and I have seen efforts on the part of NAACP officials to sabotage our humble efforts. But I have never said anything about it publicly or to the press. I am sure that if criticisms were weighed it would turn out that persons associated with the NAACP have made much more damaging statements about SCLC than persons associated with SCLC have made concerning the NAACP. But I will not allow this to become an issue. The job ahead is too great, and the days are too bright to be bickering in the darkness of jealousy, deadening competition, and internal ego struggles.

I hope that I have in some way answered your very important questions. I am deeply grateful to you for your concern and interest, and always know that I, along with millions of Americans, are deeply indebted to you for your unswerving devotion to the cause of freedom and justice and your willingness at all times to champion the cause of the underdog.

With warm personal regards, I am

Sincerely yours,

Martin L. King, Jr.

MLKmlb
Dictated, but not signed by Rev. King.

TLC. MLKP-MBU: Box 68.

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Papers Project

To Chester Bowles

24 June 1960
Atlanta, Ga.

King reports on his first meeting with Democratic presidential hopeful John F. Kennedy on 23 June at the senator's New York apartment. King describes the encounter as "fruitful and rewarding" and expresses confidence that Kennedy would "do the right thing" on civil rights. He also conveys his ideas on the Democratic Party's civil rights platform to Bowles, who served as chair of the Democratic Platform Committee. Bowles thanked King for his "excellent suggestions" on 29 June.

1. The meeting followed several attempts to get the two men together (see King to Marjorie McKenzie Lawson, 4 September 1959, pp. 276–277 in this volume). King later recalled his first meeting with Kennedy: "At that time I was impressed with his concern and I was impressed with his willingness to learn more about civil rights." King came away from the encounter with the impression that Kennedy had "a long intellectual commitment" to civil rights but hadn't yet developed "the emotional commitment" (King, Interview by Berl I. Bernhard, 9 March 1964).

2. King and Bowles had previously corresponded regarding travel in India and efforts to end apartheid in South Africa (King to Bowles, 28 October 1957 and 8 November 1957, in Papers 4:303–305 and 311–314, respectively).

3. In a 15 June letter, Bayard Rustin enclosed a list of seven points that SCLC should demand from the platform committees of both parties and requested to speak to King about it before it was sent to Bowles. The six points King outlines in this letter closely follow Rustin's suggestions, though King does modify the order and language. King and A. Philip Randolph included all seven of Rustin's points in their presentation to the Democratic convention (see Joint Platform Proposals to the 1960 Democratic Party Platform Committee, Read by L. B. Thompson, 7 July 1960, pp. 482–485 in this volume).
Congressman Chester Bowles  
Essex, Conn.  

Dear Congressman Bowles:

I intended writing you immediately after our telephone conversation a few days ago, but several unexpected developments called me away from my desk. I also had to attend a Church meeting in Buffalo, New York which kept me out of the city almost a week.\(^4\) In the next few hours I will be leaving for South America, so I hasten to give you some of my ideas on the Democratic platform before leaving.\(^5\) The main point that I feel the platform committee should consider on the questions of civil rights are as follows:

1. That the 1954 Supreme Court Decision be explicitly endorsed as morally right and the law of the land. A forthright declaration should be made that the racial segregation and discrimination in any form is unconstitutional, un-American and immoral.

2. That Section 3, empowering the Federal Government to bring suits on behalf of Negroes denied their civil rights be enacted into law.\(^6\)

3. That Congress pass the Federal Registrar Plan of the President's Civil Rights Commission, and that the responsibility for the protection of voting rights be placed squarely with the President and not with southern courts. (This would eliminate red tape complex qualities found in the present referee plan.)\(^7\)

4. That in accordance with the Fourteenth Amendment Congressional responsibilities be reduced in those areas where Negroes are denied the right to vote.

5. That the party endorse the spirit and tactics of the sit-ins as having the same validity as labor strikes.

6. That the party and its candidates take a clear moral stand against colonialism and racism in all its forms, East and West, and especially in Africa where apartheid has lead to the massacre of hundreds of people seeking only to live in freedom in their own land.

These are just some of the things I think are quite significant. I know that most of them would be strongly opposed by the South, but I think they are important enough to at least reach the discussion stage.

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\(^4\) King attended the National Sunday School and Baptist Training Union (BTU) Congress in Buffalo on 17 and 18 June.

\(^5\) King traveled to Brazil on 24 June to participate in the Tenth Annual Baptist World Alliance meeting.

\(^6\) Section 111, deleted from the Civil Rights Bill of 1957, would have allowed the Justice Department to initiate lawsuits to desegregate schools and public facilities.

\(^7\) A September 1959 commission report included a recommendation that would allow the president to provide federal registrars to communities where citizens had been prevented from voting (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, Report of the United States Commission on Civil Rights, 1959 [Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1959], pp. 134–142). The Voting Rights Act of 1965 included a provision that allowed for the appointment of temporary federal registrars in cases where the right to vote was denied.
I had a very fruitful and rewarding conversation with Senator Kennedy yesterday. We talked about an hour and a half over the breakfast table. I was very impressed by the forthright and honest manner in which he discussed the civil rights question. I have no doubt that he would do the right thing on this issue if he were elected president. Of course, I am sure that you have been a great influence on Mr. Kennedy at this point. It may interest you to know that I had very little enthusiasm for Mr. Kennedy when he first announced his candidacy. When I discovered, however, that he had asked you to serve as his foreign advisor my mind immediately changed. I said to myself, "If Chester Bowles is Mr. Kennedy's advisor he must be thinking right on the major issues."8

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to make these few suggestions, and I hope you will find them helpful. I will look forward to seeing you in Los Angeles.

Very sincerely yours,

[signed]
Martin Luther King, Jr.
MLKmlb
Dictated, but not signed by Rev. King.
TLSr. CB-CtY.

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To Adam Clayton Powell, Jr.

24 June 1960

Shortly before leaving for the Tenth Annual Baptist World Alliance in Rio de Janeiro, King assails Powell's allegations that he and Randolph were "'captives' of behind-the-scenes interests" and that King had "been under undue influences ever since Bayard Rustin . . . went to Alabama to help in the bus boycott."1 Powell also reportedly accused them of excluding the NAACP from their plans to protest the upcoming political conventions.2 King entreats Powell to "publicly correct these false charges with as much vigor as they were made."

On 27 June, Rustin announced his resignation as King's special assistant and

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1. Powell, who made his claims during a speech to the National Sunday School and Baptist Training Union Congress in Buffalo on 19 June, reportedly claimed Randolph was beholden to socialists, "guided principally" by Stanley Levison ("Powell Insists Randolph, King Are 'Captives,'" Pittsburgh Courier, 25 June 1960).