

An Uneasy Peace

The two-weeks "recess" in the sit-down demonstration of Negro students at two downtown variety lunch counters is at most only an uneasy peace. Unanswered and unsettled is the issue, with all its deep-rooted complexities and far-reaching implications, that the demonstrators stirred up.

A tense situation which needed only the spark of an overt act to cause it to explode was undoubtedly averted only by action taken the past Saturday. As it was, there was a bomb scare touched off by a racial disturbance. The two stores were emptied and closed. Both stores opened Monday for business with their lunch counters closed for the time being. Meanwhile, A & T College students agreed to halt their demonstrations for two weeks.

That is the surface appearance of the situation now. Hidden from view are the cross currents which must be beneath the surface. More specifically, these are the feelings and attitudes at work with a very delicate matter which calls for far more than the mechanics of closing lunch counters and an armistice in student demonstrating. Unfortunately, the true nature of these undercurrents is hard to gauge until it is dangerously late.

One thing should be made clear. This is that the white leadership of Greensboro does not bear the full obligation and responsibility of trying to work out the situation. Negro leadership is no less obligated than the white leadership. It is a mistaken notion, too, if the Negroes of Greensboro think they have a right to make demands without being willing to face up to the responsibilities which go with rights. Members of minority groups strengthen their case for more privileges and greater recognition as they demonstrate their worthiness. Theirs is the obligation to be patient and cooperative as customs and policies that have long prevailed are subjected to the winds of change.

Reorganization of the Greensboro Interracial Commission has been proposed for the purpose of strengthening it as an agency to mediate racial differences. In the absence of details, we cannot pass judgment on the proposal. We do know, though, that every possible means of encouraging communication between the races should be explored and furthered. There should be full discussion of the broad subject of race relations, with special stress on the phase which is currently threatening the general good feeling between whites and Negroes that has existed through the years.

We have to live together. We must solve our differences in reason and harmony if this coexistence is to be peaceful.