

**FIELD
REPORTS
ON
DESEGREGATION
IN THE
SOUTH**



THE TALLAHASSEE BUS PROTEST

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THE TALLAHASSEE BUS PROTEST

Community Background

Tallahassee is a small city (population 27,237 in 1950) in a state which contains some of the most rapidly growing urban areas in the southeast. It is not an important industrial center. Its chief importance lies in the fact that it is the state capital. Perhaps its next most important characteristic is that it is the seat of two of the state's institutions of higher learning: Florida State University (white) and Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (Negro). While the city is the capital of the state, it is important to note that it might also be called "the capital of northern Florida," an area which is culturally the most southern part of the state.

Tallahassee has many attractive features. It is a clean town, situated on a series of rolling hills, and quite worthy of being called a "garden city." It might also be characterized as an upper-middle class community, since its economy rests upon white-collar work and there is no significant industrial base. The median family income in 1950 was \$2,952.00, considerably above the median for the state, which was \$2,384.00. The median number of years of school completed by adults in 1950 (11.9 years) was also higher than that for the state as a whole (9.6 years). The city has been sharing the general population increase of the state and yet its growth seems to have been gradual and comfortable. While one is conscious that the city is growing, there is no feeling of rapid change either in population or facilities.

The city and surrounding areas are served by a single daily newspaper, *The Tallahassee Democrat*. It should be pointed out that local affairs in the capital city do merit attention in both news columns and editorials in newspapers published in the larger urban centers in the state. These in turn come back into the city and are read by local people. In addition to the local newspaper, Tallahassee has three radio stations and a television station. Most of the television programs originate locally or are filmed, but the station does join a national hookup (NBC) for some of its programs.

The largest single employer in the city is the state government. The economy of the city rests primarily on the payrolls of the various departments of the state government and the two state universities. This fact has an important effect upon the political life of the city. While the exact limits to that participation are ill-defined, there is no question that state employment serves as a restraining force on the political activity of a large number of the citizens. Whether it be justified or not, there is a widespread fear on the part of many state employees that they will be subject to official reprisals if they show too active an interest in unpopular causes, even though they may relate to purely local issues.

The ecology of the city is important. While the city is not large, neither is

the population highly concentrated. Instead, it spreads out into several suburban areas as far as from five to ten miles from the center of town. These distances, plus the somewhat hilly character of the terrain, make transportation important. The Negro population is also spread out, but not quite so much as is the white population. Most of the Negro population is concentrated in two areas well within the city limits. These areas are several miles from the new areas of white growth on the periphery of the city where many Negroes work as domestics. As a result, the city bus lines are, or were, of great importance to Negro workers and they, in turn, were its major source of revenue.

CITY GOVERNMENT: Tallahassee has a city commission-city manager form of government. The five members of the city commission are elected for three-year terms. At their weekly meetings the policies under which the city manager and the various city departments operate are established. Other important city officials are the city judge, the city attorney and the chief of police.

The level of interest in city government on the part of the voters has been relatively low until recent months. Except when they were held in conjunction with state-wide primaries or general elections, the number of votes cast in city elections has generally been small. Ordinarily, the city elections do not arouse a great deal of interest. There is not a great deal of competition for posts on the city commission, but this body has great power in the management of the everyday affairs of the city.

RACE RELATIONS BEFORE THE BUS PROTEST: It is common now for spokesmen for southern communities to boast that race relations were good and things were peaceful here until the Supreme Court ruled segregation unconstitutional. A myth of a "Golden Age of Racial Harmony" existing before May 17, 1954, has been created. Yet it must be said that, relatively, Tallahassee has more justification for speaking of good race relations than do many southern cities. This does not mean that there was not hidden discrimination and unspoken discontent. But there were many breaks in the pattern of segregation and discrimination, seemingly related to the economic status of a significant portion of the Negro population.

In 1950, Tallahassee's population included 9,373 Negroes, over thirty-four per cent of the total population of 27,237. The median school years completed for non-whites, twenty-five years old and over, was 6.2, as compared with 5.8 for non-whites in the state as a whole and 6.3 for non-whites in urban areas throughout the state. The median income for Tallahassee's non-white community was \$1,119 however, as compared with the \$1,144 non-white median for the state — which includes such metropolitan areas as Miami and Tampa. It must be assumed that Florida A and M University, with its faculty of Negro college graduates and its not inconsiderable payroll, introduces a somewhat unusual factor into race relations in a small southern city such as Tallahassee.

Tallahassee follows the traditional southern etiquette of race relations, with the local variations which are a usual part of the inconsistent pattern of race relations in the South. Some of these variations constitute unusually severe restrictions on contacts across racial lines. One is a city ordinance which forbids "fraternization." Occasionally a Negro and a white are arrested under this ordinance for drinking beer together in public, or the like. Another variation is the rule of the State Board of Control

ERRATUM

The Tallahassee Bus Protest

Field Report on Desegregation in the South — G331e

On page 5, the first and second lines of the fourth paragraph should read:

Tallahassee has had no significant interracial conflict or "incidents" for many years. Since the Democratic white primary was declared unconstitutional, Negroes

prohibiting social gatherings between students of the two state universities, and forbidding Florida State University students from visiting the Florida A and M campus unless accompanied by their parents. Whites are frequently guests at lectures, workshops, and concerts on the campus of the Negro university, but it is rare and exceptional for a Negro to attend any kind of meeting on the white campus.

On the other hand, it might be said that Negroes are unusually well received within the framework of segregation. There is little doubt that the white citizens of Tallahassee take pride in Florida A and M University, particularly its band and its football team. Negroes, particularly faculty members, are shown unusual courtesy by merchants. In the fall, merchants welcome back not only the FSU students and faculty but also those of the A and M University. The bands from the Negro university and the Negro high schools are always given a place in parades in the city. The annual Veterans Day parade usually includes the Florida A and M ROTC unit and an all-Negro Army Reserve Unit.

Tallahassee is one of the southern cities which has Negro policemen; it has two whose duties are confined to the Negro areas of the city. It has a separate municipal swimming pool and a recently completed separate golf course. On the other hand, there is no large auditorium or stadium set aside for Negro use and Negroes are rarely able to get the FSU stadium for mass functions.

Tallahassee is one of the southern cities which has Negro policemen; it has two whose duties are confined to the Negro areas of the city. It has a separate municipality registered and voted without apparent opposition. During the 1947-52 revival of the Ku Klux Klan, the head of the Florida Klan resided in Tallahassee, and meetings were held on the outskirts of the city. There were no terrorist activities in Tallahassee however, even when some were occurring in other parts of the state.

It can be said, then, that on the surface race relations in Tallahassee have been characterized by a peaceful accommodation with little evidence of racial tension. Viewed through the glass wall of segregation, Negroes in Tallahassee no doubt appeared contented and relatively well-off in the eyes of the whites.

REACTIONS TO THE SUPREME COURT RULING: The action of the U. S. Supreme Court on May 17, 1954, which brought about the decision that public school segregation was illegal, caused no break in the superficially calm surface of race relations. It was from the State Capitol in Tallahassee that appeals for a "calm, moderate approach" to the problem of desegregation emanated. In the shadow of the Capitol, local leaders, both white and Negro, seemed to wait to take their cues from the leaders of the state. Indeed, an illusion of close unity and understanding was created by the participation of several local Negroes in the work of the committee which advised the State Attorney General on the preparation of his *amicus curiae* brief for the Supreme Court. Following the "implementation decision" of May 31, 1955, the Leon County school board appointed an interracial committee "to study problems of desegregation" in Tallahassee and Leon County. In the meantime, for nearly two years no action was taken by Tallahassee Negroes to bring about integration in the local schools. In April, 1957, a petition was presented to the Board of Education asking that steps be taken to comply with "the letter and the spirit" of the Supreme Court ruling. At this time, it was reported that the Leon

County interracial committee had met only two times during its two years of existence and had issued no report.

ORGANIZATIONS: Perhaps because of the peaceful accommodation in race relations, Tallahassee was virtually devoid of organizations active in intergroup relations at the time of the Supreme Court ruling. The local chapter of the NAACP was small and weak, although a strong student chapter existed at Florida A and M. Such organizations as the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, Fellowship of Reconciliation, and the American Civil Liberties Union had no local chapters. The local white ministerial association had taken no steps toward including Negroes in its membership.

As the conflict of segregation and other American values was forced into public consciousness after 1954, there was some increase in organized activity in the city. Membership in the Florida chapter of the NAACP rose sharply although the organization showed no signs of increased activity. A Tallahassee unit of the Florida Council on Human Relations, an affiliate of the Southern Regional Council, was formed. While the Tallahassee unit is an interracial group, its program is confined to discussion of issues and it receives little publicity.

At the same time, a local unit of the White Citizens Council has been formed. It, too, is small and weak and does nothing more than hold meetings and make occasional resolutions. It was not until the formation of the Negro Inter-Civic Council that any organization embarked on a program of action either for or against any form of segregation in Tallahassee.

WHITE ATTITUDES TOWARDS DESEGREGATION: In the spring of 1956, two months before the beginning of the bus protest movement, a study of the attitudes of Tallahassee white people towards desegregation was made. Interviews were conducted with 536 subjects, a five per cent sample of the adult white population. While the study was primarily concerned with reactions to the Supreme Court ruling on school segregation, it gives some indication of the climate of opinion in which the bus protest took place.

One question was designed to elicit attitudes towards the principle of desegregation as expressed in the Supreme Court ruling and towards compliance with it as the law of the land. The question and the percentage of subjects selecting each response, were as follows:

"As you may know, the United States Supreme Court has said that making white and Negro children go to separate public schools is now against the Constitution and that in the future we'll have to open all public schools to Negroes. How do you feel about this?"

- (1) It was a good decision — we should start trying to let Negro children into white public schools. (11%)
- (2) It was a bad decision — but it's the law and we should start trying to let them in. (11%)
- (3) It was a bad decision — we should do all we can legally to keep them from getting in. (56%)
- (4) It was a bad decision — we should never let them in even if it goes against the law. (17%)
- (5) Don't know or "other." (5%)

If these responses are even roughly indicative of the total white community's attitudes, it is evident that a large majority of the whites are opposed to desegregation in principle. By the same token, the great majority are unwilling to resort to defiance of the law in order to preserve segregation.

Another question was more closely related to desegregated seating on buses. The question and the percentage choosing each response were:

"If you were in a northern city and a Negro sat down next to you on a bus that wasn't too crowded, what would you most likely do?"

- | | |
|--|-------|
| (1) I would order him to move. | (6%) |
| (2) I wouldn't like it, and I would move myself. | (44%) |
| (3) I wouldn't like it, but I wouldn't do anything about it. | (26%) |
| (4) It would be perfectly all right with me. | (21%) |
| (5) Don't know or "other." | (3%) |

While the scene of this hypothetical encounter was a northern city, rather than Tallahassee with its then unchallenged segregation laws, the response to this question supports the previous suggestion that a large majority, perhaps seventy-five or eighty per cent of the white adult population did not like the idea of nonsegregated seating on buses. Only a minority, however, showed an inclination to try to force the Negro to move.

These findings clearly indicate the existence of widespread attitudinal support among whites for the continuation of the pattern of racial segregation in public transportation and in other areas. Whether these attitudes would have been translated into action, without the explicit or implicit support of public officials, cannot be determined from the findings.

The Tallahassee Bus Protest — A Chronological Account

PRECIPITATING EVENTS — WEEK OF MAY 27, 1956

(a) On May 27, two coeds from Florida A and M University boarded a crowded Cities Transit Company bus, paid their ten-cent fares and sat in the only two vacant seats in the front of the bus next to a white woman. The bus driver requested them to move to the rear (where there was standing room only). The girls refused to do this, but offered to leave the bus if the driver would refund their fares. The driver refused to do this, and the coeds refused to move. The driver then drove to a nearby service station and called the police, who arrested the coeds on a charge of "placing themselves in a position to cause a riot." The coeds were taken to the police station and later released under bond. (Their cases were later remanded to A and M University, and the charges dropped.)

(b) That same night, a cross was burned in front of the private home where the coeds lived. In fear, the two girls moved to a dormitory for the remainder of the night.

(c) On May 28, at 12:00 noon, the student-body at A and M University held a mass meeting to decide what, if any, action should be taken in the matter. It was voted unanimously that the students "refrain from riding the city buses" for the remainder of the school term (less than two weeks).

(d) Word of the students' action spread quickly and by mid-afternoon, few Negroes in the city rode the buses. Buses that passed through the campus were stopped by crowds of students and Negro passengers were "asked" to leave the buses by the students. The students were dis-

persed by the dean of students and the president of the student-body who cautioned them against mob action.

(e) On May 29, while groups of students kept a determined, but quiet vigil of buses operating through the campus (no passengers at all were riding these buses through the campus now), the Tallahassee Ministerial Alliance (Negro) met at Bethel A. M. E. Church, along with a selected group of laymen, and discussed the matter. At this meeting it was decided that a city-wide meeting of Negroes in Tallahassee would be called for that night to determine if the general Negro population desired to take action in the matter.

(f) Later that day, a nine-man committee from the Tallahassee Ministerial Alliance met informally with the city manager and the manager of the bus company to discuss the bus situation but presented no formal resolution. The manager of the bus company at the time took the position that since the company operated under a franchise from the city, he could not do anything without the city's consent.

(g) At the meeting of Negro citizens that night, this time at Bethel Baptist Church, an overflow crowd of Negroes voted unanimously to boycott the city buses. They also organized the Inter-Civic Council with Reverend C. K. Steele as president (organization later incorporated as non-profit, civic). The Council pledged itself to non-violent and legal resistance to segregation on the buses and outlined three objectives, namely: the seating of passengers on a "first come, first served basis"; the employment of Negro bus drivers; and more courteous treatment of Negro passengers on the buses. At this meeting, plans were made for the operation of a car pool to transport workers who did not have cars and who lived far from their places of employment.

(h) As the month of May ended, the City Commission had taken no action on the grounds that they had received no written statement on what the Negroes wanted. They and the manager of the bus company argued especially that they did not know what was meant by point one in the three-point program publicly stated by the Negroes, i.e., that seating should be on a "first come, first served basis." The manager again pointed to the terms of the franchise under which his company operated and contended that any demand for nonsegregated seating or for Negro bus drivers would be ruled out by the terms of the segregation ordinance.

THE MONTH OF JUNE, 1956

(a) Early in June, the Tallahassee City Commission met privately with groups of prominent Negroes (more conservative Negro leaders) in an effort to settle the bus boycott without recognizing the ICC as a bargaining agent. Many of these Negroes were involved in the organization of the ICC, but gradually began to withdraw their support as it became clear that the membership of the ICC wanted immediate desegregation on the buses and would not compromise on their demands.

(b) On June 4, the meaning of "first come, first served basis" was finally clarified. On June 3, the City Commission had announced that it understood the franchise of the bus company to mean that no member of either race must give up his seat on a crowded bus to another race. They also said that they were willing to take applications from Negroes for consideration for vacancies in jobs as drivers on buses serving Negroes predominantly. They also said, however, that they would oppose permitting members of the two races to occupy the same seat. On the night of June 3, the Negroes turned down the city's proposal at a mass meeting and made plain that their demand was that all passengers should have the right to sit wherever they choose on any bus. Upon receipt of a written statement of these demands the next day, the City Commission took only a little over ten minutes to firmly reject the pleas of the Inter-Civic Council and to grant the request of the bus company that it be permitted to stop its Florida A and M and Frenchtown bus runs.

(c) On June 6, fourteen of the more conservative Negro citizens prepared a written statement of their position and presented it to the ICC. Essentially, they felt that the ICC should consider acceptance of the City Commission's proposal that:

(1) Negroes could sit anywhere they wanted to on the buses on a "first come, first served basis" with the exception of one three-person seat in the front of the buses.

(2) The drivers (Negro) be hired when they qualified as such, and when vacancies arose.

(3) The drivers would be more courteous.

(These proposals were not submitted to the ICC by the City Commission, but were published in a regular newspaper article.)

In their prepared statement, this conservative group also indicated that they desired the same goals as the ICC, but were opposed to the ICC's procedure for attempting to obtain them. Since this group had been publicly denounced as "traitors" to the Negro population because of their attendance at sub rosa meetings with the City Commission, which still refused to recognize the ICC as the Negroes' bargaining agent, their statement asked that such denouncements be stopped. In general, the membership of the ICC ignored this statement.

(d) On June 12, the City Commission granted the Cities Transit Company a reduction from three per cent to one-half per cent in its franchise tax. On June 13, the City Commission granted the bus company permission to raise its fares to fifteen cents. Meanwhile, buses on the A and M—Frenchtown route had been discontinued because of the financial losses due to the boycott.

(e) In the latter part of June, the City Commission recognized that it had to deal with the ICC and arranged a series of conferences with them. These conferences continued for several days with the ICC leaders demanding completely desegregated bus seating, definite assurance of courtesy to Negroes, and immediate hiring of Negro drivers. The only compromise that they proposed was to have a sixty or ninety-day cooling-off period, during which preparations and plans would be made for desegregation through forums, pamphlets, conferences and the like, and that a definite date be set for the beginning of desegregation on the buses. The City Commission steadfastly refused to yield on its stand that a single seat must be reserved for whites, that the hiring of drivers was a company matter, and that the drivers had been and would always be courteous to all patrons. The City Commission rejected the sixty to ninety-day planning period proposed by the ICC.

(f) After this series of meetings, the City Commission completely broke off negotiations with the ICC on the ground that "all they want is integration." However, a Negro volunteered his services as a messenger between the ICC and the Commission, feeling that when the two groups were in the presence of one another, there was too much feeling and tension for straight thinking.

(g) Meanwhile the Cities Transit Company had announced that it would have to suspend all bus service indefinitely on June 30, if more persons failed to ride. The members of the ICC were assured by their leaders that if the buses stopped running, they would have rides provided by the ICC.

(h) Toward the end of June, the self-appointed messenger brought reports from the City Commission in an effort to settle the protest before the buses went out of service. These reports did not provide for desegregation and, in addition, were regarded by the ICC as unofficial because of the City Commission's method of communication; consequently, the reports were rejected.

(i) On June 30, no solution had been reached, and at midnight, all bus services were discontinued in Tallahassee.

Note: From sixty to seventy per cent of all Tallahassee bus passengers were Negroes. During June, it is estimated that over ninety per cent of the Negro bus passengers did not ride the buses.

THE MONTH OF JULY, 1956

(a) On July 1, the City Commission issued a public statement regretting the loss of bus service and declared that it had made every reasonable effort to solve the boycott, but that the Negroes demanded full integration, to which they could not and would not accede. The statement went on to say that it was regrettable that the "fine Negro leadership" of the past had been replaced

by a group, "many of whom are newcomers to Tallahassee, and who apparently have no feeling of responsibility to the community, the general public or even members of their own race."

During the first week in July, Governor Leroy Collins, who had remained non-committal about the Tallahassee bus protest on the ground that it was a "local" matter, issued a statement that he felt that it was a "miscarriage of ambition" on the part of Negroes; "short-sighted and unreasonable."

Also, during the first week in July, the ICC complained that the Tallahassee police were arresting Negro drivers for trivial offenses, forcing Negroes to keep moving on the downtown streets and generally being rude and discourteous. The police chief denied these charges and said that his department was merely enforcing the law. Nevertheless, Rev. C. K. Steele, president of the ICC, stated that unless the police crackdown was softened, it might become necessary for Negroes to form "excursions to other nearby towns to spend what little money we have to spend."

(b) The Tallahassee Chamber of Commerce and the Junior Chamber of Commerce had begun a "Ride the Bus" campaign to get bus service returned to Tallahassee, and advised the manager of the company that they had assurances of financial support of the operation as well as promises that more people would ride if the buses were returned. On July 11, Charles Carter, manager of the bus company, said that his company would put the buses back into operation on revised schedules and rates.

(c) Police began to take car pool drivers to the police station for questioning without arresting them. Efforts were made to persuade these drivers to sign questionnaires or affidavits (exact contents unknown) about the operation of the car pool.

(d) On July 19, it was announced jointly by the Chamber of Commerce and the manager of the bus company that the buses would resume service on August 2. At this time also, State Representative James Beck of Palatka announced that he would introduce a bill in the Legislature to make it unlawful for a state employee to participate in an organized boycott. He made this announcement because it had been reported that faculty members from Florida A and M University were active in the operation of the movement.

(e) On July 25, the Tallahassee City Commission introduced an ordinance to outlaw car pools.

(f) On July 28, in a full-page advertisement in *The Tallahassee Democrat*, the ICC outlined its program, goals and problems for the benefit of the general public. (The *Democrat* was editorially opposed to the bus boycott.)

(g) On July 29, the ICC announced that a \$20,000 legal defense fund had been set up to fight for the rights of "our people who are mistreated when they do not ride the buses."

(h) On July 31, the Tallahassee Chamber of Commerce reported that the "Ride the Bus" campaign was a success, that numerous civic groups were cooperating and that eight hundred dollars had been collected.

THE MONTH OF AUGUST, 1956

(a) On August 2, the Cities Transit Company resumed bus services in Tallahassee. On the first day, rides were free, and orange juice and newspapers were given to patrons. In an unannounced move, Negro drivers were employed on the previously profitable, predominantly Negro A and M University—Frenchtown run. The ICC took "note" of the fact that the bus company had met its request to hire Negro drivers. Reverend Steele stated that the hiring of Negro drivers was not "the crux of the problem, but rather the seating arrangements for the passengers on the buses." So long as seating arrangements remained as before, they certainly "would not be willing to settle for the jobs of few, while the many must still ride in humiliation and segregation."

(b) On August 3, Tallahassee's City Commissioner and Mayor *pro tem*, John Humphress, announced that the City Commission had agreed not to pass the anti-car pool ordinance since an opinion from the Attorney General of Florida, Richard Ervin, stated that automobiles operating in a car pool similar to the one operated by the ICC were subject to the state law requiring "for hire" tags. Apparently the City Commission felt that the ICC car pool could be prosecuted under that law.

(c) On or about August 25, Tallahassee police began to arrest drivers in the car pool on the charge that they were violating the car "for hire" laws of the State of Florida. Among those arrested were three members of the executive committee of the ICC, Reverend C. K. Steele, Dan Speed and Reverend K. S. Dupont. Approximately eleven persons were arrested about this time. One of those arrested was a Mr. Harry Smith who was in his personal car driving his wife and twin daughters to various places in the city. (This was brought out later at the trials.)

(d) On Monday, August 27, plea day in the City Court, Attorney Francisco Rodriguez, representing the defendants, asked that the cases be referred to the state courts for trial since the defendants were charged under a state law. Request was denied and Rodriguez was "lectured" by City Judge John Rudd for trying to tell him how to run his court. The defendants then entered a plea of "not guilty." Trial was set for September 20.

(e) After these arrests, the defendants were released on bond and the car pool continued to operate throughout the remainder of August and early September without further significant interference by the police. The ICC reported that the arrests, instead of intimidating the Negro people, only served to make them more determined to stay off the buses. It was also rumored that unless Negroes started riding the buses, the Cities Transit Company in Tallahassee would have to go out of business again for good.

(f) During August, the ICC cooperated with the Florida Voters League in beginning an intensive drive to get all eligible Negroes registered to vote.

THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER, 1956

(a) Few significant events occurred in the Tallahassee bus protest until the latter part of this month.

(b) The trial of the eleven ICC car pool drivers and officials originally set for September 20 was postponed until October 4, and was later postponed until October 17.

(c) On September 25, the City Court subpoenaed all the records of the ICC, demanding transportation schedules, minutes of meetings, membership lists, finances, etc. Upon receipt of all the Council's records, the judge declared that not all records had been brought and ordered the ICC to make a more thorough search. The ICC produced no additional records of any consequence; the Council had kept no membership lists or transportation schedules.

Note: During the summer months, the ICC discontinued reading financial reports, etc., in public for two reasons: one, both white reporters and other unidentified white persons were permitted at the open mass meetings; and two, the ICC felt it was getting an unfair press. The only financial records kept were disbursements and the bank balance. The minutes were kept in such a way as not to endanger personalities in the bus protest.

(d) On September 28, the ICC accused the Tallahassee police of intimidating Negroes by taking them from their homes at all hours of the day or night and asking them questions at the police station. The chief of police denied this allegation and stated that the people went to the police station voluntarily. The ICC asked the Governor to halt these "violations" of Negroes' rights.

(e) On September 29, the president of Florida A and M University, Dr. George W. Gore, Jr., asked his faculty to refrain from participation in controversial issues which might jeopardize the well-being of the university. The ICC interpreted this statement as an "ultimatum" and denounced it. However, the next day, Rev. C. K. Steele, president of the ICC, apologized for the accusation leveled at Dr. Gore and said the statement issued to the press by the ICC was hasty and ill-advised. He further commended Dr. Gore for the manner in which the university was being operated.

THE MONTH OF OCTOBER, 1956

(a) On or about October 3, the original charges against the eleven ICC members of operating a car pool without state "for hire" permits were abandoned, but the entire executive committee of the ICC (as a corporate body) was immediately rearrested on the charge of operating

a transportation system without a franchise. This now brought the total arrested persons to twenty-one.

(b) On October 8, the attorneys for the defense filed a motion in City Court to dismiss the charges on grounds that the ICC was not in the business of transportation, but that hauling people without charge was an aspect of the bus boycott. This motion was denied on October 10. In denying the motion, Judge Rudd stated that he saw no relationship between the motion and the charges.

(c) On October 10, the Tallahassee City Commission requested the special investigating committee (created by the Florida Legislature to investigate the NAACP) to investigate organizations in Tallahassee which constituted a violation of the laws of Florida. Most observers felt that this was a move to investigate the Tallahassee chapter of the NAACP and the activities of the ICC, as well.

Note: In a special call session of the Florida Legislature during the summer of 1956, while considering such matters as reapportionment, constitutional revision and segregation matters, the Florida Legislature created a special committee to investigate organizations in the state which were working in opposition to the state constitution. It was an open secret that this committee was to concentrate its efforts on the NAACP, presumably with an eye to curbing its operation in Florida. The committee had been conducting hearings in the state and had been doing undercover work.

(d) The trial of the twenty-one ICC members and officers commenced in City Court on October 17, and lasted four days. The defendants were tried as a group. Early in the trial, two television photographers were refused permission to take pictures in the courtroom by the judge. Subsequently, they took pictures in the corridor outside the courtroom. Judge Rudd ordered these films destroyed. One photographer complied, but the other kept his film and it was shown over a television station in Tampa, Florida. Judge Rudd later issued a warrant for arrest on the charge that this photographer had violated an order of the court. The photographer contended that he obeyed the judge's order about the court, but that the judge had no jurisdiction outside his courtroom and that such broad orders violated the freedom of the press. This case is still pending.

(e) This was not a jury trial and by October 20, all arguments had been heard. The judge found all defendants guilty as charged. He sentenced each of them to sixty days in jail and a \$500 fine. The jail sentence was suspended providing the defendants engage in no "illegal" activities for a year. Attorneys for the defendants immediately served notice that they intended to move for a new trial. The defendants, who had been free prior to the trial on bonds totaling \$11,000, were released again with the understanding that an additional \$22,000 bond would be posted for the appeal.

Note: The appeal for the new trial was later denied by Judge Rudd and an appeal to a higher court was filed. This appeal is still pending. The operation of the car pool was immediately discontinued after these convictions, but the Negroes still continued to boycott the buses.

THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER, 1956

The month of November was relatively free of significant events in the bus protest. Although the car pool operation was officially disbanded, Negroes generally refrained from riding the buses. They walked, caught rides with friends or associates or rode bicycles. The Inter-Civic Council reported that the police were again intimidating Negroes by stopping the cars in which they were riding and questioning the occupants as to whether or not they had paid the drivers to transport them. Apparently the determination of Negroes to boycott the buses was not seriously altered by the loss of the car pool operation or the actions of the police.

THE MONTH OF DECEMBER, 1956

(a) During the week of December 16, integration of the buses in Montgomery, Alabama, began after a U. S. Supreme Court ruling that segregation on city buses was unconstitutional.

Assuming that the Montgomery decision could be legitimately interpreted as a class action, on December 22, Rev. C. K. Steele, president of the ICC, stated that Negroes would return to the buses but not on a segregated basis. In a letter to the City Commission, Dr. M. C. Williams, secretary of the ICC, said that Negroes would return to the buses on a nonsegregated basis and asked the city's assistance in maintaining order.

(b) On December 23, in Tallahassee, Mayor John Humphress appealed to both races and the bus company to cooperate in maintaining segregation.

(c) On December 24, some Negroes began seating themselves on the buses on a nonsegregated basis and the boycott was officially ended.

The buses were carrying few white passengers because Florida State University students had gone home for the Christmas holidays. On this day no disturbances were reported but an emergency meeting of the City Commission was called to consider the situation.

(d) On December 25, the buses did not run but the Tallahassee City Commission directed the Cities Transit Company to enforce segregation on the buses. The Cities Transit Company said it would seek a court determination of whether the Federal ruling that integrated the buses in Montgomery applied to its franchise and Florida laws.

(e) On December 26, the City Commission suspended the franchise of the Cities Transit Company because of efforts of Negroes to integrate seating. The Commission said it was acting in the "best interest of peace and harmony." The Cities Transit Company announced that it would not respect the franchise revocation because it lacked sufficient notice and was thus illegal.

(f) On December 27, the manager of the Cities Transit Company and nine drivers were arrested for attempting to operate the line without a franchise. They were each released under \$100 bond. On this same evening, Federal Judge Dozier Devane forbade interference with integration on Tallahassee's city buses by issuing a temporary restraining order after an unusual night hearing at his home. During the day, a group of Negro ministers had given up an announced plan for a "demonstration" nonsegregated bus ride after approximately 200 white persons, predominantly teen-agers, crowded around the bus the Negroes were about to board and jeered, booed and threatened. Although this "demonstration" ride was called off, Negro leaders reaffirmed their intentions to continue to ride nonsegregated but without previously announcing their plans. In issuing his order, Judge Devane said that in his personal opinion "every segregation act of every state or city is as dead as a doornail."

(g) Because of continued threats and demonstrations by whites as Negroes rode the buses, and because of threats of violence and acts of vandalism on Negroes' property, on December 31, Governor Collins used emergency powers granted him by the previous Legislature and suspended the Tallahassee buses. He said that the bus situation had created a "climate of racial tension between the white and Negro citizens" and that acts of violence "seriously threaten the lives and well-being of citizens of both races as well as the peace, tranquility, and good order of the community." He said that the suspension would remain in effect until revoked by further order.

THE MONTH OF JANUARY, 1957

(a) The first two weeks of January were marked by acts of violence directed toward Tallahassee Negroes and principally toward the leaders of the bus protest.

(1) On the night of January 2, 1957, a cross was burned on the lawn of Rev. C. K. Steele's parsonage.

(2) Bricks were hurled through the plate glass windows of a Negro grocery store and a Negro meat market.

(3) Shotgun blasts destroyed the windows of another Negro grocery.

(4) Rocks were hurled at Rev. Steele's home.

(5) Several Negroes had windows smashed in their cars which were parked at their homes and elsewhere.

(b) Early in the month, Governor Collins declined to act on a demand by the ICC that bus service be restored under "effective and forthright law enforcement."

(c) Though the buses were still suspended, the Tallahassee City Commission met to devise ways to preserve segregation on the buses. On January 7, 1957, they passed unanimously a bus seat-assignment plan to be put into operation immediately upon the return of the buses. Under this plan, all seats on the buses would be reserved and the drivers would assign seats to provide maximum safety for the passengers. This plan made no mention of race and rescinded the segregation ordinance.

(d) Meanwhile the Cities Transit Company suit seeking \$100,000 damages and a permanent injunction against interference in its bus operation, and a counter-suit which had been filed by the City of Tallahassee to get clarification of the city's segregation ordinance were both dropped after the opposing attorneys conferred with each other. The city also dropped its charges against the nine bus drivers and the manager of the bus company.

(e) On January 8, in his inaugural address to the State of Florida, while the Tallahassee bus service was still suspended, Governor Collins said white citizens must face up to the fact that the Negro does not now have equal opportunities and the Negro should realize "that he must merit and deserve whatever place he achieves in a community."

Collins said he felt the Negro is morally and legally entitled to progress more rapidly and that a full good-faith effort should be made forthwith to help him move forward in the improvement of all his standards.

(f) In an unexpected move on January 11, 1957, Governor Collins lifted his eleven-day-old suspension of the buses for a "good-will" test. Acts of violence were still continued at this time but were more sporadic. The buses returned without incident on January 12, with the drivers given instructions to use the new seat-assignment plan and tell each passenger where to sit. The ICC urged Negroes to ride the buses if they could ride in a democratic (nonsegregated) manner but to refrain from riding otherwise. Passengers who refused to obey the seating assignment ordinance were subject to arrest and a maximum sentence of \$500 and/or sixty days in jail.

(g) On January 15, Police Chief Frank Stoutamire announced that he was going to "put a stop" to the stoning and shooting of Negroes' homes and property. He said, "I don't stand for that sort of thing. That's not my kind of law enforcement."

(h) In other activity in the first half of January, Rev. K. S. Dupont, vice-president of the ICC, qualified and announced his candidacy for a vacancy on the City Commission. He was the first Negro in history to seek this position in Tallahassee and opposed ardent segregationist Davis Atkinson, a local contractor. The ICC also began an intensive drive to get Negroes registered to vote.

(i) On January 18, Governor Collins threatened to step into Tallahassee's dispute if local law enforcement officers did not take effective action to halt violence.

Not long after this, Police Chief Stoutamire interviewed eleven white youths, whom he said knew something about the acts of violence. He did not arrest them but merely lectured and warned them. Shortly after this, acts of violence stopped.

(j) While these events were going on, for the first time in the bus protest, significant numbers of interested white persons began to attend the meetings of the ICC. On different occasions as many as thirty white persons were present at the bi-weekly meetings.

(k) On January 20, three Negroes and three whites went on a "sightseeing" ride on the city buses, presumably to make a test of the unique seating ordinance. They rode nonsegregated and unmolested for a while but were finally removed from the buses by police. Two Negroes and one of the whites were arrested and the other three were listed as material witnesses. The three Negroes were students at A and M University and two of the whites were students at Florida State University, while the other was an employee of the State Road Department. Those arrested were released under \$50 bond each. They later pleaded innocent to the charges.

(l) The State Board of Control, which governs state universities, issued a statement on

January 22, warning students against "demonstrations or other activities calculated to, or having the effect of inflaming the public or inciting strife or violence."

(m) On January 27, John Boardman, a white graduate student at Florida State University who had become active in the ICC mass meetings, was notified that he would not be permitted to register for the second semester. Officially, he was expelled from FSU for having brought two Negro foreign students from A and M to an International Club Christmas party on the campus of FSU during the post-Christmas holidays. Boardman claimed that he had obtained official permission to do this. His expulsion held up even though he vowed to fight for his rights.

THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY, 1957

(a) On February 1, in a hearing before Federal Judge Dozier Devane, the two Negro A and M University students arrested in the "sightseeing" ride incident branded the Tallahassee bus seating law a "subterfuge" and called on the Federal Court to declare it unconstitutional. On February 8, Judge Devane officially refused to intervene in the case until after the City Court trial. At the City Court trial, the three defendants were sentenced to \$500 fines and sixty days in jail. In a later hearing, Judge Devane said that he would not intervene in the case until all state remedies had been exhausted by the three students. He further told Francisco Rodriguez, attorney for the three, to go back and "tell your people that . . . they have cooked their goose this time." This case is still pending in Circuit Court.

(b) On February 2, 1957, the special investigating committee of the Florida Legislature, under the general chairmanship of Representative Henry Land, issued subpoenas to the students involved in the "sightseeing" ride, to various local and state NAACP officials, and to several of the leaders and participants in the bus protest to appear in Tallahassee on February 4. Also subpoenaed were Virgil Hawkins of University of Florida lawsuit fame, Dr. Gilbert Porter, executive secretary of the Florida State Teachers Association (Negro), and Dr. George W. Gore, Jr., president of Florida A and M University.

In regards to the Tallahassee bus protest proper, it appeared that the committee was primarily interested in establishing that the NAACP had sponsored, or had been directly influential in, the lawsuits and activity on bus segregation in Tallahassee. These hearings lasted several days and were abruptly terminated when Francisco Rodriguez, regional legal counsel for the NAACP and the attorney for all defendants in all of the cases in Tallahassee, admitted that he, as NAACP representative, had had a direct interest in all cases brought by Negroes in the South on matters of civil rights. The committee apparently deemed this statement sufficient for its cause and released all further witnesses.

(c) Meanwhile, because of the "get-out-the-vote" campaign of the ICC and the interest and/or concern created by the running of a Negro for the City Commission, over 13,400 persons had been registered to vote in this election by February 7. Dupont was later defeated by a margin of over two to one, but in the election over three thousand more persons voted in Tallahassee than had ever voted in any previous election.

PRESENT STATUS OF THE BUS PROTEST

From February until the present, the Tallahassee scene has been relatively quiet on bus segregation matters. The ICC continues to hold bi-weekly meetings to create interest, hold members, raise funds, etc. Apparently the ICC is girding itself for a long fight. On May 26, 1957, the ICC celebrated its first anniversary with a series of programs and activities, including as participants Martin Luther King and many other prominent Negro leaders. The City Commission has been silent on the bus situation but reports are that it plans no concessions on bus segregation. Meanwhile the bulk of Negroes still do not ride the buses, even though the official "boycott" is over. All of the court cases are still pending in appeals of one kind or another. It appears that nothing conclusive or provocative will take place until some further disposition is made of these lawsuits.*

* The Anti-Defamation League will issue a special supplement to this Field Report on The Tallahassee Bus Protest when further disposition is made of the pending litigation.

Attitudes of the Negro Population

A foregoing statement has already been given regarding the attitude of members of the white population toward matters of desegregation generally. In another study it was found that, throughout the state, the Negro leadership generally favored desegregation with intensity. However, segments of the Negro leadership were willing to wait longer for desegregation than others. Though some Negro leaders throughout the state were in favor of gradual desegregation (in the schools), it is clear that they felt "gradual" desegregation could be accomplished in a much shorter time than did the whites who professed to be "gradualists" also.

Significantly, these Negro leaders, in both instances, believed that most Negroes in the state felt as they did about desegregation. Another important finding of this study was that white leaders did not think that Negroes wanted desegregation as badly as Negroes did, and Negro leaders thought that whites were less opposed to desegregation than whites really were.

In Tallahassee prior to the bus protest, Negroes were relatively inactive in attempting to implement any form of desegregation. The Supreme Court ruling of May 17, 1954, the subsequent implementation decision in the area of school segregation and the Autherine Lucy incident produced no overt activity. However, close observation of the attitudes of the Tallahassee Negro population revealed a growing concern over such matters; an air of expectancy could be detected, as if everyone was waiting for someone to make a move. This restiveness was evidenced in increased membership in the NAACP, and efforts to revive and activate the Tallahassee Civic League, a local "uplift" organization.

In a study of attitudes of the faculty at Florida A and M University, which had been permitted by the Florida Supreme Court in connection with the Virgil Hawkins case, ninety-five to one hundred per cent of the faculty indicated that they were in favor of desegregation in all phases of education as rapidly as it could be accomplished. In this same study at Florida State University, over three-fourths of the faculty indicated that they were willing to accept desegregation.

With regard to the bus protest *per se* during the summer and fall of 1956, it was clear that the major portion of the Negro population in Tallahassee was in strong support of the boycott. This is substantiated by the fact that during these months, even after Negro drivers were employed, the boycott was nearly one hundred per cent effective. Furthermore, during this time attendance at the bi-weekly ICC mass meetings was high. No church was large enough to accommodate the crowds of between four and seven hundred that attended the meetings. Arrests and acts of intimidation apparently frightened few of the Negroes and, if anything, tended to solidify the Negroes and produced a greater "we" feeling among the participants.

The writers felt, however, that such a general estimate of the attitudes of the Negro population was not entirely satisfactory and that a more systematic study of attitudes toward desegregation and the bus protest would be more revealing. Consequently, a random sample of the Negro population was drawn and those selected were personally interviewed with a series of weighted attitude-intensity items with regard to their attitudes toward: (1) The Tallahassee bus protest and desegregation; (2) the South and Tallahassee. The following is a summary of the general results of this study in reference to the bus protest and desegregation:

(1) Generally, the Negro population of Tallahassee was in favor of the bus protest and desegregation. The highest possible total score which could be made on the schedule by persons favoring the bus protest and desegregation was ninety-six. The lowest possible score attainable by persons opposing the bus protest and desegregation was twenty-four. The median score of Negroes was seventy, indicating solid support of the bus protest and desegregation, with a range from a low score of fifty-three to a high of ninety-five.

(2) According to age-groups, opinions indicated that the younger age-groups were strongest in their support of the bus protest and desegregation. As ages increased, the degree of favorability toward the bus protest and desegregation decreased. While seventy per cent of the persons in the twenty to twenty-nine age-group ranked above the median in favoring the bus protest and desegregation, only twenty per cent of the sixty to sixty-nine age-group were so ranked. From twenty to forty-nine years of age, more persons were above the median than below, but after forty-nine years of age more persons were below the median than above.

(3) Where classified according to sex, these results reveal that forty-eight per cent of the males and forty-seven per cent of the females ranked above the median score in favoring the bus protest and desegregation.

(4) It was thought that owning one's own home might have some relationship to a person's attitudes in this matter. Apparently it did, for fifty-four per cent of the home owners ranked above the median favoring the bus protest and desegregation while only forty-one per cent of the renters were so ranked.

(5) Another significant tabulation was made on the basis of occupational categories. Generally, this study showed that as one progressed up the occupational ladder, the proportion of respondents favoring the bus protest and desegregation increased. The direct relationship between favorability to the bus protest and desegregation and occupational level is borne out by the fact that the high of seventy-seven per cent of professional workers ranking above the median in favorability decreased consistently through the nine categories of occupations to a low of twenty-seven per cent among laborers.

(6) It was thought by the writers that since a bus boycott involved problems of transportation, particularly for the car-owning public, a tabulation on this basis would be significant. A relationship was found, though perhaps not as definitive as might have been anticipated. Fifty-three per cent of the persons who owned autos ranked above the median in favoring the bus protest and desegregation while forty-four per cent of those who did not own cars were so ranked.

(7) On the basis of education, a rather consistent pattern was found. Ranking persons by educational groups showed that support of the bus protest and desegregation varied directly with the amount of education that a person had completed. Whereas one hundred per cent of the persons who had had no schooling ranked below the favorability median, eighty per cent of those who had finished college ranked above. This relationship was consistent throughout the various school levels.

The second aspect of this study was designed to elicit some indication of how the Tallahassee Negro population felt about the South generally, and Tallahassee specifically. For purposes of this report, a brief summary combining the two categories of response will suffice. On this part of the schedule a person could have a total high score of thirty-two, indicating a most favorable attitude toward the South and Tallahassee, and a total low score of eight, indicating great unfavorability toward the South and Tallahassee. The range of scores for the group observed in this study was from ten to twenty-eight. Persons who had scores of twenty and above were ranked as most favorable to the South and Tallahassee; those having scores of eighteen and nineteen were considered neutral, and those having scores of seventeen and under were considered least favorable.

(1) According to age, slightly less than two-thirds of the respondents, thirty-nine years of age and under, were either neutral or least favorable to the South and Tallahassee, while

nearly one-half of those forty and over was most favorable. Thus as age increased the tendency to regard the South and Tallahassee as good places for Negroes to live increased. Younger persons tended to feel that better opportunities might exist outside the South.

(2) The sex groups were nearly equal in this regard, with forty-one per cent of both groups being most favorably inclined to life in the South and Tallahassee.

(3) According to method of home tenancy, renters were slightly more favorable to the South and Tallahassee, with thirty-nine and forty-two per cent of the owners and renters, respectively, being most favorable to life in the South and Tallahassee.

(4) According to occupation, persons in the higher occupational classes were generally less favorable to life in the South and Tallahassee than those in the lower occupational groups. The only outstanding exception to this tendency was "managers and proprietors," who had sixty-six per cent of their number classed as most favorable. Otherwise, thirty-three per cent of the professional group were most favorable and sixty per cent of the laborers were most favorable to life for Negroes in the South.

(5) Forty-seven per cent of the Negroes who owned their own autos were most favorable to the South and Tallahassee, as compared to thirty-four per cent of those who did not own their own autos.

(6) On the basis of education and attitude toward the South and Tallahassee, no clear-cut pattern was noticeable, except for the fact that the highest proportions of those most favorable to the South and Tallahassee were at the two extremes of the educational ladder. Sixty per cent of those having no schooling were most favorably inclined to the South and Tallahassee, and fifty per cent of those who had been to graduate or professional schools were so inclined. Otherwise a slight tendency for there to be a negative relationship between educational status and preference for the South could be observed.

In conclusion, the results of this study were generally in line with what might have been expected. Older people were generally more cautious in their views and less enthusiastic about new ideas or activities and were more likely to be reasonably well adjusted to the status quo. Younger persons, particularly those who had high school and college training, were stronger in their support of the bus protest and desegregation, and more doubtful of the South and Tallahassee as good places for Negroes to live. It must be emphasized, however, that this sample study revealed that Tallahassee Negroes were solidly behind the bus protest and efforts at desegregation. Though, as was pointed out, sub-group analysis of the results show varying degrees of favorability to the bus protest, even in the sub-group breakdowns there were almost no persons who were generally unfavorable to the movement. The significance of the achievement of such a consensus among the Negro population of Tallahassee is underlined by the apparent continued refusal of whites high in the power structure to recognize that the majority, rather than a few, of the Negro population was solidly behind the bus protest.

Analysis of the Movement

An analysis of the process that has gone on during the Tallahassee bus protest movement rests on two assumptions: (a) that the members of the Tallahassee City Commission have been, and are, deeply and sincerely committed to the preservation of segregation, and that they believe this represents the wishes of the majority of their constituents; (b) that the leaders of the Inter-Civic Council are equally serious in their commitment to the goal of doing away with segregated seating on the buses.

There is no evidence that this movement was planned in advance of the events of May 27, 1956. In fact, the confusion of the first few days of the movement strongly indicates a lack of planning. A combination of circumstances and events, however, created fertile soil in which the movement quickly developed. These contributing factors were: (a) the example of the Montgomery bus boycott; (b) the fact that the bus driver had the Negro students arrested instead of refunding their fares and permitting them to leave the bus; (c) the burning of a cross in front of the two students' residence; and (d) the fact that the Florida A and M students were still in town but in an "end of school" mood when these events occurred. It seems that the combination of these events and conditions is sufficient to account for the beginning of a mass movement among the students. Although they soon became a relatively minor element in the movement, the students were of major importance in the early stages, and it was from them that the movement spread to the local Negro community.

In releasing the two students to university officials without prosecuting them, the city officials avoided providing the Negroes with a test case which could have been the basis for a somewhat quicker solution of the issue than now seems possible. When they did not force the city's hand by staging a "test ride" at this time, the Negro leaders left themselves without means whereby the judicial machinery could be brought into the situation at an early date. As a result, the Negroes' principal weapon from the very start was mass action. While from their standpoint this action might be interpreted as a form of moral suasion, it was readily defined by many white people as "pressure" or even "force." At the same time, since the bus seating ordinance had not been challenged legally, city officials could argue that their actions in maintaining segregation were legal. Moreover, for them to accede to the demands of the Negro leaders in the absence of any legal pressure could easily be interpreted by their white constituents as surrender to, or even sympathy with, the Negroes' demands.

The lack of a well-defined organization, program, and tactics was evident during the crucial first week of the movement. It seems that one of the times when there was a possibility of a compromise solution was during this week. Neither side had stated hard and fast terms from which it would have been embarrassing to retreat. Certain features of the manner in which the emerging controversy was handled in this stage prevented a compromise settlement, if one was possible. First, the Negroes did not make clear immediately who their bargaining agents were. During the day of May 29, 1956, for example, they allowed a nine-man committee appointed by the Ministerial Alliance to meet with the city manager and the bus company manager on an informal basis. That night, however, they formed a permanent committee somewhat different in composition and apparently vested them with sole power to represent the Negro group supporting the bus protest. Second, while publicly stating what their grievances and goals were, they did not present any formal demands to the City Commission between May 30 and June 4. This gave the city officials and the bus company an excuse for doing nothing. Yet during this time the boycott was in operation, and public discussion and formation of attitudes about the controversy were taking place in the community. At the same time, the city officials may have missed an opportune moment to weaken the rapidly developing movement by making some conciliatory moves even before the receipt of formal demands. It may be that

some concessions made before the movement developed its full strength would have lessened the appeal of the bus boycott for some Negroes. Certainly the "stand-pat" position of the city and bus company officials during this first week provided an opportunity for the protest movement to develop an effective organization and high morale.

It is difficult to assess the effect of the use of the phrase, "seating on first come, first served basis," by the Negroes in their first informal, but public, statement of their demands. By avoiding the use of the term "nonsegregated seating," it kept the issue from being clearly defined initially. Just what the phrase did mean might have been a basis for discussion between the principals on both sides had they dealt directly and formally with each other before the controversy became a bitter one. What actually happened was that, whatever the Negroes may have meant by the phrase, the white leaders contended that they did not know what it meant and used this as a justification for delaying action.

When the leadership of the Negro group became more clearly defined, city officials and other white leaders attempted to deal with only a segment of what was becoming the real Negro leadership group, as well as with some erstwhile Negro leaders who were not in the forefront of this movement. Whatever the intent of this move, it was interpreted by many Negroes as an attempt to undermine their chosen leaders. The resulting split in the Negro leadership removed from the negotiations some leaders to whom the whites might have listened, since they became suspect among other Negroes. By the same token, this strengthened the position of some of those leaders with whom the whites did not wish to deal.

In some of the meetings with white leaders, official and unofficial, local Negro leaders were accompanied by representatives of the state NAACP organization. Apparently this had no value in moving the city commissioners to a solution, but it did give the white leaders a psychological weapon for attacking the newly established Negro leaders.

At its mass meeting on June 3, the Inter-Civic Council made it plain that its primary goal was fully desegregated buses. When the City Commission received this demand a day later it made it equally clear that this was one point on which they would not compromise. It is doubtful that after this date there was any possibility of a voluntary settlement, even though "negotiations" continued for almost a month. Because of the absence of a test case, the Inter-Civic Council had no legal lever with which to force real negotiations on the crucial question of segregated seating.

It may be that the restoration of bus service with increased fares strengthened the bus boycott by giving many Negroes an economic motive for not riding the buses. The arrest of car pool drivers brought a solution no closer but may have strengthened the bus protest movement even more by giving it a group of martyrs. It was the feeling of some Negro leaders at the time that these arrests were in a sense a boon to them. It is probable that the city officials at this time underestimated the popular support of the movement among the Negroes, as well as the dedication of the leaders.

At the same time, the failure of the Inter-Civic Council to set up a test case as its principal tactic left with the city the initiative in getting the controversy into

the courts. Five months after the movement started, the Negroes found twenty-one of their leaders convicted of operating a transportation system without a franchise, with the necessity of posting a \$22,000 bond pending the hearing of their appeal. The laws under which segregated buses were operated had still not been legally challenged. It was not until January that a test case was started.

As a movement to unite a significant portion of the Negro community in a demonstration of opposition to segregation, the Tallahassee bus protest was successful. Yet it has so far failed to achieve the goal of obtaining nonsegregated buses. It showed that Negroes in Tallahassee could be united even in a cause that was unpopular with white people. It also constituted a significant demonstration of the economic power that resides in the Negro group. The only changes in the operation of the bus line have been the adoption of two Negro drivers, the revision of routes and schedules, and the raising of fares. The absence of a test case may have made resolution impossible. So long as the issue was not defined in such a way as to leave little doubt that the city was operating its bus system in an illegal manner, the City Commission would appear to be surrendering to the pressure of the protest if it granted desegregated seating. The face-saving device of a court order was not available to them even if they were willing to utilize it.

This is not to imply that a court injunction is the only means of resolving a conflict over segregation. Such is the case only if public officials are determined to exhaust all legal technicalities and subterfuges of which they can conceive before changing the pattern of segregation. The Tallahassee story demonstrates the cost in litigation and community disharmony of such an adamant stand. After the decisions of the federal courts in the Montgomery bus segregation case, it was evident that any segregation in public transportation based on race would henceforth be held unconstitutional. The City Commission indicated its recognition of this fact when it substituted the seating-assignment law for the segregation ordinance. Following these decisions, the Inter-Civic Council called off the bus boycott, removing at least the outward appearance of pressure. At this point, the City Commission might have made a graceful and voluntary retreat from its stand in support of segregation. To its white constituents, it could have justified its actions on the grounds that the eventual outcome of any legal test of the local ordinance could be foreseen and that litigation would be both costly and futile. Passage of the seating-assignment law and the subsequent arrest of the violators made such litigation inevitable and again put the city in a position from which it could not retreat without appearing to have surrendered.

Observations on the Emergence of the Tallahassee Bus Protest

Prior to the bus protest, race relations in Tallahassee displayed a high degree of accommodation. No incidents of any consequence had occurred to disturb this apparent satisfactory adjustment for more than ten years. Because of this outward calm, the whites high in the power structure of Tallahassee were led to believe (according to them) that the Negro in Tallahassee was satisfied. Even after the May 17, 1954, ruling of the U. S. Supreme Court, nothing happened to disturb this calm and whites continued to believe that Tallahassee Negroes, "our colored people," did not

care about integration, and that northern agitators were responsible for the Supreme Court's ruling.

Up to the bus protest, the Negro population had the Tallahassee Civic League as its chief "uplift" organization. This organization had never been able, however, to muster a strong following from the general Negro community. The officers of the Civic League had been mostly confined to A and M faculty and staff members and there was an apparent, though generally unspoken, belief on the part of the Negro townspeople that those people from A and M were trying to "run everything." Such feelings produced a subtle "town and campus" conflict among the Negro population.

As has already been indicated, the civic and social leadership of Tallahassee Negroes was largely confined to professional persons attached to A and M University, a state school. Because of their status as state employees, these leaders did not feel free to engage openly in many of the more significant "uplift" activities, such as political action, lawsuits, etc. Consequently, the means by which this small core of leaders obtained concessions from the whites in the power structure was through personal contact and informal appeal. Occasionally petitions would be presented to the City Commission, but these were few. It is to the credit of this leadership that it was able to accomplish several worthwhile things for the Negro community. It is also to their credit, that at the time that they became leaders, no one else in Tallahassee was willing or able to assume these positions. But this type of leadership also led to the general feeling on the part of whites that the Tallahassee Negro would continue to be satisfied with whatever the whites granted him out of the "goodness of their hearts" and that formal demands, legal proceedings and concerted group activity were not to be either anticipated or feared.

After the May 17, 1954, ruling of the Supreme Court, although there were no outward manifestations of change in the etiquette of race relations in Tallahassee, local memberships in and donations to the NAACP began to increase. Efforts were made to revive the lackadaisical Civic League and, in general, an air of expectancy could be sensed among the Negro population. No events or incidents took place to set off action, however. The Autherine Lucy incident in Alabama had no activating effects; the Montgomery situation produced no activity locally. From an outsider's point of view, Tallahassee was still the same peaceful little college town with each of the two races minding its own business, with only isolated instances of personal or professional or social interracial contact.

Suddenly on May 27, 1956, the racial situation in Tallahassee exploded. Two coeds were arrested. A cross was burned. A movement was started and, almost overnight, the city of Tallahassee found itself with a well-organized, strongly unified, determined Negro citizenry — no longer willing to wait for desegregation, unwilling to compromise, making demands rather than submitting petitions. Negroes from all walks of life rallied to the protest movement. For the first time group solidarity produced a "we" feeling, an in-group identification. A new type of leadership was selected. This leadership based its demands upon its beliefs about equity and inequity and justice and injustice, rather than upon whom the members of the power structure were, whom they knew, whom they liked or whom they trusted.

Efforts early in the protest on the part of whites to utilize the erstwhile leader-

ship of the more conservative Negroes to dissolve the protest movement failed completely. The personal contacts and previous leadership pattern of Tallahassee forced this more conservative element of the Negro population to become unwilling accomplices in this futile effort. Even though their previous personal contacts with whites in Tallahassee made it more or less mandatory for these former leaders to give at least token cooperation to a move to compromise, this same group publicly stated that its sympathies were entirely with the Inter-Civic Council's fundamental goals.

Arrests, legal charges, convictions, vandalism, threats of violence, and unfavorable publicity in recent months in an attempt to break the determination of the Negroes to stick it out have apparently produced a greater unity among the Negro people. Today, over a year after the precipitating events, the Negro population appears still determined to fight and sacrifice for a goal it believes to be right and just.

On much the same basis that the U. S. Supreme Court took judicial cognizance of changed social circumstances since Plessy vs. Ferguson in its May 17, 1954 ruling, students of culture dynamics and culture continuity could have predicted that Negroes would be unable to sit idly by in these times without struggling for basic human rights. Culturally, the stage had been set for such a fight. Through the years, court decision after court decision had laid a groundwork. World War II, the changed social conditions throughout the world and our subsequent and continued recognition of the need for the friendliness of the non-white peoples of the world focused international attention upon America's domestic situation. Florida's Governor Collins recognized the inevitability of such a fight on the part of Negroes and the necessity for re-evaluation of the situation by whites when he stated:

"I am convinced . . . that the average white citizen does not object to nonsegregated seating in buses — any more than he objects to riding the same elevators with Negroes or patronizing the same stores.

"He does resent some of the methods being used to achieve certain ends. Boycotts, ultimatums and peremptory demands can never achieve what persuasion, peaceful petitions and normal judicial procedures can do for the Negro race.

"In our search for the answer, we should begin by being honest with ourselves, by recognizing realities which exist," he said.

"Man's greatest failures have come when he has refused to recognize the realities of a changed situation and failed to understand that to admit the existence of a reality is not necessarily to welcome or even agree with it.

"We should admit that our attitude generally in the past has been obstructive all along the line."

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