

Montgomery bus boycott



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The Montgomery Bus Boycott was a socio-political protest against the policy of racial segregation and discrimination campaign in the public transport service of Montgomery city, Alabama in 1955. It lasted for one whole year starting at December 5, 1955 and ending at December 21, 1956. The sentiments of the Afro-American community were cooled down by a United States Supreme decision that declared segregation in public transport as unconstitutional.

The main cause of the protest and boycott of transport system was racial discrimination. This segregation was a source of bitterness and pathos for the Afro-Americans community for a long period of time. The city bus service was making a mockery of Afro-American as they were harassed by white drivers. They had to pay the fare at the front door whereas they had to reboard from the rear-door. They used to sit behind a barrier that segregated the white community from the black one. This barrier was always moved toward the rear end to accommodate more white customers. On the bus, blacks sat behind a mobile barrier dividing the races, and as the bus filled, the barrier was pushed back to make room for white passengers.

This stated resentments of the black residents of Montgomery city got an impetus in the arrest of Rosa Parks. She was taken into custody on December 1, 1955 on the charges that she refused vacate her seat to a white passenger. She was penalized 10\$ in addition to \$ 4 court charges. This decision flamed the feelings of the Afro-American community who had already planned to set a protest against this uncivilized practice.

So the same day, on December 05, 1955, almost forty two thousands Black residents of the city started the boycott of city bus transport in order to protest racial segregation and racially discriminatory law of Alabama state. Rosa Parks was also an enthusiastic adherent of the protest campaign. The first occurrence of protest was a one day boycott by a local women's rights organization, Women's Political Council to show solidarity with Rosa Parks. The council's president JoAnn published and distributed 52, 000 fliers that prompted Montgomery's Afro-American community to stay off public buses on the day of the Rosa Park's trial.

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People's (NAACP) local section, that was hankering after an issue to involve the court into a legal and constitutional debate over the issue of racial segregation took advantage of the situation, started preparing for the legal challenge. After the conviction of Rosa Parks, the local black leaders congregated to arrange a mass protest and an extension of the bus boycott. They further established Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA) to forward the interest of the Afro-American community at the national level and elected Luther King Jr. as its president.

This protest continued for 381 days during which Black community used other mean of conveyance like taxis, carpooling, and walking through miles. Their efforts and sacrifices bore fruit when they ultimately succeeded in their struggle to desegregate seating on public buses, not only in Montgomery, but throughout the United States through a decision made by Supreme Court.

As it is stated earlier that Black organizations like NAACP and other community leader started thinking on various legal measures to challenge the Alabama bus segregation laws and to eradicate the segregation. For his purpose, they based their case on Fourth Amendments that declares equal laws for every citizen of America and wanted a clear judgment in this regards over the discriminatory laws of Alabama State. But real solace came through another case Browder v. Gayle that was filed on February 1, 1956, in the U. S. District Court.

Browder was a Montgomery housewife who was denied the equal right of bus service under the discriminatory law and Gayle was the mayor of Montgomery. In June, 1956 ruling, federal court declared the segregated seating as unconstitutional but an appeal was forwarded to the United States Supreme Court. However, on November 13, 1956, the superior court endorsed the lower court's ruling. This was a great triumph for the Afro-American community as they won the struggle for their rights.

The Montgomery Bus Boycott cast deep imprints U. S. history and equipped the Black leadership with an impetus to carry on their civil rights struggle. It had implications that reached far beyond the desegregation of public buses. Luther King established himself as the leader of a national stature. The protest boosted the Civil Rights Movement and created a mass awareness about the struggle of Afro-American community and highlighted their pathos and miseries. It further provided confidence to the Black people that they can win their rights by constant struggle. In the words of King: " We have gained a new sense of dignity and destiny. We have discovered a new and powerful weapon—non-violent resistance."

Reference

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