Please know that we made our offering of twenty thousand dollars ($20,000.00) at a great sacrifice out of our limited financial resources. We did this only because of our genuine concern for the welfare of the community. We made this gift sincerely and without any strings attached.

It goes without saying that we are aware of the policies of the local YMCA, as well as the national organization. Likewise, we assume that the policies and purposes of our organization are also public information. It is unfortunate indeed that the Board of the YMCA injected the segregation issue into this situation. This question never needed to enter the equation. The request for me to sign a statement endorsing segregation is both unnecessary and unreasonable.

Completely apart from this contribution, perhaps I should make clear my own position on the issue of segregation. I have made it clear on many occasions that the festering sore of segregation debilitates the white man as well as the Negro, and that we will never come to our full economic, political and moral maturity until this system is removed. However, I have asked God to keep me from becoming bitter in seeking to change this system. I have attempted to love and understand my white brothers who sincerely believe in the constitutional, sociological and moral validity of segregation, realizing that they were taught this from their birth and that mores do not change overnight. This is my sincere conviction. Now you request that I, on behalf of the Montgomery Improvement Association, sign a statement endorsing segregation. I cannot in all good conscience do this.

All along, we had thought that the main purpose of your fund raising campaign was to help meet the needs of our boys and girls which otherwise might not be met. Accordingly, we trust that you will not raise false issues that would stand as obstacles in the way of a better and more wholesome life for these children and young people of our city.

The Executive Board of the Montgomery Improvement Association joins me in the prayer that you will receive this letter in the Christian spirit in which it is sent. Please let us hear from you at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely yours,
Martin Luther King, Jr., President
The Montgomery Improvement Association, Inc.

MLK:mlb

TLc. MLKP-MBU: Box 6.

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Papers Project

To Richard Bartlett Gregg

18 December 1958
[Montgomery, Ala.]

On 27 October Gandhian authority Gregg, who had corresponded with King during the Montgomery bus boycott, offered his assistance in having Stride Toward Freedom published in India. Gregg also suggested that, like Gandhi, King might shift his energies toward creating self-help and education projects that would foster the
solidarity needed to launch the next mass movement: “Gandhi realized that a non-violent struggle, whether social, economic or political, imposed a great strain on people’s moral resources and endurance, so that there needed to be a period of moral relaxation and rest which was also creative in a different realm or aspect.”

Mr. Richard B. Gregg

Dear Mr. Gregg:

On returning to my office a few days ago I found your very kind letter of October 27, on my desk. I was very gratified to know of your interest in having my book published in India. I have been deeply concerned about the book being read in India, since I gained a great deal of inspiration from Mahatma Gandhi.

There has already been some discussion of this with my agent and the publishers. A few months ago an outstanding Gandhian disciple, Kaka Kalelkar, visited our city and on discovering that I had written a book suggested having it published in India through the Gandhi Memorial Trust. I immediately placed my literary agent in contact with Mr. Kalelkar. Since that time I have been so involved that I have not had a chance to consult the agent on the outcome. I am now getting off a letter to New York to find out what has been done in this line. As soon as I hear from them I will be glad to contact you concerning future possibilities. I have no concern for making any money from an Indian publication of my book. My only concern is to share my message with the people of that great country.

Thank you for your suggestions concerning our next best steps. I gained a great deal from this practical, yet profound advice. Incidentally, I have received a copy of your book, A Philosophy of Indian Development, and I am deeply grateful to you for it. Although a busy schedule has prevented me from reading it thus far, I hope to take some time out in the next few days to go through it. I am sure that it will be very helpful and stimulating.

It is always gratifying to know of your interest in our struggle and realize the presence of your moral support. I look forward to the day that we will be able to meet personally.

Very sincerely yours,
Martin Luther King, Jr.

MLKmlb

P.S. Mrs. King and I will be going to India around the first of February and we plan to spend about six weeks in that country. I would appreciate any sugges-

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1. The Gandhi Memorial Trust was organized shortly after Gandhi’s assassination in 1948 to promote his work and philosophy.
2. In his 27 October letter Gregg said that he had asked his publisher to send King a copy of the book, “on the chance that you might be able to work out for your community some sort of equivalent of Gandhi’s constructive program.” King wrote the foreword to the revised 1959 edition of Gregg’s The Power of Nonviolence.
tions that you have concerning our visit and also the names of persons that it
would be helpful to see.3

TLc. MLKP-MBU: Box 27.

3. In letters to King of 31 December 1958 and 23 January 1959, Gregg provided names and ad-
dresses of contacts in India.

To Hilda S. Proctor

22 December 1958
[Montgomery, Ala.]

After assisting King in New York as he recuperated from his stabbing, Proctor went to Los Angeles to be with her daughter, who was expecting a baby. On 2 December she wrote King asking if he had received material that she sent to Montgomery before leaving New York: “I imagine you have received it or you would have sent the FBI after me.” Proctor also sent King a bill for expenses she had incurred in New York since his departure.

Mrs. H. S. Proctor
1412 Victoria Avenue
Los Angeles 19, California

Dear Hilda:

After not hearing from you for several weeks I concluded that you had gone into exile. I am happy to know that you are still involved in everyday activities and you have not left the hurly burly of big city life.

I did receive the material from Mary Richardson and I was very happy to get it.1 Thanks for the exceptional job that you did in bringing together loose ends after we left New York.

I am happy to report that I am doing very well now and back on the job again. The work has piled up so much that I hardly think I will ever catch up. As you know, we are planning to go to India in February and remain there for two months. So if I don’t partially catch up by that time my trip to India will be so frustrating that I won’t gain the spiritual enrichment that that great country affords. At any rate I will try not to worry about it and pray that some miracle will bring things to pass.

Coretta and the little ones are doing fine. I trust that you and your daughters are well. Please give the lovely young ladies my regards although I have not had the

1. King likely refers to Harlem community activist Mary Richardson, who may have also provided him with secretarial assistance in New York.