

Race, Jobs,
and the War

*The FEPC in the Midwest,
1941-46*

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University of Illinois Press

URBANA AND CHICAGO

For Fred

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to use his OPM office to coax defense contractors into obeying the government's nondiscrimination policy. At the same time, Hillman did not want to disrupt factories by causing work stoppages over shop floor integration. His statement, which was not entered into the *Federal Register* and thus had no legal weight, was a weak attempt to propound administration policy while "avoiding vigorous intervention" that could slow defense production.²¹

Because of the half-hearted nature of the OPM's action, organizing for the march on Washington picked up after Hillman's statement. By May, most of the plans were set and the nation's black leadership appeared to rally behind Randolph. On 29 May 1941 Randolph notified the White House formally that the MOWM was assembling ten to fifty thousand blacks to march on Washington on 1 July to protest discrimination in the national defense effort. For the first time, Randolph issued his demands. He wanted the president to sign executive orders "to abolish discrimination in national defense and all departments of the Federal Government." Randolph's call for executive orders reflected the political realities in Washington. Lobbying Congress on behalf of fair employment was almost a waste of time. Southern Democrats and conservative Republicans blocked all legislative attempts to deal with the issue, including the first two federal fair employment practice bills introduced in early 1941. In March Representative Vito Marcantonio (ALP, N.Y.) was the first congressman to propose a permanent fair employment practice commission, and in April Senator Scott W. Lucas (D, Ill.) became the second. So forgettable were these initial attempts that in 1945 Lucas had to struggle to convince his liberal constituents that he had introduced such a bill. If the MOWM were to affect national policy, pressuring FDR was its only practical course of action.²²

Sensing that the march might actually take place, President Roosevelt began to pressure Randolph to stop the demonstration. FDR feared that the march might disrupt industrial production, upset his political alliances in the South, become grist in the Axis propaganda mill, and perhaps incite a race riot in segregated Washington, D.C. Hence he ordered his top advisors on racial matters—Aubrey Williams, Fiorello LaGuardia, and his wife Eleanor—to meet with the MOWM leadership. After conferring with Randolph, LaGuardia recommended that the president see Randolph himself.²³

White House secretaries arranged a meeting for June 18. In attendance were FDR, Phil Randolph, Walter White, Assistant Secretary of War Robert P. Patterson, Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox, and OPM heads William S. Knudsen and Sidney Hillman. As White wrote in his memoirs, Roosevelt tried skillfully but without success to convince the black leaders to end the march. Finally the president turned to White, the more conservative of the two activists, and asked, "Walter, how many people will *really* march?" White responded, "no less than one hundred thousand." White later wrote that "the

President looked me full in the eye for a long time in an obvious effort to find out if I were bluffing or exaggerating. Eventually he appeared to believe that I meant what I said." "What do you want me to do?" FDR asked. Once again White presented the MOWM's six demands, including an executive order banning discrimination in war plants. Quiet until that point, Knudsen, who was also president of General Motors, burst out and said that he opposed any step by the president that would interfere with employers' rights to hire. Knudsen demanded proof that any corporation, especially GM, discriminated against blacks. White retorted that he did not have the information with him but would send Knudsen a copy of the NAACP's reports on his company. "And send me a copy too of General Motors' record when you send it to Bill, won't you?" FDR wryly interjected. The president then offered a deal. He would issue an executive order banning discrimination in defense industries if White and Randolph agreed to call off their march. According to Randolph, FDR also told them that "it was in his mind that it would be well to establish a board which would have the power to take action by way of making the necessary investigations and carrying out the measures of redress." Although they had not received everything they wanted, the leaders of the MOWM agreed to cancel the march.²⁴

The job of writing the executive order fell to Joseph L. Rauh Jr., a White House assistant. He later described what happened on June 19 to Studs Terkel. "I got a call from my boss, Wayne Coy [the Liaison Officer for the Office of Emergency Management who said] 'Get your ass over here we got a problem.'" Rauh ran the ten blocks to Coy's office. Coy explained that "some guy named Randolph is going to march on Washington unless we put out a fair employment practices order." He asked Rauh if he would write an executive order. "Sure, any idiot can write an executive order, but what do you want me to say?" Coy responded, "All I know is the President says you gotta stop Randolph from marching." Rauh's first draft of the order was rejected by Randolph, who negotiated for a stronger one. The final draft became Executive Order 8802.²⁵

On 25 June 1941 President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 8802, which promulgated a nondiscrimination employment policy for the federal government during the war years. Citing his worry "that available and needed workers [had] been barred from employment in industries engaged in defense production solely because of consideration of race, creed, color, or national origin," Roosevelt reaffirmed "the policy of the United States that there shall be no discrimination in the employment of workers in defense industries or Government because of race, creed, color, or national origin." Executive Order 8802 mandated that all departments and agencies of the federal government related to vocational and training programs for defense production adhere to the nondiscriminatory employment policy. Moreover,

contracting agencies of the government were to include in all contracts a provision obligating the contractor not to discriminate against any worker. Finally, the Executive Order established the Fair Employment Practice Committee under the auspices of the Office of Production Management. Its task was to "receive and investigate complaints of discrimination in violation of the provision of this order and take appropriate steps to redress grievances which it finds valid."²⁶

The executive order did not satisfy every MOWM demand. Roosevelt took no action on the request to end segregation and discrimination in the military, a move strongly opposed by Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson and Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox. Perhaps not wishing to overplay their cards, Randolph and White agreed to set aside this request. Nevertheless, both declared Executive Order 8802 a "Second Emancipation Proclamation." It was the first time since Reconstruction that the federal government had created an agency to assist black workers. Some had high hopes for the FEPC. As one committee member, Earl Dickerson, put it a year later, "This order has given new meaning, new vitality to the Emancipation Proclamation. Lincoln's proclamation of 1863 freed us physically; Roosevelt's proclamation of 1941 is the beginning of our economic freedom." Although disappointed at the narrow scope of the Executive Order, the Midwest's main black newspaper, the *Chicago Defender*, shared this sentiment and called the president's order "one of the most significant pronouncements that has been made in the interest of the Negro for more than a century." Mary McLeod Bethune wrote FDR that the executive order "has come to us as a refreshing shower in a thirsty land." According to the NAACP's *Crisis*, "the President [had] done, finally, about all he can be expected to do on this problem."²⁷

These favorable opinions were not shared by all African Americans. Traditionally Republican newspapers were skeptical. The *Cleveland Gazette* called the committee "teethless," and the *Philadelphia Tribune* similarly wondered how the FEPC would work without enforcement powers. Equally wary was the *Baltimore Afro-American*, which asserted, "Good stuff, Mr. President, if you can make it stick!" Perhaps the group most disappointed by Randolph's deal with FDR was the MOWM's youth organization, led by Richard Parrish, Bayard Rustin, and others of similar radical bent, which repudiated Executive Order 8802 and demanded that the march proceed as planned in order to secure "full participation in American life."²⁸

With all attention on the escalating war in Europe and Asia, the general public's reactions to the FEPC appeared to be more subdued. Major urban newspapers such as the staid *New York Times* carried the story but without analysis or commentary. In Congress politicians tended to ignore the creation of the FEPC. Senator Joseph F. Guffey (D, Pa.) was an exception. He publicly thanked the president for the FEPC and placed the text of Executive Or-

der 8802 into the *Congressional Record*. Representative Arthur W. Mitchell (D, Ill.), the sole African-American legislator in Congress, made a passing reference to the FEPC on 24 July 1941, noting that he was "deeply gratified at the action of the President." Many whites and blacks, it seemed, suspended judgment on the FEPC until the committee members were appointed and began to work.²⁹

After haggling with Randolph over the composition of the FEPC, Roosevelt appointed the committee members in August 1941. Mississippi-born Mark Ethridge, the editor of the *Louisville Courier-Journal*, was tapped as FEPC chairman. Ideally, Ethridge, who was a white southern liberal with excellent public relations experience, would ensure that the FEPC would not become too radical while honestly enforcing Executive Order 8802. Three members were from the Midwest. In addition to David Sarnoff, the white president of the Radio Corporation of America, the two African-American members of the committee were from Chicago—Milton P. Webster, Randolph's right-hand man in the BSCP and the March on Washington Movement, and Earl Dickerson, a prominent and outspoken civil rights leader and Democratic alderman. The remaining members were white: AFL president William Green and CIO president Philip Murray. Murray and Green quickly named alternates to the FEPC. Green appointed Frank Fenton, the AFL's director of organization, and Murray named the national director of the CIO, John Brophy. The FEPC's first action was to appoint an executive secretary and his assistant. Believing that an African American would have difficulty dealing with lily-white government agencies, the committee selected a white man, Lawrence W. Cramer, the former governor of the largely black Virgin Islands, as executive secretary in charge of daily operations, and a black man, George M. Johnson, the dean of Howard Law School, as assistant executive secretary.³⁰

Although the mere creation of the FEPC was an important historical achievement, the committee's ability to provide significant employment opportunities for black and other minority workers was limited. Initially the committee had a part-time staff of eleven and a modest yearly budget of eighty thousand dollars. In addition, the committee could only handle cases of discrimination against departments and agencies of the United States government concerned with vocational training programs for war production, contracting agencies of the federal government, and employers and labor organizations engaged in war production. The FEPC had no power to deal with firms that did not have government contracts or were not engaged in activities essential to the war effort. Moreover, since the FEPC was created by executive order, it was not able to subpoena, fine, or jail violators of its directives. Instead the committee had to rely on what FEPC officials termed "quiet persuasion" to convince employers to hire workers regardless of race, creed, color, or national origin. The FEPC kept

an especially low profile in areas with high racial tensions. The committee sought to redress discrimination complaints without exacerbating social conflicts. If moral suasion failed, hearings, directives, and even revocation of defense contracts were possible. This last step was never taken; no war contract was ever canceled because of racial discrimination. As the committee's last chairman, Malcolm Ross, reflected in his memoirs, "in theory the company's refusal to hire qualified Negro workers should have canceled its entire contract. But suppose American lives are dependent on the production [of that plant's war materials]? Who is to judge the present value of lives against the long-term value of democracy?"³¹

Ultimately, the test that faced the newly created President's Committee on Fair Employment Practice was in the field. Minority workers and civil rights groups were fed up with the empty platitudes that had come from the OPM. They were going to judge the committee by its results, and results would be very hard to come by. Although Executive Order 8802 was a major event, most Americans paid little attention to it. In late 1941 the FEPC had a two-front fight ahead of it. It had to not only attack job discrimination and ease employment barriers but also to raise awareness and win public support. Propaganda and public hearings were weapons of choice in what soon became a major publicity campaign. One of the most critical battlefields for the committee was the Midwest. By late 1941 the region was already feeling the pains of labor shortages due in part to the failure to hire minority workers. The two FEPC members from Chicago (Dickerson and Webster) ensured that the Windy City would be a focal point in the publicity campaign. It was a logical choice for another reason. Chicago had a well-established tradition of civil rights activism upon which the committee could draw. The community networks that the FEPC built in Chicago and its experiences there in 1942 set the tone for all of its subsequent midwestern and national activities.

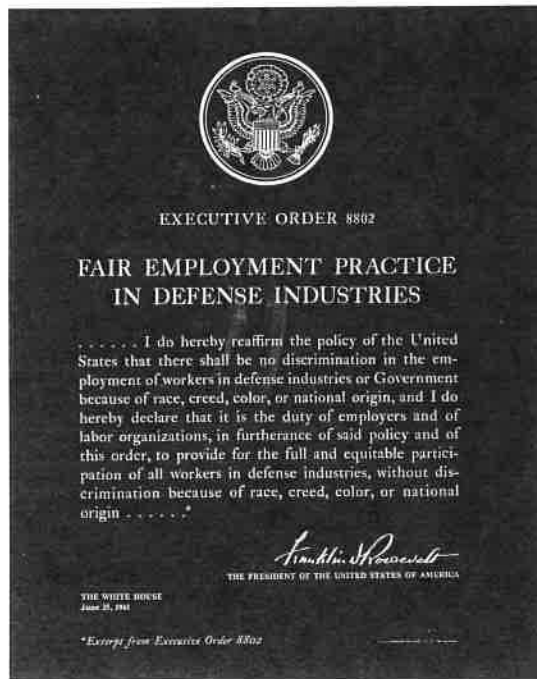
2. The Publicity Campaign and the Chicago Precedents

THE FEPC'S PRIMARY GOAL was to open the war industries for all workers regardless of race, creed, color, or national origin. Its task was daunting as were its initial problems. In addition to the difficulties associated with a small budget and staff, few employers and workers knew of Executive Order 8802 or understood how it applied to them. To solve this problem, the FEPC launched a publicity campaign from late 1941 through the summer of 1942, the centerpiece of which was a series of public hearings held in Los Angeles, Chicago, New York, and Birmingham. These proceedings not only drew attention to job discrimination but also to the new federal agency and Executive Order 8802. The publicity drive was more successful than the committee members could have predicted. By late 1942 few Americans did not know about the FEPC and the policy prohibiting employment discrimination. The public hearings proved to be the best announcement of the president's fair employment policy, and the hearings in Chicago established precedents for its enforcement. By the committee's final hearing in Chicago in 1942, the FEPC had committed itself to the case method system for redressing individual complaints, which was a break from the New Deal's prior reliance on quotas to achieve fair employment. It also adopted the practice of issuing cease and desist orders, modeling itself on other federal agencies such as the National Labor Relations Board.

The FEPC began its publicity campaign by sending posters carrying the text of Executive Order 8802 to federal agencies and employers with defense contracts. Chairman Mark Ethridge initially planned to distribute the seventy-five thousand two-foot square FEPC placards in late December, but events in the Midwest pushed up the timetable. On 30 November 1941, in Columbus, Ohio, sixty-seven white tool and die makers at a Curtiss-Wright Aeronauti-

cal plant walked off the job after a single black machinist was placed in their department. After intense negotiations between the FEPC, the OPM's Labor Relations Division, and the plant's management, an agreement was reached. The black worker remained at his post and more were to be hired. Curtiss-Wright also pledged to abide by the federal policy of nondiscrimination and promised to place the FEPC's posters around the plant.¹

By the week after Pearl Harbor, most major war plants had their FEPC posters. The results were immediate. Scores of companies requested more. One per plant seemed not enough. For instance, a Toledo steel firm wrote the committee in early 1942 requesting six more posters, so "that we can cover each department in our plant." The irony of the FEPC's poster distribution was that the committee's message and actions were not substantially different from those of the NDAC and the OPM. In the cover letter that Ethridge enclosed with each poster, he explained that the FEPC was "sending these to facilitate the cooperation of your workers with you in your efforts to carry out a program of full utilization of all labor resources in defense production."² The goal remained full utilization of manpower, and the federal government was still promoting fair employment by word of mouth, not direct



During its initial publicity campaign, the FEPC distributed thousands of posters of Executive Order 8802 to war plants throughout the Midwest and elsewhere in the United States. (National Archives, Records of the Office of War Information, Record Group 208; photograph by Ann Rosener, #208-NP-4NNN-1)

action. Nevertheless, the message was reaching more people, in part because more people were involved with the war effort. Some civil rights leaders, such as Walter White of the NAACP, were encouraged by this approach. Others were not. A typical black response to the FEPC's publicity campaign was to ask, "does it mean much?" The committee had announced its presence but it had not answered critics who feared that it did not have the teeth to back up its pronouncements. In other words, the FEPC had not differentiated itself from the NDAC or the OPM.³

To prove to employers and workers that Executive Order 8802 was to be obeyed, and to demonstrate the widespread existence of job discrimination, the FEPC decided to hold a series of public hearings in each region of the nation. The purpose behind the hearings was to collect information, demonstrate the power of the new agency, and attack employment barriers. The targeted cities were Los Angeles, Chicago, New York, and Birmingham. In late 1941 Ethridge dispatched FEPC field representatives to each of the four cities to collect evidence and prepare for the public hearings.⁴

The Los Angeles hearings were first, beginning on 20 October 1941. Generally speaking they were far from a complete success. The FEPC realized its main goal of increasing awareness about the federal government's fair employment policy. The hearings did not do much more than this, however. Bickering among FEPC members during the proceedings and sloppy staff work by Eugene Davidson, an FEPC field investigator and a former MOWM official, hindered the FEPC's cases against the industrialists and union leaders. Moreover, the committee issued no reprimands or directives to the violators of the executive order. As Dickerson and Ethridge stated during the hearings, the FEPC's motives were purely educational. In the absence of pressure on individual employers and unions, no one felt immediately compelled to drop color bars. In particular, the FEPC did not convince two major aircraft companies, North American and Vultee, to alter their unfair employment policies. It did not even persuade Vultee's president to retract his statement that "only members of the Caucasian race" would be employed at his plant. Thus the FEPC did not reap many rewards from its initial hearing, and perhaps damaged its fledgling reputation because of the conflicts within the agency.⁵

In Chicago the FEPC developed a better method of holding hearings. What happened there on 21 and 22 January and 4 April 1942, in effect, became the model for all subsequent FEPC hearings in the Midwest and elsewhere. The Windy City was an excellent site to begin attacking employment discrimination in the Midwest. Because Chicago was one of the region's main industrial centers, the committee directly reached many important defense contractors and their employees. With two members from Chicago, the FEPC could count on loyal contacts for accurate information about the city's war

industries. Earl Dickerson and Milton Webster were extremely well-connected. Dickerson, the Democratic alderman from the second ward, a member of the Chicago NAACP, and the president of the Chicago Urban League, had strong ties with the city's elite professional leadership. Webster, the vice president of the BSCP, had established networks among working-class African Americans in the 1920s. There were several additional organizations and activists who were willing to work with Dickerson and Webster and hence with the FEPC. Chicago had a tradition of civil rights activism that came from the black community and from the labor movement, particularly the CIO. Several unions, especially those with radical leadership like the United Packinghouse Workers of America, had long-standing fair employment policies and a history of supporting civil rights. The use of community contacts, including union leaders, liberal professionals, and local civil rights activists, made the FEPC's job much easier and more productive. After two hearings, the committee calculated marked progress in Chicago, demonstrating the possibility for change on the home front during World War II.⁶

War in Europe had reshaped Chicago once before. On the eve of World War I, the black population of Chicago was about forty-five thousand. Black workers were concentrated in service jobs, such as waiters, cooks, maids, porters, and janitors. Factory work had been generally off-limits as white employers and workers upheld job color bars. This changed after war broke out in 1914. As Chicago industries started to produce war matériel, migrants began to flow into the city. War jobs attracted over fifty thousand southern African Americans. By 1920 Chicago's black population was 110,000. Most new black workers were confined to unskilled and domestic service jobs, but an estimated ten thousand obtained semiskilled industrial work, many of them in Chicago's stockyards.⁷

After the war, African-American workers experienced economic displacement, although black women won a permanent place in garment factories and black men remained an integral part of the steel and meatpacking industries. Blacks increased their industrial numbers slowly during the 1920s as Chicago's industries maintained their need for workers. Job expansion was also a result of the work of the Chicago Urban League, the YMCA, and the Illinois Free Employment Bureau, which helped with placement. Equally important were the responses of white workers and employers to the introduction of blacks. Despite the fact that city-wide racial tensions were extremely intense following the First World War and that Chicago experienced a major race riot in 1919, industrial race relations were often amicable. In its massive study on the causes and consequences of the 1919 riot, the Chicago Commission on Race Relations concluded that "racial friction [was] not pronounced in Chicago industries."⁸

The Great Depression increased job rivalry between whites and blacks. The dramatic industrial downturn hurt all Chicago workers, but as laborers made their way down the economic ladder blacks were pushed to a lower rung than whites. New Deal work projects did not immediately help many unemployed black workers. Chicago employers hired whites to perform "Negro jobs." During the 1930s, hotels and restaurants, for example, replaced black bellhops and waiters with whites. As J. G. St. Clair Drake and Horace R. Cayton demonstrated in their study of Chicago, black workers were "losing out" in the intense competition of the Depression years.⁹

What made Chicago and Illinois somewhat unique was the response to job bias during the Great Depression. Civil rights organizations in Illinois joined a national trend during the 1930s and struggled to break down the color barriers to employment through "Don't Buy Where You Can't Work" campaigns. They also strove to create equity for blacks on work programs through state fair employment practice laws. In January 1933 the Chicago branch of the NAACP had African-American State Representative Charles J. Jenkins of Cook County introduce a bill to prohibit "discrimination and intimidation on account of race or color in employment under contracts for public buildings or public works." The bill carried a penalty for violators. If the Illinois secretary of state determined that a company had discriminated it could lose its charter of incorporation. Although in 1933 the Illinois legislature passed the Jenkins bill and Democratic Governor Henry Horner signed it into law, it had little practical impact.¹⁰

Despite instances of unfair employment practices within New Deal programs, by the mid-1930s black Chicagoans in general benefitted greatly from them, particularly the NYA, PWA, and WPA. As one black leader wrote, "Mr. Roosevelt gave us work and bread. Our people will respond by giving Mr. Roosevelt most of their votes." Indeed they did. From 1932 to 1936 the number of black Chicagoans who voted for Roosevelt increased by 132 percent, illustrating the dramatic shift in African-American voting to the Democratic Party during the FDR years.¹¹

It was not New Deal relief programs but the start of another war in Europe that revitalized Chicago's economy. The return of prosperity did not immediately help most black Chicagoans. To investigate the situation, in January 1940 Governor Henry Horner appointed the Illinois Commission on the Condition of Urban Colored Population. A year later, the Horner Commission spent two days in Chicago interviewing city leaders. Philip Flum of the Illinois State Employment Service told the commission that job placements were up for 1940 because of new defense contracts. In August, Flum's office placed 4,217 workers; 719 (17 percent) were black. In September 1940, 5,071 workers got jobs through the state employment service; 795 (16 percent)

were black. However, according to a 1941 survey of 358 Chicago defense industries, two-thirds refused to hire African-American workers. Analysis of relief rolls also demonstrated that more whites than blacks were receiving jobs. Leo M. Lyons, the head of the Chicago Relief Administration, reported that the percentage of blacks on relief rolls was increasing despite the economic boom. Yet in general fewer people were on relief. From November 1939 to November 1940, the total relief population decreased 15 percent, from 229,305 to 193,721. However, Lyons also pointed out that 47 percent of those on relief in November 1940 were black, roughly 5 percent higher than it was the previous November, while the percentage of whites on relief had dropped 5 percent to 53 percent.¹²

In *Black Metropolis*, J. G. St. Clair Drake and Horace R. Cayton argued that by 1940 black Chicagoans had hit a "job ceiling." Drake and Cayton used Robert Weaver's test for fair employment to calculate the effects of discrimination. They reasoned that if all things remained equal during the recovery period of the early 1940s, blacks should have attained their proportional share of jobs. In Chicago in 1940 there should have been 18,500 skilled black workers. The census showed only 8,500. Similarly, there should have been 11,500 unskilled black workers. The Census Bureau calculated the actual number to be over twenty-five thousand. Looking back at the two previous censuses, Drake and Cayton concluded that the job ceiling had existed since the First World War and had solidified by 1940.¹³

On the eve of Pearl Harbor, the employment problems in the Chicago metropolitan area were difficult for African Americans. Skilled blacks rarely found work in the city. African-American plumbers and steamfitters, for example, were denied permits to work on the federally-funded Cabrini defense housing complex. The story of Quincy D. Jones, a skilled African-American carpenter, illustrates the problems faced by blacks in the building trades. Jones began his career as a carpenter in the 1920s, and managed to practice his trade during the Depression by working on WPA jobs in Chicago. In January 1941, on the recommendation of Jones's union, the Illinois State Employment Service offered him a construction job in Wilmington, a small town just south of Chicago. Jones took the position, but when he arrived for work the personnel manager of the construction company told him to go home because he would not "tolerate a Negro working with whites on this job!" For Jones, returning to Chicago provided no relief from discrimination. As the *Chicago Defender* editorialized, "many Negro workers qualified and available for skilled positions on the job are being excluded" from defense jobs.¹⁴

Although employment discrimination was rampant in the Chicago area, there were exceptions. In March 1941 Howard D. Gould of the Chicago Urban League reported that thirty-four city firms that had previously denied blacks jobs were now employing them. According to Gould, this was due to

the tightening of the labor market and the activities of the Chicago Urban League. Most Chicago-area employers, however, opposed the idea of equal opportunity. In Melrose Park, a Chicago suburb, General Motors's Buick airplane engine plant expanded at a tremendous rate, but company managers refused to allow any blacks or Jews to work there. Gould worked for months to open that plant to blacks. He collected evidence from the Illinois Institute of Technology to show that trained African Americans were being denied jobs. When Gould could not get any response from Buick, he contacted the OPM's Negro Employment and Training Branch, headed by Robert C. Weaver. When Weaver's office failed to relieve the Buick situation, a few black leaders in Chicago suspected Buick of being on a secret OPM "exemption list" of employers who did not have to hire minorities. Because William Knudsen, the former president of GM, was the agency's codirector, the *Chicago Defender* speculated that Buick was off-limits to Weaver's office. Whether the exemption list existed or was a figment of a conspiratorial imagination, the OPM did not alter discrimination at the Melrose Park Buick plant or in Chicago.¹⁵

Some African Americans in Chicago responded to discrimination in defense industries with organized protest. In late 1940 Walter White wrote a letter to all NAACP branches calling for demonstrations against job bias in defense factories. On 14 February 1941 over a thousand people, white and black, paraded through the streets of Chicago in a march heralded as a "Demonstration for Democracy." Most local civil rights groups and some CIO locals participated. A few months later some activists formed the Chicago unit of the March on Washington Movement under the leadership of Dr. Charles Wesley Burton, the midwestern regional director of the MOWM. Although it had over twenty-five hundred members, the Chicago MOWM branch was not particularly successful. There was some friction between the Chicago MOWM and more established (and less radical) organizations, such as the NAACP. According to Roy Wilkins of the NAACP, Burton's "high-handed" style drove away local activists.¹⁶

Although black Chicagoans may have been wary of the local MOWM branch, they appeared satisfied with the creation of the Fair Employment Practice Committee. The editorials in the *Chicago Defender* were positive. One writer congratulated Roosevelt and "our brilliant leader A. Philip Randolph" for producing "one of the most significant pronouncements that has been made in the interests of the Negro for more than a century." Chicagoans, especially labor activists, had more to cheer about when FDR appointed two of their own to the committee. Frank McCulloch, a white labor lawyer and a liberal Democrat, was so inspired by the creation of the FEPC that he helped form a local organization to further the goals embodied in Executive Order 8802. The Fair Employment Practices Council of Metropolitan Chicago (Chicago FEP Council) was established in November 1941. Two

white and two black men held the leadership positions. Its chairman was Dr. James M. Yard of the National Conference of Christians and Jews; McCulloch was vice chairman; Earl Dickerson was honorary chairman; Howard Gould of the Chicago Urban League was the secretary. The Chicago FEP Council seemingly took its charge from a *Crisis* editorial in August 1941 that called on local branches of the NAACP, offices of the Urban League, and other interested parties to pressure state employment offices and collect evidence of discrimination for the FEPC. From November 1941 to April 1942 the Chicago FEP Council did this and more.¹⁷

On 21 July 1941 the Illinois legislature passed and Republican Governor Dwight H. Green signed into law the nation's first general fair employment practices statute. In language similar to Executive Order 8802, the law—the author of which was again Representative Jenkins—banned discrimination in the employment or training of any person “on account of race, color, or creed.” It also assigned a fine of not less than one hundred dollars and not more than five hundred dollars for violators. The fair employment act's one failing was that it provided no investigatory staff or adjustment agency. In late 1941 the Chicago FEP Council asked Francis B. Murphy, the head of the Illinois State Department of Labor, to assume the administration of the act. Despite plaintive letters and long-distance telephone conversations, vice chairman McCulloch was unable to secure any assistance from the Labor Department's director, who, McCulloch finally concluded, was “indifferent to the conditions” of Chicago's black Americans.¹⁸

Hope for governmental redress against employment discrimination in Chicago thus fell to the president's Committee on Fair Employment Practice. On 20 December 1941 Earl Dickerson wrote to McCulloch informing him of the opening of a Chicago FEPC office to prepare for the January 1941 hearings. Located in the Civic Opera Building, the office was initially operated by G. James Fleming, an African American from Philadelphia who had edited the traditionally Republican black newspaper, the *Philadelphia Tribune*, and who had been a member of Gunnar Myrdal's research group. The Chicago FEP Council wasted no time in collecting evidence for the hearings as did the FEPC. Fleming's office discovered that many Chicago businesses ignored Executive Order 8802. In December 1941 Fleming visited DuPont's Kankakee Ordnance Plant to check on an agreement that the OPM's Robert Weaver had arranged with the management to hire black workers. Fleming quickly discovered that DuPont was not living up to its pledge. When confronted, plant manager George Miller told Fleming that he talked “too much of the President's executive order.” Miller stated further that he would decide when and where blacks were to be hired.¹⁹

The day the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, representatives from Fleming's office met with the Fair Employment Practices Council of Metropoli-

tan Chicago to coordinate efforts. The meeting was successful in that the FEPC enlisted the council's full support. Yet the two organizations clashed over the issue of who was to lead the attack on employment discrimination. To the FEPC officials it seemed that the local group was too eager to help. Howard Gould wanted “to run away with the show.” The council's secretary, Fleming reported, was “obsessed with the idea” that the council was to help gather evidence for the hearings. The FEPC needed that assistance but it wanted to take the lead and have the local organization merely assist in the hearings and follow-up afterward.²⁰

Despite these minor differences, which were eventually ironed out according to the FEPC's liking, everyone concerned about fair employment in Chicago understood that the hearings would be of critical importance. The FEPC's work was essential for African-American, if not national, morale. No doubt the committee also wanted to redeem itself after its unsatisfactory efforts in Los Angeles. A few months before the Chicago hearings Milton P. Webster had told one of his friends that if the FEPC did not break down some employment barriers in Chicago, and if President Roosevelt did not give the FEPC his full support, “the committee will have to check out.” Fortunately for the committee the hearings were a smashing success.²¹

On 19 January 1942, in city council chambers, Mayor Edward J. Kelly opened the Chicago hearings by welcoming the FEPC. In attendance for the committee were chairman Mark Ethridge, John Brophy, David Sarnoff, Lawrence Cramer, Frank Fenton, and Earl Dickerson. Ethridge called the Chicago hearings to order in front of an overflow crowd of two hundred people. In his opening statement Ethridge pointed out that “to draw lines of employment on any basis except that of fitness is to deny ourselves the full use of our manpower.” He made it clear that those who “do not fall into line” with Executive Order 8802 were committing something “close to treason.” The chairman also explained that the FEPC had come to Chicago in part because the Illinois law prohibiting employment discrimination had gone unenforced. The statements of civil rights leaders, including Howard Gould and Harry I. Barron, an educator and the executive secretary of the Bureau on Jewish Employment Problems, followed. In an example of black-Jewish cooperation, together they detailed the problems of minority workers in training and job placement and urged the FEPC to take “positive steps” against discriminatory hiring practices.²²

The FEPC had asked eleven companies to attend the hearings, six from Chicago and five from Milwaukee. The first day of the hearings was devoted to the Windy City's employers. The Stewart-Warner, the Majestic Radio and Television, and the Studebaker corporations all failed to employ African Americans. Stewart-Warner's personnel director, R. W. Mathers, denied the charge of discrimination. The committee presented *prima facie* evidence that

none of the company's eight thousand employees were black. Agreeing with the FEPC's findings, Mathers admitted that the company was in error and pledged that they would comply with Executive Order 8802 in every respect. H. R. Parkins, the counsel for Majestic Radio and Television, and H. A. Gates, the company's president, also promised to end unfair employment practices, agreeing that they had discriminated in the past. Gates discharged his employment manager to rectify the situation.²³

Studebaker presented a difficult case because of some apparent lying by its attorney, Arthur A. Sullivan, and its industrial relations director, Walter S. Gundeck. They claimed that the reason that Studebaker required potential employees to identify race on job applications was not to facilitate discrimination. Rather, they asserted, the FBI had recommended this policy to gather information on potential employees. This answer to the FEPC's charge of discrimination disrupted the committee's case and delayed action against Studebaker until the FEPC executive secretary, Lawrence Cramer, contacted FBI director J. Edgar Hoover. A few months later Hoover responded to Cramer's inquiry and "categorically denied that the FBI recommend[ed] this procedure or that it or any of its agents recommended it to the Studebaker Company."²⁴

Buick too seemed to lie to the FEPC. In September 1941 H. H. Curtice, general manager of the Melrose plant, had reported that his factory was complying fully with Executive Order 8802. *Prima facie* evidence submitted during the hearings revealed otherwise. Harry Barron reported that Buick refused to take qualified black trainees from the Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT). Barron backed his accusation with statistics that were corroborated by the FEPC's own numbers. Of 309 recent Buick hires who trained at IIT, forty-six (15 percent) had been Jewish but none were black. Buick's personnel manager, Carl E. Wooliever, admitted that the company asked for religion and race on its applications. Wooliever defended the policy, saying that it was to get "a picture of the men" they were interviewing. When asked why he had not hired the best student among the IIT graduates—who was an African American—Wooliever coolly replied that it was "just one of those things that could happen" when hiring a large group of people. At no point during the three hours of questioning did Buick's representative admit discriminating against blacks, and he continued to proclaim that the plant was operating within the executive order's intent.²⁵

The remaining two Chicago firms, Barse Manufacturing and Simpson Construction, both agreed to stop discriminating against Jews. Barse's employment manager, James H. Erickson, promised to end the company's practice of specifying "Gentiles" on advertisements for power machine operators. Erickson said that he had been "foolish" in believing that Jewish operators could not work well on "heavy canvas goods." Simpson Construction, which had a number of Jewish and black workers in the field, refused to hire them

in the office. Elmer Hansen, the company's president, promised the committee that he would instruct his personnel manager to allow all people to apply for jobs, not only "Gentiles [and] Protestants."²⁶

The next day's cases against the five Milwaukee firms went quickly, in part because only four appeared. While attorneys for the Heil Company, the Nordberg Manufacturing Company, the A. O. Smith Corporation, and the Harnishfager Corporation came to the Chicago hearings, the Allis-Chalmers Corporation sent no representative, although members of the Communist-led UAW-CIO Local 248 attended to support the FEPC's actions. At the time, Allis-Chalmers was shut down because of a plantwide strike, and its management was in Washington, D.C., conferring with OPM directors Hillman and Knudsen in an attempt to settle the dispute with Local 248. Another aspect of the Milwaukee cases that expedited the proceedings was the fact that the companies shared a common problem—all refused to hire African Americans. The FEPC treated all five corporations in a similar fashion, demonstrating discrimination through *prima facie* evidence rather than by individual complaints. As soon as the committee dispensed with the Milwaukee cases it quickly moved to end the hearings.²⁷

Unlike the Los Angeles hearings of October 1941, which ended without any directives from the FEPC, in Chicago Ethridge gave directives to each party. Every company—whether it admitted its past wrongs or not—was directed to change its employment policies to comply fully with Executive Order 8802. They were to "cease and desist" from submitting any further discriminatory orders from employment agencies. They were directed to give written notice to all employment agencies, including the United States Employment Service, of their new willingness to accept minority workers. Finally, each company was to file monthly reports with the FEPC demonstrating its progress in hiring without regard to race, creed, color, or national origin.²⁸

By issuing these demands the FEPC improved over what happened in Los Angeles. The committee sent a clear message and blazed a path for advancing employment practices. In fact the Chicago hearings had been more successful all around. The committee's local contacts and the Chicago office's excellent staff work helped produce incontrovertible cases. Although there were recalcitrant employers such as Buick, the FEPC managed to alter the employment policies of five of the eleven companies at the hearings. Moreover, except for one incident, the bickering among the members of the FEPC did not resurface. Civil rights groups were pleased with the FEPC's results. Walter White wrote the committee to express "congratulations and appreciation" for the FEPC's directives to the eleven war plants. White felt that further follow-up action "should have very salutatory effects." Even the conservative *Chicago Tribune* praised the FEPC and hoped that it would "assemble its facts with care and present them to the President forcefully," adding

that "the abuses complained of make a mockery of our claim to be fighting a war for the four freedoms." "All editorials on the Chicago findings," an FEPC survey concluded, "were sympathetic with the purpose of Executive Order 8802 and the Committee."²⁹

After the Chicago hearings, Mark Ethridge, who was tired of leading the agency with the "small[est] staff with the lowest budget in the government," resigned as chairman. Despite the shake-up of the committee and the addition of Malcolm S. MacLean of the Hampton Institute as the committee's second chairman, the FEPC wasted no time in holding the next set of hearings in New York from 19–20 February 1942. Less than a month later, the committee was back in Chicago to challenge two labor unions, the Chicago Journeymen Plumbers' Union Local 130 (AFL) and the Steamfitters' Protective Association Local 597 (AFL), which together made up the Pipe Trades Council of Cook County (PTC). This return visit to the Windy City was not part of the original publicity campaign. Local civil rights groups had called the committee back to redress individual complaints from several black plumbers and to enforce equal employment in the construction trades.³⁰

The executive order that created the FEPC charged it with the responsibility of fighting discrimination practiced not only by employers but also by labor unions. The FEPC took this charge seriously and included unions as a part of its 1941–42 publicity campaign. In October 1941 FEPC chairman Ethridge spoke before the annual convention of the American Federation of Labor. He pleaded with the delegates to give the FEPC their "full support," and criticized them, stating that "there are still many unions which bar their fellowmen because of color. I would not be frank at all with you if I did not say that most of them are yours." Ethridge's speech earned him the praise of many influential civil rights leaders and newspapers. The *Chicago Defender* commended him for his "stand on the question of work opportunity for the Negro" and urged him to broaden the committee's struggle against union discrimination.³¹

The AFL did not receive Ethridge's speech in the same manner. At the 1941 convention all attempts to liberalize the federation's stand on racial discrimination were defeated. Convention delegates rejected a proposal by A. Philip Randolph to establish a permanent committee within the federation "to deal with discrimination on account of race, color, religion, and national origin." Like the other fair employment board that he helped to create, Randolph wanted this one to conduct investigations and hold hearings, especially in cases where AFL locals refused to admit black workers. William Green, the AFL president and an original FEPC member, attacked the proposal, which led to its defeat. William L. Hutcheson, the president of the carpenter union, also opposed it, bluntly telling Randolph to "mind his own business." Ethridge's words were similarly assailed at the convention and afterward. A few months later the *American Federationist* reprinted his convention speech. Editors add-

ed a disclaimer below the article stating that "we are reluctant to take issue with [Ethridge]. But in order that the record may be kept straight on a matter of vast importance it must be pointed out that his implication that discrimination by unions against Negro workers is widespread is not supported by the facts. The American Federation of Labor has always been most vigorously opposed to discrimination against any person because of race, color, creed, or national origin."³²

During the early years of World War II it was AFL policy to espouse fair employment rhetoric at the national level while not practicing it at the local level. Agreements to create fair employment could be made but were rarely put into action. Until the creation of the FEPC the federal government did little to change the situation. Some government officials even helped to maintain the color bar. For example, OPM director Sidney Hillman's man in Chicago, Joseph Keenan, a native of the city, helped Weaver to orchestrate the fair employment deal with DuPont's Kankakee Ordnance Plant in late 1941. Before he was on the OPM's staff Keenan had been the secretary of the Chicago local of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (AFL), which barred black workers from membership. As labor consultant for the OPM, Keenan looked the other way when Kankakee failed to live up to its agreement and in general allowed the construction unions to continue to bar minorities.³³

African-American workers' problems with the AFL worsened in late 1941 when the OPM authored a stabilization agreement with the federation's Building and Construction Trades Department. The agreement, which affected eight hundred thousand workers, sought to determine wage and hour standards, forbade work stoppages, and otherwise stabilized labor relations to speed up the construction of defense plants. In return for no-strike pledges, the OPM gave the AFL a virtual monopoly over the construction industry. Since most AFL unions held closed shop contracts and maintained color bars, the pact locked out black workers. Civil rights organizations such as the NAACP complained about the stabilization agreement, but without result. Walter White even asked Attorney General Francis Biddle to have Thurman Arnold, the head of the Anti-Trust Division of the Justice Department, investigate the "monopolistic practices under the virtual closed shop granted by the Office of Production Management." Neither Biddle or Arnold took action. Roy Wilkins appealed to William Green, the AFL's leader, to stop the practice of discrimination in the AFL's construction unions. Green rejected the premise of Wilkins's letter and wrote back that "the American Federation of Labor has led in the fight against race discrimination." The AFL head also took the opportunity to suggest that the NAACP "remain neutral" in labor struggles between the AFL and CIO.³⁴

Without support from the AFL, the OPM, or the United States Justice

ployers "have largely succeeded in overcoming whatever opposition" they had to employing Native Americans.⁵⁵ For example, in Ashland, a town that borders Lake Superior, shipbuilders regularly hired and upgraded workers from the Chippewa Reservation. Shipbuilding yards and ordnance plants in Eau Claire, Green Bay, and Sturgeon Bay also employed Indians from the Oneida, Menominee, and Lac Oreilles Reservations. The FEPC apparently received no job-related complaints from Wisconsin's Native Americans.⁵⁶

Most of the committee's cases came from southeastern Wisconsin. In Milwaukee during the Second World War employers were slow to adopt fair employment practices. This was nothing new. Milwaukee's industrialists, supported by the AFL unions and the city's socialist mayors, Victor Berger and Daniel W. Hoan, had long helped to maintain the color bar. Joe W. Trotter has argued that from the 1910s through the 1930s, "blacks in Milwaukee . . . experienced greater confinement to domestic and personal service than blacks in other northern cities of various sizes."⁵⁷

There had been an easing of the color barriers in employment during the 1920s. Some black migrants—mostly men—entered industrial jobs performing the hottest and dirtiest work. As news of these employment opportunities reached the South, more blacks came to Milwaukee. By 1930 the black population of Milwaukee had increased 237 percent to 7,501, only 1.2 percent of the city's total population.⁵⁸ Job discrimination was still common. Employment in the city's breweries, for example, was out of the question, as were many high-paying jobs in Milwaukee's manufacturing companies such as A. O. Smith and Heil.⁵⁹

During the Great Depression the job situation became much worse. As happened elsewhere in the nation, blacks were the first laid off and the last called back to work. Black unemployment in Milwaukee was higher than in other midwestern cities, including Chicago and Detroit. As late as 1940, 29.3 percent of Milwaukee's black workers were unemployed. The comparable percentage for Detroit was 15.7 percent, and 19.3 percent for Chicago.⁶⁰

Unemployment among blacks remained high in January 1941 as Milwaukee industries geared up for war. By the mid-1940s the city had received over \$2 billion in nonfood war contracts and increased industrial employment from 110,000 in 1940 to 200,000 in 1943.⁶¹ African Americans, however, did not benefit from the economic expansion. In December 1940 William V. Kelley, the executive secretary of the Milwaukee Urban League (MUL), surveyed fifty-six local defense contractors and found that only twenty-eight employed blacks, generally in unskilled positions. Unfair employment practices sometimes created pathetically ironic situations. For instance, in the early 1940s some black women in Milwaukee worked as NYA instructors, training white women to be machine operators for defense jobs. Milwaukee's industrialists hired these students but not their teachers.⁶²

Milwaukee's black leaders actively protested employment discrimination in the city's war plants. In response to A. Philip Randolph's call for a march on Washington, black Milwaukeeans organized a short-lived branch of the MOWM. In addition, William V. Kelley, the conservative executive secretary of the MUL, and James W. Dorsey, the vocal head of the local branch of the NAACP, worked closely together to fight job discrimination. Through letters and meetings Kelley and Dorsey managed to secure the support of nonpartisan Mayor Carl F. Zeidler, who, three weeks before Pearl Harbor, delivered a radio address appealing for equal treatment for Negroes in the war industries. The two black leaders who set aside their political differences during the war also enlisted the backing of the Milwaukee County Industrial Council (CIO) in the fight for fair employment.⁶³

At first Milwaukee's employers refused to listen to black leaders, CIO officials, or the mayor, and did not relax Jim Crow employment policies. As a result, Kelley and Dorsey sent the FEPC many signed affidavits from black workers alleging job discrimination in hiring and promotions. As noted in chapter 2, the committee responded by including five of the largest Milwaukee firms—Allis-Chalmers, Harnischfeger, Heil, Nordberg, and A. O. Smith—in the first Chicago FEPC hearings. At the January 1942 proceedings, Nordberg and Harnischfeger officials admitted that they did not hire blacks, and a representative from A. O. Smith added that the company "never did and didn't intend to employ" them.⁶⁴ Allis-Chalmers and Heil were charged with failure to promote African-American workers. Julius F. Heil, later the company's executive vice president and Republican governor of Wisconsin, vehemently denied the FEPC's accusations and defended his position that restricting some jobs, such as office boys, to whites only was not discrimination.⁶⁵

The employers who had attended the Chicago hearings initially resisted the FEPC's directives to cease and desist their unfair employment practices and to hire and promote black workers. Heil was perhaps the most publicly recalcitrant. Shortly after the hearings he threatened the FEPC with a libel suit. Others made clear their intentions to ignore Executive Order 9346.⁶⁶ When William Kelley paid a visit to Harnischfeger, the company's president, Arthur Coppin, told him that the plant's employment practices were "none of [the Urban League's] business," and added that he "resented that fact that [the organization] had participated in the Chicago hearings."⁶⁷

A few months after the hearings, as the white-male labor supply in Milwaukee disappeared and under continuing pressure from Henderson's FEPC office, the city's defense contractors began to change their policies. In early February 1942 a group of Milwaukee employers announced that they would hire skilled and semiskilled black workers. This news was followed by reports from Kelley and the MUL showing that black employment was on the rise. By the end of the war, Heil's percentage of minority workers had increased

from .1 percent to 3.9 percent. Allis-Chalmers also showed marked improvement, employing over six times as many nonwhite workers as it did in early 1942. FEPC investigators were particularly impressed with A. O. Smith, which by the end of the war had hired over eight hundred African Americans. Harnischfeger and Nordberg also increased the number of black workers in their plants, but to a much lesser degree than the others (see appendix A).⁶⁸ Nevertheless Kelley and Dorsey were quite satisfied with the FEPC's actions in Milwaukee. In June 1943 Dorsey wrote to the head of the Chicago FEPC office, "we feel that through no other force than the very effective work of your committee, Negroes were placed in jobs that they never had before, and the employment problem here so far as Negroes getting jobs today is concerned is very good."⁶⁹

Economic conditions continued to improve as the war came to an end.⁷⁰ In 1945, for example, the FEPC integrated the Milwaukee Road, which began to hire black stewards. Although a small victory, Henderson was "greatly pleased with the action taken by the Milwaukee Road," and thought that it would assist the FEPC in its "negotiations with other railroads" that it had been battling since 1941.⁷¹

As the Federal Bureau of Investigation reported, partly because of the favorable job situation, racial tensions in Milwaukee were lower than in most cities across the nation. Milwaukee had some problems due to the large number of migrants and the shortage of good housing. In addition, the FBI received some reports that Milwaukee's Communist leaders were "raising hell" and trying to agitate in the black community.⁷² Nevertheless, in its famous RACON report, the bureau trusted the positive reports from one of its primary informants, William Kelley of the MUL, and concluded that "Negroes as a whole feel they are getting along well at the present time and have no desire to cause trouble."⁷³

The rosy picture painted by the MUL, the FEPC, and the FBI hid some problems. Milwaukee employers with defense contracts generally refused to hire black women. In April 1942 William Kelley first alerted the FEPC to the employment problems of African-American women. Again the committee did little to redress these grievances until late in the war. When Joy Schultz, Henderson's assistant, investigated the problems of black women workers in Milwaukee in 1944, she found that the MUL no longer sought to redress their grievances. In fact Kelley actively discouraged black women from complaining, telling them not to be "sorehead[s]" or so "touchy."⁷⁴ Because by 1944 a few Milwaukee firms, such as Hansen Glove and Rhea Manufacturing, were employing black women and because Henderson did not receive many more complaints from them, the issue of genderized racism and prejudice against black women was allowed to go unresolved—at least for the time being.⁷⁵

Because of Milwaukee's close proximity to Chicago, Henderson and his staff could give it some attention. The major industrial cities of Minnesota,

however, were too remote. Henderson's resources were stretched too thin to devote time, money, and effort to job discrimination in Duluth, St. Paul, and Minneapolis. Therefore it was up to Minnesotans to settle the issue of fair employment.

Minnesota's industrial as well as agricultural sectors revived shortly after the start of war in Europe. Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing (3M), Honeywell, and Northern Pump expanded rapidly even before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Although these firms were making new products, they retained the old patterns of employment. Discrimination against Jewish and black workers was common despite state laws in 1939 and 1941 prohibiting unfair employment practices.⁷⁶

Although dubbed the "Twin Cities," St. Paul and Minneapolis did not have identical employment patterns. Whereas employers in St. Paul generally did not discriminate, those in Minneapolis did. "Minneapolis," Carey McWilliams wrote in 1946, was "the capitol [*sic*] of anti-Semitism in the United States." McWilliams argued that conflicts over religion and jobs had allowed an "iron curtain" to separate "Jews from non-Jews."⁷⁷ Blacks in Minneapolis had an equally hard time finding employment. With the lone exception of the Federal Cartridge Company, owned by Charles L. Horn of the FEPC, discrimination was common in all types of jobs from manufacturing to retail. Most blacks during the early war years were either unemployed, on relief, or working in the railroad industry in traditional occupations.⁷⁸

To battle employment discrimination, several groups in St. Paul and Minneapolis organized the Twin City Council on Fair Employment Practice (TCCFEP) in August 1942. Among the members of the TCCFEP were the executive secretaries of the Minneapolis and St. Paul Urban League branches, officials from the Minnesota Jewish Council, and representatives from the United States Employment Service. A local white magistrate, Judge Vincent A. Day, was chairman. The most important role that the council played was resolving instances of discrimination. On its own, without FEPC assistance, the TCCFEP's Case and Clearance Committee adjusted several complaints concerning a Minneapolis aircraft manufacturer (most likely Consolidated Aircraft) and Northern Pump. In both cases the council threatened to take the matter to the FEPC, a warning that the employers took seriously. Despite these advances, the council, which did not have any legal powers or governmental sanction, had only limited success.⁷⁹ The leadership of the TCCFEP recognized this weakness early on, and in its constitution wrote: "It is our hope that the matters of discrimination can be ironed out within the Case and Clearance Committee, but if not the Committee will be prepared to recommend certification to the Federal Government."⁸⁰

The Twin City Council on Fair Employment Practice sent the FEPC affidavits and general information on current employment patterns. The FEPC was grateful for the local assistance, although it maintained some distance as

rights organizations worked to enact municipal and state FEPC laws. By 1964 some three dozen states (including Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin) and two hundred cities (including Cincinnati, Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, Gary, and St. Louis) had fair employment statutes and commissions.⁴⁹

In general these state and municipal commissions were timid, weak, and ineffectual. According to Herbert Hill of the NAACP, over the twenty years during which these agencies operated, "state FEP enactments proved unable to cope with the problem of changing the Negro occupation patterns" because the "FEP commissions [did] not provide a solution to structural unemployment problems." Because of the almost complete failure of state and local FEP commissions, by the 1960s hopes rode on the enactment of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Title VII of which established a statutory Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). At first the EEOC, in essence the administrative grandchild of the FEPC, had few powers to enforce nondiscrimination against "race, color, religion, sex, or national origin." In 1972, however, it gained the legal capabilities to fight employment discrimination. Although its methods often differ from the original FEPC, the EEOC is the culmination of the struggle that began in the 1940s to have the federal government fight employment discrimination. Although many of the job barriers that the FEPC broke down during the Second World War were rebuilt after the war, the idea of federal involvement in fair employment lived past the 1940s and continues today, which is yet another legacy of Franklin D. Roosevelt.⁵⁰

APPENDIX A

Compliance Data from Companies Attending the 19-20 January 1942 Chicago Hearings

Company	Date	Total Employees	Nonwhite Employees (%)
Allis-Chalmers	Jan. 1942	17,022	110 (0.64)
	July 1942	20,632	129 (0.62)
	Oct. 1942	22,597	196 (0.86)
	Dec. 1943	24,862	434 (1.74)
	Aug. 1945	17,686	693 (3.91)
A. O. Smith	Jan. 1942	6,484	0
	July 1942	8,594	237 (2.76)
	Oct. 1942	10,372	470 (4.53)
Bearce Manufacturing	Dec. 1943	14,790	802 (5.42)
	May 1942	11	2 (18.18)
	June 1942	15	5 (33.33)
Buick Aviation (Melrose Park)	June 1945	174	15 (8.62)
	Jan. 1942	2,300	0
	Feb. 1942	4,600	52 (1.13)
Harnischfeger	July 1942	8,015	350 (4.37)
	Oct. 1942	8,952	a
	Dec. 1943	15,233	a
	Jan. 1942	3,200	0
	July 1942	3,495	5 (0.14)
Heil	Oct. 1942	3,490	10 (0.28)
	Dec. 1943	3,309	18 (0.54)
	Jan. 1942	2,400	2 (0.08)
Majestic Radio and Television	July 1942	2,485	140 (5.63)
	Oct. 1942	3,130	135 (4.31)
	Dec. 1943	2,958	115 (3.89)
	May 1945	3,070	122 (3.98)
	Jan. 1942	385	0
Norberg	Dec. 1943	496	17 (3.43)
	Jan. 1942	2,290	35 (1.52)
	July 1942	3,225	8 (0.25)
Stewart-Warner	Oct. 1942	3,250	15 (0.46)
	Dec. 1943	3,759	40 (1.06)
	Jan. 1942	8,254	0
	July 1942	8,884	44 (0.49)
	Oct. 1942	9,700	210 (2.17)
	Dec. 1943	10,144	500 (4.92)