



About
The Institute
of the Black World

87 Chestnut Street, S.W.
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WHY AN IBW?

"Somewhere in the midst of America's babble of fear, hate, condescension, paternalism and repression, sharp minds, trained scholars and committed individuals must be recovering the truths of (the black) past and present and pointing the way toward a sane future."

Vincent Harding, 1970

Every social group engaged in the struggle for social change requires its own intellectuals to interpret its experiences and help plan for the future. From the slavery period through the Civil Rights era of black struggle individuals such as Martin Delany and Frederick Douglass, W.E.B. DuBois and Carter Woodson, Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X, and a host of others performed this role for black America. Building on these legacies, IBW seeks to join with others in serving a similar purpose in the 1970's and beyond.

In the wake of the collapse of the Civil Rights movement during the late 1960's a group of black scholar-activists founded the Institute of the Black World (IBW). They had concluded that black people needed to establish control over the definition of the black past and present if they were to become masters of their future. With this goal in mind, they established an institution that was committed to unearthing the truth about the black and American past and present as a means of supporting the post-civil rights phase of the black freedom struggle. For such truth is critical if black people are to define their role in creating a sane, humane future for American society.

Through its programs of research and analysis, education and publication, IBW attempts to provide black

people (and others who are interested) with a sense of historical perspective; transforming humane values; a clear understanding of the nature of the struggle that is being waged to shape America's future; and an abiding faith in black people's collective capacities to reshape the future directions of this country. IBW's ultimate goal is to serve as an institution of social transformation for the total American society.

WHAT IS IBW?

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

IBW was incorporated as an independent non-profit corporation under the laws of the State of Georgia in 1970 and was awarded tax exempt status in 1971. The offices of the Institute are located in the heart of the Atlanta University Center. It is governed by a Board of Directors with a National Advisory Council (NAC) assisting in various aspects of its program development. An Executive Director and a Staff Council are responsible for the day-to-day management of IBW's affairs.

Currently a 12-15 person staff works from the Institute's Atlanta-based offices. In addition, a network of IBW Associates, Research Fellows and volunteers regularly assist the staff in many phases of its work. This network includes teachers, artists, scholars, writers, and consultants in a variety of fields. This group of brothers and sisters, located in this country, Canada, the Caribbean, and Africa, provide a crucial reservoir of knowledge, encouragement, counsel, and skill which immeasurably strengthen IBW's collective efforts.

WHERE DID IBW COME FROM?

OUT OF:

- * **THE LEGACY** of W.E. B. DuBois' use of scholarship in the service of struggle at the Atlanta University Center.
- * **THE GROPINGS** for a new sense of meaning and purpose of a group of concerned black scholars who had been involved in the struggle during the 1960's.
- * **THE LAST** stages of the Civil Rights and Black Power Movements.
- * **THE CRISIS** in American and world society that characterized the late 1960's and 70's.
- * **THE STRUGGLE** for black studies at black educational institutions and predominantly white colleges and universities.
- * **THE STRUGGLE** to develop Black colleges and universities out of negro colleges and universities.
- * **THE SEARCH** for a new understanding of black America's past and present and black people's explorations toward the future.
- * **THE COMMITMENT** of hundreds of black scholar/activists who have literally willed IBW into existence and kept it functioning for the past eight years even in the face of perpetual opposition to its goals and existence.

The INSTITUTE OF THE BLACK WORLD was founded

in 1969 as part of the Martin Luther King Memorial Center. In 1970, the two institutions decided to go their separate ways. Differences in philosophy and direction were at the heart of this split. Since the summer of 1970, IBW has functioned as an independent institution.

WHAT DOES IBW DO?

"Education in the United States can no longer be for the purpose of earning of or achieving the 'good life' or for fitting people into. . . our present industrial society. Education must now be for the purpose of governing, that is, for the purpose of changing society and for changing ourselves simultaneously."

---Grace Boggs

The core of IBW's program is education, but not in the traditional sense of the term. Rather its purpose is to contribute to the re-education of black people to their historical responsibilities--to assume control of their own destiny and play a critical role in transforming American society. Recognizing that a variety of approaches is necessary to be effective in the service to the black community, the Institute engages in the following activities:

- * **RESEARCHES** historical and contemporary issues, political, economic, cultural and social policies and problems effecting black America.
- * **PROMOTES** the development of an alternative intellectual tradition in black America.
- * **STUDIES** the cultural, political, sexual, economic, racial and class dimension of struggle and the processes of personal and social transformation.