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## Barack Obama's victory: A global awakening for young people today



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Americans picked the right man not because he is qualified and soulful, which he is and not because he is committed and brilliant, which he is, but because he knows how to create a phenomenal whole -out of a thousand little pieces. Passionate politicians, big arguments and the willingness to make the case for radical change: these are the ingredients which have reconnected politics to the public in America.

No young American politician since Kennedy has created such a surge of excitement and optimism. It is a mood that has spread around the world. The scene was a poignant reminder of assassinated civil rights hero Dr. Martin Luther King's historic "I have a dream" speech in 1963. King told supporters of his hopes that white and black American could one day live together. Today his vision close to reality than ever.

As a college student, I still remember the day at the Cotton girls common room when we heard the tragic news of the assassination of John F. Kennedy tears came to our eyes as a handsome, young promising president taking the world stage and his wife: Jackie Kennedy were loved by all of us. The assassination of Bobby Kennedy, Dr. Martin Luther King, we thought America is not a place to live in peace and harmony black and white.

America is changing now. This country tainted so long by racism, has elected its first Black President: Barack Obama. A washed – up discredited government had been consigned to oblivion.

The son of an African goatherd is today the most powerful man in the world. He is the first truly global leader of our times, appealing to all ages and creeds with his unifying message of hope. Devoted Michelle Obama, Barack's one time mentor at a law firm worked tirelessly behind the scenes during her husband's presidential campaign. Just four generations ago her family were slaves. Now she is preparing to move as America's First Lady!

It is the story of Obama's multiracial intercultural, working class, ivy league, community organising life. He's been doing it since day one. His simple compelling message of 'change' had helped him assemble an historic, all conquering coalition – white, black, young old liberal conservative. He fought a brilliant campaign showing intelligence, dignity and still under fire. To the joy of the world, America has not let him down.

It was a new dawn. His was a young country, whose time had come. Politics would never be the same again. Things can only get better. He would have won even he had been white. It is well-known the American capacity for innovation and reinvention. To me, race was never as big an issue in this election as some have tried to make out. Colin Powell would almost certainly had been elected President eight years ago, had he been able to choose

between offers from both the Republicans and Democrats to be their candidate. Another powerful name is Condoleezza Rice.

It is about time, Britain's limp political class should take note.

There are many similarities with the way Tony Blair swept to victory in 1997. "A new dawn has broken has it not?" said Tony Blair on May 2nd, 1997. The Blair victory was a triumph for the most modern political campaign ever seen anywhere in the world. Like Obama he was young and elected on a wave of euphoria with a huge parliamentary majority and a largely uncritical media cheering him on. That success represented a change in mood in Britain. He too offered "hope and change" and unlike Obama had the advantage of inheriting sound, blooming economy, not a basket case.

And he blew it. Those of us who were part of the new Labour party organising team at our local council find our excitement at Obama's victory tinged with poignant memories and a desire to warn one of the perils at sky high expectations. We already know Obama is very special and America is a different country to the UK. But what are the lessons to heed. Blair is now as big a hate figure on the Left as George W. Bush. We must all pray that America's first black president doesn't turn out to be this generation's Tony Blair.

Two remarkable men have last week shown the way to end the scourge of today's Broken Britain: Barack Obama & Lewis Hamilton. Hamilton seized the leadership of the racing world becoming the youngest ever Formula one racing champion. Hamilton is the toast of Britain and a shoo-in for BBC sports personality of the year.

They have a lot in common they both started life without much material wealth, each has a black father, they both come from broken homes. It was his grandmother who nurtured and encouraged Obama in the value of education. Sadly she died just hours before seeing her dream come true. In the case of young Hamilton it was his father who spotted his genius behind the wheel and sacrificed so much.

They have proved that literally Anything is possible with enthusiasm and dedication. Now we can explain to the next generation that race as a set of

ideas, nothing more and nothing less. It has only to do with intelligence and worth. Extraordinary leadership supported by an extraordinary basis, can change the world.

In Britain today, it is sad to see for thousands of young people that background alone is the excuse for their dead end lives, as they descend into a pathetic pseudo-macho world of gangs, guns and knives. But how many equally - gifted brains are rotting under their hoods from the effects of drugs and booze? It should be a lesson for other youngster both black and white who are left to behave like wild animals as they wallow in a world of crime, illegitimacy and the prospect of an early death.

True, both Obama & Hamilton are blessed with sharp intelligence. They have denied the youth of Broken Britain of their only excuses for choosing failure. Time has come for them to believe in miracles also to believe in themselves.

- Rini Kakati



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