

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,
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African Americans and the African world.

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October 22, 2009 - Issue 347

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**Armies of Gods: Peaceful Coups Are Our Business
Represent Our Resistance
By Dr. Lenore J. Daniels, PhD
BlackCommentator.com Editorial Board**

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We must not confuse dissent with disloyalty. When the loyal opposition dies,
I think the soul of America dies with it.

-Edward R. Murrow

I can't give you freedom. Nobody can give you equality or justice or
anything. If you are a man [or a woman], you take it.

-Malcolm

If you do not believe the U.S.-weapons Israel deploys to hold down Palestinian resistance is an act of a *declared* war; if you do not believe the U.S.-trained Honduras military now surrounding the Brazilian embassy where the democratically-elected Honduras President Manuel Zelaya and his supporters are under threat of death is an act of a *declared* war; and if you do not believe the 900 U.S. military facilities in 46 countries and territories, according to *Global Policy Forum*, July 2009, is an expansion of the U.S. Empire and, therefore, an act of a *declared* war, then you, indeed, are deluded. You believe, perhaps, that there are only three wars: the *good one*, that is, the *necessary* one in Afghanistan, the *oops-we-made-a-mistake-war* in Iraq (complete with the largest embassy - U.S. embassy - in the world), and the *just-trying-to-help-*

democracy-in-Pakistan war.

To be sure, the ruling class has been successful in dumbing down if not numbing the minds of citizens here in the U.S. It has been especially successful among the younger generations who are, as Matthew McDaniel, human rights activist and founder of the Akha Heritage Foundation argues, "born of a slave class, and they don't even know it."

The Mall is a sanctuary of Freedom. Citizens *imagine* themselves in a mall at a store in the middle of an aisle surrounded by choices. As McDaniel states, the right to decide which item to purchase is an exercise of Freedom. Maxed out credit cards is Freedom. A cell phone, a Blackberry, a HD large-screen television is Freedom. A much hated job and exhaustion is the price to pay for Freedom. And on Sundays, the church is where citizens pray for more Freedom.

Let the government take care of its business and keep us Free!

Ignorance is Freedom as peace is War!

The *ethnosphere* represents the "social web of life," writes Wade Davis in [*The Wayfinders: Why Ancient Wisdom Matters in the Modern World*](#), that is, the "sum total of all thoughts and intuitions, myths and beliefs, ideas and inspirations brought into being by the human imagination since the dawn of consciousness." The ethnosphere is every bit as important, he argues, as "the biological web of life that we know as the biosphere." The ethnosphere is humanity's greatest legacy but also it's most endangered legacy.

Who are the Akha? A people *at war* with the anti-human rights economic system that is trying to wipe them off the face of the Earth while its spokespeople inform the U.S. citizen that Freedom is right there in the middle aisle of the Wall Mart in their neighborhood. The Akha are one of the latest indigenous farmers to experience the *civilizing* project to which indigenous people and Blacks in the U.S. have undergone - at gunpoint. The Akha of Northern Thailand, Burma, and Laos are - how has it always been presented since the beginning of *civilized* time - receiving the hand of god. They are being taught how to *lift themselves by their bootstraps*, or sandals. The cooperative ones are being trained for the local police and military force while others have become local political representatives and spokespersons themselves, urging their fellow backward Akha kin and kind to *be responsible* and get with the program!

Where have we heard this narrative before?

It is a *soft* invasion of missionary figures with kind faces and, of course, the U.S. dollar - countless U.S. dollars. Of course, no upstanding corporate *news* outlet will send reporters and photographers to cover this run-of-mill, *humanitarian* enterprise because it is all in a day's work. Peace and goodwill. Let our efforts save the souls of your children - for god, of course - and Freedom is yours! Your children are without proper guidance; they are subject to sexual abuse; and they are orphaned. Let us save the Akha by sending our well-trained young people Youth with a Mission, YWAM, to save their children.

YWAM, according to its website, is an "ever-expanding global 'movement of ministry organization,'" since 1960. Founded by Loren and Darlene Cunningham, the

organization emphasizes "personal" support from friends and family members. *Personal support*. YWAM receives funding from *The Family International!* according to McDaniel. On August 12, 2009, *Democracy Now!* featured a report on The Family, a powerful Christian fundamentalist movement and its members include "congressmen, corporate leaders, generals, and foreign heads of state," and its leader, Douglas Coe.

YWAM is not alone. Predators have friends and family, too.

According to McDaniel, Rotary International funded Children of the Golden Triangle. McDaniel's organization's activism helped cut the umbilical cord between the parent funding organization and its children of the golden triangle. The latter was "just a money mill," waving cash to the host government and collecting village children to be saved.

The \$50 million Child Protection Compact, a U.S. Congressional project, aids in the funding of these fundamentalist organization. Each is awarded a 3-year partnership in Thailand, McDaniel informs me. The Thai government is given the bait: a narrative that says "you got to let us take kids in danger of sex trafficking," and, in turn, you receive U.S. dollars - with little or no oversight. The Akha children are taken from their homes to a location some 50 miles away. And the indoctrination begins. The coup is underway.

Indigenous, Black and Brown communities in the U.S. would be familiar, McDaniel says, with this *civilizing* project.

According to McDaniel, there are a hundred or more such missionary organizations in Northern Thailand.

"Our goal now," says McDaniel, "is to shut people [the fundamentalists] down."

Contrary to the narrative of these proselytizing organizations, the children, says McDaniel, are often not orphaned. McDaniel managed to sneak into a Rotary International conference and walk up to one of the representatives. "I told them to stop funding these missionaries. I told him that none of the children taken from their homes were orphans. He told me that he was told they were orphans."

Who would not want their children taken from them and offered good old U.S. Freedom?

Today, children are still removed from the Akha community, McDaniel informs me. Parents, "under extreme stress," are given little or no information regarding those children removed for the purpose of *educating* them. "There is certainly an issue of consent." The Akha "are losing so many kids who are being dumped down."

Akha children are taught to honor ancestors and parents. For most indigenous cultures, all life is respected. "Every culture is by definition a vital branch of our family tree," writes Davis, "a repository of knowledge and experiences, and, if given the opportunity, a source of inspiration and promise for the future." What a threat to Christianity and the American Way!

It happens in the U.S. Children are cleansed of their cultural memory and told that

parents and their community, their entire tradition is backward. Trinkets and gadgets are parade across the television screen and poor or working class Red, Black, and Brown children are told they *want* Barbie; and they *want* a cell phone; they *want* a BMW. They *want* the material items that often a single mother cannot provide. They *want* success and success is money. These children often find themselves in juvenile court on the way to a cell where they become en-caged workers for the economic system. These are the masses whose frustration separates them from those selected to qualify as foot soldiers in law enforcement or military units or *company* men and women at middle-management positions. If they are really lucky and cooperative, they take their place in academia as workers explaining the criminal pathology of the *underclass* or their place is among the politicians and corporate lobbyists. We need only step back and consider that "of the 7,000 languages spoken today, fully half are not being taught to children," Davis writes. The world of the One Mind asks that children speak the language of commodity exchange, and, in the meantime, "on average, every fourth night an elder dies and carries with him or her into the grave the last syllables of an ancient tongue.

The Akha heritage and culture is at stake. The websites of these fundamentalist organizations, Photo ops of these fundamentalist organizations, (*humanitarian* organizations!) speak of good deeds. Photos include the Akha in traditional dress - the very attire the people are ultimately told will need to go - as they become civilized in Western garb, manufactured by Western corporations, with the laboring hands of low-wage workers (if you can call them *workers* and not enslaved people). The Akha are dying from peaceful good deeds of the West. As McDaniel writes,

in 12 years, I have seen the wealth of the missionaries who worked in these same regions [Akha regions] increase to be worth millions of dollars...while the conditions in the villages have not gotten so much better and in many cases have gotten far worse (Akha.org).

We give you blankets - as a gift, an expression of goodwill.

And the missionaries are assisted in this goodwill by the Thai government. The "missionaries get a plush life" in Northern Thailand, says McDaniel. But the destruction of the Akha familial structure and its grassroots economics result in the Thai government's privatization of the land. These stolen lands, says McDaniel, often end up in "the hands of the Thai army." The grown *civilized* children, stand at attention with their weapons while their parents, Akha families and elderly members, leave the land in search of shelter, water, and food. It is about taking the land...for western environmental ideals that don't include people any more than they include Indians or buffalo in Yellowstone National Park," writes McDaniel at his website.

"The problem I see is that no one knows what freedom means anymore," says McDaniel.

I agree. Some would argue that instead of offering weapons, military training, and outright war to the world, the U.S. should help *developing* countries, those countries the Empire must keep *underdeveloped* in order to sustain its racist-based imperialist goals. I wonder if these individuals have any understanding of the U.S. Empire's relentless pursuit of tyrannical order in which it alone stands atop the Earth and all its

people. To be sure, there have been moments in which the pursuit of Freedom propelled a people to defy the Empire from within and without. To be sure, change can happen. But the Empire never sleeps. Freedom frightens it, and repression is peace.

The First World's peoples and their descendents are forced to *give up* the right to self-determination, to values, to heritage and culture, to land, and they are forced to turn over their children in exchange for a narrative that speaks of the *hereafter*. But the *hereafter* in some other world is one means to an end for a government that presents itself as god and sends out his army of gods so the people will tremble. "Make Him known" is the rallying cry of the "religious" fundamentalists as it is for the IMF, the multinational corporate operators, the insurance executives, the educational and judiciary institutions, and the Wall Street-backed politicians marching for the accumulation of papers stamped "in God we trust" because their own longevity on Earth is what really matters. What part of this pattern of destruction equals Freedom?

A people who walk about believing the Earth and all its peoples, animal life, and material resources belong to them, as McDaniel says, "just don't understand. They are deluded in this thinking." As if from one mind, this way of thinking imposes on the world either a benevolent or a malevolent force - depending on the majority's decision to accept or reject *Freedom*.

As Davis argues, "the world can only appear monochromatic to those who persist in interpreting what they experience through the lens of a single cultural paradigm, their own." A culture of greed and injustice that imprints its image on the world empties all other cultures of their spirits and deprives the Earth of its ability to give in abundance.

But the Akha are questioning this *peaceful* take over of *their* culture, heritage, and lands - through their children: they refuse to cooperate with the goodwill of these humanitarian projects to save their children. Somewhere in the human memory is an image of Africa all those centuries ago when missionaries, not unlike the ones training U.S. youth now, carried the cross and were followed by the military troops and merchant class. Somewhere humanity calls armies of people who truly remember that Freedom demands respect for all life.

The Akha are experiencing a necessary war against greed and injustice. "They have tenacity, McDaniel says. "They are a tough people" battling without the benefit of a mobilized force, but they are beginning to develop a leadership to resist the take over of their culture.

True Freedom, too, it seems, never gives up *the* war.

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.

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