Civil Rights

Name: Mr. Budd

What was the Civil Rights movement in post-war USA?

Black Americans in 1950s

- Racist State segregation laws existed - discriminating against blacks.
- Discrimination in all aspects - voting, education, healthcare, leisure, access.
- In 1950s USA: 18% of whites below poverty line, compared to 56% of blacks!

Education & Buses

- Truman made attempts to improve situation, but no Civil Rights bill introduced.
- 17 May 1954 US Supreme court ruled segregated schools were illegal.
- 1955: Montgomery Bus Boycott - led by Martin Luther King.
- December 1956 Supreme court ruled bus segregation illegal!

Little Rock

- Despite Supreme Court rulings, many States simply ignored its decisions.
- Sept. 1957, nine black students were to start at Little Rock High School (Arkansas).
- State Governor sent troops to stop them! The President had to sent federal troops to defend the students.

President Kennedy

- 1961 Freedom Riders.
- 1963 Birmingham, Alabama. King's peaceful protests brutally broken up.
- June: Kennedy submitted Civil Rights bill. King organised huge march on Washington.
- August: King "I have a dream", 250,000+ people.
- Kennedy assassinated November 1963.

Successes

- 1964 - Civil Rights Act - outlawed racial discrimination and segregation. Extended further in 1968.
- 1965 - Voting Rights Act.
- 1967 - State laws on interracial marriages declared illegal.
- Fundamental change in US society - through non-violent protest.

Failures

- Movement revived violent and racist groups such as the KKK.
- Late 1960s: race riots in major US cities.
- Still vast inequality and discrimination.
- Some felt King's non-violent methods achieved nothing - Malcom X favoured force, others believed in 'Black Power'.

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