

NAACP

# JOBS FOR BLACKS

Building the Economic Base for Full Equality



# The Promise:

Equal Employment Opportunity  
(Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VII)

# The Practice:

Massive Discrimination  
Unemployment, Under-employment, Low Pay Rates, No Advancement

**By the third quarter of 1970...**

## **UNEMPLOYMENT**

for black men rose to 7.9%, a jobless rate more than 50% higher than for whites . . .

for young black men 16 to 19, unemployment jumped to 34.9% — 1 out of 3 found no work. And this rate is for all black male workers 16 to 19. For disadvantaged youths in poor ghetto neighborhoods, employment opportunity is almost non-existent.

## **UNDER-EMPLOYMENT**

Negroes with jobs, when compared with whites, generally have jobs with lower skills and lower pay (ironically, they are often required to deliver a higher skill while remaining on the pay scale for a lower one). They have a disproportionate number of dirty jobs, blind-alley jobs, and seasonal, insecure work.

More than five years after the employment guarantees of the Civil Rights Act became "effective," personnel offices and union hiring halls in all parts of the U.S. are still discriminating: black workers with long years of service find the doors of advancement tight-shut against them.

# The Result:

The median black family, nationwide, gets 63¢ for every dollar of income received by the median white family. In the current inflation-recession, black family income in the South is little more than half the white average.

Without access to job equality, black Americans cannot join the mainstream of American life. Equal access to housing is a pious impossibility when a white family can spend two or three times what a nonwhite family can afford. The flossiest restaurant and the swankest hotel may be "open," but their prices shut out low-paid Negroes. Even education is affected: The children of low-income families grow up in poor neighborhoods where schools are notoriously ineffective.

Therefore, job equality is basic — and prerequisite to continuing the march toward racial equality in America. If we can overcome job bias in the 70s, other steps toward equality initiated in the 60s may come close to full realization.

## **LDF Battles for Jobs ...in the Courts**

The naacp Legal Defense Fund long recognized the key role that jobs play in the advancement of racial minorities. With the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VII — Employment Provisions), a nationwide legal attack on job discrimination became a possibility, and LDF immediately initiated a major campaign. Currently, LDF has more than 90 employment cases pending under the 1964 Civil Rights Act — almost twice the number of suits being litigated by the U.S. Department of Justice.

Since our first case was filed in 1965, we have established important precedents. In January of 1968, we won a district court decision in *Quarles v. Philip Morris, Inc.*, ordering equal pay for equal work and the right to promotion without loss of seniority. The seniority relief obtained in this case effectively outlawed one of the most

frequently used devices for accomplishing employment discrimination and provided the legal foundation for numerous later decisions involving thousands of jobs.

A suit for a cashier's job in the A & P of Wilmington, North Carolina, resulted in an out-of-court settlement changing employment policies by A & P for several Southeastern states. LDF's case against the Georgia State Employment Service won a decision requiring that agency, which serves as a conduit for federal funds for training the unskilled, not only to train on a color-blind basis but to ignore race in making job referrals subsequent to successful completion of the course.

## **...Outside the Courts**

By early 1966, it became clear to the Legal Defense Fund that employment litigation on a case-by-case basis, even though the suits were carefully selected to establish job rights for large groups of potential workers, might take years before it brought work to those needing it most — the rural black poor for whom the misery of urban slums is no answer. LDF's Division of Legal Information and Community Service painstakingly surveyed industrial development near pockets of black poverty across the rural South. The result was a decision to concentrate on two major — but very different — Southern industries: (1) textiles, with their heavy hiring of females but near-total exclusion of black women; and (2) the pulp-and-paper industry, in which a plant-by-plant survey revealed that two billion dollars would be spent on expansion within three years —



much of it in heavily black rural areas.

The Legal Defense Fund's plan of action was — and is — three-pronged: (1) information and organization at the plant and community level; (2) vigorous effort to get effective enforcement of fair employment by federal agencies at the national level; and (3) where the first two methods do not produce equal job opportunity, the use of carefully prepared court suits to bring about affirmative hiring practices on a company-wide or industry-wide basis.

Armed with information pinpointing the towns with the most promising employment opportunities in pulp-and-paper, Miss Jean Fairfax, Director of the Community Service Division, worked with her field staff to expand black job placements in this fast-growing industry. Grass-roots activity was usually led by an LDF Community Aide, working with local civic organizations, civil rights groups, and churches. In the course of efforts across the Central South, field staff worked with local employment committees in some forty-odd communities. Through workshops, printed materials, and person-to-person coaching, potential job applicants learned how to apply for a position, how to brush up on skills possibly needed for placement, and, importantly, what their rights are under the Law.

Through this method, 3,012 jobs and promotions were secured for black men and women in the pulp-and-paper

industry in a single year, adding at least nine million dollars to black earnings. Other applicants were turned down, and the Division assisted them in filing complaints with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in Washington, D. C.

Typical of federal apathy when it comes to delivering rights to black Americans, the Office of Federal Contract Compliance cancelled no contracts in spite of a heavy flow of complaints of discrimination by black workers against virtually every major pulp-and-paper company.

## Giant Suit

Evidence was assembled for a court-centered assault upon discrimination in the pulp-and-paper industry. Attorneys for the Washington Research Project cooperated with LDF lawyers and LDF's Division of Legal Information and Community Service to bring an unprecedented suit: *Hadnott v. Laird*. One hundred and nineteen men and women, led by a would-be pulp and paper worker, Isaiah Hadnott of Prattville, Alabama, joined in a suit against the Secretary of Defense involving federal contracts with major pulp-and-paper companies. Each of these companies is accused of discriminating against one or several of the 119 plaintiffs. This case calls upon the courts to require the United States Government to enforce its own rules for non-discrimination and insist that companies doing business with it obey the Law.

In these pages, we present some of the people involved in LDF's massive efforts to defeat job bias.

