

Politics: Jamele Bouie

- I. Black votes are illegal votes
 - a. Trump's great lie implicitly said that Black voters are illegitimate.
 - b. Trump began with his birther claims. Obama was illegitimate
 - c. There is a viewpoint that runs through American history that has always sought to narrow the scope of political participation.
- II. The Plantation
 - a. Enslavers and those enslaved developed ideas about society. Much of this was an attempt to justify the economic and social hierarchy that existed in the work camp environment. (p. 198)
 - b. South Carolina was a paradigm slave society. A majority of South Carolinians held slaves who outnumbered enslavers.
 - c. Statewide office was restricted to wealthy property owners.
 - d. Elections were "for" low-level offices.
 - e. This was a time when immigration to northern states and the northwest region threatened the South's dominance.
 - i. The slave rebellions in Haiti, Louisiana, and Virginia made South Carolinians nervous.
 - ii. Slaves were escaping
 - iii. Political abolition came into its own in 1840's
- III. There arose several political thinkers dedicated to defending slavery.
 - a. Calhoun, senator and vice President under John Quincy Adams and Andrew Jackson.
 - i. Calhoun feared large government and federal power over commerce, taxation, and trade. He was further concerned over the government's potential authority to abolish slavery.
 - ii. Calhoun was concerned about the Tariff of 1828, which demonstrated in his mind the reach of the federal government.
 - iii. Calhoun anticipated the North's threat to slavery and the threat posed by democracy itself.
 - iv. Calhoun saw the nation as a collection of sovereign states or nations.
 - v. It seems that Calhoun wanted decisions to be made by consensus, with elements within the country able to veto even the will of the majority.
 - vi. Calhoun saw the government as the advocate and champion of the elites, who he deemed as worthy. They needed special protection against the masses and the undeserving.
 - vii. His deep suspicion of majoritarian democracy—his view that government must protect interests, defined by their unique geographic and economic characteristics, more than people—would inform the sectional politics of the

South in the twentieth century, as solid blocs of Southern lawmakers would work collectively to stifle any attempt to regulate the region. P. 203

- viii. Nullification, the idea that southern states could veto national laws have continued in the South.
- ix. Wm. F. Buckley repackaged Calhoun's ideas in his defense of civil rights legislation in the 1960's

IV. The Tea Party

- a. Tea Party arose. Seeming to be organized to resist spending, policy, and taxation, the tea party was in fact a movement of resentment over an encroaching majority of Black and Brown peoples.
- b. The thought was that "real Americans were losing their country."
- c. Republicans couldn't veto the ACA. They adopted a stance of either halting Obama's agenda or wrecking the system itself.
- d. Author sees Mitch McConnell's obstruction as an egregious example of nullification.

V. Contemporary politics

- a. Trump challenged Clinton's vote majority by saying, without proof, that she won through millions of illegitimate votes, meaning Black and liberal votes.
- b. The citizenship question on the census would limit them in the count, which would limit the amount of representation accorded to the areas in which they lived.
- c. All of this happened after a Black man was elected president.

Summary: This chapter explores the idea of nullification and the ways that it threads through American politics. John Calhoun formulated the concept which holds that individual states, slave states at the time, had a right to veto the laws that were past by a majority of voters. Calhoun was primarily concerned that slavery would simply be outlawed by the more populous North that had nothing to lose if the economic value of enslaved people was dissolved. This principle of nullification or minority rule continues today in conservative politics especially after Obama's election, the rise of the Tea Party, and Trumpism.