

The Meaning of Juneteenth

Another holiday overshadowed Independence Day this year. Black Independence Day, also known as “Juneteenth,” took center stage at PBS’s annual televised Fourth of July celebration, as singer Vanessa Williams performed “Lift Every Voice and Sing,” the de facto Black National Anthem.

“It’s in celebration of the wonderful opportunity that we now have to celebrate Juneteenth,” she [told](#) the press while promoting the PBS show, in which the 19th overshadowed the fourth throughout.

Juneteenth, in truth, marks the death of the old American nation and the birth of a new one, clawing out from the chest of the Republic in a nightmarish vision that would make Ridley Scott squirm.

The new holiday emerged from the mists of June with feeble opposition from Republicans, who spent months railing about the evils of anti-white critical race theory and the *New York Times*’ “1619 Project,” only to turn around and inaugurate a national holiday to honor and validate the basic narrative underlying those things.

Just [14 Republicans](#) voted against federalizing the holiday. It didn’t matter to the GOP that a paltry [7 percent](#) of Republican voters wanted it as a new holiday and that more than [60 percent](#) of Americans know “nothing at all” or only “a little bit” about Juneteenth—though that will surely change now. Nationwide, just 35 percent of adults agreed Juneteenth should be a federal holiday, even after months of sustained propagandizing against the backdrop of last year’s riots.

The GOP’s most opportunistic characters were the swiftest to pledge allegiance while dismissing and even browbeating those opposed. South Dakota Governor Kristi Noem, fresh

off [vetoing](#) a bill that would have limited transgender participation in women's sports, [hailed](#) Juneteenth as honoring Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. House Republican Leader Kevin McCarthy [declared](#) every June 19 from now on "is about ... the ongoing pursuit of building a more perfect union." Former Vice President [Mike Pence](#) along with Republican Sens. [Roger Wicker](#), [Rand Paul](#), and [John Cornyn](#) also praised the holiday in tweets containing Juneteenth hashtags.

Prominent conservative think tank leaders also jumped on board. On the eve of the holiday, Kay James, president of the Heritage Foundation, took [shots at critics](#) of the holiday. Former Trump White House deputy advisor Ja'Ron Smith [said](#) that Juneteenth was a victory, but "the work is still out there, culturally, to change our country." Smith represents the America First Policy Institute, the official think tank of Donald Trump.

The only thing more absurd than GOP virtue signaling was the sight of women [twerking atop ambulances](#) as medical technicians attempted to access the scene of a shooting amid Juneteenth festivities in Oakland, California. One was killed, and seven were wounded as a crowd of a thousand danced like dervishes for what the opinion page of British left-wing daily newspaper *The Guardian* called "the [real Independence Day](#)."

The sentiment from the establishment right in America was just as reverent, with neoconservative pundit Jonah Goldberg calling Juneteenth the "[American Passover](#)." "If you honestly think that Juneteenth will supplant the Fourth of July as 'Independence Day,' I have good news: You're wrong," Goldberg snarks.

Near the publication of Goldberg's article, it was reported that Evanston, Illinois, had approved Juneteenth festivities and LGBTQ pride parades this year but [opted](#) to cancel its [Independence Day events](#). And, the day before Goldberg scribbled down his happy thoughts, Singer Macy

Gray [declared](#) that a new national flag is required to honor the new independence day. Of the Stars and Stripes, she wrote, "Like the Confederate, it is tattered, dated, divisive, and incorrect. It no longer represents democracy and freedom. It no longer represents ALL of us. It's not fair to be forced to honor it."

Through political stupidity, the GOP and its stooges have allowed the poisoning of America's cultural waters, claiming good intentions and calling for calm witnesses to our national slaughter. But the people clawing down Independence Day and hoisting Juneteenth as its replacement were quite honest about the true meaning of the new holiday.

There is a historical precedent to Juneteenth: President Ronald Reagan's signing of Martin Luther King Jr. Day into law, an event which Samuel Francis [wrote](#) about in the May 1988 issue of *Chronicles*. Francis accurately predicted that the logic behind destroying Confederate symbolism would extend to virtually every other symbol of the historic American nation in the shadow of the King holiday. He also perceived King's entry into the national pantheon, towering over the likes of George Washington, as marking the consummation of a new order that grew out of the smoldering ashes of the old. "We forfeited the right to revere the Constitution, the governmental principles and mechanisms it established, and the men who wrote it when we put Dr. King into the pantheon," Francis wrote.

"The federalism, rule of law, states' rights, limits on majority rule, checks and balances, and separation of powers that characterize the Constitution," Francis explained, "all are incompatible with the full blossoming of the egalitarian democracy that Dr. King envisioned and which is the completion of the radical reconstruction to which his holiday commits us."

In [The Age of Entitlement](#), Christopher Caldwell similarly

identifies the engine of this radical reconstruction as the “rival Constitution” effectively created by the Civil Rights Act of 1964. As with Juneteenth now, the King holiday then, writes Caldwell, “marked not the end but the beginning of shame, of an official culture that cast their country’s history as one of oppression, and its ideals of liberty as hypocrisies.” Thus, the only acceptable moral outcome was for the old constitutional order to give way to the new—and it did.

This new order is incompatible with the traditional constitutional order conservatives pretend to cherish even as they shout the glories of King and Juneteenth from the highest steeple. At every pivotal moment in America’s culture war, the Republican Party has used its economic policies to distract its voters from the fact it was either ceding cultural ground or selling it wholesale to the enemy. The price of gas gets cut—but so does the throat of the order they claim to defend.

Both Francis and Caldwell understood that the reason the left relentlessly pursues holidays, flags, and other patriotic symbols, replacing them with their own, is because they are in the business of nation-building. Changing the things from which people draw identity and meaning is how a new nation emerges from the old. The Republican Party has served an important role in the left’s plan, by reconciling Americans to their new gods while deluding them with ephemeral electoral victories, using their last bit of political capital to construct a noose around the neck of the nation.

—

Dear Readers,

Big Tech is suppressing our reach, refusing to let us advertise and squelching our ability to serve up a steady diet of truth and ideas. Help us fight back by [becoming a member](#) for just \$5 a month and then join the discussion on

Parler [@CharlemagneInstitute](#) and Gab [@CharlemagneInstitute](#)!

Image Credit:

Vanessa Williams sings at A Capitol Fourth 2021, FabTV