

How far did situation  
of blacks improve in  
years 1945-55?  
essay



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

1945-1955: We can see an improvement due to Truman's policies. As a senator he consistently supported legislation to abolish the poll tax (which prevented the majority of Blacks from voting in the South) and to stop lynching.

Truman established a liberal committee to investigate violence against Blacks in 1947 gave a report 'To secure These Rights'-increased awareness. It highlighted the discrimination Blacks suffered and called for: anti lynching legislation, abolition of poll tax, voting rights laws, end to discrimination in interstate travel and armed forces. Truman followed the advice in some aspects and issued orders to end segregation in the army and also to guarantee fair employment in civil service through his Fair Employment Board. He also set CGCC-> (Committee on Government Contract Compliance) federal defence contracts were not supposed to be given to companies discriminating Blacks. Eisenhower appointed strongly liberal Earl Warren the Chief Justice of The Supreme Court who decided on Brown v Board of Education.

1955-1965: He also sent federal troops in 1957 to Little Rock to escort Black students to school. He introduced two Civil Rights Acts (1957 and 1960) both of which were intended to ensure all citizens were able to vote. Kennedy insisted on employing Blacks to civil service(employed 4 black federal judges inc. Thurgood Marshall) and created Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to promote Black employment. Integration on interstate travel was enforced in 1961 by Attorney General Robert Kennedy. He sent National Guard to protect James Meredith when registering for Mississippi Uni.

He also sent federal troops to enforce integration in Alabama University. Helped in Birmingham 1963 to desegregate facilities sending Justice Department representatives. Allowed the March on Washington Johnson chaired EEOC and federal jobs held by Blacks increased by 17% in 1962 and 22% in 1963. "Great Society"-end to poverty and racial injustice, 1964 Civil Rights Bill end of de jure segregation, Higher Education Act 1965 aided poor black colleges, Secondary Education Act 1965 raised percentage of blacks with high school diploma from 40% to 60%. Voting Rights Act 1965 abolished literacy tests-> dramatic effect, significantly increased percentage of Blacks registered in the South.

NAACP: 1945-1955 NAACP made various boycotts, contributed to the development of civil rights mainly through legal means. They took cases to the Supreme Court and were highly successful there. For example the 1946 Morgan v. Virginia Supreme Court case made interstate buses segregation illegal. The landmark decision for the civil rights movement was 1954 Brown v.

Board of Education. Thurgood Marshall argued the case and won. Previous Plessy v. Ferguson case overturned and schools were to integrate. Brown II made it "with all deliberate speed". This was a huge change, finally school segregation could be challenged.

It gave footing for future protests. 1955-1965 NAACP initiated 1955/56 Montgomery Bus Boycott often considered the beginning of the Civil Rights Movement. Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat. This was very successful, attracted massive media attention, forced the bus company to desegregate

and evoked a strong feeling of unity and common purpose among Blacks. In 1958 Thurgood Marshall argued *Cooper v.*

Aaron -> obtaining decision that any law keeping schools segregated was unconstitutional. It helped James Meredith get to University of Mississippi in 1962, Robert Kennedy had to send federal troops to protect him. It also lobbied and put pressure on congressmen to pass the civil rights act 1964. Stayed the same 1945-1955: *Brown* didn't set a precise date, only *Brown II* said "with all deliberate speed" but it gave Southern states an excuse to do nothing and say 'it's impossible/we need time'. In response to *Brown* White Citizens Councils were formed to oppose desegregation, KKK was revitalised (massive white backlash).

(1956 Southern Manifesto created to prevent school integration signed by 101 southern congressmen) create No support from federal government in enforcing *Brown*. Emmett Tilly murdered in 1955 and murderers found not guilty - this showed how things were in the South. They could get away with killing Blacks. Blacks not allowed to vote. 1965: Civil Rights Acts of 1957 and 1960 were unsuccessful as they increased the number of Black voters only by 3%.

Situation in Little Rock in 1957 showed the massive grassroots resistance, students were spat on, attacked. Kennedy unresolved problem of ghettos, de facto segregation