



Partnership for Inclusive Opportunity

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Partnership of Building One America, Cleveland State University, and Rutgers Camden's Center for Urban Research and Education (CURE)

Introduction

In the wake of a tumultuous election season, the divergent but parallel issues of racial justice and economic inequality, so topical of late, are not likely to be reconciled in our national political dialogue anytime soon. Its even less probable that these two prevailing and enduring American problems will be acted upon in any meaningful way other than as a continuation of the alienation, polarization and political gridlock that has only aided the prolongation and expansion of status quo inequality.

It is in this environment, and for these reasons, that BOA and the Partnership for Inclusive Opportunity believes is has a unique and valuable role to play with likeminded institutions and leaders in: 1) developing and presenting research and data, 2) providing support and analysis for policy makers, advocates and litigators, and 3) training and supporting hundreds of grassroots and grass-tops constituency leaders who have a deep self-interest and stake in advancing a coherent and unifying narrative in support of a policy agenda of inclusive opportunity.

Building One America

BOA is an organizing institute that organizes multiracial middle and working class constituencies through institutions and leaders. It provides leadership training, technical assistance and strategic support for leaders and groups advancing policies and programs that promote fair housing, combat racial segregation in schools and expand inclusive middle class employment and economic growth. BOA's primary territory is Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Ohio. It has a secondary level of engagement with teams of leaders in Indiana, Colorado, Arizona, Michigan, New York and Illinois. With the Partnership, BOA seeks to continue organizing this constituency base and to work with its allies in academia, labor, faith, and civil rights to see that the two most powerful strains of political frustration are brought closer together to address some of America's deepest, long-standing and critical problems.

The Partnership for Inclusive Opportunity

BOA will be working with Rutgers Camden and Cleveland State University as the *Partnership for Inclusive Opportunity*. Together, the three organizations will be the primary sponsors of: a) a leadership-training institute to be held early in 2017, b) our biennial Summit on July 20-21, 2017, and c) a corresponding publication to be presented at the Summit. *Hidden in plain sight - the enduring legacy and present day crisis of racial segregation in America and why it we don't talk about it.*

The Summit event is being conceptualized as a new launch for BOA and a demonstration project of the Partnership following a long and turbulent election season and the departure of the first African American President.

In addition to the 2017 winter/spring training and the 2017 summer Summit, BOA and its Partners will be engaged in aggressively soliciting financial backing for the Partnership and for general operating support beyond the Summit and in recruiting Summit participants and academic contributors. The Partners will be providing in-kind and direct support for the events, the book as well as the fundraising activity itself.

Secondary partners for the partnership are members of the Building One America Academic Consortium

Building One America maintains important relationships with a significant number of academic institutions directly through board members and allies – and in some cases with a considerable amount of mutual support and direct engagement. These include:

- Hofstra University
- University of Minnesota
- Georgetown Law Center
- Rutgers University, Newark
- University of California, Berkley
- Princeton University
- Columbia Teachers College

A similar structure could also be created for the labor unions if we are successful in recruiting them. The Building One America Labor Committee

Places

Our focus will continue to be on metro regions in the core states where BOA has been operating in and where our university partners are based including: New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Ohio as well as those who have participated in BOA events: Colorado, Indiana, Illinois, New York and Arizona and possibly other Midwest and Northeast states such as Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan and Connecticut where we have had participation in the past. This makes our focus largely metros in the Northeast and Midwest regions of the United States along with two key Southwest metro regions.

Constituency

BOA will continue its focus on organizing racially and politically diverse, middle-class and working class constituencies. In most regions that will mean working-class and middle class suburbs both because of their disproportionate influence in state and national politics and their unique position in America's changing demographics. BOA has and will continue to have an urban presence and work with urban leaders but its focus on suburbs will continue to be both politically and strategically important. The suburbs are today a large swath of America that is often diverse, politically pivotal, and frequently ignored by both the liberal left and conservative right.

Purpose

BOA's purpose, and the mission of the Partnership, is to promote social inclusion and economic opportunity by combating segregation and discrimination in schools, work, and housing through research analysis, education, and community organizing support and training at the regional and metropolitan scale.

We seek to synthesize the two most powerful but parallel strains of our political discourse today around economic inequality and racial injustice. Not to merge or substitute one for the other but rather to examine their inter-connections and interactions and to more effectively understand and more deliberately promote a *unified* narrative and comprehensive policy agenda that can attract and sustain multi-racial support.

While the Partnership seeks to address issues of economic inequality that impact *all* working Americans, it does *not* take a "colorblind" approach in its research, training or messaging. On the contrary, BOA tackles the structures of racial injustice directly as a necessary aspect of our broader understanding of powerlessness, oppression and exploitation of *all* working people. We believe this is important because: 1) to do otherwise defies reality and the disproportionate level of inequality against working class and poor African Americans in jobs, schools, and housing, 2) a race neutral approach, in our experience, cannot sustain or motivate a truly multi-racial coalition over time, and 3) it obscures the role of race in oppressing, less disproportionately but still significantly, working class whites as well as recent immigrants.

BOA will continue to examine and challenge racialized forms of discrimination especially residential, workplace, and in schools and the enduring reality of the ghetto. This is an issue that is still very much with us and its harm to children, families, and regions has not only not been mitigated with time but continues to be a driver of many of our most pressing social and economic issues.

Allies and Members

Labor

BOA will continue to pursue organized labor as a powerful ally and financial backer. It will build on the work in New Jersey, Ohio and Pennsylvania to build a more sustainable and mutually supportive relationship with the two main teachers unions, the Laborers, Painters, Carpenters and other building trades nationally, regionally and locally, AFSCME and several other services, transportation, manufacturing and public sector unions. It will focus on the relationship between these labor unions and civil rights with an emphasis on black leadership within these organizations.

Civil Rights

BOA will continue to work with civil rights organizations who specialize in housing and schools through research, litigation and policy advocacy but it will have a particular focus expanding its relationship with the NAACP, drawing on its long relationship with its President, Cornell Brooks, several key board members, and

dozens of local chapters and units in states and regions. In many regions and states there is already a strong connection between the NAACP and the labor movement. These chapters and locals will be a priority.

Thought Leaders

BOA, with the new Partnership, will build and expand its current strong relationships with leaders who share our values and vision from academia, civil rights law, journalism, and public policy. There are many such leaders who have worked with BOA over the years including as speakers and participants at our Summits and regional gathering. Some are on our board and many others count themselves as important allies to BOA and see BOA's ability to convene and mobilize a multiracial constituency as a unique and critically important assets and contribution to their own work. These leaders will be asked to participate as: 1) contributors to the book project, 2) participants in the national summit, and/or 3) as members of an advisory board for the summit and book project. This last category will include a wider array of leaders (including labor leaders, clergy, local elected leaders and funders) and will be a testing ground for a revamped board of directors later in 2017.

Faith Leaders and Clergy

BOA will build on its relationship with the faith community and in particular the traditional black church including the three main Baptist conventions (NBC, ABC, PNBC) the AME (African Methodist Episcopal), AME Zion (African Methodist Episcopal Zion), and CME (Christian Methodist Episcopal) churches and their regional national judicatory leaders. These churches are not the only black churches in American and they are not exclusively African American but because of their history (and America's history of Jim Crow and segregation) they are some of the largest and oldest black led African American organizations of any kind in the United States. Often, it is the more visible, and activist church leaders, both black and white, who overshadow these more institutional leaders who, while more traditional, are no less powerful and important. The National Baptist Convention and the AME Church both claim 7.5 million members each. The Progressive National Baptist Conventions claims 2.5 million and the American Baptist Convention 1.3 million.

Local Elected (and non elected) Leaders

BOA will continue to build its base of leaders, members, and allies from among mayors, councilmember, school board members, superintendents, and county and township officials. Most of these local leaders are in communities and regions experiencing dramatic racial change. A growing number of these officials express interest in taking proactive steps to stabilize and even promote integration their communities and school districts.

But most leaders lack the tools, and even the language, to address issues of racial change, white-flight and social disparities on a local level. More importantly, they lack the power to counter the enormous pressures rooted in regional, state,

and national policies that too often overwhelm and eventually doom courageous efforts to address these issues locally.

BOA provides the training, convening, and the organizing support that helps these leaders: 1) build powerful relationships and alliances across the country with likeminded leaders, 2) organize an active and vocal multi-racial base support in their communities and regions to support their efforts and 3) provide the context, tools and language and to act more strategically, powerfully and successfully.

Training

BOA's best tool for recruiting leaders, allies and members is also its most effective means for preparing them for organizing, fighting and winning - that tool is BOA's leadership training program. There is a demand for this training across the country and especially among emerging leaders in increasingly diverse communities and institutions such as congregations, labor unions and local governments where a wide *power gap* often exists between 'old guard' and new leaders who tend to be more reflective of changing demographics.

BOA will provide a national training for leaders in the early part of 2017. This will likely be in Cleveland Ohio with Cleveland State University. It will be a four-day training event.

The training is designed to prepare individuals with strong leadership potential to be more powerful and effective advocates for themselves, their organizations, and constituencies. Moreover, it prepares them to work together in a coordinated manner with Building One America and its allies in the labor and civil rights movements. The training itself focuses on the principles, tactics, strategies, and techniques of leadership and power in the public arena including topics such as organizing to build power, listening for self-interest, analyzing and impacting power structures, and launching and winning strategic campaigns.

What sets this training apart from traditional Alinsky style training is the emphasis on race and regionalism and an analysis of the role that racial segregation and discrimination have played in fomenting dangerous divisions among working people of all colors and backgrounds.

BOA 2017 Summit

BOA has held a national summit every two years in Washington, DC with participation from members of Congress and White House officials along with policy experts, civil rights advocates, and hundreds of local leaders.

The leaders who attend the summit include elected officials from diverse suburbs and cities, clergy, civil rights leaders and labor leaders. The summits have focused on policies to promote and support sustainable racial and economic inclusion in housing, schools, and jobs as well as the politics and practice of building multi-racial coalitions.

BOA has proposed that its next national summit on July 20-21, 2017 be deliberately focused not only on the policies but the power needed to break through on the critical

issues of social inclusion and middle-class expansion. The presidential elections will be behind us after a chaotic political year in which rising income inequality and issues of race will have been front, center, and just below the surface.

BOA proposes to leverage these powerful political and economic themes and engage some of the most important people's institutions in our country including labor, faith, civil rights, and local government from key regions around the country.

The conference will support the launching of a broad-based peoples movement aimed at building power, advancing a new and unifying civil rights narrative and taking action on an issue agenda that flows from a narrative to combat economic inequality, racial segregation and to promote inclusive communities and jobs.

The national summit and the book will be BOA's primary organizing operation for the remainder of 2016 and the first half of 2017. It will test BOA's viability and relevance "after Obama" and therefore will need to be a show of force both financially and politically.

Book Project

Hidden in plain sight - the enduring legacy and present day crisis of racial segregation in America and why it we don't talk about it.

The book project will be a companion to the summit. It will attempt to make the case not only for why our agenda for combating racial segregation is still relevant, but that the consequences of not addressing this enduring problem will continue to hold us back as a nation economically and politically - *especially around issues of racial injustice and economic inequality.*

The book and its contributors will make the case connecting racial segregation to: the wealth and income gap; crime, policing and incarceration; persistent and growing disparities in education attainment, health, and even life expectancy. These issues and their connection to segregation have all been explored before but the book will go further to examine why an issue so tied to some of our deepest and most pressing problems remains largely obscured and even censored out of the public debate about these otherwise critical and high profile issues.

It will build on the thesis that (like climate change) its obscurity and invisibility is not simply a national delusion or a collective refusal to face reality. Nor is it because it's too complicated or opaque. There is probably nothing in America more visible and obvious than segregation by race. It is also not because the solutions are too remote, unattainable or have not worked in the past. It's because there are powerful interest that benefit and even profit from the current arrangements of a segregated society. These are not only bureaucratic and political – that is a part of it - they are economic and include private sector institutions (many with an anti-public sector and anti-union agenda) with a vested institutional interest in maintaining racially segregated poverty and thus keeping it out of the public debate no matter how obvious, observable and measurable.

Like climate change, just because it is denied doesn't mean it is not its not there, or not

happening. It doesn't mean we can't do anything about it, and doesn't mean it's not a critical and urgent problem.

Dr. Martin Luther King wrote that, *“the underlying purpose of segregation was to oppress and exploit the segregated, not simply to keep them apart.”*

The book will examine both the profit motive and the power dynamic that keeps the ghetto very much with us and yet hidden in plain sight.

To combat ghetto poverty we believe we have to understand the intersecting political and economic interests that are served by its changing but continued existence and in some cases expansion. We have to also understand whose interests (African Americans and white Americans) are harmed politically and economically, and make a powerful case for a strategy, program, and argument for its dismantling - Including specific actionable issues around federal and state housing policy, schools, land use, and fiscal policy.