



Asa Philip Randolph (April 15, 1889 – May 16, 1979) was a prominent twentieth century African-American civil rights leader and founder of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, which was a huge victory for labor and especially for African-American labor organizing.

Randolph had some experience in labor organization, having organized a union of elevator operators in New York City in 1917. In 1925, Randolph organized the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters. This was the first serious effort to form a labor union for the employees of the Pullman Company, which was a major employer of African-Americans. With amendments to the Railway Labor Act in 1934, porters were granted rights under federal law, and membership in the Brotherhood jumped to more than 7,000. After years of bitter struggle, the Pullman Company finally began to negotiate with the Brotherhood in 1935, and agreed to a contract

with them in 1937, winning \$2,000,000 in pay increases for employees, a shorter workweek, and overtime pay. The Brotherhood was associated with the American Federation of Labor.

Randolph emerged as one of the most visible spokespersons for African-American civil rights. In 1941, he, Bayard Rustin, and A. J. Muste proposed a march on Washington to protest racial discrimination in war industries. The march was canceled after President of the United States Franklin D. Roosevelt issued the Fair Employment Act. Some militants felt betrayed by the cancellation because Roosevelt's pronouncement only pertained to defense industries and not the armed forces themselves. In 1947, Randolph formed the Committee Against Jim Crow in Military Service, later renamed the League for Non-Violent Civil Disobedience. President Harry S. Truman abolished racial segregation in the armed forces through Executive Order 9981 on July 26, 1948.

Randolph was also notable in his support for restrictions on immigration.

In 1950, along with Roy Wilkins, Executive Secretary of the NAACP, and Arnold Aronson, a leader of the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council, Randolph founded the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights (LCCR). LCCR has since become the nation's premier civil rights coalition, and has coordinated the national legislative campaign on behalf of every major civil rights law since 1957. Randolph also helped Rustin and Martin Luther King Jr. to organize the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom on August 28, 1963. As the U.S. civil rights movement gained momentum in the early 1960s and came to the forefront of the nation's consciousness, his rich baritone voice was often heard on television news programs addressing the nation on behalf of African-Americans engaged in the struggle for voting rights and an end to discrimination in public accommodations.