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**Let Justice Roll Down Like Waters: Cynthia McKinney Carries the Cross
Student Writers' Corner**

By Tolu Olorunda

BlackCommentator.com Student Guest Commentator

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With the recent victory of Cynthia McKinney in last Saturday's Green Party Presidential Race, it is imperative to draw a line in the sand and determine the symbolism of the moment - as two women of culture headline the progressive agendas of a semi-major political party - and extrapolate whatever elements can be harnessed to further our fight for community-control. As expected Cynthia McKinney glowed with elegance and stature, while evoking Sojourner Truth's landmark 1851 "[Ain't I a Woman](#)" address in acceptance of the Green Party Nomination. Speaking with the rigor built over a concerted amount of time - filled with struggle, pain, joy, loss and victory - she roared; *"When I got to Washington, I saw that public policy is really made in a room at a table... At the table; one seat is for the Democrats, one seat is for the Republicans. Now, we don't know who did it, but one of them put a lock on the door, and slipped a key to the corporate lobbyists, who can come and go at will, and whisper what they want to democrats and republicans. And the result is that we the people who pay for those seats and determine who seats in them want one thing. But because the corporate lobbyists can come and go at will, our values get overwritten, and our representatives give us something else... That's how we end up with everyone saying they are against illegal spying on innocent people, yet end up with the Telecom*

Immunity Bill (FISA) being signed into law. That's how we end up with everyone saying they're in favor of universal access to healthcare, and no one's supporting the positions' nurses and healthcare providers really want – and that's a single healthcare payment in this country."

On July 9th, when Rosa Clemente was tapped and unanimously accepted as Cynthia McKinney's V.P., all the right elements of an impending revolution seemed to gather together for deliberation. Rosa Clemente is a [veteran journalist](#) and seasoned-activist who has led [campaigns against Radio Station, Hot 97](#) and [The New Orleans Police Department](#). Speaking with masterful-eloquence and poignancy – on July 12th – at the Green Party Convention, Clemente stated; *"We are not fighting for the right to a just-vote; we are fighting for the right to a just-life. The government of America has perpetrated wars not only abroad, but here at home: War on drugs; War on youth; War on those who fight for freedom... The Hip-Hop duo, Dead Prez, in their album "Let's Get Free" says, "Telling lies to our vision/ Telling lies to our children/ Telling lies to our babies/ Only truth can save us - You can't fool all of the people all of the time/ But if you fool the right ones then the rest will fall behind/ Tell me who's got control of your mind and your world view/ Is it the news or the movie you're taking your girl to?" Those prophetic words uttered over 8 years ago still ring true today. Posts 9/11, the majority of the American people have been living under a blanket of lies and fears. As a youth, particularly as a youth of color, we must tell the truth. We must be the ones not fooled; we must be the torch bearers of truth."*

With such an August team of progressives, it is unequivocally clear that Sen. Obama must reassess some of the public-policy stances he has drawn a slew of leftist-heat from. One of which, is the issue of the Obama campaign's unsuccessful effort in preventing media-outlets and political-rivals from fabricating untruths about his background. In an effort to purge himself of any Islamic ties – and inversely set the record straight – Barack Obama has subconsciously licensed the defamation of Muslims by TV-Journalists and media-personalities. In February 2008, while being interviewed by a correspondent for the highly influential Israeli Newspaper, *Yediot Aharonot*, Obama in a vehement-tone stated, *"I am not a Muslim and I never have been. I never studied at a Madrassa and I have never sworn on the Koran. I am committed to Christianity. For four years I lived in Indonesia as a child and I studied at a secular school. When I am sworn in, I do it on a Bible that belongs to my family."* With subsequent affirmation of this exact-sentiment, Obama has sadly provided a distorted and unilateral viewpoint of what Islam represents.

Adding flame to that already fuming fire, Rep. Keith Ellison – an Obama supporter – [reported of an incident](#) where he had opted to speak in favor of the Senator at a mosque, but was subsequently halted by the Obama campaign. Senator Obama has unfortunately abandoned the qualities that endeared numerous enthusiasts at the incipient of his campaign run: Statesmanship. Renowned scholar and Obama-supporter, Cornel West, in an appearance on the "Al Jazeera English" talk show, Riz Khan, warned against any accommodation of Islamic-bashing by the Illinois Senator. He spoke saying, *"If in fact he makes any xenophobic move towards downplaying the humanity of Muslims or Islamic brothers and sisters, he must be criticized like any other president."* This criticism is one which I am yet to observe. While the majority of the blame should be levied against Senator Obama, it does appear rather amusing, that the exact same neo-liberal white kids who have embraced the humor and brilliance of Black-Muslims such as Dave Chappelle, Muhammad Ali and even Malcolm X, find it uneasy to vote for a candidate who is of Islamic ancestry.

With an approximately 7 million Islamic residents in the U.S., – and 24% of that being

Black – Senator Obama must be made aware of this insinuated-dismissal of nearly 2 million people who look like him. There is no doubt that the Illinois Senator must do more, if indeed victory will be attained in November.

In addition to that, Senator Obama is also taking the risky task of presuming an automatic African-American embrace of his candidacy. A few weeks ago, Brown University professor, Glenn Loury, was featured on PBS's Bill Moyers Journal. He spoke against the disproportionate yet flexible support Barack Obama has received from within the black community. With regards to blacks who we're voting for Obama "in 90 percent levels," he said *"I don't know that they recognize that they're voting for the end of race as we've known it in the country... They're caught up in the emotion of a black guy running for President. It's the first chance to support him without perhaps thinking through all the implications of what that might mean."* Those implications, if thought through, will undoubtedly have an impact on the support from the black-voters who have loyally stood by him for the last 4 months. Barack Obama has also consistently remonstrated against the ideology of race being a significant factor in the policies of this society. For many Black Americans, such rhetoric is a threat to their very existence and significance. With the recent controversy surrounding Rev. Jesse Jackson's apprehension towards a perceived Obama condescension vis-à-vis Black people, Sen. Obama's campaign must take seriously the threat of being deprived the Black vote - by the very much comforting and convincing Cynthia McKinney.

In 2000, when Ralph Nader stormed the political world - with his gospel of consumer advocacy - and garnered 2.8 million votes, which would have otherwise redounded in favor of Al Gore, it became clear that the overt "corporatization" of the Republican Party and the covert corporatization of the Democratic Party had turned some Two-Party members off. It will behoove Senator Obama to be both prepared and planned for the grand whirlwind of activists who are willing to fight for every single vote which can be accredited to their struggle for justice - in matters of healthcare, national security, education and culture. Furthermore, with Cynthia McKinney's long record of progressivism, coupled with Rosa Clemente's history of social-activism, Senator Obama would have a hard time assuring his recently infuriated supporters to stick by his side.

Senator Obama's candidacy, when juxtaposed with that of Cynthia McKinney's 2004 Congressional run, reveals a troubling truth. While being accused of aiding and abetting "known terrorist organizations," she never once wavered from the course of truth-telling. She remained relentless in her fight against corporations and the political products they had conceived. In the midst of vehement right-wing assault, she stood her ground and remained firmly rooted. Having been vilified and vitriolically-defined as "Jihad Cindy," and "the cutest little Islamic jihadist in Congress" by Conservative talk-show host, Neal Boortz, she remained focused more than ever. In an attempt to derail her candidacy, the Republican Party took much pride in falsely-indicting her of being a terrorist-sympathizer - for receiving financial contributions from Arab and Muslim supporters.

One of such 'documented-terrorists' would be Sacramento-Kings forward, Shareef Abdur-Rahim. When questioned in a debate by her then-fellow democratic contender, Denise Majette, she replied saying, *"we don't racially profile our contributors; all of our campaign contributions are legal."* This act of unmitigated candor is one which the Democratic Presidential Nominee might want to review and furthermore incorporate. With the presidential-election still a long way ahead, it is unclear how different the end-result will be; nevertheless, it is incumbent upon us to be fully aware of not just who we're voting for, but what we're voting for. In the words of Cynthia McKinney, *"Politics is the authoritative allocation of values in a society; Politics is about values"*

being reflected in public policy; it is about having power over public policy; and we engage in the political process because we want our values reflected in public policy."

BlackCommentator.com Guest Student Commentator, Tolu Olorunda, is an 18-year-old local activist/writer and a Nigerian immigrant. Click [here](#) to reach Tolu Olorunda.

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