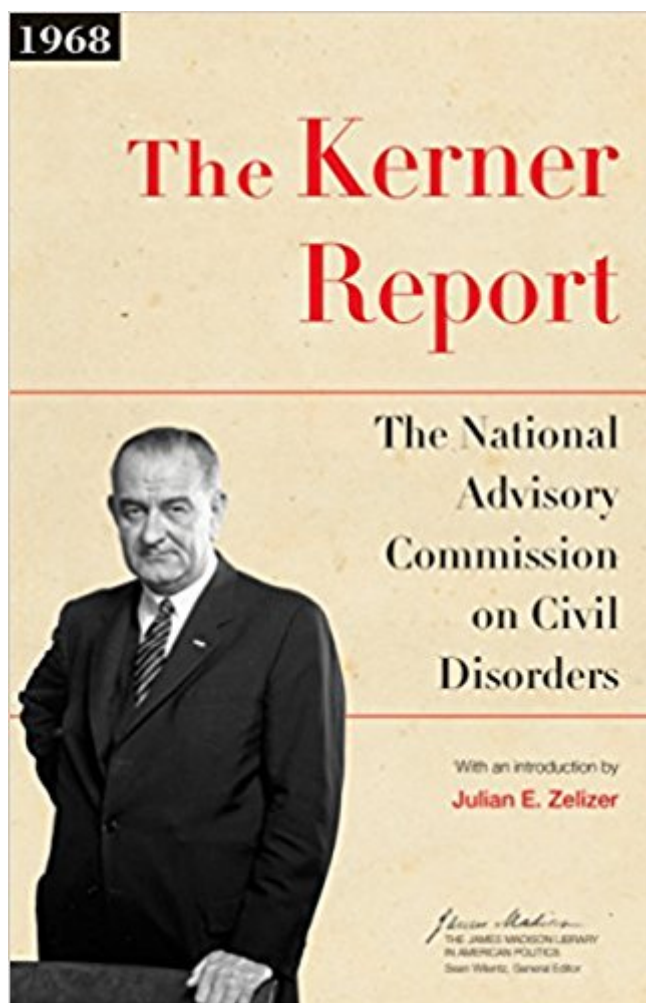


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# The Kerner Report (The James Madison Library In American Politics)



## Synopsis

The Kerner Report is a powerful window into the roots of racism and inequality in the United States. Hailed by Martin Luther King Jr. as a "physician's warning of approaching death, with a prescription for life," this historic study was produced by a presidential commission established by Lyndon Johnson, chaired by former Illinois governor Otto Kerner, and provides a riveting account of the riots that shook 1960s America. The commission pointed to the polarization of American society, white racism, economic inopportunity, and other factors, arguing that only "a compassionate, massive, and sustained" effort could reverse the troubling reality of a racially divided, separate, and unequal society. Conservatives criticized the report as a justification of lawless violence while leftist radicals complained that Kerner didn't go far enough. But for most Americans, this report was an eye-opening account of what was wrong in race relations. Drawing together decades of scholarship showing the widespread and ingrained nature of racism, The Kerner Report provided an important set of arguments about what the nation needs to do to achieve racial justice, one that is familiar in today's climate. Presented here with an introduction by historian Julian Zelizer, The Kerner Report deserves renewed attention in America's continuing struggle to achieve true parity in race relations, income, employment, education, and other critical areas.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"The Kerner Report is one of the seminal documents in understanding American race relations and

the origins of urban unrest, and was an instant bestseller when it was published in March 1968--inspiring one of the most wide-ranging debates about race in recent American history. I hope that this book helps spark a new national conversation."--Steven M. Gillon, University of Oklahoma"First released in 1968, The Kerner Commission Report offered a blunt assessment of the United States as two nations, black and white, and generated intense debate. Recent commentators have referred to the report, particularly in light of intensifying police-community hostility and persistent racial inequality. Readable and timely, The Kerner Report is likely to find a wide audience."--Thomas J. Sugrue, New York University

The National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders was established by President Lyndon B. Johnson. Its members included former Illinois governor Otto Kerner, New York City mayor John Lindsay, U.S. senators Edward Brooke and Fred R. Harris, and NAACP executive director Roy Harris. Julian E. Zelizer is the Malcolm Stevenson Forbes Class of 1941 Professor of History and Public Affairs at Princeton University. His many books include *The Fierce Urgency of Now: Lyndon Johnson, Congress, and The Battle for the Great Society*.

This was the first book I know of to really show the conscious and unconscious processes of recurrent discriminations really work. For me, what was powerful is that it showed how an individual or a community could overcome one or two discriminations, but it is the collective impact of this pseudo random process that is toxic beyond belief. Very factual, but easy to read and understand.

Great History

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