nizations sympathetic with our struggle give us renewed courage and vigor to carry on.

With every good wish, I am

Cordially yours,

[signed] M. L.
M. L. King, Jr.,
President
MLK:ovg

[P.S. It was really good hearing from you. Your words were very encouraging. Please give my regards to the family. M. L.]

TALS. GDKP.

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Papers Project

From Roy Wilkins

8 March 1956
New York, N.Y.

The NAACP executive secretary responds to King’s March letter expressing concern about funds raised by the NAACP on behalf of the bus boycott. Wilkins pledges that the NAACP will pay for most of the MIA’s legal expenses and bear the full cost of the Browder v. Gayle federal lawsuit challenging the bus segregation laws. Wilkins adds that “it would be fatal for there to develop any hint of disagreement as to the raising and allocating of funds.” In subsequent telephone conversations, the two leaders apparently finalized an agreement regarding fund-raising.1

Rev. M. L. King, Jr., President
The Montgomery Improvement Association
725 Dorsey Street
Montgomery 8, Alabama

Dear Reverend King:

Upon my return from the Civil Rights Assembly in Washington I find your letter of March 3, which arrived here March 5.2

We certainly wish to continue our support in every way to the magnificent effort being carried forward in Montgomery.

It was our intention from the first news of the indictments and mass arrests to assume the entire cost of the defense for those persons arrested and indicted and thus to relieve the Montgomery Improvement Association of any burden in that respect. Mr. Marshall stated that our legal staff would be one hundred percent

---

1. See Wilkins to King, 12 April 1956; and King to Wilkins, 1 May 1956, pp. 243–244 in this volume.
2. On 4 March Wilkins was the keynote speaker at a three-day conference of the Delegate Assembly for Civil Rights, a coalition of civic groups that sponsored an eight-point program of national civil rights legislation.
8 Mar 1956

for the indicted persons. I stated in several speeches and numerous letters that the NAACP would undertake the defense of the persons indicted.

On the strength of that we made appeals to our branches to raise money, to cooperate with local ministers in their cities and to send funds either to the national office or to Montgomery, or send some to each. We stated that you needed funds in Montgomery to keep up the protest and that we needed funds for the legal defense. We have tried to be absolutely fair in the presentation. As evidence that we have been, at least one of our branches, Jersey City, New Jersey, sent us a check made out to you which we forwarded to you last week. I am sure there will be other contributions. In the meantime, we will be receiving funds which we will use to defray the expenses in the legal proceedings in connection with the persons indicted.

In addition to those legal expenses, we expect also to bear the major part, if not the entire cost, of the bus segregation case challenging the state law. This will be an expensive proceeding which undoubtedly will go to the Supreme Court. I say we will bear the major part because in such cases in the past arising in other localities local citizens have raised some part of the cost.

In addition to the above two legal actions I am advised by our legal department that they are committed to most, if not all, of the expenses in connection with the case of Mrs. Parks as an individual.

We have in mind at all times that you need a sum of money each week to maintain the car pool and related activities. We feel confident that the churches of the nation and the NAACP branches will continue to send you contributions adequate for this expense. We assure you, also, that the national office of the NAACP, in addition to the legal expenses which it will undertake to bear, stands ready in any emergency to help with the weekly expenses. I cannot promise to do this regularly or indefinitely, but I do pledge that any time you reach an emergency point where funds are needed and are not at once forthcoming you have but to call upon us.

I am certain I do not need to stress that at this time it would be fatal for there to develop any hint of disagreement as to the raising and allocating of funds. We wish to avoid any semblance of this, and I am cautioning our chapters to give full cooperation to the churches in their localities and while setting forth the claim of the NAACP to some of the funds collected—because of our legal activity—to enter into no public dispute with such local ministers or local committees who are unable to see our point and who feel strongly that every dollar should go to Montgomery.3 I am confident that if it should develop that funds in excess of actual needs should be accumulated in Montgomery your organization would volunteer financial assistance in the legal cases. What I have tried to say to you above is similarly that we stand ready to contribute, over and above the legal expenses, to the car pool effort if we should receive here monies in excess of the requirements of the legal activity insofar as we can estimate them.

3. On the same day this letter was written, Wilkins sent a telegram to the NAACP's West Coast Regional Office asking that on 28 March, the National Deliverance Day of Prayer, branches “cooperate fully with churches and their leaders in a day of prayer and fund raising” for the MIA. He explained that although money is needed for other cases, the NAACP “will not quarrel with Montgomery Improvement Association over who gets funds” (see Wilkins to Franklin H. Williams, 8 March 1956).
I would be happy to hear from you again so that we may have a clear understanding on this matter.

With kind personal regards,
Very sincerely yours,
[signed]
Roy Wilkins
Executive Secretary

TLS. MLKP-MBU: Box 67.

9 Mar 1956

From William J. Faulkner

9 March 1956
Chicago, Ill.

The Congregational Church of Park Manor in Chicago was one of many northern churches that raised funds to support the bus protest. Its minister, William J. Faulkner, had worked with King's grandfather, A. D. Williams, at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta. Faulkner refers to Williams's "tremendous fight" for passage of a 1921 school bond issue, which resulted in the building of eighteen new schools, including four black elementary schools and Atlanta's first secondary school for blacks. King replied on 4 June.

The Reverend M. L. King,
Montgomery Improvement Association,
309 South Jackson Street,
Montgomery, Alabama.

Dear Mr. King:

A few days ago our church sent to your organization, a check for $286.05, in response to my appeal that we contribute generously in support of the worthy cause which you and other courageous leaders are fighting for in Montgomery. We are not only willing to give of our money, but we are also praying that your protest against injustice may succeed.

1. William J. Faulkner (1891-1987), born in Society Hill, South Carolina, earned a B.H. (1914) from Springfield College and an M.A. (1933) from the University of Chicago. In 1934 he joined Fisk University's staff as minister and dean of men, becoming dean of the chapel in 1942. That year he also served as president of Nashville's NAACP. He left Fisk in 1953 to become the first pastor of the Park Manor Congregational Church in Chicago. Faulkner was a member of the executive committee of the Fellowship of Reconciliation.


3. See p. 292 in this volume.