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Statement by the AFL-CIO Executive Council TO SEE PLEASE:

on

Northern Ireland

February 19, 1985
Bal Harbour, FL

C.G. _____

D.C.G. _____

P. & I.O. _____

V.C. _____

cc HQ (CO'Honin)

The AFL-CIO delegation which visited Northern Ireland in July 1983 said in its report to the Executive Council:

"We believe strongly that until the problems of employment discrimination and all of the other forms of discrimination currently practiced in Northern Ireland are forcefully and forthrightly addressed, there can be little hope for a reduction in the level of violence or for the development of attitudes which will bring about a more stable society."

International human rights advocate Sean MacBride of Dublin, who is the founder and first chairman of Amnesty International and a 1974 recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize, has devised a set of principles that addresses the serious problems of employment discrimination in Northern Ireland.

These "MacBride Principles" seek to guarantee equal access to regional employment in Northern Ireland.

The MacBride Principles call on all employers in Northern Ireland to:

- * Increase the representation of individuals from under-represented religious groups in the workforce including managerial, supervisory, administrative, clerical and technical jobs.
- * Insure adequate security for the protection of minority employees both at the workplace and while traveling to and from work.
- * Ban provocative religious or political emblems from the workplace.
- * Publicly announce all job openings and encourage special recruitment efforts to attract applicants from under-represented religious groups.

- * Abolish job reservations, apprenticeship restrictions and differential employment criteria, which discriminate on the basis of religion or ethnic origin.
- * Develop training programs that will prepare substantial numbers of current minority employees for skilled jobs, including the expansion of existing programs and the creation of new programs to train, upgrade, and improve the skills of minority employees.
- * Establish procedures to assess, identify, and actively recruit minority employees with potential for further advancement.
- * Appoint a senior management staff member to oversee the company's affirmative action efforts and establish timetables to carry out affirmative action principles.

These "MacBride Principles" are consistent with established policy and positions taken by the AFL-CIO that promote equal opportunity in the workplace and are similar in aim and content to the Sullivan Principles which American corporations have been asked to accept in South Africa.

While no such set of guidelines will correct all of the economic and political problems in these troubled areas, they can, if broadly observed, ameliorate some of the current conditions.

We, therefore, support the development and application of these "MacBride Principles" and call upon all U.S. corporations operating in Northern Ireland to adopt and adhere to them. We further urge all major institutional investors and pension and welfare fund trustees to insure that corporations in which they invest adhere to these Principles.

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