

THE CIVIC INTEREST GROUP

"To me, the question of doing away with all race and religious bigotry in this country is the most important of all."

Theodore Roosevelt

This brochure has been made available by the Civic Interest Group  
1206 Etting Street, Baltimore 17, Maryland. LA 3-4074

## FOREWORD

How many times a day do you see children? Most of us see them quite often, playing in the parks with laughter and joy, on their way to school with serious faces, when we tuck them in at night and hear their last little confidential whispers of the excitement and thrills which have befallen them. Much of our community life is taken up with children, educating them, protecting them, loving them. But do we really think of them? Do we stop to think how many times a Negro child is told that he cannot go into this or that store and have an ice cream soda? Do we wonder whether a white child is troubled over the contradiction of ideals, when he is told, on the one hand, that God loves all men, and, on the other hand, that Negroes are dirty and inferior and unworthy of his friendship? Do we have any insight at all into one of the basic dilemmas of our American society?

We feel that most people have an uneasy feeling about this conflict. At best, they harbor a genuine concern; but perhaps they are not quite sure of what is being done, or how they can help. There are many things being done today to better race relations, and one of the groups which has tried to alleviate certain aspects of the problem which face our society is the Civic Interest Group, a student organization in Baltimore City.

You may ask yourselves, why is a group of students so concerned about this conflict in our society, why do they put pressure on the community for action? Perhaps it is because the conflict is real and vivid to us, because we have a sharp, clear memory of the first time we realized that all people are not treated equally in our city and nation. Yet we believe in these freedoms on which our nation was founded; the freedom to purchase goods and services, the freedom to use God given talents in the jobs best fitted to our qualifications, the right to an education, the freedom to treat people with the dignity they deserve. We do not see many of these freedoms now, but we want them for our children, so that they may never know a want of self respect, or the want of an opportunity to accept responsibility according to their capabilities.

However, students cannot carry on these activities alone. We need support; we need your support. We ask it not for ourselves; we know the injustices, we have seen the inequities, we cannot forget their impact on our lives. Rather, we ask for your support in the name of our unborn children, that they may never see, that they may never feel, that they may never know what it is to be second class citizens. We ask for your support so that we will never have to teach our children to fear and discriminate against a man because of his color. We ask because we are human beings, who see an inhuman condition which we must help in correcting.

## AFFIRMATION OF PURPOSE

We affirm the philosophical and religious ideal of non-violence as the foundation of our purpose, the presupposition of our faith, and the manner of our action. Nonviolence as it has grown from Judaic-Christian traditions seeks a social order of justice permeated by love. Integration of human endeavor represents the crucial first step towards such a society.

Through nonviolence, courage displaces fear; love transforms hate. Acceptance dissipates prejudice; hope ends despair. Peace dominates war; faith reconciles doubt. Mutual regard cancels enmity. Justice for all overthrows injustice. The redemptive community supercedes systems of gross social immorality.

Love is the central motif of nonviolence. Love is the force by which God binds man to Himself and man to man. Such love goes to the extreme; it remains loving and forgiving even in the midst of hostility. It matches the capacity of evil to inflict suffering with an even more enduring capacity to absorb evil, all the while persisting in love.

By appealing to conscience and standing on the moral nature of human existence nonviolence nurtures the atmosphere in which reconciliation and justice become actual possibilities.

(This statement of purpose was adopted in Raleigh, North Carolina, on April 17, 1960, at the close of the first general conference of student movement participants.)

## THE CIVIC INTEREST GROUP

### WHAT IS THE CIVIC INTEREST GROUP?

The Civic Interest Group is an organization of High School and College students from Baltimore and the surrounding area, dedicated primarily to the purpose of eliminating discrimination in places of public accommodation. The CIG employs the nonviolent tactics of negotiations, sitting-in and peaceful picketing, which were originally developed by the Fellowship of Reconciliation and the Congress of Racial Equality.

### SKETCH OF THE HISTORY AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE CIG

For a period of several years, a group of college students, chiefly from Morgan State College, acting in their role as American citizens, demonstrated at the Northwood Shopping Center from time to time, and successfully ended discrimination at several luncheon counters there. In February, 1960, the movement was again revived; additional momentum was given to it by the sit-in demonstrations in the Deep South.



This article was recently published in the Afro-American Newspaper concerning the organization and achievements of the CIG.

### DEDICATED EQUALITY FIGHTERS

The Civic Interest Group earned a place on the 1960 AFRO Honor Roll Through its courage, determination and sacrifice in making Baltimore a better place in which to live.

CIG, composed of college and high school students, organized March 16, 1960, is responsible.

Because of its non-violent marching and sit-in protests, today more than a hundred public eating places welcome customers regardless of color. A year ago, this was an exception rather than the rule.

The protest movement was born on the campus of Morgan State College under the direction of Ronald Merriweather, who has since graduated and is now an Army lieutenant.

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Following a series of sit-in demonstrations, picketing and negotiations, department store and chain restaurants dropped their traditional color bars.

As the protest picked up momentum, so did the number of restaurants changing their policy.

The students were subjected to all manners of treatments.

They were insulted by hecklers, criticized by restaurant officials, arrested by policemen, hauled before magistrates and judges, tried and convicted. All the fines meted out have been appealed.

Most carried full schedules of classroom work by day, negotiated, demonstrated and did homework by night. They were not to be denied.

The movement attracted both financial and moral support from all segments of the community. Leading ministers joined students on the picket line.

Students from 14 colleges and high schools throughout the city now participate in the CIG efforts.

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When Mr. Merriweather entered the service, he was succeeded by Levin West, who since resigned because of a heavy classroom schedule. Clarence Logan is current chairman.

Mr. West, aided greatly by Phillip H. Savage, John R. Quarles, Clarence Mitchell III, and Mr. Clarence Logan, maintained rapid pace set by the original leader.

Through it all, the students sought to conduct the campaign in a manner which reflected credit on themselves. Even store executives, whose establishments were demonstration targets, lauded them.

Leading organizations have taken note of their achievements. Both the Sidney Hollander Foundation and the NAACP cited CIG in impressive ceremonies.

In addition to restaurants services, the students have also worked for passage of civil rights legislation, labored hard and long in the register and vote campaign, and are pledged to help bring about equality in employment.

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The Civic Interest Group also staged mass demonstrations for the support of the Dixon Bill. There is reason to believe that even the compromise bill, enacted by the City Council last spring, would not have been passed without our efforts.

#### AREAS FOR FURTHER DEMONSTRATIONS

The Civic Interest Group has staged demonstrations at the following establishments, and is planning to continue its efforts at:

Hoopers	Charcoal House
Miller's Brothers	Cove
One West	White Rice Inn
Mount Vernon	Forty Fathoms
China Clipper	Oyster Bay
Harvey House	Hill Top
Eager House	Lotus Inn
Chesapeake	Herman's
China Inn	Love's
Jimmy Wu's	Northwood Theatre
Chung Hing's	City Hall
White Coffee Pot	United States Capitol
Snow White Grill	United States White House
Dickman's	Gwynn Oak Park
Mandell & Ballow's	Charlie's Luncheonette
Paul's	Angel's
Toddle House	Hilltop Theatre

#### SPECIAL AREAS OF CIVIC CONCERN

On August 14, 1960, twenty-eight dedicated students, members of the CIG, walked from Baltimore to Washington, D.C. in an effort to dramatize their emotional feelings concerning the struggle for

human dignity. These students, together with an additional two hundred members of the CIG, staged an unprecedented demonstration inside the Capitol of the United States. Moreover, during this same summer, the CIG played a vital role in the highly successful Register-to-Vote Campaign in Baltimore. As a result of this effort, the city now has 106,000 registered Negro voters.