

"The strongest movement of peaceful mass demonstrations by Negroes is a striking new one in the South, revealing understandable... Let Congress heed their rising voices, for they will be heard."

-New York Times editorial
Saturday, March 23, 1968

Heed Their Rising Voices

As the whole world knows by now, thousands of Southern Negro students are engaged in widespread non-violent demonstrations in pursuit of recognition of the right to live in human dignity as guaranteed by the U. S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights. In their efforts to equalize these guarantees, they are being met by an unprovoked wave of terror by those who would deny and negate that movement which the whole world looks upon as setting the pattern for modern freedom....

In Orangeburg, South Carolina, when 600 students peacefully sought to buy daggers and coffee at lunch counters in the business district, they were furiously attacked, tear-gassed, pushed to the floor in breaking number with live bullets, arrested en masse and hauled into an eight hundred-wire stadium to stand for hours in the bitter cold.

In Montgomery, Alabama, when students sang "My Country, 'Tis of Thee" on the State Capitol steps, their leaders were assaulted from behind, and thousands of police charged with clubs and batons charged the Alabama State College campus. When the brave students hady protested to stop satisfaction by refusing to re-register, their going jail was considered as an attempt to strike their non resistance.

In Tallahassee, Atlanta, Nashville, Savannah, Greensboro, Memphis, Richmond, Charlotte, and a host of other cities in the South, young African American students, in face of the active might of official State apparatus and police power, have boldly stepped forth as

proponents of democracy. Their courage and unending restraint have inspired millions and given a new dignity to the cause of freedom.

Small wonder that the Southern violators of the Constitution fear this new, non-violent brand of freedom fighter... even as they lose the opposing right-to-peace movement. Small wonder that they are determined to destroy the one man who, more than any other, symbolizes the new spirit now sweeping the South—the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., world-famous leader of the Montgomery Bus Protest. For it is his doctrine of non-violence which has inspired and guided the students in their winning ways of sit-ins, and it is this same Dr. King who has headed and is president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference—the organization which is spearheading the ongoing right-to-peace movement. Under Dr. King's guidance the Leadership Conference conducted Student Workshops and Seminars in the philosophy and techniques of non-violent resistance.

Again and again the Southern violators have provoked Dr. King's peaceful protests with intimidation and violence. They have bombed his home, slung killing gas and clubs. They have assaulted his people. They have arrested him seven times—first "seducing," "luring" and similar "offenses." And now they have charged him with "obstruction" and felony under which they could imprison him for two years. Obviously, their real purpose is to remove him physically as the leader to whom the students and millions

of others—both for guidance and support, and thereby to intimidate all leaders who may rise in the South. Their strategy is to hinder this effective movement, and then to demonstrate Negro American and weaken their will to struggle. The student of Martin Luther King, spiritual leader of the student sit-in movement, clarity, direction, is an integral part of the total struggle for freedom in the South.

Decent-minded Americans cannot help but applaud the creative daring of the students and the great heroism of Dr. King. But this is one of those moments in the stormy history of Freedom when men and women of good will must do more than applaud the righteousness of others. The America whose good name hangs in the balance before a world of eyes, the America whose heritage of Liberty hangs before Upholders of the Constitution are defending, is our America as well as theirs....

We urge that their rising voices—you—let us join our own.

We must extend ourselves above and beyond moral support and render the material help so urgently needed by those who are taking the risk (losing jail, and even death in a grievous re-affirmation of our Constitution and its Bill of Rights).

We urge you to join hands with our fellow Americans in the South by supporting, with your dollars, the Campaign Appeal for all those men—the devotee of Martin Luther King—the support of the embattled students—and the struggle for the righteous.

Your Help Is Urgently Needed . . . NOW !!

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- We in the South who are struggling daily for dignity and freedom warmly endorse this appeal
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