Harry S Truman’s Domestic Agenda: “Stuck in the Middle”

• Truman’s first domestic task was to preside over the transition from a wartime to a peacetime economy.
  – Military shrinks to 3 million
  – 2 million women workers lose jobs
  – Dismantled wartime regulatory agencies
    • Prices rise dramatically!
  – Fair Deal Program Announced
TRUMAN’S Fair Deal

• Aim of initiative was to “out New Deal, the New Deal”
  – How was the “Fair Deal” a continuation of the New Deal policies?
    • Improve the social safety net!
    • Minimum wage, expand public housing, expand social security, education
    • “raise the standard of living in the USA”

• WHICH GROUP IS NOT GOING TO LIKE THIS?
Postwar Strike Wave:

• Liberal wing of Democratic party and the AFL/CIO labor unions decide to launch Operation Dixie, which would attempt to expand unionization to the traditionally anti-union South.

• Were “Operation Dixie” and the rest of the strikes a success?
  – Steel, Auto, Coal, HOLLYWOOD and went on strike too!
  – Now if you are a President, do you like it when much of your industries shut down on strike? NO!
  – Truman secures a court order and puts them back to work.
  – SUCCESS? No way...
GOP’S REVENGE:

- What was the “Taft-Hartley Act” and how was it a change in Democrat/New Deal policy?
  - What would you do if you were the GOP and saw Operation Dixie fail so miserably?
  - Kill the Fair Deal
  - Passed Taft-Hartley Act:
    - “Right to Work” Laws
    - No closed shop
    - Prez has power to end strikes and created “80 day cooling off period” between strikes.
Truman and Civil Rights:

• What evidence was there that race-relations in the USA in postwar society were changing?
  – 11 states with fair employment practices
  – Jackie Robinson
  – first time in forever no recorded lynching (*I guess that’s a start...*)
  – Plus ya know.... Hitler.

• What did the Commission on Civil Rights conclude in 1947?
  – Devastating indictment of racial inequality, no holds barred view of race relations
  – Oct 1947; Commission on Civil Rights called on FEDERAL gov to abolish segregation, called for public house, equal access to jobs and education-desegregation of armed forces.
Truman and Civil Rights Initiatives:

• Truman pushed forward an initiative that did everything the Commission wanted plus
  – **FEDERAL** Civil Rights Commissions to ensure access to jobs and education
  – **FEDERAL** Laws against lynching.

• Why **FEDERAL** laws instead of trying to go through the states?
By Executive Order

PRESIDENT TRUMAN WIPES OUT SEGREGATION IN ARMED FORCES

2nd Order Sets Up FEPC In All Government Jobs

In a dramatic and historic move, unprecedented since the time of Lincoln, President Harry S. Truman issued Monday afternoon two executive orders which doom forever Jim Crowism in the Armed Forces of the United States and guarantee equal job opportunities in the Federal government and all of its branches.

Executive Order No. 1

Establishing President's Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Services.

Under 'States' Rights'

Posse, Bent On Lynching, Searches Woods For Prey

Rumor Negroes Would Resist Scatters Mob

Intended Victims Escape; 2 Whites Shot As Premeditated

Aubrey Williams Bids Dixie Demos Farewell: 'Get Out And Stay Out'

By JOHN LEFLORE

Montgomery, Ala. - Continuing his attack on Uncle Sam's role in the Democratic convention and President Truman's civil rights program, Aubrey Williams, president of the States' Rights party, is threatening another strike in the form of an editorial in the Southern States News.

Save This Paper It Marks History

Come back and do a job is Truman Edict

GOP Must Decide What Comes First, Party Or Nation

WASHINGTON: The Republican-dominated White Congress is on the spot, President Harry S. Truman put it there. The Republican Party is all in on the spot. It is 'out of step' with the November elections at stake.

Save This Paper It Marks History

Bible, law, and justice, FEPC, and freedom, too, are right, not some composite key word to be read in the nation.
Truman’s Civil Rights Motivations:

1. Personal sentiments
2. Cold War implications
3. Political strategy
How was the “State’s Rights Party” formed and what were its policies?

• Lead by South Carolina Governor J. Strom Thurmond, it was formed as a direct response to Truman’s Civil Rights Initiatives.
• Traditionally Democratic voters, right in Truman’s base.
• Put forth a “pro-segregation” platform that aimed to promote “states rights”
• Claimed Truman’s plans for extending FEDERAL enforcement of civil rights, “a plan to turn America into Hitler’s Germany”.   **Irony anyone?**
Progressive Party with Henry Wallace

• Wallace was Roosevelt’s VP under the New Deal and he stood for the unionized/New Deal/Social Safety net wing of the Democrats
• Denounced segregation even more vigorously
• Wanted to have more friendly relations with Soviet Union
• International control of Nuclear weapons.
Map showing the 1948 U.S. presidential election results.

The map is color-coded by political party:
- **Green** for Democrats
- **Pink** for Republicans
- **Blue** for States' Rights
- **Gray** for Progressive
- **Light Blue** for Other candidates (Socialist, Prohibition, Socialist Labor, Socialist Workers)

**Table below the map:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Electoral Vote (Share)</th>
<th>Popular Vote (Share)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>Truman</td>
<td>303 (57%)</td>
<td>24,105,695 (49.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican</td>
<td>Dewey</td>
<td>189 (36%)</td>
<td>21,969,170 (45.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>States' Rights</td>
<td>Thurmond</td>
<td>39 (7%)</td>
<td>1,169,021 (2.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progressive</td>
<td>Wallace</td>
<td>12 (2%)</td>
<td>1,157,172 (2.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other candidates</td>
<td>Socialist, Prohibition, Socialist Labor, Socialist Workers</td>
<td>272,713</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DEWEY DEFEATS TRUMAN

G.O.P. Sweep Indicated in State; Boyle Leads in City
Impact of Election of 1948

• Unique in many ways
  – One of the few election where every voter had a candidate
    • Boring stance-less conservative candidate? Check!
    • Middle of the road sitting president? Check!
    • Super New Deal union leftists? Check!
    • Segregationist State’s Rightsers? Check!
  – First election since 1868 where race played an issue

• Results in massive GOP Defeat!
• After big GOP defeat, they redoubled their efforts to win.
• Well how are they going to do that.....
  – *What's the worst charge you could throw at a person in the late 40s-early 50s??*
• GOP ratcheted up “anticommunism” even more.
  – McCarthy/Nixon rose to power and fame with this strategy
GOP led Anticommunist politics:

- What was the McCarran International Security Bill of 1950 and why did Truman oppose it?
  - Attacked “subversives” by requiring them to register with government
  - Deported them or interned them.
  - Truman say this as an excess of Anticommunism
- Is this good politics by the GOP?
- McCarran-Walter Act
  - Immigration Quotas----> Operation Wetback
  - 1 million deported
How do you think the Civil Rights movement and Organized Labor would respond to the anticommunist movement?

What are their options and potential outcomes?