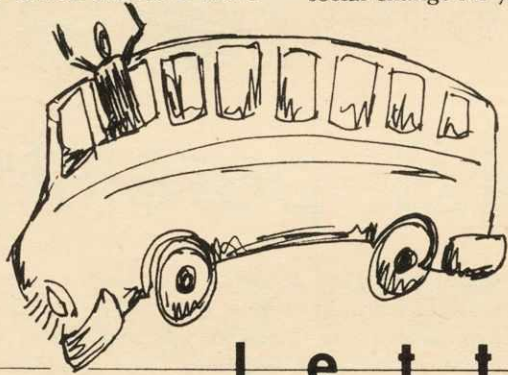


The Story of Rosa Parks

*If you miss me at the back of the bus,
You can't find me nowhere.
Come on over to the front of the bus,
I'll be riding up there.*

Rosa Parks made history by sitting at the front of a bus. She did it more than thirty years ago, in Montgomery, Alabama. They used to have a law there that said black people had to sit at the back of the bus, or give up their seats if a white person was standing. Rosa Parks made history by defying a law that she felt was unfair, and her action started a move-



ment that eventually swept (and continues to sweep) the continent.

Dr. Martin Luther King spearheaded the drive that led millions of people to realize that racism was a fact of black people's lives. Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech is probably one of the most powerful pieces ever spoken on racial issues. As well as unmasking the racial problem in America, he also made links between racism and poverty, as well as racism and education. He started attacking the American imperialist ideal and capitalism, and in doing so set an agenda for social change for years to come.

Dr. King was truly a remarkable figure, but there were thousands of "little people" who helped carry out his powerful works. Rosa Parks is an example of what individuals can do to start huge movements.

Most of us know about the accomplishments of Martin Luther King, but most of us are little people who don't have the abilities to be a Martin Luther King.

If Dr. King was the leader of the movement, Rosa Parks embodies the spirit of it. She exhibited the personal strength to refuse to be treated unfairly, to not be personally oppressed.

Can her spirit be copied? Can a student who was arrested at last year's Cole Harbour riots demand justice and spark action that simply? Can a black or Micmac student who has been denied fair access to an education receive fair treatment by standing up for his or her rights, rights that are systematically denied? No, of course not; it is not that simple. Rosa

Parks stood up (or rather stayed put) for her rights, not knowing what the consequences would be, and her example is a good one to follow — a little person, taking on "the system" in whatever way possible.

I can almost hear you thinking, right now. You are saying to yourself, "Is this going to be another Gazette editorial plea? Is this writer going to start begging me to get involved, as a concerned individual, with the Gazette, with

anything? Golly, I hate these Gazette editorials. They always try to tell us what to do, as if they are smart and have all the answers, and we are ignoramuses."

I realized when I started to do research on this subject that I knew very little about the black struggle, about black history. What I am going to do now is go find a book about Rosa Parks, and read it, cover to cover. You can do whatever you want.

Sandy MacKay

l e t t e r s

Potholes

To the Editor:

Barbara Leiterman's epistle, "Balance" (January 11), leaves in its wake potholes that demand stitching. It is obvious the author detested the course of action taken by the Palestinians in the occupied territories. It would have been noble if Leiterman had also explored the myth behind Israeli soldiers who execute themselves rather than open fire on demonstrating youths. One wonders whether there is any other alternative left to these oppressed people knowing very well the official Israeli government policy in the territories. Can you sleep peacefully when someone is occupying your land?

How non-violent was the salvation army of Mr. Begin and his devout congregation of warlords? Peaceful? The criteria used to describe the PLO as "the most malignant terrorist organization" need to be substantiated. What about the Israeli Defence Force and its secret uterine brother, the Mossad (securitate)? Indeed, there must be a good reason why the author internalized the same label while assessing the human values of the Palestinians.

The tail end of the letter introduces those viruses found in all dictatorships which condone the virtues of censorship. "... and I sincerely hope that in future the Gazette will forego such reprehensible material," the author wrote. To avoid having the misfortune of reading such essays,

the author should seriously think of living in South Africa or Israel.

The determination to wipe out the dignity of free expression must be resisted. The Gazette would lose its face if wizards of censorship inherit the burden of stimulating our minds. This wicked proposal by Barbara Leiterman is at the moment brilliantly pursued by the Israeli military authorities in the West Bank.

Finally, how happy would the author of the letter be in any of those universities in the West Bank which are chronically shut down by trigger-happy Generals?
I. Heritage

Courage

Dear Sirs/Mesdames/Padraic/Erin;

A warm embrace and a hearty 'bravo!' to those with enough courage and fortitude to put out a Gay/Lesbian St. Valentine's Day supplement!

I attend a slightly more homophobic school than yours, and am 'out', but not yet proud enough to advertise. It is so liberating and refreshing to be able to enjoy identity, sensuality, pride. To the straight Gazette staff members: you are to be applauded for allowing other people their lives, and for not fearing that it threatens yours. We need more secure, understanding people like you around!

To the gay Gazette staff: I envy you. I am getting sick of being ignored, or being told that I must

'mend my ways', or being harassed. Keep up the good work. Ciao for now!

Sign me

Name withheld by request.

Fascism

Dear Editor,

I just wanted to write to point out a couple of things that disturb me. First of all, relating to your "Lousy Decade" issue. I, as well as I'm sure many others, share some degree of the underlying sentiments hinted at by your comment about Ronald Reagan (upper border comment on front cover). This man and his administration caused untold problems both in the U.S. and abroad and countless deaths in other countries, one thinks specifically of Nicaragua. Here in lies the irony. We don't like him because he caused pain for others. So, we lament the fact that the past decade didn't claim him as a victim too. Wouldn't that raise the death toll? Your paper isn't any more open minded than he was for wishing him and others dead; even if it was a joke. Time to recognize the fascism in us all.

Along the same lines, there is yet another irony here. The Gazette holds the right to not publish any material that is "racist, sexist or homophobic." Obviously, because you feel it is hateful. Well, you're probably right. Instead, however, we get to be subjected to your very own hatefulness directed towards

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Shhhhh ... don't tell anyone, but *the gazette* is now accepting submissions for the

Portable Gay/Lesbian Reader!

the gazette has traditionally celebrated Valentine's Day by publishing a special edition featuring news and views of a woefully under-represented segment of our population.

Don't submit to homophobia!
Do submit to the supplement!

- news stories
- features
- graphics
- photos
- poetry
- fiction
- true confessions
- comics
- information
- community calendar

Submissions due Friday, February 9 at 3 pm.

Drop them by *the gazette* office, 3rd floor

SUB or the GLAD mailbox at the SUB enquiry desk.

For more information the

Gay/Lesbian Reader, phone *the gazette* at 424-2507 and ask for Padraic or Erin.

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