

ACTIVIST

Bayard Rustin

A key organizer of the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, Rustin was one of Martin Luther King Jr.'s closest advisors, especially on techniques of nonviolent resistance. Rustin was extremely active in the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and later worked to integrate unions and promote unions among African Americans. Rustin served on several humanitarian missions to Vietnam, Cambodia, and Haiti during the 1970s and 1980s.

Early in his career, he was arrested for "moral cause" which led to his outing to the public. However, once outed, Rustin was completely open about his sexuality and was never ashamed.

In the 1980s, he became a part of the LGBTQ+ movement and an advocate for AIDS education. In a 1986 testimony on behalf of New York State's Gay Rights Bill, Rustin stated that "gay people are the new barometer for social change." He felt that injustice everywhere should not be tolerated and must be protested.

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