

Message Unreceived

By Robert E. Segal

April 4 will mark the first anniversary of the assassination of Martin Luther King. On June 5, it will be one year since Senator Robert F. Kennedy was fatally shot.

The killing of Dr. King touched off riots taking a toll of 46 dead and more than 2600 injured in 10 days. Painfully disillusioned blacks, subscribing to the martyred leader's espousal of the doctrine of non-violence, continue to believe with great justification that the American Dream, in which Dr. King had such deep faith, is a near-meaningless come-on.

Senator Kennedy's senseless slaying turned the nation's attention away from racism for a while and saw the focus sharpened on crime.

Crime continues a major American concern. But the issue of race will not go away, especially the deepening abyss between whites and Blacks.

We have a fine opportunity to learn in considerable detail about these issues through surveys reported upon in fast succession. In July, 1967, President Johnson established the National Advisory Commission On Civil Disorders. In February, 1968, that Commission produced the searching and searing Kerner Report, the key finding of which was that "our nation is moving toward two societies, one Black, one white, separate but unequal." In July 1968, the same Commission submitted three supplementary reports, one on racial attitudes, one on riots, one on relationships between Blacks and white.

Now the nation has for perusal an added study produced jointly by the Urban Coalition and Urban America, Inc. The findings are all before us -- clear, undisputable, disheartening.

But the messages of the studies continue unreceived. They don't come through. We won't let them through. The bad news must manage to go away, we insist. The bad news must manage to go away, we insist.

All sensitive people can say, once again, what Dr. Kenneth B. Clark, solid scholar, eminent psychologist, told the Kerner Commission many months ago: the report of the 1919 Chicago riot, the reports of the 1935 and 1943

Harlem riots, the report of the 1965 Watts riot add up to "a kind of Alice In Wonderland - with the same moving picture re-shown over and over again, the same analysis, the same recommendations, and the same inaction."

We are obliged to agree because the message doesn't get through, changes instituted with the best intentions do not always constitute progress, the gains are disappointingly small, the palliatives brought to bear on urban ills are fragile and unsatisfactory.

Yes, we have more effective riot control. But the cost is reliance upon more police work and more military intervention; and such applications of force rub raw the wounds of those convinced that victories have been won only when violence has been employed. Yes, we have widening acceptance of the policy of open housing. But "the physical distance between the places where blacks and whites lived did not diminish during the last year and threatens to increase with population growth." Yes, there is a noticeable quickening of interest in the need to make up for education long denied Blacks. But the mounting demands of militants have disrupted college activities and have led to revolts at high school level.

Sign of deterioration. Black ghettos are growing larger in space even though the movement of Blacks up from the South is tapering. Slums and slum conditions are showing up more frequently in the suburbs into which industries are moving despite a severe lack of low income housing. The gap between earning power of Blacks and whites, even when educational levels are the same, continues to widen. Inadequacies of the welfare system and the bitter feelings the administration of that system generates add to the national dismay.

And a new reliance upon Black capitalism to provide decent income for Blacks firm in their determination to be independent is rearing a new army of serious doubters. Nor is government creating jobs enough to fill the void.

The message is unreceived. Small advances are naively recorded as giant steps ahead. And the nation, still preoccupied with a war in Vietnam and the costly race to the moon, inadequate response. Continuing deaf, we appear to be producing dynamite destined to explode some day, not very far off, with a roar we will have to hear. We are

NEW YORK (WSN) -- The National Council of Young Israel has received its third Federal contract to provide job training for hard-core jobless members of minority groups.

NEW YORK (WSN) -- The Wurzweiler School Work of Yeshiva University has started to accept applicants for its new doctoral program in social work.

NEW YORK (WSN) -- The National Jewish Welfare Board has noted that a community number of teenagers who are using drugs have begun to turn to Jewish community centers for help.

JERUSALEM (WSN) -- The Ministry for RELIGIOUS Affairs has announced that the remains of 27 defenders of Masada, the Jewish mountain fortress overlooking the Dead Sea that held out against Roman legions in 73 C.E., will be given a heroes' burial on the Mount of Olives overlooking the site of Solomon's Temple.

WASHINGTON (WSN) -- The Jewish War Veterans of the United States reports that a growing number of Negro ex-servicemen are turning to the Jewish organization to seek assistance in veterans' matters.

JERUSALEM (WSN) -- Israel has released statistics on terrorist incidents since the end of the Six-Day War in 1967 to Dec. 31, 1968 which shows there were 1,28 acts of Arab sabotage and border incidents which resulted in 234 soldiers and 47 civilians killed and 765 soldiers and 330 civilians wounded. Nearly 800 men were killed during the 1967 war. The incidents included 920 in the West Bank new territories with 166 in the Egyptian sector, 37 in the Syrian region, 35 near Lebanon and 130 in the Gaza Strip.

TEL AVIV (WSN) -- A military spokesman has revealed that Arab terrorists fired a Soviet-made Katyusha rocket launcher, a highly mobile weapon, from within Israel for the first time during an attack on a Negev village about 40 miles from the Jordanian border. Previously, such weapons were fired from behind the cease-fire lines.



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