A view of bias in jobs

Sweeping and indiscriminate charges of discrimination against San Francisco unions are wrong and unrealistic, George W. Johns, secretary of the San Francisco Labor Council, declared last week.

In response to NAACP charges, as reported in the daily press, and echoed by the San Francisco Chronicle, that "unions and some employers are practicing discrimination," Johns said:

"Discrimination does exist. But if we are to overcome discriminatory practices, a great number of factors must be taken realistically into account.

"First, an end to job discrimination requires the integrated effort of the entire community. This starts with the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors who must give more than lip service. It involves the employers and his trade associations who, since the Landrum-Griffin Act, have a major and usually decisive authority and responsibility in hiring procedures.

"It involves the economic leadership of our community, when it decides to remove basic industry and to establish San Francisco as an office that will be available. It involves a major shift in the efforts of our educational system to properly prepare young people for the kinds of jobs that will be available. It involves a more realistic approach to drop-outs.

"When the effects of modern automation on job opportunities are taken into account, we face even greater problems not merely of adequate training and appropriate skills but the very much larger task of increasing the overall number of jobs.

"Today in San Francisco many Negroes work under the protection of union contracts. It is my hope that recent events have brought a new awareness to our entire community that will result in vigorous and integrated community-wide efforts to meet these problems."

In an earlier statement, voicing labor's support for Human Rights Day in San Francisco, Johns had urged the creation of a Human Rights Committee made up of the top leadership of every segment of the population to implement the determination of San Francisco "to practice what we preach." He said:

"The Mayor's proclamation establishing Sunday as Human Rights Day speaks for all San Franciscans. As a matter of fact, I feel the Mayor should go further. He should call for vigorous protests from every civic organization, every association, every professional group, every segment of San Francisco to make clear our strenuous objection to the injustice and the denial of human rights taking place in Alabama.

"When Constitutional rights are trampled, it is not a problem for the Negro alone but for all Americans. Nor should we forget that we have problems in housing, jobs, education, and other areas in our own city where undoubted discrimination persists.

"If we protest injustice there, we have an even stronger obligation to protest it here. Only through a community effort, involving every section of the people, can we make clear to the nation our opinions of the Alabama crisis and our determination to practice what we preach.

"I think the Mayor should immediately appoint a Human Rights Committee made up of top leadership of every segment of the city to implement that determination."