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25 September 1957

Mr. Dwight D. Eisenhower
President of the United States
Washington, D.C.

Honorable Sir:

God bless you at this time when so many people seem to be against your policies. It may help a little for you to know that I, and all the people here, particularly my family and neighbors, are back of you, believing in you, and saying prayers of deep gratitude that you are our leader. How those misguided ignoramuses can call you a "dictator and a communist" is a mystery to us! How born Americans can be so non-Good Samaritan and full of racial hatred toward other Americans who are Negroes, is simply beyond our comprehension.

Maybe my husband is right in saying that the Almighty left the Hawaiians and the Hawaiian Islands as a reminder of what Paradise could have been. At any rate, we know the meaning of Aloha and we cannot feel hatred against anyone, let alone loathe people for their color of skin! I have a Japanese-American friend who gave up a fine job on the plantation because the leaders of the ILWU Union local who had forced him and others to pay dues, went out and beat up some of the supervisors. That boy could not countenance violence of any sort because he is a faithful Buddhist. He now operates a taxi service of his own, but manages to take good care of his family. On the other hand, the caucasian leaders of the ILWU here have worked hard to instill racial hatred into the rank and file, and that is the main reason we so dislike the local labor union methods!

We Americans are expected to be decent, well-bred, courteous and just leaders in the world. Our very Government is based on Christian principles for which our forefathers and our sons have fought! How, then, can the people of Arkansas be so different from us here in Hawaii nei?

May the good God enlighten them, and help them to see how ugly their violence and hatred and false pride are to Him, and to all of us who follow the teachings of the gentle Christ Child! In our schools we welcome every child, regardless of color of skin. We find wonderful qualities in all of our children here, even the Negroes.

How can people bring themselves to hurt others, particularly children, for any reason! I can remember a half-dozen men who worked in my office at NAS Puunene who were going to "beat up" a Negro sailor because he had the "effrontery" to offer me a cigarette. They became so rude that I ordered them from my office, but first I told them that so long as I was there we would have no racial hatreds! Later on, by my own example and fairness to them all, those six caucasians had come to see my views and we had no further threats. In fact, they learned that the Negro boy was a mighty fine young fellow, after all!

Certainly, one draws a line if people are rude, or undisciplined, or evil, but one does not hate. One tries, rather, to find the cause, to understand, and to lead those people into kinder ways and manners. We people of Hawaii nei do this because of Aloha, which means to "breathe the spirit of God toward others in sharing His love."

My father was a judge, one time, during the Frontier Day celebration in Cheyenne. Carl Smith, a man of Cherokee Indian and Negro blood, won the bucking horse contest. The other judges did not want to give him the prize because of his color! My father stood his ground, and the prize was awarded to Smith. Later, Smith's brother was sent to West Point, and the white men there threatened to kill him if he persisted in remaining. He shot himself. I've always been proud of my father.

So, at this time, I just thought maybe you would like to know that we feel you are right about the situation in Arkansas. We trust your judgment, because you have always proved, by word and action, that you are an outstanding officer and gentleman, and that you will remain in history as one of our greatest Presidents.

With every good wish to you and your family, I remain,
Respectfully, and with Aloha nui,

Inez Ashdown
Inez Ashdown.

Mrs. C.W. Ashdown
Kilohana
Makawao, Maui, T.H.