

Big Labor turns down Washington march

From the Editors
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Against the urgently expressed desires of Walter Reuther of the Automobile Workers and Philip Randolph of the Sleeping Car Porters, the central board of the A.F.L.—C.I.O. voted not to endorse the August 28 civil rights demonstration in the national capital. This A.F.L.—C.I.O. decision will not prevent participation by many unions, including members of the big labor combine. But it will lend credence to the impression prevalent among Negro people that big labor is reluctant to support the cause of civil rights clear across the board. While it is easy to overestimate the importance for Negroes of the Washington demonstration, it is apparently easier for labor chieftains to underestimate the importance for organized labor of making the cause of the disadvantaged their own. Labor should be strongly represented in every legitimate phase of the civil rights movement. The rights it helps win for others are not foreign to its own situation. While some groups within organized labor now receive incomes which compare favorably with those of the traditional professions, the movement as a whole can hardly be said to be flourishing at present. The growth of automation, which is speeded by every strike, has made strike action an outmoded instrument of labor policy. The efforts of a few labor leaders to persuade their associations to make common cause against racketeers in their own midst and with minorities generally deserves better support than they are getting.