

THE NEGRO PEOPLE IN THE SOUTHERN ECONOMY

J. H. O'DELL

OF ALL THE geographical regions and sub-regions which make up the continental United States of America, the one with the longest history of being "different" from the rest of the country, in every backward sense of the word, is the south. Yet this region of our country is rapidly losing some of the characteristics, which once set it apart from the rest of the country, as it passes today into the second phase of its Industrial Revolution.

The first phase of this Industrial Revolution in the south began after the Civil War, and extended over a period of about thirty years, ending just before the First World War. This was the "New South" of textile mills, railroads and oil drillings. It was the period in which Birmingham was born and became a leader, not only as the nation's leading exporter of pig iron, but a pioneer, as well, in steel production by the open-hearth-furnace process. It was the period in which south Florida was opened to tourism by the building of luxury hotels, and the names of such cities as Beaumont and Baton Rouge meant "tops" in the oil world. Nevertheless as this industrial boom came to a close, the south remained primarily a rural economy dominated by King Cotton.

The second phase of the south's Industrial Revolution opened with the 1940's and World War II. The chief feature of this phase are the widespread use of machines in southern agriculture, eliminating mules and manual labor; the rise of the dairy industry, cattle raising and poultry farming, all of which have combined to reduce cotton's importance as a cash crop; and such new industries as aluminum, the petro-chemicals, aircraft and clothing manufactures have been added to the older industries, thereby radically increasing the south's total manufacturing output.

Contrary to popular belief, by 1960, the south ceased to be an agri-

cultural sub-region. What we have today is a developed urban-industrial economy in the south which, in the main features of economic life, compares favorably with the United States as a whole.

Measured by the occupational distribution of the south's industrial labor force, the growth of savings and loan associations, the number of automobile registrations, the amount of building construction, improvements in roads, air transportation and other means of communications, the rapid development of its inland waterways systems as well as the amount of gross tonnage of cargoes handled by its deep sea port facilities, and the increasing variety of the products of both agriculture and industry as well as the modern equipment used to create these products, the southern economy has become part of the Twentieth Century.

These changes have taken place within the social and political framework of a system of racial segregation; a system enforced by all branches of government, and sustained by all of the major institutions in southern society, since shortly after the Civil War. In the first place, this is a system which denies elementary human rights to the 25 per cent of the south's population who are non-white.

An appraisal of what the south's industrial progress has meant to these ten million citizens, in their respective states, is the purpose of this article.

MEDIAN INCOME IN THE SOUTH

<i>State</i>	<i>Negro personal Income</i>	<i>White personal Income</i>
Kentucky	2,570	4,193
Virginia	2,231	4,608
Florida	2,174	4,311
Texas	2,011	4,457
Alabama	2,009	4,764
Louisiana	1,823	4,597
Georgia	1,817	4,370
Tennessee	1,801	3,737
North Carolina	1,685	3,947
Arkansas	1,636	3,678
South Carolina	1,415	4,121
Mississippi	1,168	3,565

Source: United States Census 1960 ("Families and Unrelated Individuals.")

employment and Negro income

By and large, employment patterns in the South have not changed in fifty years, as far as Negro job opportunities are concerned. During this entire century, almost all of the increase in the Negro's purchasing power has been due to the Negro family's shift from the rural south to the urban centers of the south and the north. As a result, the Negro urban family has more income than the Negro rural family. This increased circulation of personal income stimulated the growth of, and provides the material basis for, the Negro middle class (e.g., drug store, barber shop and beauty parlor owners; real estate dealers, morticians, etc.). The *kind of work*, however, that the Negro job-seeker in the city gets, is basically the same, in that they are the hot, heavy and hard low-paying jobs. The new industries identified with the south's recent economic growth (e.g., clothing manufacturing, aircraft, communications, retail trade, etc.) as well as local government, have followed the traditional southern practice of confining Negroes to the same low-wage job categories, when employed at all. At the same time, the introduction of various automation processes in the older industries (mining, lumber, tobacco, steel, etc.) are eliminating those kinds of jobs where Negroes were traditionally concentrated, in the unskilled and semi-skilled departments.

The Birmingham Chamber of Commerce estimates that the Negro community, which is 36 per cent of the population in that city, has about 12% of the purchasing power. Of course, even that 12%, when withheld from the downtown merchants in an effective "selective buying campaign," proved to be enough economic power to bring about some desegregation in public facilities.*

It may come as a surprise to some to learn that the income-gap between the average urban Negro family and the urban white family in the south is wider than the gap between the white and Negro rural families. The substantial growth of the urban Negro middle class in the south, since World War II, is a fact which, nevertheless, does not alter the basic pattern described here, because this class is still a very small section of the Negro population.

To really appreciate the significance of the income gap between the white and Negro communities in the south, let us briefly review the figures for the state of South Carolina.

* Whether by coincidence or by design, the Negro community has been granted 12 per cent of the representation on Mayor Boutwell's Community Affairs Committee. It is interesting that the Negro's representation on this important committee is based upon his *purchasing power*, not his percentage in the population.

JOIN OUR "NON BUYING MOVEMENT!"

Stay Out of Segregated Stores

Do You Know That . . .

THE CHARLESTON RETAIL MERCHANTS ASSOCIATION DISCRIMINATES AGAINST SOME OF ITS CUSTOMERS???

1. The "Lily-White" Christmas Parade was sponsored by the Charleston Retail Merchants Association?
 2. This Association denies our people job opportunities as sales personnel?
 3. That our children were refused service at lunch counters, molested, arrested and are still under bond?
-

Join Our **"NON BUYING MOVEMENT"**

We will Spend Our Money in areas where we are
Not Discriminated Against!!!

**CURB ALL OF YOUR BUYING --- Cars, Food,
Clothing, Furniture, etc.**

Our "Non Buying Movement" will last as long as segregation does

**IF YOU MUST SHOP - SHOP WHERE YOU ARE NOT
DISCRIMINATED AGAINST**

Sponsored by ASM - Anti-Segregation Movement

"Selective Buying Campaign" in Charleston, South Carolina.

 YEARLY INCOME DISTRIBUTION IN SOUTH CAROLINA*

<i>Median White Family Income</i>	<i>Median Negro Family Income</i>	<i>Annual Difference in \$ Per Family</i>	<i>Number of Negro Families Affected</i>
\$4,121	\$1,415	\$2,706	173,000
Total Dollar-Shortage Annually			\$466,000,000.

It will be noted here, that the amount of money which the average Negro family is short-changed is *greater* than the amount it gets; therefore, the total amount of money which the Negro community is deprived annually, is also larger than the total amount the community actually receives.

Fewer than 10 per cent of the Negro families in South Carolina have as much income to live on as the average white family.

The general pattern of income distribution in South Carolina is quite representative of the other southern states. The significance of this income-gap is all the more striking when we take into account the fact that the percentage of Negro families in which both husband and wife work is much higher than among white families.

On an average, half the married Negro women in the south hold jobs as compared to about one out of every three white married women.** Furthermore, the percentage of married Negro women in the labor force who have pre-school-age children at home is 50 per cent higher than is true with white married women with children: (in Florida, Texas and Georgia, the percentage is doubled). The sociological effects of this upon the Negro family in the south is a subject in itself.

Here again, it is the difference in the *kind of jobs* available as referred to earlier. White women in the labor force in the south are largely concentrated in clerical work in offices, sales work in department stores and clothing and textile manufacturing. Their salaries (or

* Ref. United States Census 1960 Series P.C.—Table 65.

** Table 52—U.S. Census 1960.

wages as the case may be) are in the range of 40 to 65 dollars a week.

Negro women, by comparison, are concentrated mainly in domestic work in private households; maids in motels and hotels; work in laundries, farm laborers and some light manufacturing, as canneries, etc. "Three-dollars-a-day-and-carfare" is the prevailing wage for domestic workers and the farm laborers (chopping cotton, etc.) do not get the "carfare."

some of the effects of the minimum wage law in the south

The Kennedy Administration's "Minimum Wage Law," passed last year, was of little benefit to many of those who need it most in the south.

This is for several reasons, among them, the following:

(1) The amendments to the bill made by southern dixiecrats, and accepted by a majority in Congress, resulted in laundry workers, domestics, hotel and motel workers being excluded from the benefits. On a nationwide scale, 35 per cent of the Negro labor force work in these "service industries," as compared to 10 per cent of the white labor force. In the south there is very little union organization in these industries, and wages are often notoriously low.

(2) The size of the increase in the minimum wage (from \$1.00 to \$1.15 and later to \$1.25 per hour) is, on its face, grossly inadequate as an aid to improve living standards. Then when the tax is taken out of this already small increase, there's little left to praise. The economic program of the "March On Washington" makes clear the need for a \$2.00 per hour national minimum wage.

(3) The law applies only to enterprises doing more than a million dollars annual business, or doing business in more than one state. A lot of Negroes in the South work in strictly local small businesses—not covered by the Minimum Wage Law. On the other hand, the heavy industries producing hard goods in most instances already pay more than the minimum wage.

(4) In the large department stores covered by the law, the employers sometimes used the following methods: where Negroes were working as "helpers" doing the wrappings, etc., for white sales clerks, the employer just fired the Negro employees and increased the wages of white sales clerks, but made them do their own wrapping (*i.e.*, increased their work-load). So in these circumstances, the white

workers got a wage increase (along with an increase in work), and the black worker got a pass to the unemployment office.

An even more cynical example was one discovered by some Southern Christian Leadership Conference staff members in Liberty County, Georgia, where their Citizenship Training School is located. They found a shrimp-canning factory, which operates in more than one state, was paying Negro workers less than the minimum wage. As a condition for their employment, the employer had made these workers sign affidavits saying they were "handicapped workers"; therefore, not entitled to the national minimum wage. SCLC's national headquarters in Atlanta promptly contacted the Department of Labor in Washington, D. C. and demanded action.

The last census shows there were nearly one million Negro families in the south whose income is less than \$2,000 per year. *This represents more than 46 per cent of all Negro families in the south.*

unemployment in the south

It is very revealing to review the unemployment trend in the south over the past twenty years. In the cotton states in the deep south in 1940 the percentage of the Negro labor force that was unemployed was lower than the percentage of the white labor force that was unemployed.* In the main, this was due to the Negro's heavy concentration in agricultural work; the more industrialized states (Kentucky, North Carolina, Virginia, Louisiana and Texas) had a slightly different employment picture.*

By 1950, however, in every southern state with but one exception** the opposite was true; the percentage of unemployment among the Negro labor force had become considerably higher than that of the white population. By 1960 the difference was even larger. The census takers compiled these figures before the 1961 recession and therefore the effects of that downturn in the economy are not reflected here.

There are, of course, always ups and downs in the economy, peaks and valleys, periods of layoffs and periods of stepped-up employment. However, the important thing is to be able to recognize the employment and unemployment pattern that develops over a long period of time. It is estimated that there are well over three hundred thousand Negro Americans unemployed in the south, today.

* Source—United States Census—Table 53—"Employment Status by Color and Sex—1940-1960."

**Tennessee.

Furthermore, there is always a considerable amount of "hidden unemployment" especially among Negroes in the south. There are a lot of Negroes, much of whose work-life consists of getting two days' work this week in a brickyard; a day and a half next week in a warehouse or unloading freight cars, etc., and it may be months before such a person lands a job getting a full week's work. Then the job may last only a few weeks and the cycle begins all over again. (Of course this is not the only kind of "hidden unemployment.")

We are reminded that the last decade marked the dawn of the "age of automation" in the nation's industry. Since the end of the Second World War, the steel industry in Alabama, for example, has doubled the value of its total manufacturing output, while at the same time eliminating the jobs of some 4,000 workers in that industry. The outlook for the immediate years ahead points to a stepped-up pace of automation in both heavy and light industry in the south.

Earlier this year, the Republic Steel Corporation announced that it was including its plant in Gadsen, Alabama in its \$100 million program of plant modernization; the emphasis is on installing oxygen steel furnaces to replace the open hearth furnaces. Textile plants in Marion, North Carolina; West Point, Georgia; and Belton, South Carolina are setting the pace in "plant modernization" in that industry. In textiles, this means increased production with fewer workers. In coal mining, some machines have been introduced that can replace as many as 200 workers each. Local mergers together with the "feather-bedding" issue in the railroad industry, as well as the basic problem in longshore, all point in the same direction.

The Negro community is deeply affected not only by the elimination of certain jobs by machines in industry and in agriculture, but in addition the rule that black Americans be "the last hired and the first fired" adds a double burden. One of the dynamic leaders of the civil rights movement in Savannah, Georgia, tells us that street-sweeping used to be considered a "Negro job" in that city. That was until the 1961 recession when unemployment began to grow in the white community, half the street sweeping jobs were taken from the Negroes. More would have been lost had not the Freedom Movement put up a fight to hold on to a quota of the street sweeping jobs.

This pattern of employment (*i.e.*, "Negro jobs" and "white jobs"), which is carefully followed by most employers, in industry, agriculture, and government, is designed not only to strictly limit the Negro southerners' economic opportunities; but also to give the average white southern worker the feeling that the Negro is out to get his job.

The tension and mistrust which arises from this job segregation is tailor made to increase the exploitation of both.

In the next few months, the Negro Freedom Movement will increasingly become the most outspoken advocate on the American scene of full employment—and other needed economic reforms. Once this situation develops, thousands of white southern working people, who have been mostly “silent neutrals” during this entire difficult period of desegregation efforts, out of a desire to solve their own problems, will be more inclined to become open allies of the Negro people, thereby swelling the ranks of the creative protest movement that is *now* demanding an economy of abundance and equal rights for all.

Finally, on the point of unemployment, it would be short-sighted not to take into account the numbers of cities in the south in which the local economy rests heavily on military payrolls. In some of these cities, local politicians have calculatedly discouraged industrial growth, mostly out of fear that it will disturb the old, stagnant, race relations which they love so dearly. In some of these places, there are men in the so-called “power structure” who are prepared to let their cities dry up and die if they are convinced it will serve the purpose of “keeping the nigger in his place” which, after all, is the central purpose of their political life anyway.

a system of economic reprisals against the Negro people

This combination of unemployment, short-week employment and low wage jobs, which is daily experienced by the Negro community in the south, adds up to an “economy of necessity.” This economic reality weighs heavily as a consideration for the Freedom Movement in making its decisions. All across the south, organized efforts by the Negro community to secure their constitutional rights are met by economic reprisals, which are most painful.

Negro sharecroppers and tenants are hastily evicted from plantations; small farmers are denied bank loans necessary for their crops; black workers in cities are fired from their jobs and cut off from unemployment insurance, while whole families are denied welfare assistance; individuals who own cars are often confronted with arbitrary cancellations of automobile insurance by white insurance companies, even though car insurance is required by law. Frequent harassments such as being given traffic tickets when no violation has occurred, in addition to stiff fines for participation in peaceful public demonstrations against segregation, are commonplace, and some-

times, even churches are threatened with having their tax exempt status revoked because they have been meeting places for the Freedom Movement.

In their courageous efforts to develop an effective voter registration drive in the Mississippi Delta, the staff of SNCC (Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee) won the respect and confidence of the Negro community by organizing the distribution of food and clothing to hundreds of needy families, who had been victims of one or another of these types of economic reprisals. This demonstration of concern for the most elementary needs of the particular community made some break-through in voter registration possible.

While bombings, mass arrests and police brutality sometimes get into the newspaper headlines across the country, these economic reprisals, more often than not, go unreported. Furthermore, these reprisals against the Negro community are most widespread and most common in those 137 counties, stretching across the south, wherein the black population is a majority.

The 1963 Convention of the American Political Science Association, meeting last September, heard a report from the general counsel of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission, Attorney Clarence C. Ferguson. Discussing economic reprisals in Mississippi, Dean Ferguson stated they are becoming "more and more violent." He further stated: "The Mississippi Negro looks to the Federal Government (for his protection) and finds impotence. . . ."

It is generally known that the Commission made a recommendation to the Kennedy Administration, earlier this year, to withhold federal funds from the State of Mississippi; and the President publicly rejected this important recommendation at one of his press conferences, on the excuse that he lacked authority to take such action. Mr. Ferguson pointed out that the Commission had also presented the Administration with a 64-page legal study showing that the legal basis and powers for taking such action already exist.

The Negro in the occupational structure of the south

To examine this question in an overall sense in the brief space of such an article, we have selected two examples, representative of the whole—an industry and a State, Alabama.

The Textile Industry has been the number one manufacturing industry in the south, in employment, since the turn of the century. The bulk of this industry is concentrated in an area called the Southern Piedmont, which roughly stretches from Danville, Virginia

to central Georgia, and includes the Carolinas, North and South. Today, more than 80 years after the founding of the textile industry in the south, Negro Americans are less than 5 per cent of the labor force in this industry; and this figure includes employment in its companion industry, clothing manufacturing, which has grown up alongside textile since the Second World War. Of the nearly one and a half million people employed in industry in the Southern Piedmont more than 600,000 hold jobs in the textile and clothing manufacturing plants.

On the other hand, Negroes employed in manufacturing in the Southern Piedmont are heavily concentrated in lumber and furniture manufacturing. We are 40 per cent of the labor force in this industry. The last census shows this industry suffered a sharp drop in general employment during the last decade, and here, there is no companion industry to take up the slack, such as clothing manufacturing is doing for textile.

The nonwhite population in Georgia and North Carolina are the biggest in the south with more than a million each (exceeded only by Texas). Yet we find ourselves just about totally excluded from the biggest manufacturing industry and instead our industrial labor force is heavily concentrated in an industry much smaller in size, paying lower wages and suffering a drastically declining employment.

It is generally recognized that the growth of "white collar" employment is the main feature of the changing occupational structure of the labor force in our country. These "white collar" jobs include clerical and sales jobs, scientific and technical work as well as the professional occupations. Without elaborating the point, we present here a brief summary description of the situation in Alabama.*

Negroes in Alabama are 30 per cent of the labor force but only 4 per cent of the total number of clerical and sales employees; 2 per cent of the "managerial, proprietors and salaried officials" in Alabama and 7.1 per cent of the engineers and technicians. Of course, if we subtract from this total the number of Negroes employed in these jobs in Negro-owned enterprises, the figures are even smaller. On the other hand, Negroes are 91 per cent of the domestic workers in private households; 60 per cent of the total number of employees engaged in the manufacturing of "food and kindred products" (which is largely seasonal work in canneries) and are 40 per cent of the labor force in Alabama agriculture.

* Table 61—United States Census 1960.

Contrary to popular belief, this picture of Alabama is quite representative of the entire south.

Since in our discussion of income and employment, we selected as examples two states which happen to be regarded as "hard core" segregationist states (Alabama and South Carolina) some may think that this is an unfair picture of the south as a whole. It is generally recognized that in terms of a rigid pattern of public segregation, politically, the once "Solid South" is no longer quite so solid. It is much more rigid in Mississippi, for example, than in Texas. However, in terms of the economic position of the Negro people, the whole south is basically "hard core." The Negro-white median income gap is wider in Texas than in Mississippi; wider in North Carolina than Arkansas. *The economic south still fits the traditional pattern of the "solid south"* as far as the Negro community is concerned. This may indeed seem ironical in view of the "revolutionary" changes in the southern economy, but it is nonetheless true.

In the south of 1963, a majority of the white population is moving on towards an "economy of comfort," while segregation (past and present) keeps the masses of Negro Americans barely holding on in an "economy of necessity."

One of the women leaders in the Voter Registration Drive in the Mississippi Delta recently summed things up this way, when she told me . . . "When you figure it out, Negroes have just begun to eat the kind of food that we need to give our brain the blood cells we need to think straight. . . . It's no wonder we were confused for so long."

the Negro freedom movement

Underlying all of the struggles in the south today, at least at the grass-roots level, is a sense of concern and anxiety over these conditions. Birmingham had 22,000 Negro and white persons unemployed this past spring; and the economic issues bear heavily upon the situation in Cambridge, Maryland, to give only two examples. Nevertheless, the main direction of the Movement is presently in the use of economic withdrawal ("selective buying," "selective riding," etc.) for the purpose of securing an end to the public insult of segregation. As victories are won and the total desegregation program expands, the economic issues come to the forefront. Slowly, but surely, the Negro community is discovering the power of Economics. It is largely within the context of the demand for "across-the-board desegregation" often expressed as a demand for "An Open City" that the issue of equal job opportunities is everywhere becoming a major point in the

program of the Freedom Movement in the south.

In short, we are beginning to get the message in A. Philip Randolph's now-famous quote: "the *book* that is best understood in America is the *pocketbook!*"

The forms of organization through which the Negro community seeks an improvement in its status and economic conditions are many. However, they fall into three main types. First, those that have come into being in recent years as purely local organizations giving expression to the rise of the non-violent direct action philosophy and technique. Among these are: the Bibb County Coordinating Committee (Macon, Ga.); the Anti-Segregation Movement (Charleston, S. C.); The Petersburg Improvement Association (Va.); Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights (Birmingham); and, the Coahoma County Federated Council of Organizations (Clarksdale, Miss.). Secondly, in at least two cities, the struggle for improvement in job opportunities is closely related to the growth of the Negro vote and it is the Voters Leagues (in Memphis, Tenn. and Richmond, Va.) which lead the way in pushing economic demands. Thirdly, New Orleans is perhaps unique in having a Consumers League, a type of organization which concentrates strictly on the economic problems.*

Each of these groups are organizational types which usually involve persons who are also members and leaders of the "established" civil rights organizations in the south (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Southern Christian Leadership Conference and Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee),** but their community appeal and influence is usually even broader than that of the established organizations.

The great need today is for some southern city to give the whole movement in the south an inspiring example of a successful *selective buying campaign for jobs*, of the kind that Montgomery provided in breaking the back of segregation in public transportation a few years ago.

So far, the best example has been set in a northern city—Philadelphia—an example whose methods and results are worthy of the most serious study.

The growth of Negro life insurance companies is one of the sig-

* We must recognize also the yeoman service which the Urban League of Greater New Orleans has performed in helping to mobilize that community to resist the economic reprisals of the White Citizens' Council.

** NAACP, SCLC and SNCC.

nificant developments for the Negro community in the South since the end of World War II. Four of the seven largest Negro life insurance companies in the nation are located in the south (North Carolina Mutual in Durham; Atlanta Life in Atlanta, Georgia; Universal Life in Memphis, Tennessee; Afro-American Life in Jacksonville, Florida). The others are located in Los Angeles, Chicago and Detroit.

Shortly after the Montgomery Bus Boycott in Alabama had been successfully concluded, in the Alabama insurance field, we received information that the White Citizens' Councils in Alabama were planning a wholesale program of economic reprisals against the Negro community. It was the presence of the Negro insurance companies and other financial institutions which caused certain white insurance companies, which had been heavy contributors to the Citizens' Councils, to advise against such a program, lest it boomerang.

At about the same time, the downtown Atlanta banks seemed to have had a "gentlemen's agreement" not to make any loans to prospective Negro buyers in a new housing development. In view of this, a well-established Negro savings and loan association then publicly announced that it was making one million dollars available to Negroes for such a purpose. This forced the bankers downtown to change their policy overnight.

The Negro insurance companies in the south are important to the Negro community, not only for the number of Negroes they employ, or the amount of capital which they represent (both of which are relatively small), but also because these institutions are the only Negro-owned centers for the professional training of managerial and administrative personnel.

Atlanta leads the way in "tokenism"

Atlanta, of all cities in the south, has done an excellent public relations job in selling the nation the image of a "liberal" city. Unfortunately, this is more image than reality. Atlanta presents a picture of itself which suggests that desegregation has taken place there with little or no resistance. The fact is that before the student sit-ins in 1960, Atlanta was as segregated as Mississippi. It took a federal court order to begin to desegregate Atlanta's public schools, eight years after the Supreme Court's decision. Of course, since the days of Little Rock, there has been some tendency to regard as "liberal" any southern city which doesn't have mobs in the streets defying federal court orders.

Dozens of Negro students were arrested this year in anti-segregation demonstrations in Atlanta at the time of the Birmingham events, and following these events, several hotels and quite a few downtown restaurants in Atlanta voluntarily desegregated.

There can be no doubt that Atlanta has a moderate political leadership, as distinguished from the "die-hard" segregationists; however, when we see a newspaper such as the *Atlanta Constitution* (which pretends to be a liberal newspaper) carrying on the same kind of "McCarthyism" attack on the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, as the nation witnessed Governors Barnett of Mississippi and Wallace of Alabama doing, it is cause for a long, hard look at Atlanta's real record. Experience is teaching us daily that the segregationists sometime find it convenient to put on the mask of "liberalism" in order to make their attacks on the Movement more effective.

A basic test of progress in race relations in any city is in the area of equal job opportunities. A sample of some of the complaints received by the national office of SCLC regarding job discrimination in Atlanta during the past eleven months include the following: Negro workers at Kraft Foods submitted an affidavit to SCLC charging the following:

1. Negro personnel of long tenure have been laid off from Branch Sales Office without any opportunity or chance of being transferred to Factory Division. White workers similarly laid off and with less job seniority are transferred almost immediately.
2. Job openings are never publicly posted; thus there is no opportunity for merit advancement for Negro personnel. Non-white employees are denied application forms as a means to thwart advancement and transfer to other job categories.
3. Non-white personnel are excluded from employment in all "white collar" jobs.

These complaints are in addition to the segregated eating facilities, and so forth.

Likewise, a group of Negro steel workers from the Atlantic Steel Company in Atlanta requested SCLC's aid in ending the pattern of job discrimination in their industry. They are members of Local 2401 of United Steel Workers, AFL-CIO. Among their complaints was that in a rising scale of thirty-two job classifications, Negro workers could never get beyond eleven. They also charged that while doing the same jobs as white workers, they are given different job-classifications and less pay. These complaints were part of a body of complaints

involving segregated locker room facilities, drinking fountains, etc. (SCLC processed these complaints.)

The Southern Regional Council in a survey, the results of which were issued this year, on how well Atlanta firms were carrying out the Kennedy Administration's "Plans for Progress" (for voluntarily ending job segregation and discrimination) reports the following: of twenty-four companies with Government contracts that had plants, offices or regional headquarters in the Atlanta metropolitan area:

"All had at least one year in which to implement their plans, to take affirmative and voluntary action toward elimination of job discrimination. The survey clearly indicates that, except for a handful of the companies, the Plans for Progress were, for the regional office in Atlanta, largely meaningless.

"Only seven of the firms interviewed produced evidence of affirmative compliance with their pledges. Of the seven, three—Lockheed, Western Electric, and Goodyear—demonstrated what appeared to be a vigorous desire to create job opportunities.

"The remaining seventeen firms have paid varying degrees of attention to Plans for Progress, ranging from ignorance to indifference. Some did not know what the Plans were (one regional manager referred to the program as the "Alliance for Progress") and others simply dismissed them."

The report further states:

"Few appeared to have considered the hiring of Negroes as secretaries and clerical workers. And only one of the companies has hired a Negro as a salesman.

"In the last analysis, only three of the twenty-four firms studied appear to be genuinely interested in adhering to both the spirit and the letter of the Plans for Progress. . . ." (our emphasis)

It should be noted that the better picture presented by Lockheed Aircraft is due to the work done by the national office of the NAACP and Herbert Hill, its labor secretary.

According to the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average Negro family in Atlanta has 52 per cent less annual income than the average white family. During the decade of the 1950's, the period of Atlanta's most rapid growth, the average income of Negro families increased by 31 per cent, while the average income of white families increased by 49 per cent. The figure for per capita income demonstrated a similar gap—the white per capita income during this period increased by 44 per cent while Negro per capita income increased by 23.8 per cent. At the same time, the prices of food, clothing

and other consumer goods in Atlanta went up by 22.8 per cent; therefore, the net improvement was so slight as to hardly be worth mentioning. The net improvement of the average white person's standard of living was twenty-two times greater. *Thus, in terms of average annual family income, as well as per capita income, Atlanta's Negro community lost ground when compared with Atlanta's whites during the decade of the 1950's.*

It should not go unnoticed that this latter fact regarding the Negro community in Atlanta is typical of the country as a whole, and continues to be the pattern. The most recent figures issued by the Census Bureau show that between the years 1953 and 1962, average Negro annual income increased by \$1,000. During the same period, annual income among the white population increased by about \$1,400. *Absolute progress and relative retrogression.*

There is of course, some tendency among us to judge our progress solely by whether or not we are "better-off-this-year-than-last-year." In view of this, what is the basis for the concern over the comparison of the Negro American's standard of living with the average income of the white population?

There are two reasons which serve as the basis for this concern:

First: In our country it takes money to enjoy certain rights. We have got to have the income to go along with the "civil rights" in order to be really free; so our Movement has to struggle for both.

Secondly: Another reality we face is that under the "free enterprise" economic system in our country, the everyday cost of every right, privilege and necessity is mainly determined by whatever is the average income of the white majority population, and not by the average of the non-white minority. The Atlanta example referred to above is a good one. The cost-of-living went up just as fast as the increase in the money income of the average Negro family.

The Negro American faces the situation in which he will have won rights which he and his family are not fully able to enjoy, because they are priced right out of the picture. So the Freedom Movement cannot afford to slow up before the income gap is closed. In short, we have to close the gap in order to stay alive and keep our living standard from deteriorating. Increasingly, we are recognizing that equality before the law is only the framework for equality in fact. Once equality before the law is established, without challenge, then he who has the economic means enjoys equality in fact.

The central fact of American economic and social history is the exploitation and deprivation of the Negro community. For the more

than three centuries of our presence on the American scene, this is the basic, continuing fact in the "American Experience." It has been the central generator affecting the economic evolution of American society to its present "affluent" stage of development.

For generations, Negro citizens in the south have been denied admission to public restaurants, hotels, lunch counters, theaters, even public parks and libraries, because *any* recognition of their rights and dignity as a people, partially interferes with the enforcement of the *system of economic robbery*, which is the central purpose of segregation.

Under slavery, the Negro people were considered property, *i.e.*, an object owned by another. Under segregation, the Negro-American is still an object, in that he is not recognized, respected or consulted as are other citizens. He is an object, though no longer *owned* by anyone, nevertheless, *controlled* by an imposed system of restrictions, which are not equally binding on the white majority population. The cold similarity between the two systems is at once obvious. Indeed, segregation is the child of slavery, both designed to effectively exploit the entire Afro-American community. *No other ethnic group in American society has had this combination of experiences.*

And the world in which we live makes us increasingly aware that our history in America is but a chapter—an episode—in a larger history which links, yesterday and today, the continent of Africa with America.

For it was our own flesh-and-blood ancestors who were dragged from the coast of Ghana, Guinea and Senegal and settled on plantations of Georgia, South Carolina and Louisiana as human slaves.

At the time of this writing, in Plaquemine, Louisiana (a sugar plantation area west of Baton Rouge), what were formerly slave quarters are now being used as a temporary jail for citizens who participated in protest demonstrations against segregation and racial discrimination.

These Freedom Fighters, led by James Farmer of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), are demanding an end to segregation, more jobs above the janitor level and the right of the Negro community to fully participate in local government.

"We just never thought of the 'nigra' as going to school with us," declared a young University of Mississippi student who was interviewed on TV last year at the time of the crisis. There is a great deal of American history behind that observation.

The use of electric cattle-prods and K-9 police dogs on Negro and

white citizens peacefully protesting the state system of segregation is fresh evidence of the fact that racist insults and public humiliation are built into the very foundation of the "southern way of life."

The Negro Freedom Movement, in the present stage of its development, is essentially engaged in a struggle for full recognition and respect for Negro Americans (in law and in practice) as human beings and as citizens in the country of our birth. Like any other people's movement, driven by history, necessity and the strivings of the human spirit for a better life, our Movement is crossing the threshold of its present, and entering upon a new period in its historical development. *This new period is increasingly marked by the struggle for economic well-being and greater political power, the two basic conditions necessary for the full enjoyment of "equal rights."*

As is well known, the sacrifices and struggles of the Negro Freedom Movement, over many years, have resulted in some important changes, to-date, in the long-standing system of public racial segregation. It is also of importance to take note of the strategic pattern of these changes, geographically.

While the larger cities, such as Richmond, Atlanta, Greensboro, Nashville, New Orleans, etc., yield (after some struggle) to "token" desegregation, the smaller towns and rural areas, (such as Danville, Virginia; Americus, Georgia; Williamston, North Carolina; Plaquemine, Louisiana; etc.) are conducting a rearguard action, to hold-the-line, in brutal defiance and disregard of all constitutional rights and authority. Indeed, what has come to be called "The Danville Method" is being studied by the whole die-hard segregationist south.

In many respects, this apparent division between the larger urban cities and the small towns basically fits a certain pattern of division along economic lines of interest. The large commercial, industrial and financial institutions, centered in the big cities, have an economic stake in yielding to at least "token" desegregation, thereby avoiding the national and international embarrassment, which a policy of hard-core opposition to integration produces. Indeed, many of these larger enterprises are southern outlets of giant northern corporations, who hold overseas investments. In addition to these, local Chambers of Commerce (restaurant and hotel owners, etc.) are concerned with attracting tourist business, and racial unrest does not help matters any. They are joined in this concern by local department store owners, who often find themselves caught in the squeeze of a "selective buying campaign" by the Negro community and white persons staying away from the downtown district to keep from getting

involved in demonstrations. The sum total of these economic interests, with few exceptions, produce a policy of "token desegregation" in the urban centers.

On the other hand, the "power structure" in the small towns and rural areas have an economic stake in preserving the old way of life; keeping the Negro community economically and politically as near to slavery-time conditions as possible. The cotton, sugar and tobacco plantation owners are in competition in the world trade market with other low-wage areas, such as Puerto Rico, the Philippines, and Egypt. Therefore, they have an economic stake in keeping their black labor force well under control. They too have their allies. They are joined in this concern by sawmill owners, many small shop keepers in the rural towns and the middle class white farmers whose "way-of-life" (economically and psychologically) depend upon having the Negro around doing the dull everyday chores; without real citizenship rights and paid scanty wages, but now and then the object of patronizing compliments and hand-me-down goods.

These small towns and rural plantation areas are the kind which are mainly responsible for putting into the United States Senate such political types as Eastland (Mississippi), Strom Thurmond (South Carolina) and Ellender (Louisiana).

"the American revolution—'63"

The Year 1963 has been, above all, a year of truth, for the American people.

Not since the Abolitionist Movement of a century ago, has there been such a searching review of the national conscience as exists today. Never before have the mass media of our country given such pointed attention to spreading *some* of the facts of life concerning racial practices and attitudes, in an effort to help the white majority population of America overcome years of public misinformation and an apathy born of racism.

This "year of truth" began in May in Birmingham, Alabama where segregationists in the state and local government put on an exhibition of racist barbarism which millions of Americans found hard to believe could happen in America. Following the Birmingham events, the wave of creative protest demonstrations against racial segregation, north and south, has amounted to a virtual explosion of genuine national concern and discontent.

The high-water mark of this period, which began with Birmingham, was reached with the "March On Washington For Jobs and Freedom."

The dignity and basic humaneness of the grass-roots community of our nation was beautifully mirrored in that noble event. It was a stunning rebuff to the segregationists; a reprimand to the unsure and the timid among the "friendly advice" givers to our Movement; and an inspiring witness of moral strength to all who struggle for the achievement of civilized relations among people.

In an historic sense, the unprecedented size of the March, the considerable amount of new participation by those organizations representing all of the religious faiths as well as a large section of the labor movement by union locals from across the country; the number of prominent personalities from the intellectual and artistic community who were present or who sent messages of support; the quality of representation from the southern battlefronts; and the unified posture of the civil rights leadership team which directed the program and organization of the March, all add up to the fact that, at long last, a Twentieth Century Abolitionist Movement has come to maturity on the American scene.

The civil rights movement in the United States has needed this and has been building up to this ever since the 1954 Supreme Court's desegregation decision. We are now at an historic turning point with the broad highway of Emancipation in front of us.

The quarter-million Americans who took the pledge of personal commitment and rededication to the crusade to wipe out the long-standing disease of racism from the American Republic can only be compared to the crusaders against slavery of the last century.

Not the least significant of the March's achievement was the outline of a comprehensive program of national economic improvement which was made an integral part of the total program of the Freedom Movement.

Notwithstanding the fact the March displayed some strategic and tactical weaknesses, in both content and organization, it nevertheless was an event of far-reaching significance.

As the author, James Baldwin, summed it up, "The day was important in itself; what we do with the day is even more important."

Yet all of the strength symbolized by the "March" (and then some) will have to be put to creative use if a "tokenism" congress and a hesitant, compromising administration is to be reminded of the urgency of the Negro community's economic, social and political condition.

The significance of President Roosevelt's "New Deal" during the great depression of thirty years ago, lies in the fact of large scale

financial investment by the Federal government in stimulating the economic and cultural renewal of our country. Billions of dollars were spent over a relatively short period of time (1933-1940) in pursuit of this objective.

The Negro community today, confronted with a permanent economic recession which is rapidly developing into a full scale depression, needs a "New Deal" (We were shortchanged in the first one). We need a Federal government-sponsored program, which includes not only the declaring and the enforcing of our constitutionally guaranteed "civil rights" but in addition, large scale financial investment towards the economic, cultural and social rehabilitation of the Negro community.

The nation cannot overcome the 344 years of deprivation experienced by the Negro community in the United States by simply extending "equal rights" to Negroes at this late date in history. Now, we Negro Americans need the "equal right" to catch up and this will require public investment in education, industrial training, etc., which should have been spent generations ago on the basis of equality of opportunity.

The statistics which we have just reviewed are more than just figures; they represent the cumulative effect of decades of segregation of American citizens, limiting their very lives and the lives of their children. Even after abolishing the cause, which is segregation, it should be recognized that this is only the first basic step in eliminating the effects. The nation has to address itself in a bold, creative and vigorous manner to the challenge of making up for all those years when the south was spending \$3.00 per capital on the white child's education and 80¢ on the Negro child's education.

Even if segregation had never happened, the job of upgrading the skills of the American labor force today to meet the challenge of automation, of the revolution in science, engineering and technology, would be a big job. The existence of segregation and racial discrimination of the past nearly 100 years has only compounded the problem for this generation of Americans.

If we may paraphrase the Reverend Martin Luther King's now famous words on the occasion of the "March":

"Instead of honoring its sacred obligations, America has given the Negro a bad check... but we refuse to believe that the Bank of Justice is bankrupt... We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation."

An important initiative to occur on the economic front in this post-March period is the call for a nation-wide Christmas boycott as an act of conscience and a memorial to the children killed in Birmingham, Alabama. Author James Baldwin, actress Ruby Dee and others who form the group known as *Actors and Writers For Justice* have taken the lead in encouraging this effort.

The Negro community alone spends an estimated two billion dollars during the month of December each year, much of this for the Christmas holidays. It goes without saying, any substantial "economic withdrawal" of this kind of money from cash-registers of the nation will certainly help the struggle for Jobs and Freedom, because it will let "the man" know we mean business.

Our Movement in the south can certainly appreciate the significance of such "selective buying." At least two dozen local cities in the south have had Easter boycotts during the past three years; with Negro families proudly wearing "last years" clothes on Easter Sunday and explaining to our children why there's "no new outfit this Easter."

A Christmas boycott will be a fitting memorial for those who have been martyred this year in Freedom's cause.