

# Toward Freedom

**T**HE current crisis facing the Fair Employment Practices Committee is in a very real sense also a crisis facing the Truman administration and the immediate future of the Negro people in America.

The reactionary foes of democratic employment policies have won the first round. FEPC faces extinction on July 1 unless there is a budget appropriation to continue its work, and the House Appropriations Committee has refused to recommend one penny for its continued operation.



The transparent "explanation" of leaving FEPC out of the war agencies budget—that the appropriations committee prefers to wait and see what happens to permanent FEPC legislation before Congress—fools no one. This is a deceitful maneuver to kill FEPC in flagrant violation of the election campaign pledges of both political parties.

The next stage of the fight will center in the Senate, where an effort will be made to restore the budget appropriation for FEPC, and where southern Bourbons are already vowing to filibuster any such effort to death.

This is by no means the first crisis faced by FEPC, but it is very probably its last. The Fair Employment Practices Committee will

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now move forward as a permanent part of a broadening American democracy, or it will die in the wave of reaction which now struggles to engulf all of our people and undo the progressive achievements of the Roosevelt administration.

**T**HE President of the United States, backed by the progressive masses of the American people, fought aggressively to rescue FEPC from each of its earlier crises.

(1) When the committee was disintegrating after War Manpower Commissioner McNutt had called off the southern railroad hearings, Roosevelt reconstituted FEPC on a more stable basis and ordered the hearings to proceed.

(2) When the Russell amendment threatened the demise of FEPC last year, Roosevelt recommended its first budgetary appropriation and fought hard to win its passage.

(3) When Comptroller General Warren, in the Southern Bell Telephone case, ruled that FEPC directives were mere "advisory opinions" and need not be followed, Roosevelt reversed the ruling and declared that FEPC directives are orders which must be obeyed.

(4) When the Philadelphia transit strike threatened to disrupt the war effort and destroy the effectiveness of FEPC, Roosevelt called out the Army of the United States to

## FEPC Crisis — A Test For President Truman

enforce FEPC's order for the upgrading of eight Negro workers.

Thus has FEPC weathered its major crises of the past. The present crisis demands equally vigorous and forthright leadership from our present Commander-in-Chief. It also calls for even greater pressure from the democratic forces of our country to back up and strengthen the President's hand.

**I**N HIS Senate votes on FEPC and the anti-polltax bill, as well as in more recent pronouncements, Mr. Truman has given evidence of his earnestness in promoting democratic rights for the Negro people. Now, as our chief executive, he must act decisively to keep one of the most fundamental achievements of the Roosevelt administration, the committee on fair employment practice, from being scuttled. And this is a test not only of his policy on racial issues. As in the realm of foreign policy, so in this critical area of domestic policy, what he does now, or fails to do, will be a strong indication of the direction in which his administration is likely to move in the period ahead.

The democratic people of America should write to their President immediately. Let us urge him to act quickly and with courage to beat back the polltax-GOP attack and restore the budget appropriation for FEPC. Let us assure him that we will back him up.