

JOB RIGHTS PLAN IRKS A.F.L.-C.I.O.

Proposals to End Race Bars Termed Presumptuous

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Two groups active in the civil rights field today sent to most of the nation's international union presidents a set of sweeping proposals for union action to end racial discrimination.

The proposals evoked a hostile reaction from a spokesman for the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations.

While saying that he felt the proposals were well-meaning, he characterized them as presumptuous. He indicated that he was concerned that union leaders would regard them as a pressure tactic, and that this unfavorable reaction later would be reflected in resistance to what action the federation itself might propose to its affiliates in the civil rights field.

'In Spite of' Proposals

"Anything that the A.F.L.-C.I.O. will do in this area will be in spite of these proposals, not because of them," the spokesman said. "We have got to look at the problems from a trade union point of view and move in a trade union way to solve them."

The 16 proposals were circulated by the Potomac Institute, a private, nonprofit agency working for improved intergroup relations, and the National Labor Service of the American Jewish Committee.

They emerged from an "off-the-record" meeting held at the institute here June 10.

About 25 persons active in civil rights work in unions, intergroup relations experts and representatives of Negro organizations attended.

Alliance Is Cited

The thought of the two sponsoring groups was that the traditional alliance between the unions and Negro groups had been critically strained because of attacks on unions by Herbert Hill, labor secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and the intransigence in the civil rights field of some unions.

The sponsors felt that Negro demonstrations against alleged union discrimination, particularly in the building trades, would increase in frequency. They felt it vital to try to heal the breach between the Negro

groups and the unions in a positive way.

A National Labor Service spokesman, informed of the reaction, said:

"We're sorry they're so hypersensitive. Our purpose was completely friendly and designed to bridge the gap between labor and the Negro and civil rights groups. We feel it is extremely important both for the civil rights movement and for the sake of legislation in other fields to have broadly based unity."

The proposals were mailed to the presidents of the A.F.L.-C.I.O.'s 130 affiliated unions. They went also to the federa-

tion itself, to union civil rights specialists, key Negro leaders, a number of government officials active in the civil rights field and the leaders of intergroup organizations.

Called Suggestions

Titled "Proposals for Civil Rights Action by Organized Labor," the 16 suggestions all were made by participants at the June 16 meeting. Not every participant endorsed each proposal and, in fact, some of the suggestions were vigorously opposed by a number of those who attended.

Nor were the proposals in any sense the official program

of the sponsoring organizations, a spokesman explained. They were sent out in the hope that they would be useful to unions in planning their activities in the civil rights field.

The main suggestion was that the federation should establish immediately a special task force of ranking officers and staff representatives to set up "a broad crash program" to deal with all aspects of civil rights. Task forces on the state and local levels were also recommended and international unions were asked to make high-level assignments in the civil rights field.