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**What Are We Going To Do?
A Post-Election Agenda for Activists
Think Piece**

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This is a call for Post-Election Forums by the activists in our communities around the country. This Presidential Campaign has presented an opportunity for activist work that is almost unprecedented in recent decades. We have an opportunity to set our own agenda.

This campaign has activated huge numbers of people of all ages (and all races), like never before. We can't stop now. It is not over on Election Day, in fact, it is when the real work begins.

Howard Dean, in 2004, showed what could be done with that energy of those coming of age and awareness of their place in society - but it was a narrowly defined constituency.

Barack Obama's candidacy fulfilled the promise of Dean, by appealing to a much wider audience. The energy unleashed by Obama had legs; it stayed up through the nomination, and no matter what happens on Election Day, it will be an historic occasion.

But the next day, the real work begins. It is up to us to decide what the agenda of the country is going to look like. So this is a call to all of our communities to gather your activists and write your agendas.

A group of activists in New York are convening a post-election forum the first Saturday after Election Day, on November 8th. There will be three panels assessing the impact of the election on our communities: state/local; national and international. But the point of the forum is to come out with action-steps. To that end we have scheduled a follow-up meeting for the following Saturday. We don't want to meet and then stop.

One of the purposes of the forum is to gather people who would be interested in working on a platform for a People's Convention in Summer 2009. We will be building a platform to be presented to the candidates running for city-wide, borough-wide, and local offices. The 2009 election cycle in New York City includes the Mayor, 36 of 51 City Council seats; as well as Comptroller, Public Advocate, etc.

It is time we focused on the real needs of our communities, and one of the real needs is a sense of empowerment, a sense that Yes We Can! We don't want to wait around to see what others do and then react. We want to decide what is going to be decided.

It is time we did more than complain; more than march, more than protest; more than be mad. It is time we don't get caught up in irrelevant issues like who slept with whom (unless it really is relevant), and where they went to church.

Most of the issues affecting the African-American communities are the same or similar: housing; criminal injustice; social services, health care, etc. It would be great if there were other forums - that we could connect - that we could make a national agenda.


What do you say?


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