

Desegregated Busses Run in Alabama--Union Drive Fizzles in South

By Ed Townsend Special to The Christian Science Monitor

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Montgomery Line Yields

By the Associated Press

Montgomery, Ala.

Montgomery's embattled bus company began desegregation operations April 24 despite a city commission order to maintain separate seating facilities for white persons and Negroes.

The bus company, target of a damaging Negro boycott that became part of a nationwide antisegregation crusade, posted a notice saying it had "no choice" except to comply with a Supreme Court ruling that segregation in intracity public carriers is unconstitutional.

The desegregation decree put the bus company squarely in the middle between the Supreme Court ruling and a stern warning earlier April 23 from Mayor W. A. Gayle to continue strict segregation of the races.

J. H. Bagley, manager of Montgomery City Lines, was not immediately available for comment on the desegregation notice posted on the bus company bulletin board above his signature. Mayor Gayle was also not immediately available for comment.

Boycott End Likely

It remained to be seen whether the three-member city commission would take legal action against the bus company for violating state and city laws

requiring separate seating facilities for white persons and Negroes.

The bus company's desegregation decision was timed to become effective with the start of operations at 5 a.m. (c.s.t.) April 24.

Montgomery, in the southeastern quarter of Alabama, has a population of about 120,000. About 50,000 are Negroes. The city is steeped in traditions of the old South. It was the first capital of the Confederacy, and it was here that Jefferson Davis took the oath of office as President of the Confederate States.

The Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., a leader in the six-month-old bus boycott, indicated there was little chance the protest movement would be called off before night time April 24 at the earliest.

The Rev. Mr. King, a Negro Baptist minister, said Negroes generally would continue to refuse to ride the busses until a mass meeting is held to decide if their demands have been met satisfactorily.

He said the bus company's action would seem to satisfy demands for unsegregated seating and courtesy to Negro patrons from bus drivers. But the Rev. Mr. King pointed out that the boycotters also have asked that Negro drivers be employed on predominately Negro routes.

"All persons of good will seek to comply with this decision," the Rev. Mr. King said. He called it a ruling that "all lovers of democracy will welcome" and asked both races to act with "calm reasonableness."

Mayor Determined

Negroes have refused to ride segregated Montgomery City Lines busses since Dec. 5, the day a Negro woman was fined \$14 for refusing to move to the rear of a bus.

Both state and city laws require segregation in all public transportation.

When the Supreme Court ruling was announced April 23, Mayor Gayle emphasized there would be "no change" in the city commission's policy. "We will do everything in our power to maintain segregation on city busses," Mayor Gayle said.

"We're going to enforce the state and city ordinances just as we have been doing, and we expect the bus company to continue to abide by these laws."

Mayor Gayle and Commissioners Clyde Sellers and Frank Parks joined the prowhite Montgomery White Citizens Council last December after early efforts to end the Negro bus boycott failed.

Car Pool Effective

The boycott has been in rigid effect since Dec. 5 when Mrs. Rosa Parks, a Negro seamstress, was fined \$14 in police court because she refused to move to the back of a bus.

A Montgomery county grand



United Press

The Rev. M. L. King, Jr.

jury indicted 90 Negro leaders about three months ago for violating Alabama's antiboycott law. The Rev. Mr. King, the first and only Negro tried thus far, was convicted and has appealed a \$500 fine.

The Rev. Mr. King is president of the Montgomery Improvement Association, a newly formed Negro organization which has operated a car pool for the thousands of Negroes who joined in the protest movement.

The young minister said the MIA's strategy committee planned to meet April 24 to discuss the desegregation decree. Recommendations will be made to the group's executive board, he explained, and the question of ending the boycott would be submitted to a vote at a mass meeting.

The bus company's typewritten notice to its employees that separation of the races would no longer be required became known late April 23.

The notice said: "We have been advised that today the Supreme Court of the United States rendered a decision the effect of which is to hold unconstitutional segregation of the races on busses."

"Under the circumstances, the company has no choice except to discontinue the practice of segregation of passengers on account of race, and drivers will no longer assign seats to passengers by reason of their race."

Costly to Bus Line

The company is a subsidiary of National City Lines, Inc., of Chicago, which operates bus franchises in more than 30 cities throughout the nation.

The mass refusal of Negroes to ride the Montgomery busses has forced the company to raise its rates 50 per cent and drastically curtail operations. It has been estimated that 95 per cent of the Negro customers, who once made up about 75 per cent of the total patronage, have stopped riding busses.

Bus fares were hiked from 10 to 15 cents in a move to offset the loss in revenue caused by the boycott. Officials said the company continued to lose money even with the higher fare, but they never disclosed the dollar-and-cent figures.

Estimates of the economic loss to the company and to Negroes, as well as to white persons whose businesses were affected, have been placed at hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Surprise Move

Early in the boycott, officials of both the Montgomery affiliate and the parent firm issued statements saying the company had no choice but to maintain segregated seating because of the state law.

The order to integrate came as a surprise since the Supreme Court ruling did not directly affect busses in Alabama. No action was expected here until at least May 11 when a three-judge panel is scheduled to hear a federal court suit attacking state and city bus segregation laws as unconstitutional.

The suit was filed by four Montgomery Negro women as an outgrowth of the boycott.

C. C. Owen, president of the Alabama Public Service Commission, pointed out that the PSC has no direct jurisdiction on busses operating within city limits. But he repeated an earlier statement that the PSC would continue to demand segregated seating on public carriers coming under its authority.

Racial Issue Stalls Labor Aides' Gains

By Ed Townsend

Special to The Christian Science Monitor

Birmingham, Ala.

Two months ago the American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations outlined plans for a vast new organizing campaign. Backed by plenty of manpower and money, the drive had as its principal target the unorganized South.

The organization plans have been filed away now. The strong statements by George Meany, president of AFL-CIO, and other federation spokesmen who favor racial integration have so antagonized southern workers that most unions have deferred indefinitely the hard and costly job of trying to sign them up.

Here is why:

The Retail, Wholesale & Department Store Union had membership cards from a claimed 25 per cent of the employees of a Birmingham department store in February and was making what it considered steady progress toward a spring representation election. The day after Mr. Meany issued a statement in Miami Beach demanding a federal probe of school segregation in Alabama, RWDSU's campaign collapsed.

Its organizers were told coldly to "tear up the cards" by those who already had signed up; others refused to have anything to do with "an organization that is fighting us" and that advocates "mixing the races" in the South.

Textile Drive Collapsed

In Charleston, the United Textile Workers was making progress toward unionizing employees of Manhattan Raybestos

at the same time. In the wave of resentment against the AFL-CIO integration stand, UTW's support dwindled away to almost nothing. Its drive also collapsed.

More recently, the Textile Workers Union of America was one day away from an expected victory in a National Labor Relations Board representation election in the Carolinas when racism flared up. The employer walked through the all-white

equal opportunity for employment.

2. The racial issue furnishes those employers who want to fight unionism with a potent weapon.

Organizing Delayed

To the unions, the first of these is the more important. Federal labor laws provide some degree of protection against the second, even though where a racial-equality issue is raised—as in the Carolina cotton mill—"coercion" in the accepted sense may be difficult to prove.

Generally, AFL-CIO isn't doing any organizing now in the South, although it has more than \$4,000,000 available and some 320 organizers ready. The delay is due as much to jurisdictional squabbles between textile, paper, wood, and other rival unions in the federation as to racial tension.

The United Rubber Workers still is organizing—and claims some recent successes—but it acknowledges that "problems" are being encountered. TWUA also is staying busy in the textile industry, and making limited gains, but its staff people admit that they are not sure "how long we'll be able to go on as we have—it depends a lot on local situations." The United Steelworkers, is about at a standstill.

A United Automobile Workers spokesman in Detroit said his organization is immobilized, adding, "When you have a fire in your house, you stop building an annex until you put it out." UAW has been troubled by a revolt in its International Harvester local in Memphis.

James Ducey, vice-president of the International Woodworkers,

one of the unions hoping for AFL-CIO aid in the South, recently returned to Portland, Ore., after a three-month study of the racial tensions on union activities in Dixie. He commented guardedly that "racism is naturally going to hurt union organizing over the long pull... I don't mind telling you I am

worried at what is taking place." (This is one of a series of dispatches by a team of correspondents exploring the segregation situation in the South. Mr. Townsend is writing about the state of organized labor. Others are reporting from Mississippi, Louisiana, the Carolinas, and Virginia.)

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mill with a Negro in overalls, pointing out machines and explaining the production operation. When they had left, a foreman told workers, "That's your new foreman, when the union comes in." TWUA took a solid drubbing.

Those are typical incidents. They point up two things that stand in the way of union expansion plans in the South today:

1. Because of the racial issue, workers in southern states (all less than 25 per cent organized by unions) are now more than ever wary of unionism; they fear that top-level labor pressure for integration in schools will be followed, eventually, by pressure for full social and economic integration — including