

Undated: Drafts: Civil rights

Senator Daniel K. Inouye Papers
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DRAFT:

During the past ~~six~~ ^{many} weeks this body has been engaged in far reaching discussions on one of the most basic concepts of democracy. ~~For~~ ^{Some will be called upon to} we are deciding the rights to which the citizens of this nation are entitled. There is a startling anachronism in this for the ~~xxx~~ fundamental guarantees of citizenship have been stated long ago, and, except for the Negro ~~principally~~, are accepted ~~prerogatives~~ prerogatives of all.

For my own part, I would have hoped that there would have been no occasion for these discussions, that we long ago would have risen above the issues involved and that today we could look back with pride and assurance upon an era of heroic victory over prejudice. But circumstances have ordained otherwise and so today we are discussing the issues of the right to fair employment, the right to live in any house one can afford, and the right to protection in the exercise of the privileges of citizenship in terms of how much, when and for whom. Within this framework three basic considerations are involved. Three reasons why every member of this body, and indeed every citizen of the United States should be deeply committed to the enactment of the civil rights proposals now before us.

The first of these considerations is political. To what extent can we afford not to give the Negro his constitutional guarantees? The answer I believe is not hard to find. We see it in Watts, Newark, Detroit, and in the anxieties over the coming summer and the summers to come. The Negro community is no longer prepared to accept what others choose to give it, or to wait for years for what it considers its long neglected rights. We live in a new era for the Negro, an era of higher aspirations and lower thresholds of tolerance, a new self-acceptance and a new awareness of the need for the Negro to solve his own problems through his own actions. Furthermore those concerned go beyond the ghetto and the social worker and reach into the congregations of the Christian church and the community beyond. While it also is true that many segments of our people have reacted negatively to this new surge, conscience and increased buying power are on the side of the Negro and his voice will not be silenced.

It therefore is of major importance to this nation how we respond to this new voice. If in this body we do not heed it, if legislation is not forthcoming to indicate that this nation can respond to a plea that is just and deserving, then the leadership of the Negro community has

choice but to move to the extreme. Even now the struggle between those factions which are moderate, which advocate patience and reliance on the orderly processes of law and government, and those which advocate violence and hate is joined. ~~If the moderates lose,~~ If we see a further loss in the battle for the hearts and faith of the ^{and the moderates lose,} Negro community, and if as is now the popular course we attempt to counter violence with force, we shall surely have years of bloodshed ahead of us.

It is regrettable that a few of the inhabitants of the ghetto have seized upon the current unrest to pervert a good and noble sentiment into one of violence, thereby undermining the years of patient constructive effort. ^{the tendency to revolt} But ~~this trend~~ should surprise no one. History will show that revolts have never come when an oppressed group was utterly prostrate, for they then have neither the necessary energy nor hope to revolt. Revolt comes only at a time of assent, a time of resolution, of increased hope for the future. ^{that time} ~~That time~~ for the Negro is here. The Supreme Court and the war on poverty recognized it and nurtured it. We could ^{now} not ~~have~~ stop the trend if we wanted to. ^{Under the circumstances it is far} ~~It therefore is~~ the better wisdom to assist it, to feed ^{those ambitions which are} wholesome ~~ambitions~~, to guide and reassure

rising sentiments, but not to turn a deaf ear. I do not say the task will be easy or the results will always be attractive. There is a tragic gap between goals of better living, and the means by which these goals can be attained. But we can continue to build on the progress we have made thus far and encourage respect for the law by insuring that the law shows respect for the individual.

Do not misunderstand me. It is imperative that law and order in the cities must be preserved, that the willfull destruction of property be stopped. Crime in the streets cannot be tolerated. We are a nation of law and must take measures to insure that there will be law and order. But does anyone here believe the answer lies in added police force alone? I am alarmed by the sentiment within this country which supports added police protection, riot training for the National Guard, elaborate plans for processing rioters this summer but will not ~~support~~ with equal energy ^{support} efforts which might reduce the causes of riots. It promises to be a costly inconsistency. ~~We have an opportunity in this session to help him get it by the orderly processes of the law.~~ If we fail we will confirm the prophecies of the extremists and insure their leadership.

A second consideration is economic. More and more we are discovering the high price of poverty. We see it directly in the cost

of crime, in police protection, in unemployment, and rising welfare costs. We see it hidden in the cost of unearned incomes for people who require more in services than they pay back in taxes. We see it in human misery, in despair and hopelessness.

I am under no illusions that fair employment, open housing or protection of the rights of citizenship will remove the ancient curse of poverty and neglect and make the ghetto dweller prosperous. ^{But} If the Negro is discriminated against in the better jobs he cannot be motivated to try; unless his civil liberties are protected he will not identify with government; and housing is the cornerstone of every plan to improve the tangled problems of the ghetto, whether they be school segregation, urban blight, crime and violence, or unemployment. ~~Each~~ ~~of these things are keys to one thing, pride.~~ ~~Each~~ ~~of these things are keys to one thing, pride.~~ Then there is an additional ingredient is each of these things that must be considered. Today ~~Today~~ the Negro as much as anything else needs pride and self respect. Without these, there is little in him to build upon. / But how can he be proud if he lives in the ghetto? How can one who is unemployed be proud? How can a man have self respect when his children are hungry, when he must leave his family in order for them to qualify for welfare? ~~How can he be proud~~ when the schoolbooks his children carry show well dressed fathers driving to a beautiful home ~~with~~ with beautifully clothed children? ~~coming out to greet him.~~ I submit it is poor economics to deny the Negro an opportunity to be proud, ~~to have~~ to live in a nicer home, to own property and have

and something to pass on to his children, to take full part in the affairs of government. ~~are absolutely essential to generating a sense of pride.~~ ~~Once pride is established we have something to build upon~~

are quick to People/criticize the Negro for living so many to a room, surrounded in filth and squalor, but they are not so quick to say that slum rentals are among the most lucrative in the country, ~~and~~ that it is the ~~six~~ landlords who will not repair, and who ~~are~~ ~~willing to~~ crowd the tenants together to make the most money. Or they criticize the high unemployment among them, forgetting that industry and jobs are not in the central city, ~~and that~~ ~~neither is there~~ adequate transportation from the ghetto to the factories. ~~is~~ inadequate.

Again there is the fear that real estate values will drop. But we have abundant evidence that real estate values continue to rise whether the area is Negro or not. If the Negro could live anywhere, "block-busting" could no longer be a threat and movement would be controlled for them as it is for everyone else, by ability to buy.

There was a time when immigrant people moved into ghetto areas, but ~~they~~ ~~then~~ moved out because there was a place for them to go when their economic status permitted. Without jobs, and without opportunity to find and own housing outside the ghetto, this cannot ~~happen for~~ ~~some~~ the Negro. Our only alternative, then is to ~~for long as we prohibit it from happening, we shall be obliged to~~ pay for Negro maintenance in the ghetto.

Finally there is amoral consideration. This aspect has too often been ignored, the arguments for and against civil rights become legalistic when in fact the central issue is a moral one. We pride ourselves in being a Christian nation and we love to justify our action by that claim. There are few among us who would deny that allegiance to the Christian faith. But as I understand it, the essence of a faith is that all men are created equal, that they are brothers under the fatherhood of God. It teaches that to offend even the weakest is to ~~affor~~ affront God. It is a concept which elevates all men, gives each a dignity and makes justice imperative. We are correct in saying that out of this concept has come democracy, a government responsive to the will of the people. We are correct in pointing to our tremendous wealth and progress as being inevitable consequences of the individual freedoms the government provides. How is it then that we now feel we can neglect this principle, a refusal to make our government responsive to the Negro.

There was a time when we could plead ignorance as to the full implications of our sins of omission, but now we know. To see a need and pass by on the other side implicates ourselves and makes us a part of the crime. Even as we reflect the sentiments of our constituents we are still involved for we are leaders and ours is a responsibility also to the well-being of the nation.

It is not good for a nation to default in a moral principle. It hardens the spirit, isolates men from one another, stirs distrust in government, and makes the worst in men the public norm. Part of the revolt of youth which today receives so much comment stems from the inconsistency between words and deeds. I am glad for that revolt. Properly nurtured it can be the beginning of a great groundswell of moral resurgency in this nation. Here is our opportunity to assist in that movement.

Far employment, open housing, and full civil liberties are practical, just and righteous. They represent progress on the long and difficult path of restitution for our sins of neglect. I urge that we delay no longer.

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