

## THE STUDENT PEACE UNION and CIVIL RIGHTS

The STUDENT PEACE UNION supports the recent upsurge in civil rights activity, strongly endorses the methods and goals of the nonviolent movement, and admires the courage of those active in it. After 100 years of discrimination, masses of Negroes are demanding equality in every sphere of social existence. The gains they have made have caused them only to set their sights higher. In the South, the demand for use of lunch counters and rest rooms has escalated to a demand for across-the-board desegregation. In the North, the demand will be for equality in the social, political and economic spheres. It is especially heartening to see that now the demand is for immediate and total desegregation, rather than piecemeal progress, and that grass-roots change is still possible in this country. We believe it is the responsibility of all citizens to work toward the immediate elimination of racial discrimination, and we take this stand not only as individuals, but as a peace group, for freedom is an unquestionable requisite of the peaceful world we seek. Peace and freedom are morally and pragmatically inseparable: all the tensions and hate that have been exposed by the civil rights movement stand as clear evidence that peace does not exist wherever there is suppression.

There are significant differences between the two movements. While the civil rights movement has primarily a local focus and a specific community base from which to draw support, the peace movement focuses on international issues and national policy, and lacks a concrete community base. More important, however, are the fundamental similarities of means, obstacles and goals: both movements emphasize nonviolent direct action; both supplement the other's struggles by making demands on the power structure and opposing the same institutions; and both are struggling for a free society. Both are faced with problems that find their roots in the social and economic structure of our society. In addition to these and other similarities, there is an intrinsic unity among these movements for social/political change: a lasting peace cannot be maintained so long as society permits individuals, groups, or nations to be so oppressed that they feel that their only recourse is to violence, revolution, or war.

It is time that the white community realize that no individual's freedom is assured until all men are free. The civil rights struggle is not a struggle of Negroes versus whites - it is a struggle of all those who consider universal human dignity to be more than a mere platitude, versus those who promote the racist status quo. The recent action in the streets is a living demonstration that peace and freedom can be advanced by nonviolent means, though we must realize that nonviolence has not been and will not be automatically accepted, and will indeed be increasingly difficult to maintain as the civil rights movement begins to mobilize larger numbers, and deals with the equally vicious though more subtle forms of discrimination. In the face of these difficulties, we must remain committed to nonviolence as the most effective means of achieving genuine recognition of racial equality.

Politically, Congress has refused to meet America's needs. The President and the Executive Branch have also failed to meet their responsibility, not acting but only reacting to overwhelming pressure, and then with minimal response. We call on all governmental levels to end completely their still extensive support of racial inequality. We demand that our representatives exercise across-the-board leadership for complete elimination of discrimination. We call on the peace movement to refuse support of any candidates who do not actively commit themselves to the struggle for civil rights.

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Yet no movement whose goals are social change can rely on the government, for without creating pressures and support on the local level through direct action and confrontation, such goals cannot be achieved. It is therefore most important that the SPU participate in local civil rights movements. SPU, nationally and locally, should co-sponsor nonviolent direct action, and individuals should work for, and become rank-and-file members of local chapters of existing civil rights groups or community movements. If this is impossible, SPU chapters may be able to initiate action on their own, as was done very successfully in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Another national as well as local responsibility of the SPU is to provide literature on and conduct workshops in nonviolence theory and practice for use in civil rights action. The recent development of tutorial programs is additional activity, particularly appropriate for a student group. SPU strongly endorses tutorials. Much help can also be given during crises by publicity in other parts of the country, letters to the officials and the groups involved, fund raising and sympathy demonstrations.

We call upon private citizens, especially students, to support and actively to participate in the nonviolent movement, including civil disobedience if necessary, so that all citizens may receive the benefits of our society, and that all men may live in peace, with freedom and dignity.

\* "The SPU works toward a society which will ensure both peace and freedom and which will suffer no individual or group to be exploited by another." - from SPU Statement Of Purpose.

(This resolution was written by R. Hunter Morey, Pat Cusick and Bill Hicks of North Carolina, Pete Allen of Chicago, and Elaine Tarry of Boston; and was passed by the 1963 SPU Convention, Princeton, N.J., June 20 - 23, 1963.)

#### STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Student Peace Union is an organization of young people who believe that neither war nor the threat of war can any longer be successfully used to settle international disputes and that neither human freedom nor the human race can long survive in a world committed to militarism.

Without committing any member to a precise statement of policy, the SPU draws together young people for a study of alternatives to war and engages in education and action to end the present Arms Race. The SPU works toward a society which will ensure both peace and freedom and which will suffer no individual or group to be exploited by another. Because both East and West have pursued foreign policies which are not in the interests of their own people or the people of the world and because both bear major responsibility for the Cold War, the Student Peace Union believes that the peace movement must act independently of both East and West, must apply the same standard of criticism to both, and must seek new and creative means of achieving a free and peaceful society.

The Student Peace Union was started at the University Of Chicago in 1958 out of the belief that young people should both study and help prevent the threatening nuclear war. We now have about 80 active chapters and over 3,500 active members all over the country. Membership is based on living acceptance of the Statement Of Purpose, national dues being \$3 per year. To join, just send your acceptance of the Statement Of Purpose and \$3 to a SPU office. The addresses are: National Student Peace Union, 6029 S. University Ave., Chicago 37, Illinois. New York office, SPU, 5 Beekman Street, room 1025, New York 38, N.Y. North Carolina office, SPU, box 202, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.