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Ministers' Negotiations Part 1, February 18th 1968

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Rabbi Wax- (muffled) Anybody here identify themselves and (muffled) either by mayor Lobe or (muffled) Champa. So can you please indicate who you are and (muffled) except those that are press and the news people.

Dean Demmick- I am Dean William Demmick here at St. Mary's cathedral and (muffled).

Father Veron- Father Veron here (muffled)

Joseph Ecklecamp- Father Joseph Ecklecamp St. Mary's.

(muffled)

(Muffled) Precimeter.

P.J. Champa- P.J. Champa I ma for the city.

(muffled)

Frank McRae- Frank McRae (muffled)

(muffled)

Rabbi Wax- I am rabbi Wax, now I take it everybody here is authorized to be here. Shall we close the door there.

(Muffled)

Rabbi Wax- Gentlemen this is an informal get together, I would not call this a conference, I would not call it a meeting. This is a get together under the auspices of the ministers association and I want to (muffled) our deep thanks for all of you that are here. And while this is an informal get together I think it is fitting and proper that we need to sacred precincts to have a word of prayer. I am going to call upon our friend Dean Demmick.

Dean Demmick-I would like to use an ancient prayer, a prayer of saint Francis of Assisi. Let us pray, Lord make me an instrument of thy peace. Where there is hatred let there be so love, where there is (muffled) where there is doubt faith, where there is despair, hope, where there is darkness light and where there is sadness joy. Oh divine master grant that I may not so much to seek to deepen souls as to console. To be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love for it is in giving that we receive and it is in pardoning that we are part of and it is in god that we are bore into eternal life. And now may we know that we standing god's presence amen.

Rabbi Wax- Gentlemen will you please be seated. (Muffled) I want to underscore this, this is not a formal conference, I wouldn't even describe this together as a meeting. We are here to talk, we are the minister's association are going to get (muffled). We are here to talk about the matter of the concern to every resident in

our community. I am only going to say a couple of words I haven't preached in a couple of days but I promise I won't preach tonight. I will quote from one of my own sermons, nobody ever does (muffled) my own sermons that life is a compromise between what you get and what you want. None of us as individuals ever go through life getting everything we want, living exactly the way we want. There is an old saying, give and take. And I fervently felt that this simple basic idea about life which is characteristic of community life as well as individual life, will characterize our spirit tonight, Let me say too and I hope it will not be misunderstood that we will have some frank conversation here tonight. But we will be candid, but let me say with a little embarrassment let there be no acrimony and no bitterness and no anger. We are here as human beings as men, please gentlemen let's all(muffled) with a sense of responsibility to our community, to our country, to society and (muffled). I happen to like westerns and when I have a little time for relaxation I enjoy watching a western and you all know in a western there is good guys and bad guys. Tonight we don't want any bad guys we all want to be good guys, we don't want to be any, we don't want any losers and we don't want any winners. The only thing that I perfectly hope for and I believe I speak for a group of ministers, and that is if there is a winner as I earnestly hope there will be it will be all of the people amidst the community. That is about all I have to say and even though this is an informal discussion we have to have some outline, I hope we will stick to the point, discuss that which is germane and not bring up some unpleasantness of the past and try to come to some understanding on a certain matters. And I am going, I am taking it upon myself I really have not consulted with anybody and I am very inexperienced in a gathering like this to consider certain matters, involving the sanitation workers in our city and I will, there 9 points have been raised I would like with your consent to certainly have the right to reject the procedure that I have outlined because I have no knowledge and no experience in this matter to reject the procedure. But it seems there is 9 points about which we may have some conversation tonight and we will do it (muffled). If we find that we have talked down one we will move onto the next one. Before we go on is there agreement to this procedure, my feelings won't be hurt if you don't agree.

Pete- Mr. Chairman may I add something.

Rabbi Wax- Yes Pete.

Pete- We have other men at the door who need to be attended to.

(Muffled)

Unknown- Before we get into the procedure I think the position of the union ought to be (muffled)

Unknown- May I respond? I think perhaps what divides us may not loom as large as it seems in the minds of anybody. If I may respectfully suggest that and that is why I propose that we discuss, remember I am not calling this a meeting or a conference

but a get together. And we do discuss these matters and let us see where we stand after we have chatted of awhile, is that agreeable?

Unknown- Something that is more and more going to a knowledge of our presence her and to discuss these matters or if you say I am not talking to them but as long as (muffled) I have talked for two and half days with this gentlemen and wound up saying that I haven't talked with you because it is an illegal strike and we got into a difficulty. My condition is simply this, Rabbi Wax, (muffled) discussions without (muffled) then I will be happy to sit down And if not I ask the city what is their proposal other than have the men go back to work. (muffled).

Rabbi Wax- It may well be that if we do talk, perhaps we shall come to understand each other and be able to resolve some other difficulties.

Unknown- Do you have any objection?

(muffled)

Henry Lobe- None what so ever but my position is exactly and precisely as stated. I have respect for the men who ministers in this room, you all asked me to attend the meeting and let it be. They had to be here too, this is why we are here. My position with regard to the union is identical as long as they break the law, the position is the same.

Unknown- You have no objection to discussing, but I don't think (muffled)

(muffled) on the basis of (muffled) discussing the issues with the ministers, fine we can find something to do but I would like to (muffled) Is he going to talk or is he going to ignore that he has a situation on his hands. If he wants to (muffled) then you know there is not much sense in exercising (muffled).

Rabbi Wax- I am very naïve and very inexperienced in this matter, gentlemen let's start talking.

Unknown- Rabbi Wax I agree that we have to start talking but I think we have to (muffled) mayor Lobe going to acknowledge and discuss the issues with the union or is he just going to discuss it with the clergy now that question must be answered so that we know whether we can (muffled).

Unknown- Rabbi let me (muffled) this is a meeting of all ministers and if they want to express themselves they can.

Rabbi Wax- Certainly.

Unknown-Secondly, I am here to talk and (muffled)

Unknown- I have this question Rabbi Wax, mayor Lobe are you going to discuss the issues involved as Rabbi Wax has said an open discussion with the union?

Henry Lobe- I have stated our position. You asked that we come to this meeting, I stated that (muffled). That as long as the union is breaking the law, our position is the same and that position I have already explained to you. No man is above the law and in Memphis it may go in New York but it doesn't go in Memphis it goes back to our administration just barely getting in and getting into a new administration, we have simply got to go by the law and there are all kinds of reasons for this but in 4 years all kinds of things will come up. This will be (muffled). How will we decide this one is going to have great (muffled) on how we decide many others and as far as I am concerned we are governed by law and it is really, I will say this for Mr. Champa (muffled) that he was breaking the law. Now as long as this is the case our position is the same. As soon as the law breaking stops it is time to work and it is time to talk. We will talk I am not going to make any great point of (muffled) Mr. Champa's direction. (muffled)

(muffled)

Unknown- What Lobe said that Champa admitted he was breaking the law. Mayor Lobe you and I both know that (muffled) that when public employees go on strike (muffled) on strike in violation of your Tennessee law, that doesn't sound like (muffled) since then you have constantly been goading Champa about breaking the law and I can't talk to you as long as you are breaking the law Champa and not only talk to you (muffled). I don't plan to make a farce of this thing, I repeat Rabbi Wax, (muffled) to discuss a solution to the problem (muffled) We are ready to discuss, we are happy to discuss but you are not ready to discuss the conditions as usual.

Unknown- Let me respond..(Tape Break)

(muffled)

Unknown- Chairmen I don't think we have any conference at this point.

Henry Lobe- I said that anything asked of me is going to be answered and (muffled).

(muffled) meaningful conference. As you like.

(Muffled) probably the youngest in here (muffled) respond to questions raised or statements to. You can't say that we don't exist on this side of the table and you want to talk to us, it is meaningless. (muffled)

Unknown- this may be a naïve thing, but given Mr. Lobe's position, I am not an attorney but I, it seems he currently doesn't want to discuss things with you because at the moment he doesn't recognize the union. Let me rephrase that he doesn't recognize the union as (muffled) he did say as I understand he would answer any question asked by the chairmen. So Mr. Champa if you had an opportunity to ask why to get started on this (muffled)

P.J. Champa- I talked with mayor Lobe for two and half days well into the morning you know. Just between the two of us it was strange (muffled) I think he is playing a

childishly, this isn't a childish game, this is serious business....every time a person is (muffled) We are adults here, we are adults here, and (muffled) struggling with a serious problem and we are going to play it like children? I don't think, that is an insult to us and to you gentlemen who have devoted your time to have a conference about it (muffled) move on to something serious. (muffled) Bill Lucie and myself we representative point of view, you represent another point of view and we are discussing these points of view and we come to a conclusion, we hereby give something (muffled)

Unknown- now let's talk and speak.

Rabbi Wax- I want to be fair, I am not taking any side sin this the fact is that the mayor accepted our invitation to come here he knew he wasn't going to speak with the people from Memphis State. He knew who was going to be here tonight (muffled).

(muffled)

P.J. Champa- We don't have a discussion here.

Unknown- Let's try do you want to ask the mayor something?

(muffled)

P.J. Champa- I don't know mayor Lobe will you discuss the matter of resolution with me? Not the Rabbi me?

Henry Lobe-The fact that I (muffled) 2 days and 2 nights I tried to talk to Mr. Champa and especially (muffled) about obeying the law. I couldn't get Mr. Champa to understand that there is a (muffled) there is a very apparent and strong respect for the law in Memphis and (muffled) but I feel I have gone as far as I can go consulting the law and until we get to the point where the law is being obeyed that is when we are going to go further. When they asked If would come I said I would be glad to come. I committed tonight and I committed again. I will answer anything you want with answers, I will answer any question, you can bring up anything you lie. My position with the union is (muffled) Mr. Champa understands this. My position with you gentlemen is ask (muffled).

Unknown- Your feeling is that if you express any opinion at all here this is tantamount to recognition of the union.

Henry Lobe- No, that isn't it.

Unknown- How can men talk when we are all here on equal basis, this is what I hear this man saying, I know there is a point there is a strain because we got a lot of cares for this thing all around but this is beside the point as far as I am concerned. If we can't agree to sit down and recognize the existence of one another in this room...

Henry Lobe- I certainly have and I have gone a lot further than that.

Unknown-I don't care about the past I care about right now.

Henry Lobe-(muffled) the other night and again tonight I have offered the union the same status as many unions this city deals with now. So there is no pointing saying if I recognize them and so forth. Simply say that this meeting is breaking the law, that I am not going to tolerate that and the city is not going to tolerate that. And I see no point in condoned breaking the law by negotiating (muffled). I recognize the fact that the ministerial association (muffled) ministerial association can get into anything they like, education or reservations. (muffled)

(muffled)

Unknown- I think that the procedures and the meet are over and if I may have the prerogative of expressing an opinion. Let's start talking and it might well be that when we talk and reach a certain point the situations can change.

(muffled)

unknown- I am ready to talk with the city. I would like to ask the question what law would we be violating to discuss the problems at hand with the representatives and the people involved.

Henry Lobe- I am not confident...

Unknown- (muffled) what law would you be violating more and more to talk about the problem that has created a disturbance in the city of Memphis?

Rabbi Wax- Mr. Giannatti?

Mr. Giannati- (muffled) Champa and Mr. Lucie they acknowledge that is not for us. There is a supreme court decision that says I don't see how any one could misunderstand what it is saying. (muffled) some wonder why we are not going to court for this (muffled). We discussed it but I thought that we could sit down and (Tape Break)

Unknown- Mr. Champa and Mr. Lucie, because what are position was that they would with all of their effective position with these men, telling these men there were certain terms not the way they have been told that these are violating the law. (muffled) I personally know and I (muffled). These men appreciate the fact that they are violating the law of (muffled) supreme court in the Alcoa court case. And we told Mr. Champa and Mr. Lucie the other night and I will say it again Mr. Hallie and I spent hours with Mr. Paisley and Mr. Lucie and I thought we were making some progress to get the men back to work. (muffled). You can ask us any questions you want and you will get an answer form the (muffled) will you discuss, will you discuss anything with these men. Yes we will discuss the men of the sanitation department if these gentlemen here(muffled) you here go back to work immediately, and I mean now.

Unknown- Thank you for talking to our men.

Unknown- I will show you how to talk to them.

(laughs)

(muffled)

Rabbi Wax- Eckelcamp excuse me I am not used to this role.

Unknown- I think that if you look at this another way, we the ministers have come to talk to both sides and we have asked you to talk to us. And in a certain sense you don't need to worry whether you talk to each other but we are asking all of you to talk with us to us. Because let's face it our concern as ministers is the total population of our city. Our concern is that either side some to a total victory we will still be doing a tremendous harm to our community because of the attitudes that would be created because of the feelings of people on both sides and one side got a total victory they would still be defeated by what we were creating in our community as far as an unwholesome religious atmosphere. This is basically why we are here and why we want to talk to you. From that we are not going to solve your political problems. We are not going to solve the, we are not going to try and solve the problems, the issues that you are working at but we are interested in the broader ones and that is wherever you solve the issues what is going to be the effect on our community as far as living together and what is going to happen to the morale, what is going to happen to the feelings of people, what is going to happen to their religious attitudes and what is going to happen to them as people belonging to god's kingdom, the children of god, this is what our concern is. No matter what I say...

Unknown- you are right.

Unknown- In that way we want to talk to both side sand we want both sides.

(Muffled)

Henry Lobe- And when you asked I stated our position and I don't intend to

(muffled)

Unknown- You have a comment sir?

Unknown-It may not be wise but I want to respond to something that was said. (muffled) every body recognizes there are principles involved in both sides. I think the principle involved is (muffled) if you want my personal point of view (muffled) in the back of the injunction I think that is unnecessary you have got the injunction now and that has (muffled). The men are fully aware of what is involved here. (muffled) they refuse to recognize that they have a problem and until that takes place this is an exercise of (muffled) and whether they respond or not that is a problem.

Unknown- If I may Rabbi Wax tell you the other day the other evening that we are happy to discuss any and all of the items with the direct parties involved. I don't

think that any of us need something to explain each other's position to (muffled). Now if you want to proceed and ask us our respective positions and these are the issues, I am not (muffled) that both parties know exactly what the other party's position is on each of the issues. We went to the public forum, we had the public forum. (muffled) Well my feeling is that if we discuss these specific matters we may see that there is an area of complete agreement on certain points and then we would see where the areas of difference are and try to resolve those. In other words we do the easy things first and the....(muffled)

Unknown- Our position on point 1 sir.

Rabbi Wax- Let me read it or you read it sir so we will all know what we are talking about.

Unknown- Alright point one, exclusive recognition of local 1733 FAFASCME AFLCIO, the designated representative of the employees involved in the department of public works. That is point number one. What would be your comment in addition to that sir?

Unknown-(Muffled)

Rabbi Wax- Let's keep them separate.

Unknown-(muffled) that the overwhelming majority of the city's public works employees decide to be represented by a collective bargaining (muffled)

Rabbi Wax- Mayor Lobe would you or your associates respond to point 12?

Unknown- First of all I represent the whole city to the best of my ability (muffled)
(Tape End)