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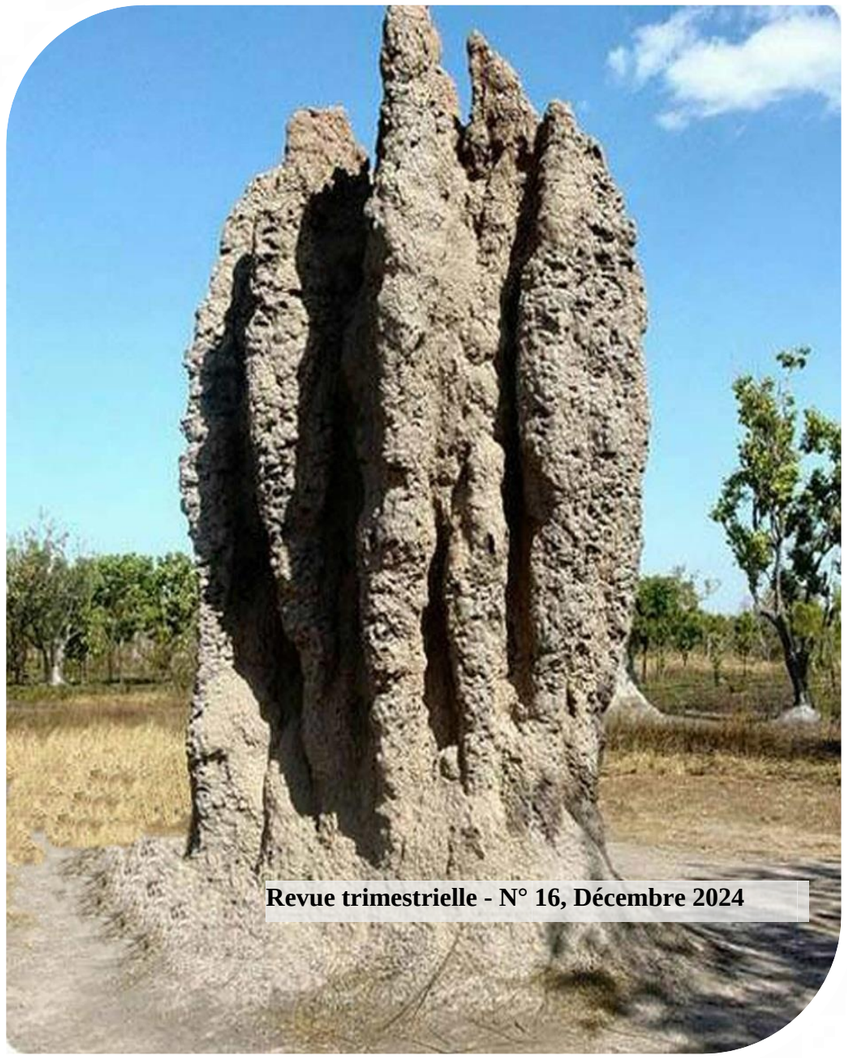

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"Dama Ninao" est une revue scientifique interdisciplinaire qui accepte et publie tous les articles relevant des Lettres, Arts et Sciences Humaines. A cet effet, elle s'intéresse aux études et théories littéraires, linguistiques, sociologiques, philosophiques, anthropologiques et historico-géographiques. La Revue "Dama Ninao", entendu "L'Entente" en langue kabyè du Nord Togo, est créée dans l'intention de matérialiser la mondialisation ou la globalisation qui s'opère avec l'esprit d'équipe et d'échanges et la désuétude du monde autarcique. Le monde scientifique universitaire ne peut échapper à cet esprit d'équipe qui fonde un creuset où « le fer aiguise le fer », les échanges se croisent, puis s'entremêlent pour aboutir à une reconstruction des connaissances scientifiques individuelles dans la collectivité.

La Revue Dama Ninao nous renvoie à la Civilisation de l'Universel du poète sénégalais Léopold Sédar Senghor, qui prône la porosité des âmes avec l'acceptation de l'autre, de ce qu'il dispose d'utile pour mon avancement : sa civilisation, sa culture, sa langue … Elle se fonde notamment sur la philosophie de Paul Ricœur qui préconise la perception de Soi-même comme un autre. Considérer soi-même comme un autre aux yeux de l'autre, nous amènerait à faire taire nos distensions et ressentiments afin de redimensionner notre espace, reconstruire notre histoire et notre société.

La Revue Dama Ninao s'est inspirée de la nature. Des insectes en miniature nous produisent de bels chefs-d'œuvre architecturaux, conjuguent leur génie créateur et leur force dans la patience et dans la tolérance. Ils créent des œuvres monumentales qui dépassent l'entendement humain, les termitières. A cet effet, la nature semble nous parler, nous guider, nous instruire dans le silence. Seules ces créations nous interpellent sans autant faire de nous des disciples. Comme la termitière qui, pour la plupart du temps, est une composante de maillons surgissant de la même matière, la Revue Dama Ninao se veut une termitière scientifique dont les enseignants-chercheurs en sont les maillons.

Au confluent de diverses sciences, la Revue Dama Ninao se propose de promouvoir la recherche scientifique et universitaire en impulsant le dialogue interdisciplinaire, le dialogue entre divers champs disciplinaires et divers contributeurs du monde universitaire.

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Dama Ninao est une revue scientifique internationale. Dans cette perspective, les textes que nous acceptons en français ou anglais sont sélectionnés par le comité scientifique et de lecture en raison de leur originalité, des intérêts qu'ils présentent aux plans africain et international et de leur rigueur scientifique. Les articles que notre revue publie doivent respecter les normes éditoriales suivantes :

La taille des articles

Volume : 10 à 15 pages ; interligne 1.5, police 12 pour le corps du texte et les courtes citations ; police 11 pour les longues citations, Times New Roman, les références des citations doivent être incorporées dans le texte. Exemple : Guy Rocher (1968, p. 29), pas de référence en foot-notes à l'exception de quelques commentaires.

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- Un **TITRE** en caractère d'imprimerie et en gras. Le titre ne doit pas être trop long ;

- **Nom et prénom(s)** du contributeur ou des contributeurs, **nom de l'institution** d'appartenance, **adresse mail**

- Un **Résumé (Abstract)** de 8 lignes en français et anglais, en interligne simple, suivi de 6 **Mots clés** (**Key words**)

- Une **Introduction** : elle doit avoir une problématique, une méthode et une structure.

- Un **Développement** : les articulations du développement du texte doivent-être titrées comme suit :

1-Pour le **Titre** de la première section

1-1-Pour le **Titre** de la première sous-section

1-2- Pour le **Titre** de la deuxième sous-section

2- Pour le **Titre** de la deuxième section

2-1-Pour le **Titre** de la première sous-section

2-2- Pour le **Titre** de la deuxième sous-section

3- Pour le **Titre** de la troisième section (si l'auteur de l'article le souhaite)

-Une **Conclusion :** elle doit être courte, précise et concise en mettant en relief l'authenticité des résultats de la recherche.

-**Bibliographie** (Mentionner uniquement les auteurs cités)

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En cas d'utilisation des tableaux, ceux-ci doivent être numérotés en chiffre romains selon l'ordre de leur apparition dans le texte. Ils doivent comporter un titre précis et une source. Les schémas et illustrations doivent être numérotés en chiffres arabes selon l'ordre de leur apparition dans le texte.

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Les instructeurs à qui la revue affecte les articles de leur spécialité, doivent les lire avec rigueur, rejeter tout article dont le contenu est en inadéquation avec le titre et/ou dont le raisonnement n'offre pas une qualité scientifique, faire des propositions pour l'amélioration dudit article, renvoyer l'auteur de l'article à la ligne éditoriale de la revue au cas où elle n'est pas respectée. Ils se doivent notamment de vérifier, par le biais d'internet, si le même article n'est pas déjà publié dans une revue en ligne.

Objectifs et portée

La revue Dama Ninao, de par son nom qui signifie « entente », a pour objectifs :

- de matérialiser le monde universitaire qui est un creuset où « le fer aiguise le fer », les échanges se croisent, puis s'entremêlent pour aboutir à une reconstruction des connaissances scientifiques individuelles dans la collectivité ;
- de promouvoir la recherche scientifique et universitaire en impulsant le dialogue interdisciplinaire, le dialogue entre divers champs disciplinaires et divers contributeurs du monde universitaire.

La revue Dama Ninao a une portée scientifique et sociale. A cet effet, elle publie tous les articles relevant des Lettres, Arts et Sciences Humaines et s'intéresse aux études et théories littéraires, linguistiques, sociologiques, philosophiques, anthropologiques et historico-géographiques sur appel à contribution thématique (colloque) ou varia. Elle est un espace de rencontre, de construction et de reconstruction des réseaux relationnels et scientifiques.

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Revue Dama Ninao

DE-INVISIBILIZING AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN IN THE MARCH ON WASHINGTON, D.C.

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Abstract: The March on Washington was the culmination of decades of mobilization and opposition against racism and discrimination. On August 28, 1963, African American men and women showed their resolve to gain both civil rights and equal opportunities in closed ranks. However, while official male leaders were lauded and greeted with recognition, the contributions of African American women, the real organizers behind this historical March, are yet to be acknowledged. For the success of this event, black women – Anna Arnold Hedgeman, Dorothy Irene Height, Maida Springer, Timuel Black and several others – were bridge-builders across organizations and leaders, mobilized marchers, raised funds, and fed the marchers.

Keywords: **Bridge-building roles, grassroots leaders, marchers, mobilizers, fundraising.**

Résumé : La Marche sur Washington a été le point culminant des décennies de mobilisation et d'opposition contre le racisme et la discrimination. Le 28 août 1963, des hommes et des femmes Noirs Américains ont montré en rangs serrés leur détermination à obtenir à la fois les droits civiques et l'égalité des chances à travers cette Marche. Alors que les dirigeants officiels masculins ont reçu la reconnaissance pour leurs rôles dans l'organisation de cet évènement historique, les contributions des africaines-américaines, véritables architectes et organisatrices de cette Marche historique, restent encore à reconnaître. Pour le succès de cette initiative, les femmes noires – Anna Arnold Hedgeman, Dorothy Irene Height, Maida Springer, Timuel Black et plusieurs autres – ont bâti des ponts entre les organisations et les dirigeants, mobilisé les manifestants, collecté des fonds et nourri les manifestants.

Mots-clés : **rôles de rapprochement, dirigeantes locales, marcheuses, mobilisatrices, collecte de fonds.**

Introduction

Viewed as the flagship of the events of the 1950s and 1960s, the March on Washington was undoubtedly the crowning of decades of protests, sit-ins, boycotts and marches. The mammoth mobilization demonstrated African American resolve to get both civil rights and equal opportunities. It was in closed ranks that black women

and men organized, supported and descended on Washington to pressure for change. However, the exclusion of women in the March's official program, combined with historians' exclusive emphasis on male frontline leaders, has contributed to erase African American women from the historiography of this event. Throughout the years, an account of the said March seems to be solely reduced to Martin Luther King, Jr. and the other well-known male leaders who met with President Kennedy afterward.

Through a feminist approach and structured around two sections, this essay seeks to resurrect some of the forgotten and downplayed female voices of this historic March. While the first section illuminates African American women's bridge-building roles across leaders and organizations, the second one uncovers their mobilizing, fundraising and feeding roles for the March.

1. Bridge-building Roles across Leaders and Organizations

Historians have tended to solely but mistakenly associate the March on Washington with King, Jr.'s special oratorical qualities. However, the March is to be understood through the global history of the movement, for its energies, finances and strategies were largely drawn in by dedicated women who took the matter in charge. The influx of people to Washington on August 28, 1963 was not solely imputable to King, Jr.'s greatness and popularity. Their flood to this venue even contributed to reinforce and sustain his fame and greatness. Their massive presence transformed this national hero into an international icon for the oppressed people. Even though King, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech personalized the dreams of equality, jobs, freedom and social justice of millions of oppressed people in the U.S. and abroad, a scrutiny of the accounts of the March deemphasized King, Jr.'s importance in the organization of this historical event.

Acknowledging the collective labor of the multitude of actors – precisely women – in planning, financing and catering for this March is conducive to a better understanding of the events of August 28, 1963. Belinda Robnett (1997, p. 47) even notes, in this sense, that "the idea to shake up the administration with a march on

Washington came from an unnamed black woman at a strategy meeting in Chicago" in the 1940s. Considering the resistance and reluctance of the U.S. to end discriminatory practices, this woman advised Asa Philip Randolph, leader of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (BSCP) and the other attendees "to throw fifty thousand Negroes around the White House – bring them from all over the country, in jalopies, in trains, and anyway they can get there until we get some action from the White House" (Giddings, 1984, p. 233). Though the March was delayed until 1963, the mammoth mobilization and the outcomes of this historic event perfectly fulfilled that woman's dream and even exceeded it as more than two hundred thousand Blacks showed up that day.

Many women and men did move to create the appropriate conditions for King, Jr., to reveal his dreams of equality, social justice, peaceful cohesion and emancipation to the U.S. and the whole world. It was a conglomerate of ideas, ideals, organizations and individuals from diverse philosophical backgrounds and horizons that united to march on the nation's capital as a way to draw attention to the difficult conditions of African Americans. There is still much to highlight regarding the monumental contributions of African American women in the designing and sustaining of the mammoth 1963 March. The March would not certainly have come this far without the indomitable determination of the various invisible women who dedicated their time and energy to readying marchers.

Regardless of the male leaders' "Tribute to Negro Women" both as a part of the March's official program and as a way to magnify women's roles in the Civil Rights Movement (CRM), black women deserved more than a lip tribute, with due consideration to their outstanding roles. In all respects, such a tribute included in the official program thanks to the determination of Anna Arnold Hedgeman and Dorothy Irene Height – who protested the blatant exclusion of African American women despite their leading roles in almost all civil rights events – seems insufficient, compared to their instrumentality (Scanlon, 2016b). Instead of letting African American women speak for themselves or giving them the opportunity to address the marchers, the U.S. and the world at large during this March, they were relegated to

peripheral roles. As Pauli Murray (1963, p. 2) nicely puts it, the male leadership of the Great March on Washington cantoned African American women to "secondary, ornamental, or 'honoree' roles instead of the partnership role in the civil rights movement which they have earned by their courage, intelligence, and dedication."

This deliberate omission belittled African American women's roles in the CRM. Hedgeman, Height, Lena Horne, Maida Springer, Corrine Smith, Geri Stark, Joyce Ladner, Dorie Ladner, Eleanor Holmes, Diane Nash, Gloria Richardson, Myrlie Evers-Williams, Prince Lee, Daisy Bates and Rachelle Horowitz, among others, were among the women whose contributions to the March are buried beneath the admiration of male activists and planners. The 1963 March, like the other civil rights events, bore the trademark of African American women's traditional and historical contributions to the Black Freedom Movement. For the success of the March, they worked toward connecting the different leaders and organizations, mobilized their organizations and African Americans to show up on August 28, 1963. In so doing, they showed their determination that paved the way for the full recognition of Blacks as rightful citizens through their demand of equal opportunities and freedom for African Americans.

African American women have built bridges across organizations and leaders for the success of the March. Historically committed to more than one organization, these women helped build coalitions that successfully championed diverse local battles. Their ability to navigate through many organizations and philosophies was highly needed in bringing the different rival leaders together. To credit Bettye Collier-Thomas and Vincent P. Franklin's (2001, p. 87) theory, because African American women "represented a cross-section of organizations, including labor, religion, and social welfare groups", their associations not only contributed to broaden the coalition that successfully marched on Washington but they equally worked toward linking the different civil rights organizations and their leaders. In addition to providing the muscles for the historic March, these women – rightly dubbed "the without-which and the way-made-out-of-no-way" – connected the different key leaders of the time (Reeves, 2020, para. 6).

Given the lack of concertation between the leaders, Hedgeman, the "doyenne of American Negro women" (Scanlon, 2016b, para. 5), connected Randolph to King, Jr. It is reported that both leaders were planning two different marches on Washington in 1963. The Negro American Labor Council (NALC), a conglomerate of black labor organizations headed by Randolph and several other black trade unionists such as Springer, Hedgeman, Murray, Dorothy L. Robinson and Bayard Rustin were planning to march on Washington for job opportunities on October 1963. While their march was designed to address the lack of economic opportunities for African Americans, King, Jr., and his liberal co-workers were equally designing, at the same time, a similar initiative to be held in July 1963 to pressure the Kennedy administration to pass a strong civil rights bill (Garfinkle, 1973).

Instead of two different marches, Hedgeman built the bridge between Randolph and King, Jr., which ultimately resulted in a unique and huge March on Washington for jobs and freedom. Reasoning that "if Martin Luther King had a mass march in the summer of 1963 and Mr. Randolph held one in October of 1963, there would be a division of forces, dissipating the impact so necessary for proper effect," Hedgeman (1964, p. 168) "arranged a meeting between the two leaders, where King and Randolph agreed to a March for Jobs and Freedom that would address both the economic problems and civil rights". Saying that the world might not have heard King, Jr.'s powerful words without the tireless work of one of the most unsung heroines of the Black Freedom Movement is certainly not overemphasizing Hedgeman's instrumentality.

African American women equally worked toward uniting black trade unionists and liberals. Besides building a bridge between Randolph and King, Jr., Hedgeman equally served as a bridge-builder between liberals and trade unionists. Before 1963, these two trends could not come together on the grounds of strategic differences between the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (BSCP), the two proponents of the battle for equality before the boom of civil rights organizations in the 1950s and 1960s. While Randolph and the other trade unionists cherished large

demonstrations and civil disobedience, liberals – NAACP and National Urban League (NUL) – privileged lawsuits and meetings with elected officials. Obtained thanks to black women, the successful merging of these two distinct philosophies brought about the huge march on Washington that addressed both civil rights and economic opportunities. To trust Henry Hampton and associates (1990, p. 67), "the 1963 march was the culmination of a decade-long process of bringing both the political and economic needs of the African American community to the attention of Washington lawmakers." The coalition of black trade unionists and liberals transformed these personal initiatives into a strong and well-endorsed event that brought thousands of diverse races to Washington to support the battle for civil rights and equal opportunities.

Moreover, African American women contributed to the forming of coalitions that supported the March. The association of black unionists and liberals helped build strong coalitions across the United States. The organizing committee was then built on mixed organizational infrastructures that both designed the large demonstration and successfully lobbied federal authorities to grant civil rights and equal opportunities to African Americans. Incontestably, women's presence in the March helped loosen organizational and ideological rigidities and mobilized Blacks and Whites to join the March. New York City's powerful coalition of civil rights and labor activists built by Maida Springer, Dorothy Robinson and Cleveland Robinson can be cited among other apt examples of collaborative works that mobilized African Americans for the March (Jones, 2010, p. 38).

The association of King, Jr., and Randolph equally connected many other organizations and their leaders. Expectedly, the teaming of King, Jr., Randolph and their respective coworkers facilitated the mobilization of other organizations and their leaders who identified themselves with these two key figures of the movement. It transformed an already massive mobilization into the largest demonstration in US history. The March was supported by Roy Wilkins of the NAACP, Whitney Young of the National Urban League (NUL), James Farmer of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and John Lewis of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee

(SNCC). Additionally, Walter Reuther of the United Auto Workers (UAW), Joachim Prinz of the American Jewish Committee (AJC), Eugene Carson Blake of the National Council of Churches (NCC) and Matthew Ahmann of the National Catholic Church for International Justice (NCCIJ) were key organizers of the 1963 March (Hampton et al., 1990).

Hedgeman was equally the one who convinced the male leaders of the March to coalesce with national African American women's and church-based organizations. She urged King, Jr., and Randolph to link with key women's organizations, including the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW), the Women's Political Council (WPC), the Club from Nowhere (CFN), the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) and the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs (NACWC). The teaming of these massive organizations contributed to attracting the support of some white liberal organizations. For instance, with "a network of organizations claiming nearly 800,000 members" (Barber, 2002, p. 159), the association with the NCNW brought in marchers and money. This move equally contributed to attracting white liberals. But as the following section details, African American women did more than bridge-building roles for this exceptional event in American history.

2. Raising a Nonviolent Army: Mobilizing, Funding and Feeding Marchers

The loud resonance of the March on Washington's success was equally built on the historic mobilization of the marchers. The more than 250, 000 marchers (including Blacks, Whites, Asians, Jews, etc.) got attracted to the initiative through grassroots networks of cooperation and collaboration between their organizations and the local chapters of the main civil rights organizations. The success of the said March depended largely not only on the softness of the different speeches or the quality of the national organizing committee but also on the local committees that were in charge of mobilizing and funding the marchers' trip to Washington. The majority of the marchers might not have direct links with the high-profile leaders of the movement –like King, Jr., and Randolph – but they did have links with several local

leaders of either religious or secular organizations such as the NCNW, the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) or the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA). The majority of these local leaders, it must be stressed, happened to be women who were the backbones of the movement, as their works sustained the different organizations. Height, Hedgeman, Springer and several others furnished the March with the marchers. As an illustration, Paula F. Pfeffer (1990, p. 244) states that "by the end of July [1963], organizers reported that local committees had chartered two thousand buses, twenty-one trains, and ten airplanes [that could] transport 115,000 people to Washington."

Hedgeman and Height typified the categories of African American women who contributed to raising a nonviolent army to march on Washington. Hedgeman was among the key organizers, like the other local female leaders of the March, insofar as they recruited thousands of participants through their networks. A key figure in the organization of the March with her NCNW, Hedgeman "was among the core personalities responsible for laying the foundation of the black freedom struggle in the North that centered largely on the demand for fair employment practices" (Williams, 2017, p. 26). On top of her mobilizing tasks, she arranged transportation and organized food and water for the attendees, as Randolph and King, Jr., were busy with the daily solicitations from the media and other entities. Given her long history in advocating equal opportunity and fair employment for Blacks, her serving on the organizing committee is thus not surprising.

Hedgeman was big enough to be included in the "Big Six" or even bigger than some of the men whose names are sealed in the historiography of this March. As a lead organizer and the only woman on the executive committee of the March, together with Randolph, King, Jr., and Rustin, she assisted on publicizing this event, recruiting marchers, organizing fundraising and coordinating buses and trains, to name but a few. Like the other civil rights leaders, she was involved and determined to push for changes in favor of African Americans. More than the other leaders, Hedgeman's grassroots connections attracted many marchers, Whites or Blacks, insofar as they identified themselves with her. For instance, Matt VanHouten (2011,

para. 6) claims that in her capacity as the Coordinator of Special Events for the Commission of Religion and Race of the National Council of Churches, Hedgeman "recruited 40, 000 Protestants to participate in the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom."

Equally, the said position enabled her to play a pivotal role in getting a staggering number of white Christians to the March. The interracial outlook of the March did not happen haphazardly: Hedgeman organized to make the sizeable presence of White Protestants a reality. Consequently, she succeeded in making the March on Washington "the first mass civil rights event with a large percentage of Whites – estimated at 25 percent of the marchers [about 60,000]" (Scanlon, 2016a, p. 100). The success of the March was more about the mammoth mobilization of African Americans than the soundness of the different speeches of its key male speakers.

Height was the other key female activist whose prominence in the March must be highlighted. In preparing for the March, this effective organizer of the event brought in thousands of women who volunteered and arranged transportation for the marchers. Cited among the "Big Six", the six most influential leaders and organizations, Height and her NCNW were an integral part of the organizations that were frontrunners in the organization of this historic event. The "Big Six" originated from the Council for United Civil Rights Leadership (CUCRL), an umbrella group formed to organize and regulate the Civil Rights Movement which later endorsed the March. It initially included King, Jr., Roy Wilkins, James Farmer, John Lewis, Whitney Young, and Height, respectively leaders of SCLC, NAACP, CORE, SNCC, NUL and NCNW (Dickerson, 2004, p. 177).

Together with her NCNW, the exclusion of Height from the "Big Six" and frequent ignorance by the press on the grounds of bogus patriarchal and sexist rationales cannot erase her crucial role in the event (Farmer, 1985, p. 215). She was instrumental in the successful completion of the March. Height, the NCNW's president, was the only woman at the table of leaders representing national organizations. Presiding over the NCNW from 1958 to 1998 in these crucial periods

gave Height a great responsibility among the organizers. As one of the chief organizers of the March, Height must receive the same recognition as the other leaders of the event. On top of mobilizing many marchers from the YWCA and the NCNW, she channeled the funds of these two organizations into the administrative committee of the March.

The peculiar organizational infrastructure of the March gave great responsibility to local committees. The central committee only coordinated and supervised the march-related activities, but the real organization was handed over to local committees that were in charge of recruiting the marchers and readying their trip to Washington. These local committees were built on coalitions of the local chapters of the different civil rights and religious organizations that endorsed the initiative. As local leaders with a rich involvement in their different networks, African American women used their multiple connections to organize the huge March in less than three months.

African American women used their experiences in fundraising in different organizations to supply the local committees and the national organizing committee with the necessary financial means. A key fundraising strategy in every city was to raise donations from churches and at church-based meetings. On a short notice, local organizers have to raise huge amounts of money to fund the expensive March. These committees relied on what Aldon Morris (1984) called both inside and outside money. That money poured in from local communities – such as donations collected at mass meetings – and from liberal organizations and sympathizers, especially Northerners, who supported the initiative.

Springer, Smith, Holmes, Horowitz, Stark, Joyce Ladner and Dorie Ladner fundraised for the March. For instance, to trust Williams P. Jones (2010, p. 42-43), “Maida Springer’s union [the International Ladies’ Garment Workers’ Union (ILGWU)] paid for sixteen trains and fifteen buses. Chicago schoolteacher Timuel Black chartered two trains and an airplane and raised $30,000 to send a thousand unemployed workers to Washington.” Holmes and the Ladners fundraised for SNCC’s members to attend the March. The vastness of the U.S. in terms of geography

even compelled different local committees and the women to accentuate fundraising as a way to finance the expensive transportation means for all the marchers. For the marchers from Alaska, Nevada, Montana, the Dakotas, and Arizona, for example, local committees were creative in finding the needed money not only for the huge transportation costs as they are far away from Washington but also for the necessary funds to feed them.

Horowitz, a member of the Social Democrats USA and the Young People's Socialist League worked as a fundraiser with Rustin, raising huge sums for the March through these organizations. In addition to her fundraising task for the March, Horowitz was equally an important support for Rustin. Added to her fundraiser position, she "served as the transportation coordinator for the 1963 March on Washington at Rustin's request", besides assisting Rustin "with running the march's organizing headquarters in New York" (Meyerson, 2013, para. 16). All these crucial efforts contributed to the historical success of the March. Hedgeman (1964, p. 173) conceded that "without this basic effort made across the country in the early months of 1963, there could not have been the mammoth turnout of August 28, 1963."

Be it by road, rail, or air to Washington, African American women took up the challenge of funding the marchers to the nation's capital. This consciousness and dedication demonstrated not only their maturity and capacity but also their resolve to fight against discrimination and segregation. Besides the significant inputs from both local and central committees mostly composed of female members, they had to pay entirely for the buses, trains, or flight tickets. Indeed, a huge sum of money was in play when one knows that local organizers in New York and Maryland alone mobilized respectively "a total of 450 and 100 buses" (Barber, 2002, p. 161),

In addition to local committees' efforts in funding the marchers' transportation, black women equally lobbied national organizations to sponsor their members' trip. In that vein, John Barnard (2004, p. 388) notes that "the United Automobile Workers financed bus transportation for 5, 000 of its rank-and-file members, providing the largest single contingent from any organization." The concerted efforts of the different local committees and organizations in funding

transportation made it possible that "more than 2, 000 buses, 21 chartered trains, 10 chartered airliners, and uncounted cars converged on Washington" on August 28, 1963 (Branch, 1988, p. 876).

Fundraising for the March was not only through organizations and churches; it was also done through concerts, activities which featured several celebrities and artists publicizing the event. The celebrity status of their performers brought in thousands of dollars for the administrative committee. In New York, for instance, "Corrine Smith and Geri Stark raised $14,000 in one night by organizing a midnight benefit show at the Apollo Theater in Harlem, featuring performances by Thelonius Monk, 'Little' Stevie Wonder, and other stars" (Jones, 2010, p. 43). In the same vein, a concert was organized in Birmingham, Alabama, at Miles College where both Nina Simone and The Shirelles, a popular black girl musician group, performed. Dubbed "The Salute to Freedom", this concert raised large sums to support the huge expenses linked to the March (Simone and Cleary, 2003).

African American women equally made the difference in the food section. Traditionally seen as women's turf and a behind-the-scene work, cooking and/or feeding is often overlooked and undervalued because it does not occur in hot streets or in front of reporters' flashbulbs. However, this section was instrumental to the success of the March, for "there is no movement, no march with a hungry belly" (Reeves, 2020, para. 5). Underscoring the instrumentality of the food section to the March is doing justice to the countless women who readied the minds, bellies and feet of the numerous marchers. Roger Reeves' (2020, para. 6) scientific language provides a surgical precision relating to women's utmost contributions to the March's overall success: "These countless, unnamed women were the ones who provided the ligature and tendons, the bone and muscle that allowed something like a civil rights movement or a March on Washington."

African American women cooked the meals and served marchers. Featuring concrete actions undertaken by these women, Jesse Rhodes (2013, para. 5) fleshes out their outstanding contributions to the successful completion of the event:

> In New York, volunteers showed up at the Riverside Church at 3:00 AM to make bagged lunches. The bagged meal, comprised of a cheese sandwich, mustard, marble cake, and an apple, could be purchased by marchers for 50 cents. These lunches are for the nourishment of thousands who will be coming long distances, at great sacrifice to say with their bodies and souls that we shall overcome.

African American women who entered Reeves' (2020) pantheon for having played decisive roles in the food department comprise Hedgeman, Gilmore and many unnamed activists. Particularly, Hedgeman facilitated many of the day's logistics, including Operation Sandwich, in which she commanded a massive volunteer effort to produce thousands of dishes for marchers. To trust Reeves (2020, para. 2), "the work of black women like Gilmore and the unnamed women who cooked for marchers heading to Washington in 1963 was a practice of synthesis – synthesizing the corporeal and immediate needs of black folks." He further holds that this particular program contributed to "building alternative methods of investment, alternative methods of circulating goods and resources in the black community without exploitation and the fetishizing of black bodies and labor." These women's works made it possible for Virginians, Mainers, Floridians, and Californians, for example, to have the necessary food for their long trips. The extraordinary mobilization of African Americans for the March on Washington and the solidarity of the other racial groups helped Blacks to come closer to the realization of their long and eternally cherished dream of equality and opportunity for all. This March ultimately helped catapult the issuance of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

Conclusion

African American women seized the opportunity of the March on Washington to invest their time, energy, ingenuity and expertise to bring marchers to Washington. Be it in the case of Hedgeman, Height, Gilmore, Nash and several other unknown figures, these women contributed to the success of this major civil rights event. Unlike the black male leaders, these women used their grassroots networks to

mobilize locally and nationally for the event. For the success of the March, they built bridges between civil rights leaders, effectively fundraised and cooked for the marchers, in addition to their decisive grassroots mobilizing strategies that brought thousands of marchers to Washington. Like their male African American civil rights icons who are adulated, sung, lauded, celebrated and enshrined, female African American civil rights leaders equally deserve proper tributes for justice's sake. Given their monumental inputs to the success of the most memorable March of the twentieth century, these women need to be canonized, like their male counterparts.

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