



The Music Has Gone Out of the Movement: Civil Rights and the Johnson Administration, 1965-1968

By David C. Carter

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After the passage of sweeping civil rights and voting rights legislation in 1964 and 1965, the civil rights movement stood poised to build on considerable momentum. In a famous speech at Howard University in 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson declared that victory in the next battle for civil rights would be measured in "equal results" rather than equal rights and opportunities. It seemed that for a brief moment the White House and champions of racial equality shared the same objectives and priorities. Finding common ground proved elusive, however, in a climate of growing social and political unrest marked by urban riots, the Vietnam War, and resurgent conservatism.

Examining grassroots movements and organizations and their complicated relationships with the federal government and state authorities between 1965 and 1968, David C. Carter takes readers through the inner workings of local civil rights coalitions as they tried to maintain strength within their organizations while facing both overt and subtle opposition from state and federal officials. He also highlights internal debates and divisions within the White House and the executive branch, demonstrating that the federal government's relationship to the movement and its major goals was never as clear-cut as the president's progressive rhetoric suggested.

Carter reveals the complex and often tense relationships between the Johnson administration and activist groups advocating further social change, and he extends the traditional timeline of the civil rights movement beyond the passage of the Voting Rights Act.

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Editorial Review

Review

Seek[s] to tell a more complicated, uneven story. . . . Provides an important supplement to the works of Steven F. Lawson, Susan Youngblood Ashmore, Gareth Davies, Hugh Davis Graham, and Taylor Branch.--*Alabama Review*

An important addition to the growing literature about the civil rights movement. . . . Recommended.--*Choice*

Carter skillfully weaves such competing perspectives into a narrative that explains the highly contested nature of the civil rights movement.--*North Carolina Historical Review*

[Carter's] combination of views from the top levels of government to the nation's poorest neighborhoods provides valuable insight into developments during these crucial few years.--*Journal of Southern History*

The Music Has Gone Out of the Movement . . . offer[s] an important window into the conflicts between the federal and local amid the civil rights movement. . . . Students of civil rights will find this work indispensable in enhancing their understanding of both the complex goals and reservations of the Johnson administration.--*Essays in History*

Carter's thoughtful analysis . . . should hit almost all of the right notes for readers interested in civil rights and the presidency in the 1960s.--*Journal of American History*

Carter's analysis of [Lyndon B. Johnson]'s second term, especially his close attention to the details of the administration's civil rights policymaking, makes this book well worth reading. . . . His research, especially his use of the records of the Johnson administration, is commendable.--*The Historian*

An important contribution to scholarship on the 1960s in America.--*American Historical Review*

An in-depth examination of the complicated relationship between and within U.S. President Lyndon B.

Johnson's administration and grassroots civil rights activism. . . . Afford[s] the reader a vision of the complexity of those times.--*Ethnic and Racial Studies*

A brilliantly fascinating history of the Johnson administration . . . brimming with political detail. . . . Meticulous in detail and covers the drama from one set piece to another and is highly recommended.--*Journal of American Studies*

Review

Carter makes a major contribution to the historiography of both the civil rights movement and the U.S. presidency during the 1960s. His sobering account cuts to the heart of America's racial divide. A marvelous book.--John Dittmer, author of *Local People: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Mississippi*

Carter challenges conventional interpretations that suggest an inevitable downward spiral from 1965 through 1968, instead exploring the dynamic interactions between the most proactive civil rights presidency in U.S. history and heightened black protests against racial inequality. This is a compelling history of a major chapter in the political history of the civil rights movement.--Patricia A. Sullivan, University of South Carolina, author of *Days of Hope: Race and Democracy in the New Deal Era*

David C. Carter's telling of the 1960s interplay between President Lyndon B. Johnson and the civil rights movement is a brilliant portrait of the tragic clash between the hope and idealism of the civil rights activists and the tired Cold Warriors' absurd dreams of pacifying this, that, and the other patch of Southeast Asia. Then, more dreams and hearts were broken by the series of urban riots that began in the summer of 1964 and ran through the death of Martin Luther King Jr. in April 1968. There was surely no music after that. Even a bit of money to respond to King's last campaign for America's poor was sucked down the Vietnam drain. It was the best of times and the worst of times, and Carter's fine book surely does it justice.--Roger Wilkins, director of the U.S. Community Relations Service, 1966–1969

About the Author

David C. Carter is associate professor of history at Auburn University.

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