

# “What about the black community?”



# Obama Exposed

**African People's Solidarity Committee**  
[www.UhuruSolidarity.org](http://www.UhuruSolidarity.org)

## What about the black community? Obama's "post-racial America" is very far from reality

by PENNY HESS, African People's Solidarity Committee

When Diop Olugbala, along with others from the Uhuru Movement, protested Barack Obama at a town hall meeting in St. Petersburg, FL on August 1, 2008, the movement's bold challenge was heard around the world.

“What about the black community?” is rapidly becoming the new mantra, targeting not just Obama but all the candidates large and small who are vying to lead the United States of America.

While Obama counts much of the African community in this country among his most enthusiastic supporters he has had no problem avoiding the pressing issues and ever-worsening conditions facing African people in America today.



**Javon Dawson, murdered  
by St. Pete, FL police**

during a graduation party.

Instead of standing with African people, Obama has taken every opportunity to use his campaign to attack them. These attacks include his disowning of Rev. Jeremiah Wright as his pastor and his Father's Day presentation slamming black men with children.

Behind his slogans for “hope and change” Obama represents the forefront of imperialism's strategy for neocolonialism, defined by the Uhuru Movement as “white power in black face.” In the U.S. and around the world African and oppressed representatives are hand picked by imperialist powers to carry out their bidding.

Obama's campaign is portrayed as "populist," representing the interests of "Main Street" America. But as an August 6, 2008 *New York Times* article revealed, a third of Obama's \$340 million raised for his campaign so far has come from donations of \$1,000 or over. Obama has more than 500 "bundlers," professional fundraisers, most of whom are lobbyists for big corporations.

After 8 years representing the 13th District of Chicago, the most impoverished area of the city, living conditions there are reportedly far worse for black people than before. Obama's district was home to the infamous Jon Burge, the Chicago police captain exposed for torturing African men, women and children for more than 20 years. Obama has yet to denounce Burge.



**Poverty in Obama's old Chicago district**

This country is built on the enslavement of African people, along with the genocide of the Indigenous people and theft of their land. The oppression of African people, as well as the theft of the labor, land and resources of oppressed peoples around the world, make up the economic and political pedestal on which the white population of America and Europe sit.

The history of slavery, genocide and colonialism does not just go away or morph into a "post-racial America." This history is the basis for every contradiction festering in this country today, from the reality of two Americas – systemic poverty of African communities in the face of U.S. prosperity – to the fact that more young black men are sent to prison than go to college.

Some of us in the white population are beginning to feel pangs of the current U.S. economic crisis. But no one is talking about the long standing economic devastation of African communities where U.S. government-imposed illegal drugs, foreclosed homes, gentrification, martial law and policies of police containment feed the multi billion dollar prison industry that has fed the failing U.S. economy for the past 35 years.

The Uhuru Movement understands that Africans are one people inside this country and around the world. The movement is working for the

liberation of Africa and all its resources as the birthright of every African person anywhere in the world. This is only just.



**African people worldwide are struggling for self-determination**

The crisis of imperialism is deepening daily because of the resistance of African and oppressed peoples worldwide who are fighting to regain control of their resources, land and self-determination. They are determined to feed their children and build a future for themselves.

It has never been more obvious that the white world is in a crisis because it cannot function without oil, minerals and resources commandeered from others. Today the capitalist legacy of slavery, genocide and colonial extraction that fueled our world for hundreds of years is collapsing.

In the Uhuru Solidarity Movement, we are white people who believe that the future of the planet and the well-being of all peoples will be found in the movement to answer the question, "What about the black community?"

To really bring about hope and change we have to organize under the leadership of African workers struggling for liberation and justice. They are the ones transforming and changing the world from the ground up. Join us – be part of creating a future that all people can believe in.

Uhuru!



Penny Hess is Chairwoman of the African People's Solidarity Committee and author of *All Diamonds are Blood Diamonds* and *Overturning the Culture of Violence*. She also writes at [UhuruSolidarity.blogspot.com](http://UhuruSolidarity.blogspot.com)

# Obama fact sheet

## Obama's political advisors

*Warmongers who violate the sovereignty of nations*

**Zbigniew Brzezinski:** Obama's main political advisor; imperialist warmonger; National Security Advisor under President Carter; founder of the Trilateral Commission; orchestrated the war against the progressive government in Afghanistan in 1970s and created the modern Jihad; author of the chilling National Security Council Memo 46 which aims to prevent the unity of African people in Africa and the African community in the U.S., calls for deepening social divisions in the African community and continues the 1960s COINTELPRO attack on the African Liberation Movement.

**Anthony Lake:** Obama's Foreign Policy advisor; National Security Advisor under President Clinton; Nominated by Clinton for head of CIA; Orchestrated Clinton's invasion of Haiti; brought Haiti's President Aristide back to Haiti chained to IMF/World Bank policies, forcing him to be isolated from the movement of the people.

**Susan Rice:** Obama's Africa Advisor; Clinton administration Africa specialist; headed up covert military logistical aid to neocolonial forces fighting against Congo's Laurent Kabila and probably instigated his assassination; strong advocate for the Aug. 20, 1998 U.S. bombing of the pharmaceutical plant in Sudan.

## Obama's financial advisors and staff

**Austan Goolsbee:** Obama's Economic Advisor; Professor at the University of Chicago's conservative business school; ideologue of "free trade" policies; supports NAFTA and other free trade agreements which deeply impoverish farmers and producers in colonized countries; in a 2007 New York Times opinion piece he disputed whether "subprime lending was the leading cause of foreclosure problems," and defended the targeting of African and Latino homeowners for subprime, stating "the existence and spread of subprime lending helps explain the drastic growth of homeownership for these same groups."

**Jason Furman:** Obama Economic Policy Director; centrist; supporter of free trade; supporter of Wal-Mart; protégé of Wall Street insider, Citibank head and Clinton's Secretary of the Treasury, Robert Rubin; considered to be an assurance to Wall Street that an Obama presidency will be subservient to the interests of the big banks.

**Penny Pritzker:** Obama's Finance Chair; heir to Hyatt Hotel fortune; one of the key bankers who designed, packaged and launched the sub-prime mortgage to Wall Street investment bank Merrill Lynch; she convinced people who had fixed mortgages to convert to subprime; Pritzker's Superior Bank defaulted in 2001 due to subprime investment and shady practices; bank customers lost all their money while the Pritzker family walked away with millions of dollars.

## Obama's financial backers

- One third of Obama's record breaking contributions of nearly \$400 million have come from donations of \$1,000 or more—a total of \$112 million, more than McCain or Hillary Clinton.
- Obama has more than 500 "bundlers," professional fundraisers and lobbyists who each collected a minimum of \$50,000.
- Two thirds of Obama's bundlers come from law, securities and investments, real estate and entertainment.
- At least 100 Obama bundlers are top executives or brokers from investment firms; nearly two dozen work for Wall Street giants like Lehman Brothers, Goldman Sachs or Citigroups; about 40 others come from the real estate industry.
- Obama gets more donations from Wall Street than any other candidate in the 08 campaign.

## Obama in Chicago

*Conditions in the African community worsen under his watch*

- Obama's 13th District is the most impoverished African community in Chicago. During Obama's 8 years of representing District 13 poverty, foreclosures, police brutality and unemployment have increased.

- Burge was finally fired but Obama never denounced him.
- City of Chicago paid out \$51 million in 2007 alone in police brutality settlements. The 13th District is the home of police captain Jon Burge accused of torture over a 20 year span of more than 200 African men, women and children. Torture included electric shocks to their genitals.

## Obama Positions

### *No hope or change*

- Says he is “against the Iraq war,” but voted for every Bush war funding increase.
- Would “bomb Pakistan” and “withdraw from Iraq and redeploy to Afghanistan.”
- Supports border wall against Mexico.
- Came out against reparations to the African community.
- Has said the least of all candidates about the sub-prime/foreclosure crisis especially as it has affected the African community.
- Stated to Israeli lobby that he would do anything to help Israel and denounced the struggle of the Palestinian people.



**Obama addresses the  
2008 American Israel  
Public Affairs Committee  
(AIPAC) Policy  
Conference**

- Used Father’s Day to make a virulent attack on African fathers.
- Upheld New York’s acquittal of the killer cops in the case of Sean Bell, an unarmed African man murdered by police with more than 50 bullets.

*“The judge has made his ruling and we are a nation of laws and so we respect the verdict that came down.”*

- Promised to continue the U.S. embargo against Cuba.

# Two Americas!

## Conditions in the African community in the U.S.

### Health Disparities

- More than 54 percent of HIV/AIDS cases diagnosed in 2002 were among African people, who are 10 times more likely to die of the disease than white people.
- Life expectancy for African men is 62.9 years – more than six years less than white men.
- African infant mortality in the U.S. is 2.5 times higher than for white babies: 13.6 per 1000 births vs 5.7 per 1000 for whites.
- The African infant mortality rate in Washington DC is more than twice as high as in Beijing, China.
- An African male child born in Washington DC has less of a chance of surviving to his first birthday than a child born in parts of India.
- An African male child in the U.S. is twice as likely as a white child to die before reaching the age of 20.
- 41 percent of African children are hungry.

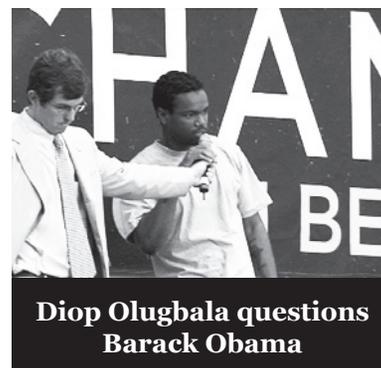
### Impact of prison, unemployment, colonialism

- More than half of the 5.6 million African boys live in fatherless households, 40 percent of which are impoverished.
- More black men earn their high school equivalency diplomas in prison each year than graduate from college.
- African men are incarcerated at rates 8 times higher than white men.
- One in every 100 adults in America is now behind bars.
- One in 8 black men in their 20s are in prison or jail on any given day.

- Nearly 5,000 per 100,000 black men are in prison vs. 736 per 100,000 for white men.
- 72 percent of drug users are white yet Africans constitute 36.8 percent of all those arrested for drug violations, over 42 percent of those in federal prisons for drug violations and 58 percent of those in state prisons for drug felonies.
- White people are less likely than African people to be sent to prison. 33 percent of convicted white defendants received a prison sentence, while 51 percent of African defendants went to prison.
- 13 percent of African men of voting age in 2000 are disenfranchised because of felony convictions—1.4 million African men.
- One in four African men has not worked for at least a year, twice the proportion of white males and Latinos.
- 2008 true unemployment rates for “inner-city” teenagers: Washington DC: 86 percent; Chicago: 85 percent; Detroit and New York: 82 percent.
- Wall Street bankers and predatory lenders consciously targeted the African and Mexican communities for risky, high-cost subprime mortgages. By using these mortgages as security bonds to reinvest in the world banking system, bankers made trillions of dollars. Instead of strategies to uplift the African community out of deep poverty they lured African workers into expensive loans even if they could afford fixed rate loans. Now African people are losing their homes by the millions. As white bankers lose money they are being bailed out by the Federal Reserve Bank, the government and by taxpayers to maintain their lifestyle.
- Total loss of wealth through subprime mortgage scam for African and Latino community up to \$213 billion—greatest loss of wealth for “non-white people” in modern U.S. history.
- Prior to subprime crisis it would take African people in U.S. 594 years to achieve economic parity with white people. The current crisis would extend that to 5,423 years!
- The average African family earns just 60 percent of the average white family.
- Median net worth of average African household is about \$6,000. The average white household has 14 times as much wealth—more than \$88,000.

# Why We Challenged Barack Obama

by DIOP OLUGBALA, International Organizer  
International People’s Democratic Uhuru Movement (InPDUM)



On Friday, August 1st, 2008 I led a contingent of the Uhuru Movement into Barack Obama’s town hall meeting in St. Petersburg, Florida to raise the question, “what about the black community, Obama?” Without the benefit of a big media budget, our organization attempted to bring the serious issues experienced by African working class people across this country into the national political debate.

These issues include the targeting of African and Latino communities with predatory “sub-prime” mortgages – a scheme that has made millions for people like Obama’s chief financial advisor Penny Pritzker, while stripping black families of billions of dollars – the greatest loss of wealth our community has suffered since being brought in chains to this country. We also challenged Obama to take a stand against the police shootings of unarmed African people, and explain why he has publicly defended the judge’s acquittal of the NYC police who murdered Sean Bell.

Obama has said that he cannot speak out on behalf of those who have been historically oppressed for fear of offending other people. Yet in Miami, he promised the Jewish community, which considers itself a historically oppressed community, that he supports turning all of Jerusalem over to Israeli control, despite the internationally enforced sharing of that city with the Palestinians. When Obama speaks to black audiences, he attacks us, attributing our community’s poverty not to systemic oppression, but to bad culture and lack of work ethic.

Barack Obama has criticized African fathers for abandoning our children,

although a recent study showed that black fathers stay more involved with their children after a split from the mother than white fathers. And Obama says nothing of the unjust imprisonment of 1 in 9 black men of child-bearing age, the overwhelming majority of whom are locked up on minor drug or other non-violent economic violations stemming from conditions of desperate poverty. He has failed to achieve any meaningful program of economic development for the African community. In speaking to a group of black legislators, Obama said “a good economic development plan for our community would be if we make sure folks weren’t throwing their garbage out of their cars.”

Barack Obama wants to increase military spending and praised Clinton for abolishing AFDC and welfare. He has reversed his position opposing the death penalty and speaks out against reparations. He wants to escalate the U.S. military presence in Afghanistan and has threatened Venezuela and Iran with military aggression. He has upheld the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA), supporting wire-tapping and government spying on citizens. He receives unprecedented financial backing from Wall Street. His close advisors and potential cabinet members include war criminal Richard Clarke, Trilateral commission founder Zbigniew Brzezinski, Madeleine ‘it’s worth the price of 1 million dead Iraqi children’ Albright, and Free Trade advocates Jason Furman and Austan Goolsbee.

Some argue that we must support Obama or else we are supporting McCain. We in the Uhuru Movement don’t believe our community should restrict its political options to a choice between one white ruling class party or another. In fact, the black community’s most recent experiences in the U.S. electoral arena have resulted not only in the Republican Party’s theft of our votes. Prior to that we suffered some of the worst attacks on our community at the hands of the Democratic Party administration of William Jefferson Clinton, who put 100,000 more police on our streets to murder our people, privatized the prisons to exploit our unpaid labor, and discontinued the public subsidies for impoverished children and families that had been won by African people as a concession to our movement of the 1960s.



**Bill Clinton put 100,000 more police on the street**

African people’s experiences with these last several elections and the desperate conditions facing our community have created a willingness by our people to seek independent political alternatives. In response to this crisis, the white rulers put forward Barack Obama – a pied piper taking African people back into the clutches of the Democratic Party.

If anyone looks seriously at the positions, programs and advisors of Barack Obama, they will see that he does not stand for any kind of real change, but for the defense of the same old status quo, with a new face. America is in an economic crisis and the white ruling class hopes to save itself by deepening the exploitation of African people in the U.S. and on the continent of Africa, where the world’s biggest reserves of oil and precious minerals lie. How better to do it than with an African face at the head of state?

Our success as a people requires that we achieve our own independent political agenda. African people’s votes should be contingent on the willingness of a candidate to support and fight for that agenda. The International People’s Democratic Uhuru Movement has invited Barack Obama, John McCain and Cynthia McKinney to attend our annual convention on September 27-28 in St. Petersburg, Florida to clarify their position on the question, “what about the black community?” Based on their response, we will consider endorsement of a U.S. presidential candidate.

Diop Olugbala is the International Organizer for the International People’s Democratic Uhuru Movement (InPDUM), [www.inpdum.org](http://www.inpdum.org).

## **Get Involved! Vote Uhuru in 2008!**

Come to the Convention of the  
International People’s  
Democratic Uhuru Movement  
Sat-Sun, September 27-28, 2008  
St. Petersburg, Florida

For more info on building solidarity  
with the Uhuru Movement, contact the  
African People’s Solidarity Committee  
[www.UhuruSolidarity.org](http://www.UhuruSolidarity.org)