

What Next for FEPC?

Some Afterthoughts on the Garden Rally

By CLAUDIA JONES

Thursday's Madison Square Garden rally was a militant demonstration of the Negro people for a permanent FEPC. But the audience, overwhelmingly Negro, was tensely silent.

Except for their response to the singing of the magnificent 1,000-voice choir, there was something lacking.

It was that unity of all Negro organizations, and all labor, to defend themselves against the bloody assault on our people and the effort to split us and return us to a semi-slave status.

These Negro people were indignant. The wave of violence and death against their kin at Columbia, Tenn., pressed upon them.

On their minds was the Freeport murder of two Negro GI's which has brought to the North the crime of Scottsboro.

Yet nary a word was said by the speakers of these things.

But on the platform sat representatives of labor, CIO and AFL, two Senators, prominent liberal NAACP and Urban League leaders and Secretary of Labor, Lewis Schwellenbach, who represented President Truman.

It was a shocking departure from reality. For support to such burning issues is inseparable from the FEPC fight. They confirm the urgent need for such legislation.

In Daily Worker articles before the rally, we said the FEPC issue was too vital to be hindered by partisan aims.

Now, much seems to have been done to try to re-shape National Council's strategy. A. Phillip Randolph, central figure in the Council, repeatedly urged action in this session of Congress. Randolph criticized the Truman Administration's "failure to place its full forces behind the bill," as well as the Senators of both major parties.

While we can agree that FEPC is an important test of Congressional candidates, it must be noted that the meeting following traditional lines tended to view FEPC as a political football between politicians and aspirants for political office. While it is true that these spokesmen do not represent the

most reactionary wings of their parties, both Chavez (D-NM) and Morse (R-Ore) and ex-Mayor LaGuardia, each in his own way, without offending the other, called for the Democratic - Republican status quo in the 46-48 elections: "Reward your friends and defeat your enemies."

Undoubtedly such an approach is conditioned by the continued presence of the scurrilous Social Democratic, red-baiting Dubinsky and Trozkyite forces who infest the National Council and are willingly permitted to do so by the Randolph-Hedgeman group.

Thus, they are fighting for FEPC in such a way as to fight the Negro people to the old political forces responsible for the sabotage of the measure.

For this reason, Secretary of Labor Schwellenbach invoked the democratic heritage of our country to assure the silent Negro citizens that the Truman Administration carries forward the mantle of Roosevelt.

Unfortunately the labor spokesmen were unrepresentative of labor. Matthew Woll, himself the embodiment of discrimination policies in the AFL read the speech of William Green, who was absent because of "pressing business."

James Carey spoke for the CIO. But Philip Murray should be sore when he learns how Carey represented him. The tone of Carey's speech was set by the horoscope. Just before coming to the meeting, he read the horoscope for Leo in a new paper. "The horoscope's advice for Feb. 28th was that he would 'mingle with the public' he said.

Perhaps Carey took the Negro people for superstitious fools, but there was no laughter, in the audience.

The conclusion from this meeting is obvious. FEPC is a major question for labor, the Negro people and all progressive forces. It becomes necessary for the initiative to be taken and kept by labor and progressive forces.