Civil Rights Movement. In the North, Mayor Daley proved to be effective at hindering progress in the Chicago Campaign of 1966 by agreeing to meet with King, yet behind the scenes his lawyers managed to prohibit further large-scale protests.

One thing to bear in mind is the imminent federal opposition. This significantly both helped and hindered the civil rights movement. Opposition from the FBI generally hindered the movement, with J Edgar Hoover setting up COINTELPRO to investigate into racial groups such as the NAACP, whom he thought were communists (he was incredibly anti-communist). Their main tactics included spying on civil rights groups, harassing activists and generally infiltrating them by posing as activists to weaken the groups from within. However this also helped the civil rights movement to a degree as their work couldn’t cause much effect due to the mass support at the March on Washington.

As well as opposition from the FBI, there was also opposition from Congress itself. A Democratic Senator James Strom Thurgood staged the longest one-person filibuster to oppose the 1957 Civil Rights Act – he spoke for over 24 hours. Similarly, a group of 18 democrats kept a filibuster going for over 125 hours to block Eisenhower’s Civil Rights Bill of 1960. However Congress also helped the progression of the Civil Rights Movement as they supported the Civil Rights Bill of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 giving the government significant power to support voting rights and force desegregation.

Presidential opposition was a massive factor in the progress of the Civil Rights Movement. Different Presidents acted, or didn’t act, in different ways. Eisenhower’s mind-set was that black campaigns do more harm than good and that the blacks should accept their place in society and be patient, because they would trigger resentment among whites. Harry Truman, however, was a racist at heart but desegregated the forces, yet no Civil Rights Bill was passed under his name. Johnson, whilst having two major Bills passed under his name, soon turned his attention to the Vietnam War which took up most of his time, thus triggering an argument with King. This meant that Johnson’s actions towards the Civil Rights Movement in the North was hindered.

However, Kennedy helped the civil rights progress through his public support of the movement, he once said he was “sickened” by the treatment of protestors at Birmingham, and was the first president to publically speak of his support for a Civil Rights Bill. This could’ve made it more socially acceptable for the public to also support the movement after learning that their own president supports it. He also set up the Voter Education Project in 1962 which offered grants to groups of activists who would abandon direct action to focus on voter registration. This reiterates my point that the civil rights movement’s opposition both helped and hindered the movement, but the most powerful of these oppositions were perhaps the Presidents.

Overall, many factors opposed the Civil Rights Movement yet with all of these oppositions came aspects which actually benefited the movement, such as public sympathy from police brutality, and the intervention of President Kennedy.