

FACTS

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RESTRICTIVE RESORTS

IN order to attract convention business, during the off-season many of the nation's restrictive resort hotels will roll out the carpet of welcome to all convention guests, regardless of religion or race. But during the regular season these same places will maintain against individual guests their impassable barriers of religious discrimination. This long-standing practice, where the restrictions come with the busy, and go with the slack seasons, might be described as "dollar discrimination."

This widespread sanctimonious policy was sharply attacked recently by a nationally prominent educator, Dr. Alice V. Keliher of New York University, who cancelled a convention speaking engagement scheduled in May at the Lake Placid Club of New York because the Club barred Jews during its regular season.

"You can't have a moral position one day and not the next," Professor Keliher declared.

"The more I thought it through," she added, "the more I realized that the conventions that go there during the off-season are paying for the summer season of discrimination."

Dr. Keliher was to address a meeting of the New York State Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, which for the past few years had regularly convened at the Lake Placid Club.

Last year the Association, said an officer, Dr. Ernest K. Weinrich, had appointed a committee to investigate complaints about the Club's discriminatory practices. Following the investigation, the Association, said Dr. Weinrich, decided to "find another meeting place as soon as possible."

"But there was just no time," he added. "We could not change the site without great loss to the convention. The committee recommended that we meet here just one more time."

This off-season relaxation of customary restrictions by hotels such as the Lake Placid Club have confused and misled a large number of people. Last September, the New York and New Jersey District of the National Association of Radio and Tele-

vision Broadcasters met at the Lake Placid Club without being aware of the Club's true policy against Jews and Negroes.

"At no time in my negotiations with the Club," the Broadcasters' president, E. R. Vadeboncoeur, later explained, "was the subject of discriminatory rules even mentioned . . . we were at no time asked about the race or religion of any of our members . . . we have no desire to give any sanction to bigotry."

The Lake Placid Club, formally constituted as a private club, is actually a place of public accommodation in all but name. Nevertheless, the club device has enabled it to get around the New York State law barring discrimination in places of public accommodation.

Camelback Inn

Equally notorious for its discriminatory practices is the Camelback Inn, near Phoenix, Ariz. But like the Lake Placid Club, it has shown a readiness to drop the customary bars for the sake of off-season convention trade. But such compromises were given short shrift last fall by the National Association of Attorneys General, which cancelled its December convention at the Camelback because of the resort's "rigid policy of 100 per cent Gentile clientele." The convention site was moved to The Greenbrier, a hotel in White Sulphur Springs, W. Va.

Prior to the change, U.S. Attorney General Herbert Brownell, Jr., who was scheduled as the convention's principal speaker, announced that he would not stay as a guest at the Camelback, in the light of its policy.

The Anti-Defamation League declared in a letter to the National Association of Attorneys General:

"Because the membership of the National Association of Attorneys General is composed of the chief law enforcement officers of the nation and because we are convinced that the Association would not want to give any sanction to religious bigotry, we consider it necessary to point out that Camelback Inn does violence to American principles of equality."

When the issue of Camelback's discriminatory policy first arose, the resort's managing director, Jack Stewart, seemed troubled by a bad conscience and prepared to make a change. He wrote the convention host, Arizona's Attorney General, Ross J. Jones:

"The embarrassing position this places you in has hastened us to make a change in our policy at Camelback Inn, which we have been thinking of for a considerable length of time. . . . We have long thought it was not right to have any discrimination and we are certainly against discrimination in the United States."

But when pressed by ADL for an unequivocal statement that Camelback's change of policy actually meant that Jewish guests would now be welcome there, Stewart hedged. He replied that Camelback's policy "will remain the same . . . thus will not be doing any differently than we have done in the past."

Camelback Inn, Stewart said later, would "soften its advertising in regard to racial discrimination." The words, "restricted clientele," he explained, would be changed to "selected clientele."

Nathaniel Goldstein, then New York State's Attorney General, was the first to react to Camelback's equivocation. He protested the Camelback management's conflicting statements to Attorney General Jones and ADL. He said they were designed "to cloud their policy just for the convention."

Mr. Goldstein said he would attend the convention but not register or live at Camelback Inn. "I could not," he stressed, "retain my self-respect as an American and as an individual if I condoned this apparently hypocritical policy."

George Fingold of Massachusetts, followed by the attorneys general of other states, joined Mr. Goldstein in the protest.

Tom Gentry of Arkansas declared: "Where my friends are not welcome, I choose not to go."

"I would not be a party to any such policy of religious bigotry," said John Ben Sheperd of Texas.

"There should be no local option on citizenship," Edmund G. Brown of California stated.

Grover C. Richman of New Jersey declared: "I cannot too strongly condemn the use of such practices. They are contrary to every concept of decency."

And Robert Y. Thornton of Oregon was equally emphatic: "I will make arrangements to stay in another nearby establishment."

A resident attorney in Phoenix promised free automobile transportation to and from the convention to delegates who would not register at Camelback Inn. The lawyer said members of local civic groups would provide and drive the cars. But, as it turned out, this was unnecessary; the convention site was cancelled.

Camelback's manager Stewart complained bitterly: "We were under extreme pressure from the Anti-Defamation League to change our policy of guest selection." The ADL replied: "It would be wonderful if ADL could pressure all discriminationists into a path of decency. It isn't that easy. Mr. Stewart put the heat on himself when he said one thing but meant another."

Other Hotels with Similar Policy

With an eye to convention business, some resort hotels, such as the Wentworth-by-the-Sea, near Portsmouth, N. H., will set forth their policies in ludicrous equivocations.

Last January, the ADL informed James Barker Smith, president of the Wentworth-by-the-Sea, that it had received inquiries concerning the New Hampshire resort's guest policy. They came from members of an association planning to hold their annual convention there. Did the Wentworth, the ADL asked, accept Jews as guests during the regular season?

"We are removing the words 'restricted clientele,' replied

Mr. Smith, "from our newly printed literature and intend to open our doors more widely than in the past. We feel that most prospective guests would prefer knowing what type of a hotel they may be expected to encounter. I had thought to use some phraseology somewhat as follows:

"New guests at the Wentworth are requested to send to the management information with reference to church and club affiliations and how they found out about the Wentworth."

"Personally," Mr. Smith blandly assured the ADL, "I am a firm believer that we are all children of God and brothers under the skin. . . ."

But the Wentworth still continues its discriminatory policy.

Some confusion as to a hotel's regular guest policy, comparable to what had occurred at the Lake Placid Club, seems to have arisen in connection with the practices of The Homestead in Hot Springs, Va. The Middle Atlantic States Accounting Conference was scheduled at the Homestead next June without knowledge on the part of the sponsors that the hotel discriminated against Jews.

Several public accountants decided not to attend on learning of the Virginia resort's practices.

One complaint, addressed to Raymond R. Rains, Executive Secretary of the North Carolina Association of Certified Public Accountants, came from a CPA of Wilson, N. C., who wrote:

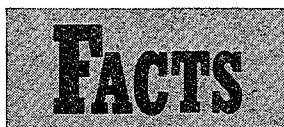
"I am unwelcome as a private guest at this hotel because I am a Jew. I would be welcome as part of a conference. This distinction is unacceptable to me. . . ."

"It is indeed regrettable," replied CPA Secretary Rains, "that some hotels continue a restrictive policy. . . . I doubt that anyone was aware of the hotel's policy . . . (it) could be financially ruinous if not literally impossible to find another location at this date."

Another public accountant, from Asheville, N. C., informed Mr. Rains that the conference at the Homestead "poses a situation that I find intolerable. It has come to my attention that this hotel considers me to be unacceptable as a guest because I am a Jew. I do not imagine that they would bar me if I attended as part of the conference, but this distinction, in my mind, only highlights the bigotry."

In Maine last summer, one convention group learned of a restrictive hotel's policy in time to cancel its meeting site. The Maine Medical Association, whose membership of 700 physicians contains less than 5 per cent Jews, refused to hold its scheduled convention at the Colony Hotel in Kennebunkport because the hotel barred Jewish guests. The medical group met, instead, at the Eastland Hotel in Portland. Member physicians themselves had made the issue.

"We in Maine," one physician declared, "have just about



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dented the surface of resort discrimination, and have a long road ahead in our work. I was particularly pleased about the result of the Colony incident, because of the fine cooperation of the Christian doctors, many of whom learned for the first time that certain hotels in their own back yard do not cater to Jews."

The state of Maine, legendary as a barometer of national political trends, has inspired the familiar phrase, "As Maine goes, so goes the nation. . . ." This also seems to hold true in regard to other trends. To some extent, Maine reflects national currents in regard to the continuing practice of religious and racial discrimination at resort hotels. Aside from Florida, no state surpasses Maine in its blatant bias toward vacationers because of religion. The state's resorts seem to labor under little inhibition in voicing this bias. They make their restrictive policies known in explicit terms.

Queries from a prospective guest with a "suspicious" sounding name will get a consistent pattern of response from hotels such as The Colony, in Kennebunkport; The Lookout Hotel, Ogunquit; York's Log Village and Saddleback Lake Camps, Rangeley; The Narranganset-by-the-Sea, Kennebunk Beach; Sprucewold Lodge, Boothbay Harbor; Keoka Guest House, Waterford; Severance Lodge, Centre Lovell; Sebasco Lodge and Cottages, Sebasco; Crystal Spring Camps, Belgrade; Ocean Point Hotel and Cottages, Ocean Point; Wildwood Lodge and Camps, Oquossoc; and Migis Lodge, South Casco.

Some will state, "Our clientele is gentile"; or "100 per cent of our clientele is Christian."

One will say, "The membership is an old family patronage, Christian following."

Another will write with tenderness, "It is not a personal prejudice but we feel you would not be happy in our environment."

Still another—"We might mention that the patronage of our resort is such that our guests do not welcome Hebrews."

And here again, is a variant—"The folks who come to Migis Lodge are a friendly and congenial group of Gentile people."

A Boston dentist of Jewish faith, vacationing last August, was given a sample of this Maine congeniality. The experience was as painful as a nip by one of Maine's over-sized lobsters.

"My family and I," he wrote to Maine's governor, Burton Cross, "were refused dinner reservations at the Colony restaurant of the Colony Hotel at Kennebunkport, Maine, purely on the basis of religious discrimination. After being interrogated as to whether I was a Christian, I was told my reservation could not be accepted.

"This has been the first time I ever met with such a distasteful experience and it is astonishing to find such bigotry in the great state of Maine, a state that expends such great effort to attract the tourist and whose byword is vacationland. I ask, sir, are such conditions tolerated in your state? Distasteful, un-American encounters such as this reflect no credit on Maine and certainly undermine its reputation as a glorious vacationland."

Everett F. Groaton, Executive Director of Maine's Development Commission, replied for the Governor:

"Governor Cross is very sorry for this unfortunate experience that you had. He wants you to understand that the people of Maine are very tolerant and, generally speaking, no discrimination is practiced here. We elect people of the Jewish faith to our Legislature. They are appointed by our Governors to judicial positions. They serve as mayors of our cities. They are teachers and principals of our high schools. We have 225 boys' and girls' camps in the state. Probably more than half of them are Jewish camps. These camps have a great many Gentile counselors on their staffs. The boys' and girls' camps that are mostly Gentile never refuse Jewish children.

"When an experience of the kind you received recently here occurs, it pains us deeply. We apologize for it."

Repelled by these unpleasant experiences, vacationers from all parts of the country have been by-passing Maine, costing the state, which needs its tourist trade, considerable loss of revenue.

"People are staying away from Maine in droves," said the counsel for the Maine State Equal Opportunities Committee, an attorney from Lewiston. In a public statement last summer, he added he had received complaints from prospective Maine vacationers in every section of the country. They found the discriminatory practices of the state's private resort owners highly repugnant.

One complaint cited by the Committee counsel was received from a Massachusetts resident who wrote to the Keoka Farm Guest House in Waterford, Maine, in quest of an accommodation. The hotel advised him that it catered only to a "Gentile clientele."

"It looks like we both made a mistake," the Massachusetts man replied. "You thought I was Jewish and I thought you were American."

The Massachusetts resident pointed to the recent Supreme Court decision against school segregation and said: "It looks like they now have a job to do in Maine."

The state of Florida matches Maine as far as resort discrimination is concerned. According to an ADL survey in 1953, almost every resort area on the east and west coasts had establishments which excluded Jews. Fort Lauderdale and Delray Beach proved the worst offenders in this respect. The ADL study showed that in replies for reservations at Fort Lauderdale, more than 50 per cent indicated discrimination against Jews while an additional 4 per cent used discriminatory language.

A spot check disclosed that 73 out of 88 Fort Lauderdale hotels displayed outdoor signs reading, "Gentiles Only," "Restricted Clientele," or "Selected Clientele."

Conditions proved even worse in Delray Beach, where one real estate agent boasted that Delray Beach is "the only city on the East coast fully restricted to Gentiles, both as to buying and renting."

The ADL survey found that virtually none of the resorts in the Delray Beach area offered accommodations on a non-discriminatory basis.

Signs of the Future

One of the few bright spots in the national picture of resort discrimination is the State of Washington, which is virtually free of the virus of restriction. A survey last year

of the state's principal vacation hotels showed that not one practiced religious discrimination. This is a result of persistent educational work by human relations groups and a state law against hotel discrimination.

"I am happy to affirm my belief," said Governor Arthur B. Langlie, "that discrimination based on race or religion by resorts and hotels is contrary to American ideals and democratic practices. We, in Washington, are proud of our excellent FEPC and public accommodation laws which make discrimination unlawful. . . . Discrimination is violative of our democratic ethic and our American concept of fair play."

In April, 1953, the Anti-Defamation League reported a "marked trend toward more democratic patronage policies" on the part of hotels and resorts in the Pocono Mountains area of Pennsylvania. The League report was based on a six-month study of 92 hotels. About 39 per cent of them seemed to have non-discriminatory policies. Thirty-nine of the hotels covered in the survey were also examined in 1950. At that time, 21 were found guilty of discrimination. Fifteen of these apparently changed their policies, accounting for a 71 per cent improvement.

"Despite such progress," the report noted, "some 13 per cent of the hotels and resorts covered in the latest study are apparently guilty of discriminatory practices. And 48 per cent of them carry language in their brochures and descriptive literature which can be, and often is, interpreted as indicating that the patronage of Jewish persons is unwelcome."

The State of New York recently broadened its campaign against racial and religious discrimination. It took action covering distribution of literature in New York for resorts outside the state. An agreement was reached whereby a local representative of certain hotels in Florida, Virginia and Canada would eliminate discriminatory phrases in his advertising in New York.

This action was the result of a complaint against a local agency which had printed and distributed a brochure describing a Miami Beach hotel as "near Catholic and other Christian churches." The agency had also circulated the hotel's own literature describing it as "catering only to a carefully restricted clientele."

Other gains include the following:

1. The Attorney General of New Hampshire warned all resorts against using such language in their advertising as "Gentiles only," "Selected," or "Restricted."
2. The Connecticut Commission on Civil Rights ruled that restrictive phraseology in descriptive brochures and refusal to cater to any but Gentiles violated the state statute.

3. The Maine Development Commission adopted a policy not to encourage patronage of discriminating resorts.

4. The Tucson Chamber of Commerce and the Tucson Sunshine Club, which publish a local travel guide agreed to discourage patronage of discriminatory resorts.

5. The Wyoming Commerce and Industry Commission agreed not to accept ads from resorts if such ads contained the language, "restricted clientele."

6. The Michigan Tourist Council, statewide agency, barred any ads with discriminatory language from its Regional Guide Books.

7. The Union Pacific Railroad decided not to carry in their travel booklet, "Dude Ranches," ads with discriminatory language.

8. Virginia passed a law prohibiting discriminatory advertising in the state.

9. The New York Auto Club, affiliate of the American Automobile Association, passed a resolution condemning any discrimination by hotels and resorts because of race and creed.

10. The national AAA removed from all its travel publications the listing of the Martha Washington Hotel, of Virginia Beach, Va., because of the hotel's discriminatory advertising.

11. The Hotel Red Book, nationally recognized as the resort and resort hotel guide, will no longer carry any ads containing discriminatory language.

Another hopeful development is the self-educational work now going on among travel agents, long considered the accomplices of the restrictive resort. This campaign is being led by a New York group called The Travel Agents Committee to Combat Discrimination by Resorts and Hotels, the membership of which is preponderantly non-Jewish. A Catholic, Protestant and Jew are its three co-chairmen. The group brought about the adoption of an important resolution by four leading chapters of the American Society of Travel Agents. They agreed not to hold meetings, conferences or conventions at any resort or hotel which discriminates because of religion or national origin.

These may seem like small advances against an entrenched national evil. But their force is cumulative. Representing a great deal of educational spade work, they reflect an active current which may be the forerunner of an eventual ripe tide. An age that is on the threshold of wiping out polio is bound to win out in its long struggle with diehard restrictive resorts.