



GS
J. Blue
might be involved
ATJ
Send to Mr
Blue at
Hearst NOD
at

Research and Reference Service

WORLDWIDE COMMENT ON THE WASHINGTON CIVIL RIGHTS MARCH

R-172-63 (A)

September 6, 1963

This is a research report, not a statement of Agency policy

Motion Picture
Service - (IMS)

SEP 11 1963

U.S. Information Agency

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
LIBRARY
540 EAST 58TH STREET
CHICAGO, ILL. 60637

CONTENTS

SUMMARY	i
WESTERN EUROPE	1
AFRICA	4
NEAR EAST AND SOUTH ASIA	7
FAR EAST	15
LATIN AMERICA	16
SOVIET UNION	18

September 6, 1963

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I	1
CHAPTER II	15
CHAPTER III	31
CHAPTER IV	47
CHAPTER V	63
CHAPTER VI	79
CHAPTER VII	95
CHAPTER VIII	111
CHAPTER IX	127
CHAPTER X	143
CHAPTER XI	159
CHAPTER XII	175
CHAPTER XIII	191
CHAPTER XIV	207
CHAPTER XV	223
CHAPTER XVI	239
CHAPTER XVII	255
CHAPTER XVIII	271
CHAPTER XIX	287
CHAPTER XX	303
CHAPTER XXI	319
CHAPTER XXII	335
CHAPTER XXIII	351
CHAPTER XXIV	367
CHAPTER XXV	383
CHAPTER XXVI	399
CHAPTER XXVII	415
CHAPTER XXVIII	431
CHAPTER XXIX	447
CHAPTER XXX	463

SUMMARY

The orderliness, peacefulness and quiet dignity of the March were lauded almost universally in commentaries and frequently were interpreted as indicating the maturity of the Negro in the U.S. Much comment noted the support of influential whites and viewed this as strengthening the potential impact of the March. In Africa, comment went further and frequently referred to the March as the greatest event of its kind in history; a similar viewpoint was voiced in the Middle East and South Asia.

Most comment agreed, however, that the meaningful impact of the March would be measured in terms of the response of Congress to the Administration's civil rights proposals and the day-to-day support given to civil rights by the American public. Noting the strong opposition in Congress and the South as well as the indifference of the general public, considerable skepticism prevailed concerning the passage and implementation of civil rights legislation. El Mercurio, a conservative daily in Chile, declared that "The United States, in matters of racial equality, is an underdeveloped nation." Comment generally concurred in the view that despite obvious advances the U.S. had a long way to go to achieve racial equality.

Generally, the Administration, particularly President Kennedy and his brother, was applauded for its efforts to achieve greater racial equality in the U.S. In Western Europe, for example, President Kennedy's role in the "second emancipation" was singled out for high praise, especially in view of the risk to his domestic political fortunes.

Western European comment also viewed the problem as a moral one that was intimately connected with future U.S. world leadership, and concluded that the March itself was a vindication of American democracy, contrasting this with the stifling character of Communist despotism.

Soviet propaganda, which had been exploiting heavily the "racist" nature of American life during the early summer months, gave fairly factual coverage of the March. Soviet commentators interpreted the March as an affirmation of the argument that "government sponsored racism" was engendering popular revolt. Peking coverage emphasized the heavy police and military supervision as evidence that the Administration sought to control and suppress the March.

WESTERN EUROPE

Calm, dignity and maturity were the characteristics of the Washington March most often emphasized in heavy Western European news and editorial coverage. The demonstration was however regarded as the most massive evidence yet of the limits to Negro patience. President Kennedy's role in the "second emancipation" was singled out for high praise, especially in view of the risk to his domestic political fortunes which, it was widely reported, this role entailed. Papers saw the problem as a moral one whose solution was intimately connected with US world leadership. A majority felt that the March itself was a vindication of American democracy and many pointedly contrasted the free society which permitted such a demonstration with the stifling nature of Communist despotism. A majority of papers were hopeful that a "turning point" had been reached in the racial question but skeptics, especially in France, doubted a sweeping breakthrough in either legislative enactments or actual living and working conditions.

The special correspondent of influential conservative Figaro, Paris, spoke for many papers in asserting that the promoters may "rightly pride themselves on having combined dignity with numbers." It was widely agreed that the discipline of the marchers constituted a powerful weapon. Two leading British dailies - the independent Times and the liberal Guardian - found in the demonstration powerful evidence of readiness to exercise wisely the rights which were being demanded; the Guardian asserted that the participants "were better qualified [for these rights] than the sick and frightened white hooligans of Birmingham."

THE
HISTORY
OF
THE
CITY
OF
NEW
YORK
FROM
1624
TO
1898
BY
JOHN
B. HOGAN
AND
J. M. SMITH
NEW
YORK
1898

THE
HISTORY
OF
THE
CITY
OF
NEW
YORK
FROM
1624
TO
1898
BY
JOHN
B. HOGAN
AND
J. M. SMITH
NEW
YORK
1898

The underlining of the peaceful nature of the event did not prevent the widespread interpretation that it was also an indication of the end of the Negro acceptance of the status quo. Liberal papers in Italy, Germany, Great Britain and elsewhere expressed the view that the American white population should be convinced by now that patience was running out. Independent Combat of Paris asserted: "The Negroes demand everything and immediately" and spoke of a "demonstration of strength, determination and controlled anger /after which/ no American can be left with any illusions about the traditional resignation" of the Negroes. Several leading German papers emphasized nonetheless that although a "revolution" was in progress, its aim was not the overthrow of the existing system but rather its fulfillment through the extension of traditional rights to the Negro community. The independent Hamburg Welt pointed out that the members of this minority were "primarily and above all American citizens."

President Kennedy's role in the present crisis was singled out for admiring attention in most editorial comment. Papers in France, Germany and elsewhere referred to a "second emancipation" owing at least in part to the efforts of the President and his brother. It was widely held that the Chief Executive was taking on great domestic political risks in supporting Negro demands but that he was right not only as a matter of principle but also in order to advance the best interests of his country. Rightist Aurore, Paris, which has not been sparing in its criticism of US policy on many fronts, was echoed by numerous other papers when it asserted: "Courageously and disregarding the counsels of caution, Kennedy is attacking the problem as none of his predecessors ever did."

The moral nature of the issue was widely held to be intimately connected with US world leadership. Rome's independent-center Messaggero expressed this view as follows: "A country that intervened twice to defend nations against internal and external violence and which is once again on the front line must have moral strength free of shadows." Vatican Radio pointedly re-emphasized that "the entire moral authority of Christian teaching and the magisterium of the Church backs up all those who are acting for the abolition of any kind of racial discrimination." Lord Russell's eccentric diatribe against evil America appeared to be isolated and was totally ignored by the British press with the exception of the Daily Worker.

Despite the almost universal criticism of past injustices, most comment found the Washington March a ringing affirmation of the power of the American democratic process. Many papers specifically contrasted the opportunity granted by a free society with the despotic suppression practiced by the USSR. Rome's Voce Repubblicana, organ of the left-center Italian Republican party, represented widely held opinion when it stated: "This is the way that American democracy moves toward the solution of difficult problems -- openly, before the eyes of the whole world and especially of those countries that suffocate national problems...". Rotterdam's independent Algemeen Dagblad went so far as to claim: "Nowhere in the world has so much been done...for the solution of the racial problem as in the US in recent years...; just imagine what would have happened had such a demonstration been planned in East Berlin /or/ Moscow." Madrid's Catholic Ya boldly referred to an "imposing manifestation channeled through democratic processes which can well be called exemplary." Many papers in Germany and elsewhere pointedly referred to Moscow's last-minute cancellation of TV coverage.

Opinions were mixed as to the practical short-term effect of the demonstration in terms of internal US developments. Available comment suggests that a majority of papers felt that a "turning point" had been reached while not belittling the remaining problems. Some emphasized the strong measure of white support for civil rights. The Nenni-Socialist Avanti, Milan, in hailing a "new era in US history" found an echo across national and political lines.

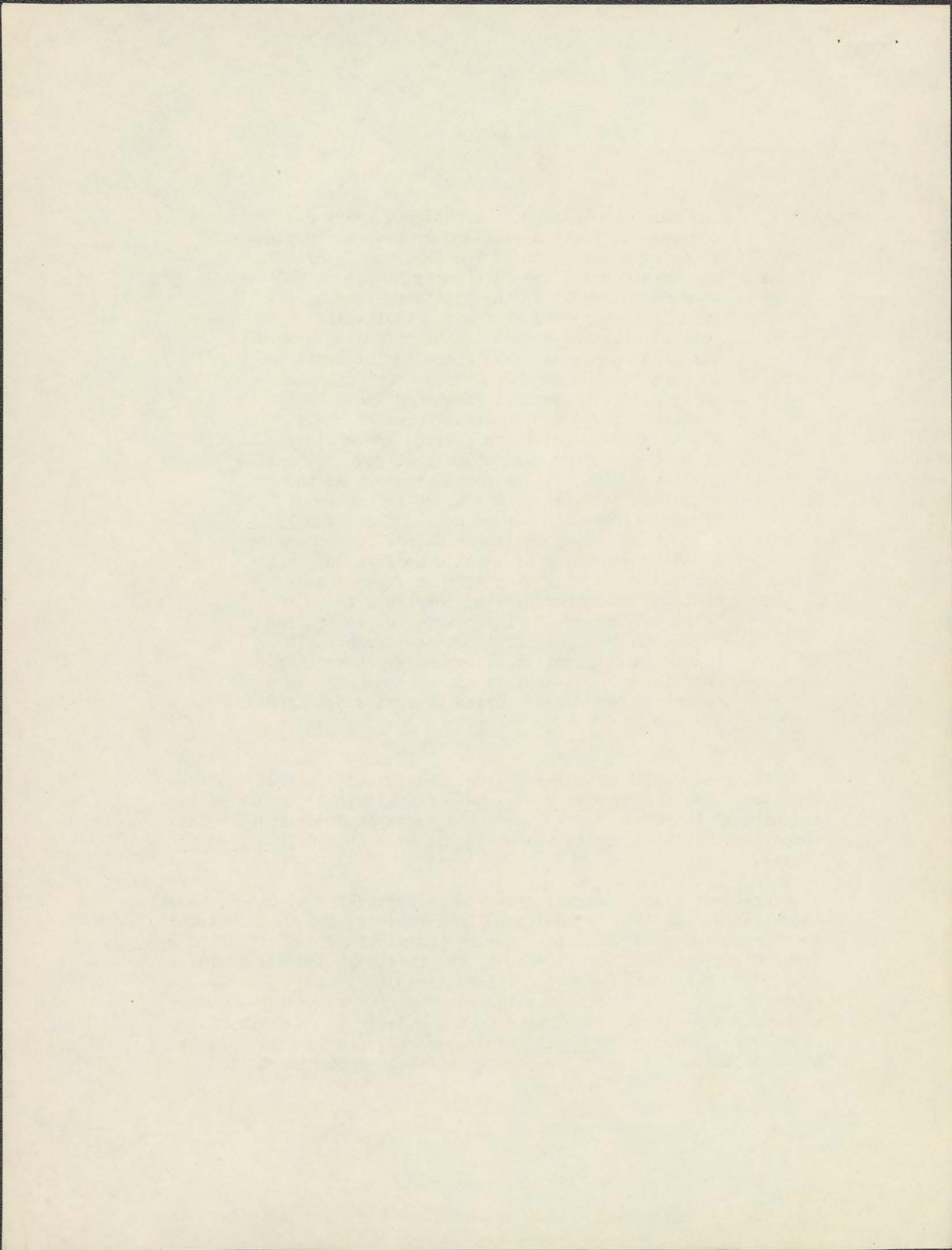
However, skeptical voices were raised in several instances, specifically in France. Congressional recalcitrance in the face of pressure as well as a recent Gallup poll revealing sizeable white opposition to the accelerated pace of the freedom movement were pointed to. The Washington correspondent of influential independent Le Monde, Paris, reported a "colossal indifference" on the part of many Americans while moderate-left Paris Jour gloomily asserted that "the problem will remain immense and tragic." Likewise, such influential papers as Die Welt doubted that the great demonstration would soon lead to sweeping changes.

AFRICA

The march on Washington occasioned heavy news coverage in North Africa and in several English-speaking areas south of the Sahara. Information on private reactions is sketchy. Much of the comment hailed it as the greatest event of its kind in history and recognized that white participation represented a significant forward step. A number of areas noted Administration support for the march. Premier Ben Bella and papers in Leopoldville, Rabat and Tunis "saluted" the Administration's recent civil rights efforts but other private and media comment expressed some doubt that governmental follow-up action would be as vigorous as the situation warranted. Strongest criticism of the Administration was voiced in Ghana and by African political exiles in Cairo. Some comment stated the problem of race is world-wide, that Negroes are inspired by African freedom and that the march had greatly impressed their "African brothers." There were few references to the civil rights bill but the march was viewed in the context of rising Negro demands. Only three small-scale sympathy demonstrations occurred; one was dominated by resident American Negroes in Ghana.

The press called the march a "memorable and decisive day for American Negroes" (Courrier d'Afrique - Leopoldville), "imaginative and daring" (Moroccan media), and "the greatest demonstration in support of racial equality the world has ever known" (Daily Nation - Kenya).

Heaviest media coverage occurred in North Africa, Ghana, Kenya and Liberia. Al-Alam (opposition) in Morocco called it an "historic event unprecedented since the American Revolution" and a "call for freedom wholeheartedly supported by the President and his Administration." Morocco's La Nation (opposition), remarking on white participation, stated editorially that "in several months we have witnessed a veritable revolution in the U.S. in which logic has finally triumphed." As-Sabah (pro-government) in Tunisia said it was a "slap in the face" for bigoted whites. Referring to the



world-wide struggle for racial equality, the paper "saluted President Kennedy's attitude in this sphere." Al-Amal (pro-government) in Tunisia said the world is following the "present conflict" and the civil rights bill to learn "whether (the U.S.) will be able to liquidate the remnant of colonialism on its soil."

Heavy press and radio coverage in Algeria called the march a "peaceful, bi-racial, multi-religious and successful" demonstration. However, Le Peuple (FLN) said "the eyes of the world are on the Senate as a test of the government's commitment" and of the claim that "official opposition is limited primarily to southern state governments." The unusually favorable media treatment may have been due to Ben Bella's statement that "Algeria expresses solidarity with Negroes and anti-racist Americans" and "salutes both the March of Liberation and the effort of the American government for racial integration."

News coverage was heavy in Liberia where limited private reaction expressed some doubt about subsequent government efforts. In Kenya, the tenor of the media coverage and limited private reaction indicated the march had made an impression.

In Ghana, the Evening News (government) called the march one of the "greatest revolutions in the annals of human history," but most of the press comment was sharply critical of American society and government. Accra Radio reviewed the Negro's sufferings and said it was "improbable the mass demonstrations will significantly change (his) status." The Ghanaian Times (government) commented that "time is running out" in the "great challenge facing Washington," adding that "practical steps by Washington will weigh more than empty words and promises" and constitute "a great service in the furtherance of human rights for all men." However, the Times said the racial situation "casts much slur on Western civilization championed by the U.S.," implied the President was delaying progress on the civil rights bill, and quoted criticisms of the President contained in the petition addressed to the American Embassy by American Negroes resident in Accra. The most stinging comment came from a regular columnist who said "twenty million Americans are in revolt against a political system which has entrenched the most ruthless, remorseless, unscrupulous and desperate industrial and military oligarchy in human history." He urged Negro leaders to "fuse (their) revolutionary upsurge" with the efforts of the "victims of U.S. imperialism in other continents."

Small-scale sympathy demonstrations occurred in three cities. In Ghana, an orderly group of 40 persons, mostly resident American Negroes, twice picketed the American Embassy. The second demonstration attracted less than 200 curious Ghanaian onlookers. In Burundi, less than 100 students staged a quiet 15-minute demonstration in front of the U.S. Legation after they had devoted their main effort to a demonstration in front of the Belgian Embassy protesting recent incidents in the former metropole. According to the Middle East News Agency, representatives of African exile political organizations in Cairo presented to the Embassy a note attacking the "disgraceful and regrettable behavior of white men in the U.S." and "firmly denouncing" the Administration's pretenses of helping Negroes."

NEAR EAST AND SOUTH ASIA

The August 28 "March on Washington" received prominent news coverage in the press and in radio news broadcasts in the Near East and South Asia. But editorial comment, except for UAR and Indian newspapers, was lighter than might have been expected. In general, the civil rights demonstration was hailed as an "unprecedented" and "historical" landmark in the American Negro's achievement of equality. Except for a slap at the Kennedy administration for "marking time too long" and "bending only under extreme pressure of public opinion" (Madras Mail, August 30) and incidental mention by Cairo radio and a Pakistani newspaper of criticisms by Bertrand Russell and "African liberation movements" in Cairo, comment was unusually favorable. Emphasis was on the orderly and disciplined character of the march, the large participation in it by whites, and the strong federal government support of Negro equality, encouraged by a "determined" President Kennedy and by a majority of "enlightened" Americans. A number of newspapers stressed that while the demonstration might not sway certain "reactionary" elements in the Congress, the President's civil rights measures must ultimately be adopted if the U. S. government wished to preserve its reputation and prestige in world affairs.

Coverage

The civil rights demonstration was described in radio newscasts and given front page coverage in most newspapers of the area. Pictures of the march, of the assembly at the Lincoln Memorial, and the meeting of Negro leaders with President Kennedy also appeared in several papers. Headlines stressed the size of the demonstration ("Biggest Mass Demonstration in U. S. History" -- Ittefaq, Dacca), the non-violent nature of the demonstration ("Thousands in Historic Freedom March -- Crowd Gay and Orderly" -- Athens News), and the Administration's sympathy with the march ("Negroes' Great March Wins Kennedy's Praise" -- Statesman, New Delhi.)

Indian and UAR newspaper printed lengthy special despatches from their Washington correspondents as well as wire service accounts of the march. Some newspapers also published side-bars and civil rights backgrounders. Beirut-Massa devoted its entire second page to the march.

Jerusalem and Cairo radios reported sympathy marches in Tel Aviv and Cairo, respectively. And the Greek press gave prominent play to an Agence France-Presse dispatch reporting remarks of E. Phillips Randolph on the incompatibility of the integrationist movement and communism.

No mention of editorial comment has been received from Iran, Jordan, Turkey, Ceylon, Syria or Nepal and it is assumed that the march elicited minimal reaction from media in those countries.

Historic
Significance

Editorial comment throughout the area drew attention to the historic character of the "march on Washington" and its significance for the American Negro and the world.

Beirut's Al-Hayat (August 29) called the march a "historic event" and a "psychological demonstration that the Negro is no longer willing to accept delay in winning equality."

Al-Akhbar of Cairo (August 28) said the march was "a practical and peaceful step to convince U. S. officials that Negroes will no longer live as third-rate citizens" and termed the demonstration "the new emancipation charter for Negroes."

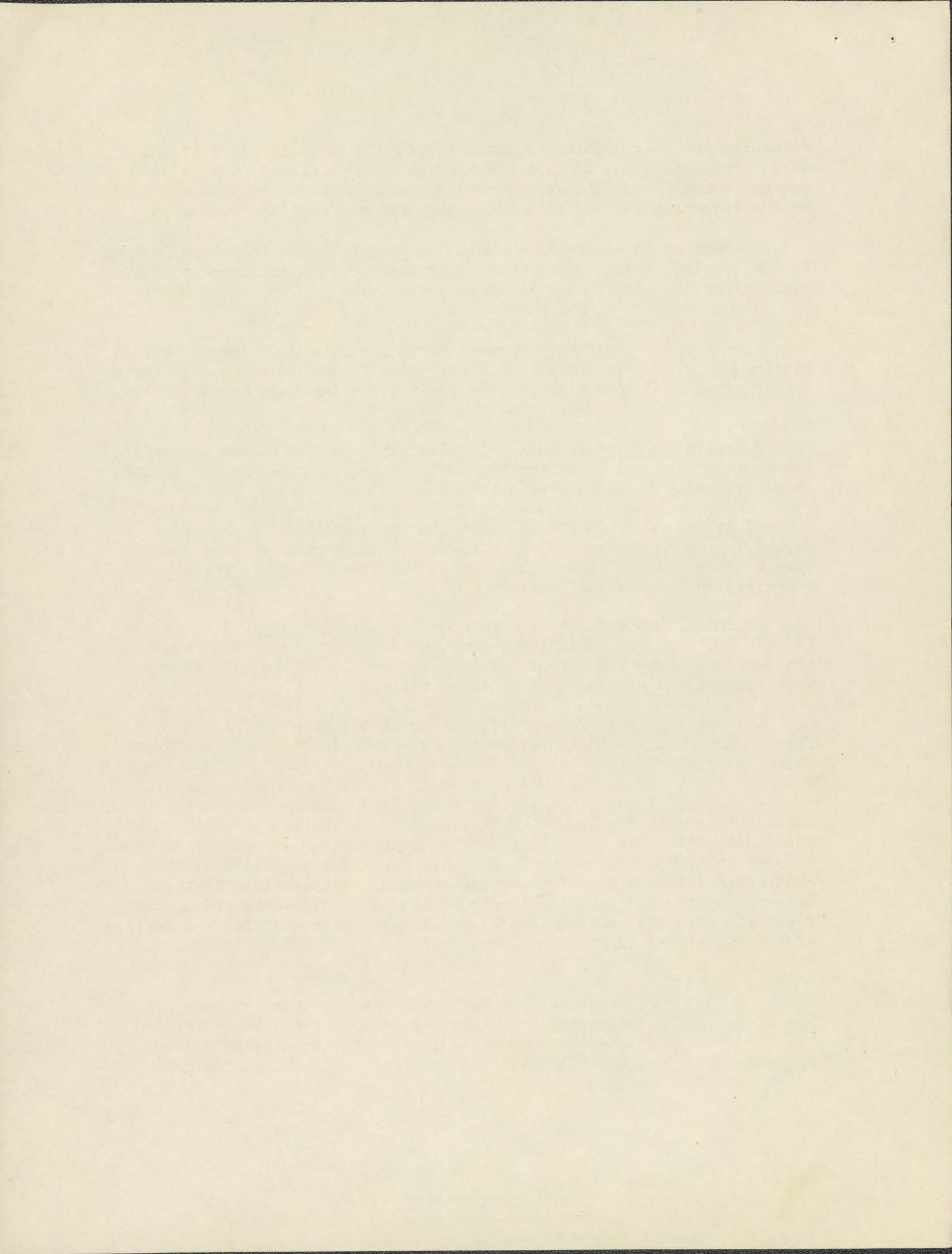
In India, the vernacular newspaper Samyukta Karnatka of Bangalore (August 30) declared that "the demonstration, unprecedented in American history, will have its effect not only in America but in all nations where racial and class discrimination exists."

Calcutta's Amrita Bazar Patrika (August 30) said: "The great freedom march in Washington marks the watershed in the Negro struggle for equal rights."

In Bombay, Times of India (September 3) declared that the demonstration was "no less than a revolution in the making" and concluded: "It does not matter if the protest gives ammunition to those ideologically hostile to the U. S. Even the lingering fears of the obstructionists are not of grave consequence. What matters is that this new controlled struggle firmly rooted in non-violence and adding fresh vigor to the American Negro symbolizes a heart-warming reassertion of the dignity of man."

Non-Violence

Headlines and editorial comment in many newspapers stressed the peaceable nature of the demonstration and the absence of incidents. The Indian press noted the presence of the "Gandhian technique" and praised the non-



violent leadership of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Al-Akhbar (Cairo, August 28) noted that the success of the march depended on "the absence of any trouble" and that the leaders of the march had "asserted more than once that their objective was to draw the attention of congressmen to the fairness of their cause in a quiet way and without bloodshed."

Indian newspapers dwelt at length on the fact that the "freedom march" was "orderly" and "disciplined." Andhra Prabha (Vijayawada, August 30) declared that "the Washington march is a tribute to the non-violent leadership of Martin Luther King." And the Bengali daily Jugantar (Calcutta, August 30), concluding a "salute to the freedom fighters," asserted: "If Mahatma Gandhi's ideal is living anywhere, it is in the Negro demonstration and in Martin Luther King's goal of life."

Indian Express, (Bombay, September 3) summarizing the universal Indian approval of the non-violent Negro approach to the civil rights question, declared in an editorial: "The American Negroes realize that it is their duty to initiate a national seizure of conscience over racial intolerance. Their leadership has wisely decided to import Gandhian techniques in the planned campaign of direct action."

Janshakti (Gujarati daily, Bombay, September 3) was "sure that the Negro people and their leaders will achieve their aim through the Gandhian way."

President's
Role

The "courageous" role of the President in pressing his civil rights program and in setting a model for the American public in his sympathy toward the Negroes' demonstration for equal rights was widely hailed.

Athens Daily Post (August 30) praised the President's "noble efforts for the abolition of racial discrimination in the United States" and declared that it drew "the deep sympathy of the entire world" It added: "Still more important, the people of the United States have taken an actively sympathetic view of the President's efforts, as was shown by the recent successful joint march of whites and Negroes alike, demonstrating against racial prejudice; the American people, inspired by a truly liberal President, seem now fully determined to put an end to the old story."

Al-Jarida (Beirut, August 30) headlined its account of the civil rights march: "Negroes Take their Struggle from the Street to the Congress; President Kennedy Proud of the March, Considers it Triumph for the Cause of 20 Million Negroes."

Cairo's newspapers made a point of crediting the federal government, and especially President Kennedy, for supporting Negro demands for equal status. And Indian newspapers were voluminous in their endorsement of the President's role.

In Madras State, the Telugu newspaper Andhra Prabha of Vijayawada (August 30) said that "President Kennedy has given practical shape to his sympathy..."

In Calcutta, Amrita Bazar Patrika (August 30), said that it was significant that the civil rights movement "has received the blessings of President Kennedy himself.... The Negroes have been left in no doubt that they have a champion of their cause in the President." The Bengali daily Basumati (August 30) noted that "President Kennedy's strong intervention helped Negroes in the southern states to attain social rights. U. S. official circles also are sympathetic to the present demonstration."

Another large-circulation Bengali daily, Jugantar (Calcutta, August 30) said: "The freedom movement of the Negroes has entered a new era in 1962-63. The main features of this era are the awakening of Negroes and President Kennedy's sympathy for them."

The Hindi daily Vishwamitra (Calcutta, Bombay, etc. August 29) said "the U. S. administration under President Kennedy is sincerely doing its best to give equal rights to the Negroes."

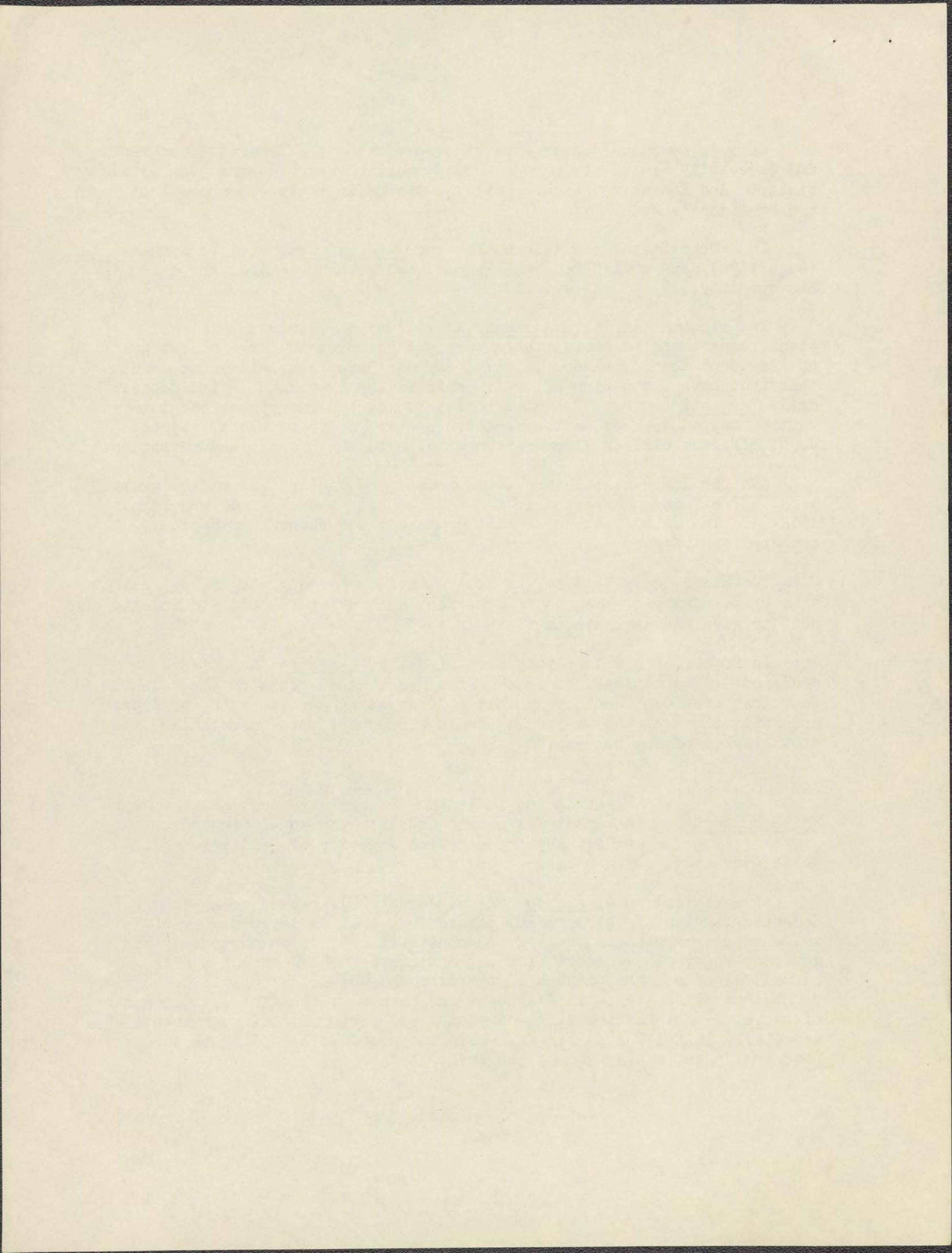
In Bombay, the widely read Marathi daily Lokasatta (August 30) declared: "The ultimate success of the Negro cause rests on the valuable fact that President Kennedy and his colleagues sympathize with the hopes and aspirations of the Negroes and make sincere efforts to establish the civil rights of the Negroes."

White Support

white Americans.

Egyptian and Indian newspapers stressed that the Negro movement for social equality and equal rights was widely supported by the majority of "enlightened"

An editorial in Al-Akhbar (Cairo, August 29), picked up by the domestic service of Cairo radio, pointed out that "a large number of white people marched in the Negro demonstration." It commented: "This movement enjoys the support of a large sector of the American public, as well as of all the peoples of the East and West.... There is no doubt that all enlightened Americans are pained by the fact that remnants of racial discrimination still exist in some parts of their continent, especially in the United States, where the people still cling to the past and do not easily accept progress."



Hindustan Times' (New Delhi, August 30) Washington correspondent underlined the fact that most of the marchers -- Negro and white -- were young, "reflecting that it is a new generation of Americans fighting the battle against racial discrimination."

The leftist Patriot (New Delhi, August 30) said: "The impressive freedom march is an unmistakable sign of a new awareness among a large section of Americans of the patent injustice of discriminatory practices to which the Negroes have been subjected for centuries." "One hopeful sign," it added, "is that liberal white elements are coming out in increasing numbers in support of the Negroes' just demands." It concluded that a "happy end" to the Negroes' movement for equal rights "will depend entirely on the capacity of the Negroes and others who share their ideals to wage a sustained war on the entrenched forces of reaction."

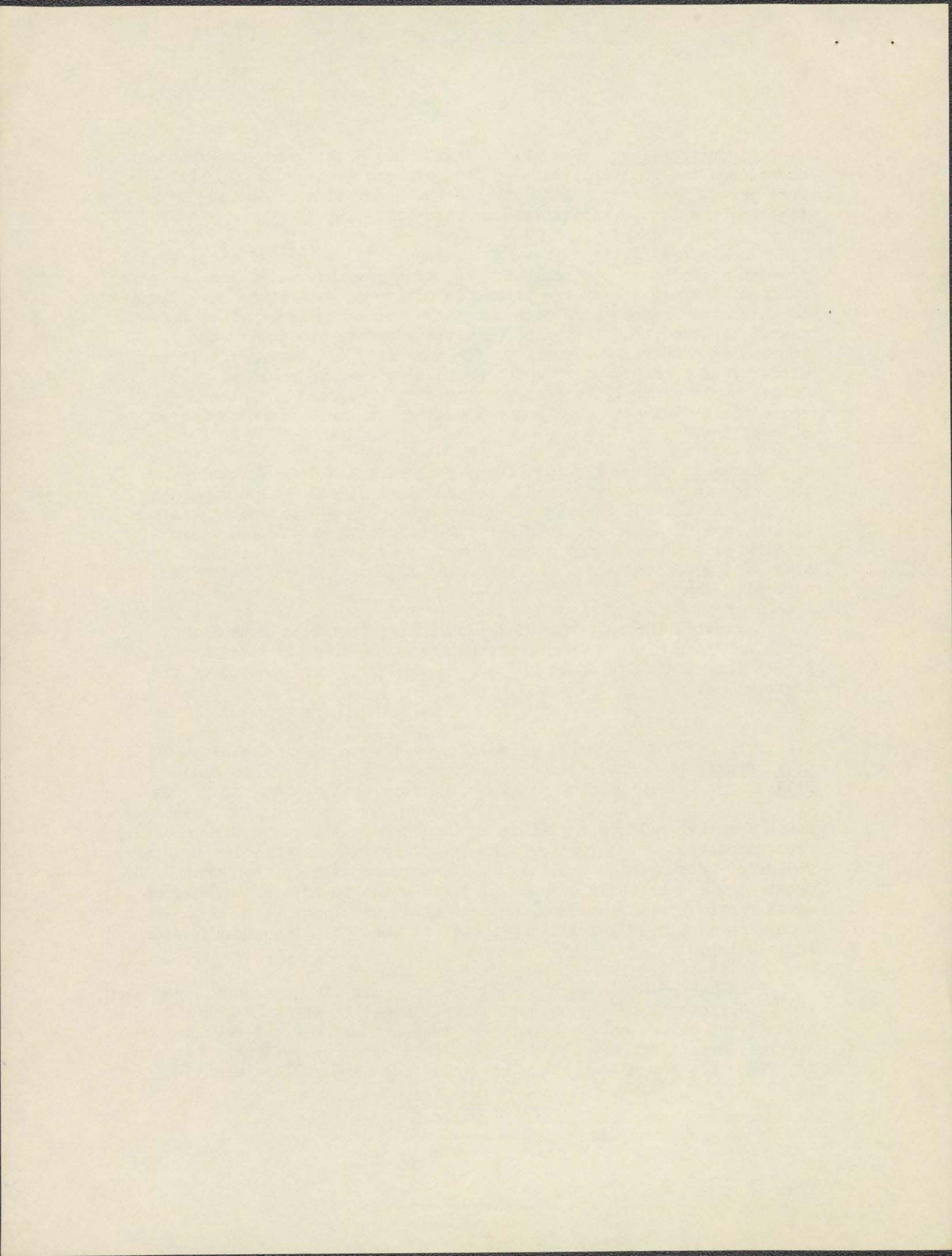
Basumati (Calcutta, August 30) declared that "the whites' participation in the rally ... is a remarkable incident." And Janshakti (Bombay, August 30) concluded: "This rally was a great demonstration of the ways of democracy. This rally has also demonstrated an outpouring of goodwill, understanding and tolerance. Justice is on the side of the Negroes and an overwhelming majority of the nation is also with them."

Lokasatta (Bombay, August 30) said "the fact that over 15,000 white American citizens participated in the Negro demonstrations ... proves that the white Americans are convinced of the justice of the Negro cause."

Civil Rights Bill

A number of newspapers commented on the march in relation to the President's Civil Rights bill. It was felt in some quarters that the August 28 demonstration had successfully prepared the "psychological" basis for the forthcoming debate in Congress, although it was generally recognized that "conservative" and "reactionary" elements in the Congress would not be swayed. Some editorials expressed the opinion that U. S. prestige would be badly damaged if legislation to assure the Negroes equal rights were not passed. On the other hand, the U. S. would render a service to itself and all mankind if it enacted anti-discriminatory legislation.

Usually pro-West Lisan al-Hal (Beirut, August 30) acknowledged that the U. S. federal policy on racial discrimination is "unbiased and honest" and expressed the hope that President Kennedy and responsible American organizations will "enforce democratic rules for the Negroes to bridge the tremendous gap which today tarnishes the reputation of



the U. S."

Athens Daily Post (August 30) was "convinced that the time is drawing near when the ideal of equal rights for all citizens of the United States, regardless of color, will become a reality."

Cairo's popular Al-Gomhuriyah (August 28) said the President was sympathetic to the marchers' demands because he realized the "disastrous effects" the "policy of persecuting U. S. Negroes (has) on the general situation inside the United States itself as well as the harm it does to the prestige of the United States in the eyes of all the peoples of the world."

Most widely read Al-Akhbar (Cairo, August 29) observed that "If President Kennedy succeeds in winning the support of American public opinion for whatever measures he intends to take toward the abolition of racial discrimination and the establishment of equality between white and black people he will undoubtedly be doing his country and all mankind the greatest service." At the same time, it said, such an action would deal a "deadly blow" to racial discrimination in South Africa.

In a second day editorial on August 30, Al-Akhbar anticipated that "this march will be followed by decisive legislative action to eradicate this stigma marring the reputation of a whole nation and incurring the bitter criticism of all the world."

Indian Express (New Delhi, August 30) wrote: "The massive march may create that psychological climate which will help to push through President Kennedy's civil rights bill which is now before Congress." And Statesman (New Delhi, August 30) in its front-page story on the civil rights march said the demonstration "laid the groundwork for the coming Congressional fight for civil rights legislation."

Amrita Bazar Patrika (Calcutta, August 30) declared that "Ultimately it is the determination of the federal authorities, which alone can prove effective (in the movement for civil rights). That President Kennedy does not lack this determination is apparent from the bold measures he has proposed in his civil rights bill to Congress." But it saw a hard fight to get the bill past the southern Democrats who, "in retaliation, have already joined hands with the Republicans in slashing his foreign aid bill."

Indian Express (Bombay, August 29) lauded President Kennedy for his "courageous effort" in pressing his civil rights bill, but observed that "it needs more than laws to bring about social justice."

Economic Times (Bombay, September 3) felt it was doubtful the civil rights march would "make any difference to the vote of individual Congressmen on the civil rights measure. That will depend on local pressures and the state of public opinion in his own constituency." But, it added, "an agitation on this scale for mass economic betterment cannot fail to embrace sooner or later the submerged poor white communities as well." With the gradual breaking away of southern Democrats from the Kennedy administration and their combining of forces with conservative Republicans, the newspaper felt, the ground was being laid for a new differentiation of political parties. "The nation-wide Negro agitation has, in other words, produced a psychological climate in which two rival parties with contrasting economic and political ideologies can contend for office and power."

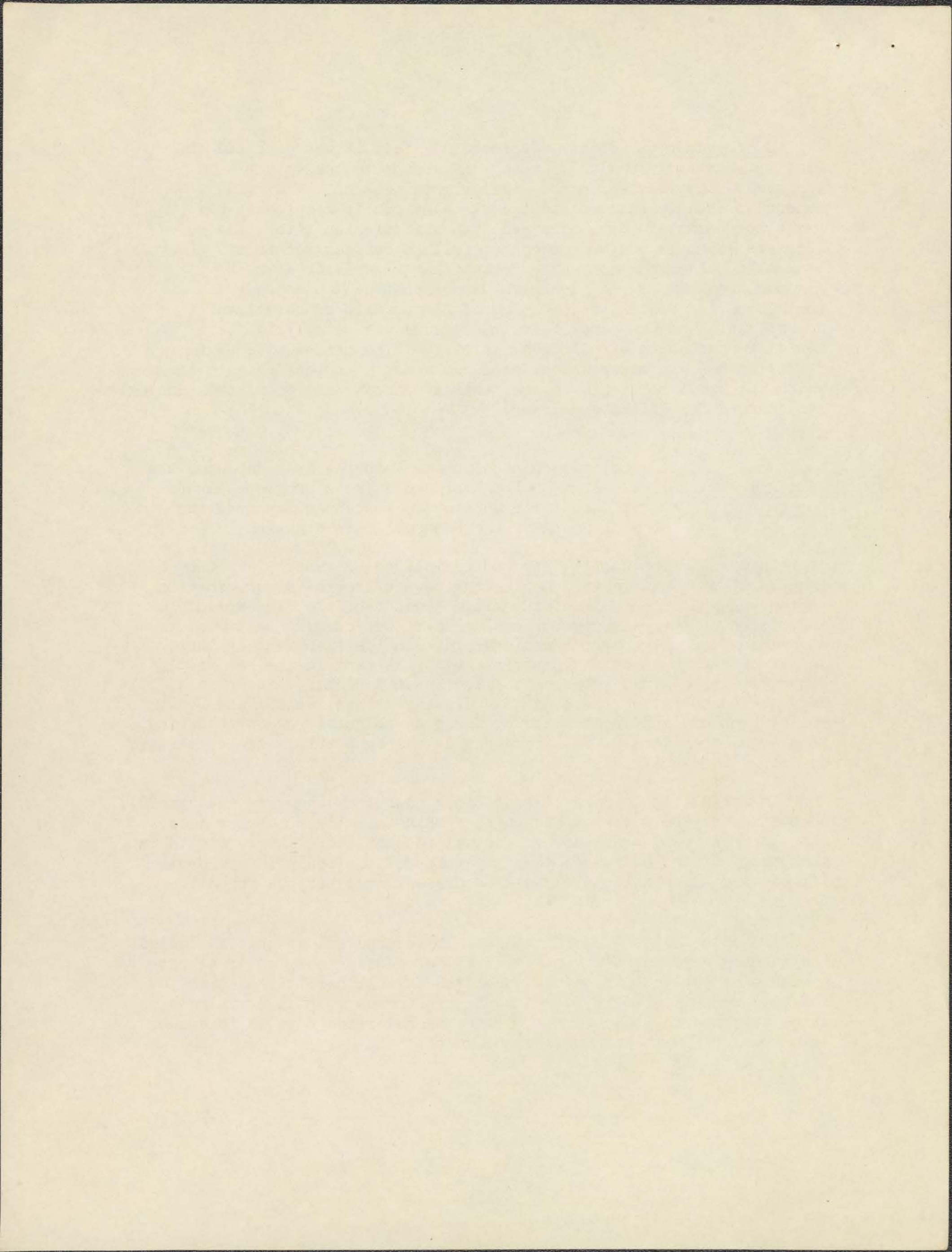
Critical
Comment

Isolated critical comment in the area deplored the slowness of the American Negro's progress toward full equality and in two instances impugned the good faith of the Kennedy Administration.

In Beirut, pro-UAR As-Sharq editorialized (August 29): "One cannot but sigh with grief reading the news of racial discrimination in the USA which monopolizes the title 'leader of the free world' and places at the entrance to New York a statue carrying a torch of freedom to enlighten the whole world. In the twentieth century, an age of civilization and progress, we still find in the USA people with fossilized minds refusing to live in this century." And in a separate editorial on the same day, drawing a parallel between U. S. racial problems and those faced by European colonial powers in Africa, it alleged that "the U. S. is now facing the same trials it perpetrated on its allies in Africa."

In Israel, the middle-of-road Labor newspaper Lamerhav (August 28), commenting on the march on Washington, said that the "thus far less than impressive progress toward factual recognition of Negro rights in the United States estranges the sympathies of the newly independent African and Asian nations as well as presenting a serious domestic problem."

In India, Mail of Madras (August 30) lashed out at what it called the Kennedy government's "healthy trait of bending only under extreme pressure of public opinion" and declared that it had "marked time" for so long that now "it is not equal rights but special privileges which may have to be conferred on (the Negro) race if it is to grow to be on a par with its white counterpart."



In Pakistan, where the civil rights march received little editorial comment, the newspaper Jehad (Dacca, August 28) declared "it is a pity that even a hundred years after Lincoln's emancipation proclamation insufferable inequities and barbaric outrages are being committed on the Negroes." Sangbad (Dacca, August 28) gave a two-column headline to a statement by British philosopher Bertrand Russell to the effect that "Nazi barbarism has paled into insignificance before the repression of Negroes."

Cairo Radio (August 28), departing from its otherwise approving tone, gave extensive publicity to a bitterly critical and inflammatory note presented at the U. S. Embassy in Cairo by sympathy marchers representing African "national liberation movements." According to broadcasts in both the Near Eastern and UAR domestic services, the note denounced the "disgraceful and regrettable behavior of the white men toward Negroes in the United States" and charged that "the local U. S. authorities have launched many campaigns characterized by violence against the peaceful U. S. Negroes." After recounting examples of the "savage acts" perpetrated against the U. S. Negro from Little Rock to the slaying of Medgar Evers, the note was quoted as observing: "The efforts exerted by the U. S. Government to intervene in favor of the Negroes do not lead us to believe that the Kennedy Administration is really enthusiastic about the Negro cause. What is now occurring in the United States is the outcome of the existence of a collapsed regime headed by President John Kennedy."

FAR EAST

Area media reaction to the civil rights march was moderate in news play and light in editorial comment. Non-Communist media termed the demonstration a success in the light of its peaceful and dignified demeanor, but agreed that its real value would be determined by its ability to stimulate Congress and the American people toward legislative and day-to-day racial progress. Peking granted heavy news coverage to the march, emphasizing Administration efforts to "control and suppress" the demonstration, but has yet to comment editorially.

The volume of non-Communist media reaction was moderate in terms of straight news play and very light in terms of editorial comment. Editorials were limited to the press in Japan, South Korea, the Republic of China (Taiwan), Singapore, and the Philippines.

Editorial opinion from these nations tended to focus on two points. First, all comment viewed the march as a success in terms of its orderliness, peacefulness, and dignity. Sankei (Tokyo) typically commented that "it is a matter for felicitation that the greatest march ever held in the United States was orderly and a success in the eyes of everyone who witnessed it."

Secondly, a consensus prevailed that the actual value of the demonstration would be determined by the effect it will have in stimulating racial progress in the United States. Specifically, the U.S. Congress was seen as having the responsibility of furthering racial equality by passing constructive civil rights legislation, while the American people were enjoined to support such legislation in action and spirit. The Manila Times thus felt that "the success of the rally will be reflected in the enactment and implementation of [civil rights] measures at a reasonably fast pace," while Sin Chew Jit Poh (Singapore) warned that "prejudices because of color differences cannot be eradicated by legislation in Congress and verdicts of the Supreme Court alone." Unstated but implied in these comments was the previously expressed viewpoint that the Administration was providing fully adequate leadership on the problem.

Communist China

Peking, which has been following racial developments in the United States with nearly daily NCNA releases, accorded heavy news coverage to the demonstration. Emphasis was placed on the use of troops and police in an effort to show that the Administration sought to "control and suppress" the march, and the more militant march slogans (e.g. "end police brutality") received heavy play. No editorial comment has yet been made.

LATIN AMERICA

All media gave moderately heavy coverage to the March on Washington. Excepting Mexico, editorial reaction was slight though uniformly sympathetic. Chile panned the US as "racially underdeveloped." Comment emphasized support for the March, approval of Administration policy, and concern with its political implications to the President.

Sign of Maturity Excelsior of Mexico City reflected editorially, after the March, that "the orderly presence of so many people was a testimony to the democratic maturity" /of the colored race/. La Paz, Bolivia, dailies declared that the March was proof of real democracy in the US.

Political Implications Bogota's liberal daily El Expectador noted that the March reflected support for "the policy of the current administration in the field of civil rights." Panama City's Televisora Nacional stated that "The massive demonstration was vigorous and eloquent proof that President Kennedy has the generous support of his people." Prensa Libre of Guatemala suggested that it would not "decide the socio-economic program but is bound to have influence on the legislative process." Most of the leading Mexican dailies commented on the political cost involved as did El Universal: "President Kennedy has valiantly assumed a position knowing that it can cause him severe loss in the balloting in the next presidential campaign." La Prensa put it even more strongly, "President John F. Kennedy will be known in history as the first North American ruler to risk his prestige to bring racial discrimination to a radical halt."

Solidarity with the March While the media throughout Latin America gave sympathetic treatment to the March on Washington only from Montevideo came reports of demonstrations in its support. As reported by Prensa Latina, these would be at the University and involve students, faculty, and labor. Brazil, concerned with mass demonstrations at home -- one peaceful, one violent -- did not react editorially, but gave the story heavy coverage.

US: A Racially Underdeveloped Nation The barbed comment, which might have been expected from Brazil, came from Chile's long established, conservative El Mercurio. It declared "the United States, in matters of racial equality, is an underdeveloped nation which must traverse a long road from its present situation of inferiority."

The Communist
and Cuban Media

Chilean Communist El Siglo stated that "every centimeter of progress has been the product of the Negroes' fight. Nothing has been graciously conceded." Uruguayan El Popular sent greetings "to the North Americans in this hour of struggle for democracy and against racist venom."

Havana media's wide coverage called for greater militancy on the part of the American Negro. The Chinese Peoples Republic's Ambassador, at a Confederation of Cuban Labor rally which coincided with the March, made a widely quoted statement: "The U.S. Negroes are awakening and their resistance is a revolutionary struggle for freedom."

Comment on USSR

By August 31, O Estado of Sao Paulo sought to explain why the USSR balked at retransmitting the TV relay via Telstar. It concluded: "Why its clear. The Washington manifestation glorified North American democracy along with exalting the North American Negro."

SOVIET UNION

During the early summer months, Soviet media heavily exploited the "racist" nature of American life by focussing on the demonstrations and violence throughout the South. This was followed by a period of low-level attention to the problem, which coincided with the somewhat changing racial situation and with the limited East-West rapprochement.

Moscow said very little about the preparations of the Freedom March, except to indicate that it could not foresee developments. Washington was described as a "tense political battleground" where thousands of troops and police had been gathered, and where the "racists" were threatening to create trouble. The Administration was said to have tried quietly to prevent the March while supporting it publicly for political reasons. And there were infrequent digs at America's "racial policy," which was compared with that of Portugal and South Africa.

Coverage and reportage of the March and of its aftermath was fairly factual. The Freedom March represented, for Soviet commentators, a bold summary and affirmation of the propaganda argument that "government-sponsored racism" was engendering a popular revolt. Some regarded the March as a manifestation of the "national liberation movement" in America; others saw in it a change from scattered, ineffectual protests to mass-based action which will eventually have its desired effect.

Soviet newspapers for the most part published photos and factual, restrained accounts, emphasizing the participation of organized labor, and noting that the Negro's 'submission has ended.' In contrast to Peking's assertion that a "new wave of militancy" was sweeping America, Moscow saw the demonstration as "the commencement of a peaceful mass struggle for true democracy and equality."

