It is too soon to determine whether the parity movement reinforced (as some critics suggest, cynically understated) as early as 1945 by Johnson, the social and intellectual foundations of sexual inequality. The movement's embrace of numerical equality, however, both has mobilized feminists in other countries and still appears resistant to the ceiling effect that critics of specific systems have pinpointed. In France, however, if the movement targets women's de facto, voluntarily and politically motivated barriers, the battle remains to be won. As one brochure published by the Lower Normandy region quite optimistically proclaims, "There's an ongoing effort, in our modern Republic, to move beyond the politics of equality to a culture of equality." [See also Citizenship; Equality; Feminism; France; Gender Theory; and Suffrage.]

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PARITY

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BIBLIOGRAPHY


TODD WILSFORD

PARX, ROSA (1913-2005), civil rights activist whose challenge to segregated bus seating at the start of the 1955 Montgomery bus boycott is credited with setting that event in the lore of the American civil rights movement. Although public memory credits this icon with beginning the civil rights movement in this single act of defiance, there is truth in her personal history that perhaps emphasizes that of the movement which stretched back further than that fateful day.

Born Rosa McCauley on 4 February 1913 in historic Tannegue, Alabama, Parks was reared on a familiar and honorable path of public service for African American women. With the encouragement of her mother, Leona McCauley, young Rosa envisioned becoming an educator. She attended the Montgomery Industrial School for Girls in her early years and finished two grades of a laboratory high school at Alabama State Teachers' College for Negroes. However, difficulties with family finances and illness interrupted her pursuit of education, but she did resume her secondary education, earning a high school diploma in 1934. With Depression-era jobs especially scarce for African American women, Parks took various jobs, although she is best known for being a seamstress.

In 1932 she married the activist and barber Raymond Parks, who had participated extensively in the case of the famed Scottsboro Boys, in which nine black teenagers were accused of raping. Rosa Parks had a close-up view of an activist's life through Raymond's community work. Soon she took up her own projects with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), which she joined officially in 1943. As NAACP secretary, she focused on voter registration and desegregation. But another cause became a political priority as well: seeking justice for women victimized by sexual violence. By the end of the 1940s, she was well known throughout Alabama because of her activism. After 1955 international acclaim followed.

On 1 December of that year, Parks boarded a city bus after work. She paid her ten-cent fare and took a middle seat in "no man's land," a section open to blacks as long as no whites were sitting. Soon the white section filled to capacity, and the next white rider boarded and found no available seat. Segregation law allowed the driver to approach black passengers and demand that they move. No black passenger could sit in the same row as, let alone next to, a white person. Of the four black passengers in her row, Parks was the only one who refused to move. Her arrest touched off the most celebrated instances of mass action in U.S. history. For 381 days, black citizens stayed off buses, eventually forcing the desegregation of city transportation. The middle-aged Parks became an inspirational symbol of a protest publicized around the world. She remained an active participant in the bus boycott as well. She devised daily strategies, organized an alternative transportation system, and staged food and clothing distribution for those fired because of their boycott participation.

While Parks became a cherished icon to many, the boycott's victory came with a price—she and her husband found it hard to find employment because of their political work. In 1957 they moved to Detroit, where Rosa Parks resumed her activism, participating in many well-publicized marches and other protests throughout the 1960s. She also took an interest in local politics and worked on election campaigns in the 1970s. She received the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1996 and the Congressional Gold Medal in 1999. After her death on 24 October 2005, she continued to make history when she became the first woman in U.S. history to lie in honor in the Capitol Rotunda in Washington, D.C.

[See also Civil Rights Movement.]

BIBLIOGRAPHY


CHENG KAI LEE

PARXNS, LUCY (1853-1942), radical agitator for labor and free speech in Chicago around the turn of the nineteenth century. Anarchist, syndicalist, agitator for the rights of workers (particularly working women) and the dispossessed, and defender of political prisoners and free speech, Lucy Parsons held that the oppression of people, whatever their nationality, race, or gender, was economic and rooted in elective politics. She devoted her life to revolutionizing the American labor movement from the 1870s to the 1940s.

Parks was born near Waco, Texas. She may have been born into slavery, but she always denied African heritage by avowing a mixed Native American and Hispanic ancestry, although any identity other than working-class was irrelevant to her. In 1871 she married Albert R. Parsons, a former Confederate army scout turned Radical Republican newspaper editor supporting the political aspirations of freed persons. With Albert, a Klansman and the architect of a plan to exterminate the Reverend Joseph Lane on the eve of the end of Radical Reconstruction around 1873, the couple moved from the periphery of the historical struggle to its "storm center," as she called it.

The Parsons devoted the rest of their lives to the industrial labor struggle, at first through union organizing and Socialist Party politics. Lucy helped find the Chicago Woman's Union in the 1870s and joined the Knights of Labor after it began admitting women in 1881. As the strife between labor and capital intensified, Albert became increasingly alienated from the electoral process and, often with Lucy in the lead, became attuned to anarchist doctrine of promoting the "general strike" through "direct action." Lucy opened a dressmaking business in their home after Albert was blacklisted from the mainstream press, and she bore two children while both she and her husband wrote for the radical (mostly anarchist) labor press and organized and addressed large protest gatherings. One such gathering, at the Chicago Haymarket on 4 May 1886, led to a police raid in which a bomb was thrown by an unknown assassin, killing a police man. Albert Parsons and others working for the radical press were convicted of a controversial trial of a conspiracy to kill police and charged.

For the rest of her life Parsons drew inspiration and historical lessons from the sacrifice of her husband and his comrades in the struggle for industrial cities of America and was often jailed for trying to defend imprisoned labor leaders. She eschewed elective politics because it was not votes that counted but money. She rested her argument on the labor theory of value, which she understood vascularly and communicated as slaves of slavery. But she rejected the anar- chist libertarianism of Emma Goldman, which sought to liberate women from the slavery of marriage and family through the practice of free sexual association. Parsons insisted that whatever is oppressive about marriage and family arises from capital's incessant need for cheaper labor and is not inherent in the family itself. The responsibilities and mutual obligations shared by wives, husbands, and children should provide the foundation for the future commonwealth of labor.

For thirty years after the Haymarket affair, Chicago police tried to prevent Lucy from speaking at public gatherings, declaring that she was "more dangerous than a thousand rioters." When she died in 1942, the authorities confiscated and destroyed her books and papers. Since the 1960s her life and work have received close attention as her influence is resonating through a new generation of writers, artists, feminists and radical activists collectively seeking social justice through direct action. [See also Labor.]

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C. FRED BLAKE

PASSIVE RESISTANCE. See Civil Disobedience.