

GHETTOS

THE LAST BARRIER TO CIVIL RIGHTS

NATIONAL COMMITTEE AGAINST DISCRIMINATION IN HOUSING

Housing is the test of civil rights

The segregators tell their strategy

Myths must be erased with facts

THE Supreme Court decisions on segregation in the schools pose America's ultimate civil rights challenge. The challenge is not in education but in housing. Segregated housing makes Jim Crow laws unnecessary. Children go to school in the neighborhood where they live. If the neighborhood is 95 percent Negro, the schools will be 95 percent Negro. So will the churches, theaters, playgrounds, restaurants and hospitals.

The segregators are badly frightened because the school decisions foreshadow an eventual ruling against segregation in publicly aided housing—including every FHA-insured and VA-guaranteed house or apartment development. They are working day and night to preserve segregation by building new ghettos and tightening the boundaries of old ones. In many cities where segregation has never approached the rigidity of New York's Harlem or Chicago's South Side, Negro families are now being pushed from mixed blocks. In Washington, federal housing officials and legislators are being buttonholed and importuned by the segregators.

Their strategy was frankly told by President Richard Hughes of the National Association of Home Builders when he addressed the Texas Mortgage Bankers Association at San Antonio on May 21, 1954.

"The Supreme Court ruling concerning schools in my opinion will have a profound effect on housing at an early date," he said. "To criticize the courts or the Congress will accomplish nothing toward the solution of this basic problem. The home-building industry must tackle this problem head-on, and we must plan and provide adequate and good housing for the minorities of this nation in proper areas with proper facilities—or get ready for Congress and the courts to seek their solution by decree and statute.

"If we meet the issue now, plan and provide the Negro with housing on comparable financial terms, but in planned communities, society will be much better off. I know we'll be happier and I sincerely believe they will be happier."

Make no mistake. Housing in "proper areas" and in "planned communities" means new ghettos that will last for generations.

The campaign to maintain and expand the ghettos must be stopped. It can be, because thousands of able Americans are ready to work for equal opportunity in housing. To be effective they need facts. They want to know, for example, how to debunk the myth that Negro residents hurt neighborhood property values. They want to convince builders and lenders that the

free competition of the open market is more profitable and stable than racially separated housing.

Leaders of many public interest organizations—church, welfare, labor, civic—are ready to take responsibility for educating the public and pointing the way for government and industry. These leaders are asking for technical data, popular literature and program assistance.

The logical spearhead for this educational campaign is the National Committee Against Discrimination in Housing. Since its founding in 1950 by several of the great national organizations, NCDH has been the major vehicle for the attack on the ghetto. It has vigorously collected, analyzed and publicized a mass of facts—facts that have led to thinking and doing. It has encouraged public and private agencies to formulate policies that dovetail. As one federal official put it, “Your Committee has been the heart and the conscience for all of us.”

A lot has happened since 1950. Public understanding has been enlarged, significant new laws adopted, government regulations improved and, most important of all, thousands of families settled peacefully in neighborhoods that once were closed to them.

NCDH's budget is too small to finance services for all who seek them. Most of the Committee's money has come from a relatively small group of enthusiastic individuals.

To meet the enormous challenge of the next few years NCDH and its 20 member organizations are resolved to do thoroughly those things which have been done on only a limited basis:

1. *Community Advisory Service*, to develop programs and techniques for opening up the *entire* community to minority families. Real estate, governmental and community organizations that influence residential occupancy patterns need more technical advice.

2. *Housing Information Service*, to watch trends, communicate facts and techniques, and interpret legislation and government policies. NCDH is recognized as the major clearing house for information on housing and minority rights.

3. *Leadership Training Service*, to plan conferences, workshops, institutes and forums, and to serve educational institutions and community organizations.

4. *Research Service*, to advise universities, government agencies and foundations, and to conduct independent studies.

NCDH's work must be broadened and intensified for the final attack on segregated housing. Winning the fight for demo-

NCDH's role in public education

Four services to be broadened

cratic housing will cost money—but the cost is small compared with the terrible human and material waste of the ghetto system.

NCDH invites the cooperation and financial support of all individuals and groups concerned with fundamental democracy. We count on each reader of this folder to help us meet the challenge.

ROBERT C. WEAVER, *Chairman* ~~CHARLES ABRAMS, *Vice Chairman*~~

~~HORTENSE W. GABEL, *Executive Director*~~

NATIONAL COMMITTEE AGAINST DISCRIMINATION IN HOUSING
35 West 32 Street • New York 1 • New York

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America (CIO)
American Civil Liberties Union
American Council on Human Rights
American Friends Service Committee
American Jewish Committee
American Jewish Congress
American Veterans Committee
Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith
Council for Social Action, Congregational Christian Churches
Friendship House
Jewish Labor Committee
Migration Division, Puerto Rican Department of Labor
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
National Association of Intergroup Relations Officials
National Council of Jewish Women
National Council of Negro Women
National Council of Churches of Christ, Race Relations Department
Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., Department of Social Education and Action
United Auto Workers of America (CIO)
United Steelworkers of America (CIO)