

CARTON 10:29 THE BROTHERHOOD OF SLEEPING CAR PORTERS

A Civil Rights Inventory of San Francisco -
Review + Conclusion

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veloping a skilled labor force. Above all, Professor Williams' study serves as a warning that our training system must undergo periodic re-examination in order that pitfalls such as age and training time requirements, which do not recognize differences in individual abilities and in the levels of skills to be mastered, must be avoided. As Professor Williams observes, "The most remarkable fact about the present [English] system of recruiting and training young workers for skilled industry is that in all essential points it is exactly the same as the method introduced more than 800 years ago for an entirely different economy."

Advocates of legislation designed to direct our brightest youngsters into professional engineering and scientific training might also profit from the author's discussion of some of the less desirable results of the well-intentioned Education Act of 1944. Legislation which would have the effect of channeling only the less intelligent youngsters into the crafts might eventually lower the level of our skilled labor force. Professor Williams points out that an industrial society needs a balanced labor force of intelligent craftsmen as well as technically trained professional workers.

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LABOR CONDITIONS AND PROBLEMS

A Civil Rights Inventory of San Francisco. Part I, Employment. By Irving Babow and Edward Howden. San Francisco: Council for Civic Unity of San Francisco, 1958. xvii, 352 pp. \$2.75.

How long is the road which must be traveled—at least in San Francisco—before persons can attain employment commensurate with their qualifications rather than the irrelevant factors of race, color, religion, or national origin is clearly revealed by this study.

This inventory of civil rights in San Francisco is a valuable addition to the other studies, such as those made at Fisk

University, which have assessed the state of equal opportunity in such major cities as Baltimore, Pittsburgh, and Minneapolis. The present work has several projected parts. Only Part I, dealing with employment, has been published. It is the most comprehensive inventory made to date. If the other projected sections, dealing with health facilities, housing, and public accommodations, maintain the same high standard of thoroughness, impartiality, and scholarship, a significant contribution to our knowledge will have been made about the actual extent and scope of discrimination in a major geographical area.

The inventory was sponsored by the Council for Civic Unity of San Francisco, a private voluntary association, its own resources being supplemented by a grant from the Columbia Foundation. Edward Howden, then executive director of the Council and Dr. Irving Babow, a sociologist from the University of California conducted the study.

Employment practices of one hundred large employers in the San Francisco metropolitan area were studied. The highlight of the report is that while seventy-five of the employers professed to have a policy against discrimination in employment, only nine appeared to have communicated the policy through appropriate channels. Upon being interviewed, thirty-five of the employers claiming to have a merit employment policy made either contradictory or inconsistent statements or stated such broad exceptions as to raise grave doubts about their alleged policy. The great majority of firms reviewed reported no Negro employees, not even in the unskilled or menial job categories. Those firms which employed Negroes limited them to posts very low in the job progression scheme, or to jobs where they served almost exclusively nonwhite clientele. The type and kind of industry made no significant difference in its employment policy regarding members of minority groups.

The authors used several cross checks to verify their ultimate findings. Employers filled out a detailed questionnaire; personal interviews were held with ranking company officials; information was obtained from "informal sources" within

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the surveyed companies; the establishments were observed to see if any Negroes or Orientals held jobs "visible" to the public; labor union practices were studied; a review was made of a case study by the University of California on the hotel and restaurant industry in the area; officials of private and public employment agencies as well as college placement officers were interviewed; application forms used by several California State Licensing Boards for certain professions and businesses were analyzed; and finally classified employment advertisements in area newspapers were studied.

This multifaceted approach sustained the conclusion that the greatest resistance to employment on merit is encountered first by Negroes, next by Orientals, then by Latin Americans, and last by Jewish persons.

The facts set forth in this inventory are sad and provocative: sad in that they are revealed in an area which has prided itself on its cosmopolitan character, which should connote the absence of discrimination; provocative in that they present a challenge, as well as a blueprint for action, to the newly created City Commission on Equal Employment Opportunity.

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LABOR ORGANIZATIONS

As Unions Mature: An Analysis of the Evolution of American Unionism. By Richard A. Lester. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1958. xi, 171 pp. \$3.75.

Professor Lester "seeks to construct the framework for a general theory of union development" (p. 105); "the ultimate goal is a long run theory of union evolution" (p. 4); "the principal objective of our pursuit [is] to explain the factors in the evolution of American unionism" (p. 7). "This book is a think piece" (p. 8).

Lester builds his "analytical framework" around "general tendencies and long run trends" and around "short term

swings" about the secular developments. His conclusions about long-run tendencies in American unionism are as follows (pp. 111-112):

1. As the rate of union expansion slows down, a psychological ageing tends to spread throughout the organization, especially if it already covers most of its jurisdiction.

2. With the passage of time and the accumulation of experience, central control at union headquarters tends to expand and democratic checks at the local level weaken.

3. As a union stabilizes and ages, the top leadership becomes more administrative in character and the differences between union executives and management executives diminish.

4. The more success unions achieve, the more they tend to reduce their areas of potential expansion and innovation and, consequently, some of their dynamic qualities.

5. With increased bargaining experience and rising living standards, the differences between manual and white-collar workers tend to narrow and the areas of conflict and worker protest tend to be reduced.

6. As unions gain employer acceptance and their objectives broaden, the differences between unions and other community organizations tend to decrease.

7. Increasing security for the union and for the present leadership serves as a moderating influence; less rivalry and fewer challenges reduce the pressures and incentives for militant exploitation of a union's bargaining power.

The short-term movements about these secular tendencies may be created by external community influences or by internal upheavals like the founding of the CIO, but they do not "basically alter" the underlying evolutionary tendencies. The last two of the twelve brief chapters develop the implications of these conclusions for economic analysis and for public policy.

Lester has performed a real service in directing attention to the changing character of the labor movement in the American community. He rightly emphasizes the interrelations between the larger American community and the changes within the labor movement. "Today [unionism] is so typically American that it mirrors most of the good and bad qualities of our society" (p. 154). The little volume is particularly well written; it reflects balanced judgments and experience. It should receive wide attention in labor organizations, in business, among editorial writers, and general readers. I have assigned chapters to an introductory undergraduate course in

A CIVIL RIGHTS INVENTORY
OF SAN FRANCISCO

Part I

EMPLOYMENT

By Irving Babow, Ph.D.

and Edward Howden

A study conducted under the auspices
of the Council for Civic Unity of San
Francisco with the assistance of a
grant from the Columbia Foundation

Daniel E. Koshland, Chairman
Committee on Civil Rights Inventory

San Francisco, June, 1958

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Chapter XII. CONCLUSIONS

In considering the findings of this study it will be useful to recall that:

1. We have been concerned only with private employment practices in San Francisco proper.

2. The city is primarily a center of finance, commerce, administrative headquarters, processing and distributive activities, shipping, and light manufacturing, in addition to extensive governmental offices and installations.

3. Overall employment stood at high levels during the period of the study, with some labor shortages in clerical and in certain skilled, technical, and professional categories.

4. No fair employment law was in force nor in imminent prospect of adoption at the time of our field work,¹ though the possibility of revival of the issue at local or state level was apparently a source of concern to some employers, probably causing their reports to be biased toward understatement of restrictive practices. This factor appears not to have had any such effect on other groups of respondents.

5. Organized labor in San Francisco is traditionally strong and predominantly AFL in former affiliation and orientation. (Merger of AFL and CIO union locals and councils had not occurred as this volume went to press.)

6. Of the several minority groups which have encountered discrimination in San Francisco, Jews have been among the city's builders and leaders since pioneer days, and have long held positions of high business, professional, and civic esteem; persons of Chinese descent, brought here a century ago, originally suffered extreme persecution, and, later, severe forms of discrimination which have diminished slowly to the present day; Japanese, Filipino, and Mexican Americans, and others have successively experienced roughly similar histories; and Negro immigrants arrived in San Francisco in appreciable numbers only during and since World War II, to become the latest of the identifiable minority populations. (Population statistics for the foregoing groups are given in Table 47 of the Appendix.)

¹A San Francisco fair employment practice ordinance, establishing a Commission on Equal Employment Opportunity, was enacted on July 8, 1957, and became effective August 9 of the same year. This enactment took place subsequent to the writing of the first eleven chapters of the present report.

Our first general conclusion is that employment opportunity in private industry in San Francisco is still widely restricted according to race. These restrictions are experienced most acutely by Negro members of the labor force, and less so by Orientals and other nonwhites of Asian background. While the employment situation for Jewish persons is much more favorable than for nonwhites, they still face certain inequalities, usually of the "gentlemen's agreement" kind and at relatively high position levels. Latin Americans -- principally those of Mexican origin -- also encounter certain limitations of job opportunity.

Practices short of merit employment¹ are found in a great variety of forms and may differ sharply as between industries, firms within the same industry, departments within the same firm, or even job levels within the same department. No single formula would adequately describe the diversity of hiring and upgrading policies which obtain. We have noted, for example, that in some occupations which are hard-pressed for manpower -- especially in technical and professional capacities -- Oriental men are apparently found increasingly acceptable; while for other categories, as in low-level, white-collar, trainee positions leading potentially to public contact or supervisory responsibilities, many firms do not consider such men. Yet some of these same firms may be entirely open to young Oriental women for clerical jobs. Again, Negroes may have been heavily represented among the personnel of certain industries for a number of years, yet still be found only in the lowest job levels and in those not entailing contact with the public. Certain occupations traditionally filled by Negroes in other regions of the country have not yet opened to them here. Jews are barred from, or present only on a token basis in, some professional and business offices; in others they are strongly represented among ownership or management, yet even in some such firms the desire of the Jewish owners not to limit employment to their coreligionists has led to preferential employment of non-Jews. These examples suggest only a few of the manifold varieties of practice affecting minority-group persons which were found in the present inquiry. It would seem that the patterns of differential job treatment by race, religion, or ancestry exhibit no logical design, but compose instead a large, irregular crazy-quilt of pieces and patches contributed, often casually or indifferently, by a wide range of people and institutions functioning according to

¹For definition of this term see above, pp. 3, 125-27.

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assorted fears, assumptions, stereotypes, habits, and economic and social pressures. There is often no rhyme nor reason -- no consistent utilization of nonrestrictive personnel selection and advancement -- within particular industries or companies.

These variegated patterns and combinations of discriminatory and non-discriminatory practice are not altogether static. In the period that this study was under way we learned of occasional changes in particular firms or organizations. A Negro apprentice, for example, was reported as a "first" in one local craft union. A large department store which, when interviewed by us, reported no Negro sales employees, later hired one and apparently expected to continue this practice. A public utility reportedly placed several Negro women in certain non-menial jobs previously open only on a token basis. Then an added management interest in merit employment evidently resulted from the introduction of the proposed municipal fair employment ordinance in December, 1956, and the extended controversy over the measure which ensued until its adoption the following July. As in earlier debates over such legislative proposals in San Francisco, all principal employer organizations vigorously opposed adoption of this ordinance, arguing that they favored the principle of merit employment but that progress was being made on a "voluntary" basis and discriminatory job practices were not sufficiently serious to warrant such an enactment.¹

During this period there seemed to be some stepping-up of management efforts to recruit nonwhite workers. It is not known how extensive or successful these efforts were, or to what extent they were sustained after enactment of the new ordinance. Among changes which did come soon after the enactment were abandonment by a major taxicab concern of its ban against Negro drivers and a decision by a large union local to engage in active enrollment and non-

¹It will be recalled that a number of the employer representatives interviewed, as reported in Chapter II, said that they did not know whether nonwhites were employed in certain capacities in their firms, or could not estimate how many, and would not carry out or permit an observational count to be taken. On February 27, 1957, several employer and trade association executives, appearing before a committee of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors in opposition to the pending fair employment ordinance, presented statistics as to nonwhites employed, by occupational level, in their industries. This information was furnished for metal trades, insurance, retail trade, building management, and hotels. The San Francisco Employers' Council also reported the occupational distribution of Negro and Oriental employees in its member firms on the basis of a November, 1956, survey.

discriminatory dispatching of Negro members.

It appears likely that further policy shifts of this nature will follow, especially among the larger and more conspicuous firms and unions, and if the fair employment ordinance is administered in reasonably active and thorough-going fashion, with due attention both to the investigation of case complaints and to the informational, educational, and research duties imposed by the law. Yet it would probably be unrealistic to conclude that the inertia, indifference, anxieties, and stereotyped thinking which so pervasively limit employment opportunity will be dispelled without intensive, long-term, many-sided effort on the part of the fair employment agency, employers and their associations, unions, placement agencies, vocational counselors, and various community organizations. While some specific findings of the present study will -- happily -- become obsolete from time to time, it will probably serve over a considerable period as a guide to those habits and tendencies which obstruct the practice of merit employment.

This study finds no basis for disagreement with the common-sense view that the main "gatekeepers" at the "doors through which workers enter jobs"¹ are the employers. Although certain roles relative to employment processes are played by other elements -- principally trade unions and various private and public placement agencies -- it is clear that in general the employer exercises, or may do so, the primary and ultimate controls over hiring, upgrading, and termination.

What of the other institutions in the labor market? Private placement agencies basically depend upon the employer for their existence; they must conform for the most part to his preferences, negative and affirmative, or go out of business. Although such agencies may elect, on the one hand, to engage in discriminatory screening of applicants, or, on the other, to try to "sell" promising minority applicants to employers, they have neither the power nor economic motivation to interfere with any employer's decision to recruit on a straight merit basis. This is equally true of the college placement offices surveyed and of the State Department of Employment. The latter has an explicit policy against accepting job orders with discriminatory specifications, yet the employer who wishes to do so may, with impunity,

¹These phrases are from Emily Huntington, Doors to Jobs (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1942).

reject qualified minority applicants referred to him by the Department. Placement agencies, then, have no real control over the employers' hiring practices.

As for the power of trade unions in this respect, we have seen that while strong unions in certain industries have been in a position to exert significant influence for or against nonrestrictive hiring, the general truth is that, with regard to minority-group workers, most employers may, if they choose, exercise their traditional and stoutly defended prerogatives in hiring, upgrading, and termination. Relatively few of the major employers interviewed gave discriminatory union practices as a reason for not having hired minority-group persons, and other evidence suggested that even some of these claims were questionable. The two channels of labor recruitment used by most firms and ranked by most among their three chief sources were private placement agencies and direct hiring -- both sources being entirely or highly subject to management preferences. Third as to the number of firms listing it as a labor source and ranked high in importance was the State Department of Employment -- which seeks to influence employers toward, not against, merit hiring. Labor unions were fifth as to the number of firms utilizing them for recruitment and were ranked by the third largest number of employers as among their three most important labor sources.

Most of the employers professed -- through their authorized executive spokesmen -- a nondiscriminatory or merit employment policy. Yet in the same interviews this policy was revealed typically as so vague, so lacking in formulation, implementation, or communication within the firm or to its labor sources, so much a matter of option to department or division chiefs, or so uneven in application to various job levels and categories, that the term "policy" seemed almost devoid of meaning. In many cases the claim of merit policy appeared to be little more than a statement of wish or intention, or an impromptu declaration deemed by the respondent to be morally acceptable. These deficiencies and exceptions strongly suggest that merit employment policy is more often nominal or partial than operational and company-wide.

This conclusion is strengthened by other evidence yielded by the interviews of management spokesmen. In many instances their responses included information which tended to qualify, contradict, or raise doubts concerning their claim of merit policy. Among such information were reasons which they gave for not employing persons of certain minority groups. Substantial

numbers of respondents revealed unfavorable, stereotyped views of such groups, acknowledged fears of customer or employee objections to their employment, or indicated that department or division chiefs were free to discriminate in personnel practices. The stereotypes and fears held by management appeared to consist almost wholly of untested assumptions lacking foundation in the actual experience of the firm or industry. Less conclusive, but probably reflective of some degree of restrictive practice, were the fact that racial or ethnic identification was called for on a number of job application forms -- despite an earlier campaign by employer associations for revision of such forms, refusal of other respondents to show or furnish copies of these forms, and unwillingness by some to estimate numbers or permit nose-counts of non-white employees in various categories.

Among reasons for not having hired nonwhites in certain capacities, many of the employers cited absence of job applicants or lack of skills and experience on the part of such applicants. To the extent that either condition actually obtains, the employer is manifestly innocent of specific discrimination against individual job-seekers presenting themselves at his gate. The problem here again appears to be mainly one of deficiency or omission. As indicated by the President's Committee on Government Contracts, minority applicants (like others) tend to seek work where they think they will be favorably received and to stay away from firms, placement agencies, or unions which they believe to be discriminatory. This being so, the employer who has not always followed a merit hiring policy but now wishes genuinely to do so must communicate this fact to labor sources which can serve him accordingly. He must help remove the barriers which have grown up around his firm and which many assume to be still in place. He must make sure that word of the new policy reaches at least some segments of the minority labor force.

We have seen that the employer may exert considerable influence over his recruitment techniques and channels. For the most part, however, the San Francisco employers covered in this study have not undertaken to encourage a flow of nonwhite applicants. They have not endeavored seriously to utilize placement agencies, vocational counselors, newspapers, minority-group institutions, labor unions, or other channels to communicate their claimed hiring policies to potential job applicants and young people among minority groups.

On the question of skills, many nonwhites (as well as others) undoubt-

groups, nt, or in ared the ly re- ial forms such forms, on- and indi- is- gate. n. ty fa- ns edly do not, at a given time, qualify for certain jobs. But the process of skill formation takes place in considerable measure on the job, and this can hardly come about unless initial entry at lower levels is permitted. Meanwhile, minority-group youth often see their parents and other adult relatives resigned to menial job levels, receive from them little stimulus to set their educational sights higher, and are often advised by counselors that the course of realism is to fit into those job categories traditionally open to persons of their racial identity. Development of greater and sustained incentives among such youth to train for higher skills would seem to require, among other things, that employers make their merit hiring policies or intentions known to counselors and to minority groups generally, and that they provide increasing evidence of the practice of merit employment throughout private industry. We have seen that nonwhites have not yet been hired generally even in those local job categories which demand few or no special qualifications, or for which companies conduct their own training; lack of skills is clearly not the obstacle in such cases. When nonwhite workers are accepted more widely in ordinary capacities -- e.g. retail clerk, waiter, waitress, service-station attendant, office trainee -- it is likely that a general rise in their skills will gradually follow. The San Francisco fair employment ordinance probably holds potentially great value as a means of lifting levels of vocational aspiration, training, and activity in job-hunting among people formerly without effective rights or recourse in the labor market.

We have mentioned that some employers exhibit stereotyped conceptions of entire minority groups. Almost one-third of the executives interviewed indicated that their firms' hiring practices were based in part on certain adverse assumptions as to physical, mental, or social traits which they attributed to the group as a whole, rather than on evaluation of the specific performance qualifications of each individual applicant. San Francisco employers are not alone in functioning according to such stereotyping; various labor recruitment and manpower studies indicate much use by employers of subjective and stereotyped criteria rather than objective determinations of the abilities and characteristics of individuals. Prevailing San Francisco practice in this respect may be no better nor worse than that of other regions, but our present findings do not support, in this respect, the familiar claim that employers here are well ahead in merit employment.

A curious contrast emerged between the anxieties and stereotypes entertained by employers with regard to the general prospect of hiring minority-group persons and their own testimony of satisfaction with such employees on the basis of their actual experience. Of the 74 firms reporting merit policy or practice, 63 answered a question concerning difficulties encountered under that policy; and of these, 62 rated such difficulties as none or negligible, 1 said there had been some problems, which were surmountable, and none reported serious unfavorable results. This finding is supported by other data obtained in the management and guidance conferences in which we participated during the study. Some of the most enthusiastic statements of favorable experience with minority employees came from respondents who otherwise revealed that their firms did not actually follow a consistent merit policy throughout their operations. It seems that satisfactory integration of a token number of minority workers in one or several job classifications or operations does not necessarily open opportunities in other jobs or departments in the same firm.

Many firms which employed some nonwhites limited them to certain lower-level job categories or to units (as in some retail chain stores) with substantial nonwhite clientele, or restricted the total number in the company or in a particular department according to a predetermined quota. Underemployment or lack of upgrading opportunity appeared to be as serious a problem for minority workers who had skills and some job status as unemployment was for others. The minority-group person not uncommonly faces a job ceiling bearing no relation to his individual performance and potential. Many employers still assume uncritically that they cannot advance such a person to the role of supervisor over nonminority employees.

We have noted that among agencies informed on minority employment questions, the prestigious and relatively noncontroversial President's Committee on Government Contracts has placed considerable emphasis on (a) the problem of restricted upgrading opportunity, (b) the fact that management fears about initiating a merit employment policy are unjustified when this step is taken firmly and without equivocation, and (c) the importance of having the merit policy come from "the very top of the organization" if it is to be implemented fully. The Committee has also laid down a reasonably clear definition of the combination of practices which it considers essential to administration of a nondiscriminatory policy by any firm.¹ Yet among the San

¹See above, pp. 126-27.

San Francisco firms whose spokesmen were interviewed there seemed to be rather scant awareness of the program and requirements of this Committee which is charged with promotion of compliance with the nondiscrimination clause in contracts between the Federal Government and private industry. Some degree of restrictive practice was revealed among many of the employers who indicated that they held Federal contracts, and there was no appreciable difference in this respect between firms holding such contracts and others.

The foregoing findings and conclusions, arising from the interviews of authorized company executives, were generally supported and strengthened by the other main groupings of knowledgeable informants and by direct observation of certain employment situations. The informants providing this corroboration and amplification were of diverse positions and points of view. Included were management and guidance people participating in certain conferences; several nonexecutive, "inside" informants; a management consultant; a management association; a graduate student's study of hotel and restaurant industry employers and unions; placement specialists in private employment agencies, in the State Department of Employment, and in Bay Area colleges and universities; and various trade union officials and members. We also examined relevant portions of the earlier Malm study of the Bay Area labor market¹ and ascertained that our main findings as to employer practices were consistent with his. The older Stripp study of Bay Area union policies² provided useful background for our discussion in this realm.

The findings deriving from each of these sources have been set down fully in the preceding chapters and need not be restated in detail. Following are main, summary observations concerning the roles played by these several institutions with regard to minority employment and the significance of their respective contributions to the overall body of information we have gathered.

The management-guidance conferences yielded testimony -- apparently quite candid -- from employers and others close to management, tending to support the findings (a) that merit employment is a highly "sensitive" subject which has been accorded relatively little local discussion, even in conferences on manpower utilization; (b) that some executives still hold

¹See above, p. 139.

²See above, p. 184.

unfavorable, stereotyped conceptions of certain minority groups, and these views are reflected in their employment practices; (c) that the familiar management fears about instituting merit hiring have little or no foundation; (d) that discrepancies between employment policy acknowledged to be desirable and actual practices are common in local private industry; and (e) that in some cases, even when recognized by the management of a firm holding Federal contracts as inconsistent with the nondiscrimination clause, such discrepancies are not regarded as particularly serious, and there is no sense of necessity to correct the violations or run the risk of losing the government as customer. Another observation was voiced at these conferences which was expressed also by some of the 100 employers interviewed: that some personnel directors endeavor or would like to foster a merit policy within their firms but are balked by supervisors and department heads who are not required by top management to comply with such policy.

In a few cases data were secured from unauthorized management personnel below the top level and from other responsible sources intimately acquainted with employment practices. We did not undertake a systematic check of a substantial number of the 100 firms, but in several instances -- involving large firms and an important management association -- these informal sources yielded positive information conflicting sharply with the merit policy claims of authorized spokesmen. No generalizations can be made from this information except that it affords a further reminder of the discrepancies which may obtain between asserted policies, inoffensive preemployment application forms, and other apparent evidence of merit employment, on the one hand, and, on the other, actual hiring and upgrading behavior throughout a particular organization.

Direct observation of jobs held by nonwhites afforded reasonably reliable data on their presence in common public-contact capacities. Covered were fifteen department and specialty stores; numerous units each of certain major chains among banks, service stations, grocery stores, and restaurants; and representative "white-collar" private employment agencies and real estate offices. These observations strongly supported the conclusions (a) that Negroes and Orientals are generally not hired for public-contact positions and (b) that where so employed they tend to be in token numbers, in relatively low-level jobs, or in chain company units serving districts of high nonwhite concentration. Since these occupations require little or no special prior training, the absence or token numbers of nonwhite employees

cannot be attributed to lack of skills among these groups. The check of department and specialty stores indicated that, despite reportedly successful pioneering by certain major stores in the use of nonwhite sales people for some years preceding this study, most such establishments have not yet taken this step.

Closely related findings emerged from the special study of hotel and restaurant practices. Here, although nonwhites are employed in relatively large numbers, they are limited for the most part to menial and behind-the-scenes jobs, with little or no opportunity to move up the occupational ladder. Except for one or two of the unions concerned, there is virtually no evidence of effort by either management or unions to change the traditional patterns in the direction of hiring and upgrading solely according to individual merit.

The placement personnel in private employment agencies, in the State Department of Employment, and in various Bay Area colleges and universities appeared to reflect with varying degrees of adequacy the hiring behavior of their employer clients. Of these three types of institutions engaged in placement functions, the private agencies surveyed -- predominantly small businesses which, to survive, must serve management's stated personnel needs and preferences -- probably afford the truest mirror of employer practices. The managers of almost two-thirds of the 45 private employment agencies in San Francisco which handle clerical, sales, managerial, technical, professional, and other white-collar jobs were interviewed. The Malm study indicated that private employers in the Bay Area rely heavily on private agencies for clerical worker recruitment (62 per cent) and that about one-fifth of these employers utilize such agencies for management, professional, or sales personnel.

A striking fact encountered here was that not one of the 28 private agency managers interviewed claimed to refrain altogether from recording or otherwise retaining the racial or religious identification of job applicants. Use of such information was clearly considered essential and routine in their day-to-day dealings with employers. Moreover, of the 14 agencies which estimated the percentage of their employer clients who exercised discriminatory preferences or limitations, none placed this figure lower than 60 per cent; 6 reported estimates ranging from 90 per cent to "almost all"; and the estimates of 4 others fell in the 75 to 85 per cent range. In some cases these responses were qualified, as when one agency

respondent said that about two-thirds of his employer clients would discriminate in filling public-contact jobs, whereas perhaps only 15 per cent would do so for other positions. It appears that many of these private agencies either know or "take for granted" that most employers will not accept Negro applicants and that many will not take persons of other minority identity.

As found in other sections of this study, the minority group most frequently reported as encountering difficulties in placement of well-qualified individuals was Negro, followed by Oriental, Latin American, and -- rarely mentioned in this connection -- Jewish. Twenty-two of the 28 agencies stated that well-qualified Negro clerical workers would have some or great difficulty securing jobs. Oriental men apparently face more serious obstacles to positions generally reserved for men than do Oriental women for clerical and other typically female employment.

The data from the private employment agencies also indicate that the greatest resistance to nonwhites and Latin Americans tends to be found in finance, insurance, and wholesale and retail trade; with lesser but noticeable resistance to applicants from these groups in manufacturing, construction, communications, and transportation. Some problems for Jewish applicants were said to exist in finance, wholesale and retail trade, transportation, and communications. These resistances did not usually take the form of complete exclusion, but of employment for certain jobs only.

Few of the agencies indicated that they exerted strong efforts to place minority workers in positions known or assumed to involve employer resistance. Several of the respondents called attention to what they regard as the quite limited power of such agencies to affect the practices of employers who either do not wish to hire persons of certain minority groups or will take them only for certain jobs or on a quota basis. Those who apparently tried hard to place good minority applicants reported great frustration, especially from their efforts on behalf of Negroes and Oriental men. Often, it was reported, the jobs to which Negroes were admitted were marginal or temporary, and these workers consequently returned rather frequently to the ranks of job-seekers.

The private employment agency testimony with regard to the general status of Jewish job applicants was predominantly to the effect that less serious restrictions obtained than for other minorities. But this view perhaps cannot be considered conclusive in the face of (a) the report by one former employment agency worker of numerous instances of anti-Semitic hiring

im- restrictions, and (b) the possibility that the other private agency re-
uld spondents may have felt constrained on several counts to understate the
s extent of such restrictions. The former report may have been biased up-
ward in this respect and the latter downward. Note that twelve -- almost
half -- of the agencies explicitly requested religious identification in
their application forms. It seems that such limitations of job opportu-
nity as exist for persons of Jewish heritage tend to be more covert and
operative at higher job levels than those affecting other minority members
of the labor force.

Among reasons given by employers for their unwillingness to interview
nonwhites, the most common was fear of objection by other employees. Other
reasons stated were that the company's "quota was filled," that such em-
ployment would be against company policy or tradition, or that customers
would object. It is notable that almost none of the employers who would
not consider minority applicants indicated that they believed these appli-
cants lacked the performance qualifications for the jobs in question; in-
dividual skills and competence were not at issue. Refusal to interview
applicants on the basis of a racial (or other group) classification obvi-
ously precludes the possibility that the actual qualifications of a par-
ticular individual might be found satisfactory.

The great majority of private employment agencies said that they
thought their task would be easier if performance specifications, rather
than race, creed, or national origin, were the only criteria to be applied
in referral and placement. Yet generally their view was that they must
"give the employer what he wants." Four agencies acknowledged that they
did not accept applications from nonwhites, but other evidence indicated
that the actual number who made only token registry of such applicants may
have been larger, particularly with respect to Negroes. A few agencies
reported that they made special efforts on behalf of nonwhite applicants.
Most, however, appeared to fall in a middle group with regard to their at-
tempted service to minority job-seekers, many willing to register them but
engaging in little or no effort toward a placement which they see as unat-
tainable.

The agencies generally operate on the assumption that they may not re-
fer a qualified nonwhite without first checking with the employer. In
some cases past experience with an employer has led an agency to conclude
that such a check would be not only useless but a cause of irritation.

Often, it seems, the agencies do not consider the extra "trouble" and cost entailed in such placement efforts worthwhile as against demands on their time and energies by other applicants. Also, there is some reluctance to risk becoming identified as an agency actively serving minority applicants, based apparently on fear that, in this highly competitive business, both employer and nonminority applicant clients might transfer their patronage to other agencies.

A number of these private agency respondents appear also to share the unfavorable stereotypes of particular minority groups held by some employers. Acceptance of such viewpoints by placement agency managers probably affects the quality of service rendered by them to minority applicants -- and may have biased their responses in the present study.

The agencies which tended to discourage minority applicants or did little on their behalf usually disclaimed any bias or responsibility for such practices, placing them at the door of employers and nonminority applicants. The few which did actively promote nonwhite placements reported discouraging obstacles.

The picture of hiring practices drawn by these white-collar private placement agencies accords with the findings derived directly from employers and other sources. Management generally fails to communicate its claimed merit policy either outward to recruitment sources or internally through all hiring channels. Many employers do not wish to have nonwhite applicants referred to them and thus seldom if ever consider such applicants as individuals. This refusal to consider nonwhite job-seekers is often said to be based on fear of customer or employee reaction, or stems from adverse stereotypes held with regard to an entire minority group; it is rarely attributed to belief that individual applicants could not meet the requisite performance qualifications. Where minority workers have been employed there are few complaints of unfavorable experience. Negroes face the greatest hiring resistance, then Orientals, Latin Americans, and Jews, in that order. Discriminatory practices do not necessarily consist of total exclusion from a firm, but frequently involve hiring only for certain jobs or on a quota basis, or denial of promotional opportunities. Bias or responsibility for restrictive practices are typically charged to other parties, never assumed by the respondent. Some placement and personnel specialists express the personal wish that they were free to operate strictly according to merit employment principles. Finally, employer claims of nondiscriminatory employment poli-

cies are often of questionable validity.

Turning to the public employment service provided by the State Department of Employment, we noted that Malm found more than half of his sample of Bay Area private employers utilizing this service for some of their clerical worker recruitment, more than a quarter for manual workers, slightly over a fifth for sales, and a little over one-tenth for managerial and professional categories. Of the San Francisco employers we interviewed who ranked their recruitment sources as to importance, approximately 40 per cent placed the Department of Employment among their top three and slightly over 60 per cent reported some use of the Department. Although no definite figure is available, it is sometimes estimated that this Department's placements may comprise 10 to 15 per cent of all hiring in San Francisco.

The Department's policy (since 1950) of keeping no record of applicants' race, religion, or national ancestry and of not accepting discriminatory job orders probably exerts a limited selective effect as to which employers use the service and for what job categories. One might expect that employers with extremely restrictive hiring practices would avoid the Department if possible. But there is nothing to prevent even this type of employer from patronizing the Department, since it is engaged only in referral and has no power over the employer's decision to hire or reject any applicant on any grounds whatever. The Department simply refuses to process explicitly discriminatory job orders. It may fill orders for one division of a firm, or for one job in a division, even though hiring in other divisions or for other jobs within the same firm is discriminatory. There is, accordingly, no necessary connection between the Department's policy on this point and that of employer-clients.

At the time of this study, moreover, the Department's policy had been in effect a sufficient period to justify the inference that employers regularly utilizing its services were well acquainted with the policy and hence, whatever their hiring policies, would rarely if ever submit a discriminatory job order. It seems likely, therefore, that the information yielded by our interviews of Department personnel is reasonably conservative as to the extent of restrictive practice among employers.

Most of the 17 Department placement workers interviewed estimated that qualified Negroes experienced "some" or "great difficulty" in securing various jobs -- especially those involving public contact, clerical, sales,

some skilled industrial capacities, and upgraded, semiskilled jobs in service industries. About half of the placement workers estimated that qualified Orientals met "some difficulty." Some difficulty was reported in placing Latin American applicants in certain job categories, but the data here were incomplete. No attempt was made to report on experience with Jewish job-seekers.

The Department of Employment personnel interviewed indicated varying patterns of acceptance and rejection of Negroes, Orientals, and Latin Americans in the respective industries served -- patterns not lending themselves to sharply drawn generalizations, but consistent with our previous findings. Underemployment was apparently most severe for Negro workers, as was duration of periods of unemployment. Several respondents handling clerical and unskilled placements reported that very few of the private employers with whom they regularly dealt would hire qualified Negro applicants, and some said that nonwhites were taken for certain jobs only.

A gradual decline in opportunities for unskilled workers in San Francisco was noted by these respondents, who pointed out that this would be felt especially by Negroes in the labor force, a relatively large proportion of whom are in this category. Their problems of acquisition of skills and of securing upgrading opportunities loom as increasingly important. The Department, however, seems able to play only a limited role in encouraging upgrading of nonwhites, since the great majority of local hirings occurs through other recruitment channels and much of the Department's placement activity consists of unskilled and semiskilled work, lower-level service jobs, and farm labor. There is evidently need for research on various questions concerning the relations of minority job-seekers to the Department's placement and counseling services, the matter of applicant incentives, how to achieve better communication among all parties on trends in unrestricted job opportunities, and the extent to which referrals of qualified nonwhites lead to actual hiring. It was impossible to judge whether or to what extent individual placement personnel informally refrain from referring nonwhite applicants to employers known or believed to be discriminatory.

Overall, the experience of the Department of Employment suggests that its formal policy of not accepting discriminatory job orders has probably had quite limited effect upon hiring and upgrading practices among employers utilizing the service. Meanwhile most of the city's private industry recruitment has been carried on through other channels which have not followed

any such policy.¹

Among the placement personnel of Bay Area colleges there appears to be little effort to widen the range or promote the practice of nondiscriminatory employment by private employers. As with the private agencies, the general practice of departmental and other placement offices in both the tax-supported and private colleges covered has been to accept and fill discriminatory job orders. Some of the college placement officers, in counseling minority students, seek to direct them "realistically" toward certain types of employment, such as government, presumed to present fewer barriers. A very few indicated that they follow a practice of advising minority (like nonminority) students to prepare themselves according to their own individual aptitudes, without regard to fields of employment traditionally considered open or closed to them.

The estimates of these placement officers as to the percentages of firms with restrictive hiring practice among employers they serve ranged from 0 to 90 per cent. Employer restrictions appeared to be most common with reference to supervisory or managerial positions, or those entailing public contact, such as business administration, sales, teaching, accounting, law, and public relations. Discriminatory job orders were said to be rather common; yet it was reported that some employers who did not submit such orders in fact exercised discrimination when the point of hiring was reached -- another reminder that there is no necessary connection between job orders or application forms containing no minority identification and actual employment practices. Although hiring restrictions reported by these officials mainly affected nonCaucasians, there was also some definite evidence of antiSemitic practices.

On the whole, the Bay Area college placement people surveyed seem to share much of the outlook and practice of the typical private employment agency in San Francisco, especially in seeing their essential function as serving the employer no matter how restrictive this policy may be. This is true of both the public and private institutions responding.

The role of unions with regard to equal employment opportunity received substantial but not complete coverage in the present study. It

¹The 1957 municipal fair employment ordinance now forbids discriminatory practices, including referrals, by any placement agency. At this writing the extent of compliance is not known.

appears that the great majority of San Francisco union locals have some Negro or Oriental members. Many endeavor to refer and encourage upgrading of these members on a merit basis. In others the nonwhite members are present only in token numbers -- which may or may not be traceable in part to union policy -- or mainly occupy lower-level jobs, with little or no indication of union pressure on the employer for equal consideration of these members for upgrading.

Absence of nondiscrimination clauses from a large majority of union-employer contracts appears to reflect a lack of aggressive action on the part of the unions concerned, or, in some instances, successful resistance by management to such provisions. A strong and determined union may be able to exert significant influence on behalf of nondiscriminatory employment. Yet, like most employers, many unions appear to content themselves with a merely nominal merit policy.

Certain other parallels between union and employer practices and attitudes emerged. Some respondents in both groups were more inclined to discuss purported justifications of restrictive practices than the practices as such or possible corrective measures. Again, it is true of unions as of employers that few broad generalizations about merit or restrictive practices can be made which would be valid throughout given industries or trades, much less for business or labor as a whole. There are on both sides some stereotyping of minority groups, failure to communicate word of claimed merit policies to vocational counselors, minority-group public, and others vitally concerned, and general passivity or default with regard to policy implementation. In such situations where there is little or no real interest on the part of either management or union officials in promotion of equal treatment, the minority worker manifestly faces formidable barriers. Lastly, departmental hiring autonomy within a firm -- an important reason cited by employers for restrictive practices -- finds occasional counterpart in the gap between an international union's policy and the behavior of a constituent local. In either case policy from on high means little unless it is made clear and mandatory for all echelons below.

Certain differences between the respective roles of employers and unions should also be noted. Probably most important is that the greater power to institute the practice of merit employment usually rests with the employer -- especially in large firms. Although some unions which have been in a position to press effectively for such practice have failed to do so or have

threatened employers with economic reprisal if they should take this step, generally the union role is secondary.¹ Many major San Francisco employers have long held the latent power to initiate merit employment despite union opposition. In any real contest on this question a number of factors (even in the absence of FEPC) would have tended to favor the employer: the weight of public opinion and press, the official nondiscrimination policies of labor councils and international unions, and, in some instances, the nondiscrimination requirements of Federal contracts, or the familiar California case law of *James v. Marinship Corporation*² and subsequent decisions. As a practical matter employers have rarely elected to challenge the position of restrictive unions. In any event, with the advent of the city's fair employment law little question would seem to remain as to the ultimate power of management to make and carry out the decision to hire without discrimination.

A second distinction between employer and union is that the former typically may exert more authoritative control over his personnel practices than the union official can, in the long run, over his members. The union chief, however strong at a given time, is typically an elected officeholder who is potentially vulnerable in the give-and-take of the organization's internal politics. Some union leaders, though personally sincere in their desire to end discriminatory practices, may therefore be reluctant to

¹An important exception occurs in some instances in apprentice selection. In certain crafts and industries where the union is strong and restrictive, the employer members of joint apprenticeship committees may either lack the actual power to override union objection to a minority apprentice applicant or may not consider the cause worth a fight. The present study did not sufficiently explore apprenticeship practice to warrant specific findings. In May, 1958, D. Donald Glover, Industrial Secretary of the San Francisco-Oakland Urban League, reported to us that there were no Negro apprentices in the electrical, plumbing, carpentering, or iron-working programs in San Francisco, and one in the metal trades.

²This ruling (25 Cal. 2d 721) held that where a union has a virtual monopoly on the supply of labor and arbitrarily excludes persons on grounds of race or color, or refuses to admit them on an equal basis, the union may not exert economic pressure to enforce a union-shop agreement with an employer. This rule was later broadened to prohibit any union, whether or not it has a monopoly over the labor supply in a company or industry, to seek through economic pressures or sanctions upon an employer to influence the employment status of any person whom the union will not admit to membership on racial grounds. (*Williams v. International Brotherhood of Boilermakers*, 27 Cal. 2d 586).

press for reforms which they believe will encounter strong opposition by members or other officers seeking to advance themselves. The employer, on the other hand, though often expressing fear of employee reaction, is comparatively free to decide for or against a merit policy. While the union leader must win consent of a constituency in this matter, top management may exercise command.

Finally, whereas all major San Francisco employer associations long stood vigorously opposed to fair employment legislation, the leadership of labor predominantly supported such measures. The unions, aware of remaining discriminatory problems of their own, were willing to submit to regulation on this score. Employer spokesmen fought hard against it.¹

We suggest no sweeping judgments as to credit due management or labor for advancement of nondiscriminatory employment practice to date. Some elements of each have made notable contributions, while others have stubbornly resisted change. A large middle range of both employers and unions apparently have done neither; they are not necessarily conscious or determined discriminators but they have not yet critically examined their own practices and have done little or nothing to encourage integration in the work force. We have seen that mere presence of minority workers in a firm or union does not demonstrate that merit policy is observed; questions may remain as to quotas, occupational distribution, upgrading opportunity, or dispatching practice. Negro workers, for example, tend to be found predominantly in unskilled, marginal, or dead-end jobs, and other nonwhites as well are widely absent from positions involving public contact -- even where prior training requirements are negligible -- and upgraded to supervisory roles. Although zealous union representation of the interests of minority members could sometimes induce changes, the primary responsibility for such underemployment rests with the employer.

We must conclude, it seems, that the status of minority-group persons in the labor force, both as employees and as union members, is still generally and markedly weaker than that of others. "Minority" denotes smaller numbers and implies lesser strength in competitive situations. This meaning still obtains in most private employment in San Francisco, whether or not a

¹Following a decisive initial vote by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors for a standard fair employment ordinance, the employer groups modified their position, entered into negotiations with the proponents, and the two sides eventually reached agreement on a revised form of the ordinance which was then unanimously adopted.

mem- strong union is present. Although hopeful beginnings have been made in
the many cases, relatively few employers and unions have taken the steps neces-
- sary fully to eliminate the differential job treatment associated with mi-
der nority status. There is a reasonable abundance of professed good will and
r- claimed merit policy, but these have yet to be honored widely and consist-
ently in employment practice.

ng It is sometimes argued that minority-group members of the labor force
n -- particularly nonwhites -- are not employed because they lack "qualifica-
tions." Substantial numbers of workers of Negro, Asian, and Mexican ances-
try are today unskilled or semiskilled. But we have seen that in referring
to "qualifications" both employers and placement people frequently have in
mind not skills or performance capacity, but certain unwarranted assumptions
as to social or physical characteristics of the entire minority group. Along
with this tendency to stereotype, some employers simply refuse to interview
-- i.e. to examine the specific qualifications of -- individuals of certain
groups. By "operationalizing" these stereotyped notions, the gate-keepers
in the employment process help to perpetuate what Gunnar Myrdal has de-
scribed as "the vicious circle": by limiting the opportunities of minority-
group members, by keeping them at a competitive disadvantage, those who
practice employment discrimination help to create the very "inferiority"
which is cited to justify the discrimination. If one starts by imputing
"inferiority" or lack of "qualifications" to Negroes, if this argument is
used as a justification for limiting them to the least desirable jobs with
poor opportunities for training and advancement, one "proves" himself cor-
rect by creating and enforcing that inferior status. Since income largely
determines the amount of education children receive, Negro youth in low-
income families are often unable to afford higher education. Since the
grade reached in school in great measure determines one's income, low in-
come and limited education are closely interrelated. Former Federal Com-
missioner of Education Samuel W. Brownell pointed out that this cycle of
"little education-little money" is crucial in perpetuating the low-income
group in the population and the country's failure to meet its need for
highly-skilled and professional workers.¹

In the present study we have seen that San Francisco minority workers

¹"Level of Education and Income Linked," New York Times, November 20, 1955.

are still largely caught in the vicious circle. They have difficulty getting jobs partly because they are not considered as individuals and are assumed not to qualify. When they do find work it is typically at lower levels and without training opportunity or possibility of upgrading. Or they may be kept out of a certain beginning job simply because it constitutes the first rung in a promotional ladder leading to supervisory or managerial levels. On-the-job skill development, of crucial importance, is severely limited. The absence of nonwhites from upgraded positions is then cited as "evidence" that persons of these groups "don't go in for such work" or lack "qualifications." Placement offices rarely refer nonwhite applicants to the better positions. Some counselors discourage the youth from training for such positions. One general consequence is that few nonwhites -- Negroes especially -- are seen in those capacities in the economic world which are generally associated with high skill or with technical, professional, or managerial status. This in turn tends to create and reinforce in whites a stereotyped image of nonwhites as suited only to lesser jobs; and a great many nonwhites -- youth as well as adults -- suffer self-deprecation, drainage of morale, and lack of confidence or incentive to battle the heavy odds of the race barrier.

With reference to the vicious circle Myrdal pointed out that a favorable change in one factor would tend to bring about other favorable changes as well. Terming this "the principle of cumulation," he said:

A rise in Negro employment, for instance, will raise family incomes, standards of nutrition, housing, and health, the possibilities of giving the Negro youth more education, and so forth, and all these effects of the initial change will, in their turn, improve the Negroes' possibilities of getting employment and earning a living.¹

A number of respondents in local firms and unions stated that lack of education was a major reason for the absence of Negroes from higher-level jobs. Several studies support our conclusion that while education is unquestionably an important factor, it by no means fully accounts for these employment differentials. One such study, by sociologist Ralph H. Turner, analyzed census data to ascertain what proportion of the employment disadvantage experienced by Negroes would seem to be the result of educational deficiencies. He concluded that not quite two-fifths of the difference in

¹Gunnar Myrdal, An American Dilemma (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1944), p.76.

occupational distribution between whites and nonwhites is due to the fact that whites have more formal education. The remaining three-fifths must be attributed to other factors, including discrimination. Turner's conclusion -- that discrimination against nonwhites does not occur primarily as complete refusal to hire them but in refusal to do so for the capacities for which they have been trained -- is supported by the experience of a number of the private and public placement officers reached in the present study.¹

Similarly, Eli Ginzberg, economist of Columbia University and of the National Manpower Council, concluded from 1950 Census data that Negroes still earned far less than whites of comparable education. In the West, as elsewhere in the country, Negro college graduates earned less in 1949 than whites who had attended but not graduated from high school.² Ginzberg found the great majority of Negro workers, both men and women, in unskilled and semiskilled jobs not likely to lead to advancement. The greatest need, he concluded, is for industry to become willing to train able Negro personnel, to promote them to skilled and supervisory positions, and to consider them for management capacities.³

There is little doubt that the foregoing observations are valid for San Francisco, with application in varying degrees to Orientals and persons of Mexican background as well as to Negroes. It also appears that there are limits in some firms as to the level to which Jewish employees may realistically aspire. Although our data suggest that antiJewish restrictions in employment are, overall, substantially less serious than those based on race or color, it would be well to note that this is a rather limited, comparative finding, not a conclusion that merit hiring and upgrading obtain across the board. AntiSemitic practice is no doubt less common in San Francisco, and the attitudinal atmosphere more wholesome, than in some other cities of appreciable Jewish population. Yet it is common knowledge within certain professions and industries that some firms exclude or restrict Jews. Evidence of such practices was revealed at

¹Ralph H. Turner, "Negro Job Status and Education," Social Forces, October, 1953, 45-52.

²Eli Ginzberg, The Negro Potential (New York: Columbia University Press, 1956), p. 38.

³Ibid., p. 41.

certain points in the present study, but it is likely that respondents were more guarded on this than on other questions and that our findings may accordingly constitute a considerable understatement of the actuality. A further inquiry would seem to be needed to develop adequate data concerning the range and levels of employment opportunities here which are open or closed to persons of Jewish heritage.

Employers, union officials, and others involved in employment processes express, when asked, a general expectation of increasing integration of minority-group people in the local labor force. One employer respondent who said he anticipated such integration in the long run cautioned (prior to the recession which commenced in 1957) that this process would probably be interrupted and delayed in the event of business decline. Other factors will no doubt determine whether and at what rate restrictions will be removed and minority hiring encouraged in particular firms, industries, and trades. We found little evidence of deep, stubborn resistance to the general idea of merit hiring, but correspondingly little recognition of the extent to which the slight beginnings to date fall short of standards such as those established by the President's Committee on Government Contracts. There is much claim of merit policy by management, but little serious and thoroughgoing implementation. Important elements among both employers and organized labor do not yet assume responsibility for promotion of or outright insistence upon nondiscriminatory policy within their jurisdictions. Generally, it seems that fair employment practice would become reality at a more satisfactory pace if both top management and union leadership would give this objective high operational priority. Unless elevated to that status, merit policy claims and intentions will probably continue to be too weak to overcome the tendencies to inertia, indifference, stereotyping, and fear which largely block the road.

Often it is difficult to perceive whether management and labor spokesmen actually hold little active and determined prejudice or whether they have only become more adept at concealing it. The incidence of stereotyping indicates that there is considerable rejection of people of certain groups merely on the basis of assumed characteristics. The familiar employer fears, of anticipated customer or employee objection to merit hiring are widespread, are usually without foundation in the experience of those who hold them, and reveal surprising ignorance by management of the record of successful job

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integration by various nationally known firms and by some on the local scene. Perhaps in some instances the statement of such fears by respondents was simply rationalization for a desire to avoid the subject altogether.

These and other reasons given by employers for not employing minority workers suggest that many will not change their practices significantly until obliged to do so because of some urgent needs or pressures -- such as severe labor recruitment difficulties, union demands, tightening of enforcement of the nondiscrimination clause in Federal contracts, or necessity to comply with the San Francisco fair employment ordinance. Top management executives, facing multiple competing demands upon their time and attention, are as likely as other humans to avoid or resist change as long as possible, particularly in a matter of human relations assumed to be quite sensitive and complex. They may well defer indefinitely the presumably troublesome task of creating and introducing new policy unless fairly convincing inducements are brought to bear. The local fair employment ordinance would seem to have an important potential role in this connection. We noted earlier that already the ordinance has had certain indirect effects on both management and labor. Until the end of its first year, however, the Commission on Equal Employment Opportunity lacked regular staff or budget and was unable to carry out its informational responsibilities. When the interpretive, educational, and promotional functions of the Commission are set effectively in motion, many among management, labor, and placement agencies will probably be stimulated to bring their practices into line without specific contact with the Commission. Others may not be jogged out of old habits until a case complaint is lodged against them. There is, in any event, promise that the new ordinance will become increasingly an instrument for the promotion of wider adoption and full observance of nonrestrictive policy.

Truly significant expansion of equal employment opportunity and integration, when it comes, will be recognizable by signs such as:

explicit merit policies promulgated in great numbers of firms with the full authority of top management and administered without exceptions at all levels and in all departments;

unequivocal communication of these policies not only throughout a company but to all personnel recruitment sources and channels;

location and use, if necessary, of new recruitment channels and techniques through which minority job-seekers may be found;

absence of token, quota, or segregated employment;

increasing demonstration of merit practice on the job -- especially in public-contact and upgraded capacities -- with resultant encouragement to minority-group young people to prepare themselves for larger job opportunities to come;

greater communication to minority communities -- particularly to parents and youth -- and to school counselors concerning both new job opportunities and the need for training;

abandonment of all minority-group identification in referral and placement processes;

union support of minority entry into apprenticeship programs;

addition of nondiscrimination clauses to labor contracts;

and generally intensified activity by labor organizations on behalf of equality in hiring and upgrading for their minority members and for job seekers in their respective fields.

Since restrictive employment practices do not necessarily stem from deeply rooted, immovable personal prejudice, but are often the product of habit, indifference, or casually held fears or stereotypes, changes in practice need not hinge upon profound, long-term processes of individual psychotherapy. Corporate or union self-analysis plus a modicum of up-to-date information about employment integration now readily available in many quarters will suffice. There is no mystery today about the principles through which enlightened business or labor organizations may inaugurate merit employment or membership policies; it has been done successfully in many parts of the country, including the South, and amply recorded.

The key to the matter is essentially simple: there must be the decision by top management that genuine merit policy will henceforth be observed in a firm. When this word is handed down with unequivocal authority to competent departmental chiefs and other personnel, the rest follows with relative ease. As with any important corporate objective, full implementation of such a new or revitalized policy will not come automatically; it must be given a reasonably high priority and regarded as truly important, even urgent; there must

be assignment of responsibility for its communication, interpretation, follow-through, and promotion within the firm and among recruitment and training channels -- all processes familiar to going concerns. Given the positive, high-level decision, capable management will find means to carry it out. If desired, consultants may be called in from agencies such as the Urban League, Commission on Equal Employment Opportunity, or Council for Civic Unity.

Major San Francisco employers have predominantly claimed to be operating under merit policies. However at variance with actual practice in many instances, such claims are no doubt important for their implicit acknowledgment of the desirability of the policy. The remaining task appears to be largely one of investing these policy professions with real authority and of bringing practices into conformance. Local law now places the weight of public policy fully behind such action.

With the advent of Sputnik I, manpower training and utilization became virtually a household term throughout America. A sudden urgency infused the task of expanding the ranks of scientific, technical, and skilled workers, both in the short run and long run, and in quality as well as numbers. Equal employment opportunity and its vital training-incentive corollaries were elevated overnight to a matter of national necessity rather than a possibility to be contemplated at some convenient future date. Can anyone today fail to grasp the connection between orbiting satellites, intercontinental missiles, and the nation's clear and present need for an all-out manpower policy? Merit hiring, nondiscriminatory upgrading, and providing all youth -- utterly without regard to race, religion, or ancestry -- incentive and opportunity to develop their full potentialities are no longer an option but an imperative which we ignore at the risk of survival itself.