

Civil rights

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How far is it accurate to describe black Americans as second class citizens the years 1945-55? Plan: The BAD part: After WWI, even though black soldiers were recognized by European countries as "Black Heroes", segregation in the Armed Forces still existed. Jim Crow Laws were very strict, it promoted segregation in Southern states between 1876 and 1965, and this was a very long period of time with very, very little De facto change.

Black people were segregated in restaurants, public transport and even toilet facilities. "Separate but equal" Black people had to live in areas known as ghettos. White Supremacy: racist belief that white people are far superior to other races. Voting Rights: under the 15th Amendment black people had the legal right to vote in America. However, especially in Southern states, the government found loopholes in the 15th Amendment to create laws that would disenfranchise the local black population.

Some states introduced laws such as the Grandfather Clause (black people could only vote if their grandfathers had the right to vote), Literacy Tests, which were made harder on purpose (white people were not obligated to do this test) and the introduction to the Poll Tax (black people had to pay a high amount of money for them to be able to vote). Economical situation: in the Southern states there were still black Americans who received poorly paid salaries.

Even in the North, black industrial workers were unlikely to be paid the same as their white colleagues (50% less on average). This happened especially because black people had no education whatsoever. In 1945, only 1% of the black population went to school. Social Conditions: with the end of the

WWII, segregation still remained in Southern States... Black people were still barred from restaurants, cinemas and hotels. 40% of housing available for black people in the Washington D. C. area was found to be sub-standard, whereas only 12% of white housing fell into this category. The fact that African Americans were poorer than white Americans meant that they were often forced to live in worse accommodation and in the undesirable parts of the city. How did Truman help? In 1947, President Truman set the committee 'To Secure These Rights' which stated every single way in which black Americans were being discriminated against. Even though this document had many recommendations about how to change their situation, many of these recommendations did not go through because of the congress.

Truman was committed to advancing civil rights. He used his powers to desegregate the armed forces. 'To Secure These Rights' was a turning point in race relations as it showed that the Federal Government had recognized its responsibility to address racism in America. Executive Order 9980 in 1948: Fair Employment Board opportunities in government organizations. Executive Order 10308: withheld defence contracts from firms that practiced discrimination.

Government Contract Compliance (CGI) 1951 : it monitored the awarding of government contracts to make sure that government contracts did not go to racist employers. Truman appointed a number of black Americans to high profile jobs in the government. E. G. Ralph Bunch Ambassador to the USA. Executive Order 9981 in 1948: racial equality in the armed forces and ended segregation in the army. The Fair Deal Programme: committed the

government to building a number of new homes, especially in inner-city ghettos. He desegregated the canteen at Washington Airport in 1949. How did Truman NOT help? Executive Order 9981-The Fair Employment Deal: was underfunded, therefore did not have enough money to function properly. 2. Executive Order 9981 : only benefited people who worked in the armed forces, therefore many people were still being segregated and suffering from racism in jobs. 3. Truman desegregated the canteen at Washington Airport, but it can be argued that Truman only did this on favor of his own image as not many African Americans would actually travel by plane. 4. Truman failed to pass many of the recommendations in To Secure These Rights Committee. For example Anti-Lynching laws were not approved by the Congress; he did not address any of his executive orders to health and education, which would have a bigger impact on the civil rights movement. 5. Some of his changes failed to achieve great change, for example the Fair Deal Housing Programmer demolished more houses than it actually built. 6. Towards the end, he got distracted by the Korean War and did not give the attention that civil rights deserved. 7. Government Contract Compliance could not force companies to adopt fair employment practices.