

FOUR FREEDOM AWARDS DINNER

NEW YORK CITY

MARCH 15, 1964

⑧

Freedom

Freedom is the theme of our gathering tonight. The award you have conferred on me is particularly cherished because it is part of a continuing tribute to Franklin D. Roosevelt and the ideals for which he fought.

my  
hero!

Franklin Roosevelt left this nation a legacy of strength, unity and devotion to social justice - ~~but~~ in ~~addition~~ <sup>addition</sup> he also left us a legacy of freedom.

Among ~~is~~ his greatest contributions was the message he sent Congress on January 6, 1941 in which he envisioned a world where men would enjoy Freedom of Speech, Freedom of Worship and Freedom from Want and Freedom from Fear.

Jan 6  
1941

4 freedoms

The Four Freedoms became the rallying cry of free men throughout the world. They were a magnificent definition of man's ideals.

But perhaps there is another goal - one that might be called a Fifth Freedom, which should be embraced by all who seek to push outward the bonds of liberty.

5th  
Freedom

~~They may be free to speak and to worship. They may get three square meals a day with adequate clothing and shelter. They may not fear their government or their fellow men.~~

~~Yet, they may be bent and bruised by a more powerful, a more subtle force. They may suffer the invisible blows of humiliation.~~

~~They may have lost - or may never have possessed - the Fifth Freedom. I call it the Freedom of Dignity.~~

and ~~It is a rare freedom that you may think.~~

How rare - How precious  
is this freedom of Dignity!

↳ Dignity involves pride - pride in one's self and one's family, one's group and country

↳ Crush that pride and you crush the soul - you extinguish the spark that makes ~~a human~~ a man a human being.

and a ~~rust~~ society finds it easy to forget those who lack means and have been denied respect to the point they have no self-respect. ‡

↳ In the poverty-stricken areas of the world the poor are in revolt - not just against colonialism, ~~not just~~ against poverty, disease and illiteracy, but also against humiliation and degradation.

↳ In Africa, South Asia, the middle East and Latin America, the masses - people - are rebelling against indignity - real, or imagined. (Paris)

↳ But even if the indignity is only fancied, it grew in a soil of remembered grievance.

*yes,* The people of the Emerging Countries clearly seek the Fifth Freedom. *L* They seek food for their children, yes. They want knowledge and health and employment. But above all, they want respect. They yearn to live in dignity.

*L* Fortunately, the foreign policy of America is geared to the 20th Century - the Century of Freedom.

*Our Foreign Policy!*

*L* But what about our domestic attitudes?

In a certain sense, our ways of thinking and doing are obsolete carry-overs from the 18th and 19th Centuries. Then, the concepts of "class," "elite" and "breeding" were the vogue. To a large extent they still are.

*L* What has been the result?

It is shame and humiliation and loss of self-respect for ~~the so-called lower classes~~ *millions of our fellow citizens - the Indian* - for the Negro, the penniless migrant laborer ~~and~~ *and* for the new citizen from Puerto Rico.

~~L~~ ~~Millions~~ of elderly citizens <sup>suffer</sup> ~~it is~~ the indignity  
of being cast on the scrap heap because they are past the

age of 65. They suffer the indignity of having to charity

and beaten & Hospital Care  
~~for~~ medical aid because their life savings are wiped out by  
catastrophic or chronic illness.

~~L~~ <sup>thousands</sup> ~~Millions~~ of the handicapped suffer indignity because ~~we~~  
have not learned to look past their birth defect, ~~or disease~~  
or disability and see them for their true worth.

~~L~~ Millions of our citizens are uneducated and under-  
educated. They are condemned to suffer the indignity of  
being shackled to life-long menial labor, even though  
their minds and hands, if properly trained, could win them a  
better place in life. yes,

~~L~~ Millions of Americans are, in effect, scarred and  
wounded by invisible blows that cut deeper than a sword.

Those who have not experienced humiliation and indignity may not be able to understand how harsh their ~~scars~~ <sup>scars and</sup> effects can be. Let the doubters recall the words of Shakespeare:

"He jests at scars who never felt a wound."

The elderly, the handicapped, the uneducated in America have been wounded and scarred. But no group in American society has suffered more blows, visible or invisible, than the 20 million Americans of the Negro race.

~~The~~ <sup>we</sup> ~~scars~~ were shocked when our fellow Negro citizens, demonstrating for their rights, were struck openly - by fire hoses, police clubs and electric cattle prodders, or are set upon by police dogs. It is shocking because it is open for all to see. But it hurts no more than the hidden humiliation which ~~American~~ <sup>million of</sup> Negroes suffer every day of the year.

What meaning would the Four Freedoms have for you if you were told from the age of 3 on - "Black child, stay in your place."

Andy What place? The bottom of the scale, the worst of everything. The lowest, the last, the shoddiest, the back of the bus, the worst of the tenements, the most crowded school.

Never mind if the child has the potential of a George Washington Carver, a Ralph Bunche, a William Hastie, a Robert Weaver,

a Marion Anderson, a Carl Rowan, a General Benjamin Davis, a Martin Luther King. *ask you;*

How long are 20 million Americans supposed to take all this?

Is it any wonder that a Negro revolution has swept the land?

I'll tell you the real wonder. It is the wonder that  
the Revolution came so late and that it's so self-disciplined,  
so responsible, so moderate, so patient. (Pause)

In a famous speech during World War II, Winston  
Churchill said to his fellow Englishmen about the Nazis:

"What kind of people do they think we are?"

well, What kind of people do we think the Negroes are? Do  
we think that their children can grow up, reading history  
books with the inspirational messages of Jefferson and  
Lincoln, Roosevelt, Kennedy and Johnson and still be  
content to act like serfs?

Whitney  
Young

Do we think that <sup>negro</sup> parents will swallow their pride  
another 5 years, another 10 years, while their children

continue to ~~suffer~~ to be denied equal opportunity  
continue to suffer the indignities  
of prejudice & discrimination!

Negro

Do we think that teen-agers or adults will be content to keep hearing: "Never mind if you are the last to be hired and the first to be fired."

#

but,

The Negro does mind. He demands "Freedom - Now." *Full freedom*  
*He demands Respect - Freedom of Dignity!*  
The Negroes in every section of our country who are

marching in the streets, sitting-in at the restaurants and at the construction sites are fighting for their freedom as surely as our ancestors did nearly two centuries ago.

and

~~The white men and women who are marching shoulder to shoulder with them, North and South, East and West, are doing honor to themselves and their race.~~

*And a fight for equality of rights & freedom is not always pleasant!*

The sound of their marching feet echoes mightily in the Senate Chamber where we <sup>are</sup> now trying to put the Congress as firmly on the side of freedom as the Supreme Court has been since 1954.

U.S.

Freedom is the business before the Senate now. One hundred years of unfinished business has piled up and we will not rest until we have cleared it away.

The Second Session of the 88th Congress can be the Freedom Session. 1964 will be Freedom Year. Shakespeare once spoke of the "tide which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune; Omitted, all the journey of life is in shallows and in miseries."

The tide for civil rights is at its peak. We dare not lose it.

The passage of the Civil Rights Act will not constitute the "beginning of the end" of inequality. It will merely mark the "end of the beginning."

Slow!

We must look ahead to the days and years beyond this victory, or else it may become as hollow and barren as the aftermath of Reconstruction to the Negro.

The reason is clear. The American Negro suffers not merely from a deficit of laws to protect him; he suffers from a century of deficits in education, in housing, in *continued* social opportunity. *these are the dangerous deficits*

*clearly* As we are marching to final victory in the century-long struggle to secure full citizenship for every American, so must we now launch the final onslaught on poverty. *Poverty* (President Johnson)

Like the Negro, the poor man has been the forgotten man. He is the miner in Appalachia whose mine is closed. He is the jobless youth who dropped out of school too early. He is the old man living his last days in a bleak and lonely room. He is, in ever increasing numbers, the middle-aged worker automated out of a job. He is in tragic *his* proportion the Negro.

*But* The "War Against Poverty" will not be won in behalf of the Negro alone. But it can certainly be lost on him.

The most important battles in the War on Poverty will be fought in the ~~Negro~~ <sup>our</sup> slums of ~~the~~ <sup>blighted</sup> cities and the rural areas <sup>of our countryside</sup>

This war will require a multi-billion program in the next decade ~~to fill the Negro needs alone.~~ <sup>But</sup> ~~and we must continue~~ <sup>We must begin</sup>

This program is not charity. It is a social and human obligation. It is not a luxury, it is a life-and-death necessity. It is not for our "image" abroad, it is to redeem our own conscience ~~here at~~

If anyone thinks the multi-billion-dollar price is too high, let him try to calculate the price, if we lose this war - the price in wasted lives, in family, neighborhood and city decay, in lost talents. <sup>in rising crime</sup>

and tension.

Congressman  
cellar!

masterful  
Job!

But our first job is to secure passage of the civil rights bill in the Senate. And I can tell you that this bill cannot be passed in the Senate unless the national consensus that has been growing rises to a pitch and intensity that will demand the passage of the bill.

This bill must be approved by the people before it can be passed by the Senate of the United States.

I feel that great consensus growing. I can feel the stirrings in the churches, among business groups, educators, the great voluntary organizations - not alone in the Negro groups themselves.

The eyes of America have been opened. The "invisible man," the Negro who was not really seen by millions of his fellow-Americans, stands clearly before us - a man who suffers, a man who yearns, a man who has much to give and has a right to all the fruits of freedom and dignity that we who were born white enjoy ~~our Constitution~~

proclaims!

Yes, the conscience of America has been stirred.

But it will not be enough to feel. It is necessary that America act.

The American people cannot remain as spectators to this great national historic event. They must become participants.

They must be mobilized. And once they are, we will pass the civil rights act and close the citizenship gap that has shamed this country for more than 100 years.

History has taught one clear lesson through the ages - that "evil triumphs where good men fail to act." But this year good men will act. We will take the first step by enacting *an* *effective* ~~a strong~~ civil rights law and then march "forthrightly into the bright sunshine of human rights" and bring not only equality but dignity to all men. *e*

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