

April 10, 1968

Excerpts of Speech by
Senator Edward W. Brooke (R-Mass).
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Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, New York City

Exactly what can be done and how soon to achieve the harmonious integration of our Negro brothers into the general social structure? In its essential respects I believe that the agenda has already been written. It has been outlined in ample detail in the report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders. It consists of a broad range of public and private action, some of which is already in progress but which must be accelerated to meet the pressing needs of a troubled society.

Discrimination in housing has denied most Negroes access to decent homes and, by providing slum landlords with an essentially captive market has driven up the prices for the inferior housing available to most ghetto residents. De facto residential segregation has thrown disproportionate numbers of underprivileged and culturally deprived children into urban schools ill-equipped to educate them. Poorly motivated and lacking encouragement from their peers or parents, these children bring little to their education and take little from it.

While this cycle has been repeating itself countless times in the Negro ghettos of the central cities, the white middle class has been gravitating to the suburbs, eroding the city's tax base at the very time the urban core is experiencing increased demands for public services. This is the cycle which distinguishes the new ghetto from the old. The old ghetto thrived on hope; the new ghetto drowns in despair. The old ghetto was open and tended to disappear; the new ghetto is closed and tends to sustain itself.

