

INSTITUTE OF THE BLACK WORLD

Statement of Purpose and Program



A Part of
THE MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. MEMORIAL CENTER
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THE INSTITUTE OF THE BLACK WORLD
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. MEMORIAL CENTER
ATLANTA, GEORGIA
STATEMENT OF PURPOSE AND PROGRAM, FALL, 1969

INTRODUCTION

The Institute of the Black World is a community of black scholars, artists, teachers and organizers who are coming together in Atlanta under the aegis of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Center. (It is also a group of several dozen "Associates of The Institute" who are located in various parts of the hemisphere).

The Institute of the Black World is a gathering of black intellectuals who are convinced that the gifts of their minds are meant to be fully used in the service of the black community. It is therefore an experiment with scholarship in the context of struggle.

Among our basic concerns and commitments is the determination to set our skills to a new understanding of the past, present and future condition of the peoples of African descent, wherever they may be found, with an initial emphasis on the American experience. This seems the least that history, or the present—to say nothing of our children—would demand of those persons who have lived the black experience and have developed certain gifts of analysis, creativity and communication.

Program of Work

In cooperating with several institutions of higher education, the Institute of the Black World has set itself to the following specific tasks in the years ahead:

1. The definition and refining of the field now loosely called "Black Studies." After having taken the lead in calling for a new encounter with the Black Experience in higher education, the staff of the Institute has now begun a long-range, careful analysis of the content and direction of Black Studies programs across the nation. A recently-ended summer workshop and a series of seminars with Black Studies directors over the next academic year (1969-70) will eventually produce a set of documents which will analyze existing programs, review and respond to the major criticisms of Black Studies, put forth a set of ideological positions concerning the field and offer certain suggestions about its future directions.
2. The development of a new Consortium for Black Education.

This consortium will involve the Institute and a group of colleges and universities drawn primarily from the historically black institutions of higher education. During the 1969-70 academic year, the Institute of the Black World will share its staff, personnel and Associates with Fisk, Howard, Shaw and Wesleyan Universities and with Tuskegee Institute and several of the Atlanta University Center schools. (Negotiations with other institutions are currently in progress. IBW staff and Associates will lecture, offer seminars, engage in workshops and generally consult with students, faculty and administrators on these campuses. Students from at least one of these schools will work in Atlanta with Institute personnel in seminars and individual research.

In the course of this year our staff will also be developing new, black-saturated curriculum and course models in several areas of the Humanities and the Social Sciences. The Consortium schools will seek to experiment with and evaluate these materials over a period of several years, beginning with the 1970-71 academic year.

3. The encouragement of basic academic research in the experiences of the peoples of African descent. All of the research staff will be engaged in individual projects, such as "Education and Decolonization;" "Black Curriculum in the Public Schools;" "The Poetry of the Blues;" "The Self-Concepts of Black Women;" "Black American Attitudes Towards Africa in the 19th Century;" "Black Radicalism and Black Religion." Senior staff persons offer at the Institute one seminar per semester related to their research areas. (See the attached list of research staff persons.) In addition, several persons will be encouraged to relate to the Institute on a part-time basis so that their research can add to our mutual strengthening.
4. The encouragement of black artists, especially those who are searching for an aesthetic which will contribute to the struggle for the minds and hearts of our people. Such artists will be invited to enter the dialogue and search of the Institute, to create out of their own vision and materials, and to share their creativity with the black community on an off campus.
5. The development of new materials and methods for the teaching of black children. Several members of the Institute staff are responsible for our work with the Martin Luther King, Jr. Community School, an independent black school. The community school will serve as a laboratory for new content and approaches, especially related to the black experience. (Some relationships to the Atlanta Public School system are also being developed.) In turn, the results of this experimentation will be fed back into the teacher training programs of the colleges and universities associated with the Institute, through workshops, seminars and new curriculum.
6. The development of a Black Policy Studies Center. An attempt will be made to develop solid tools of social analysis focussed on the contemporary situation of the black community in America and committed totally to the struggle of that community for self-determination. This will be done in conjunction with strategy and planning centers in several cities, beginning with Chicago and Harlem.

Persons and organizations representing the full spectrum of ideological thought in the black community will be brought together periodically for unpublicized encounters outside of the polemical arena. It is expected that this Center will make it possible for persons who need it to find a place of creative withdrawal from the day-to-day activity of the struggle and to enter into significant dialogue with a committed community of black artists, scholars and organizers from other parts of the nation and the world. A variety of policy papers and guidelines will develop out of this section of the IBW.

Eventually, the Institute will move to the training of community organizers whose work flows out of a rigorous and non-romantic analysis of the situation of the black community (which includes, of course, a realistic assessment of the state of the white community and its leaders). We are certain that no significant movement for justice and self-determination can continue without this level of analysis and organization.

7. The establishment of creative links with our counterparts in other areas of the Black World. In Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa and elsewhere black scholars, artists, educators and organizers are grappling with many issues very similar to those which engage us in North America. The Institute will continue its attempt to carry on significant dialogue and mutually agreed upon work with such persons, through individual visits, seminars, conferences and many types of exchanges. It has already established organizational links in Haiti, the West Indies, and West Africa.
8. The preparation of a new cadre of men and women who are at once precisely trained in the scholarship of the Black Experience and fully committed to the struggles of the black world. Through affiliation with graduate and undergraduate schools, the Institute expects eventually to be of service to persons who wish both to relate to its work and to see degrees. (However, the IBW has no immediate plans of its own for becoming a degree-granting institution. It prefers to serve those institutions which already have this capacity.) At the same time, the Institute will experiment with new ways to prepare non-degree educators for their role in the instruction of the black community.

9. The sponsoring of short-term seminars and of vacation and summer workshops and conferences, both independently and in concert with one or more of the cooperating institutions. In each of the areas of concern mentioned above, the Institute will be seeking to share its findings and to expand its own competence by meeting-regularly with others who are engaged in similar concerns and commitments. Among the first of these will be a seminar for selected Black Studies Directors (November 7-9), a Conference on "Black Studies and the Future of Negro Colleges" (January 2-4), and a Colloquium on New World Slavery.
10. The development of a publishing program. Such a program will make available to a broader audience much of the work and concern of the Institute and other groups and individuals working at the same tasks. Its output will include basic academic research on the black experience, policy study papers, curriculum materials and the creative productions of black artists. A newsletter surveying the arena of Black Studies will be one of its first periodicals. A journal will follow. A Dictionary of Black American Biography is a long range task.

Staff

The work outlined above is clearly a task of a lifetime for any group of persons. We do not expect to finish it in a year or a decade, but we shall begin. With this in mind, an initial research staff (limited in number only by funds) has been gathered to begin our work. A list of that staff is attached. With adequate funding, the group will likely grow by at least fifty per cent in 1970-71 academic year, with several persons from outside the North American black community anticipated. A full-time support staff of another seven to twelve persons will also be rounded out by the end of the academic year. In addition to the full-time persons on the staff, the Institute of the Black World has regular access to the services of several dozen "Associates of the Institute" who are teachers,

artists and consultants in a variety of fields. They serve to augment the staff in its own in-house tasks and in its work with schools, organizations and individuals.

Governing Board

The immediate governing board of the Institute is called The Advisory Council and is made up of a group of black scholars, artists, community leaders and others. They are Walter F. Anderson, Margaret Walker Alexander, Lerone Bennett, Horace Mann Bond, Robert Browne, John Henrik Clarke, Dorothy Cotton, Ossie Davis, St. Clair Drake, Katherine Dunham, Vivian Henderson, Tobe Johnson, Julius Lester, Frances Lucas, Jesse Noel, Rene Piquion, Eleo Pomare, Pearl Primus, Benjamin Quarles, Bernice Reagon, William Strickland, Council Taylor, E.U. Essien-Udom, C. T. Vivian, (Chairman), Charles White, and Hosea Williams.

Financial Needs

The Institute of the Black World seeks funds from many sources for its crucial tasks. The Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Center is a tax-exempt organization, so those contributions for the Institute which need to be tax-exempt may be directed to the Center and earmarked specifically for the work of the Institute. (The Library Project, a documentation Center for the post-1954 Freedom Movement, is the other fully activated element of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Center. Other parts will follow.)

The financial needs of the Institute are far greater than its present resources, and it is prepared to seek and

receive funds wherever it is clear that the use of the funds must be determined by the staff and Advisory Council of the Institute.

An Experiment in Black Responsibility

The Institute of the Black World is an experiment in black responsibility for that intellectual work which defines and directs the black community. It is an experiment long overdue, but nonetheless difficult to support financially. Still, we dare to experiment; partly because our consciences leave us no other choice; partly because we remember the words spoken by Martin Luther King, Jr., one year before his assassination, as he memorialized W.E.B. DuBois. Dr. King said then: "It was never possible to know where the scholar DuBois ended and the organizer DuBois began. The two qualities in him were a single unified force."

The Institute of the Black World considers that a fitting goal, a style worth emulating. It clearly deserves to live, so that the best spirit of those two scholar-organizers might be passed on to another generation of their children.

THE FULL-TIME RESEARCH STAFF
AND
THE FALL SEMINARS
OF
THE INSTITUTE OF THE BLACK WORLD
FALL, 1969

(The affiliations listed for the staff simply identify some of their earlier activities before coming to the Institute.)

1. Lerone Bennett, Senior Editor, Ebony; Visiting Professor, History Northwestern University (Black Protest Movements, Reconstruction.)
Fall Seminar: BLACK RECONSTRUCTION IN AMERICA.
2. Christine Coleman, B.A. Clark College, Mississippi High School Teacher, Southern Education Intern, Childhood Education Task Force.
3. Chester Davis, Assistant Professor Education, Sir George Williams University, Montreal; (Black Studies and the Building of Public School Curriculum? Black Studies and the Training of Teachers.)
Fall Seminar: BUILDING BLACK CURRICULUM IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS.
4. Lonetta Gaines, B.A. Fisk University; New Haven, Connecticut, Teacher, Southern Education Foundation Intern, Childhood Education Task Force.
5. Vincent Harding, Chairman, History Department, Spelman College, Director, Martin Luther King Library-Documents Project (Black Radicalism and Black Religion.)
6. Stephen Henderson, Chairman, English Department, Morehouse College (The Poetry of the Blues; Modern Black Writers)
Fall Seminar: BLUES, SOUL AND BLACK IDENTITY!
7. Joyce Ladner, Assistant Professor, Sociology, University of Southern Illinois (Black Women and the Ghetto; Black Student Protest; The Black Family). Fall Seminar: THE SOCIALIZATION OF THE BLACK CHILD.

8. Daulton Lewis, B.A. Degree, Sociology, Wesleyan University, Southern Education Foundation Intern.
9. William Strickland, Consultant, CBS; Lecturer, Department of History, Columbia University, Political History of Racism; Politics and the Black Urban Community). Fall Seminar: RACISM AND AMERICAN SOCIAL ANALYSIS.
10. Sterling Stuckey, Ph.D. Candidate, Assistant Professor, Northwestern University. (The Slave Experience; Black Americans and Africa).
11. Robert Browne, Economist (Based at the Black Economic Research Center, NYC).