

Reclaiming Populism: Reviving the Tripartite Alliance of Labor, Civil Rights, and the Black Church

"...we are the ones we have been waiting for."

Why racial justice *and* expanding middle class opportunity for all must be a unifying agenda advanced by a unified multi-racial working-class electorate.

Executive Summary

The Summit for Civil Rights Coalition will continue and renew, with its partners in organized labor, civil rights, the faith community, academia and elected office, the series of powerful convenings, training and actions to strengthen, and reinvigorate the historic alliance for racial justice *and* economic opportunity for all Americans.

On September 28-29, 2023, The Summit for Civil Rights will hold its 4th national convening as a two-day gathering of our partners for a process of analysis and reflection and action. We will develop and propose a new set of priorities and actions for a unified approach to building a multi-racial majority for racial justice and economic opportunity. This approach will include: 1. Metropolitan wide (city, suburban and rural) community-based organizing, 2. Leadership identification and training for power (with an emphasis on emerging leaders in increasingly diverse communities and institutions), 3. The development of a unifying policy agenda that challenges economic inequality and the interconnected role of race, place and political power, 4. A nonpartisan voter engagement program with an emphasis on closing the Black voter gap across our metropolitan regions and especially in suburbs.

Since its founding in November 2017, the Summit for Civil Rights Coalition (and its forerunner the Summit for Sustainable Communities) has gathered some of America's most powerful and experienced civil rights leaders from labor, faith, academia, community organizing, law and elected office¹ to advance a unified approach that responds to the dangerous reactionary turn in our politics and simultaneously to leverage today's populist anger for a more robust, multi-racial working-class movement for racial justice and economic opportunity for *all* Americans.

¹ Summit for Civil Rights Coalition Partners include the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU), the AFL-CIO A. Philip Randolph Institute (APRI) AFL CIO, Building One America (BOA), the University of Minnesota Law School, the Institute for Metropolitan Opportunity (IMO), Rutgers University Department of Labor Studies and Employment Relations (LSER), Georgetown University Law Center, the Workers Center at GULC, and Cleveland State University. Supporting sponsors have included AFL-CIO, AFSCME / OAPSE Local 4, American Federation of Teachers (AFT), American Postal Workers Union (APWU), Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers (BAC), Communications Workers of America (CWA), Copper Levinson, Cozen O'Connor, Ford Foundation, Hofstra University, HPAE, International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers (SMART), International Brotherhood of Carpenters (IBC), International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT), International Longshoremen's Association, International Union of Operating Engineers Local 68, IronWorkers 399, Local 194 IPFTE, Metal Trades Department of the AFL-CIO, National Educators Association (NEA), NJEA, National Fair Housing Alliance, New York State AFL-CIO, Ohio Educators Association, Plumbers & Pipefitters Local 9, Rutgers CURE, United Auto Workers Union (UAW), United Steel Workers (USW), University of Minnesota Law School - Law & Inequality: A Journal of Theory and Practice.

Summit speakers included House Majority Whip James E. Clyburn, House Committee on Education and Labor Chairman Robert C. "Bobby" Scott, AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka, North America's Building Trades Union President Sean McGarvey, NEA President Becky Pringle, NAACP President Derrick Johnson, USW Vice President Fred Redmond, Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison, Vice President Walter Mondale, AME Bishop Reginald T. Jackson, NAACP Legal Defense Fund President Sherrilyn Ifill, AFT President Randi Weingarten, Congresswoman Bonnie Watson Coleman, Congresswoman Barbara Lee, Beverly D. Tatum, Professors Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, John A. Powell, Sheryll Cashin, William E. Spriggs, John C. Brittain, Barbara Ransby, John H. Bracey, Jr., Julian Vasquez Heilig, Mark G. Pearce, Theodore M. Shaw, Stella Flores, Rev. Willie Francois, Richard Rothstein, Author Eric Foner, Michelle Burris, Alexander Polikoff, Bruce D. Haynes, David P. Rusk, Elizabeth Powell, Prentiss Dantzler, Gary Orfield, Genevieve Siegel-Hawley, Myron Orfield, William P. Jones, Douglas Masey, Khalil Gibran Muhammad, Rucker Johnson, Marc Bayard, Amy Wells, Tiffani Torres, Betsey Julian, CBTU President Rev. Terrance Melvin, Lisa Rice, Paul Jargowsky, Clayola Brown, Algernon Austin and Stefan Lallinger. Nikole Hannah Jones, Valerie Jarrett, Ray LaHood, Steve LaTourette.

The 2023 Summit will produce a report that will include an analysis of racial, economic, and political trends for the purpose of: 1. developing a consensus on a powerful racial and economic justice policy agenda, 2, a regional organizing and leadership training drive in several key states and regions and 3, a nonpartisan voter engagement plan for metropolitan regions that will include a strategy for closing the significant and decisive Black voter gap. Each of these topics will be highlighted at the summit with experts and practitioners from academia, law, labor, faith, government, and civil rights.

2023-2024 areas of focus and priority topics for the upcoming Summit will include:

Metropolitan analysis and organizing – Dramatic trends of the past 50 years of suburbanization, deindustrialization, and urban abandonment have created a fragmented and deeply unequal landscape across our metropolitan regions. More recent and accelerating trends of automation, and a new Black suburban diaspora make it essential that we better understand these dynamics and organize strategically at the regional level for maximum multi-racial middle- and working-class power.

Leadership recruitment and training – As institutions and communities diversify, power often remains elusive and lopsided for many who have been historically excluded. A unique four-day-training for organizers and leaders from congregations, local elected office, labor, and civil rights, helps to close this critical power gap.

Voter engagement – Most voter engagement and turnout strategies are based on obsolete and overly-simplistic views of racial and class demographics between cities and suburbs. These outdated approaches are informing who is reached (and who is missed), and with what messages and messengers. The Summit will describe a regional approach that overlays the demographics of race and class with the geography of political volatility for maximum power in pivotal communities, swing districts, and states.

Action around issues – Middle- and working-class leaders of all backgrounds will act together on issues of economic opportunity and racial justice that benefit and unite (not divide) a multi-racial working-class majority. This is especially true when a policy agenda (around expanding opportunity for good union jobs, sustainable and diverse communities, and inclusive and successful schools) builds the institutional power of our organizations.

THE SUMMIT FOR CIVIL RIGHTS 2023

Reclaiming Populism: Reviving the Tripartite Alliance of Labor, Civil Rights, and the Black Church

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Why racial justice *and* expanding middle class opportunity for all must be a unifying agenda advanced by a unified multi-racial working-class electorate.

Background and Purpose

In 2020 U.S. Senator Sherrod Brown accurately declared that “real populism isn’t racist”. But populism must be more than not racist. *Naming and challenging the structures, perpetrators, and beneficiaries of racial and economic apartheid in America is true American populism.*

In 1903, W.E. B Du Bois famously pronounced in *Souls of Black Folk*, “The problem of the twentieth century will be the problem of the color line,” Today, 60 years after his death, the *color line* is still with us and it runs through everyone of our most pressing issues from wealth and health inequality to political polarization, mass incarceration, failing education and catastrophic climate change.

Why must we confront racial discrimination and segregation if we are going to build a powerful working-class movement for change?

Since the close of the 1960s civil rights revolution there emerged an insidious bipartisan consensus to tolerate, maintain and profit (economically and politically) from an increasingly fragmented and racially segregated society. That consensus created some very big winners and many more losers.

The losers have been the poor (especially the Black and brown poor) as well as working to middle-class families of all backgrounds, the natural environment, organized labor, and other people-based associations and institutions including the Black church.

The winners have been the wealthy (nearly all white), enriched by the “opportunity hoarding” of school districts and communities, the prison and poverty industrial complexes - including the anti-union privatization movement of schools and public services - the mortgage lenders, banks, and Wall Street investors.

The social response (especially since the 2008 economic collapse) has been a sporadic lashing out against elites (from both the right and left) with little form or structure and few gains. The political response has been a greater consolidation of wealth and power amongst elites who have struggled to manage ever more frequent and volatile waves of electoral insurgencies and populist revolts.

Despite some promising signs on the “progressive” left to capitalize on working-class anger, no political leader or group seems able to unify this geographically disparate and racially divided electorate over a sustained period. ²

This failure of both progressives and liberals ³ to unify and capture the anti-establishment energy of the past decade has ceded today’s populism to a demagogic and racially charged nationalism. Only a broad-based coalition that is explicitly multi-racial and represents middle- and working-class Americans of *all* backgrounds will have the power, motivation, and self-interest to challenge this consensus and restore an inclusive and expanding middle class. **Such a coalition has already existed in America and its institutional infrastructure, while frayed, is still intact.**

America’s Tripartite Alliance

From the pre-WWII 1940s, through the Vietnam era, until the early 1980s, the largely Black led elements of organized labor in an historic alliance with America’s civil rights organizations with the moral leadership and people power of the Black church, challenged the most ruthless and terrifying forces of subjugation and exploitation since the civil war and ushered in a brief but unmatched era of progress and inclusive middle-class expansion.

Those institutions are still with us but have been weakened over the past 40 years as circumstances dramatically and rapidly changed across America - and around the globe. Demographic shifts from south to north and the resegregation and fragmentation of metropolitan regions along with de-industrialization/automation and exponential suburbanization combined to both divide and sharply reduce the power of our people-based institutions. From the early 1980s to the present, organized labor, the civil rights movement, and the Black church, split and weakened, were forced onto the defensive and thrown into what seemed like a permanent survival footing.

Why new grassroots movements (even uprisings and rebellions), while powerful, are not enough.

² One reason, and perhaps a central reason, has been progressives' failure to prioritize the critical role of Black voters or the centering of powerful African American leaders, networks, and institutions. This critical blind spot is reinforced by the false race v. class dilemma among too many progressives as well as our collective cognitive dissonance around the existence of racial segregation and the role it plays in driving inequality and political divisions.

³ Both left progressives and corporate backed liberals, largely dominated by white urban elites, have failed to motivate essential Black voters or to capture the anti-establishment energy that has instead been ceded to a dangerous demagogic right wing.

The past decade has witnessed a new and youthful outpouring of anger and near revolutionary fervor with the emergence of *Black Lives Matter* in reaction to the recent rash of police killings and persistent inequality. But like *Occupy Wall Street* of the previous decade, these historically unique and profoundly important new movements⁴ have lacked the institutional cohesion, leadership structure or the clear political analysis required for sustained power and strategic long-term action.⁵

It is possible that new organizations can emerge to rival the size, breadth, and infrastructure of the traditional civil rights organizations, the labor movement, or the Black church (after all, they were all new at one time). But it is not likely.

The Black church, the American Labor Movement, and the modern Civil Rights movement, however flawed or diminished in size or reputation, are still with us, still organized, and still self-governed. And the institutional and relational linkages within and between them⁶ are still extensive and deep, and manifestly American.

Like the phrase, originally penned by June Jordan, sung by folk group Sweet Honey and the Rock often recited by candidate Barack Obama... ***we are the ones we've been waiting for*** is the call to action today for America's own historic *tripartite alliance of labor, civil rights, and the Black faith community*. It is this alliance that is needed today to provide the institutional backing, policy direction, moral leadership, and multi-racial unity to meet the next and inevitable wave of anti-establishment populism in America.

Only these organizations (and their hundreds of affiliates and related networks and associations⁷) have the historical and institutional credibility and geographical reach across city and suburbs, and even rural areas, to unite a multi-racial working- and middle-class electorate for political power and progress for an environmentally sustainable, racially inclusive, and expanding middle class.

The diverse Suburbs: Why we must organize regionally and why the tripartite alliance is best equipped to do it.

The image of the white American middle-class suburb has been challenged in recent years by the reality of the explosive growth of racial diversity across metropolitan regions.⁸

Just as liberals and activists tend to fetishize and infantilize the poor, we see a similar and related oversimplification and lack of understanding of place as it relates to race, class, and power. Most social and especially racial justice initiatives (including Get-Out-the-Vote drives) are disproportionately aimed at what is often referred to as, the "inner-city" or "urban" areas, usually synonymous with "the Black community" or "communities of color." Not only is this kind of thinking an implicit acquiescence to racial segregation, but it fails to recognize that the majority of African Americans and Latino voters do not live in "inner cities."

Black Voters, Black Leaders and Black Institutions are Key to Multi Racial Power

⁴ We could also include anti-globalization movement protests of the mid-1990s.

⁵ Perhaps even more interesting is that these grassroots, largely-youth led militant uprisings occurred during a decade of extraordinary political electoral insurgencies including two (Obama and Trump) that made it all the way to the White House and a 3rd that was avowedly socialist. Yet despite their explicitly anti-establishment character (of the campaigns if not the candidates) the grassroots electorate of these left, right and then more left political upheavals, failed to provide any policy direction, institutional support, or even political sustenance to any of these unsustainable populist political moments.

⁶ These include complex connective professional associations, church related auxiliaries and networks in academia, the legal community, HBCUs, Greek-letter organizations, Black Caucuses among elected office holders, as well as enduring extended family lineages.

⁷ The institutional and relational linkages within and between these organizations are extensive and deep and include complex connective associations and networks in academia, the legal community, professional associations, HBCU alumni, Greek-letter organizations, elected office holders, as well as enduring extended family lineages. These institutions are profoundly American.

⁸ [Study Finds Racially Diverse Suburban Communities Growing Faster than White Suburbs but Resegregation Threatens Prosperity and Stability](#)

More than half of all American Blacks and Latinos live in suburbs today.⁹ And the Black and Latino families who live in suburbs are more likely to be working-class to middle-class in their education, income, and overall outlook and characteristics such as being a union member, a church goer, and a voter. Yet there are far fewer voter engagement efforts and community organizing efforts among people of color in suburbs than in cities. This is not because Blacks in suburbs don't have problems. They do. Many of them. And they are often more capable than inner city residents to do something about their problems. Many of their problems are the same issues of racial justice we hear talked about in urban areas across America – discrimination in the criminal justice system, schools, housing, and jobs. But they also care about issues non-Black residents care about like property taxes, good schools, and safe neighborhoods. Black votes in suburbs are often overlooked yet decisive in pivotal elections for regional, state, and national offices where the most consequential decisions get made.

Progressive and traditional Democratic activists lack the capacity and have failed in recent years to mobilize this critical suburban electorate – which is a major reason for the rightward shift in many regions and states and especially in the Midwest and parts of the northeast outside of the major cities like New York and Philadelphia. Moderates move to the political right and lose because they lose Black voters and progressives simply double down on urban turnout and lose because they lose more white voters while ignoring suburban working- and middle-class Blacks.

There has been success in mobilizing winning multi-racial majorities in recent elections when Black suburban voters turnout in numbers that match or surpass Black voters in cities. It should be no surprise that there is growing evidence that the greatest success in engaging suburban Black voters is when there is a powerful and compelling Black candidate, or when there is a largely Black led voter turnout operation. The most success is when there is both. This is more than Black voters identifying with a candidate or campaign (although that may help). It is because Black leaders and Black candidates are more likely to understand, have connections to, and appreciate the importance of powerful black institutions like the church, civil rights organizations, and some of the most powerful and reliable elements of organized labor.

These institutions have the unique ability to reach across the city / suburban boundaries (and across state lines) with credibility and often built-in relationships and networks including faith-based auxiliaries, professional associations, fraternities, sororities and even family lineages.

Most modern political organizations and even most non-partisan organizations have limited their infrastructure and culture of organizing to places that represent an obsolete segregated urban-from-suburban past.¹⁰

While racial segregation is still very much with us it is not what it used to be. It has morphed and scattered into corridors and pockets in suburbs and even rural areas across metro-regions while inner city neighborhoods

⁹ More than half of all minority groups in large metro areas, including Blacks, now reside in the suburbs. The share of blacks in large metro areas living in suburbs rose from 37 percent in 1990, to 44 percent in 2000, to 51 percent in 2010. Higher shares of whites (78 percent), Asians (62 percent), and Hispanics (59 percent) in large metro areas live in suburbs. This trend has continued in the 2020 census.

https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/0504_census_ethnicity_frey.pdf

¹⁰ In many ways, the “base vote” strategy of urban political leaders has served to incentivize the preservation of racially segregated neighborhoods, communities, and housing developments with policy implications that have turned civil rights goals on their head.

(despite some gentrification) have lost population, as their Black and brown residents have become poorer, more desperate, and politically powerless.

The church, the labor movement and the civil rights community is not and has never been limited to geographical places whether they are municipalities, school districts, workplaces, or political jurisdictions. In fact, their history is one of outright defiance of such limitations or attempts to isolate, restrict or narrow, in any way, any people's options for work, housing, schools, and political power.

When these traditional organizations of the civil rights movement (*the American Tripartite Alliance*) draw on their own traditions, history, structure, and relationships they are far more qualified, capable, and motivated to build power across boundaries throughout states and regions than are modern political organizations or activist groups.

Black voters are progressive not partisan.

Black church-based groups and civil rights organizations have operated for generations as nonpartisan but very formidable and progressive players in American power politics. And despite its ties to the Democratic party for much of the last century, organized labor remains obligated only to its members and not to any political organization or faction. One could argue that Black political power in America, whether it was bolstering Radical Republicans in the 1860s or New Deal / Civil Rights Democrats in the 40s, 50s and 60s, has always moved America forward.

Despite the erroneous view of too many white progressives today, Black voters have been and still are the most consistently reform-minded political force in our nation when it comes to the issues of race and class.¹¹ Black Voters and Black elected leaders have been more progressive than any other block of voters or elected leaders when it comes to civil rights and racial justice, voting rights and democracy, labor rights and economic justice, criminal justice and police reform, affordable health care, fair housing, and access to education, even opposition to foreign interventions and support for peace. When Black voters turnout - when they are motivated and inspired - good things happen in America. When they stay home - when they are restricted, discouraged or ignored - our country has always moved backward.

Black voters are not the biggest block of voters, but they are the most unified.

(Black voters) "are the most organized people on the face of the earth...If the negro people of Michigan, New York, Illinois and the main populated states of America decide to vote as one unit...we will decide the precedence of the unites states" Paul Robeson, 1960

In America, there is no other group that acts with as much solidarity and political consciousness as African American voters. This should not be surprising given the shared history of oppression and disenfranchisement but there are likely other related reasons. Since the earliest days of abolition and reconstruction, networks and organization of mass communication including Frederick Douglass's North Star and the writings of Ida B. Wells and W.E.B. DuBois provided powerful linkages and a shared national consciousness. Even earlier, the Black church became a place of spiritual and political liberation as well as self-preservation, resistance, and community. The modern civil rights movement, and later the labor movement, built on this infrastructure to

¹¹ While many studies and reports characterize Black Democratic voters as more conservative or less liberal than other Democrats on social issues they often fail to point out that on issues of racial equality and economic opportunity for *all* Americans (including labor rights), Black voters are consistently to the left of their white counterparts.
<https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/02/27/5-facts-about-black-democrats/>

create a sense of solidarity, power, and political unity unmatched among other ethnic groups or nationalities¹². Because Black voters are the most unified and reliable voters, they can be (and often are) the pivotal lynch pins (for good or bad) even in state and national districts where they are a fraction of the overall electorate.

White voters still matter (so do Latino, Asian and all other non-Europeans)

The flaw that must be called out and corrected is the myth that to build multi-racial coalitions in American we must use a race neutral message or a take a fragmented *identitarian* approach where there are different messengers and sometimes contradictory messages for different groups and in different places (especially between middle-class whites and Black voters). Both approaches are based on a racist assumption that whites can lead Blacks, but Blacks can't lead whites - or at least they can't lead enough whites to win. This discredited myth still dominates American liberal politics despite the overwhelming evidence to the contrary, especially since the Obama insurgency of 2008,¹³ and as dozens of Black Members of Congress have been elected in majority white districts. What many African American political leaders have achieved is increasing the participation of Black voters while at the same time maintaining the support of millions of white voters (including working class white voters).¹⁴ Perhaps more importantly, the old strategy of white leaders centering white voters in a race neutral (or even an implicitly racist) approach is not working. It's becoming increasingly difficult for white moderates to engage and energize Black voters while pandering to affluent liberals or racists (or both). This is not to say that white politicians can or should no longer lead multi-racial coalitions. They can and will continue to (along with more and more Asian and Latino leaders) but to succeed, the old assumptions must be challenged and discarded and a new understanding of the critical role of Black power must become a key part of any project to build multi-racial power in America.

We cannot abandon the ghettos but must organize the suburbs and the middle and working class.

Blacks (and many Latinos) in the poorest parts of most major cities and urban industrial areas like Detroit, Camden, Oakland, and Baltimore are experiencing the terrible and dehumanizing consequences of generations of racial segregation and concentrated poverty including high crime, failing schools, and brutal and unaccountable police. But these problems are a byproduct of segregation, abandonment, and job flight not of the people who live there just as failing schools are not caused by teachers or the students. Addressing the racial and economic issues of inner cities means removing the structures of isolation and powerlessness that are at the heart of the problems. These are problems that are structural, regional, and national that cannot be solved locally.

Speaking to the AFL-CIO in 1961, Dr. King said African Americans "are almost entirely a working people." That has changed little in the past 60 years. Even the so-called, "Black middle-class" more closely resembles the white

¹² Only white evangelicals are comparable in their identification, by a large percentage, as conservative Republicans. However, this is not the case for all whites or for all evangelicals.

¹³ In 2008 Obama significantly increased the Democrat's share and turnout of Black voters while winning essential the same percentage of white voters including the white working-class voters. Obama did as well or better than Al Gore and Bill Clinton among white working class voters winning a majority in many northeastern and midwestern battle ground states <https://www.politico.com/story/2008/11/exit-polls-how-obama-won-015297>

<https://workingclassstudies.wordpress.com/2008/12/15/the-white-working-class-vote-in-2008/>

¹⁴ In 2015 there were only two members of the Congressional Black Caucus representing majority white districts, by 2018 that number grew to 13. At almost 60 members, Black representation in the U. S. Congress has nearly doubled since 2000. U.S. [Congress continues to grow in racial, ethnic diversity](#)

working-class in economic security and wealth accumulation.¹⁵ But African American working-class church and union members are not “the poor.” They have historically been upwardly mobile (or at least aspiring toward the middle class) with middle class values, goals, relationships, education, and behaviors such as voting and being part of a local NAACP branch.

The failure of the Poor People’s Campaign that Dr. King championed just before he was assassinated in April of 1968 has had many explanations – including the tragic loss of its charismatic moral leader. But the centering of an assemblage of marginalized groups, including Chicanos, poor whites, Asian, and indigenous as well as poor Blacks with a diffuse and vague agenda, sidelined the role of King’s traditional disciplined and dignified constituency of church-going working-class African Americans with clear and winnable demands.

This does not mean the poor cannot or should not be organized. Many poor people belong to churches where they tithe and contribute their time, or unions where they pay dues, have a say in decisions and leadership. But isolated people who are also poor will be overly dependent on outside organizers, charities, foundations, and local politicians. It is why most efforts aimed at very poor people or deeply impoverished neighborhoods disproportionality attract white liberals, become dominated by (often reckless) activists, and dependent on funding from foundations and corporate (often anti-union) donors.

Train Leaders – prepare the leaders and organizers of the Tripartite Alliance

Clergy, labor leaders, civil rights leaders and organizers are not born with the skills and attitudes to thrive in the world of power and politics any more than elected officials are. This is as true in navigating a workplace when organizing a union as it is for understanding a legislature for the purpose of passing a bill.

Most corporations - motivated by profits - budget millions of dollars for leadership training; most social justice organizations, committed to the betterment of humanity, spend almost nothing.¹⁶

The Summit for Civil Rights, through Building One America, provides an effective four-day training program for leaders and organizers from all levels of experience and responsibility. The training provides important critical skills and attitudes essential for leaders and organizers seeking to, more effectively, build organizational power and to become powerful themselves.

Building One America’s training does not make people more powerful, nor does it create diversity, but it does equip emerging leaders from diverse and working-class backgrounds to better understand and navigate the dynamics of power and politics and have the tools to compete effectively and further themselves and their values in the public arena. Moreover, it helps individual leaders to recognize more clearly their own potential and motivations to build a powerful and meaningful public life.

This training is unique in combining elements of leadership training developed over the past fifty years by national community organizing networks, with a contemporary analysis and strategy for developing multiracial institutional and social power to build more inclusive and equitable communities and organizations.

¹⁵ In a new report *A Subaltern Middle Class: The Case of the Missing ‘Black Bourgeoisie’ in America*, William A. Darity Jr., director of Duke’s Samuel DuBois Cook Center on Social Equity and a professor of public policy, African and African American Studies and economics says that research on the distribution of wealth finds that blacks at the top of their strata are still far below whites at the top of theirs. Strikingly, middle-income blacks have wealth levels most similar to those of the poorest white households the report finds. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/coep.12476>

¹⁶ Leadership development is estimated to be a \$366 billion global industry. With an estimated \$166 billion annual spend on leadership development in the USA alone.

The training is not just an intellectual exercise. It challenges and helps experienced leaders and emerging leaders to identify, reflect on, and overcome internalized attitudes and beliefs that stand in the way of becoming more impactful. The goal is to produce more powerful leaders and to facilitate the expansion of more powerful and more unified multiracial coalitions and structures.

Conclusion - Get rid of corporate race hustlers and do what Dr. King told us. – fight segregation and discrimination and build multi-racial solidarity and power.

The diversity business has grown from a cottage industry to a multibillion-dollar ¹⁷corporate enterprise. Jobs in the diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) industry jumped 30% as the country witnessed the uprisings after the killing of George Floyd and the glaring racial disparities intensified and exposed by the pandemic.

Most of these corporate consultants have turned racism into an interpersonal issue, a psychological disorder or an immutable condition that can only be addressed by liberal self-flagellation or the proliferation of lawn signs in affluent white neighborhoods.

We hear the terms “structural” and “systemic” racism repeatedly used but rarely aimed at any real structures that exist today and can be dismantled by policies or legislation - policies and legislation require power not diversity training.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. demanded that racial segregation in schools, jobs and housing be dismantled as a prerequisite to addressing the many other ills facing Black Americans because it was at the heart of those other ills. Dr. King declared that segregation’s “underlying purpose (is) to oppress and exploit the segregated, not simply to keep them apart.” A. Philip Randolph understood that so long as Blacks remained segregated in the labor force, both economic and political power for African Americans was going to be restricted or denied altogether. Only the most farsighted white labor leaders understood that the denial of Black power meant an existential vulnerability for the labor movement and less power for all working people.

Despite the enormity of the triumphs of the Civil Rights movement, particularly the crushing of state sponsored apartheid in the Jim Crow South, segregation was not fully defeated. It has endured, morphed, metastasized, and deepened especially throughout the north as metropolitan regions sprawled, fragmented, and re-segregated by both race and class over the past half century.

This class and racial stratification of multi-racial America in schools, housing and work have been major drivers (along with the related banking and credit systems) of the economic disparities and the unprecedented growth in wealth inequality in America. Forcing open those structures of political, social, and economic opportunity in home ownership, good jobs, access to quality health, good schools and political power is a racial justice agenda and a middle-class agenda for Americans of all colors and backgrounds.

These are doable and winnable policy priorities that not only respond to and directly address racial disparities in our society, but they are priorities that can build solidarity and multi-racial political power. The alternative is that we continue to tolerate and ignore the racial and class stratification of our regions, including the enduring reality of ghetto poverty and its enormous real-life human and economic costs. The continuation of status quo segregation will ensure lucrative work for the diversity industry, but it will keep fueling the politics of both despair and grievance and allow the forces of anti-union, right-to-work, charter-school, and privatization for profits and power to march forward unabated.

¹⁷ An estimated \$8 billion industry in the U.S.

The Summit for Civil Rights, Building One America, The Coalition of Black Trade Unionists will hold a two-day conference that will build on the past three Summits to make a powerful case for a renewed civil rights movement to lead us through the next populist upheaval with a coherent political analysis, a compelling policy prescription and a sound organizing strategy.

Challenging and breaking the Post-Civil-Rights Bipartisan Consensus to tolerate, maintain and profit from a racially segregated society and then *pretend it's not there.*

Sections of the conference are:

1. *What is the Post-Civil Rights Bipartisan Consensus to uphold a racially segregated society?*
 - *How does it work?*
 - *Who profits from it?*
 - *Who is hurt by it?*
 - *What does an agenda look like that challenges it?*
2. *Who can challenge it and break it?*
 - *Who is in the coalition?*
 - *Where do they live?*
 - *What do they care about?*
3. *What do we do?*
 - *Organize region-wide multi-racial coalitions.*
 - *Identify and recruit institutional leaders (as well as new and emerging leaders) from among faith, labor, civil rights, and local elected leaders.*
 - *Develop and build support for a regional agenda for inclusion and expanded middle class opportunity (around schools, housing and jobs and communities).*
 - *Build power by reaching the large numbers of underrepresented voters in some of the most overlooked places in our regions.*
 - *Take actions at the regional state and national level that challenge the Post-Civil Rights Bipartisan Consensus and dismantle regional structures of segregation and economic inequality.*

Topics:

These are proposed topics that may be stand-alone sections or parts of sections.

- **Race, place, and inequality** - How racial discrimination and segregation continue to widen wealth disparities and fuel political polarization
- **Power over Powerlessness** – How racial isolation and concentrated poverty intensify and deepen political and economic powerlessness
- **Fusing Labor and Civil Rights under unified policy agenda** – Uniting a racial justice, inclusive jobs civil rights agenda with meaningful pro-organized policies under a single banner and backed by a unified multi racial constituency
- **Monopolizing whiteness** – Racism as a Cartel - Opportunity Hoarding in Education
- **The Deadly symbiosis** - When the ghetto and the prison meet and mesh
- **When diversity *doesn't* matter** - Police Brutality and Criminal Justice Reform in the age of hypersegregation

- **When work disappears** - The future of work in the age of automation and persistent segregation
- **The growth of the racially diverse and resegregating suburb** - places of hope, opportunity or decline and division
- **Schools and Segregation** - Separate is still not equal
- **Who profits?** - Identifying and fighting the winners - the privatization movement, union busting the poverty industry and opportunity hoarding.
- **Who can gain?** - Organizing the losers to fight the winners - the Diverse suburbs, the labor movement, the Black church, and traditional civil rights organizations.
- **Building the multiracial metropolitan coalition** – Organizing, leadership identification and training for power - How do we organize? Leadership identification, leadership training, voter registration, voter turnout,
- **The Missing Black Vote** - The suburbs and new Black diaspora in politics and policy
- **Black vote, Black voters, and Black Candidates** – Black power unifying and leading the multi racial coalition
- **White voters still matter (so do Asian and Latino voters)** - how all working- and middle-class families are harmed by racial segregation and the denial and fear of Black political power.
- **Advancing a unifying agenda and unified multi racial constituency** – A program to combat racial isolation, economic inequality, promoting an expanding and inclusive middle class through fair housing, powerful multi racial unions and good schools and good jobs