

The BLACK C o M M e n t a t o r

An independent weekly internet magazine
dedicated to the movement for economic justice,
social justice and peace - Providing commentary,
analysis and investigations on issues affecting
African Americans and the African world.

www.BlackCommentator.com

[Contents of Issue](#)

[Click here](#)

October 15, 2009 - Issue 346

[Home](#)

**290 "Enemies" in Chicago!
Represent Our Resistance
By Dr. Lenore J. Daniels, PhD
BlackCommentator.com Editorial Board**

Click on the back button of your browser to return to non printer friendly page of this article

[Click here](#) to get helpful hints for viewing and printing this printer friendly plain text page

Father Michael Pfleger "flew the American flag upside down outside the Saint Sabina Church in Chicago last May in protest of the violence..."

-[Digital Journal](#), September 2009

What does it mean to live in a nation that never intended to include as citizens Red, Black, Brown, and Yellow people it either stole land, material resources, or labor from? Is it applicable to hold a nation, its Constitution, and its "American Dream" up to scrutiny and mandating that it accept as citizens Red, Black, Brown, and Yellow people?

I think about these questions whenever I see a news report denouncing President Barack Obama as a *socialist* even as he is surrounded by buddies like Tim Geithner, Larry Summers, and Arne Duncan (who I doubt has any concept of a beloved community of learners). I think of these questions when I see a survey ask citizens of this nation if the president, an African American president, should be assassinated. *Should we get rid of him?*

It will not be the first time we get rid of the *outsiders!*

Getting rid of *outsiders* is the business of a nation, with a Constitution and an "American Dream" that deliberately and consciously excluded in language the people it forced off the land and the people it made work the land. Excluding the *outsiders* and its leadership makes it possible for even the most liberal white American citizen to think nothing of inhabiting pockets of space in which Red, Black, Brown, and Yellow people are seen only as subservient workers at parks, resorts, hotels or as prisoners.

So it is not usual to think and imagine the dead bodies of young Black youth as distress signals - each body a distress signal from the *hood*. Two hundred plus young bodies in Chicago alone this year questioning in their deaths whether or not they will ever be at home in a nation that has never wanted them as human beings and allows the nation's institutional structures to remind them of their status as *outsiders*.

On September 29, 2009, 16-year old Darrion Albert, an honor student, was beaten to death near Christian Fenger High School in Chicago. Surrounded by 50 young people, representing two rival gangs from Altgeld Gardens and Ville, Albert is punched and hit on the head at least twice by youths wielding wooden boards. Four teenagers ranging in age from 16-19 are charged with first degree murder.

According to the *Guardian*, September 29, 2009, hours before Albert's murder, parents of children attending Fenger High School, voiced concern about a shooting that took place outside the school. It is possible that Albert "stumbled into the middle of two gangs" fighting or he was being "punished for refusing to join" a gang?

Whatever the reason, if there can be a reason, Darrion Albert is dead - killed by young Black youth - long dead themselves.

Do not think that this crisis of the outsider, this distress signal, will receive *extraordinary* attention from the institutions instructed to deal with the matter. The city of Chicago will spend "\$30 million on a "project" that will "target" 1,200 high school pupils "identified," according to the *San Francisco Chronicle*, as most at risk to become victims of gun violence, giving them mentors and part time jobs to keep them off the streets." Of course, there will be money for more security guards. It is the usual response for young people already targeted by other governmental projects, already "victims" of these governmental projects, already targeted for jobs that just "keep them off the streets" - out of the sight and the mind of a nation that still recognizes them, if it does at all, as a collective of outsiders among others, one of those "minorities." *Plessey vs. Ferguson* was a targeting project and so was *Brown vs. the Board of Education*. No Child Left Behind is already a targeting project. Education in the U.S. is a targeting project!

And it works! In Chicago alone, "211 shootings" occurred in the 2007-08 school year, according to the *Digital Journal*, September 29, 2009. Thirty-seven deaths and 290 shootings" have occurred in the current 2008-09 school year. Rhetoric informs us that the nation has come a long way. Black Americans have made progress. Seventy-nine more students killed than last year is progress?

So Father Pflieger flew the American flag upside down! "According to the United States Flag Code, flying the American flag upside down is a recognized legal signal for distress," Father Pflieger told the press. "The whole country reacted aggressively to the

possibility of the swine flu. But we have remained silent to the reality of the killing of our children.”

And would you believe it! Veterans groups have objected - not to the dead Black and Latino/a children, but to the *dishonoring* of the American flag. *Don't touch our flag! Dishonor those children but not the American flag!*

If we hear from President Obama, you can rest assure he will raise turn the flag upright and wave it high again and speak of its glory, its values, its inclusion of all American citizens, even those who refuse to take *responsibility*.

Business for funeral homes in Chicago is booming! Spencer Leak Sr. told the *Digital Journal* that Leaks and Sons Funeral Home has buried 85 young victims of homicide. “They have this hatred for themselves because they’re not going anywhere.” Most of these victims can’t read above the third-grade level, Leaks said.

That means these young people cannot read the Oprah Book of the Month selection. They are not really reading the articles at websites featuring barely clad women. They cannot identify the United States on a globe they do not possess.

But our children are not stupid!

Living at the bottom of U.S. society, our Black young people can read the United States! They can understand hypocrisy and see through fairy tales. They can analysis the centrist-right movement of a government’s legal and judiciary system as the not so invisible walls, separating and establishing “target projects” for their parents, relatives, neighbors, and classmates. And they know the *suits*, the Black civic, religious, leaders, and academic elites have long deserted them for the silver chains.

Our children are not stupid, and they may not read the news. But they know *change* means the African American president responds to the needs of Wall Street bankers and war profiteers such as Lockheed Martin and KBR because these are Americans who matter. Living at the bottom, our children experience the soles of the U.S. big boots on their necks - early and often!

If the Olympics had been awarded to Chicago, these young people, their parents, relatives, neighbors, classmates, trapped behind the walls now, would have been crushed by greedy real estate developers, landlords, police, city council representatives, Mayor Daley Jr. and bulldozers making room for the *people of Chicago* to open the doors of the United States to the world. *The bugs are gone! Welcome!* Our children felt the dagger in the heart when President Obama and the First Lady boarded Air Force One on an *emergency* flight to Copenhagen to plead to the Olympic Committee on behalf of their buddies and *business partners* while they, not Sasha or Melia, but someone’s children, were already bleeding in the streets of Chicago, the Obamas’ adopted home, as they say.

What can you do when the rez, the hood, the barrio are geographic outposts with in a nation that builds condos and resort areas for the wealthy out of their shattered existence? What exactly do you do when the only real estate available to you is an 8 foot wide, 8 foot high, and 12 foot long cell in some upstate prison or 6 foot long, 6 foot deep plot in a cemetery? What can you do when the odds are stacked against you

- from the inside out?

Since the kidnapping and enslavement of the first Africans on this soil, Blacks have been forbidden to learn to read and write. Little has changed in all these years, except that the enslaved risked their lives to learn to read and write. Blacks established schools out of slavery. Teachers were valued members of the community. Mention the word "education" today and the responses reflect the love-hate relationship Blacks have toward *teachers* and *school*.

More than white Americans can ever fear Black Americans, Black Americans fear white Americans. At home and at school, young Black America has not been given the tools to demystify white power. And so Blacks have learned from the rulers to *love* power as defined by those rulers as a means of achieving superiority and acquiring wealth. At the same time, this generation of young people, witnesses to the cowering of their elders, learns to fear what rests at the core of white power: difference, especially Blackness. It is no wonder they learn, then, to hate themselves. Look at mom - hair slick in imitation of that power! Look at Daddy dressed to express his submission to that power! Look at young Darrion Albert lying dead in the streets - symbolizing the epitome of white power! This is what it becomes all about - except the dead will not bring a triumphant victory for the culprits. No "mission accomplished" banner will fly over the body.

We offered our children as a sacrifice to the gods in exchange for a few pieces of silver! Those who survived the flames returned home to oversee the enslavement of the elders, parents, and children yet to be born. The collective relegation of our most precious resources to the culture of greed is our greatest calamity since 1865, one in which we will continue to pay an ever increasing high cost and which makes the task of liberation education almost impossible.

For the last four decades, education for Black children in the U.S. has reminded me of Nelson Mandela's description of education under apartheid South Africa: It resembles "intellectual *'baasskap,'*" that is, the institutionalization of inferiority. When the government took over education for Africans, Mandela recalls, "African teachers were not permitted to criticize the government or any school authority."

Dr. Hendrick Verwoerd, the minister of Bantu education explained that education 'must train and teach people in accordance with their opportunities in life.' His meaning was that Africans did not and would not have opportunities, therefore, why educate them?

Education for empowerment is not to be expected from a people more in fear of losing their place in, as our young people have come to believe, a *divinely* established hierarchy of humanity.

For some of us, the effort to save our cultural heritage is lost. We did not have enough troops willing to stay on the battlefield. The history of where we have been in the struggle and where we need to go in the struggle has all but been obliterated and replaced by a narrative of *Black criminality*: the sexual animal that is Jezebel, brought about her own sexual assault, and the masculine embodiment of the Thug represents an entire society's forceful penetration into the heart of the Black community.

This renegade Western system that abuses women offers to the descendents of First World people alienation from our cultural heritage through the marginalization of their

women. In Honduras now, women's leadership in the streets is fueling the struggle against imperialism and capitalism. Here in the U.S., with little condemnation of the characterization of Black women as "hoes" and "bitches," the struggle has become a lopsided cabal of good old *Black* boys who can only think of Black women as an appendage to *the Struggle*. Talk about obliteration of historical memory!

We think of each other in borrowed images now. These are not the images that would have our young people envision ourselves free human beings. It is cruel to ask those who are *without* a cultural heritage to take responsibility for their lives when they do not have any memory of life with dignity and in struggle to be human. In place of empowering memories, four generations of Black people have had to submit to images that restrict their mobility and, most importantly, their imagination. In turn, these images control relationships within the Black community, and they make it impossible for many among us to see each other and, therefore, ourselves in each other. In exchange for the culture of greed and all its trinkets, the Black community has forfeited our cultural heritage, our defense mechanism, our spirit and soul. So, indeed, as a collective, we look like the enemy we both fear and love more than we love our children!

Our youth have been given images of *Jezebel* and *Thug* to sabotage any effort of unification among Black communities. When you give up your children, expect any monstrous thing to form from this act of collective abandonment. And it is not just those images (surrogates of the Master) that rule to kill us in the long run. We see enemies in ourselves. We love the enemies we see and we hate them too! It should be no surprise that our youth, in this highly unstable condition, kill each other - in a space *outside* themselves.

So Darrion Albert joins the ancestors we increasingly fail to remember!

Sorry if I have said too much. But what is a secret anyway? I am thinking out loud and questioning why it is that we are all going nowhere.

Keep the American flag upside down because it is hard to distinguish the dead from the supposed living!

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.



Let your voice be heard
The call is free

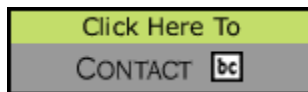
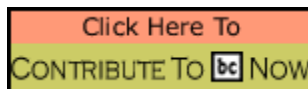


[Click Here](#)

[Contents of Issue](#)

[Click here](#)

[Home](#)



Your comments are always welcome.

e-Mail re-print notice

If you send us an e-Mail message we may publish all or part of it, unless you tell us it is not for publication. You may also request that we withhold your name.

Thank you very much for your readership.

Website Design and Hosting provided by



Copyright © 2002-2009
www.BlackCommentator.com
All Rights Reserved