

# BUS INTEGRATION IN ALABAMA CALM

## Montgomery Quiet on First Day—Slapping of Negro Woman Only Incident

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**MONTGOMERY, Ala., Dec. 21**

—The Negroes of Montgomery, victors in a year-long boycott to end segregation in public transit here, quietly and in determined numbers went back on the city's desegregated buses today.

For the first time in this "cradle of the Confederacy" all the Negroes entered buses through the front door. They sat in the first empty seats they saw, in the front of buses and in the rear. They did not get up to give a white passenger a seat. And whites sat with Negroes.

As one of the oldest race barriers in this deep South community fell this morning, following a formal order from the Supreme Court to abolish segregation in local buses, nothing happened to indicate that Montgomery's 75,000 whites and 50,000 Negroes looked upon the historic event as anything but a natural development.

There were no special details of police on duty, nor were they needed. Despite alarms by city officials and members of the White Citizens Council during the last year that bus desegregation in Montgomery would bring riots and bloodshed, only one minor incident marred today's changeover from long established custom.

A Negro woman who was one of the first to board the newly

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Associated Press Wirephoto

**ON A BUS IN ALABAMA:** Negroes in Montgomery were free yesterday to sit where they chose as Supreme Court order banning racial segregation became effective. Among the first riders were the Rev. Ralph D. Abernathy, left, and the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., who had been active in boycott of buses. At right is the Rev. Glenn Smiley of New York.

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desegregated buses this morning was slapped in the face by a white youth as she stepped out of a bus into the street. She reported that her assailant then jumped into a car with an out-of-state license plate and sped away with a group of white men.

In a couple of instances, carloads of white men were seen to follow some of the buses, but no overt attempt was made to interfere with the bus company's decision to carry out the Supreme Court order.

Aboard the buses, as the Negroes and the whites for the first time sat where they both chose to sit, the talk was rarely about integration. At first there was no exchange between whites and Negroes as they took up the strange pattern of mixed seating. But often the stiffness gradually disappeared.

A Negro turned in one bus to ask a white passenger sitting behind him—the mark of the new order—what time it was and got a quick courteous reply. A white man who had been sitting next to a Negro, said later he did not understand what all the fuss and the difficulty had been about.

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., the 27-year-old Negro minister who was a leader in the boycott, rode one of the city buses today—accompanied by a white minister, the Rev. Glenn Smiley.

### Minister Optimistic

While there was still fear in the community that efforts might be made to disrupt the bus integration process, Dr. King stressed the harmony that had marked the crucial first day desegregation and predicted no major trouble in the future.

"If any trouble does occur I feel the proper authorities will take cognizance and that it will be stopped immediately," he added.

In some cases white passengers made sneering remarks, but Dr. King's emphasis on the Christian theme of love between all men has been adopted by the Negro community not only as a tenet, but as a tactic in their struggle for racial equality.

Two white men in one bus today found themselves sitting behind a Negro, and one of the whites said, loudly: "I see this

isn't going to be a white Christmas."

The Negro looked up, and smiled. He said, with good humor but firmness: "Yes, sir, that's right." Everybody in the bus smiled, and all rancor seemed to evaporate.

There was no mass turnout of Negroes today to exploit their victory. For the most part, only those who had planned already to go to town took the buses. They made nothing special of it, simply abandoned their year-long custom of walking, or join-

ing in a car pool, and quietly boarded the bus.

There had been speculation that the whites might start their own bus boycott now, rather than ride with Negroes. Yet many whites were among today's passengers.

The Negroes, under Dr. King, held almost 100 per cent to their campaign, and consequent losses to the midtown area had brought quiet pressures from merchants and many other responsible groups in Montgomery to end the fight.