

Fact Sheet -- The Poor People's Corporation

A non-profit organization, founded in August, 1965

"The purposes of the Corporation are to provide technical and financial assistance to low-income groups in Mississippi who want to develop worker-owned and operated cooperatives of various sorts." (from the PPC prospectus)

Membership

"A member is any person in Mississippi who is involved, or hopes to be, in a PPC co-op or training program, and has paid the 25 cents yearly dues."
(PPC prospectus)

How a Co-op is started

A group of people, either members or non-members of the PPC, make application for long-term, interest free loan or technical aid. They give a complete description of the cooperative they want to start (the only formal requirement is that it must employ no less than 15 people.) At the nearest quarterly meeting of the membership of the PPC the project is reviewed and the assistance is allotted. As soon as possible after the cooperative is operating, the loan is paid back into the PPC revolving fund from which it came.

The Cooperatives

At present there are 15 cooperatives in different parts of Mississippi. The products include: adult and children's clothing, stuffed toys, patchwork quilts, ladies hats, leather handbags, coin pouches and waist pouches.

The finished products are marketed out of the Liberty Outlet House in Jackson Mississippi. There is also an outlet in New York City. Advertising is done primarily through brochures and catalogues.

The budgets are modest and all salaries are at the legal minimum of \$1.25 per hour. Special services such as legal aid, accounting are obtained on a volunteer basis.

Where do contributions go?

"All contributions are put in a revolving fund which is dispersed by a vote of the corporation membership at its quarterly meetings." (PPC prospectus)
The fund is used for long-term, interest free loans. In order for the Poor People's Corporation to assist the growing number of cooperatives there must be an increase in the revolving fund from contributions.

The Philosophy

"The poor are going to be given an opportunity to create jobs for themselves and develop industries of their own -- industries that will be highly decentralized, labor intensive, utilizing not return on capital as a guiding incentive, but return to labor; industries planned, controlled and operated solely by the people who work in them."

-- Jesse Morris, President of the PPC

The Need -- Hundreds of Negroes have lost their jobs in Mississippi because they tried to register to vote or attended civil rights meetings. There will be several thousand fewer jobs in the Mississippi delta this spring because of farm mechanization. The PPC can offer these people economic security they have never had.