

**The  
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on issues affecting African Americans  
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**If Harriet Tubman Were President  
Represent Our Resistance  
By Dr. Lenore J. Daniels, PhD  
BlackCommentator.com Editorial Board**

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In the Republic of poetry,  
poets rent a helicopter  
to bombard the national palace  
with poems on bookmarks,  
and everyone in the courtyard  
rushes to grab a poem  
fluttering from the sky,  
blinded by weeping.

- Martin Espada "In the Republic of  
Poetry"

If Harriet Tubman were elected president of the United States, the Underground Railroad would become a modern-day institution in which the "wretched of the earth" here in the U.S. would be gathered together to rise from beneath the heels of their enslavers. These citizens would form local committees to review what is best in the U.S. Constitution as well as review the Iroquois Constitution and the Black Panther education and food distribution programs. Freedom would take on a new meaning and the word "reform" would be removed from the lexicon of all languages. "Economically poor," "liberal," "democrat," "republican," "fundamental Christian," and "conservative" would not represent anyone. And we would come up with a flag that would represent all the people and not be used to intimidate those of us who still do not feel welcomed.

If Ida B. Wells were president, *any* form of lynching would be banned, the death penalty would be outlawed, and the prison industrial complex would be dismantled. A freed and enlightened population would come to recognize the truly "innocent" and the "criminal." A president who believes in justice would appoint a team led by Leonard Peltier and Mumia Abu Jamal to review the cases of all political prisoners incarcerated in the United States and held by the United States in prisons around the world. Those incarcerated under unjust laws would be *freed* to learn to read and write by teaching the young to read and write. Both the teachers-students/students-teachers would represent a new institution of learners and doers for the larger community goal of freedom for all. Prison cells would be reserved for criminals like Karl Rove and his political and corporate cronies who perpetrated voters' fraud against the people; the entire personnel at FEMA, Homeland Security, and the NSA, and corrupt local and state officials, and judges—haters of the people—who can't be trusted to live among the people.

If Malcolm were president of these United States, his VP would be someone like Ghassan Kanafani and, if Kanafani were president, his VP would be someone like Malcolm. They would teach the people to remember. By remembering, the people would recall the value of their lives and recognize their own ability to strive for a community where the playing field is leveled and the hope for a truly new world order is something in which they contribute to each and everyday.

"Wherever you have organized crime, that type of crime cannot exist (sic) other than with the consent of the police, the knowledge of the police and the cooperation of the police," said Malcolm. Community counsels would replace the police force and the role community patrolling would work to eliminate what Malcolm called "organized crime." Community counsels, accountable to the people, would submit to weekly town meetings.

Bailouts for the poor and working class who have been locked into a system of servitude to the rulers will dissolve the income gap between the rich and poor. The few would not have more homes than they can remember while others are losing their homes or have inadequate housing. Someone like Cesar Chavez would break the link between the Democratic Party Machine and the labor unions and establish the rights of workers to determine the conditions of their work environment and negotiate the value of their labor. A president of the people would appoint someone like Wangari Maathai, Secretary of the Environment, and she, in turn, would appoint thousands of African, Asian, Latin American, Caribbean, and Native American women and girls to grow corn not for the further production of fuel and profits for the rich but for hungry children who go to sleep hungry, even in the United States. Maathai would consult with James Hanson, and they would work with a team of to end the catastrophe of ignorance by working toward a more green-conscious world.

If someone like Ella Baker were president, all children would be proud of their heritage, and a little white girl would admire the texture of a little Black girl's hair. Corporations wouldn't have more rights than a Native American child, and places like Iraq would not be seen as a good business deal for the procuring of more oil.

Someone like Paulo Freire would head a team with Jonathan Kozol and Marian Wright Edelman, and together they would work alongside the people to provide quality education for all children. Teachers would see their own child in every child under their tutelage. Every child would be a "special needs" child—handled with care and love. In addition, community sessions on this nation's history of violence will be conducted to confront the U.S.'s penchant for systematic exclusion, humiliation, demoralization, and

exploitation of those with racial, cultural, and religious differences.

If Father Ernesto Cardenal were president, there would be communities of Solentiname here everywhere in United States as part of a real *free* trade to share the beauty and wisdom of birds and deer that would not have to worry about someone like Hockey Mom with rifle in hand, hunting them down to add to her trophy wall.

If someone truly compassionate were running for president, millions would not die because of inadequate health care. People like Bill Gates would produce computers free to everyone. Bill and Linda would provide the salary for ethical scientists who would work to find the cure to cancer, and all those who suffer from aids, diabetes, and malaria would have the medication they need.

Multi-millionaire politicians would be replaced by men and women who truly love people and who respect the land. You could expect the president to eat a meal of beans and rice at your house. He or she would not ask for money. Campaign funds would be obsolete. Anyone could run for president and not have to amass a fortune in a true democracy. Those people who keep track of how much a presidential candidate raises would be out of work. They would be re-hired to track down truant young children and mark off each precious child that is returned to a classroom. You could vote on a Saturday, if you are Christian, and on Sunday, if you are Jewish, and your vote will count. And no—the Christian religion, in a true democracy, will be one, that is, equal, among many, and to believe in the Sun, again, will be no one's business.

If Martin Luther King were president, funding for wars would cease. Troops would return home. A new institution to train and/or re-educate negotiators and mediators would recognize the importance of a culturally/globally literate neighbor-consultant in the world.

King George, Darth Vader, Donald Rumsfeld, Colin Powell, Condi Rice, and John Yu and the whole anti-people cabal would be rounded up, stripped of their illegally acquired wealth, and sent to work on behalf of the people in Somalia, Ethiopia, Columbia, Viet Nam, Iraq, and Afghanistan, working on the land to develop ample food sources, to build schools for adults and children alike, and to build hospitals and health care centers or all those they have mutilated or who have suffered from traumatic loss of family members. The people themselves will teach these people how to work and to value work that values the potential of people to live peacefully on Earth. Anyone who calls himself a "maverick" will be subject to the same rehabilitation program. In the evenings, these inmates of the people would have to listen to lectures provided by freed activist Aung San Suu Kyi—through a loud speaker.

Someone like a Lumumba and Evo Morales would conduct seminars for would-be-presidents across the global with no interference from the United States or the IMF because the President of the United States would call for the IMF to be dissolved and all debts cleared. Former monetary investors would invest funds in any classroom full of children until the money runs out. They would purchase new and updated textbooks, computers, art supplies and musical instruments (because art and music would return to the classroom). When their individual funds run dry, former investors would become teachers, teaching children to invest in humanity and the planet. They would have to make sure children read Wilfred Owens, Siegfried Sassoon, and Walt Whitman.

Former capitalist institutions serving war and conflict would have their profits confiscated and re-distributed to an effective, global poverty program. Corporations like AT and T and General Election would not be in the war business or nor could they employ slave labor. Former corporate CEOs would have to live among the people as

activists—actively pursuing the goal of FREE trade among the peoples of the world. A child in need of one book would receive ten books! Solar energy would provide the heat that would never be shut off because former CEOs would not want to see his or her neighbor using a space heater. They could remain in business only if they offered their services free to the people because those who remain would real want to work on behalf of all the people.

And the news would look like the best of an Edward R. Marrow broadcast, with anchors of every racial hue and with news representing all the peoples of the world without bias to any one group of people or any ideology. To that end, the corporations would have to relinquish control of the media outlets and turn them over to the people, to responsible professional and citizen journalists.

If someone truly peaceful were running for the president of the United States, the Black man in Texas would still have his place of business. Another would not have been shot in the face for wearing an Obama t-shirt. And someone like Barack Obama can stand up and be a man and be Muslim, Buddhist, Jewish, Arab, Black, Latino, Native American, Asian and not have to apologize or explain.

Peace would mean living without hatred and prejudice toward others. Peace would mean thinking that everyone deserves to do more than survive. It would mean thinking how wrong it is to have any group of people profit and live because others are working to elevate them to a higher standard of living. It would mean rethinking the idea of work and the value of all labor. Peace would mean recognizing that America's "land of opportunity" slogan is immoral and serves as a camouflage to *exploit* rather than allow human beings to *explore* their potential as human beings.

The new president would abolish the position of Secretary of Defense and appoint someone like Rosa Parks Secretary of Peace. And she, recognizing her own humanity among others, would sit and negotiate with heads of state and encourage them, in this new day, to end brute rule and the need to engage in mortal combat with their neighbors on the planet.

No one would say "nuclear" because the new president would smash the Black Box and then order the armed forces to dismantle all nuclear weapons. This would be bold leadership and welcoming to other heads of state who, lead by their citizens, agree to do the same.

The president would have to answer to the supreme leader—Pablo Neruda—declared supreme leader by a people truly enlightened in the wisdom of Confucius, Rumi, Jesus, Buddha, and filled with love for humanity and nature.

In the republic of poetry,  
the guard at the airport  
will not allow you to leave the country  
until you declaim a poem for her  
and she says *Ah! Beautiful.*

Those in fear of "spreading the wealth" will find that capitalism is out to lunch—permanently! If your god would hate this world order, and if you would feel slighted, indeed, impoverished, "spiritually" or otherwise, then perhaps your imagination has been too limited, flawed. Consider Rapture—soon rather than later. Go! Or consider

space flights leaving from Houston for some other planet. (Please let Hockey Mom be first in line—whichever line!). Clear your bank account and fly off where you can have the economic system that makes you feel like a king or a queen among your peers. Exploit and kill elsewhere!

Just let some of us imagine a new and better world—without you!


If only we could elect someone like Harriet Tubman for president...


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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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