



Where we've been. Where we stand. And where we're going.

In 1965, Bayard Rustin reflected on what the Civil Rights movement achieved in the previous ten years, including the 1954 Supreme Court decision on school desegregation and the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Writing for [Commentary magazine](#), he said:

“The very decade which has witnessed the decline of legal Jim Crow has also seen the rise of de facto segregation in our most fundamental socio-economic institutions. The median income of Negroes has dropped from 57% to 54% of that of whites. [...] More Negroes attend de facto segregated schools today than when the Supreme Court handed down its famous decision.”

“...the task of the [Civil Rights] movement is vastly complicated by the failure of many whites of good will to understand the nature of our problem. There is a widespread assumption that the removal of artificial racial barriers should result in the automatic integration of the Negro into all aspects of American life.”

Rustin, a civil rights organizer, activist, and close adviser to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., understood the limitations of the movement and encouraged its leaders to move “from a protest movement to a full-fledged social movement, [...] concerned not merely with removing the barriers to full opportunity but with achieving the fact of equality.” He could have written this today, 66 years from the Brown v. Board of Education decision. Consider some of harrowing facts of what it means to be Black in the United States of 2020:

- Black households still hold only one-tenth of the wealth held by whites.
- African-American men are two and a half times more likely than white men to be killed by police.
- The Black arrest rate is at least twice as high as that for whites for disorderly conduct, drug possession, simple assault, theft, vagrancy and vandalism.

It is evident that, as a country, we have collectively failed to understand--and act on--Bayard Rustin’s challenge. As part of the American social fabric, our congregations, unions and civic organizations are complicit in this failure. We resolve to continue taking steps to meet that challenge.

Our organization brings people together from different backgrounds, including socio-economic, religious, ethnic, racial, and geographic, which tend to divide us. And yet, we publicly claim that **Black Lives Matter**. This affirmation is rooted in the Jewish tradition of naming the oppressed:

“You shall not abuse any widow or orphan. If you do abuse them, when they cry out to me, I will surely heed their cry.” - Exodus 22:22-23

We condemn police brutality, the indiscriminate violence towards our Black brothers and sisters, white supremacy in all its forms and all institutional racism, discrimination and oppression.

We believe that the liberation of all Americans--including whites--is bound up in the liberation of all oppressed minorities and people of color, and African Americans in particular given our tragic history. None of us is free until all of us are free.

To that end, our work is aimed at building sustainable, relational power by engaging institutional leaders in public life, which means taking responsibility for the common good. Thus, we recommit ourselves to the following:

- Supporting, engaging and organizing with a larger and more diverse set of institutions, with a focus on predominantly Black congregations and civic organizations.
- Holding elected officials and business leaders accountable to follow through on the promises made during this crisis to dismantle systemic racism.
- Joining with leaders in the Black, Latinx and other underrepresented communities to craft an action agenda that not only removes the barriers to economic, education, housing, health care, and other essential opportunities, but advances the “fact of equality” in all these aspects of daily life.
- Evaluating and being responsible for our own biases, implicit or explicit, with our sights towards creating a Colorado for all.

On behalf of all the leaders of Coloradans for the Common Good, we affirm these core values, and we invite you to [join us](#), as we move towards future action to make democracy work.

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