

Testimony in *State of Alabama v. M. L. King, Jr.*

22 March 1956
Montgomery, Ala.

King's trial before Judge Eugene Carter attracted enormous press attention, including front-page coverage in the New York Times. Several dozen reporters, including writers from England, France, India, and most of the major African-American newspapers, attended the four-day proceedings. More than five hundred African Americans waited outside the courthouse on Monday morning, 19 March, the first day of the trial. They were unable to get into the segregated courtroom, which seated about 230 people, because most of the seats were reserved for the defendants and for the seventy-odd witnesses.¹ King was accompanied by his wife and parents, as well as by out-of-state visitors including Michigan congressman Charles Diggs, Jr., and Alpha Phi Alpha general president Frank Stanley. Responding to a letter sent by the Fellowship of Reconciliation, more than two hundred clergymen announced "their own willingness to go personally to Montgomery to supply the pulpits of any of the defending ministers who were jailed."² At a meeting that night attended by several thousand, King declared that "this is the year God's gonna set his people free, and we want no cowards in our crowd."³ To maintain movement morale and keep supporters informed, the

1. Wayne Phillips, "First Negro Tried in Bus Boycotting," *New York Times*, 20 March 1956. See also Anna Holden, Notes on Trial, 19 March 1956.

2. See Fellowship of Reconciliation press release, "Four Hundred Clergymen Express Support for Montgomery Pastors," 18 March 1956. See also "Negro Congressman Attending Trial Here; Raps Segregation," *Montgomery Advertiser*, 20 March 1956.

3. Quoted in James Booker, "'God Will Find Way,' Boycotters," *New York Amsterdam News*, 24 March 1956.

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MIA held two mass meetings on Tuesday night, the eve of King's testimony, attracting nearly eight thousand people.

During two days of prosecution testimony, Circuit Solicitor William F. Thetford called twenty-seven witnesses in an effort to prove that King was the primary leader of the boycott, responsible for formulating demands, presiding at meetings, authorizing financial expenditures, and representing the MIA in negotiations. His witnesses, however, many of whom were King's associates and fellow officers in the MIA, resisted his attempts to link the boycott to King. Thetford also argued that the boycott involved intimidation and violence. Nine bus drivers testified that shots had been fired and bricks thrown through bus windows, and three black witnesses claimed to have been pulled off buses or threatened with violence for riding. King's defense counsel objected, arguing that King's connections to these events could not be established.

After an unsuccessful motion to exclude the state's evidence, King's defense began its presentation on Wednesday, 21 March. Led by local attorneys Fred D. Gray and Charles D. Langford, King's legal team also included Alabama NAACP lawyers Arthur D. Shores, Orzell Billingsley, Jr., Peter Hall, and NAACP general counsel Robert L. Carter, who was unable to participate in the courtroom proceedings because he was not a member of the Alabama Bar.⁴ The cornerstone of their defense was an attack on the evils of bus segregation and the abuse that Montgomery blacks had suffered for years from Montgomery bus drivers, thus establishing under the 1921 anti-boycott law a "just cause" or "legal excuse" for the boycott. Thirty-one of thirty-five defense witnesses were bus patrons who described personal experiences of abuse by bus drivers and their own motivations for boycotting the buses. Many testified that bus drivers routinely called them derogatory names and often refused to give them change or forced them to enter the bus from the back door. Georgia Gilmore, for example, said that once a bus driver had told her, after she paid for her fare, "Nigger, get out that door and go around to the back door"; he then sped away. Martha Walker recalled helping her blind husband off a bus when the driver slammed the door shut on her husband's right foot and dragged him some distance before he managed to get free.

Most black witnesses testified that their decision to boycott the buses was spontaneous and that King was a representative of the community, not its leader. "Wasn't no one man started it," Gladys Moore insisted. "We all started it over night." Robert S. Graetz, pastor of the Trinity Lutheran Church and the most visible white MIA leader, remarked that King had not asked people to boycott the buses; rather, he urged them to decide for themselves. Graetz also quoted King and other MIA leaders as saying, "If someone wants to ride the busses, let them ride, we are not suggesting to threaten them, coerce them, or intimidate them, or anything else."⁵

As the final defense witness on the concluding day of the trial, King testifies in his own defense. Addressing a packed courtroom as the crowd outside presses to get in, King defends the Montgomery protest movement while denying responsibility for

4. Orzell Billingsley, Jr. (1924–), a native of Birmingham, Alabama, earned his B.A. (1946) from Talladega College and his LL.B. (1950) from Howard University. He joined the firm of Arthur Shores and Peter Hall in 1951. An NAACP legal advisor, he was active in voter registration and, along with Peter Hall, repeatedly challenged the exclusion of African Americans from Alabama's juries. Peter A. Hall (1912–), born in Birmingham, graduated from Johnson C. Smith University and earned his J.D. and LL.B. (1946) degrees from DePaul University. Robert Carter (1917–), born in Caryville, Florida, earned a B.A. (1937) from Lincoln University, an LL.B. (1940) from Howard University, and an LL.M. (1941) from Columbia University. He served as Thurgood Marshall's legal assistant at the NAACP and worked on many desegregation cases, including *Brown v. Board of Education*, before becoming the group's general counsel.

5. Transcript, *State of Alabama v. M. L. King, Jr.*

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leading an illegal boycott. King's occasionally evasive testimony downplays his own role in the MIA's decision-making processes. "My exposition has always been 'to let your conscience be your guide,'" King insists. Asked if he had ever advocated violence, King replies, "My motivation has been the exact converse of that; I urged non-violence at all points."

After the prosecution called several bus drivers forward as rebuttal witnesses, who asserted that they treated black and white passengers alike with courtesy, each side presented closing arguments.

Judge Carter brought the four-day trial to a close that afternoon, finding King guilty of conducting an illegal boycott against Montgomery City Lines. Carter fined King \$500 plus court costs but later suspended the sentence and postponed the remaining boycott cases while King's lawyers appealed the judgment. On 30 April 1957 the Court of Appeals rejected King's appeal, stating that his lawyers had filed it after the sixty-day deadline.

The following testimony by King is from the official transcript of his trial prepared for his appeal.

M. L. KING, JR., having been duly sworn, was examined and testified as follows:

Direct Examination

BY LAWYER SHORES:

Q Will you state your full name?

A Martin Luther King, Jr.

Q What is your occupation?

A I am a minister.

Q You are the minister of one of the local churches here in Montgomery, Alabama?

A Yes, I am minister of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church.

Q Are you a member of the Montgomery Improvement Association?

A Yes, I am.

Q Are you an official of this organization?

A I am.

Q Are you one of the organizers of the Montgomery Improvement Association?

A Yes, I was in the meeting when it was organized.

Q For what purpose was this organization formulated?

A Well, the name itself covers the basic purposes of the organization, to improve the general status of Montgomery, to improve race relations, and to uplift the general tenor of the community.

Q How does one become a member of the Montgomery Improvement Association?

A Well, any citizen who is interested in becoming a member of the Montgomery Improvement Association can become a member—there are no dues—it is just a matter of being interested in improving Montgomery, thereby one can become a member.

Q There are no joining fees or dues?

A No.

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- Q From what source is the Association receiving its funds?
- A Well, the funds have been received from free-will offerings, individuals who have given freely for the fund.
- Q Have you any idea about how much this Association has received?
- A I don't know the exact figures on that. I don't have them. That is in the hands of the Finance Committee.
- Q Are members of the Montgomery Improvement Association restricted by race or to any particular race?
- A No, not at all, anyone.
- Q Have there been mass meetings held by the Montgomery Improvement Association?
- A Yes.
- Q Have you attended those meetings?
- A Yes, I have.
- Q Have you presided at those meetings?
- A Some of them.
- Q Have you spoken at those meetings?
- A Yes, I have.
- Q During the course of your speeches have you urged any of the listeners or members of the M.I.A. to refrain from riding the busses of the Montgomery City Lines?
- A No, I have not. My exposition has always been "to let your conscience be your guide, if you want to ride that is all right."
- Q Have those meetings always been open to anybody, the members, as well as to all citizens?
- A Yes, they have.
- Q Have you urged any violence, or any of these violent acts that have been testified about here in Court, have you urged any of the members to perform any of those acts?
- A No, I have not. My motivation has been the exact converse of that; I urged non-violence at all points.
- Q Do you know if any members urged anybody to do acts of violence or perpetrate acts of violence?
- A No, sir, I do not. I never heard that mentioned.
- Q I believe there have been several proposals mentioned. Have you attended any of the meetings called by the Mayor or other groups who tried to solve the bus situation?
- A Yes, I have.
- Q And have you carried proposals back to the organization for presentation to its members?
- A Yes, I have.
- Q And what was the reaction, or what action was taken on these proposals?
- A Well, they were always rejected by the people. We made it clear we couldn't make any final statement on any of the proposals and they had to be taken back to the people, and we did that through the mass meetings, and when they were rejected I would make the contact and let the officials know what happened.
- Q Do you know what these proposals were?
- A Well, to the best of my recollection, the main proposal was, or the main one we took back was the proposal to reserve ten seats in the front for the negro

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passengers and ten seats in the back for white passengers. Also included in that was a guarantee of courtesy. Now, that is about the substance of that proposal.⁶

Q Did you say ten seats in front for negroes or white?

A I mean white passengers, ten in front for white passengers and ten in the rear for negro passengers.

Q What proposals did your group present for the bus company's consideration?

A We presented three proposals. The first dealt with the question of courtesy; that is, more courteous treatment from the bus drivers themselves. The second proposal dealt with the whole question of seating; that we requested a seating arrangement based on a first come first served basis, negro passengers seating from the rear of the bus to the front, and white passengers from the front to the rear with no reserved seats for anybody. And the third proposal was a request to hire negro bus drivers on predominantly negro lines.⁷

Q And what was the reaction to those proposals by the bus company and the City officials?

A On their part those proposals were rejected. There was some concession on the first proposal—that is the question of courtesy—the others were rejected outright at every meeting we attended.

Q Did the Montgomery Improvement Association organize this car pool?

A Yes.

Q Will you describe the operation of this car pool?

A Well, the car pool is just a matter of individuals volunteering to give their cars for the purpose of transporting persons to and from their jobs and their business. These persons volunteered to place their cars in the pool from the pick-up stations and dispatch stations, and these cars will be there at certain hours for the purpose of transporting people to various places.

Q Are the persons charged any fees for being transported?

A No, they are not.

Q Are the persons paid for operating their cars?

A No.

Q Is there any payment made to persons who own cars?

A No.

Q To operate them in the pool? Or anything?

A Well, there is a payment which is for the purpose of upkeep—that is for the wear and tear on the cars. We have all day drivers, about twenty all day drivers that start at six o'clock in the morning and work throughout the day, and there is a bonus given for the purpose of wear and tear on the car, and no one is paid a salary for driving.

Q Are you paid a salary by the Montgomery Improvement Association?

A No, I am not.

6. On 13 February 1956 an organization formed by local white businessmen submitted a proposal to the MIA that preserved segregated bus seating while also promising that "there will be no retaliation whatsoever resulting from the boycott." At a 20 February 1956 mass meeting the MIA overwhelmingly rejected this proposal (see Ralph Abernathy to the Men of Montgomery, 20 February 1956).

7. See "To the National City Lines," 8 December 1955, pp. 80–81 in this volume.

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- Q Is anyone paid a salary?
A No.
Q Do you know anything about these incidents of vandalism or unrest that were testified to here by the witnesses on the Stand?
A No, other than reading about them, and I don't know anything else about them. I just heard about them.
Q Do you know whether or not any one in your organization has ever resorted to any acts of vandalism?
A No, I don't. I am sure I know of no one in the organization has anything to do with it or responsible for it.
Q Have any acts of vandalism, or acts of intimidation or worrisome nature, been perpetrated against you?
A Yes, very definitely.
Q What act of violence was perpetrated against you or your home?
A Well, my home has been bombed on one occasion, and I have received numerous threats. I couldn't really give the number. I received numerous threats.
Q And at the time your house was bombed did you or any member of your organization to your knowledge urge any member of your organization or anybody else to commit violence?
A No, just the opposite.
Q I believe some statement was made about a telephone conversation between you and the Mayor where terms of the proposal was accepted by you and later rejected. Did you receive any proposal from the Mayor with respect to the settlement of this controversy over the telephone? And later rejected?
A No, I did not. I have never received a proposal that I accepted. I have always contended I could only take it up with the people, and that is what I said to Mayor Gayle, when he offered the proposal over the phone, I would take it up with the people, and that is as far as I would go. And he was to call me back on Friday to discuss it, but he never called back.
Q And have you always taken the proposals to the people to have them decide whether or not the proposal would be accepted?
A Yes, sir, I have.
Q And what has been the results of taking the proposals back to the people?
A Well, to this point all of the proposals I took to the people and put before them they felt were not satisfactory so they have rejected the proposals to this point.
Q Have you any concern for the status of negroes in Montgomery?

THE SOLICITOR: We object to that.

THE COURT: If you connect it up with the Montgomery Improvement Association as a member.

BY LAWYER SHORES:

- Q Does everyone connected with the Montgomery Improvement Association?
A Yes, they do have concern for the general status of negroes here.
Q Is it, or not, a fact your activities in connection with the Montgomery Improvement Association constitute a part of your effort to improve the negro status in Montgomery?
A That is right, quite right.

- Q In connection with the transportation was Rev. Glasco paid any amount in connection with transportation? 22 Mar
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- A Yes.
- Q Do you recall what amount was paid?
- A No, I don't remember the exact amount off hand.
- Q The finances are not handled by you, are they?
- A No.
- Q You have a finance committee?
- A That is right.
- Q Is there an office worker that receives any pay?
- A Office worker?
- Q Yes.
- A Yes.
- Q How many office workers that you pay a salary?
- A I think it is seven.
- Q Seven?
- A Yes, that is right.

Cross Examination

BY THE SOLICITOR:

- Q This bus boycott or bus protest, whatever you choose to call it, was called for the 5th of December through a series of little pamphlets—you are familiar with what I am talking about?
- A Yes, I am familiar.
- Q It is true they appeared on the streets a day or two before the protest meeting concerning alleged grievances?
- A I really couldn't say. I don't know if the pamphlets were put out for more than one day. I just don't recall what the pamphlet said concerning the time.
- Q Those pamphlets were pretty well distributed over Montgomery?
- A Yes.
- Q Starting about Thursday or Friday before the 5th of December; is that true?
- A That is true, yes.
- Q Did you see any of these pamphlets?
- A Yes, I remember seeing one of them.
- Q I believe you and a group of other men met on Monday afternoon?
- A That is true, yes.
- Q And formed the Montgomery Improvement Association?
- A That is right.
- Q How many of you were there? If you like to, we have the Minutes of the meeting here for the purpose of refreshing your recollection.⁸ This is just a photostatic copy of them.
- A All of these persons were present. (Indicating)
- Q Did you personally know all of them?

8. See Fields, *Minutes of Montgomery Improvement Association Founding Meeting*, 5 December 1955, pp. 68–70 in this volume.

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- A Oh, yes, sir.
- Q Refreshing your recollection, how many of them?
- A According to the Minutes, eighteen.
- Q After refreshing your recollection would you say there were substantially that number?
- A That is right.
- Q Where did this meeting take place?
- A It was held at the Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church.
- Q Around three P.M. on December the 5th?
- A That is right.
- Q At that time you formed the Montgomery Improvement Association?
- A Yes, we did.
- Q You elected your officers?
- A Yes.
- Q Elected an Executive Committee too, I believe? Refreshing your recollection, "Moved and second that the sixteen persons here"—the Minutes up here show eighteen present—"And a suggestion that nine names be brought in making twenty-five which constitutes the Executive Committee." Do you remember the Executive Committee of twenty-five with nine others to be named?
- A Yes, that is right. I remember that.
- Q Now, I believe your transportation committee was set up at that time, and your finance committee; is that true?
- A No. My best judgment, they were not. Maybe I am wrong.
- Q Was it agreed at that time to set up the transportation and finance committee, names to be supplied later?
- A I don't know.
- Q Refresh your recollection with this. I don't know exactly what it means myself. On page 3 of these Minutes it simply shows transportation committee and finance. Can you explain what that means?
- A I don't know, and that really isn't clear enough for me to make any statement concerning it. I really don't remember about these committees.
- Q Let me ask you this. Did you have anything to do with what I will refer to as the first boycott, the boycott called for December the 5th?
- A No. Do you mean if I had anything to do with calling it?
- Q That is right.
- A No, I didn't.
- Q Do you know who did?
- A No, I don't. It was a spontaneous beginning, one of those things which just had been smoldering.
- Q Do you know who printed those pamphlets?⁹

9. King was not involved with the first leaflets, produced and distributed by the Women's Political Council on Friday, 2 December 1955, which encouraged Montgomery's African Americans not to ride the buses. That evening, however, King and other black leaders met to plan the one-day boycott and decided that another leaflet should be prepared for distribution on Saturday. King and Abernathy mimeographed the second set of leaflets (see Leaflet, "Don't Ride the Bus," 2 December 1955, p. 67 in this volume).

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- A No, I don't.
- Q Do you know that the Montgomery Improvement Association according to all the testimony we have had here up to now has spent of this money it collected some \$30,000 in supporting the boycott or protest; is that correct?
- A That would be impossible to say. I don't know enough about it.
- Q Do you know any other money that has been spent, you sign all the checks, don't you?
- A Yes, I do. I would say most of it has been used for that.
- Q And you couldn't give us any amount or in which manner it has been spent other than on the boycott or protest?
- A Well, I don't have it before me. I don't remember of any.
- Q I note in your Minutes of that first meeting "It was recommended that Resolutions would be drawn up," and a Resolutions Committee was appointed?
- A Yes.
- Q You were on that committee, I take it?
- A I don't believe I worked on the Resolutions Committee. That committee was appointed.
- Q Your Minutes show "The President, Rev. M. L. King, Attorney Gray and Attorney Langford is on the committee." Is that true? They are your Minutes, aren't they?
- A It might be true I was on the committee and I had worked with the committee.
- Q Who drew up that Resolution?
- A This committee, this Resolutions Committee.
- Q Who was on the Resolutions Committee at that time?
- A I don't remember.
- Q When was the Resolution drawn up?
- A Sometime during the meeting at the Holt Street Baptist Church.
- Q You are telling the Court that the Resolution wasn't drawn up at the afternoon meeting, but it was drawn up that night; is that what you are telling us?
- A That is right.
- Q And it was also agreed at the afternoon meeting that the protest would be continued; is that correct?
- A I don't know.
- Q Let me read it to refresh your recollection, or you can read it.
- A Well, that is true according to the Minutes, according to the Minutes here. I don't remember the discussion at this point.
- Q You are familiar with that Resolution I take it?
- A Well, I have seen it.
- Q You have seen it?
- A Yes, I have.
- Q You stated you have never asked anybody not to ride the busses. Let me read you what the Resolution says. It says: "That the citizens of Montgomery are requesting that every citizen in Montgomery, regardless of race, color or creed, to refrain from riding busses owned and operated in the City of Montgomery by the Montgomery City Lines, Incorporated until some arrangement has been worked out between said citizens and the Montgomery City Lines,

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Incorporated." You say this was made up on that night. That is what the Resolution says.¹⁰

A I didn't read the Resolution.

Q You heard the Resolution read?

A This was done by the committee. Oh, yes.

Q You were there?

A Oh, yes, sir.

Q Who read the Resolution?

A My best recollection, Rev. Abernathy read the Resolution.

Q Rev. Abernathy?

A Yes, sir.

Q This is the Resolution the Montgomery Improvement Association presented at that mass meeting; is that correct?

A Yes, it was presented at that meeting.

Q In other words, what the Montgomery Improvement Association did, as I unooderstand it, is to back an existing one day boycott and by this the protest, or whatever you want to call it, has extended over a period of several months and it is still in existence; is that substantially true?

A Yes and no. The last part is true, it is still in existence. Now, as to the first part I would say the Montgomery Improvement Association came into being in an attempt to improve the general status of the city plus the—

Q That is not in response to my question at all.

A I was fixing to give the other part of it.

Q That wasn't responsive to my question.

THE COURT: Ask it again.

BY THE SOLICITOR:

Q I ask you this. I said the Montgomery Improvement Association, as I understand it, backed an existing one day boycott and has through its transportation committee and others urged people not to ride the busses, and that situation is still existing today?

A No, I wouldn't say so.

Q Isn't that the way it came about?

A No.

Q When did you come here to Montgomery?

A I came to Montgomery in 1954.

Q You have been here about a year and a half, two years?

A That is right.

Q Since you have been here how many times have you ridden busses?

A Only one.

Q How many white members have you at this time in the Montgomery Improvement Association, to your knowledge?

A I really don't know. We don't keep records of those by race. I couldn't say how many white members we have.

- Q How many do you think that are members of the Montgomery Improvement Association that are white? 22 Mar 1956
- A Well, I don't know. I know Rev. Graetz is a member, and we probably have some other. I know we have some other.¹¹
- Q Do you know of any.
- A I know we have some others.
- Q Who are they?
- A I don't recall at this point.
- Q How many members do you have?
- A I don't know. We don't keep a record of that.
- Q Coming back to the Minutes of your first meeting: "It was passed that the recommendations from the committee be given to the citizens at the night meeting." That is right, isn't it?
- A That is right.
- Q The recommendation they are referring to there was the recommendation that the protest or boycott be continued; is that correct?
- A I don't think I quite caught your question.
- Q You testified that "It was passed that the recommendations from the committee be given to the citizens at the night meeting." You say that is right?
- A What Resolutions does that refer to?
- Q "It was passed that the recommendations," as you see this here. (Indicating)
- A What recommendation does that refer to?
- Q I don't know. I wasn't at the meeting.
- A This don't say about what. I really don't remember what transpired about that there.
- Q Don't know what it means?
- A No, I really don't.
- Q As a matter of fact, you remember being at this organizational meeting on the afternoon of the 5th?
- A Yes, sir.
- Q Did you draw up this agenda for the meeting that night on the afternoon of December the 5th?
- A I don't remember for sure when that was drawn up.
- Q Look at this right there and you read that. (Indicating)
- A I imagine so, that it was drawn up there.
- Q Were you at a meeting of the Montgomery Improvement Association on December the 8th, 1955?
- A I don't remember. What was the nature of the meeting?

11. Robert S. Graetz (1928–), born in Clarksburg, West Virginia, and educated in Columbus, Ohio, graduated from Capital University (1950) and received his B.D. (1955) from Evangelical Lutheran Theological Seminary. Graetz was assigned from 1955 to 1958 to the Trinity Lutheran Church in Montgomery. Graetz and his family were ostracized by other whites for his involvement in the MIA, and, on 25 August 1956, while the family was out of town, three dynamite sticks exploded in their front yard. Mayor Gayle accused Graetz of bombing his own home in order to stimulate out-of-state contributions to the MIA. Later Graetz's car tires were slashed and sugar was placed in his gasoline tank. The harassment continued, and Graetz finally left Montgomery to become pastor of St. Philip Lutheran Church in Columbus, Ohio, where he served until 1967. See *Montgomery: A White Preacher's Memoir* (1991) for his account of the boycott.

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- Q I am referring to the Minutes of the meeting and it says "The contact committee of the Montgomery Improvement Association."
A The contact committee?
Q The contact committee.
A I don't see anything about a contact committee. I don't know about it.
Q I am reading from your Minutes.

- LAWYER SHORES: We object to that. From whose Minutes?
THE SOLICITOR: They are the Montgomery Improvement Association Minutes that are in evidence.
THE WITNESS: I didn't write these.
THE SOLICITOR: Take a look at your Minutes and see what they say.
LAWYER BILLINGSLEY: You are using "your" and "we" sometimes. "Your."
You are using your organization.
THE SOLICITOR: I take it it is his organization.

BY THE SOLICITOR:

- Q Look at it and see what it relates to and give an answer to my question.
A I am not familiar with that name. I guess that is the name the secretary used. However, that committee was appointed by the Executive Board.
Q By the Executive Board?
A Yes, sir.
Q That is the Executive Board of the Montgomery Improvement Association?
A That is right.
Q That is the committee that met with Mr. Thrasher, Rev. Hughes, the bus officials and the City Commission?¹²
A That is right.
Q On December the 8th?
A Yes, I think that is the date.
Q How was contact made with the Executive Committee to attend that meeting?
A The Alabama Council on Human Relations made the contact.
Q Who did they contact?
A They contacted the City Commission first, I think, and they contacted the Montgomery Improvement Association.
Q Who of the Montgomery Improvement Association?
A Well, they contacted me as President of the Association.
Q They contacted you as President of the Association?

12. Thomas R. Thrasher was rector of the Episcopal Church of the Ascension in Montgomery and a leader of the Alabama Council on Human Relations (ACHR). Mayor Gayle was a member of his congregation. Robert E. Hughes (1928-), a Methodist preacher, received his B.A. (1949) from the University of Alabama, his M.Div. (1952) from Emory University, and his M.S.T. (1967) from Boston University. He became pastor of the Rockford Circuit (Methodist Church) in Alabama in 1953 but left the next year to serve as executive director of the ACHR. On 7 December 1955 Hughes contacted the city commission and helped organize the first negotiating session between the MIA and the city commissioners (see Minutes, Meeting Between Contact Committee of MIA and City and Bus Officials, 8 December 1955). After leaving the ACHR in 1961, Hughes worked on human rights issues in Southern Rhodesia until 1964, when the government expelled him because of his support for that nation's liberation movement.

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A That is right.

Q Then what action did you take?

A Well, at that time just talked to the Executive Board.

Q Did you call a meeting of the Executive Board?

A Oh, yes.

Q Where was that meeting held?

A I don't remember.

Q Do you remember who was there?

A The whole Board was present—I think most of the members of the Board were present.

Q Approximately how many were there?

A I don't know exactly. It must have been about twenty or more.

Q You say that the contact committee, of which you were a member, was appointed by the Executive Committee?

A That is right.

Q Did the Executive Committee at that time formulate the demands that would be made upon the bus company?

A I don't remember; I couldn't say.

Q When were those demands formulated, and who formulated them?

A I think that was done at the Holt Street Church, as I recall. I wouldn't like to make a definite statement because I really don't remember, as I said, the people made these demands.

Q What people?

A More than four thousand people at the Holt Street Baptist Church.

Q Those four thousand people formulated these three specific demands; is that what you are telling us?

A Well, it is according to how you interpret the word formulate, if you mean they wrote them?

Q That is right.

A Well, no, not four thousand people.

Q Who did write them?

A I don't know; I don't remember who wrote them.

Q When is the first you ever heard of the three demands?

A Well, as I stated, I believe it was at the Holt Street meeting. I don't remember. I don't like to go to that extent.

Q Anyone ever tell you the three requests that were going to be made to the bus company?

A Who told me, I cannot recall. I think I heard them at the mass meeting. There were so many speakers at that meeting I don't know who mentioned them.

Q Who was it got up and said, "These are the demands we are going to make on the City or the bus company?"

A It was one speaker.

Q That is what I am trying to get at. Who worked out these demands?

A I don't know.

Q You just don't know?

A I don't know.

Q How much money have you in your bank account over in Atlanta now?

A I really don't know.

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LAWYER SHORES: We object to the wording of the question "In your bank account."

THE COURT: He has already said he don't know.

BY THE SOLICITOR:

Q Let me change that. You have a bank account in the name of the Montgomery Improvement Association in the Citizens Trust of Atlanta?

A That is right, we do.

Q Now, I believe that \$5000 was deposited in that bank in Atlanta, the same \$5000 you drew out of the Alabama National Bank?

A That is right.

Q Did you take it over there or send it over there?

A No, it was sent over.

Q It was sent over by mail?

A That is right.

Q On February 21st do you know what the amount was you had put into bank?

LAWYER SHORES: We object to that. It has nothing to do with this case.

THE COURT: Overrule your objection. The reason I am going to let it in, this is money spent by the Montgomery Improvement Association and collected for the purpose of helping out with the so-called boycott. For that reason I will let it in.

LAWYER SHORES: The amount wouldn't make any difference.

THE COURT: Show how much they collected at that time. He said voluntary contributions were given for the purpose of aiding the boycott.

LAWYER SHORES: We concede money was collected and put in the account.

THE SOLICITOR: We would like to know the amount.

LAWYER SHORES: This is fishing.

THE COURT: Overrule your objection.

LAWYER SHORES: We take an exception.

(Exception noted for the defendant.)

BY THE SOLICITOR:

Q Do you know?

A No, I don't know.

Q I believe that you have stated that the Montgomery Improvement Association is being run on a budget of about \$3000 a week?

A Well, approximately that.

Q The Montgomery Improvement Association is spending approximately \$400 a day?

A I wouldn't say exactly, but it might be in that area.

Q And whatever is being spent by the Montgomery Improvement Association, so far as you know, is being spent for the continuance of the protest or boycott?

A Well, I don't know exactly what you mean by the continuance of it. When you say continuance, I don't exactly know. [*King's testimony concludes*]