

PROPOSAL:

A Program to Deal With the Negro Job Problem

Proposed by:

Student Nonviolent Coordinating
Committee

The Problem

The Negro did not gain his freedom after the emancipation of the slaves in 1863. By 1890, he was reenslaved by grandfather clauses, outright exclusion and violence, and land ownership systems known as sharecropping, tenant farming and renting.

The position of the Negro in the South today remains relatively unchanged from that of 1890. The Negro in the South is still predominantly in the rural areas. He has been less mobile than the white Southerner, who has left the farm and traveled to the city, because the Negro has been intimidated into staying on the farm and engaging in the least productive work.

Today, about one out of every six Southern farm operators is Negro; less than one-third own or even rent their own farms; about 40% are sharecroppers, and the rest are tenant farmers. The average white-operated commercial farm in the South is about 382 acres; the average non-white commercial farm is 56 acres. The average value of land and buildings is \$37,816 for whites and \$7,328 for non-whites. The average value of products sold is \$10,396 for whites and \$3,029 for non-whites.¹

On a national level the Negro's income has declined from 57% of the average white's in 1952 to 54% today. Negro unemployment is now two and a half times that of whites.

Instrumental in putting the Negro in this position has been the exclusion of the Negro from higher levels in private industry, unions and government. Economic deprivation has had an effect upon

every phase of Negro life from education to housing to the franchise. The Negro can't get an education when it is necessary for him to help work in the fields to support the family; he can't have decent housing when he hasn't the ability to buy it. He also can't vote when his job is dependent upon one white family. In one-crop economies where the farms are controlled by a few whites, the United States Civil Rights Commission found the lack of civil rights to be more prevalent than in areas where industry is of varied types.

This means that economic development is basic to improving many of the conditions that beset the Negro. But the Negro cannot look at his problem as a wholly isolated one.

During the fifties, the population grew by 30 million and the labor force by 7 million. But only 6 million jobs were created. If the Negro thinks of his problem as solely a racial one, he will fight white workers in the streets for the few remaining jobs. The Negro and the white must see that the problem of decreasing jobs because of automation affects them both and they therefore must make a united stand.

The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee

In its early stages, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) was composed of middle-class Negro college students who were caught by a wave of rising expectations. The SNCC students

who sat-in at segregated lunch counters throughout the South had the money to eat at most lunch counters and had been taught that it was their right as Americans to enjoy equal facilities.

But lunch counter segregation is not the major problem of the Negro. Sensitive to the basic needs of the communities in which they were working, SNCC soon began to deal with problems of voting, literacy and finally, and most important, employment. In several cities throughout the South, SNCC has included a call for fair employment practices in the demands of its movement. At this time, SNCC would like to initiate a full-scale program to deal with the job problem. But because of our inexperience and lack of resources, a pilot project would be a logical first step. The pilot project would probably be able to deal with only a limited part of the program proposed in this paper.

Recommendations

It is recommended that SNCC adopt the following programs:

1. We should join with the Civil Rights Commission in its recommendations made in the 1961 report on "Employment," pages 161 to 164 (See Appendix).

2. We should join with the Civil Rights Commission in proposing integration of grant-in-aid projects, but we must also realize that pressure and mass action on a local basis is needed to integrate FHA and ARA programs. In this respect it is necessary that SNCC

stay in contact with the NSF, attend its meetings and put people in rural areas in contact with NSF, and educate workers on a local level concerning these problems. We must also be as careful to report instances of racial discrimination in economic programs as in lunch counters or voting.

"Today there are more than 14,000 organizations across the Nation engaged in economic development activities, and their numbers are multiplying daily." The Negro must be integrated into these programs. Where the Negro is excluded from the planning of a community, he should draw up his own overall economic development plan (OED), and challenge the government to recognize it.

An area is eligible for Area Redevelopment help if there is substantial and persistent unemployment and under-employment. Before redevelopment help is given, an OED plan must be drawn up. The Department of Agriculture supplies technical assistance whenever a community redevelopment group comes up against an obstacle.

4. We should support the special burden of the colored worker to call for a \$2.00 minimum wage which will cover more jobs, because the Negro, Mexican and Puerto Rican are largely employed in jobs not covered by minimum wage laws.

5. Since the colored worker is unorganized, we should aid domestics, cotton pickers, government employees, etc. in organizing.

6. Because the masses of Negroes must have food and shelter until the job problem is solved, we support permanent unemployment compensation and adequate welfare programs. Food, clothing, medicine

and household necessities, etc., must be exempt from all sales taxes.

7. We support the call for a massive Southern campaign to increase employment opportunities for Negroes in utilities systems - telephone, telegraph, water, gas and light.

On January 9, 1963, Charles McDow, the then-SNCC Chairman, said "Nonviolent techniques of negotiation and, if necessary, direct action, will be used to show the huge utilities companies of the South that if all citizens are allowed to pay their bills equally, they must be hired equally."

8. Local protest groups should compile data on numbers of Negroes employed in utilities companies in their areas, and the number of persons serviced. We should also find:

a. The number of whites likely to be employed when an industry moves into a town.

b. What industries plan to move into a town and the probable jobs that will be created. With this information we can demand that the government train Negroes for jobs that will be available when an industry moves into an area.

c. On what level the government will participate in

- 1) development of community facilities
- 2) development of private factories
- 3) development of training programs.

d. The level of consciousness of the local community:

- 1) their willingness to act
- 2) the way they interpret the problem

e. The general economic condition

- 1) if it is good, then our problem is to integrate into it
- 2) if it is bad, then our problem is to create a new

economic structure, and in this case we might expect white cooperation.

f. What national concerns are present.

g. What unions are in the area.

h. Where the products produced in the community are sold.

9. We must make industrial giants realize their moral obligations, because, as we have seen, Northern business has gained a large controlling hand in Southern economic life. We therefore encourage action similar to that taken against U.S. Steel during the Birmingham crisis. A letter was sent to the Director of U.S. Steel with the following information in it:

U.S. Steel in Birmingham violates Human Rights. United States Steel, St. Regis Paper, Martin-Marietta, Lone Star Cement, United States Pipe and Foundry, Republic Steel, Harrison-Walter Refactories, Nitco, Hettig Sash and Door and Union Carbide Corporation are supporting racism in Birmingham, Alabama through inaction. In the struggle for equality, hundreds have been arrested for trying to claim their rights as American citizens. These powerful companies employ over 35% of the work force in Birmingham. The directors of these companies help control every phase of Birmingham life, whether it is by action or inaction...

Leading directors of U.S. Steel are

Cleo F. Craig, 20 Pine St., N.Y. 5, N.Y.
Henry T. Heald, 447 Madison Ave., N.Y. 22, N.Y.
Arthur A. Houghton, Jr., 715 Fifth Ave., N.Y.C.
Alex C. Magla, 399 Park Ave., N.Y. 22, N.Y.
Eduard M. Voegeles, 14 E. 60th St., N.Y. 21, N.Y.
Henry S. Wingate, 67 Wall St., N.Y. 5, N.Y.
J.M. Meyer, Jr., 140 Broadway, N.Y. 15, N.Y.

Officers:

Chairman: Roger Blough
President: Leslie B. Worthington, 71 Broadway, N.Y. 6, N.Y.

10. As youth vitally concerned with the question of employment, we take note of the inadequacy of the youth legislation now before both Houses of Congress (HR 1890/51). The bill provides for a Youth Conservation Corps and a Domestic Peace Corps which will employ 65,000 men aged 16-21. We wonder what will happen to the 735,000 other unemployed youth, and we wonder what good training as forest rangers will do the young people. It is a shame that minds that should be developing in education institutions are on the labor market in the first place. If they are already there, let's give them creative and decent jobs.

11. We should use a booklet called "Apprenticeship Training" published by the Workers Defense League, a guide toward action that can be taken. The handbook is a "compilation of apprenticeship opportunities in our city and state at the present time. It lists some three thousand openings..." Most importantly, the WDL is willing to "back youth who apply for apprenticeship with legal and direct action in the case of discrimination."

12. SNCC is at the present time thinking of starting a cooperative farm in Georgia. This effort should be approached with a note of caution. SNCC could probably only afford to farm on a small scale, and the small farm has been on the decline for many years. The people in Georgia should investigate the possibility of industries moving into their region. The NRP and some people in the ARA would be able to give them expert advise. Koinonia farm in Georgia is a special case, because it may be the base for a thriving pecan industry. We also recognize the function small farms may serve as a temporary relief to families suffering political persecution.

On a local level, the Negro, if directed by a central committee (SNCC or NRP) can keep the community aware of what is needed for full employment. For instance, at a meeting to discuss CED when organization of the businesses to be brought into the community is considered, he can suggest the cooperative type as opposed to proprietorship, partnership, or corporation.

In local communities, job committees or possibly a subcommittee of an action group should be delegated the responsibility of dealing with the economic problem.

13). Even though calling for a massive public works program has been included in at least two other sections of this statement, I would like to repeat the call.

Proposal for Implementation of this Program

One Staff Person	\$ 2,600.00
Travel and other expenses	<u>1,400.00</u>
Total.	\$ 4,000.00

The duties of the staff person shall be:

1. to become familiar with government agencies that deal with anything that affects the economic conditions of the Southern Negro.
2. to become familiar with the legislation and the Congressional Committees related to the problem.
3. to help local groups organize conferences, programs and action on the job problem.
4. to delegate his purely technical problems to a secretary. We are not proposing to deal with them here.
5. to relate to the unions and other organizations that may be of assistance in this matter.
6. to implement a pilot project because of the early stage of the program and because of the lack of resources. The pilot project would concentrate on youth unemployment in the District of Columbia. During the period, the person will establish contacts with the unions and the government which will be valuable to the development of the program.

The person employed should be prepared to expand the program through SNCC in the South, and in the North he might work through the Northern Student Movement. When the program is expanded, a larger staff will have to be hired.

APPENDIXRECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE 1961 CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION REPORT ON
UNEMPLOYMENT

General

Recommendation 1. That Congress grant statutory authority to the President's Committee on Equal Employment or establish a similar agency;----

- (a) to encourage and enforce a policy of equal employment opportunity in all Federal employment, both civilian and military and all employment created or supported by Government contracts and Federal grant funds;
- (b) to promote and enforce a policy of equality of opportunity in the availability and administration of all Federally assisted training programs and recruitment services;
- (c) to encourage and enforce a policy of equal opportunity with respect to membership in or activities of labor organizations affecting equal employment opportunity or terms and conditions of employment with employers operating under Government contracts or Federal grants-in-aid.

Armed Forces

Recommendation 2. That the President issue an executive order providing for equality of treatment and opportunity, without segregation or other barriers, for all applicants for or members of the Reserve components of the Armed Forces, including the National Guard and student training programs, without regard to race, color, religion or national origin; and directing that an immediate survey, and report thereon, be made regarding Negro membership in the Armed Forces, the Armed Forces Reserve, the National Guard and student training programs, including data, where appropriate, on branch of service, rank, type of job or assignment, years of service and rates of pay.

Employment and grant-in-aid projects

Recommendation 3. That the President issue an Executive Order making it clear that employment supported by Federal grant funds is subject to the same nondiscrimination policy and the same requirements as those set forth in the Executive Order 10925 applicable to employment by Government contractors.

Training and recruitment

Recommendation 4. That Congress and the President take appropriate measures to encourage the fullest utilization of the Nation's manpower resources and to eliminate the waste of human resources inherent in the discriminatory denial of training and employment opportunities to minority group members by ---

- (a) expanding and supplementing existing programs of Federal assistance to vocational education and apprenticeship training;
- (b) providing for retraining as well as training and for funds to enable jobless workers to move to areas where jobs are available and their skills are in demand;
- (c) providing that, as a condition of Federal assistance, all such programs be administered on a nondiscriminatory, nonsegregated basis; and
- (d) amending present regulations regarding admission to vocational classes to provide that admission be based on present and probable future national occupational needs rather than, as presently interpreted, on traditional and local needs and opportunities.

Recommendation 5. That, in order to encourage the fullest utilization of the Nation's manpower resources, Congress enact legislation to provide equality of training and employment opportunities for youths (aged 16 to 21), and particularly minority group youths, to assist them in obtaining employment and completing their education---

- (a) through a system of Federally subsidized employment and training made available on a nondiscriminatory basis; and
- (b) through the provision of funds for special placement services in the schools in connection with part-time and cooperative vocational educational programs.

Recommendation 6. That the President direct that appropriate measures be taken for the conduct, on a continuing basis, of an affirmative program of dissemination of information---

- (a) to make known the availability on a nondiscriminatory basis of jobs in the Federal Government and with Government contractors; and
- (b) to encourage all individuals to train for and apply for such jobs, and particularly those jobs where there is currently a shortage of qualified applicants.

Recommendation 7. That steps be taken, either by executive or Congressional action, to reaffirm and strengthen the Bureau of Employment Security policy, in rendering recruitment and placement services, of encouraging merit employment and assisting minority

group members in overcoming obstacles to employment and in obtaining equal job opportunities. In this connection, consideration should be given to changing the method utilized to determine Federal appropriations to State employment offices, presently keyed primarily to the number of job placements made, to reflect other factors (such as the greater degree of difficulty and time involved in placing qualified minority group workers), so that the budgetary formula used will encourage rather than discourage referral on a nondiscriminatory basis. In addition, the regulations and statements of policy with respect to the operation of State employment offices should be reexamined in order to insure that such statements and regulations conform to the overall USES policy of discouraging discrimination and encouraging merit employment.

Recommendation 8. That the President direct the Secretary of Labor to grant Federal funds for the operation of State employment offices only to those offices which offer their services to all, on a non-segregated basis, and which refuse to accept and/or process discriminatory job orders.

Labor Organizations

Recommendation 9. That Congress amend the Labor-Management and Disclosure Act of 1959 to include in Title I thereof a provision that no labor organization shall refuse membership to, segregate, or expel any person because of race, color, religion or national origin.