

PROPOSAL FOR FUNDING OF THE BLACK AGENDA NETWORK

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

December 18, 1970

#### 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:

1. To organize a coherent, coordinated network of men and women from across the national black community whose specific expertise in one or more of the selected problem areas has already been tested.
2. To develop through that network a long-range plan of analysis and program projection related to the issues faced by the black community in the eight Task Force areas. Specifically, the Task Forces will attempt to produce verifiable answers to the following questions in each area:
  - a. What is the present condition of the national black community (recognizing significant local variants) in relation to the particular problem area under examination?
  - b. What were the historical and systemic forces inside and outside the black community which contributed to the creation of the present situation?
  - c. What have been the kinds of earlier attempts to deal with the problems? What were the results. How are these results accounted for in the light of our present perspective?
  - d. What must be done in very specific, programmatic ways, by the black community and by others to move from the present condition to one of basic health and self-determination?
3. To keep a constant and active relationship between the work of analysis and program planning on the one hand, and the day-to-day experiences of the practitioners on the other.
4. To disseminate the results of the work of the BAN task forces in as wide and as deep a milieu as is possible, placing special focus on the black community. This would include the constant development of non-technical versions of the Network's findings and proposals and their transmission

via printed and audio-visual forms into as many dissemination media as possible (church groups, civic clubs, community organizations, educational institutions, fraternities, sororities, etc.)

5. To produce a commercially published one or two-volume standard work on the findings of the BAN.
6. To work with and advise others who will specialize in the creation of those programs relevant to the findings of BAN. These programs will translate the Black Agenda analysis and program into the lived experiences of the black community.
7. To produce, in the long run, the kind of perspective and systematic analysis which will make it possible for the black community to move towards authentic self-determination.

#### PROCEDURES

##### A. To November 15, 1970

1. The work of the Black Agenda actually began with the gathering of the staff of the Institute of the Black World in the summer of 1969. At that point it was decided that a major part of the responsibility of the six senior research fellows (Lerone Bennett, History and Communications; Chester Davis, Pre-College Education; Vincent Harding, History and Religion; Stephen Henderson, Language and Literature; Joyce Ladner, Social Science Research; William Strickland, Political History and Analysis; and Sterling Stuckey, History and Folklore) would serve as catalytic agents and nuclei for a network of persons who would eventually share our work from their own geographical bases of operation.

2. During the spring of 1970 the staff of the Institute engaged in a series of discussions and planning sessions focused on the document, "Toward A Black Agenda." It was agreed to move forward in the organizing of the kind of national system of co-workers described in the document. The document was then circulated to the initial group of Associates who would eventually form the core of the Black Agenda Network, and they were asked to join the BAN group.

3. After having received a set of responses from this group, staff members and several Associates then developed a series of initial discussion papers on several of the Black Agenda problem areas early in the summer of 1970. These were distributed to a larger group of persons with an invitation to participate in the initial gathering of the BAN group in the fall, and with a request for critiques of the working papers. By the eve of the first meeting of the BAN group in October, 1970 the IBW staff had proposed the following Task Force areas and Chairmen:

Communications: Lerone Bennett (IBW Senior Fellow and Senior Editor, Ebony)

Cultural Definitions and Survival: Stephen Henderson  
(IBW Senior Fellow)

Economic Development: Robert Browne (Director, Black Economic Research Center) and Robert Vowels (Dean, School of Business Administration, Atlanta University)

Education: Chester Davis (IBW Senior Fellow)

Health and Welfare: Andrew Billingsley, (Vice President for Academic Affairs, Howard University)

Pan-African History and Relationships: Canute Parris (Director of Black Studies, Hofstra University) and Robert Hill (IBW Senior Fellow)

Political Organization: William Strickland (IBW Senior Fellow)

Organized Religious Resources: Leon Watts (Associate Director,  
National Committee of Black Churchmen)

4. The first meeting of the Black Agenda group took place on October 16-18, 1970. Two thirds of the persons invited were able to attend.

Including Institute staff members, the group numbered 47 persons. (A philanthropist absorbed all of the on-site expenses, and a participant in the process was able--through his institution--to cover the travel of all persons who could not pay for their own.)

5. The major tasks at Idlewild were outlined in a set of guidelines which were distributed to the participants.

They said, in part:

. . . we see our work here as the beginning of a process. In the work groups we are seeking two things:

1. To begin to develop a basic sense of agreement about the nature of the problems we face, the reasons we face them and what can be done to overcome them. But this can only be the beginning of the task.
2. So our second task is to define and begin here to develop those structural relationships and to identify those resources, human and material, which will make it possible for the network we represent to do the things which need to be done--on a long and short term basis.

The emphasis here must be on hard assessments, hard planning and hard commitment. We do not expect to leave with the problems fully defined and the programs fully articulated. We do expect to leave with the foundations in place for coordinated work on the development of those definitions and the creation of those programs. This will happen if the work groups move seriously "on the case". We have prepared the following guidelines to help that movement:

- 1) Select a person to take notes. Each group is responsible for a written (no more than five pages) summary of its activities. This summary is to be submitted to an IBW staff person before we leave.

- 2) Given the specific category of the sub-group, we propose that work be centered around the following questions:
    - a) What is the current status of the Black Communities of the United States with regard to--(economic development, education, health and welfare, etc.)? Individual case studies of communities and/or institutions are perhaps most helpful.
    - b) What were the precise forces which contributed to the development of the current situation?
    - c) What have been the kinds of earlier attempts to deal with the problems? What were the results? How are these results accounted for in the light of our present perspective?
    - d) What must be done to move from the current situations and tendencies in order to develop self-determination both locally and nationally? (Wherever program is proposed, it is crucial that very specific suggestions for implementation be included.)
  - 3) Given our four core questions, inventory the relevant published and unpublished materials in your area and establish a mechanism for centralizing, localizing, or master listing these for easy access.
  - 4) Initial work assignments towards the answering of the questions should be made before the sessions are over.
  - 5) Determine the need for and move to incorporate other individuals with expertise who can fill out your group's capabilities. (Include a listing of names, addresses and telephone numbers.)
  - 6) It will be important to **create** whatever formal structure is necessary for the group to carry out its work beyond this meeting (i.e. Convenor, Secretary, work schedule, etc.). ....
6. In most groups, the initial assessments and the initial structures for ongoing work were developed successfully. In one or two cases, the process proved slower and more difficult. Nevertheless, by October 18 the basic structural groundwork for the BAN working force had been established, and the necessary commitment for long-range work had been elicited from all participants. At the initial meeting of BAN each participant group chose its working chairman and secretary. Each established--or began to establish--its own internal agenda and

schedule. Meanwhile, the Institute staff continued to develop its own coordinating structures.

7. By November 5 the reports from the initial consultation were sent out by the Institute staff, listing decisions, assignments, participants to be added to each group and working schedule for the next 3-6 months. A Black Agenda coordinating committee was formed within the IBW staff, to handle coordination until a full-time Coordinator is employed, and then to work with the BAN coordinator and his secretary when funds are available to bring them on.

B. To Summer, 1971

1. Each group chairman, working closely with the BAN coordinator, will follow up on the research and writing assignments of his Task Force. He will see to it that all materials get to the IBW for inter and intra-Task Force dissemination.
2. The initial working papers and reports will be reproduced on a broader but still limited scale by the end of the winter, 1971, largely to elicit initial responses from practitioners in the various Task Force areas fields being explored by the Task Forces. They will also serve to alert organizations and institutions to the ultimate availability of the materials. Indeed, the early expressed interest of national organizations and of the mayors' offices in Gary and Newark will provide a number of initial testing grounds for some of the ideas and analysis. The BAN coordinator will be responsible for this work.

3. By the end of the spring each group will meet again for at least two days to discuss the work submitted up to that time and to make assignments for additional work. At that time they will confer with the BAN coordinator (who will be present at each group meeting) on a variety of matters, including the development of the best procedures for dissemination of the early Task Force products outside of the Network mechanism.\*
4. The papers which will be reworked as a result of the winter/spring meetings will be circulated among the entire group of network participants by July 15, 1971. Their written and verbal responses would again be disseminated by the BAN coordinator with any additional IBW input, in preparation for a fall meeting of the full BAN group.
5. The entire BAN working group will meet in late summer or early fall of 1971 for at least five days. This will be the occasion for full group critique and evaluations of each of the working papers, as well as the opportunity for each of the Task Forces to meet and register its initial reactions to the larger group response. Assignments will be made here for whatever rewriting and additional research the group may deem necessary.

C. To Summer, 1972

1. By mid-winter, 1972, each Task Force (with or without an additonal meeting) will have a document prepared for the widest possible dissemination. Conversations with commercial publishers have already commenced concerning publication and distribution of these documents

\*The Communications Task Force will bear initial responsibility for developing proposals relating to audio-visual dissemination.

in attractive paperback form.

2. By late spring or early summer, 1972, a group of regional meetings (at least four) will be organized by the BAN persons in each area to expose a significant group of community leaders, organizers, educators, technicians, students, etc. to the work of the Black Agenda. This will be one of the most critical means of moving the continuous internal evaluation out to a broader community.
3. The responses from the regional conferences will be fed into the BAN coordinator, and the final forms of the individual Task Force Publications (and audio-visual presentations), as well as the final form of the larger, collected volumes would reflect this encounter.

D. Evaluation

Procedures for the evaluation of the BAN approach and product are, of course, built in throughout the working process. For instance:

1. The collective nature of the work provides a large, significant and varied set of perspectives which would be unavailable if a single person or relatively small staff was doing the work.
2. The products of each Task Force will be examined and critiqued by members of other Task Forces who, in many cases, are impressively competent across Task Force lines.
3. The ideas, analyses and programs will be exposed to practitioners within and without the Task Forces, and will be evaluated--in terms of their own autonomously defined needs--by the organizations and offices which have committed themselves to experiment in their particular settings with the materials and findings which emanate from the BAN process.

4. The regional conferences will provide another source of evaluation for the work of the BAN apparatus by providing interim check points.
5. Ultimately, of course, the real evaluation and validation will take place in the implementation of the programs which grow out of the analysis.

KEY PERSONNEL

Central Coordination

Project Director: Vincent Harding, Director, Institute of the Black World, BAN Coordinating Committee, IBW, Co-Chairmen: William Strickland and Aljosie Yabura.

Coordinator, Black Agenda Network:

Black Agenda Task Forces

Communications: Lerone Bennett, IBW Senior Fellow and Senior Editor, Ebony

Amy Billingsley  
Social Science Researcher, Author  
Washington, D. C.

Elma Lewis, Director  
National Center of Afro-American Artists  
Dorchester, Massachusetts

Cultural Definition and Survival Task Force:

Stephen Henderson, Chairman  
IBW Senior Fellow  
Atlanta, Georgia

ART

Floyd Coleman  
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Clark College  
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Jeff Donaldson  
Chairman, Department of Art  
Howard University  
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E. Barry Gaither  
Curator  
Museum of National Center of Afro-American Artists  
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DANCE

Kathryn Dunham  
Director Performing Arts Training Center  
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Bill Mackey  
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Shirley Rusing  
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DRAMA

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PHOTOGRAPHY & FILM MAKING

Julius Lester  
Martha's Vineyard, Mass.

Robert Sengstacke  
The New Courier  
Fisk University  
Nashville, Tennessee

Economic Development: Robert Browne, Co-Chairman  
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Community Organizer  
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Lloyd Yabura  
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Grace Boggs  
Writer, lecturer  
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Organized Religious Resources: Leon Watts, Chairman  
Associate Director  
National Committee of Black Churchmen  
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Albert Cleage  
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Shrine of the Black Madonna  
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H. Carl McCall  
President  
H. Carl McCall Associates  
New York, N. Y.

Bishop Herbert B. Shaw  
President  
National Committee of Black Churchmen  
New York, N. Y.

George Thomas  
Professor of Theology and Ethics  
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Atlanta, Georgia

Pan African Relations and History Task Force: Canute Parris  
Director of Black Studies  
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Robert Hill, Chairman  
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National Council of Churches  
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Mack Jones  
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Mayme Mitcham  
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Alex Poinsett  
Ebony Magazine  
Chicago, Illinois

Bryant Rollins  
H. Carl McCall Associates  
New York, N. Y.

Nahaz Rogers  
BLK Consultants  
Representative of the Mayor's Office  
Gary, Indiana

Charles Turner  
Black United Front  
Boston, Massachusetts

BUDGET

The budget for the work of the Black Agenda Network is set up for a working period ranging from March 1, 1971 to September 31, 1972. As has been noted above, work has already begun on the Agenda project, and the costs of this work have been absorbed by the Institute and by others. But these very limited resources cannot seriously underwrite this significant work.

It is also important to note that the project will likely have spin-off effects of many kinds during the course of its life and beyond the termination date established for its formal activities. None of these is included in the budget request on the assumption that any other expenses will be absorbed by the BAN participants or by other means.

The budget makes allowance for only one third of its total to be spent on salaries for the very small, but necessary coordinating staff. The other two major categories of expenses are for communications among the network (reproduction equipment and supplies, telephone, telegraph and postage) and for travel to make it possible for the gathering of the Task Forces. No room and board expenses are included in the budget. The participants will supply this as part of their own basic commitment to the project.

<u>Salaries and Fringe Benefits</u>	<u>March 1-Dec 31, 1971</u>	<u>Jan 1-Sept 30, 1972</u>	<u>Total</u>
BAN Coordinator	14,000	7,000	21,000
Secretary to Coordinator	8,000	4,000	12,000
Part-time Transcriber	4,000	2,000	6,000
Withholding Taxes	<u>3,000</u>	<u>1,500</u>	<u>4,500</u>
Total	29,000	14,500	43,500

Travel

Coordinator*	1,350	650	2,000
Task Forces#	<u>24,000</u>	<u>6,000</u>	<u>30,000</u>
Total	25,350	6,650	32,000

Rental of Space

A.B. Dick Offset Press	600	300	900
Xerox Copier	2,400	1,200	3,600
IBM Selectric Typewriter System (Robo)	2,500	1,250	3,750
IBM Selectric Composer System	<u>4,500</u>	<u>2,250</u>	<u>6,750</u>
Total	10,000	5,000	15,000

Purchase of Equipment and  
Supplies

Office Equipment	3,000	700	3,700
Office Supplies	1,500	1,500	3,000
Reproduction Supplies	6,000	2,000	8,000
Audio Tapes	500	200	700
Periodicals and Publications	<u>2,000</u>	<u>1,000</u>	<u>3,000</u>
Total	13,000	5,400	18,400

## BUDGET continued

<u>Postage</u>	5,000	2,000	7,000
<u>Telephone and Telegraph</u>	5,000	2,500	7,500
<u>Total Budget Expenses</u>			<u>125,650</u>

## Budget notes:

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\*Travel for the coordinator is based on his need to make nine trips in 1971, averaged at 150 dollars per trip. These would be his trips to the meeting of each Task Force, plus his trip to the larger meeting in late summer/early fall. For 1972 it's estimated that he would make four major trips with some driving added.

#The Task Force budget is based on the estimate that approximately 80 of the 100 participants will need travel assistance for one gathering of the individual Task Forces and for the full group meeting in 1971. Averaged at 150 dollars per trip, this means 300 dollars in travel for 80 persons in 1971. In 1972 the regional gatherings will take the place of the larger meeting and is averaged at one trip of 75 dollars for each participant.