

During the presidency of Lyndon B. Johnson, socialism rose to great heights with his Great Society, a series of domestic legislative programs to help the poor and downtrodden during a time of national prosperity in the USA. On November 22, 1963, the same day as President Kennedy's assassination, Vice-President Johnson took the oath of office aboard Air Force One with widow, Jacqueline Kennedy, at his side. He assumed the helm of our country as the ex-majority leader of the Senate. Through executive orders and much legislation during his presidential reign, he greatly expanded FDR's New Deal during his terms of office, 1963-1968.

His first major piece of legislation was the Civil Rights Act of 1964, a bill conceived by JFK that was stuck in Congress, especially by resistance from Southern Democrats. Johnson now presented this bill to a nation mourning their young President, as a memorial to him, and it passed a deadlocked Congress. After the death of Martin Luther King, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which gave the vote to disenfranchised Black voters, followed his first landmark legislation.

The popular book, *The Other America* (1962) that exposed hidden poverty in the Appalachians and other pockets in the USA greatly influenced Johnson's War on Poverty. Its author, Michael Harrington, was a disgruntled Catholic turned atheist/socialist, who believed only government intervention could cure society's ills. Expansion of social security, welfare to the poor, food stamps, help with housing, and the new programs of Medicare and Medicaid were birthed during this season. Harrington went on to lead the Socialist Party of America, 1968-72, with an agenda to no longer run candidates for political offices but to further infiltrate the Democratic Party with socialistic ideas, as he had been doing. Another book, *The Good Society*, written by Walter Lipmann, a known member of the socialist Fabian Society, inspired the name of Johnson's Great Society. The inroads of socialism rose to high tide with President Johnson's presidency, more perhaps than even that of Franklin D. Roosevelt's reign.

Barry Goldwater, the conservative senator from Arizona, was part of the resistance to these ideas. He ran against Johnson on the Republican ticket in the election of 1964, as he had planned to versus his friend, JFK, before his untimely death. Johnson's tactics against Goldwater were anything but friendly. He painted the senator from Arizona as an anti-communist warmonger, who would lead us into possible nuclear war with Russia. Goldwater's conservative solutions fell on ears deafened by the cacophony of yellow journalism, drowning out some of Goldwater's viable answers to America's domestic problems. Johnson won the election of 1964 by a large majority.

In the latter years of his full term, Johnson experienced antagonism to the Vietnam War, Kennedy's small venture, which LBJ had expanded. This war against communism became very unpopular in the USA, especially among students and other youth. Johnson's popularity plummeted in wake of this reaction. It seemed to be the chief reason for him not running for another term. His Vice-President, Hubert Humphrey, and Richard Nixon, Eisenhower's Vice-President, would be contenders for presidency in the election of 1968 along with Gov. George Wallace as an American Independent. How would the winner of this contest handle the Great Society created by Johnson and his predecessors?