

Civil Rights terrorism

draft

4/3/68

GARY

please hold this

Mr. President, the time has come for the United States to decide as a nation whether it will lend its full protection to those who are attempting to gain equal rights for all citizens and those who are complying with the civil rights laws, or whether it will ~~set~~ ^{step} back and watch in growing horror the violence which is rising in intensity against them.

America has been shocked time and again at the murder of civil rights workers, at the bombing of churches, and the frequent brutality of police breaking up civil rights demonstrations and marches. But the American conscience has always sunk once again into apathy.

It must not be allowed to do so any longer. The rise of lawlessness, whether under color of law or otherwise, is the main ~~threat~~ threat to peace in the South and not the "disorder" which is said to be created by the civil rights movement. In the struggle which is going on today in hundreds of cities and towns in the South, one cannot help but be impressed by the fact that the violence has been overwhelmingly directed against those who are challenging the oppressive system ^{of segregation} which has ^{oppressed the Negro} for so long ~~been the Southern Negroes' lot.~~

There is nothing new in this; terror has always played a vital part in the strategy of Southern segregation. ~~That~~ Violence and intimidation have had as their purpose keeping the Negro "in line," ~~and they~~ both official and unofficial violence are part of the southern tradition; ~~they~~ ^{what we now call the} predatory ~~anything like the present~~ civil rights movement.



More recently, Mr. President, the potential of economic reprisal and intimidation has been used to discourage any activity in favor of equal rights.

And finally, and most frightening of all in its implications for the future, ~~all of these~~ the terror has been turned against not only those who are active in the civil rights struggle ^{against those} but who merely protest against violence itself as a means of dealing with ^{this} threat to the traditional position of the Southern white. This is the ultimate result of any ~~great~~ reign of terror--that it ^{is} ~~not~~ ^{be} directed against anyone who does not agree to the use of violence against ~~the~~ "enemy." ~~to~~ ~~one~~ ~~cannot~~ ~~about~~ ~~what~~ ~~the~~ ~~about~~ ~~such~~
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XX.

It is time to realize the full extent of the failure of the South to curb this violence. We who live in peaceful communities cannot understand what it is like to live in the fear that one's home or church might be destroyed during the night and the knowledge that the outrage would certainly go unpunished.

The ~~entire~~ nation grieved when four ~~innocent~~ Negro children were killed in the bombing of a church in Birmingham last May. But we did not anticipate what was to follow in Mississippi. A week after the Birmingham tragedy, the Delta Democrat-Times of Greenville, Mississippi, which has raised its voice unceasingly against it, warned of the violence which would sweep across the state unless something was done.

In the summer of 1964, in addition to ~~the~~ 31 Negro homes and other buildings used for civil rights headquarters, ~~31~~ 31 Negro churches were either burned or bombed. The list of those damaged by explosions and fire from June through September in Mississippi is a frightening document. and I ask unanimous consent that it ~~be~~ this list, provided by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, be entered into the record at this point.

Many of these churches were used by civil rights workers in connection of one or another project in ~~xxxx~~ voter registration. Jessie Lee Harris, who was in charge of such a project in Jackson, Mississippi, had requested the use of the Society Hill Church for Voter Registration Classes in September of 1964. Two days later the church was ~~blasted~~ destroyed by a bomb.

The terror more often focuses on individual leaders, of course. Curtis Bryant, President of the Pike County Branch of the NAACP, saw a bomb explode in his barber shop in Jackson, ~~Mississippi~~ on April 28, 1964, and the incident was followed by phone calls threatening the lives of him and his family.

On November 16, 1964

1 Otis Mathews, ~~the~~ Assistant business manager of local 5443 of the International Woodworkers Union in Laurel, Mississippi, was abducted and whipped with a strap while on his way to work, shortly after the Masonite Corporation, for which most of the local union members work, adopted a policy of nondiscrimination in hiring, in compliance with the civil rights ~~act~~ law of 1964.

