

INSTITUTE OF THE BLACK WORLD

Statement of Purpose and Program



A Part of
THE MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. MEMORIAL CENTER
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ATLANTA, GEORGIA
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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.