

Council to ask talks on NAACP stand

The Labor Council plans to invite local officials of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People to a face-to-face discussion of civil rights involvement in trade union affairs.

Arthur Lathan, president of the San Francisco NAACP, wrote the Labor Council October 3 that until Negro union members' on-the-job complaints are given more attention by their unions, his organization intends to give what help it can.

Lathan asserted that civil rights groups have been involved in negotiations directly with employers "only because your members primarily from the various service type unions have received less than adequate representation."

LATHAN SAID the NAACP had no desire to handle union

members' complaints or grievances. He insisted that "we have always made it a policy to act on a complaint only after a complaint has been registered with the local involved by the employee involved."

Because of the high proportion of Negroes and other minorities in service-type union locals, Lathan went on, "the incidence of racial discrimination in the job situation becomes a significant factor."

It is no factor, he claimed, in the skilled trade unions.

BUT he said NAACP constantly receives calls about problems on the job. It handles only "the most flagrant injustices."

For the others, he said the NAACP tries to make the member "aware of his bargaining rights under NLRB."

Lathan said that many members complain that their unions provide only bare-minimum services. Some claim, Lathan said, "that the union is in collusion with the employer at the member's expense. Some have even said they would be better off under "right to work," adding their savings on union dues to "their meager wages."

LATHAN SAID the NAACP would be "happy" to give up any responsibility in these cases "and cease our questionable involvement any time the unions are ready to fill the void."

He concluded: "Until such time, we feel that these complaints merit some kind of attention and we plan to give what little help we can."

Lathan said his letter was prompted by the statement of policy adopted by the city's organized labor. Particularly, he was "perplexed" by the statements dealing with civil rights groups involving themselves in union matters by dealing directly with employers.

AT THE suggestion of Council Sec. George W. Johns, the Council approved an invitation to Lathan to sit down with its executive committee and explore the problems in detail.



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