

Beyond Racial Liberalism

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My Position

- An effective response to a Trump administration is the realization of a progressive movement.
- The election of Trump was only made possible by liberalism, and specifically racial liberalism in the presidency of Barack Obama.
- Racial liberalism is moderate politics based on universalism (e.g. the American Dream) rather than substantive structural changes committed to an egalitarian society.

Problematizing Obama's Racial Liberalism

- Barack Obama symbolized racial inclusivity from an assimilationist paradigm only subjecting people of color to advances in neo-liberalism. This play out in two issues:
- Making government more responsive to the needs of the people
- And managing The Great Recession

Cooper Union Protest

- April 2010 Obama spoke about the Dodd-Frank Wall-Street Reform And Consumer Protection Act at Cooper Union in Manhattan.
- Inside the building were the WallStreet CEOs
- Outside were the protestors (on the left) that wanted to see those same CEOs go to jail for the economic “fraud” that lead to the Great Recession.
- This deception of interests was aided by a racial liberalism that can be traced back to the Truman Admin.



Six Year Later Obama Persist:

- “The laws we have passed have worked..”
- “I want to emphasize this because it is popular in the media, in political discourse—both on the left and the right—to suggest that the crisis happened and nothing changed.”
- “So I want to dispel the notion that exists both on the left and on the right that somehow, after the crisis, nothing happened.”
- “So when you read articles, whether on the left or the right, that suggest somehow nothing happened and everybody just went back to the same go-go years that they were engaging in before, those are factually incorrect.”

The Recession was an opportunity for Progressive Change

- Racial justice movements must work with radical economic justice movements and not settle for a politics of symbolism.
- Racial inclusion is often without racial justice, but co-opted neoliberal projects that use brown faces in high places to continue a politics to the detriment to the majority, e.g. Arne Duncan “Race to the Top”
- Issue to address: a robust examination of power in the economic structure, redistribution, and allocation of basic resources

Two Practical Approaches to momentum building

- Using Social Justice Organizations as a framework for participatory Democracy: **National Domestic Workers Alliance**
- Identify and challenge progressive leaning members in the Democratic Party on the national and local levels.
- The DNC seems to be anointing Keith Ellison (MN) as the “new face.” He should be pushed politically.

What most be avoided:

- A politics based purely in opposition to Trump
- Progressive politics should push the envelope to reinvest in the social safety net, progressive taxing, single payer health insurance, federal and state policies that stem the mounting tide of neoliberalism
- A progressive urban social policy that confronts gentrification, public school disinvestment, and vouchers that privatize public goods.