

The Obama Phenomenon

Barack Obama's presidential nomination is historic and inspiring. Even a decade ago, few of us would have imagined it possible. Majorities of first-time voters, young people, African Americans and other progressive voters are moved by the optimism Obama expresses and the vision he projects, which contrasts to the racism deeply embedded in U.S. society and the divisions that emerge from it.

It's an amazing prospect that an African American might soon be elected president. And if Obama is defeated, there is no doubt that white racism will have played a major part in his defeat.

Realities of the Democratic Party

But Obama is a candidate of the pro-war, corporate Democratic Party and is firmly entrenched in the party's mainstream, as his voting record reveals. After winning the Democratic Party nomination, Obama chose pro-war Joseph Biden as his running mate. Obama and Biden want more troops in Afghanistan and have no plans to cut the swollen arms budget or end saber rattling in Venezuela, Iran, and in Eastern Europe. Without cutting the military budget there aren't enough resources to rebuild U.S. infrastructure in the optimistic fashion Obama projects. Promises of change are degraded by the politics of imperialism – and if programs emerge they will be underfunded, ineffective or corrupted.

This should not surprise us. The Democrats, like the Republicans, are thoroughly controlled by big business. In fact, in this election cycle, corporations have given more money to the Democrats.

George W. Bush has distilled right-wing ideology into naked weapons of domination and empire – with disastrous results, which McCain/ Palin would continue. But many of these policies are continuations of the Clinton administration, when the gap between rich and poor grew faster than any period since the 1920s. Clinton proudly signed NAFTA, dismantled social safety net programs, and filled federal prisons with people — particularly Black men — for drug violations at a time when crime was *decreasing*.

The Democratic Party has been called “the graveyard of political movements” for very good reasons. Its structure silences the voices of the grassroots while maximizing the impact of the rich and powerful. The two parties have a stranglehold on every detail of the presidential debates, the venue



- Bring the troops home from Iraq and Afghanistan. Immediately end torture and secret trials and release all uncharged detainees.
- Take the lead on launching a national single-payer health care plan.
- Appoint members to the National Labor Relations Board who will protect workers' rights and reverse three decades of anti-labor rulings. Cancel NAFTA and CAFTA!
- Reverse the “Global Gag Rule” that bans funding for agencies offering family planning and abortion counseling in Third World countries. End political censorship of scientific reports on everything from climate change to sex education.
- Immediately release 4.5 billion FEMA dollars, appropriated for Hurricane Katrina relief, that have never been spent!
- Order immediate end of workplace raids and roundups of immigrants; suspend deportations until Congress passes fair immigration reform.

through which millions of undecided and indepen- dent voters choose how to cast their ballots. State by state, election laws present obstacles to ballot access for progressive viewpoints. Established electoral practices systematically limit access to the polls, with the effect of marginalizing Black and Latino voters, and the poor.

Keep the Movements Alive

Even if Obama wins, Obama's change agenda will be insignificant, unless there are organized, mobilized social movements countering the corporate power that has Washington in its grip. Today's political situation demands the revitalization of social movements, and new organizing to spur the majority antiwar sentiment into action. Building movements that make demands is the best way to strengthen the voices of workers, women, queers, young people and people of color. Campaign after campaign, the Democrats make promises that prove empty. Progressives have nowhere to go in the two-party system.

Especially during an election year, standing firm – and in the streets – on social justice and antiwar principles remains critical.

Independent Political Action

However, even strong social movements, by themselves, have difficulty cementing their victories without a political voice. The power of the labor, civil rights, and women's movements has been chipped away because their leaders' strategy puts them in alliance with the very forces they fight against every day. Democrats in leadership sabotage the movements they claim to embrace.

Activists in Solidarity, along with many others, believe that the patient work of building a grassroots political party, based in neighborhoods and work- places, will lead to greater democracy and better lives for everyone marginal- ized by corporate interests.

Today the Green Party presidential campaign of Cynthia McKinney and Rosa Clemente offers a historic opportunity to vote against war abroad, and against racism and exploitation at home. The Green Party faces challenges to becoming the independent party we envision – but it has a national membership and visionary political platform of social and ecological justice that represent the future we hope to build. Beginning this work is today's imperative.



Cynthia McKinney and Rosa Clemente are the Green Party's candidates for the 2008 election – the first presidential ticket in U.S. history that is all women and all people of color.

During her twelve years in congress, presidential candidate **Cynthia McKinney** fought to preserve voting rights and civil liberties, opposed the Iraq War and demanded the Bush administration's impeachment. McKinney has worked for immigrant rights and publicized the government's failure to rebuild the Gulf Coast after Katrina. After seeing her efforts undermined by Democratic leaders, McKinney left the Democratic Party and became a Green.

Vice Presidential candidate **Rosa Clemente**, an independent journalist and community activist, is a Puerto Rican of African descent. She helped found the Hip-Hop Political Convention in 2003 to give a political voice to the hip-hop generation. A delegate to the 2001 UN Conference on Racism and Xenophobia, Clemente has spoken extensively on hip-hop activism, femi- nism, and the history of national liberation movements.

Their platform calls for single-payer health care, a living wage, fair trade not corporate globalization, sustainable energy and transportation programs, a cut in the military budget, money for education, not banks or profit-making prisons! Bring the troops home now!

This brochure is produced by Solidarity, a socialist, feminist and anti-racist organization. To learn more about Solidarity and how to get involved, visit our website at www.solidarity-us.org.

We are supporters of the McKinney/Clemente campaign; however, this brochure is not issued by them. You can find their platform and literature at www.votetruth08.com.