

SOUTHERN CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

208 Auburn Avenue, N. E.

Atlanta 3, Georgia

REPORT OF MEETING FRIDAY, MAY 26, 1961

NOTE: Meeting called by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., to explore developments related to the Freedom Ride and to consider action based on long and short-range objectives.

PRESENT: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., President  
Southern Christian Leadership Conference

Mr. Gordon Carey  
Congress of Racial Equality

Rev. Kelley M. Smith  
Nashville Christian Leadership Council

Rev. Metz Robbins  
Nashville Christian Leadership Council

Miss Constance Curry  
National Student Association

Mr. Edward King  
Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee

Mr. Len Holt, Attorney  
Norfolk, Virginia

Rev. A. D. King  
Atlanta, Georgia

Mr. James R. Wood  
Southern Christian Leadership Conference

PLACE: Education Building, Ebenezer Church  
Atlanta, Georgia

Dr. King presided as chairman. Discussion was free and informal. Decisions were unanimous in every instance. It was not recommended that a formal report be written.

LONG-RANGE OBJECTIVE:

To continue the Freedom Ride program until safe, secure interstate travel can be enjoyed throughout the nation by all citizens and other persons legally entitled to this constitutional privilege.

IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVE:

To intensify the Freedom Ride so that national public attention can be brought to examine the denial of legal rights of interstate travellers by certain citizens and public officials in the hard-core Southern states.

To create a committee which will be empowered to organize, coordinate, schedule and otherwise implement the travel of Freedom Riders. To meet the issues and bring a strong ruling from the Attorney General in clearly establishing the rights of interstate travelers (possibly) through an order to the Interstate Commerce Commission. To fill jails of Montgomery and Jackson in order to keep a sharp image of the issues before the public.

FREEDOM RIDE COORDINATING COMMITTEE:

This Committee will consist of four (4) permanent members: Gordon Carey, Congress of Racial Equality; Wyatt T. Walker, Southern Christian Leadership Conference; Diane Nash, Nashville Christian Leadership Council; and Edward King, Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee.

This Committee will not have a chairman. Each member will sit and function equally in the execution of the responsibilities of the Committee. The working relationships of the members will be informal and decisions reached by general agreement. Since its members will not all be present in the conduct of business, mail and telephone communication will be used for contact. Reports of activities including fund raising, expenditures, progress, etc., will be made to the organizations represented in the Committee. The frequency of reports will be determined by the Committee itself.

ORGANIZATION:

The Freedom Ride Coordinating Committee will maintain four (4) offices: Atlanta, Georgia, Montgomery, Alabama, Jackson, Mississippi, and New Orleans, Louisiana. Through these offices the Committee will recruit, schedule, coordinate, provide cost of transportation and attend to other details relating to participation in the Freedom Ride. These offices will use telephone and mail for intercommunication.

FINANCE:

The Southern Christian Leadership Conference and Congress of Racial Equality have each agreed to deposit \$1,000.00 to an account with Western Union Telegraph Corporation in Atlanta, Georgia, to be used on a 24 hour basis in meeting financial needs. The procedures for withdrawal of these funds will be established by the Committee.

Wyatt T. Walker, of Southern Christian Leadership Conference is designated as custodian of funds for the Freedom Ride Coordinating Committee. The Southern Christian Leadership Conference has agreed to subsidize the telephone and other minor operational costs of the Atlanta and Montgomery offices. The Congress of Racial Equality has agreed to subsidize the costs of telephone and other minor operational expenses of the Jackson, Mississippi and New Orleans offices.

#### LITIGATION:

It was further agreed that Congress of Racial Equality and Southern Christian Leadership Conference would engage in fund raising for the purpose of underwriting legal expenses incurred by Freedom Riding. The details of the fund raising to be worked out by each organization. The entitlement of each organization to raise funds for its own use in this matter is not to be restricted except as indicated else where in this report. In order to meet with equity the legal costs arising from Freedom Riding, Southern Christian Leadership Conference and Congress of Racial Equality have agreed to act at a later date on the method to be used in apportioning these costs between themselves. The uncertainty of developments in the areas of activity makes this necessary.

#### PUBLIC RELATIONS:

It was further agreed that publicity concerning the Freedom Ride would originate in the Committee and that publicity would clearly establish Congress of Racial Equality as the originator of the Freedom Ride, continuing its program with the assistance of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the Nashville Christian Leadership Council. The details and other decisions to be made concerning publicity relative to the Freedom Ride will originate in the Committee and be executed by the Committee. This is not to be construed as restricting all publicity concerning Freedom Rides to the Committee. Each Organization will be free to publicize its particular share of participation in the general program.

#### PROGRAM:

The following suggestions were made as possible elements in the development of the Freedom Ride program.

(1) To arrange a conference with the President of the United States for the possibility of discussing various aspects of the Freedom Ride. If in the event the President will not grant a conference, then the Attorney General will be approached for the same purpose. (2) Efforts should be made, without publicity, to meet with the Governors of Alabama and Mississippi for the purpose of reaching general working agreements within the jurisdiction of federal laws affecting interstate travel and the use of facilities in those states. In the event replies are not received in answer to requests for these meetings, full publicity will be given after a suitable waiting period has expired.

FUND RAISING:

The Freedom Ride Coordinating Committee will conduct joint rallies to raise funds for the general program.

Respectfully Submitted For the  
Freedom Ride Coordinating  
Committee By:

James R. Wood  
Administrative Assistant to the  
President, Southern Christian  
Leadership Conference