

Race and PoliTricks I

Bashing Barack: The Breaking of the Democratic Party's National Unifier

What are we to make of this year's presidential campaign? Just when it appears that the people's long-awaited Change Candidate has arrived, we are subjected to yet another concentrated dose of More Of The Same. Mud-slinging. Race baiting. Twisted statements. Lies, lies, lies. And continued disregard for policies and platforms that seem to offer the real change the people are said to hunger for.

First, there was **Hillary Clinton**, the presumptive favorite to win the Democratic Party nomination. As a veteran New York Senator, she was seen as the political insider, the known quantity. As former First Lady when her husband Bill was president, she had already staked out a reputation as a strong helpmate to some and as a bossy shrew to others. As one

of only a few women to have broken into the Old Boys' Club called the United States Senate, she was the champion of women everywhere, or so we were told.



Clinton's road to the White House seemed clear. All she needed to do was defeat a motley crew of outsiders and upstarts, and then she could carry the banner of the Democratic Party to what was certain to be a resounding victory against the standard-bearer of a Republican Party that was sure to still be reeling from eight years of illegal war, police-state-style violation of civil and human rights, and ruinous economic policies.

But something strange happened on the way to victory. While the campaign of 2004 vice presidential candidate **John Edwards**, which had been launched amid the ruins of New Orleans' Lower Ninth Ward, would come to a crashing end in the same place where it had begun, and while the highly principled but uncharismatic **Dennis Kucinich**, along with fellow candidates **Mike Gravel** and **Bill Richardson**, would never receive the exposure or the

support they deserved, the young but intelligent and poised Senator from Illinois, **Barack Obama**, would not only challenge her, he would take a commanding lead in both the popular vote and the delegate count that was needed to clinch the nomination.

And this would *never* do.

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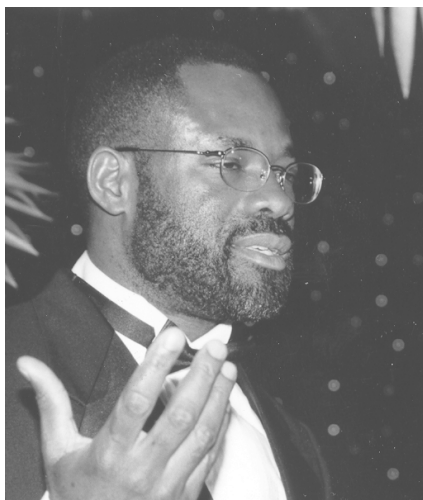
Philip Emeagwali:

Africa Must Produce or Perish

Imagine that it is May 25, 2063, the 100th anniversary of Africa Day, a day for reflecting on Africa's successes and failures. The newspaper headline announces, "Last Remaining Oilfield in West Africa's American Territory Dries Up."

The article continues: "The last patch of rainforest will soon be empty land scarred by oil pipelines, pumping stations, and natural gas refineries. Wholesale pollution will be the environmental legacy for future generations.

"Africa's offshore oil reserves will ebb away. Abandoned oil wells could well become tourist attractions, and oil-boom



settlements will be transformed into derelict ghost towns.

"In a world without oil, air travel will disappear, and people will voyage overseas on coal-powered ships. Farmers will use horses instead of tractors, and scythes instead of combine harvesters. As crops diminish and populations soar, famine will grip the globe. With no means to power their vehicles, parents will be housebound, without jobs, and children will walk to school."

This scenario could become a reality, because we no longer have an abundant oil

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Race and PoliTricks, from Page 1**Bashobama**

After shocking Clinton in the Iowa primary and putting up a surprisingly strong second-place showing in New Hampshire, Obama had surged to the lead in popular vote and committed delegates upon a groundswell of support from young and Afrikan-American voters who had been inspired by his message of hope. As Obama suddenly mounted a winning streak that reached eleven primaries in a row before finally losing in Ohio, Clinton knew that she had to put a stop to Obama's momentum before his lead in the delegate count became insurmountable.

Clinton had won enough delegates to ensure that Obama would not be able to clinch the nomination before the Democratic National Convention, but his lead was still so great that she was unlikely to catch him. She would need to find a way to convince the still-uncommitted **superdelegates** that Obama not only could not unify the Democratic Party to defeat Republican nominee **John McCain** in November, but that he also was not up to the task of uniting the country and restoring its standing in the world.

But Clinton was a little late to the Bashobama Party. The media got there first.

"Are You Now, or Have You Ever Been, a Muslim?"

The first salvo in the feeding frenzy seems to have come from the media. Confusion over Obama's heritage quite conveniently opened the door for the Islamophobes to spread a dirty little secret: Barack Obama was a *Muslim*.

Aside from the fact that this secret was in fact a *lie*, as Obama repeatedly pointed out in word and deed by discussing his extensive Christian family history and his membership in the Trinity United Church of Christ (more on that later), it also played right into people's (much-hyped) fears about handing the country over to someone who allegedly shared spiritual ties with the likes of Al-Qaida, Hamas and Hezbollah, who, as everyone knows, are the United States' deadliest enemies, in that they constitute the very nucleus of the Axis of Evil. Except that *that's* a lie also.

Just What is a madrasa, anyway?

But the media wouldn't give up on its attempt to paint Obama as not only unfit to be president, but a bad risk for the country in general. A brief period during which a very young Barack Obama spent some time in an Indonesian madrasa, or, put into plain English, *a school*, was distorted by some intrepid though misguided soul into "Barack Obama spent time in a Muslim training camp." Once more, the Dogs of War-On-Terror started barking and howling at the moon, and once more Obama's patriotism was put into question. But that's not all.

As if the Muslim question and the madrasa issue weren't enough, next it came out that Obama's middle name matches the surname of the United States' most recent *dictator du jour* (now deceased). Where there's smoke, there's fire, even if they lit the match. But wait, we're not done yet.

Where's Your Pin?

Ever since September 11, 2001, everyone--politicians, news reporters, commentators, comedians, even actors--is expected to pay proper homage to The Day Everything

Changed by wearing the Official Approved Symbol of the Empire, the American Flag Lapel Pin. Some have compared this "tradition" to the compulsive wearing of the Nazi swastika, or the tale from Revelations about taking the Mark of the Beast. But let's not be ridiculous here. After all, there's nothing *compulsive* about wearing the Lapel Pin. You don't *have* to wear it. You can be as anti-American as you want, which you are free to express by not wearing it. By the way, Mr. Obama, for the fifteenth time today, why didn't you remember *your* Lapel Pin?

Obama's statement that he chooses to express his patriotism in different ways seemed to have been finally accepted, after it had become clear that not much more mileage could be made from the issue. Of course, in the debate just prior to the Pennsylvania primary, the question was brought up yet again. Perhaps the decision had been made to simply "save"

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that particular controversy until it was needed again. Certainly, Obama would provide an opportunistic media with another excuse to question his “loyalty to his country”.

Michelle Obama: Finally Proud to be an American

“What we have learned over this year is that hope is making a comeback. It is making a comeback and let me tell you something, For the first time in my adult lifetime, I am really proud of my country. And not just because Barack has done well, but because I think people are hungry for change. I have been desperate to see our country moving in that direction and just not feeling so alone in my frustration and disappointment. I have seen people who are hungry to be unified around some basic common issues. It has made me proud.”

--Mrs. Obama at a campaign stop February 18, 2008 in Milwaukee

The online *cognoscenti*, followed closely by the major mass media, sensed another field day. One blogger wrote the following: “Nothing America has done in Michelle Obama’s adult life, which at 44 goes back 26 years to 1982, has made her proud of her country? Nothing? Not winning the Cold War? Not our regular and orderly transitions of power based on the rule of law? Not the fact that we feed and defend the world, not that we lead in science and technology research, not that we elected the first black president in 1992...nothing? Not the fact that she and her husband were able to go to Ivy League schools before embarking on extremely lucrative careers? Not the fact that we help out in disasters wherever they strike in the world?”

Considering the fact that, for the first time, an African-American is actually close to victory in the Democratic presidential race, perhaps the bloggers can be forgiven their ignorance of the Black Perspective on American politics. (Okay, maybe they can’t.) For the first time, they seem to be in position to really hear (but not listen to) the words of people whose ancestors were enslaved by this very country. Add to that the near-extinction of the Indigenous “Indians” and the modern-day sins of the US: overthrowing democratically-elected leaders in Chile, Guatemala, Panama, Congo, Iran, Grenada and a host of other nations, far from “regular and orderly transitions of power based on the rule of law”; using nuclear bombs on civilian populations in two of Japan’s largest cities; police brutality; political prisoners; an illegal war in Iraq; the torture of prisoners; and other acts that could easily be considered war crimes by the International Criminal Court (if the US actually *acknowledged* the Court); one might wonder what there is to be truly proud of even *now*. Feeding and protecting the world doesn’t quite look the same to many of those the US allegedly fed and protected. The US didn’t even help out *its own citizens* in New Orleans (unless you count shooting “looters” as help) after

Hurricane Katrina until long after the outcry from the rest of its citizens over its inactivity, and much of that was due to the *heroic acts of individual Americans*, not the federal government agencies. And who exactly was this “first black president in 1992”?

That particular web log, or “blog”, was only one of many that echoed similar sentiments and opinions that were repeated widely in the “mass media”. It appeared that, at the very least, the molders of public opinion were beginning to paint Michelle Obama as cut from the same discredited cloth as a certain former First Lady who now is Obama’s opponent in the primaries. But, with all these controversies about Obama’s identity, his faith, his name, his history and his wife’s newfound pride being dissected in the major media, there was still this impression that the campaign thus far had been ...

A Free Ride for Obama?

We still hear the whines of the right-wingers among the press elite that Obama has not been “sufficiently vetted” or questioned regarding his ethnicity (Kenyan-American), his religion (Muslim? Christian Liberation Theologist?) or his loyalties (Flag pin? Friendship with Minister Louis Farrakhan?). Clinton herself seemed to join in on the complaint-fest that Obama was being given a “free ride”, despite all the rumors about madrasas and a specious connection to international Jihadist terrorism.

Wright Place, but the Wrong Time?

Of course, the pivotal issue surrounding the Obama campaign has been his association with the **Rev. Jeremiah Wright of Trinity United Church of Christ**. Once video of one of Rev. Wright’s earlier sermons, which lambasted the well-documented, but often ignored, sins of the US government in classic fire-and-brimstone fashion, was sufficiently chopped up to remove all context and then mass-distributed to any political smut factory that would use it against Obama, the feeding frenzy was on. After all, it’s perfectly okay to condemn the gays, the fornicators, the idol-worshippers and the pagans for their sins against God’s law, but to so severely scold a nation like the United States for its extensive international criminal record and its violations of the Ten Commandments (you know, the ones about bearing false witness, coveting, stealing, killing, worshipping profits over people as well as God) was clearly unacceptable and must be punished. Surely, this would finally sink the Ship of Obama.

Problem was, many people, Black and White, apparently saw through this act of political deception and character-assassination. Perhaps eight years of the Bush administration’s bald-faced lies, thoughtless environmental destruction, wanton abrogation of international treaties and unrestrained evisceration of Americans’ civil liberties have

finally opened the eyes of some of America's citizens wide enough to give them pause, and to consider the possibility that Rev. Wright could be ... *right*?

Driving Too Fast In Your Ferraro

It seems some people simply can't resist the temptation to open their mouths and expose themselves. Close Clinton friend, aide and advisor **Geraldine Ferraro**, the first woman to win the Democratic Party's nomination for vice president when she ran with Walter Mondale in 1984, felt the need to opine that Obama "wouldn't be where he is today were he not a Black man," implying that his Blackness bestowed him with a privilege he would not have enjoyed were he a woman or a White man. Perhaps the fact that the campaign of John Edwards was so unsuccessful led her to believe that suddenly being a Black politician conveyed an advantage. Perhaps she was attempting to make a commentary on the fact that Clinton's tactics, decried by many as "dirty", would be seen simply as "tough campaigning" were she a man. In any case, her statement made her seem less like a feminist railing against the long-standing patriarchal system of US governance, and more like a closet racist who resented that fact that her candidate was the one currently being outclassed by a Black man who was, relatively speaking, a political novice. As such, Ferraro has been essentially silenced by the Clinton campaign, one in a long line of advisers, managers and assistants to have been sidelined for ineffective or counterproductive statements or actions.

Elitism: The Pot Calling The Kettle White

The pivotal primary in Pennsylvania was approaching fast. Clinton was considered to hold a 20-plus-point advantage according to informal polls taken there. And it figured: Pennsylvania is a largely White, conservative state with many small towns dotting its landscape. The campaigning would be tough for Obama. And he would need to find a way to answer the fears and frustrations of those in the "Rust Belt" of small towns that had sunk into economic decay ever since the departure of industry and the good jobs and economic opportunities it offered.

At a fundraising meeting in San Francisco, Obama spoke about those fears and frustrations, and the way in which they might lead to a feeling of isolation and abandonment in people from those towns. "It's not surprising then they get bitter. They cling to guns or religion or antipathy to people who aren't like them or anti-immigrant sentiment or anti-trade sentiment as a way to explain their frustrations."

Now was the time for Clinton to strike. Her response was to first ridicule the fact that Obama's meeting was held in "private" in "San Francisco", and she implied a certain racism from Obama for implying that poor

Whites, who had been denied economic opportunity as a result of the broken promises from administrations like her husband's in the 1990's, were bitter. "I was taken aback by the demeaning remarks Senator Obama made about people in small-town America. Senator Obama's remarks are elitist and they are out of touch. They are not reflective of the values and beliefs of Americans. Certainly not the Americans that I know." She capped her critique by stating that Americans "don't need a president who looks down on them," reminiscing on her days as a child with her dad's guns, and then throwing back a shot and a beer at a Pennsylvania bar.

Even McCain got in on the act, expressing his shock at the "breathtaking" elitism Obama displayed. All this populist sentiment coming from candidates from Old Money, one a longtime Senator and the other a former First Lady who was on the board of Wal-Mart opposing union organizers while Obama was working in the streets of Chicago.

So now Whites can't be bitter. After decades of analyzing the boiling Black Rage of the inner-city ghettos and the role their bitterness over apparently unending poverty played in the urban rebellions of the Sixties and even the Nineties, now it is considered racist to speculate that Whites, when confronted with the same economic marginalization, might become bitter *too*?

Once Again, from Wright Field: Taking a Hand in Our Own Downfall?

After the Clinton strategy earned her a clear but unimpressive victory in the Pennsylvania primary, the candidates had some time off to prepare for the next stretch of nine primaries leading up to the Democratic Convention in June. To fill the lazy days prior to the home stretch, it was evidently decided that bringing up old controversies might help pass the time.

This next little bit of entertainment was brought to us by Clinton, the increasingly conspiratorial media and the return of an unexpected helpmate: the Rev. Jeremiah Wright.

As the media chose to revisit the Rev. Wright controversy (Even Comedy Central's **Stephen Colbert** made a running joke of "Why won't this story die?") and Clinton chose to state her position that she would have effectively kicked Rev. Wright to the curb long ago, journalist and commentator **Bill Moyers** interviewed Rev. Wright April 25th on his public television program *Bill Moyers Journal*. He spent an hour with Rev. Wright discussing his spiritual theology, his upbringing in which he served heroically and loyally in the Navy and the Marines (unlike certain draft-dodging, suddenly-hawkish war-mongers in the Bush administration), his relationship with Obama, and, of course, the remarks that have caused so much controversy for Obama and so much difficulty for him (Rev. Wright re-

vealed on the show that he has received death threats and his church has been threatened with arson).

Here is what the **Bronzeville Metropolis**, an Afrikan-centered newspaper published in Chicago, Illinois, had to say about the Bill Moyers interview and the media controversy surrounding Rev. Wright:

The highly anticipated interview with Reverend Jeremiah Wright aired last night on PBS and what a night it was.

Reverend Wright broke his month long silence after snippets of his sermons were willfully and maliciously used to hurt him and the campaign of Senator Barack Obama.

Preparing their ambush, Fox News producers went to Trinity UCC with a specific list of DVD titles of Reverend Wright's sermons. These producers and news anchors watched the sermons in their entirety and shaped their smear campaign with the most inflammatory statements they could find while completely leaving out pertinent information which would have given context to the viewers and Pennsylvania voters.

Fox News, and the laziness of the other networks to do their own research, has done severe damage to Reverend Wright personally, Trinity Church, Barack's campaign, and Black people in general. They played on the fear of Whites in America, the same as D.W. Griffith's Birth of a Nation gave rise to the Ku Klux Klan.

Whites who are voting for Barack are demonstrating that they want change but Sean Hannity, a "red-blooded American", continues to fight the "crazed mulatto" by summoning the troops of his White Supremacist following.

As Reverend Wright prepares for an action packed two days in Washington, D.C. and "red-blooded" American troops reload, one can't help but wonder if a real conversation on race will turn into a race war.

In case you're interested in checking out the **Bronzeville Metropolis**, you can go to the Internet and visit their Web Site: www.bronzevillemetropolis.com.

To view the Bill Moyers interview with Rev. Wright in full, it may still be available on the Web at <http://www.pbs.org/moyers/journal/04252008/watch.html>.

Tim Wise has also written a very insightful commentary about the Rev. Wright controversy. Tim Wise is one of the few European-Americans who condemns America's racism even more harshly than the vast majority of Afrikan-Americans, including many in the Black Left. His essay, which completely exposes, debunks and discredits the racist underpinnings of the political and media feeding frenzy over the Rev. Wright issue, is titled ***Of National Lies and Racial Amnesia: Jeremiah Wright***,

Barack Obama, and the Audacity of Truth. For that and more of Tim Wise's commentaries, visit his Web Site: www.timwise.org.

This entire episode would have ended quite neatly had things been left right there. But the constant scrutiny and harassment Rev. Wright and his congregants were forced to endure apparently was too much to even let the Moyers interview suffice as an answer. So, Rev. Wright made two *more* appearances that weekend. After an address at an NAACP event, he appeared at a ministers' convention in Washington, DC on Monday, April 28 and made a speech at the **National Press Club**, despite warnings from friends and allies not to do so.

As it was, the speech was assertive but not outrageous. He outlined many precepts and traditions of "the prophetic theology of the Black Church", primarily those of transformation and liberation "of the slave and the slave-

holder, the oppressed as well as the oppressor" and the "reconciliation" that would result from sincere discussion. He stressed that the Black Church, with which many in the media were not familiar, was different from the established White Church, and he pointed out that "different" does not mean "inferior or superior", just "different." He also mentioned the fact that his remarks were often taken out of context by people who had never heard his sermons, that they were his opinions as a pastor and not to

be confused with Obama's political platform. So far, so good.

But then the event began to take a turn into the surreal. A question-and-answer session followed, supposedly organized to give Rev. Wright an opportunity to set the record straight on a number of points of controversy regarding him, Obama and the Black Church. The trap was set, and Rev. Wright walked right into it.

The session featured questions that were allegedly submitted beforehand and were read by a National Press Club staffer, a White female. At first, the Reverend seemed composed and even charming. "Let me try to respond in a non-bombastic way," Rev. Wright began. As the questions wore on, however, Rev. Wright's polished demeanor wore down, and he gradually became animated, which may explain some increasingly theatrical gestures and slightly more defiant tone as he answered questions that even **Fox News** analysts described as "heated".

On one of his sermons when he had mentioned the theme of America's chickens coming home to roost: First, he stated that his words were a quote from the Iraqi ambassador. Then, he quoted the Bible: "Be not deceived. God is not mocked. For whatsoever you sow, that you also shall



reap. Jesus said, Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. You cannot do terrorism on other people and expect it never to come back on you.”

On being a patriotic American: “I served six years in the military. Does that make me patriotic? How many years did Cheney serve?”

On the Minister Louis Farrakhan: “One of the most important voices of the 20th and 21st centuries ... He is not my enemy.”

On Israel: He emphasized his belief in Israel’s right to exist, in reconciliation and harmony with Palestine.

On his differences with Obama: He was a pastor, who answered to a higher authority, while Obama was a politician, and would say what a politician must say in the world of polls and sound bytes.

Why was he speaking out at this time? “On November fifth and January 21 I’ll still be a pastor. As I said, this is not an attack on Jeremiah Wright. It has nothing to do with Senator Obama. It is an attack on the Black Church, launched by people who know nothing about the African American religious tradition. And why am I speaking out now? In our community we have something called playing the dozens. If you think I’m gonna let you talk about my mama and her religious tradition and my daddy and his religious tradition and my grandma, you’ve got another think coming.”

Fox News had a field day. Words like “racist”, “hate speech”, “divisive” and “anti-American” were used. Rev. Wright’s comment about “coming after” Obama were he to become president was twisted from its intended meaning, that he would hold President Obama accountable for his actions as leader of the “free world”, to some kind of personal threat. Analysts insisted Obama would have to distance himself completely from Rev. Wright now. Even **Juan Williams** got into the act (not a surprise to some), belittling Rev. Wright’s descriptions of liberation theology, the dozens and the “chickens coming home to roost” remark, and branding Rev. Wright’s comments “shocking”.

Debate raged in the Afrikan-American community. Some strongly supported the Reverend for the content of his message and the assertive way he stood up for the Black Church. Others agreed with his essential points (they were correct), but groaned when, egged on by the cameras and the occasional cheers from his audience, he shot zingers back at the more combative questions and appeared to revel too much in his apparent victories. From our viewpoint, each and every one of his points was valid (even his assertion that the US had biologically engineered AIDS, while as yet not conclusively proven, is more than plausible for anyone familiar with the Tuskegee experiments, the smallpox-infected blankets for the Indigenous Nations or the US’s longtime supply of ricin, botulinum and anthrax to Saddam Hussein) and *he was still on solid ground right up until the question-and-answer session began*. At that point, the symbolism of himself and a White woman

jockeying for advantage on the podium, the glare of the bright lights and cameras, the microphones in his face, and the fact that the event was being held at the *National Press Club*, filmed by *Fox News* and broadcast on *CNN* should have clued him in that the trap had been laid. But he apparently did not see it, and as a result was suddenly cast (whether he ever realized it or not) as the central figure in a High-Tech Minstrel Show for the political pundits’ New Millennium Sacrificial Dance.

Obama responded in the only way he could, according to his supporters and the mainstream media. He quickly held a press conference during which he personally rebuked Rev. Wright and all but severed his ties to his longtime pastor, saying he was “not the same man I knew 20 years ago” and calling the Reverend’s remarks “hurtful”, “divisive” and “destructive”.

A friend of this Editor, a Black Republican pastor (yes, as hard as it may be to believe, we do have positive relationships with *sincere* conservatives) who is also an Obama supporter (“It’s time one of us got to the White House to help show this country that there are things we need to apologize for”), was livid with Rev. Wright. “The Bible says, *Be discreet*. To be discreet is to be moderate in your opinion at the time you need to be,” he said. “You can’t show your cards like that. If people see your cards you’re going to lose. Why couldn’t he *see* that? ... Obama has the opportunity to bring this country together, and we as a people are the ones who are going to bring us down. We’re always talking about the White Man bringing us down, and *we’re* doing it.”

Either way, both Obama and Rev. Wright came out of this controversy damaged. Obama’s reaction may have saved his presidential bid, even if it weakened his image among some in the Afrikan activist community. Meanwhile, Clinton sought to solidify her standing in the overwhelmingly working-class White states like West Virginia and Kentucky by proclaiming that Obama was losing support among “hard-working Americans, White Americans,” an apparent attempt, according to her critics, to exploit the racial tensions that the media are trying to stir up.

And this may lend some credence to a rather curious theory regarding Rev. Wright’s real intentions when he began to sound off in the first place. There were some who suspected Rev. Wright had done all this to “sacrifice himself” and force Obama to sever ties with him so that the question would be put to rest forever. However, the hope of most Obama supporters now seems to be that Rev. Wright will heed his own advice, which he had ironically quoted during that question-and-answer session: “Better to keep your mouth closed and be thought an idiot, than to open it and remove all doubt.” This may be another case of damaging our own position by speaking truth to power but not recognizing a setup when we see one.

The Home Stretch

Clinton had to be dismayed when she saw even more of the prized superdelegates begin to abandon her and side with Obama. She vowed to continue the fight, apparently to the bitter end, as the primaries for West Virginia, Kentucky, South Dakota, Montana, Oregon and Puerto Rico drew near.

Her “good luck charm” to start the home stretch was the West Virginia primary. One of the Whitest states in the country at 95%, Clinton counted on the demographic of non-college-educated rural Whites to bring her a decisive victory. And it did. As Obama, holding a near-insurmountable lead in delegates, began campaigning for the November contest with McCain by revisiting other states he figured to need in the general election, Clinton expended huge amounts of time, energy and money (lending her campaign several hundred thousand dollars from her personal fortune) reaching out to small-town West Virginia White voters as she made her propaganda pitch to the press and the superdelegates. Predicting a resounding victory in the state, she went further with the “hard-working Americans, White Americans” remark, claiming that her advantages in the counties along West Virginia’s borders with Ohio, Pennsylvania and Virginia would translate to an advantage to her in the general election, that she would be able to win these states while Obama would not (despite Obama’s victory in the Virginia primary earlier in the year).

In an interview with CNN’s **Wolf Blitzer** the day after the West Virginia primary, Clinton went back to the tactic of praising Obama and insisting that those who took her earlier remark about her advantage with White voters were making an “inappropriate” assumption that she was using race as a weapon. Still, she and her staff continued to insist that her West Virginia victory, which shaved only a scant few delegates off Obama’s 150-plus lead, was a watershed event. Her resolve to stay in the race, against the advice of those who feared she would destroy the Democratic Party by obstinately continuing to fight, was hardened. She would battle on to the Convention.

So it could not have been taken as a good sign when, that same day, Obama picked up more superdelegates and,

to top it off, what appears to be a key endorsement. Only days after saying it would be premature to endorse a candidate, **John Edwards** announced his support for Obama, along with the 19 delegates he had won in the early primaries. His delegate lead swelled over 160 again. Thus, the net impact on Obama’s march to the party’s nomination was, at best, zero. On the day after what Clinton saw as a key primary victory, she was again trumped by Obama.

What Now for the Democratic Convention?

Now, Clinton’s plan continues, the same one analysts said she had to follow over a month ago: dig for as much dirt as you can find, and hope Obama makes a critical mistake. So far, Obama has not made the critical mistake, but enough traps have been placed between Obama and the Democratic Party nomination that his friends and associates may be making the critical mistakes for him. Still, it appears that every time Obama has been faced with a potential crisis--questions about his religion, his patriotism, his pastor, and his “electability” with White voters--he has managed to turn the tables, either with a timely speech, a painful personal rebuke of a friend, and even the announcement of newfound support from a former competitor. Clinton’s hope now seems to be that these controversies, the degree to which they *can* be made to stick to Obama, and a veiled campaign double-team by herself and McCain will allow her to label him as “unelectable” in the eyes of the increasingly-critical superdelegates, who she hopes to sway to her side regardless of the size of Obama’s lead in pledged delegates and popular vote (both of which he is likely to retain) by the time of the Democratic Convention. She and McCain seem to be pinning faint hopes on setting Obama up to somehow be eliminated at the Convention, so that Old Money can once again contest the job of Leader of the Free World, just as it was always meant to be. ■

NEXT ISSUE: Race and PoliTricks, Part II

Ignoring Cynthia: The McKinney Campaign and the Fictitious Search for a Third-Party Candidate

Africa: Produce or Perish

[Philip Emeagwali, from Page 1]

supply. We know oil exists in limited quantities and that most oil wells dry up after 40 years. It is as certain as death and taxes. Rather than debate the exact year when we will run out of oil, I prefer to imagine that we have already run out. It may come sooner than any of us expect. Our heirs will thank or curse us for how much oil we left for them. Instead of asking, “When will Africa run out of natural resources?” we should ask, “When will Africa be unable to export raw materials, either for lack of our own oil or because foreign markets have themselves dried up?”

A \$100 bar of raw iron is worth \$200 when forged into drinking cups in Africa, \$65,000 when forged into needles in Asia, \$5 million when forged into watch springs in Europe. How can this be? European intellectual capital – the collective knowledge of its people – allows a \$100 raw iron bar to command a 50,000-fold increase! It could be said, therefore, that a lack of intellectual capital is the root cause of poverty.

Without African intellectual capital, iron excavated in Africa will continue to be manufactured in Europe and exported back to Africa at enormous cost. To alleviate poverty,

Africa needs to cultivate creative and intellectual abilities that will allow it to increase the value of its raw materials and to break the continent's vicious cycle of poverty. Poverty is not an absence of money, Rather, it results from an absence of knowledge.

In oil-exporting African nations, multinationals such as Shell (selling rigs for a 40% royalty on exported oil) are getting rich, while the oil rig workers remain poor. Instead of addressing the underlying causes of poverty – minimal productivity resulting from a lack of intellectual capital – Third World leaders have focused on giving false hope to their people.

We need less talk about poverty and more action to eliminate it. So how do we do this? Education has done more to reduce poverty than all the oil companies in the world. So it is disheartening to realize that few leaders believe that their people's potential is far more valuable than what lies beneath the soil.

Intellectual capital, not higher wages, will eliminate poverty in Africa. If we all demand higher wages, we will end up paying the higher wages to ourselves. Intellectual capital will result in the creation of new products derived from new technologies. The end result will be not just a redistribution of wealth, but the creation and control of new wealth.

And Africa's power to reduce poverty will open the floodgates of prosperity for millions of people. One catalyst for such prosperity could be telecommuting. If 300 million Africans could work for companies located in the West (just as millions of Indians do), then both regions would benefit. The strategy would be to recognize the labor needs of the global marketplace, and enable Africa to fulfill those needs.

For example, tax preparation experts living in Africa, where labor is cheaper, could fulfill the needs of US-based accountants. Furthermore, the time difference could allow for a fast turnaround in service. It is clear that knowledge and technology is crucial to alleviate Africa's poverty.

Africa will perish if it continues to consume what it does not produce, and produce what it does not consume. The result will be a depressing cycle of increasing consumption, decreasing production, and increasing poverty. We are missing a golden opportunity by not using the trillion dollars earned by exporting natural resources to break Africa's cycle of poverty.

We are at a crossroads where one signpost reads "Produce" and another reads "Perish." We risk becoming like the driver who stops at an intersection and asks a pedestrian, "Where does this road lead?"

And the pedestrian replies, "Where do you want to go?"

"I don't know," the driver replies.

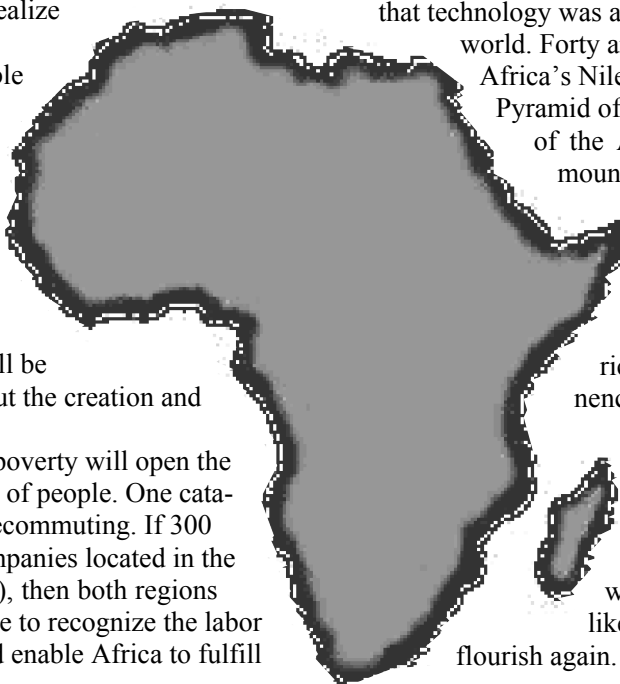
"Then it obviously doesn't matter which road you take!" replies the pedestrian.

If we adopt the same attitude as the driver, Africa will have lost its chance to "choose" its future.

For decades, power in post-colonial Africa rested in the hands of those with guns, not those with brains. We were not always at war with our neighbors, but we were always at war with poverty. And we spent more on guns than on books and bread.

Africa's choice is clear: produce or perish. However, it is important that we do not blindly choose the lesser of two evils – producing what we cannot consume or consuming what we cannot produce. We can avoid this. My wish is that by the end of the 21st century high-end products in New York City will sport the label: "Made in Africa."

We cannot look forward to our future until we learn from our past. Five thousand years of recorded history reveal that technology was ancient Africa's gift to the modern world. Forty and a half centuries ago, geometers in Africa's Nile Valley region designed the Great Pyramid of Giza, the last of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. That man-made mountain remains the largest stone building on Earth. It is an icon of engineering, and testifies that Africa was once the world's most technologically advanced region. It is absolutely imperative that Africa regain its technological prominence, which will enable it to produce what the world can consume. When we do that, Africa will finally be eating the fruits of its own labor. When Africa has regained its technological prominence, the world's leaders will seek it out. And, like a rainforest renewed, Africa will flourish again.



Excerpted from a speech delivered by Philip Emeagwali to the African community in Valencia, Spain on May 11, 2008. The entire transcript and video are posted at emeagwali.com.

About the Author:

A Son of Nigeria whose home offices are currently located in Washington, DC, **Philip Emeagwali** has been called "a father of the Internet" by *CNN* and *TIME* for his groundbreaking advances in supercomputer technology, and extolled as "one of the great minds of the Information Age" by former US President Bill Clinton. He won the **1989 Gordon Bell Prize**, the Nobel prize of supercomputing.

Mr. Emeagwali travels around the world to give presentations and lectures on science and on the future of Afrika. For more of Mr. Emeagwali's commentaries and analyses, as well as articles, videos and photographs, please visit his Web Site, <http://emeagwali.com>.





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From Social Theory To Social Practice



The Honorable
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This seminar is a thorough and intense exposition of the historical, ideological, organizational and programmatic development of African-American Nationalism.

Structured within the framework of five (5) thematic sessions, **Introduction to African-American Nationalism** instructs its students in: (1) The definitive strategies of traditional and contemporary African-American nationalism, i.e., religious, political, economic, cultural and communitarian nationalism; (2) The roots of contemporary African-American nationalism found in classical African cultures and nation-states; (3) Critical analysis of key African-American social movements, theorists and organizers from the 18th Century to the present; (4) The African-American Cultural Revolution, i.e., the contemporary nationalist project of transforming the African-American population into a socio-politically conscious, committed and productive national community and (5) Training community organizers to serve as the nucleus of the cultural revolution.

Dialogue is centered on **African Communitarian Nationalism**. Communitarian Nationalism is the organizational and programmatic extension of the cultural nationalist movement of the 1960s, i.e., the ideological codification of the cultural revolution. Building on that ideological movement, African Communitarian Nationalism contends that *"Indigenous and autonomous, local community organization is an indispensable prerequisite for continuity of the cultural revolution."*

The primary purpose of **Introduction to African-American Nationalism** is to serve as an initial and ongoing ideological training institute, in order to develop a permanent circle of professional community organizers, who are conscious and capable of, and committed to the cultural, economic and political development of the African-American population of Baltimore, Maryland.

Seminar instructor is **Sanifu Onaje Mwananchi**. Mr. Mwananchi is a Baltimore-based community organizer and theatre artist. He has been an active student, organizer and teacher of African-American Nationalism for over 40 years.

Introduction to African-American Nationalism is conducted **Bi-monthly**, i.e., February, April, June, August, October and December. Each seminar runs for five (5) consecutive weekends, beginning the first weekend of its scheduled month. Registration deadline is 28 days prior to the first session of each seminar. **Tuition** is \$124 (new student) and \$63 (alumnus). Fifty percent is required upon registration (non-refundable) and the balance due no later than the first session.



El-Hajj Malik Al-Shabazz
(Malcolm X/Omowale)



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11:00 pm *Hollah Black* with Minister General Ahmad
12:00 pm *The Digital Underground* with Baba Junious Ricardo Stanton
2:00 pm *The Kuumba Radio Report* with Bro. Cliff
Super Sunday Special Broadcasts Every Sunday Afternoon

Monday

8:00 pm *Good Life News Reporters* with Min. W. Dukes-El
9:00 pm *Just About Books* with Sis. Cheryl Robinson
10:00 pm *Live In The Spirit* with Baba Wallace "The Motivator" Durham
11:00 pm *Think Healthy Wealthy* with Bro. Ashiki Taylor

Tuesday

8:00 pm *Transformation Network* with Bro. Haki Ammi
9:00 pm *Black Star Lion Nine Time* with Bro. Heru and Baba Senghor Jawara Baye-El
10:00 pm *In a Loving Voice* w/Bro. Onaje Muid & Sis. Fatima
11:00 pm *Pisces Speaks* with Sis. Gwen Mack

Wednesday

8:00 pm *Black Star Productions* with Baba Henry DeBernardo
9:00 pm *The Bottom Line* with Sis. Toi
10:00 pm *Health Is A Family Affair* with Prof. Hajii Salim Ali, Dr. Akosua Ali-Sabree and Sis. Sakinah Ali

Thursday

8:00 PM *The Ramesseum* w/Ramessu Meriamen (Bro. Deven)
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JUSTICE FOR MARSHALL EDDIE CONWAY!

Marshall "Eddie" Conway is currently in the 39th year of his incarceration in the Maryland prison system *for a crime he did not commit*. As an important member of the Baltimore chapter of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, Eddie was targeted by local, state and federal police under the FBI's infamous counterintelligence program, COINTELPRO.

Despite being a model prisoner, infraction-free for over 30 years, Eddie has been repeatedly denied parole by the State of Maryland. With the assistance of several State politicians, support groups and his legal team, Eddie is seeking a new trial that would uncover the "dirty tricks" that were used to target and unfairly convict him of killing a Baltimore police officer in 1970. Eddie himself has repeatedly stated: "At no time in my life have I killed or attempted to kill anyone. I have no involvement in that incident. I'm innocent." The Baltimore City Council passed a unanimous Resolution in 2001 calling for a review of Eddie's case. However, the then-Governor and the Maryland Legislature (despite the strong work of Clarence "Tiger" Davis and Salima Marriott) did not call for a review of Eddie's case.

What Can You Do To Help?

Write to Maryland's Governor Martin O'Malley, Lieutenant Governor Anthony Brown and the State Legislators to demand

that Eddie be granted parole or a new trial. Write to: Governor-Martin O'Malley, State House, Annapolis, MD 21401; phone: 1-800-811-8336 or 410-974-3901; fax: 410-974-3275. Send e-mails to: governor@gov.state.md.us. The Governor's Web Site is www.gov.state.md.us

Write to Eddie:

Marshall E. Conway #116469

Maryland Correctional Training Center
18800 Roxbury Rd, Hagerstown, MD 21746.

Contact organizations supporting Eddie:

Marshall E. Conway Support Committee
P.O. Box 41144, Baltimore, MD 21203-6144

The National Jericho Movement

P.O. Box 1272, New York, NY 10013
Web Site: www.thejerichomovement.com

Kuumba Events and Communications

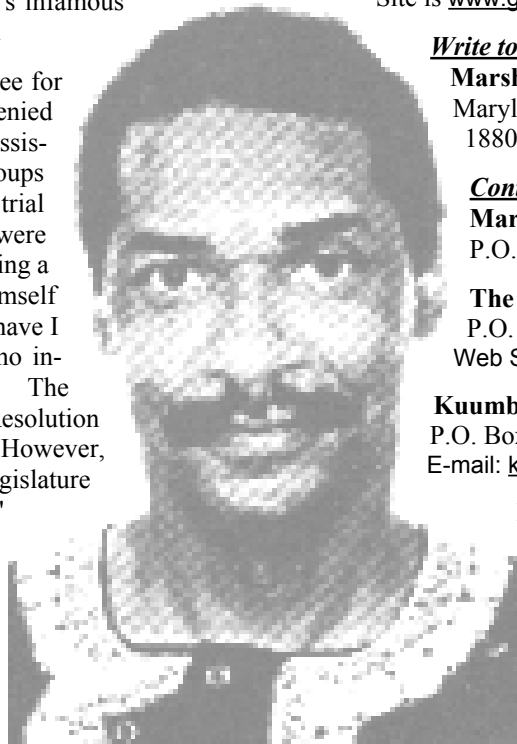
P.O. Box 1723, Baltimore, MD 21203-1723
E-mail: kuumba@verizon.net

Partnership for Social Justice c/o

AFSC

4806 York Rd, Balto, MD 21212.

Web Site: www.freeeddieconway.org



**Be Involved
or Be Enslaved!**

KUUMBAREport Update

June 3, 2008: As of this writing, Senator **Barack Obama** has far surpassed the 2,118 Democratic Primary delegates needed to clinch the nomination of his party for President of the United States, making history as the first U.S. presidential nominee of Afrikan descent.

While she did not immediately concede the race on this day, Senator **Hillary Clinton**, short of an ill-advised floor fight at the Democratic Party Convention in August, will *not* be the Democratic Party's standard-bearer in November's general election. By the time you read this, she may have finally conceded the nomination to Obama, and he may by now have even offered her the opportunity to share the Democratic ticket with him as his vice presidential running mate, though at this writing such an offer has not been made.

As he has been doing for the past month, Obama continues to look toward November, praising Clinton's historic candidacy while setting the stage for his campaign against Republican Party nominee **John McCain**.

Over the next several weeks, that campaign will clarify and intensify. While it is impossible for a bimonthly publication such as this one to stay on top of every development in a campaign that often changes by the day, we will continue to offer our analysis of the campaign from an activist and Afrikan-centered viewpoint.

Because of that commitment, our coverage now shifts to *what many analysts and observers refuse to acknowledge*: the campaign is not really a two-way contest between left-leaning Democratic and right-leaning Republican platforms. This is actually a *three-way* confrontation between the politics of the status quo, represented by the McCain candidacy; the politics of incremental reform of that status quo, as embodied by the Democratic Party and the Obama campaign; and what is more of a revolutionary people's program, as we will see from analysis of the platform of Green Party nominee **Cynthia McKinney**.

McKinney, who will almost certainly represent the Green Party in November, has been the candidate whose platform truly seeks to end the war in Iraq (not just remove the troops and replace them with Blackwater mercenaries, as many say even Obama will allow), addresses the still-fester wound that is the Gulf Coast and post-Katrina New Orleans (which neither the Democratic nor Republican candidates spoke to in a substantive way), and calls for a fundamental change in the economic system away from subsidizing corporations and toward truly empowering Americans who have been left out of the political and economic process.

Next issue, we will take a closer look at the McKinney campaign, comparing her platform to those of Obama and McCain, and specifically, for those who felt a chance was missed to support a woman presidential candidate and those who remain excited about a candidate of Afrikan descent, to re-emphasize the fact that both of those possibilities still exist for November, and that a reasoned look at the policies of the next president is still possible without feeling the need to collectively hold our noses and vote, as we have been forced to do so many times before, for the lesser of two evils.

This in no way means that we will forget the many other issues that are central to a Pan-Afrikan activist publication. We will continue to report on the plight of Political Prisoners (Marshall "Eddie" Conway, Mondo we Langa, Mumia Abu-Jamal, the MOVE Nine, Leonard Peltier, etc.), the state of the Afrikan Continent (Darfur, Kenya, South Afrika, the Niger Delta), the continuing struggle of the people of New Orleans in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, and efforts to unify and organize Afrikan people in the United States (we just returned from a Gathering of the Black Left in Chapel Hill, NC), the Afrikan Continent and the Diaspora (including updates on the African Union Initiative).

It's going to be a long, eventful summer, and we hope you'll travel with us and help us navigate the sociopolitical wilderness ahead. ***Peace and Power!***

Bro. Cliff, Editor & Publisher