

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR AND CONGRESS OF INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATIONS

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The national economy's advance, which got underway in 1961, continues to add to employment, incomes, and output. The economic performance of the past 7 years has been a most welcome improvement after the trend of rising unemployment and recurring recessions during most of the 1950's.

Despite this record of achievement, the American economy remains some distance from full employment. Unemployment persists at much too high a level and in 1967 there was no improvement in this important indicator of the American people's economic well-being—3.8 percent of the labor force remained unemployed.

The economic advance, thus far, has failed to provide enough job opportunities for a rapidly growing labor force in a period of radical technological change—particularly for the most disadvantaged job seekers among teenagers, Negroes, and unskilled workers.

Moreover, the benefits of the national economy's much-improved performance in the 1960's have not been shared equitably among the various groups in the population. A disproportionately great share has gone to business and upper income families, even after accounting for last year's small decline in profits.

Unfortunately, the Council of Economic Advisers' Economic Report of January 1968 indicates a willingness to accept a reported unemployment rate of approximately 4 percent as a goal of national economic policy, rather than to continue to press for further reductions of the unemployment level.

As for the lopsided distribution of the benefits of the economy's much-improved performance of the 1960's, the economic report says nothing at all. Indeed, this important issue of economic and social policy continues to be ignored by the Council of Economic Advisers.

THE REMAINING PROBLEM OF UNEMPLOYMENT

The economic expansion of the 1960's boosted employment and incomes and, in 1960-66, it reduced the level of unemployment. As sales and production picked up after the beginning of 1961, weekly working hours were increased following the part-time work schedules that had spread in the 1950's. The continued pickup resulted in the recall of workers, who had been laid off, and, gradually, in the hiring of additional workers.

The rise of employment during the 1960's—and, after 1963, the concentrated increase of factory and construction jobs—finally reduced unemployment after a rising trend during the previous decade. Be-