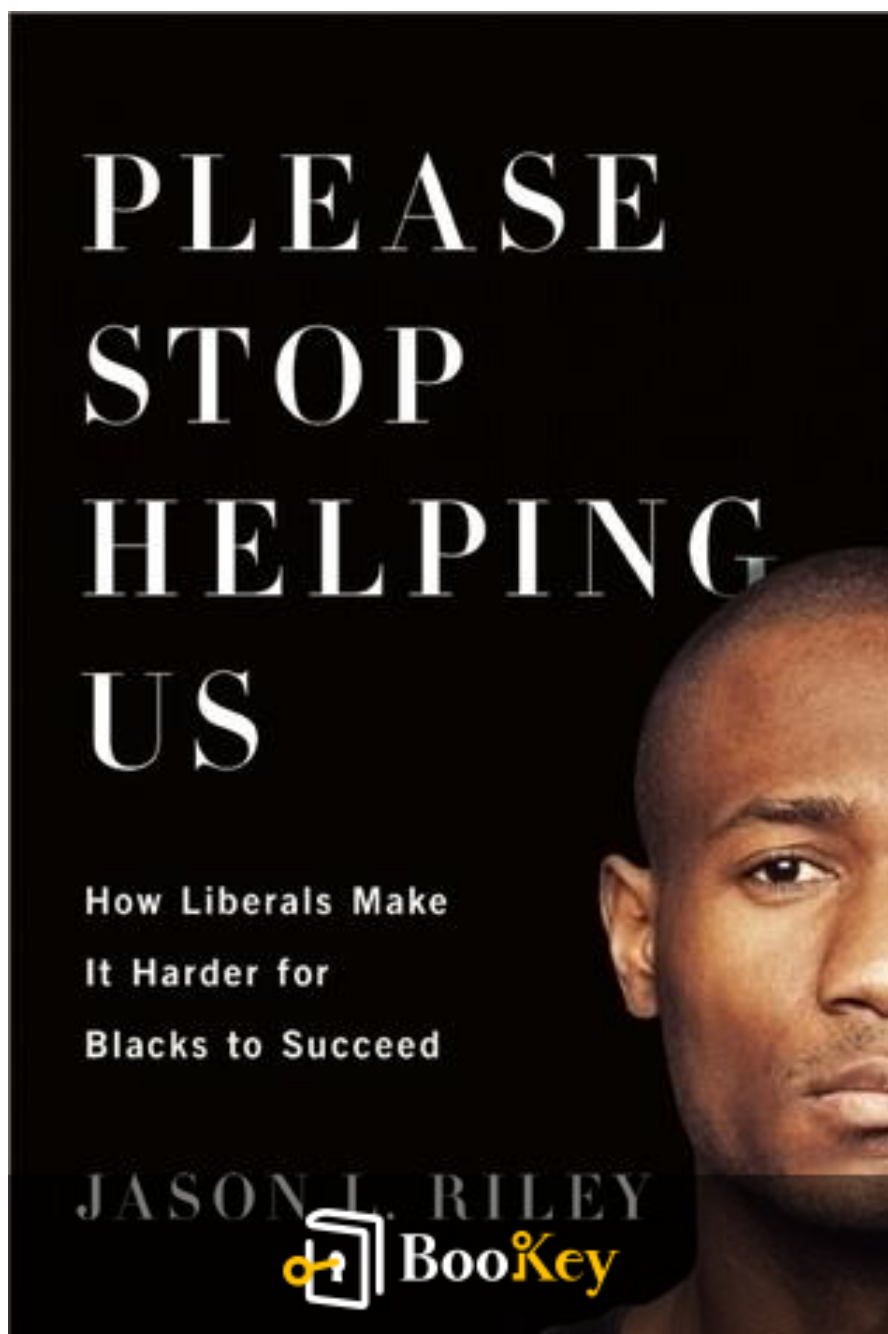


Please Stop Helping Us PDF (Limited Copy)

Jason L. Riley



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Please Stop Helping Us Summary

Examining the Harmful Impact of Welfare on Black Americans

Written by New York Central Park Page Turners Books Club

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About the book

In **Please Stop Helping Us**, Jason L. Riley presents a critical analysis of well-intentioned liberal interventions aimed at supporting the black underclass, arguing that these initiatives frequently produce counterproductive outcomes. He examines various policies—including welfare programs, minimum-wage laws, and affirmative action—that, while designed to assist marginalized communities, often end up creating obstacles for those they intend to help.

Riley emphasizes that minimum-wage regulations can inadvertently limit job opportunities for many black workers, as employers may be unable to afford the increased labor costs, leading to reduced hiring. Additionally, he argues that affirmative action, while aimed at increasing black representation in higher education, may actually diminish the overall number of black college graduates by lowering admission standards, which can lead to a lack of preparedness among students.

The author also critiques lenient crime laws that undermine community safety and misguided educational policies that restrict school choice, preventing families from accessing better educational opportunities. By spotlighting these issues, Riley encourages readers to confront the unintended consequences of such interventions and to rethink current strategies for promoting socioeconomic advancement within the black

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community. Ultimately, he advocates for more effective and empowering solutions that prioritize individual agency and choice, rather than paternalistic measures that can stifle progress.

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About the author

In the chapters exploring Jason L. Riley's contributions as an influential journalist and commentator, the audience gains insight into his extensive background and the significant impact of his work on social and economic discussions in America. Born on July 8, 1971, in Brooklyn, New York, Riley's journey to becoming a prominent voice in journalism is marked by a commitment to addressing critical societal issues.

As a member of the Wall Street Journal editorial board, Riley applies his expertise to analyze and comment on vital topics such as race, economics, and public policy. His role at the Journal places him at the nexus of influential discussions, allowing him to voice perspectives that often challenge prevailing narratives. His insightful commentaries reflect deep understanding and a unique viewpoint shaped by his personal experiences and professional encounters.

In addition to his editorial work, Riley serves as a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute, a think tank that promotes free-market policies and addresses urban issues. This position further enhances his ability to contribute to discussions on economic development and social mobility, particularly in marginalized communities.

Riley frequently appears on various media platforms, including the Journal

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Editorial Report and Fox News programs, where he engages in debates that reflect his researched views on pressing issues. His contributions to C-SPAN further widen his audience, as he explains complex topics in an accessible manner.

Through these chapters, readers not only learn about Riley's professional achievements but also the underlying principles that guide his work: a belief in individual agency, the importance of economic opportunity, and the need for open dialogue on contentious societal issues. This overarching narrative positions Riley as a thought leader capable of influencing public perception and policy through a blend of personal experience and journalistic rigor.

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Summary Content List

Chapter 1: 01. Black Man in the White House

Chapter 2: 02. Culture Matters

Chapter 3: 03. The Enemy Within

Chapter 4: 04. Mandating Unemployment

Chapter 5: 05. Educational Freedom

Chapter 6: 06. Affirmative Discrimination

Chapter 7: Conclusion

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Chapter 1 Summary: 01. Black Man in the White House

BLACK MAN IN THE WHITE HOUSE

By the fall of 2011, President Barack Obama experienced a decline in his approval ratings, dipping below 50% for the first time since he took office. This shift occurred against a backdrop of persistent high unemployment and economic stagnation, resulting in diminished support from white voters. In stark contrast, the black community remained largely loyal to Obama, sustaining overwhelming endorsement levels—particularly considering that African Americans, especially men and teenagers, were facing disproportionately high unemployment rates during this period.

Under Obama's presidency, the black community confronted significant economic challenges, notably a widening disparity in homeownership and elevated black-white unemployment gaps, the largest since 1960.

Historically, black support for Democratic candidates has been robust, with Obama capturing 95% of the black vote in the 2008 election. As economic conditions deteriorated, however, this unwavering support persisted into the 2012 election. One reason for this loyalty may be rooted in a belief that the dismal conditions were a legacy of prior administrations, and that Obama warranted time to implement change. This phenomenon aligns with historical trends showing black approval ratings often correlate with jobless

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rates; during Obama's term, black unemployment inched higher compared to his predecessors.

RACIAL SOLIDARITY AND LOYALTY

The enduring loyalty within the black community toward political leadership underscores the theme of racial solidarity. Many black leaders promote the notion that supporting a black president, regardless of effectiveness, is a social duty. In response, the Obama administration initiated measures aimed at maintaining goodwill among black voters, although critics often viewed these efforts as more symbolic than genuinely impactful.

Despite fostering optimism within the black community, data indicated troubling economic indicators for African Americans during Obama's presidency, resulting in a troubling paradox: while black support for the president remained high, their economic circumstances often faltered. Moreover, narratives from the political left frequently frame discussions on voting rights and voter ID laws through a racial lens, emphasizing the importance of representation.

THE ROLE OF POLITICAL ADVANCEMENT

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Over time, black political leadership has increased; however, this surge has not translated into substantial socioeconomic improvements for the black underclass. Historical analysis reveals that prior to significant civil rights achievements, black poverty rates had decreased meaningfully. Yet, following the civil rights movement and the rise in black political representation, improvements to poverty rates have stagnated. This disconnect suggests that genuine economic development typically precedes effective political engagement.

POLITICAL SUCCESS VS. SOCIOECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT

Research illustrates that political achievements do not automatically lead to economic progress. Historical examples, such as the Irish and more recent Asian American communities, highlight a pattern where economic advancement often predated political activism and engagement. Despite notable gains in black political representation, the black underclass continues to confront challenges driven not solely by systemic issues but also by cultural values and social behaviors that complicate progress.

The discourse surrounding voting rights and racial representation has shifted, with the focus transitioning from merely achieving access to evaluating the number of elected officials of color. This alteration risks fostering division, such as through racial gerrymandering, rather than

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promoting unity.

CONCLUSION

Obama's presidency encapsulates a complex dialogue regarding racial and political identity. For many, he represents a significant milestone; yet, persistent challenges facing the black community indicate that meaningful progress lies not merely in political leadership but in economic self-sufficiency and robust family structures. The core of the black community's journey toward advancement may hinge on fostering individual and communal values and habits, as well as encouraging self-improvement, rather than relying solely on government or political figures to resolve entrenched socioeconomic challenges.

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Chapter 2 Summary: 02. Culture Matters

Chapter 02: Culture Matters

Introduction to Family Dynamics

The author begins by reflecting on his last encounter with his father, a figure who remained actively engaged in his children's lives despite the parents' divorce. This memory serves as a poignant reminder of the importance of family culture in shaping children's development and nurturing. The author's father exemplified steadfast commitment, symbolizing the potential for strong familial bonds even within fragmented family structures.

Parental Engagement

The narrative highlights the contrast between the author's personal experience and the troubling statistics indicating a high rate of absent fathers, particularly in the black community. Unlike many, the author's father prioritized quality time and education, underscoring a commitment to guiding his children amidst societal challenges. This steadfastness stands as a beacon against the backdrop of a crisis in black family dynamics, often marked by instability.

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Cultural Influences on Education

Broken family structures typically correlate with negative outcomes, including increased crime rates and academic failure. The author's parents made a conscious effort to shield their children from these adverse influences within their community by emphasizing the significance of education and positive role models. The focus on academic excellence became a sphere of resilience amid external pressures.

Peer Pressure and Identity

Navigating a dual identity, the author experienced the tension between academic success and the ridicule of his peers for "acting white." This section delves into how cultural norms within certain black communities may dissuade educational achievement, suggesting that accolades are sometimes viewed with skepticism if they challenge collective identity or expected behaviors.

Academic Disparities

The author draws on research indicating that black students, irrespective of socioeconomic status, often perform academically worse than their white counterparts. He attributes this gap to cultural attitudes that can undermine hard work and educational ambition, revealing how societal pressures can

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inhibit academic achievement and perpetuate disparities.

Role Models and Success

The youth within the black community frequently gravitate towards negative role models prevalent in popular culture, overshadowing successful figures in their own communities. The pressure to conform to certain cultural expectations impedes academic striving and exacerbates existing inequalities, limiting opportunities for growth.

Cultural Attitudes Toward Work and Authority

In this critical examination, the author investigates prevailing attitudes within segments of the black community regarding education, hard work, and authority. He posits that these beliefs can have harmful repercussions, stifling socioeconomic advancement and creating barriers to upward mobility.

The Role of Government Programs

Welfare policies are scrutinized for their unintended effects, which may foster dependency on government aid instead of encouraging self-reliance. The author argues that this reliance can weaken traditional family structures, reinforcing cycles of poverty that affect black families and complicating

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efforts to achieve greater prosperity.

Critique of Black Cultural Identity

Reflecting on historical biases that linger in modern America, the author contemplates how behaviors often associated with "ghetto culture" may be rooted in earlier immigrant influences. These diverging values from mainstream society highlight the complexities of cultural identity and its impact on success.

Conclusion: Self-Development and Opportunity

The chapter culminates in a call for empowerment within black communities, urging a focus on self-improvement and education to seize available opportunities. The author emphasizes that while systemic racism exists, the challenges faced are not solely attributable to external forces. Instead, he advocates for a cultural shift that encourages proactive engagement in both educational and social systems to foster sustainable progress.

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Chapter 3 Summary: 03. The Enemy Within

Chapter 03: The Enemy Within

This chapter delves into the complex relationship between race, law enforcement, and societal perceptions, particularly from the perspective of the author as a young Black man.

Overview of Personal Experiences with Law Enforcement

In 1993, the author recounts his early encounters with police that instilled a deep sense of fear and suspicion. A standout incident occurred in Washington, D.C., where he was stopped at gunpoint by multiple officers who suspected him of being a criminal based solely on his appearance. This incident epitomizes the systemic racial profiling he faced, particularly in predominantly white neighborhoods, and lays the groundwork for understanding the broader implications of his experiences.

Continued Encounters with Law Enforcement

As he continued his education in college, the author faced repeated police stops without explanation, reinforcing a troubling pattern common among Black men. These encounters became emblematic of a harsh reality:

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regardless of his attire or the type of vehicle he drove, he was consistently marked as suspicious due to societal biases against his race.

Racial Profiling and Criminal Perceptions

The narrative moves to reflect on societal attitudes surrounding race and criminality, revealing that even the author carries biases shaped by his personal experiences, including retail interactions with law enforcement. This acknowledgment underscores a pervasive dynamic where judgments regarding an individual's character and likelihood of criminal behavior are too often filtered through the lens of race.

Debate on Incarceration and Crime Rates

A significant critique arises regarding the framing of high incarceration rates among Black men. While systemic racism plays a key role in this issue, the author argues against reducing the conversation solely to systemic discrimination. He presents crime statistics indicating that Black individuals are disproportionately represented in violent crime rates, complicating the narrative and urging a more nuanced discussion on crime and race.

Criticism of Liberal Views on Crime and Punishment

The chapter further critiques the liberal perspective, particularly the

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arguments posed by figures like Michelle Alexander, who attribute the incarceration rates primarily to systemic factors without adequately addressing individual behavior and crime rates. The author suggests that public discourse often shies away from confronting the difficult realities of crime perpetrated by young Black men.

Crime Rates and Community Effects

The author explores how certain legislative measures—such as “stand-your-ground” laws and proactive policing—could actually serve as protective mechanisms for residents in high-crime areas, predominantly composed of Black communities. He argues that increased policing and tougher incarceration laws have contributed to a decline in crime rates, countering the narrative that such measures are solely repressive.

Concluding Thoughts on Community and Responsibility

In closing, the chapter emphasizes the necessity for candid discussions about individual behavior and collective responsibility in shaping crime perceptions and realities within Black communities. Drawing from sentiments expressed by various public figures, the author highlights the critical role of family structure in mitigating crime rates among Black youth. He calls for an honest confrontation of these issues rather than reflexively attributing them to systemic racism. The chapter concludes with a powerful

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assertion: unless root causes are honestly addressed, racial fear and tension will likely endure.

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Chapter 4: 04. Mandating Unemployment

Chapter 04: Mandating Unemployment

This chapter examines the complex interplay between labor unions, racial dynamics, and minimum wage laws in the context of employment opportunities for black workers in America.

The **AFL-CIO**, the largest labor organization in the United States, representing over twelve million workers, took a significant political stance by endorsing Barack Obama in 2008. Richard Trumka, the organization's secretary-treasurer, called for union members to confront their racial biases during voting, acknowledging the troubling history of racism within labor unions, which often excluded black workers. Historically, figures such as **Frederick Douglass** and **W.E.B. Du Bois** criticized unions for their discriminatory practices, leading to a longstanding skepticism among black leaders regarding the unions' commitment to their economic advancement.

The chapter further explores how **minimum wage laws**, while intended to support low-income workers, can paradoxically hinder job opportunities for black individuals, especially younger and less-skilled workers. Economists largely agree that these laws can lead to job losses, disproportionately affecting low-wage workers—a category that includes many black

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individuals who face systemic socioeconomic challenges.

Statistics highlight that **black teenage unemployment rates** are significantly higher than those of their white counterparts. This disparity is exacerbated by minimum wage increases, which black youths often

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Chapter 5 Summary: 05. Educational Freedom

EDUCATIONAL FREEDOM

Achievement Gap Overview

The persistent achievement gap between Black and white students in K-12 education highlights a troubling reality: despite a dramatic increase in public school funding—rising 375% from 1970 to 2010—test scores have remained largely unchanged, revealing significant racial disparities in academic outcomes.

Historical Context and Funding Disparity

Federal initiatives, such as Title I, were designed to bridge the funding divide between affluent and low-income school districts. However, these efforts have not substantially improved academic performance for students in disadvantaged areas, particularly for Black students in high-poverty urban environments, who continue to fall behind their white counterparts.

Persistent Disparities in Performance

The data consistently exhibits that Black students score lower than white

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students across a variety of subjects, contributing to substantial achievement gaps, especially among Black males. Despite numerous socioeconomic improvements, educational attainment remains distressingly low for young Black men, underscoring the urgency for reform.

Inefficacy of Increased Funding

Studies indicate that simply increasing financial resources does not lead to significant improvements in student performance. Historical analyses, such as the 1966 Coleman Report, have reinforced this view, revealing that funding alone cannot guarantee educational success.

Role of Teachers' Unions

Teachers' unions often face criticism for placing their interests—primarily job security—above the educational needs of students, particularly those from low-income and minority backgrounds. This focus can obstruct necessary reforms aimed at enhancing the educational experience for disadvantaged students.

Charter Schools as a Solution

Charter schools have emerged as a promising alternative, showcasing notable improvements in student performance, particularly among

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underserved communities. These schools typically operate with greater freedom from union regulations, allowing for innovative educational strategies tailored to meet diverse learner needs.

Parental Choice and Vouchers

School voucher programs have proven to be effective in enhancing educational opportunities for Black students, granting them access to higher-performing private or charter schools. However, resistance from political groups aligned with teachers' unions often hampers the expansion of these beneficial programs.

Historical Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)

HBCUs face a decline in enrollment and low graduation rates, prompting criticism about their ability to adapt to the contemporary educational needs of Black students. Reforming these institutions is essential to address their shortcomings and better serve their communities.

Potential Reforms for Educational Institutions

Recommendations for improving educational outcomes include consolidating struggling HBCUs, enhancing management practices within educational institutions, and expanding school choice options. The primary

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goal is to prioritize student success and educational quality over perpetuating failing systems for historical or political reasons.

Conclusion

The current educational landscape calls for a reevaluation of existing practices and institutions to effectively address the achievement gap. Charter schools and voucher programs present viable avenues for educational reform, while entrenched systems often prioritize adult interests over student needs. A shift toward innovative, student-centered solutions is crucial for creating equitable educational opportunities for all.

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Chapter 6 Summary: 06. Affirmative Discrimination

Chapter 06: Affirmative Discrimination

Overview of Thomas Sowell's Perspective on Affirmative Action

On November 3, 1983, economist Thomas Sowell engaged in a heated debate on the television show **Firing Line** regarding affirmative action policies aimed at assisting impoverished black communities. Sowell argued that these initiatives often benefit those who are already relatively privileged, rather than reaching the truly disadvantaged individuals in the black community. He pointed to research indicating that, during the affirmative action era, specific demographics—like black female-headed households—had actually seen worsening socio-economic conditions.

Critique of Racial Preferences

Opposing Sowell was Robert Lekachman, who advocated for affirmative action on the basis of historical injustices suffered by minorities, arguing that such policies were necessary to rectify these past wrongs. In response, Sowell highlighted the lack of empirical support for the efficacy of affirmative action in achieving its goals, emphasizing a troubling shift in societal discourse from equal opportunity to equal outcomes. This shift posed a challenge to the foundational principles of individual merit and fairness.

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Legal Foundations and Changes

The chapter proceeds to explore the legal history of affirmative action post-Civil Rights Act of 1964, which initially sought to ensure equal opportunity. However, significant judicial decisions, notably *Griggs v. Duke Power Co.*, altered this trajectory by placing the burden of proof on employers regarding hiring practices that disproportionately affected minorities. Consequently, this legal shift fostered a preference for achieving racial quotas, often at the expense of assessing individual qualifications and merit.

Effects of Affirmative Action on Outcomes

Sowell's examination further reveals that despite the initial aims of affirmative action, evidence suggests these policies may have exacerbated income disparities among blacks, particularly affecting the most economically vulnerable. Academic statistics illuminate a concerning trend: disparities in educational preparation among black students hinder their competitiveness for admission into elite academic institutions, ultimately leading to struggles once enrolled.

Counterproductive Consequences

Insights from research conducted after California's Proposition 209—a measure that eliminated affirmative action—indicate that the abolishment of such policies led to improved academic outcomes for black and Hispanic

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students. This finding suggests that affirmative action may unintentionally impede the success of its intended beneficiaries by placing them in environments that do not match their preparedness or skill levels.

Public Sentiment and Future Implications

In closing, the chapter analyzes the evolving public sentiment surrounding affirmative action. Support has dwindled when these policies are perceived as preferential treatment rather than tools for equity. As emerging data continue to reveal the limitations and adverse effects of affirmative action, there is a growing conversation about the necessity of reassessing or redesigning these policies to more sincerely aid disadvantaged individuals without reinforcing stigma or negative stereotypes. The discussions imply a critical need for reevaluation to ensure that the pursuit of social justice aligns with genuine equity and upliftment.

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Chapter 7 Summary: Conclusion

The civil rights movements of the mid-20th century represent a transformative era in American history, climaxing with landmark legislation such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. These acts were pivotal in abolishing racial discrimination and securing voting rights for African Americans. This discussion reflects on the significant contributions of influential figures like Thurgood Marshall and Martin Luther King Jr., while raising critical questions about the efficacy of social policies implemented after the dismantling of Jim Crow laws aimed at fostering black advancement.

In "Social Policy Review," Nathan Glazer's 1988 critique stands out, highlighting the shortcomings of liberal social policies. While these policies were initiated with noble intentions, their outcomes have been mixed. Statistics reveal a troubling persistence of racial inequalities, including a widening poverty gap between blacks and whites, stagnant poverty rates among blacks, and rising incarceration statistics. These data points illustrate the ongoing challenges within the black community, suggesting that superficial policy changes are insufficient to address deep-rooted issues.

In "Continued Policy Failures," the discussion pivots to President Obama's proposed initiatives, which echo earlier ineffective solutions such as increased preschool education and job training programs. Critics argue that

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such measures reflect a pattern of liberalism that has inadvertently fostered dependence and victimhood among African Americans, rather than promoting self-sufficiency and personal accountability.

The "Legacy of the Civil Rights Movement" examines the ideological evolution since the 1960s, noting that the contemporary narrative often positions blacks predominantly as victims, which could undermine their potential for progress. The experiences of figures like Clarence Thomas illustrate a shift in racial consciousness, advocating for resilience and a departure from a mindset focused solely on perceived injustices.

Finally, "Final Thoughts" suggest a disconnect within liberal ideology. Liberals appear more invested in defending existing policies than in critically reassessing strategies to genuinely uplift the black community. This disconnect creates a tension between the romanticized perspective of black struggles held by some white liberals and the reality that feelings of self-pity and victimhood can impede collective progress. Ultimately, the discourse encourages a reevaluation of approaches to foster empowerment and independence within the African American community.

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