

## THE BIOGRAPHY OF A. PHILIP RANDOLPH

(Editor's Note: The following is a review of "A. Philip Randolph--A Biographical Portrait," written by Jervis Anderson. The original, hardcover edition of the book, which sells at bookstores for \$12.50, can be purchased from the A. Philip Randolph Educational Fund, 260 Park Avenue South, New York, N. Y. 10010, at the special price of \$10.00).

It is ironic that the black struggle, despite its transforming influence on society, has produced such a scarcity of worthwhile literature. Most that has been written about the civil rights movement, or about the figures who shaped that movement, is exploitative and sensationalistic--the more angry and anti-white, the higher the profits.

The publication of "A. Philip Randolph--A Biographical Portrait" stands in marked contrast to the intellectual wasteland that passes for race relations literature. Its author, Jervis Anderson, has written both an important account of social and racial struggle, and a perceptive portrait of the man I consider the most important figure in the past 50 years of black struggle.

This is not an authorized biography, but rather an objective, honest recounting of Randolph's life. But the author's objectivity, combined with his thoroughness and craftsmanship, gives the work strength.

I have known, worked with and admired A. Philip Randolph for 36 years. Many of my beliefs were first imported to me by Mr. Randolph--the use of non-violent civil disobedience, the importance of the labor movement as an instrument for racial equality, the necessity to seek change that will directly benefit working people, and the importance of mass actions--demonstrations, marches, strikes--as a tactic of protest.

There are many lessons to be learned from Mr. Randolph's life, but perhaps none more important than the lesson of what it was like to be a Negro, in the 1920's, 1930's and 1940's, and to be engaged in protest.

The description of the campaign to organize the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters is to me one of the most moving chapters in the whole panorama of the campaign for equality. The Brotherhood's lonely fight for recognition was not aided by nationwide boycotts of Pullman cars. Even the black community was, at least initially, unmoved by the Brotherhood's cause. With the exception of two black newspapers and a handful of churches, there was little support forthcoming from Negro institutions of the period. There was only Randolph, and a few porters, or, as often was the case, ex-porters who had been fired for their union activities. Those who, having just entered the struggle for reform, grow despondent after a few failures, should keep in mind that it took the Brotherhood 12 YEARS to gain recognition, years in which it often seemed as if there was no money, support, or hope.

Because Randolph believed that social movements must be of and for workingmen, he came to break from the views of three of the most influential figures in black thought--Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. DuBois and Marcus Garvey.

Washington advised Negroes to accept social segregation and hope that the largesse of white society would one day bring economic emancipation; DuBois said progress would come from the development of a "Talented Tenth"--an enlightened and educated elite; Garvey preached a crude form of black capitalism and a cruder form of race consciousness.

None of the three, however, had a program to deal with the chronic poverty, unemployment, and economic discrimination which were the daily experiences of the vast majority of black Americans. Nor did Washington, DuBois (whom Randolph respected in many ways) or Garvey challenge the basic institutions that discriminated against working people and the poor.

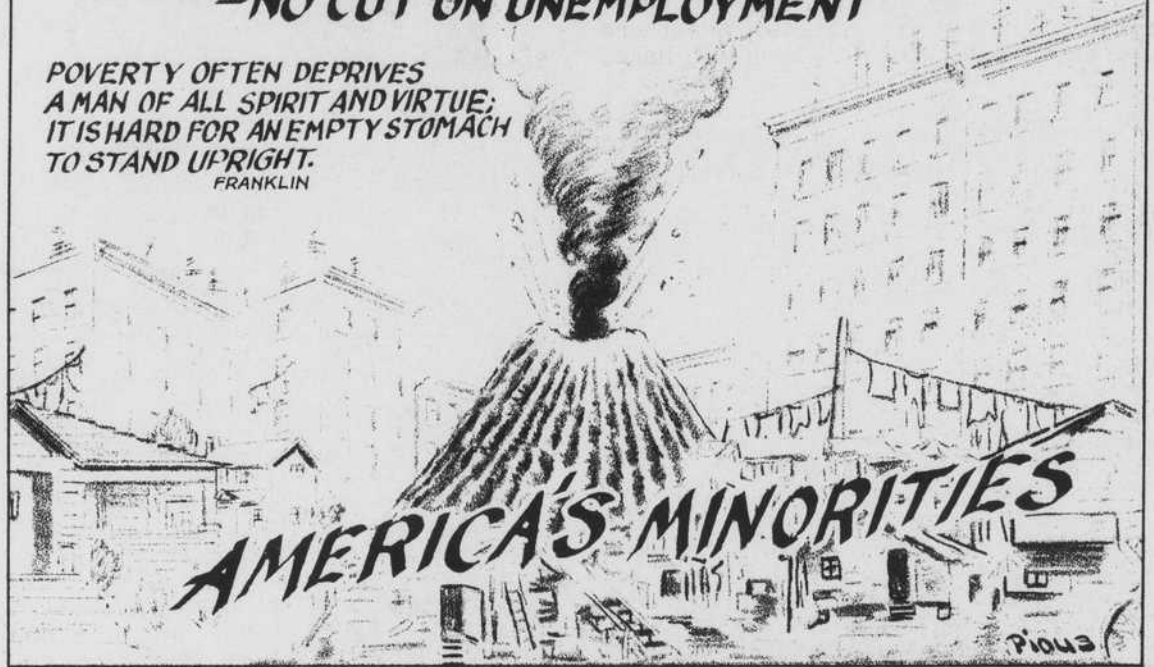
To give even a partial list of Randolph's accomplishments in a paragraph would be to evoke disbelief from most people. He founded the MESSENGER, one of the most important black journals of the 1920's; he founded the Brotherhood; he was the first head of the National Negro Congress; he prodded President Roosevelt to sign the order banning discrimina-

## SEEDS OF A HOT SUMMER...?

### CUT-BACKS

DAY CARE CENTERS  
POVERTY PROGRAM  
HOUSING  
YOUTH SUMMER PROGRAM  
COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM  
WELFARE AID  
SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM --  
-NO CUT ON UNEMPLOYMENT

POVERTY OFTEN DEPRIVES  
A MAN OF ALL SPIRIT AND VIRTUE;  
IT IS HARD FOR AN EMPTY STOMACH  
TO STAND UPRIGHT.  
FRANKLIN



tion in defense industries; he fought, and won, a fight for the abolition of Jim Crow in the military; he was instrumental in transforming the labor movement to an institution that has welcomed the participation and championed the rights of minorities.

The culmination of his career as activist was, of course, the 1963 March on Washington, the largest, most effective mass peaceful demonstration in American history. It is altogether fitting that the publication of this biography comes during the tenth anniversary of the March.

Mr. Randolph, at 84, is now in retirement. But he can look back on his career and feel that the principles he refused to betray have been vindicated and that many of the goals for which he sacrificed have been achieved. Today we are in a time of stalemate, when progress is measured in inches, or, sometimes, as simply having held the dike firm against the torrents of reaction. At a time such as this, when many are tempted to give it up, embracing outmoded formulas of black nationalism, or retreating behind a shell of race consciousness, nothing could be more soul reviving than to read, and reflect on--for a long time--the life of A. Philip Randolph.

## HUMPHREY CALLS ON PRESIDENT TO APPOINT NEW CIVIL RIGHTS CHAIRMAN

The President  
The White House  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. President:

I am deeply concerned by the continued vacancy in the chairmanship of the U. S. Commission on Civil Rights.

I was encouraged, in your message of March 1, by your stated commitment to protect the civil rights of every American and by your indication that the Commission on Civil Rights will receive additional resources to carry out its new responsibility to promote equal opportunity for women.

The appointment of a vigorous chairman, however, is the most important resource the Commission can have, save only the strong moral leadership of the President himself. Clearly, the denial to the Commission of an effective chairman forestalls progress in its most important function, awakening the conscience of America to denials of human dignity under patterns and practices of discrimination.

Therefore, I urge you to submit this nomination without further delay for Senate consideration.

Like many Americans, I was profoundly disappointed by your acceptance last November of the resignation submitted at your request by Father Theodore M. Hesburgh. His distinguished service over 16 years as chairman of the Commission was viewed with constant deep respect and admiration across the nation. A gentleman of the highest integrity and absolute commitment to overcoming barriers to equal justice and opportunity for all Americans, Father Ted provided exactly the strength of leadership for civil rights that I continue to hope will be reflected throughout your Administration.

The January, 1973, report by the Commission, (see LETTER, page 8)



### LAS VEGAS Voice

A WEEKLY NEWSPAPER (Published every Thursday) DEDICATED  
to the INTERESTS and ASPIRATIONS for a BETTER LIFE  
for NEGRO CITIZENS of the STATE of NEVADA

CHARLES I. WEST, M.D. . . . . . Publisher  
PAUL C. SMITH . . . . . Managing Editor  
DOROTHY S. WEST . . . . . Treasurer  
BEATRICE BRYANT . . . . . Office Manager  
RAY FEASTER . . . . . Art & Layout  
DOROTHY JOHNSON . . . . . Food Forum  
LERTHANIEL DILIGARD . . . . . Religious News  
HENRY P. MILLER . . . . . Advertising

EDITORIAL, ADVERTISING & CIRCULATION OFFICES  
900 West Bonanza Road, Lobby Suite (Moulin  
Rouge Hotel) Las Vegas, Nevada 89106 Telephone 648-2615

ADVERTISING RATES FURNISHED UPON REQUEST

Price per copy - 15¢ \* One year - 7.50 \* Two years - 12.50  
(Application for 2nd Class Mailing Permit pending at Las Vegas, Nevada)