

Poisonous Prejudices

By Doxey Wilkerson

WESTBROOK PEGLER has blasted forth again on the Negro press, and Dorothy Thompson has done a learned piece on the segregation of Negro blood. Although apparently divergent in purpose, these two articles reveal a strange underlying kinship in their effort to discourage struggle against Negro discrimination.

"Fair Enough" Pegler devotes his Nov. 15 column to stirring up racial and religious hatred. Ostensibly supporting Attorney General Biddle's pathetic call for education "to combat racial disunity and prejudice (which Mr. Biddle still refrains from attacking directly through the authority of his office, while the nation lies prey to pro-Axis incitements), Pegler advances the argument that the Negro press, the Communists, and PM are the main "sources of this dangerous agitation."

As in his earlier column on the Negro press (April 29, 1942), Pegler's chief quarrel with Negro newspapers is that they expose and condemn the degrading, morale-destroying injustices which confront the Negro people both in civilian and in military life. "This," he says, "naturally does not make for that friendship and understanding by the Negro of the white man and vice versa for which Mr. Biddle pleads and all good Americans yearn."



Pegler's quarrel with "the Communists" and "Marshall Field" (meaning PM) is much the same. He slanders both with crude lies which must be apparent even to the uninformed, but the burden of his tirade is that they too provoke racial and religious prejudices by their attacks upon anti-Jewish and anti-Negro persecutions.

Having grouped the Negro press, the Communists, and PM together as enemies of the nation—because they campaign against racial and religious discrimination — Pegler then proceeds to identify all three with the "New Deal Party" of the "ruling administration."

PEGLER'S purposes are clear.

Knowing full well that racial and religious persecution is a major obstacle to the war effort, he seeks to confuse and weaken the struggle against these ills by suggesting that the trouble lies, not in concrete social conditions, but in "agitators . . . who pretend to fight against group hatreds."

Keenly aware of the fact that Axis agents operating in our country are deliberately stimulating anti-Semitic and anti-Negro incitements as an aid to Hitler, Pegler seeks to divert attention from these real enemies by attacking precisely those democratic forces which are struggling to remove the root evil.

Realizing that President Roosevelt is the rallying point for those progressive win - the - war forces which are most consciously fighting for racial and religious democracy at home as a necessary means to

victory in this war, Pegler seeks to indict so-called "New Deal Party" adherents as "the most influential agitators of racial and religious hatred."

"ON THE Record" Dorothy Thompson devotes her Nov. 17 column to ridiculing the American Red Cross policy of segregating "white" and "Negro" blood plasma in separate banks. After a lengthy citation of Biblical, scientific and anecdotal evidence that this policy is based upon a foolish superstition, she draws this moral from her analysis: "But considering how long it takes a superstition to die, I would say to my Negro friends: Stop bothering about the blood banks. It's a silly controversy and not worth a campaign."

Miss Thompson's purposes are not so clear. Does she not know that the Jim Crow blood banks represent much more than a silly superstition, that they express and help to entrench fascist race theories which are worthy of a Hitler, or a Bilbo—or a Pegler?

Does Miss Thompson not realize that abolition of the Red Cross segregated blood bank policy would constitute a major blow to the ideology of race hate which now renders such excellent service to Hitler's helpers within our own country? Does she really believe that this home front symbol of what the whole war is being fought against is "not worth a campaign"?

The crude, defeatist purposes of pro-fascist Westbrook Pegler are quite apparent. But what is Dorothy Thompson trying to do?