



CANADIAN
UNITARIAN
COUNCIL

CONSEIL
UNITARIEN
DU CANADA

Resolutions – 1963 – 1986 – Peace and Disarmament, A Summary

The CUC adopted 16 resolutions on Peace and Disarmament between 1963 and 1986.

This activity was set in a definition of peace that went beyond absence of war or cessation of hostilities, including a broader concept of mental, physical and spiritual well-being of people. As part of its peace policy, the CUC endorsed the need to work for the absence of poverty and economic insecurity, a healthier environment, and equal opportunity for the development of human potential. It acknowledged that warfare is a waste of human and natural resources and causes needless suffering. Warfare anywhere on earth endangers the peace of the world.

Early resolutions took the position that every opportunity for negotiation should be explored and pursued to its utmost, rather than dependence being put upon armed struggle in the resolution of international disputes. Peace should be encouraged by strengthening international bodies, weakening military alliances and working toward disarmament. In 1968 the Annual Meeting urged the Canadian government to stop shipment of all types of military equipment and materials of war to any country unless the supplies were to be used in support of a United Nations peace-keeping action. A few years later, the meeting encouraged the government of Canada to refuse on principle to promote or engage in the sale of any and all war material to any other country, but instead trade only in the goods that promote human life and well being, and to provide truly impartial medical aid and relief, either bilaterally or through international channels, to victims of war or other disasters, with need, rather than political alignment, being the criterion.

Throughout this period, the major thrust of the policies was to achieve peace through disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament. Initial resolutions sought to prevent extension of nuclear arms capability and to encourage reduction of armaments; in 1976 the Annual Meeting advocated total and complete nuclear disarmament for all countries. In 1986, the delegates recommended that Canada cancel its nuclear submarine acquisition program.

In 1984, the meeting directed the Board to formulate a denominational policy on nuclear disarmament to develop and coordinate a nuclear disarmament action program for



implementation by Unitarian members and societies. A number of suggestions were made for the form in which this would take place. No information is available about whether this was ever carried out.

The resolutions include recommendations that Unitarians and our congregations support other organizations with similar aims: Peace Research Institute, Amnesty International, and notably Project Ploughshares. CUC became a member-supporter of Ploughshares, and had a place on the Board for many years. We also supported Operation Dismantle, especially in its attempt to develop a “Global Referendum on Disarmament.” We recommended to the International Association of Religious Freedom (IARF) that they encourage participation in the Global Referendum among their member countries.

A number of these resolutions, of course, reflect the period of the Cold War in which they were adopted. However, the commitment to disarmament and peace certainly gives us a context for supporting the current activity against landmines, and for objecting to the sale of arms as a part of Canada’s trade policies.

This summary is developed from resolutions adopted in 1963, 1964, 1968, 1974 (2 resolutions), 1975, 1976, 1979, 1981 (2), 1982 (3), 1983, 1984, 1986.