

How to Defeat FEPC

By Doxey Wilkerson

The best defense of FEPC is an offensive against the wreckers who would destroy its valuable wartime service to the nation.

Let labor and the Negro people hasten to the support of FEPC in the present crisis. But let them do more. Let them demand legislative action for a permanent FEPC — through passage of H.R. 1732.

The reactionary Smith Committee's smear "investigation" of FEPC is—and is intended to be—an attack upon the progressive policies of the Roosevelt Administration, an attempt to block the growing trend toward equal employment opportunities for the Negro people, and a direct blow at the war effort. The flouting of FEPC's directive in the southern railroads case has much the same effect.

Both are serious threats to the wartime interests of the country. They must be met through vigorous counter-offensive by the progressive forces of the nation. Congressman Vito Marcantonio's proposed "Fair Employment Practices Act" is a sound and attainable objective around which the democratic win-the-war coalition can rally.

H.R. 1732 declares it to be "the policy of the United States to re-

pudiate and prohibit discrimination in employment because of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, or citizenship by employers" providing goods or services for any agency of the Federal Government.

The bill not only "prohibits" such discrimination. It requires that every Federal contract include certain specified "fair employment practices provisions." It sets stiff penalties for violations. And it vests FEPC with investigatory authority similar to that of the National Labor Relations Board, and with effective powers of enforcement.

Discharge Petition No. 18 has been filed to dilodge H.R. 1732 from the House Judiciary Committee. It has already gained quite a number of signatures. With a vigorous and unified campaign by labor and the Negro people, this bill can be brought to the floor of the House and passed.

But let there be unity in the campaign for a permanent FEPC. H.R. 1732 is a good bill around which the entire win-the-war camp should now rally. Let there be no division within the ranks of the progressives through the proposal of "rival" bills.

House passage of the Anti-Poll Tax Bill was once jeopardized through petty conflicts by groups eager to press their "own" separate bills. Keep the campaign for a permanent FEPC free from this menace. Let none "pull a Baldwin" on H.R. 1732.



It is well for patriotic Americans to appreciate fully the tremendous stakes at issue in the current attacks upon FEPC. President Roosevelt's creation and continued support of this federal agency is unparalleled by any action of a Chief Executive since Lincoln. Although immediately concerned with assuring democratic wartime employment rights for Negro and other minority peoples, FEPC poses issues of fundamental and continuing importance for the nation as a whole.

At a time when maximum war production is imperative to support the coming Anglo-American invasion of Western Europe, a strong and effective FEPC is absolutely necessary to clear away traditional employment discriminations which now seriously impede the war effort.

At a time when the firm unity of organized labor, the Negro people, and all other patriotic Americans is an urgent necessity to implement the democratic perspectives of Tehran, to rout the defeatists and win a people's victory and a people's peace, FEPC stands as a vital rallying point around which to weld democratic coalition unity.

Let labor and the Negro people move quickly to the defense of FEPC in its present crisis. Let them move also to the offensive—in unified support of Discharge Petition No. 18, for passage of H.R. 1732. Upon this issue the lives of our fighting men abroad and defeat of our pro-fascists here at home largely depend.