

# THE US PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION 2008 – Part 2

Judy Waters Pasqualge

This article is the second in a series that began in the last issue of *Polity* (March-April 2008). The first article mainly focused on the primaries held up to and including the one in Wyoming on 8 March; with John McCain already the Republican Party (RP) nominee, Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton were neck-and-neck in the race to win nomination as the Democratic Party (DP) candidate. The remaining primaries, up until 3 June, will be dealt with first, with in addition a brief look at three special elections held to fill vacant seats in the US House of Representatives, and at a significant example of political hardball – the RP role in the resignation of New York State Governor Eliot Spitzer. By early March it was clear that neither Obama nor Clinton would obtain the number of delegates required to win nomination by early June; rather, the choice of DP superdelegates would be crucial. A look at the superdelegate system may clear up a few common questions. With Clinton facing a challenge her campaign did not expect, more details will then be given on the (smear) tactics used in the attempt to stop Obama, and on more general views regarding her campaign. Some of the reactions in the feminist movement are included. Following this is a run-down of the key politico and/or superdelegate endorsements and/or switches that led to Obama's win on 7 June. Finally, a brief look at the McCain campaign will be given.

## The Primaries

After Obama's win in the Wyoming primary, the candidates' estimated delegate counts showed (with 2,026 needed for nomination): Obama 1,368; Clinton 1,226. Of the 796 DP superdelegates, about 450 had declared their choice: Obama 210; Clinton 242.<sup>1</sup>

**Mississippi** (11 March): with blacks constituting half of voters, and many whites voting Republican, a heavy black turnout could mean a DP win in November. Obama (61%), Clinton (37%); Obama won 90% of blacks, Clinton 72% of whites.<sup>2</sup> See below for events in the six primary-free weeks before Pennsylvania.

**Pennsylvania** (22 April): most delegates among remaining states (188) and an expected Clinton win; significant populations (blacks 10.7%, Hispanics 4%, in household of union member 15%); many lower-income, white areas; big urban areas (Philadelphia, Harrisburg); Clinton (55%), Obama (45%). Clinton strong with union, lower income, without college, seniors, white women, Catholics; Obama in cities, independents, youth.<sup>3</sup>

**Guam** (3 May): Of 4,521 voters, Obama won 7 more than Clinton.

**Indiana, North Carolina** (6 May): polls showing heavy Clinton win in Indiana and closing fast in North Carolina were wrong. Indiana: 80% of voters white, economy by far the #1 issue; Clinton (50.5%), Obama (49.5%). North Carolina: 1/3 of voters black, many whites for RP; Obama (56%), Clinton (41%).<sup>4</sup>

**West Virginia** (13 May): 95% non-Hispanic white, lower average income and education levels, no big urban area: Clinton (67%), Obama (26%).<sup>5</sup>

**Kentucky, Oregon** (20 May): expected results. Kentucky: 7.5% black, 2/3 without college; Clinton (66%), Obama (30%). Oregon: more liberal, + college grads, higher income; Obama (58%), Clinton (41%).<sup>6</sup>

**Puerto Rico** (1 June): Clinton (68%), Obama (32%).

**Montana, South Dakota** (3 June): both about 8% Native American. Montana: Obama (56%), Clinton (41%). South Dakota: Clinton (55%), Obama (45%). White vote: Obama won men in Montana, split it in South Dakota; Clinton won women in South Dakota, split in Montana.<sup>7</sup>

## Special House Elections

With the DP controlling the House, the special elections in Illinois, Louisiana and Mississippi – to fill formerly RP-held seats – were widely seen as important indicators of RP appeal; all three seats are up for election again in November. On 8



March voters in the Illinois 14th District elected Democrat Bill Foster (52-48%). The district had been held by former House Speaker Dennis Hastert (resigned in November 2007), and Bush won it with 55% in 2004. Big issues were the Iraq war and the economy. Obama endorsed Foster; opponent Jim Oberweis portrayed Foster as an Obama supporter in favour of higher taxes. Foster won in Hastert's own county (61% for Bush in 2004). On 3 May Democrat Don Cazuyoux beat Woody Jenkins for a Louisiana seat held by Republicans since 1974 (49-46%). The RP again stressed the Obama connection, with the DP as pro-big government and higher taxes. Finally, on 13 May Mississippi held an election to fill the seat of Roger Wilker (RP, now in Senate, filling seat of Trent Lott who resigned in December 2007). Wilker had won the House seat in 2006 with 66%; conservative DP candidate Travis Childers won 54-46%. The balance in the US House: Democrats 236-199.<sup>1</sup>

### *The Fall of Eliot Spitzer*

In early March New York Governor and former state attorney general Eliot Spitzer was forced to resign when news of his ties to a VIP prostitution ring came to light. Apparently Spitzer had paid for such services by wire transfer, with the federal government then investigating. It was soon discovered that in 2006 Wayne Berman (a lobbyist and McCain campaign national finance co-chair) had authorized a \$2.2 million investigation, paid for by a group that included targets of Spitzer when he was attorney general. Republican operative Roger Stone passed the information on to the FBI. Stone and Berman are former partners in the consulting firm Black, Manafort, Stone & Kelly, among whose clients were Ferdinand Marcos, Jonas Savimbi, US Sugar, Phillip Morris and Donald Trump.<sup>2</sup>

### **Why Superdelegates?**

As mentioned in the previous article, the DP superdelegates, who are free to vote for any candidate, are elected officials at national and state levels, members of the Democratic National Committee (DNC), and certain party high-ups such as former presidents, etc. The reader should turn to [thegreenpapers.com](http://thegreenpapers.com) for detailed information on many aspects of state and national electoral systems.<sup>3</sup> It may be hard to believe, but forty years ago most states did not hold party primaries, and convention delegates were chosen by state influentials within each party. The 1968 Democratic Convention in Chicago is famous for the accompanying street demonstrations and police confrontations, especially around

the issue of the Vietnam War. Inside the convention hall, it was clear that many state delegations did not reflect public opinion, nor racial breakdowns—especially blacks in the South. The DP passed rules to work for a more participatory system, leading to the McGovern-Fraser reforms in 1972. These reforms introduced proportional representation and more primaries; by 1976, 30 states held primaries. In 1980 the DP added as delegates local party leaders and elected officials, if they would commit to a candidate during the primary season. That year, the process worked to renominate Jimmy Carter, even though the party platform reflected the much more liberal views of the Ted Kennedy faction. For 1984, the DP added governors, senators, congressmen, DNC members and party leaders, as free agents, making up about 20% of delegates. At that year's convention, the superdelegates turned the nomination to Walter Mondale, over Gary Hart, even though Hart had won more primaries. In the next election years, one candidate had enough of a lead to win without superdelegates (1988 Dukakis, 1992/96 Clinton, 2000 Gore, 2004 Kerry). As noted by one commentator, the superdelegate issue is complex, with individuals operating for a variety of reasons: what is good for the delegate, or for the state, for a congressional district, for the DP, for a November win, etc.<sup>4</sup> One thing for sure, in 2008 the superdelegates were in a tough position in the choice between Clinton and Obama, and their connections and actions were monitored as never before: anonymity disappeared, and, in the face of Obama's many wins, a vote for party favourite Clinton could have drastic consequences (see below). It would be necessary for Clinton to somehow show decisively why she deserved the nomination, and try she did.

### **The Fight Against Obama**

In an article worth reading, Ari Berman gives some background on the campaigns to smear Barack Obama.<sup>5</sup> Obama's images as being a Muslim, Arab loving, Israel hating, radical, not patriotic, and a tool of Louis Farrakhan developed over a period of time, sometimes originating on the far right and then being picked up by more mainstream media and the Clinton campaign. The Muslim label, for example, was started in 2006 by a conservative blogger, and was picked up by the *Washington Times* and the Christian right. The anti-Israel image was promoted by Ed Lasky at [americanthinker.com](http://americanthinker.com), was picked up by the Jewish press, and then circulated by Clinton campaign members, and then made it to National Public Radio and *The New York Times*. The characterization of the church



Obama attended as 'black supremacist' made its way from the right-wing WorldNetDaily to Fox TV. Bill Clinton added his word regarding Obama's patriotism, commenting in March that a Clinton/McCain contest would be between two people who loved their country.<sup>13</sup> The Clinton campaign's distribution of far-right materials says more about her than anyone else; and, indeed, of interest during this campaign has been the support for Clinton by such people as Patrick Buchanan (of the *National Review* and *Boston Herald*) and Richard Mellon Scaife (*Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*, who also gives to the (Bill) Clinton Global Initiative).<sup>14</sup>

As Obama added up primary wins in early 2008, attackers then tried to tarnish him twice via guilt by association, and once via a charge of being uppity. In March all the news was of the pastor at Obama's Chicago church, Jeremiah Wright. Wright was on tape as criticizing the US for treatment of its minorities, and for saying after 9.11 that the 'chickens had come home to roost.' Wright, in the Congregational Church tradition, and in the tradition of black liberation theology, was forced to resign as an advisor to the Obama campaign. A few days later Obama delivered a long speech in Philadelphia on race.<sup>15</sup> Obama was also tied to the illegal '60s group, the Weather Underground. Former group members Bill Ayers and Bernadine Dorn, now Chicago activists, for a time served on the board of the Woods Fund in Chicago, as did Obama.<sup>16</sup> Finally, in April Obama made a comment that the working class in the US was bitter because of economic circumstances, and thus clung to guns and religion, and could be anti-immigrant. Clinton jumped on the comment to label Obama as elitist and divisive,<sup>17</sup> unfortunately a characterization that was also true of herself. All these issues were the main topic of the televised Clinton/Obama debate six days before the Pennsylvania primary, for which network ABC was much criticized.<sup>18</sup>

As seen in the previous article, early in the year the Clinton campaign also played the race card continually. Another example of this occurred in mid-March, when Geraldine Ferraro (former House member from New York, 1984 vice-presidential candidate, and on Clinton's finance committee) stated that if Obama were white or a woman, he would not be in his dominant position. Ferraro was forced to resign, and Clinton repudiated her remarks and apologized to blacks. Ferraro then said she had been attacked because she was white, that she was a victim. In a good article by Gary Younge, it is noted that the label of Obama as privileged belies his primary wins in white states. Younge calls Ferraro's remarks racist, in the same vein as attacks on affirmative action – the insinuation that blacks succeed only because they are black.

He finally notes that Ferraro said the same thing about Jesse Jackson during his campaign run in 1988, just before the New York primary: 'if Jackson was not black he wouldn't be in the race.'<sup>19</sup> In another article, Phil Gasper notes some of the history of use of words and issues that connote racist attacks: law and order (by Nixon); campaigns against Martin Luther King day and for the display of the confederate flag; criticism of welfare programmes and forced bussing; Bill Clinton's criticism of Sister Souljah in 1992 (vs. Jesse Jackson), and in 1996 against welfare programmes. Finally, Gasper describes the double standards facing blacks: activism by whites is positive, but negative if by blacks; whites are assertive, but blacks aggressive; they are resolute while blacks are arrogant, uppity or pushy; candid while blacks are abrasive; and independent while blacks are not team players.<sup>20</sup>

As the Clinton campaign lost its edge over Obama, it increasingly turned to a claim that Clinton had a better chance to beat McCain – the electability issue – until that was really the only issue left to it.<sup>21</sup> Obama being part black was an aspect of this, with his also being too liberal and weak on national security. Obama supposedly had a problem with the working class (the 'Reagan Democrats'), who, it was claimed, would vote for McCain against Obama. As noted by Jonathan Allen, while this may be true regarding some voters, the claim is actually a smear on low income people, and there are many districts that will turn Democratic if the black turnout is high.<sup>22</sup> Bob Herbert wrote that when Clinton said she was favoured by 'hard-working' Americans, she meant white Americans – an insult to both blacks and whites.<sup>23</sup> It was also claimed that Obama would have a problem with Jewish voters. As noted by Ari Berman, however, the supposed black/Jewish 'divide' is the 'wrong' story: Jews are liberal (2-1), although many of their big organizations are not; polls show some 60% as being against McCain; they are 4-1 Democrat; 2/3 think it was wrong to invade Iraq; about 60% oppose action against Iran; and a majority are for a Palestinian state.<sup>24</sup>

In the end, Clinton as candidate may have been mirrored in the type of campaign she ran. Coming in as the DP favourite, her campaign was over-confident; as Bob Benenson puts it, it aimed to "shock-and-awe" by winning early and taking big-delegate states; the race was hers to lose, and she did.<sup>25</sup> Her campaign machine was marked by infighting and resignations – in April of campaign strategist Mark Penn (after meeting with Colombian government officials in connection with his PR firm's work in support of their seeking a free trade agreement with the US); and of an advisor on China affairs, Richard Baum of UCLA, who criticized



Clinton's harsh rhetoric regarding human rights in China and its strong currency, and for punitive trade sanctions.<sup>26</sup> In addition, the campaign gained a reputation for putting off paying its bills.<sup>27</sup> Finally, Clinton's campaign has been contrasted to Obama's, which one commentator has said mastered the nomination process using careful planning and great research of congressional districts.<sup>28</sup> And, Obama won the nomination without Clinton's negatives being rehashed much at all: her possible perjury in an Arkansas savings and loan case (Whitewater); her history of lying, for example regarding her trip to Bosnia; and her affiliation with a conservative and elitist Washington religious fellowship.<sup>29</sup>

In mid-May, as the primary season neared its end, Clinton first raised the issue of the sexism she'd encountered during the campaign. Some women supporters denounced chauvinistic DP leaders and the media. A study of media treatment will surely show appalling references to Clinton. It is a stretch, however, to claim, as does Geraldine Ferraro, that Obama waged a sexist campaign; and a huge fallacy to claim, as is being done, that sexism is worse than racism; Ferraro has even stated that she may vote for McCain. An opposing voice is that of Harvard law professor, Lani Guinier, who thinks Clinton was never just a victim of gender, and, indeed, has benefited by being the wife of Bill Clinton. Another dissenter is Barbara Ehrenreich, who wrote that Clinton has "smashed the myth of innate female moral superiority in the worst way possible – by demonstrating female moral inferiority."<sup>30</sup> In the end, the sense of entitlement – to the presidency itself – demonstrated by Clinton and some 'inside-the-beltway' (Washington) leaders of women's organizations has been on full display, raising doubts about actual objectives.

### Superdelegate Politics

The scramble of the superdelegates has been something to see, illustrating some of the power blocks in the DP. The concerns were real: how would blacks and youth react if the contest was tilted to Clinton – would fewer vote in November? Would the long contest within the DP, even possibly continuing until the convention in August, work to the advantage of McCain? The consequences could cut both ways; if Clinton destroyed the image of Obama, McCain could benefit; on the other hand, Obama now has on-the-ground organizations in every state, ready for the battle with McCain. In March the possibility of an Obama/Clinton ticket was raised, by former three-term New York State Governor Mario Cuomo, and, ironically, by Bill Clinton, too (Obama

as the vice-presidential nominee); one could only wonder what qualified Obama to be vice-president but not president. At any rate, Obama has gotten the nod, and here's how it happened, in rough chronological order.

March: House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (the DP convention chair) said the party would be damaged if the popular vote for Obama was overturned. New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson (former candidate) said that Clinton should drop out if she trailed in the popular and delegate vote. Pennsylvania Rep. Murtha endorsed Clinton. Senator Casey (Pennsylvania) endorsed Obama; Senator Leahy (Vermont) said Clinton should withdraw. Senator Klobuchar (Minnesota) endorsed Obama, but said Clinton should continue. At the end of the month such party leaders as Leahy, Dean (DNC chair), and Senate Majority Leader Reid (Nevada) were discussing how to resolve the race early. Twenty DP financiers who supported Clinton criticized Pelosi, saying that superdelegates could change their minds at the convention. Moveon.org started a petition calling on the superdelegates to follow the popular vote. The open-source superdelegate Transparency Project tracked each delegate on line.

April: Jimmy Carter said that his whole family supports Obama. Jane Fonda for Obama. The governor of Montana and a former Montana senator for Obama. Gore and Carter said to be conferring on how to end the Clinton run. Obama gained a Montana state legislator. At a concert in New York, Elton John endorsed Clinton. A California representative for Clinton. Bruce Springsteen endorsed Obama. An Indiana rep and two North Carolina reps for Obama. A DC councilman for Obama. Robert Reich (secretary of labor under Bill Clinton) for Obama. Former Senators Sam Nunn (Georgia, chair of Armed Services Committee 1987-95) and David Luren (Oklahoma, longest chair of Select Committee on Intelligence) for Obama. That brought the battle up to the Pennsylvania primary on 22 April. After this: Rep. Clyburn (South Carolina, #3 Democrat in House) criticized Bill Clinton. Oklahoma Governor Henry and a Nebraska DNC member for Obama. Rep. Wu (Oregon) for Obama. Two Ohio reps and one from Tennessee for Clinton. North Carolina Governor Easley for Clinton. New Mexico Senator Bingaman for Obama. An Arizona DP official for Obama, and one from New Hampshire for Clinton. Rep. Brady (Pennsylvania) for Obama. Three reps (Indiana, Iowa, California) for Obama. Clinton gained Pennsylvania AFL-CIO official, and DP vice-chair of Puerto Rico.



May: Former DNC chair and Al Gore ally Andrew switched to Obama. Missouri Rep. Skelton for Clinton. After the Indiana and North Carolina primaries, George McGovern endorsed Obama and called on Clinton to withdraw. Rep.s Millér (North Carolina) and Larsen (Washington) for Obama. Obama to Capitol Hill; of the 260+ undecided superdelegates, + were in Congress. Obama gained nine, including: Rep.s Payne (New Jersey), DeFazio (Oregon), Hirono (Hawaii), two California DNC members, a South Carolina DP official, and one each from New Mexico and Virginia. Clinton gained Rep. Carney (Pennsylvania). American Federation of Government Employees for Obama. John Edwards said he voted for Obama in North Carolina. Obama gained one each from Utah and Ohio, two from the Virgin Islands, and Rep. Mitchell (Arizona). Obama passed Clinton in superdelegate tally. Former DNC chair Romer for Obama. Six Edwards' delegates for Obama. Rep.s McDermott (Washington), Waxman and Berman (California), and Communications Workers of America president for Obama. United Steelworkers Union switched from Edwards to Obama. In a *Washington Post* op-ed, former DNC chair Robert Strauss endorsed Obama and called on Clinton to concede.<sup>31</sup> Senator Byrd (West Virginia, longest-serving senator) for Obama. After the Kentucky and Oregon primaries, tally at: Obama 1,961; Clinton 1,779. Rep. Cardoza (California) for Obama. Hawaii DP chair and former Alaska governor Knowles for Obama. Clinton referenced the 1968 assassination of Robert Kennedy with regard to her decision to stay in the race; amid an uproar she apologized. Clinton wrote letter to all superdelegates, pointing to West Virginia and Kentucky wins, and saying she is the best prepared and ahead in states key to a November win.<sup>32</sup> Obama gained Rep. Mollohan (West Virginia) and Texas DP chair Richie. On 31 May the DP Rules and Bylaws Committee agreed to seat + of Michigan and Florida delegates (states earlier disqualified for breaking DP rules); total delegates required increased to 2,118; Obama 2,052, Clinton 1,877.5. Clinton advisor and Rules Committee member Harold Ickes said Clinton can take issue to Credentials Committee at the DP convention.<sup>33</sup>

June: The press publicized support for Obama by John F. Kennedy speech writer Ted Sorenson. After the 3 June primaries, Obama reached required total; Clinton refused to concede. Jimmy Carter endorsed Obama. Rep. Clyburn (most senior black in House) for Obama. Sixty superdelegates to Obama; Clinton lost three. Tally: Obama 2,156.5; Clinton 1,933. Nancy Pelosi said Obama has won. Clinton supporter Rep. Rangle (New York) signaled Clinton to withdraw; the next day the whole New York House delegation for Obama. DP leaders set a 6 June deadline for undecideds. Rep.

Emanuel (Illinois) switched to Obama. Eight senators switched to Obama in a group: Boxer (California), Cardin (Maryland), Harkin (Iowa), one each from Delaware, Louisiana, New Jersey, Colorado and Oregon. On 7 June Clinton conceded.<sup>34</sup> Three hundred of her superdelegates endorsed Obama. On 16 June Al Gore appeared with Obama.

### McCain on the Trail

Having clinched the RP nomination early, McCain had a potential head start in the next stage of the presidential campaign – to consolidate support among RP factions, get the RP machine fully running (including funding), and set in place the critique of Obama. In March he tried to demonstrate his international credentials with a trip to Iraq, Israel, France and the UK. He was endorsed by Nancy Reagan and gave an initial view of his economic plan.

As the months passed criticism of his campaign grew. It has been described as 'unorthodox,' with a decentralized command structure of ten regional managers who control scheduling and use of media. In an attempt to lessen expenditures, McCain relies heavily on personnel from the Republican National Committee, and makes great use of free media via town meetings. There have been critiques that McCain has been slow to organize on the ground level, that his campaign is in disorder, that he wasted his early time advantage, and that his personnel too heavily come from the lobbying sector. Two aides had to quit when it came to light that their PR firm (the DCI Group) had represented Myanmar.<sup>35</sup>

McCain, like Hillary Clinton, has sought to shape his image via a contrast with Obama. McCain argues that he is the one for change – meaning practicing bipartisanship, while Obama is a DP operative and a cog in the Chicago DP machine; that he is a maverick vis-à-vis the RP of George Bush; that Obama is too inexperienced to be the commander-in-chief – Obama is young, weak on national security and a conventional liberal. Another theme is that Obama is 'un-American' with regard to his religious views, patriotism and even 'citizenship' (i.e., relatives from other countries). On top of these, Obama is said to be supported by Hamas, Fidel Castro and Amedinajad.<sup>36</sup>

So far, many of the McCain 'negatives' have been kept out of sight, by Obama and the mainstream media, but a word on some of what is out there is worthwhile. McCain has done a lot over the years to try to portray himself as uninfluenced by lobbyists. This was especially necessary after he was one



of five senators in the 1980s to be reprimanded by the Senate Ethics Committee for taking contributions from Charles Keating, a savings and loan bank executive who sought favours from regulators when that industry went bust.<sup>37</sup> More recently, McCain accepted money from the CEO of Paxson Communications, and wrote letters of support to that industry's regulator, the Federal Communications Commission.<sup>38</sup> McCain, as Obama and Clinton, has his own 'pastor problem.' Rev. Rod Parsley, whom McCain has called a "spiritual guide," runs a megachurch in Ohio and is heavily involved in politics; he has said that the US has a mission to destroy Islam, and he is vitriolic against Muslims in the US.<sup>39</sup> In May McCain had to reject the endorsement of Rev. John Hagee of Texas. The anti-Muslim Hagee has said that Hitler was doing God's work with regard to the holocaust (as the Jews then had to set up Israel); that the Catholic Church is a whore; and that the US should wage nuclear war against Iran.<sup>40</sup> Other issues include McCain's shoddy treatment of his first wife, and his reputation for losing his temper in a big way.<sup>41</sup>

McCain's biggest problem, however, reflects the larger problems of the RP and his relationship with it. With George Bush so out of favour, to the extent that he cannot campaign with RP candidates, and his economic and foreign policies under such attack, McCain's maverick status is quickly waning. McCain holds similar views on Iraq, the economy, subprime mortgage scandal, and qualifications for Supreme Court nominees. He has hacked off of earlier maverick positions on the Bush tax cuts and immigration. With a coterie of neo-con advisors, McCain advocates the formation of new international institutions, to bypass the UN: he is for a new League of Democracies and an expanded NATO, the 'rollback' of 'rogue' states by covert means; and is very anti-Russia. His economic view of 'let the market handle it' is epitomized by the appointment of former Texas Senator Phil Gramm as campaign co-chair; Gramm and McCain were instrumental in the passage of legislation in 1999 to 'deregulate' the banking industry, i.e., overturn the New Deal-era separation of banks and brokerage firms – witnessed today by bank exposure to the subprime and general credit crisis.<sup>42</sup> An additional problem for the RP comes with the shift among younger evangelicals/Christian right from a focus on social issues to economic ones.<sup>43</sup> In an article in *The Nation*, Hyl Press has described the RP dilemma: after eight years of RP 'pro-family' and 'anti-government' (except in some sectors) policies, the results are apparent: Iraq, housing crisis, crony capitalism, fiscal recklessness, incompetence (Hurricane Katrina), all-time high inequality. RP practice has shown the need for government involvement in dealing with some

problems. The rhetoric of stability and traditional values is in contradiction with the results of unfettered capitalism – the RP is out of touch with its own base.<sup>44</sup>

All in all, the next four months should prove very interesting. Up next are the party conventions: DP 25-28 August, RP 1-4 September. Those will show the party platforms, and the vice-presidential nominees. Then the heavy campaigning begins. It would seem that this year it is the Democrats' race to lose – and the party is not incapable of repeating the Clinton performance. As Obama seems to be calmly proceeding to the 'centre' (or right, depending on definition), McCain seems to be walking a tightrope. One thing is clear, an Obama win in November will keep space open for progressives and the Left; if McCain wins, things could get even more scary. In this regard, the next article will look at the Obama and McCain advisors. It will also start to look at the situation regarding congressional and state races – given the current US recession, and trends in housing, credit, and oil and other commodity prices, the outcomes there will be crucial.

## Notes

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<sup>7</sup> David Paul Kuhn, "Exit Polls Show Challenge for Obama," *politico.com*, 4.6.08.

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Judy Waters Pasqualge is the author of *International McCarthyism: The Case of Rhoda Miller de Silva*