

28 Oct
1957

To Alfred Hassler

28 October 1957
Montgomery, Ala.

For some time FOR had considered publishing a comic book to popularize the story of the bus boycott and its message of nonviolence.¹ On 17 October Hassler sent King the manuscript for "Martin Luther King and the Montgomery Story" in order to eliminate "inconsistencies and inaccuracies or words that you would not like to have used." Hassler explained that he hoped to "keep it in terms that will make the message clear to many more people than now are able to comprehend it," even though his script writer had described it as "the most literate comic book published." Following its publication in January 1958, FOR members distributed the ten-cent comic through labor unions, peace groups, and churches.

Mr. Alfred Hassler
Fellowship Publications
Nyack, 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 comic 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 coupled 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 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.² 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!"³

1. See Smiley to King, 20 November 1956, in *Papers* 3:435-436.

2. The published text read: "In their attempt to break up our bus protest, they indicted 93 of our leaders, including E. D. Nixon, of the Sleeping Car Porters Union."

3. This change was incorporated in the published text.

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.

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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,

[*signed*] M. L. King, Jr. /b

M. L. King, Jr.

MLK:mlb

(Dictated by Rev. King, but signed in his absence.)

THLSr. FORP-PSC-P.