



Commemorating, Collaborating, Constructing:

Action planning on the 50th anniversary of the Kerner Commission Report on Civil Disorders

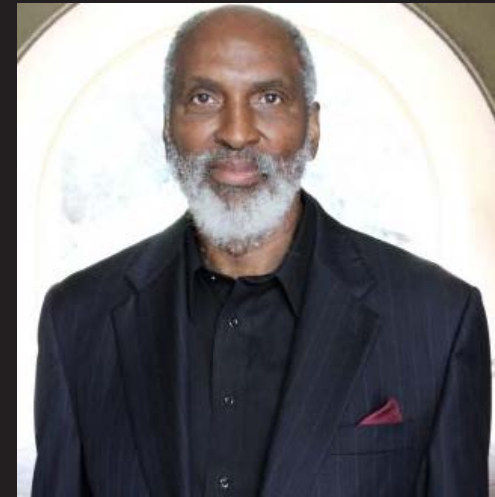
john a. powell

Director of the Haas Institute for a Fair & Inclusive Society, and Professor of Law, African American & Ethnic Studies at the University of California at Berkeley.

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The Kerner Commission At-A-Glance

After a series of uprisings in more than 100 different cities in 1967, resulting in over 80 deaths, thousands of injuries, and over \$100 million dollars in property damage, President Lyndon Johnson issued an executive order to investigate these incidents.

The executive order sought out to answer three main questions:

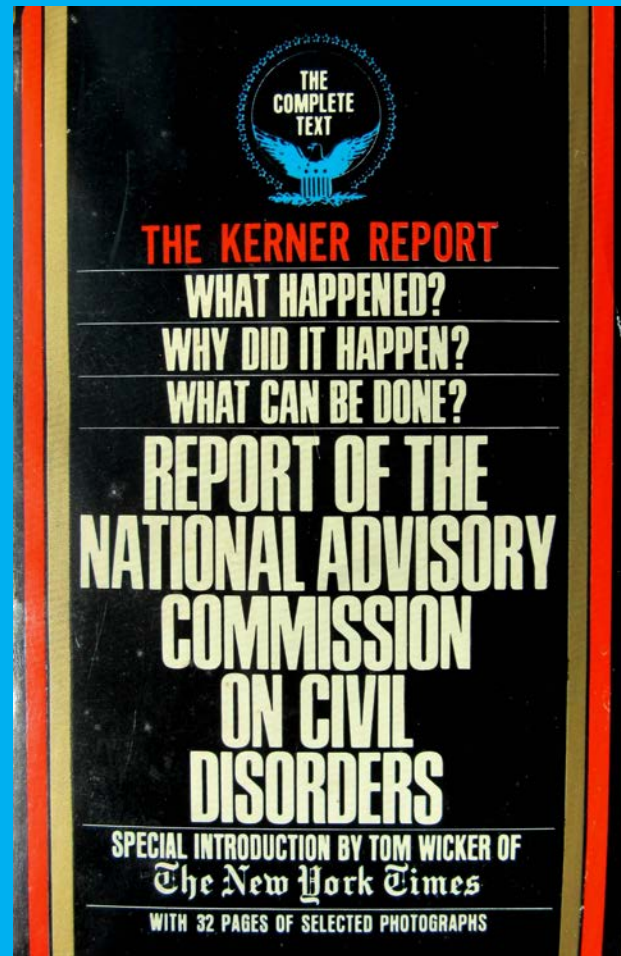
1. What happened?
2. Why did these events happen?
3. What can be done to prevent these events from happening again?

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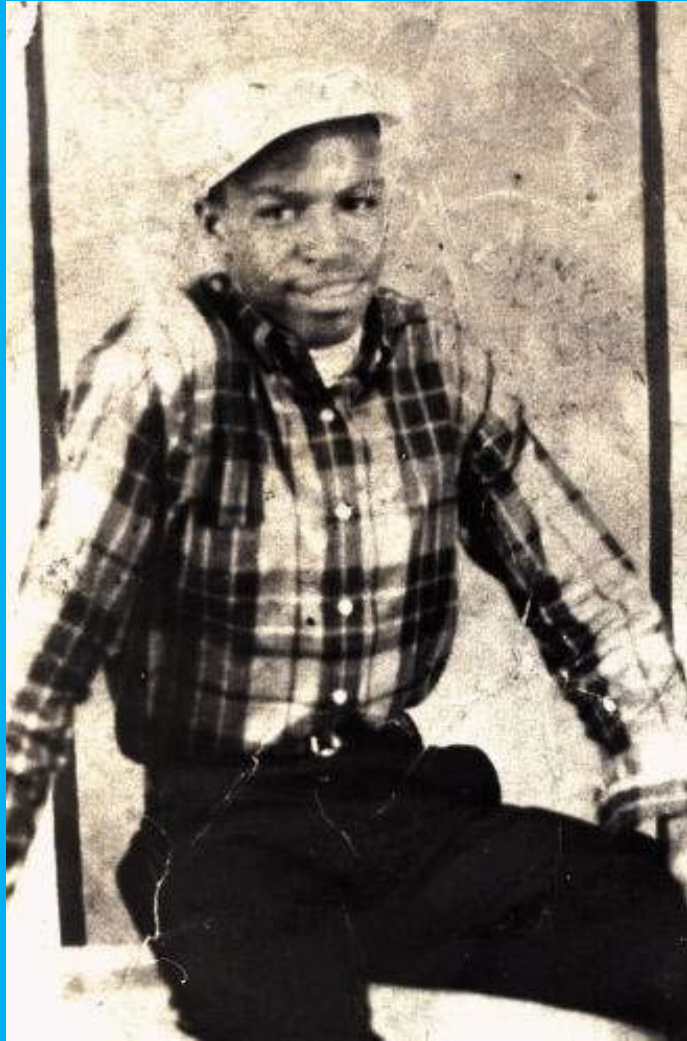


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In its most famous line, the Commission concluded that...

- We were moving towards two societies; one black, one white, separate and unequal.
- And, it placed blame:
 - “What white Americans have never fully understood – but what the Negro can never forget – is that white society is deeply implicated in the ghetto. White institutions created it, white institutions maintain it, and white society condones it.”

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Recommendations in the report

The report set forth a comprehensive set of recommendations, including but not limited to...

1. Massive investments and subsidies for low and moderate income housing, e.g. Section 8, LIHTC;
2. The development of a universal basic income, e.g. higher minimum wage;
3. Expansion of pre-k education to indigent families;
4. A three-year plan to create over two million public and private sector jobs for disenfranchised youth;
5. Massive federal investment in education; and more.

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The Southern Strategy



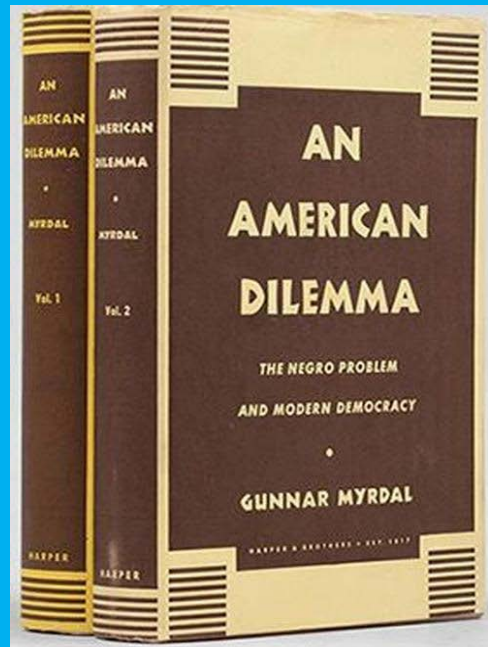
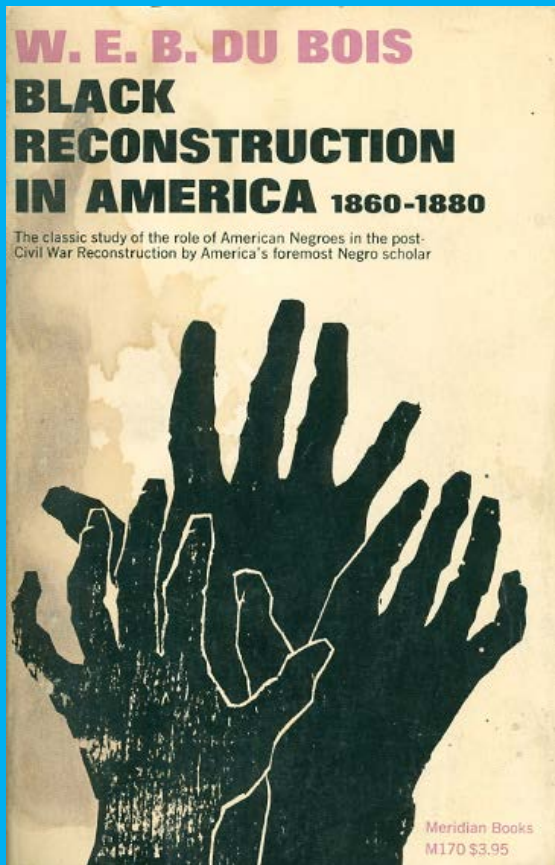
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THE NEGRO IN CHICAGO

A STUDY OF RACE RELATIONS
AND A RACE RIOT

BY
THE CHICAGO COMMISSION ON
RACE RELATIONS



THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS
CHICAGO BELONGS

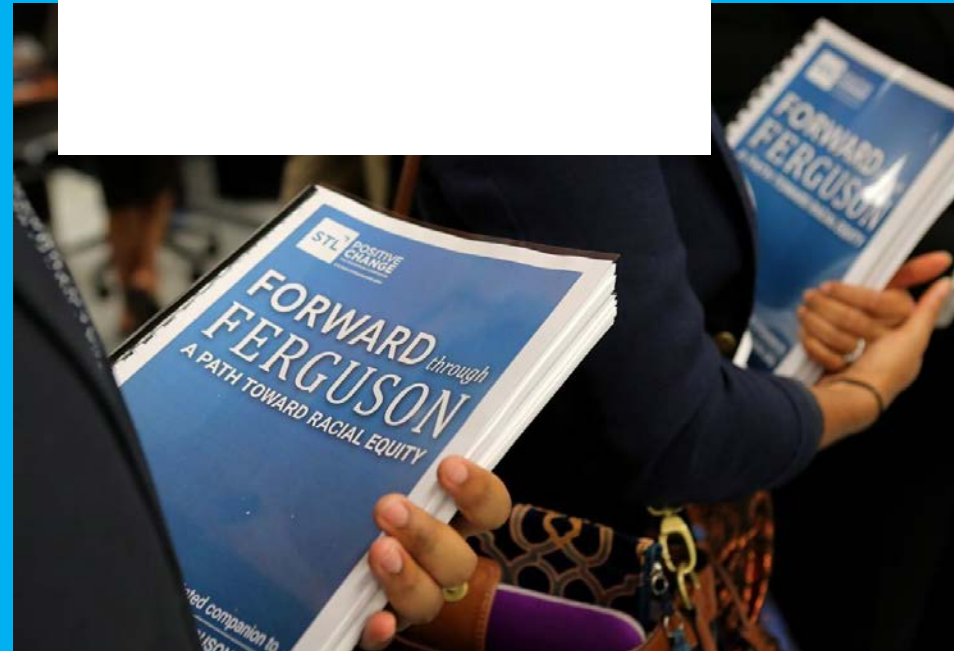
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August 10, 2016



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Why commemorate this report?

First, this was our last serious, comprehensive, government led attempt to try and address the issue of belonging, of racial inequality and our unremedied racial caste system and to create a more perfect union.

“The Primary Goal Must Be a Single Society”

However, the racial demographics of our country have changed significantly over the last 50 years. Two of the fastest growing segments of our population include interracial marriages and interracial children, creating all the more need to focus on narratives.

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Narratives: Bridging, Breaking, Bonding

BREAKING: When a group turns inwards and explicitly pushes away from other groups who are seen as dangerous or a threat.

BONDING: Connecting to individuals who are similar to you in some important way.

BRIDGING: Ties to people who are unlike you in some important way through stories, structures, and contact.

Panel 1 will explain these forms of narratives in more depth.

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Why commemorate this report?

Secondly, the Kerner Commission is a “road not taken.” It laid out a program for policy and institutional change that America did not follow.

“I read that report...of the 1919 riot in Chicago, and it is as if I were reading a report of the investigating committee on the Harlem riot of ‘35, the report of the investigating committee on the Harlem riot of ‘43, the report of the McCone Commission on the Watts riot...I must again in candor say to you members of this Commission –it is a kind of Alice in Wonderland– with the same moving picture re-shown over and over again, the same analysis, the same recommendations, and the same inaction.” – Dr. Kenneth Clark

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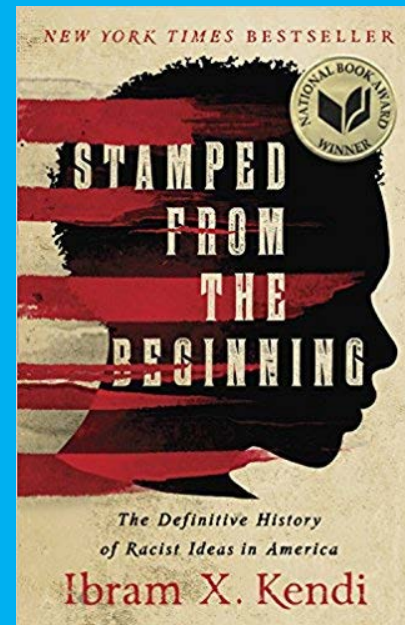
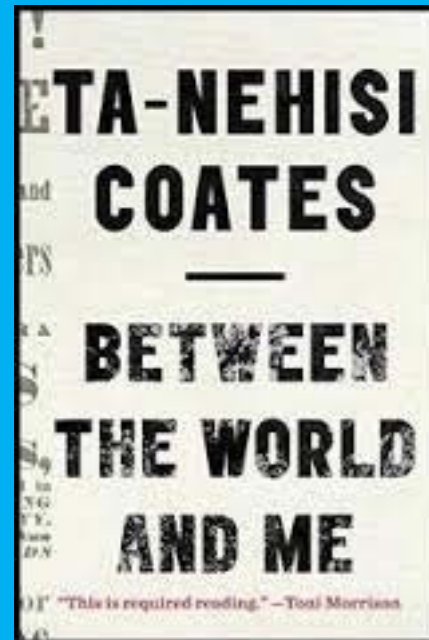
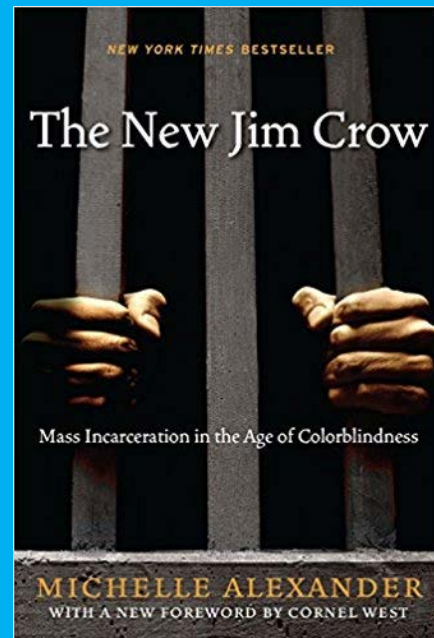
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Why commemorate this report?

Finally, we must confront the question of *why* so few of the Kerner Commission's recommendations were implemented. There is no question that we find ourselves in a similar set of circumstances today. The Black Lives Matter movement, books like Michelle Alexander's *The New Jim Crow* and Ta-Nehisi Coates's *Between the World and Me*, are creating a historical moment upon which we can build in part by *bridging* with all sectors of society.

**BLACK
LIVES
MATTER**



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We need a “Game plan to move forward.”



As remarkable as the Kerner report was, we must confront its failures as well.

- How do we bridge the despair of our current political arrangements into transformative change?
- How do we channel movement organizing and local initiative into policy change?
- How do we make sure this isn't just another conference, after which nothing will be done?

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We have Three Options...

1. Do nothing, which would risk a repeat of the same violence.
2. Create policies aimed to “enrich the ghetto,” which they argued would “create a permanently divided country.”
3. Create a mixture of short-term policies to strengthen the ghetto with longer term policies to promote integration.

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Introducing our First Keynote Speaker,

Mr. Shaun Donovan



- Former Deputy Assistant Secretary for Multifamily Housing at HUD and acting FHA Commissioner during the Clinton/Bush presidential transition.
- Served as Commissioner of the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development.
- Served as Secretary of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, where he initiated development of the Department's 'Affirmatively Further Fair Housing' rule.
- Until January, 2017, Donovan served as the Director of the U.S. Office of Management and Budget under President Obama.

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