

# Racism in America: After Mississippi and Alabama Debacles Trump Sinks Deeper into Political Abyss

Doug Jones victory over Roy Moore in Senate exposes the bankruptcy of alt-right ideology

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*Two recent major decisions by United States **President Donald Trump** and his advisors have rendered the 45th head-of-state much weaker in the opinion of the majority of the American people. The visit to Jackson, Mississippi for the inauguration of a museum honoring African American leaders and the president's endorsement of **Judge Roy Moore** in his senate bid, have both been disastrous.*

Moore, an ultra-conservative was facing allegations of sexual misconduct with minors while he was in his 30s. So confident that he would prevail in the hotly-contested race against Democrat **Doug Jones**, upon losing Moore refused to concede defeat.

Trump's visit to the opening of a Civil Rights Museum in Jackson, Mississippi on December 9 was met with broad rejection by the African American people of the state and the throughout the country. Many viewed the effort as a cynical and hypocritical attempt to shed the stain of racism which has permeated his electoral campaign and administrative policies. Several African American elected officials refused to attend the event including Congressman John Lewis of Georgia, the former Chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in mid-1960s.

Jackson, Mississippi, the capital of one of the poorest states in the U.S., has been a focal point in the struggle of the African American people since the conclusion of the Civil War. During the Reconstruction period from 1865 through the successive decades, African Americans took a pro-active posture through the organization of political and economic initiatives which were inevitably crushed through force of arms by white law-enforcement agents, the judicial system and vigilante groups such as the Ku Klux Klan.

One of the most prominent of these politicians in Mississippi in the Reconstruction era was Blanche Bruce who held various positions including Bolivar County sheriff, tax collector, supervisor of education as well as being sergeant-at-arms for the Mississippi state senate in 1870, a state senator in 1874 and U.S. Senator from 1875-1881. Bruce was eventually exiled from the state and later took up residence in Washington, D.C. where he held several public positions.

Violent retribution for political activity among African Americans was illustrated clearly through events in the Yazoo Delta region area of Leflore County in 1889. African American farmers had organized the Colored Farmers' Alliance under the leadership of the charismatic and articulate Oliver Cromwell. The Alliance sought to bypass local avaricious white

merchants through a cooperative effort to trade with each other.

This effort raised the alarm of the state government at the time led by **Governor Robert Lowry** who sent an all-white militia to ostensibly maintain order in Leflore County. Lowry directed the militia to “always uphold the superiority of the Anglo-Saxon race.”

In carrying out its duties the whites detained forty leaders of the Alliance and later lynched 25 of them. For several days other members of the Alliance were pursued resulting in the deaths of several other African Americans.

Since the 1950s, Mississippi has been a center of racial violence involving the quest for Civil Rights. Numerous African Americans and whites were detained, beaten, killed and driven out of the state. The lynching of 14-year-old **Emmett Till** in August 1955 for supposedly insulting a white woman sparked the modern struggle for African American equality and self-determination.

During the Freedom Summer campaign of 1964, aimed at registering disenfranchised African Americans to vote, three Civil Rights workers **Michael Schwerner, James Chaney** and **Andrew Goodman** were brutally murdered by the Ku Klux Klan, some of whom were members of local law-enforcement agencies in Neshoba County. These youth joined others who met a similar fate including **George W. Lee** (1955), **Herbert Lee** (1961) and **Vernon Dahmer** (1966), to only name a few.

### **Alabama and the Roy Moore Albatross**

Allegations of sexual misconduct against Judge Roy Moore of Alabama forced many conservative Republicans to withdraw support from his candidacy for the U.S. Senate. Moore denied all of the allegations and sought to cast aspersion on the accusers who were teenagers during the time of the purported attacks.

Moore has made several statements that reinforced his reputation as a conservative Christian opposed to the rights of women and LGBTQ people. He blamed the lack of Christian adherence for the mass shootings which have taken place with increased frequency throughout the U.S.

In July 2015 Moore said:

“I’m sorry, but this country was not founded on Muhammad. It was not founded on Buddha. It was not founded on secular humanism. It was founded on God.”

Earlier in 2002, he emphasized that:

“The common law designates homosexuality as an inherent evil, and if a person openly engages in such a practice, that fact alone would render him or her (as) an unfit parent.”

In regard to African enslavement in North America, an economic system which lasted for nearly 250 years from 1619 to the defeat of the Confederacy in 1865, Moore was quoted as saying:

“I think it was great at the time when families were united—even though we had slavery—they cared for one another. Our families were strong, our country had a direction.” (Newsweek, Dec. 9)

Trump traveled to Pensacola, Florida on December 8 for a rally which was in effect a get out the vote gathering for Judge Moore. At the Pensacola meeting, just 25 miles from the Alabama border, Trump urged participants to vote for Moore on December 12.

This event was held in the aftermath of a visit by Trump’s chief strategist **Steve Bannon** to the state of Alabama to campaign for Moore. Bannon, who left the White House in recent months, returned to the alt-right publication Breitbart News.

**Doug Jones** as a U.S. Attorney appointed by former **President Bill Clinton** during the 1990s prosecuted two of the four men who were responsible for the Ku Klux Klan bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church which killed four African American girls on September 15, 1963. Victims of the bombing, which took place less than three weeks after the historic March on Washington, were **Denise McNair**, 11; **Carole Robertson**, 14; **Addie Mae Collins**, 14; and **Cynthia Wesley**, 14.

**Thomas Edwin Blanton Jr.**, was convicted in 2001 and **Bobby Frank Cherry** in 2002. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) under former director **J. Edgar Hoover** had documented evidence to prove that Blanton and Cherry were involved in the conspiracy to bomb the church. Yet this information remained classified for decades after the incident.

**Herman Frank Cash**, another assailant, had already died by the time of the trial in the early 2000s. The first conviction was handed down against **Robert Edward Chambliss** in 1977 some fourteen years after the bombing. Jones had attended the Chambliss trial as a law student.

African American voters played a pivotal role in the defeat of Moore. The division within the white electorate and the overwhelming support of African Americans and Latino voters resulted in the narrow victory by Jones of approximately 1.5 percent.

### **Which Road towards African American Liberation?**

Of course with the recent defeats by Republican candidates in Virginia and Alabama, the Democratic electorate has been reinvigorated. However, this will not automatically translate into a greater commitment on the part of the U.S. ruling class and state structures for the full realization of the demands of the African American people

Interestingly enough initial reports indicate that a larger percentage of African Americans turned out to vote for Jones than did Hillary Clinton in the 2016 presidential race which brought Trump to power. Clinton was unable to inspire the necessary enthusiasm among nationally oppressed groups resulting in her monumental defeat within the Electoral College.

Consequently, an independent political direction is still required for further progress aimed at full equality and self-determination. Even with Trump’s blatant racist pandering to an ever shrinking political base where his approval rating has sunk to an abysmal 32 percent, the Democratic Party as a whole is providing no real program to mobilize the African American people.

Another telling incident occurred just one day after the defeat of Moore in Alabama. Omarosa Manigault, an African American aide to Trump, was dropped from the staff of the administration in what was said to be either a resignation or termination. Although early claims conveyed that Manigault had resigned, other reports indicated that she was walked out of the White House at the aegis of Chief of Staff General John Kelly.

At any rate, Trump is being revealed as a failed president. Even the conservative USA Today newspaper in an editorial published on December 14 said that he is unfit for office.

Moreover, as it relates to the overall status of the African American people, bloc voting, direct action and mass mobilizations as tactics have been used effectively since the middle 20th century to achieve short term goals both on a symbolic and substantive level. However, the strategic objectives aimed at total freedom require a far deeper institution building methodology. The necessity for fundamental transformation of the economy and political superstructure can only be achieved through independent revolutionary organization designed to create a new social order based on the acquisition of a genuinely egalitarian society.

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