

The meaning of the march

From the Editors

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Directions for participants in the August 28 "March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom" and for the concurrent church assembly read like snatches from a John Bunyan allegory: "March from the Washington Monument at 12:00 noon in two parallel lines down Constitution and Independence Avenues to the Lincoln Memorial." This capsuled, is the history and the hope of the American Negro: from the birth of a nation to a national maturity which includes all men equally in the nation's blessings of liberty and law. In this hope Negroes march in Washington, and white men, sharing and supporting their hope, march with them. They march peacefully—not to do violence but to remove the occasions for violence. They march prayer fully, knowing that their cause is just and that they express the moral indignation of millions of Americans who have been deliberately and systematically cut off from the rights which are theirs as men and as American citizens. They march purposefully, not infatuated with marching as an end in itself but moving toward a goal, toward a memorial which promised them a freedom they must now obtain for themselves in resolute and courageous suffering. For the Negro the Lincoln Memorial is not a monument to the past but a mentor for their future. This is the symbolic meaning of the march. It will be a sad day for the whole nation as well as for the Negro if the men to whom the nation's affairs are entrusted miss the meaning of this allegory.