Foreword to *A First Step Toward School Integration*

May 1958
Montgomery, Ala.

In a 12 March letter Rustin asked King to sign the foreword of a Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) pamphlet on school integration: "Your signature... will help to give this work an even wider circulation." He enclosed a draft of the pamphlet and invited King to suggest changes for this introduction. In a 19 March reply to Rustin, King agreed to lend his signature to the foreword as it was drafted: "I have read the whole document and find some invaluable suggestions there. It certainly is a good job and I am sure that it will be quite helpful in the present crisis."

Can the method of non-violence that erased the color line in Montgomery's buses be applied effectively to schools? This pamphlet seeks an answer to that question, so urgent in southern communities where the Supreme Court decision of 1954 is not yet accepted.

CORE (the Congress of Racial Equality) told the Montgomery story in *Our Struggle*, a pamphlet in which I described the year-long boycott of segregated buses.²

In this pamphlet Anna Holden tells how a CORE group helped parents and children when—despite the violence of segregationist mobs—desegregation was begun in the Nashville schools in the fall of 1957.³ Alex Wilson, the newspaperman who was beaten by a Little Rock mob, wrote in the *Tri-State Defender* that the two groups which made integration possible in Nashville were CORE and the Negro PTA.

Since CORE was organized in 1943, its affiliated groups have worked steadily by peaceful means to end discrimination in restaurants, hotels, theaters, transportation and employment. Nashville was an important test of non-violent techniques in the schools. The outcome suggests that the same methods can be used in other southern communities where court-ordered integration is being thwarted by terrorism.

The key to success in Nashville was CORE's policy of backing up the parents—by visiting them and by escorting their children to integrated schools. If Little

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1. King later signed a cover letter that accompanied a mass mailing of the pamphlets (James R. Robinson to King, 7 August 1958; Form letter to accompany *A First Step Toward School Integration*, 7 August 1958; see also Anna Holden, *A First Step Toward School Integration*, June 1958). In October 1957 King had agreed to serve on CORE's advisory board (Robinson to King, 3 October 1957).

2. "Our Struggle" originally appeared in the April 1956 issue of *Liberation* (see King, "Our Struggle" in *Papers 3:236–241").

3. Anna Gladys Holden (1918–), born in Ocala, Florida, earned a B.A. (1950) from Florida State University and an M.A. (1955) from the University of North Carolina. Holden worked for the Southern Regional Council (SRC) from 1951 until 1955, when she joined a biracial research team from Fisk University that traveled to Montgomery in the early days of the bus boycott to collect eyewitness accounts of the movement (see for example, Juliette Morgan, Interview by Holden, 7 February 1956; and Notes, Statements after decision, *State of Alabama v. M. L. King*, 22 March 1956). In 1957 Holden became chair of Nashville's CORE chapter.
Rock had had a strong interracial group, Governor Faubus might have been checked without the use of federal troops.

MARTIN LUTHER KING

PD. MLKP-MBU: Box 76.

From Melvin Arnold

5 May 1958
New York, N.Y.

Harper & Brothers editor Arnold suggests revisions in King’s discussion of communism in his Stride Toward Freedom manuscript. King incorporated all of Arnold’s recommendations in the published version.

The Rev. Martin Luther King
309 S. Jackson Street
Montgomery, Alabama

Dear Martin:

Hermine has just sent in the revised Chapter VI; she asked me to raise with you any questions that I may have.1 I have made a few suggestions, and have gone over them with her—and she asked me to tell you that she recommends that these changes be made, and is convinced that they clarify, and not distort, your thinking.

As she mentioned in an earlier letter to you, I am writing on the basis of my experience in Boston in turning out a long series of books on controversial public issues.2 I learned what the enemies of freedom and of liberalism can do. Therefore, I made—and am now making—every effort to see that not even a single sentence can be lifted out of context and quoted against the book and the author.

These suggestions may strike you as reflecting excessive care—but I speak from long experience!

Page 4: The next to the last sentence at the bottom of the page can be distorted to suggest that only your initial response to communism was negative; therefore

2. Arnold refers to the draft of the chapter that would be called “Pilgrimage to Nonviolence.” An excerpted version of this chapter was published in the September edition of Fellowship magazine; see pp. 473–481 in this volume.
3. In a 15 April letter to King, Hermine Popper said of Arnold’s forthcoming suggestions for King’s discussion of Marxism: “His experience while head of Beacon press, where he published several books antagonistic to McCarthy, taught him how skillful hostile critics can be at indicting writers with sentences taken out of context. In other words, not only must the whole presentation be balanced, but every sentence must be so written that it cannot be misconstrued.”