



## Roy Wilkins

A PLAIN 'NO'

The news from the Negro employment front is not good. Census data for the '60s showing Negro Americans to be still poor are an expected consequence of the adamant exclusionist policies of the construction unions, coupled with the ineffectiveness of government enforcement.

White Americans who pooh-pooh news of black unemployment are ignoring a time bomb that could threaten the whole of American life. The nation tends to think of unemployed blacks as an item affecting only the curtailed-off Negro minority. They forget all the other factors, the most powerful of which is poverty imposed by racial prejudice in the midst of the richest society on earth. They ignore the obvious ingredient of American violence.

The unemployment rate for black teenagers is more than 25 per cent, whereas for white teenagers it is about 12 per cent. When one out of four (and in some localities one out of three) Negro teenagers is idle, mischief and crime are in the air. Some of this was in the minds of government officials when the Nixon Administration announced a year ago a program to put 500 black plumbers to work in the construction industry.

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Today, a year later, not a single black plumber has been put to work under the program. Not one. Not even a token number. Not a talking point for apologists, for statisticians and for politicians—not one. The local unions simply did not take in minority members as their international union leaders agreed to do. Said one observer, "I give the national leaders of the plumbers credit. But the locals across the country absolutely refused to participate." A government official said the real problem was racial discrimination.

There it is in plain language. The

construction unions made it official by issuing a statement from Miami vowing to fight non-white quotas. The unions deny that racial discrimination exists. They claim their apprenticeship program includes Negroes. They reject "quotas under any name."

In rejecting quotas, the unions are sounding a popular note on which many Americans, including some blacks, agree. But the unions fail to note that the quota system to get some kind of black employment started was a last resort. Absolutely nothing in jobs for Negroes was produced by voluntary union action. Left to themselves, the unions added a mere trickle of Negroes. Now they will fight the government if it tries to make them change their policy.

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Meanwhile, according to the census, Negroes in bulk are remaining among the poor. More than half are below the poverty figure of \$3800 a year. The welfare rolls are swelling. Negroes who want work can get only menial, low-paid jobs. Their color shuts them out of journeyman plumbers' work at \$5 to \$10 an hour. They are but 1.9 per cent of the 173,726 union electrical workers. They are only 0.8 per cent of the plumbers and steamfitters, but 25.9 per cent of the building service employees.

A microscope is needed to find black faces among the elevator constructors, iron workers and sheet metal workers. The wage contracts of these men call for as much as \$500 a week, but their annual total is subject to seasonal fluctuations.

It would be a tragedy of massive proportions if Negro Americans became convinced that the elite trade unions were barring their path to the good life armed with a racial crow bar. It would also be a tragedy for all workers if the welfare and tax burdens became so heavy that the economy collapsed.

# Black Legal Help For G.I.'s Is Urged

By THOMAS A. JOHNSON

Nathaniel R. Jones, the general counsel for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, called yesterday for black civilian lawyers to be sent to West Germany to defend Negro soldiers facing military trials there.

This was a principal recommendation of a three-member N.A.A.C.P. investigating team, headed by Mr. Jones, that completed a three-week tour of United States military bases in Germany this weekend.

Another recommendation was that the military "set up an Army 'Philadelphia Plan' to recruit more black officers" and to give more blacks "command instead of staff assignments." The Philadelphia Plan is the name given to a Government effort to put more black workers into the building trades unions.

At a news conference at the Park Sheraton Hotel, Mr. Jones said that he had found that black soldiers often had little faith in white military defense lawyers. He added: "I have talked to more than 100 white lawyers in the Judge Advocate General's office in Germany and they all shared a feeling of utter frustration in getting black clients to confide in them."

## Lack of Protection Charged

The result, Mr. Jones said, was that the rights of many black defendants were not being fully protected.

He suggested also that the Government should help defray the cost of sending black civilian lawyers to Germany because the military "has the responsibility of providing legal counsel" in whom a defendant can freely confide.

The investigation came as the result of letters the black servicemen complain-

ing of discrimination, Mr. Jones said, plus news reports of racial disorders in Germany. With another N.A.A.C.P. lawyer, Melvin Boldin, and Julius Williams, the organization's director of military and veteran affairs, Mr. Jones toured bases in and around Berlin, Frankfurt, Stuttgart, Mannheim, Munich, Mainz, Wiesbaden, Karlsruhe and Heidelberg. Mr. Jones said they talked to more than 500 black enlisted men plus hundreds of whites, officers and civilians.

"The mood was very tense," he said, when asked about the black soldiers, "and they are extremely apprehensive for fear that no one cares. But I also found they were willing to work for change for the better within the system."

Mr. Jones said he was optimistic "because of the determination on the part of the black G.I.'s."

"All they need is some help," he added.

The 44-year-old black lawyer, who had served as the deputy general counsel for the President's Commission on Civil Disorders in 1967 and 1968, said that charges by the black soldiers of double standards of military justice had absorbed most of the lengthy "eyeball to eyeball" talks.

He said the practice of pretrial confinement, where a soldier can be put into the stockade for up to 30 days before being formally charged, was being used by some "inexperienced" and "frightened" commanders to remove "so-called black militants" from their units.

While black troops amount to 13 per cent of the total American military

strength of more than 300,000 in West Germany, 50 to 55 per cent of the stockade population is Negro, Mr. Jones said.

Most of the soldiers in the stockade were there on pretrial confinement, Mr. Jones said, and some 30 per cent were released without being charged. He said this went far to prove the black soldier's contention that pretrial confinement was being used by company commanders and sergeants to get soldier-activists out of their units.

The lawyer, who took over as the national civil rights organization's chief legal officer in October, 1969, had some praise for some military attempts to solve racial problems. He singled out Brig. Gen. George S. Patton Jr., son of the World War II commander, for the general's order that there was to be no pretrial confinement in his command unless he personally approved of it.

Mr. Jones said that he and his aides should immediately begin working on a full report of his investigation that would be made to the group's executive director, Roy Wilkins, and the national board of directors.

He said he hoped the organization would then make recommendations for action to the White House, Congress and the Pentagon.

Mr. Wilkins, who attended the news conference, said when it ended that the organization had made similar investigations of the military since World War I and that Thurgood Marshall, a former general counsel, had made a similar trip to Korea during the Korean war. Mr. Marshall is now a United States Supreme Court Justice.