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creative ways of dealing with this predicament.

Teen pregnancy has become a priority project with organizations such as the National Urban League, the National Council of Negro Women and Delta Sigma Theta Sorority. The Sisterhood of Black Single Mothers, Coalition of 100 Black Women, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, NAACP and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) also have demonstrated a concern for this predicament.

No Easy Answers

Black teenage pregnancy is a complicated issue with no easy answers. The increase in teenage pregnancy, interestingly enough, is not limited to the Black

community. The United States leads nearly all other industrialized countries in the incidence of pregnancy among girls 15 to 19 years old.

A study by the Alan Guttmacher Institute indicates that American teenagers are no more sexually active than teens in countries such as Sweden, Holland, France, Canada and Britain. All have been affected by the sexual revolution. However, American teenagers, despite the availability of birth control, are many times more likely to become pregnant. This difference is attributed to the ambivalence of American society about sex. In Europe, there is a recognition of sex as a normal part of development and, generally, children are given a thorough education in reproductive biology and the various types of contraceptives at an early age. In America, we tend to repress acknowledg-

ing sex as a normal part of human development at the same time that we behave as though we are not. Thus, in this country, seeking contraceptives generally is considered "bad" in teenagers, yet these same teens are bombarded with messages implying that sophistication means being sexually active. Teens are exposed to this message in everything from television, rock music, videos and movies to advertising.

A Closer Look at Teen Pregnancies

A large number of both Black (41 percent) and White (47 percent) teens abort their pregnancies. Of White teen pregnancies, 35 percent of the young people are married and 18 percent are unmarried. Among Black teenagers, 8 percent are married and 51 percent are unmarried. These unmarried Black teens are tomorrow's family heads.

Black Female-Headed Families

Black female-headed households have the lowest median income of any family type. The National Urban League's *Black Pulse Survey* found that in 1980 about one out of every five Black female household heads interviewed had never been married; over two out of five were either separated or divorced; nearly one-third had been widowed; and a very small proportion were married, but their husbands were not living at home for some reason other than separation or divorce. Over half of the sample had not completed high school.

One out of every five in the sample were employed. Of those who were working, almost a third worked for some level of government and are likely to have been affected by the budget cutbacks that have occurred since 1980. Of those who were not working, over three-fourths were not looking for work. When asked why, over one half cited health as the reason with hypertension and diabetes being the most frequently mentioned diseases. Over half of the households in the sample contained children and the second most frequent reason for not looking for work was child care responsibilities.

The Moynihan Report

A number of Blacks and Whites now say that the current high incidence of female-headed households vindicates the findings of the *Moynihan Report* of 1965.

This report was based on the findings of the 1960 census that 25 percent of Black families were headed by women and that nearly one-fourth of all Black babies born in 1965 were out of wedlock.

The *Moynihan Report* blamed out of wedlock births on the so-called failure of the Black family to prepare Black children to make their way in the world. "At the heart of the deterioration of the fabric of Negro society," the report stated, "is the deterioration of the Negro family. It is the fundamental source of weakness in the Negro community at the present time." The report found the Negro family to be "a tangle of pathology.... Once or twice removed, it will be found to be the principle source of most of the aberrant, inadequate, or antisocial behavior that did not establish, but now serves to perpetuate, the cycle of poverty and deprivation."

Certainly, the philosophical foundation for the Moyers documentary seems to have been the *Moynihan Report*. During the "Vanishing Family," the camera returned several times to Timothy, an unemployed high school dropout with an arrest record who was the father of six children by four different women. When questioned why he neither raised his children nor contributed to their support, his reply was that the responsibility belonged more to their mothers and the government.

The Convergence Of External Pressures On The Black Community

If we leave the issues of morality and family pathology in abeyance, we are better able to examine the convergence of a number of external pressures on the Black community which have tended to diminish drastically the anticipated gains stemming from the civil rights movement and legislation of the mid-60's.

Economic Vulnerability Of The Average Urban Black Family

Blacks at the turn of the century were largely impoverished agricultural workers living in the South. By 1965, 75 percent of Black families lived in urban areas having migrated to these industrial centers to improve their economic situation. Of these urban Blacks, approximately ten percent were considered to be upper income; 40 percent middle income; and 50 percent lower income. This latter group would be considered the more average urban Black family.

The lower income group in Black America was composed of three distinct groups: (1) the working non-poor; (2) the working poor; and (3) the non-working poor. The elite of the working non-poor was a "group of families headed by men in semi-skilled, highly paid, unionized, steady industrial jobs." Because the unions

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