American middle class by providing opportunities for education and homeownership to the 16 million soldiers after World War II. Katznelson writes that "there was no greater instrument for widening an already huge racial gap in postwar America than the GI Bill." This was because Southern lawmakers had insisted that the benefits be administered at a local level.

Katznelson concludes with the plea for the Supreme Court to embrace a set of new, more far-reaching New Deal-type programs that would have targeted the resources that were targeted before. He says, "This is unsettling history, especially for those of us who keenly admire the New Deal and the Fair Deal. At the very moment a wide array of public policies were providing most white Americans with valuable tools to gain protection in their old age, good jobs, economic security, assets and middle-class status, black Americans were mainly left to fend for themselves. Ever since, American society has been confronted with the results of this twisted and unbalanced form of affirmative action."

A full generation of federal policy, lasting until the civil rights legislation and affirmative action of the 1960s, boosted whites into homes, suburbs, universities and skilled employment while denying the same or comparable benefits to black citizens. Despite the prosperity of postwar capitalism's golden age, an already immense gap between white and black Americans widened.

Even today, after the great achievements of civil rights and affirmative action, wealth fits to black citizens. Despite the prosperity of postwar capitalism's golden age, an already immense gap between white and black Americans widened.