

Summary: A Call for Equality

Civil Rights

African Americans came home from the war, after all they had given their country, to face discrimination. Segregation laws in southern states kept black people in separate schools, separate neighborhoods, even separate parks. Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. fought these laws with nonviolent protest. The federal government passed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to guarantee the rights of all citizens.

In California, segregation laws didn't exist, but people were still treated unfairly. In 1963, the state passed a law making it illegal to refuse housing to a person based on race. The next year, citizens voted to overrule this law. In 1965, race riots broke out in Watts, a poor and overcrowded African American neighborhood outside Los Angeles.

United Farm Workers

Farm workers in California also faced unequal treatment. Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta, joined by a Filipino group, started the United Farm Workers (UFW). They wanted to gain better pay and working conditions for farm workers. In 1965, the workers went on strike against grape growers in Delano. People throughout California supported them by sending food and money to the strikers. Chavez called for a boycott of grapes, and millions of Americans refused to buy grapes or grape products. Growers started losing money. In 1970, they finally agreed to give the workers higher wages and better working conditions.

Equal Rights for All

In the 1960s, many groups used nonviolent protest to gain civil rights. Hispanic high school students in East Los Angeles fought for and won reforms, including Mexican American studies as well as more Hispanic teachers and principals. Women used nonviolent protests to gain rights. California universities started women's studies programs. More women were elected to national, state, and local government. American Indians took over Alcatraz Island near San Francisco to make people aware of their poor living conditions on reservations. They also wanted to turn the island into an educational center, but they were forced to leave.



Before You Read

Find and underline each vocabulary word.

segregation *noun*, the practice of keeping different groups of people separate

civil rights *noun*, rights that countries guarantee to their citizens

nonviolent protest *noun*, a way to protest injustice peacefully, without violence

boycott *noun*, a refusal to buy, sell, or use certain goods



After You Read

REVIEW What did California lawmakers do to try to end housing discrimination? Underline the sentences that explain what the lawmakers did and how the citizens responded.

REVIEW Why did Cesar Chavez want to form a labor union for farm workers? Draw a box around sentences that explain Chavez's reason for forming a union.

REVIEW What rights did California women work for in the 1960s? Highlight the sentences that tell what women won.