

RANDOLPH'S ADDRESS 11/17/65

1800 G Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C.  
Room 1123  
Tel: 737-9010

FOR RELEASE:  
After 10:00 a.m.  
Wednesday, Nov. 17, 1965

STATEMENT BY A. PHILIP RANDOLPH, HONORARY CHAIRMAN  
at the opening of the  
PLANNING SESSION OF THE  
WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE "TO FULFILL THESE RIGHTS"

Washington Hilton Hotel, Washington, D.C.  
November 17 - 18

I hail and salute the President of the United States, The Honorable Lyndon Baines Johnson, upon his creative statesmanship, explicit and implicit in his pronounced bold and brave new approach to the American Negro problem when he pointed out that the nation has to advance from equality as a right and theory, to equality as a fact and as a result. Rights have been secured; now they must be fulfilled. We dare not delay in redressing this one huge wrong of the American nation.

How true!

And permit me to hail and salute the leaders of the Freedom movement, Roy Wilkins, Dr. Martin Luther King, James Farmer, Dorothy Height, Whitney Young, Jr., John Lewis and Jack Greenberg. They threw down the challenge to the President and he took it up.

Verily, the Civil Rights Revolution and history will not give America any more time to come to grips with this new force of racial challenge and change, conflict and crisis.

Indeed, the Negro is in transition from an old order of racial subordination, exploitation and humiliation to a new order of confrontation with a decadent doctrine of white supremacy, and the concept of the hereditary racial inferiority of persons of color. They are in transition

from a sense of fear to a sense of no fear; from a sense of "nobody" to a sense of "somebody"; from submission and retreat to revolt and democratic equalitarianism.

Caught up in the preoccupation with the burst of the world of color in Asia, Africa and Negroes in the United States in the flames of revolution against colonialism, imperialism and racialism, America is yet properly to evaluate this convulsion of history which is definitely destined to be as fearfully and far-reachingly cataclysmic as the industrial revolution that touched and affected the life of every person on this planet a century ago.

Before this Black Revolution, which is concerned about completing the incompleting Civil War Revolution, a continuation of the American Revolution of 1776, finishes its course, it will profoundly alter and change the structure and function of American society and the relations of black and white Americans to it.

Already, the Negro Civil Rights Revolution is writing a new, broader and bolder role of responsibility of the Federal Government for racial and social justice and protection and advancement of the black and white poor, in the President's unprecedented war on poverty.

#### HOW TO FULFILL THESE RIGHTS?

Confronted with an increasingly excessively explosive socio-racial dynamite, the black ghettos, with the responsibility for the integration of angry, skeptical, critical dropout, jobless teenagers, low-wage working poor, hardcore unemployed and unemployables, sick and dangerous narcotic addicts, rootless, moneyless havenots about whom nobody cares, broken homes and runaway unemployed fathers from their own homes, unsupervised children while mothers are at work, the Federal Government of an American affluent

society, whose National Gross Product for 1965 will run around \$675 billions, has only one remedy, the creation of a vast "Freedom Budget" - a nationwide plan for the abolition of the ghetto jungles in every city, even at the cost of a hundred billion dollars, a cost which may be vastly less than the chance of another unhappy Watts of Los Angeles, especially as a legacy of racial hate. Nothing less than such a "Freedom Budget" will suffice.

Ghettos are human jungles of violence, crimes, murder, arson, where some people live by their wits, the knife and the gun. But the ghettos were not created and are not maintained by its inhabitants. It is the handiwork of American racism and of cruel unconcern on the part of blind men who profit from misery. Slums are maintained because slum landlords coin huge profits out of them. Narcotics syndicates and pushers make fabulous profits out of the ghetto, Wine merchants make profits out of the ghetto, and some of the police come by an easy buck in the ghetto. It is a haven for prostitutes, petty gamblers and hustlers. The ghetto is a dangerous social cancer on the community and cannot be eliminated except by taking the profits out of its operation or tearing it down by the federal, state or city government, the latter being the more feasible. The ghetto is the problem and it must be destroyed.

#### PRICE OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

If pouring a hundred billion dollars into the enterprise of ridding the country of the social sickness of the ghetto seems to be a staggering sum, let me hasten to add that Negro citizens and the country are now paying a much higher price for not wiping out the ghettos.

According, for instance, to a statement by the President's Council of Economic Advisors, in 1962, losses to the economy through racial

discrimination result from two factors: (1) inefficiency in the use of the labor force resulting from failure to utilize fully the existing skills of our population; and (2) failure to develop potential skills fully.

The Council estimated that the nation's economy is losing from \$13 billion to \$17 billion per year in national income and product as a result of these two factors.

Thus, on a basis of the position of the President's Council of Economic Advisors, Negroes and the national economy lost in every ten year period from one hundred and thirty to one hundred and seventy billions of dollars in income and product on account of racial bias. Therefore, the abolition of the ghettos throughout the nation at the cost of a hundred billion dollars or more would constitute a basic economic gain which would continue to grow with the increase of the Negro population with a correlative increase in their skills, training and education, assuming that the country will be wise enough to throw racial discrimination and segregation into the ashcan of history, winding up with the Negroes paying the price for their own second emancipation from color discrimination, while increasing the rate of economic growth and strengthening the national economy.

#### THE NEGRO AND JOBS

A basic and major concern of black America is jobs, and properly so, because the large majority of Negroes depend upon income in the form of wages for labor performed; not income from the ownership of property.

But the rate of unemployment among Negroes is twice as high as it is among whites. Wages are lower because their jobs are largely unskilled jobs at a frightfully rapid rate and Negro workers are not acquiring new skills,

training and education rapidly enough to perform the new jobs in the American automated workshop. Thus, the gap between the average annual median income of the Negro family and the white family is widening and there is no prospect of closing it soon.

Hence, to fulfill these rights in the area of the Negro job problem is a difficult task of the Civil Rights Revolution if indeed it can solve it all. Hence, in an attempt successfully to deal with the problem, an approach should be made from two angles: (1) the public sector of the economy, by providing vast public works to meet practical unmet needs of the country, such as building schools, hospitals, libraries, highways, slum clearance and many other developments the country needs; and (2) providing new opportunity in the private sector by a series of the President's White House Conferences with the management and trade union representatives of every industry, such as railroads, oil, electrical, electronics, shipping, automobile, steel, rubber, building construction, public utilities, manufacturing, wholesale and retail businesses and others.

The purpose of these White House conferences with each individual industry being to determine the extent to which Negroes are present in all areas and job classifications of each industry and to develop a master plan for the integration of Negroes upon every level and in every job classification. If Negroes lack the training skills, education and efficiency needed, that the industry be held responsible for the preparation of Negroes to perform the various and varied services with the efficiency required by one-job and ✓ vocational and educational training. Industry will profit from this program since it will create higher purchasing power of a large segment of the nation's workforce. Cities will profit from it by the elimination of heavy relief loads.

A comparable White House Conference should be held to determine the extent Negroes are employed in the various Government departments and the areas and job classifications involved, with a view to increasing the integration of Negroes in every department upon a basis of qualifications. Where qualifications are absent, Negroes should be urged and helped to get the qualifications. In city and state governments the same procedure could be followed. In the South, few Negroes are employed by the state and city governments. This is not peculiar to the South; Negroes do not receive a fair share of employment in any state or city in the country. While this is also true of the federal government the picture is favorably changing in this area, if not by a sufficiently rapid rate.

#### INTEGRATED SCHOOLS

Only within the framework of an integrated American school system will the Negro boy and girl ever get a change to move into the vanguard of American progress in this new age of advancing technology.

While no doubt existing objective racial and educational realities require complete commitment to the development of immediate quality education where an integrated school system is as yet nonexistent, any form of segregated education should be only temporary and in the process of disestablishment, north and south. An integrated school system does not only equip a youth, black or white, with better tools of education, but will give all youth a higher order of moral and spiritual insight and psychological understanding and to live within / help build and maintain a democratic society.

#### MINIMUM WAGE

No legislative action can provide greater economic strength to an American community, the population of which is largely composed of the

working poor, white or black, than a federal minimum wage of \$1.75 an hour, with unlimited coverage, enforceable in every state of the United States.

A minimum wage will not only increase the purchasing power of the lower-lower rung of workers, but create more jobs for workers required to produce the goods and services the workers with a higher minimum wage consume.

With incredibly low wages of workers in the South, white and black, and workers in the North employed in hospitals, hotels, laundries, retail and wholesale businesses, domestic services, transportation and migrant farm laborers, a meaningful minimum wage will bring billions of dollars into the homes of workers who require public welfare subsidy to provide just a bare subsistence income. There are millions of the working poor who are deprived of even public relief assistance.

It is estimated by the President's Advisory Economic Council that the South, where 50 percent of Negroes live, that the Negro and the economy of the South sustain a loss of from six to seven billion dollars annually because of discrimination in job opportunity. In this connection, it is imperative that we vigorously work to repeal section 14B of the Taft-Hartley Act. For it is in those states where this crippling legislation exist that the Negro is most abused in his effort to find work.

#### HOUSING

With respect to the problem of segregated housing, the foundation of segregated schools, the answer is integration, for without integration of housing there cannot be integration of schools.

Middle income and low rent housing projects with the President's proposal of rent subsidy for the working poor is a fitting and timely

corollary of a new and sound approach to a housing problem which is becoming increasingly acute.

### SCHOOLS

Since Negro boys and girls have never had a chance basically to improve their mind and spirit with the comparability of white boys and girls, being isolated, as it were, from the mainstream of art, science and knowledge, they will never get a chance to develop and utilize their talent, genius and ability in the building of the Great Society until they are permitted to live, work and function within the American Society as equals.

Moreover, some textbooks on history with creakingly antiquated and fantastic hypotheses and concepts on race need rewriting, since the minds of children even in integrated schools in their formative years can be irretrievably crippled by ideas of race that stem from the false doctrine of white supremacy.

The achievement of these objectives are the purpose of this conference and the vision of President Johnson.

And to our committed and dedicated freedom fighters, may we ever guard and protect the Civil Rights Revolution, a mighty force for freedom, democracy and equality, and keep it to the creative path of non-violence, for it is the lesson of history that whenever a revolution degenerates into a reign of terror it eventuates in devouring its own children and digging its own grave.

May God grant us the strength, courage and faith to go forward in this battle for human dignity, and may we never falter.

###