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The Economics of Equality

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by Tom Kahn

FORWORD BY

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A. PHILIP RANDOLPH
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The Economics of Equality

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by Tom Kahn

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② League for Industrial Democracy

New York, 1964

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The LID, of course, takes no responsibility for the views herein expressed. This is not merely a *pro forma* disclaimer. Members of the Publication Committee disagreed on a number of significant points. This is as it should be for an organization dedicated to education and discussion of basic social problems and not the grinding of axes. The author has his own axes to grind, and thanks the LID for enabling him to do so.

COVER BY EUGENE GLABERMAN

BOOK DESIGNED BY IGAL ROODENKO

Foreword

THE NEGRO PROBLEM is the same as the American problem. It is not simply an issue of morality or even of racial justice. It poses the most basic political, economic and social determinants of the future of this entire nation, black and white.

This is perhaps the most important, underlying theme of Tom Kahn's brilliant and incisive pamphlet, *The Economics of Equality*. It is a concept which we recommend, not only to the strategists and militants of the civil rights movement, but to every citizen concerned with the fate of his country.

By now, it has become more and more clear that the Negro minority of 10% in the United States cannot eradicate racism by itself. On the most obvious level, this is true because Negroes are indeed a minority, lacking the political strength of numbers and the economic and social power to restructure the other 90% of the society. But something even more basic than a head-count is involved. In the North, statutory racism has all but vanished. Negroes have a legal right to employment, to public accommodations, to the vote. And yet, every minute of the day the Northern Negro is still victimized by discrimination.

For all the legal equality of the North, the Negro has been herded into teeming, rat-infested racial ghettos, he is educated in inferior, de facto segregated schools, his unemployment rates are twice those of whites, his characteristic occupations are menial and ill-paid.

So it was that the great March on Washington of August, 1963, was a march for *jobs* and freedom. This marked the definitive recognition by the civil rights movement that it could only truly eliminate second class citizenship through changes in the American economy and social structure as well as in the laws of the racist South.

This point has now become relatively familiar. But the second half of the equation—that America's fate, and not just that of the Negro depends on meeting this challenge—is not so plain.

The Negroes are the most visible and oppressed group at the bottom of the American economy. But they are not the majority of the poor. According to President Johnson's figure, 25% of the poor in America are Negro (that is two and a half times the incidence of Negroes in the

population as a whole, a statistical proof of the economics of racism) and 75% are white. If the city slums are left to continue their physical and social rotting, if the depressed areas become more depressed, if an automating technology is paid for by the most impoverished whose jobs are destroyed, then there will be three white victims for every Negro victim.

But then, the issue goes well beyond any attempt to compute an arithmetic of misery. The fate of the Negro is inextricably bound up with that of the poor white; but that same fate will also play a massive role in determining the very quality of American life.

Today, poor Negroes and poor whites are the chief victims of our anarchic technological ingenuity. The routine, repetitive, low-paid jobs which they held—and many they still hold—are the simplest ones to eliminate in favor of the machine. But there are already signs that the computers and cybernated equipment are moving from the blue collar to the white collar and even executive levels. American Airlines and Westinghouse have already proved that clerical functions and even middle level policy decisions can be made by computers. The Wall Street Journal has already reported that seasoned engineers laid off by the termination of defense contracts have been forced back to school in order to catch up with the revolution in their own trade.

If this society cannot give an economic answer to the Negro and the poor white who are eliminated from the least skilled jobs, how will it be able to respond when automation strikes at the skilled worker, the office and the executive suite?

Tom Kahn examines the implications of these sweeping changes for the civil rights movement—and therefore, for all America. His focus upon the economic and social underpinnings of racism points to important aspects of program and political tactic for those citizens, black or white, who see the need to answer this challenge.

Clearly, the civil rights movement must increasingly do battle on economic and social issues which cut across the race issue. The expansion of the public sector, the creation of new jobs, fulfilling the unmet needs of the nation for decent housing, schools and transportation systems—these are the kinds of demands which are going to have to be made. When this pamphlet was being written, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was still being debated. Now that it is law, Kahn's emphasis becomes all the more important. The means are at hand to eradicate formal Jim Crow from American life. But, just as it took from two to four years of struggle to turn the Wagner Act's guarantee of the right to collective bargaining from a legislative sentiment into a reality, this change will not be accomplished unless a militant mass movement implements the law. In the next period, America's attention will shift from the juridical racism of the South to the practical economic and social racism of the entire society.

Given this kind of an economic and social program, Kahn's analysis reveals the kind of political coalition required to carry it out. The American labor movement, speaking through George Meany at the 1963 AFL-CIO Convention, has already stated that, thus far, automation has been a curse rather than a blessing. The unions know that if they do not face up to this issue, they will be acquiescing in their own destruction.

If the civil rights and labor movements assume that chronic, high levels of unemployment and a careless technological revolution are inevitable, then both will fail. Black and white workers at the bottom of the economic heap will fight one another for scarce jobs and that vast American majority which desperately needs democratic planning and social investment will split into warring factions. Under such conditions, there is no hope for progressive political change for anyone, black or white.

But if the civil rights movement and the unions, along with those middle class people moved by liberalism or radicalism, by religious and/or ethical values, if these forces unite to solve the American problem, then in the process they will solve much of the Negro problem. In this context, integration is not some distant ideal but a practical necessity.

And to do these things requires something much more than politics as usual. From 1938 to 1964, the coalition of Dixiecrats and reactionary Northern Republicans stopped or deformed every major piece of domestic social legislation. Significantly, the first break in this pattern took place when a new coalition organized itself around the Civil Rights Bill of 1964.

That new coalition is at this moment fragile and tenuous. If the more massive changes which are necessary are to succeed, there must be a shift from a temporary congressional alliance to a new political alignment. Those who face up to the American problem—Negroes, trade unionists, liberals, radicals—must become as forceful and decisive as the Dixiecrat-Republican coalition. In effect, they must become one of the two major parties in America.

These kinds of ideas are detailed in this excellent pamphlet. A veteran of the civil rights movement, Tom Kahn speaks with passion, knowledge and experience, and not simply of the Negro problem. This is truly an analysis of the American problem for, as Kahn makes so clear, in responding to the plight of the racial minorities, the most cruelly used of our fellow citizens, we are answering the most basic challenge of the nation's future.

A. PHILIP RANDOLPH
MICHAEL HARRINGTON

To Mike, Bayard and Max

1 The Crisis In Strategy

THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT has entered a critical period. Without new tactics and fresh approaches, its future success is by no means assured. The struggle for freedom may be eternal, but specific movements never are: they adapt and prosper, or they falter into the graveyard of history.

Signs of the crisis abound, North and South. Ten years after the Supreme Court destroyed the legal basis of Jim Crow, the fundamental conditions of Negro life have scarcely improved. Indeed, there is more actual segregation in schools and housing today than in 1954. More Negroes are jobless today; more are underemployed and unemployable. The ghettos grow larger at the same time that their economic life weakens. For all too many, the promises seeded a full decade ago have yielded a harvest of bitter fruit.

Angry frustration is the inevitable backlash. Expressed in nationalism and other modes of alienation, the frustration is not confined to anti-white sects. It spills over into the strategies and tactics of the mainstream integrationist movement. It challenges the movement to deliver real victories—to make a tangible *difference* in the Negro's day-to-day existence. How to channel the rising frustration of the black community into effective mass action is the first horn of our dilemma.

White Counter-Revolution

THE SECOND is the burgeoning white counter-revolution. Its magnitude cannot accurately be gauged, but its most disturbing manifestations are perhaps in the North. Here something of a white liberal retreat is evident as tactics which drew applause and admiration when applied in the South suddenly become reprehensible when applied in the North. So-called parents and taxpayers groups emerge, ostensibly to campaign against busing as a method of school integration, but in reality to throw up new walls of resistance to social change, to preserve the enclaves of white middle-class privilege. Meanwhile, on the lowest rungs of the economic ladder, job competition among black and white workers creates a tinderbox whose explosive potential mounts with the steady rise of unemployment.

Eager to exploit the North's deepening racial crisis, the Dixiecrats step up their own counter-revolutionary activity. Georgia's Senator Russell, eyeing the concentration of Negroes in the major urban centers, reverts to the ancient Dixiecrat effort to win sympathy for the Confederate cause by playing on fears of Negro political domination: he suggests a redistribution of Negroes throughout the fifty states. The Alabama and Mississippi "sovereignty commissions" dip into pub-

lic funds to finance so-called Committees for Fundamental Freedoms, which play background music while Alabama's Governor Wallace forays into Wisconsin, Indiana and Maryland to peddle the Dixiecrat line on civil rights. Back home, meanwhile, the elaborate spy network established in Alabama for the purpose of compiling dossiers on civil rights activists around the country exemplifies the new sophistication of the Southern resistance. As Southern state officials learn how legally to frustrate the movement, shootings, bombings and other retaliatory violence against freedom fighters continue to appall the world.

Vanishing Middle Ground

THESE DEVELOPMENTS suggest that a polarization is taking place in American society around the race issue. Indifferentists and moderates find the comfortable middle ground vanishing beneath their feet as the Negro, armed with techniques of social dislocation, extends his struggle into their backyards.

Some see the polarization merely as the alienation of white sympathy in reaction against extremist tactics employed by some civil rights groups. There is an element of truth in this assessment. But such tactics spring from the frustrations of the ghetto; they are rooted in a continuing social injustice—the very existence of the ghetto—and therefore cannot be eradicated by admonitions from above. The alienation of white sympathy is, at least in part, a defense mechanism whereby whites avert their eyes from a painful social problem by focusing on byproducts of the problem. They ascribe extremist tactics merely to the perverse ambitions of some Negro leaders; they refuse to recognize that rank-and-file frustration compels even “moderate” leaders to adopt militant tactics or lose popular influence in the ghetto. They also fail to see that such tactics, even when ineffective, may maintain a sense of motion that helps sublimate potential violence.

The myopia of many whites is certainly convenient. It helps restore an emotional balance for the guilt-ridden and vacillating: the racial crisis is not only our fault; the Negroes are also to blame, for their tactics are designed to antagonize us, and show they do not really want to integrate with us.

The “balance” is of course false, because black frustration and the white counter-revolution cannot be equated. The former emanates from an oppressed group and will provide much of the energy behind the revolution, whose goal is freedom. On the other hand, the white counter-revolution, whatever its rhetoric, aims to maintain the status quo. This distinction is fundamental.

Still, because a viewpoint is incorrect does not mean it can be simply dismissed. The white counter-revolution is an objective reality, and strategies must be devised to cope with it. Those strategies, I suggest, must rest on an analysis which sees black frustration and white counter-

revolution not only as opposites but as dialectically related forces.

On one level, they feed on each other. Tactics aimed primarily at irritating and inconveniencing whites draw their justification precisely from white complacency and conservatism. Whites, on their part, point to such tactics as evidence of the movement's irresponsibility and lawlessness, and thereby justify their conservatism.

The Social Base of Counter-Revolution

THIS CYCLE can continue only because the two contending forces are related on a deeper level: they have a common source in the nature of our fundamental institutions. So long as segregation is built into our schools, housing, and employment patterns, the social base for the white counter-revolution remains. Because these institutions, at least outside the South, do not usually carry a Jim Crow label, the potential virulence of the base may be concealed—that is, until attacked by the civil rights revolution. At that point, the potential energy becomes kinetic, and the counter-revolution has begun, gathering into its ranks many whites who hold no conscious brief for segregation but are fearful of change. This is a transition period marked by intense conflict.

How long the conflict lasts depends on how speedily the revolution can accomplish its institutional changes. Until it does, the hearts of the counter-revolutionaries cannot be liberated from their institutional moorings, and their hostility to change increases as the demand for it becomes more militant. To oversimplify somewhat, the gap between militant attack and actual institutional change is a rough measure of the duration of the counter-revolution.

The same gap produces frustration among the revolutionaries. Just as their opponents may exaggerate the potency of the militant attack—"They're pushing too fast"—in order to rally a counter-attack, so do the revolutionaries, in order to sustain morale, need to believe that they are making progress. But when the vaunted progress, cited by friends and enemies alike, is not tangibly felt in the lives of the oppressed group, angry frustration results.

Though abstract, the above analysis may provide an insight into the polarization now taking place. As the middle ground narrows, the question arises: Where does the great "white middle" (to use Bayard Rustin's phrase) go? Along what lines is it most desirable that the polarization proceed? If black frustration and white counter-revolution have a common source in our institutional life, what strategies and tactics are best suited to transform our institutions?

These are not questions to which the revolution can afford to be indifferent. The mass of uncommitted whites cannot be brushed aside by a movement whose ultimate aim is profound social change. What our analysis suggests is that the sympathy of whites need not be purchased by a cooling off of Negro militancy—which the objective circum-

stances of Negro life make impossible anyway, and which would merely signal the readjustment of whites to business-as-usual. The support of whites will finally be won and secured by militant action that tears down the structural obstacles to Negro freedom, and, in so doing, frees whites from institutional arrangements that bind them to the old order.

The Meaning of Birmingham

IT IS ALMOST TEN YEARS since Mrs. Rosa Parks of Montgomery, Alabama, refused to surrender her bus seat to a white man and, with this assertion of dignity, sparked the massively successful bus boycott. The sit-ins and freedom rides that swept through the South at the start of 1960 were also dramatically successful. Thousands of lunch-counters, hotels, restaurants, bus terminals, and other public accommodations were rapidly integrated.

Then, what began as a "revolt for dignity" against the most overt and humiliating forms of segregation acquired new dimensions. Did the *right* to use public accommodations amount to much without the *means* to exercise that right? What difference did the integration of hotels and restaurants make to the unemployed black worker? The questions were not academic. Negro unemployment in the South is astronomical, running at 30% in cities like Birmingham, Alabama, and Cambridge, Maryland. Increasingly, therefore, the movement turned to the entangled problems of jobs, housing, and education.

This is the background of the Birmingham upheaval last year. Not only did it symbolize total community mobilization, but it recognized the inter-relatedness of all the basic problems besetting the ghetto. The single-demand approach associated with the lunch-counter sit-ins gave way to package demands. More jobs, integrated schools, decent housing, an end to police brutality—these were among the key issues with which the civil rights movement confronted the white power structure. They spoke to the social and economic needs of the total Negro community. Consequently, what began as a movement of students and middle-class Negroes expanded to include the ghetto's poor and unemployed.

But Birmingham failed; its demands were not won. There were defeats in other Southern cities as well, as demonstrations ran into a stone wall of opposition. Indeed, in not a single city did the civil rights movement score a major breakthrough victory last year. The closer the movement came to the real needs of the Negro community, the more it encountered obstacles that were not purely racial in character.

Public accommodations proved relatively easy to integrate. Large numbers of people are not required to integrate a lunchcounter; a small number applying direct action will suffice. Moreover, the participation of whites in the sit-ins was not essential; Negroes could immobilize a lunchcounter alone. But in desegregating public accommodations, the movement was victorious in only the most peripheral

institutions. Humiliating caste barriers were broken, but the basic conditions of Negro life were unaltered. Can they be altered by means of the direct-action techniques that proved so effective in the field of public accommodations? Can they be altered by the Negro alone?

The "American Problem"

AS THE MOVEMENT reaches into the more fundamental institutions, it finds itself confronting not only the "Negro problem" but the "American problem." In New York, the effort to secure jobs for Negroes in the brewery industry ran up against the problem of automation; how could Negroes be hired when white workers with seniority were being displaced by machines? The struggle for school integration in the urban centers has proven to be inseparable from the struggle for improved quality education, and thus becomes tied in to the question of how public funds are to be allocated and what the priorities of this society are. Similarly, ending discrimination in housing is a token gesture so long as the slums are left standing. The rent strikes have only scratched the surface of a deeper problem, namely, that of tearing down the slums, rebuilding our cities, and providing decent, integrated housing for all who need it. Here again, the matter of social resources and priorities is involved.

It is not surprising that the civil rights revolution should touch upon so many apparently non-racial issues. Segregation and discrimination, after all, are products of the *total* society; they cannot be eliminated, nor full racial equality assured, while all other aspects of the nation's life remain as they are. Conservatives may howl that the Negro movement is going beyond its legitimate concerns; and some Negroes who only sought inclusion in existing arrangements may be taken aback by the ramifying institutional changes that genuine integration implies. Nonetheless, the impetus toward broader social objectives is a logical development of the civil rights movement itself.

The Need—a Political Movement

UNLESS PROGRESS is made toward these broader social objectives, the civil rights revolution will be stymied. Yet the Negro lacks the political and social weight to attain these objectives alone. Other segments of society must be set in motion. Allies must be won. Even this is not enough, because the "American problem" cannot be solved by private agencies, by voluntary group action. National priorities must be set and resources allocated by the government, which bears responsibility for the general welfare. This means that the Negro and his allies must construct a *political* movement—political in two specific senses:

1. It advances a comprehensive nationwide program for social and economic reconstruction, *transcending but unswervingly committed* to Negro freedom, and it agitates for this program on the grass-roots

level throughout the country.

2. It consciously and systematically, directly and indirectly, seeks political power, without which no basic reform program can be implemented.

To a considerable extent, the irrational and distorted aspects of the civil rights movement are traceable precisely to the absence of such a movement. "Extremist" tactics will become increasingly prominent so long as the Negro revolt continues to proceed in isolation.

This is not to imply that the revolt lacks sympathy and support among other segments of the population. What it lacks is corresponding organization and movement. Unemployment among Negroes is at least 12%, but there is no mass movement of the unemployed with which the civil rights movement could forge mutually reinforcing links. Similarly, the integration of schools and housing, especially in the industrial centers, is stalemated by a complex of socio-economic problems for whose solution no powerful urban reform movement now exists. Nearly 15% of Negro labor is still on the farms, but there is no strong organization of small farmers to cope with galloping agricultural mechanization and its miserable human consequences.

All of this is another way of saying that the Negro revolt has not been echoed in American political life.

Structural Obstacles

WHAT HAS THIS to do with the "economics of equality"? Two things:

First, without prefacing a discussion of the Negro's economic crisis with a consideration of the need for a political movement, that crisis may well seem insoluble. Indeed, there are some civil rights activists who, despairing of an effective political movement, cannot or will not face the economic and social problems treated in this pamphlet. They succumb instead to a project-centered provincialism which ignores what I have called the structural obstacles to Negro freedom. That their projects may be "militant" does not mean they are radical—i.e., that they go to the root of the problem. On the contrary, they may be conservative—not consciously, but by virtue of irrelevance or superficiality.

Second, it is the author's contention that the strategic crisis of the civil rights movement reflects a confrontation with structural or institutional barriers which, in the final analysis, are economic in character; and that these barriers do not give way before traditional tactics evolved during the "public accommodations stage" of the movement's history. At the same time, an assault on these barriers, in the Negro's own interest, opens new possibilities for alliances and for social action by whites in *their* own interest. Thus, inherent in the confrontation are possibility and danger: the possibility is for a new political movement, the danger is a setback for the civil rights revolution.

The Lesson of Reconstruction

THE GREAT LESSON of Reconstruction is that political and social freedom is inseparable from economic freedom. Democracy may be written into the law books, but if it is not also built into the way men earn their bread and the way they relate to each other in the process, legal rights become mere abstractions, if indeed they survive at all.

The Civil War freed the slaves, and the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments defined their citizenship rights. Armed with the ballot, Negroes wielded political power in the Reconstruction governments. Congress in 1875 passed a sweeping civil rights act outlawing discrimination in public accommodations.

But, rejecting the Radical Republican slogan of 40 acres and a mule," the federal government refused to break up the large plantations into small farms on which the freemen could establish themselves as independent farmers. Having no other livelihood, they returned to the plantations, but as sharecroppers, and often to their former masters. Before long, they were marched to the polls to help reinstall Dixiecrat political power. The original intent of the Amendments was warped or gutted, the ballot taken from the Negro, and the Civil Rights Act of 1875 declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court eight years later. By the turn of the century the Negro was disfranchised and segregated. The counter-revolution was complete.

The history is crudely oversimplified, but the moral is solid. The political and social gains won by the Negro during the Civil War and Reconstruction could not survive his economic re-enslavement. They were inappropriate to his new position.

On the verge of a new economic order launched by the victory of Northern industrial capitalism over the Southern agrarian slavocracy, the nation had been called upon to decide a crucial question: What is to be the Negro's place in the new order? The decision was to relegate him to a semi-feudal agrarian status only once removed from slavery—that of a sharecropper. It meant precisely that he was to be excluded from the new industrial order, and from the political and social rights which that order conferred. Generations of black Americans have been crippled by the consequences of that decision.

Another Decision

TODAY THE NATION is on the verge of still another new economic order based on cybernation. Electronic computers and automated machinery make possible the production of ever more goods and services by fewer and fewer workers. Just as, formerly, industrialization meant the relative decline of agriculture, so now does cybernation mean the decline of the industrial, blue-collar work force. Again the decision is upon us: What is to be the place of the Negro in the new order? For just as, formerly, the Negro was confined in agriculture, so now is

he sealed in to the declining industrial occupations.

History does not repeat itself. The parallel between today and the post-Reconstruction period breaks down at one point: whereas, decades ago, a sharecropper could take a menial factory job and perhaps work his way up in the industry, automation is destroying that possibility by eliminating unskilled jobs. Increasingly there is no bottom to start at. Horatio Alger is dead—once and for all! (This circumstance, by the way, renders analogies between the economic plight of the Negro and that of ethnic immigrant groups of earlier generations more and more fatuous.)

Later chapters will discuss the impact of technological change on the economic prospects of the Negro and the nation. Here I am concerned with the prospects for social and political equality, should masses of Negroes be dumped onto the slag-heap of technologically displaced workers. And what if that slag-heap becomes even more disproportionately black? It seems fairly certain that if we fail to solve the economic crisis wrought by technological progress, two consequences will follow: Negro unemployment, already at Depression levels, will mount even higher, with disastrous effects on the ghettos; and the class warfare ignited by rising unemployment will be infused with a racial content that would seriously undermine not only civil rights but social morality and the foundations of political democracy.

The Stakes

A HEAVY BURDEN weighs upon the Negro and his white allies. Far more is at stake than the right to eat a hamburger—far more even than racial equality itself. What is at stake is the very structure and substance of the new society we are all about to enter. Will it be humane and democratic? Will it meet people's needs? Will it finally liberate us from psychological prisons, animal toil, and material deprivation?

This pamphlet means to suggest that at this juncture in American history the answer to these questions rests largely—and perhaps unfairly—with the civil rights revolution and the response of the white majority to it. The victory of the revolution is therefore the monumental necessity of our era. There simply is no time left to furnish history with another glorious tragedy that illuminates the human condition but leaves it unchanged.

The strategy for victory is to build a grass-roots movement that speaks to the real needs of the Negro masses; that mobilizes those masses around demands which are fundamental, not peripheral, to the daily conditions of Negro life; and that advances an economic program which stimulates the emergence of allies and rallies them into a powerful political movement.

What follows is intended as a contribution to an economic program for Negro freedom.

The relative economic position of the Negro is declining. In part this is due to overt racial discrimination, but mainly to his membership in an economic class to which he has been bound by centuries of exploitation. The position of this class is deteriorating because of technological developments which are revolutionizing the structure of the labor force. More precisely, it results from the failure to evolve sweeping national policies to meet the economic and social problems thrown up by the technological revolution. Since the economic future of the Negro is inseparable from that of his economic class, the civil rights movement must mobilize behind radical programs for the abolition of poverty and unemployment, thus infusing "the other America" with the dynamic and spirit of the Negro revolt. Failing this, persistent economic inequalities will undermine the drive toward legal and social equality.

2 The Economics of Inequality

The Treadmill

IT TAKES a lot of running to stand still on the treadmill of this technologically advancing society. When you know you're running hard and everyone tells you you're moving at a fast clip, and yet the scenery around you remains the same, the most appropriate word to describe your reactions is . . . frustration.

Running fast to stand still is essentially the position in which the Negro finds himself today. This harsh fact cannot be obscured by dramatic progress in the integration of public accommodations. Lunch-counters, hotels, bus terminals, and the like are the easiest targets of direct action and boycotts. There are enough of these establishments to accommodate everybody; in fact, overcrowding them is profitable. Once the sit-in movement in a city integrates all the lunch-counters, thus securing a given establishment from segregationist competition, lunch-counters enjoy a potentially larger consumer market.

Overcrowding in employment, housing, and schools has vastly different consequences. If the segregated lunch-counter is a hollow relic of the *ancient régime*, one which would inevitably topple at an early stage in the revolution, the more fundamental, institutional forms of discrimination are more securely rooted in our economic system. And current trends in that system imperil the Negro's economic future.

The remaining pages of this chapter are concerned with the decline of the Negro's relative position in terms of jobs and income. But trends in these purely economic categories underlie demographic developments which profoundly affect housing and schools. It seems convenient to discuss the latter separately in the next chapter, under "Social By-

products." Yet, we should remember that they are intermeshed with the jobs situation and are therefore economic matters as well.

But first things first. What emerges from the statistics on jobs and income are the following trends:

1. There is a widening *dollar gap* between Negroes and whites.
2. The *relative* income gap between Negroes and whites has remained virtually constant over the past decade.
3. The unemployment gap between Negroes and whites has been widening.
4. The industries and occupations where the Negro made his greatest gains have either declined or shown relatively little growth over the past decade.
5. Negroes constitute a growing percentage of all workers in most of the declining job categories.

Widening Dollar Gap

THE MEDIAN Negro family income is \$3,233, or 54% of the white family's \$5,835. Approximately two out of every three Negro families subsist on less than \$4,000 annually—and are therefore poor or deprived—as compared with 27.7% of the white families. Only one out of five Negro families earns \$6,000 or more, as compared with one out of two white families. In the whole country there are only 6,000 Negro families that can boast of incomes of \$25,000 or more.

These figures tell us where the Negro is today, but they become more meaningful when compared to the 1945 figures, as Table 1 shows.

Notice that between 1945 and 1961, the percentage ratio of whites who escaped from the below \$4,000 category (63.3%) is almost double that for Negroes (33.1%), despite the fact that a larger percentage of Negroes were in that category in 1945 (90.1% as against 75.5% of white families). Similarly, whites entered the \$6,000-and-over category at a faster rate than Negroes.

On the other hand, the percentage increase of Negro families entering the \$4,000-\$5,999 category seems very impressive when compared

**Table 1: Percent Distribution of Income of Families by Color
For United States, 1945-1961**

Total Money Income Level	1945		1961		Percent Change in Ratio Over 1945	
	White	Nonwhite	White	Nonwhite	White	Nonwhite
Under \$4,000	75.5	90.1	27.7	60.2	- 63.3	- 33.1
\$4,000-\$5,999	16.8	6.1	22.4	19.7	+ 33.3	+223.0
\$6,000 and Over	7.7	3.8	49.9	20.1	+548.0	+429.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0		

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, *Current Population Reports*, Consumers Income, Series P-60, No. 2, March 2, 1948 and No. 38, August 28, 1962.

with the figures for whites. But the percentage gain is great only because the starting figure was so low.

Fisk economist Vivian Henderson emphasizes that while relative growth in wage and salary income of Negroes since 1940 has been greater than that of whites . . . the absolute, or *dollar*, difference has widened considerably. . . . People spend and save dollars. It is this dollar difference that counts. Pronouncements regarding economic progress which are confined to acceleration concepts and percentage change obscure the real predicament—*Negroes are losing ground rapidly in gaining dollar parity with whites*. The “dollar gap” trend . . . means very simply that earnings are increasing for whites at a faster pace than for Negroes. [*The Economic Status of Negroes*, Southern Regional Council, pp. 12-13.]

One aspect of the earning gap is particularly astonishing. When we compare the lifetime earnings of Negro and white males by education (Table 2), we find that the Negro who finishes four years of college will earn less than a white with only eight years of elementary school.

Table 2: Male Lifetime Earnings by Race and Education
(in thousands)

Highest Grade Completed	White	Negro	Negro As % of White
Elementary School			
Less Than 8 Years	\$157	\$ 95	61
8 Years	191	123	64
High School			
1 to 3 Years	221	132	60
4 Years	253	151	60
College			
1 to 3 Years	301	162	54
4 Years	395	185	47
5 Years or More	466	246	53
Average	241	122	51

Source: Employment and Earnings, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Feb. 1964.

Relative Income Gap

NOT ONLY is the dollar gap widening, but the *relative* income gap has remained virtually constant for almost a decade. While the figures reported by statisticians vary slightly, they point to the conclusion of Herman P. Miller of the Census Bureau:

In the last decade . . . there has been no change in income differential between [Negroes and whites]. The median pay of the Negro worker has remained stuck at about 55% of the white [*N.Y. Times*, Aug. 12, 1963.]

The Negro's *relative* income gains were actually registered between 1940 and 1954, when Negro family median income jumped from 37% to 56% of the white figure.

Behind this gain was World War II (not the New Deal, after eight years of which 25% of the Negro work force was still unemployed as against 13% of the white). War production created a shortage not only of skilled workers, but of semiskilled and unskilled workers as well. Consequently, thousands of Negroes left the rural South and poured into the factories. Protected by a federal FEPC, needed by an expand-

ing economy, and absorbed in large numbers into the CIO, they won higher wages than the farms could offer. Many acquired new skills. The base of the Negro lower middle class was considerably expanded.

After Congress killed FEPC in 1946, job discrimination surged up and many of the newly acquired skills were lost to the Negro community through lack of use. Still, in the relatively prosperous post-war years, the unemployment rate among Negroes was only about 60% higher than the white rate. *Since 1954 it has been at least 200% higher.*

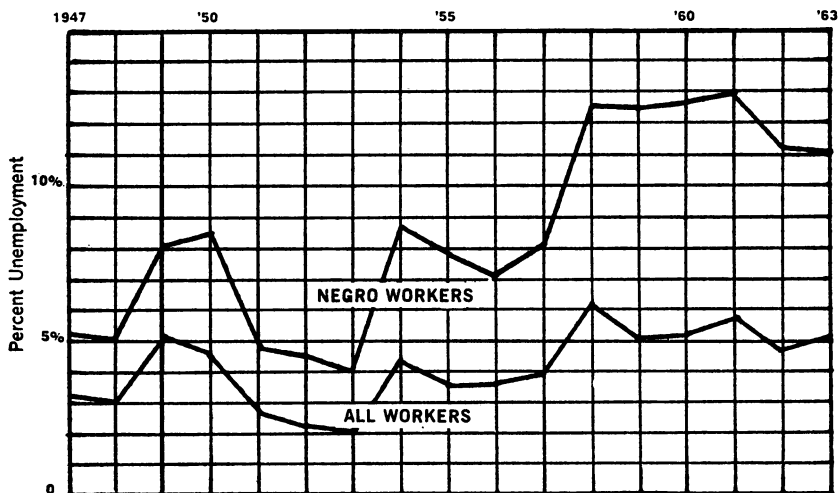
The point to be stressed here is that the Negro's income gains were the result of peculiar employment opportunities that no longer exist. In part, as Michael Harrington has observed, these gains were due to "economic geography rather than the workings of the society." They reflect the shift of rural Negroes to cities and Southern Negroes to the North. In these cases, the people involved increased their income by going into a more prosperous section of the economy as a whole. But within each area—Northern city, Southern city, agriculture—their *relative position remained the same: at the bottom.*

Thus, masses of Negroes entered industrial production but were concentrated in unskilled and semiskilled jobs. And these are precisely the jobs now being destroyed by automation. The "bottom" is falling out of society; it is no longer needed.

"Invisible Army of the Unemployed"

JUST AS the dollar gap between Negroes and whites has been widening, so has the unemployment gap, as Figure 1 indicates. Whereas the

Figure 1: Negro and Over-All Unemployment Rates, 1947—1963



Estimates based on statistics of U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, and other sources.

unemployment rate from 1947 to 1953 never exceeded 8.5% for Negroes and 4.6% for whites, now it stands at 12.4% and 5.9% respectively. Not only have there been rising levels of unemployment since 1954, but—and this is of strategic importance—the Negro-white unemployment gap has tended to widen in times of high unemployment and narrow in times of low unemployment. Historically the Negro fares better, absolutely and relatively, the closer the economy is to full employment.

Both tendencies—rising unemployment and a widening unemployment gap—come into sharper focus if we replace the official figures with more realistic ones which take into account what Professor Charles C. Killingsworth of Michigan State University has called the “invisible army of unemployed”—“people forced out of the labor market some time ago who are willing and able to work, but have become too discouraged to search for jobs” and are therefore not counted as part of the labor force by the government. Professor Killingsworth carefully calculated the size of this “invisible army” at 1½ million. They would raise the national unemployment rate to 8.8%. Gunnar Myrdal, the eminent Swedish economist, likewise taking into account the number of persons who would re-enter the labor force if jobs opened up, put the figure at 9%.

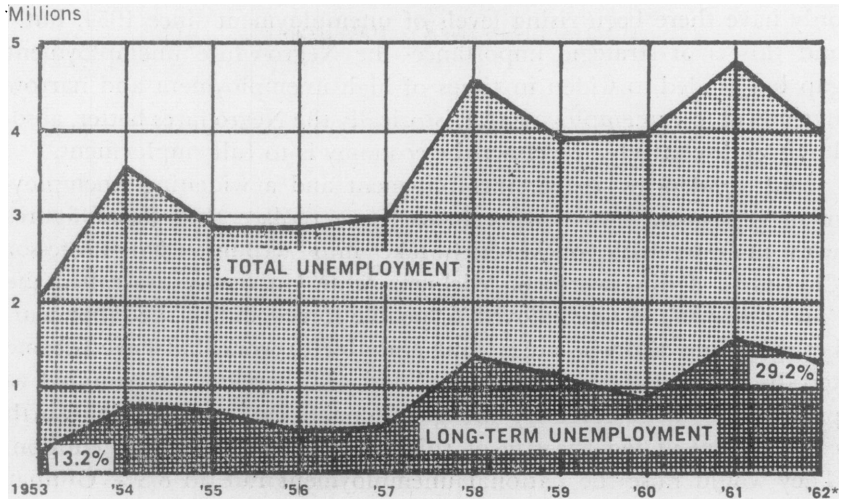
While Killingsworth has not made a racial breakdown of the “invisible army,” he emphasized that its members are educationally disadvantaged. A disproportionate number are undoubtedly Negroes, many of whom support themselves in the ghettos by means they are not likely to report to census takers. Labor economists believe the real Negro unemployment rate is probably close to 20%. In the words of the *New York Times*, “Unemployment of these proportions, were it general, would be a national catastrophe.”

The Under-class

ESPECIALLY OMINOUS is the long-term unemployment rate among Negroes. For the long-term unemployed tend also to be the most frequently hit by unemployment, and the longer they are unemployed the less chance they have of ever finding jobs. They make up a swelling “under-class” that is daily becoming economically more obsolete. This “under-class” is composed mainly of Negroes, males 65 and over, young men, farm laborers, those in unskilled occupations and those with less than 12 years of schooling. For all of them, unemployment is worsening in frequency and duration. The mass unemployment of the thirties has yielded to a new “under-class” unemployment.

The seriousness of the problem is illustrated in Figure 2, which shows that since 1953 the long-term unemployed have been constituting *an increasing percentage of the total unemployed*. This means that a growing section of the work force is being more or less permanently detached from the economy and sinking into the “under-class.”

Figure 2: Long-Term Unemployment, 1953—1962
(15 weeks or more)



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

*January-June, seasonally adjusted.

Within this “under-class,” Negro representation is mounting. Vivian Henderson reports that

In September, 1958, the average duration of unemployment for Negroes was 17.8 weeks and for white workers 13.3 weeks. The average length of unemployment in September, 1962, for Negroes was 18 weeks while that for whites had dropped to 13 weeks. Negroes accounted for about 25% of all the long-term unemployed, but for only about 11% of the labor force. About 29% of the very long term unemployed in September, 1962, were Negroes compared with 21% in September, 1961. Long-term joblessness among Negroes results from discrimination in hiring and inadequate training and inadequate manpower development. [*op. cit.*, p. 16.]

Generally, the long-term unemployed are more likely to be the victims of technological change, while the short-term unemployed may be seasonal lay-offs, retrainees, or seekers of better jobs. What percentage of long-term joblessness among Negroes is attributable to discrimination *per se* and what percentage to inadequate training is difficult to state with precision.

The role of discrimination is clearest in the areas of income and occupational distribution of Negro college graduates. Lack of training certainly cannot explain the figures in Table 2. Nor can it satisfactorily explain why only 5% of Negro college men become proprietors, managers, or officials as compared with 22% of white college men; or why Negroes with some college training are found in service and laborer jobs in numbers five times greater than whites with similar training. It absolutely cannot explain why 10% of Negro women who finish college end up as domestics! Here is an obvious waste of skills that can be ascribed only to blatant discrimination and segregation.

On the other hand, college graduates constitute only 3.5% of the non-white population, and they are not usually to be found in the ranks of the long-term unemployed. In fact, because of skilled manpower shortages, educated Negroes are likely to make the most rapid progress in the period ahead.

For the vast majority of Negroes, however, an economic crisis is in the offing. And overt discrimination seems less a part of it than the weight of centuries of past discrimination combining with portentous economic forces that are themselves color-blind. *It is as if racism, having put the Negro in his economic "place," stepped aside to watch technology destroy that place.*

Changing Labor Force

AS INDICATED ABOVE, most of the Negroes' economic gains in recent years were made in the period 1940-1953 and reflect their movement out of agriculture into mining, manufacturing, and construction, where they took up unskilled and semiskilled jobs. These blue-collar jobs in the goods-producing industries paid better than the unskilled and semiskilled jobs in the service-producing industries. But they were also the jobs most hit by automation and technological change.

Table 3: The Shift in Non-Farm Jobs 1953-1963
(in thousands)

	1953	1963	Gain	Loss
Goods-Producing				
Mining	866	634		232
Construction	2,623	3,030	407*	
Manufacturing	17,549	17,035		514
	21,038	20,699		339
Service-Producing				
Transportation, Public Utilities	4,290	3,913		377
Wholesale Trade	2,727	3,143	416	
Retail Trade	7,520	8,721	1,201	
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	2,146	2,866	720	
Miscellaneous Services	5,867	8,297	2,430**	
Federal Government	2,305	2,358	53	
State, Local	4,340	7,177	2,837	
	29,195	36,475	7,280	

*Most of this increase was made by 1957; since then the number of construction jobs has remained fairly static.

**A high proportion of these jobs is part-time.

Source: *Employment and Earnings*, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Feb. 1964.

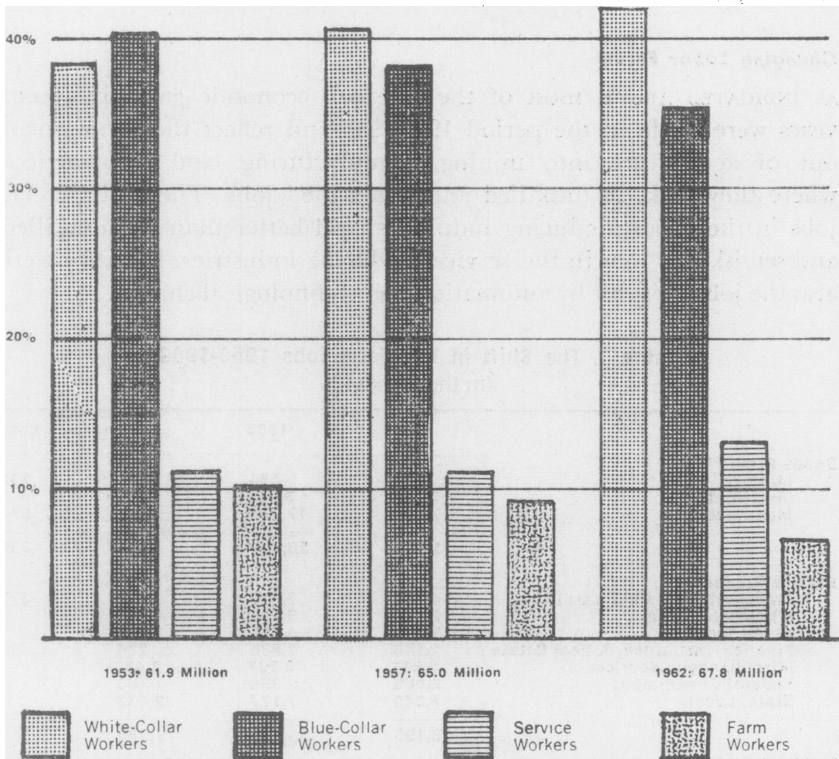
As Table 3 shows, the past decade has witnessed a decline of 339,000 jobs in the goods-producing industries and an increase of 7.3 million jobs in the service-producing industries.

But these figures reveal only part of the impact of the technological revolution on the work force. Customarily, goods-producing jobs are considered blue-collar and service-producing jobs are considered white-collar. The fact is that *within* the goods-producing industries

there has been a dramatic increase in the number of white-collar jobs and an even more dramatic loss of blue-collar jobs.

In manufacturing, for example, 1.6 million blue-collar (production and maintenance) jobs have been obliterated in this decade while more than one million white-collar (non-production) jobs have been added. The blue-collar decline is also evident in the service-producing industries. Note that the only service-producing jobs that declined since 1953 were in transportation and utilities (especially in railroading).

Figure 3: Growth in White-Collar Jobs, 1953—1962



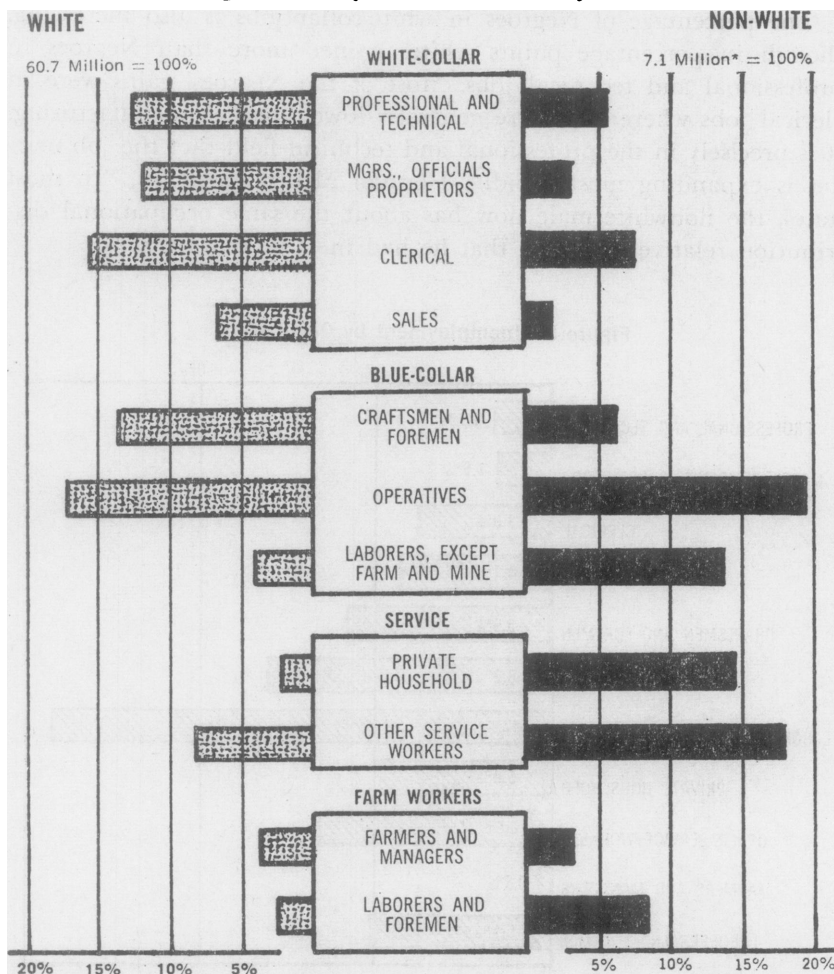
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Thus the growth in white-collar jobs resulted not only from the expansion of the service industries, but also from the application of technology to the productive process itself. The economic revolution wrought by these developments became fully evident in the mid-1950s when, as Figure 3 shows, the number of white-collar workers exceeded the number of blue-collar workers for the first time in history. This graph also indicates the decrease in the agricultural work force. As a consequence of agricultural mechanization, more than 1.5 million farm jobs have been wiped out since 1953.

It is against this background that the economic position of the Negro must be viewed. Figure 4 shows the percentage of whites and non-whites in each of the occupational categories. Notice the disproportionate concentration of Negroes in blue-collar and service jobs. (These service jobs are not to be confused with white-collar jobs in *service-producing* industries.)

That these jobs are becoming increasingly marginal to the economy becomes clear when we examine Figure 5, which shows the rate of unemployment in each occupation. Note that the occupations in which unemployment is highest—for example, laborers, operatives, and “other service workers”—are precisely the occupations in which Negroes are most heavily concentrated. Conversely, the occupations with the lowest

Figure 4: Occupational Breakdown by Race



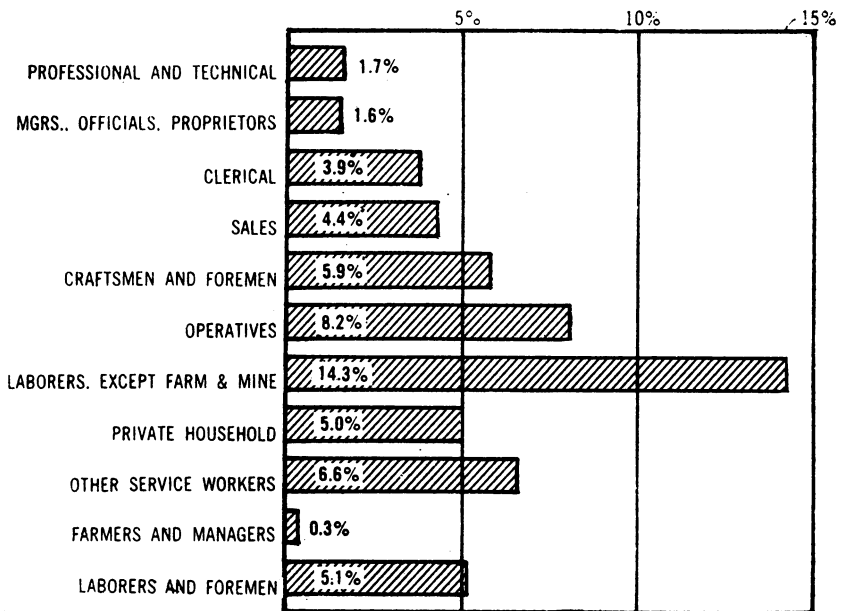
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

unemployment rates—for example, managers, officials, and proprietors—are those in which Negroes are least concentrated. Taken together, Figures 4 and 5 suggest that if Negroes suddenly changed their skin color but not their occupations, their unemployment rate would still be far above the national average.

Further study reveals that while the national trend is toward a white-collar labor force, the percentage of Negroes in blue-collar jobs is increasing. Thus, while the percentage of white males in blue-collar jobs fell from 53% in 1950 to 50% in 1960, the percentage for Negroes rose from 64% to 67%. And the greater part of this increase was in the “laborer” category. These are the figures for Negro *males*. More shocking are those for Negro females, an increasing percentage of whom are now in *blue-collar* jobs (15% in 1950, 17.2% in 1962; corresponding figures for white women are 22.3% and 17.3%).

The percentage of Negroes in white-collar jobs is also increasing, though in percentage points whites gained more than Negroes in professional and technical jobs. Most of the Negroes’ gains were in clerical jobs where wages are generally lower than in manufacturing. It is precisely in the professional and technical field that the job market is expanding most rapidly. Herman Miller concludes, “In most states, the nonwhite male now has about the same occupational distribution relative to whites that he had in 1940 and 1950.”

Figure 5: Unemployment by Occupation



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

But unless this occupational distribution is radically altered, disaster looms for the Negro. Not only will the unemployment gap widen because of increasing automation in categories where Negroes are concentrated, but so will the dollar gap. As Henderson summarizes,

Whites are acquiring the highest paying jobs in the higher occupational classifications. The benefits of general economic expansion and technology, therefore, have only trickled down to the Negroes, putting more of them into wage and salary jobs. These benefits automatically produced high acceleration in income change, but were restricted tightly to lower occupational classifications. Thus, despite the unprecedented growth of income among Negroes and the percentage gains made, the fact remains that *income progress of Negroes has leveled off*. The percentage of Negro families in lower income brackets is twice as high as whites, and *the differential in earnings of whites and Negroes continues to widen*, largely offsetting percentage gains. Accordingly, it is still difficult for Negroes to purchase health, education and the amenities of life on the same level as other members of the population. [*op. cit.*, pp. 12-13. Italics added.]

Table 4 shows another trend that has important implications for the future structure of American society:

Table 4: Nonwhite Employment As Percent of Total Employment in Each Major Occupation Group, By Sex, April 1940 and April 1960

Major Occupation Group	Nonwhite Men as % of All Men		Increase or Decrease in Percent 1940-1960	Nonwhite Women as % of all Women		Increase or Decrease in Percent 1940-1960
	1940	1960		1940	1960	
TOTAL EMPLOYED	9.0	9.3		13.9	12.6	
WHITE COLLAR						
Professional, Technical						
Kindred Workers	3.1	3.5	+0.5	4.6	5.6	+ 1.0
Managers, Officials, Proprietors except Farm	1.5	1.9	+0.4	2.8	4.8	+ 2.0
Clerical, Kindred Workers	1.6	6.7	+5.1	0.7	3.8	+ 3.1
Sales Workers	1.4	3.0	+1.6	1.1	2.4	+ 1.3
BLUE COLLAR						
Craftsmen, Foreman, Kindred Workers	2.7	4.4	+1.7	2.3	8.0	+ 5.7
Operatives, Kindred Workers	6.1	11.6	+5.5	5.0	12.4	+ 7.4
Laborers, except Farm and Mine	21.2	27.6	+6.4	*	*	
SERVICE						
Private Household	*	*		46.5	47.5	+ 1.0
All Others	17.4	21.1	+3.7	13.1	19.2	+ 6.1
FARM						
Farmers, Farm Managers	13.1	8.6	-4.5	30.2	16.4	-13.8
Farm Laborers, Foremen	22.5	23.6	+1.1	62.9	22.6	-40.3

*Not Available.

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, and U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Not only are Negroes trapped in declining and stagnant job categories; *they constitute a growing percentage of the total workers in these categories*. Of all laborers (except farm and mine), Negroes were 27.6% in 1960 as against 21.2% in 1940; among operatives and kindred workers, Negroes constituted 11.6% as against 6.1%; among clerical

workers, 6.7% as against 1.6%. While Negroes constituted a larger percentage of farm laborers and foreman in 1960 (23.6%) than in 1940 (22.5%), they make up a decreasing percentage of farmers and farm managers (8.6% as against 13.1%). The reason for this, of course, is agricultural mechanization, which has hit Negroes hardest. Between 1940 and 1959, the drop in the number of American farms was 39%, but the number of farms owned or operated by Negroes was cut more than one-half, from over 700,000 to less than 300,000. (Only 23% of Southern Negro farm workers own their own farms as contrasted with 60% of white farm workers. On the other hand, almost half of all tenant farmers and over 65% of all sharecroppers are Negroes.)

The Talk of Progress

TO SUM UP, then, the decline in the relative economic position of the Negro is evident in the widening dollar and unemployment gaps between Negroes and whites, stagnation of the relative income gap, erosion of the job categories in which Negroes are concentrated, and the increasing segregation of Negroes in the declining job categories.

Underlying these trends are basic changes in the structure of the total labor force. The rising productivity caused by technological advances has reduced the number of workers required to produce the goods and services we need. While the effect of automation will become increasingly widespread, the blue-collar production and maintenance jobs are hardest hit. Paralleling the erosion of unskilled and semiskilled jobs is the growth of white-collar jobs and a mounting demand for skilled labor, where manpower shortages already exist. Because of centuries of discrimination and exploitation Negroes have been disproportionately concentrated in the unskilled and semiskilled jobs now being obliterated and lack the training demanded by the new skilled jobs. Even if every racial barrier were immediately torn down, the mass of Negroes would still face a disastrous economic future.

This dangerous situation is neglected in the talk of "progress." Status quo propagandists are desperately trying to serve up a "new Negro"—an upper-middle-class professional type, urbane and bourgeois, an ideal next-door neighbor—to symbolize an allegedly radical improvement in American race relations. Thus *Time* magazine (January 2, 1964) devotes seven pages to lavish color photographs of Negroes who have "made it"—athletes, entertainers, diplomats, bishops, architects, judges, mathematicians, dentists, educators, realtors, and doctors. The section begins with a headline reminiscent of the language of Booker T. Washington: "Every Negro Who Discharges His Duty Faithfully is Making a Real Contribution." It closes with this statement: "The main source of Negro discontent is economic hardship. Fortunately, this is the one area where progress seems most likely—more and better jobs for Negroes are on the way."

The question is: more and better jobs for *which* Negroes—and how many? We shall examine this question at closer range in Chapter IV. For now it should be clear that focusing the achievements of individual Negroes obscures the economic forces at work on the Negro community *as a whole*. It is these fundamental forces, reasserting themselves through any veneer of optimism imposed upon them, that shape the patterns of Negro life and the racial attitudes of whites.

Image and Reality

THE IMAGE of the Negro that *Time* projects is not utterly unreal, and to the extent that it overturns humiliating stereotypes and whets the aspirations of Negro youth, it serves a purpose. But to a larger extent it causes frustrations. For the drive toward achievement which the image might normally inspire is overwhelmed and distorted by the greater social reality it conceals. Frequently that drive, when not extinguished, is channeled into illegal activities which offer material rewards and a status which may be considered disreputable in the white world but commands respect in the ghetto where the only alternative appears to be demoralization.

Between image and reality, between the progress Negroes are alleged to have made and the actual conditions of their daily existence there is, then, an enormous disparity which breeds frustration, disillusionment and anger. These are among the ingredients that make up the militancy which upsets so many whites.

Whites, on their part, are also affected by the disparity. On the one hand, *Time's* image of the successful Negro projects standards of middle-class behavior which shapes white expectations of what Negroes *should* be like. On the other hand, it is the reality of the ghetto, though the white may have only fleeting contact with it, that conditions his emotional attitudes toward Negroes.

For example, the trend toward *de facto* segregation of Negroes in declining low-paying job categories can only reinforce the association between *Negro* and *failure*. Thus most whites perceive no transformation of the Negro as a "social type." Yet a transformation is precisely what they have considered the *sine qua non* of integration—whether as a precondition or as an after-effect. *Since we are integrating the Negro into the mainstream of American life, why isn't he improving himself?*

Meanwhile, poverty and social disorganization continue to take their toll, burdening the Negro with disabilities which many whites construe as evidence that he is not ready for integration. More often acted upon than explicitly verbalized, this attitude is not necessarily rooted in racist dogma, and it seems to be gaining ground in the urban non-South. Instead of the view that Negroes are racially inferior, there arises a vaguer, but no less malevolent, conception of Negroes as somehow socially or morally incompetent to realize their potential.

Attitudes and Institutions

THIS CONFUSED VIEW is one of the manifestations of the white counter-revolution. I have discussed it on a psychological level, as a reaction of whites to economic developments within the Negro community. But the economic roots of the counter-revolution are more direct. Increasing unemployment can only nourish the counter-revolution, especially at the bottom layers of the economy, where job competition will be fiercest. The classic historical pattern of conflict between black and white workers is likely to be repeated, this time with potentially more devastating consequences. If racism prevented unified action by black and white workers to improve their lot in periods of *cyclical* unemployment and impoverishment, what may be expected when technological displacement is piling up a slagheap of long-term and permanently unemployed workers?

To turn back such a development requires more than education and propaganda. The attitudes described above will be changed when the social and economic references from which they are derived are changed. Institutions mold attitudes more than attitudes mold institutions. If this sounds like a cliché, it is nonetheless true. Institutional patterns of racism have scarcely been altered over the past decade; there has not been sufficient institutional change to support the changes in racial attitudes demanded by the civil rights ideology. Indeed, present trends indicate a divergence of institutional patterns and ideology, in which the latter cannot long hold its own.

This chapter has suggested that our economic institutions, as presently organized, do not meet the challenges posed by the technological revolution, impede the integration of the Negro into the mainstream of American economic life, and foster racial tension. How these institutions should be changed is the subject of Chapter 5.

First, however, we turn to institutions that are not purely economic but are profoundly related to jobs and income.

As the technological revolution transforms the structure of the labor force, eliminating lower job categories and intensifying the demand for skilled labor, demographic changes are also set in motion. Population shifts, in response to shifting job opportunities, are reshaping our cities. The movement of Negroes into the central cities combines with a white suburban exodus to transform these cities increasingly into vast class and racial ghettos. The inevitable consequence is a growth in segregated housing patterns which enormously complicates the problem of school integration. In turn, the inferiority of ghetto schools in an era of cybernation perpetuates racial and class poverty. The vicious cycle is completed as poverty then undermines educational motivation. To break the cycle and achieve integrated, quality education on a meaningful scale will ultimately require a reorganization of our cities and their institutions. We must adopt economic policies that reverse current demographic trends, clear the slums, and reconstruct our cities through national planning.

3 Social Byproducts: Housing and Schools

JUST AS the technological revolution has adversely affected integration in employment, so has integration of housing and schools been adversely affected by population movements set off by economic changes. Where people choose to live is determined primarily by the location of job opportunities, just as where their children go to school is determined primarily by where the parents live.

Urbanization and Segregation

OUR MAJOR CITIES are becoming vast racial ghettos. According to Theodore Whyte,

Within 14 to 16 years, if present population trends are arithmetically projected into the future, Negroes will be in the majority in Detroit, Cleveland, Baltimore, Chicago, and St. Louis; and, in the decade following in Philadelphia. [*Life*, Nov. 18, 1963.]

Thus, if present population trends continue, seven of the country's ten most populous cities will have Negro majorities—ringed by overwhelmingly white suburbs. To talk about more than token housing integration in these areas is chimerical.

Behind this transformation of our major cities are two population trends. First is the continual migration of Negroes from Southern farms and cities into the large urban centers of the North. Agricultural mechanization, displacing Negroes at a higher rate than whites, accounts for much of this migration, as do the oppressive racial conditions and higher Negro unemployment rates in the South. For the most part Negroes are migrating North in search of job opportunities.

Thus the percentage of Negroes living in the South has declined from 60% in 1950 to 52% in 1960. The National Urban League estimates that by 1970 eighteen million Negroes will be living in the big cities.

Suburban Exodus

THE SECOND important population trend is the predominantly white middle-class movement into the suburbs. Its magnitude is indicated by the fact that the 1950's witnessed a 44% growth in the suburban population as against only 1½% for the metropolitan centers.

Explanations of the suburban exodus as a flight of whites from Negroes—or from integrated schools—are insufficient. The suburban movement has been going on for decades and certainly predates the 1954 Supreme Court decision. What whites are fleeing is city life itself, which has become increasingly intolerable—overcrowded, underserved, dreary, filthy, and dangerous.

The flight to the suburbs reflects not only a racial separation but an occupational one as well. Most of the suburbanites are white-collar workers in the expanding service-producing sector of the economy, the sector in which relatively few Negroes are represented because of discrimination and lack of training. The blue-collar workers who live in the suburbs tend to be skilled workers protected by strong unions. Thus the technological changes in our economy have profoundly affected the composition and layout of our cities.

Not only discrimination but also strong economic reasons have prevented Negroes from moving into the suburbs. Trapped in decaying cities, the Negro becomes, in the eyes of whites, an integral part of the ugly urban scene being left behind.

Housing

THE UGLINESS is evident in the housing itself. In New York City, for example, about half of the nonwhite renters and 40% of the nonwhite homeowners live in substandard housing. The figures for whites are but 20% and 10%, respectively. Nationally one out of every six Negro dwelling units is dilapidated, obsolete or otherwise substandard, as compared with one in 32 white dwellings. It appears, therefore, that the more urbanized Negroes become, the worse their housing conditions.

Within the cities themselves, segregation of the Negro community proceeds as part of what Michael Harrington describes as the segregation of poverty, one of the less happy consequences of urban renewal. At the end of 1961, the Urban Renewal Administration reported that 66% of those displaced under its programs—involving Federal grants of nearly \$3 billion—have been nonwhites.

Public housing programs have also tended to encourage economic and racial segregation. High-rise low-income public housing has in-

creased population density and racial isolation in the ghettos. 47% of all public housing units in the country are occupied by Negroes, and more than 80% of all public housing is segregated. What do the tenants themselves think of public housing?

Only four years ago, over one-third of all low-income families displaced by government action accepted the opportunity to move into public housing. Today, less than 15% choose public housing, and the experts see the percentage continuing to decline. [David B. Carlson, *Architectural Forum*, July, 1963.]

Largely in recognition of these facts, the Harlem Neighborhoods Association has fought for mixed-income as against purely low-income housing on the former Polo Grounds site. Class and caste have become so interwoven that a degree of economic integration implies corresponding measures of racial integration. Probably the only way to maintain attractive, racially balanced public housing will be to subsidize low-income families in middle-income housing.

Federally-aided private housing has been of relatively little benefit to Negroes. Of the millions of housing units whose mortgages were insured by the Federal Housing Administration since 1934 and the Veterans Administration since 1944, less than 2% has been available to nonwhite families.

Summing up the effect of present Federal housing programs on the Negro, Charles Abrams, President of the National Committee Against Discrimination in Housing, declares:

Thus urban renewal which displaces minorities oppresses more than it benefits them and the requirement of relocation is no more than a frail pretext for appeasing conscience. FHA is a boon to the white middle class and the skilled worker but it carries with it the hidden sanction of exclusion as long as it continues to recognize local zoning practices. . . . Public housing benefits but is little more than a handout, and its benefits are miniscule as long as it confines itself to cities and offers only tenancy to minorities while excluding ownership [*Equal Opportunity in Housing*, National Committee Against Discrimination in Housing, April, 1963.]

Schools

BECAUSE OF the population movements of whites into suburbs and Negroes into the central cities, as well as intra-city tendencies toward segregation, more Negro children attend what are in fact segregated schools in the major cities of the North than attend officially segregated schools in urban areas of the South. The higher birth rate among the Negro rural immigrants to the city means a rapid growth in Negro school enrollment.

In Chicago, 87% of the Negro elementary school students attend virtually all-Negro schools. In Detroit, 45% of the Negro students are in public schools that are overwhelmingly (80% Negro. In Philadelphia, 38 elementary schools have Negro enrollment of 99%. In Los Angeles, 43 elementary schools have at least 85% Negro attendance.

In New York City, 131 elementary schools and 25 junior high schools are at least 90% Negro and Puerto Rican—*twice the figure of five years ago!* Of the city's one million public school pupils, nearly 40% are Negro and Puerto Rican. In Manhattan, Negro and Puerto Rican children are 70% of the total elementary school population, and it is estimated that the figure will rise to 85% by 1980.

Segregated schools are inferior schools, North and South:

In Chicago, 81% of the children in the Negro schools were on double session as against 19% of the "mixed schools" and 2% of the white schools. Moreover, while the typical white school has 669 pupils, the mixed schools averaged 947, the predominantly Negro, 1,275.

In New York, only 50.3% of the teachers in the Negro and Puerto Rican elementary schools were fully licensed as compared with 78.2% in white schools.

Boycotts and Bussing

IN RESPONSE to these conditions, school boycotts, involving hundreds of thousands, have been launched in New York, Chicago, and other cities. In some cases, the leaders of the boycotts have proposed concrete steps toward school integration, while in others, the burden of devising plans has been put at the feet of the local boards of education.

Even where the boycotts have projected a concrete program, the techniques advocated would still fall short of full integration. Permissive busing, open enrollment, Princeton Plans, realignment of school districts, and similar devices seem artificial precisely because they abstract the school problem from its community context.

The problems of busing are symptomatic of most efforts at school integration based on the residential status quo. White parents are justified in their reluctance to bus their children to Harlem schools. Slum schools—white or black—have always been inferior, robbing youngsters of motivation. While a handful of idealistic white parents may "take a chance," most, in a twist on James Baldwin, would ask, "Integrate into what?"

Busing presents problems for the Negro community as well. What is the psychological effect on a Negro child who leaves the ghetto every morning for a bus ride through the tree-lined streets of the white neighborhood (where the "better," integrated school is likely to be), is taught by a "better" (read: white) teacher in an integrated classroom, and then returns to the ghetto in the late afternoon? How does the child relate to its family, to neighborhood friends, to the ghetto itself? So long as the better, integrated schools lie outside of the ghetto, Negro children are compelled to live in two worlds, one of which makes a profoundly negative judgment on the other.

Other disadvantages have been cited in proposals for a "massive shifting of Negro and white children out of their own districts."

Whatever possibilities might exist for closer parent-teacher contacts are practically eliminated for those who do participate in the open-enrollment program. Also, the child who has a long route home by bus from a distant school has less chance to participate in local after-school activities sponsored by the city and the settlement houses.

Another comment I have heard from white parents and school staffs is that the children who are bused to another school under this program tend to be the better students and their parents the more sophisticated in their community; thus the sending school loses its better students and the local community is deprived of its best prospects for Negro leadership. [Joseph P. Lyford in *The Negro as an American*, Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, 1963.]

However much weight is given these arguments, it seems clear that the maze of criss-crossing bus routes required to achieve a racially balanced redistribution of urban school populations would be an elaborate thing indeed.

The point here is not that busing and related devices should be fought, but that we must recognize that the full advantages of integrated education are not to be realized within the context of segregated communities. If busing seems to be an interim necessity, it is not because the civil rights organizations are unreasonable but because their opponents have acquiesced in the segregation of communities.

Higher Social Sights

A TACTICAL ERROR is therefore made when boycott leaders deride the objections to busing and attack the values of neighborhood schools. By raising their social sights, by demanding the integration of both schools and housing, they are in a better position to take the offensive against so-called "parents and taxpayers" groups who deny being opposed to integration *per se* but insist on preservation of neighborhood schools.

It may seem easier to rally the Negro community around simple, single-issue slogans, but the price paid is the confinement of choice to the lesser of two evils. Busing and its attendant drawbacks may indeed be preferable to continued segregation; on the other hand, why must we make this choice? Similarly, why must one choose *between* integration and improved quality of the schools in a society of abundance? If local and state governments are not able to finance the overhauling of the schools under their jurisdiction, why is the federal government to be absolved of responsibility, especially since the school crisis has serious implications for the national economy? Meanwhile, even when programmatically limited, the boycotts are the first sign of a mass movement aimed at fundamental reforms in the urban educational system. Implicit in the movement is the challenge to approach these reforms from a different set of premises: *not*, given the status quo in housing and public spending, what degree of school integration and

improvement is feasible? *but*, given the irreversible demand for school integration and improvement, what new commitments must be made by the government on local and national levels?

It is not surprising that this movement should have been initiated by Negroes, but its ultimate success depends upon its awakening whites who have failed to act against the deterioration of the schools which mold the futures of their own children. It is their apathy—which has permitted urban boards of education to become havens for political appointees presiding over encrusted bureaucracies that resist innovation and are insensitive to public needs—that makes it unlikely that integrated, quality education can be achieved without inconvenience.

Educational Crash Program

RECOGNITION of the difficulties inherent in urban school integration has led to proposals to improve the quality of education available in the ghettos. John Kenneth Galbraith recently declared that our best schools should be in our worst slums, where they are most needed. Accordingly, he called for the selection of 100 depressed areas, as a start, as centers of an educational crash program. "To the best of my knowledge," he commented, "there is no place in the world where well-educated people are really poor."

Galbraith is certainly right in emphasizing the importance of education. It will be the chief means for achieving upward mobility in our increasingly technocratic society. Gunnar Myrdal and others have pointed out that our economic growth will be stymied by a shortage of skilled manpower. Already, writes Daniel Bell, "the technical requirements of all high status jobs are such that a person who has failed to complete his (secondary) education has already lost out for a place in the society ahead." Yet one-third of all students who enter high school drop out before graduating—and this in a society one half of whose members will be under 25 by 1966. It is estimated that there are already 50% more school dropouts than jobs for unskilled workers.

For Negro youth the prospects are especially bleak, since they constitute 21% of all high school dropouts. Among those graduating from high school in 1960, only 7% were Negroes. In the words of Bell:

... failing a special effort to deal with the Negro education problem, the hard consequences remain: that by age 18 the overwhelming proportion of Negro children have already lost out in their chances for economic advancement in the country. [*The Post-Industrial Society* (unpublished).]

Youth Unemployment

THE UNEMPLOYMENT FIGURES for Negro and white youth are a frightening omen. As late as 1948, unemployment among white youngsters (age 14–19) was *worse* than among Negro youngsters. But last summer, unemployment among Negro youth was 24% as against 9% among whites. Negroes constitute 50% of all unemployed youth between the

age of 16 and 21, but only 15% of the total youth population. Moreover, since 1955 the jobless rate among Negro teenagers has risen faster than the rate for white teenagers—up about 60% for the former, compared with 30% for the latter.

Dr. Conant, in *Slum and Suburbs*, reports that in one slum area, of 125,000 people, mostly Negro, a sampling of the youth population showed that roughly 70% of the boys and girls ages 16 to 21 were out of school and unemployed. When one considers that the total population in this district is equal to that of a good-sized independent city, the magnitude of the problem is appalling . . .

What is equally clear is that an educational crash program in 100 depressed areas is barely a pilot project when measured against the need. Between 1960 and 1970, high school enrollment will have grown from 10 to 15 million. College and university enrollment, now at 4 million, will triple by 1980. The present national commitment to education is totally inadequate to meet even these "normal" rates of growth, let alone the special needs of depressed areas. Beginning with elementary and secondary schools, the educational system will have to be overhauled if higher education is to be meaningful; vast outlays must be made for new physical plants, rehabilitation, teacher training, and salaries. An enormous social investment—in the billions—is required. So is extensive public planning.

Poverty Perpetuates Itself

GALBRAITH'S PROPOSAL dramatizes the strategic role of education, but, as he would be the first to admit, education cannot be treated in a vacuum, ignoring external factors that impinge on motivation and aspiration. Studies have shown a correlation between drop-out rates and economic status: rates are higher among those whose parents have low incomes. In this way, class poverty tends to perpetuate itself.

Poverty is not just an income figure. It is an environment, a culture: your clothes, your home, your manners, your friends. It is not conducive to high motivation or academic excellence. Educational reform, therefore, has to proceed hand-in-hand with a direct assault on poverty *per se*, even while the elimination of its causes is underway.

A student's motivation is conditioned not only by his environment but also by his future prospects. It should be noted, for example, that in the North, where there are greater opportunities for white-collar Negro males, more Negro men than women are finishing college, whereas in the South, where teaching is the greatest outlet for Negro college graduates, Negro women college graduates outnumber men.

This raises a fundamental question: for which jobs should today's youth be trained? As one writer points out,

Even when law or other pressure has brought racial discrimination under some effective control, the probability has to be faced that technological changes will soon make it impossible for 50% of our high school graduates,

white or black, to find employment of any kind. The young people who take at face value current propaganda about the need for an education and are thus disappointed can hardly be expected to take the education of their own future children very seriously. (Joseph Lyford, *op. cit.*)

To educate today's youth for tomorrow's jobs, we must know what tomorrow's jobs will be. Such knowledge, in the age of cybernation, is the fruit of planning. Negro youth have a vested, if unarticulated, interest in economic planning.

"Master Plan"

THIS CHAPTER has attempted to indicate the relationships between schools, housing, and poverty. The central point is that the problem of schools can no more be abstracted from that of housing than it can from that of poverty. A vicious cycle exists wherein the undereducated are consigned to a future of poverty in a society which will place ever higher premiums on skilled labor. Poverty in turn undermines education and relegates its victims to class and racial ghettos, further diminishing their chances of acquiring needed skills.

While specialized programs are needed to deal with each of these problem areas, they must be coordinated within the framework of a "master plan"—not in piecemeal fashion. For example, no realistic program to improve the education of minority youth can be implemented without a war on the slums which demoralize them, or without employment policies that guarantee them meaningful work upon graduation. It is also necessary that any master plan fully recognize the dangers and possibilities facing our society in this era of profound economic change.

The technological revolution challenges our society at many points. It produces crises where traditional philosophies and social relations are most in conflict with the imperatives of technological progress. Irrational relations and ancient prejudices conditioned by the old order must then give way, or the society will plunge into crisis. The present crisis in race relations is a measure of the tenacity with which our society has clung to racism; our present economic crisis is a measure of the tenacity with which we cling to nineteenth-century notions of "free enterprise" in the midst of forces that are only socially controllable.

Nothing even vaguely resembling a "master plan" has been set in motion to eliminate the twin problems of racial inequality and technological unemployment. Because current government programs do not cope with the economic revolution, deepening structural unemployment frustrates the efforts of Negroes to enter the job market even when discriminatory barriers are eliminated. Thus, even if existing apprenticeship openings were fully integrated, Negro unemployment rates would remain intolerably high. Neither "equal opportunity" nor "preferential treatment" can solve the problems of Negro unemployment within the framework of a private economy which has failed to generate jobs over the past decade. To accept this framework is necessarily to accept a form of economic tokenism which benefits relatively few Negroes, and not those most in need.

4 Economic Tokenism

Causes and Cures

IN AN ARTICLE against "discrimination in reverse," Secretary of Labor Wirtz cited the "three causes of minority group unemployment":

1. "The present shortage of jobs in the economy as a whole for *all* workers"—for which he proposed no solutions.
2. "Unquestionably the fact of lesser qualifications" among minority groups—a problem which the Manpower Development and Training Act would help meet in the short run, although in the long run we need a vastly improved school system such as could only result from the kind of federal action embodied in the National Education Improvement Act of 1963.
3. "The harsh ugly fact of discrimination"—which Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1963 are aimed directly at eliminating ["Toward Equal Opportunity," *American Child*, Nov., 1963.]

These remarks are an excellent point of departure for an evaluation of government programs in the field. I have no intention here of taking the Secretary to task, since his article did not require him to offer solutions to all the problems related to Negro unemployment.

Federal Training and Education Programs

THE MANPOWER DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING ACT of 1962 sought to retrain 400,000 workers within three years. A bill extending the program and adding 93,000 workers was signed by President Johnson in December, 1963. Even these inadequate figures are misleading. Dan Schulner, of the Manpower Development and Training Agency, told a Washington conference of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee in November, 1963, that

one thousand seven hundred ninety-four projects, providing 63,000 jobs, were approved last year. Yet 63,000 jobs is not anywhere near the two million jobs which the Manpower Research Office estimates will be needed each year to offset advances in technology.

He went on to report that

MDTA programs in the South in the first 8 months of operation have trained only 234 Negroes, according to the report of the Civil Rights Commission. That figure represents only 11% of the total MDTA trainees, while Negro unemployment in the South is 30%. Further, training has been offered to Negroes in only a few of the occupations provided by the Commission. In the clerical and sales categories, 90% of the Negroes were trained as stenograph-typists. In the service category, such jobs as tailoring, typewriter-repairing were available to most of the Negroes. Others were trained as waiters and waitresses. [1]

Under the original terms of the Act, one-third of the applicants under 25 were rejected on grounds of illiteracy—an added handicap for Southern Negroes, who have a disproportionately high illiteracy rate.* Racist state officials are a stumbling block, since the states are responsible for approving the training programs. Mississippi has no program under way because the state refuses to offer assurances that the program would be administered on a nonracial basis. Finally,

the Act states that people cannot be accepted for training without “reasonable expectation of employment”; in the South this provision can be interpreted to mean that since a white man will not want to hire a Negro for any job but a “Negro job” (cleaning, digging), there is not reasonable expectation of employment.

In short, the Federal retraining program is not only inadequate to begin with, but it is also forced to accommodate to the dominant political and economic patterns within the states.

The National Education Improvement Act, while broad in scope, suffers similar disabilities. It would assist the states in undertaking their *own* improvements. In the late President Kennedy’s words, the policy would be “selective, stimulative and where possible transitional.” It scarcely represents the decisive Federal intervention that is required to deal with the national education scandal.

Nondiscrimination in Government

TITLES VI AND VII of the Civil Rights Bill would legislatively outlaw discrimination in all government programs and establish “complete equality of opportunity within the government and by government contractors.” This has already been put into operation administratively. Government policies in this area have markedly improved since the Eisenhower Administration. Still, “complete equality of opportunity”

* There are 8 million “functional illiterates” in the U.S., i.e., persons who have completed fewer than 4 years of school. The illiteracy rate among Negroes is four times that of whites. It has been estimated that one out of every 10 Negro men in the U.S. is completely illiterate.

doesn't seem to be enough. A Spring 1961 survey showed that although 10.6% of Federal employees were Negro—roughly the Negro proportion of the population—these were heavily concentrated in the lowest grades. In Grades GS-12—18, they held less than 1% of the positions.

Actually, government enforcement of nondiscrimination provisions in its contracts is not likely to increase substantially the job opportunities available to Negroes. It does not affect the structure of the labor market or of the industries doing business with the government—certainly not as much as government spending policies do.

It is in this light that one must therefore view the Department of Labor's new standards outlawing discrimination in the apprenticeship programs it certifies.

Apprenticeships

NAACP LABOR SECRETARY Herbert Hill estimated in 1960 that Negroes make up only 1.69% of the total number of apprentices in the economy. This is the result of generations of systematic exclusions of Negroes from skilled trades. The segregatonist practices of the craft unions are well-known and among the ugliest chapters in labor history. They are now under fire from the AFL-CIO itself.

However, the struggle against discrimination in apprenticeship programs, though vital, cannot solve the problem of Negro employment. Such discrimination is not a major cause of the present high levels of Negro unemployment. As A. Philip Randolph has pointed out,

We complain because the building trades have no room for Negroes; but the real trouble now is that these unions are designed for profit through scarcity. If the crafts were open to us, that could not, in the present economy, create more than 40,000 jobs. (*Testimony before the Committee on Employment and Manpower, July 25, 1963.*)

Something of Randolph's view is conveyed by Peter Kihss in the *New York Times*:

There are about 140,000 men in the city's construction industry. Nobody knows how many are Negroes . . .

Last month, at the height of the construction season, there were 12,313 unemployed construction workers [in New York City].

Governor Rockefeller has announced that \$400 million in hitherto unscheduled state construction contracts will be awarded in the next 18 months. James J. McKenna, president of the Building Employers of New York State, says this will mean 4,000 on-site construction jobs—statewide. A total of 27,593 construction men were unemployed [in New York State] last month. [*N.Y. Times, Oct. 13, 1963.*]

From California the note is echoed by William Becker of the Jewish Labor Committee:

It is not enough to prohibit discrimination in the apprenticeship programs which receive government assistance. It is important to take steps to provide for *more* apprenticeship training programs and *more* opportunities for the employment of apprentices. Equal opportunity is important,

but at the present time it is scarcity of apprenticeships which is being shared. In California alone, for example, collective bargaining agreements are said to provide for about 100,000 apprentices, but employers are willing to employ only about 21,000 this year. Of these 21,000, over 4,000 are in the carpenters' program, so the opportunities in all the remaining 160 programs are very limited indeed! It would help if the government would stipulate that every federal contract must have joint labor-management apprenticeship training programs. ("After FEPC—What?" *Journal of Intergroup Relations*, Autumn, 1962.)

The point here is that the effort to secure apprenticeship openings for Negroes is inevitably conditioned by the total number of apprenticeship openings available. When that number is relatively small, proportional representation for Negroes in the entire population of apprentices can be achieved only at the expense of white workers. It requires an idealized faith in the altruism of insecure white workers to believe for a moment that Negro workers could win their objectives under such circumstances. Labor unions must share the blame for the historical development of discrimination in apprenticeship programs, but the scarcity of apprenticeships results from the state of the national economy—from the changing structure of the work force. For this the labor movement bears little responsibility. Business and government must carry the brunt.

Fair Employment

AMONG THE KEY SECTIONS of the Civil Rights bill now before the Senate is the fair employment provision. (Title VII). The importance of Federal FEPC may be measured by the opposition it has evoked from the Southerners. Senator Russell, for example, said that he regards Title VII as worse than the public accommodations section.

Essential as it is, FEPC runs into many of the obstacles discussed in connection with the integration of government employment and apprenticeship programs. For one thing, FEPC's effectiveness depends on how much room it has to operate in. If the job market is expanding, then FEPC can bring widespread results. In itself, however, FEPC does not affect the job market. Moreover, FEPC outlaws discrimination at the *point of hiring*. It cannot deal with past discrimination which has impeded the acquisition of the skills required for the most rapidly expanding job opportunities.

Twenty-five states already have laws against job bias; they cover 41% of the Negro population. If there is any correlation between enforcement of these laws and high Negro employment, it is likely to be inverse (major urban centers tend to have politically liberal administrations *and* high ghetto unemployment rates). Thus the "equal opportunity" principle is only a principle and not a formula for jobs. Even the most rigorously enforced FEPC would be inadequate to this end, as inadequate as "equal opportunity" in apprenticeship programs.

The operational sterility of the "equal opportunity" principle has given rise to the "preferential treatment" slogan. Other terms have been coined—"compensatory hiring," "positive discrimination," the doctrine of the debt," etc.—all meaning essentially the same thing. The chief spokesman for "preferential treatment" has been Whitney Young, Jr., of the National Urban League. It is not often that the slogans of the most conservative civil rights group are taken up with such gusto by the more militant activists. Mr. Young's argument is worth examining in some detail:

This idea of temporary special help now being called for is not new to our society. We have generously—and with justification—given special consideration in employment, education, and welfare to Hungarian and Cuban refugees fleeing oppression. We have given preferential treatment to the G.I. after World War II—in the form of free education, reduced interest loans for homes and businesses, a ten-point advantage on civil service examinations and other benefits—because he had been out of the mainstream for four or five years. Even now we designate certain geographic areas as depressed and disaster centers, and their people entitled to special help because of joblessness and acts of God. Another reason for a special effort arises from historic considerations. A great many of the intense needs and problems so evident in so many Negro communities are the results of exclusion based on racial discrimination. Apart from historical equity, a massive compensatory effort may well be the only means of overcoming the present results of past neglect. ["The Negro Revolt," *American Child*, November, 1963.]

Corporate Orientation

THE MORAL OBJECTIONS to "preferential treatment" have on the whole been flabby and pious. The real deficiencies in "preferential treatment" are on another level, and it is here that the essentially conservative nature of the National Urban League's social philosophy becomes evident. Young writes:

For 18.7 million American Negroes . . . the problem is immediate and desperate.

Federal action, however commendable, is still too little—and may well be too late. We believe the answer lies in effective action by responsible individuals and institutions—acting privately and in concert—who will undertake a massive program to close the intolerable economic, social, and educational gap that separates the vast majority of Negro citizens from other Americans. [*Ibid.*]

On the one hand, urgent indignation; on the other, an orientation toward the corporate structure. The 10-point domestic "Marshall Plan" Young calls for emphasizes massive aid to Negroes primarily by private sources—and it is clear that the "responsible individuals and institutions" referred to are the corporations and foundations from which the NUL has traditionally derived its support. One of the ten points is in fact an appeal to these groups for more financial assistance to the civil rights organizations.

The Negro revolt, Mr. Young seems to be assuring the NUL audience, differs from many revolutions inasmuch as it is an attempt by an under-privileged element of society not to change the fabric of that society, but to "revolt" into partnership with it. [*Ibid.*]

It is perfectly legitimate and consistent for the NUL to have this orientation. The original Marshall Plan, however, was a government aid program, not a voluntary gift of U.S. corporations. European recipients developed new forms of social and economic planning to allocate the aid and to lay the foundations for relative full employment, while Americans continue to rely for their social services on private agencies to a degree unknown in any other contemporary society.

The real question is, what are the limitations on private economic action, to reduce the differentials in Negro employment, education, and housing? Who will benefit from "preferential treatment" in the absence of basic, government-spearheaded economic reform? Without such reform, can there be full employment—and can there be fair employment without full employment?

Speaking for the National Urban League, Mr. Young states,

We do not advocate the firing of a white worker to employ a Negro—nor do we subscribe to the notion that until there is full employment for all Americans, the Negro must carry the brunt of the unemployment. [*Ibid.*]

Yes, he must. *So long as we have class unemployment and Negroes are disproportionately concentrated in the lower job categories, only full employment can keep them engaged in the economy.* This is not a notion to which one either subscribes or doesn't subscribe. It's an implacable economic reality which would not obtain if Negroes had the same job distribution as whites. Preferential treatment cannot substantially alter this distribution in the context of a stagnant economy.

But If No Job Exists?

A NEGRO CANNOT be given preference over a white if no jobs exist for either of them. The demand for preferential treatment has been unsuccessful where labor supply exceeds labor demand (as in the New York construction industry). This is the situation confronted by workers with the least education because of the inadequate expansion of the unskilled and semiskilled occupations for which they are qualified.

Preferential treatment has benefited those Negroes who can qualify for the more skilled occupations. These are the occupations that are expanding most rapidly. The more education and training they require, the more they are characterized by an excess of labor demand over labor supply. Professional and technical occupations—the fastest growing part of the labor force—will expand 40% in the '60's, as compared with 15% for semiskilled jobs and no growth at all in unskilled jobs.

To list the companies most commonly associated with "preferential treatment" policies is to indicate expanding industries in need of

skilled manpower. IBM is perhaps the most vigorous in pursuit of Negro talent, regularly visiting 17 Negro colleges to recruit engineers, mathematicians, scientists, as well as sales and managerial trainees. Others are: Radio Corporation of America, American Telephone and Telegraph, Thompson Ramo Woolridge, Lockheed, Western Electric, Goodyear, Pitney Bowes, Texas Instruments, Hughes Tool, etc.

Reports from the 115 companies participating in President Kennedy's "Plans for Progress" program are revealing. Of the 60,000 new workers hired by these companies between September and November of last year, 25% were Negroes, whereas previously the percentage of Negroes hired by these companies in any similar period ran only 3%. At the year's end, President Johnson announced that the employment of nonwhites in *salaried* posts had gained 23.5% in a *general* rise of 13.8% in nonwhite employment.

Employment of nonwhites in management categories rose by 46.3% . . . and by 37.4% in professional and administrative jobs. In sales positions, the increase was 53.1% and in technical jobs 31.6%.

Mr. Johnson continued:

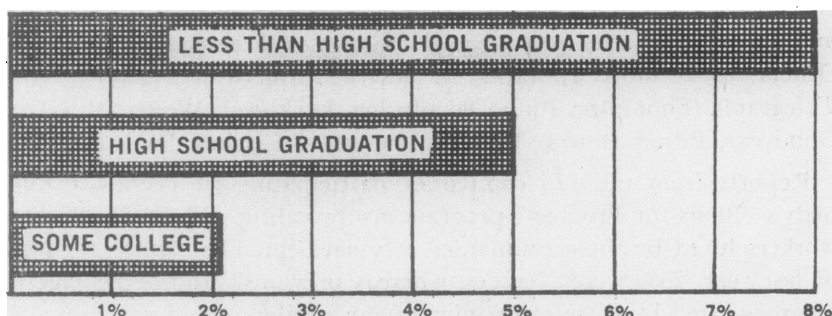
Within those companies whose reports have been received, the ratio of white salaried employees to nonwhite dropped from 61 to 1 at the beginning of the reporting period to 60 to 1 at the end. We still have a long way to go. [N.Y. Times, Dec. 6, 1963.]

We have an even longer way to go before the *bulk* of Negroes can benefit from these forms of preferential treatment. This is not to say that mechanisms for preferential treatment should not be set in motion by expanding industries. At least theoretically, these mechanisms could eliminate the more glaring disparities in employment and income between Negroes and whites with comparable high-education backgrounds. For the 3.5% of the adult Negro population with college degrees, for the 240,000 Negroes presently enrolled in colleges and professional schools, and for numbers of Negro high-school graduates, preferential treatment could quicken the pace of their absorption into the occupations that are expanding with technological progress.

Not only do these Negroes constitute a relatively small portion of the Negro population; they are also the least disadvantaged. Their incomes are higher, their unemployment rates lower. Preferential treatment is the most militant demand of the "black bourgeoisie."

Meanwhile, there is the danger that the emphasis on preferential treatment sows the illusion that Negroes can make progress in a declining economy, and diverts attention from the real nature of the unemployment problem. Moreover, while one may scoff at the abstract arguments against preferential treatment used by middle-class liberals, one cannot dismiss the fears it arouses among white workers, especially those whose own economic positions are marginal. The twenty-five percent job quota demanded by Negro pickets at construction sites

Figure 6: Percent Unemployment by Education, March, 1962



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

in New York is known to have irritated the Puerto Rican community. Used functionally in negotiations with certain employers, preferential treatment can be dangerous; broadcast as a central slogan, it drives a wedge between Negroes and those whites who stand most to gain from a political alliance for economic reform.

Politics aside for the moment, preferential treatment, at least in the context of the present economic order, does not go to the root of the Negro's job problem. The great majority of the Negro population is trapped in the lower educational categories. As the figure below indicates, members of these categories have the highest unemployment rates, and these rates will increase even more as cybernation's conquest of our economy places mounting premiums on skilled labor.

Thus Daniel Bell predicts that:

By 1970 with the demand for unskilled labor shrinking, relative to the total labor force, and the substantial majority of workers in white-collar or highly skilled blue-collar jobs, the relative disproportion between whites and Negroes in the low-skilled and service jobs—despite a rise in the levels of Negro education—may be even greater. For while the levels of Negro education are rising they are not rising fast enough. [*op. cit.*]

Failure of the Private Economy

THERE ARE THREE possible—but not mutually exclusive—solutions:

1. Massive education and training to qualify Negroes for the expanding occupations;
2. Planned creation of unskilled and semiskilled jobs for which Negroes are already qualified;
3. Direct financial relief.

None of these approaches, taken singly or in combination, can be seriously entrusted to the private economy; they are simply not natural functions of the profit motive.

Whichever approach is taken, the private economy has little to offer. Take education, for example. Corporations may contribute to higher

education, from which they reap the most immediate rewards. Elementary and secondary education, however, depend on real estate taxes for their basic revenue. These generally regressive taxes are among the costs which business enterprises seek to *reduce* when selecting sites. Yet expansion and reform of the elementary and secondary school systems is indispensable for raising the educational status of the general Negro community.

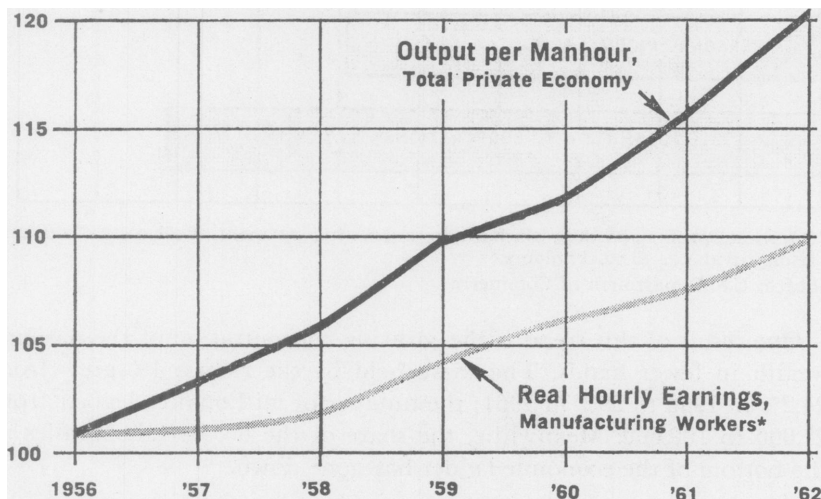
Moreover, while expanding sections of the private economy may apply preferential treatment in the acquisition and training of needed white-collar workers, they are not concerned with *creating* jobs of the kind that the mass of Negro workers could readily assume. These jobs can be performed more profitably by machines.

The purpose of business, if we need to be reminded, is to make profit, not jobs. The two don't necessarily go together.

The fact is that the demand for labor in the total private economy has remained virtually constant in recent years. Between World War II and 1957, nearly a million new jobs were created each year. Since then, fewer than 500,000 have been generated. But even these figures do not tell the full story. In the past ten years, most of the net jobs-increase in private industries was in part-time work. By contrast, state and local government jobs have risen by more than 2.5 million. There could be no more devastating answer to the champions of "free enterprise" who flail against "big government."

The failure of the private economy to generate jobs must be meas-

Figure 7: Lag of Real Wages Behind Advancing Productivity



*Hourly earnings, including payroll fringe benefits, adjusted for changes in the Consumer Price Index. Earnings figures exclude non-payroll fringes, such as pension and health-welfare plans.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

ured against future needs. It has been estimated that 30 million jobs must be created by 1970 to offset technological displacement and to absorb the 26 million young workers who will be added to the labor force. If the total economy continues to open new jobs at the present rate, unemployment will reach eleven million in 1970.

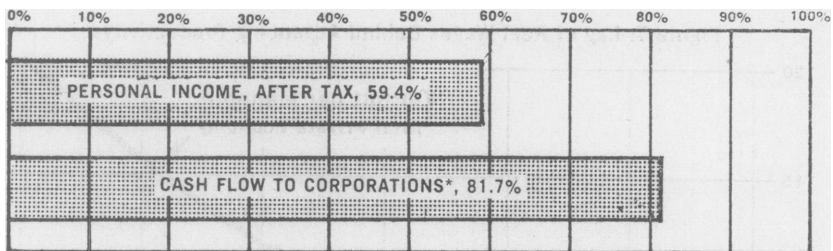
Corporate Profits

SIDE BY SIDE with rising unemployment are rising corporate profits. Largely because of automation, *productivity* (output per man-hour) increased 20.2% between 1956 and 1962. This means that private industry could produce more with fewer workers, thereby saving on labor costs. But the increase in workers' purchasing power in this period was only 15.2%. As Figure 7 shows, the disparity is even greater for manufacturing workers, many of whom are Negroes.

Thus the cost savings resulting from higher productivity have not been passed on to the consumer through lower prices or to workers through commensurately higher wages. They have gone into corporate profits, which reached a record \$26.8 billion after taxes in the second quarter of last year.

This imbalance in our economy is revealed even more dramatically in Figure 8. In the past ten years, the rise of peronal income has lagged far behind the cash-flow to corporations.

Figure 8: Lag in Rise of Personal Income Behind Cash Flow to Corporations



*Corporate profits and depreciation allowances after payment of all costs, taxes, and rising dividends to stockholders.

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce

One result of this trend is the growing concentration of the nation's wealth in fewer hands. The share held by the richest 1% grew from 24.2% in 1953 to 28% in 1961; the number of millionaires leaped from 27,000 to 100,000. Meanwhile, the share of the 60% of all families at the bottom of the economic ladder has gone down.

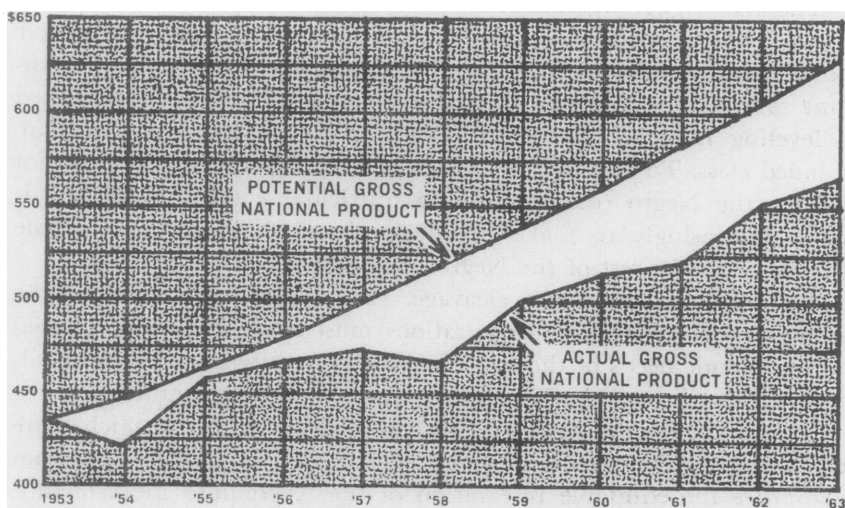
Production Lag

BECAUSE REAL WAGES have not kept pace with productivity and profit, the ability of consumers to purchase goods and services has fallen

behind our capacity to produce those goods and services. One way to prevent inadequate purchasing power from putting the brakes on production would be to produce at maximum capacity and distribute goods and services on the basis of need. Our economic system is based on production for profit, however, and production has therefore been limited to the demands of the market. Corporate profits keep soaring because many large corporations can do better by maintaining high profit margins on a smaller volume of production than by lowering margins in hopes of raising volume.

The overall result, as Figure 9 shows, is a growing gap between actual and potential national production. This gap between the economy's actual performance and its growing potential to produce amounted to \$63 billion in 1963. Were it not for our "permanent war economy"—which does not produce goods for use—the gap would be even greater. In any case, this untapped reservoir of wealth, if exploited in the interest of the society at large, could go a long way toward lifting living standards, improving education and health facilities, clearing slums, and reducing poverty.

Figure 9: Growing Gap Between Actual and Potential National Production
(in billions of 1962 dollars)



*AFL-CIO Estimate

Source: Council of Economic Affairs and AFL-CIO Research Department

There is every reason to believe that the gap between actual and potential production will widen in the years ahead as automation boosts productivity. Furthermore, it is unlikely that social altruism will dethrone the profit motive in the private economy and prompt decisions to close the gap by increasing production for the purpose of waging war on poverty. It is equally unlikely that a private econ-

omy characterized by high profits and high unemployment can undertake a "Marshall Plan" that would substantially improve the living conditions of the majority of Negroes. This is a social responsibility. It rests with government, which is ultimately entrusted with the national welfare. The exercise of this responsibility is therefore a political, not a private, decision.*

Historic Turning Point

THE TECHNOLOGICAL REVOLUTION, it has been said, is creating two Americas—the "affluent society" and the "other America." It is also dividing the Negro community, offering glittering rewards to the cream of the crop. The Negro technocrat may emerge as a social type—a new image perched on a narrow reality (but a reality all the same). Meanwhile, the majority of Negroes—trapped in ghettos, under-educated, unemployed, underemployed, or unemployable—will be subject to new disintegrative forces, to new forms of racial-economic separation and alienation.

If we correlate, roughly, the school drop-out rate with the skill requirements of the future labor force, then we can say . . . that thirty years hence, *class society in the U.S. will be predominantly color society* [Daniel Bell, *op. cit.*]

The civil rights organizations may be at an historic turning point. Toward which portion of the Negro community will they orient their policies and programs? The "black bourgeoisie" has been an important source of leadership, especially when legalized racism exercised a leveling influence and enforced a racial identification that transcended class. To be sure, the elimination of legalised racism will not plunge the Negro community into fratricidal class warfare, but it tends increasingly to make the demands of the black bourgeoisie irrelevant to the rest of the Negro community.

To prevent unnecessary cleavage, to maximize solidarity in the struggle, the civil rights organizations must speak to the real social and economic needs of the total Negro community and develop goals to which it educates the less needy members of the community.

Among these goals must be full employment, without which there cannot be equality even in unemployment. Full employment may not *guarantee* the equitable integration of the Negro into the economy, but it is a *precondition*. Preferential treatment, yes—but as A. Philip Randolph declares, preferential treatment for *all* the unemployed, the poor, the sick, the aged, disadvantaged youth—for the other America.

* This does not mean that private enterprise can play no role in a domestic "Marshall Plan." It can play an important role in housing, for example. But government priming and leadership in setting goals is essential.

The civil rights movement has attracted growing numbers of workingclass and unemployed Negroes for whom social action is less a path to the integrationist ideal than a response to economic upheaval. To maintain and deepen its mass base, the movement must therefore stretch its moral dimensions to include economic leadership. What is an economic program for civil rights? Given the inability of the private sector of the economy to provide jobs, this chapter examines alternative forms of government action and concludes that the chief economic demand of the Negro revolution should be a massive public works program. By creating jobs for unskilled and semi-skilled workers, it would put the mass of black and white unemployed to work clearing slums, replacing them with public housing, building schools, hospitals, nurseries, parks and playgrounds, and providing other desperately needed social services. Such a program must be massively financed and properly planned. Thus, public works is set in a context of economic planning and expansion of the public sector.

5 The Economics of Equality

TO THE WRITER'S KNOWLEDGE, the civil rights organizations have produced no comprehensive studies of the Negro's economic plight as it relates to national trends. Not until the March on Washington did the movement project a clear set of economic demands. They were essentially correct but sketchy, and have since been pretty much forgotten. They need to be developed and popularized.

The New Recruits

SEVERAL OF THE ORGANIZATIONS, notably SNCC and CORE, have begun to recruit numbers of working-class and unemployed Negroes, many of them youths. Attracted by the militant direct action of these organizations, the new recruits become restless when activity ebbs and then they often drift away. To a large extent, this will be a constant problem. Still, more intensive social-educational programs could certainly polish some rough diamonds and yield new leaders with deep roots in the community.

The task is not easy; it would be a pioneering effort in many ways similar to the worker-education programs developed by the early labor movement. Occasional area conferences are not enough. In techniques (though presumably not subject matter), the civil rights organizations might take their cues from some of the radical political sects. Infused with the spirit of the movement, continuous classes in politics, economics, Negro history, etc., might take on a meaning they

never had in the formal classroom. These should be combined with practical training in leadership and organizational skills (writing, speechmaking, stencil-cutting, mimeographing, etc.).

Again, the civil rights organizations will not ultimately be able to enlist and maintain the participation of the Negro masses on the basis of a middle-class integrationist ideology. Nor can they do so on the basis of abstract economic analysis. But such analysis can lead to—must lead to—the formulation of dramatic economic demands that express real needs, arouse popular support, and stimulate greater awareness of basic issues.

The civil rights movement, as a first step, should make its economic demands explicit. The March on Washington, I believe, points the way with its key demand for a *massive federal works program to put all Americans back to work*.

Alternative Approaches

A NUMBER OF PROPOSALS have been advanced to solve the problem of unemployment. While space does not permit extensive analysis of these proposals, the major criticisms of each may be briefly outlined as an argument for the massive federal works program.

1. *The \$11.5 billion tax cut* is the centerpiece of the Administration's program to reduce unemployment to . . . 4%! One fourth of the dollars involved go to the corporations to stimulate investment. The remainder go to individuals to stimulate consumption. But corporate profits are already at an all-time high; why assume that tax savings would be invested when available capital is not? Besides, the Council of Economic Advisors estimates that 70% of current business investment in plant and equipment is for modernization and replacement (read: elimination of jobs) rather than expansion.

Professor Killingsworth makes a more profound criticism of the tax cut in terms of the structural or class character of unemployment:

Despite a steady (but slow) improvement in the average educational level of the work force, the change in the pattern of demand for labor has created a large surplus of poorly educated workers and serious shortages of certain kinds of highly educated workers. Because of the new employment patterns in the economy, a general increase in spending for goods and services by consumers and an increase in investment by business firms—which are the hoped-for effects of the proposed \$11 billion tax cut—would soon result in acute shortages of many kinds of highly educated workers without greatly reducing the present surplus of poorly educated workers. The bottleneck in the supply of workers at the top of the educational ladder would seriously impede the continued economic expansion that is essential to reduce to tolerable levels the shocking rates of unemployment that we find today at the middle and bottom of the educational ladder. [Address before Conference on Employment Security, Michigan State University, October 26, 1963.]

Like Myrdal, Killingsworth emphasizes the need to improve the qual-

ity of the labor supply, and wryly observes that "While the Administration urgently presses for the \$11-billion tax cut, we are actually spending around \$100 million this year for manpower retraining."

2. *Manpower retraining and education* on a massive scale is indispensable to achieving and maintaining full employment in a technologically revolutionary society. But the immediate employment benefits of retraining are limited. Many blue-collar workers are beyond retraining, e.g., miners, laborers and other unskilled workers over 40. Nor are educationally disadvantaged youth likely candidates for training in skilled jobs. And for what jobs do we retrain service personnel, who have already begun to feel the impact of cybernation? Before retraining can reach maximum effectiveness, the primary and secondary school systems will have to be radically improved. Even then, many marginal workers will not be able to make the necessary adjustment. Finally, as the AFL-CIO pointed out:

Obviously, no matter how well designed, training programs will not create the job opportunities needed to provide employment for the large numbers of unemployed who are seeking work. Without such opportunities training will be of little help and this is precisely our difficulty today—not enough job opportunities . . .

Furthermore, if training is undertaken for occupations for which there are no real shortages, a pool of unemployed trained workers is created. Such a pool—where no vacancies exist—will present a threat to incumbent employees and to the standard of wages and working conditions. ["Retraining the Unemployed," *AFL-CIO American Federationist*, May, 1962.]

3. *A shorter workweek* has been advocated by the labor movement, on the grounds that rising productivity means that fewer manhours are required to create an ever greater abundance of goods and service.

As the AFL-CIO points out, America has traditionally reduced working hours as productive efficiency improved. Between 1900 and 1940, the workweek was cut by 4 to 5 hours a decade. But since 1940, the pace has slowed down to only 1½ hours per decade—despite an average productivity increase of 3½% in the past three years.

The AFL-CIO estimates that for every hour cut from the workweek, 500,000 to one million new jobs would be opened. Thus, reduction of the workweek from 40 to 35 hours would make room for at least 2½ million additional employees. There is no denying that such an increase in employment is now crucially necessary. It is also clear that any long-range adjustment to the technological revolution will involve a reduction of working time and an increase in leisure. Only such a prospect of gradual liberation from toilsome labor and the redirection of human energies to more satisfying ends can give ultimate meaning to technological progress.

Nonetheless, as the AFL-CIO has recognized, the shorter workweek is not the formula for full employment. It is of limited efficacy in coping with the structural aspects of unemployment. Purely arithmeti-

cal calculations of manhours tend to obscure the fact that manhours are not exactly interchangeable units. There are skilled manhours, semiskilled manhours, and unskilled manhours. How does the reduction of the workweek of an automobile worker create a job for a displaced miner? It could, in fact, create a job for a machine. In his study of cybernation, Donald N. Michael writes that the shorter workweek approach

is intended to maintain the ability of workers to consume the products of cybernation and, in the case of blue-collar workers, to maintain the strength of unions. This would retain the consumer purchasing capacity for workers in those situations where the nature of the cybernation process is such that x men would do essentially the same work which x plus y men used to do. But when the task itself is eliminated or new tasks are developed that need different talents, shorter shifts clearly will not solve the problem. The latter conditions are the more likely ones as cybernation becomes more sophisticated. [*Cybernation: The Silent Conquest?* Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, 1962, p. 25.]

Whether or not one accepts Michael's argument in full, one must concede, as the AFL-CIO does, that the main benefit of the shorter workweek is that it can "*ease displacement of labor by automation.*" Its ability to reabsorb the "under-class" into the economy is not proven.

For a Massive Federal Works Program

BY CONTRAST, the demand for a massive federal works program can be a natural rallying point for virtually all the unemployed. Such a program would do what the others cannot—attack class unemployment by providing job opportunities even for unskilled and semiskilled workers; that is, for precisely those who now lack work. Says Mr. Michael,

If our understanding of the direction of cybernation is correct the government will probably be faced for the indefinite future with the need to support part of the population through public works. There is no dearth of public work to be done, and it is not impossible that so much would continue to be needed that an appropriately organized public works program could stimulate the economy to the point that a substantial portion of the work force could be absorbed into the private sector. That is, although the proportion of workers needed for any particular task will be reduced through the use of cybernation, the total number of tasks that need to be done could equal or exceed the absolute number of people available to do them. [*Ibid.*]

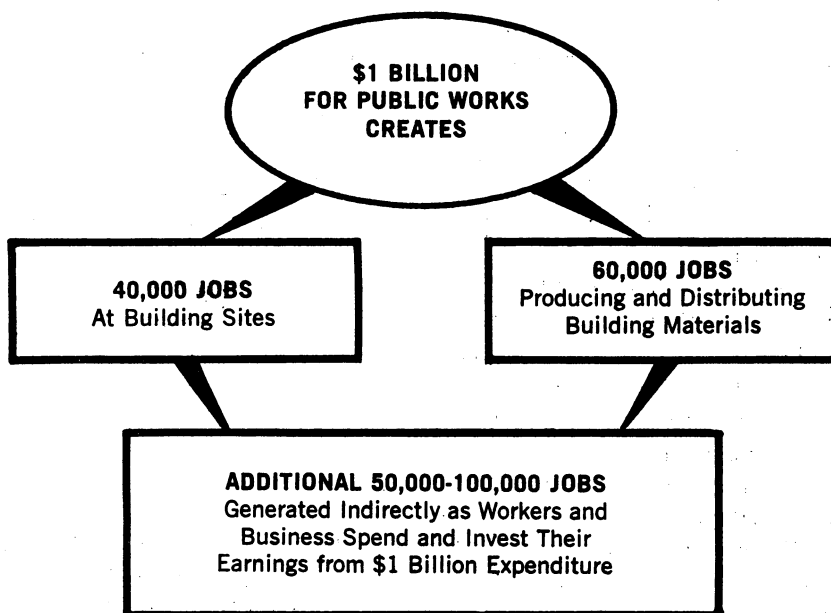
The civil rights movement should have a special interest in a massive federal works program because it can provide jobs and additional purchasing power for the unskilled categories in which Negroes are so heavily concentrated. No less important, Negroes will especially benefit from the fruits of public works: slum clearance, school and hospital construction, decongestant highway and road construction, new parks and playgrounds, carefully planned public housing, etc. We can at least begin the rational reorganization of our cities.

Among the leading spokesmen for massive public works has been the American labor movement. Its explanation of how public works creates jobs is worth quoting at length.

On the basis of Labor Department studies, it is estimated that \$1 billion of government outlay for public works directly creates about 40,000 on-site construction jobs, with approximately 25 percent to 30 percent of the jobs for unskilled and semi-skilled workers. In addition, such investment outlay also directly creates about 60,000 jobs in the production and distribution of building materials and equipment. In all, \$1 billion of government investment for public works directly creates about 100,000 jobs.

As these workers spend their earnings—and the retailers who deal with them re-spend the money—sales increase and more jobs are created in retail stores, warehouses and companies that produce consumer goods. The improvement in sales and the increased orders for building materials, also boosts business profits and investments. This process of rising sales and business investment creates many jobs indirectly. A government expenditure of \$1 billion for public works indirectly creates about 50,000-100,000 jobs—a total of about 150,000-200,000 jobs. An increase of \$3 billion in public works outlays, therefore, would create about 450,000-600,000 additional jobs, both directly and indirectly. [*Labor Looks at the Nation's Economy: 1963*, AFL-CIO, p. 16.]

Figure 10: Jobs Created by Outlays of Public Works



Source: AFL-CIO Research Department, based on studies of U.S. Department of Labor

Some economists object that a public works program would have a “make-work” or “handout” air that would demoralize workers. This need not be true. It depends upon the value society assigns to the work being performed. Certainly a public works program carried out by the

guardians of the status quo—who regard poverty as a moral flaw and people on relief as chiselers—would have the predicted results. But under new political leadership genuinely committed to “getting America moving again,” such a program could be cast in radically different terms: not as “make-work,” not even merely as an assault on unemployment, but as a crusade for the physical and social reconstruction, literally the rebuilding, of the nation. If unemployment did not exist, a national face-lifting would still be needed to enable our social services, our very patterns of life, to catch up with twentieth century technology. In a rational and humane society, conscious of its own growing needs, participants in a reconstruction program would have the respect reserved in the past for the financially successful.

Our Unmet Needs

IT IS CONSERVATIVELY ESTIMATED that 750,000 new public elementary and high schools are needed for the decade ahead. Many thousands more are necessary if our goal is not merely the elimination of present and anticipated shortages, but the major reform of our whole public school system—on a basis of genuinely integrated quality education. And what about higher education, not to mention vocational and technical training facilities?

We need to build 2.3 million dwelling units *per year* between now and 1974—nearly half again the number built in 1962. Andrew Hacker (*New York Times Magazine*, March 22, 1964) tells us there are 11.3 million homes or apartments which are “deteriorating” or “dilapidated.” Yet, the current Administration program calls for 35,000 low-income housing units. “Assuming that these are built,” says Mr. Hacker, “they will provide places for one out of every 80 families now living in a slum.”

We are short one million hospital and nursing home beds, 2,000 public health centers, 2,500 diagnostic treatment centers, and over 200 comprehensive rehabilitation centers.

Mass transportation facilities are needed if slums are not to mushroom and cities suffocate in traffic. The cost—an estimated \$9.8 billion in the next ten years.

Adequate public outdoor recreation programs between now and 1975 will cost about \$20 billion.

We have only sampled the enormous backlog of social needs that America has neglected. The magnitude of the task depends on the magnitude of our social vision. In any case, there is a great deal to be done. *If the United States were to fill all of its unmet needs in highways, schools, and hospitals, it would have a labor shortage instead of more than 6% unemployed*, according to Secretary of Labor Wirtz.

Yet, the nation languishes. Millions are unemployed, 15% of our plant capacity is unused, and over \$60 billion is lost each year. There

can be no greater indictment of our present economic arrangements than this inhumane paradox.

Democratic Central Planning

TO RESOLVE THE PARADOX requires extensive economic and social planning. For example, a massive public works program which wiped out our backlog of unmet social needs in, say, ten years would be an ephemeral glory if it left in its wake a large residual army of workers who did not possess the skills demanded by future technology. The upgrading of labor skills must therefore be a built-in feature of public works. Every government contractor should be required to establish, with government assistance, on-the-job training programs.* Time for training should be included in the work schedule, thus achieving a shortened work week and spreading employment. The percentage of unskilled and semiskilled workers involved in public works could thus be increased. All of society would benefit from the upgrading of their skills, their income and their self-respect.

Economic planning is important because the upgrading of skills implies a foreknowledge of what skills are needed. The filling of our unmet national needs will create, as Secretary Wirtz says, labor shortages. C. J. Haggerty, President of the AFL-CIO Building and Construction Trades, warns that two million more skilled workers are needed—hence a tremendous acceleration of apprenticeship programs. Labor shortages will be more acute in some occupations than in others. We must know what those occupations will be, and how many men must be trained to fill them.

The principles of planning must extend beyond public works. Our entire economy is threatened by the gap between skills demanded and skills possessed. The quality of the labor force must be matched with the labor demand. This cannot be done on an industry-by-industry level. It requires national planning.

Should jobs be moved to people, or people to jobs? In which areas should new industries be established or old industries expanded to eliminate unemployment—and which industries? What tax, fiscal, monetary, and regulatory policies would motivate corporations to pay \$X in wages rather than \$X-Y for labor-saving machinery? These are issues that must be decided in the public interest. "In an abundant society," writes W. H. Ferry,

the problem is not an economic one of keeping the machine running regardless of what it puts out, but a political one of achieving the common good. And planning is one of its major means. [*Caught on the Horn of Plenty*, Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions. Jan., 1962.]

* Without waiting for massive public works, the federal government should stipulate a one-to-five ratio of apprentices to journeymen in all of its contracts—thus opening new apprenticeship training opportunities

Public Control

IF THE COMMON GOOD is to prevail, public control must be exerted over the key decisions affecting the private economy. It is through the extension of public control that the productive engines of the private economy can be harnessed to our social needs. The task of central planning is to formulate those needs in a hierarchy of priorities. The mere extension of public control, without planning, is purposeless. Similarly, planning is a futile exercise without the power to implement policy decisions.

Equally important, planning must be democratic in its goals and methods. That is, it must be directed toward the common good, not vested interest, and it must involve popular participation. Slum dwellers should have a say about where their new homes will be and what they will be like.

Advances in computer technology have vastly simplified the technical problems of planning. Data can now be collected and processed with astounding rapidity. With the help of cybernation, a mass of statistics can be reduced to basic political propositions or value judgments. The responsibility for choosing among these basic alternatives would remain, inescapably, man's.

Though the technical means are ours to command, social planning remains an underdeveloped art in the United States, which has fallen behind Western Europe in this respect. We seem not yet to have recognized that, in Ferry's words,

"The government bears the final responsibility for the quality and content and prosperity of the nation. We need to see today's economic order for what it is, an enormously complicated piece of machinery which cannot be run by the instruction manuals of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. National hypocrisy has in few places as many facets as it has in the simplistic rhetoric of the opponents of planning. The most violent anti-planners are the same men who expertly plan the future of their corporations for ten to thirty years, and who rely on planners to keep their suburbs from infestation by junkyards and filling stations." [*Ibid.*]

Clearly, then, Americans are going to have to abandon conventional attitudes about economic planning and stop hiding behind the shibboleths of "free enterprise." Corporate objections to government intervention in the economy become curiously muted when the issue of oil-depletion allowance or other forms of government favoritism toward business are under discussion. Likewise, a big step toward exorcising the planning bugaboo would be recognition of the extent to which private industries are already engaged in planning.

Their planning is for profit, however. We need long-range planning for full employment and social reconstruction. Various specialized programs to eliminate poverty among particular groups and in particular areas are of course necessary. But they must be coordinated on a national scale, lest they work at cross purposes or become depend-

ent on local politics and resources.

Moreover, if national planning is needed to cope with our present economic imbalances, what of the future? It is certain that our continuous technological revolution will bring us to the point where only a fraction of the present work force will be required to produce necessary goods and services. Economists differ as to how far we are from this point. My own view is that there is enough work to be done in this country to sustain full employment in the period ahead. The needs of the world's hungry should push the prospect of universal leisure even *further* into the future.

But it cannot be postponed *indefinitely*. We must begin to plan for it now, or be caught short by future economic upheavals. For example, if present disparities in the skills of our work force are not systematically ironed out, the benefits of the cybernetic revolution will not be evenly distributed throughout society. Instead, the shortage of skilled manpower will become more acute, while the surplus of unskilled and semiskilled manpower grows higher and higher. The income of the first group would then rise, while that of the latter declined. And, in an ironic reversal of history, the wealthier groups would probably be working overtime, while the poorer worked part-time or not at all—a new, involuntary leisure class.

These trends would have far-reaching implications for our total society. No democratic political order can long be sustained on an economic base characterized by such widening inequalities. When those inequalities become identified with racial differences—when class society becomes color society—we have the ingredients for a reactionary political and social order.

If, on the other hand, the gradual withdrawal of the work force from the productive process is to proceed in a more or less egalitarian manner—rather than through the dispossession of certain classes of workers—there must be a massive upgrading of skills. This, as I have tried to show, can best be accomplished in the context of full employment in an expanding economy whose energies are geared to the fulfillment of social needs.

Public Works—A Civil Rights Demand

FAIR AND FULL EMPLOYMENT through a massive federal works program—this is a civil rights demand. Vigorous agitation and direct action around it should become central for the movement.

Here a slight digression is in order. One criticism of the public works demand is that it overemphasizes the structural character of our rising unemployment. The civil rights movement, this argument runs, would therefore be accepting an unduly narrow approach to the nation's economic ills instead of displaying a sophisticated understanding of the complexity of the problem.

Three things must be said in reply. First, it is true that not all of today's unemployment is structural; some of it can be reduced by fiscal, monetary and other measures which stimulate consumer demand. Expansion of consumer demand is an essential backdrop to the achievement of full employment. But this is precisely why I have stressed that an effective public works program must be set in a broad framework of coordinated social and economic policies.

Secondly, however, it must be recognized that structural factors do predominate in the case of Negro unemployment and poverty—whatever one's analysis of the national scene may be. The role of the civil rights movement is not, after all, to vie with professional economists in the elaboration of endless data, but to mobilize masses around basic issues. To the extent that they seek solutions to the Negro's economic crisis, the civil rights organizations are necessarily oriented toward structural solutions.

This, finally, is as it should be. Let the statisticians haggle as they will, it is the structural aspect of unemployment that will most likely evoke the crusading zeal we need to eliminate unemployment generally. Structural unemployment in an affluent society is a form of social injustice. As such, it can become the focus for a mobilization of public sentiment and political action. In this respect the structurally unemployed and the Negro have a profound kinship: their problems, being extreme and concentrated manifestations of less conspicuous inequalities that permeate our society, can illuminate the latter with the spotlight of social morality. To intensify this spotlight—by insisting on a massive public works program as a matter of social justice—is the unique contribution that the civil rights revolution can make to the eradication of unemployment.

"Social Dislocation"

MARCHES OF UNEMPLOYED YOUTH are reported under consideration by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, at whose Washington conference last Thanksgiving Bayard Rustin urged white students to concentrate more of their energies on the organization of unemployed whites. If these students can transfer to the unemployed (particularly the youth) a measure of the spirit they acquired in the Negro struggle, we may be on the verge of a new student movement. The civil rights movement would also be changed by the appearance of Negro-led interracial groups with programs and activities aimed at both the Negro and dispossessed white worlds.*

To some Negro militants this course will seem to blur the special

* A pioneer effort to organize the unemployed along these lines has been undertaken by Students for a Democratic Society, student arm of the League for Industrial Democracy, with the enthusiastic support of the United Automobile Workers.

interests of the civil rights movement. It may appear to them as a white liberal trap to divert Negro militancy into utopian fantasies. But the past year has shown that militancy alone does not produce enough results, that it is no substitute for fundamental analysis, that it is not in itself productive of jobs, housing, and schools.

"Social dislocation," in Bayard Rustin's phrase, has been the Negro's most effective weapon in recent years. But as Rustin himself has recently emphasized, social dislocation is a *technique* of struggle, not a program. It is not sufficient in the present context to say "White man, move over," without having an answer to "Move where?" Nor is a program answering this question enough; allies must be won if the program is to be effectuated. The integration of lunchcounters was largely won by Negroes alone, using "social dislocation." But to win jobs will require a reorientation of national policies beyond the capacities of the Negroes alone.

Crystalization of the Negro's socio-economic needs in a campaign for a massive federal works program admittedly runs the risk of oversimplifying these needs or of overshadowing other concerns. Nonetheless, the evidence indicates that the movement may have reached a point when it not only needs allies but must also call those allies into existence and help launch their programs. This is not accommodation to liberalism-as-usual, but a *challenge* to it—a challenge to transform rhetoric into action, paper slogans into political action.

A numerical minority, Negroes by themselves lack the political power to achieve the economic reforms required by the civil rights revolution. These can be won only by an alliance of progressive forces—of which the labor movement is the largest organized component—in the field of political action. Infused with the dynamism and spirit of the Negro struggle, such an alliance could effect basic social change in the interest of the "natural majority" of Americans. The will of this majority is today frustrated by anachronistic and undemocratic features of our political institutions. Congressional reform, legislative reapportionment, and party reorganization are elements of a broader political realignment which should be an avowed goal of the civil rights revolution.

6 The Politics of Equality

Alliances and Ambivalences

HISTORY DEMONSTRATES that minority groups can, through united and militant action, exercise an influence beyond their numbers. Those who are organized, disciplined, and determined carry greater social weight than an equal number who are atomized. A minority's hand is further strengthened when it is favored by the society's official ideology: by dramatically calling attention to the gap between that ideology and common practice, it can embarrass the majority into concessions.

What it cannot do alone, however, is to fundamentally reconstruct society—at least not democratically. This can only be done through sustained political power. And unless the minority can command overwhelming economic or military force, it must exercise its political power through alliances with other groups in the society with whom it can make common cause.

Allies may be reluctant or enthusiastic. In choosing allies, the criteria cannot be subjective. The strongest personal ties may be built on continuous affection and sympathy, but the sturdiest political alliances are built on overlapping self-interests, and there are times when these tend to be obscured. Indeed history is replete with examples of groups who applied purely subjective criteria and, mistaking possible friends for worst enemies, failed in their objectives.

Overlapping self-interests are not at every point identical self-interests. If they were, we would be speaking of a single group rather than of two or more. And if that single group were in the majority, the problem of alliances might not present itself. This perhaps happier situation has prevailed in Africa, where oppressed black people are very much in the majority. Their struggle has been for total political power and it could be accompanied by expression of racial-cultural nationalism that has counterparts in the history of European peoples.

It is in many ways unfortunate that American Negroes, who do have a distinct culture, are stymied in their "nationalism" and deprived of its energizing advantages by the necessity of orienting toward the *sharing* of political power.

The clash between nationalist psychology and integrationist goals produces ambivalence and frustrations which will continue to pose often painful problems for the civil rights movement. They certainly cannot be eliminated by homilies about brotherhood. They spring from contradictions that can only be resolved through the democratization and full integration of our basic institutions. If our institutions are to be changed, it will be because of tremendous pressure generated by a mass movement wielding political power.

Politics and Direct Action

WHEN POLITICAL POWER is understood in these terms—as the ability to effect institutional changes—the false dichotomy sometimes made between political action and direct action should vanish, and none too soon, for it has been a source of considerable confusion, in the opinion of this writer. When Freedom Riders compel government enforcement of the 1946 *Morgan* decision outlawing segregation in interstate travel, they engage in a profoundly political act. When demonstrations in Birmingham cause civil rights legislation to be introduced into Congress, are they not political? At bottom, the integration of public accommodations—which are social institutions—is a political act with direct and indirect political consequences.

Unfortunately, and understandably, the word *politics* has unsavory connotations in the American vocabulary. It is associated with expediency, careerism, and charlatanism. In a deeper sense the civil rights movement is already up to its ears in politics. The question is, what kind of political action should it pursue in order to win its social and economic demands? And who are its best allies in the pursuit?

To propose social and economic programs without suggesting the political requirements for their implementation would be a sterile exercise in abstraction. On the other hand, a full discussion of this question, taking all the organizational and strategic contingencies into account, would be another pamphlet. What follows, therefore, is necessarily brief and general.

The Under-class and the Middle Class

I SPOKE EARLIER of the relative isolation of the Negro struggle. A major reason for this is the absence of activity among the nation's dispossessed. Class unemployment, by its very nature, has tended to induce passivity, not revolt. Its effects are attritional, not cataclysmic. In contrast with the Great Depression, when masses of workers were more or

less suddenly laid off, increasing numbers of today's unemployed are simply never hired. Many of today's youth may never enter into the productive process at all. It is a measure of how far we are from a welfare state that most of the unemployed have not yet fully perceived that they are victims of social injustice.

Another contrast with the Depression: in that economic collapse, workers of all classes lost their jobs—including skilled workers and white-collar professionals who possessed organizational and leadership abilities. Many college students were forced to interrupt or abandon their studies, found themselves thrown into the labor market, and cast their lot with the downtrodden. They helped articulate the grievances of the unemployed, to give them program and visibility.

So far, the ranks of today's under-class have not been substantially leavened by such elements, neither by the indignation of a newly dispossessed middle-class nor by the articulateness of idealistic intellectuals. The current college generation is pretty much excluded from the travails of the "other America." All indications are, however, that cybernation will make greater inroads into the skilled and professional occupations in the years ahead, threatening many middle-class Americans and their children. How will they react?

Not all of them will cast their lot with the poor and unemployed on the side of democratic social change. Some, perplexed by the dislocations they have experienced despite their education and training, and misreading the causes, will fall victims to the simplistic "solutions" and demagogery of the ultra-rightists. There is evidence that the John Birch society has recruited some of its most effective people from this displaced stratum.

On the other hand, in creating a new intellectual and political climate, the civil rights revolution may catalyze a movement of young idealistic students into the ranks of the underclass, as purely economic motivations cannot. This would be an important step toward giving visibility and coherence to the poor—and thus consolidating a social movement politically allied with the Negro. If the spirit and dynamic of the Negro's struggle can be injected into the white "other America," then the problems of both may be solved.

Negro-Labor Alliance

AT THE SAME TIME, the role of radical students and intellectuals should not be exaggerated. In the social confusion resulting from economic upheaval, the disaffected may look to reactionary pseudo-solutions, especially if the forces for democratic social change are disorganized and fragmented. It is for this reason that the existence of a strong labor movement is of the utmost importance. Even when its program is inadequate—and many criticisms can be leveled at the AFL-CIO—it is the single most powerful bulwark against conservative and

reactionary interests. It is no accident that virtually no dictatorial or totalitarian regime has won power without first destroying or repressing the free labor movement. There are doubtless as many individual Americans dedicated to democracy outside of the labor movement as within it. Many belong to liberal organizations that provide important sources of leadership. But they cannot provide the social ballast represented by institutions with socio-economic roots.

Beyond these general considerations, there are more immediate and practical reasons for the Negro-labor alliance. The economic program of the labor movement—particularly with regard to public works, the public sector, and economic planning—comes closest to addressing the needs of the masses of Negroes. Also, when the organization of the unemployed gets under way, the labor movement will be their greatest source of material and moral support. The Packinghouse Workers and the United Automobile Workers have already mapped programs in this area, though most of the labor movement remains inactive.

So far labor has been unable to back up its economic program with mass action. Until it does so, tensions between it and the civil rights revolution are inevitable. But if these tensions are to be creative, they must take the form of *pushing* the labor movement, not of *rejecting* it. No diminution of militancy is implied here, as the Negro American Labor Council has proven.

Meanwhile, the role of the churches in civil rights has been vastly enlarged. If a Civil Rights Act comes out of the present Congress, it will owe much to the influence of religious groups upon congressmen from areas (like the mid-West) where the Negro population is small and trade union organization weak. Church groups have also taken to the streets in direct action, led by ministers and rabbis.

An effective alliance between Negroes, labor and the unemployed—and, to be sure, middle-class liberals and religious groups—would indeed alter the context in which the Negro revolution takes place. It would open new horizons, new possibilities for basic social change.

The Congressional Roadblock

THE INCREASINGLY OBVIOUS confluence of caste and class factors may spark a new movement. But the movement will not effect progressive social change without removing the obstacles to the exercise of its rightful political power. The two chief obstacles faced by the Negro-labor-liberal coalition today are Congress and our political party system.

The American Congress is neither mathematically nor politically a representative body. This fact, and not any schizoid tendencies of the voters, explains why the Legislative and Executive branches of government have been so often at loggerheads over the past two decades. Almost half the time since World War II, our government has been "divided"—that is, one party has had a majority in Congress while the

other has controlled the White House. But party *labels* aside, Congress has been steadily dominated by a conservative coalition of Dixiecrats and Republicans since the late thirties, while the Presidency has been consistently held by the more liberal wing of either party.

The Senate, of course, was never intended as a democratic body. As conceived in the doctrine of "checks and balances," it was to represent the interests of the states, to restrain the popular will as reflected in the House. Today, the House no longer reflects the popular will, because the principle of populational representation which distinguished the House from the Senate has been eroded.

Thus, of the 413 districts of the 88th Congress, 171 were over- or under-represented.* Early 1964 estimates indicate that over half of all Congressional districts may now be disproportionately represented. Failure to equalize district populations has resulted in extreme disparities: former House Speaker Sam Rayburn, for example, represented a district of 216,000 people, while the Congressman from an adjoining Texas district represented 952,000

Most states have not reapportioned their Congressional districts in decades—and not out of laziness. Reapportionment would have to reflect the population shift to the cities, where voters tend to be relatively liberal. The state legislatures, on the other hand, are generally dominated by rural, conservative interests. The political party controlling a state legislature seeks to perpetuate its rule through gerrymandering of districts (a method of distorting *political* representation that does not necessarily create extreme numerical disparities among districts). In any case, state legislatures, loath to permit a shakeup of Congressional districts, have extended their conservative, anti-urban bias into the Congress itself.

The political implications of Congressional reapportionment are obvious in the recent decision of the Supreme Court ordering a redistricting of Georgia's Congressional seats (*Wesberry v. Vandiver*). The case was brought by Atlanta voters whose district of 823,680 persons was represented by a liberal Democrat, while the rural 9th district of only 272,154 regularly sends a Dixiecrat to Congress. How quickly reapportionment can be achieved in the face of state legislative resistance remains to be seen. Meanwhile, urban Americans—constituting 70% of the population—continue to have their destinies determined by anti-urban politicians.†

* This excludes at-large seats. A district is defined as over-represented if it has less than 85% of the state's norm (population ratio per representative) and under-represented if it has more than 115% of the state's norm.

† By Nov. 11, 1963, lawsuits had been brought in 39 states to challenge existing legislative apportionments. In 20 states, legislative districts had been revised by legislative action or constitutional amendments. In three cases a court itself drew new district lines.

Minority Veto

UNDER-REPRESENTED at the outset by the Congressional electoral system, the liberal forces are further weakened by the archaic and undemocratic procedures that govern the internal operations of Congress. These procedures give a veto power to a conservative minority.

The seniority system virtually guarantees conservative control of Congressional committees. According to this system, committee chairmanships are awarded to members of the majority party with the longest uninterrupted incumbencies. Because the conservatives usually come from "safe" or one-party districts, they are constantly re-elected and accumulate the most seniority.

In the Senate, consequently, Southerners chair 10 out of the 16 standing committees (and 8 out of the 10 most important ones). In the House, the Confederacy chairs 12 of the 20 standing committees. Thus, when the Democrats control Congress, Southerners get about 60% of the standing committee chairmanships.

Conservative minority rule persists regardless of which party controls Congress. When the Republicans were in power in 1953-1955, about 60% of the standing committee chairmanships went to mid-Westerners representing "safe," conservative, and not very populous parts of the country.

Inherent in the seniority system is a profound repudiation of political democracy. For it elevates to decisive positions of power representatives of districts where lively political activity—debate, conflict, choice—is negligible. In the South such activity is throttled by one-party rule and effective disfranchisement of large parts of the population.

If a repudiation of political democracy is implicit in the seniority system, minority veto power is explicit in Rule 22 of the Senate. This rule, by requiring a 2/3 vote to close debate, gives a minority the power to filibuster legislation to death. At this writing, 56 Senators have publicly declared their opposition to Rule 22, but any effort to change the rule would itself be met by a filibuster. The entrenched conservative minority thus has the "right" to determine what constitutes a majority! Nowhere, of course, is this "right" provided in the Constitution.

Certainly the legitimate rights of a political minority must be protected—particularly *the right to become a majority*. But a minority has no right to act as if it *were* the majority, either by imposing its own legislative program on the majority or by preventing the majority from carrying out its program. Majority rule may entail risks, but there is no other essential definition of democracy. To the extent that this essential and positive definition is buried in formal and negative concepts of checks and balances, concurrent majorities, minority vetoes and the like—to that extent is democracy drained of its dynamism, of its decision-making efficacy, and easily portrayed by its enemies as a stagnant and ineffectual system for solving social problems.

Party Responsibility

UNDEMOCRATIC CONGRESSIONAL RULES and procedures are not merely a matter of parliamentary mechanics; they are a matter of politics. Seniority is determined along party lines. It is not only Eastland's seniority on the Senate Judiciary Committee, but his membership in the majority Democratic Party that gives him the chairmanship of that committee. Without that membership his seniority would count for nought. The same principle applies when the Republicans are in control. *Political parties must take responsibility for those it elevates to positions of power over the lives of millions of Americans.*

The Senate is now organized by the Democratic Steering Committee, appointed by the Majority Leader. This group's function is to assign Democratic Senators to their committees and to determine the number and party ratio for each committee. In 1958, seven of the fourteen members of the Democratic Steering Committee were Southerners. There were then 49 Democrats in the Senate. Today there are 67 Democrats, representing a considerable increase in the strength of the party's liberal wing. But the Southerners still occupy seven Steering Committee seats. Five years of efforts by Senators Clark, Morse, and Douglas to reform the Committee have yielded only the expansion of its size to fifteen. Southern and non-Southern conservatives still command nine votes—a clear majority.

The conservative majority on the Democratic Steering Committee is not above using its appointments power against its political opponents. When fourteen non-freshman Senators who favored revision of Rule 22 applied for new committee assignments last year, only five were rewarded, and only one—the Majority Leader of the Senate!—got his first choice. Of the eight pro-filibuster Senators who applied at the same time, seven were rewarded, six getting their first choice!

Clearly, the mere accretion of liberal numerical strength, as important as that is, will not break up the Congressional deadlock without an assault on the citadels of conservative power—the seniority system, Rule 22, etc. Commitment to such an assault has in the past been weakened not only by numerical considerations but also by a traditional predisposition toward log-rolling and compromise that permeates the political psychology of Congress, including that of many liberals. This predisposition has been generated to a large extent by the very procedural and structural features of Congressional functioning that entrench minority rule. A counter political psychology is not likely to be nourished *within* the Congressional Establishment, where pressures to conform to the traditional *modus vivendi* are strong. It will have to come from the people themselves.

To reduce the conservative coalition to its deserved minority status means more than a new political psychology. It also means organization. Here again, pressure from below is essential. It is significant that

the Senate fight over the civil rights bill called forth a more disciplined liberal caucus than on any other issue in recent years. The durability of the caucus is uncertain. What is certain is that the caucus was welded together by the pressure of the civil rights revolution. In the long run the ideological and strategic cohesion of the Congressional liberals depends on whether these pressures are united with other pressures generated by a popular demand for social change.

In January, 1964, a Harris poll showed that 64% of the American people supported President Kennedy's 1963 legislative program. This amounts to a vote of no confidence in the Congress, which has failed to enact this program. If discontent over Congress' failure to enact specific legislation boils over into active dissatisfaction with the very nature of Congress, important political transformations may be in the offing.

Political Realignment

WHEN A CONSERVATIVE COALITION is able to dominate Congress no matter which party achieves an electoral majority, then clearly our political institutions are structurally defective. When that coalition can succeed in preventing passage of desperately needed social legislation for two decades, political realignment becomes an urgent necessity.

Speaking before a Washington SNCC Conference, Jack Conway, Executive Director of the Industrial Union Department, AFL-CIO asserted that

wage earners, minority groups, middle- and low-income city people in general, older people—all of us who make up an overwhelming majority of the society—have a broad interest . . . in justice, in full employment, in social security, in a world at peace, in a community where there is no exploitation of one group by another. No party, not even the Democratic Party which elected President Kennedy, had finally brought these people together into an effective political party. . . . We have not yet created this broader based party we need so badly, and because we do not have this party, with its commitments reaching into every community of the United States, it is uncertain what way legislation and political events will go in the next year, and in the next four years, and perhaps in the following eight years.

The nation can ill afford such uncertainty. The deepening racial and economic crises alone—not to mention international problems—require that we make fundamental decisions about our future and that these decisions be acted upon.

Our present political alignments render such decisions well-nigh impossible. Rather they place in power a hidden party—the Dixiecrat-Republican coalition—which has no platform, does not formally go before the electorate, and has no popular mandate behind its grip on legislative machinery. Meanwhile no effective political party exists to carry out a program in the interest of the “overwhelming majority” of which Conway speaks.

Because of the cultural, regional, and economic diversity that has

characterized American life—owing largely to our sprawling geography and heterogeneous immigration—we have accepted a loose political party structure based on autonomous local clubs which are not necessarily bound to the national party by ideological commitment. Indeed, it is difficult to see what Hubert Humphrey has in common with James Eastland, except formal membership in the Democratic Party, which confers a crucial committee chairmanship on Eastland while not subjecting him to the restraining political influence of Humphrey—or of the party's national platform.

Toward Twentieth Century Politics

WHATEVER THE JUSTIFICATION for such a political party structure in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the nation is now undergoing a series of changes which makes it unlikely that the old arrangements can meet its future needs. The waves of immigration have halted, while the technological revolution and urbanization are undermining the traditional regional and cultural divergencies. Social scientists prophesy that we are approaching the social homogeneity that characterizes European countries. Like them, we shall have to think and plan in national terms. The guiding intelligence for such thinking and planning can scarcely emanate from our presently constituted political parties, intellectually provincial, organizationally incoherent, and politically divided on fundamental issues. Indeed, the disorder which civil rights demonstrations are alleged to create is as nothing compared with the generally accepted disorder that prevails in our political establishment.

This disorder has been defended by many academicians and intellectuals as a part of the pragmatic and flexible American tradition, the source of our national vitality. The suggestion that a more rational political party system might be possible is answered by the charge that tight-knit ideological parties have been the bane of numerous European and other countries. What is overlooked is that such parties are not the only alternative to the present stalemate.

Harry Bird of Virginia, is chairman of the all-important Senate Finance Committee, a position he holds by virtue of his seniority and membership in the Democratic Party. To expect that he would agree with every word in the Democratic Party platform would indeed be to raise the spectre of super-ideological party discipline. But to ask why he has opposed the Democratic Administration on 45% of the issues—more opposition than he showed the Eisenhower Administration—is to raise quite another question. Can we not rightfully expect our political parties, especially their most influential members, to show a minimal internal cohesion on the major problems of our society?

A realignment of our political parties into distinctly liberal and conservative entities would be a major step toward social progress in

America. How disciplined should these entities be? Enough to ensure that when either of them wins a popular mandate on the basis of its program, it is in fact capable of implementing that program. Not so disciplined that real diversities in American life are muted or that minority aspirations toward majority status are trammelled. Indeed, a political realignment would compel the hidden ruling party—the coalition of Dixiecrat and conservative Republicans—to campaign among the people for a legitimate majority status.

Again, it cannot be overemphasized that political democracy requires not only universal suffrage, but the exercise of the ballot in terms of meaningful alternatives. Voters must feel that they are making a decision affecting their futures and that their decision will be carried out. That large numbers of Americans do not feel this way is perhaps the major reason for the scandalously high percentage of eligible citizens who do not vote. Political parties that do not coherently embody and clarify the choices before society inevitably appear as, and ultimately become, associations of spoils-seekers and patronage-hunters. Under their shadow, electoral ritual takes the place of genuine participatory democracy.

Prospect for Change

AS INDICATED EARLIER, the nation is undergoing socio-economic transformations that will profoundly affect our political life. The urban-technological revolution means that an ever-growing proportion of the American population will be living in cities and their environs. Urban dwellers have been traditionally liberal because they need expanding social services of the kind that can only be publicly financed and planned—schools, housing, transportation, sanitation, etc. This need will certainly continue to grow.

Viewed in this context, legislative reapportionment reflecting the population shift to the urban areas will strengthen the political representation of liberalism at the expense of small-town rural conservatism.

These trends may be expected to exacerbate the tensions within the major political parties—particularly, though far from exclusively, within the Democratic Party, which contains most of the liberal currents at the same time that it houses the most reactionary racist elements. Should these tensions reach the breaking point; should it become clear to the liberals that they do not need the electoral support of the conservatives and racists; indeed, should that support prove an impediment to political power, then a process of disentanglement, of political realignment is likely to unravel. Separated from the Democratic Party, the Dixiecrats would be deprived of the political power they wield on the national scene.

Today the Negro movement provides the most discernible impetus toward political realignment. The reason is simple: that liberals can

be aligned with racists in the same party is in itself an affront to the Negro's aspiration to freedom. Such an alignment also frustrates the yearnings of millions of whites for decent jobs, housing, schools, medical care, social security, minimum wages, and a host of other needs which our society can well afford, and cannot afford to withhold.

But frustrated yearnings, in the case of Negroes and whites alike, remain frustrated yearnings precisely until translated into political motion—into an assertion that present political alignments are not satisfactory and that expedient efforts to maintain them will not finally prove expedient. As a people, we have not yet demonstrated that alliances and compromises with troglodytes are an impediment to political power. We have not yet demonstrated—loudly enough, frequently enough, and in enough places—that political power lies on the side of democratic social change. We have not yet built a political movement.

The Challenge

AS I WRITE, Negroes in Mississippi are preparing a challenge to the national Convention of the Democratic Party. The Council of Federated Organizations, representing the Mississippi affiliates of the national civil rights organizations, have registered tens of thousands of disfranchised Negroes in a mock election and are running candidates for office. They will go to the Democratic convention demanding that their Freedom Democratic Party delegation be seated in place of the regular lily-white delegation. Whether or not this dramatic challenge succeeds, its implications are clear. It is calling upon both parties to repudiate the racists in their ranks. It is a political movement crying to be born. Its cry must be echoed throughout the land.

The echo must come from the liberal-labor-Negro coalition in this and subsequent election years. Roy Wilkins' announcement that the NAACP will actively seek the defeat of congressmen opposed to civil rights legislation is a potentially significant move toward serious political action. The test question for congressional candidates might be:

If elected, do you pledge to vote against any candidate for a committee chairmanship who opposes the party's platform in the area of the committee's concern?

The determination of political allegiance on the basis of answers to this question might take us a long way toward the kind of principled politics without which we are not likely to achieve civil rights, or social justice, or economic reform.

Meanwhile, we remain in the streets.

About the L. I. D.

SINCE ITS FOUNDING in 1905 by Upton Sinclair, Jack London, Clarence Darrow, and other well known writers and civic leaders, the League for Industrial Democracy has been an outstanding American educational organization dedicated to increasing democracy in our economic, political, and cultural life.

It has not advocated democracy as a passing fad or as a principle applicable to but one sector of our social life. It has ever regarded democracy as a social process that, in the words of John Dewey, the League's late Honorary President, should be "a living reality in every aspect and reach of our common life."

To this end, League members are devoted to the struggle for full racial equality, the abolition of poverty, the strengthening of socially-visioned trade unions and cooperatives, the expansion of civil liberties, the extension of public ownership and democratic economic planning, and the realignment of our political organizations with a view toward making them more responsive to the will of the people.

Through pamphlets, conferences, institutes, and lectures, the LID seeks to deepen public understanding of these issues and their inter-relatedness.

Students for a Democratic Society is the student department of the LID. It seeks to bring together all those—liberals and radicals, activists and scholars—who share its vision of a truly democratic society. Among the most active groups on the campus scene, the SDS strives to implement its vision and analysis by engaging students in study-action projects, both through its campus chapter structure and through its community organizing projects administered by SDS's Economic Research and Action Project.

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From the Foreword

by **A. PHILIP RANDOLPH** and **MICHAEL HARRINGTON**

THE NEGRO PROBLEM is the same as the American problem. . . . For all the legal equality of the North, the Negro has been herded into teeming, rat-infested ghettos, he is educated in inferior, *de facto* segregated schools, his unemployment rates are twice those of whites, his characteristic occupations are menial and ill-paid. . . .

Today, poor Negroes and poor whites are the chief victims of our anarchic technological ingenuity. But there are already signs that the computers and cybernated equipment are moving from the blue collar to the white collar and even executive levels. If this society cannot give an economic answer to the Negro and the poor white who are eliminated from the least skilled jobs, how will it be able to respond when automation strikes at the skilled worker, the office and the executive suite?

If the civil rights and labor movements assume that high unemployment and a careless technological revolution are inevitable, then both will fail. Black and white workers at the bottom of the economic heap will fight one another for scarce jobs; that vast American majority which desperately needs democratic planning and social investment will split into warring factions. Under such conditions, there is no hope for progressive political change for anyone, black or white. . . .

From 1938 to 1964, the coalition of Dixiecrat and reactionary Northern Republicans stopped or deformed every major piece of domestic social legislation. Significantly, the first break in this pattern took place when a new coalition organized itself around the Civil Rights Bill of 1964. Those who face up to the American problem — Negroes, trade unionists, liberals, radicals — must become as forceful and decisive as the Dixiecrat-Republican coalition. In effect they must become one of the two major parties. . . .

A veteran of the civil rights movement, Tom Kahn speaks with passion, knowledge and experience, and not simply of the Negro problem. For, as Kahn makes so clear, in responding to the plight of the racial minorities, the most cruelly used of our fellow citizens, we are answering the most basic challenge of the nation's future.

The Author

TOM KAHN, a graduate of Howard University, was assistant to Bayard Rustin in organizing the March on Washington, and previously helped organize the Youth Marches for Integrated Schools in 1958 and 1959. He is the author of *Unfinished Revolution* (1960) and of numerous articles for *Dissent*, *Liberation*, *New Politics*, and other magazines. In addition, he serves on the editorial board of the fortnightly newspaper, *New America*.

Formerly on the staff of the American Committee on Africa and of the Committee to Defend Martin Luther King, Tom Kahn has been arrested during civil rights demonstrations, and in 1961 was active organizing a citizens committee in support of striking hospital workers in New York City.

He is presently Acting Executive Secretary of the League for Industrial Democracy.