

Change? Not

A viewpoint on Americans and President Elect Barack Obama

By [Global Research](#)

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I happen to like Americans. I'm legally one of them, but I wasn't born here. Most of the Americans I have known in the four decades I have lived here have not been warmongers or racists or contemptuous of culture and intellect. Even the so-called uneducated ones have a core of neighborly decency and tolerance that seems rooted in a cheerful attitude of live-and-let-live.

Their culture is malleable and adaptable and eventually inclusive. They have refined the discourse of human rights, feminism, and anti-authoritarianism. They have developed great universities. They are indefatigable inventors and innovators. They have perfected the rhetoric of rights and actually enjoy some of them. They are not snobs. And they are quick on the uptake when lies and chicanery are in the offing. The last eight years in the vertiginous rise and fall of Bushist triumphalism and bluster attest to that.

But.

These are the people. Their government is something entirely different, and they are beginning to realize it. It frightens them — this pending gap and potential divorce between themselves and their government. The election of Barack Obama restores hope — after all, they have elected a black American, and, to them, this is a huge paradigm shift. In the horrible, long, and contorted history of racist America, this single act gives them the illusion that their government can now be trusted again to be in tune with their sentiments because it includes an outsider — a person of color.

Except.

Barack Obama is not an outsider. He has chosen the establishment over the people. But this is hard for Americans to understand because they have no concept of class — which is to say the concept that class is a relation of power. They think in racist terms. They think that color determines politics. Or maybe they don't, but they have no other tool of analysis than race.

How else to explain the enthusiasm over Obama, a man whose policies and advisors are indistinguishable from Clinton's, who was a dismantler of welfare, a neo-liberal free-trader, and an ardent warmonger? A man who put power and profits before the people?

This is a tragedy in the making. Possibly the last disillusionment. After all, this new president is never going to say what Martin Luther King said when the awful truth about the war in Vietnam caught up with him, "The greatest purveyor of terror in the world today is my own government." How could he when he has chosen to defend that power in a relation of class

solidarity with the economic elite?

And it needs to be said again. Or nothing will change.

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