Baptists Face Housing Crisis

White Hotels Display Organized Resistance

PHILADELPHIA

One of the most critical housing shortages ever to face a convention committee is looming disastrously over the horizon of the National Baptist Convention, to be held in Philadelphia from Sept. 5-12.

Bucking an obviously organized resistance campaign by local white hotels, the convention's housing committee, headed by the Rev. Clarence M. Smith, is doing a heroic job against the most terrific odds imaginable.

With approximately 10,000 delegates, auxiliary members, missionaries, laymen and visitors expected in the city for the conclave, the committee is reported to have been able to secure less than 300 hotel room reservations.

6,000 Hotel Rooms Here

The organized resistance is even more obvious when it is considered that there are more than 6,000 hotel guest rooms in the city's major establishments registered with the Chamber of Commerce.

Only 20 of the 60 hotels contacted by the housing committee responded to the request for reservations; and only two or three of these indicated a willingness to accommodate a handful of delegates.

Told Hotels "Sold Out"

First indications of the negative attitude toward the convention were evidenced when the basic courtesy of a seat was not extended the committee head in the Hotel Reservation Bureau of the Chamber of Commerce.

He was told that the agency was aware of the convention, but that the hotels were already sold out. A spokesman later suggested that a direct contact with the hotels might have proven more successful.

Interviewed by the AFRO on Tuesday, Charles L. Todd, executive secretary of the bureau of conventions and visitors of the Chamber of Commerce, said that he had not been previously advised of any difficulties by the committee.

The AFRO came in for its share of "regret" responses when it attempted to secure reservations for newspapermen assigned to coverage of the national conclave.

The Benjamin Franklin, the Broadwood, the Adelphia, the Bellevue-Stratford and the Penn-Sheraton all reported their establishments as "booked to capacity" for the convention period.

The Ben Franklin and the Penn Sheraton, the John Bartram and the Morris hotels had already allocated a few of their guest rooms for the use of delegates, but the supply is drastically lower than the demand.

Brightest spot in the entire picture was the talk with J. R. Boudreau, manager of the Hamilton Court, 37th and Chestnut Sts., who not only offered 19 of the hotel's 78 rooms and five suites for the convention, but also interceded in securing the Penn-Sheraton and Morris hotel reservations.

As committee workers enter the final stages of their planning for the session a desperate plea for accommodations has been issued, and the co-operation of all private home owners, small hotel managers and colored establishments is urged to help meet the need.

According to Chamber of Commerce figures, the Bartram Hotel has a total of 350 rooms, including meeting, permanent, and guest rooms. The Penn-Sheraton has 600; the Ritz-Carlton, 210; the Robert Morris, 208; the Adelphia, 400; the Bellevue, 700; and the Ben Franklin, 1200.

Equally as great concern has been expressed over the national reaction to Philadelphia's lack of hospitality as over the inconvenience delegates to the convention may be caused.

While city officials and major agency heads have accepted invitations to participate in the program of the Baptist conclave, there has been no evidence of their concern about the accommodation of the delegates or of their effort to help alleviate the increasingly pressing shortage.

4th Division Mixed With Good Results

FORTORD, Calif. (NNPA)—The Army is trying another "experiment" with racial integration here and, just as in the European theater during World War II and in the Air Force at present, it is working out satisfactorily.

The Fourth Infantry Division here has become the first Army organization to abolish racial segregation completely, and it is finding that integration works well.

Sleep, Eat Together

Soldiers in the Fourth Division are not separated according to race into different units.

All the men sleep in the same barracks, eat in the same messes, and sweat out their rugged training together on the drill fields. There is no coddling and no trouble.

The results obtained have been more than a little surprising to some of the officers who served with colored troops during World War II and were not familiar with the results obtained.

When colored and white soldiers fought shoulder to shoulder in the battle of the Bulge, went out on mixed patrols, slept in the same bombed buildings, and sweated out the same chow lines.

Under pressure to abolish segregation throughout its widespread operations, the Army is again experimenting to see whether racial integration will work in its ranks.

The Fourth Division is the organization it has chosen to find out the results.

Equal Treatment Prevails

Colored men assigned to the Fourth Division, which now is engaged in its most expansive training program since World War II, find they are treated exactly the same as white men.

If they fail to maintain the same standards, they are told to snap out of it. And when they make good, they are promoted.

Turns Out Many Non Coms

The Fourth Division is turning out colored non-commissioned officers in increasing numbers and they are doing a good job.

One of the arguments advanced against integration was, that the opportunity for promotions would be lessened for colored men by their being thrown into competition with white men.

Officers in the Fourth Division believe the incentive for a man to stand on his own feet competitively, in a sense, is the main reason the integration program is bringing such surprising results.

Fosters Friendship

One of the results has been the fostering of friendship between white and colored soldiers.

Instead of colored soldiers pairing off with colored soldiers and white soldiers with white soldiers, there is a very evident tendency for the men to mix freely in training and in recreational and leisure-time activities.

One white field grade officer who had considerable duty with colored troops in Italy during World War II says, "The quicker the entire Army adopts this policy the better."

Another, a Texan, who has been training these mixed companies for many months, swears that it is the "only" solution. He emphasizes that absolute impartiality is necessary, however.

Combat Integration Favored

There still remains the vital question of what will follow when these trainees, and the draftees who will follow them, are sent out as combat soldiers to main line outfits.

Officers would like to see them assigned in the same manner as they are being trained in the Fourth Division.

They feel that if colored troops, after training with notable success in mixed units, are suddenly thrown into segregated units or batteries, their morale will be destroyed.

What will be done about this is a matter for high level Army policy to decide.

JC Policy Old, Outdated

Ever since the organization of colored units shortly after the Civil War the Army has rigidly maintained racial segregation, despite the increasing necessity for effective utilization of its personnel.

After World War I, it decided to organize no more divisions composed of all-colored enlisted personnel and to organize colored troops in organizations no larger than a regiment.

Location of Tan Units

Under this policy, a number of colored units are a component part of or attached to larger units. In this category are:

The 24th Infantry Regiment, the 159th Field Artillery Battalion, the 36th Medical Collection Company, and the 77th Engineer Combat Battalion which are attached to the 25th Infantry Division; and

The Third Battalion of the Ninth Infantry Regiment and the 503rd Field Artillery, which are a part of the Second Infantry Division.

Continental List

In the continental United States, colored units with larger white organizations include:

The 367th Armored Infantry Battalion with the Third Armored Division at Fort Knox, Ky.; the 73d Engineer Combat Battalion attached to the Second Armored Division at Camp Hood, Texas; and

The 80th AAA Automatic Weapons Battalion, the 758th Heavy Tank Battalion, the 589th Quartermaster Field Service Company, and the 98th Field Artillery (light) Battalion with the 82nd Airborne Division.

Masons Pledge Aid, Loyalty to Truman

WASHINGTON (NNPA) — A committe of grand masters of Prince Hall Masons of America last Monday gave a David K. Niles, an administrative assistant to the President, resolution reaffirming the "unyielding loyalty" of Masons to this country.

The resolutions, adopted at the Conference of Grand Masters held in Boston recently were to be presented to Mr. Truman by Mr. Niles.

The President, himself, was unable to receive the committee which consisted of Louis Fair Jr., grand master of New York; P. G. Porter, grand master of Kansas; Ashby B. Carter, grand master of Illinois, and James C. Gilliam, grand master of Mississippi.

Adherence Not Perfect

The resolutions, signed by Amos T. Hall, grand master of Oklahoma and chairman of the Conference of Grand Masters, and William McKinley Newby, of Pennsylvania, secretary, stated:

"We aver that America is great because she has striven continuously to reach and maintain those high ideals that are our cherish legacy. We submit that perfect adherence to those principles and ideals have not and do not obtain but we have faith and confidence that progress toward their full attainment, where all Americans of every color and faith will dwell together and labor together as brothers, is being made with increasing rapidity and convincing certainty.

"Once again our country finds itself embroiled in a conflict wherein our citizens must rally to the principles enunciated by our chief, the President of the United States, in the matter of our fighting forces being now engaged in mortal combat in Korea.

Communism vs. Democracy

"It is clear to al lthinking people that the issue is distinctly drawn and resolves itself to just this: Shall the world be dominated by communism or shall the peoples of the world be free to select the form of government they themselves like best, free from all fear of aggression, a police state and ultimate slavery?

"As grand masters of the various states of the union and as chosen leaders of thousands of colored Masons, we are ready and willing to do al that we can to enhance the all-out efforts of our nation to put down tyranny and crush the arch enemies of democracy.

"To further crystallize our actions and endeavors, we have designed Sunday, September 10—that day being the Sunday nearest September 12, which is the birthday of our noble and sainted progenitor—as 'Prince Hall Day' and as an occasion for his legion of followers to assemble in communities throughout the land for the purpose of reaffirming their unyielding loyalty to America and its government, and to strengthen the fight for democratic ideals and practices, the real brotherhood of all free men being our goal.

"With the help of the Almighty, on whose side we are ever to be found, we shall come forth victorious."

Mayor Lauds Urban League in Official Proclamation

Citing the organization for its work to "increase good will" and "remove intolerance," Mayor D'Alesandro on Tuesday issued a proclamation setting aside Sept. 3-8 as Urban League Week.

The week's observance will be in connection with the 35th anniversary of the National Urban League.

Mayor D'Alesandro called upon citizens to gain a greater understanding of the league's work.

15 New Polio Cases in Week Taken Calmly

The Health Commissioner observed that despite 15 new cases of polio last week, Baltimoreans are accepting the occurrences of the disease without undue panic.

Dr. Huntington Williams, commissioner, said he noted a growing appreciation of the fact that summer polio can be expected and accepted, pending further medical research, without widespread alarm.

Week's Cases Excessive

The 15 cases last week were more than the number for any previous week this year. Dr. Williams pointed out, however, that the higher figures are expected for this season.

The Health Department recorded 209 infant births last week and nine infant deaths. Adult deaths numbered 52.

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