King offers corrections to a draft profile by Peters, a freelance journalist, to be published in Redbook. King explains to Peters, "I did not say that the economic boycott can never be used as a weapon by the Negro . . . [but] it can be used if the proper conditions bring it about and the community situation is taken into consideration." Peters incorporated the majority of King's comments but chose to retain King's earlier characterization of the boycott as a religious movement, not an economic one. Peters's article remains an important source for tracing King's intellectual development. King explained to Peters, for example, that "the spirit of passive resistance came to me from the Bible, from the teachings of Jesus. The techniques came from Gandhi."

Mr. William Peters
921 Grant Avenue
Pelham Manor, New York

Dear Mr. Peters:

Thanks so much for your thoughtfulness in sending a carbon copy of your article for Red Book. Absence from the city has delayed my reply. I see you work very fast. The article is certainly an excellent one and I am sure that it will be welcomed by the American public. It is set forth in a very lucid style and the contents reveal a real grasp of the total situation.

I have noticed just a few minor things that need to be worked. The first is found on page thirteen. I feel that this paragraph should be deleted because it doesn't adequately express my feelings at this point. That is to say I don't feel that all white churches follow an empty pattern of ritual. That might be misunderstood by many. The second is found on the bottom of page fourteen. There were six Negro students at Crozier and about eighty whites. The next is found on page twenty. Instead of saying hundreds of Negroes were assembled at the jail, I believe it would be better to say "there were numerous or a large number, because I don't think the number went up into the hundreds. The next is on page twenty-three, the second paragraph. Maybe I didn't clearly express my views on that point. I did not say that the economic boycott can never be used as a weapon by the Negro in the struggle for justice. It seems to me that it can be used if the proper conditions bring it about and the community situation is taken into consideration. I would not, however, advocate the indiscriminate use of the boycott in cases, for instance, where counter boycotts can upset the total economic struc-

1. William Peters, "Our Weapon Is Love," Redbook, August 1956, pp. 42-43, 71-73; see also Peters to King, 16 April 1956. Peters (1921-), born in San Francisco, received his B.S. (1947) from Northwestern University. After working on the staff of several magazines and as a freelance journalist, Peters produced documentaries on race relations for CBS television during the early 1960s.
ture of the Negro. I would agree that in the South there are not many areas where
the boycott can be applied. However, there are communities in the South where
the Negro wields a great deal of economic influence and power. In these cases
boycotts can be much more effective than in poorer communities.

Thanks again for your thoughtfulness. I'll be looking forward to the publishing
of this article with great anticipation. It was a real pleasure meeting you, and I
hope that at a very early date we will be able to renew this great fellowship. When
I am in New York I will be sure to look you up.

With warm personal regards, I am

Cordially yours,
M. L. King, Jr.,
President

MLK$b

THLc. MLKP-MBU: Box 64.

From Harris Wofford

25 April 1956
Alexandria, Va.

Since visiting India in 1949 Wofford, an attorney in the Washington law firm of
Covington and Burling, had promoted Gandhian nonviolence as a strategy for
confronting American segregation.1 On 13 March Wofford sent King a copy of India
Afire (1951), a book he and his wife, Clare Wofford, had written after their visit.2 In
this letter, to protest continued enforcement of segregation laws despite the recent
Supreme Court ruling, Wofford urges "some straight Gandhian civil disobedience,"
suggesting a test bus ride by ministers. Perhaps responding to King's public statement
that the bus boycott would continue until the demand to hire black drivers was met, he
encourages King to leave out "the employment question in return for the complete end
of segregation." King replied on 10 May.3

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1. Harris Llewellyn Wofford, Jr. (1926–), born in New York City, received his B.A. (1948) from the
University of Chicago and received law degrees from both Howard and Yale in 1954. He later served
as assistant to the Commission on Civil Rights (1958–1959) and, as President John F. Kennedy's aide,
helped forge the Kennedy administration's civil rights policies. Wofford also helped establish the
Peace Corps, of which he was associate director from 1964 to 1966.

2. Wofford praised King in the letter that accompanied the gift: "Your venture is improving us all.
It is the most significant development I know of anywhere." In addition to the book, he enclosed a
booklet on nonviolent resistance and an assignment he had given his law school class ("Opinion
Memorandum Assignment for the Howard University School of Law," 1 April 1956) about legal issues
facing a hypothetical Shapeless Shoe Company that sought to make a donation to the MIA, noting
that the assignment "may amuse you."

3. See p. 254 in this volume.