The Demand for Civil Rights after 1945

Describe the importance of the Double-V campaign, the Brown v Topeka case and the murder of Emmett Till to the civil rights movement.

Explain why the civil rights movement grew quickly after the Second World War.
Double-V Campaign

- Over a million black Americans fought for their country in WW2. They fought against Nazi aggression and racism, yet they faced segregation and racism in their own army units and back home in the USA.

- As a result many black soldiers began to talk of the Double-V campaign. The ‘V’ stood for victory in the war and victory for civil rights back home.

- When black Americans returned home from WW2 they found that racism still existed. They wanted a change. They wanted civil rights. They said, ‘No more Jim Crow’.

Historians agree that WW2 planted the seeds of the Civil Rights movement of the 50s and 60s.
Double-V Campaign

The Tuskegee Airmen was the first group of black pilots ever trained by the US air force. In 200 missions they never lost a

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Su0JjIYTZY
Red tails video.
Failure of the Double-V Campaign

Racial tensions continued during the war.

More and more people crowded into towns and factories making weapons, competition for housing and jobs resulted in race riots. (Detroit, Harlem)

Even in the south there were outbreaks of violent protest.

There were up to 75 lynchings reported during the war.
Success of the Double-V Campaign

Sowed seeds for later success.
First seed-1942- creation of an organisation called the Congress of Racial Equality. (CORE)

Second seed was an organisation called the Nation of Islam. Some black Americans refused to serve in the US armed forces. They believed in complete separation of the races and did not think it was right that black soldiers should fight for white USA.

Protests and organisations that started before or during WW2 eventually led to the more organised civil rights movements of the 50s and 60s. One black soldier said ‘After the end of the war, we just kept on fighting. It’s just that simple.’
Brown v Topeka: 1954

Topeka- town in Kansas. Argument about 8 year old Linda Brown and what school she should attend. Linda’s father Mr Brown took the Topeka Board of Education to court.
Mr Brown was supported by the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP).
The NAACP aimed to achieve civil rights by working within the legal system. The NAACP saw the case of Linda Brown as an opportunity to attack segregation in education.
Brown v Topeka

Eventually the court case reached the Supreme Court.

You should remember that in 1896 the Supreme Court had decided that segregation was acceptable. The Supreme Court said that black people and white people should have ‘separate but equal’ facilities, which included schools.

On 17th May 1954, the Supreme Court completely changed its decision made 60 years previous. It decided that segregated schools were unequal and that schools should be desegregated.

The Supreme Court said the idea of ‘separate but equal’ had no place in modern day USA and that separating children in schools because of the colour of their skin was wrong.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TTGHLdr-iaK
Brown v Topeka

The case of Brown v Topeka and the Supreme Court decision was the first victory for civil rights campaigners and it set a precedent. However, there was still the problem of making southern states desegregate their schools.

Even the US president (Dwight Eisenhower) said ‘I don’t believe you can change the hearts of men with a law’. By the end of 1956 not one black child attended a white school in the south. Most southern states believed the Supreme Court was out of touch with the realities of southern life.
Who was Emmett Till and what happened to him?

He did not know about the extreme segregation and prejudice that existed in Mississippi.

August 1955

14 years old

From Chicago

Visiting relatives near Money, Mississippi
Watch the episode of eyes on the prize-Awakenings.

Make notes on what happened to Emmett Till and the court case that followed.

Headings:

What happened to Emmett Till?
What happened in the court case?
What was the importance of Emmett Till’s death?
The importance of Emmett Till

3 impacts:
1. The importance of the media – especially television – huge amount of publicity therefore
2. Impact on black Americans living the north (and others in the north too) – seeing how bad conditions were in the south
3. It was such a horrendous case and indicated that very little had changed, so this motivated people to push for civil rights.