EDITORIALS

John J. Oliver, Jr.
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THE VOICE OF BLACK AMERICA SINCE 1892

223,557 in Jail

June 30, 1988—223,557 inmates in 3,338 jails; 16 million admissions and releases, nearly 44,000 per day.

These are just some of the figures that were quoted by Samuel F. Saxton, director, Prince George's County Corrections in a recent speech

Drugs are not a black problem. Drug abuse has no regard for race, religion or station in life. Yet, there are more blacks in jail than whites. But, if you stand on any street corner in any urban area today there are more whites than blacks driving by searching for a drug buy. Blacks are only 12 percent of the population.

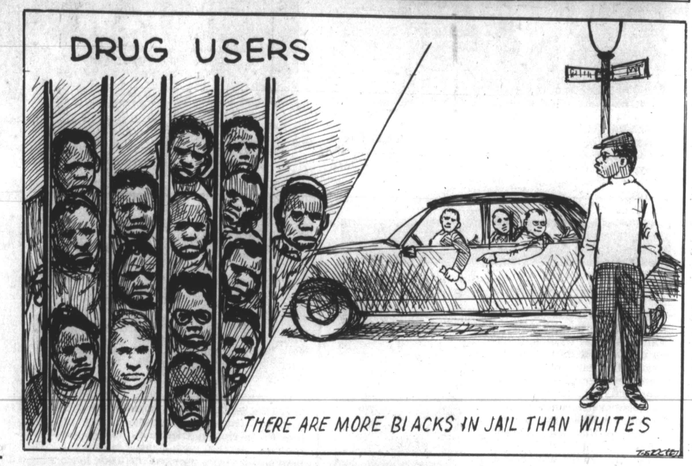
How come, you should ask, since there are more whites buying and selling than blacks that only a few whites are put in jail?

Remember the Len Bias case. You know, that young University of Maryland basketball star who supposedly "had everything." He died, the coroner said, because of cocaine use.

There are more Len Biases in the country today—mostly white—than most people care to admit. Ten to one the people who brought those drugs to the University of Maryland campus were white; so were the people who brought the drugs into this country in the first place. Only a fool would believe that when you buy drugs on a campus as large as UM that some black man is reaping all the profits. Sure, Mr. Cool with his gold chains and fast guns is easy to arrest. Thus he is crowding the jails.

Will America continue to ignore the real culprits in the drug culture until there are more white children in graves than in school?

Only when the jail population reaches the right proportion of 12 percent black and 88 percent white will this country stop the drug trade. In other words, only when Mr. Cool the showman, is replaced by the real behind scenes drug lords will all children once more be safe to attend school and walk the streets.



Samuel **Banks**
Educator

Bush and Black Americans

The tumult, fulminations, frustrations and hoopla associated with the recent presidential election have come, mercifully, to a conclusion. George Herbert Walker Bush, for better or for worse, has emerged the victor.

The time is now at hand for President-elect Bush, in concert with the Congress and 250 million Americans, to tackle the all-time high Federal deficit in excess of $200 billion and the $2 trillion debt and begin the long, arduous and long overdue process of human renewal and reconciliation.

One of the refreshing and heartening manifestations of the presidential election is that black Americans, numbering 18 million of the 180 million Americans eligible to vote, confounded the political pundits and prognosticators by casting approximately eleven million votes for Governor Michael Dukakis.

In fact, the black electorate cast ninety-percent of its vote for Dukakis. The explanation for this phenomenal vote, given the tenor of the campaign and widespread dissatisfaction among many black voters in terms of how Reverend Jesse Jackson was treated, is quite simple:

Black citizens believed that Dukakis' candidacy was one of socio-racial inclusiveness, fairness, opportunity for all and economic justice.

The same raison d'etre was operative in state and local elections. Candidates for office, black and white, who were advocates of an inclusive, fair and open society received the overwhelming support of the black electorate throughout the nation.

Notable examples of black political sophistication, savvy and maturity were the political races here in Maryland and Virginia.

Senator Paul S. Sarbanes, a staunch, cerebral and redoubtable supporter of an inclusive society, social justice and equal opportunity for all, won a smashing victory against Alan Keyes, the sagacious and articulate black Republican standard-bearer in the senate race.

Farther south, former Democratic Governor Chuck Robb easily defeated Reverend Maurice Dawkins the black Republican standard-bearer for the United States Senate in Virginia.

It should be noted that both Keyes and Dawkins are highly intelligent, prescient and able men, but their candidates were more Reagan than Reagan in being both reactionary and inimicable to an open, equal and inclusive socio-economic body politic.

The black electorate rejected them and similar candidates throughout the nation in a clear and resounding manner.

Now that Bush has been elected President, black citizens, as is true of the national electorate will respect the venerable and historic office of the presidency.

It is the hope of black citizens, now that the campaign rhetoric has ended, that President-elect Bush will act decisively, fairly and humanely in addressing the societal needs of all 250 million Americans; especially those who have been excluded from the socio-economic mainstream and largesse of our nation.

In this conjunction, President-elect Bush must understand, as he takes office as President of the United States on Friday, January 20, 1989, that for 35 million black Americans there cannot be any retreat on the principle of affirmative action, equal educational opportunity and full employment.

Paean of praise for Morgan State

Morgan State University has been part of Baltimore and Maryland for many years. Although, it has a status of a historically black institution its doors have been open to all citizens.

Morgan State University has given much to the citizens of Maryland both black and white; this is not a paradigm but a reality. Many citizens are ensconced in the concept that Morgan has been and continues to be plagued with problems.

This is true only in the area of physical areas—that is buildings, and other structures are in need of repair. The reason is simple; a lack of funds. For many years Morgan State University was not getting its fair share of funding. Further, prior to 1984 Morgan was plagued with internal problems.

Since 1984 under the direction of Morgan's erudite and perspicacious president Dr. Earl Richardson, Morgan has made great strides. First, the S.A.T. scores at Morgan State University have improved more than the average.

Further, Morgan is attracting some of the best and brightest students in the community and state. Its reputation under Dr. Richardson has lifted the spirits of alumnae and other admirers.

Morgan State University has and continues to serve Maryland by providing Maryland and its people with first rate professionals in all walks of life

JOHN A. MICKLOS

LETTERS

Parren J. **Mitchell**
Former U.S. Rep.

A gray, rainy November day

Last week, when the weather was miserable, I was reminded of a gray, rainy day in November, 1977.

At that time, I was in my Congressional Office in the Cannon House Building in Washington, D.C. when I received a telephone call from the Maryland State Police. After advising me that I should have no cause for alarm, the officer told me of a KKK plot to bomb my home at 1805 Madison Avenue in Baltimore, MD.

I was advised that a state trooper had infiltrated the KKK and learned of the plot to bomb three places on the same night. One was a synagogue in Northwest Baltimore; one was an integrated youth center, also in Northwest Baltimore, and my Madison Avenue home.

I was further informed that these klansmen had been in the backyard of my residence and had planned the escape route from my home. Once again, I was assured that there was no danger to me because the state police were on top of the situation. I thanked the officer and hung up the telephone.

I was stunned! My home was deep in the black ghetto of Baltimore and I wondered how white klansmen could reconnoiter my home without being noticed.

Then I remembered that several young black professionals were rehabilitating those lovely old homes on Madison Avenue. The area was aswarm with roofers, carpenters, electricians, painters, etc.

I asked Clarence Bishop, my administrative assistant, to come into my office and told him of the telephone call. His entire countenance reflected his deep concern, but, in his usual, unemotional manner, he told me not to worry, that everything would be okay.

Despite the reassurances, I spent some sleepless nights. During the hours after midnight, every sound in the old house seemed magnified and ominous. I got up out of my bed, frequently checking the back and front of my home.

Shortly after that, I was notified that the klansmen had been arrested at or near their first target, the synagogue in Northwest Baltimore. My home was to have been the last of the three targets. When they were arrested, the police found weapons, explosives and detonating caps in the klansmen's automobiles.

They were tried and sentenced to, I think, three years in the early spring of the next year. I slept better after that.

Why do I recall that experience so vividly? Why do I share it with you? We must always be aware of the fact that there are sick, racist minds in our society that are willing to perform sick racist acts, including bombing, shooting, yes, even murder.

During the Jackson campaign, I worried over the safety of Rev. Jesse Jackson. The depraved exploitation by Republicans of the Willie Horton furlough during the Presidential campaign, attracts such sick minds to violence.

The attempt to create a near hysteria atmosphere about weapons in public schools, makes a climate in which sick minds are prone to act out their violence.

It is hard for far too many of our young black people to realize that this sordid episode took place in the city of Baltimore just eleven years ago. It is easy for far too many black adults to pretend that such things never happened.

This did happen, and I remember it many years later on a gray, rainy day in November, 1988. Can such a thing happen again? Yes, it can, that is why eternal vigilance must always be the price of liberty.

Kweisi **Mfume**
U.S. Congressman

Voc-Tech Education Week

Vocational and Technical education students make up a large portion of the high school population in many communities. These students like others are also a large part of our future, for they represent this nation's industrial hope into the next century.

Still each year the United States falls further behind the other major industrialized nations in the preparation of our young people to assume the increasingly complicated tasks required in industry.

We need to emphasize the importance of vocational education so as to update our programs to meet the needs of the 21st century.

To this end I introduced a bill, which became Public Law 100-593 in the 100th Congress, that designates this week (November 28-December 2, 1988) as **"Vocational - Technical Education Week"** in America.

A directory of occupations released by the U.S. Labor Department indicates that only 20 percent of the jobs listed require a college degree. Eighty percent call for the types of skills usually taught in vocational and technical education programs.

Moreover, there are about 20 million 16-24-year olds who, for whatever reason, are not planning to pursue a college degree. Thus, the need for state-of-the-art vocational-technical education is imperative.

Another fact that points to the importance of the "voc-tech alternative" is that the majority of voc-tech students continue their education past high school. This suggests that not only is there a great need for undergraduate voc-tech curriculum but that such class work is an alternative path towards a college degree.

This statistic also points to the reality that the industrial work world is becoming increasingly complicated and sophisticated requiring more training past high school.

The realization that we can improve our vocational and technical programs indicates that the quality of such education must continue to be a state-wide priority. Voc-tech is an important part of the total educational scene in Maryland.

As a state, we have come to recognize the quality of our programs in hopes that the partnership of education, business and government will continue to foster an ever improving voc-tech program.

Insuring the quality of any program requires the input of those who are on the front line. In the case of technical training matching the special needs of our educational system with the ever changing needs of business and industry, there is progress.

Each such Maryland program has a private sector advisory committee that assists in strengthening curriculum, reducing obsolescence and providing employment opportunities.

Last year, more than 160 occupational programs were improved through expansion or modernization.

This translates to a lot of students (43 percent of Maryland's 10-12th graders) enrolled in a lot of voc-tech programs. The success of these students is impressive.

Over 60 percent of employed voc-tech graduates were in occupations related to their vocational program, and 58 percent were employed full-time, while the other 33 percent were continuing their education.

With the starting wages above the minimum and employers stating that 92 percent of their voc-tech employees met or exceeded entry level skills we are assured that the partnership at the front lines is now working well.

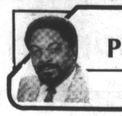
The future of vocational and technical education in Maryland looks bright. Last year, more than 5,000 business and industry representatives participated in insuring the continuation of quality programs.

Plans were recently completed for eight new vocational-technical laboratories with related classrooms. Thousands of single parents and homemakers have received assistance to re-enter the labor market.

We must continue then, to increase enrollment, expand facilities, update training and develop new programs to meet the needs of business and industry into the next century.

The Afro-American
MEMBER
MDDC NNPA UPI

COMMENTARY & OPINIONS



Les **Payne**

'Camelot' in retrospect

It has been 25 years since that bullet rang out from the Texas Book Depository, or whatever, and dramatically began to change America.

The 1960's were nasty times, and on Nov. 22, 1963, they got infinitely nastier. It was the first of the assassin's hits that would fix in strangers' minds for years to come just what they were doing when the slugs hit their target.

Feb. 21, 1965, was the second strike. The third, of course, was on April 4, 1968.

On that bleak autumn day 25 years ago, I was a newly minted second lieutenant swaggering to lunch at the Fot Bliss officers' club, when the rifle slug — in Dallas — struck home.

Starched and pressed in my tropical worsted uniform, I had taken the oath to defend strangers' human rights that neither I nor my forebears had ever enjoyed in our own country. Such cruel contradictions are the birthright of those born into the oppressed classes of this republic.

After graduating from college, I had sought a job as a reporter, but that possibility for me, in those days, was as remote as the Oval Office. There were two newspapers in Hartford, the Times and the Courant. Neither had ever hired a black reporter. *The Evening Times* has ceased to exist, thanks to the forces of good.

Had it continued to exist, the Times would no more have hired me, I had every reason to believe, that the klan would have taken me on as its imperial wizard. The white male graduate, in the main, got the upscale jobs and all the other benefits of citizenship. My generation of blacks was expected to make peace with the obligations of citizenship. We were not rewarded in the civilian job market for aspiring to excellence.

Not many of us, two decades ago, got out of the wretched conditions of the ghetto.Some took refuge in the church, others in the bottle, still others made their stand in the pool hall, on the street corner, behind the switchblade — candidates, as Richard Wright wrote, "for the clinics, morgues, prisons, reformatories and the electric chair of the state's death house."

Those of us who escaped had to find a lever. I took my English degree into the Army to hone my leadership skills and learn how to shoot down enemy bombers with Nike Hercules missiles.

My commander-in-chief was John Fitzgerald Kennedy.

The Irish had never struck me as racially enlightened. I grew up in a partly Irish and Italian neighborhood in Hartford and found the former, on the issue of race, to have attitudes similar to their redneck cousins in Tuscaloosa, Ala. Ala.

But this Irish-Catholic Kennedy, this president, many Afro-Americans said, seemed different. He spoke eloquently enough, but when pressed, there was something more. What the oppressed saw in him was a quality rare in white males and absent in every other president since, save Jimmy Carter.

President Kennedy's humanitarian synapses were open; he had a rather substantial capacity to change. This quality, more than any other, endeared him to Afro-Americans. They gazed on him and saw not so much what he was, but rather what, if worked on, he could become.

Coming out of the Eisenhower years, blacks were afforded a new, though exaggerated, sense of the possible humanness of the enemy they were up against. As Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr. heightened blacks' sense of dignity about themselves, Kennedy, in words at least, hiked their expectations of the federal government.

It was never so much what Kennedy did during his short sojourn; it was his style, his boldness, the things he said. On Feb. 28, 1963, in a message to Congress on civil rights, Kennedy diagnosed the effects of racial illness in America:

"Race discrimination hampers our utilization of our manpower. It hampers our world leadership by contradicting at home the message we preach abroad. It increases the cost of public welfare, crime, delinquency and disorder. Above all, it is wrong."

No president, including Abraham Lincoln and Lyndon Johnson, has ever spoken this way. Kennedy went on to lay out a blueprint to make things more equal in the areas of voting, education, employment, public accommodation, housing and civil rights overall.

In his introduction, Kennedy cited the Emancipation Proclamation as a "first step." He praised the president who signed it and noted that Lincoln "unhappily did not live to follow up."

Nor, of course, did Kennedy.

For on that bleak November day as I swaggered into the officers club, Walter Cronkite gave us the word that the commander-in-chief had been shot dead in Dallas.

The crowd of officers gathered around the television broke out into mild applause and scattered cheering.

That afternoon, my first sergeant, from Mississippi, smiled for the first time since I had met him.

Parren J. **Mitchell**
Former U.S. Rep.

Black citizens betrayed

After a long and arduous struggle, federal and state agencies were established to protect black citizens from discriminatory practices in employment; housing; and places of public accommodations. In most every state and every major city, there are Human Relations Commissions and, of course, there is the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

I have repeatedly claimed that these agencies are failing to do their duty. Based upon the many referrals I made to the agencies when I served in Congress, I had the distinct impression that they did not pursue cases of discrimination with any zeal.

Quite to the contrary, my impression was that the agencies either sought to discourage black citizens from filing complaints or did not follow through effectively once a complaint was filed, and almost inevitably, came to a formal conclusion that there was "no probable cause" and dismissed the complaint.

These fears were confirmed when the General Accounting Office, the investigative arm for the U.S. Congress, issued in October, 1988 its report, "EEOC and State Agencies Did Not Fully Investigate Discrimination Charges."

I am investigating, on an informal basis for now, allegations of discrimination against a major corporation in the Baltimore-Washington area. What I have uncovered so far is sickening.

Twelve black citizens have filed charges against this corporation, some were filed more than a year ago, and nothing has happened. As the complainants have sought information with regard to the status of their complaints, they are brusquely turned away.

Even more offensive is the statement made by an official of a state agency. The statement made in a public meeting was, "Large companies are usually repeat offenders of breaking our laws on discrimination. Our Commission is unable to force large companies to obey the law." Isn't that an incredible statement to have made?

In the case I am looking into, it is very clear that the agencies having knowledge about the complaint did nothing, absolutely nothing, to protect the complainant from retaliation by the corporation after the complaint was filed. In one case, the complainant was put on indefinite suspension after he filed his complaint and was shortly thereafter terminated.

The agencies involved delay acting on the complaint for as long as they possibly can, hoping that the complainant will become discouraged and disappear. When that happens, the agency can then close out the case.

Is it any wonder that black citizens have lost faith in government? Is it any wonder that in the black community, these federal and state agencies are regarded as paper tigers who really don't want to fight for us? Is it any wonder that black citizens suffer discrimination in silence because they believe that the agencies designed to help them will not do so?

The most tragic aspect of this whole situation is that these agencies are often headed by blacks and have blacks on staff, but they have become the worst enemies to black citizens by their betrayal, by their silence, by their cooperation with the system that permits racial discrimination in employment to persist unchallenged.

I will continue to work on this case, gathering additional facts, and, at the appropriate time (perhaps three months), I plan to make the whole sordid story public.

The betrayal of black citizens by state and federal agencies is a story that the public must know about and do something about it.

Ruth **Jenkins**
SOB SISTER

He was expected, and he usually travels by plane. So when the aircraft landed, what else could he do but alight? It would have been real news had he thrown a tantrum and refused to get off.

Even then, our show should not have been bumped. It's so informative and educational. Once it asked the burning question, "In what month does a woman begin to show pregnancy?" And a contestant (male of course) answered seriously "In September."

In news hour previews, reporters usually pique listener-interest with one-line teasers about minor incidents. Then they reveal that "But the big story today is . . ."

We sat alert when the newscaster reported the lesser news events. Such as: A subway train mysteriously disappeared between stations. And ET is revisiting the earth, this time with a facelift. And our busiest river is flowing upstream, with sparklingly clear water. And birds in the park are singing rock 'n roll.

Then he added dramatically "But the big story now is the five-day countdown to the polls." That turned us off, so we turned him off.

We glanced at the daily paper's front page. The 7-col. headline blared 'Down To The Final Days.' More campaign update. In type bold enough to proclaim something really exciting. Like the New Year's Eve countdown.

So we resolved to black out all election news thereafter.

Picked up a magazine. It featured a timely story about a 19th Century free spirit, the first woman to seek election as USA president.

"Twas in 1872 that fiesty feminist Victoria Claflin Woodhull cast her bonnet into the ring. Bidding for the right to receive junk mail addressed to 'White House Occupant' (WHO). But the sitting tenant, Ulysses S. Grant renewed his lease, winning a second term in office.

Lots of scurrilous free speech was spouted during the 1988 campaign infinity. Surely somebody said something worthy of Election Day arrest. It is now 11 o'clock. Do you know where your candidates are?

With news blackout, we don't yet know
Who now heads the nation.
We'll find out when invited to His inauguration.

T.G.I.F. — Those initials (as a popular saying) bring weekly delight to millions of toilers in the workaday world, because they mean 'Thank Goodness It's Friday.'

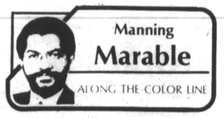
And Friday means a blessed respite from the job routine. Opportunity for rest or relaxation or revelry or romance, or whatever. A free period to devote to other pursuits and pleasures.

And now, after a wearying, worrying, wisening political campaign, kind fate has given Americans reason to breathe a fervent T.G.I.F. . . . Meaning 'Thank Goodness It's Finished.'

As some sage once said (or should have said if he didn't) "Never in the field of political conflict was so much (tedium) inflicted on so many (voters) by so few (candidates, promoters and publicists). — (With our earnest apologies to Winston Churchill).

All the offenders doused themselves in that 'freedom of speech' stream in the 1st Amendment. Maybe free speech would suffer less abuse if it cost money.

The news media also overdid that 'freedom-of-the-press' bit. They interrupted our favorite TV game show to report that President Reagan was alighting from Air-Bear I at the Philly airport. What was world-shattering about that?



Manning **Marable**
ALONG THE COLOR LINE

Class character of US politics

George Bush's election to the presidency raises serious questions about the ability of a moderate to liberal candidate to run successfully in any general election. An analysis of American political culture reveals several fundamental factors which help to explain why Republicans have defeated Democrats in five out of six presidential contests.

The first factor is what can be understood as "class consciousness." During the period of the Great Depression, most Americans viewed themselves as working people-mechanics, factory workers, farmers.

The Democatic Party of Roosevelt and Truman functioned as a defacto social democratic party, promising jobs and greater social opportunities to this majoritarian constituency.

But the very successes of the Democrats' socioeconomic agenda created a growing white middle class of homeowners and entrepreneurs.

This new middle class increasingly favored less government, not more; it criticized labor unions and advocated cutbacks in public housing, welfare and job programs. Its material interests were more clearly articulated by the Republicans.

By the 1980's, the traditional ideology of liberalism, with its emphasis on social welfare, government assistance to minorities, the poor and elderly, and the reduction if not elimination of the affects of sexism and racism, was thoroughly rejected by most whites with annual household incomes above $35,000.

White middle class America may support a limited national health care system or an expanded federal loan program for college students, but it isn't willing to pay for such programs.

Despite the existence of several million Americans sleeping in the gutters and city streets across the nation, and millions more who are hungry or lack any kind of health insurance, the majority of upper middle class whites reject the concept of redistributive justice, and even deny the existence of social class oppression within society.

For example, in a recent Gallup poll, approximately 70 percent of all Americans rejected the assertion that our society "is divided into the haves and have-nots." When Americans were asked "whether it's government's responsibility to reduce differences between the rich and poor," only 36 percent stated yes.

A second factor is the social class composition of the U.S. electorate. Politicians frequently use the expression, "If you don't vote, you don't count." In a limited context, this is true.

Politicians are most responsive to highly organized interest groups (usually corporations) which have the funds to lobby for their agendas, and they exercise the power to reward or punish those who betray their interests.

But they also respond to highly motivated electoral constituencies; their legislative lieutenants constantly gauge public opinion of those groups most likely to vote.

If a neighborhood or district has an abysmally low voter turnout rate, politicians not only don't campaign there, they'll ignore legitimate grievances from such constituences.

Moreover, if a specific constituency votes reliably, election after election, for one particular set of candidates over another group, then both groups will eventually ignore that constituency.

The politicians who receive no votes will skip serious campaigning because they know that this group won't provide any support for them. But the politicians who regularly receive large numbers of votes without pressure will inevitably take this group for granted, relegating its concerns to a secondary level.

Politicians are usually elitist, in part, because the electorate doesn't reflect the actual social, racial and class composition of the society as a whole. According to a recent New York Times poll, most voters are middle-to-upper class, affluent, and satisfied with the socioeconomic status quo.

Eighty-six percent of all regular voters are white; 42 percent have annual incomes between $25,000 to $50,000, and another one in six voters earn above $50,000.

The vast majority of regular voters, 79 percent, describe themselves ideologically as "conservatives" and "moderates." Conversely, "nonvoters" are disproportionately female, Hispanic, and black; three-fourths of all whites with college degrees vote, while only about one third of all Hispanics and about 40 percent of the unemployed vote. Seven out of ten nonvoters have only a high school education or less.

Democratic Party leaders such as Georgia Senator Sam Nunn and Virginia Senator Chuck Robb are attributing Dukakis's defeat to the failure of their party to advance a more conservative, middle class agenda, their version of "Reaganism With a Human Face."

But the long term solution to the Democratic Party's electoral malaise won't be found by replicating the GOP program of welfare for the rich, laissez faire capitalism for the working class and poor.

It must engage in massive voter registration and education efforts, reaching the millions of blacks, Hispanics and low income whites who have been locked out of the economic expansion of the mid-1980's.

By significantly increasing voter turnout rates among care constituencies which have a material self-interest in an activist, progressive government, it would be possible to constitute a new majoritarian coalition, uniting labor, minorities, women's groups, and others.

More importantly, the most oppressed sections of society must take the political initiative to organize themselves behind a progressive democratic agenda, independent of whatever the Democratic Party may do, in order to promote their own interests.

It will only take one major economic recession to convince millions of working Americans that class struggle and class conflict lies at the center of America's political process.

Dr. Manning Marable is Chairperson of the Black Studies Department, Ohio State University.