**Civil Rights in 2 pages**

**Brown v. Topeka 1954**

•NAACP argued *Plessy* was unconstitutional as it made black children feel inferior.

•Supreme Court said schools should desegregate but didn’t say when, so schools could avoid desegregating.

•By 1957 723 school districts had desegregated, but none in the Deep South, which called for ‘massive resistance’.

•**White Citizens Council** set up in Mississippi to preserve segregation, KKK membership grew and there were protests outside schools.

•*Brown* raised awareness and started the legal battle for Civil Rights, but many blacks felt worse off afterwards because of the violence and black schools closing

**Civil Rights Organisations**

**NAACP-** National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People focused on fighting for civil rights in law courts to overthrow segregation (***Plessy v. Ferguson***).

**CORE-** Congress of Racial Equality used non-violent direct action in the North to protest about segregation

**Church Organisations-** Churches were the centre of the community, so black church leaders were often also civil rights leaders. They were well educated and respected, and organised peaceful protests. They could negotiate with white politicians.

**Importance of Boycott & Civil Rights Act**

•The Boycott showed black people could organise mass resistance, be well organised and publicised

•Made MLK famous, and what showed non-violent direct action could achieve. It inspired boycotts in other cities. The violent white reaction showed whites in a bad light, so activists used this in later protests

•There was no further desegregation in Montgomery.

•Dixiecrats opposed the **1957 Civil Rights Act** by using a *filibuster* but it was signed anyway and would persecute violations of voting rights. However, not well enforced

•**Southern Christian Leadership Council** set up 1957 to coordinate church-based protest. MLK became one of the leaders. They protested segregation, and used non-violent direct, mass action tactics, and had broad black and white membership. They also worked for voter registration.

**Montgomery Bus Boycott 1955**

•Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a bus for a white man and was arrested. This triggered the boycott.

•Rosa wasn’t the first to do this, but was chosen to be the figurehead of the boycott because she was a member of the NAACP and a respected citizen

•90% of black people who used the bus stopped using them for 381 days in protest of segregation of the buses.

•**Montgomery Improvement Association** set up to improve lives of blacks and support the boycott.

•**Martin Luther King** became the leader of MIA as a respected, educated and peaceful clergyman.

•MIA set up a car pool system to give lifts and used publicity to gain support.

•Strong opposition from WCC and KKK, many boycotters arrested and MLK house and churches were bombed.

•Violent opposition to peaceful protest gained sympathy for the boycott.

•Boycott ended when buses desegregated (*Browder v. Gayle*)

**Little Rock High School 1957**

•Nine black high school students applied to go to white school

•Governor of Arkansas ordered 250 state troops to stop them entering, and huge protests outside the gates

•Mass publicity showed the mob screaming “lynch her” at a teenage girl- Elizabeth Eckford. Caused huge outrage in USA and abroad

•President Eisenhower ordered the removal of the state troops and signed a **Presidential Order** to send 1000 federal troops to protect the Little Rock Nine.

•Little Rock schools closed for next school year, but opened and integrated September 1959

•WCC grew, KKK carried out bombings and state governments used loopholes to avoid desegregation- *massive resistance*.

**Situation in 1950s**

•Black Americans faced discrimination and segregation, enforced by **Jim Crow laws** in the South, separating all aspects of life such as education, housing and transport etc.

•Many white people saw blacks as lazy, stupid and criminal

•WW2 saw 1 million black soldiers fight- it showed they were worthy of respect and embarrassed US in Cold War for claiming to be the leader of the free world while still treating their citizens so badly

•White people prevented blacks from voting through violence or unfair tests.

**Opposition**

**Ku Klux Klan**- a violent white supremacist group, mainly in the South who claimed the bible supported segregation!

**The Murder of Emmett Till 1955**- Emmett was brutally killed for possibly flirting with a white woman in Mississippi. It was widely publicised and caused shock and outrage in the North. Trigger for starting the Civil Rights movement.

**Dixiecrats**- a political group who opposed Civil Rights Acts, who the President could not ignore.

**Campaign in the North and MLK assassination**

•SLCL shocked by Watts Riots, wanted to prove non-violent direct action still worked

•Went to Chicago to hold protests but didn’t really connect with ghetto gangs. Riots began, SCLC accused on encouraging them.

• Agreement made on housing prices so MLK left, but agreement then ignored. However, some success with **Operation Breadbasket**.

•1968 MLK assassinated in Memphis

•Led to riots in 172 cities- 3,500 arrests and $45 million damage 🡪 Lost white support

•**1968 Civil Rights Act** passed

**Black Power**

**Malcom X**

•NOI campaigner who was frustrated with lack of progress non-violent protest had gained. He rejected integration (black nationalism) and accepted the possibility of using violence to gain equality

•1964 set up **Muslim Mosque Inc**. and went to Mecca, where he became more accepting of integration and white help and agreed to work with other civil rights leaders like MLK, SNCC and CORE.

•NOI assassinated him 1965 while making a speech. Many focused on his earlier views on self-defence and black nationalism, creating the **Black Power movement**.

**Black Panthers**

•Wanted full black communities with officials working for their own interests & self-defence. Inspired by Malcom X

•Had a 10-point program to improve black communities e.g. health clinics and safety patrols, but also taped police harassment cases and carried guns- there were shoot outs and accused of stealing to fund their program.

•25 cities had Panther groups, 2,000 members

**Watts Riots 1966-68 and Kerner Report 1968**

•329 major riots in 257 cities. 220 deaths and 52,629 arrests. Reaction to ghetto conditions, and police discrimination in the North

•**Kerner Report** said policing should be changed and money spent on improving conditions, but no serious attempt to do so.

**Selma 1965**

•Freedom Summer 1964 in Mississippi had tried to increase black voter registration but faced huge opposition from the KKK. 3 civil rights activists were murdered. Only 1600 people successful registered

•SCLC went to Alabama to increase voter registration and protest unfair registration tests.

•State troopers attacked protesters- **Bloody Sunday**

•Led to **Civil Rights Act** ‘64 and **Voting Rights Act** ‘65

**March on Washington 1963**

•March for jobs and freedom had 250,000 people

•Peaceful and broadcast on TV with famous people like Bob Dylan involved, and 40,000 white people

•MLK made the closing speech- “**I have a Dream”** that confirmed his role as leader of civil rights.

**Progress by 1975?**

•Civil Rights influenced by Vietnam War as black people didn’t want to fight for a racist government

•Nixon supported Civil Rights but to make acceptable to southern whites he sold it as stopping the riots. He pressed for affirmative action in jobs

•Many blacks still lived in poverty and faced discrimination, but there were some in top government jobs and their struggle was well known.

**Campaign in Birmingham, Alabama 1963**

•**Campaign C** (for confrontation) aimed to end segregation by provoking white violence to gain support. SNCC, SCLC and MLK involved.

•Included sit-ins, boycotts and peaceful marches. Hundreds took part, most adults arrested (900)

•SNCC trained young demonstrators instead. Chief of Police **Bull Connor** used fire hoses and attack dogs on the teenagers- caused massive outcry

**James Meredith 1962**

• University of Mississippi had rejected James but ordered by Supreme Court to admit him- forced segregation.

• Governor and WCC physically stopped him from entering

•500 federal officials sent to protect him, plus appeal from President Kennedy for calm, but 3,000-man mob attacked. 2 civilians died, 375 injured. 28 federal officials shot at by mob!

•Federal troops sent in to stop riots and guarded James all year.

**Greensboro sit-in 1960**

• 4 black students sat at a segregated lunch counter in Woolworths, and not served.

•Within 3 days over 300 students joined the protest, huge publicity. Inspired sit-ins in other places too.

•**SNCC** set up as a non-violent student group that trained students to do sit-ins.

•White people began to join the protests despite threats

•Showed importance of publicity and was hard to ignore

**Freedom Riders 1961**

• 13 CORE activists tested bus desegregation by riding from North to South. They knew it wasn’t happening, so wanted publicity and government action

•100 KKK members attacked and firebombed the buses in Alabama. Huge embarrassment to government as state police and politicians has supported the actions of the KKK.

•Inspired SNCC to have own freedom rides. Total 60 rides and 300 arrests. Forced desegregation