

US History An Age of Civil Disobedience

Learning Target:

*I can examine and identify the factors that caused the Montgomery Bus Boycott.
I can analyze the strategy of non-violent protest that emerged with MLK Jr.*

6. Civil Rights – The Montgomery Bus Boycott & Nonviolence

The Montgomery Bus Boycott

The Arrest of Rosa Parks –

- 43 year old black woman
- worked as a tailor's assistant in Montgomery, Alabama
- boarded the bus and sat down in the middle section of the bus
- as white passengers boarded she was told to give up her seat and move
- refused to give up her seat and was arrested
- this action is regarded by many as the true beginning of the civil rights movement

Opportunity Arises –

- Park's arrest spread throughout Montgomery
- Type of case community leaders had been waiting for
 - Parks was soft spoken, dignified, and well liked
 - Agreed to fight case as long as it took to win

The Boycott –

Planning –

- Call went out to boycott the Montgomery bus system
 - Blacks would exert economic pressure on the company
 - Ministers, community leaders pledged support to the one day boycott
 - Martin Luther King Jr., local Baptist minister, pledged support

First Day Results –

- Monday morning every bus was nearly empty
- Rosa Parks found guilty and fined \$10.00 plus court charges
- That evening local black ministers met again to organize
- Named themselves the Montgomery Improvement Association
- Named MLK Jr. their president
- Boycott would last nearly 400 days

Reaction & The End –

City Officials Reaction –

- City officials became increasingly frustrated with the boycott
- King's house bombed and King arrested for conspiracy to boycott

The End –

- Federal District Court ruled that bus segregation was illegal – appealed
- US Supreme Court ruled that segregation on buses was unconstitutional

Martin Luther King Jr. & Nonviolence

Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) –

- After success of Montgomery Bus Boycott King wanted to take the movement to other southern cities
- Jan. 1957 MLK Jr. called a meeting in Atlanta attended by 60 southern ministers to discuss nonviolent integration
- MLK Jr. and these ministers formed the SCLC

Nonviolent Resistance –

- Protesting without fighting with the authorities even if provoked to do so

SCLC Workshops –

- Taught methods of nonviolent protest to civil rights activists
- Taught people how to sit quietly while others jeered and spit on them
- Taught people how to protect themselves from blows and to circle someone under attack

MLK Jr. & Gandhi –

- King's use of nonviolent protest often compared to that of Gandhi's tactics when India became independent of Britain
- Both men used moral arguments to change the minds of the oppressor
- King's method however used the Christian theme of loving one's enemy

Four Steps in a Nonviolent Protest –

1. Investigation
2. Negotiation
3. Publicity
4. Demonstration