

## F - Eisenhower Tranquility and Crisis 1953 - 61

### African Americans in the North and South

#### **The emergence of the civil rights movement**

1. Before 1955 the struggle had been spearheaded by the NAACP and A. Philip Randolph.
2. The 1956 Montgomery bus boycott is considered by many to be the start of the Civil Rights Movement. This saw Rosa Parks refuse to give up her seat to a white man, for which she was arrested. The NAACP organised a boycott of the buses which eventually led to the Supreme Court ruling, 1956 *Bowder v Gayle*, which ruled segregation of Montgomery's buses as illegal. This suggested non-violent protest might be effective.
3. More mass action protests followed:
  - a. A sit-in at a lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina.
  - b. Woolworths desegregated their lunch counters in 1961.
  - c. The Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) worked to empower local communities. E.g. a voter rights campaign for black residents of the Mississippi Delta.

#### **The policies and attitudes of the main political parties.**

Most Southern **Democrats** were opposed to civil rights but some were increasingly liberal because of:

1. Basic human decency (Harry Truman)
2. The increased importance of the black vote in pivotal states like New York and Illinois.
3. The recognition that racism stunted economic growth (Lyndon Johnson)
4. The increasing realisation that the black consciousness would not accept inequality much longer.
5. From 1948 the Democratic Party promoted Truman's civil rights programme and stated this again in 1952 and 1956

The **Republicans** were mildly interested in the black vote in the North but realised it mostly went to the Democrats.

1. In 1952 the party declared commitment to both racial equality and states rights.
2. In 1956 they repeated the racial equality commitment and dropped states rights.
3. Some Republicans were liberal on race; Earl Warren and Richard Nixon.
4. Others were far more conservative; Eisenhower.