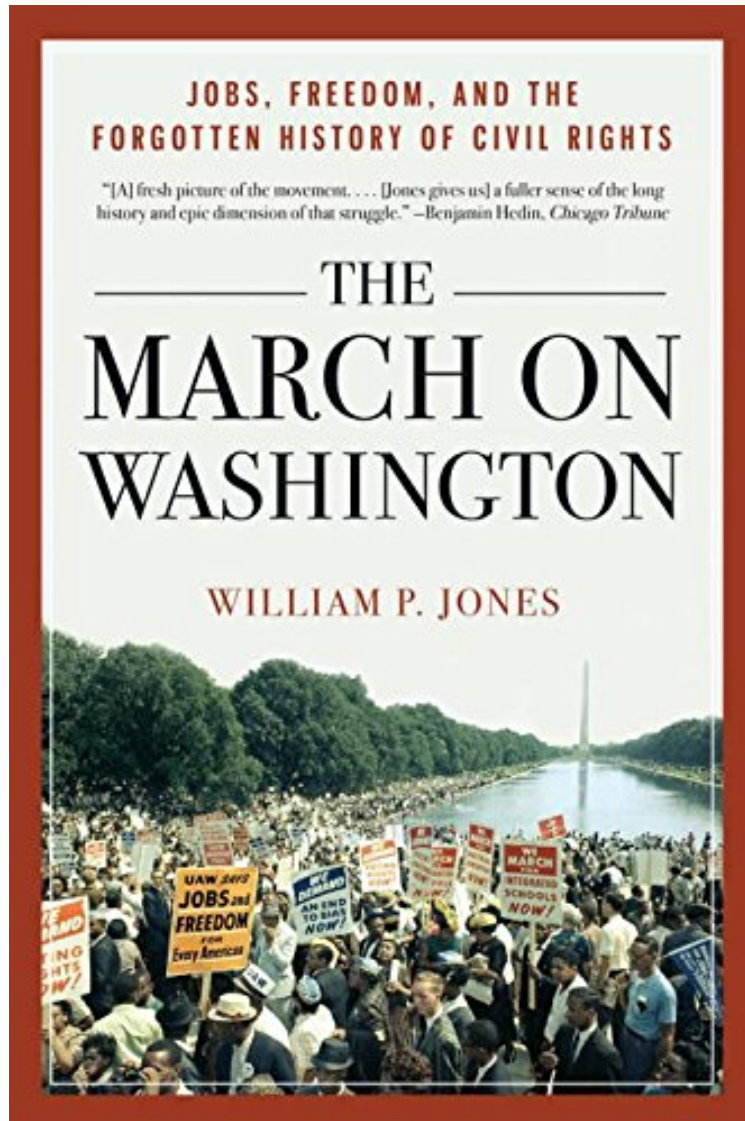


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The March on Washington: Jobs, Freedom, and the Forgotten History of Civil Rights

William P. Jones

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Vivid and moving. . . . [Tells] a story all but lost in most civil rights histories. Bill Marvel, Dallas Morning News It was the final speech of a long day, August 28, 1963, when hundreds of thousands gathered on the Mall for the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. In a resounding cadence, Martin Luther King Jr. lifted the crowd when he told of his dream that all Americans would join together to realize the founding ideal of equality. The power of the speech created an enduring symbol of the march and the larger civil rights movement. Kings speech still inspires us fifty years later, but its very power has also narrowed our understanding of the march. In this insightful history, William P. Jones restores the march to its full significance. The opening speech of the day was delivered by the leader of the march, the great trade unionist A. Philip Randolph, who first called for a march on Washington in 1941 to press for equal opportunity in employment and the armed forces. To the crowd that stretched more than a mile before him, Randolph called for an end to segregation and a living wage for every American. Equal access to accommodations and services would mean little to people, white and black, who could not afford them. Randolphs egalitarian vision of economic and social citizenship is the strong thread running through the full history of the March on Washington Movement. It was a movement of sustained grassroots organizing, linked locally to womens groups, unions, and churches across the country. Jones fresh, compelling history delivers a new understanding of this emblematic event and the broader civil rights movement it propelled. 8 pages of photographs

From BooklistMartin Luther Kings famous I Have a Dream speech and the march that occasioned it were about not only racial harmony but also the freedom that comes with equal rights and economic opportunity, in other words, jobs. Jones examines the historic 1963 March on Washington from the perspective of its focus on jobs. He zeros in on labor leader A. Philip Randolph, who advocated for an increase in the minimum wage, extension of minimum wage law to agricultural and other workers left out of the federal law, and programs to train workers for well-paying jobs. Randolphs life reflected the complex evolution of the labor movement in the U.S., the influence of socialism, and the racism within the unions that kept out black workers. By refocusing on the jobs agenda of the march, Jones notes that it was relatively easier to allow blacks to have access to seats on buses and at lunch counters than to provide them with access to jobs at the restaurants and bus companies. This is an important look at the true significance of the March on Washington. --Vanessa Bush A tour de force. . . . [Jones] provides great food for thought as the nation faces race relations in the twenty-first century. - Patti Brown, Iowa RepublicanProvides an alternative to the standard account by stressing the part played in the movement by unions and womens groups. - Louis Menand, The New Yorker[A] fresh take on events leading to the 1963 March on Washington. - Los Angeles TimesEnlightening. - Jay Strafford, Richmond Times-DispatchIndispensable. . . . Rediscovered the inextricable links between the civil rights movement and the cause of economic justice. - Sean Wilentz, author of The Rise of American DemocracyJones thoroughly recovers the radical reality of the events leading up to the march, as well as the march itself. - Moshe Z. Marvit, Washington MonthlyJones gets past the heroic myths and provides us with the history we need not just to celebrate the march but to understand it. This is the single best book on that historic event to date. - Eric Arnesen, The George Washington UniversityA magnificent work of historical reconstruction. . . . Jones provides a rich, robust understanding of the meaning of the march. - Michael Honey, author of Going Down Jericho RoadA masterful history. . . . Will Jones deeply satisfying book makes the history of the march whole and demonstrates the depth of change its participants embraced. - Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, author of Defying DixieOne of the great moments in American history becomes fresh again. Peeling away layers of myth, Jones shows the deep roots of the march in a tradition of African-American labor struggle. - Joshua Freeman, author of American EmpireAbout the AuthorWilliam P. Jones, professor of history at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, is a specialist in civil rights and labor history and contributes to The Nation and other publications. He and his family live in Madison, Wisconsin.