

A Turbulent Decade

BIOGRAPHY READING

A. Philip Randolph

A. Philip Randolph was a labor and civil rights leader who fought for the rights of his fellow African Americans. He formed a black labor union in 1925 and co-founded The Messenger, a magazine that urged African Americans to demand better pay.

Asa Philip Randolph was born on April 15, 1889, to Reverend James William and Elizabeth Robinson Randolph in Crescent City, Florida. He and his brother, James, were top students at the Cookman Institute, the first high school for African Americans in Florida. Shortly after graduation, Randolph and a friend traveled to New York City. There he became active in politics and joined the Socialist Party, along with Chandler Owen. The two then established *The Messenger*, a magazine considered the most radical in America at that time, and began giving public speeches to encourage African Americans to assert their rights.

In 1919 race riots broke out among African American laborers who felt they were being treated unfairly by their employers. Randolph and Owen came to the aid of the laborers by forming the National Association for the Promotion of Labor Unionism Among Negroes. When the Pullman Company continued its poor treatment of blacks, Randolph formed the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car

Porters (BSCP) in 1925. This triggered a 12-year battle throughout which the company tried to destroy the union.

The union eventually gained respect when President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal legislation granted workers the right to organize, which forced companies to negotiate with unions. Finally, in 1937 Randolph and the BSCP achieved victory when Pullman awarded the BSCP a contract, the first ever between a company and a black labor union.

Randolph went on to fight segregation in the federal government during World War II. He organized a march to demand that African Americans be given jobs in the defense industry. Reluctantly, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed an executive order prohibiting discrimination, and Randolph called off the march. Randolph then recommended that African Americans should refuse to register for the peace time draft as a peaceful demonstration against segregation in the Armed Forces. President Harry S Truman issued an executive order barring discrimination in the military, and Randolph called off the demonstrations.

In 1963 Randolph spearheaded a march in which more than 200,000 people rallied to protest discrimination against African Americans. One of the speakers was Martin Luther King Jr., who would become a major leader of civil rights in America. A. Philip Randolph died 16 years later in 1979.

■ UNDERSTANDING WHAT YOU READ After you have finished reading the selection, answer the following questions in the space provided.

1. Why might *The Messenger* have been considered radical?

2. Why did Randolph and Chandler Owen form the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (BSCP) union?

3. What big victory did Randolph and the BSCP achieve at the end of a 12-year struggle with the Pullman Company? What do you think was Randolph's reaction to this?

4. How did Presidents Franklin D. Roosevelt and Harry S Truman respond to Randolph's proposed marches?

ACTIVITY

Imagine that you are a writer for *The Messenger*, the magazine started by Randolph and Owen. Write a brief editorial encouraging African Americans to stand up for their rights.

BIOGRAPHY

1. It urged African Americans to assert their rights.
2. to protect the rights of those working for the Pullman Company
3. The Pullman Company awarded the BSCP a contract, the first ever between a company and a black labor union. Randolph would have been happy to have succeeded, but probably frustrated by how long it took.
4. President Roosevelt signed an executive order banning discrimination in the hiring of federal government workers. President Truman signed an executive order ending discrimination in the military.

ACTIVITY

Students' editorials might advocate that all people are created equal and that no one has the right to take away someone else's civil rights.

CHAPTER 23

LITERATURE

1. a dance
2. Many adults viewed dancing as "wicked" and therefore limited their "dancing" to grand marches and other dances in which "feet don't get crossed." Young people disagreed with this view and wanted to dance the two-step, the waltz, and other more daring dances.
3. They might have believed the college students to be wicked, or at least frivolous and shallow, in their dress and behavior.
4. They might have believed the people of Eatonville to be unsophisticated and ignorant of society and culture.
5. In the story by Hurston, the music and dancing styles of the Jazz Age seem to have allowed African Americans in Eatonville more options for self-expression, as they danced in a variety of styles to different kinds of music. The white party-goers in Fitzgerald's story, on the other hand, seemed to consider dancing

to be part of a social ritual that emphasized appearance and conversational skill in a particular setting.

ACTIVITY

Students' stories will vary, but should be modeled after the selections.

PRIMARY SOURCE

1. Answers will vary, but students may point out that since these people espouse fundamentalist religious doctrine, the trial will probably not be decided in Scopes's favor.
2. The tone of Mencken's writing suggests that he disagrees with the woman.
3. Possible answer: They feel that Clarence Darrow is a villain. They believe that William Jennings Bryan and Judge Raulston are brilliant men.
4. There is a common element of hysteria that runs through both environments; but the revival meeting is hysterical with religious fervor, while the town is hysterical because of the famous people and the high emotions surrounding the trial.
5. Mencken's overlying idea is that ignorance is the basis for the hysteria surrounding the Scopes trial.

ACTIVITY

Encourage students to be creative in the writing and performance of their skits. Tell them they are free to expand upon the revival meeting they read about, in terms of both the physical action and the dialogue in the scene.

BIOGRAPHY

1. She was the first female pilot to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean and the first pilot to fly across the Pacific Ocean. Most students will guess that she was proud of her accomplishments.
2. It followed the equator and therefore was a longer flight.
3. She and her navigator were not familiar enough with radio navigation, and they may have run out of fuel.
4. that she had been captured by the Japanese; that she was living on an island.