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*Cover Story
The Need for Struggle
Blacks at a Political Impasse
by BC Publishers Glen Ford and Peter Gamble*

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We have arrived at, and long passed, the juncture in Black politics when we can afford a false unanimity. Although there does exist an overwhelming consensus of progressive opinion among African Americans at-large, there is a deep and widening chasm between the people and those who purport to represent the masses – such as has not been seen since the mid-Sixties, when distinct strains of divergent Black political opinion gave motion to various oppositional movements. These movements were not opposed to each other, but were joined in opposition to racial oppression.

The result was a social transformation of America – accomplished by Black people – and which spawned the women's and anti-war movement: children of the Black movement, without which these social advances would not have been possible. The entire society was restructured, for the benefit of most citizens. But there was a price to pay – a great "white backlash" that has been most dramatically manifested in mass Black incarceration as a national policy since the early Seventies, the white reaction to Blacks stepping out of their place.

At the same time, during the early Seventies, we saw the ascension of a newly liberated class of Blacks who had cashed in on the chips that the Freedom Movement had provided. These African Americans saw a clear cut through the forest to the sunlight of profit – and took off like gazelles. The masses of Black folks applauded them, believing that their political and financial victories were our own. But they were not.

The Black political-business class positioned itself to accept the largesse of the much more powerful white capitalist class. It took a generation for the white corporate denizens to realize that their money was their power, and that they should use it to influence the now-established Black political-business class. White corporate America convinced itself, fitfully, to sit down with Negroes who would sit down with them, and

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come to agreement. They found a willing audience.

By the mid–Nineties, the corporate approach to Black politics had matured. They would use their financial resources to create a new Black leadership, and to infiltrate the urban environs in which Black politics operates – the Democratic Party.

From what was a trickle of cash to the only right–wing member of the Congressional Black Caucus – Floyd Flake (NY), in the mid–Nineties – to a Mississippi of money to the "derelicts" who have been identified by the CBC Monitor, we have witnessed a sea change in the behavior of the Black business–political class. They now try to define racial progress in terms of their own aggrandizement. But we are not applauding, anymore.

This deal has run its course. It is now clear that the class that was catapulted to Black leadership was – with some exceptions – out for itself. Too much blood has been spilled to be wasted on them.

There is a reason that this Black political–business class has been allowed to seize – and abuse – Black people's power for their own profit. It is the strong historical current of Black solidarity – trust. For so many generations, we relied on that solidarity, and supported our upwardly mobile few, trusting that they would do good in the 'hood. Often, they did. Now, they don't. They work against our interests – bought off by corporations.

Nobody can force corporate America to abandon its offensive against independent Black politics. They have the money to finance their infiltration – to invent media–created Black leaders. But we also have the power to rise up and say "No! That ain't our leader!"

The media–based modalities of corporate political conduct – in which much is said, but nothing is grounded in fact – can be countered by a political strategy that affirms the Black Political Consensus as it has actually existed for generations. We must lay out the lines of demarcation – the "bright lines" that separate the "derelicts" and traitors from the rest of us. And then we must demand that our political leadership adhere to these "bright lines." Or be ousted.

In order to accomplish this task, it is necessary that Black folks take the historical step – actually, a great leap – into a political maturity and standup–adulthood that relinquishes the ties with the class that has betrayed us. We don't have any obligation to Andy Young, the former aide to Martin Luther King who now represents Nike and Wal–Mart. He's getting paid to work against our interests, and against the interests of others who are suffering in this world. Andy Young has gone over to the enemy camp.

We have no interest in Harold Ford, Jr. getting a Senate seat from Tennessee. He is a whore for the Republicans, who says he "loves, personally" George Bush. If it is a choice between Harold Ford and a Republican, what is our business in it? To elect a "role model" who is the worst model of all, for our people and our children?

Black Commentator is concerned most of all about Black political development, not because we are Afri–centric, but because we understand that nothing happens that is progressive in this nation that we have *built* occurs unless Black people are in motion.

It is therefore time for us to stop censoring ourselves, to stop biting our lips, and to speak the truth as we know it. Forget the Black business–leadership class. Replace them. They are no use, and they do us no good.

Glen Ford and Peter Gamble are writing a book to be titled, Barack Obama and the Crisis of Black Leadership.