

**The
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**Some Thoughts on the Left from the Left
Represent Our Resistance
By Dr. Lenore J. Daniels, PhD
BlackCommentator.com Editorial Board**

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The real intellectual wealth of the individual depends entirely on the wealth of his (or her) connections.

-Karl Marx

We know...how drastically the political climate of our country changed in the postwar years, but even in the worst period of McCarthyism...I saw no reason why convictions should change with the weather. I was not raised that way, and neither promise of gain nor the threat of loss has ever moved me from my firm convictions.

-Paul Robeson, [Here I Stand](#) (Kindle edition) [Here I Stand](#) (regular edition)

There are circles meant to maintain and to strengthen, but there are others to dismantle for they are artificial creations of misery and suffering.

No doubt, the U.S. Left is in trouble. In the last 40 years, "criminal" and "terrorists" propaganda campaigns, FBI surveillance, police brutality, entrapment tactics, judicial prosecution and imprisonment, and assassinations have undermined the work of the Left. Despite assaults on the right of citizens to question, organize, and protest, the right to fight for self-determination and against government and corporate abuse, Left movements surface - here and there. As Seth Sandronsky notes, "the Left was far more organized in the 1960s than it is today." His article, "The U.S. Left: Down but Not Out," written in December 2001, is relevant today.

Sandronsky argues that organization is only partly to blame. With less resources, quality matters. The kind of organization that connects the dots among "common shared interests" is not only more effective, but, I would argue, strengthens the circle as we work to dismantle the government-corporate circle threatening to strangle us all. Sandronsky writes, during the 1960s, the Left was able to connect some of the dots between domestic and foreign policies. Such advanced positions were due in no small part to the independent news media that existed in America at that time. Avenues for such public communication are essential to popularize critical theory and action.

We know today, independent news media, Left news media have taken a hit under the economic crisis. The story is the same for the mainstream press. Limited access for *putting the word out*, too few citizen activists, and too many instances of domestic injustice and U.S. aggression in foreign lands, force activists into a tunnel vision perspective: The Left sees *the tree*, but the forest is just too much to take in or the forest is haven for many, but the trees are best left to tree huggers!

Compartmentalization of our tasks has made us a collective of expendable if not usable section of the population. We are labeled "dissidents" so the world's public audience feels it can afford to turn away and tune into Oprah or Fox News for the latest news. We have something for *everyone*, except for those "dissidents" who tune into *Democracy Now!* to hear and see other "dissidents."

"Greater political-economic power" is with the rulers today. In the 60s, Sandronsky explains, "the relative economic security of the Left created favorable conditions for some of them as they protested against the Vietnam War and for Civil Rights. Today, such economic security is largely a memory." We have only to remember that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was on the verge of drawing a circle around the circles of the war, the civil rights, women's, immigrant workers', urban policy movements before he was assassinated.

The U.S. working class, Sandronsky notes, is confronted with insecurity from food availability and safety, to health care to shelter or employment. True. But this, too, isn't an accident. And each area of insecurity is connected to the big forest of war funding and corporate interests. This is part of the battle for the Left. How to encircle those most effected by economic insecurity, including many of us activists on the Left, just as Black women in the 60s, who were without economic security, nonetheless used to their feet to walk alongside empty buses for a few (or many) blocks, conscious of the goal of dismantling Jim Crow legislation on every block in the U.S.?

Jim Crow legislation is still on the books and in the minds of many, including those on the Left in the United States. The Left now looks for a consensus before it acts. It consciously considers what's "in" or what part of the issue to acknowledge while ignoring other aspects of the issue. Anti-war activity is "in" even though law enforcement and the federal government has worked overtime to find ways to penalize protest of the Iraqi and Afghani wars. Racial justice, however, is "out." Blacks, Red, Brown are making headway, can become president, particularly if they are recognized and encircled by Wall Street veters. Everyone is persecuted - equally. You would assume the U.S. would also begin a war with Canada or with France.

But, no. The corporations are still interested in the so-called "developing" nations in

that they can still help develop or save capitalism for the "developed" nations - a perpetual economic crisis for those in "developing" nations as well as for those Black, Red, Brown workers in the U.S. long confronting economic insecurities. Most all those "developing" nations consist of predominantly racially different people or profess a different religious faith from the predominant rulers of "developing" nations. Poverty circles the globe a million times over, predominantly in the Southern Hemisphere while movement of millions from the U.S. shifts to the IMF to European banks, and, in turn, the IMF funds Eastern European nations and collects "debts" from nations in the Southern Hemisphere. It makes for one big cesspool of national and international workers where many lose decent wages and others gain substandard wages. All workers by force or war become "workers" in the "free market." We need only to see many of the Left in South Hemisphere nations building schools, churches, hospitals, shelters that will be destroyed by the uprising of the poor or bombed by the uprising of no-longer "friendly," "diplomatic," and "peaceful" U.S. or U.N. troops or CIA-backed and U.S. trained militia.

Cycles of madness *continue. Continue!* It didn't *just* begin in the present when time becomes available for *seeing* what has *always been* wrong but beneficial to one's own survival. James Baldwin once said that the American self-evasion is all the history it has as history.

Workers are made into consumers of misinformation about each other. Now, the misinformation campaign of labeling some "terrorists" and criminalizing others isn't new.

The criminalization of Black, Red, and Brown people is still an operational duty of the corporate media, and the police state within the U.S. Prisons across the U.S. are bulging with non-violent offenders. Since 9-11, the U.S. is focused on "terrorists" and "terrorists" receive special treatment: enhanced "terrorists" laws and prisons called Communication Management Units like the one in Terre Haute, Indiana where, according to Jeanne Theoharis, "Guantanamo at Home," most all the detainees *are Muslim*. And the criminalized, now - lawyers, journalists, radio hosts, academics, activists who try to defend, speak, write, or protest the legality of "terrorists" arrests or question their inhumane treatment - are themselves subject to violations of the First Amendment. The confinement of Indians on reservations in the U.S., the Abu Graibe prison in Iraq and the one at Bagram in Afghanistan, the rural prison sites housing Black, Red, Brown people, the Gaza Strip and West Bank and now Communication Management Units tells us what? And the privatized Earth on which all this takes place confines us to toxic waste and the animals to perpetual silence because some people and most animals are expendable if not usable.

Privatizing "terror" reclaims, for the U.S. imperialist state, the right to declare any and all Muslims enemies of the state just as other campaigns of "law and order" declared the politically conscious Native American and Black enemies of the state. The Left can't afford to pick and choose "victims" of these campaigns while considering its hands clean of the crimes against humanity. Entrapment in fear and ignorance can't come to represent the opposition, too! The secession of violence has widened: the war on Native Indians, Blacks, communists, is, today, fishing for immigrant Muslims and American Muslims. Asian and Latin American countries yesterday, today - Islam!

Former President Bill Clinton's 1996 Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act "spread like kudzu under Bush and infiltrated the fabric of the justice system," writes Theoharis, and still in effect under Obama. The U.S. does have "death camps": it has the Communication Management Unit and the Penitentiary-Administrative Maximum Facility (the Supermax) in Colorado and laws to enforce its "pre-emptive strategy" to stop "terrorism" by "detaining and prosecuting people who may not have committed any actual act of terrorism but whose religious beliefs and political associations ostensibly reveal an intention to do so." In the competition for domestic as opposed to the foreign funding for the "war on terror," FBI agent provocateurs and informants encircle and infiltrate mosques in search of more "homegrown terrorists" to cultivate.

Theoharis cites the case of 29-year old Muslim-American Syed Fahad Hashmi, confined at the federal Metropolitan Correctional Center in Lower Manhattan for the last 2 years, without trial. Aside from raincoats and cell phones, "the government's case hinges on establishing his intent." Hashmi graduated with a master's degree in international relations from London Metropolitan University 2005. According to Theoharis, who is challenging the legality of her former student's detention, the government has noted that Hashmi "advocated positions well outside the mainstream." He questioned U.S. foreign policy and the treatment of domestic and foreign Muslims! In other words, "the prosecution...has the potential to criminalize constitutionally protected political speech."

The Fort Dix Five, on a family outing to the Poconos Mountains, video tape their activities swimming, pillow fighting at the hotel, and using the recreational facility's firing range, end up in a "terrorist" plot to harm soldiers at Ft. Dix because a young Circuit City clerk recognizes Muslims as "suspicious" and he viewed a small portion of the video in which the young men, exercising freedom of speech, acknowledge "Allah Akbar" (as an exclamation, equivalent to "Oh, my God") at a firing range! And more than 60% of American citizens shout "Single-Payer" and the government and the pharmaceutical corporations can't hear them, or recognize the very real terror experienced by many uninsured terminally ill cancer patients.

Consider the flow of taxpayers' money, within a "Christian" nation, for the operation of this corporate, military, law enforcement, and judiciary war on Islam!

Connect the dots: It is the *intent* of the U.S. strategy is the production of war against Islam, now, and against any dissent. Homeland Security and the military apparatuses serving the interests of a corporatized government demand it. And every one of us is pulled within this circle one way or another. The interrogation and the desired nullification of the Left is no more a government secret than is the U.S.'s intent to control the oil in the Middle East.

It comes down to this: It is you. It is you now and it has always been you, since the first gold nugget was ripped off the nose or ear of an African and the body fell slain. It has been you since the first Indian, who came to greet Columbus, fell to disease and in time, her home village was covered with corpses. The capitalist-to-be determined the New World would be round, and they'd own everything in the circle.

We have been dissidents as long as they have been conquerors, rulers. We have been against the economic devastation of lands and people. We have been against the creation of suffering and misery.

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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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