FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Washington, D.C. - February 17 and 18, 1961: An all-out drive against job discrimination was launched here, February 17 and 18, at a Workshop and Institute, sponsored by the Negro American Labor Council, which was attended by 800 delegates and visitors from all parts of the country.

For eight hours the delegates listened to twenty witnesses who testified on the exclusion of Negro youth from apprenticeship training program and racial and ethnic violations of union and economic democracy by trade unions, industry and government. Among the unions cited for discriminatory practices were: Sheet Metal, Electrical Workers, Carpenters, Plumbers, Bricklayers, International Longshoremen Association, Brotherhood of Railway and Steamship Clerks, International Moulders and Foundry Workers, International Association of Railway Employees, Baltimore Fire Fighters, Seafarers International Union and the International Hod Carriers, Building and Common Laborers.

A 15 point platform to abolish discriminatory practices by organized labor, industry and government, presented in the keynote address of A. Philip Randolph, president of the Negro American Labor Council, was adopted as a program of action to be pushed by Negro trade unionists.

The serious employment crisis of Negro labor was highlighted in the speech of Secretary of Labor Arthur Goldberg who reported that unemployment in the current recession had hit non-white workers twice as hard as the whites, with 13.8 per cent of all colored workers out of work in January as compared with 7 per cent of the white workers.

An over-flow mass meeting of 1800 persons at the Metropolitan Baptist Church on Friday night heard rousing attacks on unfair employment practices delivered by Rep. Adam Clayton Powell, Chairman of the House Labor and Education Committee; the Rev. Martin Luther King; and by Mr. A. Philip Randolph.

Declaring that "we are in danger of becoming a second-class nation because we have second-class citizenship," Congressman Powell asserted that the "New Frontier must include black men as well as white."

Rev. King charged that the Federal Government is "the Nation's highest investor in segregation and discrimination," and said that "with the stroke of a pen, the President can go a long way toward ending the crime of discrimination."
In a telegram to the conference President Kennedy stated: "I fully share your deep concern over the grave issue of unemployment and over the added burdens carried by those who suffer from the racial bias that still unhappily remains in our midst. We are seeking to mobilize the full resources of the government to help put America, all Americans, back to work."

Among other notables who spoke at conference sessions were: Elmer Carter, Commissioner of the New York Commission Against Discrimination; Victor Daly, Race Relations Adviser, U. S. Employment Service; Julius Thomas, Industrial Relations Director of the Urban League; Herbert Hill, Labor Secretary of the NAACP; Milton P. Webster, 1st Vice-President of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and Dr. James M. Nabrit, President of Howard University.

Following is a summary of the action program that was adopted:

1. The President and Executive Council of the AFL-CIO should call all national and international unions into conference and advise and require them to move within the course of six months to initiate the desegregation and integration of local unions with respect to a common and specific target date, in order to bring their unions into compliance with the provision of the constitution of the AFL-CIO on race bias.

2. Advise and require all unions to initiate action within the course of six months to abolish the practice of exclusion of workers of color from membership by tacit consent.

3. Advise and require all unions to initiate action to study and revise their policies of selection of workers for apprenticeship training programs with a view to elimination of nepotism and cronyism and opening the door of opportunity to apprenticeship training for the skilled trades to all qualified youth, regardless of race or color.

4. Election of Negro trade unionists to policy-making bodies of local, national and international unions, and city and state central bodies.

5. Appointment of another Negro trade unionist to membership on the Executive Council.

6. Integration of qualified Negro office and staff workers into all departments of the general headquarters of the AFL-CIO in Washington, D. C., as an example to the national and international unions.

7. Place additional Negro trade unionists on the Civil Rights Committee. Members of the Executive Council should be urged to set an example by having their unions set up civil rights committees and departments.
8. Because of the failure of the Civil Rights Department to fulfill its mission it should be reorganized with a qualified Negro trade unionist as director, with additional professional and office personnel. This department should serve as an example of the application of the principles of civil rights to the entire labor movement. A native white Southerner, who is sound on civil rights and a sound trade unionist, should be placed on the staff to work in the South and an additional sound Negro trade unionist should also be placed on the staff, with an adequate interracial office force. We recommend that the President or Secretary-Treasurer of the AFL-CIO serve as the Chairman of the Committee.

9. An executive order should be issued by President Kennedy to investigate the employment policies of all the departments of the Federal government, with a view to eliminating the practice of race bias in same.

10. Recommend an executive order to investigate the methods, promotion and upgrading on government jobs, with a view to providing an equal opportunity for every worker, regardless of race or color, to seek and occupy a place commensurate with his ability. It is most significant that about 70 per cent, according to the National Urban League, of all Negro government employees are concentrated in the lower, subprofessional job classifications.

11. We recommend that President Kennedy provide the President's Committee on Government Employment Policy with the status of White House authority for effective executive and implementation of a non-discrimination job policy in every department, agency, commission and bureau.

12. We recommend an investigation of the administration of Federal Civil Service rules that invite discrimination by allowing choice of any of the top three applications, and exceptions to even the "rule of three" make it possible to avoid hiring a Negro even when all three top candidates are Negro. Exceptions to the rule of three should be outlawed.

13. We recommend that President Kennedy issue an executive order requiring that all federal government contracting agencies strictly enforce the non-discrimination clause which is not now being done. All 30 contracting agencies have the power to terminate, amend or refuse to negotiate contracts for any failure to comply with all parts of the contract, all of which are legally binding. It is a motorius fact that under all administrations only a small portion of the more than 17 million jobs currently being performed under government contracts are in fact, as well as in contract, awarded on a non-discrimination basis.
14. We recommend that President Kennedy issue an executive order providing
that the federal government assume a more vital role in promoting a nationwide crash
program for the training of skilled workers and guarantee that federal assistance
to all craft training systems be limited to programs which do not discriminate on
a basis of race or color.

15. Finally, we call upon the President of the United States and President
of the AFL-CIO and the leaders of industry, the most powerful country and labor
movement and industry in the world, to issue a clarion call to the government, the
workers and management to respect, recognize and support the God-given right of
every human being, regardless of race or color, to earn a living in the sweat of
his brow.

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