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Black Entry Into the Apprentice Trades:  
Lessons of the Sixties and Prospects  
for the Seventies

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During the 1960's, the question of black participation in the apprentice trades was swept into the maelstrom of issues that became the civil rights movement. In the early years of the decade the quest for racial justice was confined largely to the South. It dealt primarily with overt segregation. By the end of the sixties, the scope was national and the target was covert discrimination. As these latter impediments are imbedded within the institutional structures that composes the fabric of our society, they are greatly more difficult to correct than were the overt affrontaries to human dignity. The overt practices collapsed quickly once a sustained assault was marshalled. The covert barriers are institutionalized and, therefore, require a strategy that is more complex than simply goodwill and dedicated effort. Institutionalized patterns of behavior are sustained by complex sets of forces which require systematic remedies. A review of the factors that impinge upon racial employment patterns in the apprentice trades (with primary interest upon the construction industry) will be the concern of this paper.

The Apprentice System and the Issue

To the degree that there is a formal apprentice policy in the United States, it flows from the National Apprenticeship Act of 1937 (Fitzgerald Act).

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Thirty states have also enacted their own apprenticeship statutes. In substance, these enactments set minimum certification requirements which must be met by private sponsors. The programs are registered with the Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training of the U.S. Department of Labor and, where applicable, the equivalent state government agency. The certifications given to graduates of registered programs serves the function similar to that diploma <sup>or a</sup> from an accredited school. It means that the participant has satisfactorily met the minimum requirements of a prescribed course of study. In this case, the apprentice has completed a specified number of hours of on-the-job work experience and classroom instruction in his craft. Other than certification, the role of government has basically been to promote the establishment of such programs in industry. Yet, because apprenticeship is frequently an extension of the collective bargaining process between private parties, it is likely that the apprenticeship system as presently constituted would continue even if government were to discontinue its modest support of the institution. <sup>1</sup>

As of January 1, 1969, there were about 41,000 registered programs in the nation. There are, however, numerous apprentice programs that are not registered. Of these, little is known with respect to program standards, enrollment sizes, or enrollee characteristics. Typically, the non-registered programs are in industrial settings -- as those of the electrical appliance, rubber tire, and steel industries. The registered programs, on the other hand, are centered in three major industries. Of the 237,996 apprentices enrolled in registered programs in 1968, 132,512 (or 56 percent) were in the construction trades; 56,324 (or 24 percent) were in the metal working trades; and 12,850 (or 6 percent) were in the printing trades. The remainder are in a

myriad of miscellaneous trades -- as meat cutters and automobile mechanics.

Prior to 1960, there were few blacks in any apprenticeship program. The Census of 1960 reported that "non-whites" (a category that is broader than "blacks") comprised a scant 2.3 percent of the apprentices in the United States.<sup>2</sup> In the construction unions, blacks were clustered into several relatively lesser-skilled trades -- as laborers, carpenters, roofers, plasterers, and bricklayers. In the mechanical trades -- electricians, pipe trades, operating engineers, sheet metal workers, elevator constructors, and structural iron workers -- blacks were so scarce as to be considered rare. Thus, the issue is twofold: the level of black participation in the apprentice trades and the distribution of black among the trades. Both issues are clearly visible from a review of the racial membership of building trade unions in 1967 -- a year, as will be argued later, from which progress should be measured -- as reported by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Table 1 shows that blacks (including both journeymen and apprentices) numbered 106,263 members of a total 1,257,929 membership of sixteen building craft unions. Blacks accounted for 8.4 percent of the total. By the same token it is clear that black membership is highly concentrated in the six relatively lesser skilled unions mentioned earlier. The six accounted for 89.6 percent of all black construction unionists. The point is not that these lesser skilled trades are bad jobs or less desirable jobs. For as George Meany has so aptly stated: "there are no low wage jobs in the building trades" and "there are no clean jobs in the building trades; they are all dirty."<sup>3</sup> Rather, the point is simply that some trades have been more accessible to blacks than have others.

Table I. Racial Membership of Building  
Trade Unions, 1967

Union	<u>Total Membership</u>	<u>Black Membership</u>	<u>Percent (%) of Membership that is black</u>
Asbestos Workers	6,104	61	0.9
Boilermakers	23,946	934	3.9
Bricklayers	34,069	3,300	9.6
Carpenters	315,538	5,284	1.6
Electrical Workers	113,904	915	0.6
Elevator Constructors	6,728	33	0.4
Operating Engineers	103,677	4,200	4.0
Iron Workers	70,273	1,197	1.7
Laborers	266,243	81,457	30.5
Lathers	4,660	177	3.7
Marble, Slate and Stone Polishers	4,355	387	8.8
Painters	66,714	2,498	3.7
Plasterers	28,182	3,917	14.0
Pipe Trades	147,862	320	0.2
Roofers	10,807	1,461	13.5
Sheet Metal Workers	<u>34,867</u>	<u>92</u>	<u>0.2</u>
Totals	1,257,929	106,263	8.4%

Source: Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

### The Nature of the Issue

The American labor movement has tended to reflect the moral and social values of our society. The movement has absorbed the good and the bad. White racism -- as the Commission on Civil Disorders put it--has permeated the structure of most of our institutions. It would be surprising, therefore, if the labor movement with its pragmatic emphasis upon short run economic gains and its general eschewal of social and political issues had not been afflicted with a racist past.

Racial discrimination is by no means the only explanation for the paucity of blacks in the apprentice trades. A public policy based upon such a premise is destined to failure. There are a constellation of causative factors. In general, they can be grouped as follows: the apprenticeship system itself; the lack of information and of awareness concerning craft vocations in minority communities; and the general disadvantages incurred by blacks in meeting stipulated entrance standards. A successful public policy must be cognizant of all of these considerations. Hence, a brief review of these issues is in order.

To begin with, the apprenticeship system pre-dates the American labor movement itself. It is steeped in mystiques. Combining classroom instruction with first-hand experience on the job, it merges theory with practice. The goal is to make the apprentice a well-rounded journeyman who is capable of meeting a diversity of job situations. It is true, of course, that many white journeymen currently in the crafts did not enter via the apprenticeship route. Little is really known about how most of them did become journeymen. A significant number, it is believed, entered during and after World War II when there were nationwide manpower shortages. They had learned their trades in

the military or in the ever-present non-union sector. In contract construction, for example, about half the workers in the industry are not union members. Most of these men are employed in the residential building sector. In the mechanical trades, however, the percentages of people entering the trades via apprenticeship has traditionally been higher than in the non-mechanical trades. Moreover, it is apparent that in many respects apprenticeship is a form of in-service preparation for management positions. It is reported, for example, that 90 percent of the membership of the Mason Contractor Association of America were former apprentices; 75 percent of the apprentices in the General Electric Company's program have become supervisors and division managers; 45 percent of the apprentices in the machinist trades at the Ford Motor Company have become foremen or supervisors; and 35 percent of the members of the Associated General Contractors<sup>4</sup> were once apprentices. In numerous instances, only journeymen who have completed apprenticeship training can become construction foremen. Seldom does a journeyman who learned his trade by a non-apprenticeship method find the opportunity to advance to a white collar position. Foremen, supervisors, draftsmen, and contractors who rise from manual positions frequently come from the ranks of journeymen who completed apprenticeships. Hence, the often stated goal by some spokesmen to find alternative ports of entry into journeyman positions should at least be aware of the promotion limitations that are likely to exist by such a course.

To continue, it is true that the apprenticeship system serves as a form of control over the supply of entrants into various trades. To protect the high wages that the union has secured, it is necessary that new journeymen be able to meet prevailing productivity standards. No union is interested in

flooding the job market with semi-trained workers with whom its members must compete. In the past, the method used to assure that those entering the trades were dedicated and loyal to their craft was the practice of admitting only relatives of members. Courts have in the 1960's ruled such nepotistic practices to be illegal. By the same token, the drive by civil rights supporters to end nepotism as the selection device for entry has led to the imposition (by government edict or court decisions, or state statutes) of stipulations that the selection of apprentices shall be based upon qualifications alone in accordance with objective standards that permit review. As a result, joint apprenticeship committees are given little latitude to deviate from the established standards for admission into apprenticeship..

A second obstacle to entry has been the lack of available information about apprenticeship. There are two dimensions: procedural matters and the nature of certain crafts. As to the former, an applicant often encounters a labyrinth of admission procedures. He must: (1) learn the objective standards (e.g., a high school diploma, no serious arrests, be usually within the age range of 18-26; and pass a physical examination); (2) ascertain when and where formal application forms are to be submitted; (3) find out <sup>what</sup> tests are required as well as when they are administered and where; and (4) be informed of what credentials must accompany a notarized application form (as a high school transcript, a birth certificate, proof of residency in the city for a set period of time, and letters of recommendation). The fact that a black youth who possesses these qualifications is often employed (albeit some menial job) makes access to information about apprentice classes even more difficult to obtain. The other information barrier confronting minority youngsters pertains to knowledge of



the nature of certain trades. Many ghetto youth are aware of the carpenter's and bricklayer's trades but few had had exposure to operating engineers or sheet metal workers. The absence of male role-models for black youth often precludes information from reaching them about the mechanical trades in which black adults are few. Relatedly, the absence of effective communication channels has meant that school counselors have little knowledge as to the desirability of a career in the skilled trades. Counselors often reflect in their advice their own middle class bias toward white collar jobs. Frequently, they are unaware that some blue collar jobs provide more income than many white collar jobs; or that in the skilled trades area it is possible to advance into white collar jobs in the future. For all of these reasons, Dennis Derryck -- a knowledgeable black educator who has contributed greatly to the process of gaining entry for blacks into apprenticeship programs in New York City -- has candidly observed that "it is easy to see, therefore, that the union's cry of 'no qualified minority applicants' holds some truth."<sup>5</sup>

The third barrier pertains to the overall disadvantages that blacks face in a competitive employment situation. Inner city schools have notoriously high dropout rates. In addition, the Coleman Report in 1966 confirmed the supposition that actual grade achievement in many ghetto schools lags several years behind actual grade attainment. With unions in particular and society in general placing emphasis upon paper credentials and test performance as criteria for job entry, the inadequacies of the public school system -- which serves most minority youngsters -- looms large. When educational deficiencies are combined with other ghetto impediments -- as poor housing, inadequate transportation, and serious health handicaps, the chances are reduced that black



youngsters can compete equally for the limited number of apprentice openings.

Thus, the point is that although racial discrimination has been in the past -- and in some instances still is -- the major obstacle to black participation in the skilled trades, it is not by any means the only explanative factor. To insist that it can serve only to divert public attention from the need to develop broader remedial measures.

As indicated earlier, the fewness of blacks in apprentice programs became one of the issues of the civil rights movement of the early sixties. Whereas in the South demonstrations dealt with segregated lunch counters, hotels, swimming pools, churches, and parks; demonstrations in the North often centered upon construction unions. In 1963 there was a wave of demonstrations (some violent) in New York, Philadelphia, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, and other Northern cities over the apprenticeship issue.

Many of the construction unions have been especially vulnerable to attack. White construction crews working in black ghettos have high visibility. Often the building projects are supported by public funds -- as hospitals, schools, public housing, post offices, urban renewal, subways, and freeways. Moreover, construction jobs offer employment opportunities for men at exceptionally high wages. Such jobs are in short supply in all ghetto communities.

#### Changing the Exclusionary Pattern of the Past

It is often said that public policy is not made, it emerges. Such has clearly been the case with the issue under discussion.

Focusing upon the construction trades, the first significant break from the past occurred in 1962. Local 3 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers in New York City admitted 240 blacks into a newly formed class of 1,020 apprentices. The details of this decision are recorded else-

7  
where. Suffice to say, that this action stands to this day as the single most important event taken to increase the number of blacks in apprenticeship. It only serves to prove once again that private decisions to undertake affirmative action can be far more significant than legal devices as instruments of social change. For private actions can do things that laws cannot require.

In 1963, the Department of Labor established its Apprenticeship Information Center (AIC) program. The AIC's serve to narrow the communication gap between the outside community and the apprenticeship establishment. Usually, the AIC's do not engage in outreach recruitment. They serve solely as a referral body to local apprentice sponsors who have supplied information about entrance standards, dates when applications will be received, and where they should be submitted. As of August 1969, there were 35 AIC's in operation in 22 states. In total they have counseled and assisted over 31,000 potential applicants to apprenticeship. Of this number 7,400 (or 24 percent) of the referrals were from minority groups. Of those ultimately indentured, 1,600 (or 19 percent) were from minorities. Many of these placements, however, were actually placed in the Apprenticeship Outreach Program (to be discussed shortly) and are included in their reporting statistics.

With regard to continuing influence and accross-the-board impact, the most influential decision of the decade was that of the Workers Defense League (WDL) to assume as its primary task the placement of blacks into apprentice programs. Founded prior to World War II in New York City as a human rights organization, WDL was an active participant in demonstrations at construction sites in 1963. The leaders of WDL, however, quickly realized that it would be impossible to fill any openings that were made available unless someone assumed

responsibility for recruiting and preparing minority youth for apprenticeships. Relying upon a small grant from a local philanthropic organization, WDL accepted in challenge and launched its program in June, 1964. The format of their undertaking consists of distribution of information; outreach recruitment; guidance counseling; preparation for test taking; personal assistance through the application process; and follow-up meetings to overcome adjustment problems of on the job.<sup>8</sup>

The Workers Defense League effort is based upon a pragmatic diagnosis of both the apprenticeship system and black community. The approach does not attack the conceptual basis of apprenticeship or the prevailing standards for admission. Legal action is used when absolutely necessary but only as a last resort. As one WDL staff member put it:

In reality the issue of increased Negro participation is more 'selling' people what ought to be done then it is 'telling' people through compliance enforcement what they have to do. It doesn't do any good to put pressure on these cats because they are more than capable of putting pressure back on you.<sup>9</sup>

Likewise, efforts to have standards lowered are no guarantee that more blacks will qualify since it means that more whites are also eligible. Working the other side of the street as well, WDL seeks to stimulate community awareness of apprenticeship. To accomplish this task it works on the attitudes of both minority youngsters and their parents. To find recruits, it is necessary to go to specific places. WDL has learned that the schools are the best long run source of applicants. In the short run, the most profitable group are employed youths with the paper credentials who hold low wage jobs. Other sources are local poverty and manpower programs; YMCA's (as this is where new migrants to the city stay); and "walk-ins". The League has found that street corners,

pool-rooms, and bars supply people who are unlikely to succeed in apprenticeship. The most unique feature of the WDL effort, however, is its tutoring phase. As most of its participants have high school diplomas, little concern is given to basic education. Rather, the sessions are based upon the expedient view that written and oral tests are obstacles to minority youngsters who lack "test consciousness." The tutor sessions center upon how to take a test and what type of questions are likely to be encountered. Emphasis is given to spatial relations, verbal reasoning, and mechanical operations. Mock oral interview sessions are also conducted. The results of the WDL program between 1964-1967 were so astounding that the program received national attention. During that timespan, 245 black youngsters were placed into the apprentice classes in New York City. Special emphasis was given to the mechanical trades where some black indentures were the first of their race in the history of the local unions.

The year 1967 represents the achievement of a plateau. Early in the year, the Department of Labor put forth its Apprenticeship Outreach Program (AOP). AOP is based upon the successful format devised by the Workers Defense League. The WDL itself has become a sponsor within the AOP framework. With funding provided by the federal government, the WDL has been able to expand its operations from its original Brooklyn office into eleven urban labor markets. Because the WDL concept is based upon the use of a small staff with explicit responsibilities and an intimate awareness of the local unions and labor market characteristics, it was impossible (even had it been desirable) for the WDL to function as a nationwide sponsor. Other groups had to be found. By 1967, the national labor movement itself had begun to retreat from its solely defen-

sive posture. In December, 1967, the AFL-CIO's Seventh Constitutional Convention explicitly endorsed the WDL program. Shortly afterward, in February 1968, the powerful Building and Construction Trades Department AFL-CIO also pledged itself to the assumption of responsibility of recruiting minority youngsters. The presidents of the respective building trades unions agreed to support, through their local building and construction trades councils, the outreach efforts of AOP sponsors in their local areas and to become local AOP sponsors themselves in a number of communities. Thus, as of September 30, 1969, local building trades councils were the prime sponsors of 16 outreach programs. The third major group to participate in the AOP programs is the Urban League. With a long history of concern for the employment needs of individual blacks, the Urban League -- as a part of its Labor Education Advancement Program (LEAP) -- sponsors AOP operations in 22 cities. And lastly, there are eight additional Apprenticeship Outreach Programs that are sponsored by a variety of local community groups. As of September 30, 1969, the breakdown of indentures of minority (i.e., blacks, Spanish surname, oriental, and Indian) youth by sponsoring agency is shown in Table II.

The pioneer program of the WDL has had the highest indenture rate for blacks (89 percent of its placements). Spanish Surnames (i.e., Puerto Ricans in this case) account for most of the remainder. Seven of the WDL's operations are within the state of New York. Of the other five, only two are in the South: one each in Lexington and Nashville. Table III indicates the WDL placements by city. Of the 1,561 cumulative placements by WDL, 1,419 indentures were in the sixteen construction trades. Of these, 769 (or 51 percent) were in the six mechanical trades. This is by far the highest percentage of any of the AOP

Table II. Minority Indentures of Apprenticeship  
Outreach Program Sponsors, Cumulative through  
September 30, 1969

<u>Number of Programs</u>	<u>Sponsoring Agency</u>	<u>Total Indentures</u>	<u>Percent of Inden- tures who were black</u>
16	Building Trades Councils	1,204	60%
22	Urban League	1,799	83%
12	Workers Defense League	1,561	89%
<u>8</u>	Miscellaneous Sponsors	<u>478</u>	<u>75%</u>
58	Totals	5,042	78%

Sources: With the exception of the last column, the information is from the Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training, U. S. Department of Labor. The source of the column giving the percentages is confidential but extremely reliable; there is no question in the authors mind that they approximate reality.

Table III. Apprentice Indentures by Mechanical Trades  
and Total Placements Through the Auspices of  
the Workers Defense League Sponsored Programs,  
Cumulative through September 30, 1969

City	Total Placements: All Crafts	Total Placements: Mechanical Trades	Mechanical Trades					
			Electricians	Elevator Construction	Iron Workers	Operating Engineers	Pipe Trades	Sheet Metal Workers
Brooklyn (NY)	475	293	120	21	13	6	59	74
Buffalo	94	36	2	0	8	0	17	9
Cleveland	244	142	26	0	35	8	56	17
Harlem	344	163	77	10	10	9	22	35
Lexington	36	12	5	0	0	3	2	2
Mt. Vernon (NY)	33	33	6	0	0	0	16	11
Nashville	58	17	4	0	1	0	6	6
Newark	177	38	4	1	6	0	22	5
Roxbury- Boston	52	25	0	1	3	4	15	2
Rochester	47	10	3	0	4	3	0	0
Hempstead (NY)	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wyondanch (NY)	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	1,561	769	247	33	80	33	215	161

Source: Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training, U. S. Department of Labor

Note: Part of the variation in performance is due to the fact that not all programs have been in operation for an equal period of time.



sponsors. Originally WDL focused its activities on the mechanical trades. As it has become an AOP participant, it has been required to expand its concern to the full range of apprentice programs. In the non-mechanical trades, the dropout rate (for all races) has traditionally been higher than the mechanical trades. The entrance requirements for the lesser skilled crafts are typically lower than for the mechanical programs; the apprentice programs are relatively less rigorous; and the temptation to leave an apprentice program and become employed in the non-union sector where the wages are often higher than apprentice earns are more real to a youth from a low family income background. Before 10 affiliating with AOP, the WDL dropout rate was about 6 percent; as of September 30, 1969, with the broader range of recruitment it had risen sharply to 19 percent. This rate, however, is the lowest of all the AOP sponsors.

In absolute numbers, the Urban League sponsors the most programs and has had the most indentures. As indicated in Table IV, its programs are scattered nationally with 7 programs in the North; 5 in the South; and 10 west of the Mississippi. As with all of the AOP programs, the duration of operation of the individual programs varies so widely that it is impossible at this point to draw any conclusions based upon geographical considerations. In the aggregate LEAP has secured 1,799 indentures of which 1,721 were in the construction crafts. As shown in Table IV, 734 (or 42 percent) of these placements were in the six mechanical trades. The dropout rate for Urban League programs has been 31 percent. The high rate is clearly reflective of the fact that the Urban League programs have had higher placement rates in the more dropout prone non-mechanical programs.

The sixteen programs sponsored by local building trades councils have had the lowest percentage of black placements (60 percent.) The explanation

Table IV: Apprentice Indentures by Mechanical Trades  
and Total Placements Through Auspices of the  
Urban League, Cumulative through September 30, 1969

City	Total Placements	Total Placements	Mechanical Trades					
	All Crafts	Mechanical Trades	Electricians	Elevator Operators	Iron Workers	Operating Engineers	Pipe Trades	Sheet Metal Workers
Akron	50	23	11	0	2	4	3	3
Atlanta	119	37	3	0	0	4	26	4
Baltimore	157	50	13	0	9	11	13	4
Chicago	545	276	75	0	74	46	54	27
Colorado Springs	32	10	3	0	0	2	3	2
Columbus (Ohio)	49	17	8	2	2	4	0	1
Dayton	62	35	12	0	3	3	10	7
Denver	83	36	9	0	3	13	6	5
Flint	53	23	6	0	1	1	5	10
Jacksonville (Fla)	46	7	0	0	0	0	5	2
Kansas City	42	5	0	1	0	0	1	3
Los Angeles	91	53	18	0	3	15	9	8
Miami	46	20	1	0	0	0	16	3
Milwaukee	85	36	3	0	2	21	4	4
New Orleans	49	5	0	0	1	0	4	0
Omaha	9	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
Portland	28	11	2	0	0	0	1	0
Phoenix	96	44	7	0	3	7	22	8
St. Louis	65	23	3	0	7	3	8	2
St. Paul-								
Minneapolis	19	7	0	1	0	2	4	0
Tampa	9	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Tulsa	64	14	5	0	1	2	5	1
Total	1,799	734	180	4	111	138	200	101

Source: Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training, U. S. Department of Labor  
Note: Part of the variation in performance is due to the fact that not all programs have been in effect for an equal period of time.

rests with the fact that 5 of the sponsors are in Texas; 1 in New Mexico and 2 in California. All of these are areas with high Spanish surname populations (Mexican-Americans in this case). Thus, 23 percent of its placements were from this ethnic group. People of Indian ancestry were also disproportionately represented (7 percent) due to the fact that seven programs were in the West (not including the 5 programs in Texas.) The remainder were largely Orientals in the San Francisco program. Of the 1,204 indentures through these sixteen councils, 1,151 were in the construction crafts. As shown in Table V, 428 of these were in the six mechanical trades (or 37 percent). The overall drop-out rate for the programs sponsored under the auspices of these building trades councils is 23 percent.

The last group of sponsors are a variety of local community groups. One of the two sponsors in Detroit and the one in Philadelphia have had long association with the labor movements of their respective communities. They are both known as the Trade Union Leadership Councils (TULC). Their concern has traditionally been with matters that affect the black community and union activity. In Pittsburgh, the sponsor is the local Opportunities Industrialization Center which has been associated with the anti-poverty program in the city. The remaining five sponsors are less known nationally. The Mexican-American Opportunity Council in Los Angeles has placed 74 people with Spanish surnames and it accounts for most of the 16 percent placements in this category by this group of miscellaneous sponsors. As shown in Table VI, the combined indentures of these eight AOP sponsors as of September 30, 1969, was 478 apprentices. Of this number, 446 of the placements have been in construction crafts; 215 (or 48 percent) of these were in the mechanical trades. The dropout rate has been 22 percent.

Table V: Apprentice Indentures by Mechanical Trades  
and Total Placements Through the Auspices of  
Various Building and Construction Trades Councils,  
Cumulative through September 30, 1969

City	Total Placements	Total Placements	Mechanical Trades					
	All Crafts	Mechanical Trades	Electricians	Elevator Operators	Iron Workers	Operating Engineers	Pipe Trades	Sheet Metal Workers
Albuquerque	65	22	8	0	4	1	4	5
Casper (Wyo)	41	33	4	0	6	15	3	5
Chattanooga	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Corpus Christi (Tex.)	15	5	0	0	0	3	0	2
El Paso	178	48	5	9	18	3	9	4
E. St. Louis (Ill.)	59	33	8	0	5	4	8	8
Ft. Worth	15	13	1	0	9	0	0	3
Gary-								
Hammond (Ind.)	50	25	8	0	4	3	5	5
Houston	84	23	2	2	10	1	2	6
Knoxville	78	52		1	5	8	9	6
Oklahoma City	111	23	23	0	1	1	7	10
Oakland	302	53	4	0	1	5	12	14
Salt Lake City	45	17	17	0	3	3	2	4
San Antonio	42	27	5	0	1	0	11	10
San Diego	27	14	4	1	0	0	5	0
San Francisco	91	39	0	8	23	1	0	7
Total	1,204	428	90	21	94	57	77	89

Source: Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training, U. S. Department of Labor

Note: Part of the variation in performance is due to the fact that not all programs have been in operation for an equal period of time.

Table VI: Apprentice Indentures by Mechanical Trades and Total Placements Through Auspices of Miscellaneous Community Sponsors, Cumulative through September 30, 1969

City	Total Placements		Mechanical Trades					
	All Crafts	Mechanical Crafts	Electricians	Elevator Operators	Iron Workers	Operating Engineers	Pipe Trades	Sheet Metal Workers
Cincinnati	55	30	9	1	5	1	8	6
Detroit-Trade Union Leadership Council	175	98	8	11	26	0	22	31
Detroit-(Industrial)	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Los Angeles	69	42	3	1	0	26	0	12
Philadelphia	83	29	12	0	2	4	11	0
Pittsburgh	60	9	2	0	1	5	1	0
Trenton	11	7	5	0	0	1	1	0
Washington D.C.	16	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	478	215	39	13	34	37	43	49

Source: Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training, U. S. Department of Labor

Note: Part of the variation in performance is due to fact that not all programs have been in operation for an equal period of time.

The Apprenticeship Outreach Program represents the pragmatic response of the sixties to the paucity of blacks in apprenticeship at the beginning of the period. The Workers Defense League model served as the prototype. It does appear, however, that a number of the AOP sponsors have accepted the WDL approach without completely duplicating the WDL model. Although it is difficult to generalize, it seems that a number of sponsors have sought to bypass the tutorial phase of the model. To the degree this is so, it is likely that indentures could be higher if this crucial step was given the prominence that it is in the pure WDL arrangement.

The combined placements of minority group members by all sponsors into all trades is presented in Table VII. Of the total indentures, 2,146 were in the six mechanical trades. They represented 42 percent of the total placements. It is anticipated that the Apprenticeship Outreach Program will be expanded to about 85 sponsors by late 1970. In reviewing the AOP operation, however, it is important to keep in mind that the actual numbers of minority members serving apprenticeships is undoubtedly higher. Such is the case because some minority members were in apprentice classes before AOP began and also there are minority members in programs that are not involved in the AOP scheme. In fact, the number of minority group apprentices as of January 1, 1968, was reported as 15,600 individuals (9,360 of whom were black; 4,320 were Spanish surname; and 960 were American Indians).<sup>11</sup>

There has been another related development, whose roots stem as far back as 1965, that was finally consummated in January 1970. Known as the "Chicago Plan," it represents a formal agreement between the Chicago and Cook County Building Trades Council, the local employer association, and the Coalition for United Community Action. The Coalition, representing 61 black

Table VII: Minority Placements in Apprenticeship Programs Through the Apprenticeship Outreach Program, Cumulative Through September 30, 1969

	Workers Defense League	Urban League	Building Trades Councils	Miscel. Sponsors	Total In- dentures by 30 /Craft
Asbestos Workers	12	11	2	5	
Bricklayers	59	145	48	22	274
Carpenters	216	380	332	98	1,026
Cement Masons	52	82	66	34	234
Electricians	247	180	90	39	556
Elevator Constructors	33	4	21	13	71
Glaziers	45	20	12	5	82
Iron Workers	80	111	94	34	319
Lathers	7	20	5	3	35
Machinists	40	19	6	9	74
Operating Engineers	33	138	57	37	265
Painters	156	200	62	33	451
Pipe Trades	215	135	77	43	470
Plasterers	45	30	16	4	95
Roofers	55	160	133	26	374
Sheet Metal Workers	161	101	89	49	400
Tile Setters	3	4	27	1	35
Miscellaneous	102	59	67	23	251
Total	1,521	1,799	1,204	478	5,042

Source: Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training, U. S. Department of Labor



community organizations had demanded in July 1969 a total of 10,000 jobs for blacks in the building trades. Demonstrations by Coalition members led to counter demonstrations by union members. The situation remained tense until Mayor Daley was able to have negotiation reconvened. Signed on January 12, 1970, the agreement sets an immediate target of 4,000 jobs for minority people. The Coalition accepts the responsibility for recruitment. One phase of the accord will be the admission of 1,000 workers who already possess skills (presumably from working in the non-union sector) as full journeymen. The second aspect pertains to workers who have at least two years of experience in a craft but whose skill level is not sufficient to qualify as a journeyman. They will be slotted into comparable skill steps of on-going apprentice programs. If this arrangement proves unsatisfactory, a special training program for these workers will be initiated to meet **their** needs. And lastly for young men in the 19-23 age category, a special one month pre-apprenticeship program (very similar to the AOP program described earlier) will be set up to prepare these youngsters for apprenticeship qualification examinations. The objective is to reach, within a period of not more than 5 years, a level of black participation that will approximate the percentage of the black population in the community at large that is included within the area-wide agreement.

Thus, the decade of the sixties has been eventful.

#### The Prospects for the Seventies

If the actions of the sixties are to bear fruit in the seventies, public policy should provide momentum for three separate types of endeavors: (1) apprentice outreach recruitment; (2) apprentice dropout abatement; and (3) alternate channels to journeyman status other than the apprentice route. Each of these deserves brief commentary.

The Apprentice Outreach Program has demonstrated that black youth can be found who, with minimum assistance, can qualify for on-going apprentice classes. The information vacuum in ghetto communities can be filled and stimulation provided in the local community to influence black youth in the direction of apprentice training. The inclusion of both union and community groups seems basic to any successful ventures. Community groups can relate more effectively to both the hesitations and aspirations to apprenticeship of black youth. A cooperative union attitude can overcome some of the institutional barriers that have hitherto often been as insurmountable obstacles as has been racial discrimination. Peter Schoemann, general president of the plumbers and pipefitters union, has succinctly written that:

For the time being, it seems to me that the surest protection of existing standards is to follow an affirmative action program, and if some extra coaching or tutoring or waiver of requirements is necessary to make the program go, then this ought to be done.<sup>12</sup>

The AOP format which involves both labor and community groups should be continued indefinitely and it should be expanded to a larger number of localities.

But attracting and gaining entrance for minority youth into apprenticeship is only one step toward increasing the participation rate of blacks in these programs: keeping them in the programs is another. The notoriously high dropout rates of all apprentice programs has also become characteristic of the indentures secured through the auspices of the AOP. The AOP operation has had an overall dropout rate of 23 percent which is roughly consistent to the regular dropout rate. Nonetheless, the gravity of the situation surrounding the placement of minority youths in apprenticeship during these years of transition in racial employment patterns demands that AOP sponsors pay more attention to the dropout problem.

Recruitment must center upon the best available talent that is not interested in going to college or who have quit college. Apprenticeship positions can never be regarded as the answer to the high unemployment rates of ghetto teenagers who are school dropouts. It can be part of an answer but its capacity in this role is likely to be small. The significance of apprenticeship to the advancement of racial minorities rests in its qualitative opportunities and not its quantitative dimensions. As such, the AOP effort is guilty of "creaming" some of the best of ghetto youth while leaving behind the more difficult placement problems to other programs and agencies. In reply to this naive charge, one WDL official has sarcastically replied to critics of its emphasis upon youth who possess the paper credentials that "we take the cream of the crap." Apprenticeship must be understood for what it is: a program to develop skilled craftsmen. To recruit bodies simply to fill positions or to justify continued operations is to invite dropouts. Construction work is hard work; it is outdoor work; it does require going back to school; it is rough work; it is irregular work that is subject to seasonal, cyclical, labor disputes, and weather interruptions; and, for apprentices, it does start out at relatively low wages (usually from 40 to 50 percent of the prevailing journeymen salary with 6 month incremental increases) that are sometimes not competitive with other entry level (but often dead end) jobs for male high school graduates (especially given the irregularity of income flows). The AOP operation cannot be content simply to match the disgraceful dropout rate that already characterizes apprentice programs. It must do better because it is seeking to correct a past flaw in employment opportunities in this country. The completion of apprentice programs is a worthy goal whose accomplishment deserves as much attention as simply gaining access to the programs.

With respect to alternatives to apprenticeship, the need is real. There has been discrimination in the past that precluded black entry into both apprenticeship and journeymen positions. As it is likely that the journeymen ranks of all crafts are going to be filled in the near future, as they have been in the past, by people who have completed apprenticeship and by those who have not, it is only fair that blacks have access to both avenues to entry. The expansion of the AOP effort to include recruitment, preparation, and placement of minority adults who have had experience in the non-union sector or in upgrading lower skilled journeymen (as laborers) to higher skilled crafts should be given at least equal priority to the **present** emphasis on apprenticeship. The "Chicago Plan" offers promise and, as George Meany said of the proposal:

It is a worthy extension of Operation Outreach which has already proven itself.<sup>13</sup>

There are plans to add journeymen to many of the AOP operations in the 1970's and this should be done forthwith. Similarly, it can be hoped that other urban labor markets may find the opportunity to **derive** and to implement their own versions of the "Chicago Plan" that are consistent with their own needs and practicalities.

#### Concluding Remarks

Reviewing the 1960's, one sees a decade in which the pattern of virtual exclusion from the skilled trades has been shattered. Looking ahead to the 1970's, one sees much to be done before one can rest at ease and be assured that equal access shall prevail regardless of racial background. But so it is throughout our society. In the apprentice trades, promises have been made by the people in the key positions to see to it that the pledges are kept. Moreover, programs have been implemented to meet the institutional practices that

have frequently remained in other sectors of our society once overt segregation was publicly disavowed. Undoubtedly there remain some locals who have yet to abandon a racist philosophy. In addition, there are a number of labor markets that do not have an Apprenticeship Outreach Program, or an equivalent, and who are satisfied to keep the status quo as long as possible. Moreover, it is likely that at least some of the AOP operations are content with token results. In each of these instances, pressure must be exerted and vigilance maintained to see to it that complacency and/or racism are purged wherever it exists. The national labor unions and, when necessary, the various instruments of government should act forcefully when a laggard to the espoused racial goals of the labor movement and the nation are encountered. Yet, at the same time, it is clear that the stage has now been reached when the global indictments of the craft unions as a whole as racists are no longer valid. Indeed, those who make such blanket charges are either oblivious of the events of the past few years or who have motives that are maleficent to both the goals of the black and union movements of this country.

In this regard, a passing reference to the "Philadelphia Plan" seems apropos. The proposal, which requires federal contractors on jobs of \$500,000 or more to submit intended employment plans which specify the expected racial composition of certain crafts (those singled out are the mechanical trades, as defined in this paper, with the exception of the operating engineers which are excluded and the roofers union which is included). It is impossible to see how the "Philadelphia Plan" could accomplish anything more than does the Apprenticeship Outreach Program, or its equivalent. To actually do more, the Plan would have to assign a racial quota (which its proponents vehemently in-

sist it does not do) or it must set up some formal recruiting and training program to prepare individuals for work in the crafts (which it does not). All that it takes to be in compliance is that a "good faith" effort be expended to meet the targets. Aside from the fact that it implicitly condemns in public all of the unions regardless of the vast diversity of effort to overcome their past shortcomings, the Plan puts forth not a modicum of institutional adjustment that is required to see that long term attachment to a craft is secured. The Department of Labor would be better advised to continue its support of its AOP operations and to expand the program's scope to include journeymen as mentioned earlier. Similarly, the sooner that the Philadelphia Plan is abandoned the sooner the Office of <sup>Federal</sup> Contract Compliance can assume its most useful duty in this area: the pinpointing of the malingerers.

In conclusion, the reversal of past practices as indicated by the rising minority participation figures since 1967 portend the distinct prospect that during the 1970's this lingering ghoul of racial exclusion in the skilled trades can be buried once and for all.

## Footnotes

1. For a discussion this point, see Felician Foltman, "Public Policy in Apprenticeship Training and Skill Development," U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Employment and Manpower, The Role of Apprenticeship in Manpower Development: United States and Western Europe, Volume 3 of Selected Readings in Manpower, 1964.
2. It is very difficult to believe that this statistic (2.3%) is correct. The census figure was based upon only 86,966 people who said that they were apprentices whereas the Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training had 166,005 people enrolled in its registered programs alone. It is likely that parents or wives reported their sons or husbands as craftsmen rather than as apprentices. Nonetheless, the paucity of black apprentices was so widely documented in other studies that there is no question as to their fewness (see, e.g., the review of such studies in Chapter III of F. Ray Marshall and Vernon M. Briggs, Jr., The Negro and Apprenticeship. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1967).
3. George Meany, Labor and the Philadelphia Plan, An address to the National Press Club, Washington, D.C., (January 12, 1970), p. 4.
4. Remarks by James J. Reynolds, Under Secretary of Labor, at the 20th Southern States Apprenticeship Conference, Birmingham, Alabama (July 25, 1968), p. 5 (mimeographed material).
5. Dennis A. Derryck, "Minority Youth Can Be Apprentices," Occupational Outlook Quarterly (December 1967), p. 8 of reprint.
6. The basis for this conclusion is drawn from the research finding of the author and his colleague, F. Ray Marshall, as cited in The Negro and Apprenticeship, ibid. In the ensuing years since the publication of this study, a continuing association with the topic has served only to reinforce the strength of this finding.
7. See, F. Ray Marshall and Vernon M. Briggs, Jr., Equal Apprenticeship Opportunities: The Nature of the Issue and the New York Experience Ann Arbor: The Institute of Labor and Industrial Relations, University of Michigan-Wayne State University, 1968.
8. The details are described in ibid.
9. Interview with James E. Dukes, Tutor Coordinator, at the Conference on "Minority Youth and Apprenticeship Training," in New York City, (February 17, 1968).
10. Marshall and Briggs, Equal Apprenticeship ..., op. cit., p. 48.
11. "Apprenticeship Rate up 19% for Minorities," AFL-CIO News (April 5, 1969) p. 2 (The article cites a Report of Secretary of Labor, George P. Schultz as the source).



Footnotes (continued)

12. Peter T. Schoemann, "Apprenticeship and Fresh Air," Address to the General Assembly, 20th Southern States Apprenticeship Conference, Birmingham, Alabama, (July 25, 1968), p. 5 (of reprint).
13. "Chicago Minorities Pact Hailed as Pattern-Setter," AFL-CIO News, (January 17, 1970), p. 11.