

Abernathy Declares King Day

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The Rev. Ralph D. Abernathy, yesterday "proclaimed" Jan. 15 a "national people's holiday" honoring the birthdate of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

He urged citizens across the nation to stay home from work and school next Thursday to honor the assassinated civil rights leader who would have been 41 on that day.

Mr. Abernathy said he was proclaiming the holiday "by the power vested in me" as president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, which Dr. King led until his death April 4, 1968, and as head of the Poor People's Campaign.

Mr. Abernathy signed his proclamation at a news conference in the Rayburn Office Building, using four pens, and suggesting that the document be preserved for posterity in the National Archives.

Legislation making the King birthday a legal public holiday was introduced last February by Rep. John Conyers Jr. (D-Mich.) and 26 other congressmen. It has since been bottled up in the House Judiciary Committee.

The birthday this year corresponds with observances of the Vietnam Moratorium, and the events are to be observed jointly in many instances.

Conyers said at the press conference that 24 congressmen had written 65 mayors urging official commemoration of the birthday next week.

Public schools will be closed in New York City, Philadelphia, and Berkeley, Calif., ac-

ording to the Associated Press.

A memorial service was planned at Atlanta's Ebenezer Baptist Church, where Dr. King was pastor. In-school observances were scheduled in Los Angeles, Oakland, Buffalo and Cincinnati, AP said. Local observances in New Jersey schools were urged by the State Federation of District Boards of Education.

In New York, District 65, National Distributive Workers, a 30,000 member union, asked

its members to take the day off and attend a rally.

Locally, a group including the Rev. Walter E. Fauntroy, the Rev. Channing E. Phillips, Marion Barry and at least 20 other private citizens planned an afternoon rally to celebrate the event. They urged people to stay home from work and school children to leave school to attend the rally.

City officials last week refused to declare an official holiday, but said a liberal leave policy would be in effect. A request that the

schools be closed was being considered by the schoolboard.

The local planning group had one defector, the Rev. Douglas Moore, who stood up in front of television cameras to declare that he would not participate because the committee was including white groups in the observance.

Mr. Moore is chairman of the Black United Front.

After the conference, Mr. Abernathy left for Raleigh, N.C. for a rally to protest the scheduled execution of Marie Hill, a 16-year-old Negro. She



Associated Press

The Rev. Douglas Moore interrupts a news conference by the Rev. Ralph Abernathy (right) to say the Black United

Front of Washington would not participate in services for Dr. King because whites are in the sponsoring group.