



WHAT IS THE ROLE OF CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE TODAY?

Background for students:

In light of the death of civil rights pioneer Rosa Parks (1913-2005), much of the nation has been examining Parks' monumental action and legacy.

Parks' refusal to give up her seat on a bus to a white man in the segregated South helped ignite a nationwide movement toward correcting deeply ingrained biases based on race in both the American government and in society.

Moreover, Parks' action was one of passive resistance or civil disobedience - a form of protest against a government or organization in which the one protesting refuses to abide by a law that is contrary to his/her beliefs, while also refusing to engage in violent behavior to correct the injustice.

Parks broke the law -- at the time, in 1955 Montgomery, Ala., segregation ordinances required blacks and whites to be separated in public facilities, such as restrooms or buses -- in a peaceful manner, serving as a model for others.