

PROPOSAL FOR FUNDING OF THE BLACK AGENDA NETWORK

THE INSTITUTE OF THE BLACK WORLD  
87 Chestnut Street  
Atlanta, Georgia

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## SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSAL

The Institute of the Black World, an independent research center in Atlanta, Georgia, has recruited a national network of approximately 100 black scholars, artists, organizers and other professionals to develop what is called a Black Agenda. The first meeting of the Network group took place on October 16-18, 1970.

Working in eight task forces of approximately 10-15 persons each, the Black Agenda Network (BAN) has begun the unprecedented attempt to create a sustained, precise, collective analysis of some of the major problems facing the black community in America today. Over the next 18 months it will move to produce not only such an analysis, but it will put forward specific programmatic proposals towards the solution of some of the critical problems. The eight task force areas are: Education, Economic Development, Political Organization, Health and Welfare, Communications, Cultural Definition and Survival, Organized Religious Resources, and Pan-African History and Relationships.

Even at this preliminary stage of the work, several significant organizations and institutions have committed themselves to make use of the end products as well as the working papers of the Black Agenda Network. Such commitments have come from the National Committee of Black Churchmen, the National Conference of Negro Women, the Congress of African Peoples, Atlanta University School of Social Work, Fisk and Howard Universities and others.

The work of the Black Agenda Network is coordinated by the staff of the Institute, and each Task Force member is an active Associate of the Institute. This proposal is for a grant of 125,650 dollars to assist the

development of the Black Agenda, primarily through the funding of a full-time coordinator (and his minimal staff) and through the facilitating of the process of work and production in the task forces.

## SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROPOSAL

It is surely clear to most men of reason and perception that there is no hope for a viable, open and healthy American society if the Black community of this nation is not infused with new sources of life and health, if it is not supplied with new means of radically changing its persistent status as the oppressed, exploited and dependent minority. Those who read the signs towards the future and who properly assess the past are increasingly aware of the fact that if this nation does not open itself to at least a viable pluralism--and to clear beacons of leadership from black men--in the next stage, then it can be assured only of deeper troubles than it has ever known.

A large part of the strengthening of the black community, and of the nation's pilgrimage towards new health depends upon the development among black Americans of their own analysis of their problems and their own programs towards solution. This must be done at both local and national levels, for the scope of the problems certainly transcends the local manifestations in which they are found, and the ultimate solutions must be national in concept. Moreover, the problems of black men in America are often dark mirrors of the problems of America itself.

At this point in history there are no black-controlled and black staffed national programs for careful research and analysis on the history, present condition and future of black people other than the Institute of the Black World and its Black Agenda Network. There are a few, important, locally-oriented Black Strategy Centers, like the ones in Chicago and in Roxbury. There is also the Black Economic Research Center in Harlem (whose Director, Robert Browne, is co-chairman of the Economic Development Task Force of the Black Agenda Network). There are a constantly increasing number of

independent, black-controlled educational centers, like Malcolm X Liberation University in Greensboro, the Center for Black Education in Washington, D. C. and McKissick School in Milwaukee. These are all essentially teaching rather than research institutions.

None of the aforementioned specialized institutions is able to fulfill the need for systematic planning and research that is needed by black America. This is why the Institute with its national network of working Associates is faced with an unprecedented opportunity to do what has not been done before--except on local levels, or by solitary individuals like Dr. W.E.B. DuBois.

The stature of the staff of the Institute and its Black Agenda Network colleagues can give the resulting work a legitimacy and a representative character which would likely be impossible to duplicate in any other structure. Indeed, representatives of almost all the strategy centers and independent educational institutions listed above are committed either to participate in a BAN Task Force, to make full use of its products, or both. They recognize, with IBW, the national scope of the task and have readily joined in this absolutely necessary attempt to master it.

#### OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Black Agenda project have been suggested in the earlier sections of this proposal. It is, however, important to point to them in a more deliberate way at this point. Specifically, these are some of the most important objectives of this proposal: