The Road to Freedom

Matatma Gandhi from India, Martin Luther King Jr. from the USA and Nelson Mandela from South Africa: in the last century these three men were important in the struggle for civil rights.

Mahatma Gandhi

Gandhi believed in non-violent protest, and many civil rights movements have learned from his methods. He spent many years working as a lawyer in South Africa. Here he experienced racism, as in the following incident:

Gandhi was travelling by train to Pretoria. He was travelling with a first-class ticket. Even so, a railway official ordered him to leave the first-class compartment. The reason was that he was not white. Gandhi refused to leave, and a policeman came to move him. When he still refused to sit in another compartment, he had to leave the train. Sitting in the waiting room all night, where it was very cold, Gandhi began to think about what he should do to fight against colour prejudice.

Martin Luther King Jr.

Martin Luther King Jr. was the leading figure in the US civil rights movement. He was a Baptist minister and a very good public speaker. King grew up in the South and experienced racism at an early age:

Once, Martin was in a shoe store with his father. They sat down on some empty seats at the front of the store, but the white clerk asked them to move. (The seats were probably reserved for white customers.) Martin’s father angrily left the shop.

---

1 struggle kamp
2 civil rights borgerrettigheter
3 lawyer advokat
4 incident hendelse
5 compartment kupé
6 prejudice fordom
There was strict segregation in Atlanta, Martin’s home town. Parks, schools, stores and cinemas were all segregated. In one store Martin was hit by a white lady because she said he had stepped on her foot. On buses only whites were allowed to sit at the front. Even if there were no whites on the bus, blacks were not allowed to sit in them.

April 1965: Dr Martin Luther King (1929-1968) addresses civil rights marchers in Selma, Alabama (Keystone/Getty)

Nelson Mandela

Nelson Mandela grew up in a village in South Africa. He became the leading figure in the ANC, an organization that fought against apartheid. He spent 27 years in jail, but after his release he was elected as President of the new South Africa.

Like Gandhi, Nelson Mandela worked as a lawyer. Here is an experience from his first job at a law firm in Johannesburg:

Nelson was told that all races were equal at the firm. But he noticed that he and the other black lawyer, Gaur Radebe, were given their own special teacups to drink from. Gaur purposely took the wrong cup. But Nelson, who was new to the job, did not dare to do this. Instead he chose not to drink tea at all.

---

7 segregated delt etter rase
8 apartheid praksis i Sør-Afrika (inntil 1990-tallet) som holdt rasene adskilt og umyndiggjorde svarte innbyggere
One white secretary at the firm was taking a dictation from Nelson when a white client came in. She was embarrassed and pretended that Nelson was her errand boy instead.

ACTIVITY

a Whose father left the shoe store in anger?
b Who spent a cold night in a waiting room?
c Who gave a dictation to a white secretary?
d Who was a lawyer in South Africa?
e Who was a Baptist minister?
f Who was hit by a white woman?
g Who spent many years in jail?

9 dictation diktat
10 embarrassed flau
11 errand boy løpegutt