

Editorial Notes

(Continued from page 3.)

Woodson asked, "Must we let this generation continue ignorant of these eloquent facts?"

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As we go to press, this nation has observed for the first time, as a national holi-

day, the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Many older Black Americans, who remember what it was like to have every facet of one's life controlled by the mean parameters of segregation, never dreamed of seeing the passage of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1965, much less

living to see a Black man honored with a national holiday as are George Washington and Abraham Lincoln.

The commemoration of Dr. King's birthday as a national holiday provides the youth and others of America, both Black and White, with unparalleled models of discipline, leadership and courage.

It did take tremendous courage to face the armed defenders of segregation with prayer and a forgiving heart. This was what Dr. King asked of thousands of ordinary Black Americans throughout the South.

Because of television and its institutionalized attitudes toward race, the nation and even the world quickly knew when a White civil rights worker had been slain or when a Black was slain with other Whites. No one, however, knows the number of unnamed Blacks who were beaten, brutalized, raped and/or murdered because they had, through non-violent activism, demanded their rights as American citizens.

It took a fearless leader to wage war against the forces of segregation and racism. Make no mistake, the civil and human rights movement was a war. Civil rights workers were soldiers armed with an abiding faith in God, with a belief in the invincibility of non-violence, and with an overriding confidence in the democratic foundations of our government.

The celebration of Dr. King's birthday as a national holiday provides us with a means of not only honoring this great man, but also a means of displaying the long delayed recognition of the innumerable and unsung contributions of Blacks to American life.

The celebration of Dr. King's birthday also reminds Black Americans of the psychological victory each of us achieved because of the Civil Rights Movement. As Dr. King put it, "I think the greatest victory of this period was...something internal. The real victory was what this period did to the psyche of the Black man. The greatness of this period was that we armed ourselves with dignity and self-respect. The greatness of this period was that we straightened our backs up. And a man can't ride your back unless it's bent."

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