

OUTREACH

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I DON'T FEEL NO WAYS TIRED: The Movement and the Division

"I don't feel no ways tired, I've come too far from where I started..."

Several decades after the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation, the modern segregation movement began in Tennessee in 1882, when the first "Jim Crow" laws were enacted, assigning second class status to Black people. Moreover, less than 15 years later in 1896, segregation was reinforced by the U.S. Supreme Court when it ruled that the "separate but equal" doctrine was indeed constitutional. However, it would not be until 50 years later when another movement began to take root in the South.

During 1955 in the U.S. South, the climate was ripe for a drastic change to the legally sanctioned second class citizenship given to Black people. As early as the year before, in May 1954, an unanimous Supreme Court Decision declared racial segregation in public schools unconstitutional. The famous "Brown vs. Topeka Board of Education" case set aside the 1896 "separate but equal" doctrine. Later, in October 1954, the U.S. Department of Defense abolished the "all-Negro" units of the Armed Forces.

Notwithstanding these earlier significant decisions in 1955, "Whites Only" and "Colored" signs were an ongoing daily reminder to Southern Blacks that they could not live, work or play in the same manner afforded to Whites. Certainly the time was ripe for social change and for a new movement.

Similar to their counterparts in South Africa today, Blacks in



ROSA PARKS

Montgomery, Alabama had reached their limit and were fed up with the unequal treatment given to them by Whites. In December of 1955, **Rosa Parks** was one of those Blacks who was fed up! Often referred to as the "Mother of the Civil Rights Movement," **Ms. Parks** made a courageous stand against the "Jim Crow" laws. Exhausted after a long days work, she refused to give her seat up to a white man. Consequently she was arrested for her heroic action.

Outraged by **Ms. Parks'** arrest, members of the Black community met and a boycott of city buses was planned. For the first time, Black civic and religious groups united to form an alliance. Thus, the Montgomery Improvement Association was born and **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.** was unanimously elected as its president.

Having studied the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi, **Dr. King** was convinced that oppression, like colonialism, could be combatted through nonviolent resistance. Accordingly, he led a massive protest that lasted more than a year and drew worldwide attention to the plight of the Blacks in the U.S. South.



MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. copy

The famous boycott continued into the following year in spite of arrests, fines, terror tactics and dubious legal maneuvers. Eventually, the boycott resulted in a law suit being filed by the NAACP. And ultimately, on December 21, 1956, the U.S. Supreme Court again rejected the "separate but equal" doctrine of 1896 and ruled that segregation of public facilities was unconstitutional.

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It should be noted that prior to that ruling, in 1955, the ICC (Interstate Commerce Commission) banned segregated waiting rooms and buses for interstate passengers.

A few years later, in 1957, more than 100 Black leaders nationwide came together under **Dr. King's** leadership to plan strategies for the civil rights struggle. Consequently, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) was formed and **Dr. King** became its president. Using nonviolent resistance, SCLC began to mobilize the South's grassroots. SCLC's initial campaign was a massive voter registration drive.

During this time there were several civil rights leaders and national organizations. However, **Dr. King** emerged as the leader among such notable individuals as **Roy Wilkins**, National Director of NAACP; **James Farmer** of CORE; **Whitney Young** of the National Urban League; **Malcolm X**; and **Elijah Muhammed** of the Nation of Islam.

Approximately 20 years prior to the birth of the so-called Civil Rights Movement, in 1945, the New Jersey Legislature enacted "The Anti-Discrimination Law," making New Jersey one of the first states to do so. This significant statute evolved from the great need to enact stronger legislation as a measure to deter both segregation and discrimination. Although previous laws had attempted to give some civil rights to Black citizens, they were used minimally and were seldomly enforced.

The new law was aimed towards the prevention of employment discrimination based on one's race, creed, color, national origin and ancestry. Since it was assumed that unlawful discrimination would be accomplished only by the elimination of prejudices in the hearts and minds of men, the Division Against Discrimination was established in the State Department of Education. Accordingly, all complaints received by the division were to be resolved through education, persuasion and conciliation.

Less than two (2) months after the division was established, it received its first complaint. A Black machine worker filed charges that he had been fired from a plant in Newark because of his race.

Several years later, in 1949, the law was extended to cover places of

public accommodations, including schools. After that amendment, the division, under the direction of the Commissioner of Education, became actively involved in the desegregation of schools in approximately 50 communities. In his decision evolving from public hearings in the Englewood School case, **Commissioner John A. Bosshart** stated that, "A child is entitled to attend the school nearest his home, unless there are compelling reasons why he/she should not to do so."

Thereafter, the law's jurisdiction expanded to include the prohibition of employment discrimination because of liability for service in the United States Armed Forces (1951); enforcement power against discrimination in public housing (1954); and powers of enforcement against discrimination in publicly assisted housing.

For the most part, the division's initial ten years, comprised of compliance work, and a comprehensive education program which included public addresses, meetings with community groups, working with schools, planning conferences and surveys of employment and public accommodation practices.

"Nobody told me the road would be easy . . ."

The 1960's were one of the most emotionally turbulent eras in American history. Protests, demonstrations, burnings, bombings, beatings, and prayers constantly made news headlines as Blacks demanded their inherent rights to equality and freedom in

America.

In February 1960, after four students from North Carolina's A & T College started a "sit-in" movement at a Greensboro, North Carolina eating facility, students at other Black colleges began to conduct "sit-ins" in department and variety stores, lunch counters, as well as other segregated establishments throughout the South. Later that year, in April, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee was founded in Raleigh, North Carolina.

The struggle continued into the following year. A brave group of individuals consisting of thirteen Black and White "Freedom Riders" protested discrimination on Southern buses. While embarking on a bus trip through the South, the bus was bombed and burned by segregationists outside of Anniston, Alabama. Nevertheless, due to the courage of the "Freedom Riders," in September 1961, the Interstate Commerce Committee issued another order that interstate passengers were to be seated without regard to race.

Also in 1961, three segregationists in Louisiana were excommunicated by Archbishop Joseph Rommel for opposing his order to integrate New Orleans' parochial schools. Meanwhile, in New Rochelle, New York, the Board of Education was convicted of gerrymandering to promote segregation. Sadly enough, the U.S. was indeed in turmoil. Blacks were advancing one step only to be set back two.



Meredith March

In 1962, Governor Ross Barnett of Mississippi, personally denied **James H. Meredith** admittance into the University of Mississippi. Consequently, the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ordered **Mr. Meredith's** admission into the university or Barnett would be held in contempt of court. Nevertheless, **Mr. Meredith** did not enter the University of Mississippi until Federal Marshals, along with the Mississippi National Guard (who had been federalized by President Kennedy), escorted him there. Consequently, the White students on campus, as well as adults from Oxford, Mississippi, rioted on the campus causing the death of two individuals and injured over 100 people. However, in 1962, integration of public schools was a reality in all but three states.

Also during this period, the sit-in movement which had started in Greensboro, North Carolina, in 1960, was swiftly gaining momentum, taking the form of picket lines, wade-ins, read-ins, kneel-ins and pray-ins. Although these methods of protest were nonviolent, racist Whites reacted and retaliated with extreme violence. Oftentimes, unarmed demonstrators were beaten with chains, burned with matches and acid. But the determination to gain freedom moved on.

Eventually, students and young Blacks became dissatisfied with what they considered the slow pace of desegregation. They were also unhappy with traditional Black leadership. Consequently, younger Blacks refused to participate in the rhetoric of White courts and councils. Instead, they wanted immediate action. A war was being waged between Blacks and Blacks, between Blacks and Whites, and Whites and Whites. This phenomenon was the most massive confrontation of citizens in America since the Civil War.

Nevertheless, during this midst of confusion, some very meaningful words were spoken by **Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr.** who was then in the forefront of the civil rights movement. Speaking at Shiloh Baptist Church in Albany, Georgia, Reverend King said, "Don't stop now. Keep moving. Don't get weary. We will wear them down with our capacity to suffer!" Sadly enough, a statement, that even today in 1987, needs to be repeated.

The following year in 1963, **Martin Luther King** initiated an anti-segregation campaign in Birmingham, Alabama, known as the "Birmingham Manifesto" which explained the demands of the movement. For the first time high school and grammar school children participated in a demonstration. Notwithstanding, Governor Bull Connor retaliated against the demonstrators with vicious police dogs and high-powered fire hoses that violently knocked down children who were no older than six or seven years old.

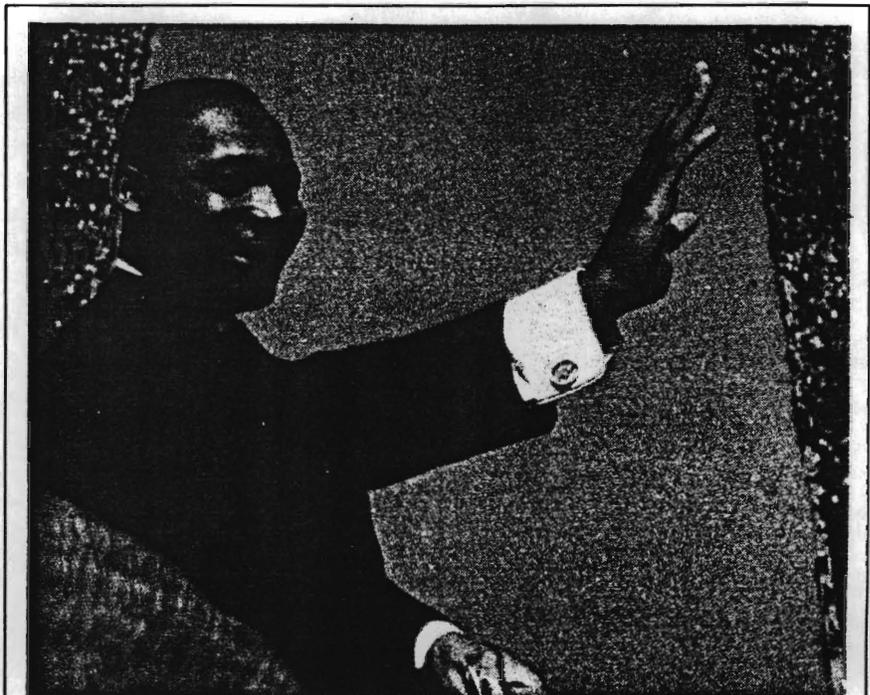
Following that atrocity in Birmingham, President Kennedy made an inspirational speech about the immorality of segregation and the need for action against it. Afterwards, Kennedy submitted to Congress the most encompassing civil rights legislation since the Reconstruction, the "Civil Rights Act of 1964." It was signed later signed into law by President Johnson after Kennedy's assassination. Also in 1963, President Kennedy ordered the National Guard to ensure **Vivian Malone's** and **James Hood's** entrance to the University of Alabama after Governor Wallace had initially physically blocked their way inside the school.

In addition, during that time Blacks were planning what was to become the largest civil rights demon-

stration in history, the "March on Washington" in 1963. Headed by **Martin Luther King, Jr.** the "March" was held on August 28, 1963. More than 250,000 marchers, of whom 60,000 were White, participated in this significant event. At the march, **Dr. King** delivered his inspirational speech "I Have A Dream." His dream, however, was short lived. Eighteen days later, on September 15, 1963, a bomb was tossed into the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama, unmercilessly murdering four little Black girls. For several weeks afterwards, nonviolent tactics became questionable and bore the brunt of heavy criticism.

In 1964, the Civil Rights Act was finally passed, outlawing discrimination in public places. Also in that year, **Dr. King**, 35 years old, became the youngest winner of the Nobel Peace Prize. Moreover in 1964, the Freedom Democratic Party was organized in Mississippi and nominated three Blacks for Congress, the first time since Reconstruction. Despite these gains, the violence against nonviolence continued, one Black and two White civil rights activists were needlessly murdered by local Whites in Mississippi.

Ultimately, Blacks began to react violently. In the summer of 1964, on July 18th, the start of what was to later



March on Washington



Selma Montgomery March: (l to r) John Lewis, Martin Luther King, Rev. Jesse Douglas.

be called "The Long Hot Summer" began in the North. An uprising occurred in Harlem when a 15-year-old Black youth was slain by an off duty policeman.

The next year, in 1965, the Voter's Registration drives down South were in full force. After a conference with fellow demonstrators, SNCC, **Dr. King** and his aides planned a march from Selma to Montgomery. Rather than provide protection for the marchers, Alabama state troopers, along with sheriff's deputies, physically attacked them. Amazingly enough, this scene was televised across the nation, shocking thousands of viewers. Among these viewers, was President Johnson, who became outraged about the inflicted atrocities. Consequently, a federal court ruled that the marchers had a right to commence the fifty mile march from Selma to Montgomery. When they did so, the marchers were protected by the Federalized Alabama National Guardsmen and U.S. Army troops. Eventually that year, the Voting Rights Act became law and suspended literacy tests and the federal registration of voters.

Further rioting began in August 1965, in the Watts section of Los Angeles. When law and order was finally restored, 34 people were dead, 1,032 injured and 3,952 arrested. The struggle continued on.

The following year, in 1966, young Black college students were distressed about the slow path to integration. Since they were disenchanted with the slow ineffective conservative changes, a number of young workers in SNCC and CORE rejected the concepts of liberal alliances and middle class values. Accordingly, they began to reiterate the philosophy of **Malcolm X** who had been assassinated in 1965, and increasingly talked of revolutionary change. Hence the phrase "Black Power" was introduced by **Stokely Carmichael**.

In June 1966, **Carmichael** and other civil rights leaders were in Mississippi to continue a march started by **James Meredith**. However, during the march, Meredith was assassinated by local whites. Again, nonviolence was countered by violence.

Also in 1966, a ten point Black Panther Manifesto demanded freedom, employment, fair trails and the end of police brutality. On campuses throughout America, **H. Rap Brown** instilled the desire in young Blacks for a separate identity which later became evident by the late 60's.

Fifteen years after it had been created in 1945, during the 60's, the division had also become actively involved in the struggle for civil rights. It had grown, expanded its staff and became actively involved in the issues deriving from the social changes tak-

ing place in America. While 94% of the schools in the nation were still segregated, New Jersey State Commissioner Raubinger named two factfinding teams to study race problems existing in the Englewood and Orange school programs. In addition, due to an amendment in 1954 to include housing discrimination under its jurisdiction, along with another amendment in 1961 that provided coverage of sale or rental of certain kinds of privately financed housing and other real property, the division was besieged with complaints statewide against realtors who had committed discriminatory actions.

On May 21, 1963, after having been in the Department of Education for 18 years, the Division Against Discrimination (which had been renamed the Division on Civil Rights in 1960) was transferred to the Department of Law and Public Safety, under the Attorney General. Accordingly, the transfer granted the division additional investigatory powers. Consequently, the agency then became more effective as well as more actively involved in the fight against discrimination.

Near that time, **Director Pfaus** issued a "cease and desist" order to the owner and operator of Robin Dee Day Camp to stop excluding persons from the camp because of race, color, creed or ancestry. Moreover, in Monmouth County the agency investigated a complaint of a Black U.S. Air Force officer who was denied accommodations at two different trailer parks. After a division investigation revealed that the allegations were true, both owners agreed to invite the officer to use their camping facilities.

In Union County, the owner of several garden apartments agreed to provide all prospective tenants with an application form stating, "This is an application for open occupancy housing." This agreement was made after a finding of probable cause had been rendered in a race complaint against the local rental agent.

Like the other states, New Jersey was also encountered with uprisings. In July 1967, a Watts-like revolt occurred in Newark, New Jersey, following the arrest of a Black taxi driver on charges of assaulting a policeman. The aftermath was similar to the Watts riot, 26 persons were killed, 1,100 were injured and more than 1,600 were jailed. Gunfire from Newark policemen

caused most of the deaths and injuries. Consequently, a special commission appointed by **Governor Richard J. Hughes** concluded that the Newark police, the state police and the National Guardsmen had used "excessive and unjustified force" against the Blacks, of whom some were innocent bystanders, and caused their deaths by "indiscriminate" shooting.

During this turbulent time, the Division on Civil Rights was working twenty-four hours a day in an attempt to restore a sense of balance to the state. Though the staff was small, every investigator, including the director, was on the streets. Moreover, **Director Pfaus** was instrumental in establishing a "Police Community Relations Unit" within the division. **Emmett E. Spurlock, Sr.**, an investigator with the Division on Civil Rights, was assigned the full-time responsibility by the division to train all policemen in community relations.

Outside of New Jersey that year, race riots in over 100 cities resulted in an estimated 100 deaths, 2,000 injuries and 12,000 arrests.

The goal of obtaining justice and equality continued to evade the American Blacks. The pacifying tactic during this time was to enact new civil rights legislation, but stall on its enforcement.

President Johnson began his "War on Poverty." New commissions were set up to study and find solutions to the uprisings which were springing up in many urban cities. The National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (the Kerner Commission) reported that "White racism was the fundamental cause of riots in American cities." The Commission also stated, "America was moving toward two societies, one Black, one White—separate and unequal."

Meanwhile, younger Blacks grew more impatient with nonviolent tactics. Accordingly, discussion of self-defense and Black separatism increased among them. A new consciousness was developing which boosted Black pride and cultural identity. An unprecedented flurry of Black activity began in the arts, education, social sciences and other areas of American life. Although this phenomenon splintered some of the alliances with liberal Whites and older Blacks, it

promoted a new degree of Black political and economic self-reliance. Nevertheless, progress was slow and painful. In April 1968, the entire civil rights movement received a harsh blow when **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.** was assassinated by a white sniper in Memphis, Tennessee. His assassination precipitated a national crisis and rioting broke out in more than 100 cities. Forty-six persons were killed in this major rebellion.

"I don't believe he brought me this far too leave me . . ."

As a result of the Movement in the 50's and 60's, Black America forced the doors of opportunity to open wider in the 70's and 80's. Currently, Blacks can move in society with far more freedom than 30 years ago. However, there are more roads to travel.

In the 80's, Black unemployment is twice as high as that of Whites. Economically, one-third of the Black population lives below the poverty level. At a little over half the median income level of Whites, Black income is at the same ratio as it was in 1960. According to a study by the National Urban League, 44% of Black children under 18 years old, are being raised by single females, who are among the nation's poorest. In spite of these statistics, thanks to affirmative action policies, Blacks have gained an unprecedented access to jobs at every level in American businesses.

According to **Black Enterprise Magazine**, the top 100 Black businesses grossed a total of \$2.6 billion in 1984. There have also been impressive gains in politics. By 1985, 6,056 Blacks have become elected officials. Moreover, the number of segregated schools have decreased from 64% to 33%. And the number of Blacks attending higher educational institutions have more than doubled from 6.3% to 14.5%.

Despite these significant gains, the battle for equality continues. And it will do so until there exist the same equality for Blacks and other minorities as there is for white Americans.



VERNON E. JORDAN JR.

Perhaps **Vernon Jordan**, former president of National Urban League said it best:

"Civil Rights don't take place in a vacuum. They are meaningful only in the real world where people have to survive, to work, to raise their families, to instill in their children hope for the future and the skills to function in a society where a broad back and a desire to work are no longer enough. Perhaps, the vision of a fair and just society is starting to rear its head. The journey has been long and laboring and there is no time to rest. We should have a mind to work and work we must. The gains were not a gift. Blood, tears, hunger and many prayers have brought us this far. Only by continuing to actively work will we retain what we have gained. Nevertheless, we still have a way to go."

We can only hope that **Barbara Jordan**, former Congresswoman from Texas was accurate when she said:

"We, the people! It is a very eloquent beginning. But when that document was completed on the seventeenth of September in 1787, I was not included in that 'we, the people.' I felt somehow for many years that George Washington and Alexander Hamilton just left me out by mistake. But through the process of amendment, interpretation and court decision, I have finally been included in 'We, the people.'"

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OUTREACH

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This newsletter is for you and we welcome all suggestions.

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