DATE: January 30, 1956
TIME: 11:00 a.m. - 2:35 p.m.

Executive Board "Call" Meeting

This meeting was called because there are some "important"
issues to discuss rather than to hold off until Thursday.

Prayer:

Rev. Alford: Said that he had been pondering over a proposal which was made to
Rev. Binion by some of his "white friends" some weeks back.
(Apparently the Executive Board rejected it then) Rev. Alford
feels that it is "worth of our studying it" "I think we should
go back under those conditions.

Rev. Binion: To the question of the nature of the proposal:
Mr. Macrosie (his "white friend") explained the proposal to him before
the three N. ministers had been "hoodwinked" into a "compromise." The
City had decided that if Negroes would give Whites the first two seats
on the Jackson, Day and Cleveland*st. routes, and on the rest of the
routes give the first six seats to the Whites - an agreement could be
reached.

Mr. E. D Nixon: "Did the proposal of two seats mean the long seat plus the nest two
seats?"

Rev. Binion: "I don't know."

Mr. Nixon: "If you talk about the first two seats, then that's the same as before.
We would be returning to the same conditions, and if we accept it we
are going to run into trouble, with the people who had been riding the
bus. If that's what you're going to do, I don't want to be here when
you tell the people."

Mr. White: "This morning was the test." "The rain was pouring and they still
walked. If they don't want to go back, I don't see why we should de-
cide otherwise, folks just made too much sacrifice. I hold that we
should go on to the end. I think we should stay just where we're at."

Rev. King: "I've seen along the way where some of the ministers are getting weary.
Says he won't call names. If you have that impression that should go
back to the bus under the same conditions. We won't ostracize you.
We should "iron it out here" (executive meetings) and show where in
we shouldn't go back"

*Jackson, Day and Cleveland streets are predominantly Negro used routes
"There's a time in the life of any crisis when you ought to be reasonable; the parties concerned ought to "give and take". If we can get two out of the three demands (Alford called the "concessions"), I think we ought to accept. We have no protection to give these people - our wives and daughters* are not out there. We can arrive at some type of agreement that is pleasing even to us."

Rev. Alford:

"From my limited contact, if we went tonight and asked the people to get back on the bus, we would be ostracized. They wouldn't get back. We "shouldn't" give people the illusion that there are no sacrifices involved, that it could be ended soon. My intimidations are a small price to pay if victory can be won. We shouldn't make the illusion that they won't have to walk. I believe to the bottom of my heart that the majority of Negroes would ostracize us. They are willing to walk.

(changing the subject), "I think this is a basic point." We agreed that in the event the Chicago franchise was renewed and ours was rejected, we would go to court. Attorney Gray went to New York last week for a few days to discuss this whole problem with Thurgood Marshall and another lawyer. "Atty. Gray has drawn up two suits: one demanding that the segregation law of the city is null and void because it is unconstitutional. In the process of litigation, all intimidation be cut laid. His joint suit is to be filed in the Federal Court this afternoon or tomorrow. We are in the process of drawing up a list of plaintiffs (those who can stand up under intimidation and who are not susceptible to losing their jobs). So far we have Miss Calving, Miss Smith, Mrs. Reese, Mrs. Hamilton, and Mrs. McDonald. This suit on the City of Montgomery would go directly to the Federal Courts, but it would be filed in the name of the NAACP.

What are we to do for the people in the process of litigation? The Court has 20 days to answer - don't know how long the litigation would take.

Mr. Saye:

Number 1 "issue an ultimatum giving a time limit (leaving out goal 3) to the Commission stating our position to see what they would do; 2, we need to do that to have a point from which to prepare people to return to the bus. We need to train people to go back to the bus. We would disgrace ourselves before the world if we give up now.

Mr. Nixon:

"Hold people off the bus for the end of the 20 days, instructing them about going back to the bus. At least for the first 20 days from tomorrow keep them off the bus."

Rev. King:

"It is very important that misinformation does not leak out about the NAACP and the Court action until its printed in the newspaper. We want to surprise the whites. Don't mention the 20 days. Some liberal whites say that because of the stigma that has been put on the NAACP, its part in this should not be mentioned because of its effect.

*Rev Bennet has referred to the masses of Negroes, those who had once ridden the buses, but who are now walking, as "those in the gutter".
on a public sentiment. We should use the legal structure of the
NAACP, but refer to the participants as "legal citizenry".

Dr. Saye:

"Because we can't settle this within the framework of the law, we should
state publicly that we're taking it to the Federal Court.

Rev. King:

"By the way, I've found out that the Negro lady who was beat up
by a Negro man a few days ago is the cook for the mayor; she attends
the mass meetings and tells the mayor what happened the next morning.
We also found out that Sellers let 3 Negro prisoners attend the
mass meetings so that they can tell him what has happened.

Att'y Gray:

About selection of plaintiff: I think it's good strategy to have
at least one minister, people of different ages, and people with
different grievances. It's not good strategy to have Rev. King
because he's too much in the "limelight".

Rev. King:

"I think it's very important in throwing sentiment our way if we have
a minister as a plaintiff. Who (of 25 present) will volunteer?

After discussion in which Rev. King said that he knew of many in the
meeting who had been fired and other wise intimidated, still no one
would volunteer.

Rev. King reiterated their stand on a policy of non-violence. It was
suggested in this connection that we go "on record not to come to
the rescue of people arrested for carrying concealed weapons."

Rev. King:

"About lawyer fees.

Att'y. Gray:

(A. H. Langford not present) The branch NAACP made an agreement
with me about a figure for my work for the Mrs. Parks' case. Explains
that the retaining fee ($50/wk for each lawyer) covers anything that
comes up other than Court cases.

Rev. King:

"I would ask this question ever if A. H. Langford was here: Is it
necessary to retain two lawyers?"

A. H. Gray:

"I'll leave while you discuss it." (He leaves the room)

Dr. Saye:

"I'll never did see the wisdom of hiring two lawyers."

It was agreed that the lawyers be paid $500 (the figure the two
lawyers had submitted) for their work from December 11 to January 4, and from that time
retain the two lawyers at $50/wk each until the case is filed in the Federal Court.
They will then be paid a "general fee" which will be added to that fee paid by the
branch NAACP (this money will come from collections at the mass meetings) Each lawyer
will submit a bill for "services rendered" to get away from having to pay the retainer
featuring as after Court action.

Announcement: Mass meeting tonight at 7:00 p.m. at First Baptist Church

Meeting ends with prayer.
Executive Board Call Meeting
Monday, January 29, 1956
11:00 A.M. - 2:35 P.M.
Rev. M.L. King, Presiding

- Prayer

This meeting was called because there are some important issues to discuss rather than to hold off until Thursday.

Mr. Alford - Said that he had been pondering over a proposal which was made to Rev. Binion by one of his white friends some weeks back. (apparently the Executive Board rejected it.) Rev. Alford feels that it is "worth of an studying it." I think we should go back under those conditions.

Rev. Binion - to the question as to the nature of the proposal:

Mr. Mearns (his white friend) explained the proposal to him before the three N. ministers had been "hoodwinked" into a "compromise." The City had decided that if N. would give W. the first two seats on the Jackson, Day and Cleveland St. routes and on the rest of the routes give the first 50 seats to the W. - an agreement could be reached.

Mrs. Nixon - Did the proposal of two seats mean the long seat plus the next two seats?  Mrs. Binion - "I don't know."

Mrs. Nixon - If you talk about the first two seats, then that's the same as before. We would be returning to the same condition and if we accept it we are "going to run into trouble" with the people who have been riding the bus. "If that's what you are going to do, I don't want to be here when you tell the people."

Mr. White - "This morning was the test. The rain was pouring and they still walked. If they don't want to go back, I don't see why we should decide otherwise. If you just made too much sacrifice, I think that we should go on to the end. I think we should stay just where we are at."

Rev. King - "I've seen along the way where some of the ministers are getting weary."

Says he won't call names. "If you have that impression (that we should go back into the buses), we won't accuse you. We shall iron it out here [area meetings] and show where we shouldn't go back."

* Jackson, Day and Cleveland streets are predominantly Negro resident areas.


Reverend Alford—"There's a time in the life of any crisis when you go ought to be reasonable. The parties concerned ought to 'give and take.' If we can get two out of the three demands (Alford called them 'concessions'), I think we ought to accept. We have no protection to give those people—our wives and daughters are not out there. We can arrive at some type of agreement that is pleasing to us."

Reverend King—"From my limited contact, if we went tonight and asked the people to get back on the bus, we would be ostracized. They wouldn't get back. We shouldn't give people the illusion that there are no sacrifices involved. I think we were wrong in our intimidation and in the price we paid if victory can be won. We shouldn't make the illusion that they won't have to walk, I believe to the bottom of my heart that the majority of the people would ostracize us. They are willing to walk."

Reverend King (changing the subject), "Think this is a basic point."

We agreed that in the event the Chicago franchise was renewed, and ours was rejected, we would go to court. Attorney Gray went to New York last week for a few days to discuss this whole problem with Thrups and another lawyer. Attorney Gray has drawn up two suits: 1) demanding that the segregation law of the city is null and void because it is unconstitutional; 2) in the process of litigation, all intimidation be ended. This joint suit is to be filed in the Federal Court this afternoon or tomorrow. We are in the process of drafting up a list of plaintiffs (those who can stand under intimidation and who are not susceptible to losing their jobs). So far we have Miss Colbert, Miss Smith, Mrs. Reese, Mrs. Hamilton, and Mrs. McDonald. This suit on the City of Montgomery would go directly to the Federal Court, but it would not be filed in the name of the NAACP."

Reverend King—"What are we to do for the people in the process of litigation? The court has 20 days to answer—don't know how long the litigation would take."

* Rev. Bennett has referred to the masses of Negroes, those who had succeeded the buses, and who are now walking, as "those in the gutter."
Mr. Sarge - Number 1, issue an ultimatum (leaving out goals) to the Commission stating our position to see what they would do. If we are to do that it has to be a point from which to prepare people to return to the lots. We need to train people to go back to the lots. "We would disgrace ourselves before the world if we give up now."

Mr. Nixon - Hold people off the lots for the end of the 20 days, instructing them about going back to the lots. At least for the first 20 days from tomorrow keep them off the lots.

Rev. King - It is very important that this information does not leak out about the NAACP and the Court action until it's printed in the newspaper. We want to surprise the whites. Don't mention the 20 days. Some liberal whites say that because of the stigma that has been put on the NAACP, it is part in this should not be mentioned because of its effect on public sentiment. We should use the legal structure of the NAACP, but refer to the participants as "legal strikers."

Dr. Sarge - Because we can't settle this within the framework of the law, we should state publicly that we're taking it to the Federal Court.

Rev. King - By the way, the plaintiff that the lady who was beat up by all men a few months ago is the cook for the mayor; she attends the mass meetings, and tells the mayor what happened the next morning. We also wanted to say that Sellers has let 32 prisoners attend the mass meeting, so that they can tell him what has happened.

Dr. Gray - about selection of plaintiffs:

I think it's a good strategy to have at least some white people of different ages and different grievances. It's not a good strategy to have Rev. King because he's too much in the "line of fire."

Rev. King - I think it's very important in throwing sentiment any way if we have a minister as a plaintiff. Who (of 25 percent) will volunteer?

After discussion in which Rev. King said that he knew of many in the meeting who had been fired and otherwise intimidated, still no one would volunteer.
Rev. King reiterated their stand on a policy of non-violence. It was suggested in this connection that we go on record not to come to the rescue of people arrested for carrying concealed weapons.

Rev. King — about lawyer fees.

Atty. Gray (Atty. Langford not present). The branch has come to an agreement with me about a figure for my work for the Mrs. Parks case. Explain that the retaining fee ($50/week for each lawyer) covers any thing that comes up other than court cases.

Rev. King: "I would ask this question even if Atty. Langford was here: Is it necessary to retain two lawyers?"

Atty. Gray: "I'll learn while you discuss it." (He leaves the room)

Dr. Sarya: "I never did see the wisdom of hiring two lawyers."

It was agreed that the lawyers be paid $500 (the figure the two lawyers had submitted) for their work from Dec. 11 to Jan. 1, and from that time retain the two lawyers at $50/week each until the case is filed in the Federal Court. They will then be paid a "general fee" which will be added to that fee paid by the branch NAACP (This money will come from collections at the mass meetings.)

Each lawyer will be paid "submit a bill for services rendered" to get away from having to pay the retainer. After court action, announcement: Mass meeting tonight at 7:00 p.m. at First Baptist Church.

Meeting ends with prayer.