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The Cases of Rosa Parks and Viola Desmond:
The Influence on the Civil Rights Movement in the
USA and Canada

Bakalářská práce

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Prohlašuji, že jsem bakalářskou práci vypracovala samostatně a použila pouze uvedené prameny literatury.

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Anna Kopecká

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List of all abbreviations

USA = the United States of America

US = the United States

KKK = the Ku Klux Klan

NSAACP = the Nova Scotia Association for the Advancement of Colored People

NAACP = the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

MIA = the Montgomery Improvement Association

Keywords:

Black, Negro, Black American = These are historic names for African American or for African Canadian.

Caucasian = It is a historic term for a person with white skin.

Segregation = Keeping one group apart from others.

Discrimination = Treating someone differently from others, usually because you like one group more than another.

the Civil Rights Movement = It was a struggle for social justice for African Americans, which took place mainly in 1950s and 1960s in North America (USA + Canada).

NOTE:

Nowadays, terms such as Blacks, Negroes and Black Americans are considered and I also find them offensive. That is why politically correct terms Afro-Americans and African Americans are primarily used. The original terms are just used in some citations in this thesis. Collocations such as “black people, black children, people with black skin, white people, white children or people with white skin” are used for the simple text continuity and not to express any offence.

Abstract

Although the case of Viola Desmond is not as popular as Rosa Parks's case, she was also a woman of black skin with courage and determination to stand up for her rights. These two women are known for influencing civil rights movements in Canada and in the USA. The project clarifies the background of their decisions and their consequences. The aim of the thesis is to find out how strong impact they had on the fight for African Americans equal rights and what was and was not achieved by their effort. The project initially outlines historical development of slavery, segregation and discrimination against African Americans and African Canadians and finally, part of the project is a detailed comparison of both racial discrimination cases.

1 Introduction

The bachelor thesis describes and compares the stories of Rosa Parks and Viola Desmond. Both women were arrested for violating segregation laws in different situations and different places, but it was never officially admitted that it was a matter of segregation customs and discrimination. I am interested in racial issues, and it was very educative and unbelievable for me it took so long to give African Americans the equal treatment and opportunities as people with white skin had.

The project deals with the history of African Americans as slaves, sharecroppers, second-class citizens and other unequal treatment based on colour of skin. The first part of the thesis is about history and context that should be known before the description of the individual cases of racial segregation. The following part is about Viola Desmond and segregation policy in different places in Canada. The project continues with Rosa Parks's case and the segregation laws in the USA from Rosa's point of view. The final part of the thesis is the comparison of both cases and conclusion. Nevertheless, a list of abbreviations is attached to better understand the text.

Both women were important for their determination to stand up for the civil rights of African Americans in North America. The goal of the thesis is to find out how strong impact these women had on the civil rights movements in the USA and in Canada.

The civil rights movement finally changed the inequality of Afro-Americans and segregation laws. However, the complete equality has not been achieved until now. Dr Martin Luther King, Jr. stated in the Acceptance Speech for the Nobel Peace Prize 1964: “I refuse to accept the view that mankind is so tragically bound to the starless midnight of racism and war that the bright daybreak of peace and brotherhood can never become a reality... I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word.” (NobelPrize.org, 2021).

2 Overview of Slavery and Segregation in the USA

This bachelor project begins with clarifying how African Americans got to America and why they were discriminated. All the answers can be found in the following abridged history of African Americans.

2.1 Slavery

The African Americans were brought as slaves by slave traders to Americas. Afro-Americans were not considered as people but as things. According to Dasilva, Finkelstein and Loshin (1972), as the “New World” was discovered by Christopher Columbus in 1492, the Europeans (primarily from Portugal, Spain and England) saw the opportunity to bring wealth back to Europe. These countries established their own colonies in Americas and their European kings believed that the colonies would provide wealth and power. Colonizers faced the lack of men for work. Therefore, slavery came soon after the first settlers. It is said that in 1503 (11 years after Columbus' first voyage) first “Negro” slaves were brought to America. The slaves were used primarily to work the land, sometimes to be servants and rarely craftsmen. Their lives were very poor. In return for their hard work slaves got only necessary clothing, shelter, food and water. The colonists did not think about the cruelty they had done to slaves and slavery grew because white people made money from it. “Historians agree that at least 15 million Africans were brought to the Americas. Some have placed the number as high as 50 million.” (Dasilva, Finkelstein and Loshin, 1972, p. 47). (Dasilva, Finkelstein and Loshin, 1972)

There were thirteen English colonies that later became the United States and the real wealth was in its farming land. The settlers needed help to do all the work. In 1619 a ship from Holland carrying Africans who were promised freedom after several years in the service for their new masters stopped at Jamestown, Virginia. They were sold as indentured servants and many of them became successful after the end of their service. However, many of them tried to escape during the service and that was a reason for a change. “Before long Negroes were brought in as slaves, no as indentured servants” (Dasilva, Finkelstein and Loshin, 1972, p. 59). Fertile farmland and good climate for raising products such as sugar, tobacco, rice or indigo required a great deal of labour. The demand of slaves grew. In 1661 a law to make slavery legal in Virginia was passed. (Dasilva, Finkelstein and Loshin, 1972) According to Higginbotham (2013), the racial

inequality was officially imposed by this law and a long history of racial oppression motivated by desires of white people for economic exploitation.

There was a big difference between being a slave in the South or a slave in the North. While slaves in the North could use hospitals and a few schools, nothing like that was possible for slaves in the South. In 18th century, many people in the North realized keeping slaves was wrong, and soon after they agreed slavery was evil and they wanted to end it. (Dasilva, Finkelstein and Loshin, 1972)

During the American Revolution (1765-1783), when the Colonists broke away from English control and gained the right to rule over themselves, African Americans proved to be one of the key reasons for success. African Americans were good, brave and teachable soldiers. Both sides offered freedom to the slave fighters in the war. "It is believed that about 5,000 Afro-Americans, free and slave, served in the Continental armies. They served well." (Dasilva, Finkelstein and Loshin, 1972, p. 71). After the war many African Americans went to Canada or to Europe. Although the war was not over yet, some leaders sought to end slavery. The most famous names were Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson, who was the author of the Declaration of Independence published on 4th July 1776 where he wrote: "all men are created equal". They tried to create a plan to end slavery and get Congress on their side. Unfortunately, most members of Congress disagreed and rejected the proposal. At least, Congress passed a law for the Northwest Territory in 1787, where slavery was banned in the emerging five states. (Dasilva, Finkelstein and Loshin, 1972)

Slavery was not forbidden even when the Constitution of the United States was set up in 1789. The country was growing west and slavery too. The end of slavery was not budget-wise for slaveholders who occupied new farmland and had business in cotton, rice, and tobacco. The states of Constitution were divided into "free" and "slave". "By 1819 the number of slave states and the number of free states was equal. Neither side had control of Congress." (Dasilva, Finkelstein and Loshin, 1972, p. 91). The United States government passed a law ending the African slave trade in 1808. Another law had to be passed twelve years later because the slave trade (smuggling) still continued after the first law. Some states ended slavery with one law and others ended slavery slowly. In both cases it looked like a victory for Afro Americans. But then "cotton gin" was invented and a new clothing industry demanded all cotton it could get. The owners of cotton plantations

convinced themselves that slavery is good for the slaves and the number of slaves grew enormously again. By 1860 the number of slaves as cheapest labour had reached four million. (Dasilva, Finkelstein and Loshin, 1972)

The living conditions of four million slaves were still very poor around 1860. A marriage between slaves was not legal, a family could be separated and sold any time the owner wanted. Slaves had to have the same religion as their owner even though they were not given the Bible. A slave could not be educated because it could be dangerous for the owners, and other rules were used by slaveowners. It got even worse with very strict laws called “slave codes” which helped to control the slaves in the South. After violating these laws, the slaves were punished by public whipping. It is no wonder the slaves tried to escape, buy their freedom or revolt with two possible results: to kill or to be killed. They had a couple of options to escape: to Mexico, to join an Indian tribe or to go north and reach a free state in the US or Canada. One of the ways to go north was through so called Underground Railroad. Thousands of white people and free Afro-Americans helped more than 50,000 slaves to escape to the free states or Canada through the road in thirty years (1830-1860). (Dasilva, Finkelstein and Loshin, 1972)

Many new factories opened in the North and a new way of thinking came with the new industries. The businessmen wanted cheap labour as before but they did not want to care about their lives anymore. Therefore, they hired workers for long hours and low wages. The former slaves took these jobs because they came to the North very poor. The cities kept growing. Many white people wanted to help the newcomers but many people discriminated against the immigrants. The segregation began and African Americans had to face it. Afro-Americans had to sit on back seats in public transport, use special cars, use only some restaurants and shops and they were not admitted by some doctors or hospitals. Another problem was separated education for black and white children.

Segregation sometimes led to violence. Some white people turned to the discriminatory laws, and when the laws did not help, they reacted violently against African Americans. The president Abraham Lincoln elected in 1860 believed that slavery is evil and should be slowly ended. The end of slavery seemed to be coming to an end. The Republicans wanted to stop spreading of slavery and they soon occupied most of the government seats because there were more people in the North than in the South. But the Supreme Court was mostly represented by Southern judges and they said a slave could

not be considered a citizen of the US. Shortly afterwards they forbade Congress to pass laws influencing slavery. People all over the North got angry about the decision. The Southern states did not want to be under Republican rule and therefore wanted to separate from the North – from the United States. These eleven states set up the Confederate States of America with its own government in the South. Abraham Lincoln wanted to keep peace in the country but the Confederate army attacked the Union (the North) and therefore he had to fight back. It was the start of the American Civil War. (Dasilva, Finkelstein and Loshin, 1972)

Lincoln's main focus was to save the Union, not to end slavery. However, when the Union Army reached the South, many slaves fled their owners and joined the Union troops. They sought freedom and revenge. In 1861 the Confiscation Act was passed which ruled to free every slave who was liberated by the Union Army. One year later another law freeing all slaves who helped the Confederacy was passed. It resulted in open acceptance of Afro-Americans in the Union Army and Navy. The so-called United States Colored Troops were very brave and beneficial to the American Civil War. There were over 200,000 Afro-Americans fighting for the North during the war. In 1862 an important battle was fought at Antietam, Maryland, where the Union Army won. It gave Lincoln the courage to end slavery in all states in 1863, which was a part of his aim to win the war. It was worth it. The Civil War ended after four years of fighting, in 1865. The Union won and people thought that freedom for all was there. Nevertheless, they gained freedom without equality. (Dasilva, Finkelstein and Loshin, 1972)

Higginbotham (2013) stated that African Americans were enslaved until 1865 and were perceived as inferior. According to Dasilva, Finkelstein and Loshin (1972) a new government had to be set up after the war. Its representatives had to secure the rights of four million African Americans through laws and their real effect in society. Lincoln wanted to make all southern states representatives swear that slaves would remain free and only after that he would give them back their rights in the country's government. Not all the states had managed to do so before Lincoln was assassinated in 1865. (Dasilva, Finkelstein and Loshin, 1972)

Powerful men in Congress believed in many changes in the South. They wanted to force the governments of the southern states to make every African-American an equal citizen with all rights. However, the new president Johnson wanted to have all states back

together as soon as possible and therefore he allowed the states of the South to set up new governments without their swearing they will give full and equal rights to African Americans. Unsurprisingly, the southern states returned to the old ways. They renamed the old “slaves codes” to “Black Codes” and African Americans were limited again. They could not run a business, buy land in a city and their civil rights were taken away. (Dasilva, Finkelstein and Loshin, 1972)

The Radical Congress members did not agree and decided to take control in their hands. There were three amendments changed and added to the Constitution. “The Thirteenth Amendment ended slavery for all time. The Fourteenth Amendment made Negroes citizens of the United States and of their own states. The Amendment also said that no state could make or try to enforce any law that took away the rights of any citizen. Each person had to have the full protection of the law. The Fifteenth Amendment told all states that all citizens could vote, even those who had once been slaves.” (Dasilva, Finkelstein and Loshin, 1972, p. 188). These changes had been approved by 1870. (Dasilva, Finkelstein and Loshin, 1972)

Together with these amendments, the Reconstruction Act of 1867 was passed to start over with new governments and with new rules. The Civil Rights Act was passed one year earlier, and guaranteed all rights to all citizens regardless of skin colour. These laws were supported by army troops sent to the South and by The Freedmen's Bureau that helped former slaves with food, finding jobs, education and taught them how to vote. The Bureau built lots of schools for all African Americans and also schools to train Afro-American teachers. They were eager to learn. This was the first opportunity providing education to all given by the state governments in the South. African Americans could suddenly hold government jobs such as sheriffs, town clerks, mayors and even senators. Everything seemed to be going well for African Americans after the Civil War. The laws were passed to bring equal rights to all and their lives improvement was expected. However, according to Higginbotham (2013) some laws and decisions after the Civil War supported white people's desires for racial isolation and their resistance grew as Afro-Americans demanded schools, housing and public accommodations for all. It would be nice to end the cruel history of African Americans here, but unfortunately this dream failed and harsh conditions for African Americans were reintroduced. (Dasilva, Finkelstein and Loshin, 1972), (Higginbotham, 2013)

By 1890 the South was under the rule of white men again. The power of governments was taken away as well as the soldiers who had come to protect the rights of all citizens and the Freedmen's Bureau was also ended. Afro-Americans grew poor, afraid and without the right to vote. They could be killed without punishing their murderer. It is not enough to issue a law if it is not abided by. Corruption spread through the governments of the southern states. Many high-ranking officials used their power to make money for themselves. When white people gained control of the governments, they passed the Black Codes. These laws harshly restricted the rights of Afro-Americans and they faced discrimination again. Their living conditions were not very different from slavery. African Americans worked as sharecroppers. It means they farmed land which belonged to a white man and they got only a small share of what they grew. (Dasilva, Finkelstein and Loshin, 1972)

Unfortunately, it got even worse. A new secret group called Ku Klux Klan (henceforth KKK) was formed and promoted white supremacy. Its members wore white robes with hoods to cover their faces. The aim of the group was to destroy all the rights of African Americans without hesitation to use violence. KKK members intervened at night and set fire to houses, schools or churches, burned and hung Afro-Americans if they had not followed their rules. Despite its official ban in 1871, KKK continued its violent operations. Thousands of members of the group had been arrested before 1900, but the terror of Afro-Americans continued. Some KKK members were by profession police officers and therefore only a few murderers were punished for their actions. It seemed the government lost interest in the rights of African Americans. Finally, a compromise between the Republicans and the Democrats from the Southern states was reached in 1877. It meant the end of the Reconstruction and brought freedom for African Americans. "Much of the South became a new kind of slave world in the years 1880 to 1905. Violent white men ruled. They kept the black people in their states under tight control." (Dasilva, Finkelstein and Loshin, 1972, p. 201). (Dasilva, Finkelstein and Loshin, 1972)

2.2 The Jim Crow World and Segregation in the USA and in Canada

White men wanted to keep their control over the South forever. They treated African Americans as second-class citizens and kept them segregated. "Jim Crow" was a song about an Afro-American but it later gained a special meaning. It meant the customs

and laws, especially in the South, that kept Afro-Americans from improving their lives. Afro-Americans lost their rights through Jim Crow. Most of the Jim Crow's laws with two goals were passed in the 25 years after 1890. The goals were to keep African Americans separated and to take away as many rights as possible to discriminate them. White owners of newspapers influenced other people with Jim Crow ideas and forced all in the South to accept these laws. (Dasilva, Finkelstein and Loshin, 1972)

Although there were some groups protesting against the Jim Crow's laws, none succeeded. The Federal government did not bother to use its power to protect the rights of African Americans. This obligation was left to individual states, districts and towns which was a great mistake. Violent groups such as KKK could harm Afro-Americans without fear of any punishment. These Jim Crow ideas were also spread through newspapers that started cooperating with violent groups and political leaders of the South. (Dasilva, Finkelstein and Loshin, 1972)

Conditions such as “grandfather clause” or a poll tax were added as a part of a law. It meant a man was not allowed to vote unless his grandfather had been allowed to vote. Because it was not possible for Afro-Americans to vote before the Civil War, this law made it impossible for them to vote completely in the South. The poll tax was a tax for voting and it was a higher price than a poor farmer could afford. White leaders of the South used these ways to keep the poor from voting. However, the Court found the grandfather clause illegal and therefore another way was found – the literacy test. It was almost impossible to pass the test. The attempt by white supremacy thus succeeded and they finally eliminated Afro-Americans from voting. The African Americans lost hope for a better tomorrow. A segregation wall between white and black people was built and thanks to that, even the poorest white man felt as something more important than any Afro-American man. The effort to make Afro-Americans feel useless as much as possible worked. (Dasilva, Finkelstein and Loshin, 1972)

Segregation has also affected transport. Afro-American passengers were not worthy of travelling along with the white passengers. According to Parks (1999) the buses were segregated not in the middle of the bus but in the way African Americans could not be inside the bus, they had to stay in luggage space on the roof of the bus. The words “Colored” and “White Only” began to divide seats in public transport and entrances to shops, restaurants, waiting rooms and other places. These Jim Crow rules were used in

the South only. However, when an Afro-American from the North came to the South, he or she had to obey the southern rules. Failure to comply with local laws could result in arrest. Strict rules also applied to all public segregated schools. Only white children could be taught by white teachers in schools for white children, which got more money from the state government. It was forbidden by law for a white teacher to teach in a public school for African Americans. (Dasilva, Finkelstein and Loshin, 1972)

Segregation laws got even worse when a marriage or an affair between white and black people was forbidden or when an African American could not be served at any “white” place - not even in a hospital if a person was on the verge of life and death. Afro-Americans could not buy lunch at “white” lunch counter or be in the same hotel as white people. African Americans had to seek for food or place to sleep in different parts of town than white people. Each state had adjusted the conditions according to its “needs” and lusts. For example there were Jim Crow taxicabs in Mississippi in 1922 and separate parks for black and white people in Georgia in 1905. Every possible aspect of an African American life was separated from a white one from birth to death. On top of that African Americans had no hope for better future. They were poor, got worse education, worse jobs and the Federal government did nothing to stop their suffering. The Jim Crow laws lasted more than 50 years. (Dasilva, Finkelstein and Loshin, 1972)

Education and new skills were needed to acquire for African Americans to make a change of their living conditions. Many Afro-Americans saw an opportunity to be better and to manage better even they had to do it in separation. They decided to do their best and to be “separate but equal”. This was a way of adjusting rather than fighting. It was pointed out how much the South could have been better if one-third of the population had been given the opportunity to prove worthy. The equality for African Americans could only come after their demonstrating their good work performance. This opinion was agreed by president Grover Cleveland too. (Dasilva, Finkelstein and Loshin, 1972)

The only hope for African Americans in the South was to move in the northern states, where industry was rapidly growing. Simultaneously, thousands of immigrants came from Europe to search for jobs and better living conditions to the North. After a while, all good jobs were filled and therefore African Americans were forced to take those lowest in pay and dignity. Even at the beginning of the World War I African Americans could take only menial jobs. The Jim Crow laws did not weaken during the war and

African Americans were further discriminated against. Moreover, the KKK had returned to power in 1915 and more and more African Americans were lynched. The Federal government as well as president Wilson did nothing to stop it. (Dasilva, Finkelstein and Loshin, 1972)

On the other hand, during the war many young men left to fight and immigration from Europe stopped. The vacancies in factories needed to be filled and African Americans got those jobs. Thousands of Afro-Americans came to the northern big cities and settled in segregated areas called “Negro ghettos”. Afro-Americans in the North faced discrimination again and African Americans who stayed in the South had to deal with more than five million members of the KKK. The situation for Afro-Americans seemed hopeless. (Dasilva, Finkelstein and Loshin, 1972)

According to Dasilva, Finkelstein and Loshin (1972), there were many riots in the South but they were not successful. Groups and later organizations were set up to demand and defend equality promised by the constitution. By equality was meant the right to vote for the government representatives, right for social justice, which means equal treatment for all, and civil rights that the Constitution of the US with its Fourteenth Amendment (1868) explains as: “the equal protection of the laws”. However, the Fourteenth Amendment did not function properly even after the Civil War or the Reconstruction period. *The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People* (henceforth the NAACP) established in 1910 was an organization demanding the equality. The NAACP searched laws to protect African Americans and to end the Jim Crow laws. The organization was successful and won many cases in court. Other organizations such as *The Urban League* or *The Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters* were formed with the same goal, to bring equality to all. (Dasilva, Finkelstein and Loshin, 1972), (Bobek, 2001)

During the Jazz age in the 1920s the Jim Crow rules did not improved, but even so, African Americans decided to enjoy life with music, dance and other artistic activities. Ten years later, the Great Depression came and poverty hit the whole country for other ten years. Afro-Americans were very poor. The government decided to provide work opportunities to poor people by building roads, public housing or public buildings. It was immediate help for Afro-Americans because they could buy food for themselves and their families. (Dasilva, Finkelstein and Loshin, 1972)

On the other hand, schooling for African Americans improved and there were schools, high schools and even universities. In 1938 the Supreme Court allowed African Americans to enter state colleges mostly located in the North. Jim Crow laws were criticised by president Roosevelt in 1941, when he ruled for equal treatment of all in work. Organizations kept fighting for equal rights. However, during the World War II segregation continued. There were only menial jobs for black soldiers, separated training for black and white people and different opportunities. The Jim Crow laws did not improve until the end of the WWII. On the contrary, the situation of discrimination got even worse in the late 1940s when people got back from the War. African Americans did the same work in the war as the whites, but they were treated differently after the war. Afro-Americans came back from serving their country and they were welcomed into segregation laws and disrespect again. They did not even get the right to vote. Unsurprisingly, they did not like it. (Parks, 1999), (Dasilva, Finkelstein and Loshin, 1972)

All the schools in the South were segregated. The fight for integration was the fight against discrimination. The NAACP tried to explain and show that the rule “separate but equal” was wrong. There could be no equality for separated African Americans children with separated education and opportunities. Black schools were not as good as white schools. However, the Supreme Court found legal reasons to support Jim Crow laws until 1954, when the Supreme Court had to rule on behalf of Afro-Americans that “It was separate but not equal.” (Dasilva, Finkelstein and Loshin, 1972, p. 311). According to Higginbotham (2013) the famous Supreme decision prohibiting racial segregation in schools was enacted thanks to the NAACP lawyers and gave hope that white superiority and racial segregation in all fields would end. The Court stated that “in the field of public education the doctrine *separate but equal* has no place. Separate education facilities are inherently unequal.” (Justia, 1954). All schools had to be integrated from then on. Although some leaders of the Southern states refused to obey this law they were forced to let Afro-American students enter the schools by the United States Army. Higginbotham (2013) claims that opportunities in education and employment increased after these laws. (Dasilva, Finkelstein and Loshin, 1972), (Parks, 1999)

African Americans were separated legally until 1954 and are victimized illegally until today. Unfortunately, this approach continued even when Barack Obama became president of the United States in 2009. According to Higginbotham (2013, p. 141): “The

desire by some whites for racial isolation, and the opportunity to victimize blacks, persists.“. Bobek (2001) argues social discrimination was constant. African Americans were called by their first names by white people, but they had to address white people with respect and full name. Afro-Americans were expected to step off the sidewalks to make enough room for Caucasians. They even had to use separate parks, waiting rooms, schools, churches or other separate public facilities. A marriage between white and black people was prohibited under a threat of castration or hanging. Water fountains were labelled “White” and “Colored”. The Jim Crow laws have weakened at the end of 20th century, but the desire to separate one race from another has remained. (Higginbotham, 2013), (Bobek, 2001)

The 1950s and 1960s were stormy for their protests and uprisings for equal civil rights for all, as it is demonstrated later in this thesis. „The equal protection of law in 1896 meant apartheid, in 1954 chilly equality, and in 1978 tolerance of *Affirmative Action*.“ (Bobek, 2001). The Affirmative Action meant a new challenge for fast and full racial equality, primarily in the way of social and economic equality. (Bobek, 2001)

The abridged history of slavery and segregation came to its end for now. Nevertheless, it is possible to learn more about segregation and discrimination from the personal experience in the following chapters.

3 The Case of Viola Desmond – the Roseland Theatre

Viola Desmond was an African Canadian citizen of Nova Scotia who was famous for her courage and determination to stand up for her rights. Viola faced criminal prosecution for violating the racial segregation laws in New Glasgow in 1946. Her case marked a turning point in civil rights movement and social justice across Canada.

Nova Scotia Museum (2015) states that Viola Desmond was born as Viola Davis in Halifax on 6th July 1914, to a middle-class family. Her parents were racially mixed and they talked about themselves as “colored”, which was a rarity in early 20th century in Nova Scotia. They worked hard and were involved in community matters. Viola followed their footsteps because the community was very friendly and it could be said white and black people behaved quite respectfully to themselves. She taught in two racial-segregated schools for a short time and then she decided to build her own career as an entrepreneur in the field of beauty culture for African Canadian women in Nova Scotia. Viola studied this kind of professional beauty culture in Montréal, New York and New Jersey. The study was worth it because it helped Viola to open her own salon *Vi's Studio of Beauty Culture* and the Desmond School of Beauty Culture, which was successful and later attended by students from other provinces. Both the studio and the school were primarily for African Nova Scotia women. Desmond taught them how to build their own businesses in the field of beauty and thus provide employment for other African Canadian women. The students were glad to have the opportunity to study there because they were denied to entry similar white-only schools. (Nova Scotia Museum, 2015)

The case of racial injustice happened in the town of New Glasgow on November 8th, 1946. As Nova Scotia Museum (2015) presents, Viola Desmond was travelling by car from Halifax to Sydney, Nova Scotia, when her car broke down in New Glasgow. A repairman told her it would take a couple of hours to repair the car and therefore she decided to spend that time watching a movie at the Roseland Theatre. Warner (2020) states that she came to the window to buy a ticket for a seat on the main floor, but she was given a ticket for the balcony. She walked unaware of the wrong ticket onto the main floor area and found a perfect seat for her. Then an employee of the theatre touched her shoulder and informed her that she had a cheap ticket and had to move up to the balcony. However, there the sources slightly diverge. (Nova Scotia Museum, 2015)

Before introducing different versions of the story, the social situation in the first half of the 20th century in America should be clarified. According to Dasilva, Finkelstein and Loshin (1972, p. 214), an African American or African Canadian, who wanted to visit a theatre or a cinema, had to buy a ticket in a separate booth, enter such a building through a separate entrance, and had to sit on a balcony. As Warner (2020) states the stand selling tickets in the Roseland Theatre was not separated, but the seats in the theatre were. The theatre hall was reserved only for white people and Afro-Canadians had to sit on the balcony.

Firstly, Nova Scotia Museum (2015) argues Viola believed a mistake by the cashier had been made and she returned to the booking office. There she asked the cashier to replace the wrong ticket with the right one for the main floor. Nevertheless, the cashier refused promptly: "I'm sorry but I'm not permitted to sell downstairs tickets to you people." (Nova Scotia Museum, 2015, p. 2). Viola immediately realized this was an unwritten and unofficial segregation division of the theatre. She got upset and decided to face this discrimination on the basis of skin colour and returned to her place on the main floor. Then the head of the theatre came and warned Viola the theatre had the right to "refuse admission to any objectionable person". However, she did not give up and noted she was not denied access and the ticket was sold to her normally. She also stated she had offered to pay the price of the ticket so that she would be able to sit on the main floor, but was refused by the cashier. Then the police was called by the theatre head, Viola was arrested and dragged out of the theatre. Desmond was put in the town jail and had to spend the night there. (Nova Scotia Museum, 2015)

Secondly, according to Warner (2020) Viola told the usher that she would get up and go to the cashier to buy the right ticket for the main floor then. However, the usher said: "No. You people have to sit in the upstairs section." (Warner, 2020, p. 16). Viola immediately understood what was happening and felt sad, frightened and angry. She told the usher again she was willing to pay the different price for the seat she was sitting on but she would not move. The usher did not wait anymore and went to tell it to the manager of the theatre. The police was called. Then the usher, manager and police officer insisted on Viola's moving but she refused. After that she was dragged out in a real rough way and put in the jail overnight. (Warner, 2020)

The third version of the story by Backhouse (1994), which is more detailed, states that after buying the ticket, Viola headed to the down section of the theatre and was stopped by the ticket-taker, who told her she had an upstairs ticket and she would have to go on the balcony. Viola thought there had been made a mistake and returned back to the cashier. She asked for her ticket exchange but the ticket-seller refused with the explanation: "I'm sorry but I'm not permitted to sell downstairs tickets to you people." (Backhouse, 1994, p. 3). She made a spontaneous decision and went to the seat she wanted on the main floor. The theatre was partially empty and there were no other reasons not to sit there, except her skin colour. The employee followed her and although she was sitting quietly on the seat, he said to her: "I told you to go upstairs." (Backhouse, 1994, p. 4). She refused. The employee left to report it to the manager of the Roseland Theatre. The manager came immediately and demanded Viola to move to the balcony. He argued that it was written on the other side of the ticket. There was: "the right to refuse admission to any objectionable person" (Backhouse, 1994, p. 4). Viola resisted that her admission had not been denied only her attempt to exchange the ticket had been unsuccessful. Then she politely asked the manager to get her the ticket to the main floor for her. Viola stated that she had never sat upstairs because she could not see very well from a distance. The manager became angry and called the police. The police officer came with an order to throw her out, but she replied she had done nothing, was quiet and therefore there was no reason why he would do it. The policeman did not wait a minute longer and took Viola by the shoulders and pulled her out cruelly. During that time, her wallet fell down and her shoe was disarranged. The officer stopped for a moment so Viola could put on her shoe, and in the meantime a bystander handed her the wallet. According to Viola's testimony, her hip and knee were injured during the transfer to prison. Then she was put in a cell and spent there the night. (Backhouse, 1994)

All sources agree that on the morning of November 9, 1946, Viola was brought to a trial. Nova Scotia Museum (2015) states that she was the only non-white person in the court. Viola was charged for failure to pay a provincial tax in conformity with the *Theatres, Cinematographs and Amusements Act*, which made one cent difference in payment. However, Viola Desmond was discriminated during the trial. She was not informed of her rights to get a counsel neither that she could seek an adjournment to prepare herself for defence. Moreover, no Crown attorney was present on the trial. Viola wanted to explain what happened, but no one listened to her. According to Backhouse

(1999) she had no lawyer and had not been told about her rights to seek a bail or counsel. She was convicted for tax evasion because the court never admitted that it was all about racial segregation. At the end of the trial, she got a fine of twenty dollars plus six dollars costs to pay and then she was free to go. Viola was reasonably very upset and “bitterly disappointed” (Canadian Museum for Human Rights, 2021, first video, 3:45), because she was convicted without the possibility of self-defence. (Nova Scotia Museum, 2015), (Backhouse, 1999)

Nevertheless, according to Backhouse (1994) Viola paid the full charge and went back home. People from the community got angry when they found out what had happened, except for her husband, who told her: “Take it to the Lord with a prayer.” (Bingham, 2021, Trial). After a discussion at a meeting of the *Nova Scotia Association for the Advancement of Colored People* (henceforth NSAACP) whether Viola should appeal to the court or not, it was decided she should. According to Backhouse (1999) the NSAACP aimed at eradicating racial discrimination and segregation in public facilities, housing, education and employment. Warner (2020) argues that Viola and African Canadian community appealed to the Nova Scotia Supreme Court in 1947. Unfortunately, their efforts failed. The judges said Viola's trial had been fair. They did not want to bother with the case of racial segregation, and they cancelled her appeal. (Warner, 2020), (Canadian Museum for Human Rights, 2021)

On the other hand, Viola made a big difference and inspired many other people to fight against segregation and discrimination. Nova Scotia Museum (2015) points out that the case raised an interest in the civil rights of African Canadian in Nova Scotia. Bingham (2021) claims that the fight against segregation started after the unsuccessful trial of Viola Desmond. Her case was a demonstration of the end of Afro-Canadians willingness to be considered as second-class citizens. She opened the door of determination to African Canadians who had previously feared standing up for their rights. However, the wanted change did not come immediately. According to the Canadian Museum for Human Rights (2021), Viola was not the first black woman challenging racial segregation in Canada, but her decision to act after the first trial and her courage to speak against the unwritten segregation and discrimination customs is what set her apart from other cases. It could be said that her story started the civil rights movement in Canada. In the next eight years more and more people in Canada stood up for their rights. The segregation was finally made lawless in 1954. It would not have been possible without the efforts of individuals,

organizations, and community support. (Bingham, 2021), (Canadian Museum for Human Rights, 2021)

However, as the Canadian Museum for Human Rights (2021) states Viola lost her marriage and abandoned her business. The day she was arrested changed her approach to life, determination to succeed in business and her disappointment influenced her whole life. She moved to Montréal and died in New York City in 1965. In 2010, Viola Desmond was pardoned posthumously and she was featured as the first African Canadian on Canadian 10 dollar bill. Viola also appeared on a Canadian postal stamp and many other things are named after her. Moreover, a project for remembering her courage was made. People all around the world sat on a chair to remember Viola's decision to sit down to stand against injustice. (Canadian Museum for Human Rights, 2021)

4 Rosa Parks

The story of Rosa Parks took place in the state of Alabama, one of the southern states of the USA. Rosa was an African American woman, who is known for refusing to give up her seat on the racially segregated bus in Montgomery, Alabama, in 1955. Although there were many stories of unequal treatment of African Americans in the United States in the 20th century, the story of Rosa Parks is very important due to previous and subsequent events. (Parks, 1999)

4.1 Biography

First of all, an autobiography of Rosa Parks is presented. This is important for a general understanding of the Rosa Parks story, which resulted primarily in a boycott of the Montgomery buses. It is also a very credible statement about segregation customs and discrimination in the USA in the 20th century. According to Britannica (2021), Rosa Parks was born Rosa Louise McCauley on February 4, 1913 in Tuskegee, Alabama, USA. As Rosa states in her autobiographical book *Rosa Parks: My Story* (1999) she had lived in segregated environment since the beginning of her life. Rosa and her younger brother grew up in their grandparents' small farm house in Pine Level. Her grandmother was born as a slave and grandfather was a child of a white plantation owner and his black slave housekeeper. Rosa's father did not stay with the family for long. The mother had to take care of the children on her own. Rosa's mother was a well-educated woman and worked as a teacher. She taught Rosa until the age of eleven, because Rosa was very often sick and stayed at home. There was a school for African American children from first grade up to sixth grade in Pine Level. Unfortunately, it was open only five months of a year. The other months the children were needed for work in the fields, especially for cotton harvesting. It was the time of the sharecroppers. Facilities for African Americans were always in worse conditions than white people's facilities. Sometimes there was school and church in one building and the wood for school heating often had to be carried by pupils or pupils' parents. Schools for African Americans were usually managed by one-teacher only and there were about 40 or 50 children in one room. They were seated in rows by age and learned also from each other. However, while Afro-Americans had to build schools for themselves, schools for white children were built with public money, including taxes from both white and black people. (Parks, 1999)

Rosa was very protective of her brother and from her childhood she had believed in equal treatment for all. Rosa confirms “I do know that I had a very strong sense of what was fair.” (Parks, 1999, p. 22). When she started going to school, she realized the danger they lived in. It was after the end of the World War I when the Ku Klux Klan grew in power. Her grandparents' house was right at the main road and therefore the children knew what to do in case the Klan broke into the house. Her grandfather kept a gun with him at all times. Fortunately, he never needed it. Rosa experienced segregation laws deeply when she was growing up. The customs rather than laws applied to public transport, hospitals, doctors, shops, schools, churches, restaurants, etc. (Parks, 1999)

As Parks (1999) states, Rosa Parks attended more school buildings during her childhood. She was a couple of years in Pine Level, then in Alabama State Normal for a few weeks and then she had her mother as a teacher at the church at Spring Hill. The church served as a school for black children. Rosa was sent to school in Montgomery when she turned eleven years old. The Montgomery Industrial School called “Miss White's school” was named after its principal. All the teachers in the school were Caucasian women coming from the North and all the children were Afro-American. They taught African American children to be ambitious, to have self-respect and dignity. The teachers fought the southern racism in that way. Rosa was there for three years and then the school was closed. She went to Brooker T. Washington Junior High for one year, which was the only high school for African Americans in Montgomery. Afterwards she attended Alabama Normal School, which was then called: *Alabama State Teachers' College for Negroes*. The word “Negro” was considered a polite word for African Americans in that time. Rosa's grandmother got sick and Rosa had to take care of her. One month later Rosa's grandmother died and aged sixteen she had to take her first job in a shirt factory. Then she went back to school again, but her mother got very sick, so Rosa dropped the school again and took care of her and their farm. (Parks, 1999)

As Parks (1999) states, Rosa met Raymond Parks, her future husband, in 1931. He was an intelligent activist and a member of the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (henceforth NAACP). Raymond had courage to defend the rights of wrongly accused African Americans because he believed in equal treatment for all. The meetings with only men members were in secret and it was very dangerous to go there. Someone always had a gun in case they were attacked. He could have been killed for this type of voluntary work, but he would not stop. Raymond wanted racism to

end. Rosa and Raymond Parks got married in December 1932. Rosa's husband supported her to finish high school education and she obtained a diploma one year later, when she was 20 years old. It was very exceptional for an Afro-American to get graduated. Ten years later she got a job at local Army Air Force base. That place was without segregation laws because president Roosevelt decided so. The irony was that when Rosa left the base and went home, she had to obey segregation principles again. When she was at the base, she could sit with the others in the front of the bus, but when she got on a bus in the city, she had to go to the back part of it. (Parks, 1999)

4.2 Voting in the USA

The right to vote is very important for all people across the USA. According to Duignan (2020), nowadays every American older than 18 years has the rights to vote in local, state and presidential election and thus choose his representative. To achieve this goal a difficult journey had preceded. As already mentioned, it had not been possible for African Americans to vote until 1870, when The Fifteenth Amendment was included the United States Constitution. However, freedom to vote did not come until almost 100 years later. It is quite simple. African Americans had to vote if they wanted to change the way they were treated. This goal is achievable only in case they had a representative in the government. Nevertheless, the right to vote for Afro-Americans was not supported by communities. They made up difficulties for African Americans to vote such as the literacy test, poll tax, owning a property and short opening hours for registration. In short, white people came up with anything to prevent African Americans from voting. (Duignan, 2020)

According to Parks (1999) Rosa was trying to get registered for two years but she was not successful in either of her tries. She finally made it in 1945. However, she had to pay the poll tax, which was calculated retrospectively from her age of 21 to the first registration and the price was 1,5 dollar for every year. Therefore when Rosa got first registered aged 32 she had to pay 16,5 dollars for the right to vote. It was a lot of money back then but there was no other possibility to vote so she paid. Raymond achieved his first registration to vote in Detroit in 1957. (Parks, 1999)

4.3 Work for the NAACP

Rosa became a secretary for the NAACP, when Mr Edgar Daniel Nixon was the president of the association in the early 1940s. Rosa worked there voluntarily every night after work. It was her first official involvement in activism against racial discrimination. It was not common for women to get involved in such a dangerous association. Its African Americans members and the minority of white members were ostracized by the other white people. The association helped many African Americans get justice in court at that time but even so, more percents of the cases were unsuccessful. In spite the fact that it was hard, voluntary and demotivating work Rosa had become an established activist, organizer and member and she had been very involved in the fight for social justice before the time she refused to give up her seat on the bus. (Norwood, 2017), (Parks, 1999)

4.4 Segregation Laws in Buses

Discrimination in public transport was a big issue for Rosa Parks. She states in her autobiographical book *My Story* (1999) that her first incident happened in 1943 when she did not follow the rules African Americans had to. She got on a bus, paid her fare to the bus driver and went on to the back part of the bus. But the driver told her to get off the bus and get on through the back door. However, it was very crowded in the back and Rosa did not see any reason why she should get off the bus and get on again through the back door since, she had already been on board. The driver took her sleeve and made her get off the bus though. Rosa refused to get on the bus again and waited for another bus instead. (Parks, 1999)

The Montgomery buses had 36 seats and the first 10 seats were reserved for the white people, 10 in the back were for African Americans and the 16 in the middle were for both races. It depended on how many people with white skin were on the bus. However, when the front seats got full, the driver made those middle seats available for white people. If there was an African American sitting in that section, the driver made him stand up. It has to be mentioned that some drivers were hateful and carried guns. The buses were often very crowded and most African Americans had to stand even though the 10 front seats were empty. It is important to say that there were more African Americans than white people riding on the buses in Montgomery because more white people could afford cars. (Parks, 1999)

Nevertheless, Parks (1999) states that the Montgomery NAACP came up with an idea how to stop the segregation on buses. There was a need for a strong case and the right plaintiff to bring a suit to the court. The plaintiff had to be a woman of good reputation, with no records and her refusing to give up her seat on a racially separated bus had to be the only “illegal” action she had ever taken. There were two women, unknown of the NAACP idea, who took this action in the spring 1955. One ran away after the incident but the other one stood up for her rights and she was arrested by the police. It led to a petition made by activists, who demanded the right for Afro-American drivers to be hired and wanted to change the way of splitting seats on the buses. They suggested simple change. “Whites would start sitting at the front of the bus and blacks would start sitting at the back, and wherever they met would be the dividing line” (Parks, 1999, p. 111). It would not end segregation, but it would make it less annoying for African Americans. Unsurprisingly, the petition was denied. The woman was willing to testify in court and speak about it in different parts of town, but she was pregnant and that meant the end of the case. Another case appeared in summer, but it was not a case the NAACP needed. (Parks, 1999)

5 The Main Story of Rosa Parks

Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on the bus to a white man on 1st December 1955. According to her book *My Story* by Parks (1999) she did not intend to get arrested. It was just a coincidence of fatigue, attitude and courage. Rosa was very busy that day and left work with many thoughts in her head. She got on a bus as usual and found out that the driver is the mean one who had put her off the bus twelve years earlier. However, Rosa had paid a fare already, so she stayed on the bus. She sat down on a vacant seat in the middle section of the bus. Several white people boarded at the next bus stop, the front seats got full and one white man remained standing. It was not acceptable and therefore the driver said: "Let me have those front seats" (Parks, 1999, p. 115). Nobody moved because Rosa and the other three people were sitting on the front seats of the black section. The driver said then "Y'all better make it light on yourselves and let me have those seats." (Parks, 1999, p. 155). The two African American women and the man next to Rosa left their seats. Rosa remained seated and just moved to the seat by the window. She remembered her thoughts in retrospect: "I could not see how standing up was going to "make it light" for me." (Parks, 1999, p. 115). The driver asked her if she would stand up or not. Rosa said "no" and the driver replied: "Well, I'm going to have you arrested." Rosa answered: "You may do that." (Parks, 1999, p. 116). She later stated "*People always say that I did not give up my seat because I was tired or old. The only tired I was, was tired of giving in.*" (Parks, 1999, p. 116). (Parks, 1999)

On the other hand, Rosa Parks got worried what might happen to her but yet she chose to remain on the seat. After a while two policemen came and asked Rosa why she did not stand up. She asked back: "Why do you all push us around?" and she got an answer: "I don't know, but a law is a law and you're under arrest." (Parks, 1999, p. 117). The policemen took her things and they accompanied her to the police car. They did not put their hands on her and treated her quite nicely. When they arrived at the police station Rosa asked for a drink of water as she saw a water fountain nearby. One policeman said "yes" and the other one denied with words "No, you can't drink no water. You have to wait until you get to the jail." (Parks, 1999, p. 118). The police officers also denied her request for a telephone call. They filled out the necessary information about Rosa in the forms and then they took her to the city prison. There she had to empty her pockets and hand over personal items. She was not treated badly, but she was slightly ignored when she asked for a telephone call twice. It is difficult to say whether this approach was a kind

of discrimination or a normal process. Rosa went through the mandatory process of taking fingerprints and mug shots and then she was placed in a prison. At first, she was placed in a single cell but then the escort changed her mind and placed Rosa to a cell with two other women. (Parks, 1999)

One woman argued that it is almost impossible for an Afro-American woman to get out of the jail without the help of white people or family members. Fortunately, Rosa had her husband and friends. She finally got a permission to make a call and she called home. Raymond said he would be there in a few minutes. Mr. Nixon heard about the arrest. He called to the jail and asked for a price of a bail. No one answered him. He tried to find the B lawyer, but he was not home and so Mr. Nixon asked for help the white lawyer – husband of a lady who also helped the NAACP. The white lawyer called the prison and found out that Rosa had been arrested under segregation laws and how much the bail cost. Rosa's husband arranged the money to cover the bail. Rosa was released after a while only thanks to the help of her white friends and friends from the NAACP who did everything they could for her release from prison. Rosa received a trial date, her personal things and was free to go. This was just a start of the fight. (Parks, 1999)

After Rosa, her husband and their friends got home, Mr. Nixon asked Rosa if she was willing to be a test case against segregation. Rosa discussed it with her family, and they finally agreed on supporting that idea. She was chosen as the plaintiff against segregation on buses. Mr. Nixon was thrilled when she agreed because Rosa had no police record, was not pregnant and she had worked all her life. (Parks, 1999)

5.1 The Montgomery Bus Boycott

According to information from the Britannica (2021), Rosa was arrested and released on Thursday, December 1st, 1955. As Rosa states in her book Parks (1999), the leaders of the Women's Political Council learned about the arrest and decided to organize a bus boycott starting on the coming Monday. The Monday, December 5th, was the day of Rosa's trial. The Women's Political Council produced 35,000 leaflets overnight from Thursday to Friday and handed them over to all local black schools on Friday morning. The aim was to give the leaflets to students who would take them home to their families. That way a large part of the local population would learn about the boycott through this method. The leaflet called for the involvement of all African Americans in the bus

boycott, which was about to start on Monday. The leaflet reported about the story of Rosa Parks and another arrest of a African American woman for not giving up her seat to a white man. The appeal was supported by the sentences: “Negroes have rights, too, for if Negroes did not ride the buses, they could not operate. Three-fourths of the riders are Negroes, yet we are arrested, or have to stand over empty seats. If we do not do something to stop these arrests, they will continue.” (Parks, 1999, p. 126). The closing sentence of the leaflet was: “Please stay off all buses Monday.” (Parks, 1999, p. 127). (Parks, 1999)

Firstly, Mr. Nixon called nineteen church ministers on Friday morning because he believed that they could express support and greatly influence the community in the churches. Secondly, he made an appointment with a journalist. Mr. Nixon showed him the leaflet and the journalist promised him to try his best to share the story on the front page of the *Montgomery Advertiser*. (Parks, 1999)

On Friday morning, Rosa called a cab and went to work like every normal working day. She was determined never to take a bus again. When Rosa had finished at work, she went to the meeting with the ministers. She explained the whole story and then there was a discussion about the protest. Some of them agreed to support the boycott and devote time to it on Sunday sermon. Some of them also made a shorter leaflet. Another meeting with the boycott topic was scheduled on Monday evening. (Parks, 1999)

The leaflet made by the Women's Political Council formed the front page of the *Montgomery Advertiser* on Sunday. There was an agreement that all Afro-American-owned cab companies in Montgomery would go the same routes the buses usually go and would take African Americans to their work, school or anywhere else. The fare would be the same as for the bus ride. The weather forecast did not look favourable, but it was still believed that African Americans would stay off the buses on Monday. Fortunately, most Afro-American people finally decided to fight segregation and they stayed off the buses on Monday, December 5th. They walked, used the cabs or took rides with friends. The public buses were empty. Everybody was surprised how many African Americans demonstrated against the segregation. (Parks, 1999)

Rosa had the trial on the same day the boycott began. Raymond Parks accompanied her to the courthouse and there was a supporting crowd in front of the building. The trial took very long and the main prosecution witness was the bus driver, who had Rosa arrested. There was another witness – a white woman – who testified that

the back part of the bus had not been filled and that Rosa had refused to take the vacant seat in the back. It was a lie. Rosa herself was not summoned to testify. Her lawyers did not try hard to defend Rosa, because she needed to be found guilty. The goal of this test case was to appeal the conviction to a higher court because only there segregation could be fought against. Rosa was “found guilty of violating the segregation laws and given a suspended sentence (Parks, 1999, p. 134)” and she had to pay fourteen dollars for a fine and the court costs. (Parks, 1999)

Rosa went to Mr Gray (the Afro-American lawyer in Montgomery) and helped him answer the telephone after the trial. Most of the calls were directly related to her case. Then Mr Nixon picked her up and she prepared herself for an evening meeting in the church. Mr Nixon told her that the ministers, he and Mr Gray had met earlier on Monday and that they had decided to form a new organization called the *Montgomery Improvement Association* (henceforth MIA). The MIA wanted to stand up for the rights of African Americans and lead a demonstration. The elected president was Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., who was according to Robinson (1987) a pastor at the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church at that time. Dr King got involved in civil rights work and he was new in Montgomery. He did not have many friends or enemies, which was perfect for the position. (Parks, 1999)

The evening meeting took place in the church in the middle of the African American community on Monday and there were many more people than expected. The goal of the meeting was to decide if the bus boycott should continue or not. Mr Nixon and Dr King made supportive and determined speeches to the people. There were other speeches as well and the African American community became strong-minded to defend their rights and further support the boycott. There were three demands presented: “1) Courteous treatment on the buses; 2) First-come, first-served seating, with whites in front and blacks in back; 3) Hiring of black drivers for the black bus routes.” (Parks, 1999, p. 140). The crowd was asked to vote by standing up and the result was all these people standing in and outside the church. The atmosphere of the moment was moving. (Parks, 1999)

The MIA arranged a meeting with three representatives of bus companies and Montgomery city commissioners on Thursday. The MIA introduced the three demands and reasonably supported them. Nevertheless, all the three demands were denied. The

MIA tried their best, but it was useless. Rosa argues: “They were afraid of compromising in any way with black people.” (Parks, 1999, p. 141). However, the boycott continued. White people together with the police tried to stop it but with no result. A lot of African Americans lost their jobs because of the boycott. Rosa and Raymond Parks were no exceptions. Rosa started to sew from home, spoke in public a little bit about her arrest and the boycott and finally, she started to work for the MIA. (Parks, 1999)

Another level of discrimination was achieved when the police started to arrest the cab drivers for not demanding full fare for a ride. The MIA did not wait a minute and took volunteers for driving. The churches collected money to buy a couple of cars as cabs for African Americans. It did not take long and a good transport system was developed. No one had a trouble of getting somewhere without the city buses. (Parks, 1999)

The boycott was unconsciously supported by those white women who needed their African American maids and drove them from and to work. The mayor of Montgomery advised people not to support the boycott in this way, but the women got angry and told the mayor that he could do the work instead of the maids. The police also tried to stop the boycott by arresting many Afro-American cab drivers for tiny mistakes. Another try to stop the boycott was an announcement made by the city commissioners in January. They said the rule first-come, first-served in the middle of the bus was accepted and the end of the bus boycott announcement was printed on the front page of the *Montgomery Advertiser* newspaper the next day. However, the city commissioners were not supposed to decide when the boycott would end. It was to be decided by the discriminated people. This information in the newspaper was a lie. The leaders of the MIA went from house to house and told the people that the boycott was not over yet and the ministers did the same during Sunday church gatherings. The buses were empty again on Monday. The mayor, who was a member of the White Citizens' Council, did not want to bother with the boycott but he had to. He did not admit that African Americans were treated differently than the white people on buses. The leaders of the MIA were threatened by letters, bombs and telephone calls. Rosa parks admitted she felt uncomfortable about it. Meanwhile Mr Gray filed a suit against bus segregation and argued that it was unconstitutional. He decided to achieve a change of the system and take the suit to the Supreme Court. He filed it on behalf of the five mistreated Afro-American women on the buses. (Parks, 1999)

The bus companies were losing a lot of money every single day. About two months after the start of the boycott, the buses stopped running completely. The bus companies were hurt as well as downtown business. On February 21, 89 people were arrested for organizing the boycott based on a very old law prohibiting boycotts. Rosa Parks was among them. Fortunately, the MIA took care of the bails for their release and they waited at home until their trial. The witnesses were Raymond Parks and a woman whose husband was shot to death on the bus coming from his military service. Dr King was found guilty, but he appealed successfully. The boycott continued and there was increased attention from the mass media outside Montgomery. A photograph of Rosa Parks giving her fingerprints at police station was on the front page of the *New York Times*. She was asked to give speeches and appearances at different places such as churches or various meetings in cities like New York or San Francisco. She did everything she could to inform the public about what was happening and to raise money for the boycott. (Parks, 1999)

In June, the case seemed to be won. However, the city officials who disagreed appealed to the Supreme Court, and therefore the waiting for the victory was extended. The boycott continued the whole summer and autumn. Some of the white people in Montgomery made accusations based on everything they could think of because they wanted to stop the boycott. Nevertheless, Afro-Americans did not give up and fought legally against them. (Parks, 1999)

Finally, on November 13, 1956, the Supreme Court declared segregation on buses in Montgomery was unconstitutional. Nevertheless, the boycotters had stayed off the Montgomery buses until 20th December, when the written order from the Supreme Court arrived and it was the official end of the bus segregation there. The next day Montgomery Afro-Americans filled the buses again after more than one year. Every Afro-American person was excited about the success. Rosa Parks was asked by journalists to ride on several buses on that day so they could take pictures of her. However, the social integration on the buses did not go easily overnight. There were snipers at buses, futile efforts to establish white-only transport, bus transport ending at 5 p.m. and bombing of homes of the ministers and leaders of the MIA. Fortunately, the violence slowly disappeared and African Americans were no more afraid of riding buses. As Robinson (1987) states, the Montgomery Bus Boycott would not have been successful without the African American ministers, who gathered Afro-Americans in their churches for sermons.

The segregation in Montgomery buses ended and it gave inspiration and courage to African Americans in different cities in the USA. It was the beginning of the civil rights movement. (Parks, 1999)

6 The Civil Rights Movement from Rosa Park's Point of View

According to Norwood (2017), Rosa Parks then moved to Hampton, Virginia and later settled in Detroit because she, her husband and her mother did not feel safe in Alabama anymore and there was only a minor possibility for Rosa to get an appropriate job in Montgomery. They moved in 1957. Her brother got her an apartment and her friends in Montgomery collected some money for their new start. Rosa got a job at Hampton Institute but felt lonely because her family stayed in Detroit. In summer 1958, while Rosa was reading the book *Stride Toward Freedom* by Martin Luther King, Jr. she heard on a radio that he had been stabbed in New York City and was in a very bad conditions in the hospital. Rosa was shocked, but fortunately, he survived. Rosa went back to Detroit to her family and she got a job there. Rosa kept travelling around the US and talked about the boycott and the civil rights movement that was growing in strength at that time. (Parks, 1999)

Martin Luther King, Jr. and the ministers in Montgomery had formed the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (henceforth SCLC) and fought against segregation in other parts of life through this group. Rosa joined them at big events. The most famous march was in Washington in 1963, where Dr King made his phenomenal speech: "I Have a Dream". Rosa was there too but women were not allowed to give speeches. However, the civil rights movement was set in motion and more and more African Americans in the South started to demonstrate against segregation. As Rosa wrote in her book: "The civil-rights movement was having a big effect." (Parks, 1999, p. 166-167). The civil rights movement changed the way of thinking of the politicians in Washington, D. C. Thanks to that and the support of the president the Civil Rights Act was published in 1964. It was a great success for the African Americans. "It aimed to guarantee blacks the right to vote, to use public accommodations, and provided for the federal government to prosecute those who did not obey this law." (Parks, 1999, p. 167). The Civil Rights Act was not the solution for all difficulties but it really helped African Americans to feel safer. However, the civil rights movement continued, because African Americans dreamt of equal treatment and opportunities, which was not a part of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. (Parks, 1999)

There was another famous march held from Selma to Montgomery. More than 300 people got involved. They walked over 50 miles in three days. Rosa was invited for the last part in Montgomery. The mass march was held in the honour of over 150 demonstrating children who were taken out of the town like cattle by the police. The march was also associated with another murder by Ku Klux Klan. It was not a surprise for African American people that the Ku Klux Klan was still in power in 1965. On the other hand, the Voting Rights Act was published in 1965 by President Johnson. It was another help for African Americans to feel equal in the society. (Parks, 1999)

Malcolm X was shot in 1965. He was a criminal who changed his life in jail where he became a member of the Black Muslims. The Black Muslims hated white people and the religion was based on it. On the other hand, they believed in strong family relationships. Malcolm X travelled to Mecca in Saudi Arabia and learned that Muslims are not originally racists. When he got back to the USA, he left the Black Muslims and started to build a new organisation based on non-racism. Rosa met and spoke to Malcolm X one week before he was killed and she admired his speech, his approach to people and the determination to be better. (Parks, 1999)

One of the most famous opponents against segregation and discrimination was Dr King. He was inspired by Gandhi and his nonviolent approach in the fight for freedom. Dr King strongly believed that nonviolence is the key to freedom. As Rosa claims in her book: "I strongly believe that the civil-rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s could never have been so successful without Dr King and his firm belief in nonviolence." (Parks, 1999, p. 175). (Parks, 1999)

Dr King was killed during the march in support of African American garbage collectors in April 1968. It was devastating for Rosa and her mother who heard it on radio. It was a huge shock. Rosa got ready for traveling to Memphis, Tennessee for a funeral. It was very sad. Another terrible event happened in June when Robert Kennedy was assassinated. The year was very challenging because important people fighting segregation were being assassinated. It got even worse for Rosa twelve years later when her husband died after fighting cancer, her brother died three months after her husband and her mother died two years later. Rosa was not completely healthy either, but she was still working. Her dream was to start an organization helping young people, and the dream came true in 1987 when she founded the *Rosa and Raymond Parks Institute for Self-*

Development. The goal of the institute was to give an opportunity to young people to get educated, to have dignity and sense of hope for the future. (Parks, 1999)

Rosa got a job as an assistant and receptionist for John Conyers, an African American newly elected congressman in 1965. She worked for him until 1988, when she left for retirement. Rosa Parks received lots of invitations to various events and organizations. One of the greatest honours was renaming the street in Montgomery, where Rosa was arrested, to *Rosa Parks Boulevard*. She received many awards and honorary degrees from various people and associations. She admitted: “They call me the Mother of the Civil Rights Movement and the Patron Saint of the Civil Rights Movement.” and “I understand that I am a symbol.” (Parks, 1999, p. 185). (Parks, 1999)

To sum up, Rosa's dream was “Everyone living together in peace and harmony and love.” (Parks, 1999, p. 187). She spent half of her life teaching this wisdom. Rosa and her story influenced not only the Civil Rights Movement but also many lives of individuals. A lot of laws regarding segregation had changed during her life. She died on October 24, 2005. Thanks to her, it all started. Rosa Parks was not just a random person who defended her rights, but an activist who was not afraid to oppose the system and risk her own life. She was a remarkable woman. (Parks, 1999), (Norwood, 2017)

7 Comparison of Rosa Parks and Viola Desmond Cases

This chapter compares the case of Viola Desmond and the case of Rosa Parks. Both cases have something in common but they differ in many things. This chapter compares the background of both women, their decision to stand up to the system, their efforts to change the social setting and rights of African Americans. There is also information about the trials of both women, and finally there is a comparison of racial customs and laws in the United States and Canada.

The background of these two women was very different. The only similarity is that they were both African American women in North America. Viola Desmond grew up with her both parents in an Afro-American community in Nova Scotia, Canada, where the white community way of life was separated from that of Afro-American community. However, the environment was mainly non-violent. On the other hand, Rosa Parks grew up in a racially segregated area with the Ku Klux Klan passing by. While Viola Desmond stayed in Nova Scotia and set up her business there, Rosa Parks moved many times and took several different jobs with white employers. Nevertheless, according to Robinson (1987) they were both strong women with the strength of character. It is important to mention that Backhouse (1999) claims their decision to stand up for their rights influenced their whole lives. Not only Rosa lost her job due to the bus boycott because she was an employee of a white boss, but she was also invited to make speeches and appearances, and therefore she travelled a lot. Viola Desmond's work did not change because she was a successful businesswoman and her beauty salon succeeded. However, her disappointment affected her entire life and she voluntarily quit the entrepreneurship. Both women moved out of their towns after some time. The reason for Viola Desmond was her disappointment due to the failure of her case and the inequalities in her rights and the rights of the community. The reason for Rosa Parks to move was her fear of life threatening letters, concerns about her family's safety, failure to find a job and she had the need to move on, change the environment.

Furthermore, the decision to stay seated for standing up one's rights is compared. Viola made a spontaneous decision in the theatre. According to the published stories, it is known that she just wanted to see the movie from the main floor and she was willing to pay for the seat there. The decision, among other things, was a result of anger and

tiredness after the car accident and the missed meeting Viola was going to. Compared to her, Rosa was much more prepared for the decision. Rosa Parks was a member of the NAACP organization before and after her arrest. She knew some similar cases and she knew the consequences. It is believed that she was ready and willing to do the stand up. She decided to stay on her seat because she was tired and upset with the African Americans who did not want to stand up for their rights. Rosa Parks remained seated not only for herself, but for all African Americans in the South. She wanted to show them that nothing would change without their involvement in the fight for equal treatment. Rosa also knew that she would be supported by the NAACP and even though she was afraid, she had the courage and determination to sacrifice her person for a better future for African Americans in the South.

However, both women were determined not to let the court resolve only their arrest cases, but they both appealed to the court and wanted a change for all African Americans. Viola Desmond's case disgusted the whole African American community she lived in and they decided to take action, even though Viola's husband was not supportive of that idea. Their effort was not as successful and huge as the bus boycott in Alabama. Although Viola's case was rejected by the court, it was still considered a success for the Canadian community. It encouraged other African Canadian women to become successful entrepreneurs and to show their importance and great abilities. Viola Desmond was the first known African Canadian woman who challenged the court against the racial segregation laws in Canada. On the other hand, the outcome of Rosa Parks's case was enormous thanks to the involvement of the NAACP and her family, subsequent Montgomery bus boycott and the civil rights movement in the United States. (Backhouse, 1994)

It is also important to compare the length of court proceedings and the treatment of the women in the prisons. While Rosa was treated nicely, Viola suffered greatly. Viola claimed her knee and hip had been injured during the arrest. According to the Canadian Museum for Human Rights (2021), Viola was a small, elegant woman and was pulled out of the theatre by the police in an unnecessarily brutal way. Rosa was not given water when she asked for it, but on the other hand, after several requests, she was allowed to make a telephone call. While Viola spent the whole night in jail, Rosa was there only for a few hours. Viola had to wait until the trial in the morning and after then she was free to go. On the other hand, Rosa had the opportunity to prepare herself for the trial because

she was arrested on Thursday and the trial was scheduled for Monday. The trial of Rosa Parks took much longer compared to the trial of Viola Desmond. However, both women were discriminated in the courts. It could be said that the preparation for the trial as well as the determination, opportunity and support influenced the outcomes of the cases.

There were racial segregation laws that differed in some places, cities or provinces in Canada. They were customs rather than laws. According to Backhouse (1999) these racial segregation customs and laws applied to schools, public facilities such as theatres, restaurants, hotels or events organized by white people. The Ku Klux Klan was in Canada too. Viola did not know that coloured people were not allowed to sit downstairs in New Glasgow, because it was the custom there. Viola grew up in the African American community and she was used to having good relationships between white and black people. She seemed to be shocked to experience the customs and treatment in New Glasgow. There was racial segregation in Halifax too and Viola knew that very well, because she taught in the school for Afro-Americans and then she had the “Vi's Studio of Beauty Culture” for Afro-American women. On the other hand, she was not used to ugly behaviour from the whites. Nevertheless, the racial segregation laws and customs in the US were not very different from those in Canada. As we learned from the story of Rosa Parks, the segregation and discrimination laws were even worse and more visible in public. Lives of African Americans in both countries were very tough in many ways. (Backhouse, 1994), (Walks, 2006)

8 Conclusion

In conclusion, Viola Desmond and Rosa Parks were incredible strong women who were not afraid to sacrifice themselves to improve the rights of African Americans and African Canadians. Their stories are full of courage and determination.

The historic part describes that some mistakes about the segregation and discrimination laws were repeatedly made by governments that had not learned from their mistakes for centuries. The segregation laws were revised, transformed or repealed during the 19th and 20th century. It demanded a lot of effort and victims to achieve the main goal. It was a long journey motivated by Afro-Americans for better living conditions.

Viola Desmond was a brave woman whose decision to stay seated in the Roseland Theatre in 1946 was a spontaneous act. Her subsequent arrest would not have been known if she had not decided to stand up for her rights and injustice after her trial. She brought another suit to court as an appeal for her previous trial. The court proceedings were not successful, but the community solidarity slowly grew in the civil rights movement. Much success was achieved in the next ten years, and the main law determining the end of the segregation was passed in 1954. Viola Desmond was one of the first African-Canadian woman, who was willing to stand up racial discrimination. However, Viola was very disappointed and did not deal with the unequal treatment after the trials. She left her husband, business and Nova Scotia. The reason for it could be not enough strong character or not so strong support by her husband, friends or community.

The background of Rosa Parks's story was surprising. She was not like other African American women, because she got involved in activism and in dangerous meetings of the NAACP with the goal to help wrongly accused African Americans defend them in court. Her whole life was affected by discrimination and segregation laws and customs. Rosa's decision to stay seated was not as spontaneous as Viola's decision. She had been much more prepared for bad treatment in prison and during a trial. Rosa knew consequences because she knew many stories of other African Americans. Her trial succeeded in favour of Rosa and the NAACP, but it took almost a year. The Montgomery bus boycott followed the first trial on December 5, 1955, and came to the end on December 20, 1956, when the Supreme Court decision stating that segregation on buses was unconstitutional arrived to Montgomery. This long fight against segregation inspired many other African Americans across the United States and the civil rights movement

grew in power. Therefore, it could be said that Rosa Parks was the starting point of the civil rights movement in the USA and there would have been a very long journey to achieve such results for African Americans without the case of Rosa Parks.

The comparison of the cases was very interesting. The background of the lives and interests of the women were very different. While Viola Desmond lived in a supportive African American community with good relationships between black and white people, Rosa Parks faced difficult situations, racial segregation and discrimination since childhood. Their decision to stand up for equal rights for African Americans or African Canadians changed their lives completely. They both had to move to another city after some time. The decision of Viola to violate the segregation custom was much more spontaneous than the Rosa's decision. Both women were arrested and charged on the basis of false testimonies by witnesses in court. Their court proceedings were of different importance and took different time. Although the segregation customs and laws were similar in Canada and in the USA, the South of the USA had much stricter restrictions. Finally, the women gave courage to other African American citizens to start fighting for their equality and social justice. The civil rights movement in Canada was not as strong as the civil rights movement in the USA, but the results were important.

Shortly, the findings confirm the belief that Rosa Parks was the starting point for changes in the social justice and civil rights of African Americans in the United States. Viola Desmond was the first African Canadian woman to file a lawsuit on racial segregation and discrimination in order to reverse her charge in court. Both women influenced greatly the willingness of African Americans and African Canadians to face segregation.

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Resumé

Závěrečná práce je zaměřena na porovnání dvou případů rasové segregace a jejich vlivu na hnutí za občanská práva v USA a v Kanadě. Podrobným prozkoumáním příběhů obou žen byla zjištěna jejich motivace, rozhodnutí a následky jejich činů. Pozitivní i negativní výsledky jejich zatčení byly popsány a porovnány. Vliv Rosy Parksové na hnutí za občanská práva v USA byl větší, než se očekávalo. Viola Desmondová neměla tak velký vliv jako Rosa Parksová, ale i tak dokázala podnítit Afro-Kanaďany k boji za občanská práva. Proto je možné tvrdit, že důsledky činu Violy Desmondové bylo zákonné zrušení segregace v Kanadě v roce 1954 a výsledkem činu Rosy Parksové byl bojkot autobusové dopravy v Montgomery po dobu delší než jeden rok a začátek hnutí za občanská práva, jehož důležitým úspěchem byl Zákon o občanských právech z roku 1964, který zakazuje segregaci a diskriminaci na základě rasy, barvy kůže, náboženství či původu. Pro Afro-Američany to znamenalo především ochranu zákonem, právo volit a užívat veřejné zařízení.

Anotace

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Rok obhajoby:	2021

Název práce:	Případ Rosy Parksové a Violy Desmondové: Vliv na hnutí za občanská práva v USA a Kanadě
Název v angličtině:	The Case of Rosa Parks and Viola Desmond: The Influence on the Civil Rights Movement in the USA and Canada
Anotace práce:	Cílem této bakalářské práce je zjistit vliv dvou případů rasové segregace na hnutí za občanská práva v USA a Kanadě. Práce se jednotlivě věnuje případům Rosy Parksové a Violy Desmondové, následně je porovnává a zjišťuje následky. V práci je také zmíněna historie rasové segregace.
Klíčová slova:	otroci, Afro-Američané, Afro-Kanadčané, běloši, Rosa Parksová, Viola Desmondová, segregace, diskriminace, Hnutí za občanská práva, sociální spravedlnost
Anotace v angličtině:	The aim of the bachelor thesis is to determine the influence of two racial segregation cases on the civil rights movement in the USA and Canada. The thesis deals individually with the cases of Rosa Parks and Viola Desmond, compares them and finds out the consequences. The thesis mentions also the history of racial segregation.
Klíčová slova v angličtině:	Slaves, African American, African Canadian, Caucasian, Rosa Parks, Viola Desmond, Segregation, Discrimination, the Civil Rights Movement, Social Justice,
Přílohy vázané v práci:	0
Rozsah práce:	37
Jazyk práce:	anglický