

A conference sponsored by the American Historical Association and the National Museum of African American History and Culture with funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities and HISTORY™

The Future of the African American Past

May 19-21, 2016
Washington, DC

“Pursuing Economic Emancipation: Black Workers and the Labor Question in the Twentieth Century”

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Available online at <https://futureafampast.si.edu/conference-papers>
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Think back over half a century ago to 1963 when a quarter of a million people gathered a mile or so from here at the Lincoln Memorial for the March on Washington. Present that day were tens of thousands of trade unionists, whose numbers, funding, logistical assistance, and moral support helped make this gathering an historic success. The initial organizers of the march were the civil rights legend, A. Philip Randolph, and his assistant, Bayard Rustin. Randolph was, at the time, the most important black trade unionist in the nation, a man considered to be the “dean” of the civil rights movement. The purpose of the march was captured in its title: The March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. This demonstration was not simply about civil rights broadly construed. It also had a pronounced economic dimension, for among its demands were the calls for the passage of a federal fair employment practices act, a higher minimum wage, and a serious public works program designed to aid the unemployed. Indeed, the jobs demand rested on an understanding that all American workers, black *and* white, needed access to employment, something, organizers argued, that the government was responsible for ensuring.¹

Jump ahead five years to the 1968 sanitation workers' strike in Memphis, Tennessee. In that very southern city, the revolution brought about by the civil rights movement may have won voting rights and a degree of desegregation, but it left untouched a racial division of labor that rested upon black subordination and exploitation. And, in that fateful year, sanitation workers affiliated with AFSCME went out on strike against a city that denied them dignity and forced them to work without decent wages or union representation. The strike proved controversial in Memphis but attracted the support of trade unionists around the country, as well as the support of the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., who was assassinated while in town on the strikers' behalf. At *that* moment, the labor movement *was* a civil rights movement, the sanitation workers' union a vehicle not merely for wages and better working conditions but for civil and human rights as well. Civil rights and labor rights, then, were unquestionably entwined; what were once called the race question and the labor question were intimately connected.²

That had always been the case, even when the relationship between the two looked very different in earlier decades. As late as the 1940s, Rayford Logan simply and directly declared: the "solidarity of labor" is [just] another myth as far as the history of American labor is concerned." Discriminatory white unions, particularly in the American Federation of Labor, were ubiquitous in pre-World War II America. In Logan's eyes, they deserved the same epithet that they directed at Big Business: they were merely "soulless corporations."³ Indeed, the overall record of white unions was hardly impressive: from Reconstruction to, in some instances, the 1950s and 1960s, unions functioned to exclude blacks from key sectors of the labor market or otherwise restrict them to the least desirable jobs. And that sorry record accounted for blacks' traditional antipathy toward organized labor.

The record of employers was hardly different. Discrimination in the job market on the basis of race was widespread from emancipation through the mid to late 20th century. Entire sectors of the labor market were closed to black workers. Writing about Chicago's labor market in 1905, the Reverend R. R. Wright argued that the "question of earning a living – how to get a job and how to hold a job – is the most serious

and most difficult question now confronting the Chicago Negro. He must work where he can rather than where he will.”⁴ “In the half century that the negro [sic] has had the franchise as the crowning of his freedom,” one New Jersey newspaper concluded in 1920, “he has, by and large, been relegated to the role of a hewer of wood and a drawer of water. . . . Theoretically free, the negro has not been able to sell his labor” – except for a few exceptions – “where most he wanted to.”⁵ As one group of black workers in the state of Washington put it, “There is still such prejudice against our color, and especially against our condition as freed people of color that we are excluded from almost every sphere of employment except those which are burdensome, temporary, and menial in character.” This was a refrain that was repeated countless times and could be found in newspaper after newspaper, speech after speech, petition after petition from emancipation onward. For the century after the Civil War, sharp and enduring barriers restricted the employment opportunities of racial minorities in the United States. Removing them became a goal of at least a portion of the civil rights movement. As historians Charles Payne and Adam Green once noted, the “quest for economic justice” has “defined some of the most challenging, imaginative—and underappreciated campaigns” engaged in by blacks to improve their “life conditions.”⁶

In the course of writing a biography of A. Philip Randolph, I come up against the intertwined labor and race questions on a daily basis. Randolph was a black socialist, a rare breed in early 20th century America.⁷ He advocated for interracial trade unionism at a time – in the 1920s and early 1930s -- when most white trade unions had no interest in admitting black members; he advocated for black membership in trade unions at a time when the black elite – ministers, editors, businessmen – preached an anti-union gospel and instead cautioned black workers to not bite the hand that fed them – namely the employers who hired them into unskilled or menial jobs. But the advent of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters in 1925 changed the conversation in black America. The “movement to organize the Pullman porters and maids has been a national school in economics for the race,” the young journalist Floyd Calvin noted in 1927. “We are beginning to see... that the New Negro is seeking economic emancipation... through

organized effort, by demanding that he dictate the conditions of his employment.” Calvin was no stranger to Randolph and black socialism, having briefly worked on Randolph’s journal, the *Messenger*, before moving on to more mainstream black newspapers. And he was no socialist. But he recognized the novelty and potential of Randolph’s crusade to organize Pullman porters. “The economic life of the Negro now has the center of the stage,” Randolph told the younger reporter. “Until we get down to the question of work and wages, of hours and working conditions, we will never strike at the roots of our racial ills.” The Brotherhood would be just a beginning. “Some day,” Randolph admitted, “I hope to see a kind of economic organization, directing and controlling various crafts and divisions of labor among Negro workers. They will be taught how to strengthen themselves by the co-operation idea.” For the moment -- the late 1920s -- the Brotherhood was engaging in a “fight for economic emancipation.”⁸ That was one of a number of phrases – “the unfinished task of emancipation,” the “next emancipation, and the “unfinished revolution” – that Randolph and his allies used. Whatever the precise wording, the phrases spoke to the economic dimension of the civil rights struggle, a dimension with a long history that pre-dated Randolph and the Brotherhood.

Over the past generation, a healthy number of historians -- Joe William Trotter, Jr., Tera Hunter, Daniel Letwin, Nan Woodruff, Michael Honey, Robert Korstad, and many others -- have written about a tradition of black trade unionism that took root in the South *despite* white labor’s racial practices and beliefs.⁹ A visible minority of black southerners found in unionization a means to pursue the same goals as white workers: raising wages, shortening the working day, and improving on-the-job conditions. In many instances, their efforts reflected a quest for workplace dignity and a modicum of respect – or at least a lessening of brutal treatment – from white managers. Domestic workers in Atlanta, dock workers in Houston, Galveston, New Orleans, and other Gulf and South Atlantic ports, coal miners in Alabama, West Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee, timber workers in Louisiana and East Texas and lumber workers in North Carolina – all turned to unions between the 1870s and the 1950s to advance their interests in an

economically inhospitable environment. Similarly, smaller groups of black workers – oyster shuckers, washerwomen, phosphate miners, railroad car cleaners and firemen, sugar harvesters, hod carriers, bricklayers, carpenters and joiners, and teamsters, to mention just a sample, organized their own locals, some affiliated with the Knights, the AFL, or the CIO, others remaining wholly independent, in these same years.¹⁰ One should not exaggerate the numbers or the impact of this black labor tradition, though, for the vast majority of African American workers, North and South, remained outside of the industrial labor force and outside of the ranks of organized labor, at least until the Great Depression of the 1930s.

What began to change noticeably in the 1920s and 1930s was the broader orientation of black America toward the labor question and the relationship of black workers to the labor movement. And the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters was, in part, responsible for the shift. What it did was to foster a new openness to unionization in black communities and spearheaded a new, far more aggressive approach to protest. The Brotherhood was up against a powerful American corporation, the single largest employer of African-American labor in the country that had carefully cultivated black support through financial donations to black churches, hospitals, YMCAs, and social clubs, ensuring that many local black leaders would repay Pullman's paternalism by coming to the company's defense and denouncing any challenges to its authority or reputation.¹¹ The company unleashed a barrage of hostile attacks against the fledgling union, relying heavily upon the black ministers, politicians, journalists, and civic leaders it had cultivated over the years to condemn the BSCP. Equally damaging was the company's reliance on spies and informants and its firing of declared union sympathizers.¹² And yet . . . the Brotherhood survived and eventually triumphed. Over the course of the late 1920s and early 1930s, it reached out successfully to white liberals and black leaders. When it launched its crusade for recognition and dignity in 1925, it confronted a black elite that was largely, if not entirely, indifferent or hostile to unions. In the late 1920s and early 1930s, Randolph cultivated NAACP officials, clergymen, and black women's clubs. Many came around. More

than any other single organization, the Brotherhood contributed to the historic shift in opinion of the black middle class from anti- to pro-union.¹³

Drawing on recently passed New Deal labor laws, the Brotherhood prevailed in 1935, decisively winning a government-supervised union representation election.¹⁴ Two years later, it negotiated an unprecedented and path breaking contract with the Pullman company that constituted, in Randolph's words, "a foundation on which the future of the porters' well being and a constructive and powerful Brotherhood" could be built.¹⁵ In black America, the porters' victory resonated deeply. For his leadership, one observer noted, "Randolph is currently the ranking hero of the race and his journeys are in the nature of triumphal tours."¹⁶ The Brotherhood's success inspired numerous groups of black workers to organize. Porters soon had company from the red caps' union and the dining car workers' union. And the gospel of unionism spread beyond railroaders' ranks: Of crucial importance was the emergence in the mid-1930s of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), which was committed to industrial unionization and the organization of black workers. "Sweeping irresistibly over America today," the black weekly, the *Houston Informer and Texas Freeman* observed in 1937, was an "upsurge of labor." Beyond the pragmatism of the CIO was something more: Social scientists Horace Cayton and St. Clair Drake called the CIO a "crusading movement" that incorporated a "[b]elief in racial equality" into its ideology.¹⁷ "Seldom in the world's history has a social movement achieved such speedy and spectacular success" as the CIO, concluded four black railroad union officials in Los Angeles in 1937. Through its "amazing series of organizing successes," the CIO "changed the psychology of the American Labor movement from one of discrimination, segregation and defeatism to a movement of liberality, swayed by principle of democracy giving assurance and victory to all workers irrespective of color, class, or creed."¹⁸ These were exaggerated assessments, to be sure. All black workers did not flood into organized labor's ranks. Nor had union discrimination vanished. But it is hard to dispute the simple fact: One sector of the labor movement had dropped *some* of its exclusionary barriers and welcomed black participation, and African-Americans had responded accordingly, shifting

decisively toward a pro-union stance. By the early 1940s, in much of basic industry – automobile manufacturing, steel, rubber, electrical, meatpacking, and the like – the CIO succeeded, winning union representation elections and attracting substantial black support. By 1943, some 400,000 African American workers had joined the labor movement.¹⁹

The economic battle was fought on multiple fronts with multiple weapons. During the World War II years, that front was access to jobs. By the early 1940s, the American economy had largely recovered from the hardships of the Great Depression of the 1930s as the nation's industrial sector geared itself toward war production. But the defense build-up preceding the American entry into the war generated a new prosperity that was not equally enjoyed by all. Unemployment rates dropped steadily for white workers, but blacks' access to new jobs lagged far behind. Large numbers of employers refused to hire blacks beyond menial or unskilled positions; few risked promoting them into skilled positions, even when the supply of labor was tight; and numerous trade unions remained reluctant to admit blacks or represent their interests. "New factories are springing up with lily-white employment policies," complained the Seattle black weekly *Northwest Enterprise* in March 1941; "billions of dollars in additional contracts have been awarded to firms which refuse to employ Negroes." If employment discrimination was wrong under normal circumstances, it appeared absurd to many in the context of growing labor shortages. Yet throughout 1940 and 1941, the Urban League's Lester B. Granger found, "Negro job applicants found their approach to renascent industry blocked at almost every turn."²⁰

"Negroes made the blunder of closing ranks and forgetting their grievances in the last war," Randolph complained in a reference to W. E. B. Du Bois's widely criticized recommendation during the previous world war. "We are resolved that we will not make that blunder again."²¹ Black editors and activists, led by the *Pittsburgh Courier*, announced what they called the "Double V Campaign": "victory over our enemies from without" and "victory over our enemies from within."²² That is, they proposed waging a war not only against the Nazis and their racist ideology but against American racism and discrimination as

well. More a slogan than an actual campaign, the phrase voiced African Americans' understanding of a two-front war where a domestic enemy vied for a foreign one as a force to be combatted.

The most prominent initiative of the war years was the March on Washington Movement, which Randolph initiated in early 1941. The idea was simple: a mass march on Washington that "would wake up and shock official Washington as it has never been shocked before."²³ This "epoch-making march" to "achieve liberation from economic, social and political slavery" would "stun the government, shock business and astonish organized labor."²⁴ Black journalists talked of a "mammoth mass demonstration" bringing together African Americans from "the voteless South" and the "jobless North, united in protest over a way of life which offers neither freedom or opportunity"; they would "invade" the nation's capital, that "fountain head of racial prejudice."²⁵ If African Americans could not stop discrimination outright, they could, nonetheless, as one black periodical put it, "tear the mask of hypocrisy from America's democracy."²⁶ The numbers of projected protesters kept increasing from an initial 10,000 to 100,000. Randolph's immediate goal was to force the hand of the administration of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. And he certainly got the administration's attention.

The story of the legendary confrontation between Randolph and FDR has been widely recounted.²⁷ The president opposed the march, believing that it would embarrass him, weaken his hand, and show weakness to the nation's enemies; other officials feared the eruption of a race riot. Roosevelt summoned Randolph and several other leaders to the White House, promising to personally involve himself in winning better treatment for blacks; Randolph rejected that offer as insufficient. In the end, FDR backed down and offered a compromise. At the eleventh hour, he signed Executive Order 8802 and Randolph called off the march: There shall be "no discrimination in the employment of workers in defense industries or government because of race, creed, color, or national origins," the order boldly declared. To ensure that the policy of non-discrimination by employers, labor unions, and the government was carried out, the order created a five-member Fair Employment Practice Committee to collect information, investigate

complaints, and take “appropriate steps to redress grievances.”²⁸ Although the serious matter of segregation in the armed forces remained unaddressed, Randolph declared the order the “greatest thing for Negroes since the emancipation proclamation.” At the same time, he recognized that this was just the first of many battles to come.²⁹ As it turned out, the Executive Order was no Emancipation Proclamation; the FEPC did not eliminate discrimination in American industry. Randolph knew it – and so did black America. But he was right in noting that it was the most significant government stance against discrimination since the Reconstruction Era.

Even so, the FEPC possessed few resources and little power to compel compliance with the Executive Order. It could issue directives but could not enforce them beyond exerting verbal or political pressure. Over the next four years, Randolph and the March on Washington Movement closely scrutinized the government’s actions, as well as those of employers and unions, offering scathing criticism time and time again. Simultaneously, black grassroots activists in and out of the MOWM rallied behind the beleaguered federal agency, expending considerable energy in new battles to preserve the FEPC’s autonomy and to prevent its dismemberment by politicians and government administrators who sharply disagreed with the FEPC’s mission. Conferences, pickets, marches, and mass demonstrations in support of civil rights and the FEPC were regular occurrences in churches, auditoriums, parks, union halls, and streets around the nation during the war.³⁰ Established groups like the NAACP and the Urban League, along with numerous local organizations, collected data documenting discrimination, presented affidavits from workers who faced that discrimination, and testified repeatedly to bring about change.

Contemporaries and subsequent historians have disagreed as to the effectiveness of the FEPC, but there is general agreement that certain sectors of the economy remained unaffected by its efforts. The west coast shipbuilding industry, employing tens of thousands of workers, excluded virtually all African Americans from the highest paid and most skilled positions. FEPC investigations and hearings notwithstanding, few unions and employers made more than cosmetic changes, retaining their

discriminatory barriers largely intact. The railroad industry too rebuffed FEPC efforts to integrate certain job categories and promote blacks to more skilled jobs. Pressure from managers, white unions, and their supporters led to the cancellation of the scheduled FEPC hearings on discrimination in the railroad industry in early 1943. Black and white liberal pressure prompted the administration to reschedule them in September. The four days of hearings, which Randolph and the Brotherhood had done much to orchestrate, produced extensive testimony and irrefutable proof that white unions and managers engaged in racially exclusionary practices. But there was little the FEPC could do: When its order to comply with the anti-discrimination executive order was ignored, it certified the case to the President and awaited his decision. Roosevelt took no positive action. For all of its efforts, the FEPC's campaign against discrimination in the railroad industry produced virtually no results. Nor did Randolph's efforts to extend the FEPC's life after the war, when congressional opponents of the beleaguered federal agency cut off its funding. Randolph's new National Council for a Permanent FEPC held rallies and marches and lobbied Congress, but failed to accomplish its goal. Although individual states passed weak fair employment acts, the federal government did not.³¹ What activists did accomplish was to put the issue of employment discrimination permanently on the political agenda; for the first time, it became a rallying cry around which African Americans and whites – civil rights organizations, trade unions, and federations of Christians and Jews -- could mobilize over the years to come. And eventually, they prevailed. The passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, particularly its Title VII, finally outlawed discrimination in American workplaces and union halls.³²

The economic dimension of the various movements for civil rights did not perish during the height of the Cold War, as some long civil rights scholars insist. True, the Communist-oriented variant of the movement – the Communist Party and its allies in left-led unions, the National Negro Congress/Civil Rights Congress, and other front organizations in particular – suffered intense repression at the hands of Congressional investigators, the FBI, and federal and state prosecutors. But that repression neither silenced

the voices of a broader left nor eliminated economic issues from the civil rights agenda.³³ Black trade unionists, as historian William Jones has demonstrated, “retained considerable influence in local movements for economic justice and racial equality” in the postwar era.³⁴

Throughout these years Randolph remained the most prominent spokesperson for that economic agenda. With the merger of the AFL and the CIO in 1955, Randolph became, along with CIO leader Willard S. Townsend, one of two black vice presidents of the new AFL-CIO. From that position he continued challenging the House of Labor, founding and leading the Negro American Labor Council, composed of black AFL-CIO leaders frustrated with the slow pace of change, and hammering away at the federation’s racist practices. “Who the hell appointed you as the guardian of all the Negroes in America,” an angry George Meany, the AFL-CIO president, shouted at Randolph in 1959; two years later, the AFL-CIO executive council voted to censure the BSCP president for what it claimed were “baseless charges” against the federation. But as black disaffection with the AFL-CIO grew and the struggle for civil rights expanded across the South, the federation adopted a civil rights program that broke with past practice. “While the resolution on civil rights did not have as strong sanctions against unions that practice discrimination” as the BSCP delegates wanted, it was “nevertheless the most comprehensive and soundest civil rights resolution ever” passed by the AFL-CIO, the *Black Worker* concluded. As he had done since the 1920s, Randolph continued to use his position of leadership in the labor movement to call attention to its racial problems and to insist upon their elimination.³⁵

Until the end of his life, Randolph maintained that equality for black Americans required both civil and economic rights, that progress for black Americans required not only the passage and enforcement of civil rights and anti-discrimination laws but economic policies designed to ensure the economic health of black Americans. In the 1950s and 1960s, he focused not only on employment discrimination but joblessness and the challenges posed by automation.³⁶ “It is becoming increasingly clear,” he argued in 1962, “that no lasting political freedom or social equality is conceivable without the integration of the

Negro into the economic life of the nation.” Black unemployment was substantially higher than white unemployment, black income substantially lower. The nation had “passed the stage where fair employment practices on the part of management, unions, and government can, in themselves, suffice.” What was required was a “massive job retraining program...on a scale infinitely more ambitious than anything now envisioned,” along with “large scale public works programs to provide immediate jobs for the millions of unemployed negroes.”³⁷

That agenda for fundamental economic rights was incorporated into the demands of the 1963 March on Washington. Days before the March, Randolph laid out his vision in the clearest of terms: “The fate of the Negro masses is linked ... to the fate of the American economy,” he insisted. “Our great freedom movement must address itself to the basic problems of this economy if it wishes to find a way out of the swamp of unemployment, poverty and despair.” Three things were needed – equal access to jobs (an FEPC, or Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, which was achieved), the creation of “millions of new jobs,” and a serious retraining program. “Only by winning all of these demands will the Negro people succeed in emancipating themselves from the blight of poverty and deprivation.”³⁸ Later that year, he eloquently called attention to “the forgotten workers,” the “pariahs, the exiles, the untouchables of our economy.”³⁹ As for the March itself, organizers stated their economic demands clearly, forcefully, and repeatedly. “We march to redress old grievances and to help resolve an American crisis,” they declared. “That crisis is born of the twin evils of racism and economic deprivation. They rob *all* people, Negro and white, of dignity, self-respect, and freedom. They impose a special burden on the Negro, who is denied the right to vote, economically exploited, refused access to public accommodations, subjected to inferior education, and relegated to substandard ghetto housing. African Americans weren’t the only group subject to these evils, for Puerto Ricans, Mexicans, and other minorities too faced discrimination in education and apprenticeship training programs and were, like blacks, “helpless in our mechanized industrial society.”⁴⁰ At the gathering of the surviving remnants of the Socialist Party on the day following the March, the radical

journalist I.F. Stone heard Randolph assess the demonstration. “We must liberate not only our selves, but our white brothers and sisters,” Randolph explained. Stone drew the conclusion Randolph had intended: “For most Negroes, civil rights alone will only be the right to join the underprivileged whites.”⁴¹

In the end, the protesters got some things but not others – certainly not two out of the three programs Randolph called for. The 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Act were tremendous achievements, won against considerable odds. They went a long way toward guaranteeing formal equality before the law and transforming, for millions, the textures of daily life. But the larger anti-poverty agenda – President Johnson’s poorly fought war on poverty notwithstanding – remained unfulfilled. The 1964 Act, Randolph concluded, would “not . . . make a significant dent in the problem of joblessness among Negroes. Fair employment practice, while absolutely necessary, will not be meaningful without full employment.”⁴² The Urban League’s Whitney Young called for a Marshall Plan to rebuild America’s cities, while Randolph and Bayard Rustin released a “Freedom Budget” in 1966, proposing that the federal government spend \$180 billion to end poverty in the United States through full employment, higher incomes, medical care and education.⁴³ “Our economy is rich enough, and should be just enough, to reject as intolerable the ghetto within stone’s throw of the duplex apartment,” the Freedom Budget insisted. “[T]he alien worlds of slums and suburbs; the unemployment rate four times as high in some localities as in the nation at large; the millions receiving substandard wages despite many thousands of millionaires. . . . This war against want must be color blind. . . [T]hose already free from want, both white and nonwhite, cannot enjoy fully the benefits of economic progress and the blessings of democracy until ‘freedom from want’ becomes universal throughout the land.”

In the end, there was no Marshall Plan for American cities nor was the Freedom Budget enacted. By the middle and late 1960s, the civil rights coalition had fractured and liberalism was increasingly divided over the war in Vietnam. Social democratic proposals to rebuild cities and end poverty received scant attention from the Johnson Administration. The conservative backlash ensured that *those* dreams would

remain only dreams. But Randolph and his allies continued to hammer away at the crisis of jobs and poverty afflicting black America, predicting continued violence unless major steps were taken.⁴⁴ “I have walked up and down the streets of Harlem for over 60 years,” he testified before a Senate subcommittee in December 1966. “I do not recall the time when I met young men with whom I was not able to talk. I have attempted to talk to them about their life, about their future, their hopes, and their aspirations. And they view you with cynicism and skepticism, if not disgust and contempt, and sometimes they end up with abuse.” Randolph was alarmed about this dispositional change among those who believed that “society is against them. They believe that the promise of a job is merely a hoax.” What he learned was not restricted to Harlem’s streets.” That was “the condition that you have in every metropolitan center in this Nation – young men walking the streets aimlessly, . . . with souls that are hardened, and burning with frustration and anger, because they believe that there is no hope.”⁴⁵ The violence that erupted during the hot summers of the mid and late 1960s would only reinforce his concerns.

A great deal changed over the course of the next half-century. The race riots/urban rebellions of the 1960s did not prove to be a permanent development in American life; Great Society programs, while falling short of their goals, made a difference in the lives of millions; Title VII and affirmative action programs changed the demographic (and gender) composition of countless job categories; the labor movement became far more inclusive and diverse; the Voting Rights Act enfranchised millions of African Americans denied the ballot; and the black middle class grew substantially in size.⁴⁶ But civil rights and labor rights remain intertwined, even if the nature of their relationship is different today than it was in 1900, 1941, and 1963. Despite the dramatic changes in American society, one can imagine that Randolph and his many allies would conclude that the “next emancipation” is yet to be accomplished, that the “unfinished revolution” is still unfinished, and that the pursuit of economic emancipation – or, in our current language, economic justice – remains as urgent as ever.⁴⁷

¹ William P. Jones, *The March on Washington: Jobs, Freedom, and the Forgotten History of Civil Rights* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2013); William Jones, "The Forgotten Radical History of the March on Washington," *Dissent* 60, No. 2 (Spring 2013): 75-79; Lucy Barber, "'In the Great Tradition': The March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, August 28, 1964," in Barber, *Marching on Washington: The Forging of an American Tradition* (2004), 141-78

² Michael Honey, *Going Down Jericho Road: The Memphis Strike, Martin Luther King's Last Campaign* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2007); Laurie B. Green, "Race, Gender, and Labor in 1960s Memphis: 'I am a Man' and the Meaning of Freedom," *Journal of Urban History* 30 (2004): 465-489; Steve Estes, "'I AM a Man!': Race, Masculinity, and the 1968 Memphis Sanitation Strike," *Labor History* 41, No. 2 (Spring 2000): 153-170

³ Rayford Logan, "The Negro Wants First-Class Citizenship," in Logan, ed., *What the Negro Wants* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1944), 12. Of the CIO, Logan wrote that it was the "most aggressive organization in recent years in promoting not only economic equality for the Negro but also political and even social equality."

⁴ R. R. Wright, Jr., "The Negro in Times of Industrial Unrest," *Charities and the Commons* XV, NO. 1 (October 7, 1905): 69.

⁵ "Labor and the Color Line," *Newark Evening News*, May 14, 1920, in Tuskegee Institute News Clipping File, Reel 11, Frame 0728.

⁶ Charles M Payne and Adam Green, "Introduction," in Payne and Green, eds., *Time Longer Than Rope: A Century of African American Activism, 1850-1950* (New York: New York University Press, 2003), 2-3.

⁷ For concise overviews of Randolph's life, see Eric Arnesen, "A. Philip Randolph: Labor and the New Black Politics," in Arnesen, ed., *The Human Tradition in American Labor History* (Scholarly Resources, 2003), 173-191; Benjamin Quarles, "A. Philip Randolph: Labor Leader at Large," in Benjamin Quarles, *Black Mosaic: Essays in Afro-American History and Historiography* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988), 151-177; Leon Fink, "A Voice for the People: A. Philip Randolph and the Cult of

Leadership” in Fink, *Progressive Intellectuals and the Dilemmas of Democratic Commitment* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 184-213; Clarence Taylor, “Sticking to the Ship: Manhood, Fraternity, and the Religious Worldview of A. Philip Randolph,” in Taylor, *Black Religious Intellectuals: The Fight for Equality from Jim Crow to the 21st Century* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 11-36; and William H. Harris, “A. Philip Randolph, Black Workers, and the Labor Movement,” in Melvyn Dubofsky and Warren Van Tine, eds., *Labor Leaders in America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987). Longer treatments include Jervis Anderson, *A. Philip Randolph: A Biographical Portrait* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1972); Paula F. Pfeffer, *A. Philip Randolph, Pioneer of the Civil Rights Movement* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990); Cynthia Taylor, *A. Philip Randolph: The Religious Journey of an African American Labor Leader* (New York: New York University Press, 2006); Andrew E. Kersten, *A. Philip Randolph: A Life in the Vanguard* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007); and **Andrew Kersten and Clarence Lang, eds.,** *Reframing Randolph: Labor, Black Freedom, and the Legacies of A. Philip Randolph* (New York University Press, 2015).

⁸ Floyd J. Calvin, “‘Economic Emancipation’ is Platform of ‘New Negro,’” *Pittsburgh Courier*, January 22, 1927.

⁹ Joe William, Trotter, Jr., *Coal, Class, and Color: Blacks in Southern West Virginia, 1915–1932* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995); Tera W. Hunter, *To Joy My Freedom: Southern Black Women’s Lives and Labors after the Civil War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997); Eric Arnesen, *Waterfront Workers of New Orleans: Race, Class, and Politics, 1863-1923* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); Michael Honey, *Southern Labor and Black Civil Rights: Organizing Memphis Workers* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993); Robert Rodgers Korstad, *Civil Rights Unionism: Tobacco Workers and the Struggle for Democracy in the Mid-Twentieth-Century South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); Daniel Letwin, *The Challenge of Interracial Unionism: Alabama Coal Miners, 1878–1921* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998); Nan Elizabeth Woodruff, *American Congo: The African American Freedom Struggle in the Delta* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003); William P. Jones, *The Tribe of Black Ulysses: African American Lumber Workers in the Jim Crow South* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2005). On the development of the field of black labor history, see Eric Arnesen, “Up from Exclusion: Black and White Workers, Race, and the State of Labor History,” in Lou Masur, ed., *The Challenge of American History* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 146-74; and Arnesen, “The Peculiar Waterfront: The Crescent City and the Rewriting of the History of Race and Labor in the United States,” in **Steve Striffler, ed.,** *Working in the Big Easy: The History and Politics of Labor in New Orleans* (University of Louisiana Press, 2014), 9-40; Robert H. Zieger, “Recent Historical Scholarship on Public Policy in Relation to Race and Labor in the Post-Title-VII Period,” *Labor History* 46, No. 1 (February 2005): 3–14.

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²⁶ Anderson, *A. Philip Randolph*, 248-249; *Michigan Chronicle*, June 28, 1941; *Northwest Enterprise*, March 21, 1941.

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