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CITIZENS' INTERRACIAL COMMITTEE OF SAN DIEGO COUNTY
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HUMAN RELATIONS
and
LOCAL GOVERNMENT

AN ANALYSIS

HOUSING IN SAN DIEGO

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In the area of housing, just as many other facets of community life, San Diego is rather unique: there is no low-income housing or housing projects. This condition may be interpreted as a blessing in that those added social conditions which so often are attendant to housing projects are absent from the community. On the other hand, this condition might also be misleading in that it appears that because there are no housing projects or low-cost housing there is present provision for taking care of such persons in our community, or that here no such need exist. It is true that only since the end of World War II did minority groups move into San Diego in large numbers; but equally true is the fact that most of the minority groups have the greatest numbers of low-income members. Additionally, the senior citizens of this community are in need of this kind of housing.

Thus it has been only within the past few years that much concern has been expressed over the need for this kind of housing, except by the minority groups themselves. The latter groups have expressed this need, at times, in distressful tones for many years here, according to many residents of long standing.

On a state-wide basis the condition has been even worse; in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Berkeley and Oakland, to name only a few cities. We all know too well the fate of Proposition 14 which has made it legal for owners and members of the housing and related industries to discriminate on a racial basis if they chose to. Other conditions which preceded this Proposition have also added to the urban problems with regard to housing. It may be said that of all the areas into which the civil rights and other groups have been pushing recently, that of housing offers the most resistant. It is this area that the most deeply entrenched attitudes of racism find overt and often condoned expression.

SAN DIEGO'S HOUSING PROBLEMS

Many companies and industries will hire a Negro for the first time when approached by C.I.C., the Urban League or other agencies; many white churches will open its doors to the Negro for the first time; one white church in our area has recently had a Negro minister appointed as pastor; many inter-racial activities are routine for a great many people of the county. However, in the matter of accepting a neighbor in the community who happens to be Negro, the matter is of a different order altogether for most of the sub-communities. There is a great and pressing need for the whole community to understand the implications of the specific situations which follow:

1. In and around the San Diego State College, realtors and apartment owners and managers have refused to rent or lease to persons because they were Negro. Most of these businessmen around that area practice this kind of exclusion, according to our records and those of realtors who work in that area.

   C.I.C. has referred all its cases from this and other areas to the local F.E.P.C.

2. The communities of Balboa, Vista, Encanto and Skyline Drive, have all been experiencing within the past year signs of mass exodus by the white residents as the Negroes move closer. C.I.C. was requested to help citizens groups in these areas organize in attempt to help educate the residents along such lines as the need to stabalize the population there, understand why they have the many fears about minorities and recognize that no neighborhood can become all-anything unless residents first move out.

3. Presently, at this very moment, an organized citizens group is campaigning within their community to keep Negroes out and preparing a petition to be presented to City Board of Education which request that no action be taken which will send their (white) children to a school which has over a few Negro students.

   Further, this group has said to members of our committees that should their children have to attend an integrated school (of more than a dozen or so), all of them (the whites) are going to move out.

4. In response to the above group, a counter group has organized in the same community for the purpose of countering the kind of information and philosophy that the former is expressing.

5. C.I.C.'s files contain numerous documented cases of instances of refusal by realtors in almost every section of the city and county to sell or rent to Negroes. Some of these cases have been published; others have not been by request of the persons involved. Our files contain, also, copies of the listings which state "whites or caucasians" only. And while this is legal, the frequency of this kind of listing suggest the extent of the negative feelings and stereo-typical thinking in our community.

6. Until very recently, only one Negro was a member of the San Diego Realty Board. This is the nationally used practice of not allowing minority groups access to the listings of properties throughout the given area. Thus most of the minorities do not even hear of the many thousands of openings which come through yearly.

7. The practices of some of the loan, mortgaging, financing, insurance, and banking and other related industries are of a racial nature. Some Negro realtors and brokers are so aware of these practices that they select only those places of businesses which they know from personal experience will welcome or accept their business on an equal basis.

8. Included in some of those who have been turned down on the basis of color in the immediate past have been families whose sons were at that time on their way to fight in Viet Nam; one family came here just to be with their son the last few days and saw him off right after being turned down.

9. Three cross-burnings have taken place within the past nine months in communities in which Negroes live; only through the emergency handling of one of these cases was a possible explosion averted.

There is also a strong need to consider the condition of the housing now occupied by the minority person and the extent that such housing is allowed to become sub-standard. Most of the housing occupied by the Mexican-American and Negro in given areas are owned by absent landlords and are in poorest of condition. The inspection of some of these houses has been brought to the attention of the proper authorities recently by the Urban League; much more attention might well be directed in this area.

There is also the problem of the displaced persons who will soon be seeking housing because of the new freeways through the southeast section of San Diego. These persons will surely need an attorney and the support of the total city and county. Many of these persons are so excluded from the main stream of our city economy that some special attention will have to be given to their concern over where they are now going to live once displaced.

WE THEREFORE RECOMMEND THAT:

1. The City and County of San Diego convene members of the housing and related industries and use its influence to help create the kind of atmosphere which will lessen instead of increase the tensions which are building up in some communities around the issues involved in housing and movement of minority groups into previously all-white neighborhoods.

   This convening be a "San Diego County Mayor's Conference on Housing in San Diego County". The planning and other details would be worked out in cooperation with the many local and county groups, organizations and community agencies with an expressed interest and concern in the housing field, both public and private.

2. Immediate consideration by C.I.C.'s Board of Trustees be given to the establishing, within the offices of C.I.C., a "Center On Urban Housing Affairs" to coordinate all community problems and related concerns in the housing field.

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