
“The Secret Heart of America”

Lyndon Baines Johnson’s Bold Synthesis of American Thought

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Rarely . . . does an issue lay bare the secret heart of America itself. Rarely are we met with a challenge . . . to the values and the purposes and the meaning of our beloved nation. The issue of equal rights for American Negroes is such an issue. And should we defeat every enemy, and should we double our wealth and conquer the stars, and still be unequal to this issue, then we will have failed as a people and as a nation.¹

November 26, 1963, was raw and wet in Washington, D.C. Just four days earlier an assassin’s bullet had thrust Lyndon Baines Johnson (1908–1973) into the presidency. Now, he sat with advisors in the dining room of his sprawling ten-bedroom estate in northwest Washington and pondered just what he aimed to achieve. The next day, he would address a joint session of Congress and a national television audience—a kind of inaugural address. His advisors agreed on one thing: Stay clear of civil rights. Bringing it up would offend the Southern Democrats and, besides, John F. Kennedy’s Civil Rights Bill was a lost cause.²

President Johnson (LBJ) had other ideas. He was already famous for coming on like a tidal wave, as Vice President Hubert Humphrey later put it, and now he interrupted the talk of trimming in his booming Texas way: “Well, what the hell’s the presidency for?”³ From those first days, LBJ decided to make the explosive matters of race and civil rights central to his domestic policy agenda.

JOHNSON’S PHILOSOPHY

Over time, three distinctive features coalesced into Lyndon Johnson’s philosophy of governance. In effect, he took three very diverse American themes—all present since the Founding—and hammered them into his unique American legacy.

Three Principles

First, Johnson unabashedly relied on Congress and the national government to solve problems. He was an admirer of Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s (FDR) New Deal and his presidency reflected that fact. Johnson would win the blockbuster Civil Rights Act, a Voting Rights Act, Medicare, Medicaid, a War on Poverty, the Housing and Urban Development Act (which

created the Department of Housing and Urban Development), the National Endowments for Humanities and Arts, the Food Stamp Program, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the National Vehicle Motor Safety Act—and the list goes on and on.⁴ These programs included, arguably, the most consequential federal interventions ever undertaken in health care, in education, in housing, and in other areas.

Second, more than any president since Abraham Lincoln, Lyndon Johnson decisively supported racial civil rights. From that very first speech, five days into his presidency, Johnson boldly put civil rights at the top of his policy agenda. Soon LBJ would articulate his vision of a Great Society and boost the end of racism and the elimination of poverty into national goals. President Johnson would rearticulate the basic values of American liberalism, recognizing freedom as a prerequisite for civic participation; but, to him, freedom was not enough and prosperity on its own terms was insufficient to make a just society. Johnson would win the most far-reaching civil rights legislation of the twentieth century and championed a new liberalism in immigration; with the Hart-Celler legislation of 1965, the United States reopened the golden gates to a new wave of immigrants. That change in immigration, along with the civil rights and voting rights laws, remade the United States and its politics. Perhaps no other president—and certainly none since the end of Reconstruction (1877)—has made racial justice as central to his administration. And no president in the last 140 years (again, since the end of Reconstruction) transformed the rules governing civil rights like the Johnson administration did.

Third, Johnson tried a unique approach to federalism, what he called “creative federalism”: The federal government partnered directly with local communities and civic groups, bypassing the traditional channels of state and local government to funnel material benefits directly to poor and minority populations. This meant organizing direct citizen participation and, perhaps chimerically, trying to bypass the state governments themselves. After all, it was the state and local governments that had thrown up formidable resistance to civil rights, voting rights, and school desegregation through Jim Crow in the South and a kind of *de facto* apartheid in the North. In an effort to win racial justice, LBJ tried to rewrite the essential rules of federalism. Here, Franklin Roosevelt’s nationalism met Thomas Jefferson’s autonomous communities.

In sharp contrast to these signature domestic policy innovations, Johnson simply applied conventional wisdom—containing communism—to foreign policy. In this, he was ambushed by history. The international framework changed dramatically, leaving his Vietnam policy high and dry: The desperate struggle against international communism ran into the reality that communist countries, far from being a monolithic block, were full of rivalries and conflicts—as likely to fight one another as to engage the United States and its allies. Johnson acknowledged the change, at the end of his administration, when he finally repudiated the Cold War doctrine. As with his domestic policies, we still live with the legacy of Johnson’s foreign policy, and particularly, the Vietnam War.

Success and Failure

The Johnson administration’s efforts profoundly changed America. Medicare and Medicaid, together, now offer health insurance to more than 130 million Americans—the world’s largest government health insurance programs. Forty-five million people participate in nutrition programs that grew largely out of food stamps. His civil rights legislation fundamentally changed American race (and gender) relations. In 1959, a census of black families found 55

percent in poverty; by 1966 that number was down to 42 percent, and by the end of the Johnson administration down to 32 percent (it is 22 percent in 2017).⁵ The immigration debate today traces directly back to the legal changes in 1965. The contemporary federal budget likely has more spending rooted in the Johnson administration than in any other single administration. A half century later, the legacy of LBJ's political thought remains relevant and salient as ever to American political discourse: A robust national government committed to rights; racial equality; and the active democracy of citizen representation, today powerfully facilitated by new media.

Still, despite all his efforts, LBJ would find there are limits to what domestic policy can accomplish. Legislation to end Jim Crow in the South revolutionized the society but it could not solve *de facto* racism in Northern cities, nor could it, despite the progress, create genuine equality across the nation. Over the course of the Johnson presidency, a series of summer race riots spread from coast to coast and shook Johnson's faith in what liberal policies could accomplish, prompting a sharp turn to the Right in the administration's later years. The question within the administration turned from an optimistic question, "How can we accomplish as much as possible?" to a pessimistic rhetorical question, "How much could the federal government actually do to solve social problems?"

The backlash to the Johnson effort turned a majority of white voters (especially in the South) from Democrats to Republicans. A great unanswered (perhaps unanswerable) question hangs over the Johnson legacy: Was the backlash against the Democrats a response to an overbearing federal government, running roughshod over the states? Or was it a reaction to the brave effort to finally win civil rights and social justice, to finally answer Abraham Lincoln's 1854 call: "Let us re-adopt the Declaration of Independence, and with it, the practices, and policy, which harmonize with it."⁶

Events in foreign policy, chiefly revolving around the Vietnam War, would sap both the political and fiscal support necessary to make larger strides toward the Great Society and eventually brought down Johnson's presidency. LBJ stunned most political observers when he pulled out of his reelection contest in 1968. That election marked the end of a Democratic era that had run thirty-six years. The last poll of his presidency gave Johnson a 49 percent approval rating (39 percent disapproved)—ranking him sixth out of the ten postwar presidencies at the end of term.⁷

In sum, Johnson should be seen as making a unique contribution to American government. Like FDR he made a forceful national government commitment to social programs. He made a commitment to racial equality that few other presidents have made—certainly none since Reconstruction. And his creative federalism tried to restructure government into a federal-community partnership. Each effort would leave behind a long legacy. The result, with all its success and failure, is an administration that created the modern public policy state.

The next sections look at the three prongs to Lyndon Johnson's vision: the commitment to civil rights, formidable reliance on national government, and the effort to foster citizens' participation in local communities. It adds up to a singular merger of overarching American ideals which drew on the legacies of Abraham Lincoln, Franklin Roosevelt, and Thomas Jefferson.

THE FREEDOM AGENDA

On Wednesday, November 27, 1963, Johnson gave what is now known as the "Let Us Continue" speech before a joint session of Congress. As he put it, "An assassin's bullet has thrust

upon me the awesome burden of the Presidency.” Johnson mentioned multiple domestic and foreign policy goals in his first speech, but stressed two. He called on Congress to pass the Civil Rights Act and to pass a tax cut that had been promised by the Kennedy administration but that had stalled in Congress.⁸ In Johnson’s own words:

Our most immediate tasks are here on this Hill. First, no memorial oration or eulogy could more eloquently honor President Kennedy’s memory than the earliest possible passage of the Civil Rights Bill for which he fought so long. We have talked long enough in this country about equal rights. We have talked for a hundred years or more. It *is* time now to write the next chapter, and to write it in the books of law.⁹

Commitment to Civil Rights

Johnson made the passage of the Civil Right Act the first priority of his presidency, and he used several arguments to justify deciding to do so. First, it would honor the memory of Kennedy whose funeral had the nation in a state of mourning. Second, a century after the Civil War, the United States still did not have equal rights among the races. Finally, leaning on a moment of national unity, Johnson set forth an aspirational reason: “The time has come for Americans of all races and creeds and political beliefs to understand and to respect one another.” This last statement is a good summation of Johnson’s freedom agenda.¹⁰

The truth is that LBJ was thrust into power in the shadow of not one, but two former presidents. The first was John Fitzgerald Kennedy, whose legacy Johnson was careful to honor and protect, even while always trying to distinguish himself. But the second was the shadow of Abraham Lincoln, assassinated ninety-eight years before. The 1960s were the centennial of the U.S. Civil War. Johnson himself pushed through a bill creating the Civil War Centennial Commission back in 1957 when he was still senate majority leader. Ulysses S. Grant III was named commissioner in 1960, and by 1961 stamps commemorating the one hundredth anniversary of the first shots fired at Fort Sumter were available at post offices as festivities began nationwide.¹¹

In fact, just six months before he died, President Kennedy tasked then Vice President Johnson to give the keynote speech at the celebration of the one hundredth anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg on Memorial Day, May 30, 1963. Just as Johnson used the argument that we have been waiting one hundred years for equal rights in America in his first major speech as president, he used much the same rationale in his own “Gettysburg Address,” reminding the audience that, “One hundred years ago the slave was freed. One hundred years later, the Negro remains in bondage to the color of his skin.”¹² Johnson’s widespread usage of the phrase “one hundred years” throughout his speeches is not simply a rhetorical flourish, but rather an allusion to the work of Lincoln and the injustice that persisted in America in spite of it. Johnson made this clear at Gettysburg, warning Americans that:

Until justice is blind to color, until education is unaware of race, until opportunity is unconcerned with the color of men’s skins, emancipation will be a proclamation but not a fact. To the extent that the proclamation of emancipation is not fulfilled in fact, to that extent we shall have fallen short of assuring freedom to the free.¹³

This line illuminates Johnson use of the phrase “one hundred years.” The scourge of slavery goes back much further, of course, but Johnson did not refer back to the early American experience but constantly came back to emancipation. The implication was that not just emancipation, but all of Reconstruction was left incomplete for one hundred years, and the way

to complete it was by winning political, social, and racial equality in America. LBJ used this "completion of reconstruction" narrative as a justification for civil rights legislation. Johnson knew that many liberals and most of the Kennedy team were skeptical of his commitment to civil rights. After all, he was a Texan who had worked closely with the Southern Democrats in the Senate. How deep did his commitment to civil rights go? Johnson had pushed back, rather defensively, reminding his critics that, as senate majority leader, he had gotten legislation where he could. For example, he had negotiated the Civil Rights Acts of 1957 by withdrawing the literacy tests (a powerful tool used to disenfranchise people of color).

The Civil Rights Act of 1964

Now, however, he dedicated his administration to a more ambitious effort. The House passed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 ten weeks after Johnson's speech. Perhaps the most important moment in the House debate came when Southern representatives, led by Howard Smith of Virginia, voted to drop the word "sex" into the bill—the legislation would bar discrimination on the basis of "race, color, religion, *sex*, and national origin." The Southern representatives vainly hoped that adding gender would give Northern representatives a reason to vote against the bill. Anxious liberals—with the conspicuous exception of the seventeen women in the House of Representatives—tried to defeat the Southern strategy which would, over time, backfire into one of the most powerful consequences of the legislation.

The Senate took up the bill at the end of March 1964. Proponents faced a filibuster that lasted sixty working days until a cloture motion finally passed on June 19. The victory—only the second bill (and the first dealing with civil rights) ever to win over a filibuster—reminds us of LBJ's single greatest strength: Pulling laws out of Congress. The president always delegated the details, kept his eyes on the big principles, and oversaw every jot and turn of the internal maneuvering. On important votes in Congress, he had the highest box score of any modern president. And no victory looks larger than the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

The logic underlying the Civil Rights Act was the logic of an active state that would align American Founding principles with social practice. It rested on an expansive reading of the commerce clause of Article 1, section 8, of the Constitution. Title II of the Act proscribed discrimination in public accommodations such as hotels, restaurants, and entertainment venues. The constitutional authority that Congress relied upon to make such legislation was the commerce clause of Article 1 Section 8 of the constitution, which gives Congress the power to regulate interstate commerce. Congress defined an expansive reading of the word "commerce" directly in the law. The law stated that the operations of an establishment affect commerce if it serves or offers to serve interstate travelers, or if the products it serves or entertainment it offers have moved through an interstate supply chain, or if any operations physically located within the premises might affect commerce as defined in this way. The law went on to exempt private clubs not open to the public; but in using such an expansive definition of interstate commerce, it covered the vast majority of businesses engaged in public accommodation, no matter how local.¹⁴

Opponents of the Civil Rights Act, from Barry Goldwater (the Arizona senator and Republican presidential nominee in 1964) to George Wallace (the segregationist former-Democrat governor of Alabama who ran for president as the American Independent Party candidate in 1968), instantly charged that such an expansion of federal authority was a violation of property rights and states' rights. The nature of the law itself cemented an alliance that stretched back to the Civil War. Segregationists resisting civil rights kept discovering that overly racist

language lost national support; in contrast, attacks on overweening federal power, overstepping its bounds, won allies and applause. Goldwater remained quiet as the segregationists climbed on board and, together, they blasted the legitimacy of federal mandates that told private business owners whom they were required to serve. At the heart of the argument over politics, race, and society ran a controversial constitutional question: how far could the commerce clause stretch? Few acts stretched it as far as the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

The Civil Rights Act, blockbuster that it was, had one obvious, glaring omission. The law did nothing about the common methods of disenfranchising racial minorities: literacy tests and other restrictions. On the same day he signed the Civil Rights Act, Johnson issued new instructions to Attorney General Nicholas Katzenbach, informing him, "I want you to write me the goddamndest, toughest voting rights act that you can devise."¹⁵

Voting Rights

Johnson turned next to what had been even more elusive than civil rights: Medicare. He had tried mightily to win the legislation in 1964 only to see it blocked in the House. After his reelection he placed Medicare at the top of his agenda: It was labelled HR 1 and, given the ferocious opposition by the American Medical Association, he warned his allies that it had to be won quickly. On January 15, 1965, LBJ called Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and explained to him that, as a strategic matter, Medicare had to come first. There was not enough room on the agenda to do both at the same time.¹⁶

Events at Selma, Alabama, on "Bloody Sunday," March 7, 1965, would change Johnson's calculus. After Americans watched televised images of white police officers brutalizing black people marching peacefully in the name of freedom, there was no going back. Ten days later the Voting Rights Act was introduced in Congress. And Johnson seized the bully pulpit.

Johnson's March 16, 1965, speech to a joint session on Congress on voting rights was the defining statement of his freedom agenda. Johnson put the events of Selma in the context of his common themes of an unfinished post-Civil War reconstruction, the struggle for equal rights and respect, and the fundamental necessity of freedom for a functioning democracy. He began:

Mr. Speaker, Mr. President, members of the Congress, I speak tonight for the dignity of man and the destiny of democracy. I urge every member of both parties, Americans of all religions and of all colors, from every section of this country, to join me in that cause.

At times, history and fate meet at a single time in a single place to shape a turning point in man's unending search for freedom. So it was at Lexington and Concord. So it was a century ago at Appomattox. So it was last week in Selma, Alabama.¹⁷

LBJ insisted that the events in Selma were not to be taken in isolation as merely parts of a struggle-of-the-day, but rather as the latest chapter in a long struggle for the soul of American democracy. At stake was the fundamental meaning of America. He continued to the heart of his argument:

Rarely in any time does an issue lay bare the secret heart of America itself. Rarely are we met with a challenge, not to our growth or abundance, or our welfare or our security, but rather to the values and the purposes and the meaning of our beloved nation. The issue of equal rights for American Negroes is such an issue. And should we defeat every enemy, and should we double our wealth and conquer the stars, and still be unequal to this issue, then we will have failed as a people and as a nation.¹⁸

Johnson had just won the second-largest electoral college victory of the twentieth century. The economy was booming, and GDP growth hovered around 6 percent per year.¹⁹ Medicare and Medicaid stood poised to pass through Congress after two decades of battling over public health insurance. The launch pads for the Apollo mission were nearing completion. The United States—and the Democratic administration—were at the height of its powers and success. And here he was proposing a new metric of national worth. None of what they had accomplished, he rather bravely said, mattered as much as racial justice. Success would reflect promise of American democracy, and would enrich the national soul itself. Racial justice was the ultimate test of American ideals and values.

To drive home the centrality of American ideals and values to his argument for voting rights, Johnson continued:

This was the first nation in the history of the world to be founded with a purpose. The great phrases of that purpose still sound in every American heart, North and South:

"All men are created equal." "Government by consent of the governed." "Give me liberty or give me death." And those are not just clever words, and those are not just empty theories. In their name Americans have fought and died for two centuries and tonight around the world they stand there as guardians of our liberty risking their lives. . . .

To apply any other test, to deny a man his hopes because of his color or race or his religion or the place of his birth is not only to do injustice. It is to deny America and to dishonor the dead who gave their lives for American freedom.²⁰

Johnson applied the nation's fundamental values to the cause of civil rights. This cause, now, lay at the heart of America's logic; it rested on the very reason for the existence of the Republic. To deny racial equality was to deny the idea of America itself.

Johnson was, once again, evoking Lincoln. Lincoln had thought slavery left the nation's founding ideals "soiled and trailing in the dust." Johnson now invoked the same founding ideals to press for racial equality. But, as with the Civil Rights Act, winning voting rights required an expansive use of federal power.²¹

The Constitution itself left voting rights to the states. The states were left to specify "the time, place and manner" of American voting. The Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments lodged new limits on state behavior. But the idea of national government overseeing elections was a break from the historical tradition of American federalism. In fact, the only other time it had occurred was in the South under military rule after the Civil War during Reconstruction. After Reconstruction, national authority withdrew, once again, and left elections in the same place where they had always been lodged: the states. And it was the states that enforced voter discrimination.

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 offered a rare challenge to state control over voting. Specific states and localities with a history of discrimination—almost all in the South—would now be required to receive Department of Justice approval for their election plans. Any changes would have to be approved by the Justice Department. Those national rules would remain in place until June 2013, when the Supreme Court ruled (5–4) that, in Chief Justice John Robert's phrase, "the United States has changed" and the oversight had, in effect, done its job. The court struck down the section of the Voting Rights Act that established preclearance formulas defining the jurisdictions which would have to seek Department of Justice approval for their local or state election plans.²²

A Second Reconstruction

Both the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act created a tension. The Johnson administration argued for basic liberal rights. Yet the method for securing those rights powerfully strengthened the hand of the federal government; strong national power would enforce liberty. Johnson used Hamiltonian ends to attain Jeffersonian ideals.

Yet from another angle, this thinking made perfect sense. Finally putting some teeth into the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments for the sake of African American freedom was simply completing what had been left undone by the post-Civil War reconstruction. Viewed in this light, the movement for civil rights and voting rights were nothing more than a second reconstruction, meant to finish what had been started one hundred years prior. Put differently, LBJ's values are a reassertion of Northern victory, and an outright rejection of the Southern values that brought about the three-fifths compromise in Article 1, section 2, of the Constitution.²³

In sum, LBJ locked racial equality at the heart of the American experiment. He used it as a test of national worth. And, crucially, Johnson rearranged American power relations, both expanding the role of government in private society and expanding the power of the federal government over state governments to try to achieve it. In the process, Johnson evoked both the dreams of the recently assassinated JFK and the unfinished business of Lincoln a century before. He tied the long struggle for American self-governance and equality under the law to his freedom agenda and made these the core of his argument for civil rights and voting rights. He argued that his methods are the right ones required to save the very soul of America; and in doing so, he made technical arguments about the limits of interstate commerce and the relative powers that should be afforded to state or federal government seem trite and banal. Of his many contributions to American political thought, Johnson's freedom agenda—standing in the legacy of Abraham Lincoln—was his most convincing, powerful, and effective articulation of American ideals.

THE GREAT SOCIETY: SOARING IDEALS— AND MORE GOVERNMENT

Despite his powerful focus on freedom, Johnson understood early on that freedom alone is not enough to build a great society. The Great Society would come to be known as Johnson's domestic program with all of its components—his answer to Roosevelt's New Deal or Truman's Fair Deal or Kennedy's New Horizons. He first used the phrase in a commencement address at the University of Michigan on May 22, 1964. In this speech, Johnson made the familiar overtures to ideals and again argued that prosperity and power were not enough:

For in your time we have the opportunity to move not only toward the rich society and the powerful society, but upward to the Great Society. The Great Society rests on abundance and liberty for all. It demands an end to poverty and racial injustice, to which we are totally committed in our time.²⁴

Johnson set forth two broad goals of the Great Society. The first was, once again, ending racial injustice. The second goal, to end poverty, was a different and far more material matter than the ideal-driven arguments for freedom and American ideals that Johnson made for civil rights and voting rights.

Johnson imagined the Great Society as something aspirational—a constant challenge, something the nation would work toward. It might never be fully achieved. In his more eloquent phrasing:

It is a place where men are more concerned with the quality of their goals than the quantity of their goods. But most of all, the Great Society is not a safe harbor, a resting place, a final objective, a finished work. It is a challenge constantly renewed, beckoning us toward a destiny where the meaning of our lives matches the marvelous products of our labor.²⁵

In a way, Johnson's Great Society reflects John Winthrop's City on a Hill, itself a quotation of the Sermon on the Mount. It imagines the nation as a model; and it sets high aspirations for the nation to meet as a test of greatness. For this ideal, too, Johnson believed that the federal government was the proper tool.

Johnson initially began with a two-pronged approach to waging war on poverty. The first was to expand the Social Security Act. He called for an expansion of the Social Security Act that would include Medicare, Medicaid, increasing minimum wage, increasing aid to families with dependent children, increasing old age and disability pensions, and Food Stamps. These provisions became the Social Security Amendments of 1965 and 1967, the largest expansion of the American social safety net, at least since the initial passage of the Social Security Act in 1935.

A host of other federal programs touched every area of public policy: The largest federal expansion into education which, until the Johnson years, had been almost entirely a state and local priority; the creation of the Departments of Transportation and Housing and Urban Development; the establishment of a Public Broadcasting System; car and highway safety standards; consumer protection; anti-poverty programs; gun control; and the National Endowments for the Arts and Humanities. The list runs on to mass transit legislation, early environmental laws, housing programs, model cities legislation, nutrition programs, work safety regulations, and many more.²⁶

MAXIMUM FEASIBLE PARTICIPATION

Johnson knew that the traditional federalism introduced serious roadblocks to civil rights. How could Americans confront injustice and poverty if federal funds went through outspoken segregationist governors like George Wallace of Alabama or Ross Barnett of Mississippi? Or for that matter, through urban regimes across the North that had always shunted African Americans to the side?

To get around these traditional barriers, he followed the advisors who suggested a new system of community action. The federal government would provide direct support to poor people who, participating directly in local agencies, would manage funds and programs in their communities. This meant bypassing the traditional method of financing local programs which funneled the funds through state and local governments. Instead, Johnson insisted the Great Society required a "creative federalism":

The solution to these problems does not rest on a massive program in Washington, nor can it rely solely on the strained resources of local authority. They require us to create new concepts of cooperation, a creative federalism, between the National Capital and the leaders of local communities.²⁷

Johnson oversaw the passage of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, which included over 1,000 local Community Action Agencies. The program would also establish such familiar programs as Head Start, Job Corps, VISTA, Work Study, Adult Basic Education, Neighborhood Youth Corps, Community Health Centers, Legal Services, Senior Centers, and others—many of them bubbling up from citizen participation. The efforts would be based in local communities and directed by local residents. As LBJ put it,

Poverty is a national problem, requiring improved national organization and support. But this attack, to be effective, must also be organized at the State and the local level and must be supported and directed by State and local efforts. For the war against poverty will not be won here in Washington. It must be won in the field, in every private home, in every public office, from the courthouse to the White House. The program I shall propose will emphasize this cooperative approach.²⁸

An Office of Economic Opportunity, located in the White House, would organize not-for-profit corporations. In many cases, they were run by poor people in the communities these programs were meant to serve; often, as critics sardonically noted, “poor” and “community” became synonyms for people of color. The aspiration for shifting power was real: Federal funds would flow directly to the community boards with little or no initial input from state or local governments. Over time, the model—maximum feasible participation—spread to health boards (known as Health Systems Agencies), to education boards (where community residents engaged in some high profile battles with teachers’ unions), and to all manner of local programs.

This method of empowering community members to become leaders directly was modeled in part on an early study of juvenile delinquency in Chicago directed by Richard Cloward and Lloyd Ohlin. Their efforts became simply known as “community action.”²⁹ With federal funds and assistance in building organizations, local poor communities could learn to provide their own services and build up their own political and social capital; that, in turn, might inject previously excluded interests and groups into the pluralist scrum of local politics. Of course, this meant growing potential challengers to the local political orders. Mayors and governors quickly figured out that President Johnson’s “creative federalism” meant bypassing them and fostering new bases of power. Needless to say, they resisted.

The effort to directly empower communities came under enormous criticism. Daniel Patrick Moynihan, then a presidential advisor and later a U.S. senator, summarized the critique and gave it a name in his book, *Maximum Feasible Misunderstanding*. Amid criticism of chaos and charges of social engineering, the effort to organize community members achieved one often overlooked goal: It did socialize a new generation of activists into the processes of urban politics and policy. African Americans and, to a lesser extent, Latinos with no experience in government (indeed, systematically excluded before the new agencies offered them a place), suddenly were empowered to negotiate with the urban powers. They rose up to speak for a constituency that had been largely excluded.

As Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward would later suggest, a generation of potentially radical community members had their energies diverted from disruption into pluralist politics as usual.³⁰ When the Nixon administration permitted mayors to take control of the community agencies, almost none did so. They found, over time, that the agencies were channeling protesters into mainstream politics. The need to balance the budget and to win new grants turned activists into bureaucrats.³¹

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE GREAT SOCIETY

The Great Society drew on many traditions in American political thought. In effect, the Johnson approach forged together what had been discordant ideas: The Jeffersonian tradition of communal power, the Progressive tradition of national leadership, and the principles of black political thought.

First, there is the obvious Jeffersonian foundation. The entire Johnson program begins by taking the Declaration of Independence seriously: All people are created equal. Equality and rights were the touchstone of the civil rights movement, and it found its way into the aspiration of community action. Here were the classical republican values of community leadership and self-sufficiency. The programs tried to build civic capacity by giving previously repressed groups (mainly people of color) control over local programs and civic organizations. The idea was rooted in the values of community self-ownership. The central idea draws on the long Jeffersonian ideal: The people themselves will rule most effectively if they govern themselves—if they have a real stake in the institutions which operate on them.

At the same time, the Johnson’s vision fundamentally violates the Jeffersonian ideal by relying on the national government. The new civic organizations are formed, not by citizens coming together and drawing on long-standing “habits of the heart,” as Tocqueville called them, but by the action of the national government. The national government provided the funds, devised the (national) regulations, approved the local budgets, and used its own muscle to create political space for community action.

This strong central presence draws directly on the Progressive tradition as reinterpreted by President Franklin Roosevelt. Indeed, Johnson had climbed the political ladder as an avid New Dealer. He drew on Progressive and New Deal notions when he championed broad economic reforms, the expansion of social insurance, the strengthening of the safety nets, and the fight against inequality. Moreover, like the original Progressives, he pushed to expand the franchise through the Voting Rights Act. A host of programs, highlighted by the creation of Medicare and Medicaid, drew on a reform tradition of using federal power to expand progressive government. Indeed, Medicare itself had roots that could be traced back to the Roosevelt and Truman administrations. In effect, the Johnson idea forged the Jeffersonian dream of communal governance with the Progressive idea of national leadership.

Johnson did not formulate positions in a vacuum. His administration was influenced—and pushed—by the civil rights movement and, more generally, by black political thought. One debate running through African American writing focused on how people of color ought to organize themselves for politics. Booker T. Washington’s *Atlanta Compromise* imagined building up the black community from within. Build social, economic, and political capital from the ground up, argued Washington; train skillful men and women and build wealth and power through their work and their achievements. W. E. B. DuBois, on the other hand, famously criticized these methods as too passive, too timid, and too naive. Black citizens would need political muscle: the right to vote, civic equality, and equal access to education according to ability. His *Niagara Movement* evolved into the formation of the NAACP and, from the very beginning, tried to exert federal power over the states and localities through the expansion and enforcement of rights granted in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments. Finally, black power took these ideas—build black community, win the vote and civic equality—and rooted them in a demand for control over local institutions: People of color ought to take control

of the forces that shaped black lives and black communities. The Johnson program drew on the long tradition of black political thought in almost every aspect of its program. The Civil Rights Act (DuBois), the Voting Rights Act (again, DuBois), the idea of self-sufficiency (Washington) and the effort to empower local groups and communities (DuBois and black power) all reflected a century-long effort to mobilize the black community.

Johnson's "creative federalism" blended these traditions to try and break traditional American federalism—and the racial oppression it enforced. New laws and programs stretched federal authority under the commerce clause and the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments. Federal programs used national action to organize networks of citizen representation that tried to address a wide gamut of issues—from fighting poverty to providing health care.

The Great Society, constructed from 1964 to 1967, predates John Rawls's *A Theory of Justice*, which would appear in the following decade. But, at its core, it groped toward precisely the same principles. Rawls—among the greatest twentieth-century political theorists—established a liberal theory of justice rooted in two principles. The first is the greatest equal liberty principle: "Each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive scheme of equal basic liberties compatible with a similar scheme of liberties for others." The second is the difference principle: "Social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both (a) reasonably expected to be to everyone's advantage, and (b) attached to positions and offices open to all."³² Here we find a much more formalized version of a theory that, at its core, makes much the same argument that Johnson groped toward in the 1965 Howard University commencement address, when he exclaimed that "Freedom is not enough."

In sum, Johnson argued for freedom. But, he argued, freedom—ambitious as it was to try and achieve—was not enough. LBJ was arguing, ultimately, for moving America toward a Rawlsian vision of liberalism with justice. In order to do this, he tried to break traditional federalism—federal, state, and local—seeking a creative federalism that linked national power directly to community activism. True national equality required an expanded federal authority linked to networks of active citizens. Federal aid would build civic capacity in the republican tradition, flowing past existing governments—with their biases—and directly to communities. Here was an effort to empower the disempowered, to ensure they had an ownership stake in the institutions that were meant to lift them out of poverty. Johnson may have pulled from several different strands of American political thought. But the goals of his Great Society were clear: To use federal authority to end poverty and racial injustice in America.

What went wrong? Johnson was too late. The Civil Rights Act was an extraordinary breakthrough. But it came more than a decade after the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Demands for simple justice across the South faced massive white resistance—from state laws, local polices, law enforcement, vigilantes, and a culture backlash. Confederate flags were defiantly run up the state house flagpoles. That white backlash in the South created, in turn, a black backlash in the North and blew up into violence and urban insurrection.

Insurrections in Harlem, Rochester, and—most dramatically—Watts (Los Angeles) rocked the United States and set off four summers of urban violence between 1964 and 1968. The immediate cause was often (white) police violence; the underlying cause, however, was both inequality and fury over the decades of white backlash to simple civil rights. Whatever the causes, the consequences were fatal for an administration that had so unabashedly committed itself to civil rights and racial equality.

No longer ahead of the issues, as it had been in its early days, the administration found itself reacting to events and scrambling to catch up. Civil rights funding and commitments began to diminish as the white majority grew terrified of black nationalism and urban violence.

Still, Johnson made one final push for civil rights. His Civil Rights Convention in 1966 and his Kerner Commission on Riots in 1967 had each recommended action on housing discrimination. This would become the Civil Rights Act of 1968, better known as the "Fair Housing Act." But, after the 1966 midterms, Johnson found his power over Congress diminished. It was not until the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., on April 4, 1968, that Congress acquiesced and passed the Civil Rights Act of 1968—the last major piece of domestic legislation passed under President Johnson. Funding to expand Great Society programs waned over the administration's final years and months as the Vietnam War demanded attention and funding.

Liberal allies had slowly warmed to Martin Luther King. Liberal Democrats and Republicans both supported and won the Civil Rights Act of 1964. But in the face of racial riots across the North, white supporters fled. Johnson had put it boldly: If we are not up to achieving racial justice, "we shall have failed as a nation." A generation of young men and women, black and white, grew up drawing the obvious conclusion: The promise of America had failed. We still live with the consequences today.

FOREIGN POLICY

In foreign policy, as with civil rights, the Johnson administration was out of step with history. The administration came to office reflecting the Truman Doctrine: The United States would contain the Soviet Union and communism at every turn. President Kennedy had given a robust rendition of this doctrine in his celebrated Inaugural Address: "We shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty."³³

When Johnson stepped into the oval office, there were 16,000 American soldiers in Vietnam (and 122 combat deaths that year). On the ground assessments varied: from gloomy depictions of a deteriorating South Vietnamese regime to optimistic scenarios that the war could be won with the application of American muscle. In the end, Johnson drew on the containment doctrine, originally formulated by George Kennan, and vastly escalated American presence in Vietnam.³⁴

In Latin America, Johnson extended the Cold War politics of containment. He dispatched 22,000 troops to the Dominican Republic to stop the rise of communism and the danger of "another Cuba" (to the enormous criticism from across Latin America, which charged the United States with "Yankee imperialism"). The administration protected Guantanamo Bay from Cuban takeover and shut down Panamanian riots over the Canal Zone—although it eventually signed an agreement turning the canal over to Panama in 1999.

Still, Vietnam was the crucible of American foreign politics. As the war expanded, two vast changes shattered the assumptions on which the war—and the Johnson administration's grand strategy—were based. The Cold War between liberty and communism began to crack, and it became entangled in the violent battle against segregation.

First, the entire notion of a Communist monolith—still vital when Johnson took office—began to evaporate. Communist nations appeared to each go their own way, displaying tensions and animosity among themselves. The Soviet Union and China seemed as likely to fight one another as they were to clash with the United States; even more to the point, China and North Vietnam were uncomfortable allies with a long legacy of conflict between themselves. The monolithic menace appeared to drain away from communism. Johnson's

successor, Richard Nixon, would soon underscore the point by opening diplomatic doors to both the Soviet Union and China. The American Cold War paradigm had stood on a vision of democracy standing up to tyranny, of good versus evil. But now international morality ran to gray. Americans intellectuals, college students, and (eventually) congressional leaders began questioning the entire Cold War paradigm: Who wants to “bear any burden” or “pay any price” against an ambiguous foe? The global battle against communism had defined American foreign policy since World War II. Now perceptions changed, stranding a Vietnam policy that suddenly seemed lost in time.

Third World nations, like Vietnam, now seemed more focused on nationalism and self-identity than in the global clash of ideologies. Vietnam vividly reflected the new ambiguities. On June 11, 1963, journalists in Saigon were advised to go to a busy intersection. As they gathered, a Buddhist monk, Thich Quang Duc, sat in a lotus position while two colleagues doused him with gasoline: he then lit himself ablaze. Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist David Halberstam was standing on that street corner and remembered the horror that swept the crowd, the smell of burning flesh, and the eerie composure of the man ablaze. “I was too shocked to cry,” he later wrote, “too confused to take notes or ask questions, too bewildered to even think.” On the Left a startling new theme stirred: Perhaps the United States was on the wrong side.³⁵

Second, the complications in Vietnam interacted with events back home. Many American’s (and especially opinion leaders) began to see the United States itself in a radical new way. The virtuous nation fighting tyrants in the name of liberty ran headlong into a postcolonial swamp. The rising new nations in Africa and Asia, constantly in the news, had won their freedom against imperialists who were reluctant to let go. Back home, the civil rights leaders began to cast their movement as part of the irresistible international surge toward freedom. Martin Luther King, Jr., repeatedly invoked Mahatma Gandhi’s heroic nonviolence and, beginning with the Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech in December 1964, expressed kinship with the freedom struggle around the globe. As the war dragged on in Vietnam and racial violence rose in the United States—through the middle 1960s—a subversive idea rocked American foreign policy: Was American fire power, like the segregationist police forces, repressing a Third World freedom movement? Were the freedom fighters in American cities, somehow, akin to Vietnamese freedom fighters fighting great power imperialism?

Those questions split the Johnson administration, its allies, and the American public. While public opinion still registered support for the war to the end of the Johnson administration, Vietnam divided liberals and opinion leaders in a profound way: Was the United States a benign power standing for freedom around the world? Or had it snatched up the banner of imperialism and taken up the dirty fight to repress people of color, at home and around the world?

That division reflected the division that sprang up in racial politics: The good nation versus the repressive one. The great challenge from Johnson’s most eloquent address hung over the nation: “Should we defeat every enemy, should we double our wealth and conquer the stars, and still be unequal to this issue [racial equality], then we will have failed as a people and as a nation.”

The division that emerged, from both domestic and foreign policy, realigned American political parties. For all Johnson’s efforts to commit the United States to a freedom agenda, at home and abroad, the majority of white Americans—and the solid South—left the Democratic party and became staunch Republicans. Over time, people of color would move firmly

to the Democrats. That racial sort would form the foundation of a new and perhaps unprecedented partisanship in American politics.³⁶

CONCLUSION: THE LEGACY OF LBJ'S THOUGHT

There are three legacies that Lyndon Johnson bequeathed to American political thought. What is unique about them is their combination. Johnson took three very different American ideas and hammered them into a unique governing vision.

First, he used national government. In this he reflected his New Deal Democratic roots and, like the New Deal, drew on Progressive-era ideas for using national power to foster social justice and efficient government.

Second, from the start, he committed his administration to civil rights and social justice. More than any other president since Reconstruction, he challenged the nation to reach for racial and social equality.

Third, he used federal power to foster direct citizen participation in governance. Here was a controversial effort to empower a whole new class (and race) of activists and usher them into the pluralist cacophony of American politics.

One final legacy might be tacked onto the three that stood at the heart of the Johnson vision. At the very end of his administration, when he announced that he would not seek reelection, he rejected the Truman Doctrine and the American Cold War policy of containment.³⁷ Let us take each contribution in turn.

Federal Power

LBJ expanded federal power in myriad ways. The rationale for this expansion always rested in his Great Society goals to end poverty and racial injustice in America. But the constitutional justifications he would use to achieve these goals through federal government intervention rested heavily on the commerce clause of Article 1, section 8, and on the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments. He moved forward in New Deal tradition to enact strong federal policies that enforced uniform national rights of citizenship and limited state, local, and private power to defy federal rule. In doing so, he also moved forward in the tradition of W. E. B. DuBois, especially through voting rights, which answered the potential DuBois saw in his 1935 classic, *Black Reconstruction in America*.³⁸ By winning Medicare and Medicaid, he followed in the tradition of Franklin Roosevelt. And by signing the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts, he worked in Lincoln's tradition and helped complete what political scientist Richard Vallely called “the second reconstruction.”³⁹

Racial Justice

LBJ also rearticulated liberalism with a special focus on racial and social justice. He made race central to his presidency in a way no president had (or has) done since Reconstruction. Johnson argued that real social and racial justice ought to be central to liberalism and his argument, and the legislation he won, changed the United States—often in ways that took a generation or more to grasp fully. Most obviously, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 created nothing less than a racial revolution, a second and

far more successful reconstruction. In addition, it was his idea to end the racial and ethnic quotas in the U.S. immigration system by designing and signing the Immigration Act of 1965—known as the Hart-Celler Act—into law. Tangential programs were also designed to force integration. Health clinics and other War on Poverty-funded establishments were required to be integrated and serve anyone. Medicare integrated hospitals throughout the nation; implementers required desegregation before certifying hospitals to participate in the (lucrative) program and all but thirty small hospitals (less than half of one percent) clung to segregation by the time the law went into effect a year after passage. The Civil Rights Act of 1968—known as the Fair Housing Act—prohibited housing discrimination that was rampant in Northern cities. Johnson's actions and commitment—along with his extraordinary success moving legislation through Congress—pushed the United States much closer to something like John Rawls's vision of justice in a liberal society.

Citizen Participation

Johnson vastly expanded direct citizen participation with the federal government through the War on Poverty, community action agencies, and a host of smaller programs—in health, education, housing, and more—that mandated direct citizen participation. By both expanding federal government and going around state and local governments to employ federal resources, Johnson created fertile ground for the growth of the grant-operating, not-for-profit firm in America. This is perhaps most obviously seen in the creation of a massive federally funded not-for-profit sector that today takes up the primary role in the delivery of on-the-ground social services.

Many of the Great Society programs, such as Head Start, Americorps, and Community Health Centers, have grown significantly over time. They continue to provide real benefits that limit the deprivation of the poor in America. Twenty-seven million Americans now have access to primary healthcare through one of over nine thousand health centers. One million children a year now have access to the education and other basic benefits provided by Head Start, and their parents have the opportunity to work while their children are cared for. Most of these programs still draw members of their boards of directors from the poor communities they serve. Beyond directorships, they employ hundreds of thousands of people. The remaining War on Poverty programs represent significant nationwide operations that are largely federally funded with limited state and local involvement. Directors must learn to write, win, and comply with federal government administrative procedures and grant terms.⁴⁰

Foreign Policy Shifts

Johnson's failure in Vietnam marks the end of the strategy of containing communism as a single monolithic bloc. In his first year in office, on November 3, 1969, President Richard Nixon delivered a speech on Vietnam—and on Vietnamization of the war—that, in some ways, echoed LBJ's own hard-earned wisdom: Truman's doctrine of containment had ended in both political parties. A new era began when Nixon visited China and began an era of negotiating with communist regimes.

The legacy of Vietnam imprinted the Democrats to the present day. Democratic presidents after Johnson tended to retain the Progressive tradition of internationalism, but were far more reluctant to engage in large-scale military intervention than were Roosevelt, Truman, or Johnson. Democratic politics did not take up the old Republican mantle of

isolationism. But there was a clear shift toward restraint and limited military engagement. Interestingly, this opened up for the rise of interventionist, internationalist neoconservatives in the Republican Party in the 1990s and 2000s.

Johnson's Legacy

In the end, Johnson aspired to great things. More than any president since the Civil War era he committed his administration, and the United States, to ending racial injustice and poverty. Of course, he did not fully succeed. But he left behind blockbuster laws that bent American policy, and perhaps more important, American political thought, to those ends.

For better and for worse, the United States ended up with a larger, more ambitious federal government, an expansive, non-profit sector reliant on federal grants, a defeat in Vietnam, and two parties that, for the first time, grew divided around the race line. But the United States also became a far more just place, offering unprecedented opportunities for women and people of color; the end of racial apartheid across the South; a voting system that was far more fair; housing rights; and health insurance for over 130 million children, poor adults, disabled citizens, and people over sixty-five.

Johnson left behind a more just society. He articulated a bold new metric by which Americans might judge their nation. He identified the secret heart, as he put it, of the United States itself. Both the ideals he struggled to achieve and the methods he deployed to achieve them define American politics—and the debate between the parties—to this day.

NOTES

1. "Transcript of the Johnson Address on Voting Rights to Joint Session of Congress." Accessed January 7, 2018. <http://www.nytimes.com/books/98/04/12/specials/johnson-rightsadd.html>.

2. In 1963, before he was assassinated, JFK called for the passage of a Civil Rights Bill that would eventually become the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The bill was held up in the House Rules Committee by Rules Chairman Howard W. Smith, a Democrat and vocal segregationist from Virginia. LBJ saw it as his duty to move this bill to passage in the House and on through the Senate where it faced further difficulties and a dramatic 54 days of filibuster by "the Southern Bloc," which consisted of 18 Democratic senators and 1 Republican senator (it took 67 votes—two-thirds of the Senate—to break a filibuster then, not the 60 votes it takes today). Ultimately, Northern Democrats and Republicans joined together and through several amendments and a cloture vote, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 passed. Perhaps the biggest change that came from the debate was that prohibitions on discrimination were extended to include women—an amendment introduced by Smith in the House in the failed hopes of giving Northerners an excuse to vote against it.

3. Robert A. Caro, *The Passage of Power: The Years of Lyndon Johnson* (New York: Knopf, 2012), xv. Hubert Humphrey quoted in Roger Dallek, *Lyndon Johnson: Portrait of a President* (New York: Oxford, 2004), 87.

4. The full list of legislation and major actions taken by Johnson is truly extensive. Some of the most important bills and actions enacted under Johnson (under the 88th through 90th Congresses) include: Tax Cut and Reform (HR 8363), Civil Rights Act of 1964 (HR 7152), Mass Transportation (S 6), Federal Pay Raise (HR 11049), Economic Opportunity Act (S 2642), Food Stamps (HR 10222), Omnibus Housing (S 3049), Interest Equalization Tax (HR 8000), Wilderness System (S 4), Conservation Fund (HR 3846), Foreign Aid (HR 11380), Education (NDEA, Impacted Areas) (S 3060), Elementary-Secondary Education Act (HR 2362), Voting Rights Act of 1965 (S 1564), Omnibus Housing (HR 7984), Regional Development (S 1648), Manpower Amendments (S 974), Foreign Aid (HR 7750),

Department of Housing (HR 6927), Arts and Humanities Foundation (S 1483), Water Pollution Control (S 4), Immigration Reform (HR 2580), Regional Medical Programs (S 596), Anti-Poverty Amendments (HR 3283), Air Pollution Control (S 306), Omnibus Farm Program (HR 9811), Higher Education Act (HR 9567), Cold War GI Bill (S9), Tax Program (HR 12752), Appalachia Assistance (S 3), Excise Tax Reductions (HR 8371), Auto Safety (S 3005), Highway Safety (S 3052), Minimum Wage (HR 13712), Transportation Department (HR 15963), Drug Controls (HR 2), Elementary School Aid (HR 13161), Health Manpower (HR 13196), Higher Education (HR 14644), Water Pollution Control (S 2947), Demonstration Cities (S 3708), Truth in Packaging (S 985), Poverty Amendments (HR 15111), Investment Tax Credit (HR 17607), Food For Peace (HR 14929), Medical Care, Social Security (HR 6675), Model Cities Funds (HR 9960), Public Television (S 1160), Foreign Aid Authorization (S 1872), Air Pollution Control (S 780), Postal Rates (HR 7977), Poverty Program Expansion (S 2388), Elementary Education (HR 7819), Social Security Amendments (HR 12080), Investment Tax Credit (HR 6950), Truth-in-Lending (S 5), Teacher Corps (HR 10943), Wiretapping (HR 5037), Hand Gun Control (HR 5037), Tax Surcharge-Excise Taxes (HR 15414), Draft Law Revision (S 1432), Conservation Fund (S 1401), Home Ownership (S 3497), Juvenile Delinquency (HR 12120), Poultry Inspection (HR 16363), Central Arizona Project (S 1004), Redwoods Park (S 2515), Civil Rights Act of '68 (HR 2516), Foreign Aid Expansion (HR 15263), College Assistance (S 3769), Vocational Education (HR 18366), Long Gun Control (HR 17735), Drug Abuse Control (HR 14096), and Vietnam Funding (HR 7123).

5. U.S. Census Bureau, "Historical Poverty Tables: People and Families—1959 to 2016." Table 2. Accessed March 16, 2018. <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/historical-poverty-people.html>.

6. Abraham Lincoln, "Speech at Peoria, Illinois," October 16, 1854, in Roy P. Basler, ed., *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, vol. 2 (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1953), 248–76.

7. Final polls taken from Gerhard Peters, "Final Presidential Job Approval Ratings," *The American Presidency Project*, eds. John T. Woolley and Gerhard Peters (Santa Barbara: University of California, 1999–2017). Accessed March 12, 2018. http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/data/final_approval.php.

8. The terms "Civil Rights Act" and "Civil Rights Bill" both refer to the same eventual law. LBJ tended to use the word Bill early on before passage and the word Act later after it passed through Congress. We use the terms interchangeably here.

9. "Johnson, Lyndon B. 'Let Us Continue,' Speech Text." *Voices of Democracy*. Accessed January 6, 2018. <http://voicesofdemocracy.umd.edu/johnson-let-us-continue-speech-text/>.

10. "Johnson, 'Let Us Continue,' Speech Text." *Voices of Democracy*. Accessed January 6, 2018. <http://voicesofdemocracy.umd.edu/johnson-let-us-continue-speech-text/>.

11. Robert J. Cook, *Troubled Commemoration: The American Civil War Centennial, 1961–1965* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2011), 1–131.

12. "LBJ Presidential Library Research." Accessed January 6, 2018. <http://www.lbjlibrary.net/collections/selected-speeches/pre-presidential/05-30-1963.html>.

13. "LBJ Presidential Library Research." Accessed January 6, 2018. <http://www.lbjlibrary.net/collections/selected-speeches/pre-presidential/05-30-1963.html>.

14. *Prohibition against Discrimination or Segregation in Places of Public Accommodation*. 42 U.S. Code (2018) § 2000a et seq.

15. Gary May, *Bending Toward Justice: The Voting Rights Act and the Transformation of American Democracy* (New York: Basic Books, 2013), 48.

16. David Blumenthal and James Morone, *The Heart of Power: Health and Politics in the Oval Office* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), chap. 5.

17. "Transcript of the Johnson Address on Voting Rights to Joint Session of Congress." Accessed January 7, 2018. <http://www.nytimes.com/books/98/04/12/specials/johnson-rightsadd.html>.

18. "Transcript of the Johnson Address on Voting Rights to Joint Session of Congress." Accessed January 7, 2018. <http://www.nytimes.com/books/98/04/12/specials/johnson-rightsadd.html>.

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20. "Transcript of the Johnson Address on Voting Rights to Joint Session of Congress." Accessed January 7, 2018. <http://www.nytimes.com/books/98/04/12/specials/johnson-rightsadd.html>.
21. Abraham Lincoln, "Speech at Peoria, Illinois," October 16, 1854, in Basler, ed., *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, 248–76.
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23. Richard M. Valelly, *The Two Reconstructions: The Struggle for Black Enfranchisement* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).
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25. "Lyndon B. Johnson: Remarks at the University of Michigan." Accessed January 13, 2018. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=26262>.
26. See note 4 for a list of major Johnson-era legislation.
27. "Lyndon B. Johnson: Remarks at the University of Michigan." Accessed January 13, 2018. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=26262>.
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33. John F. Kennedy, "Inaugural Address," January 20, 1961. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*. Accessed April 18, 2018. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=8032>.
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