

How Randolph Aided Filibuster

By CLAUDIA JONES
(Second of a series)

In yesterday's article, we charged that the leaders of the National Council for a Permanent FEPC, seek to make partisan capital out of the FEPC issue.

It is obvious that in so charging we differentiate between the leaders of the National Council and the thousands whose pennies and dollars have helped the FEPC fight through this channel.

Now here are some facts:

1. Mrs. Anna Arnold Hedgeman, Randolph's co-worker, busied herself in sabotaging the Jan. 17th Mass Peoples Delegation to Washington called under the leadership of Congressman Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., and Councilman Benjamin J. Davis. The delegation included about 1,000 representatives from National Negro Congress, NAACP, Urban League, CIO and AFL, church, fraternal and youth groups. Members of that delegation reported that Mrs. Hedgeman deliberately urged many local groups not to come to Washington.

No progressive would take such a position, even with regard to the Feb. 28 rally for to do so would mean selfishly to hinder the fight for FEPC.

2. Leaders of the National Council, as widely reported by Washington observers, were responsible for bringing up the FEPC bill first in the Senate. This made the fight harder. In the Senate, the poll-tax Republican bloc has always been most virulent in their attacks against democratic procedures.

RANDOLPH'S TACTICS

3. It was Randolph and Mrs. Hedgeman who worked behind the scenes to foil the plans of the most experienced, reliable and progressive group of Congressmen, the CIO, and other labor groups, and many Negro peoples organizations. The latter based their strategy on working for the House Discharge Petition to get FEPC to the House floor for vote. It is this strategy that still remains to be accomplished if the FEPC bill is to be made law in this session of Congress.

Progressive persons in the Na-

tional Council for a Permanent FEPC, reflected concern over the ill-devised strategy followed by the Randolph-Hedgeman leadership, on the very day the filibuster began.

Since the mass delegation was in Washington just then, many of these progressives urged delegates to do something about the "surprise" move of Chavez and the resultant filibuster. This, the delegation did, and it obtained many signatures to the House Discharge petition, and laid the groundwork for the later fight to secure Senators' signatures to the cloture petition.

Here, however, is graphic proof of the insufficient preparation on the part of the National Council leaders to beat the filibuster. And such strategy played into the hands of the bill's enemies.

MOTIVE BARED

Does this mean that the National Council did absolutely nothing on FEPC? By no means. But Randolph's telegram to Bilbo's filibustering act, best reveals the motivation of their strategy.

Randolph proudly wired Bilbo that "while you are filibustering in Washington we are planning a Madison Square Garden rally, in which thousands of white New Yorkers are joining with fellow Negroes, Catholics and Jews in demanding fair employment practices."

While Bilbo was filibustering, progressive and labor forces recognized the filibuster as a danger signal requiring a heightened fight for victory on the FEPC—in this session of Congress. Not at some future date!

Had the National Council leaders plunged into this fight, instead of sabotaging the only mass Peoples March to Washington, ever held, they might have helped secure the eight votes which marked the difference between success or failure.

It is no wonder, then, that Randolph and Mrs. Hedgeman were more interested in corralling the angered sentiments of the Negro people for their own partisan purposes, than in fighting for FEPC

now.

More than pompous oratory is needed for speedy enactment of

FEPC legislation.

There is a good idea there. For and labor will ask: Whose advice

do Mr. Randolph and Mrs. Hedgeman seek in their strategy on FEPC?

Why have they in their forthcoming meeting deliberately excluded progressive and labor forces?

(These questions will be answered in the concluding article in Monday's Daily Worker).

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