

Point of View

Editorial

We have noted that Sen. Joe Neal, D-Las Vegas, was frustrated the other day over the inaction of the state Senate failing to pass legislation declaring a state Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday. He told his fellow Senators their inaction on the measure helps breed contempt for blacks among supremacists.

Their inaction also brings frustration and disappointment to the Las Vegas Sentinel-Voice president and co-publisher Ed Brown, the first person in the nation who developed the idea of establishing Dr. King's birthday as a national holiday. At the time of Dr. King's death, Brown was the Station Manager of Radio Station WNJR, Newark, N.J. On the day of the burial of Dr. King, Brown took to the airwaves and announced his plan to solicit cards and letters daily from the listeners who supported the suggestion. The first announcement was made April 4, 1968. By the end of December 1972, he had accumulated nearly a million letters from across the nation. Within this time span Brown personally delivered the letters to Senator Edward W. Brooke, D/Mass., Congressman John Conyers, D/Michigan, Peter Rodino, D/New Jersey and the New Jersey legislature.

Brown contacted Conyers on April 5, 1968 to advise him of the station's efforts and requested that he support the campaign. Conyers introduced the bill HR16510 on April 8, 1968 asking for the House's support of designating King's birthday as a legal public holiday. Rodino, after Brown's contact, submitted his bill, HR5071, March 1, 1973 and Sen. Brooke entered his resolution on January 16, 1973.

Brown's efforts have been documented and acknowledged by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in 1969, Mrs. Coretta King through an article published in the January 1984 issue of the National Black Monitor and an account reported in the Las Vegas Review Journal, January 13, 1984.

The first proclamation of this concept was issued by the City of Newark, N.J. on January 3, 1969. It petitioned the citizens to observe in Dr. King's honor, his birthday, on January 15, 1969.

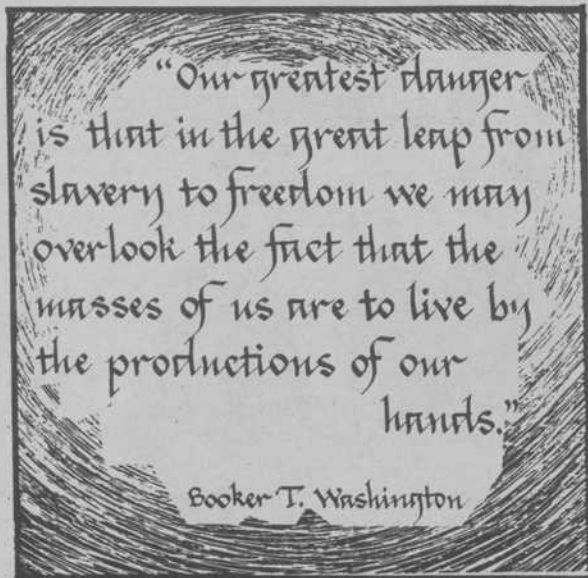
Brown has seen his "dream" moved progressively in a number of States, municipalities and through special observances throughout the country—but not in the State in which he presently resides. He, too, has become frustrated and disappointed.

Sen. Neal is to be commended for his gallant efforts. He remains steadfast. His present bill, AB117, failed on a roll call vote, 11-10, and was sent back to the committee.

Neal, in his passionate plea, said the holiday would honor the ideas of passive resistance to injustice and not necessarily the man who began it.

There has been a measure of success in the Assembly through the great efforts of Assemblyman Gene Collins, D/Las Vegas. He saw the passage of his bill. It is a great example of sensitivity and support in that legislative body.

We hope that Senator Neal does not "give up the ship." His constant measured applications will prevail. WE KNOW THAT EVENTUALLY HE WILL WIN.



To Be Equal

Teen Pregnancy Campaign

by John E. Jacob

A nationwide volunteer campaign to help reduce the incidence of teenage pregnancy was launched last month.

Sponsored by the National Urban League, the campaign is based on the talents and energies of volunteers, ranging from Mingo-Jones Advertising, Inc., the firm that created its posters and radio commercials, to the recording artists, photographers, and others who helped implement it, to the media outlets that will run the ads and community groups that will bring the campaign's theme into neighborhoods and homes across the country.

The campaign theme, "Don't make a baby if you can't be a father," is a direct, straightforward appeal to young, black males. It is intended to make them aware of their responsibility in sexual relations and parenting, and to convince them to act responsibly in both.

Many programs try to help young girls avoid pregnancy. Others assist teenagers, if they do become pregnant, to deal constructively with the responsibilities of

motherhood, and to obtain the training that will enable them to earn their own livelihoods.

But the primary concentration has been on black teenage girls, with limited attention to black teenage boys. These current efforts



John E. Jacob

are vitally important and must be continued and expanded. However, young black males are an integral part of the equation and this campaign marks the first national effort to reach them.

The need is obvious.

In 1982 black teens had 145,929 births, 87 percent of them out of wedlock. By their 18th birthday, 22 percent of black females have become mothers, as com-

pared to 8 percent of white females. For every 1,000 black teenage girls, there are 163 pregnancies. Overall, the American teenage pregnancy rate is higher than that of any other industrialized nation.

Teen parents complete fewer years of schooling than those who have children at a later age, meaning that their employability is reduced. They also tend to have larger

Even before it was officially launched, the campaign got a tremendous shot in the arm from a group of inmates at the Green Haven Correctional Facility, who donated their own money to buy paper stock and printed the first 2,000 posters on the institution's presses, with the approval of the authorities.

Ultimately, teenage pregnancy rates are determined by the options young men

John E. Jacob is President Of The National Urban League

numbers of children, face a higher probability of being a single parent, experience poverty more frequently, and are disproportionately represented on welfare.

This campaign seeks to instill an attitude of responsibility in our young black males toward sexuality. It reminds them that bringing a child into the world is not a matter to be taken lightly, and they owe it to themselves and others to be careful.

The campaign's emphasis on volunteers is one of its strong points, for concerned individuals and organizations are the key to any successful program.

and women have, and by the alternatives available to them. If black youngsters had the same life-chances whites have their teen pregnancy rates would be the same, as well. So the issue of teenage pregnancy can't be turned into a morality issue.

First, we need to stem the tide of disproportionate teen birth rates that threaten the black future. But the long-range solution to the problem is to ensure the black disadvantaged young people enjoy the same life chances as do middle-class white teenagers.

Blunders Surrounding German Visit Created Needless Controversy

By BAYARD RUSTIN

"I never thought I'd see the day when Ronald Reagan could get the American Legion angry at him," said a U.S. diplomat recently, according to "Time" magazine, "but, by God, we've done it."

The President's trip to West Germany, charged with historical and ideological symbolism, has created un-

necessary controversy through a series of blunders and gaffes. The errors of judgment, deplorable in



Bayard Rustin

themselves for their insensitivity and over-reliance on shallow public relations gestures, will have serious consequences for the Western democratic world in

its battle of ideas with the Communist world.

The troubles really began two years ago, when democratic West Germany —

strate their total break with the Nazi past and to celebrate together with the Allied powers the key battle in Hitler's downfall.

Bayard Rustin is President Emeritus of the A. Philip Randolph Institute and one of the founders of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters.

an ally created from the ashes of the Nazi regime — was shunned during the commemoration of the Normandy invasion. There was every reason to include West Germany, giving the West German people and government a chance to demon-

However, the Allied powers decided not to invite West Germany, unnecessarily creating bad feelings.

Hence Chancellor Kohl's emphasis last year, during the planning of Reagan's summit trip, on some sym-

See RUSTIN, Page 15

The views expressed on these editorial pages are those of the artists and authors indicated. Only the one indicated as the Sentinel-Voice editorial represents this publication.