

Principles of Non Violent Action and the Problems of Survival in the Face of Economic Pressure and Boycott.

The Institute will open Monday evening, December 3, with Dr. King as the principal speaker. It will terminate on Sunday afternoon, December 9, with a mammoth state-wide religious service. At this service, Dr. J. H. Jackson, President of the National Baptist Convention, the largest Negro Church body in the world, will be the main speaker. Dr. Jackson has just returned from a world-wide preaching mission. All religious leaders and laymen in the state and nation, regardless of color or creed, are invited to attend the Institute service.

On Friday, December 7, pastors of all faiths and denominations are urged to attend the State-Wide Ministers' Seminar. Dr. Harry V. Richardson, and the Reverend James H. Robinson will discuss the "Role of the Church in Social Change", and "Social Aspects of the Christian Gospel." The Reverend Glen Smiley, Field Secretary of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, will conduct the Seminar on "Non-Violent Social Action. The feature of the Ministers' Seminar will be the sermon by the Reverend Gardner Taylor, pastor of the new million dollar Concord Baptist Church in New York.

Reverend Ralph D. Abernathy is chairman of the Institute program. He plans to involve the entire national community by discussing major issues that effect Negro-white relations in the whole nation. In addition to the educational workshop, plans are underway for banquets, seminars, mass meetings, luncheons, an oratorical contest for young people, fasting, and a day of prayer to ask for the spiritual strength to remain non-violent in word and deed during these days of grave danger and great Christian opportunity.

RECENT HAPPENINGS

One of the most dramatic and legally entangled periods of the past twelve months, during which time Montgomery Negroes have refused to ride segregated busses, climaxed and initiated all over again an epoch-making era in a people's fight for freedom. In the midst of requested injunctions by Negroes and city authorities against each other contesting the legal right of each to operate or to interfere with the operation of the Negro car pool, the long awaited decision of the Supreme Court to abolish segregation on public transportation was issued. And what seemed to be the end of a year of boycotting was only the beginning of additional days of greater suffering for Montgomery Negroes. It began this way:

A few weeks ago published reports revealed that an independent, pro-segregation labor group was attempting to collaborate with city officials to end the bus boycott by "swearing out warrants" against the car pool operators to break up the car pool. The city disclosed its own plans to bring an injunction against the car pool operators to stop the movement and instructed its legal department to file proper proceedings in the State Circuit Court.

NEGRO LAWYERS TAKE ACTION

Instead of waiting for the city to file its injunction to enjoin the MIA carpool and church station wagons from further operation, Negro lawyers filed an injunction in District Federal Court requesting "that the city be restrained from interfering with the car pool operations".

The following day the city filed its injunction to halt the car pool service. It also asked for "compensatory damages of some \$15,000 which it alleges would have been the city's two per cent share of the \$750,000 or more the bus company would have taken in revenue had Negroes ridden segregated busses.

The city's injunction suit was heard in State Circuit Court on Tuesday, November 13. A few hours before the circuit court judge branded the car pool illegal and authorized the churches to cease operations, the U. S. Supreme Court handed down its decision that "segregation on public transportation in Montgomery is unconstitutional."

It was common belief that the U.S. Supreme Court decision was immediately effective and that the action of the State Circuit Court in stopping the car pool was fortunately timed. The injunction which Negroes had filed in District Federal Court was to be heard the next day, Wednesday, November 14. There was also common belief that the procedure was routine and that it did not matter which way the higher court ruled since busses were no longer segregated and Negroes could ride once more.

The District Federal Court heard the case but refused to intervene in Negroes' behalf. Thus, all motor pool operations ceased and there was no mode of public transportation. However, the District Court's decision caused no particular concern or alarm for the belief was that the end of protesting was near.

NEGROES END BOYCOTT

The MIA, under the leadership of Dr. M. L. King, Jr., believing that official orders from the U.S. Court would be received within a few days, called for mass meetings for Wednesday night and thousands of Negroes voted to go back to the busses on an integrated basis. They learned later that the official orders would require twenty-five days so as to permit the opposing side time to appeal for re-hearing of the decision. Being completely without transportation, Negro lawyers appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court "for quick action and immediate delivery", declaring that it was "of great public importance that the order be issued forthwith." The request was turned down. Now, between 30,000 and 40,000 Negroes are walking to and from work and must continue to do so for the next twenty-five days, or until the official orders are received in the district court here. All pick-up stations and dispatch stations have been closed. A neighborhood block service is being used by people of good will, to get their neighbors to work. Taxis are used. All station wagons are idle.

In the meantime the bus company is seeking to dissolve the injunction which the city brought against it in May to enjoin the company from integrating passengers on city lines. That injunction must be dissolved before the bus company is free to abide by the ruling of the Supreme Court. Thus, when this State Circuit Court injunction is dissolved, when the orders from the U.S. Supreme Court reach Montgomery, after the city has had time to file request for re-hearing as a possible delaying tactic, and when that hearing has been acted upon, Negroes will ride non-segregated busses in Montgomery.

STATE DRAFT BOARDS RESIGN

General Lewis B. Hershey's request to the local draft board to re-open Attorney-Minister Fred D. Gray's case caused fourteen draft board members over the state of Alabama to resign. In addition to this, six county draft boards refused to draft any more men into the service until Attorney Gray was also drafted. The lawyer-minister is still a citizen, serving his church congregation and his clients as well.

THE F.B.I. INVESTIGATES

Complaints from the Negro population brought the F.B.I. to Montgomery during the past month to determine whether Negroes are being deprived of their right to vote. Of the approximate 130,000 people in Montgomery, 46% is Negro. But 26,000 whites are qualified voters to only 2,000 Negro voters. There are 34,000 Negroes in the city who are twenty-one years old and older. Hundreds of them claimed to have taken the twenty question examination required as a prerequisite to voting, but they can not qualify seemingly. The F.B.I. has investigated to ascertain whether discriminatory practice is being used against Negroes so as to control the number of Negro electors. If evidence is found to justify the complaints, prosecutions are supposed to be made.