THE COMIC BOOK
THAT CHANGED THE WORLD

A Thesis
submitted to the Faculty of
The School of Continuing Studies
and of
The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of
Master of Arts in Liberal Studies

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Washington, D.C.
October 31, 2012
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ABSTRACT

For more than fifty years, a myth-like story has grown around the history and influence of a fourteen page comic book called *Martin Luther King and the Montgomery Story*. This paper seeks to answer many of the questions surrounding the comic book by tracing its history from the stage setting days of the 1954 Senate “Comic Book” hearings, through its inspirational involvement in the civil rights movement, to the present day stories of its influence around the world.

Through interviews, reviews of primary historical documents as well as government documents and testimony, this thesis uncovers new information about the earliest days of the comic book, including its role as an inspiration to those who participated in the first Greensboro sit-in on February 1, 1960. Though published by the Fellowship of Reconciliation, perhaps the most prominent public claim has been that the comic book was produced by the “Al Capp Organization.” This thesis disproves that claim, instead establishing Graphic
Information Services (GIS) as the producer of the comic book as well as offering an evidence supported theory as to who was running GIS at the time and how the company came to exist. This thesis also shows through primary documents how the story was written and by whom.

*Martin Luther King and the Montgomery Story* is a comic book that has had a profound influence both in the United States and around the world. It has been uniquely successful in spreading the philosophy and discipline of nonviolent social resistance and serves as perhaps one of the strongest examples of the potential for comic books as a medium for inspiration.
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I first heard of Martin Luther King and the Montgomery Story from John Lewis in the spring of 2008. I had been working for him less than a year when I was driving him to an event and we got to talking about comic books. Over the years in so many of these moments he has told me small stories from his days in the civil rights movement that together have amounted to a collection of cherished life lessons lighting a path of perseverance and determination that few could ever walk.

I remember John Lewis sitting in the front passenger seat as he gently clowned on me about a comic convention in Atlanta I had been attending for a number of years. But then he said, “You know, there was a comic book during the movement. It was very influential.”

It took me three years to track down an original copy but in that time I found digital copies of the comic online and Congressman Lewis told me the story of Ezell Blair and Joseph McNeil. I became fascinated with the idea of comic books as a driver for social change. I had read comic books since I was a kid, never forgetting the day my grandmother bought me my first comic off the rack at a Bi-Lo grocery store (Uncanny X-Men #317, incidentally).
As I was coming to understand the importance of *Martin Luther King and the Montgomery Story* to the early days of the civil rights movement, the stories I was hearing from John Lewis were becoming an epic mythology to me that I couldn’t understand why more people didn’t know about. It drove me to ask him, “Why don’t you write a comic book?”

John Lewis did write a comic book, a graphic novel in fact, and I was lucky enough to write it with him. We worked on it at night on the phone or on weekends here and there for nearly four years. What we created is to some extent the next chapter; it shows what happened *after* the Montgomery bus boycott. It tells the story of a boy, born the son of sharecroppers, who grew into a student, an activist, and a Congressman. The sit-in movement, the Freedom Rides, SNCC, the March on Washington, the Mississippi Freedom Summer, Bloody Sunday in Selma, Alabama, the assassination of his friends and mentors, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert Kennedy—John Lewis lived and helped lead one of the most successful and heartbreakingly necessary non-violent revolutions in history.

But questions about *Martin Luther King and the Montgomery Story* stayed with me. Scholars have largely ignored the comic and very few scholarly works exist
documenting its origins and influence. The comic is more than fifty years old and, perhaps most importantly, the people who experienced it, who passed it out at churches and schools in the fifties and sixties are even older. Memories fade. History is lost. I hope to capture the story while we still can.
CHAPTER 1
MANUFACTURED LIGHTNING

At times, history and fate meet at a single time in a single place to shape a turning point in man's unending search for freedom.
President Lyndon B. Johnson March 15, 1965 Joint Session of Congress

They happen so fast. They strike like lightning. The bright flash of an unforeseen moment of inspiration that can change everything. We like to hold these moments, turn them around and look at them from every angle. We like to see how they came about, what sort of disjointed facts we can cobble together to explain why something happened that had never happened before, why it worked. To some degree, I suppose, it gives us comfort to understand these things and to believe that we should have seen it coming; we just missed the clues along the way. But they can also serve as a blueprint, a handbook for manufacturing lightning.

The genesis of these moments is often long in the making. They start to form well before the lightning bolt ever strikes. It could be just a breeze that begins to blow halfway across the world. It could be a shifting ocean current deep underneath the water’s surface. Then somewhere the wind picks up, the clouds gather and swirl. The sky turns dark and the rain begins to fall. When
everything is just right, when the wind and the clouds and
the temperature and the pressure are just right, when the
storm has gathered, then and only then can it happen.

On February 1, 1960, Ezell Blair was an eighteen-year-
old student at North Carolina A&T State University when he
and four of his friends led a protest at a Woolworth’s
lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina. They wanted
something to eat, but because they were black they could
not be served at the segregated lunch counter. It was a
shocking and dangerous act of defiance against the long
established system known as Jim Crow that had permeated
nearly every aspect of Southern culture at the time. The
next day, February 2, 1960, the front page of the
Greensboro Record featured a quote from Blair who “declared
that Negro adults ‘have been complacent and fearful. It is
time for someone to wake up and change the situation … and
we decided to start here.’”

Rumblings of protests had already taken place in
Nashville, Tennessee. In late 1959, Jim Lawson and
students attending his nonviolent workshops led test sit-ins
that avoided direct confrontation. Yet history largely
remembers the non-violent confrontation in Greensboro as
the spark that set fires of protest that quickly spread
across the American South. It was exactly one week after
the sit-ins began in Greensboro that Lawson and his students began their own sit-in campaign in Nashville.

“It was an accident of history,” Rev. Lawson said to me in a phone conversation one afternoon in August 2012.¹ Blair and the others were not acting as a part of any formal civil rights group, not the NAACP, not the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), and not the Southern Christian Leadership Council (SCLC), which had been founded just three years prior by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Bayard Rustin, and others. They had not been through any substantial training in the practice and discipline of non-violent action. They were simply young men who felt that segregation was wrong and they were going to do something about it. Yet, somehow, someway, their actions swept across the American South like thunder rolling from a great flash of lightning.

We may never know why the Greensboro sit-ins had such a profound effect. Perhaps it was the large amount of media coverage the protests generated or the long overdue release of deeply buried dreams unwittingly unearthed by young people who didn’t know enough to be afraid of the consequences. But, a storm, at its most basic level, is what happens when opposites meet, when hot air meets cold

¹ James Lawson, Interview with Author, Phone Interview, Los Angeles, August 29, 2012
air. We can try to better understand what went into their decisions. We can try and figure out what inspired them. We can try to determine when hot met cold and what pushed them together.

According to a 1968 account by William Robert Miller, it was late January 1960 in Greensboro, NC, when Ezell Blair, read a fourteen-page four-color comic book distributed by the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR) called "Martin Luther King and the Montgomery Story." The ten-cent comic book told the story of Rosa Parks’ arrest, of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and of the Montgomery Bus Boycott supplemented by a short introduction to the Gandhian principles of non-violent social resistance. A few days later, Blair showed the comic book to his roommate, Joseph McNeill. Flipping through the thin newsprint pages, McNeil was moved. Looking up at Blair, McNeill declared, "Let’s have a boycott!"²

Is this true? Was a comic book responsible for inspiring the Greensboro sit-ins? There is no way to fully understand if those who became known as the Greensboro Four would have done what they did if Blair had never handed McNeil that comic book. But the influence of those moments and the atmosphere that led up to it when Blair and McNeil

let their eyes fall over the fourteen pages of words and pictures are moments in history yet to be fully examined. Could a comic book be the unknown variable that pushes otherwise ordinary young people to greatness?

To say that the idea to produce a comic book about civil rights in 1957 was a radical idea would be to underestimate the overwhelmingly negative popular attitudes towards comic books at the time. Just three years prior, growing anti-comic book sentiment came to a head when the U.S. Senate Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency conducted an investigation into the negative effects of comic books on America’s youth. The investigation, and the public spectacle of the hearings held near the height of McCarthyism, was enough to devastate the industry and put thousands of comic book professionals out of work. But, like the sudden shift in wind, it signaled a brewing storm. It was not the first signal. One has to go back a little further to truly find the beginning of this story.
CHAPTER 2

WHAT’S WRONG WITH THE COMICS?

“Most comics, as I see them,” said John Mason Brown on March 2, 1948, “are the marijuana of the nursery, they are the bane of the bassinet, they are the horror of the home, the curse of the kids and a threat to the future. The comics offer final and melancholy proof that, even among the youth, the mind is the most unused muscle in the United States.” Brown was a Harvard College graduate, a veteran of the Second World War, a columnist for The Saturday Review, and a drama critic. On March 2, 1948, Brown was participating in a debate, “What’s wrong with the Comics?” on America’s Town Meetings of the Air arguing that comic books were a destructive force to the moral fiber of America’s youth.¹

The debate took place in a large brick building located at 123 West 43rd Street, between Sixth Avenue and Broadway, in New York City, known as the Town Hall. It first opened on January 12, 1921. Built by the League for Political Education, an organization that fought for the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment, the Town Hall was meant as a place for the free exchange of ideas among

people from all walks of life. Even the building’s design was meant to reflect the most democratic of principles with the prestigious design firm McKean, Kim & White excluding box seats in favor of every seat having an unobstructed view. “Not a bad seat in the house,” became the Hall’s motto.

Today, the Town Hall plays host to popular radio shows like “A Prairie Home Companion,” and shows known as “Morning Performances” are offered free to schoolchildren during the day. But its tenure boasts a long history of notable performances, incidents, and firsts. In 1921, Margaret Sanger was arrested and carried off stage for speaking to a mixed gender audience about contraception. Marian Anderson made her New York debut at the Hall on December 30, 1935, after other venues refused to allow her to perform because she was black. Whitney Houston gave her first performance there. Over time, the Town Hall became as much a reflection of the changing social fabric as a performance space.

The radio show America’s Town Meetings of the Air began production at the Hall in 1935 as a six-week experiment. It was met with such a positive response that it continued production for more than twenty years. George V. Denny, who was also the Executive Director of the League
for Political Education, moderated the program and directed the choosing of the weekly topics. *America’s Town Meetings of the Air* was the forerunner to the modern talk show, featuring a panel of guests discussing topical issues that were for the first time coupled with audience participation.

It was common for shows to feature panels of experts who answered questions from a moderator, but *America’s Town Meetings of the Air* offered the audience the opportunity to question the experts themselves and cheer or jeer their responses. Heckling from the audience was not uncommon. After a time, listeners from across the country could call in and ask their questions as well. It was a fitting venue to begin a discussion that started with a simple question yet would ultimately have worldwide consequences and weave itself into the fabric of pop culture, race, and politics in America.

In the debate, Brown squared off with Marya Mannes, former editor at Vogue and Glamour, George Hecht, who at the time was publisher of Parents Magazine and True Comics, and Al Capp, who just one year prior had received the National Cartoonist Society’s most prestigious honor, the Reuben Award. Capp countered Brown with a story. “This whole thing,” Capp said, “gives me an idea for one of my
own contributions to juvenile delinquency, which I call, rather defiantly, my comic strip.”

“The scene is the typical American home of a typical American family which I call ‘Kinsey’ of course. Supper is over and seated in the living room are Mr. and Mrs. Kinsey and their eleven-year-old son, Kingsblood. They are discussing what they read that day in their typical American newspaper.”

“Lil’ Kingsblood has gone through all that and frankly it bored him. He’s reading the one page of the newspaper where there’s real action, the comics page. Mrs. Kinsey, noticing that lil’ Kingsblood isn’t joining in this uplifting discussion the front page of their family newspaper, glances over her shoulder and screams a typical horrified American mother type scream.”

“Look,’ she screams to Mr. Kinsey. ‘Look at what your son is reading. Why this thing is full of murder, crime, violence, and look, there is even a boy in it who doesn’t think that a girl in it is repulsive so it’s full of S-E-X too.”

“Mr. Kinsey speaks, ‘Why do you bother with that old comic page anyhow, Son? Why don’t you read the news?’”
“‘I did, Pop,’ replied the lad, ‘and oh boy its all full of murder, crime, violence,’ and he winks, ‘and S-E-X too, Pops.’”  

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CHAPTER 3
THE RISE OF COMIC BOOKS

According to the Congressional Record: “The first comic strip to appear in a newspaper was Outcailt's "Yellow Kid" which was introduced in the New York World in 1896. The concept, however, of an entire publication devoted to comics was not developed until 1911 when the Chicago American offered reprints of Bud Fisher's Mutt and Jef' in pamphlet form as a premium for clipping coupons from six daily issues.”¹ Americans have a long history of avidly clipping coupons and can apparently count contributing to the creation of comic books as one of its fortunate byproducts.

Comic books most similar to those we know today arrived later. “The pattern for present-day comic books was set in 1935 when New Fun, a 64-page collection of original material printed in four colors, was put on the newsstands. Action Comics were put on sale in 1938, and Superman Quarterly Magazine appeared in 1939. The number of comic book publishers has increased and the circulation figures have risen astonishingly since that time.”²


² Ibid.
This history omits some things, including a thirty-six page single issue called *Famous Funnies: A Carnival of Comics* that was published in 1933 and distributed through Woolworth’s department stores. It was remarkable not only as an evolutionary step in creating the modern comic book, but as an example of the financial success of early comic book publishers. Though the first issue did not turn a profit, it sold 90 percent of its print run. Subsequent issues of the *Famous Funnies* title generated profits upwards of $30,000 per issue at the height of its 218 issue run.3

Seeing the potential, publishers eager to find their own success in the burgeoning format began creating original stories and new characters, thereby unknowingly launching the “Golden Age” of comics. Of this the Congressional Record says, “Action Comics were put on sale in 1938, and Superman Quarterly Magazine appeared in 1939. The number of comic book publishers has increased and the circulation figures have risen astonishingly since that

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time."\(^4\) In a few short years Superman, Wonder Woman, Batman, Captain America, and other superheroes redefined the pantheon of pop culture mythology. Artists and writers hungry for work and often from outside the commercial mainstream found sanctuary in the new industry. Publishers often only paid page rates—an agreed upon per page payment—and would claim the copyright and thereby all future royalties and revenues from the creator’s iconic characters.

Comic books were unique because they spoke directly to young people. They were a massive divergence from the traditional sales model that targeted parents as the purchasing decision makers. Creators were able to tell stories they could not tell in other mediums, their imaginations only limited by what they could write and draw. Young people devoured them. As the Allied powers claimed victory in the Second World War, Captain America and his colleagues were selling tens of millions of issues per week. For every comic book sold, five to ten young

people read it. Comic books reached more people than any other medium in America.⁵

It was big business. It was estimated that, in 1940, “publishers of at least 150 comic-book titles shared annual revenues of over $20 million. Ten years later, in 1950, about 300 comic-book titles were being published with annual revenues of nearly $41 million. The upswing in the next 3 years brought the number of titles to over 650 and the gross to about $90 million. Average monthly circulation jumped from close to 17 million copies in 1940 to 68 million in 1953”⁶ This phenomenal growth of the comic books industry, however, contained a seed of its own subsequent demise.

In the postwar years, as the world struggled to rebuild and cope with the beginning of the atomic age, young people’s taste in comic books took a dark turn. Crime, horror, lust—tensions building throughout the war years exploded into comics as the world sifted through the consequences of global conflict. Vocal critics emerged, lambasting comic books as a cause of increasing juvenile delinquency.


delinquency. Churches warned of their dangers. Schools and libraries organized burnings where young people were urged to throw their comic books onto bonfires to purge the lingering scourge from their homes.\footnote{As is sometimes the case with history and unintended consequences, many of the comics that were burned are incredibly valuable today. Their rarity and value has no doubt been enhanced by the concerted effort to eradicate them.}
CHAPTER 4

CONGRESS VS. COMIC BOOKS

For Dr. Frederic Wertham, there was no greater threat to young people than some of the stories found in comic books. "As long as the crime comic books industry exists in its present forms there are no secure homes," said Dr. Wertham in 1954. His criticism, and particularly his book, Seduction of the Innocent, stoked the fires of anti-comic book sentiment that culminated in two Senate hearings conducted over three days in the spring and summer of 1954 at the federal courthouse in New York City. But it would be from this great front of hot air that our storm would form.

When the public hearings were first gavelled to order on April 24, 1954, Senator Robert Hendrickson, a Republican from New Jersey and chair of the subcommittee, noted the large amount of mail his office received from parents who "are greatly concerned about the possible detrimental influence" of some of the stories being told in comic books.¹ Two other members of the subcommittee were also present. One was Senator Thomas C. Hennings, Jr., a fifty-year-old Democrat from Missouri. The other member of the

Subcommittee to participate was Senator Estes Kefauver, a Democrat from Tennessee who went on to be nominated for Vice President in 1956 on the Democratic ticket of Adlai Stevenson, ultimately losing to President Dwight D. Eisenhower and his running mate Richard Nixon.

The public outrage was most poignant when discussing the marketing of crime and horror comics directly to children, particularly when correlating the increasing sales of comics to the shifts in subject matter, and attempting to draw a connection between comic books and widely reported increases in juvenile delinquency. It was as if comic book publishers were being blamed for the problems afflicting America’s youth. The Second World War taught a new generation of the horrors of global armed conflict and was just one dramatic example of the introduction of the moral acceptability of violence into the daily lives of young people. But the idea of morally acceptable violence was not in question, in fact quite the opposite. It was the expectation that all violence be directed for a moral end.

In their version of history, the subcommittee is clear to place the increases in sales over the past decade next to the growing genres of crime and horror comics, noting “In the years between 1945 and 1954, two striking changes
took place in the comic-book industry. The first was the great increase in the number of comic books published and the number of firms engaged in their publication. The second was the increased number of comic books dealing with crime and horror and featuring sexually suggestive and sadistic illustrations. This increase of materials featuring brutality and violence is being offered to any child who has the 10-cent purchase price. That these examples of crime and horror are aimed at children is clearly evident from the advertisements with which each issue is replete."

Similar criticisms had also been directed at the Television industry but it was particularly wounding to the comic book industry because they marketed and sold directly to young people, turning one of comics’ greatest strengths against them.

The hearings played out with all the drama and showmanship of a true political spectacle. Taking place in a Federal courthouse, it seemed not unlike a trial of the comic book industry. Witnesses testified, evidence was entered into the record, and being in New York City only made it easier for members of the press to attend.

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Chairman Hendrickson opened the hearing with a clear statement of purpose, saying, “Today and tomorrow the United States Senate Subcommittee Investigating Juvenile Delinquency, of which I am the chairman, is going into the problem of horror and crime comic books. By comic books, we mean pamphlets illustrating stories depicting crimes or dealing with horror and sadism. We shall not be talking about the comic strips that appear daily in most of our newspapers.”³

Understandably, the hearings sparked public outrcies against government censorship. Responding to these concerns, the Chairman attempted to strike a tone of investigation rather than outright condemnation. “It would be wrong to assume that crime and horror comic books are the major cause of juvenile delinquency. It would be just as erroneous to state categorically that they have no effect whatsoever in aggravating the problem. We are here to determine what effect on the whole problem of causation crime and horror comic books do have.”⁴

As the Chairman attempted to call the first witness of the proceedings, Senator Kefauver interrupted. An

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⁴ Ibid., 2.
experienced politician, he began his participation in the hearing by sucking up. “Mr. Chairman,” said Senator Kefauver, “before we call the first witness, I just want to compliment the chairman upon a very excellent statement of the purposes of this subcommittee and of this hearing here.”

Senator Kefauver then turned his attention to reminding everyone of the most serious possible consequences hanging over the comic book industry. “I would like to reemphasize that I feel that congressional hearings must be related to something that the Federal Government has jurisdiction of. This subcommittee is looking into the violations of various Federal laws, such as the Dyer Act, Mann Act, violations of the interstate commerce, and in connection with the subject matter under investigation we, of course, do have a postal statute which prohibits the mailing or using the mails for the distribution and dissemination of indecent and scurrilous literature which will be part of the subject matter of this hearing.”

Sen. Kefauver continued, invoking a name feared by many, “I think it is also important to point out that Mr. J. Edgar Hoover's report of yesterday shows that whereas

\[5\] Ibid., 3.
the increase in population last year was 5 percent, crime had gone up 20 percent and the particularly large increase was in connection with burglary and stealing of automobiles. The interesting point is that a large part of the burglaries was committed by juveniles. Also juveniles, according to the FBI report, comprise 53.6 percent of those arrested for stealing automobiles. As the chairman said, we do not have all the answers, but I think that it is important to look into the various matters which Mr. Hoover and other experts do bring out in connection with the increase in juvenile delinquency…"

When Sen. Kefauver finished, the Chairman retook the attention of those gathered for the hearing, and replied, perhaps sarcastically, “The Senator from Tennessee is entirely correct and the Chair wishes to congratulate and commend the Senator for his contribution.”

The first person to testify was the Executive Director of the Subcommittee, Richard Clendenen. The Subcommittee’s Associate Chief Counsel, Herbert Wilson Beaser, questioned him. Beaser began by asking Clendenen about his background, “Mr. Clendenen, will you outline briefly your education and experience in the field of juvenile delinquency?”

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6 Ibid.
This time is was Chairman Hendrickson who interrupted. “Before Mr. Clendenen answers that question,” said Chairman Hendrickson, “I would like to say that the Senate Subcommittee on Juvenile Delinquency feels that we have a very able staff director.” Clendenen thanked the Chairman and proceeded to answer Beaser’s question. “Prior to coming to my present position I had worked in the United States Children’s Bureau for a period of 7 years, and held there the position of Chief of the Juvenile Delinquency Branch. Prior to that time I had served in administrative capacities in institutions for emotionally disturbed children and delinquent children and also have had experience as a probation officer in a juvenile court.”

Beaser then confirmed Clendenen was a trained social worker before asking the question that would truly mark the beginning of the hearings. “Speaking on behalf of the staff,” asked Beaser, “have you conducted an investigation into the comic-book industry?” Clendenen responded, “Yes, sir; we have.”

Clendenen began by defining the investigation, “Our investigation into the comic-book industry has been almost exclusively limited to those comics which themselves center about horror and crime...” Beaser probed, “When you say crime and horror comics could you be more specific in describing
what you are talking about?” Ready for the cue, Clendenen responded, “Well, we have prepared a certain number of slides which show pictures taken from comic books of the type to which we have addressed ourselves.”

The lights dimmed and a projector whirred to life as the attention of the hearing turned to Clendenen’s slide show presentation. “Now, I would like, for the purpose of illustration, to relate very briefly in summary fashion 6-stories, together with pictures illustrating these 6 stories which will give you a sampling of the type of comic books that we are talking about here. Now, in presenting these I would like to say that while it is not a random sampling actually it is a deliberate sampling in trying to present the various types of stories and pictures that appear. These are not typical, rather they are quite typical of the stories and pictures which appear in this type of publication.”

Clendenen, as might be expected, chose his samples from the most egregious departures from mainstream fare. Clendenen begins with a story titled “Sanctuary.” Clicking through slides of comic book pages, he said, “You will note that this shot shows certain inhabitants of this sanctuary which is really a sort of sanitarium for freaks where freaks can be isolated from other persons in society. You
will note 1 man in the picture has 2 heads and 4 arms, another body extends only to the bottom of his rib.” As an example, themes from this story reflect as much upon the emotional experience of young people at the time as any association with juvenile delinquency. Isolation, not feeling “normal,” and body issues are easily relatable themes for young people. The disfigurement of the “freaks” can also be seen as a reflection of the atomic age fears of radiation as well as the large number of disfigured veterans that returned from the Second Word War.

Though the sexual revolution of the 1960’s had not yet occurred, attitudes towards women and sexuality were changing. This is something of which young people were no doubt acutely aware as they struggled to understand their own sexuality and their relationship with the opposite sex. Standards of beauty, gender expectations, the consequences of trying to be someone you are not, are all themes that shine through as Clendenen concludes. “But the greatest horror of all the freaks in the sanctuary is the attractive looking girl in the center of the picture who disguises her grotesque body in a suit of foam rubber. The final picture shows a young doctor in the sanitarium as he sees the girl he loves without her disguise.” The story ends as the
“doctor fires bullet after bullet into the girl's misshapen body.”

The next five stories contain similar levels of violence, crime, horror, and immorality. It is interesting to note that throughout his testimony, and with much agreement from Subcommittee members, Clendenen does not in any way condemn violence. His testimony regarding his investigation is more particularly concerned with the morality of the violence; who is committing the violent act, for what reason. At no point does Clendenen or any of the Subcommittee members condemn the occurrence of violence. In fact, at one point Clendenen says to the Subcommittee members with conciliation, “in all fairness it should be added that Mary finally dies in the gas chamber following a violent and lucrative criminal career.” At another point, Clendenen offers, “It might be said that right triumphs in the end, however, since the boy turns into a werewolf and kills and eats his foster parents.”

Over the course of the hearings more than two-dozen witnesses offered testimony including elected officials, medical professionals, comic book publishers, and, of

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7 Ibid., 5.
8 Ibid., 7.
9 Ibid., 8.
course, Dr. Frederic Wertham. When Dr. Wertham was called to testify, he began by offering a lengthy typed statement of his credentials as his opening statement. Chairman Hendrickson asked Dr. Wertham to summarize rather than reading it aloud in its entirety. His opinions were based, Dr. Wertham said, “on clinical investigations which I started in the winter of 1945 and 1946. They were carried out not by me alone, but with the help of a group of associates, psychiatrists, child psychiatrists, psychoanalysts, social workers, psychiatric social workers, remedial reading teachers, probation officers, and others.”

Where Dr. Wertham’s testimony differed from Clendenen in his denunciation of the comic books was Dr. Wertham’s belief that violence itself should be abhorred and the morality of the violent act is irrelevant to its appropriateness and harmful effects on young people. “We have come to the conclusion that crime comic books,” said Dr. Wertham, “are comic books that depict crime and we have found that it makes no difference whether the locale is western, or Superman or space ship or horror, if a girl is raped she is raped whether it is in a space ship or on the prairie.” Dr. Wertham paused briefly before adding, “If a

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10 Ibid., 81.
man is killed he is killed whether he comes from Mars or somewhere else.”\textsuperscript{11}

However, Dr. Wertham vigorously supported the assertion that comic books were contributing to the rise in juvenile delinquency. “Now, nobody versed in any of this type of clinical research,” Dr. Wertham said, “would claim that comic books alone are the cause of juvenile delinquency. It is my opinion, without any reasonable doubt, and without any reservation, that comic books are an important contributing factor in many cases of juvenile delinquency. There arises the question: What kind of child is affected? I say again without any reasonable doubt and based on hundreds and hundreds of cases of all kinds, that it is primarily the normal child.”\textsuperscript{12} Dr. Wertham did not define what constituted a “normal child.”

Chairman Hendrickson was moved by Dr. Wertham’s sentiments to defend America’s young people. “American children are wonderful children. If we give them a chance they act right. It is senseless to say that all these people who get into some kind of trouble with the law must be abnormal or there must be something very wrong with them. As a matter of fact, the most morbid children that

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., 82.

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., 83.
we have seen are the ones who are less affected by comic books because they are wrapped up in their own fantasies. Now, the question arises, and we have debated it in our group very often and very long, why does the normal child spend so much time with this smut and trash...?" "Mr. Chairman," said Dr. Wertham, "I can’t explain..."\(^{13}\)

But other witnesses were more able to offer significant medical opinions. Dr. Lauretta Bender, the Senior Psychiatrist at Bellevue Hospital in New York, was a professional expert in the study of emotional disturbed children. "In my early years in working at Bellevue Hospital," said Dr. Bender in her testimony, "when we were hard put to find techniques for exploring the child's emotional life, his mind, his ways of reacting, when the child was separated from their home and brought to us in the wards at Bellevue, I found the comics early one of the most valuable means of carrying on such examinations, and that was the beginning of my interest in the comic books."\(^{14}\)

Questioning Dr. Bender, Assistant Counsel Beaser pressed for some sort of link between the fate of the characters in the comic books and the emotional responses of the young people reading them. "A child would not

\(^{13}\) Ibid.

\(^{14}\) Ibid., 152.
identify himself or herself with any one of the figures in there? For example, we had a picture yesterday and a story about a child who murdered her foster mother.” Dr. Bender acknowledged that Clendenen had related the story. “In the final shot they showed the child getting away with the three murders. Do you think,” asked Beaser, “that a child would identify himself or herself with the little girl?” Dr. Bender said, “No.”

Beaser attempted to continue but Dr. Bender cut him off. “The child,” said Dr. Bender, “would only identify itself with such a child who had committed these 3 murders if there had been 3 murders in the child's family, for which people were looking suspiciously at this child. In that case the child with horror would throw the comics out of the window.” Unsatisfied, Beaser pressed, “Would the child identify its mother—or its father, with the mother and father in the story comic?” “Not unless their mother and father were like that mother and father,” replied Dr. Bender.

Beaser pressed harder looking for a better answer, “Since delinquency does appear in broken homes as well as others, assuming this is a broken home and they depicted a broken home, would the child identify his own mother and father with the pictures in the comic book?” But Dr.
Bender stood her ground. “If he would so identify himself, then it would be his tendency again to discard the comic book or go into a panic. I have seen children in panics, as I say, not over comics usually because they are easily rejected, but over movies.”

Dr. Bender dug in, “I have seen children brought to me in terrible panics, and interestingly enough most often the Walt Disney movies which do depict very disturbing mother figures. The mothers are always killed or sent to the insane asylums in Walt Disney's movies. They are among my experience, except for Franken-stein, the worst movies in the world for children who have had a problem of the loss of a parent. I can speak of that with feeling because I have 3 children who lost their father when they were babies and I know the problem of exposing children to such problems as this. It can throw them into the kind of anxiety which is distressing, but the children will leave if they can or they will not read the comics, they will reject it.”

Dr. Bender noted earlier that she was a member of the Superman editorial advisory board. Beaser’s questioning probed her compensation as a member of the advisory board, which Dr. Noted received $150, more than some received and less than others. “Doctor, could you give the
“subcommittee,” asked Beaser, “a typical case of the sort of problem which comes to the board members?” “Yes, very easily,” Dr. Bender responded, “As a matter of fact, I don't see any reason for not being more specific about this last inquiry.”

“This was a question,” said Dr. Bender, “that there were concerns who wanted to produce a Superman uniform for children, realistic, and copyrighted. The National Publishing Co. said they had this request coming through for many, many years, and they had always turned it down because they were afraid that children would be hurt under the circumstances; but again, it had come up so persistently that they now wanted my advice about it.” When put in the context of comic books today and the large number of young people who attend conventions dressed as their favorite characters, the case put before Dr. Bender and the advisory board seems almost absurd, but these were days long before the public at large embraced comic books.

What was Dr. Bender’s expert advice? “So I advised them,” said Dr. Bender, “that in my experience children throughout the ages, long before Superman existed, tried to fly, and also it has been my specific experience, since I have been at Bellevue Hospital, that certain children with certain emotional problems are particularly pre-occupied
with the problem of flying, both fascinated by it, and fearful of it. And we frequently have on our ward at Bellevue the problem of making Superma4 capes in occupational therapy and then the children wearing them and fighting over them and one thing or another—and only about 3 months ago we had such, what we call epidemic, and a number of children were hurt because they tried to fly off the top of radiators or off the top of bookcases or what not and got bumps.”

Chairman Hendrickson interrupted with a question, “You mean they would put these suits on and try to fly?” “That is right,” Dr. Bender responded. “The sheets form many purposes to these children. Part of it is that it probably gives them the feeling of the power to fly. It also gives them the feeling of protection, almost as if they were invisible when they wore the Superman cape or as if they had the magic power of Superman, so if they wore a Superman's cape they would have these magic powers.”

Acting as if on a hunch that he’s discovered something, Chairman Hendrickson asked, “This does show the influence of comics, then?” Dr. Bender responds calmly, “That is true. I am sure the comics influence. As I say, I have found one of the best methods in my experience to examine children is to get them to tell me their favorite
comic book and to relate it and then analyze their material. In adult psychiatry, dreams are analyzed.”

Attempting to drive his point home, Chairman Hendrickson followed up with another question. “If Superman could have that influence, what sort of influence do ‘you think that picture there, called ‘Crime Suspense Stories,’ would have?” “I can tell you why,” said Dr. Bender, “this would have nowhere near. Superman represents an instinctive problem that we are all born and grown up with, that we can fly—after all, we can fly now; we couldn't before—and that we can carry on all kinds of scientific investigations, that we can stop crime, which Superman does, and that we can have a good influence on the world and that we can be protected by the powerful influences in the world which may be our own parents, or may be the authorities, or what not.”

Seeking a definitive answer, Beaser asked, “It is your considered judgment then; that Superman has been a good influence?” Dr. Bender agreed but offered her own reasoning in response. “There is another reason why Superman has had good influence. That is the years of continuity of the Superman character. The children know that Superman will always come out on the right side. On
that, I can give you another story about what they wanted to do."

Even in the pages of Superman, the consequences of war find their place. "At the end of the Second World War," said Dr. Bender, "we had the problem of a certain number of soldiers coming home as amputees. One of the script writers got the bright idea that we ought to prepare children for their fathers coming home as amputees by having one of the characters—I don't think it was Superman—one of the others—have an accident and lose his leg. They wanted to know what I thought about that idea. I said I thought it was absolutely terrible because I felt that the children loved this character and, after all, how many children were going to have to face the question of an amputee father? Certainly there are far better ways of preparing such children for such a father than to have to shock the whole comic reading children public. So I disapproved of it."

Finding common ground with Dr. Bender's disapproval of the Superman story, Chairman Hendrickson continued with another question, "Doctor, suppose you were on the advisory board for some of these magazines, what would you recommend?" Dr. Bender responded saying, "Let us put it this way: Suppose you said, 'Why don't you go on one of
these and see," and then I would go on it and I would see. I would expose children to these comics and see what the result was. Now, if you want to ask me what I think the result would be I think it would be minimal. I think that many of the children would be bored with them, I think that many of the children would refuse to read them and the more sophisticated would say, "So what, I have seen stuff like that before.'”

Beaser pressed seemingly in an attempt to undercut the certainty of Dr Bender in her answer. “But,” said Beaser, “you do not actually know, Doctor?” Before Dr. Bender could respond, Chairman Hendrickson interjected, saying, “You are talking about normal children, though?” Dr. Bender answered matter-of-factly, “There is no such thing as a normal child.” Chairman Hendrickson responded as if stumped by Dr. Benerder’s answer, “There is not?” Dr. Bender reiterated her belief. “No,” she said. Chairman Hendrickson reframed the context of her answer, asking, “That is your medical opinion?” “That is my medical opinion,” said Dr. Bender.\footnote{Ibid., 151-162.}

In defense of comic book artists and writers, the Subcommittee called Walt Kelly to testify. As President of the National Cartoonists Society, the same organization
that presented Al Capp with its highest honor the Reuben Award in 1947, Kelly attempted to defend his fellow creators. An artist himself, Kelly worked at Disney as an animator before creating his own comic, *Pogo*, published by Dell Comics. After Kelly was questioned about his credentials and the membership of the National Cartoonists Society, Kelly delivered a prepared statement.

“*The National Cartoonists Society,*” read Kelly, “views as unwarranted any additional legislative action that is intended to censor printed material. The society believes in local option... We believe good material outsells bad. We believe people, even juveniles, are fundamentally decent. We believe, as parents and as onetime children ourselves, that most young people are instinctively attracted to that which is wholesome. Our belief in this sound commercial theory is only in addition to our belief in free expression and the noble traditions of our profession. Our history abounds in stalwarts of pen and pencil who have fought for freedom for others. For ourselves as artists and free Americans we too cherish freedom and the resultant growth of ideas. We cannot submit to the curb, the fence, or the intimidating word. The United States of America must remain a land where the Government follows the man.”

\[16\] Ibid., 110-111.
When Kelly finished, Beaser asked if Kelly believed it was not possible to put into comics “things that might have a harmful effect.” Kelly deflected the question saying, “I think it is even entirely possible, sir. I think it is the, duty of the creator of the material to see that that sort of thing does not get in there. The creator, apart from the producer or the publisher, is personally responsible for his work.”

Then Kelly addressed some of the criticisms of comic artists and writers in the testimony of other witnesses. “I somewhat question,” said Kelly, “the good doctor’s statement before when he said in response to your question, sir, that perhaps the originators of this material might be under scrutiny, should be, as to their psychiatric situation. We in the cartoon business sort of cherish the idea that we are all, sort of screwball. We resent the implication that any man putting out that kind of stuff is not a screwball. That is another thing we fight for.”

Senator Hennings’ answered Kelly’s statement with poignant commentary on the Subcommittee’s actions. “I would like to say to Mr. Kelly,” said Senator Hennings, “that I think your statement is admirable. I am a frustrated cartoonist myself. I wanted to be one when I was a boy and I got off the track. I have noticed the
chairman of our committee doing a good deal of sketching during some of the hearings. He is really a very fine artist.”

As the laughter subsided in the courtroom, Senator Hennings continued in a more serious vein, saying, “Without asking you to be invidious or to pass upon any thing ad hominem here with respect to any other publication, is it your opinion that there are certain publications being circulated and calculated to appeal to children in their formative years, their immature years, and from your understanding of the profession-and I call it one because it is; your strip is clean and enlightening as is Mr. Caniff’s; the very best in the business-do you not deplore, do you gentlemen not deplore some of these things that you see purveyed to the children and in a sense pandering to the taste, or do you think those things will right themselves? Do you think sooner or later that the harm, if such exists, is outweighed by a good many other things?”

Walt Kelly largely agreed. “I think,” said Kelly, “basically that is our position; yes, sir.” Senator Hennings continued, “You realize, of course, the great danger of censorship?” Kelly responded, “I realize, too, sir, the great danger of the magazines in question.”
Summing up, Senator Hennings said, “So it is a rough problem; is it not?”

“We are put in a rather unpleasant position,” said Kelly. “We don't like to be put in a position to defend what we will defend to the last breath.”

In the end, the Subcommittee’s hearings created a firestorm of publicity and public pressure that devastated the comic book industry, but no significant new legislation was passed as a result. The final report noted, “comic art has genuine appeal for a large segment of the American public. It is apparent that comic books have assumed major importance in the reading diet of thousands of American youths.” The Subcommittee’s report specifically underlined that the greatest danger of graphic storytelling is its appeal and influence, as “government and private agencies and philanthropic organizations have recognized the comic book as an effective medium of communication for worthwhile objectives, it is apparent too that the comic book can also be an effective medium of for unworthy objectives. The comic book is recognized as a means of publicizing crime and horror. There was no plausible reason offered as to why

17 Ibid., 109-115.
this medium should be less impressive when dealing with one kind of subject matter than with another.”

CHAPTER 5

COMIC BOOKS TAKE A HIT

The comic book industry floundered amidst the public backlash. EC Comics head William Gaines, whose controversial testimony at the hearings drew ire from publishers hoping to minimize the negative publicity surrounding the investigation, formed a plan to fight back. At the suggestion of Lyle Stuart, EC Comics business manager at the time, Gaines held a handful of small exploratory lunches attended by close friends in the industry that was followed with an open invitation to comic book publishers in New York City that read:

Dear Fellow Comic Book Publisher:
If fools rush in where angels fear to tread, then I suppose EC is being pretty foolish. We may get our fingers burned and our toes stepped on. Be that as it may, it seems to me that someone has to take the initiative.

Gaines was shocked at the remarkable turnout. Nine publishers attended the first meeting and the numbers swelled with each successive meeting. By the fourth meeting, on August 17, 1954, thirty-eight publishers attended and the group had evolved into something more akin to an industry trade group. Elliott Caplan, brother of Al Capp and then-owner of Toby Press, served as chairman of

the meeting. The result was the formation of a new entity to be known as the Comics Magazine Association of America (CMAA) and the establishment of a code of standards as an act of self-governance to regulate acceptable subject matter and content.

The CMAA was officially incorporated on September 4, 1954, counting twenty-six publishers and nineteen operation and distribution companies among its founding membership. Only three major comics publishers declined to join: Dell, Gilberton, and Gaines’ own EC. But, for many publishers, the effort at self-policing content was not sufficient to restore confidence in their product and thereby resuscitate flagging sales. By the start of 1956, six publishers were out of business, including Gaines’ EC Comics and Caplan’s Toby Press, followed by Ace, Avon, Premier, Superior and others the next year. Hundreds of writers and artists were out of work.² By all accounts, the comic book industry was dying, and those whose livelihood depended on its survival were forced to find jobs that utilized their specific skills in new ways.

² Ibid., 326.
CHAPTER 6
THE MONTGOMERY STORY

At the same time as the comic book industry was dying in New York City, a movement was born in Montgomery, Alabama. On December 1, 1955, a forty-one year old African-American woman on a Montgomery Area Transit bus was ordered to move from her seat in the front of the bus to a seat in the back of the bus because of her race. She was told that if she did not move, she would be arrested. Her name was Rosa Parks, and she responded calmly, saying, “You may do just that.” The bus driver, James F. Blake, pressed charges and Parks was taken to jail. Using her one phone call, Parks called her mother to tell her what happened. Word of her arrest spread through the Montgomery African-American community like wildfire. Within hours, a response that would change the course of American history began to take shape.

The Montgomery Bus Boycott, as it has simply come to be known by school children the world over, lasted for more than a year before Montgomery City officials finally yielded and allowed bus passengers to sit freely regardless of race. The desegregation of Montgomery city buses was a victory. Perhaps more importantly, from it emerged new leaders and new alliances that would shape the political
dialogue on civil rights and racial equality in the coming decade. The Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA), which organized carpools, negotiated with Montgomery city leaders, and coordinated legal challenges with the NAACP during the boycott, was led by a charismatic young preacher from Atlanta, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. who emerged as the movement’s single most influential leader.

During the boycotts, Dr. King developed a relationship with the Rev. Glenn E. Smiley, a white Methodist minister from Texas, who at the time served as Field Secretary of an organization known as the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR). As the boycott grew in numbers, Smiley helped organize nonviolence trainings, including a one-week Institute on Nonviolence and Social Change that marked the one-year anniversary of the boycott’s beginning. Smiley also supplied the MIA with FOR materials and publications for nonviolence training.\(^1\) Ultimately they became so close that it was Smiley who, without interference or being charged with a crime, sat next to Dr. King on December 21, 1956, aboard a Montgomery city bus.\(^2\)

The Fellowship of Reconciliation that became a major actor in the story was an organization whose activities for

\(^1\) Miller, 55.

\(^2\) Ibid., 56.
world peace dated back to the start of the World War I.

According to FOR’s literature:

“In 1914, an ecumenical conference was held in Switzerland by Christians seeking to prevent the outbreak of war in Europe. Before the conference ended, however, World War I had started and those present had to return to their respective countries. At a railroad station in Germany, two of the participants, Henry Hodgkin, an English Quaker, and Friedrich Sigmund-Schultze, a German Lutheran, pledged to find a way of working for peace even though their countries were at war. Out of this pledge Christians gathered in Cambridge, England in December 1914 to found the Fellowship of Reconciliation. The FOR-USA was founded one year later, in 1915.”

Today, the FOR is “an interfaith and international movement with branches and groups in over 40 countries and on every continent.” Membership of FOR includes “Jews, Christians, Buddhists, Muslims, and people of other faith traditions, as well as those with no formal religious affiliation.”

Even before the Montgomery Bus Boycott, the FOR and its staff actively participated and lead nonviolent actions in the struggle for racial equality. An FOR staff member for several years in the 1940s, Bayard Rustin, a black Quaker, once led a freedom ride through the deep south in 1947, known as the Journey of Reconciliation. The ride

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4 Ibid.
ended when all participants were arrested and sentenced to twenty-two days on a chain gang.⁵

Following the victory of the Montgomery Bus Boycott, the FOR sought to capitalize on their success and spread the "Montgomery Story" as an example of the potential of nonviolent action for advancing social change. Mobilizing the "black masses," as A. Phillip Randolph called them, would require innovative approaches as they were dealing with a community whose very right to vote was often denied by the requirement of literacy tests imposed at polling locations in the Jim Crow South. Relying on their experience publishing literature, the FOR turned to a format nearly as publicly reviled as the cause of racial equality: comic books. At the center of this effort was the FOR’s Director of Publications, Alfred Hassler.

Born in 1910 in Allentown, Pennsylvania, Hassler was "a lifelong pacifist and leader of the Fellowship of Reconciliation and a pioneer in the environmental movement." Hassler was raised in New York City where he attended Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute and studied journalism at night at Columbia University. He worked as a reporter for The Leader-Observer in Woodhaven, Queens, and

⁵ Miller, 46.
then for the American Baptist Publications in Philadelphia. In 1942, he joined the staff of the FOR.  

In an email exchange, Hassler’s daughter Laura recalled, “He was raised in a quite traditional Protestant Christian (Baptist) milieu, but left the church at the beginning of World War II, disappointed in its failure to take a strong stand for peace. He was introduced to the FOR by my mother, Dorothy Graham Hassler. I think the FOR appealed to him because it was then based on the teachings of Jesus on nonviolence and justice, which were at the core of his religious beliefs, although these were definitely his own and not a product of his environment or upbringing.”

“Within the FOR,” wrote Laura Hassler, “he was one of the main proponents of opening the organization to people of other faiths-- first that meant mainly Catholics and Jews, later of course Muslims, Buddhists, humanists, or anyone who came to nonviolence through a spiritual base. I think he found (and partly created) in FOR a place in which his own beliefs in the sanctity of all life and the interconnection among all humans, were welcome and could be translated into concrete action. I would say that compassion was the driver of his beliefs and his life.”

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Hassler wrote numerous anti-war books and articles, including a book about his time in prison as a conscientious objector during World War II. But in 1957, Hassler had the idea to write a comic book. "It was actually quite funny," wrote Laura Hassler, "that my father thought of producing a comic book in the 50s. Alfred was a great lover of literature, good writing and subtlety. In the era of Superman, Wonder Woman and Archie and Veronica, he was definitely not a comic book fan! In fact, we were not allowed to have them as children, and I can remember going to a friend's house on weekends, lying around in the 'shack' outside their house, reading her comic books! (I was 10 when the MLK comic book was published.)"

As to what would inspire Alfred Hassler to write a comic book about nonviolence, Laura Hassler wrote, "Alfred was a keen observer of changes, growth and trends in society. And he had a very creative imagination and an amazing sense of humor (also in the sense of not taking one's own preciously held views too seriously!). So he would have understood the attraction of this medium to a broad cut of the population and made the leap without difficulty."
Another contributing factor to the production and publication of the “Montgomery Story” certainly must have been the willingness of an organization known as the Fund for the Republic to provide Hassler and the FOR with funding for such a project. If the comic book hearings of 1954 had unquestioningly affirmed one fact, it was that comic books could be influential. Comic books were an economical and effective means of reaching a semiliterate population.

Richard Deats, FOR’s Director of Communications in the 1990’s, laid out the FOR’s motivation and purpose behind the comic in a 1997 letter, saying, “The comic book was originally intended to convey to semiliterate persons the story of nonviolence and its effectiveness as seen in the Montgomery movement. The medium of the highly popular comic book was believed to be the best way to reach masses of exploited African-Americans.”

Deats recalls the comic as something of a milestone for FOR, “This 4 color publication,” wrote Deats, “turned out to be FOR’s largest publishing event to that time. Following FOR’s extensive involvement in the civil rights movement with specific staff and organizational support
during the Montgomery boycott, FOR received a $5,000 grant from the Fund for the Republic in late 1957. FOR executive secretary Al Hassler wrote the text for the comic book with the FOR staff working in close consultation with Dr. King. The illustrations were done by the Al Capp Organization. A quarter of a million copies were printed...” Deats explains that “200,000 copies of the comic were sold and later a Spanish edition was printed that was widely used in Latin America.”

The facts laid out in Deats’ letter largely correspond with much of what has been written about the comic’s history in subsequent news articles. But asking a question only brings up more questions. The letter credits Hassler with writing the script but news articles have mentioned “black-listed writer Benton Resnick” as a possible scriptwriter. Hassler is not known to have had much experience with comic books so the participation of another person with experience who developed the story into an acceptable format would not have been implausible. And what does “Al Capp Organization” mean? At the time, Al Capp and his assistants in his studio produced work for various publishers, but nearly all of them featured Capp’s unique style. A public service comic with Capp’s signature that
came out a year prior to the FOR comic clearly featured Capp’s style.

When I asked legendary comic artist and writer Eddie Campbell about the Al Capp connection, after reading the FOR comic he responded, “To even mention Capp's name, unless you have evidence, would be to show a lack of knowledge of comics styles.” Known for his autobiographical series Alec as well as numerous collaborations such as From Hell and The Playwright, Campbell is widely respected for his intimate familiarity with artist’s styles and encyclopedic knowledge of comic book history. He is also a very kind person who puts a lot of thought into what he is about to say.

Thanks to the research of Professor Sylvia Rhor at Carlow University, collections of letters have been located at the Swarthmore Lang Center for Civic & Social Responsibility that provide crucial details for understanding the true history of the comic book that would ultimately be known as Martin Luther King and the Montgomery Story.

Correspondence between Hassler, Dr. King, Ed Reed of the Fund for the New Republic and others paints a vivid picture of the conception and creation of the comic book.
These letters, when paired with other research, shed new light on the growing myth.

The earliest letter is dated March 12, 1957. At the top of the page in bold letters, it says GRAPHIC INFORMATION SERVICES. The address listed below is 17 East 45th Street, New York 17, NY. It is addressed to Alfred Hassler. The letter reads simply:

Dear Mr. Hassler,

I am enclosing herewith a suggested story treatment for the proposed booklet, THE MONTGOMERY STORY. I would appreciate your comments.

Once the treatment is accepted by you, we would then proceed to two or three pages of script and art work for presentation to the Fund.

Cordially,

Benton, J. Resnik

The seemingly deliberate use of the word “booklet” could conceivably point towards an aversion to the words “comics” or “comic books.”

The letter’s author, Benton Resnik, is listed in the indicia of several comic book titles, including The Black Knight and Monty Hall of the U.S. Marines as the General Manager of Toby Press. These same titles are listed among those reviewed by the “Committee on Evaluation of Comic Books” and entered into the record by Richard Clendenen, the Executive Director of the Subcommittee on Juvenile Delinquency, during his testimony. Both titles received a “C” or “objectionable” rating and were not deemed “safe for
use by children and young people.” The list had been previously published in Parents Magazine.¹

The possibility of links between Resnik, Graphic Information Services (GIS), and Toby Press grow stronger when one compares the address listed on the GIS letterhead with the address for Toby Press in the Subcommittee on Juvenile Delinquency’s 1955 report. The addresses are identical, 17 East 45ᵗʰ Street, New York 17, NY. Toby Press went out of business in 1955, but its General Manager was operating out of the same address, working to publish a comic book apparently under the new mantle of GIS. Resnik, like many others working in the comic book industry in 1955 and 1956, found new ways to make a living with his particular skills.

Elliott Caplin, the owner of Toby Press, was also the brother of Al Capp. At one point Capp held a financial stake in Toby Press but by 1954 Caplin was the sole owner. “Toby,” wrote Eddie Campbell, “was founded on reprinting [Al] Capp’s work. They took the job away from Harvey comics. Perhaps some have taken this as meaning that Capp decided to publish the books himself. So at the very least there is a longstanding relationship between Toby and Capp.

At most, Capp was financially involved with the company beyond assigning the reprints to Toby. Toby then went on to publish loads of stuff that had nothing to do with Capp, but we can see how it would be convenient to imply a stronger bond if it didn't already exist. And there would have been a continuing liaison, as seen in the use of L'il Abner on the Disasters comic.”

The “Disasters” comic that Campbell refers to is *Mr. Civil Defense Tells About Natural Disasters!*, the only title attributed to GIS uncovered so far. The cover features Lil’ Abner in the Capp style and is signed by Al Capp. The
comic book is copyrighted 1956. It is an informational public interest comic book for disaster preparedness and sixteen total pages in length. Though it does not list an organization specifically, it was more than likely a commissioned work that seems to fall in line with GIS as a work for hire comic book publisher specializing in public interest comics.

On May 2, 1957, Hassler responded to Resnik’s letter. “The more I have looked at the text of the script for the comic book the more I feel that, while the utilization is alright, the script is too heavy and literary for our purposes. You will recall that what we have in mind is getting to people who have relatively little education.” Hassler appeals to Resnik’s experience in the comic book industry. “I would assume,” wrote Hassler, “that you have considerable experience with this problem and I would be glad to have any ideas you have on the subject.” Hassler included his revisions to the script and a note expressing his uncertainty over funding from the Fund for the Republic, writing “I really feel that this initial page has to be as near right as we can get it if we hope to get any substantial favorable response.”
By early summer 1957, a painted draft cover was created by the unknown artist that prominently featured Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and indicated a shift towards the increasing emphasis on Dr. King’s role in the growing civil rights movement with the addition of his name to the title of the comic book. The cover was featured in an advertisement that Hassler mailed primarily to religious leaders, schoolteachers, and community leaders.

Illustration 2: FOR promotional material (1957)
The advertisement described the story, “In all the long struggle against racial discrimination, few things have been more exciting or important than the tremendous year—
long “walk to greedom” of Montgomery’s 50,000 Negroes. The story of their patient, determined, nonviolent assault on jim crow has been told in the newspapers, in magazine articles, and on radio and television. But for masses of people to read and understand, it needed telling in the most widely read medium of our day, and that’s how it is now being told!"

Then, in much larger bold letters, the advertisement reads, “NOW – IN VIVID, HARD-HITTING COMIC-BOOK FORM DONE BY THE AL CAPP ORGANIZATION, CREATORS OF “LI’L ABNER” – YOUR GUARANTEE OF A FIRST RATE, PROFESSIONAL JOB.” Though the Resnik letters indicate that Hassler knew very well that he was dealing with GIS, it appears the Capp connection proved too strong of a marketing lure to pass up. Perhaps Hassler or others felt that the Capp connection was necessary to emphasize in order to boost initial sales figures.

The advertisement promoted the comic book as something for both children and adults. “Children of all ages will thrill to the story of the Negroes who would not yield in the face of threats and bombings. Most comic-books glorify violence—this one demonstrates the real heroism of ordinary men women and children who pit their whole strength against evil but refuse to hate or use violence while they do it,”
read the advertisement’s pitch to children. Taking another
tact for adults, the advertisement reads, “The Montgomery
Story is more than the account of what happened in one city
to one group of people. It is a signpost, a book of
directions for others who would work for freedom and
brotherhood without adding to the world’s store of hatred
and bitterness.”

A mislabeled list sent two thousand mailings to white
Southern ministers rather than the black clergy for which
they were intended. The response was understandably
negative. However, the mailings that reached their
intended recipients, according to Hassler, were met with
great enthusiasm. Hassler expected initial orders of at
least fifty thousand copies. The Montgomery Improvement
Association, A. Phillip Randolph, Rev. Will Campbell and
others all expressed their desire to purchase the comic
book.

By September 1957, Hassler received assurances from Ed
Reed of the Fund for the Republic that a five thousand
dollar grant would be proposed to their Board of Directors.
In a letter to Reed, dated September 12th, Hassler thanks
Reed for his support and says, “we feel here that it is
imperative that the comic book be produced, and that it be
produced without delay. I personally feel sure that the
entire edition will be sold out within a fairly short time and that reprints will probably be necessary.

Though Capp is not mentioned anywhere in the Resnik letters, Hassler reiterates the Capp affiliation to Reed, writing, “As soon as you give me a favorable word I will be in touch with the Capp organization to speed up the procedure as much as possible.” Without more information, it is unclear who is actually the origin of the phrase “Al Capp Organization” as the publisher of the comic book. There is no evidence to suggest Al Capp had any personal involvement and was neither the writer nor artist of the comic book.

Ultimately, the Fund for the Republic approved the five thousand dollar grant, and on September 24th, Hassler dispatched a letter informing Dr. King.

Dear Dr. King

I am sure you will be happy to know that after long delays the Fund for the Republic has approved the grant to us that will make it possible to publish the Comic Book about which I spoke to you during the summer. We will be going ahead with this as rapidly as the Al Capp Organization can move, and as we do so, I would like to have you look at the script before it is put in final shape just to be sure it has your approval.

Cordially,
Alfred Hassler
Acting Executive Secretary

Three weeks later, Hassler dispatched a complete draft script to Dr. King. Several “personal emergencies”
including the birth of his first son, Martin Luther King, III, delayed his response for which he apologized in his letter of October 28th. Dr. King offered adulation as well as a few corrections:

I have read the script very scrutinizingly, and frankly there is hardly anything I could add or subtract. It is certainly an excellent piece of work. I might raise one or two questions concerning factual points. Of course, these points might not necessarily be important because at times you must stray away from the exact facts to create the drama of the situation. However, I will raise them with you. On page 16, box 1 you state that [E.D.] Nixon was the first person to be indicted. I don’t think this is actually the case. The Grand Jury indicted everybody simultaneously. Neither was Nixon the first to be arrested. Ralph Abernathy was the first to be arrested. On page 20, box 5 you quote the Negro woman who was slapped: “I could really wallop her—she is smaller than me.” Actually, there was a white man who slapped the Negro woman. In order to be more in line with the facts it would be better to say: “I could really wallop him—he’s smaller than me!”

_Martin Luther King and the Montgomery Story_ was published a month later and Dr. King’s proposed changes were among those included in the final text. Sixteen color pages printed on thin newsprint paper, just as the 1956 _Mr. Civil Defense Tells About Natural Disasters!,_ although the similarities are attributable as much to the trends of the times as to the particular publisher.
There were other changes to the final edition as well. The cover differed slightly from the one featured in the advertisement. Dr. King’s image no longer gazed directly at the reader, instead looking away off into the distance. A ray of light shines from above as if cast by a divine hand.

Nowhere in the comic book is there a signature or credit to an artist or writer. Instead it simply features a reference to the Fellowship of Reconciliation on the back cover. It is possible to infer from the correspondence that Alfred Hassler and Benton Resnik collaborated on the
script, with a little help from Dr. King of course. But determining the artist is a much more challenging task.

“The MLK book is generic in so many ways,” wrote Eddie Campbell, “which is why it's so difficult to figure it out. Being so generic is the very reason that we would exclude Capp, who is of an earlier generation than [Dan] Barry. And why we shouldn't jump to too many conclusions. "New York comic book slick style circa 1958, in the manner of Dan Barry" best describes the situation. With all the information available right now, that's about as far as I personally would go.”

In the appendix of David Hajdu’s 2008 book The Ten-Cent Plague: The Great Comic-Book Scare and How It Changed America, there is a list of “the artists, writers, and others who never again worked in comics after the purge of the 1950’s.” Among the hundreds of names is one I’ve mentioned before, albeit spelled a little different, “Benton Resnick.” As we learned, it was Resnik who worked at Toby Press. But now we know that Resnik did in fact continue working in the comic book industry. Graphic Information Services was a new name but the work was the same. It was just one of the many ways comic book professionals attempted to shield themselves from the stigma of their profession in the late 1950’s.
There is a very real cause and effect relationship between the 1954 hearings and FOR’s ability to produce their comic book. Had comic books remained as popular, the FOR might not have been able to find and secure affordable quality talent nor production houses willing to produce the less lucrative projects.
CHAPTER 8

LESSONS FROM MONTGOMERY

Publishing a comic book like Martin Luther King and the Montgomery Story was remarkable in and of itself considering the times and the popular attitudes towards comic books. But perhaps the more remarkable story is that of what happened after the comic book was published. There were no specialty shops to distribute to directly. One of the new hurdles that arose after the establishment of the CMAA and their offshoot organization for approving content in comic books, the Comic Code Authority (CCA), was that the “Comics Code” as established by the CCA came to be the definitive stamp of acceptability for newsstands and other outlets for comic books hoping to avoid any backlash, either legal or public, for selling “inappropriate” comic books. Most retailers were unable or unwilling to read each comic book themselves so they came to rely on the CCA and their approval as a guide for which comic books were acceptable to sell. As a result, few newsstand shelves were available to the non-comic code approved FOR comic book.

Instead, the FOR embarked on an ambitious journey across the American South to spread the message of non-violence using the story of the Montgomery Bus Boycotts as
an example of how they could succeed. Hassler and his network of religious leaders pursued a multifaceted strategy to distribute the comic book. In some instances, the FOR only received a portion of the ten-cent cover price. Allowing for larger distributors of the comic book to raise funds themselves from the sale of the comic book, the FOR sold the book at a bulk rate of five cents per copy in five thousand unit bundles. But commercial distribution was difficult because it was so expensive and the print-run of 250,000 copies was relatively small when compared to the volume of other titles at the time.

To address these challenges, Hassler put together a four-point plan. First, Hassler sought to put sample copies in the hands of community leaders who dealt specifically with race relations and each copy “should be accompanied by an order blank.” Second, reach out the churches. Presuming that every religious institution had taken “strong positions on the issue of racial brotherhood,” Hassler sought to raise awareness of the comic book among sympathetic clergy, Sunday school teachers, and church leaders. Third, Hassler urged personal contact with newsstand operators serving the black community hoping that direct contact would facilitate distribution within sympathetic communities that might have
overlooked the comic book because it was not approved by the CCA. Fourth, Hassler believed that college students might be willing to set up displays on tables around their campuses. "There is widespread interest in the Montgomery experience among college students," said Hassler, "and sales should be good."

Hassler and the FOR also embarked on an ambitious grassroots media campaign in pacifist and Christian publications to raise awareness of the comic book. News publications such as The Southern Patriot, Four Lights, National Guardian, Serving Mankind, and Peace News ran articles touting the comic book's release and providing sales information. Another way Hassler touted the comic book was by publishing it in serialized form in Peace News in January and February of 1958. Even Dr. King issued a statement that was included with some copies endorsing the comic book and explaining his hopes that it would be widely read by both black and white communities. "We Negroes, particularly in the South," wrote Dr. King, "have a special opportunity to demonstrate the power of love to reconcile racial differences. This book will help to spread the word around."

The most successful tactic, however, was the personal dissemination of the comic book by FOR staff and other
community leaders. Richard Deats’ 1997 letter identifies some of the earliest and most prominent figures to distribute the comic. “In February 1958,” wrote Deats, “the FOR established a regional office for the South. Opened in Nashville, Glenn Smiley, Ralph Abernathy and James Lawson, a young Methodist minister studying at Vanderbilt University, formed a reconciliation team visiting communities in eight states in the South, as well as some states in the North. They held nonviolence seminars in Negro churches and colleges. They distributed copies of the comic book in the seminars, as well as a small FOR leaflet, How to Practice Nonviolence.”

At the time of Deats’ letter, Rev. Lawson served as the National Chairperson of the FOR and was in regular contact with Deats. When asked about his first encounter with the FOR comic book, Rev Lawson said, “I cannot remember when I first heard about it or saw the comic book. I’m pretty sure I saw and read the comic book first in 1957 while I was still in Ohio and I think the Midwestern FOR secretary carried them around and she may have been the source of how I saw them for the first time. But I know by January, when I moved to Nashville and picked up the work of the Southern Secretary of the FOR, I had copies of the comic book that I used in my first travels into Little
Rock, Jackson Tennessee, Memphis Tennessee, Jackson Mississippi, Charlottesville, Virginia, Louisville Kentucky, Greensboro North Carolina, Columbia South Carolina, Knoxville Tennessee. I carried copies of the comic book in my bag and in my luggage, I know that much."

But Rev. Lawson was quick to point out that the comic book was one tool among many that he and the FOR were using in their work to spread the message of non-violence. “The comic book,” said Rev. Lawson, “was in the context of a larger curriculum as I taught it around the South and used it. Part of its value was that it gave people a brief story of a very effective non-violent campaign, something that they could refer to and memorize and study. And it also gave them some of the ways in which Martin King had struggled and taught nonviolence. I would have the comic books available free of charge but then I would discuss the Montgomery Bus Boycott for the purpose of insisting it was a major illustration of the power of non-violence action, of nonviolent politics.”
CHAPTER 9
LIGHTNING STRIKES IN GREENSBORO

“It was reported,” wrote Deats’, “that one of the students who were to sit in at the lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina read the comic book and thought, ‘If they can do it, why can’t we?’ The Greensboro protest sparked the sit-in movement that spread across the nation.” Just like his FOR predecessor William Robert Miller, whose 1968 work first told the story of the comic book inspiring the Greensboro Four, Deats does not source his account to any of the principal figures.

When I asked Rev. Lawson about the comic book’s influence, he said, “I think a couple of people in Greensboro who got involved in the workshop knew that comic book and even studied it before they went down. Theirs is the first one that hit the press. The ones we did in Nashville, we deliberately did not call the press nor did we want the press to know about it because we were still doing our basic training and strategizing. But in some ways, it was an accident of history. How important that is I don’t know because the Greensboro people, to them, this was incidental and there was an NAACP man, a merchant, a white merchant, who is the one who pressed them to go forward on it and in fact they met at his store the first
time or they met at his store several times according to the stories I’ve heard and read and then actually did their first sit in walking from his store.”

Lawson pointed out differences between the Nashville sit-ins and those in Greensboro. “But you see,” said Rev. Lawson, “another important part about this is that Greensboro did not desegregate the lunch counters until July of 1960. Our program, which was far more disciplined and systematic, we were beginning to get signs pulled down voluntarily in March.” Looking to the participants of the Nashville sit-in movement, it is possible to gain additional confirmation of the role the comic book played. In his memoir Walking With The Wind, John Lewis recalls the comic book as “a wildly popular comic book-style pamphlet,” that, “explained the basics of passive resistance and non-violent action as tools for desegregation. The pamphlet wound up being devoured by black college students across the South. I’d read a copy of it myself.”¹

Probing further, I read Rev. Lawson the passage from Miller’s book that told the story of Ezell Blair and Joseph McNeill reading the comic book and being so inspired that they decided to begin sitting-in. In response, Rev Lawson said, “I have no doubt that probably that part of the story

is accurate. I would also only add to that what I said earlier, that there was a merchant selling sundry items, as I recall, who talked to these guys also. I do know that that was another influence so I’m not prepared to say that it was only the influence of the comic. The comic had a major role in that scene.”

Lewis also mentions the role of the comic book on the Greensboro sit-ins, writing, ”They were four guys in Greensboro, all of them freshmen at North Carolina A&T College. They had no plan, no preparation. One of them had read that FOR comic book about King and Montgomery, they had begun talking about the process of nonviolent action, and on this particular afternoon they simply decided it was time for them to do something.”

However, Rev Lawson also adds that within the NAACP affiliated community there was awareness of another sit-in that had taken place in 1958, one in which Rev. Lawson himself had visited and participated in, giving non-violent workshops and distributing the FOR comic book. Rev. Lawson said, “There was a fairly well reported sit-in by the youth chapter in Wichita, Kansas, by a teacher in the city, a very well known NAACP activist in the Midwest. I sat-in with them on one occasion when I visited them in ’58 and

2 Ibid., 91.
did a workshop with them and listened to their experiences. The national NAACP did not approve and they went ahead anyway. So I’m saying to you these NAACP people in Greensboro might have known about this episode.”

Even in this early sit-in, the comic book appears to have been used. But there also seems to be an NAACP connection. Does this mean that, in some way, the NAACP was responsible for jumpstarting the sit-ins? “The National office,” Rev. Lawson said, “never supported the sit-in campaign until well into the sixties. While they did not support the students sitting-in in Greensboro or Nashville, they when called, the national office told the Nashville sit-in chapter of the NAACP ‘do not sit, we do not support that.’ So I know this and now the NAACP claims credit in some ways but their leadership was very much opposed to the confrontation style of the sit-ins.”

Deats’ letter also speaks to the views of another hugely influential figure within the FOR, Glenn Smiley. Deats’ letter offers a quote attributed to Smiley that reads “It was not used popularly as we had thought it would be, but it was largely used—the biggest buyers were sociology classes from the universities…” The schools would use them as “an illustration of modern means of propaganda.” Smiley doesn’t give much weight to the
influence of the comic book as a teaching tool, believing that its greatest academic importance is as a relic of early civil rights movement propaganda. “We’ve had sociology departments from I don’t know how many universities,” said Rev. Smiley, “that would order a thousand copies or a hundred copies and say we use it as an illustration of modern means of propaganda.”
CHAPTER 10
BEYOND THE AMERICAN SOUTH

The story of Martin Luther King and the Montgomery Story did not end with the Civil Rights movement in the American South. In fact, the full story of its influence has probably yet to unfold. Shortly after the comic book was first published in the United States, the FOR published a Spanish language edition that was printed and distributed throughout Latin America. The art was redrawn but the cover remained the same. Over the next two decades, other translated editions appeared alongside nonviolent movements.

The comic book was distributed in South Africa among those resisting the apartheid regime. A young missionary named Jerome Nkosi read the comic book in Johannesburg, where he was working as a missionary. In July of 1959, Nkosi wrote a letter to the FOR describing the inspiration he felt after reading the comic book. “I feel all the more challenged,” said Nkosi, “to do what I can to apply the suggestions outlined in the closing pages to our local situations which, as you well know, are far from being commendable.” The comic book was eventually banned in South Africa for its allegedly incendiary content.
In the late sixties, the FOR turned its attention to the escalating war in Vietnam and so too did Hassler. A Vietnamese translation of the comic book quickly followed. But for Hassler, the relationships he developed would prove to be profoundly influential and ultimately lead to his separation from the FOR. “Alfred was strongly affected by his friendship with Thich Nhat Hanh,” wrote Laura Hassler, “not only because of the bravery of the Buddhist nonviolent movement in opposing the war while refusing to choose a violent alternative; but also for the insights that Buddhism brought. He retired early, out of disappointment in the peace movement (including the FOR) for not supporting the Vietnamese Buddhists during the Vietnam War. At the time, much of the US and European peace movement, including many who claimed nonviolence as their fundamental belief, yielded to the temptation to align themselves with the armed resistance to 'American imperialism', understandable in many ways but very disappointing to the nonviolent movement in Vietnam of course.”

Hassler moved to southern Spain in 1974, where he and his wife started a cooperative retirement community in a small fisherman's village in Andalucia. He became interested in Islam, according to Laura Hassler, he “read the Koran, then went back to read the Old Testament to look
for parallels. He was fascinated with studies on the universe, read Stephen Hawking and others avidly, and corresponded with his oldest grandson (my son, Dan) about all these things. (Ironically, Dan is now a professor of literature and media studies at the University of Amsterdam, specialized in popular media (including comic books and graphic novels); he wrote his PhD thesis on 'Superheroes and the Post 9/11 Bush Doctrine.)” Hassler passed away in 1991.

But the story of Hassler’s comic book was not over. In 2006, a young woman named Dalia Ziada rediscovered the comic book and began the process of creating an Arabic and Farsi translation. Ziada learned of Dr. King’s writings while attending a civil rights conference in Cairo. "It was amazing and really moved me," Ziada said. "Since then, I decided to use nonviolent strategies in everything in my life, starting from my personal life to major political participation and civil problems, and it worked perfectly!" She focused on the impact of translating the comic book into Arabic as a way to engage students in the Middle East. "The young generations must learn that being young does not mean being weak and apathetic," Ziada said. "[Dr. King] was only 29 years old when he launched his campaign and motivated the whole Afro-American community."
Ziada faced some roadblocks when trying to import the comic book into Egypt. "Pushing for democracy and inciting young people to attain civil rights was taboo in Egypt," said Ziada, "but thanks to the nonviolent technique of negotiation and pressure, I got the approval -- which was impossible once." She invited the security officer who blocked publication to share a cup of coffee and discuss the book. They read through it page by page to address his concerns. "Strangely, he liked it and helped me edit the sentences that might cause trouble!" Ziada recalled. He granted permission to print it. He then asked, "Could I have a few extra copies for my kids?" \(^1\)

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CHAPTER 11

NONVIOLENT REVOLUTION

Our own understanding of the world around us, almost universally, accepts violence to some degree or another. War is an all too common part of foreign policy and the merits of a particular war often find themselves debated on the front page of the newspaper or at the kitchen table in many homes. We have seen how comfortable America was with the idea of violence following World War II through the almost nonsensical morality displayed during the 1954 hearings of the Senate Subcommittee on Juvenile Delinquency.

But we have also witnessed through the course of this discussion that the absence of violence can be just as destructive to artificial and morally abhorrent social constructs. We have seen that in Birmingham, and Greensboro, in Nashville and elsewhere, nonviolence was capable of bringing drastic change to society. The only bloodshed was that of those willing to make the ultimate sacrifice so that others would not face such fury.

We have also seen that very few popular mediums offer the potential to educate and inform broader swaths of the population than comic books. The words and pictures come
together to form a more complete dialogue that has, according to experts both in support of and against comic books, a tendency to influence the mindset and future experiences of young people. In the instance of *Martin Luther King and the Montgomery Story*, we have seen this influence take on an exaggerated importance, almost mythical, that has yet managed to escape scholarly evaluation.

I hope that, to some degree, this discussion has at the very least raised questions about what we consider to be “influential” or “important” to the formation of moments that have a tremendous impact on history. I hope that this discussion broadens our perception of what we willingly accept as possible. Over the last few years, as I have had the privilege to spend time with some amazing figures in the civil rights, government, and comic book worlds, I have heard the questions often asked, “Is it true? Did a comic book really do that?” I have done my best to answer these questions. I have done my best to show that what causes a manufactured lightning strike is often years in the making, that what we understand as relevant is often rooted in events taking place years or decades prior. I have done my best to show to you the comic book that changed the world.
APPENDIX

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Martin Luther King and the Montgomery Story 146
March 12, 1957

MAR 1. 1957

Mr. Alfred Hassler
Fellowship of Reconciliation
Nyack, New York

Dear Mr. Hassler:

I am enclosing herewith a suggested story treatment for the proposed booklet, THE MOUNT-GEMERY STORY. I would appreciate your comments.

Once the treatment is accepted by you, we would then proceed to two or three pages of script and art work for presentation to the Fund.

Cordially,

[Signature]

Benton J. Resnik

Enclosure
Panel 1

Joe Jones, three-quarters back view, a good looking young Negro, opening bureau drawer in which there is a revolver.

Jones: I'm a peaceful man—but I have a gun. For a long time I thought I might have to use it some day. Now, I don't know...

Panel 2

Joe Jones, leaning on bureau, addressing reader.

Jones: Call me Jones. My name doesn't matter. But my story's important, for you as well as me. We're all caught up in it, one way or another.

Panel 3

Sympathetically drawn white man pointing with authority to Jones who is washing car.


Man: Snap it up, boy. I want that car in a hurry.

Panel 4

Jones' wife with baby in arms, greeting Joe Jones coming home from work. They live in a neatly kept but essentially runshackle, mustard-colored clapboard cottage.

Jones: People live scared under Jim Crow. I was scared, too. You never know when something might bust out, and I have a wife and baby.

Wife: Say hello to daddy...

Baby: Da.

Panel 5

Jones: And how's my little boy today?

Baby: Da!

Jones: We used to play—the baby and I—right next to the bureau with that loaded gun. I wondered if I'd have the courage to use it to defend my family. Lately I've started to wonder if that would be courage.
Panel 6

Bus driver angrily telling Rosa Parks to move as she looks placidly straight ahead. Others in bus watch in interest.

Jones: Now take Rosa Parks. She really had courage. Sat there in the bus that night and just quietly said no when the bus driver told her to give her seat to a white man.

Driver: For the last time... are you getting up... or aren't you?
Panel 1
Judge, leaning forward to talk to Rosa Parks.

Caption: Rosa Parks hadn’t planned it that way. I guess I surprised her as much as she the bus driver. She was tired, and her feet hurt, and she suddenly decided she had as much right to that seat as anyone... They arrested Rosa Parks and fined her $10.

Judge: ...guilty of violating a city ordinance. Next case!

Panel 2
Jones sitting up in bed, in darkness, as his wife sleeps.

Caption: That night I couldn’t sleep. I knew Rosa, and I knew why she had stayed in that seat. She had a right to sit there, and so had I, and every other human being, black or white, who paid his fare.

Panel 3
The night lamp is on as husband and wife talk to one another.

Caption: In the middle of the night I woke my wife.

Jones: We ought to do something.

Wife: What? What can we do?

Panel 4
Close-up of perplexed Jones.

Jones: I don’t know. Maybe we ought to talk to our friends.

Panel 5
Jones operating mimeograph machine as friends watch.

Caption: We talked to them the very next day. And we decided to mimeograph the story of what had happened to Rosa Parks and ask all the Negroes in Montgomery to stay off the buses the next day. We would have a strike against the buses—a one-day strike—to say we didn’t like what happened to Rosa Parks...

Friend (laughing): Let the presses roll, Joe!
Panel 6
Suee friend shows Joe a Montgomery newspaper.

Caption: Next day, December 4, 1955, the Montgomery newspaper made its big mistake. It printed a copy of our sheet and spread the story all over the paper. That way everybody in Montgomery heard about the strike. We never could have reached them all ourselves.

Friend: Now we're in!

Panel 7
This is the day of the strike. Negroes are walking as an empty bus rolls by.

Caption: December 5, 1955! Everybody walked! The buses rolled empty along the streets of Montgomery. Our strike was a success!
May 2, 1957

Benton J. Resnik
Graphic Information Service, Inc.
17 East 15th Street
New York 17, New York

Dear Mr. Resnik:

The more I have looked at the text of the script for the comic book the more I feel that, while the utilization is alright, the script is too heavy and literary for our purposes. You will recall that what we have in mind is getting to people who have relatively little education. Writing to such people involves not only the choice of words, but also sentence structure, abstract concepts, etc. For example, it seems to me that the sentence beginning "Some friends and I..." on panel 5 is much too heavy for this kind of literature.

I would assume that you have had considerable experience with this problem and I would be glad to have any ideas you have on the subject. It does not seem to me to be a matter of "writing down" to the reader, but simply of making it as easy for him to read as possible.

I am enclosing a revised copy for the pages in question. The revisions are more substantial than we had talked about, but I really feel that this initial page has to be as near right as we can get it if we hope to get any substantial favorable response.

Sincerely,

Alfred Hassler

AH/sm
June 20, 1957

Rev. Will D. Campbell
1715 West End Avenue
Nashville, Tenn.

Dear Will Campbell:

Oscar Lee suggested that I write to you about the project described in the enclosed copy of a letter sent to some leaders in Negro Christian communities. If you have any suggestions for ways in which this can be promoted, I would be most grateful to have them. Would you permit us to use your name as one of the sponsors?

Cordially,

Alfred Hassler

AAR Int
enclos.
July 4, 1957

Miss Thelma Stevens, Executive Secretary
Department of Christian Social Relations
150 Fifth Avenue
New York 10, N. Y.

Dear Miss Stevens:

I am writing to you at the suggestion of Dr. Forest Ashbrook of the American Baptist Convention. Dr. Ashbrook is National Treasurer of the Fellowship of Reconciliation which, as you may know, has been deeply involved in the non-violent struggle for racial equality in the South during the past couple of years. I am enclosing a copy of a letter from the Rev. Robert Gratts that will give some indication of the role that the Fellowship has played.

In the course of the past year it was suggested to us that what was needed desperately was a means of telling the story of Montgomery, Alabama, and its implications, in a form that could be distributed to both Negroes and whites whose education was somewhat limited.

We have come up with the idea of publishing a comic book style booklet entitled "Martin Luther King and the Montgomery Story." The actual art and script work are being done by the Al Capp Organization, and Dr. King has given his approval to it and has agreed to sign a statement endorsing it when it is sent out for distribution.

The mechanical job of producing a 4-color comic book is such that the minimum print order possible is 250,000 copies. You will recognize that this involves a considerable financial investment, well beyond the normal capacities of the Fellowship. However, we have had a promise from a large foundation to subsidize the bulk of the cost if we can demonstrate that there is a considerable demand for the booklet before it is actually published. We are, therefore, in the process of preparing a 4-page brochure describing the comic book and showing sample pages (in one-color, of course).

I am writing to you to ask two things. Would you be willing, as a leader in your denomination, to give your endorsement to this project? Could you undertake to distribute a substantial number of the 4-page brochure to the ministers or women's societies, etc. within your convention?
This brochure does not ask for contributions; it does solicit advance orders for the comic book, to be paid for on delivery. Retail price of the book will be 10¢, but it is to be sold in quantities to churches for from 5-7¢, depending on the size of the order.

I am enclosing photocopies of the two pages that have been tentatively finished by the Capp organization. The entire script will be checked and approved by Dr. King before final publication. I shall be most grateful for any help you can give us in this matter.

Sincerely,

Alfred Bassler

Addenda
Enc.
July 17, 1957

Mr. Alfred Hassler
Fellowship of Reconciliation
Nyack, New York

Dear Alfred Hassler:

Thank you for your letter of June 20. I have discussed the proposed comic book briefly with Glenn Smiley when I was with him in North Carolina. It seems to me to be an excellent idea. As far as method of promotion, it occurs to me that it might be well if you had a circulable mailing list of presidents, secretaries, etc., of the various fraternal organizations, lodges, etc., in the South. They sponsor a great many projects and the like, and Dr. King is quite a hero in the book of most of them. It might be that they would take the distribution of this booklet as an annual project, and I should like very much to see these get wholesale coverage throughout the South.

In the booklet to contain the basic message of Christian Nonviolence? I have thought for sometime that such a wholesale educational project is badly needed. So many people still feel that the only way to fight is with the same weapon as the aggressor. In short, as I move around the South I find that despite Montgomery and other cities, many people do not know this method. I am sure that you are employing to the fullest the denominational staff people. However, I do not wish to be critical, but the denominational people are often so busy promoting their own program that they have little time for anything else, whereas the groups such as mentioned above are often anxious to get something to do.

I should be glad to do whatever I can to help you, and you are certainly free to use my name as a sponsor.

Cordially yours,

Will H. Campbell
Associate Executive
July 31, 1937
via Air Mail

Will D. Campbell
National Council of the Churches of Christ
1715 West End Avenue
Nashville, Tenn.

Dear Will Campbell:

I am troubled about the comic book project, concerning which you wrote me recently. The problem is one of time, and I would appreciate having your thoughts on the matter.

The Fund for the Republic is not willing to give us the money for the book until we have demonstrated that there is a considerable demand for it, by showing advance orders for a good many thousand copies. Delays in producing the preliminary art and script, largely on the part of the Al Capp organization, has resulted in our sending the brochure out at the beginning of the summer, probably the worst possible time in the year. We have had relatively few responses so far, although those that have come in are generally encouraging.

My difficulty is that if we have to wait until fall to produce enough of these orders to encourage the Fund to go ahead, then it will be near the end of the year before the comic book is actually produced and ready for shipment. Will this be too late, in your opinion, for widespread use? Have you any other suggestions for promoting it to key groups and individuals who might send us some respectable orders?

Cordially,

Alfred Hassler
WOMAN'S DIVISION OF CHRISTIAN SERVICE
OF THE
BOARD OF MISSIONS OF THE METHODIST CHURCH

150 FIFTH AVENUE    JULY 11, 1957    NEW YORK N. Y.

DEPARTMENT OF CHRISTIAN SOCIAL RELATIONS

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550 North Division
Wheaton, Ill.

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ASSOCIATE SECRETARY
WIFE OF CLIFFORD A. HENDRICKS

CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEE
MRS. A. M. HENRY
117 S. 10TH ST.
LINDA HENDRICKS

Mr. Alfred Hassler
Fellowship of Reconciliation
Spaek, New York

Dear Mr. Hassler:

Your letter of July 12 has received my attention. I have
delayed sending a reply until I was sure what answer I should give.

I have read your letter very carefully and I have looked at
the sample pages of the Visual Comic Book Style story of Martin
Luther King and his experiences in Montgomery. I think it sounds
as if it will be tremendously significant. I wish I were in
position to say that our agency will stock a considerable quantity.
I hope we can, but I am not in position to give the "green light"
without further clearance with the Department of Christian Social
Relations. Therefore, it will not be possible for me to give you
an answer until after our meeting in September. Our Executive
Committee meets around the 20th of September. I am very much
afraid that this delay will cause you some difficulty, but I hope very much that it will
not prevent the important process through which you are going. I think this story must
be told, and it should be told in a way that large numbers of people will read it. I am
personally grateful to you and your agency for putting your hands to the plow and giving
us leadership at this point. I shall be eagerly looking forward to seeing the final draft
of the 64-page 4-color comic book which you are preparing. I have no doubt that it will be
completed by the middle of September. I should be most grateful to you if you will let
me know, or let me have a sample copy of the entire pamphlet so that I can bring it to
our Executive Committee for their consideration when they are making this important
cancellation. I am sure that they, too, will feel as I do that this could become a very signifi-
cant contribution in these days. You may be sure that Methodist women will give their
full cooperation as far as possible in this whole process. I am not sure how much money
we would have available for the purchase of quantities of this type of material since we
always plan our budget so far ahead of time. In any case, we shall do our best.

With every good wish, I am

Sincerely yours,

THELMA STEVENS

Secretary

MRS. A. M. HENRY

J. M. ROWE, M. D.
August 9, 1957

Dr. Alfred Hassler
Fellowship of Reconciliation
New York, New York

Dear Alfred Hassler:

It is my opinion that even if the comic book which we had discussed in recent communications is delayed until fall, there will still be plenty of time for proper distribution. As a matter of fact, recent developments in the South indicate that this maybe better.

Yesterday I attended the third meeting of the Southern Leaders Conference now known as the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and it was voted at that meeting to establish an organization with three full-time staff people and two administrative assistants. This organization through staff personnel will work throughout the South in organizing mass demonstrations, such as Montgomery and other cities, and various other nonviolence acts of resistance. I know that you and Glen Smiley are most familiar with this group but you might not know of this latest development.

This new organization will be in immediate contact with every city and town in the South, and through their work of promotion, and since Dr. King has become such a terrific symbol in this movement, I should think that they will be a great help in promoting sales of this book. I do not know if they could offer you any advance orders at this time, but it would be worth writing to Dr. King about.

Of course I do not know what sources you have contacted but there is one which should not be overlooked. Mr. Russell Lasey, International Vice-President of the United Packing House Workers of America has attended past meetings of the Southern Leadership Conference and his organization has already raised quite a sum of money toward financing the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. I am not sure of his address, but you can get it from any AFL-CIO directory. It might be that they would place a respectable order at this time. Also in attendance at yesterday's meeting were two representatives of the AFL-CIO. Both were impressed and both showed an immense interest in the movement. Although I cannot give you the names and addresses of these men, I believe that because of the closeness of your organization to the Montgomery situation you would have no difficulty getting them. This would seem to be an excellent source to tap.
August 9, 1957

I must ask that you consider the information regarding yesterday’s meeting as confidential, not even revealing to those mentioned the source of your information. I have not violated a trust but these are closed meetings and I have not cleared with Dr. King or anyone else regarding permission to share this with you. Of course, there would have been no objection I am sure, but you can understand my position. Please let me know if I can help you further.

Cordially yours,

Will

Will D. Campbell
Associate Executive
August 9, 1957

Mr. Alfred Hassler, Editor
The Fellowship of Reconciliation
Nyack, New York

Dear Mr. Hassler:

In confidence that F.O.R will avoid factors which will inflame hatred or violence, I am glad to endorse the publication of the proposed “Martin Luther King and the Montgomery Story.”

This must be considered strictly as my personal endorsement and does not involve commitment by the Board of Education of the Methodist Church. Mr. King is becoming widely recognized for his Christian non-violent attitude and acts. A booklet such as this in consistent spirit can be a valuable implement of our avowed purpose of reconciliation.

Cordially yours,

Leon M. Atkins

IMA/nm
August 22, 1957

Mr. Russell Lasley
United Packing House Workers of America
603 South Dearborn
Chicago, Illinois

Dear Mr. Lasley:

Both Philip Randolph and the Rev. Will Campbell have suggested that I write to you about a project that the Fellowship of Reconciliation is working on at the present time. I am enclosing some printed material about it, but would like to give you a little background in this letter.

You may know that staff members of the Fellowship have been active in the South, and particularly in Montgomery, during the past two years. An indication of what their work has meant can be gotten from the copy of a letter from the Rev. Robert Graetz of the Montgomery Improvement Association, which is enclosed.

The experiences of these staff members led them to feel that there was great importance in producing in some form the story of what happened in Montgomery, and why and how, in a medium that would be read and understood by people of very limited education. Working on this, we came up with the idea of producing a 16-page, 4-color comic book style publication as described in the enclosed brochure. It is being produced by the Al Capp organization, and the copy, etc., are being approved by Dr. King as well as by our own staff.

The initial print order on this kind of publication is $50,000 which involves an investment larger than our budget would ordinarily make possible. However, the Fund for the Republic has promised to subsidize the major part of this investment if we can demonstrate in advance that there will be a substantial sale and distribution on the finished product. It is, of course, difficult to get orders from the eventual consumers before the book itself has been completed, but we are managing to get a few large commitments from groups who can undertake distribution themselves. Both Mr. Randolph and Mr. Campbell felt that the United Packing House Workers might be in a position to
Russell Lassley
August 22, 1957

give us such an order possibly as many as 10,000 copies. As you will note from the folder, the retail price is 10¢ per copy but in quantities of 5,000 or more it is only 5¢ per copy. No payment would be expected, of course, until delivery of the finished book.

We have found throughout the South an intense interest among both Negroes and whites in both the philosophy and techniques used in the Montgomery type of nonviolent resistance against continued segregation and discrimination. Our staff people have been able to put libraries on nonviolence in many Negro colleges and churches and have inaugurated more than a score of institutes and seminars on nonviolence throughout the South. We believe that this kind of publication will multiply enormously the understanding of this whole historic development, and will be very grateful if you can find it possible to give us the kind of help requested.

Sincerely,

Alfred Hassler

All/Int encls.
August 22, 1957

Mr. Philip Randolph
Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters
217 West 125 Street
New York City, New York

Dear Philip Randolph:

It was a pleasure to meet and talk with you yesterday, and I appreciate the encouragement you gave in connection with our project for a comic book to tell the story of what happened in Montgomery, Alabama. I am writing now to ask whether you would bring before the New York Local the possibility of ordering as large a quantity as possible at this time, so that we might be able to present to the potential sponsor an encouraging a number of specific orders as possible. The Local would not be billed for the books, of course, until they are delivered.

I am sending along a few extra copies of the brochure with the endorsement by Martin Luther King. You will note that the finished comic book, 16 pages long and in four colors, is designed to sell for 10¢ per copy retail, but that quantity prices are: 1000 @ 6¢ each and 5000 or more @ 5¢ each.

I will appreciate anything you can do in this matter.

Sincerely,

Alfred Hassler

All/int
encls.

P.S. I am sending along a couple of copies of our new Christmas card which I think is delightful. If you can use any of them they sell for $7.50/100, $65.00/1000 with envelopes.
August 21, 1957

Mr. Alfred Hassler, Editor
Fellowship Magazine
Fellowship of Reconciliation
New York, New York

Dear Brother Hassler:

This will acknowledge receipt of your letter of August 22, 1957 concerning the local division of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters purchasing a comic book dealing with the epoch-making stand against segregated buses taken by the Negroes of Montgomery, Alabama, under the leadership of the Reverend Martin Luther King.

I will bring your letter to the attention of the local Executive Board of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters.

Sincerely,

A. Philip Randolph
International President

A. Phill.
August 27, 1957

Rev. Will D. Campbell
National Council of the Churches of Christ
1716 West End Avenue
Nashville, Tenn.

Dear Will:

Thanks very much for your encouraging letter of August 9. I have since talked to Philip DeMolphy and have had a very encouraging response from him. As soon as Dr. Reed of the Fund for the Republic returns from vacation I hope to see him and try to persuade him to make the grant without further delay. If you should be moved to drop him a letter encouraging him to do so that might be helpful, though I would not want to urge you to do anything you have any reluctance about.

Cordially,

Alfred Baseler
September 12, 1957

Ed Reed
Fund for the Republic
60 East 42nd Street
New York, New York

Dear Ed Reed:

We were grateful for your assurance the other day that you would propose the $5,000 grant for the Montgomery comic book to your Board of Directors on September 15 or 19. Since there will inevitably be some time consumed in the actual production of the book, the sooner we get at it the better. As the current developments in the South demonstrate, there is an enormous need for the widespread distribution of information as to how the struggle for human equality can be carried on without violence. You will be interested to know that on Monday evening our Executive Committee approved a staff proposal that Glenn Smiley be detached from his regular work and stay in the South for a major portion of the coming year.

My understanding from you and Ping Perry was that the final decision on the grant would depend largely on the reaction that we get from the preliminary announcements of the comic book. Because of the need for three different organizations to consider various decisions in this matter from time to time, the material that we could send out for preliminary examination was delayed until the beginning of this past summer. For that reason many of those to whom I wrote, or who wrote, were unavailable because of vacations, etc. In addition, the single mailing that we did to that we thought was a potential ultimate consumers' list--a list of 2,000 Negro ministers--turned out to have been mislabelled by the denomination from which it came, so that the mailing actually went to a list of white Southern ministers. You will understand that we did not get a very promising return from this list.

Those key persons with whom we were able to make contact during the summer have without exception been enthusiastic about the project. As of this time I would say that we can certainly count initial orders of at least 50,000 copies, and probably substantially more. Specifically, the contacts I have had reactions from have been
The Montgomery Improvement Association, through Dr. King, has indicated great interest and the probability that at least 10,000 copies will be used.

Mr. Philip Randolph, President of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, was equally enthusiastic and indicated that his union would certainly order substantially. However, the Union Board of Directors does not meet until November and a specific order has to wait until that time.

The Rev. Dr. William F. Campbell, Associate Executive Secretary of the Department of Social and Cultural Relations of the National Council of Churches, working in the South, is very hopeful that we will get the publication out and expresses the belief that it will circulate widely throughout the South. Mr. Campbell also volunteered the feeling that the publication is likely to be even more relevant coming out this fall than it would have been at an earlier time.

Bishop Love, of the Methodist Church in Baltimore, promises wide distribution in that city through his churches.

Dr. Oscar Lee, Executive Secretary of the Department of Social and Cultural Relations of the National Council of Churches, has promised to push the publication through the Social Action Committees of all denominations of the National Council.

Several other denominational leaders have expressed support for the project and a willingness to push it, but have not given any specific figure on which we can count.

We have asked our regional secretaries to canvass their areas to see what circulation they could count on, and have had commitments from them for 50,000 copies with two secretaries still to be heard from.

In view of this, we feel here that it is imperative that the comic book be produced, and that it be produced without delay. I personally feel sure that the entire edition will be sold out within a fairly short time and that reprints will probably be necessary. As soon as you give me a favorable word I will be in touch with the CAppy organization to speed up the procedure as much as possible.

Cordially,

Alfred Root

All/Int
September 24, 1957

Dr. Martin Luther King
Montgomery Improvement Assn.
530 South Union
Montgomery, Alabama

Dear Dr. King:

I am sure you will be happy to know that after long delays the Fund For The Republic has approved the grant to us that will make it possible to publish the Comic Book about which I spoke to you during the summer. We will be going ahead with this as rapidly as the Al Capp Organisation can move, and as we do so, I would like to have you look at the script before it is put in final shape just to be sure it has your approval.

Cordially,

Alfred Hassler
Acting Executive Secretary
The Fund for the Republic INC.

69 East 42nd Street, New York 17, New York

September 26, 1957

Dear Alfred Hassler:

I am pleased to advise you that the Board of Directors of the Fund for the Republic has approved a grant of $5,000 to the Fellowship of Reconciliation, to help finance production of a "Comic Book" based on the Montgomery bus boycott, with the understanding that $2,000 of this grant will be returned to the Fund by the FOR from proceeds from the sale of the book.

With this letter I am enclosing the Fund's check for $3,000. We would appreciate progress and financial reports at six-month intervals, and shall inform interim reports as you wish to submit. You are at liberty to publicize this grant, but we would appreciate the opportunity of reviewing any news releases before they are made public.

We have in our files a copy of the Treasury Department letter establishing the tax exempt status of the Fellowship of Reconciliation. When you acknowledge receipt of the enclosed check, will you please have one of the officers of the FOR sign a statement to the effect that, to the best of his knowledge, the tax exempt status of the Fellowship of Reconciliation is still in effect.

Kindest regards,

\[Signature\]

Hallock Hoffman
Treasurer

Alfred Hassler
Fellowship of Reconciliation
Nyack, New York
September 27, 1957

Hallock Hoffman
The Fund for the Republic, Inc.
60 East 42nd Street
New York 17, New York

Dear Hallock Hoffman:

Thank you very much for the check for $25,000 from the Fund for the Republic. We have already given the go-ahead sign to the Graphic Information Service and are hopeful that actual production on the book will be completed sometime in November. I shall see to it that you receive periodic reports as to the progress and success of the venture.

Our most recent official communication from the Treasury Department indicated that we could count on our tax exempt status continuing in effect so long as we make no basic changes in the purpose or method of operation that we had outlined to the Department. No such changes have been made, and there have been numerous communications with the Bureau of Internal Revenue in which the Bureau has continued to accept the presumption of tax exemption. Our contributors regularly list the Fellowship as a recipient of contributions which they deduct for income tax purposes. For these and other reasons I can assert that to the best of our knowledge and belief the tax exempt status of the Fellowship of Reconciliation is still in effect.

Cordially,

Alfred Haskell
Acting Executive Secretary
October 29, 1957

Mr. Alfred Hassler
Fellowship Publications
Wyack, New York

Dear Mr. Hassler:

I must apologize for being rather tardy in responding to your letter of October 17, with the enclosed script of the forthcoming movie book. The day I returned to Montgomery I confronted two or three emergency situations that needed my immediate attention and then two days later a new addition came into our family - Martin Luther King, III. The excitement and the extra work that inevitably follows a new addition in the family caused me to keep me out of the office for the rest of the week. All of these things account for my delay in replying.

I have read the script very scrutinizingly, and frankly there is hardly anything that I could add or subtract. It is certainly an excellent piece of work. I might raise one or two questions concerning factual points. Of course, these points might not necessarily be important because at times you must stray away from the exact facts to create the drama of the situation. However, I will raise them with you. On page 106, box 1 you state that Nixon was the first person to be indicted. I don't think this is actually the case. The grand jury indicted everybody simultaneously. Neither was Nixon the first to be arrested.(which abnormally was the first to be arrested. On page 20, box 5 you quote the Negro woman who was slapped: 'I could really wallop her - she is smaller than me.' Actually there was a white man who slapped the Negro woman. In order to be more in line with the facts it would be better to say: 'I could really wallop him - he is smaller than me.'

As I said these are very minor points and they do not necessarily have to be changed. It is certainly true that a person as important as Nixon needs to be in the picture at some point, and maybe the situation you create is the best point to bring him in.
Again, I would like to say what a fine piece of work this is. You have done a marvelous job of grasping the underlying truth and philosophy of the movement. I am sure that this comic book will be welcomed by the American public. Please feel free to call on me at any time.

Very sincerely yours,

M. L. King, Jr.

MLK Jr.

(Dictated by Rev. King, but signed in his absence.)
Preliminary artwork, promotional documents and materials
I'M A PEACEFUL MAN BUT I HAVE A GUN. FOR A LONG TIME I THOUGHT I MIGHT HAVE TO USE IT SOME DAY. NOW I DON'T THINK...  

CALL ME JONEE, MY NAME DOESN'T MATTER, BUT MY STORY'S IMPORTANT. FOR YOU AS WELL AS ME, WE'RE ALL CAUGHT UP IN IT, ONE WAY OR ANOTHER.

I LIVE IN MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA. I LOVE MONTGOMERY BUT I'VE HATED IT TOO. A NEGRO ANYWHERE IN THE SOUTH HAS A HARD TIME. I'M GROWING MIGHTY HEAVY ON A MAN'S SPIRIT.

PEOPLE LIVE SCARED. UNDER JIM CROW. I WAS SCARED TOO. YOU NEVER KNOW WHEN SOMETHING MIGHT BUST OUT AND I HAVE A WIFE AND BABY. SAY HELLO TO HARRY.

WE USED TO PLAY. THE BABY AND I. RIGHT NEXT TO THE BUREAU WITH THAT LOADED GUN. I WANTED IF I'D HAVE THE COURAGE TO USE IT TO DEFEND MY FAMILY. LATELY I'VE STARTED TO WONDER IF THAT REALLY WOULD BE COURAGE.

NOW J. AS A PARKS, SHE REALLY HAD COURAGE. SAT THERE IN THE BUS THAT NIGHT AND JUST QUIETLY SAID NO. WHEN THE BUS DRIVER TOLD HER TO GIVE HER SEAT TO A WHITE MAN...

OK?

AND HOW'S MY LITTLE BOY TODAY?

FOR THE LAST TIME, ARE YOU GETTING UP... OR AREN'T YOU?
Letter to FOR full list (comic book folder)
covering letter (comic book)

Dear Friend—

The enclosed brochure will be largely self-explanatory. It concerns a "comic-book" that the Fellowship has been working on for some months.

We have great hopes for this, and believe that it will spread the story both of Montgomery and of the ways of nonviolence to millions we have never before reached. In Africa, particularly in the South, we have been encouraged to proceed with this project by a major foundation, which had indicated a willingness to make gifts and subsidies available to cover most of the cost of production, around $7,000. (The minimum "run" on this kind of publication is 250,000 copies.)

Now, with the script almost completed, preliminary art work done, and a brochure ready to go out to hundreds of churches and organizations, the foundation has informed us that it has changed the direction of its entire program and is canceling all other projects, including this one.

The Fellowship has no provision in its budget for this comic book.

We do not like to appeal to the membership, but we suspect that you would feel as strongly as we that this project must not fail. If each member and friend of the FOR were to send in only $1, we would have more than enough to subsidize the initial printing and distribution. (If the project is successful, and more printings are needed, their costs will be covered by sales.)

Will you send a dollar today?

Sincerely,

P.S.—If you want to include an order for Martin Luther King and The Montgomery Story with your contribution, that will help also. An order blank is enclosed.
Coming—

MARTIN LUTHER KING
AND
THE MONTGOMERY STORY

10c

DRAMATIC—EXCITING—VISUAL

A 16-page, four-color, comic-book style story of one of the most important events of our times
The Montgomery Story

In all the long struggle against racial discrimination, few things have been more exciting or important than the tremendous year-long "walk to freedom" of Montgomery's 50,000 Negroes. The story of their patient, determined, nonviolent assault on Jim Crow has been told in the newspapers, in magazine articles, and on radio and television.

But for masses of people to read, and understand, it needed telling in the most widely read medium of our day, and that's how it is now being told!

NOW — IN VIVID, HARD-HITTING COMIC-BOOK FORM DONE BY THE AL CAPP ORGANIZATION, CREATORS OF "LI'L ABNER" — YOUR GUARANTEE OF A FIRST-RATE, PROFESSIONAL JOB

For Children

Children of all ages will thrill to the story of the Negroes who would not yield in the face of threats and bombings. Most comic-books glorify violence — this one demonstrates the real heroism of ordinary men, women and children who pit their whole strength against evil but refuse to hate or use violence while they do it.

For Adults

The Montgomery Story is more than the account of what happened in one city to one group of people. It is a signpost, a book of directions for others who would work for freedom and brotherhood without adding to the world's store of hatred and bitterness.

HELP MAKE SURE THE MONTGOMERY STORY IS TOLD ALL OVER THE UNITED STATES. ORDER COPIES TODAY —SEE BACK PAGE FOR DETAILS
Martin Luther King

and

THE MONTGOMERY STORY

This booklet will have as one of its major purposes serving the Negro as a guide to help him retain his moral initiative in situations that could deteriorate into violence. Love and non-violence are the watchwords and the key to the theme.

What was accomplished by Martin Luther King and the Montgomery Improvement Association must stand as an example of what can be done in other places and other situations to get justice for all while holding on to human dignity under stress.

The following is the proposed content of the booklet.
A montage. Most important here is a large, central vignette of Martin Luther King speaking to the reader from his pulpit. Above, to the right, a small vignette depicting a Negro woman thumbing a ride from passing cars.

Caption: DECEMBER 5, 1955 -- WALK TO FREEDOM.

Small vignette, lower left corner of cover, shows Negroes and whites entering bus by front door.

Caption: DECEMBER 28, 1956 -- VICTORY FOR JUSTICE

Inside front cover

A brief biography by means of vigneted scenes devoted to Martin Luther King. His birth, boyhood, family life, his journey north for an education, his decision to return to the south.

Pages 3 - 13

The Montgomery Story as seen through the eyes of a man who calls himself Joe Jones. Jones, the narrator, is a hardworking, responsible member of the Montgomery, Alabama community, and a Negro. Because of the racial tensions building up in Montgomery as the story opens, Jones is scared. He has a gun which he plans to use -- if the situation warrants -- to protect his wife, his

117
infant child, his home.

Jones tells of Rosa Parks who refused to give up her seat in a Montgomery bus because she was tired and her feet hurt -- and of how this began the Montgomery story.

That night Jones couldn't sleep. In the middle of the night he awakened his wife and told her that he was getting sick and tired of what was going on. Something ought to be done about it, he told her.

The next day Jones and some friends got together. They decided to put out a mimeographed sheet, protesting what had happened to Rosa Parks and calling for a one day boycott of the buses.

Jones continues his story...

The newspapers of Montgomery unwittingly helped the success of our strike. They picked up the story contained in our little mimeographed paper and printed it up big in their papers for everyone to read. We couldn't have done that ourselves.

December 5. Everyone walked. The buses rolled empty along the streets of Montgomery. And during the day we formed a committee. That night we had meetings in the churches. The crowds were huge. We used public address systems so that those who couldn't get in to listen could hear what was going on from out in the streets. That night, by acclamation, Martin Luther King was elected to be our leader.

At that time I knew Martin Luther King only slightly, but soon I was to learn enough to convince me that a new and important leader had emerged from
this crisis, one all America would be proud to acknowledge.

As the days stretched into weeks and months, we organized car pools. At first it was casual. We would thumb a ride like any hitchhiker or we would walk. And then it got so we could expect to find rides at certain corners and at certain times. And then it went still further than that, thanks to the organizational ability of Martin Luther King. We decided to get station wagons and before we knew it, we had a transportation system of our own. Of course we knew it was temporary, but we didn't know how long that temporary was going to be.

I'll tell you another date that plays up big in my mind. That was January 30, 1956, almost two months after we all started to walk to freedom. For something happened on that day that touched my heart and did some to change me.

(Please narrator Jones relates the bombing episode involving King and his home and family and indicates that it was at this point that what had been merely passivity changed into love and non-violence.)

We knew that one day we were going to go back on the buses. And we were going to have to get ready for that day. Because it wasn't going to be like it was before. It was going to be different. And because it was going to be different we had to know how to go about it.

So here's what we did (Jones tells how socio-dramas gave examples of what to be done on return to the buses.) For instance, if a seat next to a white woman is vacant, does a Negro man take it? Scenes like this were acted out to see how the various possibilities might work out in actuality. One
of the things we decided on through the use of socio-dramas was that we had
better make good and sure that we would not be accused of violence if any un-
pleasant incidents occurred. So all of us would clasp our hands in our laps and
not use them against anyone, no matter what the provocation.

On December 21, 1956 we went back on the busses. (The Supreme Court
Decision.) Some white people attempted to provoke incidents. Someone shouted out
vile and abusive words at a young fellow who was getting on the bus. Once that
young fellow would've gotten sore about that -- and shouted dirty words back
and maybe hit back. But now it was different -- for all of us. We all just smiled.
And that affected the man who shouted. The newspaper fellows took his picture
and asked him his name, and he couldn't stay the way he was -- mad and angry --
he couldn't help himself, pretty soon he was smiling, too.

Oh, there are a lot of stories to tell! (Good illustrative anecdotes will
be used here;

Of a colored woman who actually got slapped; what happened, what she
did and said.

Of a woman who had to pay her fare twice and how, when she offered to
pray for the bus driver, he gave her back her fare, etc.

There are some people who are looking at this thing in Montgomery as
a victory for some people over other people -- well, I want to tell you I just don't
think that's so! If it's a victory for anyone at all, it's for Montgomery, which is
a better place for everyone to live in now than it was before. I know that I have
a feeling of increased self-respect. I know, too, that this thing is spreading --
love and non-violence -- and I feel this is the way of doing it. Of getting justice for all. So do the many fine and decent white citizens of Montgomery who witnessed the unfolding of the Montgomery story.

As for my gun... I still have it. It's still in my drawer. But it's getting heavier and heavier. So heavy I don't think I could lift it anymore. And some day soon I'm hoping to get my courage up to the point where I can throw away that gun and depend on myself and my fellow human beings, white and black, to win whatever causes there are to be won with the greatest weapon of all -- love for your fellow man, whatever his faith or his color of skin.

I no longer have the gun.

Page 14

"A Nation Wins Its Freedom By The Montgomery Method." This would be a summary of the way in which India won its freedom under Gandhi and would show that non-violence used in the context of love is not something brand new but has a history and a record of success.

Page 15

This page would be devoted to panels showing how this method works. These are the steps to be illustrated:

1. Seeking the whole truth about a situation.
2. Meeting with the antagonists to present the problem and to try to work it out by conference.
3. Preparation and self-discipline of the people who are going to participate in
the project so that they will understand the need for remaining non-violent and loving in order to reconcile the situation rather than simply win it.

4. The action -- the demonstration itself.

Page 16
A close-up portrait of Martin Luther King (head shot) using his words exhorting the use of love and non-violence as the way to work out affairs toward a just end, etc. Make \underline{\textit{specific}} organization.
Martin Luther King

and

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Caption: DECEMBER 25, 1956 -- VICTORY FOR JUSTICE

Page 2

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His birth, boyhood, family life, his journey north for an education, his decision
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The newspapers of Montgomery unwillingly helped the success of our strike. They picked up the story contained in our little mimeographed paper and printed it up big in their papers for everyone to read. We couldn't have done that ourselves.

December 5. Everyone walked. The buses rolled empty along the streets of Montgomery. And during the day we formed a committee. That night we had meetings in the churches. The crowds were huge. We used public address systems so that those who couldn't get in to listen could hear what was going on from out in the streets. That night, by acclamation, Martin Luther King was elected to be our leader.

At that time I knew Martin Luther King only slightly, but soon I was to learn enough to convince me that a new and important leader had emerged from
this crisis, one all America would be proud to acknowledge.

As the days stretched into weeks and months, we organized car pools. At first it was casual, we would thumb a ride like any hitch hikers or we would walk. And then it got so we could expect to find rides at certain corners and at certain times. And then it went still further than that, thanks to the organizational ability of Martin Luther King. We decided to get station wagons and before we knew it, we had a transportation system of our own. Of course we knew it was temporary, but we didn’t know how long that temporary was going to be.

I’ll tell you another date that plays up big in my mind. That was January 30, 1956, almost two months after we all started to walk to freedom. For something happened on that day that touched my heart and did some to change me.

(Here narrator Jones relates the bombing episode involving King and his home and family and indicates that it was at this point that what had been merely passively changed into love and non-violence.)

We knew that one day we were going to go back on the buses. And we were going to have to get ready for that day. Because it wasn’t going to be like it was before, it was going to be different. And because it was going to be different we had to know how to go about it.

So here’s what we did: (Jones tells how socio-dramas gave examples of what was to be done on return to the buses.) For instance, if a seat next to a white woman is vacant, does a Negro man take it? Scenes like this were acted out to see how the various possibilities might work out in actuality. One
of the things we decided on through the use of socio-dramas was that we had better make good and sure that we would not be accused of violence if any unpleasant incidents occurred. So all of us would clasp our hands in our laps and not use them against anyone, no matter what the provocation.

On December 21, 1956 we went back on the buses. (The Supreme Court Decision.) Some white people attempted to provoke incidents. Someone shouted out vile and abusive words at a young fellow who was getting on the bus. Once that young fellow would've gotten sore about that — and shouted dirty words back and maybe hit back. But now it was different — for all of us. We all just smiled. And that affected the man who shouted. The newspaper fellows took his picture and asked him his name, and he couldn't stay the way he was — mad and angry — he couldn't help himself, pretty soon he was smiling, too.

Oh, there are a lot of stories to tell! (Good illustrative anecdotes will be used here:

Of a colored woman who actually got slapped; what happened, what she did and said.

Of a woman who had to pay her fare twice and how, when she offered to pray for the bus driver, he gave her back her fare, etc.

There are some people who are looking at this thing in Montgomery as a victory for some people over other people — well, I want to tell you I just don't think that's so! If it's a victory for anyone at all, it's for Montgomery, which is a better place for everyone to live in now than it was before. I know that I have a feeling of increased self-respect. I know, too, that this thing is spreading —
love and non-violence -- and I feel that this is the way of doing it. Of getting justice for all. So do the many fine and decent white citizens of Montgomery who witnessed the unfolding of the Montgomery story.

As for my gun...I still have it. It's still in my drawer. But it's getting heavier and heavier. So heavy I don't think I could lift it anymore. And some day soon I'm hoping to get my courage up to the point where I can throw away that gun and depend on myself and my fellow human beings, white and black, to win whatever causes there are to be won with the greatest weapon of all -- love for your fellow man, whatever his faith or his color of skin.

Page 14

"A Nation Wins Its Freedom By The Montgomery Method." This would be a summary of the way in which India won its freedom under Gandhi and would show that non-violence used in the context of love is not something brand new but has a history and a record of success.

Page 15

This page would be devoted to panels showing how this method works. These are the steps to be illustrated:

1. Seeking the whole truth about a situation.
2. Meeting with the antagonists to present the problem and to try to work it out by conference,
3. Preparation and self-discipline of the people who are going to participate in
the project so that they will understand the need for remaining non-violent and loving in order to reconcile the situation rather than simply win it.

4. The action -- the demonstration itself.

Page 16

A close-up portrait of Martin Luther King (head shot) using his words exhorting the use of love and non-violence as the way to work out affairs toward a just end, etc.
Correspondence and documents pertaining to sales and
distribution

The Fellowship of Reconciliation
Box 271, Nyack, N.Y.

Suggestions for aid in the distribution of
"Martin Luther King and the Montgomery Story"

The biggest problem we now face in connection with the "comic book" on Montgomery is the matter of distribution. While the printing of 250,000 copies is a big project for the F.O.S., it is very small in terms of the volumes in which commercial distributors are accustomed to deal. For this reason, plus the fact that distribution through commercial channels is expensive anyway, we have to depend on the assistance of interested individuals and groups across the country. The following are a number of suggested ways in which you can help to get distribution of this significant story, others will occur to you.

1. See that a sample copy goes to the appropriate person in every community group dealing with the question of race relations, or that has a program emphasis in this field. Sample copies can be distributed by mail or in person and should be accompanied by an order blank.

2. Practically all religious groups now have taken strong positions on the issue of racial brotherhood, and many local congregations include this subject in their programs. Bring "the Montgomery Story" to the attention of clergymen, leaders of youth and women's classes, Sunday school teachers, etc.

3. Since Negroes are naturally much interested in this subject, the same kind of approach should be made to churches and other organizations that are predominantly Negro, as well as through neumensands permitted by Negroes. In the case of such newspapers, the best procedure is to make personal contact with the proprietor and ask him to display the book prominently on an experimental basis with 20 or 25 copies. If it sells well, then he will be interested in ordering additional copies. Note: Few newspapers will generally require a set of copies, which means that they will have to be made available to them on endorsement at 50 per copy. On all orders for this purpose, we will allow you the regular 2000-copy rate of $2 per copy.

4. College students might consider the possibility of setting up a display of the comic book on a table somewhere on the campus. There is widespread interest in the Montgomery experience among college students, and sales should be good.

This particular publication is sufficiently unique so as to have real news value, and even before publication had been reported on by a number of newspapers and magazines. You may find the possibility of more such publicity by a visit or a letter to the editor of a near-by newspaper or to radio or TV commentators in your community.

As you develop means of promoting and distributing "The Montgomery Story," please pass them along to us. We are concerned to see that this gets very wide distribution.

Alfred Hassler,
Publications Director

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Here is your sample copy of

**MARTIN LUTHER KING AND THE MONTGOMERY STORY**, hot off the press.

We believe it is destined to be one of the most exciting things to happen in the great struggle for human brotherhood in this country, and the more than 75,000 copies ordered before publication seem to bear this out.

Will you help us get widespread distribution of *The Montgomery Story*? It is completely authentic and carries Dr. King's own enthusiastic endorsement.

*The Montgomery Story* sells for 10¢ a copy retail, but on quantity orders the price goes as low as 5¢, so that church groups, women's societies, NAACP chapters and others can add substantially to their treasury while advancing the whole cause of human dignity. Be the first in your community to distribute it!

THE FELLOWSHIP OF RECONCILIATION

Napack, New York
Fellowship Publications
Box 271
Nyack, N.Y.

Dear Friends,

We would like to order 10,000 (ten thousand) copies of the Montgomery comic book. Can you let us know when it will be delivered?

Also, please send us 25 copies of CHRISTIANS IN THE ARENA by Allan A. Hunter @ $1.15 per copy.

Sincerely,

William Basnight
Peace Literature Service

WB/jw

Royack 08
October 29, 1957

William Bannight  
Peace Literature Service  
American Friends Service Committee  
20 South 18th Street  
Philadelphia, Penna.

Dear Bill:

Thank you very much for your order for 10,000 copies of The Montgomery comic book. I wish I could send them off to you immediately, but we do not expect them off the press until some time in December. You may be assured that we will not forget your order.

"Christians in the Arena" is expected about November 15, but we may be able to get the printer to send you 25 copies directly to save a little time.

Sincerely,

Alfred Hassler
January 10, 1958

Hugh H. Brock, Editor
Peace News
3 Blackstock Road
London, W.1., England

Dear Hugh Brock:

Thanks for your letter of December 30th. The Graphic Information Service people who are actually producing the comic book insist that it will be difficult or impossible to send them to England, in any substantial quantities. I hope you are sure of your ground on this matter.

We will send you as soon as they are out two 6 lb. parcels as you request. Indications are that there will be about 150 copies in each parcel. Do you think this will be adequate in view of the publicity that it will get through Peace News?

You asked about distribution in the U.S. There appears to be a great interest in the book, and we have orders for something more than 75,000 copies before publication.

Cordially,

Alfred Hamsler

All/San
January 16, 1958

Mr. William H. Miller
Fellowship
Nyack, N. Y.

Dear Bill:

Thanks for the layout for the advertisement in our next issue. I suspect it will bring some business. I can hardly wait to see the finished product. Be sure to send me a copy as soon as they are available.

Incidentally in my review of Harry Ashmore’s book in a forthcoming issue of “The Nation” I touch upon an idea concerning the attitudes and actions of the Negroes which has not been explored, and is in keeping with what Martin Luther King is trying to do with this booklet.

Give my kindest regards to Mr. Hessler.

Cordially yours,

Harry G. Golden
The Fund for the Republic INC.

60 East 42nd Street, New York 17, New York

February 14, 1958

Mr. Alfred Rassler
Fellowship of Reconciliation
Nyack, New York

Dear Al:

The transition at the beginning still bothers me but otherwise I think it's a fine job, and I'm sure it will do some good.

Could we have another 50 copies? We could use them for our Board and the like.

It has been a long pull but I think it's been worth it. I am sure the sense of relief in Nyack must be gigantic. Best of luck.

Yours,

Edward Reed
News Clippings

A NEW KIND OF COMIC BOOK

Non-Violence Replaces Horror

The AI Gego organization has produced a new comic book for the Fellowship of Reconciliation. Entitled "Martin Luther King and the Montgomery Story," it is a 16-page, black-and-white production. Distributed by the PAIR, 16th & Walnut St., Philadelphia, it is the story of non-violence to children and adults. It tells the story of what happened in Montgomery and explores a thousand embattled on a struggle for freedom.

"Martin Luther King and the Montgomery Story" has been put out in comic book format by the Fellowship of Reconciliation. The story of the Negroes in Montgomery, Alabama, who, protesting against segregation on city buses and who staged a successful "Walk to Freedom" movement for over a year, has been told in simple, colorful terms in the conventional comic book—picture story format. The religious, non-violent aspect of the struggle is emphasized.

This comic book has been widely acclaimed as a new way to present the need for racial equality. Copies can be obtained from the Fellowship of Reconciliation, Box 271, Nyack, New York, at ten cents each, with reduced prices for quantities.

The American Friend

January 1956

FOUR LIGHTS

VOL. XVI, No. 7

PAX

137
Southern News Round-up

Ky. SCEF Backs Civil Rights Bills

SCEF activity in Kentucky helped to pass a campaign supporting the civil rights bills introduced in the 1968 session of the General Assembly.

Two of the bills would end poll tax discrimination because of race in eastern Kentucky, provide for the establishment of a lottery, and in other public places throughout the state. The bill would also give Louisiana police powers to evict an voter whooustling each other of the laws.

The bill would raise Louisville's power to enact an ordinance against the laws. - A two-page report on the bill was sent to hundreds of Kentucky citizens.

Florida Witch Hunt: It's an Old, Old Tune

It was a familiar scene that day played—by yet one that still manages to get top headlines in the state, when a Florida legislative committee held hearings remotely in Tallahassee and Miami.

The committee was set to expose "communists" in the state, but the committee members were not able to find any "communists" in the state. The committee members were not able to find any evidence of communism, and the committee was disbanded.

Despite two reiterations, a second "witch hunt" bill failed to pass the Florida General Assembly. It would have barred non-white citizens from voting in local elections. On a third ballot, it received only six of the required 18 votes for House passage. Called in a second time 15 days later, it got only 10 votes.

In Mobile, Ala., 22 white municipal officials met in Mobile to discuss the plans of the United Counties of Mobile County. The meeting was called to discuss the plans of the United Counties of Mobile County.

Recent U.S. Civil Rights Court of Appeals decisions will affect the hearing of the City Commissioner making a request for a court order to end the discrimination against public voters.

Books and Pamphlets You'll Want to Read

The Southern Patriot

Gomillion Speaks To Ala. Legislators

Charles G. Gomillion, president of the Tuskegee, Ala. Civic Association, recently appeared before an Alabama Legislative committee and made a dramatic appeal for fair play in Monroe County.

Speaking under the committee's call to discuss whether or not the county would be a model of democratic living, the critic said not. "We are in the future to realize that you are in the county that you serve in.

Gomillion, an SCEF board member, was criticized by the members of the committee for his" statements and the committee's request to adopt a plan of comprehensive education for the county's citizens.

The court also wanted a lower court decision in the pending case of the Monroe County School Board, which is the only school district in the county with a majority of black students.

Arizona Executive: You have been a valued citizen for 10 years in prison for treason as a Negro in Birmingham last September.

The Southern Patriot

Martin Luther King and the Montgomery Story: Fellowship of Reconciliation, Box 87, New York, N.Y. 10016.
A 16-PAGE "COMIC-BOOK" entitled The Montgomery Story will be off the press in January. It is being drawn by the Al Capp organization at cost or less, colored and lettered by the Federation of Reconciliation—under a financial assist from the Fund for the Republic. It will carry a one-page biography of the Rev. Martin Luther King, 10 pages on the Montgomery struggle, told first-hand by a fictional participant, two pages on Gandhi and the "Montgomery Method," two more on the virtues of non-violence. Initial printing: 350,000. Price: 15¢ a copy. Orange can buy at wholesale rates. Address: Pulitzer Publications Box 271, Nyack, N.Y.

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**SERVING MANKIND**

"I am among you as he that serveth."
"Whatever you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all."
"From each according to his ability, to each according to his need."
Now, in the present lives of men—

"You in your manner, end I in mine."
"Heart within end God o'er head!"

Issue No. 8
Houston, Texas, December 1957
Price 10¢

The Montgomery Story, a Fellowship of Reconciliation, Box 271 Nyack, New York. Price 10 cents; special rates in large lots. First printing: 250,000 copies.

This is the story of Montgomery bus boycott told in "Comic-Book" format designated by the Al Capp organization (at cost or less) and published by the F.R.A., with some financial assistance from the Fund for the Republic (a subsidiary of the Ford Foundation). It carried a brief biography of Martin Luther King, ten pages on the Montgomery struggle against segregated seating told first-hand by a fictional "Al Capp" participant, and several pages on the non-violent Gandhi method so largely adopted by the Montgomery Negroes. It is appealingly narrated and lends itself readily to distribution in schools, churches, labor unions, civic organizations, etc., etc. Here is the closest answer I know, to the question: "What Can I do?" to promote peace education and help heal one of our country's most crying sore spots.
Council, in which most pacifist groups belong, appointed a "strategy committee" consisting of representatives of the FOR, the American Friends Service Committee, the Friends Service Committee, the Friends Committee on National Legislation, the Manseville Central Committee, and the Woman's International League for Peace and Freedom.

As outlined, the strategy committee will explore various methods for staunching public opinion against nuclear tests and after repeal of the arms race. Some projects will be carried on by various groups cooperatively, others will be "assigned" to individual organizations. First specific effort will be the circulation of petition forms in January by AFSC and FOR.

Recent plans call for the inclusion of a copy of the petition in the January issue of Frontrunners.

Quaker Integrationist
Guts Jail Sentence

On October 31, David H. Scull, a Virginia Quaker leader, was sentenced to ten days in jail and a $50 fine for refusing to answer questions put to him by Virginia's Law Reform and Recruit Activities Committee concerning the activities of organizations working for integration. Scull is appealing the sentence, contending that the committee's investigation violated the First Amendment. "These tactics," he said, "are used against the NAACP and others in the integration controversy, could, if allowed to stand unchallenged, be used in the future against any other unpopular cause. . . . I have pledged allegiance to one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all, and I regard that as a commitment to work for justice for all."

Scull was called before the Committee after the Pauline White Citizens Council charged that he was permitting organizations opposed to segregation to use his post office box as a mailing address.

Fund Gives Grant
For FOR Comic Book

The Fund for the Republic has granted $2,000 to the FOR to aid the production of a comic book titled "Martin Luther King and the Montgomery Story," to be published on January 10.

The sixteen-page book tells the story of the nonviolent movement in Montgomery, Ala., and why it succeeded. In a recent letter the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. wrote of the book: "Again, I would like to say what a fine piece of work that is. You have done a marvelous job of grasping the underlying truth and philosophy of the movement."

Copies will be available after January 10 from the FOR, 2371 N. Yack, New York, price 10c.

New Committee
Urges H-Test Ban

In the November 15 issue of The New York Times, the recently formed Committee for a Safe Nuclear Policy ran a full-page advertisement headed: "We are facing a danger unlike any danger that has ever existed." The advertisement called for international control of satellites and guided missiles and a complete ban on
What you see at left is the cover of an unusual comic book. Writers produced it after a draft before the final drawings were made. Now, at last, the plates are being printed and the big four-color presses are rolling to the tune of a quarter-million copies.

Already we have advance orders for copies from such organizations as the NAACP, the National Council of Churches, and local FOR groups. And no wonder—no wonder! A handy 16-page book fills a crying need in America today—how to tell people about the reconciling power of Christian love in the struggle for racial equality. How to tell it with drama, brevity and graphic impact, to make it both as instruction and as inspiration for people who have little time or training for such lengthy tomes. Available January 15.

MARTIN LUTHER KING AND THE MONTGOMERY STORY
SIXTEEN EXCITING PAGES IN COLOR—ONLY TEN CENTS A COPY

This comic book is the answer—a simple, short, story that even a child can understand—it is drawn by an artist from the Al Capp organization, creators of Li'l Abner and other syndicated cartoon strips.

Twelve pages tell the exciting story of the successful bus protest movement—the famous "walk to freedom." Two more pages tell how the Montgomery bus boycott got its independence by the "Montgomery method," and a final section explains how nonviolence works.

You'll find many uses for this comic book—from church social action groups to Boy Scout troops. See that it is widely read. Single copy, 10c; 100 for $7; 1,000 for $60; 5,000 for $250.

ORDER TODAY FROM:
FELLOWSHIP PUBLICATIONS
BOX 371, Nyack, New York

* Be the first in your community to have it.
* The first 10,000 sold are gone.

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250,000 comic books to show U.S. how non-violence works

DISTRIBUTION: starts next week in the USA of 250,000 copies of "The Montgomery Story," a comic-style booklet in colour which tells how 50,000 negroes in the Deep South used non-violent resistance to end race discrimination on the city's buses.

The presentation of the story has been undertaken for the American Fellowship of Reconciliation by the Al Capp organisation, creator of one of America's best known comic strips, "Li'l Abner."

"Many comic books glorify violence—this one demonstrates the real heroism of ordinary men, women and children who put their whole strength against evil but refuse to hate or use violence while they do it," say the F.R.A.

"The Montgomery Story" is more than the account of what happened in one city to one group of people. It is a signpost, a moral of direction for others who would seek to defend and protect them without adding to the world's store of hate and bitterness.

Martin Luther King

Peace News has secured permission to serialize "The Montgomery Story" and publication will commence on Jan. 17. The book consists of a short account of the life of the Negro leader, the Rev. Martin Luther King, and then tells the story of the Montgomery campaign through the eyes of a fictional character: How Revs. Please allow us to give him the name of a white man, the spread of the movement, the march in trouble, the fight for a Parliament against discrimination, the summoning of Jones and the centre, the story of 50 minutes and the successful conclusion of the campaign.

Additional pages allow Martin Luther King telling the story of Gandhi's campaign for Indian freedom, and plans have been made for a peace march.

The book sets at 60 cents a copy with reduced rates for quantities and is obtainable from Fellowship Publications, 330 W. 57th St., N.Y.C. and also from Peace News, London (copies only available in London).
Correspondence pertaining to the post-publication impact

371, Dube Village
Johannesburg, Tvl.

The Fellowship of Reconciliation
Box 271, Nyack, N.Y.
U.S. America.

Dear Friends,

Just a line to congratulate the work you are doing and helping to spread for better relations throughout the world.

I am a young evangelist called to work among youth. One reason I would not change this job for another is it gives me that much opportunity to help channel the aspirations and thinking of our African youth into the mold of Christ's teaching re: this matter of loving our neighbors. Through the means of an integrated regular program (undenominational) I am able to reach scores of our young people with the Message of love, and after reading "Martin Luther King and the Montgomery Story" I feel all the more challenged to do what I can to apply the suggestions outlined in the closing pages to our local situations which, as you well know, are far from being commendable.

I, therefore, apply for any number of pamphlets, comic strips, at your disposal dedicated to this Great Cause to be set aside, if it is possible, for free distribution here among the young people. We shall continue to pray for your work and vision for Fellowship of God's people around the world.

With every blessing. Signing off.

Sincerely,

[signature]

(Jerome N. Nkosil)
Youth Sponsor.
Dear Paul Gravett:

Here is the information you requested about the comic book, Martin Luther King and the Montgomery Story. This 4 color publication turned out to be FOR's largest publishing event to that time. Following FOR's extensive involvement in the civil rights movement with specific staff and organizational support during the Montgomery boycott, FOR received a $5,000 grant from the Fund for the Republic in late 1957. FOR's executive secretary Al Hassler wrote the text for the comic book with the FOR staff working in close consultation with Dr. King. The illustrations were done by the Al Capp Organization. A quarter of a million copies were printed with many advance orders being placed by groups such as the NAACP and the National Council of Churches. The 16 page comic book sold for ten cents. It was published in January 1958. Dr. King wrote in response: "...I would like to say what a fine piece of work this is. You have done a marvellous job of grasping the underlying truth and philosophy of the movement." Dr. King later that year, on December 8, 1958, joined the Fellowship of Reconciliation and served on its Advisory Council until his death.

The comic book was originally intended to convey to semiliterate persons the story of nonviolence and its effectiveness as seen in the Montgomery movement. The medium of the highly popular comic book was believed to be the best way to reach masses of exploited African-Americans. But Glenn Smiley, FOR staff member who worked with Dr. King during the boycott, said, "It was not used popularly as we had thought it would be, but it was largely used--the biggest buyers were sociology classes from the universities...We've had sociology departments from I don't know how many universities, that would order a thousand copies or a hundred copies and say we use it as an illustration of modern means of propaganda."

200,000 copies of the comic were sold and later a Spanish edition was printed that was widely used in Latin America. It was reported that one of the students who were to sit in at the lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina read the comic book...
and thought, "If they can do it, why can't we?" The Greensboro protest sparked the sit-in movement that spread across the nation.

In February 1958 the FOR established a regional office for the South. Opened in Nashville, Glenn Smiley, Ralph Abernathy and James Lawson, a young Methodist minister studying at Vanderbilt University, formed a reconciliation team visiting communities in eight states in the South, as well as some states in the North. They held nonviolence seminars in Negro churches and colleges. They distributed copies of the comic book in the seminars, as well as a small FOR leaflet, How to Practice Nonviolence.

Lawson, incidentally, is now a pastor in Los Angeles and national chairperson of the FOR.

Enclosed is a copy of a flyer about the comic used by FOR for promotion, along with two pages on the FOR and the comic from the book, Eyes on the Prize, that was published along with the prize winning documentary of that name.

We are eager to see how you use this material.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Richard Deats, Dir. of Communications
Martin Luther King and the Montgomery Story

MARTIN LUTHER KING
AND
THE MONTGOMERY STORY

HOW 50,000 NEGROES
FOUND A NEW WAY TO
END RACIAL
DISCRIMINATION.

DECEMBER 5, 1955
WALK TO FREEDOM

WASHINGTONE PARK

DECEMBER 21, 1955
VICTORY FOR JUSTICE
IN MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA, 60,000 NEGROES FOUNDED A NEW WAY TO WORK FOR FREEDOM, WITHOUT VIOLENCE AND WITHOUT HATINNG, BECAUSE THEY DID, THEY PUT NEW HOPE IN ALL MEN WHO SEEK BROTHERHOOD, AND WHO KNOW YOU DON'T BUILD IT WITH BULLETS, NO ONE PERSON MADE THE MONTGOMERY STORY, BUT ONE MAN'S NAME STOOD OUT AMONG THE HUNDREDS WHO WORKED SO HARD AND SELFISHLY, THAT MAN WAS 28-YEAR-OLD MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., MINISTER OF THE DEXTER AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH AND PRESIDENT OF THE MONTGOMERY IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION.

bles in the King house was the Bible, from it Young Martin early learned Jesus' teachings about love and its power.

AND LOVE THY NEIGHBOR AS THYSELF.

MARTIN FINISHED HIGH SCHOOL AT 15 AND ENTERED MOREHOUSE COLLEGE IN ATLANTA, THERE HE WORKED WITH THE CITY'S INTERCOLLEGIATE CHRISTIAN COUNCIL, WITH BOTH WHITE AND COLORED STUDENTS.

SOME OF US DON'T LIKE DISCRIMINATION, EITHER, MARTIN.

AT CROZER SEMINARY, ONE OF SIX NEGROES AMONG NEARLY 100 STUDENTS, HE WAS ELECTED PRESIDENT OF THE STUDENT BODY AND GRADUATED AT THE HEAD OF HIS CLASS.

WHILE HE STUDIED FOR A PH.D. DEGREE AT BOSTON UNIVERSITY, HE MET AND MARRIED CORETTA SCOTT, A PRETTY YOUNG SINGER.

I NEVER THOUGHT I'D MARRY A PREACHER.

NORTHERN CHURCHES WERE OPEN TO THE YOUNG MINISTER, BUT IN 1954, MARTIN LUTHER KING AND HIS BRIDE DECIDED TO RETURN TO THE SOUTH.

WHERE TO NOW, MARTIN? FOR MORE STUDY, I NEED TO KNOW MORE BEFORE I START PREACHING.

IT'S HERE THAT GOD WANTS ME TO BE, I KNOW.
ONE YEAR LATER, MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA...

I'M A PEACEFUL MAN—BUT I HAVE A GUN. FOR A LONG TIME I THOUGHT I MIGHT HAVE TO USE IT SOME DAY. NOW I DON'T KNOW...

CALL ME JONES. MY NAME DOESN'T MATTER. BUT MY STORY'S IMPORTANT FOR YOU AS WELL AS ME. WE'RE ALL CAUGHT UP IN IT IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER!

I LIVE IN MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA. I LOVE MONTGOMERY, BUT I'VE HATED IT, TOO. A NEGRO ANYWHERE IN THE DEEP SOUTH HAS A HARD TIME. JIM CROW SITS MIGHTY HEAVY ON A MAN'S SPIRIT.

PEOPLE LIVE SCARED UNDER JIM CROW. I WAS SCARED, TOO. YOU NEVER KNOW WHEN SOMETHING MIGHT BUST OUT, AND I HAVE A WIFE AND BABY.

SNAP IT UP, BOY. I WANT THAT CAR IN A HURRY!

SAY HELLO TO DADDY...

AND HOW'S MY LITTLE BOY Today?

Now TAKE ROSA PARKS. SHE REALLY HAD COURAGE. SIT THERE IN THE BUS THAT NIGHT AND JUST QUIETLY SAID NO WHEN THE BUS DRIVER TOLD HER TO GIVE HER SEAT TO A WHITE MAN.

FOR THE LAST TIME... ARE YOU GETTING UP... OR AREN'T YOU?

WE USED TO PLAY THE BABY AND I—RIGHT NEXT TO THE BUREAU WITH THAT LOADED GUN. I WONDERED IF I'D HAVE THE COURAGE TO USE IT TO DEFEND MY FAMILY. LATELY I'VE STARTED TO WONDER IF THAT REALLY WOULD BE COURAGE.
Because she was tired and her feet ached, Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat in the bus. Rosa Parks was arrested.

That night I couldn’t sleep. I was getting sick and tired of all this. I woke up my wife.

Something ought to be done. Rosa is a good woman and not a trouble maker. They had no right arresting her!

I decided to talk to some of my friends, the very next day...

They make us move if any white person wants our seat. We ought to protest— and not ride the buses for a day.

Now here’s my plan...

We got out a mimeographed sheet protesting what had happened to Rosa Parks and calling for a one-day boycott of the buses.

There are 50,000 Negroes in Montgomery— how many of them can we reach with just a few hundred copies of this leaflet?

Let’s just hope that those who read it spread the word.

That night, word was flashed around town that the protest was set for the next day.

You hear the news? Sure did. Nobody’s going to ride the buses tomorrow.

The newspapers of Montgomery helped more than they knew.

Look at this! They’ve printed it up big for everyone to read.

That’s wonderful. We couldn’t have reached that many people with our little sheet. Now everyone will know what to do.
December 5, 1955 -- the day of the protest, everyone walked.

...or rode in a friend's car... or hitched a ride with Negro taxi drivers.

Our protest is a success! No one's riding those buses.

During the day we formed a committee. That night we had meetings in the churches.

We're calling ourselves the Montgomery Improvement Association. We're going to see to it that Negroes are treated fairly in the buses of Montgomery.

The crowds were huge. We used loudspeakers so that those who couldn't get in could hear what was happening from out on the streets.

...I want you to meet the leader we have chosen today... Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr.!

At that time I knew Martin Luther King only slightly, but I soon learned that a new and important leader had come on the scene... one America would feel proud of.

You all know of the success of our one-day protest. But a single day is not enough. Let's stay off the buses until we can ride them with dignity. Let's walk to freedom.

This is a nonviolent protest against injustice. Our chief weapons are moral and spiritual forces. We depend on love! Love and goodwill toward all men must be at the forefront of our movement if it is to be successful.
And so began the walk to freedom. During the day we walked... at night we held prayer meetings.

Are we going to ride those buses? No!

Are we going to walk with the feet God gave us? Yes!

Yes! Better to walk with dignity... than ride in humiliation.

We walked and walked and walked... and sometimes thumbed a ride like any hitchhiker.

Room for everybody! Step right in--there’s no charge!

That’s just great! Otherwise I have to walk four miles to work.

Things were going almost too good. There was bound to be trouble.

You failed to signal for a turn.

But I didn’t turn at all! I’ve been driving straight down the road for more than a mile.

Tell it to the judge, I’m giving you a ticket.

The police officers kept bothering us. They even stopped Martin Luther King’s car.

What’s the charge, officer? 30 miles in a 25 mile zone. Why don’t you people get wise to yourselves and give up this boycott?

We weren’t going to give up! We decided to buy station wagons with contributions sent in by white and Negro sympathizers all over the country.

D. J. Gimms and Rufeus Lewis laid out the routes and pick-up points. Before we realized it, we had a transportation system of our own.
JANUARY 30, 1966. SOMETHING HAPPENED ON THAT DAY THAT TOUCHED MY HEART AND DID SOMETHING TO ME. MARTIN LUTHER KING WAS SPEAKING AT A MEETING... THIS IS A SPIRITUAL MOVEMENT... VIOLENCE WILL DEFEAT OUR PURPOSE. VIOLENCE IS NOT ONLY IMPRACTICAL BUT IMMORAL.

MRS. KING WAS AT HOME TALKING TO A FRIEND... CORETTA—DO YOU HEAR THAT? SOUNDED LIKE SOMEONE THREW A BRICK!

WHY DON'T WE MOVE INTO THE BACK ROOM WHERE WE CAN TALK IN PEACE?

SUDDENLY...

REV. KING! FIRST THINGS I WANT YOU TO KNOW IS THAT CORETTA AND THE BABY ARE ALL RIGHT. THEN I'VE GOT TO TELL YOU THEY'VE JUST EXPLODED A BOMB IN YOUR HOME!

MARTIN LUTHER KING RUSHED HOME. A CROWD WAS GATHERED OUTSIDE. THEY WERE IN AN ANGRY MOOD, WANTING TO ANSWER VIOLENCE WITH VIOLENCE. AND THEN KING SPOKE TO THEM... PLEASE BE PEACEFUL. WE BELIEVE IN LAW AND ORDER. WE ARE NOT ADVOCATING VIOLENCE. I WANT YOU TO LOVE OUR ENEMIES... FOR WHAT WE ARE DOING IS RIGHT, WHAT WE ARE DOING IS JUST—AND GOD IS WITH US.

LATER, WE WALKED BACK THROUGH THE NIGHT TO OUR HOMES... IF A MAN CAN SEE HIS HOME BOMBED AND NOT RIGHT BACK—EXCEPT WITH LOVE—THEN THERE IS HOPE FOR ALL OF US.
THOUGH WE TRIED TO LOVE OUR ENEMIES, THEIR HEARTS WERE NOT SOFTENED TOWARD US. IN THEIR ATTEMPT TO BREAK UP OUR BUS PROTEST, THEY INDICTED 95% OF OUR LEADERS, INCLUDING E.D. NIXON, OF THE SLEEPING CAR PORTERS UNION.

LOOKING FOR ME? WELL, HERE I AM.

WE WERE THRILLED TO SEE MANY OF OUR LEADERS SURRENDER WITHOUT BEING HUNTED DOWN...

THOSE ARRESTS WERE LAST MINUTE DESPERATION MEASURES ON THE PART OF THOSE WHO KNEW THAT SOMEDAY SOON, RIGHT AND JUSTICE WOULD PREVAIL. AS REVEREND RALPH ABERNATHY SAID...

AT THIS MOMENT, THE SUPREME COURT IS CONSIDERING OUR CASE AGAINST THE BUS COMPANY. ONE DAY SOON WE ARE GOING BACK TO THE BUSES. WE MUST GET READY FOR THAT DAY.

WE BEGAN TO MAKE PREPARATIONS FOR WHAT WE WOULD DO WHEN WE GOT BACK ON THE BUSES. THINGS WOULD BE DIFFERENT. WE ACTED IT ALL OUT.

NOW, I'M THE BUS DRIVER, AND CATHERINE IS COMING ABOARD TO PAY HER FARE AND SHE'S COMING IN THROUGH THE FRONT DOOR!

MOVE ALONG, THERE! GET TO THE BACK OF THE BUS!

THANK YOU, MR. BUS DRIVER, BUT THE BACK IS CROWDED. I THINK I'LL TAKE THIS EMPTY SEAT HERE.

WELL, YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO GO TO THE BACK.

ARGUING WON'T HELP. I'LL JUST SIT QUIET.

THAT WAS HOW WE GOT READY TO GO BACK ON THE BUSES. TO MAKE SURE WE WOULD NOT BE ACCUSED OF VIOLENCE, WE DECIDED TO CLASP OUR HANDS IN OUR LAPS AND NOT USE THEM AGAINST ANYONE, NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENED.
ON DECEMBER 21, WE WENT BACK ON THE BUSES. SOMEONE SHOUTED VILE AND ABUSIVE WORDS AT A YOUNG FELLOW WHO WAS SITTING ON THE BUS. I ONCE WOULD HAVE GOTTEN SORE ABOUT THAT... AND SHOUTED DIRTY WORDS BACK—AND MAYBE HIT BACK!

BUT NOW IT WAS DIFFERENT FOR ALL OF US. WE ALL JUST SMILED, AND THAT DID SOMETHING TO THE MAN WHO SHOUTED. THE NEWSPAPER FELLOWS TOOK HIS PICTURE...

HE: 'YOU'RE SMILING! I THOUGHT YOU WERE MAD AT THESE PEOPLE!'

I AM! BUT IT'S PRETTY HARD TO STAY MAD WHEN THEY DON'T FIGHT BACK!

ONE BUS DRIVER MADE A WOMAN PAY HER FARE TWICE.

I'M GOING TO PRAY FOR YOU. HERE! TAKE BACK YOUR FARE. I DON'T WANT YOU PRAYING FOR ME!

ON ANOTHER BUS, SOMEONE SLAPPED A WOMAN.

I COULD REALLY WALLOP HIM—HE'S SMALLER THAN ME—but I'm going to remember what Reverend King told me about peace and nonviolence. I'll just keep my hands clasped that way there won't be any trouble.

AT FIRST, A FEW BUSES ON NIGHT RUNS WERE PEPPERED WITH SHOTGUN BLASTS.

CRASH!

THEN THINGS SEEMED TO QUIET DOWN. IT WAS A FALSE QUIET.
The Ku Klux Klan paraded through the streets... Crosses were burned in the night...

Then the night bombings began. There were seven of them.

One of the homes bombed was that of Reverend Robert Graetz, white pastor of a Negro Lutheran Church, who had been one of us right from the start.

I am planting a tree in this bomb crater to remind us that in the midst of death, there is life... and hope.

Negro churches were bombed and an unexploded bomb was found on King's front porch, but now Montgomery's law-abiding white citizens turned against the violence.

It's got to stop these bombings are giving Montgomery a bad name.

I agree, the bus fight is over anyway. It's the law of the land.

If what happened here is a victory for anyone at all, it's for all Montgomery. We respect ourselves more and we know that the idea of love and non-violence is spreading. I've thrown my gun away--it had gotten much too heavy for me ever to lift again.
MARTIN LUTHER KING TELLS
HOW A NATION WON ITS FREEDOM
BY THE MONTGOMERY METHOD

YEARS BEFORE OUR WALK TO FREEDOM, A COUNTRY OF 300,000,000 PEOPLE WON ITS INDEPENDENCE BY THE SAME METHODS WE USED...

"MAHATMA GANDHI STARTED HIS CAMPAIGN FOR FREEDOM IN INDIA IN 1919. IT LOOKED HOPELESS. THE BRITISH EMPIRE WAS THE STRONGEST. THE WORLD HAD EVER KNOWN. INDIA'S PEOPLE WERE POOR AND POWERLESS."

"THE NEW CAMPAIGN MEANT SUFFERING AND EVEN DEATH. WHEN GANDHI CALLED ON THE PEOPLE TO FAST AND PRAY TO PROTEST A BAD LAW, THE BRITISH SHOT DOWN HUNDREDS OF THEM AT AMRITSAR. IT RAISED HORRIFIED PROTESTS ALL OVER THE WORLD,"

"AGAIN AND AGAIN THEY PUT GANDHI IN PRISON, BUT THAT DID NOT STOP HIM. HE WOULD WAIT PATIENTLY, THINKING AND PRAYING, AND AS SOON AS HE WAS OUT WOULD START AGAIN..."

"MILLIONS OF THE POORER PEOPLE IN INDIA WERE CALLED 'UNTUCHABLES.' THEY COULD NOT EVEN USE THE PUBLIC HIGHWAY. GANDHI RENAMEN THEM 'HARIJAN,' CHILDREN OF GOD, AND LED THEM TO STAND IN THE FORBIDDEN ROAD. IT TOOK 16 MONTHS OF STANDING, BUT THEN THE POLICE GAVE IN AND LET THEM PASS."
"The British put a tax on salt, and said Indians could not make their own salt. Gandhi walked with his followers 200 miles to the sea to break the law by gathering salt. Soon the jails were overflowing with Indians— and the British did away with the salt act."

"It became harder and harder for the British to keep control. Their jails were filled with India's best-loved leaders, including such men as Nehru, who later became prime minister."

"Besides, the news that British soldiers were shooting unarmed men and women and putting leaders in jail, was troubling the British at home."

"...finally the British gave in and granted India's independence. Gandhi had made a revolution without firing a shot."

"The voters in my district don't like what we're doing in India. We'll have to get out. That's clear."

"It wasn't easy. It took years of nonviolent struggle, many long hours of prayer and suffering. The Indians were shot and beaten, but never licked. They won their freedom—and something else, too. They won the friendship and respect of the British. This is the unusual thing about nonviolence—nobody is defeated; everybody shares in the victory."
HOW THE MONTGOMERY METHOD WORKS

IN MONTGOMERY WE USED THIS NONVIOLENT CHRISTIAN ACTION TO GET JIM CROW OFF THE BUSES. IT CAN BE USED ANYWHERE, THOUGH, AGAINST ANY KIND OF EVIL. HERE IS HOW IT WORKS.

FIRST, REMEMBER THAT YOU CAN DO SOMETHING ABOUT THE SITUATION. NOT JUST THE GOVERNMENT, OR SOME BIG ORGANIZATION, BUT YOU. GOD SAYS YOU ARE IMPORTANT. HE NEEDS YOU TO CHANGE THINGS.

THE SECOND THING IS MUCH HARDER. GOD LOVES YOUR ENEMY, TOO, AND THAT MAKES HIM IMPORTANT TO YOU. YOU HAVE TO SEE HIM AS A HUMAN BEING, LIKE YOURSELF. YOU HAVE TO TRY TO UNDERSTAND HIM AND SYMPATHIZE WITH HIM.

WHITES ONLY

TO SEE YOUR ENEMY AS A HUMAN BEING, YOU HAVE TO STOP SEEING HIM AS YOUR ENEMY. EVEN WHEN HE DOES CRUEL, HEARTLESS THINGS TO YOU, HE IS A CHILD OF GOD. HE IS YOUR BROTHER, EVEN WHEN HE HURTS YOU.
Hardest of all, you have to help your enemy to see you as a human being. He has to see you as a person who wants the same kind of things he wants: love, a family, a job, the respect of his neighbors.

It will be easier for him to see you this way if you act like a brother. So, even when he tries to hurt you, you must not strike back. Even in your thoughts, you must not strike back. "You just go on loving him. Like the schoolgirl in Little Rock, you must say, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

This does not mean giving up, though. It is wrong for this brother of yours to treat you as though you were not a human being, and it would be wrong for you to help him treat you this way. You have to do something to stop him.

He is a human being and so he can treat you badly only because somehow, he is afraid of you, or of what you might do to him. If you try to stop him by using violence and by "getting even," he will be sure he is right in being afraid of you.

If you show him love, though, you start to take away the reason for his fear and you make it harder for him to go on hating you. Here's how to go about it.
First, decide what special thing you're going to work on. In Montgomery, it was buses; somewhere else it might be voting, or schools, or integrated churches. Don't try to deal with everything wrong at once.

Second, be sure you know the facts about the situation. Don't act on the basis of rumors or half-truths. Find out.

Third, where you can, talk to the people concerned. Try to explain how you feel and why you feel as you do. Don't argue—just tell them your side, and listen to theirs. Sometimes you'll be surprised to find friends among those you thought were enemies.

Next, be sure you are ready. Join with others who feel the way you do. Have someone with experience come in to tell you how to get ready. Try practice situations as we did in Montgomery. Make sure you can face any opposition without hitting back, or running away, or hating.

When you are ready, then go ahead, and don't turn back no matter how hard the way or how long the struggle. When my friend the Rev. Ralph Abernathy found himself about to be put in jail in Montgomery, he prayed, 'God, I'm afraid to go to jail. I've never been in jail before, if I go, God, will you go with me?"
AND GOD ANSWERED: "RALPH, YOU GO AHEAD TO JAIL, AND WHEN YOU GET THERE, YOU'LL FIND ME WAITING THERE FOR YOU." THAT'S HOW IT WILL BE WITH YOU, TOO. WHEN THE GOING GETS HARDEST, IF YOU REMAIN TRUE TO CHRISTIAN LOVE, YOU'LL FIND GOD WAITING THERE FOR YOU, HOLDING YOU AND SUPPORTING YOU, GIVING YOU A VICTORY FAR BEYOND WHAT YOU HAD HOPE.


Lawson, James, Interview by Andrew Aydin, Phone Interview, Los Angeles, August 29, 2012


