



AFL-CIO aids "hard-core" unemployed

# Labor's New Plan For The Underprivileged

by Ben Stahl

**J**OBS can bring hope, as well as income, to the chronically jobless men, women, and youth who have all but given up on America. The entry of these "hard core" unemployed into the employment mainstream is the major target of AFL-CIO's new Human Resources Development Institute (HRDI).

Labor's deep concern with meeting today's crisis in urban communities prompted the recent reorganization of AFL-CIO's national structure to deal with the major problems of cities. Special emphasis is placed, logically, in the areas of manpower and employment—where unions can work most effectively; at the same time, the organization is also interested and increasingly active in the fields of low-income housing and urban education which it believes are important facets of the problem.

The labor movement is itself a product of our urbanization. Ninety percent of our nation's population today lives on two percent of the land, and this trend toward greater centralization of people will certainly continue. In Pennsylvania, for example, well over 50 percent of the state's en-

tire population lives in the two cities of Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. Significantly, over 90 percent of the state's non-white population lives in those cities, indicating the more concentrated urbanization among minority groups.

Thus, the AFL-CIO Executive Council last year established a new Department of Urban Affairs, headed by John Evans. The assistant director is Julius Rothman, who also serves as president of the Human Resources Development Institute, the new non-profit organization established by AFL-CIO and funded mainly by the U. S. Department of Labor. This acceptance of a one-and-a-half million dollar grant is, incidentally, the first time the AFL-CIO has agreed to use Federal funds in carrying out any of its activities.

## 50 Cities Designated

**H**RDI has a representative in each of the 50 metropolitan cities that were designated by former President Johnson as having significant problems of hard-core unemployment. It was into these high-problem cities that the National Alliance of Business-

men last year took their JOBS program. At that time, AFL-CIO assigned a labor liaison person in each city—frequently an officer of its local Council—to work with the program. This person sat in on planning sessions implementing hard-core hiring in various plants, helped work out problems regarding union-management contracts and procedures, interpreted the program to the unions and, in general, helped to promote it. It was soon apparent, however, that the problems of the hard-core unemployed required more time, a degree of specialization, and a broader approach that would relate them to the entire manpower field and labor's role in it. HRDI thus came into existence.

The institute's main job is still in the hard-core field. What, in the first place, is a "hard-core" unemployed? Of governmentese origin, the term has by now come into general usage, although on occasion it arouses some resentment as an overly glib label. To meet the hard-core classification, one must fall within HEW's poverty criteria—\$3,300 maximum annual income for a family of four—and meet *one* of the following: under age 22, over age 45, member of a minority group, school drop-out, physically handicapped, unemployed 15 weeks, having a poor employment history, or receiving public assistance. Hard-core programs also reach out to those who have served jail sentences and to narcotics addicts.

## Who Are the Hard-Core?

**T**HE average hard-core unemployed placed on a job under the NAB JOBS program is: Male (75 percent); age 28; 3.6 members in family; average family income \$2,800 a year; 10½ years of education; out of work for over six months; black (76 percent—12 percent are white; one percent American Indian; one percent Oriental; and 10 percent Spanish surname).

Here's how JOBS operates: Private employers are approached and asked to designate how many hard-core unemployed they will hire within the year. The campaign is built around the slogan, "Hire, train, and retain." Emphasis is on obtaining meaningful jobs with upward mobility, rather

than dead-end jobs. After a year's operation of the program, over 100,000 former hard-core unemployed are still working. Federal funds are available for on-the-job training, prevocational orientation and education to assist the new worker, including, in the coming year, training to qualify for upgrading. Non-profit institutions can now also qualify for such training funds. The JOBS program has recently been extended to an additional 75 cities.

HRDI plays a major role in the permanent retention of the new worker on the job with its "Union Buddy" program. Older workers are trained to assist the new hard-core employee with both in-plant and out-of-plant problems, becoming, in effect, union counselors on a one-to-one basis.

Supplementary to the main hard-core thrust of the JOBS program, is the placing of needy high school and college students on summer jobs.

HRDI works on a variety of additional manpower problems. While programs vary from city to city because of special community needs, there is a great emphasis throughout on promoting minority participation in the building trades through the "Outreach" program.

### *Apprenticeship Training*

**"OUTREACH"** basically assists minority youth to compete successfully for entrance into apprenticeships through recruitment, guidance, and tutoring. It was pioneered about three years ago in New York's Bedford-Stuyvesant area by the Workers' Defense League (an organization familiar to many *W.C. Call* readers for its long history as a champion of workers' rights). The program has since spread to 50 additional cities, has gained the cooperation of labor's Building Trades Councils, and is receiving Federal funds. "Outreach" has been instrumental in raising minority participation in apprenticeship programs from two percent to over eight percent, a statistic which reflects a good beginning—but only that—in the apprenticeship picture.

HRDI representatives — coming from varied racial and ethnic backgrounds, but all with basic union experience—relate to governmental and

community manpower agencies, coordinating labor's role in them. In some areas, its staff works on problems of modernizing vocational education in the schools. Working closely with the local Central Labor bodies, they are helping to build a closer relationship between the labor movement and the minority communities.

There has been some work with the Job Corps program. In some areas, special labor programs, such as that of the Appalachian AFL-CIO Council, have been effective both in recruiting and placing Job Corps applicants.

### *Black Capitalism No Solution*

**AFL-CIO** takes sharp issue with the philosophy that "Black Capitalism" offers a major solution to the economic ills of the black ghetto. Labor's view is that an upwardly mobile Negro elite does little to solve our nation's manpower problems. The concept of the Full Employment Act of 1948 is still basic—namely, that it is the responsibility of our society to provide every person willing and able to work with a job. This includes the concept of government as "the employer of last resort" when people need work.

Approaches to the solution of manpower problems need to keep pace with the continuous changes in population and available work force. A large number of today's employed population are young. One-third are women; a majority of married women work outside the home. Minority workers make up an increasingly large segment of our urban work force. The shifting trend continues from blue-collar jobs being automated out of existence, to professional, white-collar, service and government jobs. As technology develops, workers must be retrained for new jobs. It is estimated that this occurs as many as five times during a work life. These changes give added substance to organized labor's role.

Since one-third of our nation's poor are members of a family headed by a full-time breadwinner, and not poor due to unemployment, AFL-CIO gives high priority to raising the minimum wage to \$2 an hour.

### *Jobs and Housing*

**MANY** of the working poor are Negroes. A decent income is their passport to a decent life—better housing, maintenance of good health, and the various good things in life that money can buy. However, supplementing the fight for a decent income for all must be the provision of adequate housing at moderate income levels and the freedom to move into any neighborhood of one's choice, regardless of race, creed, or color. AFL-CIO is working on these fronts, too.

Many questions regarding manpower need to be thought through. How do we maintain and improve employment levels at the end of the Viet Nam war? How do we eliminate irrelevant hiring practices, such as middle-class oriented testing, automatic disqualification due to prison record, and qualifications placed unnecessarily high for the specific job? Does the entire apprenticeship structure need re-evaluating—length of service necessary, entrance qualifications, minority representation? Do we gear our manpower programs to the avoidance of riots or to meaningful employment?

AFL-CIO's new Human Resources Development Institute is making a vital start in tackling some very big problems upon which the progress of our American community depends.

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### *Reaching for the moon*

## The View From Here

by William Stern

**I**T IS Monday, July 21, the day man left his mark on the moon, in its way the most forward thrust of the human intelligence ever made. One wonders what that ever happened before is comparable to it. Hardly anything, since the feat is a culmination



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SEPTEMBER, 1969