

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

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social justice and peace - Providing commentary,
analysis and investigations on issues affecting
African Americans and the African world.

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[Contents of Issue Menu](#)

[Click Here](#)

[Home](#)

**Homegrown Blowback!
Represent Our Resistance
By Dr. Lenore J. Daniels, PhD
BlackCommentator.com Editorial Board**

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If one does not understand how the fire came to be, he will burn in it,
because he does not know his root.

-Dialogue of the Savior from [The Nag Hammadi Library](#)

Somerset decision (1772) in Great Britain impressed Anglo-Americans in the colonies. In [Slave Nation: How Slavery United The Colonies And Sparked The American Revolution](#), the author writes, "Somerset never knew that his private quest for freedom was the spark that helped start the American Revolution and that has haunted the nation down to the present day."

They've been given their orders from Wall Street, the Obama administration - Save the corpse! Wall Street is waiting! Clean up the economic system! Bring it back to life! The administration and ex-Wall Street "geniuses" are busy cleaning and scrubbing the corpse. But the natural process of decomposition is overtaking their efforts. Thousands are laid off one week and thousands more another. Unemployment benefits are running out. But the American people hear the buzz: new jobs are coming right up! Stability is coming! More lay offs. More bankruptcy claims. But all attention is on the absurdity of a remedy that is no remedy at all.

In place of this rotting corpse, who will wake up?

It's something to think about in case the triumvirate ruling the country insists on its obsession with the corpse. Who will wake up and take to the streets? Americans are angry. They're "furious," writes *The Nation's*, Nicolas Von Hoffman: people have been "used, gamed, duped, lied to, betrayed, ripped off, conned, humiliated, scammed, cheated, plundered, rooked, screwed over, hosed, dissed and dishonored. Americans, left, right and center, have had it."

In Europe, the atmosphere is "explosive," writes Joshua Holland in an *AlterNet*, "The Whole World is Rioting as the Economic Crisis Worsens - Why Aren't We?" Thousands of angry, shouting, banner-toting people are in the streets. Among the "furious crowds," raging war against "skyrocketing food and energy prices, stagnating wages and unemployment" in "India, Senegal, Yemen, Indonesia, Morocco, Cameroon, Brazil, Panama, the Philippines, Egypt, Mexico and elsewhere" - this scene is commonplace. "Wealthier countries" take "little notice." But now the "furious crowds" are showing up in European streets demanding accountability and an end to corporate world manipulation of their lives, Holland writes.

Yet "notably absent from the list of countries where the economic crunch is rending the social fabric," writes Holland, "is the good ole US of A, a state with the greatest level of economic inequality in the wealthy world." And he asks: Why aren't U.S. citizens in the streets en masse?

The citizens of the US - a country born of revolution, but with an elite that's been terrified of that legacy since immediately after its founding - have been calm, despite opinion polls showing that Americans are more dissatisfied with the direction in which the country has been headed since they began measuring such things.

The "elite," the ruling class have been terrified of the legacy of revolution while the American public, dissatisfied with the leadership, nonetheless remains calm. What's missing from this picture?

We know. Can you say the enslavement and exploitation of Africans and their descendents in the U.S.? The Revolutionaries couldn't shake their fears, and if fear is the legacy, then descendents of these revolutionaries who implemented "security" policies (the 1793 Fugitive Slave Act, for example) to usher in the beginnings of a "police state" and who subjected "freed" and enslaved Blacks to rendition - by law, weren't focused on freedom and democracy, were they? Control the source of labor and capital will flow upward to the top and keep us on top!

Why aren't Americans in the streets?

Holland recalls a 2005 interview in which Frank Ames suggested that Americans "have created a powerful slave mentality." The "slave mentality" is stronger here than anywhere else because "no other country on earth has so successfully crushed every internal rebellion," writes Ames.

America has put down every rebellion, brutally, from the Whiskey Rebellion to the Confederate rebellion to the proletarian rebellions, Black Panthers, white militias - you name it. This creates a powerful slave mentality, a sense that it's pointless to rebel.

In the Caribbean, the enslaved "rebelled a lot more because their oppressors weren't as

good at oppressing as Americans were.”

How do you control an expanding base of labor and labor advocates? Brutally!

But there is anger from below, Hoffman and Holland report. Yes, and there are tiers of people below the ruling class. The level of anger varies from one rung on the ladder to the next because anger depends upon how much is remembered. It depends on memory. People in France, Russia, Morocco, India and elsewhere possess a collective memory of their history in struggle. Here, people possess the memory of movie stars, TV shows, songs, malls, fashion designers.

Now, this late in the game, when the corpse is not cooperating, we shouldn't waste time wondering why Americans aren't in the streets because it's only a matter of time now. Both Hoffman and Holland avoid the unspoken: Who will be in the streets?

Hoffman and Holland's articles speak to the *new* angry people, for the most part, the newly unemployed, losing health care and homes. The *new* angry people see the here and now - *today*, and *today* doesn't look good to them because it isn't good for *them*! But it hasn't been good for many and for a long time but the new *angry* people are short on collective memory of the history of struggle.

But Americans do possess the memory of fear!

I suspect that for most Anglo-Americans there are two images of Blacks and both involve Blacks in the streets! In one, Blacks walk behind Martin Luther King, Jr. Practitioners of "non-violence," Blacks look peaceful enough. It's the sheriff or the governor or the KKK guys at the podium who threaten to damage the U.S. image of itself among other nations. The other image of Blacks, dressed in black leather jackets, carrying rifles, looking angry, garners fear in white Americans sitting before their television screens.

For Black Americans, too, there's a memory of fear. In these images, many remember sitting in their homes, hearing the knock at the door late at night. It's the sheriff or the governor or the KKK guys at the podium who threaten to destroy homes and businesses and massacre whole Black towns. It's the body hanging from a noose and a dead unarmed young man standing beneath a city policeman's gun.

To be sure, whites and Blacks sit down at the lunch counter these days, and there's an African American at the White House, and he sits in the Oval Office, occupying the biggest chair.

But the masses of Black Americans have been left behind. Forget the "left, right and center" ideologies, this group, on the last rungs of the ladder, have been "used, gamed, duped, lied to, betrayed, ripped off, conned, humiliated, scammed, cheated, plundered, rooked, screwed over, hosed, dissed and dishonored," and for sure they have "had it" too - and have "had it" the longest! Simmering at the bottom for so long, enduring the pressure of every bump up the ladder for the wealthy and middle class, the poor, the low-wage earner, barely working classes, the homeless, and the from-pillar-to-post class now believe they see *hope*! The people left behind in the 4th Ward of New Orleans long before Katrina swept into town or those cast away by the auto industry in Detroit have been told to *hope*! Those whose occupancy in a prison cell

puts food on another family's table - they've been told to *hope!* Every U.S. military venture from the Gulf War to the present expenditures of billions for the war in Afghanistan and the invasion of Iraq reduced educational and welfare programs for this group, and every consultant who earned a fee for suggesting a new plant in India or China, meant the loss of decent housing for this group. But the people, now, have *hope* - and they expect *change* just around the corner!

Do you see this population in the streets?

The masses of humanity living in the U.S. as unwelcome members of this "democratic" society, often live not far from "gated communities." They have long endured an increasingly comprehensive police state and, at the same time, an increasingly comprehensive marketing strategy intended to break their spirits and will to resist. Corporate television programming keeps this population invested in the doings of the fictitious and fanciful. It's not surprising that of all the "wretched of the earth," this population of the "wretched" in America misses the ongoing Left analysis of the U.S. as a corporatist state. As a result, corporate media arrogantly proclaims to this population that they, "the viewers" rule - corporate owners supply the audience what it wants! The "wretched" in the "belly of the beast," miss the analysis of class division *within* the "Black community." They miss the analysis of how *the STRUGGLE* became just their personal *struggle*, highlighted occasionally on day-time talk shows. In place of *the STRUGGLE*, this population has been sent the message that collectivism (or worse, socialism) is unpatriotic, if not downright evil! They can press the button for further accounts of this "evil" or just escape all talk of the world. For there's a gold-chained pastor, with a mega-church just down or up the channel, more concerned with Armageddon than educating the demoralized to fight the crooks here on earth.

The "wealthy educated Black bourgeoisie [,] who... escape [but] never reach back and pull the rest of our people out with them," as Malcolm noted in the 1960s, is now the one enforcing the law. "Black masses remain trapped in the slums." Escape is impossible. Run to alcohol or "to the dreadful needle," and there's an under-funded or non-existent mental or rehabilitation center. This "escape" entraps them in a "mug" shot just over the shoulders of a blond anchor woman: and the winner of "local" news is: A "looter" or a drive-by shooter! Or "escape" puts some of them on the road to a corporate "music" guru who cleverly lifts the angry voices that mirror the sexual perversity and psychopathic legacy of the "peculiar" institution of slavery. Or "escape" is the momentary "human interest" story of woe by the "inarticulate" as opposed to the "articulate" Black speaker - always good for a "colorful" story about the poor or downtrodden - but only for a few seconds.

This alienated population is segregated by prison walls and neighborhood police patrols. The desire for *upward mobility* ironically saddles young Black women with babies, government welfare, and often, AIDS. If the older population among this group should develop diabetes or heart problems, they ended up paying more for home care and vital medication. American slander, packaged as significant "university research," has called this population of American citizens "deviant," "dysfunctional" - a downright "underdeveloped" class.

But, if they were given nothing else in the last 40 plus years, they were given guns! The government and American society has ordered them to go and kill: Kill all the brutes!

Kill all the niggers, criminals, and terrorists. This population has obliged the triumvirate by engaging in suicidal behavior - the dirty work of the U.S. government, its law enforcement, and its judiciary system. Ultimately, unlike communities of NRA-ers with guns, Americans have come to rely on law enforcement to keep this population in check, keep it to the business of killing and suicide.

The Black masses have been left behind while other groups of Americans, who believe they have left the plantation, have pursued the "American Dream." Everyone knows this. It isn't the exclusive thought and *hope* of blatant racists! How many from this alienated population are invited to join a Code Pink group or a local Green Party campaign? Americans have come to expect that the masses of Blacks remain invisible! David Harvey, Distinguished Professor at CUNY, writes in *The Bullet*, that in order for the stimulus package to work, it "must be directed to those who will spend it, which means the lower classes." But, he adds, there's the "prevailing hostility in the United States to `spreading the wealth around.'" How true. We have heard. President Obama will signed into effect a stimulus package that cuts 20 billion for education and another 30 billion for social services for the poor and unemployed from the original package - but assures trillions to the banking industry!

Think the invisible will remain invisible for long?

So what will happen when this group has had enough of the brothers and sisters on the Hope and Change ship in Washington? What will happen when they see, as many of us Blacks have seen for years that Washington means to trick them again? What will happen if they decide they have "had it," too, and their anger returns? What will happen when America isn't their America - again? What will happen when they wake up from *hope* and realize they have been lied to - again?

Allegiance with the capitalists (the Masters) sent Americans driving past this population on the way to the Malls, and now it seems a mystery why this *new* angry crowd is outraged but timid about stepping into the streets! Well, the timid are held back by the trace of memory: the true heritage of field Negroes is that of freedom warriors! But they have been a little tweaked since then.

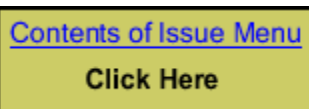
So now, what if the masses of invisible Blacks wake up and take to the streets?

Are you going to stay home? Are you going to urge the government to lock up more "terrorist" and "criminals" so you can be "free" to watch as Washington and Wall Street try to bring the corpse to life? What side are you on? What side of freedom have you ever been on?

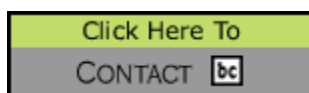
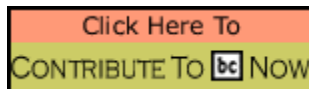
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The BlackCommentator Readers' Corner Blog

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

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