
As Dem Race Shifts to Clinton, Issue Is Still the Lower 80%

by Debra Hanania-Freeman

For those who thought that Hillary Clinton's stunning win in Pennsylvania represented on April 22 the height of political drama, the fact is that the events of the last few days have proven to be even more dramatic.

Although the mathematics of the results have not all that significantly changed, the events leading into the May 6 primaries in Indiana and North Carolina have shown that the psychology of the race certainly has, shifting the ground in very important ways for Hillary Clinton.

After his defeat in Pennsylvania, the usually slick, poised Obama appeared more rattled than at any time in his campaign, political analysts have noted. Pennsylvania once again made the emphatic point that, save his home state of Illinois, Obama has failed to beat Clinton in any major state, including states that are deemed "must wins" for any Democratic Presidential candidate. But, Obama wasn't the only one rattled.

The day after the Pennsylvania defeat, Obama's top campaign strategist David Axelrod, told a National Public Radio (NPR) interviewer that the campaign wasn't worried about the loss in Pennsylvania, any more than it was about the loss in Ohio. When the somewhat startled NPR interviewer asked Axelrod to explain, Axelrod went on to say that Clinton's big wins in both states were attributed to her strong support among blue collar workers, which he dismissed as "insignificant" to Obama, "since they always vote Republican."

Just a couple of weeks earlier, the online *Huffington Post*'s Mayhill Fowler had caught Obama on tape, talking to

an affluent crowd of supporters at an April 6 San Francisco fundraiser, making what were considered to be bigotted, condescending remarks about the very same demographic layer, saying that blue collar workers were "clinging to guns, religion and anti-immigration sentiment because they are bitter about Washington's unfulfilled economic promises."

Casting Aside Blue-Collar Dems

The two remarks, taken together, could no longer be categorized as "gaffes" or misstatements. Clearly, despite all the Obama rhetoric about broad coalitions and expanding the Democratic Party's base, a massive segment of the party's traditional base—the very segment that any Democrat *must* win—was being cast aside.

Things got worse for Obama when his longtime pastor, the Rev. Jeremiah Wright, made a highly publicized appearance at the National Press Club May 28. Wright repeated his earlier remarks that the United States deserved to be attacked on Sept. 11, because "we nuked far more than the thousands in New York and the Pentagon, and we never batted an eye." The controversial minister said the only reason that Obama was distancing himself from Wright now, was that "politicians say what they say and do what they do based on electability, based on sound bites, based on polls," and that Obama "had to distance himself, because he's a politician." The remarks caused a national uproar just one week before the next big battlegrounds in Indiana and North Carolina

In an attempt at damage control, Obama and his wife made an appearance on NBC's "Today" show, where Obama said that he was "appalled" by Wright. And Obama's "Bombers" went to work, planting a story that Wright's appearance at the National Press Club was a Clinton campaign "dirty trick": that Wright had been brought there by Barbara Reynolds, a well-known journalist they claim is a Clinton supporter. A simple inquiry showed that not only is there little indication that Reynolds is supporting any candidate, but that Reynolds, who is originally from Chicago, has been trying to arrange for Wright to appear at the Press Club for at least two years.

Although some praised Obama for his handling of the Wright debacle, the majority noted that Wright has been making these comments for a long time. Was Obama somehow unaware of what his pastor was preaching? Had he only recently become "appalled"?

Apparently, what caused Obama to finally break with Wright were not Wright's attacks on America. It was Wright's attacks on Obama. The *New York Times* commented that Obama was willing to give Wright the "benefit of the doubt" on his attacks on the United States. But attacking Obama himself? That Obama could not forgive. The *Times* reported, "As Mr. Obama told close friends after watching the replay [of Wright at the Press Club], he felt dumbfounded, even betrayed, particularly by Mr. Wright's implication that Mr. Obama was being hypocritical. He [Obama] could not tolerate that."

More Wrong than Wright: The Economy

Although the fallout from Obama's very belated repudiation of Reverend Wright has yet to die out in the press, the interesting thing is that polls show there are other more compelling factors for the breakdown of Obama's popular support. According to a CNN poll, although 65% find Obama's close ties to Wright "disturbing," only 17% said it would affect their vote. The far more decisive issue on voters' minds is the state of the U.S. economy.

Through 2007 and early 2008, the Iraq War was the top issue on voters' minds, but a new CNN poll indicates that the economy is issue No. 1, more than in any recent Presidential campaign, including Bill Clinton's big win over George H. Bush in 1992. The poll suggests that inflation is the top economic issue for most Americans, with 47% identifying it as the biggest economic problem. The housing crisis, at 19%, came in second, followed by taxes, 13%; unemployment, 13%; and the stock market, 5%. Skyrocketing gasoline and food prices and a spree of negative economic news only promise to increase the number of Americans for whom the economy will be the most vital issue in determining their vote this November.

Clearly, the economy is determining their vote now. Well-placed political analysts agree that Hillary Clinton's continuing gains in the popular vote, and the political dynamic plaguing Obama, are the result of Clinton's unswerving focus on those economic issues that most concern the lower 80% of the population. Increasingly since her win in New Hampshire,



EIRNS/Stuart Lewis

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (left), and Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, along with DNC Chairman Howard Dean, are insisting that one of the candidates—meaning Clinton—drop out after the last primaries on June 3.

Clinton has taken her campaign to those hardest hit, and has built a formidable coalition of support among women, Hispanics, seniors, Catholics, middle- and low-income Americans, and rural, suburban, and urban voters, that is tailor-made for victory in a November general election. In fact, each and every national poll taken thus far shows that if the election were held today, Hillary Clinton would beat John McCain decisively, while Barack Obama would not.

Since Clinton's Pennsylvania win was largely attributed to her ability to address the key economic issues directly, and specifically in her debate with Obama the weekend prior to the vote, Obama has been unwilling to get back in the ring. A debate scheduled for North Carolina, where Obama enjoyed what was considered to be an impenetrable lead, was cancelled, and a proposal by the Clinton campaign for a "no holds barred" Lincoln/Douglas-style debate, with no moderator, was rejected.

With just 72 hours to go before the Indiana and North Carolina polls open, Clinton continues to gain momentum. In Indiana, a state that many say Obama must be able to win, because it borders his home base of Illinois, polls most favorable to Obama show the two running even. Most polls show Clinton with a narrow, but unmistakable lead. In North Carolina, Obama's consistent double-digit lead has slipped to just seven points, 49-42. This represents very bad news for Obama, who desperately needs to show that he can take a big state, with a decisive margin.

All of this seems like nothing but good news for Hillary Clinton. She's winning the popular vote among Democratic voters. She's strong in all the states that a Democrat must win in the November election. Polls show that she's unquestionably the Democrat who can beat McCain. She's also expected to do very well in the remaining primaries in West Virginia, Kentucky, Oregon, Puerto Rico, Montana, and South Dakota. Yet, firsthand reports indicate a dramatic escalation of strong-arm operations to force Clinton out of the race.

As Clinton Gains, 'Drop-Out' Chorus Escalates

Despite the fact that the momentum of the campaign had clearly shifted after Pennsylvania, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, and Democratic National Committee Chair Howard "Scream" Dean, wasted no time in making public statements conceding that they would let the electoral process continue until the last primaries on June 3, but that at that time, they would insist that the super-delegates declare their choices and that one of the two candidates—i.e., Hillary Clinton—drop out. A few days later, former President Jimmy Carter, a longtime Clinton hater, joined the chorus.

On May 1, as polls showed Obama's numbers slipping badly, Indiana super-delegate Joe Andrew, who served briefly as DNC Chair at the very end of Bill Clinton's Presidency, announced that he was switching his backing from Clinton to Obama. In a statement, Andrew said: "This has got to come to an end. The ship is taking on water." Given that Andrew was DNC Chair during the disastrous 2000 election that sent George W. Bush to the White House, his statement has done little to inspire confidence in Obama's crumbling machine, or to sway voters.

Twenty-four hours later, another former DNC Chair, Massachusetts super-delegate Paul G. Kirk, announced that he would support Obama. But Kirk, a former special assistant to Sen. Ted Kennedy (D-Mass.), has always been in the Obama camp. It also has not gone unnoticed that Kirk's tenure as DNC Chair during the 1980s represented some of the darkest days for the Democratic Party, when hundreds of thousands of life-long Democrats continued to vote for Democrats in local elections, but abandoned what they viewed as a badly misguided Party in national elections—the phenomenon of "Reagan Democrats."

The same day, New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg, who many thought would have replaced Barack Obama as a Presidential candidate by now, slammed Hillary Clinton as "dumb" for calling for a suspension of the Federal gas tax, in an attempt to provide some relief from skyrocketing gas prices for truckers, farmers, and those who must drive long distances to work. "It's the dumbest thing I've heard.... We're trying to discourage people from driving ... and we're trying to have more money to build infrastructure," Bloomberg said. It does make one wonder how the guy managed to amass a \$40 billion fortune.

Clinton's proposal, although it falls far short of providing the kind of relief necessary, doesn't take a penny away from Federal coffers; it doesn't really "suspend" the tax; it just transfers who pays the tax from the consumer to the oil companies. As for discouraging people from driving, very few Americans would be pleased with the result if farmers and truckers stopped driving.

Howard Dean, in one of his classic wild-eyed performances, accused Clinton (without naming her directly) of being responsible for the current bankruptcy of the DNC by her refusal to drop out of the race. He said the fact that the race was still going on meant that the Presidential candidates were sucking up money that should be going to him!

But the public statements are only markers for the behind-the-scenes berserker drive to force super-delegates to come out for Obama. Sources report that especially in Nancy Pelosi's House of Representatives, members' willingness to declare for Obama is being tied to committee appointments and chairmanships, as well as injections of much-needed campaign funds for members facing tough re-election bids. Others report that the Obama campaign is promising appointments to key posts in exchange for support.

Meanwhile, Clinton's Support Is Growing

One really must marvel at the Obama campaign's ability to shape the storyline with just a peppering of largely insignificant endorsements. The problem for them, however, is that Clinton's support continues to grow. The same day that Obama was parading around two former DNC chairmen that nobody remembers, Clinton countered by releasing a letter of support signed by seven former DNC chairmen and the family of the beloved Ron Brown, who lost his life when, as Bill Clinton's Secretary of Commerce, his plane went down during a mission to build support for reconstructing the Balkans in the aftermath of the war there. Clinton also grabbed the endorsement of the *Indianapolis Star*. More importantly, though, she has widened her lead among voters.

In an event that inexplicably garnered no press coverage, on April 30, six hundred outraged Florida voters rallied in front of the DNC headquarters in Washington, D.C., to protest the disenfranchisement of their delegates. The crowd was addressed by leaders of LULAC (the nation's largest Hispanic organization), trade unionists (including officials of the Building Trades), and several members of the Florida state legislature and Congressional delegation. Declaring Howard Dean's refusal to seat the Florida delegation a criminal violation of the Voters' Rights Act, they vowed to shut down the Denver Convention if Dean continued his attempt to exclude them.

Not surprisingly, Dean refused to come out to address the demonstrators, but issued a press release reaffirming his position that Florida's original 210 delegates and Michigan's 156 would be stripped of their credentials, because those states held their primaries early, in defiance of DNC rules. But the Florida Democratic Primary, wasn't set by Florida Demo-



LYM/W.S. Mederski

Floridians rally at the Democratic National Committee headquarters in Washington on April 30, demanding that their vote in the state primary be counted. The state's Republican leadership refused to abide by the DNC's schedule, so the DNC is refusing to seat Florida delegates—even though the turnout was unprecedented. (Clinton won overwhelmingly.)

crats, but by a Republican Governor and legislature. And despite that, the turnout was unprecedented. Floridians argue that Dean's move to exclude the delegation is because the state went overwhelmingly for Clinton.

Clinton, herself, has dismissed those who are calling on her to withdraw, as having no understanding of history. In fact, Lyndon LaRouche has recommended that the wary citizen would do well to look back to the 1932 Democratic National Convention. The major nations of Europe had already fallen into fascism, and the United States appeared to be close behind. The only hope for a forgotten U.S. electorate, largely beaten down by the Great Depression, was Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

The Democratic Party leadership, fully infiltrated by agents of the very same Anglo-Dutch financial establishment that is today trying to drive Clinton from the race, demanded the withdrawal of Roosevelt, so "the party could be unified." Roosevelt stayed in the race. At the convention, the delegates fought the pressure from that crowd to dump Roosevelt through no fewer than four ballots. Roosevelt took the nomination, and the Presidency, becoming the longest serving President in U.S. history. (See *EIR*, April 4, 2008, for the full story of that 1932 battle.)

With Momentum on Her Side

Some may argue that Hillary Clinton is no FDR, and that the delegate math is against her. It is true that at this time, she hasn't shown the extraordinary qualities of an FDR, but then, few in history have. As for the delegate math, when the last primary vote is cast on June 3, neither Clinton nor Obama will

have the delegates necessary to take the nomination. Right now, Clinton leads in the popular vote, has shown that she can win in November, and has momentum on her side. In fact, were it not for the arcane and complex manner in which Democratic convention delegates are selected, she would also lead in pledged delegates.

And, although few things are certain, one thing that absolutely *is* certain, is that the continuing acceleration of this global financial and economic collapse will increase the importance of the economy as *the* determining issue in this election campaign. Regardless of whom the super-delegates have declared for today, this issue will undoubtedly be the one that determines whom they cast their vote for in Denver. Hillary Clinton has defined her candidacy on the issue of the economy and providing representation for the lower 80% of the population. She

would be *insane* to withdraw now.

The most important issue, however, is addressed in the statement issued by Lyndon LaRouche, accompanying this article: "... the rank and file of the supporters of Obama's and Senator Hillary Clinton's candidacies, have inherent rights which must be protected by the institution of the Presidency. It is those rights, especially those of the lower eighty percentile of our family income-brackets, which must be served as a commitment to be expected of all of us who care." And, that mandates that the intricate and unique electoral process devised by our Founding Fathers continue unimpeded, especially by foreign interference.

Those calling on Clinton to withdraw have a whole other agenda. Although they are nominally Democrats, they care little for the fact that it is *their* actions, if not brought to a screeching halt, that will be responsible for the destruction of the Democratic Party as a force in the elections. For the more small-minded players, like Felix Rohatyn-stooge Nancy Pelosi and Howard "the Scream" Dean, the motivation is personal. If Clinton wins the Democratic nomination, they will most certainly join the growing ranks of the unemployed.

For the likes of George Soros and Felix Rohatyn, the motivation is different. They are working on behalf of a British attempt to control the U.S. election. Remember, according to their game plan, the Clinton candidacy should have already ended, Obama's candidacy should be imploding, and some "other candidate" like Al Gore or Michael Bloomberg should be stepping up to the plate. Unfortunately for them, they grossly underestimated the key role that LaRouche would play in shaping events in this critical moment of American history.