**A. Philip Randolph: Pioneer of the Civil Rights Movement**

This book by Paula F. Pfeffer (LSU press, 1990) was selected because I thought (erroneously) that Harry and I had used it before. In fact, Vernon Williams and I used this book in our course, “Race and Political Protest: from Abolition to Civil Rights,” which we taught twice before Vernon left to join the Afro American Studies program at that other Indiana University. Had I realized that Harry had never read and did not own this book I would have considered using Cornelius L. Bynum, *A. Philip Randolph and the Struggle for Civil Rights* (University of Illinois Press, 2010). Neil is on the Purdue History faculty and would be a great addition to our discussion, but I have not invited him—partly because we are not reading his book. Nevertheless, you should consider him a resource. He is a super nice guy and would (I am sure) be happy to discuss Randolph and Civil Rights and American History with you.

Other books (e.g., Anderson, 1973--see note 2, p. 3 in Pfeffer) might be more appropriate in a course that is largely focused on the relations between labor and capital in the USA in the 20th century. Both Pfeffer and, particularly, Bynum focus on race and racial identity/consciousness and the role of Randolph as a pioneer of the Civil Rights Movement. Both [Aldon Morris](file:///W:\www\SOC%20693\Aldon%20Morris.pptx) and [Piven and Cloward](file:///W:\www\SOC%20693\Political%20sociology.ppt) present Randolph as the original March on Washington organizer and stress how his early work and his perseverance made the 1963 March an unmitigated success. Pfeffer is probably more critical of Randolph and more interested in his socialism, his anti-communism, and his “situational charisma” (pp. 2-3). Still, she claims, “My goal is to demonstrate that Randolph’s ideologies and strategies provided the blueprint for the civil rights movement that emerged in the late 1950s and early 1960s.” (Pfeffer, 1990, p. 2).

Bynum seems less critical of Randolph but more critical of the labor movement. He argues, for example, “Randolph’s view of genuine social justice also reflected an egalitarian outlook that further distinguished his critique of the American system from that of mainstream socialism.” (Bynum, 2010, p. xiii). He goes on to explain that “Congress passed new laws regulating collective bargaining in the late 1920s and 1930s that still left most black workers unprotected[.] ... As the porters’ struggle had made abundantly clear, neither corporations nor labor unions nor federal agencies were going to deal with black workers fairly without being compelled by some significant force.” (p. xv). Particularly in chapters 7-9, Bynum (2010) argues that Randolph moved beyond “strict” or “straight-forward class consciousness” toward a better understanding of “the problems of race.” (p. xvii).

**Questions for Consideration**

**1. Are race and class similar or different, as social categories, social relationships, social statuses, or whatever? How should we define race and class? Why does this matter? [We can come back to these questions later when we add gender to the equation.]**

**2. What is the difference between socialism and communism—ideologically, organizationally, or programmatically? As ideology, organization, program, or consciousness, how do socialism and communism clash in the USA in the twentieth century? More specifically, in what way does Randolph’s socialist anti-communism make sense? Is this false consciousness? Is this how capitalism (or FDR or Taft or whomever) divided and conquered the left wing of the labor movement?**

**3. Why does Randolph seem to be ideologically and socially drawn to the CIO but organizationally loyal to the AFL?**

**4. Why and how is Randolph drawn into third party politics? What is his love/hate relationship with the Democratic Party?**

Thinking Back and Looking Forward: Toward Week Two

Thinking back, I wish I had read your essays before class, because a number of you addressed questions that I raised (above) that might have informed our discussion. As it was, Harry and I spent most of our time arguing.

Aside from returning to questions about race, class, and party, I would like to add another unread book to your bibliography:

Jennifer Scanlon, *The Life of Anna Arnold Hedgeman* (Oxford University Press)

This book was reviewed in NYT Book Review (2/28/16, p. 14) by Patricia Hill Collins—one of the great sociological defenders of intersectionality and Race, Gender, and Class (in that order). Here she celebrates this history/biography, which seeks to bring Hedgeman out of Randolph’s and King’s shadow. This, together with the other recommended readings, would seem to be essential (if you will excuse that term) to a consideration of gender, race and class.

Since we did spend some time talking about race and class, the question of socialism versus communism and the divergence and convergence of the labor and civil rights movements might be more appropriate for our next class discussion. I will start things off with a video of the 1963 March on Washington, from the PBS documentary, “Eyes on the Prize: No Easy Walk.” There is a link on my SOC 312 course which seems to work. It might not work here: <http://vimeo.com/43462957>

One way or another, you might want to watch the entire “No Easy Walk” segment—about an hour long. We will just focus on the March (if I can make it work)—about 15 minutes. Even this brief glimpse will indicate how important Randolph and Rustin were in organizing and facilitating the March that we all tend to associate with King and the SCLC rather than Randolph and the MOWM. Aside from reading Piven and Cloward and Aldon Morris, Bynum, and Scanlon, you might also want to look at another biography from another Purdue historian: Randy Robert and Johnny Smith, *Blood Brothers: The Fatal Friendship between Muhammad Ali and Malcolm X* (Basic Books, 2016).

**More Questions:**

**1. Why are Randolph and Rustin largely forgotten (along with Fred Shuttlesworth and a variety of Civil Rights Movement leaders who were at least as important in the creation and mass marketing of MLK, Jr., and the SCLC)?**

**2. What constitutes a good book or good source, in general? Is it the subject, the expertise (or professional standing) of the author, the depth and breadth of original (primary) sources uncovered, the theory, methods, or the narrative? Why don’t we all just use Google and U-tube? Why pay all this money to take classes at Purdue?**

**3. At one time I used to say that I did not write biographies and did not even read—no less write, intellectual history. Now I have come to see the provincialism of that position: see** [**Hogan 2013**](file:///W:\www\SOC%20693\Hogan%202013.pdf)**. Should we (must we) focus on our areas of expertise and interest (e.g., the political economy of labor and capital in the U.S. in the twentieth century), or should we constantly seek ways to expand the limits of our professional purview? Should Marists only read books about and by Marxists?**

**4. How and why does race matter in the labor movement? We can continue this discussion after the break when we start reading and discussing Honey and CIO.**

**5. How and why does labor matter in the Civil Rights Movement? This might be the most relevant question in our effort to evaluate Randolph and his role in the Civil Rights Movement.**