nine million people have been teetering on starvation ever since," "the ugliest forces in the Western world" recognized a "great opportunity to steal the country's food supply and dump our nuclear waste in their seas...mysterious European ships started appearing off the coast of Somali, dumping vast barrels into the ocean." The Somalis suffered from "strange rashes, nausea and malformed babies." After the tsunami, hundreds of dumped and leaking barrels "washed up on shore." Then the people suffered from "radiation sickness, and more than 300 died." Included in this washed up mess were lead and heavy metals such as "cadmium and mercury."

This is from an article titled, "You are Being Lied To" by Johann Hari, [London Independent](#), April 13, 2009. Malloy indicated that he received this article from a listener. He read the name of the article and named the author. But he dismissed the article on air.

What does Johann Hari know?

"Other European ships have been looting Somali's seas of their greatest resources: seafood," writes Hari. After 18 years of poaching the Somali waters, "we have destroyed our own fish-stocks by over-exploitation - and now we have moved on to theirs."

More than \$300m worth of tuna, shrimp, lobster and other sea-life are being stolen every year by vast trawlers illegally sailing into Somali's unprotected seas. The local

fishermen have suddenly lost their livelihood, and they are starving.

What are the European nations doing about this violence to the Somali people? According to the UN envoy to Somali, Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah, "nothing." And "this," writes Hari, "is the context in which the men we are calling 'pirates' have emerged."

*"We don't consider ourselves sea bandits. We consider sea bandits [to be] those who illegally fish and dump in our seas and dump waste in our seas and carry weapons in our seas,"* Sugulle Ali, pirate leader, told Hari (my emphasis).

This is how Somali piracy began - in violence, reminiscent of what Frantz Fanon called "first encounter." That encounter between the settler and the native "was marked by violence... [and] carried on by dint of a great array of bayonets and cannons" - and today - chemical and nuclear waste.

In "Two Piracies in Somalia: Why Is the World Ignoring the Other," Mohamed Abshir Waldo calls attention to the crime the corporate media and even independent talk show hosts prefer to ignore - that the "European Union (EU), Russia, Japan, India, Egypt and Yemen are all on this piracy campaign, mainly to cover up and protect their illegal fishing fleets in the Somali waters."

Here's what Waldo, speaking from Mombassa, Kenya, on *Democracy Now!* called a "tremendous injustice" in which the Somali fisherman had "no alternative but to protect" their waters.

In "Two Piracies in Somalia," Waldo writes:

In all these piracy ballyhoo and campaigns, why is the other key IUUs fishing piracy ignored? Why are the UN Resolutions, NATO Orders and EU Decrees to invade the Somali seas fail[ing] to include the protection of the Somali marine resources from IUU violations in the same waters? Not only is this outrageous fishing piracy disregarded but the illegal foreign marine poachers are being encouraged to continue their loot[ing]... [and] freely fish in and violate the Somali seas. The Somali fishermen can no longer scare away the IUUs for fear of being labeled pirates and attacked by the foreign navies unlawfully controlling the Somali waters.

But Americans and Europeans are not comfortable talking about the "beginnings," the foundation of their nation-states, their laws, their order, their civilization, their economic domination over the majority of the world's First Peoples.

These Somali fishermen are people who stand, once again, in the way of Western governmental commerce, profits - capitalist enterprise. Johann Hari begins his article with reference to the "golden age of piracy" (1650-1730) when the British government created a propaganda campaign to discredit *pirates*. Falsely characterized in newsprint and film as senseless, savage thieves, writes Hari, the actual pirates were the "first people to rebel" against the developing Western world's merchant of capitalism.

In the "New World," writes Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker in [\*The Many-Headed Hydra: The Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic\*](#), the settlers "took their lands and divided them among God's people, and kept the vanquished at hand 'to hewe wood and to carie water.'" As early as the Beggar Act of 1598, "first-time offenders for begging" could be stripped and whipped; second-time offenders, however, could be banished from England and end up in the galleys of ships. To avoid "sloth and pilfering," these men would labor in the seas. In lieu of execution, the offenders would

have their heads and face shaved and "marked in the cheek with a hot iron."

The authorities at the Virginia Company procured "several hundred poor children between the ages of eight and sixteen" from the City of London to begin work as laborers "in the early spring of 1619." As with the common labor, the hewer of wood, women, too, as carriers of water became an integral part of a "state-sponsored science in the seventeenth century" and both categories of labor served to build the "infrastructure of merchant capitalism."

Many a hewer of wood and a drawer of water were captured Africans, transported to the Americas.

"Enslaving Africans fell within the limits of a 'just war,'" declared the Papal Bull of 1442 which gave Portugal the right to traffic in slavery (Kenneth Morgan, in [Slavery and the British Empire: From Africa to America](#)). The Africans offended the Western world, racially and culturally. The racial and cultural difference of the Africans justified shipping Africans in Portuguese ships to the Americas where Africans became "the main source of enforced labour...and served as a cost-effective way of providing such a large workforce to toil in the cane field."

In time, white men escaped the European ship's galleries and captured ships of their own. According to Linebaugh and Rediker, in an undemocratic age, pirate ships were democratic. Order and "hydrarchy" was established from below. And these pirate ships "resisted many of the practices of the capitalist merchant shipping industry...They sought to prove that ships did not have to be run in the brutal and oppressive ways of the merchant service and the Royal Navy."

Not surprisingly "hundreds of people of African descent found places within the social order of the pirate ship." Multinational, multicultural, and multiracial, pirate ships, Linebaugh and Rediker argue, could be considered "multiracial maroon communities, in which rebels used the high seas as others used the mountains and the jungles."

Ultimately, "hydrachy was attacked because of the danger it posed to the increasing valuable slave trade with Africa," writes Linebaugh and Rediker. *The war on terror was the war on piracy then*. The pirates had to be "exterminated" in order for "warfare, trickery, banditry, and kidnapping" by the powerful Western nation-states to politically, economically, and culturally *benefit a given race*.

In Thomas Jefferson's [Notes on the State of Virginia](#), published in 1784, the "Oran-utan" has a preference for the Black woman "over those of his own species." And later, Jefferson writes, that he could never find a Black who could utter "a thought above the level of plain narration." In Black people, he "never saw even an elementary trait of painting or sculpture." "Among the blacks is misery enough," Jefferson writes, "God knows, but no poetry."

"The main body of the savages," writes Edgar A. Poe, in [Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket](#) (1838), "upon reaching the broken canoe, set up the most tremendous yell of rage and disappointment conceivable. In truth, from everything I could see of these wretches, they appeared to be the most wicked, hypocritical, vindictive, bloodthirsty, and altogether fiendish race of men upon the face of the global."

Among many dying Africans, there's one described by Joseph Conrad in [Heart of Darkness \(Norton Critical Editions\)](#) (1899): "one of these creatures rose to his hands and knees and went off on all-fours towards the river to drink. He lapped out of his

hand, then sat up in the sunlight crossing his shins in front of him, and after a time let his woolly head fall on his breastbone."

Hegel, in 1899, contemplated the whole of the human race and history, but he had this say of Black people: "At this point we leave Africa, not to mention it again. For it is no historical part of the World; it has no movement or development to exhibit...What we properly understand by Africa, is the Unhistorical, Undeveloped Spirit, still involved in the conditions of mere nature, and which had to be presented here only as on the threshold of the World's History."

It's true the Somali fishermen took on a crew of armed Somalis who call themselves "the Volunteer Coastguard of Somalia." And it may be true, too, that many of the young Somali militia, as the corporate media is reporting, are in the piracy business "for the money."

And, as we all know, Euro-American adventures on the high seas have always been *righteous*!

The last time we witnessed the righteous in Somalia was in 1993. Many Americans remember the two Black Hawk helicopters and mourned the 18 U.S. Army Rangers killed by Somali militiamen. A total of 34 U.S. soldiers were killed in "a dubious 'rescue mission,'" Noam Chomsky writes, to assist with humanitarian operations. In "The Somalia Syndrome," Chomsky states that the "rescue mission may have killed about as many Somalis as it saved." "Somali casualties - militiamen and civilians - may have been 7,000 to 10,000," but as Marine Lt. Gen. Anthony Zinni, commander of the operation, informed the press, "I'm not counting bodies...I'm not interested."

The American public isn't interested either, but be assured the Wall Street vultures shadow above the merchant capitalist ships off the shores of Somalia! So the Somali pirates must be condemned outright.

In the *Chicago Sun-Times*, April 12, 2009, we can read this quote from radio host, Michael Savage, "'We don't want police action; we want combat action. We need to retaliate against these Muslim pirates with full military force to let them know that they cannot do this.'" And the President of the United States had this to say on April 13, 2009, after ordering a rescue mission to retrieve an American hostage: "I want to be very clear that we are resolved to halt the rise of piracy in that region and to achieve that goal, we're going to have to continue to work with our partners to prevent future attacks."

The U.S. news accounts are simple: The rescuers are heroes and the Somali pirates are just "bad" people. The message is that civilized, righteous nations need to galvanize their power to "halt" these pirates even if that means a military attack on its *failed* state!

Everything is worth something in the world, except knowledge of Euro-American hypocrisy.

I know one of the listeners to the Mike Malloy show, and not long after the broadcast began on April 13, 2009, I received his email to the host along with Malloy's response.

*From the listener:*

I'm a Black listener of yours. I've noticed, for a while now, your tendency to raise issues of racial and social awareness in your program. I applaud this effort. Unfortunately, you've also been largely unsuccessful in keeping a spirit

of humility when you, as a White man, discuss these issues. You chide other White people for their arrogance, but you fail to act differently, whenever you speak of the issues afflicting Black America, and the Black universe at-large. You find it easy to claim knowledge of everything Black, and Black-people related. That's a regrettable practice. You should know better than anyone that, in truth, doing so pushes you into the same category in which folks like Rush Limbaugh, O'Reilly, Sean Hannity currently [fall]. Like you, they claim to know Black people better than Blacks know themselves. They might not explicitly confirm this, but their words and mannerisms do. When you speak of Black history (past and present) as though you were present when the first slave ships touched ground in Africa, or as though you traveled through those lonely nights with Harriet Tubman, or as though you broke bread with Malcolm X, you don't do my people any justice. When Black people with radical agendas call into your show, you seem to find their views worthless, and you subtly bully them into seeing things your way (e.g. the Black caller [of] last Friday, and the Somali [non-piracy story](#)). I don't know which is worse: His acquiescence to your views, or your opinion that those Somalis are perpetuating "violence" against the European corporations that exploit their land and resources. This is why I'm writing to urge you, to cultivate a spirit of humility, whenever you discuss ANY and ALL issues Black folks hold dear to heart. You don't know it all, and you're not expected to. The fact that you might be more progressive on race issues than your White counterparts is not necessarily an exceptional virtue. After all the years of conquest your people built on the backs of mine, I ask that you consider your actions / words / analysis, and begin reforming them. For a White man, it's the least I can ask of you. Stay Blessed.

*And the response:*

Sorry, pal. You're confusing me with someone else. In your attempt to describe me you show clearly that you don't have a clue about who I am, what I've said, or the points of view I've worked a lifetime to acquire. Your arrogance is breathtaking. You lecture ME about humility and write like you are some expert in ... what?

You come across as a fool. You really do. In fact, I doubt you're Black. Probably one of my smart-ass white listeners trying to take me down a notch or two, right?

Do me a favor: Go away.

Well, with "liberals" like Mike Malloy, what "conservatives" needs Rush Limbaugh?

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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


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