

## Fletcherism and Fakery: Guarding Obama's Left Flank

Bill Fletcher and Carl Davidson  
are two Left opportunists with a problem.

Unlike four years ago, when  
Fletcher co-founded Progressives for Obama, their guy now has a record –  
and it is indefensible. Solution: nullify the issues right up front in  
the title to their reworked rationale for backing the Bill of  
Rights-destroying, Wall Street-protecting, Africa-bombing,  
regime-changing corporate Democrat.

Their August 9 article, "The 2012 Elections Have Little To Do With Obama's Record ... Which Is Why We Are Voting For Him" frames the campaign as a contest between "revenge-seeking" white supremacists and – well...those of us who are not revenge-seeking white supremacists.

The facts of the Obama presidency – his actual behavior on war, austerity, and civil liberties – are deemed irrelevant, and the president himself becomes a mere stage prop in the battle against "Caligula," the Republicans.

Fletcher and Davidson want Blacks and progressives to respond with hysteria to GOP "irrationalism," to keep the traditional Democratic base in the Obama camp through raw fear. They claim the current campaign "will be unlike anything that any of us can remember."

In truth, the abject Black failure to make a single demand of Obama, and the vapid excuses and rationalizations for the Left's political collapse in his presence, then and now, makes 2012 very much resemble 2008.

Back then, Fletcher & Co. wrote: "Barack Obama's very biography reflects the positive potential of the globalization process that also contains such grave threats to our democracy when shaped only by the narrow interests of private corporations in an unregulated global marketplace.

We should instead be globalizing the values of equality, a living wage and environmental sustainability in the new world order, not hoping our deepest concerns will be protected by trickle-down economics or charitable billionaires. By its very existence, the Obama campaign will stimulate a vision of globalization from below."

Four years later, we are admonished to forget the facts as they actually transpired – and as we at BAR predicted – and pretend the current campaign is a crusade against the Tea Party, with Obama as the incidental beneficiary.

Right-wing populism is the bogey man, in opposition to which we must re-embrace Obama. The GOP isn't just racist, it is "irrational," crying for "a return to the past." They write: "Obama represents an irrational symbol for the political right, and a potent symbol that goes way beyond what Obama actually stands for and practices. The right, while taking aim at Obama, also seeks, quite methodically and rationally, to use him to turn back the clock."

Of course, the meaning of the term reactionary is to "turn back the clock," a promise Republicans have been making for 50 years. And racism is fundamentally irrational, causing white supremacists to see that which is not there, be blinded to facts that are right in front of their noses, and to invent whole narratives of history.

But, this time is different, Fletcher and Davison insist, because the Right is so intensely focused on the symbolism of Obama, the Black man – and so "irrational" about it that they make up ridiculous things about him, like his non-citizenhood. Therefore, our response, as progressives, must be to forge a "common front based on resisting white revanchism... on political misogyny, on anti-'freeloader' themes aimed at youth, people of color and immigrants, and a partial defense of the so-called 1%."

The fact that Obama is demonstrably not a part of that common front must not dissuade us from joining his campaign. If the Right has made Obama its symbolic focus, we must, in response, make him the focus of our "common front." If the Right hates Obama with an irrational passion, we must hug him to our breasts.

Just in case the logic of such reasoning escapes you, Fletcher and Davidson remind us that the Republicans are not merely irrational – they are crazy like Caligula.

"November 2012 becomes not a statement about the Obama presidency, but a defensive move by progressive forces to hold back the 'Caligulas' on the political right. It is about creating space and using mass campaigning to build new grassroots organization of our own. It is not about endorsing the Obama presidency or defending the official Democratic platform. But it is about resisting white revanchism and political misogyny by defeating Republicans and pressing Democrats with a grassroots insurgency, while advancing a platform of our own, one based on the 'People's Budget' and antiwar measures of the Congressional Progressive Caucus. In short, we need to do a little 'triangulating' of our own."

So, it's not about "endorsing the Obama presidency" – but about voting for Obama while claiming that the facts of what he did as president don't matter. It is about the nonsense of "creating space" so that the Left can do what it ought to do anyway, but which it didn't do in the two years leading up to the 2008 election, or in the first two and a half years of the Obama presidency, until the Occupy Wall Street activists came out of left field in disgust with both parties' subservience to finance capital.

The anti-war movement seems largely to oppose only Republican wars. The great fallacy, here, is that Democratic presidents in general, and Obama in particular, somehow create "space" for progressive activism. Movements create space for themselves, by acting. Only charlatans preach that progressive movements must install preferred personalities from the menus of the ruling circles before they can find space to move.

The great tragedy of the Obama era, is that his presence has had the effect of shutting down progressive – and, most dramatically, Black – opposition to the prevailing order. This does not happen by the magic of charisma.

Political operatives identified with the Left work diligently to maintain such silence – people like Fletcher and Davidson, who are once again guarding the left flank for Obama, whose great legacy has been to create vast political space for Wall Street and the Pentagon, with a minimum of resistance from white progressives, Blacks and the rest of the Democratic base.

That's why we at Black Agenda Report call Obama "the more effective evil."