

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

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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.

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## **Walmart's Black Friday and "Convict Leasing" of the 99% Represent Our Resistance By Dr. Lenore J. Daniels, PhD BC Editorial Board**

Reading Charles Silberman's *Crisis in Black and White* after its publication the prior year, Martin Luther King scribbled a long note in the margins of his personal copy: 'The South deluded itself with the illusion that the Negro was happy in his place; the North deluded itself with the illusion that it had freed the Negro. The Emancipation Proclamation freed the slave, a legal entity, but it failed to free the Negro, a person.' In every aspect and almost every demographic, how American society digested and processed the long, dark chapter between the end of the Civil War and the beginning of the civil rights movement has been delusion.

-Douglas A. Blackmon, *Slavery by Another Name*

Douglas A. Blackmon adds that when he began his quest to find Green Cottenham, he discovered "an unsettling truth" that all white Americans, including himself, are "marked by." "Whether a company or an individual, we are marred either by our connections to the specific crimes and injuries of our fathers and their fathers. Or we are tainted by the failures of our fathers to fulfill our national credos when their courage was most needed." It is, he writes, "undeniably our inheritance."

*And the "inheritance" is global!*

Poverty kept a percentage of freed Blacks on the plantation after the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation. Convict leasing assured the continued servitude of Blacks and helped establish "industrial slavery." The privilege of being a plantation owner, a company, or a Sheriff, a lawyer or a judge, the 1% of this profitable scheme to re-enslave Black Americans, bought "justice" and "freedom" for white America. Criminalize Black life and the business of maintaining racial segregation codes has gone global. Blacks still work in the labor camps, on the cotton fields, in the mines, and in the iron furnaces, and the United States is on its way to Empire building.

The "medieval water torture technique," known as waterboarding, and floggings kept the forced laborers in place, along with the gun and rifle. The former is preferable for use in foreign lands today. The gun and the rifle, particularly in the hands of law enforcement today is still an option. The company store did the rest until it became more efficient at the profitable business of enslavement.

Everyone wants to do business with the company store today. Many work for the company store and they are all not Black, Brown, Red, or Yellow. The globalization of the company store is no surprise to those who learn from history. Only the enslaved believe it is a sign of progress, invincible.

At the core of any "good" American enterprise is the repression of Black, Red, Brown, and Yellow people. But such enterprises rarely have remained restricted - racially. The "inheritance" has come to haunt American citizens. And we cannot continue to say - *let's forget that past!* Companies like Walmart have not. CEOs and their research personnel and managers are the learned men and women of our time, the truly "educated" in what matters here in the United States. "Education would spoil a good plow hand," a state legislature once said (*Slavery by Another Name*). Why not expand on a good idea! And, no, "freedom" is a profitable idea for these most honored entrepreneurs.

But Americans want things rather than freedom. Ownership and possession of things and people is freedom!

So the Walton family gets what it wants. Who can blame the family? This is America. Even the workers at Walmart, earning on average \$12,000 a year, would agree. Yes, this is America! *Play the lottery with merge earning in hopes of winning and joining the truly free!* Play the lottery, collect food stamps, stand in the food pantry lines,

shop at the company store after hours, and one day have the chauffeur, the house maid, the nanny, and the mansion filled to the brim with the latest from Macy's and DeBeers, Sony and the very quaint and exclusive shops. Those enslaved at some of the biggest company stores sell the idea in tailored clothes and meticulously styled hair with white teeth and zeal as they announce: *Walmart is celebrating a victory! Black Friday was a success!*

How many hours, dedicated to the acquisition of a corporate worldview and corporate productions, did "reporters" and "announcers" interview shoppers in long lines, followed by listing the companies most "successful" at attracting the shoppers and profits?

America, the land where, when Walmart workers, brave and courageous, announce a strike for Black Friday, a strike for living wages and benefits, a strike for respect, other Walmart employees and fellow workers on other corporate plantations, enslaved labors all, merrily or resigned to their fate, proceed to work and shop at Walmart on Black Friday, November 23, 2012. So Walmart could announce before and certainly after - *see! we made out like bandits!*

Oh, America! Home of the Free!

How much more profitable to criminalize the masses of the 99%? The 99%'s crime: *They are simply NOT us! Or who would labor to amass the resources of the Earth and wealth for us! The 99% want to take away OUR freedom!*

Transition the workers from family farmers and craft shops, from auto and specialized manufacturing plants, from ma and pa store fronts and educational institutions to glamorized forced labor camps and chains of stores on miles of artificial landscaping. The lucky Americans - Walmart's happy campers - workers and shoppers all - enslaved, forced to the ingenious and America idea of "freedom," while escaping by the exceptional privilege of being an AMERICAN, escaping an even worse fate in the sweatshops of Bangladesh or phone call centers in India. There, workers are forced to internalize "Happiness" Made in the USA!

And Americans know freedom when they see it! They vote, never failing to enter the voting booth to pick the lesser of two evils!

It is no accident that disregarding one's own interests to procure favors, status, and a place in the sun with the multinational

corporations, on the one hand, and indifferent to the plight of fellow workers on the other is THE norm. For workers to call a strike for fair wages is nearly akin to terrorism!

*These are not fun-loving people!*

*These are not people content with LIFE!*

*These are not people, humans - but those who want to set off explosions through the "economy" and do harm to the nation!*

*Denounce these "radicals," these "troublemakers," these ungrateful! Put the fear of God in them! Fire them! Let them experience 1929! Foreclosures, food pantry lines, Emergency rooms, isolation! Lynch them! Waterboard them!*

*These strikers do not know how to handle FREEDOM! (And no "foreigners" will come and take the "freedoms" we have!)*

*When we hit the lottery and are able to break loose from our chains, we'll teach them a thing or two, too! When it's own turn!*

This, too, is the 99%, tamed, reliable because they are marked by their inheritance of "innocence"/ignorance of this United States' history of injustice! No, a delusional mindset is no accident! How else could the 1% proceed to spread injustice globally - and yet be welcomed by the masses it enslaves!

Black Friday succeeds for Walmart and its fellow corporate brothers. Convict leasing continues!

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