PRESIDENT TRUMAN VERSUS THE EIGHTIETH CONGRESS:

A STUDY OF THE SPECIAL SESSION OF 1948

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Muller, Arnold J., President Truman Versus the Eightieth Congress: A Study of the Special Session of 1948. Master of Arts (Political Science), December, 1970, 171 pp., 2 tables, bibliography, 157 titles.

The problem with which this investigation is concerned is the description and analysis of President Harry S Truman's use of his Presidential prerogative in recalling the Republican Eightieth Congress into special session on July 26, 1948. Numerous and varied materials were used in making the investigation of the political significance of the special session. Basic sources include the Congressional Record, Public Papers of Harry S Truman, Truman's Memoirs, the New York Times, and autobiographies of persons connected with the event. A multitude of secondary works and supplementary articles have also been employed.

The study follows events chronologically and is organized around those actions which led to the session, the session itself, and the political results. Chapter I is concerned with the reconversion problems of President Truman in postwar America and those events which led to the election of the Eightieth Congress in 1946. Chapter II is an investigation of the Eightieth Congress's reaction and treatment of President Truman's domestic legislative proposals and the major points of disagreement. Chapter III is devoted to the politics of 1948. The major events traced are the liberal and Southern

revolt movements within the Democratic Party, the Republican Party's nomination of Thomas E. Dewey as its Presidential candidate, the nomination of President Truman as the Democratic Presidential candidate, and Truman's call for the special session while accepting the nomination. Chapter IV is concerned with the special session. Particular topics considered are the immediate reaction of the Republican forces and editorial comment, claims for authorship of the session, the special session strategy of Truman and the Republican leadership, and the legislative enactments of the session. Chapter V includes a summary of the thesis and a statement of conclusions.

The results of this investigation indicate that President Truman's call for a special session of the Eightieth Congress on July 26, 1948, was primarily a tactic in his campaign strategy for the election of that year. However, the full significance of the session can be understood only by taking into account the political environment of the postwar period and the executive-legislative relationships between President Truman and the Republican Eightieth Congress on domestic legislation. The special session was a microcosm of the political events of 1948 and the relationship between the President and the Eightieth Congress.

Truman's use of the special session suggests several conclusions of both a particular and general nature. They are as follows: (1) Truman's use of the special session was indicative of his political style and personality as a bold

and intensely partisan President; (2) the special session was unique and proved to be a successful campaign tactic; (3) although unique and a partisan maneuver, Truman's action was in keeping with his Constitutional powers; (4) the special session made crystal clear the differences between Truman's position on domestic issues and that of the Republican Party; (5) it is unlikely that the special session tactic can be used again since the political environment of 1948 was unique and the present business of Congress almost always requires that its sessions convene for a full year with short recesses; (6) the special session can be justified by the legislation passed; (7) the special session emphatically demonstrated that the office of the President is always a political one; (8) the special session indicates that a Presidential incumbent has an advantage over his opposition; (9) a disadvantage was that Truman was almost inevitably a prisoner of his own campaign strategy and lost a certain amount of flexibility in future relations with Congress; (10) it was a poor legislative tactic since it had a disagreeable impact on Truman's long-term relations with the Congressional establishment on both sides of the aisle; and (11) the special session indicates that when the President is of one political party and Congress is under the control of the opposition party, the result is an added conflict to the adversary relationship between the President and Congress.

PRESIDENT TRUMAN VERSUS THE EIGHTIETH CONGRESS: A STUDY OF THE SPECIAL SESSION OF 1948

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
North Texas State University in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

By

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Denton, Texas
December, 1970

PREFACE

One of the great difficulties which confronts anyone who wishes to understand the Presidency of the United States is that no two Presidents are ever alike. Each person who becomes President of the United States through election or succession takes command of an office that has a long heritage of Presidential precedent. Each person who exercises the powers, duties, and responsibilities as President of the United States does so under the authority of the United States Constitution. Yet, even though each President can look back to an ever growing heritage of precedent and each President has at his disposal the same Constitutional powers to carry out the duties and responsibilities of the office, the way in which he does so is individualized and unique to the extent that each Administration develops its own personality. Such is the case when the executive-legislative relationship is considered.

A basic principle of American government contained in the United States Constitution is that the United States government was created with a separation of powers: a legislature to make the laws, an executive to take care that the laws be faithfully executed, and a judiciary to interpret the constitutionality of the laws. However, Richard Neustadt has pointed out that it is much closer to reality to consider the

Constitution as having created a government of "separated institutions sharing powers."[1] Because of the separateness of the institutions and the sharing of power and authority, there is the unique situation of both a conflict of interest and an interdependence in the legislative process. The President and the Congress both represent the nation; together they provide for the formulation, authentication, and implementation of public policy. They view their work, however, from a completely different perspective because of the structural differences of the two branches. The President represents the nation as a whole while the Congress represents it as a collection of states and congressional districts.

When this structural source of conflict is added to the conflicts that are inherent in the struggle for power in the political system, the result is that the President is often sharply at odds with the views and purposes of the men on Capitol Hill. Several sources of conflict which seem always to cut across the executive-legislative relationship (aside from conflict resulting from honest differences of opinion) may be identified as: legislative versus executive interests, local versus national interests, special versus general interests, and Democratic versus Republican interests.[2]

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[1]Richard E. Neustadt, Presidential Power (New York, 1960), p. 47.

[2]Rowland A. Egger and Joseph P. Harris, The President and Congress (New York, 1963), p. 43.

As a result of the ceaseless struggle for power produced by these conflicts, the normal situation between the President and Congress is an adversary relationship.

Since the beginning of this century, the President's responsibility as Chief Legislator has evolved in response to demands for a positive executive role in policy-making. His chief constitutional means for meeting this responsibility lie in the negative weapon of the veto and the command that he "shall from time to time give to the Congress information of the state of the union, and recommend to their consideration such measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient; he may, on extraordinary Occasions, convene both Houses, or either of them . . ."[3] Nowhere is he given authority to compel action on, or even attention to, his suggestions. Once the President has presented his legislative proposals to Congress, much of what follows is in its hands.

This, the normal adversary relationship between the executive and legislative branch, is by its very nature one of conflict and frustration for the participants involved. All Presidents have had to live with this situation. Some have handled it better than others, and some have been blessed with less conflict and frustration than others. However, few Presidents have been able to turn the inherent conflict into an advantageous factor in their own behalf. President Harry S Truman, who was often frustrated by the Republican

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[3]U. S. Constitution, Art. 2, sec. 3.

dominated Eightieth Congress, managed to accomplish this in an action that was so bold that it was without precedent. At 2:00 A. M. on the last day of the 1948 Democratic Convention in the midst of his acceptance speech, President Truman perpetrated one of the most astounding coups in the history of the executive-legislative relationship. He announced his intention to call the Eightieth Congress--the "Do-Nothing Congress" as he had named it--into special session to enact into law measures which he had been urging them to pass--measures which the Republicans had included in their campaign platform. This extraordinary action on the part of President Harry S Truman is the subject of this thesis.

An investigation of the events which led to the special session, the session itself, and the political consequences of the session may be justified because no comprehensive study has been conducted on the subject. An in-depth investigation will provide an insight into the executive-legislative relationship in general and Truman's relationship with the Eightieth Congress in particular. President Truman's relationship with the Republican-dominated Eightieth Congress on domestic policy provides an interesting and informative illustration of the conflict of interest and the interdependence of the two branches of government in the making of public policy. This thesis, which will follow events chronologically, will attempt to analyze and describe the impact of the actions leading to the special session and the results which followed.

It is obvious that President Truman called the special session of Congress on July 26, 1948, as a tactical move in his campaign strategy for the Presidency. The central theme of his 1948 campaign was his vendetta upon the Eightieth Congress. The relationship between President Truman and the Eightieth Congress took its tone from their differences in political faiths. Although successful in foreign affairs, the President and the Republican Congress were generally unable to agree in domestic affairs. The roots of the dichotomy between them on domestic legislation lay in immediate post-war America.

Chapter I will be concerned with the reconversion problems of President Truman in postwar America and those events which led to the election of the Eightieth Congress in 1946. Chapter II will be an investigation of the Eightieth Congress's reaction and treatment of President Truman's domestic legislative proposals and the major points of disagreement. Chapter III will be devoted to the politics of 1948. The major events that will be traced are the liberal and Southern revolt movements within the Democratic Party, the Republican Party's nomination of New York Governor Thomas E. Dewey as their Presidential candidate, the nomination of President Harry S Truman as the Democratic Presidential candidate, and Truman's call for the special session while accepting the nomination. Chapter IV will be concerned with the special session. Particular topics to be considered will be the

immediate reaction of the Republican forces and editorial comment, claims for authorship of the session, the special session strategy of President Truman and the Republican leadership, and the legislative enactments of the session. Chapter V will include a summary of the thesis and a statement of conclusions which the study deems valid and appropriate.

Numerous and varied materials have been used in making this study of the political significance of the July 26, 1948, special session of Congress. Basic sources include the Congressional Record, Public Papers of Harry S Truman, Truman's Memoirs, the New York Times, and autobiographies of persons connected with the event. A multitude of secondary works and supplementary articles have also been employed.

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CHAPTER I

THE ROOTS OF A DICHOTOMY BETWEEN PRESIDENT TRUMAN AND THE EIGHTIETH CONGRESS IN THE POSTWAR YEARS

Postwar America

On Thursday, April 12, 1945, President Franklin D. Roosevelt died of a cerebral hemorrhage. Thereupon, Vice-President Harry S Truman assumed the powers, duties, and responsibilities that accrue to the person holding the office of President of the United States. In assuming the Presidency, Truman came to power at one of the most critical periods in the nation's history. There were mammoth problems confronting the new Chief Executive--a complex maze of domestic and world problems made even greater by the recently completed war.

According to Clinton Rossiter, history will judge Truman as being a "near-great" President to be ranked alongside Jefferson and Theodore Roosevelt. He will earn this rank above men who were more able primarily because of his successes in foreign affairs. He will be kept from the ranks of "great" Presidents because of his failures and frustrations in domestic affairs.[1] Postwar America was not kind to Harry S Truman. He was frustrated by the many problems and events of

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[1]Clinton Rossiter, The American Presidency (New York, 1960), p. 153.

the immediate postwar period from the time he took the oath of office on through 1946 and then even more by his relationship with the Republican Eightieth Congress on domestic legislation from 1947 through 1948. To understand the Eightieth Congress, one must first understand the many factors which led to its election.

The Eightieth Congress, elected in 1946, constituted a landmark in the history of the relations of the President to Congress. Its election reflected the reaction of an electorate to the frustrations incidental to civilian restrictions during World War II and other problems in postwar America. Joseph Martin, Republican Speaker of the House in the Eightieth Congress, reflecting on the period related: "The tremors of the Truman years resulted mainly from the upheavals of World War II. . . . Not even the New Deal produced moments of greater division and dispute."[2]

War and its manifold effects always cause an upheaval in the way of life within a country. At the same time that the people are experiencing the diverse effects of war, they consider these effects as being temporary and look forward to the time of peace and the return to normalcy. Yet, the return to normalcy never quite comes. The people themselves because of their experiences are not the same; the world in which they live has changed; and the essence of normalcy is

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[2]Joe Martin, My First Fifty Years in Politics (New York, 1960), p. 176.

defined and interpreted quite differently by the various peoples within a country.

World War II, although fought completely on foreign soil, caused a great change within the United States. And, as it is with all wars, World War II came to an end. The people of the United States were confident that they had fought a good fight, won, and in winning had won the right to return to a more normal way of life. Yet, a normal way of life never quite returned, if one had ever existed as they remembered it.

Rather than a return to normalcy, the years which immediately followed World War II proved almost as tumultuous as the war years. Few Americans during the war had the wisdom to see that the defeat of the Axis would not solve most of the nation's problems--a nation that had not yet overcome a devastating depression upon entering the war. It seemed to most people in their innocent optimism that the end of the hardships of war would mean automatically an era of peace and internal harmony.[3] The most widespread anxiety about postwar America was that cessation of war spending would bring about the return of the depression. Optimism about America's future economic outlook was tempered by a certain uneasiness. John M. Fenton, managing editor of the Gallup poll, reported: "When asked what would be the biggest postwar problem the

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[3]David A. Shannon, Twentieth Century America (Chicago, 1963), p. 507.

United States would have to face, only 5 percent of Americans named keeping the peace; 71 percent cited some problem relating to personal financial security."[4]

Fear of depression proved unfounded. The United States after World War II enjoyed the greatest and most sustained period of economic prosperity in its history. The Gross National Product in 1941, the year in which the United States entered the war, was 125.8 billion dollars. In 1945, the year in which the war ended, it had climbed to 213.6 billion, dropped to 210.7 billion in 1946, and then up again to 234.3 billion in 1947 and 259.4 billion in 1948.[5] This rise was also reflected in wages. The average weekly earnings for production workers in manufacturing in 1941 was $29.58, $44.39 in 1945, $43.82 in 1946, $49.97 in 1947, and $54.14 in 1948.[6] Unemployment was 9.7 percent of the civilian labor force in 1941, and it dropped to less than 4 percent in 1942 and stayed below that figure through 1948.[7]

However, the optimistic expectation of an era of peace and internal harmony proved equally as unfounded as was the fear of depression. On the domestic scene, the nation faced inflation and shortages, labor unrest with industry pressing

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[4]John M. Fenton, In Your Opinion . . . (Boston, 1960), p. 34.

[5]United States Bureau of the Census, Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1957 (Washington, 1960), p. 139.

[6]Ibid., p. 92.

[7]Ibid., p. 73.

for relief from scores of Federal controls, irresponsible political battling, social problems arising from a rapidly increasing population, and a general heightening of individual and family social aspirations.

Reconversion from Wartime

In the final months of 1945 and throughout 1946, the White House was heavily involved in foreign-affairs problems; but one situation consistently clamored for its attention--the problem of reconversion.[8] The difficulties of transition from the controlled economy of war to the relatively free economy of peace were many. Everyone wanted to get back to normal conditions. But the nation's most powerful economic blocs violently disagreed over what was normalcy and how it was achieved. Marriner S. Eccles, Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, wrote:

> In the period after V-J Day, as in the war years, every economic group in the land wanted the benefits of inflation for itself, to be paid for by a different group. The farmer wanted a floor for his prices, but not a ceiling. The real-estate people, the building-materials people, wanted easy credit so that at inflated prices they could readily dispose of the houses and materials they had to sell. But they certainly resisted an excess-profits tax that would help the government recapture some of the profits that were thus made. Labor always wanted price controls, but vigorously resisted wage controls. The bankers wanted higher interest rates, but they

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[8]Harry S Truman, Year of Decisions, Vol. I of Memoirs, 2 vols. (Garden City, N. Y., 1955), p. 481.

> did not want the federal banking agencies to have any other power over the expansion of credit.[9]

It has been written by one student of the Presidency that "Truman's honeymoon with Congress was so short lived it almost never existed."[10] On September 4, 1945, President Truman called Congress which had adjourned in July back into special session. On September 6--four days after the proclamation of V-J Day--Truman sent to Congress his twenty-one point domestic legislation proposals. The message contained approximately 16,000 words, and Truman later recorded that it:

> . . . marked the beginning of the "Fair Deal," and . . . is the date that symbolizes for me my assumption of the office of President in my own right. It was on that day and with this message that I first spelled out the details of the program of liberalism and progressivism which was to be the foundation of my administration.[11]

The message was drafted by Judge Samuel I. Rosenman, who had been persuaded to stay on after Roosevelt's death as counsel to the President, a New Dealer who firmly believed in the philosophy of the New Deal and wrote the message in the same vein of thought. It was read and approved by Truman and such advisers as Clark Clifford and Charles Ross. It was sent to Congress over the protest of the President's conservative associates such as John Snyder and John Steelman.[12]

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[9]Marriner S. Eccles, Beckoning Frontiers (New York, 1951), p. 408.

[10]Jack Bell, The Splendid Misery (Garden City, N. Y., 1960), p. 160.

[11]Truman, Memoirs, I, 481-482. [12]Ibid., pp. 482-483.

The program called for immediate statutory underpinning for some of Truman's reconversion directives and the initiation of basic social and economic reforms reaching far into the future. Among the recommendations were proposals for (1) a full year's extension of the War Powers and Stabilization Acts; (2) a sweeping reorganization of the executive branch of the government; (3) enactment of full employment and fair employment practices bills; (4) federal control of the unemployment compensation program and an increase from 40 cents to 65 cents in the minimum wage; (5) a housing program aimed at 15,000,000 new homes in ten years; and (6) a vast extension of natural-resources development. To mollify some critics of these proposals, he included a modest tax reduction and a boost in congressional pay from $12,500 to $20,000 annually.[13]

The message was greeted by a roar of protest from the Republican leaders. House Minority Leader Joseph Martin snorted, "The scenery is new and there is a little better decoration, but it's just a plain case of out-New Dealing the New Deal."[14] Charles Halleck of Indiana, House Minority Whip, proclaimed: "This is the kick-off. This begins the campaign of 1946."[15] In November of 1945, John Chamberlain

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[13]Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Harry S Truman, 1945, Vol. I, 6 vols. (Washington, D. C., 1961), pp. 263-309.

[14]Martin, op. cit., p. 178.

[15]Cabell Phillips, The Truman Presidency (New York, 1966), p. 104.

of Life wrote, "Washington has begun to turn against him."[16] By December, practically the whole of Truman's postwar domestic program of legislation was deadlocked in Congress.[17]

Postwar Labor Problems

It was stated above that postwar America was not kind to Harry S Truman. He faced an impossible task. He was called on to get rid of controls and yet prevent inflation. His task was made more difficult because of shortages, the actions of the different economic blocs including excessive lobbying on the part of business and strikes on the part of labor, and an increasingly hostile Congress. Because of his vacillation in meeting the problems, Truman only succeeded in making a difficult situation worse and earned the antagonism of all parties concerned--liberal and conservative.

Within the twenty-one point message that Truman sent to Congress on September 6, 1945, he set forth his reconversion program which included "holding the line on prices and rents until fair competition can operate to prevent inflation," and "holding wages in line where their increase would cause price rises."[18] In a radio address on

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[16]John Chamberlain, "Truman's Troubles," Life, XIX (November 26, 1945), 16.

[17]Legislation of significance passed by the 79th Congress: Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946; Employment Act of 1946; Hospital Survey and Construction Act of 1946 (Hill-Burton Act); and the Atomic Energy Act of 1946.

[18]Public Papers, I, 264.

October 30, 1945, he stated that ". . . we should drop as quickly as practicable wartime government controls and get back to the free operation of our competitive system."[19] In November, over the plea of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, Truman requested Congress to repeal the excess-profits tax.[20] Congress accommodated him in this matter, and according to Marriner Eccles, the wage-price inflationary spiral began.[21] Yet, throughout 1946 Truman repeatedly asked Congress for legislation to fight inflation.

As a result of New Deal labor legislation and the tremendous industrial growth during World War II, American labor unions doubled in membership between 1935 and 1945.[22] However, the activities of the unions had been checked during the war years, and the climax of union aggression did not come until after V-J Day. Labor emerged from World War II with a good record and was highly favored by public opinion. Except for minor disturbances, labor had faithfully remained on the job during the war, and the man-days idle due to strikes accounted for "only one-ninth of one per cent of available working time."[23]

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[19] Ibid., p. 447

[20] Eccles, op. cit., p. 414.

[21] Ibid., p. 415.

[22] Historical Statistics, op. cit., p. 92.

[23] R. Alton Lee, Truman and Taft-Hartley (Lexington, Ky., 1966), p. 12.

With the conclusion of the war and war controls came a nationwide wave of strikes. There were several factors during the reconversion period which help to explain the rash of strikes. One underlying factor was apprehension on the part of labor that mass unemployment was probable if not imminent. Their fears were fed when unemployment jumped from one-half million to one million between V-E and V-J Days. War contracts were cancelled after V-J Day, and unemployment immediately tripled.[24] The natural reaction of labor was to strike before mass unemployment curtailed its bargaining power. A second and more obvious factor was that the workers' take-home pay was lowered when wartime bonuses and overtime were reduced or abolished. Labor had made tremendous gains during the war and was reluctant to lose them. In 1941, for example, production workers in manufacturing made 73 cents an hour with an average weekly earning of $29.58. In 1944, the last full year of war, the wage scale was $1 an hour with an average weekly earning of $46.08. In 1946, although the hourly pay scale was still $1, the average weekly earnings dropped to $43.82 because of the loss of overtime.[25] A third factor was that the real wages of labor were lowered at a time when the cost of living was going up. The consumer price index based on all foods went up eleven points from the end of 1945 through 1946.[26]

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[24] Ibid., p. 16. [25] Historical Statistics, op. cit., p. 92.

[26] Ibid., p. 125.

President Truman wrote in his Memoirs:

> The labor unrest . . . during the early period of my administration presented one of the most difficult and persistent of all the domestic problems I faced as President of the United States.[27]

The problems began eighteen days after he took the oath of office and continued to plague him through the 1946 election. On April 30, 1945, John L. Lewis, leader of the United Mine Workers, ordered 72,000 anthracite coal miners out on strike. The strike was ended in mid-summer when the miners received a daily wage increase of $1.37½. The work stoppage resulted in a loss of more than twelve million tons of coal.[28]

By autumn of 1945, the labor situation in the United States was assuming serious proportions. Strikes were spreading once more through the coal mines. The issue this time involved union demands for recognition as collective bargaining agents for supervisory employees.[29] On November 21, 1945, Walter Reuther's United Automobile Workers of the Congress of Industrial Organizations launched a strike against General Motors for higher wages.[30] In 1946 things got worse. As the new year opened, the 900,000 auto workers led by Reuther were still on strike. Within weeks they were

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[27]Truman, Memoirs, I, 495.

[28]Ibid., p. 496.

[29]Ibid., p. 498.

[30]William E. Leuchtenburg, The Great Age of Change, Vol. XII of The Life History of the United States, 12 vols. (New York, 1964), p. 35.

followed by 750,000 steel workers, 200,000 packing-house workers, 200,000 electrical workers, and 50,000 communication workers.[31]

In an attempt to find a solution to the wage problem, President Truman had brought thirty-six representatives of labor and management to Washington in November, 1945, for a conference. After three weeks of accomplishing nothing, he took action on his own. He went before Congress on December 3, 1945, with a request for immediate legislation setting up fact-finding boards to investigate each dispute and a thirty-day cooling-off period when a dispute arose during which strikes would be prohibited.[32]

When Congress refused to act, Truman established fact-finding boards by executive order--although his Attorney General Tom Clark advised him that they had no legal basis.[33] The first dispute investigated was in the steel industry, and a wage increase of 18½ cents an hour was recommended and accepted by labor.[34] Following the steel agreement, the United Automobile Workers concluded its 113-day strike against

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[31]Barton J. Bernstein and Allen J. Matusow, editors, The Truman Administration: A Documentary History (New York, 1966), p. 63.

[32]Public Papers, I, 516-521.

[33]Alfred Steinberg, The Man From Missouri (New York, 1962), p. 271.

[34]Leuchtenburg, op. cit., p. 35.

General Motors with a 19½ cents an hour increase, and other industries fell into line along this pattern.[35]

Postwar Price Control

The battle to hold-the-line on prices was just as frustrating as the battle to hold-the-line on wages. Congress had grudgingly extended the life of the Office of Price Administration for six months prior to its Christmas recess. According to President Truman, it became apparent in December of 1945 that the decontrol of prices without inflation would not work.[36] His response was to deliver a fireside chat on January 3, 1946, to the nation when the Congressmen were at home among their constituents. Among other things, the President said:

> This is our year of decision. . . . I can say with emphasis that the legislative branch of our government has done its full share toward carrying out its responsibilities in foreign affairs. . . . When we turn to our domestic problems we do not find a similar record of achievement and progress in the Congress.[37]

He then listed as one of the pieces of "must" legislation the extension of price controls beyond the June 30, 1946, termination date of the Office of Price Administration. He continued his message saying, "I urge you to tell your

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[35]Bernstein and Matusow, op. cit., p. 66.

[36]Truman, Memoirs, I, 488.

[37]Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Harry S Truman, 1946, Vol. II, 6 vols. (Washington, D. C., 1961), pp. 1-2.

public servants your own views concerning the grave problems facing our country."[38]

One of the problems was that OPA's methods and policies had soured. The great weakness of OPA stemmed from the simple fact that the war had ended.[39] With the war over, Congress was in no mood to continue the wartime restrictions. The opposition forces in the Senate were under the skilled leadership of Senators Robert Taft of Ohio and Kenneth S. Wherry of Nebraska. In the House these forces were led by Charles A. Halleck of Indiana and John Taber of New York. Applying tremendous pressure on Congress were the massed forces of business as represented by the United States Chamber of Commerce, the National Association of Manufacturers, and scores of specialized trade organizations. Cabell Phillips wrote:

> Day after day dozens of the nation's top industrialists, merchandisers, and bankers paraded across the witness stand in the Senate's marbled Caucus Room. Their statements were backed up with charts, statistics, and the testimonials of bankrupt businessmen to drive home the evils of a regimented economy.[40]

Their testimonies were well received by Senator Taft, who was an ardent critic of the price-control agency and Chester Bowles,

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[38] Ibid., p. 7.

[39] Frank McNaughton and Walter Hehmeyer, Harry Truman, President (New York, 1948), p. 142.

[40] Phillips, op. cit., p. 107.

director of the Office of Price Administration, a just as ardent New Dealer. Speaking to a group of businessmen, Taft stated:

> I do not think the OPA can be trusted with the decision as to what articles must still be controlled after July 1, 1946.
>
> My criticism of the OPA administration is of the methods it has pursued. I believe it has entirely departed from the original purpose of the Price Control Act and is gradually setting up a complete control of profits instead of prices.[41]

Even within the Administration there was conflict on the best way to fight inflation and restore the nation to a peace-time economy. For weeks, two of the President's subordinates fought over the issue of price controls. Chester Bowles opposed large price boosts while John Snyder, a Missouri banker who was named director of the Office of War Mobilization and Reconversion, claimed that price rises would stimulate production and ease inflation.[42] In a letter to Truman on January 24, 1946, Bowles stated:

> . . . I have been disturbed over my relationship, and the relationship of the Office of Price Administration, to John Snyder and some of his staff. While I like John personally and respect his sincerity, we often fail to see eye to eye on the most effective ways to meet the problems which we face.
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> . . . I would feel it most essential to you to make an emphatic statement in the immediate future that price and rent controls must be renewed

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[41] Bernstein and Matusow, op. cit., p. 59.

[42] Leuchtenburg, op. cit., pp. 34-35.

> after June 30 for one more year. If this statement is not forthcoming, there will be a rapidly growing belief, on the part of business, that it will pay to hold back production.[43]

When Truman acted, he came down on the side of Snyder. To settle the steel strike, President Truman had appointed a fact-finding board to investigate the dispute. The board had recommended a wage increase of 18½ cents per hour and no price increase. After the steel industry had refused to grant the 18½ cents per hour wage increase without a price increase, Truman followed the advice of John Snyder and granted the steel industry a $5 per ton increase in price[44] stating that "I am now modifying our wage-price policy to permit wage increases . . . and price adjustments. . . ."[45]

The six months reprieve given the OPA was due to expire on June 30, 1946. In President Truman's State of the Union address in January, he told Congress that orderly planning made it necessary that a new OPA bill be completed by April 1.[46] One week before OPA's authority was to expire, a thoroughly mangled compromise of the original measure was laid on his desk. It provided for a full year's extension but included a tangle of crippling amendments aimed at undercutting effective enforcement. The most drastic was

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[43]Bernstein and Matusow, op. cit., pp. 61-62.

[44]Ibid., p. 66.

[45]Public Papers, II, 117.

[46]Ibid., p. 53.

the Taft amendment which stipulated that the OPA should issue no new price schedule which did not reflect a manufacturer's profit on each item covered--a bookkeeping and administrative monstrosity.[47] Chester Bowles, promoted to Director of the Office of Economic Stabilization, charged that under the new bill effective control of prices would be impossible and submitted his resignation to Truman stating, "Clearly I cannot remain here to administer the inflationary bill which Congress has presented for your signature."[48] President Truman in accepting Bowles's resignation replied, "I want to assure you, and at the same time every American, that this administration will never give up the fight."[49]

President Truman was caught in an acute dilemma. If he signed the bill, he would continue to assume the responsibility for checking inflation but would be deprived of the tools to accomplish the task. If he did not sign it, all price controls would end at midnight, June 30, and inflation would run rampant. On June 29, President Truman vetoed the OPA bill stating that "the choice which H.R. 6042 presents is not a choice between continued price stability and inflation. It is a choice between inflation with a statute and inflation without one."[50]

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[47] Congressional Record, 79th Congress, 2nd Session, XCII, pp. 7884-7929.

[48] Truman, Memoirs, I, 489. [49] Ibid.

[50] Congressional Record, 79th Congress, 2nd Session, XCII, pp. 7973-7975.

Truman predicted in his veto message that there would be an immediate rise in prices and asked Congress for a bill that was "fair," "effective," and one that "could be made to work."[51] His prediction was correct. As a result of the price spurt following the veto, the index of prices rose 25 percent during the first sixteen days of July--about twice as much in two weeks as in the previous three years. Meat prices rose 20 cents a pound, corn 40 cents a bushel, and in Chicago rent rose 20 percent.[52] Now it was the consumers who went on strike. In Princeton, New Jersey, housewives banded together in "The Militant Marketers" to boycott food shops with inflated prices. In mid-July every production line in Detroit shut down for a day while thousands of automobile workers swarmed into Cadillac Square "to terrorize the profiteers."[53]

President Truman had taken a fearful gamble. His audacity had left the nation standing on the brink of runaway inflation and a Congress split between outrage and support. Senate Majority Leader Alben Barkley went to work against Senators Taft and Wherry to try to get a bill through the Senate that he could take to a conference committee. When a bill was finally passed by the Senate, Barkley announced that it would "take all the camphor in Washington

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[51] Ibid.

[52] Leuchtenburg, op. cit., p. 36.

[53] New York Times, July 17, 1946, Sec. 1, p. 1.

to cool the backs that were scratched this week."[54] A new price control bill was eventually passed and placed on the President's desk. On July 25, 1946, the President signed the new measure and sent a message to Congress that he was doing so with reluctance.[55] The bill had been stripped of the Taft amendment, but in some ways it was even weaker than the bill that he had previously vetoed. Although rent remained under Federal control, meats, poultry, butter, eggs, milk, and grain would be free of controls until August 20, and after that the independent Decontrol Board set up by the bill would decide which ones still needed price ceilings.[56]

More Labor Problems

In the spring of 1946, two crises with labor developed which exceeded all preceding ones in political importance; one involved the railroad industry and the other the coal industry. The coal controversy began to take shape in January, when Lewis presented the mine operators with a revolutionary new contract demand for the bituminous coal miners--a ten cent royalty on every ton of coal mined to be put into a welfare fund to provide medical and old-age care for the miners. The mine operators refused to negotiate, and

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[54] McNaughton and Hehmeyer, op. cit., p. 148.

[55] Public Papers, II, 359-362.

[56] Public Law 548, 79th Congress.

when the old contract expired on April 1, Lewis ordered the miners to walk out--400,000 of them in twenty-one states.[57]

There was a thirty-day supply of coal above ground when the mines were shut down, so the economic impact was not immediately felt. But, as April wore into May, the supply dwindled. On May 15, Truman called Lewis and Charles O'Neill, the operator's representative, to the first of a long series of conferences. Efforts to settle the dispute were to no avail. On May 21, the President ordered seizure of the mines and put them under Julius A. Krug, his Secretary of Interior. Krug and Lewis signed a contract a week later that gave the miners a five-cent royalty on each ton of coal mined to finance their welfare program.[58] Very obviously, Lewis had won again.

An even more serious development came in the midst of the coal crisis: the threat of a total railroad strike. The United States had never gone through a complete shutdown of the railroads; but on May 18, 1946, Alvanley Johnston, president of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, and Alexander F. Whitney, president of the Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen, were ready to call the strike. President Truman, just minutes before the deadline, asked for a five-day delay of the strike while the negotiations were to continue.[59]

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[57]Truman, Memoirs, I, 502.

[58]Phillips, op. cit., p. 121.

[59]Eric F. Goldman, The Crucial Decade (New York, 1956), p. 23.

The President had been conferring with the twenty unions involved since February in an effort to avert a rail strike. The railroad operators and the union representatives were unable to reach agreement, so Truman submitted a compromise proposition. The railroad operators and eighteen of the unions involved accepted the President's compromise settlement of 18½ cents per hour increase in wages. Johnston and Whitney, however, refused to accept the compromise.[60]

The five days went by without a settlement. Beginning at 4:00 P. M. on May 23, the railroad unions called out on strike 300,000 members from most of the major lines across the country. Eric Goldman wrote:

> Within forty-eight hours, air and bus terminals were pandemonium, runs were starting on gas stations and food stores, unemployment in fringe industries was mounting, and news stories were pouring in of fortunes in lettuce rotting away at Salinas, in citrus fruit at Redlands, in vegetables on the Rio Grande. From federal officials came the bluntest possible warning that hundreds of thousands in Europe would starve if shipments of grains and meat to eastern ports were delayed as much as two weeks.[61]

The President summoned the two union chiefs to the White House for a series of three conferences. Neither union leader would budge. Truman then went before the American people on May 24 in a radio address stating that this was "no contest between labor and management but one

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[60]Truman, Memoirs, I, 500.

[61]Goldman, op. cit., p. 23.

between a small group of men and their government." He also announced that either the trains were to be running by 4:00 P. M. of the next day, or "I shall call upon the Army to assist the Office of Defense Transportation in operating the trains . . ."[62] The next day on May 25, President Truman went before a joint session of Congress and requested emergency legislation that would give him authority to bring injunctions against labor leaders forbidding them to incite strikes; authority to strip of seniority rights those who might strike against the government; and the bombshell of a request for authority to draft into the armed services all workers who were then or who might go on strike against the government.[63] Halfway through his speech, Truman received a note from Leslie Biffle, Secretary of the Senate, announcing that the strike had been settled on his terms.[64]

The railroad strike was over, and a great roar of applause from Republicans and Democrats alike swept across Congress. However, the President's drastic proposal shocked Congress. It was denounced by Senators running a spectrum from liberals like Claude Pepper of Florida ("I would give up my seat in the Senate before I would support this bill.")[65] to conservatives like Robert Taft ("The Truman proposal offends not

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[62]Public Papers, II, 277.

[63]Ibid., pp. 277-280.

[64]Truman, Memoirs, I, 501.

[65]Leuchtenburg, op. cit., p. 36.

only the Constitution, but every basic principle for which the American Republic was established.")[66]

Reconversion Takes Its Toll

By the late summer of 1946, the task of reconversion had begun to take its toll, and the mid-term congressional election was just ahead. In the preceding year and a half, Truman had managed to antagonize just about every powerful economic and political group. The process began when Truman delivered his Congressional message on September 6, 1945, setting forth his domestic proposals. House Republican Leader Joseph Martin noted that Truman's first months in office were reassuring but that:

> Nevertheless we were soon to learn that Harry Truman was not Herbert Hoover. On September 6, 1945, barely five months after becoming President, he sent up a special message outlining in twenty-one points his Fair Deal program. A long decade, more or less, had passed since our struggles against the alphabet agencies, government handouts, and socialistic experiments. . . . At last the time seemed propitious in spite of the disruption on all sides for a gradual advance toward sound, conservative, nonmeddling government.[67]

Truman had set forth a "program of liberalism and progressivism,"[68] but he had also alienated a Congress that was becoming increasingly conservative and anxious to regain

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[66]Goldman, op. cit., p. 25.

[67]Martin, op. cit., p. 178.

[68]Supra., p. 6.

the powers lost during four years of war and twelve years of Franklin Roosevelt. Truman's labor policy also had earned him condemnation from the conservative ranks. His administration had brought about compromises which granted labor slightly more than two-thirds of the pay increases it demanded.[69] Lewis had managed to win in each one of his confrontations with the mining industry and the administration. Because of the remarks made by Secretary of Commerce Henry Wallace on American foreign policy toward the Soviet Union, the conservative factions began to brand the Truman administration as being "soft" on Communism.[70]

On the other hand, Truman had also managed to earn the condemnation of the liberal ranks. From the first they had been somewhat perturbed because he had replaced Henry Wallace as Roosevelt's running mate in 1944. Many liberals had considered Wallace the legitimate heir to Roosevelt.[71] After Truman had become President, the rumor was that the conservative wing of the party had taken over.[72] From the outset, the New Deal Democrats compared the new President's every move with Roosevelt.[73] In particular

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[69]Shannon, op. cit., pp. 511-512.

[70]The controversy over the remarks made by Secretary of Commerce Henry Wallace will be discussed later in this chapter.

[71]Clifton Brock, Americans for Democratic Action (Washington, D. C., 1962), p. 40.

[72]Truman, Memoirs, I, 483.

[73]Steinberg, op. cit., p. 265.

they questioned Truman's appointments. Under Roosevelt, many liberals and progressives had held high offices in the federal bureaucracy: Henry A. Wallace in Agriculture and later in Commerce, Harold L. Ickes in Interior, Frances Perkins in Labor, Henry Morgenthau, Jr., in the Treasury, Francis Biddle as Attorney General--all of the Cabinet level--plus Chester Bowles and Leon Henderson in the Office of Price Administration. This was an impressively strong corps of liberals. By the fall of 1946, all of those named were gone and most of them with resentment against Truman.

It was, however, the dismissal of Secretary of Commerce Henry Wallace that caused political turbulence beyond liberal ranks. The whole episode was a colossal blunder on the part of President Truman. On Thursday, September 12, 1946, Wallace was scheduled to address the National Committee of the Arts, Sciences, and Professions in New York City. On the Tuesday preceding the speech, Wallace had a meeting at the White House with Truman and had in hand the speech that he was to deliver. He told the President what he was going to say, and it is not certain whether or not Truman actually read the speech or if he did so how thoroughly.[74] In any case, no problems were raised at this time.

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[74]There is somewhat of a controversy about what took place in the meeting between Henry Wallace and President Truman. For different accounts of the whole episode see: Truman, Memoirs, I, 555-560; Alfred Steinberg, The Man From Missouri (New York, 1962), pp. 281-285; Cabell Phillips, The Truman Presidency (New York, 1966), pp. 148-155; Frank McNaughton and Walter Hehmeyer, Harry Truman, President (New York, 1948), pp. 54-60; and William P. Helm, Harry Truman (New York, 1947), pp. 233-234.

At four o'clock on the afternoon before the speech was to be delivered, the subject was brought up in a routine White House press conference. A reporter of the Cowles newspapers, William Mylander, had an advance copy of the Wallace speech. He noted that Wallace had stated in his speech that the President had read the contents and that it "represented the policy of his administration." Truman replied, "That is correct." He was then asked if that applied to the whole speech? Truman said, "I approved the whole speech." Later in the press conference, Raymond Brandt of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch asked if this policy represented a departure from the policy of James Byrnes, Secretary of State? The President answered "no, the two were right in line."[75]

That night Wallace gave his speech before a decidedly pro-Soviet audience. His address was an all-out attack on the foreign policy of the United States towards the Soviet Union. He added that he had talked with the President on these points and that the President approved of what he was saying.[76]

The next morning there was tremendous reaction to Wallace's speech in all the newspapers. What was the foreign policy of the United States? Had the policy been reversed?

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[75]Public Papers, II, 426-429.

[76]Truman, Memoirs, I, 557.

Who was spokesman for American policy--Truman or Wallace? President Truman then committed another blunder. He called a press conference for the next day, Saturday, September 14, and said that there had been a misunderstanding regarding his answer to the question on Secretary Wallace's speech in the press conference of September 12, and he noted:

> The question was answered extemporaneously and my answer did not convey the thought that I intended it to convey. It was my intention to express the thought that I approved the right of the Secretary of Commerce to deliver the speech. I did not intend to indicate that I approved the speech as indicating a statement of the foreign policy of this country. There has been no change in the established foreign policy of our government. . . .[77]

The statement was transparently weak and was labeled by Time as "a clumsy lie."[78]

Secretary of State James F. Byrnes, then negotiating with the Russians in Paris, sent a teletype message to the White House on Tuesday, September 17, which stated:

> . . . if it is not completely clear in your own mind that Mr. Wallace should be asked to refrain from criticizing the foreign policy of the United States while he is a member of your Cabinet, I must ask you to accept my resignation immediately. . . .[79]

On September 19, Truman communicated with Secretary Byrnes by teletype and assured him that he stood behind him and

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[77]Public Papers, II, 427.

[78]"The Presidency," Time, XLVIII (September 23, 1946), 22.

[79]James F. Byrnes, Speaking Frankly (New York, 1947), p. 240.

that Wallace would make no more statements during the Paris talks and that he had made no commitments that Wallace would be free to resume criticism at a later date.[80] That afternoon Truman picked up a copy of the Washington Daily News and found a detailed account of a private conversation which he had with Wallace on September 18, disclosing privileged information.[81]

The next morning before ten o'clock, Truman called Wallace on the telephone at his office and asked for his resignation. Wallace replied, "If that is the way you want it, Mr. President, I will be happy to comply."[82] Truman wrote to his mother and sister that day: "Well, I had to fire Henry today, and of course I hated to do it. . . . the crackpots are having conniption fits. I'm glad they are. It convinces me I'm right."[83]

The last of the New Dealers was gone from the Cabinet, and after all the uproar, the support of the liberal faction of the Democratic Party as well. Clifton Brock wrote in assessing the period: "Truman was an unknown quantity; liberals waited uneasily to weigh and judge him. By late 1946, their verdict was hearty condemnation of President Truman."[84]

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[80]Truman, Memoirs, I, 559.

[81]Steinberg, op. cit., p. 284.

[82]Truman, Memoirs, I, 560.

[83]Ibid.

[84]Brock, op. cit., p. 40.

A Year of Frustration

The journalists in 1946 were calling it "The Year of Frustration."[85] The whole United States was frustrated--a frustration that was to make itself known in the coming elections of 1946. Meat prices had risen so high after price controls were removed on July 1 that the public was clamoring for action. On August 20, the Price Decontrol Board restored controls.[86] The angry stockmen then withheld their cattle from market, and there was no meat. The Armour Meat Company's main plant in Chicago, which normally handled 9,000 head of cattle a week, received only sixty-eight by September. In New York City, nine out of every ten butcher shops closed.[87] In early October, the country rose in protest over the meat shortage. On October 14, Truman yielded to the deafening public and political clamor over meat and lifted price controls. He angrily announced in a radio address that the shortages and inflated meat prices were the work of a "few men in the Congress who, in the service of selfish interest, have been determined for some time to wreck price controls."[88] All price controls over meat were ended, and meat reappeared on the market with steak costing one dollar a pound and up. Truman was then blamed for the high meat prices.

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[85]Goldman, op. cit., p. 41.

[86]Harry S Truman, Years of Trial and Hope, Vol. II of Memoirs, 2 vols. (Garden City, N. Y., 1956), p. 24.

[87]Leuchtenburg, op. cit., p. 36.

[88]Public Papers, II, 451.

Truman's popularity reached its lowest point prior to the election of 1946. A Gallup poll conducted a few weeks after he had taken the oath of office showed that Truman had the confidence of 87 percent of the population. (Roosevelt's highest was 84 percent.)[89] This figure had fallen to 32 percent in the fall of 1946.[90] Everyone was angry, and the natural person to blame was the President. The consumers were angry because of the high prices and shortages. The cattlemen were angry because of the reimposed controls. Industry was angry because of the remaining price controls. The labor unions were angry because Truman had asked for draft authority to break strikes. The conservatives were angry because labor had won all its battles, and Truman had asked for sweeping welfare measures in his September 6, 1945, speech. The liberals were angry because industry was given price increases and because of Truman's Cabinet difficulties. About the situation, Truman wrote on December 11, 1946: "There is no exaltation in the office of the President of the United States--sorrow is the proper word."[91]

The Republicans were the only ones who were happy, and they made "political hay." For fourteen long years they had been fighting a losing battle. The Harry M. Frost Advertising Company of Boston produced the perfect campaign slogan for

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[89]Fenton, op. cit., p. 50.

[90]McNaughton and Hehmeyer, op. cit., p. 155.

[91]Truman, Memoirs, I, 504.

the Republican Party--"Had Enough?"[92]--which appealed directly to the pent-up frustrations of reconversion from wartime. Republican National Chairman B. Carroll Reece promised that a Republican Congress would restore "orderly, capable, and honest government in Washington to replace controls, confusion, corruption, and Communism."[93]

The Democratic Congressional campaign was somewhat lackadaisical. President Truman failed to hit the campaign trail and offered scarcely any comment on the important races and issues. Democratic National Chairman Robert E. Hannegan did warn the country that a Republican victory would be a "surrender to the will of a few who want only large profits for themselves."[94] The Democratic candidates for Congress dug up old campaign addresses recorded in earlier years by the late President Roosevelt and aired them over the radio--refraining from mentioning President Truman.[95]

The election of 1946 was a resounding Republican victory in both houses of Congress. America had indeed "had enough" inflation, shortages, controls, industrial unrest, strikes, and administration bickering. In exasperation and frustration the voters elected the first Republican Congress since the pre-depression days of Herbert Hoover.

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[92]Goldman, op. cit., p. 45.

[93]Politics in America: Politics and Issues of the Postwar Years, 3rd ed., Congressional Quarterly Service (Washington, D. C., 1969), p. 3.

[94]Ibid.

[95]Steinberg, op. cit., p. 288.

CHAPTER II

HARRY S TRUMAN AND THE EIGHTIETH CONGRESS: A NEGATIVE RELATIONSHIP

A Republican Congress Is Elected

The election of 1946 was an overwhelming success for the opponents of Truman. After fourteen long years, the Republicans again controlled both houses of Congress. Across the nation they had swept Senate and House contests. In the House they had increased their membership by fifty-six seats from 190 to 246, with the Democrats holding 188 seats. In the Senate they had a gain of thirteen seats which gave them a total of 51, as opposed to the 45 seats held by Democrats. Among the new Senators were John W. Bricker of Ohio, William E. Jenner of Indiana, William F. Knowland of California, George W. Malone of Nevada, Joseph R. McCarthy of Wisconsin, Arthur V. Watkins of Utah, and John J. Williams of Delaware. These Republicans all represented their party's most conservative wing.[1]

The Eightieth Congress was led by men with a mission. They set about their tasks like a royalist faction returned from years of exile. Representative Joseph W. Martin of

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[1] Politics in America: Politics and Issues of the Postwar Years, 3rd ed., Congressional Quarterly Service (Washington D. C., 1969), p. 3.

Massachusetts wrote later that as Speaker of the Eightieth Congress he "led the Republicans in what looks in retrospect like the last stand against heavy federal spending, high taxes, centralization, and extravagance."[2] He added later that "we were at last in control of both houses . . . and were determined that Congress would be a much stronger, more independent force than it had been since 1933."[3] Senator Robert A. Taft, chairman of the Republican Steering Committee in the Senate, interpreted the election of 1946 as a mandate "to cast out a great many chapters of the New Deal, if not the whole book."[4] Representative George Bender of Ohio presented his fellow Republicans with new brooms, saying it was time "to sweep away the cobwebs which have cluttered up our thinking."[5]

The first session of the Eightieth Congress convened under unusual circumstances. The Seventy-ninth Congress had passed the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946, which reduced the number of standing committees in the House from forty-eight to nineteen and in the Senate from thirty-three to fifteen.[6] This caused a complete reorganization of both houses since each party in each house had to assign anew

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[2]Joe Martin, My First Fifty Years in Politics (New York, 1960), p. 177.

[3]Ibid., p. 190.

[4]William S. White, The Taft Story (New York, 1954), p. 57.

[5]New York Times, January 3, 1947, Sec. 1, p. 2.

[6]Public Law 601, 79th Congress.

every one of their members to the newly established committees. When the organizational meetings were over, it was clear that the important leadership assignments were held by the most conservative members of the Republican Party.

The House was under the leadership of Congressman Joseph W. Martin, who was then a veteran of twenty-two years and considered the "symbol of the Republican Party in the House."[7] However, the man who best symbolized the mood of the Eightieth Congress on domestic policy and who was unquestionably the powerhouse of the Senate was Robert Alphonso Taft of Ohio, who was the epitome of conservatism. He had a very parochial image of both America and the world; his immediate response to American commitments abroad was that they should be reduced, and to social welfare legislation at home that it should be rejected. His attitude on Truman's domestic proposals is best portrayed in a speech excerpt as quoted by Eric Goldman:

> We have got to break with the corrupting idea that we can legislate prosperity, legislate equality, legislate opportunity. All of these good things came in the past from free Americans freely working out their destiny. . . . That is the only way they can continue to come in any genuine sense.[8]

Taft was the hero of all who mourned an earlier, simpler, more isolated America--more sure of its values and above

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[7]Martin, op. cit., p. 1.

[8]Eric F. Goldman, The Crucial Decade (New York, 1956), p. 55.

all more self-contained than the frustrated America of the postwar years. He was the symbol of the Republican Party's desires, worshipped by the right wing, and nationally known as "Mr. Republican."[9]

Republican Charles A. Halleck of Indiana, House Majority Leader of the Eightieth Congress, is quoted as saying, "It always galls me to think that Harry Truman won in 1948 by attacking the Congress which gave him his place in history."[10] The relationship between President Truman and the Eightieth Congress set forth a clear demarcation between foreign and domestic programs, and Truman was the first President who was forced to conduct a "dual presidency."[11] He had to conduct, simultaneously, fully developed domestic and foreign policies. At the same time that he was asking Congress for legislation in social welfare, he also had to extract legislation, giving financial support, to carry out his concept of America's role in world affairs. While he was most often blocked in the former, he was extremely successful in the latter.

There is little doubt that if President Truman is remembered and ranked as a "near-great" President, it was because of his success in his foreign policies. Clinton Rossiter,

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[9]Herbert Agar, The Unquiet Years (London, 1957), p. 69.

[10]Jules Abels, Out of the Jaws of Victory (New York, 1959), p. 139.

[11]Richard O. Davies, "Social Welfare Policies," The Truman Period as a Research Field, edited by Richard S. Kirkendall (Columbia, Mo., 1967), p. 171.

in agreement with the point made by Congressman Halleck, wrote that Truman will surely be remembered and possibly honored for "the irrevocable commitment of the American people to active co-operation with other nations in search of world peace and prosperity"[12] through such policies as the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, and the Berlin Airlift. These policies were to have significance far beyond their immediate enactment. David S. McLellan and John W. Reuss, in an article devoted to the Truman period as a research field, postulated:

> If foreign and military policies during the Truman Administration had to be summarized in a word, that word would be seminal. Ask yourself how many of the decisions made in 1945-1953 control policy today. . . . The era was . . . a seedtime for mid-century foreign and military policy.[13]

This paper is concerned only with those events which led up to and help explain the significance of President Truman's call for the July 26, 1948, special session of Congress. The significance of the session is related entirely to domestic problems and the lack of legislative initiative and responsibility in meeting these problems. However, there are two factors which help account for Truman's success in foreign affairs legislation and help to explain his lack of success in domestic legislation. First, Truman made absolutely clear

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[12]Clinton Rossiter, The American Presidency (New York, 1960), pp. 152-153.

[13]David S. McLellan and John W. Reuss, "Foreign and Military Policies," The Truman Period as a Research Field, edited by Richard S. Kirkendall (Columbia, Mo., 1967), p. 15.

his commitment to nonpartisanship on foreign affairs. For example, in one of his first meetings with congressional leaders, one of the Congressmen present mentioned the probable domestic political reaction to certain foreign relations proposals put forward by the President. According to House Speaker Sam Rayburn of Texas, Truman gave the man a sharp stare and stated, "Let's get one thing straight. I never want to hear that damn word 'politics' mentioned here again when we are discussing a thing like this."[14] In assessing the passage of the Marshall Plan, Truman related in his Memoirs:

> Credit is due to Republican Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg and to Republican Representative Charles A. Eaton, the chairman, respectively, of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives. In a Congress dedicated to tax reduction and the pruning of governmental expenditures, they championed this program in a truly bipartisan manner.[15]

The second factor is that by cooperating with the President in foreign policy legislation, Congress had an additional political advantage in assessing and rejecting domestic legislative proposals. Speaker Joseph Martin noted that for many Republicans the incentive to help the Allies was keener in the 1940's than it had been in the 1930's because of the rise of the Soviet Union and the spread of Communism. He added:

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[14]Booth Mooney, Mr. Speaker (Chicago, 1964), p. 156.

[15]Harry S Truman, Years of Trial and Hope, Vol. II of Memoirs, 2 vols. (Garden City, N. Y., 1956), p. 119.

> Then there was another very subtle factor after the war. This was that by taking the liberal, the progressive, one might even say (in view of Republican traditions) the radical line in foreign policy, we were in a stronger position to champion conservativism at home. Somehow it provided for us a political equilibrium that probably could not have existed if we had pursued the conservative course in both fields.[16]

Post-Election Interlude

When compared with 1946, the following year, 1947, was a good year for President Truman. After his extremely low popularity at the time of the Congressional elections of 1946, he began 1947 with much more popularity and confidence due to his controversy with John L. Lewis. On October 21, 1946, just before the Congressional elections, Lewis chose to reopen his fight with the government. Five months had passed without serious incident since Truman had ordered government seizure of the mines on May 21, 1946.[17] Lewis began to find fault with his contract. On November 1, Lewis demanded that the agreement be reopened, implying that the miners would go on strike if negotiations were refused. In a White House memorandum dated December 11, 1946, Truman expressed the idea that Lewis's motive was to "be sure that the President would be in the most embarrassing position possible for the Congressional elections on November 6."[18]

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[16] Martin, op. cit., p. 193.

[17] Supra., p. 20.

[18] William Hillman, Mr. President (New York, 1952), p. 129.

On Friday before the election, President Truman met with his Cabinet and later in a special meeting with Julius A. Krug, Solid Fuels Administrator; Lewis B. Schwellenbach, Secretary of Labor; Tom C. Clark, Attorney General; Clark Clifford, Special Counselor to the President; and John Steelman, Special Assistant to the President. The instruction which Truman gave to them was "to fight to the finish."[19] Attorney General Tom Clark was instructed to seek a temporary injunction restraining Lewis's action in calling a strike. The injunction was sought and issued on November 18 in the federal court of Justice T. Alan Goldsborough, former Congressman from Maryland. Lewis ignored the order; two days later on November 20 the miners walked out, and the country was once again plunged into a general coal strike--this time against the government. President Truman saw the strike as "a challenge by the head of the United Mine Workers against the authority of the United States."[20]

After refusing to comply with the injunction, Lewis was summoned before Judge Goldsborough to show cause for his failure to obey the court injunction. Lewis's defense was that the court lacked jurisdiction and authority to issue the temporary injunction. On December 4, John L. Lewis was found guilty of civil and criminal contempt of court. His

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[19] Ibid.

[20] Harry S Truman, Year of Decision, Vol. I of Memoirs, 2 vols. (Garden City, N. Y., 1955), p. 505.

personal fine was fixed at $10,000, and the United Mine Workers Union was fined a total of $3.5 million.[21] Seventeen days after he had called the strike, Lewis ordered the miners to return to work.

Public response to the settlement of the strike was tremendous. Truman climbed back to 60 percent in the popularity polls,[22] since the public was tired of strikes and especially John L. Lewis, and wanted to see him beaten. The Truman Administration conquered Lewis completely within the law in a precise and orderly manner.

The First Session

Although Truman faced the Eightieth Congress in January of 1947 with new confidence and popularity, he still had some misgivings. He adopted a moderate tone in addressing the new Congress:

> I realize that on some matters the Congress and the President may have honest differences of opinion. Partisan differences, however, did not cause material disagreements as to the conduct of the war. Nor, in the conduct of our international relations, during and since the war, have such partisan differences been material.
>
> On some domestic issues we may, and probably shall, disagree. That in itself is not to be feared. It is inherent in our form of government. But there are ways of disagreeing; men who differ can still work together sincerely for the common good. We shall be risking the nation's safety and

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[21] Ibid., p. 503.

[22] Frank McNaughton and Walter Hehmeyer, Harry Truman, President (New York, 1948), p. 164.

> destroying our opportunities for progress if we do not settle any disagreements in this spirit, without the thought of partisan advantage.[23]

The relationship between the President and Congress took its tone, however, from their differences in political faiths. Although successful in foreign affairs, President Truman and the Republican Congress were generally unable to agree on domestic affairs. The domestic program which he proposed to the first session of the Eightieth Congress was general and short compared to the proposals he had made in 1945.

Several of the President's domestic proposals such as the Presidential Succession Act (making the Speaker and President pro tempore third and fourth in line of succession),[24] extension of rent control,[25] and extension of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation[26] were enacted substantially in the form recommended. A number of the President's recommendations were never enacted--some never passed the discussion state. There was no legislation on Truman's proposals for a national housing policy, aid to education, a Fair Employment Practices Commission, extension of social security benefits, a national

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[23]Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Harry S Truman, 1947, Vol. III, 6 vols. (Washington, D. C., 1961), p. 2.

[24]Public Law 199, 80th Congress. The President's original message was submitted on June 29, 1945, while Sam Rayburn of Texas was Speaker of the House. A supporting letter was sent by the President on February 5, 1947, urging Congress to adopt the Presidential Succession Bill.

[25]Public Law 129, 80th Congress.

[26]Public Law 132, 80th Congress.

health program including insurance, and a minimum wage increase. No bill was enacted to carry out the President's ten recommendations to fight inflation which he outlined to Congress in a special session on November 17, 1947. The Eightieth Congress did submit to the states a constitutional amendment limiting all Presidents after Truman to two terms. As the Twenty-second Admendment, it became a part of the Constitution on February 26, 1951, when the thirty-sixth state, Minnesota, ratified.

Tax Reduction

The real conflict in the first session between the President and the Eightieth Congress fell into two issues: tax reduction and curbing of organized labor. The Republican Congress, in keeping with campaign promises to cut government expenditures and taxes, proceeded with a tax-reduction program. Harold Knutson of Minnesota, chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, was convinced that if all the possible economies were effected, there could be a 20 percent across-the-board tax reduction, a reduction of the war-inflated national debt, and a balanced budget.[27] An across-the-board tax reduction was too much even for the Republicans. The bill was rewritten so that incomes $1,000 or less would receive a 30 percent reduction, incomes $1,400 to $302,000--a 20 percent reduction, and incomes $302,000 and above--a

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[27] McNaughton and Hahmeyer, op. cit., p. 183.

10.5 percent reduction. The bill was then sent to the Senate and proceeded to the White House for Truman's signature.[28]

President Truman, contrary to political expediency, vetoed the bill and stated:

> The right kind of tax reduction, at the right time, is an objective to which I am deeply committed. But I have reached the conclusion that this bill represents the wrong kind of tax reduction, at the wrong time. It offers dubious, ill-apportioned, and risky benefits at the expense of a sound tax policy, and is, from the standpoint of government finances, unsafe. . . .
>
> Ample evidence points to the continuation of inflationary pressures. Tax reduction now would increase them. . . .[29]

Speaker of the House Joseph Martin is quoted as saying, "Instead of cooperating with the Congress as he [Truman] promised immediately after the election he would do, he has chosen instead to continue the old New Deal policy of tax and tax and spend and spend."[30] The House then proceeded to attempt to override the veto. When the final count was made, they had failed by two votes to obtain the needed two-thirds required majority.[31] After Truman's veto was sustained, Republican Senators wanted to let the issue drop. However, the House leaders were not satisfied. They began a careful

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[28] Congressional Record, 80th Congress, 1st Session, XCIII, p. 6394.

[29] Public Papers, III, p. 279.

[30] McNaughton and Hehmeyer, op. cit., p. 183.

[31] Congressional Record, 80th Congress, 1st Session, XCIII, p. 7143.

poll of the House members to see if any of them had weakened and were ready to support another try. Convinced that they would be able to override another veto, a similar bill was prepared and sent to the Senate.[32]

For a second time, substantially the same tax-reduction bill was sent to the White House. On July 18, the President was ready with another veto. He returned the bill using the same argument as he had used in vetoing the first bill. This time the House immediately overrode the veto, but the Senate failed by a vote of 57 yeas to 36 nays.[33] Truman had won the battle, and tax reduction was dead until 1948.

Curbing Organized Labor

In the second major issue of conflict between Truman and the Eightieth Congress, Truman was not nearly as successful. The Eightieth Congress was determined to curb the power of organized labor. Although labor had emerged from the war with a good record and a great deal of public support,[34] by 1947 the public had changed. One year of unrestrained strikes and the arrogance of leaders such as Alvanley Johnston of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, Alexander F. Whitney of the Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen, and John L. Lewis of the United Mine Workers had completely changed the picture. A

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[32]House Resolution 3950.

[33]Congressional Record, 80th Congress, 1st Session, XCIII, p. 9304.

[34]Supra., p. 9.

Gallup poll was taken after the 1946 Congressional elections posing the question: "Should the Congress elected in November pass new laws to control labor unions?" The results were 66 percent affirmative, 22 percent negative, and 12 percent undecided.[35] R. Alton Lee, in making a study of the political climate, wrote that "throughout the country the atmosphere was charged with an air of expectancy that at last Congress would 'put labor in its place.'"[36]

The Republicans of the Eightieth Congress interpreted the election of 1946, and possibly correctly, as a mandate to curb the excesses of organized labor. They took up their task willingly and immediately. In the Senate reorganization, Robert Taft had the choice of chairing either the Finance Committee or the Labor and Public Welfare Committee as he was the ranking Republican member on both committees. He chose the Labor Committee assignment to the disappointment of Senator George Aiken from Vermont, who wanted the position but "was considered much too liberal by the G.O.P. leadership."[37] In the reorganization of the House, Richard Welch of California was the ranking Republican member of the House Committee on Education and Labor. Welch, considered pro-labor, was persuaded to take the chairmanship of the Public Lands

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[35]Public Opinion Quarterly, XI (Spring, 1947), 151.

[36]R. Alton Lee, Truman and Taft-Hartley (Lexington, Ky., 1966), p. 51.

[37]United States News, XXII (January 17, 1946), 58.

Committee,[38] which gave the Labor Committee assignment to Fred A. Hartley, Jr. of New Jersey.

In writing its bill (H. R. 3020), the House Committee on Education and Labor seemed to have only nominal interest in the hearing stage of the legislative process. Hartley proceeded to write the bill before hearings were concluded suggesting that the Committee's ideas were already formulated.[39] The bill was taken to the floor of the House where on April 17, 1947, it passed by the sizable majority of 308 to 107.[40] On the same day, Senator Taft introduced his committee's bill (S. 1126) in the Senate. The final vote was taken on May 13 passing 68 to 24.[41] The bills then went to the Conference Committee, and compromise was reached on May 30.[42] On June 9, H. R. 3020 was sent to the White House for the consideration of President Truman.

The Taft-Hartley Bill outlawed the closed shop (under which some employers had been required to hire only union members) and curbed the union shop (under which new employees had to join the union) by permitting union-shop contracts, unless state "right-to-work" laws held these to be illegal.

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[38] Ibid., pp. 14-15.

[39] Lee, op. cit., p. 61.

[40] Congressional Record, 80th Congress, 1st Session, XCIII, pp. 3615-3617.

[41] Ibid., pp. 5117-5118.

[42] Phillip Michael Simpson, "President Truman and the Taft-Hartley Act," unpublished master's thesis, Department of Government, North Texas State University, Denton, Texas, 1966, p. 90.

The measure forbade jurisdictional strikes and secondary boycotts, required union officials to file non-Communist affidavits, prohibited political contributions by unions to candidates for federal office, provided that unions register and report on their affairs, empowered the government to obtain injunctions against unions, and stipulated a cooling-off period before walkouts.[43] The bill was admittedly tough. However, the dilemma which its passage posed for President Truman was even tougher.

Labor began a monumental campaign to persuade President Truman to veto the "slave-labor act" which they claimed it to be. The final total of communications to the White House in the form of letters, postcards, and telegrams numbered over 750,000--a vast majority urging a veto.[44] Labor all over the United States was up in arms. On June 20, 1947, President Truman sent a 5,500-word message to Congress stating:

> I find that this bill is completely contrary to that national policy of economic freedom. . . .
> At a time when we are determined to remove, as rapidly as practicable, Federal controls established during the war, this bill would involve the Government in free processes of our economic system to a degree unprecedented in peacetime . . .[45]

Truman concluded his message stating:

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[43]Public Law 101, 80th Congress.

[44]Lee, op. cit., p. 81.

[45]Public Papers, III, 289-297.

> The most fundamental test which I have applied to this bill is whether it would strengthen or weaken American democracy in the present critical hour. This bill is perhaps the most serious economic and social legislation of the past decade. Its effects--for good or ill--would be felt for decades to come.
>
> I have concluded that the bill is a clear threat to the successful working of our democratic society.[46]

On the evening of Truman's veto of the Taft-Hartley Bill, Senator Robert A. Taft in a radio message attacked the President's veto:

> The President's message vetoing the labor bill is a complete misrepresentation, both of the general character of the bill and of most of its detailed provisions. . . .
>
> Following the lead of labor union leaders, the President does not find a single good provision in the entire bill. He ignores every abuse by labor unions which fill the record of evidence before the committees. . . . He wants a commission to study a matter carefully studied for months by committees of Congress with the best expert advice. This is the standard device of those who wish to delay and defeat action.[47]

The next day Congress overwhelmingly overrode the veto;[48] out of the thirty-two bills which President Truman vetoed in the first session of the Eightieth Congress, only the Taft-Hartley became law over his rejection.[49] The defeat was

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[46] Ibid.

[47] Congressional Record, 80th Congress, 1st Session, XCIII, pp. A3043-3044.

[48] Ibid., pp. 7484-7489.

[49] Floyd M. Riddick, "The First Session of the Eightieth Congress," American Political Science Review, XLII (August, 1948), 693.

devastating to the Democratic forces but was to become one of the major factors in President Truman's election in 1948.[50] In the campaign of 1948, he lost no opportunity to identify the Taft-Hartley Act with Republican conservatism.

The Second Session

The political and organizational structure of the House and the Senate for the second session remained virtually unchanged from that of the first. However, both the President and Congress faced a national election in 1948, and this was to have a heavy influence on their relationship. Floyd M. Riddick, Senate editor of the Congressional Record, observed that members of the majority party at times conducted themselves in both houses as if a Congressional and Presidential Republican victory in the approaching election were a certainty; certain members of the minority party in each house were frequently outspoken in their opposition to nominating President Truman for another term; both parties performed on occasions as if they were bidding for votes in the coming election; and several Representatives and Senators were personally concerned with the soon-to-be-held national conventions.[51] This last point is made more meaningful by the

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[50]Jack Redding, Inside the Democratic Party (New York, 1958), p. 79.

[51]Floyd M. Riddick, "The Second Session of the Eightieth Congress," American Political Science Review, XLIII (June, 1949), 483.

remarks of Senator Barkley, Senate Minority Leader, on the closing night of the second session just prior to the Republican Convention:

> . . . I understand hope has been abandoned of getting a housing bill, but I have been told tonight that the Republican moguls in Philadelphia have sent word down here that we are just not to adjourn until a housing bill is passed--just anything that has got a house in it.
>
> Senators recall having read that one of the great English kings on an historic occasion shouted, "A horse! a horse! My kingdom for a horse!" And so the Senator from Ohio, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the majority leader of the House, and the chairman of the Committee on Banking and Currency of the House are shouting, "A house! a house! My candidacy for a house!"[52]

The State of the Union message which President Truman sent to Congress on January 7, 1948, was much more militant in tone and substance than the message of the previous year. It was a bold, almost defiant, restatement of the domestic proposals which he had advocated in September of 1945 with several more proposals added to the list. He made no attempt to appease the opposition in control of Congress. Many interpreted the message "as the opening gun of his campaign."[53] Congress took the message as such, and its reaction according to the New York Times was "extraordinarily chilly."[54] The

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[52]Congressional Record, 80th Congress, 2nd Session, XCIV, p. 9429.

[53]Abels, op. cit., p. 3.

[54]New York Times, January 8, 1948, Sec. 1, p. 2.

only applause of significance that Truman received was when he pledged to carry out the Taft-Hartley labor law.[55] According to political analyst Arthur Krock, the message consisted of a long list of legislative recommendations without plan or pattern--"everything including the kitchen stove."[56]

Although Truman asked for (and received) prompt approval of the European Recovery Program[57] (Marshall Plan--which he first presented to Congress in a special session on November 17, 1947), the main emphasis of the message was concerned with expanding the social welfare program. A number of the President's recommendations were never seriously considered by Congress: a national health program including national medical insurance, federal aid to education, an increase in the minimum wage from forty cents to seventy-five cents, and statehood for Alaska and Hawaii.[58]

On other recommendations by the President, Congress enacted legislation but not in agreement with Truman's proposals. The President asked that the Tennessee Valley Authority formula be applied to other river basins such as the Columbia and Missouri Rivers.[59] A further development

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[55] Ibid.

[56] Ibid., p. 24.

[57] Public Law 472, 80th Congress.

[58] Senate Miscellaneous Documents, 80th Congress, 2nd Session, No. 203 (Washington, D. C., 1948), pp. 16-38.

[59] Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Harry S Truman, 1948, Vol. IV, 6 vols. (Washington, D. C., 1961), p. 5.

of the public power program was not seriously considered. However, the House did vote to prohibit the T.V.A. from building a steam-generating plant to increase the output of electricity in the area. This limitation was upheld in the conference committee, and the agency's appropriation bill of 1949 barred the building of a steam-plant.[60] The President also asked for extension of social security coverage. Congress was in the mood for restriction rather than extension, and Truman received two bills which he vetoed. One measure barred newsboys from participation in the social-security program,[61] and the other denied social-security benefits to 750,000 salesmen by freezing social-security payroll taxes.[62] Congress promptly passed both measures over Truman's veto.[63] Another veto which President Truman was unable to sustain was his rejection of the Reed-Bulwinkle Bill.[64] This measure exempted railroads from antitrust laws and allowed railroads to agree on rates among themselves. Truman vetoed the legislation, stating:

> By enacting rate control by groups of carriers, this legislation would represent a departure from the present transportation

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[60] Senate Miscellaneous Documents, No. 203, p. 32.

[61] Public Law 492, 80th Congress.

[62] Public Law 642, 80th Congress.

[63] Congressional Record, 80th Congress, 2nd Session, XCIV, pp. 4433, 4594, 8087, 8191.

[64] Public Law 662, 80th Congress.

> policy of regulated competition. This I believe would be a serious mistake, with far-reaching effects on our economy.[65]

This veto was overridden by the Senate on June 16 and the House on June 17.[66]

The Labor Department Attacked

The mood of Congress towards labor was evident in its passage of the Taft-Hartley Bill and the overriding of Truman's veto of that bill in the first session of the Eightieth Congress. In keeping with this mood, Congress began to dismantle the Department of Labor: the United States Conciliation Service was removed from the Labor Department and set up as a separate agency; Labor Department funds for general operation, staff, and research were reduced by 25 percent; United States Employment Service funds were cut in half; and funds for the Bureau of Labor Statistics were reduced by 40 percent. In 1948, the Labor Department, because of the reduction in funds appropriated in 1947, was forced to terminate 3,000 of its 7,000 employees.[67] In his budget message submitted to Congress on January 12, 1948, Truman stated:

> The reduced appropriations to the Department of Labor in the fiscal year 1948 have impaired its capacity to perform some of its statutory functions. I am recommending increases in the Department's

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[65] Public Papers, IV, 331-332.

[66] Congressional Record, 80th Congress, 2nd Session, XCIV, pp. 8435, 8524.

[67] Ibid., p. 28.

> total appropriations for the fiscal year 1949 sufficient to enable it to carry out efficiently its statistical and labor information services to the general public and to the labor mediation and regulatory agencies. . . .[68]

He also asked that the United States Employment Service and the Bureau of Employment Security be made permanent agencies of the Labor Department.

The mood of Congress, however, had not changed. In the Federal Security Agency's appropriations bill,[69] Congress attached a rider that retained the Bureau of Employment Security as an agency of the F.S.A. and transferred the United States Employment Service from the Labor Department to the F.S.A. President Truman's veto of this bill was overridden.[70] The House then proceeded to complete the job of further emasculation of the Department of Labor by slashing by 25 percent the funds for the Department of Labor and by 40 percent the funds for the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The Senate in a somewhat more conciliatory mood restored the cuts made by the House in the fiscal 1949 budget for the Labor Department.[71] However, the Department of Labor remained severely crippled from the reductions suffered in the previous year.

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[68] Public Papers, IV, 53.

[69] Public Law 646, 80th Congress.

[70] Congressional Record, 80th Congress, 2nd Session, XCIV, pp. 8435, 8473.

[71] Ibid.

Inflation Control

Another area in which the President was not to see any legislative action on his recommendations was that of inflation control. The consumer price index showed a 9.8 percent rise in 1947.[72] By the fall of 1947, Truman believed that inflation had progressed to a point where serious injury was being done to the economy. Prices had continued to climb since the price controls had been lifted. In the 1946 campaign, Republicans had claimed that the end of price controls would end the nation's economic difficulties. Four days after the election, Truman surrendered to the opponents of controls. He took ceilings off everything except rent and two items in short supply: sugar and rice.[73] As a result, steak, which cost 52 cents a pound in 1946, cost 76 cents a pound in 1947 and was to rise to 90 cents a pound in 1948.[74] The only anti-inflation action which the Eightieth Congress had taken in its first session was to extend the rent control act,[75]

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[72]United States Bureau of the Census, Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1957 (Washington, D. C., 1960), p. 125.

[73]Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Harry S Truman, 1946, Vol. II, 6 vols. (Washington, D. C., 1961), pp. 475-477.

[74]Historical Statistics, op. cit., p. 128. The consumer price index on all foods showed a rise of 16.9 percent in 1947 and 8.2 percent in 1948; on rent the rise was 3 percent in 1947 and 6.3 percent in 1948--the rise in 1948 was due to the weak rent control bill passed in the first session--and the price index rise on apparel was 13.4 percent in 1947 and 6.4 percent in 1948.

[75]Public Law 129, 80th Congress.

but nothing was done to strengthen its provisions. The law was full of loopholes, and the National Association of Real Estate Boards wrote its members: "It is important that every realtor understand the law so that we may take full advantage of its privileges."[76]

The dangers of inflation (coupled with the need for prompt action on the Marshall Plan) caused Truman to call a special session on November 17, 1947. Truman told the Congress in his message:

> Today inflation stands as an ominous threat to the prosperity we have achieved. We can no longer treat inflation--with spiraling prices and living costs--as some vague condition we may encounter in the future. We already have an alarming degree of inflation. And even more alarming it is getting worse.
>
> The harsh effects of price inflation are clear. They are felt by wage earners, farmers, and businessmen. Wage earners are finding that bigger checks this year buy less than smaller pay checks bought last year. . . . Even those who are well off are asking, "How long can it last? When is the break coming?"[77]

The President then proposed a ten-point program to deal with inflation. Senator Taft took to the radio to declare that what Truman had advocated was a page torn from the CIO-PAC book and that it amounted to outright regimentation.[78] Perhaps as a result of his influence, no legislation was considered or passed on the President's proposals.

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[76]Redding, op. cit., p. 81.

[77]Public Papers, III, 494-495.

[78]New York Times, November 18, 1947, Sec. 1, pp. 6-7.

President Truman again repeated his warnings of spiraling prices and living costs in his State of the Union message on January 7, 1948, and also repeated his ten-point program to deal with inflation. Again Congress in the second session ignored nine of his proposals and extended the rent control bill[79] for another year, adding more loopholes. President Truman signed the bill, stating that it was "better than no rent control at all."[80]

Housing

The last two areas in which Truman made recommendations in his State of the Union message (and in which he was to receive a rebuff from Congress) was the passage of legislation to meet the housing crisis and tax reduction.[81] As early as September 6, 1945, in an address to Congress, President Truman expressed "the right of every family to a decent home." He added, "We must consider the redevelopment of large areas of the blighted and slum sections of our cities" and that "the time has come for the Government to begin to undertake a program of Federal aid to stimulate and promote the redevelopment of these deteriorating areas."[82] Truman reiterated

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[79]Public Law 464, 80th Congress.

[80]Congressional Record, 80th Congress, 2nd Session, XCIV, p. 3769.

[81]President Truman's message of February 2, 1948, to Congress urging passage of Civil Rights legislation will be discussed in Chapter III.

[82]Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Harry S Truman, 1945, Vol. I, 6 vols. (Washington, D. C., 1961), pp. 307-308.

his request for the third year by asking Congress to pass housing legislation in his message of January 7, 1948. On February 23, he sent a special message to Congress urging specific housing recommendations.[83]

The major portions of the President's proposals were embodied in the Taft-Ellender-Wagner Bill, which was reported by the Senate Banking and Currency Committee in April, 1947, but did not pass the Senate until almost a year later. Senator Taft in urging that the bill be passed in the first session explained uncharacteristically, "You don't get decent housing from the free-enterprise system." Senator Bricker, in opposition to the bill, exclaimed characteristically, "I hear the Socialists have gotten to Bob Taft."[84]

After the Taft-Ellender-Wagner Bill passed the Senate in April of the second session, it was sent to the House and was considered by the Banking and Currency Committee. Chairman Jesse Wolcott of Michigan was opposed to the public-housing section of the bill (which proposed that 100,000 units would be built annually for five years with government funds, to be rented by persons with low incomes) and was for awhile able to block the measure.[85] In the closing days of the session, the bill was reported out of the committee, where it was then

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[83] Public Papers, IV, 156-163.

[84] William E. Leuchtenburg, The Great Age of Change, Vol. XII of The Life History of the United States, 12 vols. (New York, 1964), p. 38

[85] Senate Miscellaneous Documents, No. 203, p. 23.

blocked by Chairman Leo Allen from Illinois, of the Rules Committee.[86] As a result of these dilatory tactics, no housing legislation was passed until the July special session.

Tax Reduction

Twice in the first session of the Eightieth Congress, a bill known as the Knutson Tax Reduction Bill had been passed, and twice a veto message was delivered by President Truman stating that this bill "represents the wrong kind of tax reduction, at the wrong time."[87] The "right time" came in January of 1948, and in his State of the Union message, Truman set forth what he considered to be the "right kind":

> I recommend . . . that, effective January 1, 1948, a cost-of-living tax credit be extended to our people consisting of a credit of $40 for each individual taxpayer and an additional credit of $40 for each dependent. . . . The credit would be extended to all taxpayers, but it would be particularly helpful to those in the low-income group.
>
> It is estimated that such a tax credit would reduce the Federal revenue by $3,200,000,000. This reduction should be made up by increasing the tax on corporate profits in an amount that will produce this sum. . . .[88]

Congress exploded with fury and indignation at Truman's tax proposal. Harold Knutson, author of the two bills that Truman had vetoed in the first session and chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, angrily commented: "My God!

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[86] Ibid.

[87] Supra., p. 43.

[88] Public Papers, IV, 9-10.

I didn't know inflation had gone that far. I remember when Tom Pendergast paid only $2 a vote, and Truman . . . proposes to pay $40."[89] Majority Leader of the House Charles Halleck, going back to the Reconstruction slogan of "forty acres and a mule," asked: "What, no mule!"[90] The New York Times labeled the tax plan "The Voters' Bonus Bill of 1948."[91] There was also bitterness in the Democratic ranks. The first and second ranking Democratic members of the House Ways and Means Committee refused to introduce the bill. Congressman John Dingell of Michigan, the third ranking member, sponsored the bill, and it was immediately shelved by the committee.[92]

The Ways and Means Committee again went to work writing a tax-reduction bill similar to the Knutson bill of the first session. On April 2, Truman vetoed the measure, stating, "It is bad policy to reduce taxes in a manner which would encourage inflation and bring greater hardship, not relief, to our people"[93] The bill became law[94] when Congress immediately and overwhelmingly repassed it over Truman's veto.[95]

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[89]"The Presidency," Time, LI (January 19, 1948), 19.

[90]Ibid.

[91]New York Times, January 8, 1948, Sec. 1, p. 24.

[92]Abels, op. cit., p. 9.

[93]Public Papers, IV, 204.

[94]Public Law 471, 80th Congress.

[95]Congressional Record, 80th Congress, 2nd Session, XCIV, pp. 4026, 4053.

A Negative Relationship

There seems to be little doubt that the relationship between President Truman and the Eightieth Congress on domestic affairs took its tone from their differences in political faiths. The only piece of domestic legislation of significance recommended by the President and passed by the Eightieth Congress was the Presidential Succession Act. The fact that he wielded the veto in the first session thirty-two times with one veto overridden[96] and in the second session forty-three times with five vetoes overridden[97] points out that many of the measures enacted by Congress were opposed by the President. It was a negative relationship. In reflecting on his tenure as Speaker of the House of the Eightieth Congress, Joseph Martin later wrote:

> Our American concept of government . . . rests upon the idea of a dominant Congress. Congress is the people's special instrument of control over their government. . . . This nation can remain free only through a strong, vigorous Congress . . . which will protect the liberties of the people and not delegate its fundamental powers either to the executive or to arrogant bureaucrats.
>
> These words fairly captured, I believe, the attitude of the majority of the Eightieth Congress. It was a strong, independent Congress. In Truman it was pitted against a strong, impulsive President. . . .
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> . . . he proposed compulsory national health insurance. He proposed an extensive public housing program. These and other

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[96]Riddick, "The First Session of the Eightieth Congress," p. 693.

[97]Riddick, "The Second Session of the Eightieth Congress," p. 492.

> similar measures were the heart of his Fair Deal program, yet not one of them was enacted by Congress.
>
> As often as Truman threw these at us we hurled them back at him. Moreover, in spite of his veto we passed the Taft-Hartley act. Over his veto we reduced taxes by $4,800,000,000.[98]

Senate Minority Leader Alben Barkley in his reflections of the Eightieth Congress wrote: "That Eightieth Congress really had made a deplorable record. In so far as the welfare of the general public was concerned, the slogan . . . might well have been, 'We feel for you, but we just can't reach you!'"[99]

President Truman wrote in his Memoirs:

> The Republican Eightieth Congress . . . had managed to reverse the sound Democratic policies of collective bargaining, social security, rent controls, price controls, and other instruments of government designed to insure equality of privilege for the great majority of people. Instead, the Congress had ignored the repeated recommendations of the President and had yielded to the pressures and lobbies of special privilege in housing, in prices, in taxes, . . . in labor and industrial relations, . . . and in virtually every other major field of national . . . policy.[100]

It was quite clear then, at least to President Truman, and it seems equally clear today that the fundamental question to be decided in the national election of 1948 was,"What was the political faith of a majority of the American electorate?"

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[98]Martin, op. cit., p. 190.

[99]Alben W. Barkley, That Reminds Me-- (Garden City, N. Y., 1954), p. 202.

[100]Truman, Memoirs, II, 175.

CHAPTER III

THE POLITICS OF 1948

When the Presidential election year of 1948 opened, it was considered certain that President Truman would be renominated by the Democratic Party. According to Gallup polls, his popularity at this time had stabilized at about 52 or 53 percent. When contested against Governor Thomas E. Dewey of New York and Senator Robert Taft, the two leading Republicans, indications were that Truman would defeat them by decisive margins.[1] In a few short months, the political picture had completely changed. President Truman was trailing Dewey in the polls, and it was not certain whether he would even be nominated by the Democrats as their standard bearer. The Democratic Party appeared to be heading for an almost certain defeat in November. In early March, Raymond Moley of Newsweek wrote:

> On the 15th anniversary of its rise to power, the Democratic party is returning to the primeval chaos from which FDR lifted it. Minorities are not only drifting away; they are splitting up. Minority groupism as a political faith is at the end of its sandy rope. . . .
>
> Truman simply does not have what it takes to bring masses of city voters enthusiastically, almost fanatically, to vote Democratic. The vast

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[1]John M. Fenton, In Your Opinion . . . (Boston, 1960), pp. 60-61.

> majorities in the big Northern cities were not voting Democratic in the past 15 years. They were voting Roosevelt.[2]

The Democratic Party put together by Roosevelt was a coalition of the conservative South, a progressive-organized labor movement, big-city machines, moderates, liberals, idealists, radicals, Jews, and Negroes. In the first three months of 1948, it did look as if the Democratic Party was splitting apart, with Truman wielding the ax. In early 1948, there was a violent rejection of the Truman Administration by both the liberal and conservative factions of the party.

The Liberal Movement

It was pointed out above that by the end of 1946 the liberal faction of the Democratic Party had judged President Truman, and "their verdict was hearty condemnation."[3] This rejection was to take its form in two movements in the politics of 1948: one was a third party movement led by former Secretary of Commerce Henry Wallace, Progressive Citizens of America (PCA);[4] the second was the more moderate organization, Americans for Democratic Action (ADA). The PCA Party was primarily concerned with foreign affairs and especially American policy towards the Soviet Union, while the ADA

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[2]Raymond Moley, "Crack Up," Newsweek, XXXI (March 8, 1945), 88.

[3]Supra., p. 28.

[4]Supra., pp. 25-28.

organization was primarily interested in further promotion of social welfare measures within the United States and considered itself as a liberal movement within the Democratic Party. Both considered themselves as carrying forward the liberal tradition of Roosevelt in the absence of positive action on the part of President Truman.[5]

The roots of the PCA Party went back to a Conference of Progressives in September, 1946, in Chicago, between the CIO-Political Action Committee (CIO-PAC), the National Citizens Political Action Committee, and the Independent Citizens Committee of the Arts, Sciences, and Professions. The diversity of interested parties was indicated by the presence of such men as James Patton, president of the National Farmers Union; Walter White, secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; and A. F. Whitney, president of the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen. Also present were New Dealers such as Harold Ickes and Henry Morgenthau, Jr.[6] In December, the three organizations merged into the Progressive Citizens of America. Early in its existence the organization enjoyed the sponsorship of prominent liberals such as Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, Max Lerner, Chester Bowles, and Rexford Guy Tugwell.

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[5]Clifton Brock, Americans for Democratic Action (Washington, D. C., 1962), p. 55.

[6]Ibid., p. 53.

The PCA Party was a "catch-all" liberal organization throwing criticism at the Truman Administration, until late in 1947. Then it began to gain momentum on its own. On December 29, 1947, Henry Wallace sounded the trumpet to rally a "Gideon's Army" that would surge forth and take the reins of government from the misguided and reactionary forces holding them. In a nationwide speech he stated:

> When the old parties rot, the people have a right to be heard through a new party; a chance to vote for the greater good, and not just for the lesser evil. . . . And so I announce to you tonight that I shall run as an independent candidate for President of the United States in 1948.[7]

The PCA Party sponsored Wallace's speech, and through mutual adoption he became its de facto leader.[8]

Political observers at first disregarded the new party thinking that it would have no significant effect on the politics of 1948. However, this was to change in mid-February. A special election was held on February 17 in New York's 24th Congressional District--supposedly the stronghold of Democratic boss Ed Flynn. Leo Isacson, the American-Labor candidate backed by Henry Wallace, won a two-to-one victory over his Democratic opponent Karl Propper, who was backed by Ed Flynn.[9] To their regret, the Democratic Party had advertised the election as a test of public opinion.

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[7]New York Times, December 30, 1947, Sec. 1, p. 15.

[8]In the PCA Party's 1948 Convention, Henry Wallace and Senator Glen Taylor of Idaho were officially nominated as the Presidential and Vice-Presidential candidates respectively.

[9]New York Times, February 18, 1948, Sec. 1, p. 1.

The real significance of the Wallace movement lay in its appeal to labor and, thus, its ability to garner votes from the Democratic Party. The Isacson victory was disheartening to the Democratic forces because the 24th Congressional District was predominently labor and had always been considered safe.[10] The Isacson victory had a ballooning effect on the assessment of Wallace's strength. Throughout the early spring, Gallup polls indicated that when contested against Truman and Dewey, Wallace was polling about 15 percent of the vote in the large industrial cities.[11] Since this 15 percent was normally in the Democratic ranks, the addition of Wallace as a candidate was enough to make the poll vote uncomfortably close for Truman. In Chicago, for example, Wallace polled 12 percent, which left Truman with 42 percent and Dewey with 41 percent.[12]

One of the basic differences between the PCA Party and the Americans for Democratic Action was the position each took regarding domestic Communists. The ADA specifically excluded them from membership in their organization while the Progressives made no move to change the policies of its ancestor organizations of welcoming Communists into their ranks. In fact, one of the original reasons for organizing

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[10]Jack Redding, Inside the Democratic Party (New York, 1958), p. 46.

[11]Fenton, op. cit., p. 65.

[12]Ibid.

the ADA was the fear that American liberalism would be crushed unless a distinct separation and rejection of Communist ideology and members were made.[13]

As a potential threat to the Truman Administration, the ADA had to be taken more seriously because of its more potent membership. The ADA was composed of such men as ADA National Chairman Leon Henderson, ADA Executive Secretary Jim Loeb, ADA Vice-Chairman Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jr., Mayor of Minneopolis Hubert Humphrey, ex-Housing Expediter in the Truman Administration Wilson Wyatt, President of the Anti-Communist International Ladies Garment Workers Union David Dubinsky, and President of the United Automobile Workers Walter Reuther. Although the ADA was committed to "working for liberal objectives within the framework of the Democratic party,"[14] it was certainly not committed to the nomination of President Truman as the Democratic candidate for the election of 1948. Their first annual convention was held in February of 1948 in Philadelphia. The domestic platform was substantially the same as Truman's proposals to Congress in his State of the Union message in January. The ADA's position, however, was that Truman's words were not backed up by deeds. Without

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[13]Brock, op. cit., pp. 46-55. The practice of admitting Communists into its ranks became the Achilles' heel of the PCA Party. Because of Communist infiltration, the Party lost its broad base support and eventually died. See V. O. Key, Jr., Politics, Parties, and Pressure Groups (New York, 1964), pp. 272-273.

[14]Ibid., p. 83.

mentioning Truman by name, one of the platform resolutions denounced "the dismissal of outstanding liberal officials."[15]

The liberal faction of the Democratic Party was still generally angry over Truman's expulsion of liberals from his Cabinet[16] and specifically angry over two discharges in January of 1948. The first was the dismissal of James M. Landis as head of the Civil Aeronautics Board. Landis was one of the few New Dealers left in the Truman Administration. The action was unexpected because House Minority Leader Sam Rayburn of Texas had been told two days before Landis's dismissal that he would be reappointed. In discharging Landis, Truman told him that he had been doing a fine job but would not be reappointed because a prior commitment had already been made.[17]

The second unexpected dismissal that was to upset the liberal ranks came two weeks later. Marriner Eccles, who had been chairman of the Federal Reserve Board for twelve years, was not reappointed as chairman at the end of his term. The move was a complete surprise to Eccles, who had seen the President in mid-December and had been told nothing. On January 22, 1948, just nine days before his term was to expire, Eccles was told by John Steelman, the President's special assistant, that the President was not going to redesignate

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[15] Ibid., pp. 87-88.

[16] Supra., pp. 24-25.

[17] Time, LI (January 12, 1948), 14.

him as chairman of the Board of Governors but that he wanted Eccles to stay as a member of the Board. In an interview with the President on the next day, Truman declined to give Eccles any reason for the action but repeated several times that he wanted Eccles to remain on the Board and that he would designate him as vice-chairman if he would consent. Eccles later wrote that "it was evident that he did not want me to know what lay behind his action. Any further questioning would serve no purpose except to prolong the unhappy interview."[18] Eccles swallowed his pride and remained on the Board.

Not only was the liberal faction upset over the curt treatment of Landis and Eccles; it was further outraged when charges of impropriety were made against two of the President's closest associates. On October 5, 1947, faced with the problem of grain speculators bidding up food prices, President Truman asked Congress for power to control commodity exchanges.[19] In December of 1948, former Governor of Minnesota Harold Stassen, an early contender for the Republican Presidential nomination, gave testimony to the Senate Appropriations Committee that government insiders had made millions of dollars speculating on the commodity market. He charged that Ed Pauley, special assistant to Secretary of the Army Kenneth Royal, had

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[18]Marriner S. Eccles, Beckoning Frontiers (New York, 1951), p. 437.

[19]Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Harry S Truman, 1947, Vol. III, 6 vols. (Washington, D. C., 1961), pp. 456-458.

made several hundred thousand dollars in this manner.[20] Pauley admitted in his testimony before the Committee that he had made a gain of $932,000 but that there was no impropriety involved; nevertheless, he resigned shortly after the incident. However, in its investigation the Senate Committee also found that Brigadier General Wallace Graham, the President's personal physician, had made $6,165 as a grain speculator. It was very evident that Dr. Graham had been involved in commodity speculation. President Truman was denounced in editorials across the nation when he refused to fire Graham.[21]

January was a bad month for President Truman. If commodity speculation by members of his administration was not enough, a far more trivial but explosive incident was. Truman announced plans in mid-January that a balcony was to be built leading off his second-floor White House study. The Fine Arts Commission, in charge of the exterior structure of government buildings, unanimously opposed the addition. It was immediately brought to Truman's attention by the press that he was only a "transient guest." He answered, "All changes in the White House since Fillmore's time have faced resistance--like gaslights and cooking stoves. Mrs. Fillmore put in the first bathtubs and she was almost lynched for doing it."[22] Truman then ignored all criticism and proceeded

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[20]Time, LI (February 2, 1948), 11.

[21]New York Times, January 14, 1948, Sec. 1, p. 1.

[22]Time, LI (January 26, 1948), 17.

with his plans. The first month of the election year ended, and the New York Times captured the fallen popularity of President Truman in a caption over his picture: "Democrats Choose Portrait of Truman for Campaign Use 'If He is a Candidate.'"[23]

The Southern Revolt

The political repercussions of January were minor when compared to the explosion which occurred in the opening days of February. In a special message to Congress on February 2, 1948, President Truman proposed measures to protect the civil rights of American minority groups--in particular the Negro. The origin of this action began in September, 1946, after a series of racial murders had taken place in the South during the previous spring and summer. Walter White, NAACP executive secretary, led a delegation to the White House to plead with President Truman for executive action on the behalf of black Americans.[24] The President responded on December 5, 1946, by establishing the President's Committee on Civil Rights "to inquire into and to determine whether and in what respects . . . the authority and means possessed by Federal, State, and local governments may be strengthened and improved to safeguard the civil rights of the people."[25]

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[23]New York Times, January 30, 1948, Sec. 1, p. 5.

[24]Albert P. Blaustein and Robert L. Zangrando, editors, Civil Rights and the American Negro (New York, 1968), p. 372.

[25]Executive Order 9808.

On October 29, 1947, the Committee completed its investigation and submitted its report to the President. The report, entitled To Secure These Rights, made several recommendations which were the basis for Truman's proposals to Congress on February 2, 1948. President Truman declared:

> In the State of the Union Message on January 7, 1948, I spoke of five great goals toward which we should strive. . . . The first of these is to secure fully our essential human rights. I am now presenting to the Congress my recommendations for legislation to carry us forward toward that goal.
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> . . . . . .
>
> The Federal Government has a clear duty to see that Constitutional guarantees of individual liberties and of equal protection under the laws are not denied or abridged anywhere in our Union. . . .
>
> I recommend, therefore, that the Congress enact legislation at this session directed toward the following specific objectives:
>
> 1. Establishing a permanent Commission on Civil Rights, a Joint Congressional Committee on Civil Rights, and a Civil Rights Division in the Department of Justice.
> 2. Strengthening existing civil rights statutes.
> 3. Providing Federal protection against lynching.
> 4. Protecting more adequately the right to vote.
> 5. Establishing a Fair Employment Practice Commission to prevent unfair discrimination in employment.
> 6. Prohibiting discrimination in interstate transportation facilities.
> 7. Providing home-rule and suffrage in Presidential elections for the residents of the District of Columbia.
> 8. Providing Statehood for Hawaii and Alaska and a greater measure of self-government for our island possessions.
> 9. Equalizing the opportunities for residents of the United States to become naturalized citizens.

10. Settling the evacuation claims of Japanese-Americans.[26]

What motivated Truman to take positive action on the Civil Rights Committee's report became a topic of debate. Critics charged Truman with political maneuvering in an election year because of the impending pressures from Wallace's Progressive Party from without and from the ADA organization from within the Democratic Party.[27] Others credit him with the sincere intention of striving for fundamental reforms.[28] In his Memoirs, Truman related that he asked for the legislation because repeated anti-minority incidents were depriving American citizens of their property and lives: ". . . executive authority was not enough. . . . I saw that legislative action would be required to put an end to such un-American practices."[29]

President Truman's motives were then and are still a subject of debate which is not resolved at present. However, the immediate results of his message were preordained. Southern legislators vociferously replied to his recommendations. Senator James O. Eastland of Mississippi angrily answered

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[26]Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Harry S Truman, 1948, Vol. IV, 6 vols. (Washington, D. C., 1961), pp. 121-126.

[27]William C. Berman, "Civil Rights and Civil Liberties," The Truman Period as a Research Field, edited by Richard S. Kirkendall (Columbia, Mo., 1967), p. 191.

[28]Redding, op. cit., pp. 130-133.

[29]Harry S Truman, Years of Trial and Hope, Vol. II of Memoirs, 2 vols. (Garden City, N. Y., 1956), p. 180.

that "the recommendations would destroy the last vestige of the South's social institutions and mongrelize her people."[30] Representative Eugene Cox of Georgia roared that "Harlem is wielding more influence with the Administration than the entire South."[31] Governor William Munford Tuck of Virginia remarked that Truman's address was "an unwarranted assault upon the established customs and traditions of the entire Southland."[32] Speaker of the House of Representatives Walter Sillers of Mississippi bluntly stated that "the President's ideas are damnable, Communistic, unconstitutional, anti-American, and anti-Southern."[33] While Senator Tom Connally of Texas was stating that the President's proposals were "a lynching of the Constitution . . . we will not take it lying down,"[34] GOP National Committee Chairman Carroll Reece was gleefully declaring:

> With the Moscow wing of the Democratic Party already departed to the left and with the racially intolerant wing now threatening to go off in another direction, it looks like the Pendergast splinter will be all alone by next November.[35]

Meanwhile, Jack Redding wrote that the President grinned and seemed to be enjoying the uproar.[36]

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[30] Newsweek, XXXI (February 16, 1948), 25.

[31] Ibid. [32] Time, LI (March 8, 1948), 22.

[33] Newsweek, XXXI (February 16, 1948), 25.

[34] Time, LI (March 8, 1948), 22.

[35] Newsweek, XXXI (February 16, 1948), 25.

[36] Redding, op. cit., p. 134.

In Wakulla Springs, Florida, the annual meeting of the Southern Governors' Conference was getting under way. Its usual lethargic proceedings became vitalized by the President's proposals to Congress. The governors declared: "The President must cease attacks on white supremacy or face full-fledged revolt in the South."[37] The conference appointed a delegation of four governors to go to Washington to seek concessions.

On February 19, the annual Jefferson-Jackson Day Dinner in Washington was held in both the Mayflower and Statler Hotels, with the President addressing both groups. In his address, the President did not refer to his civil rights program or to the Southern reaction to it.[38] However, if any of those present needed to be reminded of the controversy, all they had to do was look at the empty tables located immediately in front of the speaker's table in each room. The tables were reserved by Senator Olin Johnston of South Carolina, who refused to attend on the grounds that since no segregation was enforced, "his wife feared she might have to sit next to a Nigra."[39] The next day more steam was added to the revolt when fifty-two House Democrats assembled to condemn Truman's civil rights proposals.[40]

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[37] New York Times, February 5, 1948, Sec. 1, p. 2.

[38] New York Times, February 20, 1948, Sec. 1, p. 1.

[39] Time, LI (March 8, 1948), 23.

[40] New York Times, February 21, 1948, Sec. 1, p. 1.

On the following Monday, the special delegation of Southern Governors met with J. Howard McGrath, chairman of the Democratic National Committee. The delegation consisted of Governor J. Strom Thurmond of South Carolina, chairman of the special delegation, and three members of the delegation: Governor R. Gregg Cherry of North Carolina, Governor Ben Laney of Arkansas, and Governor Beauford H. Jester of Texas. Governor William Preston Lane, Jr., chairman of the Conference of Southern Governors, attended the meeting as an observer.[41]

The meeting lasted for about ninety minutes and ended without agreement. Jack Redding, publicity director of the Democratic National Committee, was present and later wrote that upon commencement of the meeting Governor Thurmond began to read from a prepared list of questions in "the manner of a prosecuting attorney."[42] As the conference went on, McGrath, who had been answering Thurmond's questions in detail, began to shorten his responses. Thurmond put the ultimate question to McGrath:

> Will you now, at a time when national unity is so vital to the solution of the problem of peace in the world, use your influence as Chairman of the Democratic National Committee, to have the highly controversial civil-rights legislation, which tends to divide our people, withdrawn from consideration by the Congress?[43]

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[41] New York Times, February 24, 1948, Sec. 1, p. 1.

[42] Redding, op. cit., p. 136.

[43] Ibid.

McGrath's answer was a firm and simple no. The governors marched out and later that day issued a formal statement to the press: "The present leadership of the Democratic party will soon realize that the South is no longer in the bag."[44]

In revolt against the Democratic Party in general and President Truman in particular, Governor Tuck of Virginia initiated action in the state legislature to ban the names of the nominees of the national Democratic Party from the November general election ballot in his state.[45] Several of the other Southern states began the same process. This strategy was ultimately to be successful in four states--Alabama, South Carolina, Mississippi, and Louisiana.[46]

On March 19, 1948, President Truman added more troubles to the already burdened Democratic Party. On orders from the President, the United States Representative to the United Nations announced that the United States no longer favored the partitioning of Palestine and was in favor of placing the territory under United Nations trusteeship when the British ended their rule on May 15.[47] Only several months before on November 29, 1947, the United States had pushed through the General Assembly the partition plan.[48] However,

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[44]New York Times, February 24, 1948, Sec. 1, p. 1.

[45]New York Times, February 27, 1948, Sec. 1, p. 1.

[46]V. O. Key, Jr., Politics, Parties, and Pressure Groups (New York, 1964), pp. 265-267.

[47]Truman, Memoirs, II, 161-162.

[48]Ibid., p. 159.

the Department of State's specialists on the Near East were, almost without exception, unfriendly to the idea of a Jewish state.[49] Their arguments convinced President Truman on the wisdom of trusteeship, and he reversed the policy of the United States on this politically dangerous problem. By putting political considerations aside and responding to his convictions as to the national interest, Truman alienated the Jewish community in America--an alienation that would be felt in terms of both votes and funds.

By the end of March, all of the troubles of the first three months of 1948 caught up with Truman. Newsweek reported that out of the forty-five Democratic Senators in Washington, only six would openly acknowledge support of their party's President.[50] Jack Redding related that the Democratic Party was on the downgrade and beginning to feel the pinch in operating funds. The liberals of the far left were giving their contributions to Wallace. Money from the South had dried up, and the Palestine issue had cost the Democratic Party Jewish funds.[51] There was open talk of ditching the President. Senator Lister Hill of Alabama stated that "there cannot be Democratic Party unity with President Truman as the nominee."[52] The President's national popularity felt the

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[49] Ibid., p. 162.

[50] "The Democrats in Desperation," Newsweek, XXXI (April 5, 1948), 19.

[51] Redding, op. cit., p. 146.

[52] "The Democrats in Desperation," Newsweek, XXXI (April 5, 1948), 19.

effects of his struggle within the Democratic Party. Truman's popularity across the nation dropped from 53 percent in early January to 36 percent in April.[53] It was generally believed that only a disaster or a miracle could secure President Truman the nomination and the November election.

The Republicans Nominate a Candidate

To the Republicans, the overwhelming success in the Congressional elections in 1946 was a prediction for greater things to come in the next Presidential election. Postwar readjustments and difficulties had turned the voters against the party in power in 1946, and the Republicans had captured control of Congress with promises to end "controls, confusion, corruption, and Communism."[54] Two years later they were ready to move on to greater glory. On June 21, 1948, enthusiastic Republicans converged on Philadelphia to not only nominate but to "elect the President of the United States." Speaker Joseph Martin summed up their attitude of confidence when he wrote:

> At every convention, Republican or Democratic, that I have ever attended or read about or listened to on a broadcast, some one has invariably said, "Mr. Chairman, we are assembled in this great city to nominate the next President of the United States." What was unique about Philadelphia in 1948 was that everyone from the permanent chairman to the man who fed hay to an

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[53] Fenton, op. cit., p. 68.

[54] Supra., pp. 30-31.

> elephant we had installed in the basement believed this with all his heart when he heard it. . . .[55]

According to Newsweek, the Republican delegates to the Philadelphia convention were certain of the coming victory, and "all they had to worry about was deciding who was going to be the 'brand-new President.'"[56]

The race for the Republican Presidential nomination was a wide open contest. As early as January of 1948, several Republicans had tried to persuade General Dwight D. Eisenhower to be their standard bearer. General Eisenhower was at the peak of his popularity due to his military accomplishments in World War II, and public opinion polls indicated that he could win the election on either ticket.[57] Leonard Finder, publisher of the Manchester Union Leader, entered Eisenhower in the Republican primary in New Hampshire. Eisenhower, however, rejected the Republican offer and on January 23 wrote Finder:

> I am not available for and could not accept nomination for high public office. My decision is definite and positive.
>
> The necessary and wise subordination of the military to civil power will be best sustained when life-long professional soldiers abstain from seeking high political office.[58]

In early February, General Eisenhower resigned his position as Army Chief of Staff and accepted the presidency of Columbia University.

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[55]Joe Martin, My First Fifty Years in Politics (New York, 1960), p. 163.

[56]Newsweek, XXXI (June 21, 1948), 21. [57]Ibid., p. 18.

[58]New York Times, January 24, 1948, Sec. 1, p. 2.

From the outset, Governor Thomas E. Dewey was the candidate most likely to win the nomination. He had been reelected Governor of New York by a 680,000-vote margin in 1946,[59] and his wartime loss to Franklin Roosevelt in 1944 had not badly damaged his national image. The primaries were a battle royal between six potential nominees: Harold Stassen, Thomas E. Dewey, Robert A. Taft, General MacArthur, Joseph Martin, and Arthur Vandenberg. However, only Stassen, Dewey, and Taft conducted a serious campaign.

While the primaries indicated that there was no overwhelming demand among the Republicans for a particular candidate, the Democrats were hoping to oppose a Dewey ticket. In a spring meeting between Chairman of the Democratic National Committee Bob Hannegan, Asssistant to the Chairman Gael Sullivan, Director of Publicity Jack Redding, and Assistant Publicity Director Sam Brightman, the question of the Republican candidate arose. Hannegan predicted that it would be Dewey:

> But Dewey will have to run on what Taft does in the Congress. Actually, if the Republicans were smart they'd run Taft. He'd make a better candidate and would probably be harder for us to beat simply because he would fight harder, . . . Dewey will be "me too" all over again.[60]

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[59]William E. Leuchtenburg, The Great Age of Change, Vol. XII of The Life History of the United States, 12 vols. (New York, 1964), p. 41.

[60]Redding, op. cit., pp. 44-45.

The potential candidate whom the Democrats most feared was Senator Vandenberg. He had been the leading Senator in supplying leadership for foreign affairs, and therefore would not have to run on Taft's record. He was also untouchable by propaganda, for he was too precious to the Administration's foreign-policy plans to be subject to partisan attack.[61]

The Republican Convention began on Monday, June 21, only two days after the adjournment of Congress. An enthusiastic horde of Republicans converged on Philadelphia to nominate "the next President" while millions on the eastern seaboard for the first time watched through the miracle of television. According to Joseph Martin, permanent chairman of the convention, the crucial fight was between Dewey and Taft.[62] No candidate had enough votes for a first-ballot victory, so for the first two days there was a frantic procession of secret conferences, negotiations, and bargaining as each tried to beg, borrow, or steal some of the opposition support for a second-ballot win.[63]

It took seven hours of speeches, parading, and demonstrating to dispose of the nominations. The first ballot gave Dewey 434 votes, Stassen 157 votes, Vandenberg 62 votes,

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[61] Ibid., p. 126.

[62] Martin, op. cit., pp. 164-165.

[63] Cabell Phillips, The Truman Presidency (New York, 1966), p. 217.

and Earl Warren of California 59 votes.[64] Joseph Martin noted that Dewey could have been stopped, but "the trouble was that the men who collectively could have stopped him . . . persisted, each in his own optimistic fashion, in seeking the nomination for himself."[65]

The Dewey forces were considered the most able practitioners of delegate recruitment at the convention.[66] They were under the leadership of Herbert Brownell, Jr., Dewey's campaign manager, J. Russel Sprague, New York national committeeman, and Edwin F. Jaeckle, Buffalo Republican leader and former state chairman. With smooth precision they went to work on the delegates. A card file was kept on each delegate contacted, and the well-oiled machine soon began to manipulate the convention. According to Jules Abels, "the Dewey forces could have won even with Taft."[67] Senator Robert Taft, on the other hand, was at somewhat of a disadvantage. His forces when compared to those of Dewey were inept, and he was further handicapped because of his strong stands in the Senate. He was the father of the Taft-Hartley Act, and the party wanted some labor support; he had opposed terminal-leave pay for veterans and high prices for farmers;

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[64]Eugene H. Roseboom, A Short History of Presidential Elections (New York, 1967), p. 218.

[65]Martin, op. cit., p. 165.

[66]Politics in America, op. cit., p. 7.

[67]Jules Abels, Out of the Jaws of Victory (New York, 1959), p. 64.

he was an isolationist which after the Marshall Plan was a distinct liability; and he was forever getting himself into trouble with undiplomatic and inept language.[68]

On the second ballot, Dewey's total votes rose to 515 against 274 for Taft and 149 for Stassen. He lacked only 33 votes for the necessary majority of 548. At this point, the opposition forces then caved in. Senator Bricker of Ohio asked for recognition from the chair, received it, and stated:

> I have a statement which I have been authorized to present to this convention on behalf of Senator Taft. These are his words as he dictated them to me: "A careful analysis of the situation shows that a majority of the delegates will support Governor Dewey on the third ballot. I therefore release my delegates and ask them to vote for Governor Dewey with all their force and enthusiasm. . . ."[69]

On the third ballot Dewey was unanimously elected to be the Republican Presidential candidate for the general election in November. While Taft was respected for his intellect and character, too many delegates, both conservative and liberal, thought he would jeopardize the "sure victory" for the GOP.[70] As in 1936, 1940, and 1944, the Republicans, however conservative its congressional delegation, had turned to a moderately liberal Republican for its Presidential candidate. The next

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[68] Politics in America, op. cit., pp. 6-7.

[69] Martin, op. cit., p. 166.

[70] Abels, op. cit., pp. 62-63.

day Governor Earl Warren of California was nominated for Vice-President, by acclamation.[71]

According to opinion analyst Elmo Roper, Dewey won the Republican nomination because he was uncommitted on the main controversies of the day.[72] The lack of a firm stand on issues was a Dewey characteristic that both helped and hindered him. Although this made it possible for him to win the support of widely disparate factions, it also cost him the backing of those to whom the issues were all-important. In order to insure their "sure victory," the Republicans chose a candidate who would not alienate the many factions which made up the American electorate--a weak candidate who would not wage an aggressive campaign nor win strong support. This, of course, made them vulnerable to the Democratic strategy of forcing Dewey to run on the Republican record in the Eightieth Congress.[73]

In the Republican platform, as well as in their candidate, the GOP sought to insure their "sure victory." Most of the platform's pledges on domestic affairs were in direct contradiction to the Republican policies of the Eightieth Congress. The platform promised prompt action to correct "the recent

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[71]Charles A. Halleck had originally been promised the position. Due to Eastern forces opposed to his pre-war isolationist voting record and conservatism, he was dropped and Warren got the bid. See Martin, op. cit., pp. 65-69.

[72]Elmo Roper, You and Your Leaders (New York, 1957), pp. 108-109.

[73]Redding, op. cit., p. 184.

cruelly high cost of living;" yet, not one of President Truman's ten recommendations made to Congress to halt inflation had been passed. It promised "federal aid to the states for local slum clearance and low-rent housing programs," but in the House the Republicans had defeated the Taft-Ellender Housing Bill containing such action. It favored "progressive development of the nation's water resources," but the Eightieth Congress had cut TVA appropriations. The platform contained a determined stand on civil rights solemnly upholding the "equality of all individuals in their right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness . . . never to be limited in any individual because of race, religion, color, or country of origin," but on Capitol Hill the Republicans had done nothing with the civil rights proposals of the President. It recommended extension of Social Security benefits, but the Republican Congress had reduced rather than extended Social Security coverage. On federal aid to education the platform was more ambiguous but stated: "We favor equality of educational opportunity for all and the promotion of education and educational facilities."[74] Never had a campaign platform been more divorced from the realities of a party's political philosophy and policies. With their platform, as with their candidate, the Republicans accommodated President Truman's campaign strategy.

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[74]Congressional Record, 80th Congress, 2nd Session, XCIV, pp. A4661-4662.

The Democrats Select a Candidate

It was pointed out in an earlier section of this chapter that by the end of March it was generally believed that only a disaster or a miracle could secure President Truman the Democratic nomination and the November election.[75] The most serious threat to the Democratic Party and to the candidacy of President Truman in 1948 came from the extreme right and left wings of the party itself rather than from the Republicans. As a result of the turmoil over Palestine, the Southern reaction to Truman's civil rights proposals, Henry Wallace's third party movement, and outspoken animosity by the liberals of the Americans for Democratic Action, a bizarre "dump Truman" coalition formed around General Dwight D. Eisenhower. Earlier in January, Eisenhower had turned away Republican bids for his services with a definite and emphatic refusal.[76] In their desperation to replace Truman, several factions of the Democratic Party interpreted Eisenhower's refusal as a rejection of the Republican Party rather than a refusal to accept nomination for a political office.

There was a violent resentment of President Truman by the New Dealers who had banned together in the ADA organization. On March 10, ADA Executive Secretary James Loeb sent a memorandum to ADA officers noting that from his correspondence there was a national concern over "the catastrophic possibility

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[75] Supra., p. 80.

[76] Supra., p. 81.

of a Truman nomination."[77] Several weeks later ADA Vice-Chairman Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jr. was championing General Eisenhower as the man who could "unify the country."[78] The reversal of United States policy on the future of Palestine alienated the Democratic leaders of the large industrial cities. Jake Arvey, boss of the Chicago Democratic machine, began a frantic search for a candidate who could heal the troubled waters. He also came up with Eisenhower as the man to replace Truman in 1948.[79] Influenced by Zionist pressure, Mayor William O'Dwyer of New York joined Arvey in the campaign for Eisenhower.[80] ADA Chairman Leon Henderson called on member chapters across the country to lend their support in the "draft Eisenhower for President" movement.[81] Public opinion polls in April showed that the President's popularity had dropped to 36 percent.[82] It was evident to Truman's political advisers that his candidacy was in serious trouble.

By early April, the Eisenhower movement was gaining momentum. National Democratic Chairman McGrath was afraid that it had the potential of becoming unstoppable. With the

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[77]Brock, op. cit., p. 89. [78]Ibid., p. 90.

[79]Redding, op. cit., p. 147.

[80]Ibid., p. 148.

[81]Brock, op. cit., p. 91.

[82]Fenton, op. cit., p. 68.

permission of Truman, he announced to the press that "the President has authorized me to say that if nominated by the Democratic National Convention, he will accept and run."[83] In his Memoirs, Truman stated that the compelling motive in his decision to run for the Presidency in 1948 was that there "was still unfinished business"[84] needing attention. To Truman the essential question that was to be answered in the general election was: What was the political faith of the American electorate and which party could and would best promote that faith? Truman declared:

> It seemed to me that the only possible argument the opposition could advance in asking the voters to turn the Executive Department over to them in 1948 was a desire for a change after fifteen years of control of the government by the Democrats. But the voters' action in 1946 had put a Republican Congress in legislative control, and in my coming campaign to persuade the voters that the time for a change had not yet come, it was obvious that the Eightieth Congress would stick out like a sore thumb. It was my Exhibit A.[85]

President Truman was well aware of the attempt within the Democratic Party to replace him with General Eisenhower. He attributed much of the trouble to a concerted effort of the pollsters and the Republican-controlled press to drug the populace with speculation and propaganda.[86] The effort

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[83]New York Times, March 9, 1948, Sec. 1, p. 1.

[84]Truman, Memoirs, II, 170.

[85]Ibid., p. 174.

[86]Ibid., pp. 177-178.

was so successful that Truman related: "Some of my closest friends and advisers were counseling me to change my mind about going after the nomination in July."[87] President Truman came to the conclusion that "in order to circumvent the gloom and pessimism . . . I decided that I would go directly to the people in all parts of the country with a personal message from the President."[88]

On June 3, Truman set out in the eighteen-car Presidential Special on a cross-country jaunt that was to last until June 18. The professed purpose was to accept an honorary degree at the University of California. The trip was labeled as nonpartisan by Democrat strategists, because they did not have the funds to pay for it. Thus, it was charged to the President's official fund.[89] Also, Congress had not yet adjourned, and many of the President's proposals were still pending. In his Memoirs, Truman pointed out that the purpose of the trip was to inform the people what he as their President was doing and explain the status of domestic problems: "I also felt obligated to make clear the obstructionist role which the Eightieth Congress was playing."[90]

It did not take long for the central purpose of politics to become evident. At Crestline, Ohio, the President joked

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[87] Ibid. [88] Ibid.

[89] Phillips, op. cit., p. 213.

[90] Truman, Memoirs, II, 178.

with the crowd about "this nonpartisan, bi-partisan trip we are making," and put in a plug for former Governor Frank Lausche.[91] Although Truman was scheduled to make only five major speeches, he passed through eighteen states and made some seventy-six impromptu talks from the rear platform of the train.[92] The people got a look at the "new Truman" and his "new manner" of speaking. Because of a favorable experience he had in speaking extemporaneously before the American Society of Newspaper Editors in April, Truman decided to talk "off the cuff" on his June trip.[93]

The central theme of the campaign of 1948 was set by President Truman in his cross-country trip--his vendetta against the Eightieth Congress. At first he was moderate in his tone and criticism. In Gary, Indiana, he criticized Congress for not passing legislation to curb inflation.[94] In Chicago, before a crowd celebrating the Pioneer Swedish Centennial, he attacked the position of Congress on its biased admittance policy of displaced persons.[95] The speech was so dull that Carl Sandburg fell asleep on the platform.[96] Also, the trip was not without its failures. Due to a split in the local Democratic organization in Omaha, Nebraska, only

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[91] Public Papers, IV, 284.

[92] Truman, Memoirs, II, 179. [93] Ibid.

[94] Public Papers, IV, 286.

[95] Ibid., pp. 288-289.

[96] New York Times, June 5, 1948, Sec. 1, p. 2.

1,200 persons showed up to hear the President speak in the Ak-Sar-Ben Auditorium that was designed to seat 12,000. Pictures were taken from the rear of the all-but-empty auditorium and widely printed in newspapers across the country as proof of Truman's unpopularity.[97]

By the time that Truman reached Butte, Montana, he had begun to be more caustic in his comments. In speaking of Senator Taft he said, "I guess he'd let you starve. I'm not that kind." He went on to charge that the Eightieth Congress had cut appropriations for the Bureau of Labor Statistics, whose job it was to study prices and determine causes of inflation. So the Eightieth Congress had not only cut off price controls but had also removed the "speedometer" which told how fast prices were rising.[98] All pretension of nonpartisanship was discarded at Bremerton, Washington. Truman charged that the Republicans were "going to Philadelphia [for the convention] to tell you what a great Congress they have been. If you believe that you are a bigger sucker than I think you are."[99] The more speeches that Truman made as the trip advanced, the more bitter his criticisms were of the "worst Congress ever."[100] The more

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[97]Stefan Lorant, The Glorious Burden (New York, 1968), p. 697.

[98]Public Papers, IV, 305-306.

[99]Ibid., p. 315.

[100]New York Times, June 10, 1948, Sec. 1, p. 1. Also see comments by Arthur Krock in New York Times, June 11, 1948, Sec. 1, p. 22.

that Truman blazed away at the Eightieth Congress, the bigger and more enthusiastic his crowds became. By the time that he reached Los Angeles, an estimated one million people greeted him between the railroad station and the Ambassador Hotel. According to the New York Times, the President was "thrilled" with the waving flags and confetti.[101]

Although it was evident that the "new Truman" approach was gathering crowds, neither the press nor the Republicans were impressed. The major newspapers were critical of the "spectacle" that the President was making of himself.[102] In reply to the label of "worst Congress," Republican House Majority Leader Charles Halleck said, "There are a lot of people who find Truman the poorest President since George Washington."[103] The biggest success that was to come of the June cross-country jaunt was the faith that it gave President Truman in himself: ". . . I found renewed encouragement and confidence in the response that came from the crowds that gathered at all the train stops on this first tour."[104]

It was also evident that the fragmented Democratic Party was not impressed. According to Cabell Phillips, the Eisenhower movement had become an "obsession" with certain

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[101] New York Times, June 15, 1948, Sec. 1, p. 3.

[102] Abels, op. cit., p. 45.

[103] Time, LI (June 21, 1948), 23.

[104] Truman, Memoirs, II, 179.

elements in the Democratic Party.[105] The Truman mutiny had created some strange allies. The ADA and the Chicago machine, under the leadership of Jake Arvey, had already cast their lot for Eisenhower. The Southern Democrats who were casting about for anyone besides Truman joined the Eisenhower bandwagon. Senator Byrd of Virginia declared, "I hope that Virginia will cast their votes for Eisenhower and lead the Democratic Party to victory."[106] The Georgia Democratic Convention resolved that "Eisenhower is the one man, the only proper man to lead the people in their fight against Communism, tyranny, and slavery."[107] The prospects for a successful revolt against the nomination of Harry Truman looked very promising to the alienated Democrats. On July 4, Vice-Chairman of the Democratic National Committee Frank Hague of New Jersey switched the New Jersey delegation from Truman to Eisenhower.[108] It seemed that the only person for Truman was Truman himself.

The climax to the "draft Eisenhower movement" came just prior to the Democratic Convention. In order to plan the particulars for the overthrow of Truman in the convention, a caucus was called to meet in Philadelphia the Saturday before the convention was to start. The caucus was called by

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[105] Phillips, op. cit., p. 210.

[106] Time, LI (June 28, 1948), 16.

[107] Ibid.

[108] New York Times, July 5, 1948, Sec. 1, p. 1.

Jacob M. Arvey, James and Elliott Roosevelt, and sixteen other party leaders. The active coalition against Truman could be seen in the cross section of the Democratic Party involved. It included Mayor Hubert Humphrey of Minneapolis, Chester Bowles, Harold Ickes, Mayor William O'Dwyer of New York, and the Americans for Democratic Action. These Northern Democrats were to be joined by Southern Democrats such as Senator Lister Hill of Alabama, Governor Strom Thurmond of South Carolina, Governor Ben T. Laney of Arkansas, Governor William M. Tuck of Virginia, and Senator Claude Pepper of Florida.[109] The caucus collapsed before it ever met. In a statement on July 5, Eisenhower announced: "I will not at this time identify myself with any political party and could not accept nomination for any political office."[110] The Eisenhower boom was ended, and the anti-Truman caucus was called off. In desperation the ADA leaders attempted to transfer the momentum of the Eisenhower drive to Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas. ADA Chairman Leon Henderson stated: "In our judgment the Democratic Party must choose Douglas or invite a disaster that will imperil the future of progressivism in America."[111] The Southern leaders, however, were not interested in progressivism or Douglas's liberal views and refused to support him for nomination. There was no one left but Harry S Truman.

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[109] Ibid. [110] New York Times, July 6, 1948, Sec. 1, p. 1.

[111] New York Times, July 5, 1948, Sec. 1, p. 21.

In retrospect, the coalition of Democractic factions allied in the aborted Eisenhower draft is almost beyond belief. How could Northern liberals, labor, Southern conservative states righters, and the big city machine bosses be so intense in backing a candidate about whom they knew nothing? The answer lay in the anti-Truman sentiment. Each group was so vehemently opposed to the nomination of President Truman that its actions became irrational. President Truman's assessment of the situation appears in his Memoirs: "In 1948 I was in a position to control the nomination. When I had made up my mind to run, those in the party who turned against me could do nothing to prevent it." However, in the next paragraph he added that the boom for Eisenhower ended because the General resisted the movement, and that actually it would be difficult to speculate on what would have been the outcome if Eisenhower had declared in 1948.[112]

The following week the Democrats gathered in Philadelphia to begin their proceedings in "an atmosphere of gloom and despondency."[113] To remind the delegates that the Truman cause was a lost cause, signs were seen everywhere in the hall stating: "WE'RE JUST MILD ABOUT HARRY."[114] Meyer Berger of the New York Times offered this description of the opening of the Democratic Convention:

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[112]Truman, Memoirs, II, 186.

[113]New York Times, July 11, 1948, Sec. 4, p. 1.

[114]Lorant, op. cit., p. 711.

> Democratic delegates wandered deserted streets today without destroying their Sabbath stillness. They seemed like so many mourners.
>
> Caucus rooms were weeping chambers. Lobbies were as soundless as a studio at a broadcasting station. A delegate from Texas sneezed, and the echo thundered and rolled like a cannon shot on a mesa.
>
> Listless cab drivers lolled by empty vehicles at hotel curbs and in the side streets sunning. One said bitterly: "We got the wrong rigs for this convention. They shoulda given us hearses." One of his droopy-eyed fellows retorted: "What convention?"
>
> Delegates meeting on the street or in the lobbies don't say, "Going to the caucus?" or "Coming to the meeting?" They lift their heads off their chests and murmur: "We're going to the wake."[115]

From the minute the convention was called to order, everything seemed to go wrong. When the taps were sounded in a memorial service for the war dead, many of the notes were gratingly off key. The organist gave the soloist Lawrence Tibbett such a high pitch on the Star-Spangled Banner that it sounded as if he were strangling.[116] The battle of the convention came on the third day in a floor platform debate. In order to pacify the aroused Southern states, Senator Francis Myers of Pennsylvania, chairman of the Platform Committee, presented the convention with a platform containing a mild civil rights plank. Hubert Humphrey, one of the four ADA members on the Platform Committee, was given the task of directing the ADA strategy in pressing for a civil rights plank containing all the proposals which Truman

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[115] New York Times, July 12, 1948, Sec. 1, p. 3.

[116] New York Times, July 14, 1948, Sec. 1, p. 21.

had presented to Congress in February. Unable to make any headway in the committee sessions, he presented the convention with a minority report. He pleaded with the convention for adoption of a stronger civil rights plank:

> To those who say that we are rushing this issue of civil rights, I say to them, we are 172 years too late. To those who say that this civil rights program is an infringement of states rights, I say this, that the time has arrived in America for the Democratic party to get out of the shadow of states rights and walk forthrightly into the sunshine of human rights.[117]

A roll call was demanded on the minority report. Faced with the threat of a public poll of their members, Northern and Western delegations swung behind the stronger civil rights plank, which carried by a count of 651½ votes to 581½.[118] Ironically, one of the reasons that the plank carried was because of Truman's unpopularity. Convinced that nothing could save the national ticket in November, the Northern and Western delegations felt that a strong civil rights stand would win Negro support for local candidates in their own backyard.[119]

When the result of the roll call was announced, the Mississippi delegation and half of the Alabama delegation (thirty-five in all) walked out. The chairman of the Alabama delegation told the convention: "We will never vote

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[117]Brock, op. cit., p. 98.

[118]New York Times, July 15, 1948, Sec. 1, p. 1.

[119]Phillips, op. cit., p. 219.

Republican, never vote for Truman and never accept the civil rights program. We, therefore, bid you good-by."[120]

The convention then proceeded with its primary purpose--nominating a Presidential and Vice-Presidential candidate. The early choice of President Truman and Chairman of the Democratic National Committee J. Howard McGrath for Vice-President was Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas. Douglas refused the President's request, stating that the only reason for his refusal was the desire to remain on the court.[121] Senator Alben Barkley of Kentucky momentarily roused the spirits of the convention when he delivered the keynote address.[122] Backed by Leslie Biffle, Secretary of the Senate, Barkley asked the President for a chance at the office, and Truman consented.[123] After midnight on Wednesday, July 14, the nominations of the convention were over, and the balloting began. When the votes were tabulated, it was 947½ for Truman, 262 for the states righters' candidate Senator Richard Russell of Georgia, and ½ for Paul V. McNutt of Indiana.[124]

Senator Barkley spoke first and made a very short acceptance speech. President Truman related in his Memoirs:

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[120] New York Times, July 15, 1948, Sec. 1, p. 9.

[121] Truman, Memoirs, II, 190.

[122] Jack Redding related that because of television coverage, the additional lights were so bright that Senator Barkley was unable to read his prepared script. It is remarkable that the Senator delivered an almost two-hour address entirely by memory. See Redding, op. cit., p. 189.

[123] Truman, Memoirs, II, 190.

[124] Roseboom, op. cit., p. 219.

"At 2 A.M. I was escorted to the convention floor above and onto the speaker's platform. The huge hall was packed with weary, perspiring delegates who had spent three days and nights in bedlam."[125] Jack Redding recalled that the President had only notes and that he intended to completely speak "off the cuff."[126] President Truman's first words were: "Senator Barkley and I will win this election and make those Republicans like it--don't you forget that!"[127] He later stated:

> The Democrats had been waiting to hear somebody say positively that we were going to win, and the effect on them was electric. . . . I had learned from my June tour that people wanted the facts before they would fight for or against anything. I felt that the convention would react in the same manner as the crowds at the train had done. . . . I made a tough fighting speech. I recited the benefits that had been won by the Democratic administration for the people.[128]

President Truman spoke to the delegates as he did to the crowds on the whistle-stop tour, and they loved it. Near the end of the speech he played his trump card and placed his "Exhibit A" out for the world to see. He rid himself of all his frustrations with the Republican Eightieth Congress--the "Do-Nothing Congress," as he had named it--by stating:

> On the twenty-sixth of July, which out in Missouri we call "Turnip Day," I am going to call Congress back and ask them to pass

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[125]Truman, Memoirs, II, 206.

[126]Redding, op. cit., p. 197.

[127]Truman, Memoirs, II, 207.

[128]Ibid.

> laws to halt rising prices, to meet the housing crisis--which they are saying they are for in their platform.
>
> At the same time, I shall ask them to act upon other vitally needed measures, such as aid to education, which they say they are for; a national health program; civil rights legislation, which they say they are for; an increase in the minimum wage, which I doubt very much they are for; extension of the social security coverage and increased benefits, which they say they are for; funds for projects needed in our program to provide public power and cheap electricity. By indirection this Eightieth Congress has tried to sabotage the power policies the United States has pursued for fourteen years. The power lobby is as bad as the real estate lobby which is sitting on the housing bill. I shall ask for adequate and decent laws for displaced persons in place of this anti-Semitic, anti-Catholic law which this Eightieth Congress passed.
>
> Now my friends, if there is any reality behind that Republican platform, we ought to get some action from a short session of the Eightieth Congress. They can do this job in fifteen days, if they want to do it. They will still have time to go and run for office.[129]

The announcement of a special session of the Congress electrified the convention with confidence and enthusiasm. In a radio broadcast the next day, Martin Agronsky announced, ". . . whether he wins or loses, Harry Truman in one little speech . . . has lifted what was a beaten party up on its feet again and put it back in the campaign."[130] President Harry S Truman in an action that was so bold that it was without precedent, perpetrated one of the most astounding coups in the history of the executive-legislative relationship.

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[129] Public Papers, IV, 409-410.

[130] See Morris L. Ernst and David Loth, The People Know Best (Washington, D. C., 1949), p. 103.

CHAPTER IV

THE SPECIAL SESSION

Reaction to the Calling of a Special Session

The United States Constitution gives the President the power "on extraordinary Occasions to convene both Houses, or either of them."[1] Only once prior to Harry S Truman had a President called a special session of Congress in an election year. The Congressional summons issued by President Truman, however, was without precedent, for in 1856 Franklin Pierce, unlike Truman, was not a candidate for reelection,[2] whereas Truman was very much a candidate. Whether or not there was an "extraordinary Occasion" which required the President to convene Congress was debatable. However, announcing his intention to recall Congress in the most partisan of all settings--the National Democratic Convention--was without doubt an "extraordinary action."[3]

Just as the announcement of the special session was made in a partisan setting, the reaction to the announcement likewise varied according to partisanship. With the exception

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[1]U. S., Constitution, Art. 2, sec. 3.

[2]Congressional Record, 80th Congress, 2nd Session, XCIV, p. 9381.

[3]On the afternoon of July 15, some twelve hours after his acceptance speech, Truman officially recalled Congress to convene on July 26, 1948.

of the Southern members, the Democrats in general were "delighted" with the President's action.[4] According to the New York Times, the convention adjourned "with fire in its eye, in place of the glazed look a week ago."[5] The outcry from the Republican ranks testified to the political effectiveness of the call. "This petulant Ajax from the Ozarks," warned Senator Styles Bridges of New Hampshire, would be answered by the "maddest Congress you ever saw."[6] Senator Arthur Vandenberg of Michigan assailed the call as "a last hysterical gasp of an expiring administration."[7] Congressman Hugh D. Scott, Jr. of Pennsylvania, Republican National Committee chairman, charged "that the President had jeopardized the national unity."[8] While Senator C. Wayland Brooks of Illinois recalled that never before had an incumbent "stooped so low in his desperation to garner voters," other Congressmen declared it "a cheap political trick" and "a cheap and dangerous device."[9] Even the PCA Party candidate, Henry A. Wallace, criticized President Truman for calling the session in an effort to make Congress the "scapegoat for his own inadequate and often dangerous leadership."[10]

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[4] New York Times, July 16, 1948, Sec. 1, p. 1.

[5] New York Times, July 18, 1948, Sec. 1, p. 1.

[6] "The Turnip Day Session," Time, LI (July 26, 1948), 15.

[7] New York Times, July 16, 1948, Sec. 1, p. 1.

[8] Ibid. [9] Ibid.

[10] New York Times, July 30, 1948, Sec. 1, p. 1.

The editorial comment on the President's maneuver was varied. David Lawrence called Truman's action a "shallow expression" that was "plainly partisan."[11] W. H. Lawrence reported that "the President is clearly putting his opposition on the 'spot' and leaving Mr. Dewey out of the fight at least in the beginning."[12] The most stinging criticism came from Walter Lippman:

> In the annals of the American government the scene enacted by Mr. Truman in the middle of the night at the close of the Democratic convention is unique in its disrespect for the dignity of his office and the propriety of the Constitution.[13]

The New Republic hailed the President's call for a special session as "a stroke of bold and liberal leadership and a confident reassertion of the validity of American democracy."[14]

Even more interesting was the varied reaction of the major newspapers to President Truman's acceptance speech and his call for a special session. On July 16, the New York Times printed excerpts from different newspapers on Truman's speech.[15] Following are typical comments quoted in the Times. The New York Herald Tribune stated:

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[11]David Lawrence, "An Extraordinary Session of Congress Calls for Extraordinary Leadership," U. S. News and World Report, XXV (August 6, 1948), 29.

[12]New York Times, July 16, 1948, Sec. 1, p. 1.

[13]Congressional Record, 80th Congress, 2nd Session, XCIV, p. A4635.

[14]"Turnip Day in Washington," New Republic, CXIX (July 26, 1948), 7.

[15]New York Times, July 16, 1948, Sec. 1, p. 2.

> . . . he [Truman] tossed away public esteem and the prestige of his present office by attempting a shoddy partisan trick on his opponents. For it is with no national or international emergency that Mr. Truman is summoning the Congress to deal, but a Democratic emergency. . . .

The New York World Telegram declared:

> . . . the President has put the Republicans on the spot by calling upon them to make good on their campaign pledges in advance of the election.

The Washington Star reported:

> Calling the Congress into special session is a political maneuver pure and simple. . . . but it will put the Republicans in an uncomfortable spot and give Mr. Truman a good sounding board against which to make some political speeches.

The Baltimore Sun pointed out:

> A special session is likely to prove a source of acute embarrassment to Mr. Dewey. Splits in the Republican Party are almost, if not quite, as deep as those in the Democratic Party. Viewed that way, Mr. Truman's move looks like smart politics.

The Houston Chronicle lamented:

> The speech made it no easier for the South to find a way of living with the Democratic ticket during the Presidential campaign and at the time of the November election.

The Chicago Tribune believed that:

> . . . in calling Congress back into session on July 26, Truman had a bright idea. . . Mr. Truman thus fixed the campaign on his own terms. Governor Dewey, as the Republican Party's Presidential nominee and titular head, has been relegated to the side lines in the campaign battle. . . . This means that the campaign in reality is between Truman and Senator Taft, the intellectual and moral leader of the Republican forces. Once more, the Republicans have been caught with the wrong candidate.

The Kansas City Star announced:

> The President has gained a tactical advantage over the Republicans in his call for a special session of Congress. . . . The Republican leadership was gravely remiss in leaving itself thus exposed. It should have issued its own call for the session to complete legislation neglected in the haste to adjourn last month. . . .

The Minneapolis Star recalled:

> Never before has Congress been summoned by such a bold announcement to a purely political gathering or for such frankly political purposes.
>
> Whether this proves to be smart politics will depend on what the American people think of such cynically partisan use of presidential power.

The day after his nomination Dewey was quoted as saying that it would be "a frightful imposition" to call Congress back for a special session after the conventions.[16] The New Republic regarded this as an indication of "[Dewey's] appraisal of both the sincerity of the Republican Party platform and the urgency of the problems which Americans face."[17] In nominating Dewey as its candidate and adopting a liberal "me-too" platform, the Republican Party had drawn a line of distinction between its national ticket and its Congressional record. This distinction was threatened with exposure when President Truman announced that he was going to convene the Republican-dominated Congress to act on its platform pledges. The New York Times reported that "in their asides, not for quotation,

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[16] Ibid., p. 1.

[17] "Turnip Day in Washington," New Republic, CXIX (July 26, 1948), 7.

certain Republicans admitted that the special session would pose a difficult problem for Governor Dewey."[18] The day following Truman's acceptance speech, Dewey had "no comment" on the special session.[19] Five days later, after conferring with the Republican Congressional leadership, Dewey's campaign manager, Herbert Brownell, Jr., issued a forty-five word statement:

> The Republican platform calls for the enactment of a program by a Republican Congress under the leadership of a Republican President. Obviously this cannot be done at a rump session called at a political convention for political purposes in the heat of a political campaign.[20]

Democratic National Chairman J. Howard McGrath answered: "The American people would be willing to settle with the Republicans if they would live up to the promises they made in 1944."[21] President Truman's diary entry on July 15, 1948, was:

> I called a special session of Congress. My, how the opposition screams. I am going to attempt to make them meet their platform promises before the election. That is acording [sic] to the "kept" press and the opposition leadership "cheap politics." I wonder what "expensive politics" will be like. We will see.[22]

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[18]New York Times, July 16, 1948, Sec. 1, p. 3.

[19]Ibid.

[20]New York Times, July 21, 1948, Sec. 1, p. 1.

[21]New York Times, July 23, 1948, Sec. 1, p. 9.

[22]William Hillman, Mr. President (New York, 1952), p. 140.

Origins of the Special Session

Samuel Lubell, noted student of postwar America, reflected in an interview with Margaret Coit that the strategy of calling a special session of Congress following the Republican and Democratic Conventions gave President Truman a fighting chance to win the election of 1948,and there is little doubt that the special session played a significant role in Truman's campaign. Since the special session was unique and played a significant role in Truman's bid for reelection, the originating idea of the tactic was claimed by numerous persons. For example, Helen Fuller in a New Republic article claimed that "the idea of calling a special session of Congress as a platform from which to campaign effectively was a pet project that Lowell Mellett, a former Roosevelt adviser, had sold to [Clark] Clifford a few weeks before" the Democratic Convention.[24]

Bernard Baruch wrote that toward the end of June he met with President Truman at the White House to offer ". . . some suggestions which might improve his chances for reelection."[25] First, he suggested that Truman go to Philadelphia in person to accept the nomination. Second, he suggested that Truman seize the initiative by announcing to the convention his intention of calling a special session of Congress. According

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[23]Margaret L. Coit, Mr. Baruch (Boston, 1957), p. 629.

[24]Helen Fuller, "The Funeral is Called Off," New Republic, CXIX (July 26, 1948), 10-14.

[25]Bernard Baruch, The Public Years (New York, 1960), pp. 395-396.

to Baruch, Truman listened attentively, rose from his chair, and stated: "You've got something there. You've got something there."[26] Baruch recalled that a few days later Clark Clifford visited him in New York and asked him to elaborate on the suggestions which he had made to the President.[27]

Jules Abels, in his assessment of the special session strategy, was of the opinion that the idea flowed so naturally from the President's feud with Congress that he must be given credit as its author.[28] R. Alton Lee wrote that in an interview with President Truman in 1961, Truman insisted that the scheme was his own inspiration.[29] Whatever the source, the possibility of a special session was openly discussed in the summer of 1948, and there was talk of another session of Congress at the time of adjournment on the morning of June 20. There was a rush for Congress to finish its agenda in its closing days. Congress was trying to meet a Saturday, June 19, deadline for adjournment because the Republican Convention began on Monday, June 21. In the middle of May, Speaker Joseph Martin had suggested that Congress return after the two political conventions, while Senator Taft had asked that

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[26]Ibid., p. 396. [27]Ibid.

[28]Jules Abels, Out of the Jaws of Victory (New York, 1959), p. 123.

[29]R. Alton Lee, "The Turnip Session of the Do-Nothing Congress: Presidential Campaign Strategy," The Southwestern Social Science Quarterly, XLIV (December, 1963), 259. This article is one of the few scholarly investigations devoted to the special session. Although very brief, it is well written.

they return between the two conventions.[30] The idea, however, was rejected by the House Steering Committee, and it was a rejection that President Truman caused them to regret. When Congress adjourned on June 20, the New York Times noted that Congress was "subject to recall by the majority leaders or President Truman."[31]

In addition to those already mentioned, there were many sources from which President Truman could have originally received his "inspiration." Even prior to the June 20 adjournment of Congress, people had called attention to the idea of a special session in letters and telegrams to the White House. R. Alton Lee wrote:

> The earliest such letter found in the Truman Papers was dated June 16. The writer believed this proposal would be "excellent strategy" since it would probably throw the Republicans into "utter confusion" and also illustrate to the public "their incapacity as well as their stupid insincerity."[32]

Indications were that President Truman was already considering the move in the early days of July. On July 5, the New York Times reported that President Truman had told Congressman Frank M. Karsten of Missouri that "he was seriously considering" a special session "to act on housing bills."[33] On the same date, Newsweek reported in its "Washington Trends" section:

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[30]Abels, op. cit., p. 47.

[31]New York Times, June 21, 1948, Sec. 1, p. 1.

[32]Lee, op. cit., p. 260.

[33]New York Times, July 5, 1948, Sec. 1, p. 1.

> Whether Congress will be reconvened in special session before next January is still uncertain. Truman is still considering such a move to dramatize discrepancies between Congress's performance and GOP platform promises.[34]

Since the idea of a special session was such a general topic in the late spring and summer months of 1948, it is virtually impossible to credit any one person as being responsible for the origination of the special session. Nevertheless, the President can certainly be credited with adding the Truman touch and calling the session on "Turnip Day."[35] When asked for an explanation of his "Turnip Day" logic, Truman told reporters that "a half pound of seed will sow a couple acres of turnips."[36] His explanation implied that a few political seeds sowed on July 26 would produce a bountiful election harvest the following November.

Strategy in the Special Session

Democratic Strategy

The criticism most often leveled at President Truman's call for a special session of Congress was that a Presidential power was being used for partisan purposes. A most obvious question was: Why did Truman choose the most partisan of all settings to announce his intention of recalling the Eightieth

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[34]"Washington Trends," Newsweek, XXXI (July 5, 1948), 10.

[35]The Missouri maxim was: "On the twenty-fifth of July, sow turnips wet or dry." Because the twenty-fifth fell on a Sunday, Truman called Congress on Monday the twenty-sixth and misdated "Turnip Day."

[36]New York Times, July 16, 1948, Sec. 1, p. 1.

Congress into special session? All evidence indicated that there were two elements involved in President Truman's special session scheme. First, the session itself was a tactic to be employed in his overall campaign strategy as set in his June cross-country jaunt. Rather than run against Governors Dewey and Warren, Truman elected to run against the Republican Eightieth Congress. By calling a special session, Truman could dramatically and emphatically make the Eightieth Congress the central issue of the campaign.' Second, even after the decision to recall Congress was made, an equally as important decision was the timing--when and how Truman would convene Congress for the utmost political advantage.

To be effective, the announcement had to be dramatic. The session was for campaign purposes not legislative purposes. President Truman in his Memoirs frankly admitted:

> . . . I knew that the special session would produce no results in the way of legislation. But I felt justified in calling the Congress back to Washington to prove to the people whether the Republican platform really meant anything or not.[37]

Also, Truman was having problems within the Democratic Party as well as with the opposition party. To conduct an effective campaign, he would have to regain his position as leader of the Democratic Party.

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[37]Harry S Truman, Years of Trial and Hope, Vol. II of Memoirs, 2 vols. (Garden City, New York, 1956), p. 208.

When the Democratic Convention convened, President Truman was in an impossible position. The "dump Truman" strategy had failed primarily because of Eisenhower's refusal to run.[38] Truman's national popularity was low, and the party was in splinters. Yet, on the opening day of the convention, it was a foregone conclusion that President Truman would be the Democratic nominee. If the Democratic forces were to depart with any unity and hope for the coming election, they would have to be drawn together by their Presidential nominee, Harry S Truman. President Truman would have one chance at the convention (his acceptance speech) to reassert himself as leader of the party, bind together the splintered factions, and instill hope for the coming election. Presidential Adviser Clark Clifford, who helped the President reach the decision to call the session, expressed the position and ultimatum as: "We've got our backs on our own 1-yard line with a minute to play: it has to be razzle-dazzle."[39]

Bernard Baruch wrote: "It may be that no candidate has ever accepted the nomination from such an unenthusiastic gathering of delegates."[40] However, the delegates to the Democratic Convention had not heard the "new" Truman speaking "off-the-cuff," fighting for his political life. It was a

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[38]Supra., pp. 95-96.

[39]"But Truman Rides Again," Newsweek, XXXI (July 26, 1948), 21.

[40]Baruch, op. cit., p. 397.

speaking style that had been tried and proved in his cross-country tour a month earlier. President Truman's acceptance speech was a rough, angry, and fighting delivery. Joseph Alsop wrote that "he's stopped trying to be President. He's being Truman now . . . campaigning for re-election as a county Sheriff in the Ozarks might campaign."[41] The Chief Executive opened a rough-and-tumble fight with the opposition--the Republican Party which was best exemplified by the "Do-Nothing Eightieth Congress." What could be more dramatic and emphatic than the announcement of the President's intention to recall the Eightieth Congress back into session for the whole country to see its confusion, insincerity, and inconsistency? The President's call for a special session was the climax of the convention which brought the delegates "to a roaring pitch of excitement."[42] President Harry S Truman had reasserted himself as leader of the Democratic Party and, for awhile at least, gave it new confidence and enthusiasm.

The New York Times reported on the day following Truman's acceptance speech that he had made the decision "at least a week ago" to announce his intention to recall Congress.[43] According to Alton Lee, however, a July 13 draft of the acceptance speech contained no mention of a special session.[44]

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[41]Joseph Alsop and Stewart Alsop, The Reporter's Trade (New York, 1958), p. 121.

[42]Baruch, op. cit., p. 397.

[43]New York Times, July 16, 1948, Sec. 1, p. 2.

[44]Lee, op. cit., p. 260.

Also, Senate Minority Leader Alben Barkley and House Minority Leader Sam Rayburn were not told of the President's plans until a few hours before the announcement.[45] It seemed obvious that the final decision to announce the recall of Congress for a special session was made only a few hours prior to Truman's acceptance speech. It was indeed a most advantageous time for a dramatic impact.

It was made clear in an unsigned memorandum dated June 29 that the special session was first and foremost a tactic in campaign strategy. The document, entitled "Should the President Call Congress Back?," was found in the Samuel I. Rosenman file in the Truman Library. This suggested that if Rosenman was not responsible for the special session scheme, he at least played a large role in assessing its merits for the President. The writer of the document used "we" in several statements which further suggested that there were several people involved in its formulation.

The memorandum realistically declared that the election of 1948 could only be won by "bold and daring steps . . . the boldest and most popular step the President could possibly take would be to call a special session of Congress."[46] This reasoning was reinforced with the following points:

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[45]"But Truman Rides Again," Newsweek, XXXI (July 26, 1948), 21.

[46]The unsigned memorandum has been reprinted by Barton J. Bernstein and Allen J. Matusow, editors, The Truman Administration: A Documentary History (New York, 1966), pp. 147-150. All references in this paper to the memorandum have been taken from this source.

1. This would focus attention on the rotten record of the 80th Congress. . . .

2. It would force Dewey and Warren to defend the actions of Congress, and make them accept the Congress as a basic issue.

3. It would keep a steady glare of publicity on the Neanderthal men of the Republican Party, the reactionary men such as Martin, Halleck, Wolcott, Allen, who will embarrass Dewey and Warren.

4. It would split the Republican Party on the major questions of how to deal with housing, inflation, foreign policy, social security, etc.

5. It would show the President in action on Capitol Hill, fighting for the people . . . leading his party in a crusade for the millions of Americans ignored by the "rich man's Congress."

The writer pointed out that the "course may be hazardous politically," but that President Truman faced "an uphill fight in the coming election--and the American people love a fighting leader who takes bold action to help the ordinary citizens against the lobbies and the corporations."

The rest of the memorandum was devoted to possible objections to the special session tactic and answers in rebuttal. The first objection was that if a special session was called, the Republicans would probably react by introducing strong civil rights legislation which would invite a Southern filibuster. The rebuttal was that the President could make it plain to the Southern members of Congress that they "stand in extreme danger of losing their patronage . . . and their prestige in the event of a Republican victory." In any case,

the memorandum went on to state that the South could not win or lose the election for the Democratic Party. The election "will be won or lost in the Northern, Midwestern, and Western states."

The second possible objection to a special session was that Congress might pass some good legislation "for which Dewey and Warren would seize credit." The memorandum stated that this would be very unlikely because the "Congress is so closely controlled by reactionaries and lobbyists that it cannot pass satisfactory bills," and if a few good bills were passed, the Democratic Publicity Department should "pound it home to the people that the President" deserved the credit.

The third possible objection was that Congress "might pass phony bills" on price control, housing, aid to education, and national health which might "fool the people." Again the memorandum stated that this was highly unlikely, for Congress was dominated by men who could not take "steps to curb prices" for fear of "losing their financial backers and incurring the wrath of the N.A.M. [National Association of Manufacturers], the U. S. Chamber of Commerce, and other such groups." The answer was the same on housing, education, and health.

In announcing his decision to recall Congress for a special session on July 26, 1948, President Truman had made the opening move. It was up to the Republican leadership to react.

Republican Strategy

The Republican leadership was obviously put on the spot to do something. The immediate reaction of House Majority Leader Charles A. Halleck and acting Senate Majority Leader Kenneth S. Wherry was that Congress should adjourn as soon as it met on July 26.[47] Many of their Republican colleagues were also of this opinion. But others, including House Steering Committeeman Clarence J. Brown of Ohio, were not sure that this would be the politically astute move to make. Congressman Brown contacted Speaker of the House Joseph Martin and argued that for Congress to adjourn immediately upon meeting would be foolish since the President could just call it back again. He also pointed out that if any man accused of "getting a girl into trouble" (as the GOP was charged with fathering high prices) refused to reply to the accusations, he would look guilty to the community. Looking ahead at the many possibilities, Brown noted that if Congress adjourned immediately on the twenty-sixth and something were to explode in Berlin, the GOP would be faced with a political disaster.[48] Speaker Joseph Martin agreed that immediate adjournment was not the best move they could make.[49]

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[47]"Politics and the Water's Edge," Newsweek, XXXI (August 2, 1948), 15.

[48]On the morning of June 24, 1948, the Soviet Union stopped all land traffic to and from West Berlin and initiated the first confrontation of the Cold War. President Truman responded with the "Berlin Air-Lift" which eventually saved West Berlin from Communist domination.

[49]"Politics and the Water's Edge," Newsweek, XXXI (August 2, 1948), 15.

President Truman's call for a special session had put Governor Dewey in a dilemma. He had taken the position at the time of the Republican Convention that it would be a "frightful imposition" to call Congress back again.[50] Truman had done so, and due to a series of "strategic leaks" arranged by White House Press Secretary Charles Ross, the probable contents of Truman's message to Congress when they met were known.[51] Although Dewey could critize Truman for convening Congress for partisan purposes, he could not condemn the probable legislation which Truman would propose to the special session because his campaign platform contained substantially the same legislative requests. In pre-session consultation with the GOP Congressional leadership, Dewey was advised that he should remain "aloof from the Eightieth Congress" and not take any chances that would endanger his "safe" election. In counsel with Harold Stassen, Dewey was warned to "either take charge of Congress at the special session or drop it. Don't straddle."[52] Ignoring the advice of Stassen and Congressional leaders, Dewey straddled the issue. He decided that he would cooperate and consult with the GOP

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[50]Supra., p. 107.

[51]Cabell Phillips, The Truman Presidency (New York, 1966), p. 226.

[52]Abels, op. cit., p. 124.

Congressional leaders, but he would not take charge. He would take neither the credit nor the blame for its record.[53]

On July 26, 1948, the opening day of the special session, Republican leaders met in a small private dining room in the Mayflower Hotel to discuss their strategy for the session. Attending the meeting were Senators Robert A. Taft, Arthur H. Vandenberg, Kenneth S. Wherry, and Eugene D. Millikin. They were joined by Representatives Joseph W. Martin, Jr., Charles A. Halleck, Leslie C. Arends, and Clarence J. Brown. Herbert Brownell, Jr. attended as Dewey's representative.[54] It was reported that Dewey considered the passage of two pieces of legislation as a "must" for the special session. First, he wanted the $65,000,000 loan for the United Nations Building in New York passed. Second, he wanted passage of a revising amendment to the Displaced Persons Act which would strike out the Jewish and Catholic discriminatory provisions.[55]

Each person at the meeting seemed to want something different. Dewey wanted the United Nations loan and revision of the Displaced Persons Act. Senator Vandenberg also supported the UN loan, but the House leaders were indifferent. Senator Taft wanted passage of the Taft-Ellender-Wagner housing bill, which contained public funds for slum clearance and low-rent

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53"Politics and the Water's Edge," Newsweek, XXXI (August 2, 1948), 16.

54New York Times, July 27, 1948, Sec. 1, p. 1.

55Abels, op. cit., p. 124.

projects, but Speaker Joseph Martin would have none of it. Taft and other Senators wanted consumer credit controls, but again the House leaders were unenthusiastic. The leaders compromised, with Taft agreeing to give up the Taft-Ellender-Wagner housing bill, and the House yielded on the United Nations loan and credit controls.[56] In adjourning, they decided their strategy would be to curb widespread cries for immediate adjournment; listen to the President politely; pass a mild anti-inflation bill, a watered-down housing bill, and the United Nations loan; let the Southern Democrats filibuster the anti-poll tax bill in the Senate and thus dramatize the war between the Democrats; ignore the rest of the President's requests; and, if possible, grab the headlines away from the President in a spy probe.[57] Driven together by the Truman strategy, the Republican leadership cooperated more closely than they had in the regular session. With their strategy prepared, they were ready to listen to President Truman's address to Congress on the next day.

The Special Session

On July 27, 1948, at 12:30 P.M., President Harry S Truman confronted the Eightieth Congress as it sat in joint session to hear his message justifying the "extraordinary

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[56]"According to GOP Plan," Newsweek, XXXI (August 6, 1948), 15.

[57]Ibid., p. 16.

Occasion" for which it was called. The attitude of Congress was reflected in Speaker of the House Joseph Martin's introduction: "The Chair presents the President of the United States"[58] which, according to Jules Abels, was the shortest Presidential introduction on record.[59] Much of what the President was going to request from Congress was already known. As a small publicity triumph, White House Press Secretary Charles Ross had maneuvered a series of "strategic leaks" on the President's message during the week prior to the session.[60] For example: On July 20, the New York Times reported that "based on an unidentified White House source," Truman would emphasize price control and housing in his message to Congress;[61] on July 22, it was reported that President Truman would deliver his message to Congress in person and ask for the full range of social welfare legislation previously introduced;[62] and on July 24, it was reported that Paul Porter would lead the President's fight for inflation curbs and that Truman would ask for an excess-profits tax.[63] Also, in order for the public to better keep up with Congressional action on the President's requests, Ross released a

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[58]Congressional Record, 80th Congress, 2nd Session, XCIV, p. 9403.

[59]Abels, op. cit., p. 122.

[60]Phillips, op. cit., p. 226.

[61]New York Times, July 20, 1948, Sec. 1, p. 1.

[62]New York Times, July 22, 1948, Sec. 1, p. 1.

[63]New York Times, July 24, 1948, Sec. 1, p. 1.

Special Session Score Card which included the legislation requested and its standing in the Senate and House on the eve of the session. This appears below in Table I.

TABLE I

SPECIAL SESSION SCORE CARD

Presidential Recommendations	Passed Senate	Favorably Reported by House Committee	Hearings Held by This or Previous Congress
Anti-inflation Program	No	No	Yes
Housing Bill	Yes	Yes	Yes
Federal Aid to Education	Yes	No	Yes
Increase Minimum Wage	No	No	Yes
Social Security: Increase persons covered and amount of benefits	No	No*	Yes
Reform of Federal Pay Scale	No	No	Yes
Civil Rights Program	No	**	Yes
Correction of Displaced Persons Act	No	No	Yes
United Nations Loan	Yes	Yes	Yes
International Wheat Agreement	No	***	Yes
Restoration of Funds for Power Projects	No	No	Yes

Source: New York Times, July 27, 1948, Sec. 1, p. 3.

*Inadequate bill has passed House.

**Anti-poll tax bill has passed House; anti-lynching bill has been reported by House Committee.

***Does not require House action.

Although the President's message was moderate in tone, the legislation requested was massive in its dimensions. With his message being carried on a nationwide radio broadcast, President Truman addressed Congress:

> The urgent needs of the American people require our presence here today.
>
> Our people demand legislative action by their government to do two things: first, to check inflation and the rising cost of living, and second, to help in meeting the acute housing shortage.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> It would be reckless folly if we failed to act against inflation.
>
> High prices are not taking "time off" for the election.
>
> High prices are not waiting until the next session of Congress.
>
> High prices are getting worse. They are getting worse every day.
>
> We cannot afford to wait for the next Congress to act.
>
> We cannot risk the danger, or suffer the hardship, of another 8 months of doing nothing about high prices.[64]

To control inflation, Truman recommended eight measures:

1. Reestablishment of the excess-profits tax.
2. Restoration of consumer credit controls.
3. Authority for the Federal Reserve Board to regulate inflationary bank credit.
4. Authority to regulate speculation on the commodity exchanges.
5. Authority for allocation and inventory control of scarce commodities that affect the cost of living.

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[64] Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Harry S Truman, 1948, Vol. IV, 6 vols. (Washington, D. C., 1961), pp. 416-417.

6. Strengthened rent controls and adequate appropriations for enforcement.

7. Authority to ration those few products in short supply which affect the health and welfare of the people.

8. Authority for price control on scarce commodities which basically affect essential industrial production or cost of living.[65]

On the national housing shortage Truman noted:

> We desperately need more housing at lower prices--prices which families of moderate income, particularly veterans' families, can afford to pay. We are not getting it.
>
> Most of the housing now being built is for sale, or for rent, at prices far above the reach of the average American family.[66]

To meet the housing crisis, Truman recommended passage of the Taft-Ellender-Wagner Bill stating, "This is the bill we need. We need it now, not a year from now."[67]

"Without letting anything interfere with its vital work on legislation concerning inflation and housing," Truman urged Congress to "take action on certain other important measures" including aid to education, a raising of the minimum wage to seventy-five cents an hour, an increase in social security benefits, revision of the Displaced Persons Act, authorization of the United Nations loan, ratification of the International Wheat Agreement, an increase in appropriations for power projects, an increase in salary for Federal employees, and passage of the civil rights legislation

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[65] Public Papers, IV, 418.

[66] Ibid. [67] Ibid., p. 419.

which he had submitted to Congress in February. In closing the President noted:

> I hope that there is no misunderstanding of the recommendations I have made. I have asked the Congress to return, first of all, in order to meet the urgent need of our people for relief from high prices and the housing shortage. I urge the Congress not to be distracted from these central purposes.
>
> At the same time, as I have stated, the Congress can and should act on certain other important items of legislation at this special session.[68]

President Truman had achieved a brilliant coup on the Republican Eightieth Congress. If Congress passed any new and substantive legislation, the President could take credit for initiating the action and at the same time prove his indictment that Congress had left things undone at the time of its June adjournment. If Congress failed to pass any legislation or immediately adjourned, the President could hammer dramatically on the "Do-Nothing Eightieth Congress" theme. All that the Republican Congressional leaders were able to do was to make the best they could out of a bad situation.

As far as Congressman Frederick C. Smith of Ohio was concerned, the best that they could do was to go home. As soon as he was recognized on the opening day of the session, he addressed the House: "Mr. Speaker: There is no good reason for this special session of Congress. . . . I am

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[68] Ibid., pp. 419-421.

therefore introducing a resolution to adjourn sine die immediately upon receipt of the President's message tomorrow."[69] Charles Halleck called the President's proposals "an insult to the intelligence of the American people."[70] In a radio broadcast on the evening of July 27, Senator Taft bitterly critized Truman's call for a special session "as a political maneuver in the campaign for his reelection and to add zest to an otherwise discouraged political convention."[71] Taft also recalled that the Senate Minority Leader Alben Barkley, only three weeks before the June adjournment, had spoken against a special session between or after the two conventions stating: "If we sit here between conventions or after the two conventions the entire time of Congress will be taken up with political bickering and political legislation and political oratory. . . ."[72]

On the same day of Taft's speech, the Republican leadership released a position statement on the special session containing the following points:

1. The session was called by the President not because of an "extraordinary Occasion" as required by the Constitution, but solely as a political maneuver.

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[69] Congressional Record, 80th Congress, 2nd Session, XCIV, p. 9375.

[70] New York Times, July 28, 1948, Sec. 1, p. 3.

[71] Congressional Record, 80th Congress, 2nd Session, XCIV, p. A4634.

[72] Ibid., p. 8559.

2. The call involved no reference to the critical foreign situation in which there was an emergency.

3. Serious legislative problems could not be satisfactorily handled in the midst of a political campaign.

4. The President's quarrel with Congress was not because of its failure to enact legislation, but because of a fundamental difference in government philosophy between the President and Congress.

5. There was very little of an emergency nature in the President's program.

6. Therefore, the session would be limited to a short period as suggested by the President himself.[73]

The next day the Republican leadership in the Senate released the statement that the special session of the Eightieth Congress would consider only those recommendations made by the President that could pass the following test: "1. The proposed legislation must be emergency in character. 2. It must contain a problem of national importance. 3. It must be a program which can be processed properly within the time available."[74]

On Tuesday, July 27, both houses in joint session heard the President's message. On Wednesday, the House was not in session, and the Senate heard speeches from various Senators in violent criticism of President Truman's action. On Thursday, July 29, the Republican strategy was put into

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[73] Ibid., p. A4671.

[74] New York Times, July 29, 1948, Sec. 1, p. 1.

operation. Acting Senate Majority Leader Kenneth Wherry called up the anti-poll tax bill (H. R. 29). Senator John C. Stennis of Mississippi picked up the cue and began. There were twenty-one Senators from eleven Southern states who were pledged to the filibuster. Newsweek reported that "it was the strangest filibuster in recent history. There was no ranting, no raving, no horseplay, no preaching on white supremacy."[75] Stennis began the filibuster temperately, and it was to stay that way throughout its five-day duration.

Also, in accordance with Republican strategy, both the Senate and House Committees on Banking and Currency opened hearings on price control. The administration's case was poorly organized. Testimony was given by four key administration witnesses who could not agree on whether the program was beneficial. Paul Porter, former OPA chief summoned from private practice, defended the administration's bill for a price rollback for selected cost-of-living commodities before the House Committee on Banking and Currency. He was asked by Committee Chairman Jesse P. Wolcott which commodities the administration had selected. Porter mentioned several that were being given consideration and added: "But I don't want to suggest a detailed list." Wolcott then asked Porter whether he thought that Congress was "going to give the

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[75]"Pardon My Filibuster," Newsweek, XXXI (August 9, 1948), 17.

Administration carte blanche authority."[76] Porter did not answer the question. There was no need to answer.

In the Senate Committee on Banking and Currency, the situation was much worse. Federal Reserve Board Chairman Thomas B. McCabe said that he was not ready to testify, and Secretary of the Treasury John Snyder refused to testify first. Only at the insistence of President Truman would McCabe testify, and then he stated that "price controls should be a last resort." Marriner Eccles, although a member of the Federal Reserve Board, testified as a private citizen and got his revenge on the President.[77] He viewed the President's message to the special session as "more political than economic" and such parts of the Truman program as its long-range housing request as "highly inflationary." According to Eccles, Truman was "trying to fill up a bathtub with the stopper out."[78] Neither was John Snyder any help to Truman's program. In reply to Committee Chairman Charles W. Tobey's question on price controls, Snyder replied that "I am not in favor of price controls. Nor am I in favor of castor oil, but if I've got an ailment . . . then I'll take it." He added that both were to be taken only in emergencies and refused to say whether there was an emergency.[79]

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[76]"Inflation Deflation," Newsweek, XXXI (August 9, 1948), 18-19.

[77]For Eccles's grievance against President Truman, see Supra., pp. 69-70.

[78]"Inflation Deflation," op. cit., p. 19. [79]Ibid.

The Republicans had their own share of embarrassment during the session. It was pointed out earlier that Senator Taft was willing to give up the Taft-Ellender-Wagner Bill for a milder housing bill in return for the United Nations loan and mild anti-inflation measures.[80] The House passed the United Nations construction loan bill (S.J. Res. 212) on Thursday, August 5,[81] which had already been passed by the Senate. However, getting the housing and anti-inflation bills through the Senate was not that easy. Senator Charles W. Tobey of New Hampshire, chairman of the Senate Banking and Currency Committee, which handled both bills, rebelled against his party's strategy. On Thursday, August 5, Tobey and Senator Ralph E. Flanders of Vermont joined five Democratic committeemen to vote 7 to 5 for a favorable committee report to the Senate for the Taft-Ellender-Wagner housing bill. (Commonly called T-E-W Bill) The next day, Senator Taft was put in the embarrassing position of fighting his own bill on the Senate floor.[82] Senator Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin introduced an amendment designed to stimulate private construction of low-cost apartments and houses by increasing government loans and mortgage guarantees rather than by slum clearance and public construction of low-rent projects as provided in the T-E-W Bill. According to

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[80] Supra., pp. 121-122.

[81] Congressional Record, 80th Congress, 2nd Session, XCIV, p. 9899.

[82] Ibid., p. 9934.

Senator Barkley, "this measure met every demand of the real-estate lobby."[83] The housing act (H.R. 6959) with the McCarthy amendment passed the Senate with a vote of 48 to 36 on Friday, August 6,[84] and the House with a vote of 351 to 9 on Saturday, August 7.[85]

On anti-inflation measures, the bill (S.J. Res. 157) which the House passed 264 to 97 on Thursday, August 5,[86] was also unsatisfactory to Senator Tobey. The bill provided for consumer credit controls on installment buying requiring buyers to put up one-third down payment and requiring an eighteen-month limit on payments. It also required the Federal Reserve System to raise the reserve requirements of its member banks to tighten bank credit. Denouncing the bill as a "feeble compromise," Tobey sought in the Senate committee to give the President stand-by powers to invoke price, wage, rationing, and allocation controls.[87] This time Tobey lost in the committee 6 to 4, and the House version went to the Senate floor; it passed with a 55 to 33 vote on Saturday, August 7.[88]

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[83] Senate Miscellaneous Documents, 80th Congress, 2nd Session, No. 203, (Washington, 1948), p. 38.

[84] Congressional Record, 80th Congress, 2nd Session, XCIV, p. 9935.

[85] Ibid., p. 10219.

[86] Congressional Record, 80th Congress, 2nd Session, XCIV, p. 9890.

[87] "According to GOP Plan," Newsweek, XXXI (August 16, 1948), 16.

[88] Congressional Record, 80th Congress, 2nd Session, XCIV, p. 10159.

One event occurred in a Congressional committee during the two-weeks special session that was to have an effect on the campaign of 1948, but it was to have a much more serious impact on the political climate of the United States for the next decade. To a certain extent, the call for a special session was helpful to one Republican tactic for the election of 1948. Newsweek reported on June 21 that the Republicans in Congress planned to launch a series of investigations aimed at embarrassing the Democratic administration shortly after the political conventions. It would be their intention to keep "at least one investigation alive and on the front pages" through the election. According to all reports, "top billing was being given to the House Committee on Un-American Activities."[89]

On Monday, August 2, the House Committee on Un-American Activities met in executive session and agreed to begin public hearings starting the next day, August 3, with a former editor of Time magazine, Whittaker Chambers, as the first witness. Within a week, he and a plain-looking woman in her middle thirties, Elizabeth T. Bentley, unfolded a tale of Communist espionage that reached into the upper levels of the federal government. The label of "spy" was

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[89]"The Periscope," Newsweek, XXXI (June 21, 1948), 15.

hung on a number of present and former government officials including William T. Remington of the Department of Commerce; Lauchlin Currie, a former White House economic adviser; and Alger Hiss, a principal State Department technician in the formation of the United Nations. Thus, the seeds of a mass hysteria that eventually would be harvested by Joseph McCarthy were sown.[90]

On Saturday, August 7, eleven legislative days after convening, Congress adjourned. In accordance with pre-session strategy, the Congressmen had passed a mild housing bill,[91] a very mild anti-inflation bill,[92] the United Nations construction loan bill,[93] and in addition had passed a veterans bill which provided $5 million to purchase automobiles for disabled veterans.[94] The remainder of President Truman's requests were ignored. Alben Barkley, Senate Minority Leader and Democratic candidate for Vice-President, suggested that the Republicans' theme song between that time and November "should be 'I Got Plenty O'Nuttin.'"[95]

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[90]Phillips, op. cit., pp. 227-228.

[91]Public Law 901, 80th Congress.

[92]Public Law 905, 80th Congress.

[93]Public Law 903, 80th Congress.

[94]Public Law 904, 80th Congress.

[95]"According to GOP Plan," Newsweek, XXXI (August 16, 1948), 16.

Post-Session Politics

President Truman made clear the real significance of the special session in a news conference on July 29. When asked whether he considered the Senate to be acting "in good faith," the President replied: "I have no comment to make on the Senate. The Senate stands before the country just the same as I do. They will have to take the consequences of their acts."[96] On August 5, two days before Congress adjourned, President Truman held another news conference to read a prepared statement to the members of the press. He read:

> It now appears that the 80th Congress is determined to take no effective action on the proposals which I have submitted to curb high prices and to protect the average American citizen against the certain prospect of increased living costs.
>
> I have been informed that the Republican leadership has decided that the Congress will not be allowed to consider really effective measures to stop high prices.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> It now appears that so far the Congress has failed to discharge the tasks for which I called it into special session.
>
> There is still time for the Congress to fulfill its responsibilities to the American people. Our people will not be satisfied with feeble compromises that apparently are being concocted.[97]

On August 12, the White House released a summary of action taken by the special session in response to the measures proposed by the President, as shown in Table II.

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[96] Public Papers, IV, 422.

[97] Ibid., p. 431.

TABLE II

SUMMARY OF ACTION BY THE CONGRESS ON THE PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATIONS AT THE SPECIAL SESSION

Recommendations	Congressional Action
Anti-inflation Program	
Excess-profits tax	Failed to act. Ways and Means Committee held no meetings; permitted no administration witnesses to testify.
Consumer credit controls	Enacted, but for a shorter period than recommended.
Bank credit controls	Enacted in part.
Regulate speculations in commodities	Failed to act. No administration witnesses permitted to testify.
Authority for allocations and inventory controls	Failed to act. House Committee refused to hear administration case; Senate Committee cut hearings short.
Strengthened rent control	Failed to act. No administration witnesses permitted to testify.
Authority to ration	Failed to act. House Committee refused to hear administration case; Senate Committee cut hearings short.
Authority for price controls	Failed to act. House Committee refused to hear administration case; Senate Committee cut hearings short.
Housing Program	
Taft-Ellender-Wagner Bill	House leadership refused to permit House to vote on Taft-Ellender-Wagner Bill. Emasculated housing bill enacted instead.

TABLE II--Continued

Recommendations	Congressional Action
Other Proposals	
Aid to education	Failed to act. House Committee held no meetings. Bill had previously passed the Senate.
Increase minimum wage	Failed to act. Committees held no meetings. Hearings had previously been held.
Increase social security benefits	Failed to act. Senate Committee held no meetings. Bill had previously passed House--in inadequate form.
Amend Displaced Persons Act	Failed to act. Senate leadership refused to permit action.
Loan for United Nations headquarters	Enacted.
Ratify International Wheat Agreement	Reported by Senate Committee, but Senate leadership refused to permit ratification.
Restore power appropriations and remove crippling restrictions	Failed to act. House Appropriations Committee refused to hear administration witnesses. Senate defeated amendments when they were offered by Democratic Senators.
Reforms in Federal pay scales	Failed to act. House and Senate Committees did not meet; permitted no administration testimony.
Civil rights legislation	Failed to act. Senate briefly considered antipoll tax bill, took no action.

Source: Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Harry S Truman, 1948, Vol. IV, 6 vols. (Washington, D. C., 1961), pp. 421-422.

On that same day, Truman held his first post-session news conference. When asked if he had any "observation to make on the record of the special session," he replied: "Well, my observations are that it was a kind of a poor result that we got. . . . I would say it was entirely a 'do-nothing' session. I think that's a good name for the 80th Congress."[98]

In looking at the balance sheet of legislation requested and legislation enacted, it was obvious that Congress had remained almost totally on the debit side of the ledger. In his Memoirs, Truman recalled that with the adjournment of the special session of Congress, "the stage was . . . set for the active 1948 presidential campaign."[99] The President took full advantage of the inaction of the Eightieth Congress in his campaign for reelection. Truman officially opened his campaign on September 6, Labor Day, at Detroit, and he spoke to six audiences that day, beginning at 9:00 A.M. at Grand Rapids, Michigan. He immediately picked up the theme of his campaign as initiated in his tour in June and emphatically set by the special session. He remarked on high prices and housing: "I tried every way within my power to get Congress to do something about that. . . . I call it the worst Congress, except one,[100] this country ever had."[101] In speaking to a

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[98]Ibid., p. 438. [99]Truman, Memoirs, II, 208.

[100]Truman remarked in a speech at Hillsboro, Texas, on September 27 that he considered the Civil War Reconstruction Congress under the leadership of Thaddeus Steven to be the "worst" Congress ever. Public Papers, IV, 586.

[101]Public Papers, IV, 464.

crowd of over one hundred thousand people at Cadillac Square in Detroit on the same day, Truman reminded them of the Taft-Hartley Act and that "the 80th Republican Congress failed to crack down on prices but it cracked down on labor all right."[102]

On September 18, the President began another nationwide tour in which he traveled some 31,700 miles and delivered some 356 speeches[103] to "clarify the issues" to the people.[104] On September 18 at 5:45 A.M. in Rock Island, Illinois, Truman began the first of a long series of speeches from the rear platform of the Presidential Special. He reminded the early-hour Rock Islanders that the issue of the campaign was "the people against the special interests," and if they needed any proof, all they need do was "review the record of this Republican 80th Congress."[105] The next day the citizens of Ogden, Utah, were told that "this Republican 80th 'do-nothing' Congress tried its best to take all your prosperity away from you."[106] In Oakland, California, on September 22, Truman declared that "in July, I called the Congress into session to try and get passage of the Taft-Ellender-Wagner housing bill." However, it was opposed "by the housing lobby and even Senator Taft ran out on his own bill and voted against it."[107] The whistle-stop tour traveled into Texas, Oklahoma, Missouri, and Cleveland, Ohio, where Truman used the Republicans'

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[102] Ibid., p. 477.
[103] Truman, Memoirs, II, 219.
[104] Ibid., p. 211.
[105] Public Papers, IV, 500.
[106] Ibid., p. 519.
[107] Ibid., p. 532.

position statement on the special session to emphasize his crusade. He read to the crowd: "The President's quarrel with the 80th Congress was not the failure to enact legislation, but a fundamental difference in government philosophy between the President and Congress."[108] He added in explanation: "To put it in plain English, it means that I believe in one kind of government: government for the people. The Republicans believe in another kind of government: government for the special interest."[109] The whistle-stop tour completed its mission on October 30 at Mattoon, Illinois, where Truman, still fighting, told his audience that if they wanted relief from high prices, they would have to vote for Democrats to "take the place of this 'do-nothing' Congress, good-for-nothing Republican 80th Congress."[110]

Despite the stir of excitement which Truman had injected into the campaign of 1948 with the special session and subsequent "give 'em hell" speeches, there was little reason to believe that he would win the election. The Gallup poll on October 20 indicated that Dewey would win 50 percent of the vote, Truman 44 percent, Wallace 4 percent, and Thurmond 2 percent.[111] The Crossley poll was almost exactly the same as

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[108] Supra., pp. 128-129.

[109] Public Papers, IV, 865.

[110] Ibid., p. 933.

[111] Morris L. Ernst and David Loth, The People Know Best (Washington, D.C., 1949), p. 131.

Gallup's report.[112] Elmo Roper was so sure of Dewey's victory that he announced as early as July that "further polling was a waste of money."[113]

Governor Dewey, convinced of his coming victory, conducted a defensive campaign. An article in the U. S. News and World Report entitled "Formula For Victory," ironically published three days after the election, set forth Dewey's campaign strategy. According to Dewey's campaign manager, Herbert Brownell, Jr., Dewey considered himself responsible for the Presidency from the moment of his nomination as the Republican Presidential candidate. Also, all poll takers and GOP political leaders agreed that Dewey was far ahead of President Truman. Therefore, since Dewey was in such good shape, the best thing that they could do was not "rock the boat." And, it was thought that "nothing should be done . . . that would create dissension in the country, for which Mr. Dewey already felt himself responsible, that would complicate his post-election problems."[114] With campaign strategy based on this reasoning, Dewey dealt in generalities, stressing the theme of a need for unity within the country.

The campaign of 1948 was strange. The two principal contenders seemed to completely ignore the fact that either

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[112] Ibid., p. 135.

[113] Alfred Steinberg, The Man From Missouri (New York, 1962), p. 319.

[114] "Formula For Victory," U. S. News and World Report, XXV (November 5, 1948), 37-39.

of them had an opponent. Truman seldom mentioned Governor Dewey, except occasionally to tie him to the Republican Eightieth Congress. It seemed almost beneath Governor Dewey to run against "that accidental President--that little man from Missouri."

On July 16, 1948, the day after he had called the special session of Congress, President Truman entered in his diary:

> Editorial columns and cartoons are gasping and wondering. None of the smart folks thought I would call the Congress. I called them for July 26, turnip day at home. . . . I am going to make a common sense, intellectually honest campaign. It will be a novelty and it will win.[115]

On November 2, 1948, the unbelievable happened. The greatest upset in the history of Presidential elections took place. Harry S Truman was elected, in his own right, President of the United States.[116]

According to Richard O. Davies, a student of Truman's welfare policies, "the actual campaign was anticlimatic. By Labor Day Truman had shaped the issues to his own advantage. . . ."[117] The political tactic of calling the Republican

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[115]Hillman, op. cit., p. 140.

[116]The total electoral vote count: Truman, 303; Dewey, 189; Thurmond, 39; and Wallace, 0. Popular vote: Truman, 24,105,812; Dewey, 21,970,650; Thurmond, 1,169,063; and Wallace, 1,157,172. President Truman's national vote plurality was 2,135,747 out of a 48,690,956 total national vote. (Politics in America: Politics and Issues of the Post-War Years, 3rd ed., Congressional Quarterly Service (Washington, D. C., 1969), p. 8.)

[117]Richard O. Davies, "Social Welfare Policies," The Truman Period as a Research Field, edited by Richard S. Kirkendall (Columbia, Mo., 1967), p. 179.

Eightieth Congress into special session enabled Truman to set the terms of the campaign battle and to dramatize those issues upon which he wished to campaign. Although the GOP leadership made the best they could out of a bad situation in meeting the special session challenge, the "Turnip Day" tactic proved more than successful. The session had exposed a deep division within the Republican ranks and, more important, had emphatically demonstrated that the Republican Congressional delegation would not honor its own campaign pledges.

CHAPTER V

PRESIDENT TRUMAN VERSUS THE EIGHTIETH CONGRESS

An Overview

It is the contention of this thesis that President Truman's call for a special session of the Eightieth Congress on July 26, 1948, was primarily a tactic in his campaign strategy for the election of that year. However, the full significance of the session can be understood only by taking into account the political environment of the postwar period and the executive-legislative relationships between President Truman and the Republican Eightieth Congress on domestic legislation. The special session was a microcosm of the political events of 1948 and the relationship between the President and the Eightieth Congress.

The optimistic expectations of the American citizenry for a return to peace and normalcy upon the completion of World War II were shattered by the resulting problems of the transition from the controlled economy of war to the relatively free economy of peace. Rather than a return to normalcy, the years which immediately followed World War II proved almost as tumultuous as the war years. On the domestic scene the nation faced inflation, shortages, controls, labor strikes, industrial unrest, and administration bickering. President Truman made few friends and many enemies in coping

with the problems of reconversion. His popularity reached its lowest point prior to the elections of 1946. The Republican Party, in its campaign slogan "Had Enough?," appealed directly to the pent-up frustrations of reconversion from wartime. In exasperation and frustration the American voters elected the first Republican Congress since the pre-depression days of Herbert Hoover.

The relationship between President Truman and the Eightieth Congress took its tone from their differences in political faiths. Although compatible in foreign affairs, the President and the Republican Congress were generally unable to agree on domestic affairs. While President Truman's legislative requests from the Eightieth Congress in its first session were somewhat moderate, his requests during the second session were mammoth in dimension and depth. His proposals, which were an extension of the New Deal with the addition of his own Fair Deal, were an anathema to the Republican leaders of the Eightieth Congress. They rejected his proposals to fight inflation, cope with the housing crisis, increase social security benefits, increase the minimum wage, provide federal aid to education, and pass legislation protecting the civil rights of minority groups. The Eightieth Congress did, however, pass over Truman's veto the Taft-Hartley Bill in 1947 and a tax-reduction bill in 1948. The only piece of domestic legislation of significance recommended by the President and passed by the Eightieth Congress was the

Presidential Succession Act of 1947. The relationship between President Truman and the Eightieth Congress on domestic affairs was a negative one.

To understand the Eightieth Congress, it must be remembered that for fourteen years the Republicans in Washington had been members of the oppositon party. It is always much easier for a party to oppose than to lead. The psychology and habits of opposition were deeply embedded in most of the Republican leaders. Also, the Republican leadership considered the election of 1946 as giving them a chance, if not a mandate, to return to pre-New Deal normalcy. In control of both houses, they were determined that Congress would be a much stronger and more independent force than it had been since 1933 in curbing labor strikes, heavy federal spending, high taxes, centralization, and government involvement in the economic sector of American life. Therefore, the legislative program of the Republican Eightieth Congress contained four major points: (1) abolish remaining wartime controls; (2) sharply reduce federal expenditures; (3) cut taxes; and (4) curb the power of organized labor. All four points were accomplished over the protest of President Truman.

Interpreting the election of 1946 to be an omen of greater things to come and with the Democratic Party in splinters because of liberal and Southern rejection of President Truman, the Republican Party was convinced of a "sure victory" in the election of 1948. In order to insure their

"sure victory" and to win support of widely disparate factions, the Republicans selected Governor Thomas E. Dewey of New York, uncommitted on the main controversies of the day, to be their Presidential candidate. In the Republican platform, as well as in its candidate, the GOP employed the same reasoning and adopted a platform pledging substantially the same domestic proposals which President Truman had requested from the Eightieth Congress. The Republican candidate and platform were completely divorced from the realities of their party's political philosophy and policies, as evidenced by the record of the Eightieth Congress.

At this point it was conceded by everyone, except Truman himself, that the President had little chance of being re-elected in November and, in fact, might not be selected as the Democratic Presidential candidate. Rejected by the Southern wing of the Democratic Party because of his civil rights proposals and forsaken by the liberal wing of the Democratic Party because of his treatment of liberals within the administration, President Truman stood alone in his bid for another term of office. In a fifteen-day cross-country jaunt in June, the President experimented with his campaign strategy for the election of 1948. He initiated his vendetta upon the Republican Eightieth Congress, claiming that it was a "Do-Nothing Congress" in the hands of "special interests." Receiving encouragement from the response of the crowds to his vociferous assault on the obstructive role of the Republican Congress, Truman was confident of his campaign strategy.

The President took the offense and emphatically set the terms for the election of 1948 in his acceptance speech at the Democratic Convention by recalling the Republican Eightieth Congress into a special session to act upon its platform campaign pledges--measures which he had previously requested from the Eightieth Congress. Bitterly denouncing the President's action as a "shoddy partisan trick," the Republican Congress convened on July 26, 1948, to receive Truman's message. Although Truman asked for all the social welfare measures previously requested from the Eightieth Congress (which were included in the Republican platform), he emphasized the need for anti-inflation measures to combat the high cost of living and for the passage of the Taft-Ellender-Wagner Bill to relieve the housing crisis. Making the best of a bad situation, Congress adjourned eleven legislative days later after passing a mild housing bill, a mild anti-inflation bill, a United Nations Construction loan bill, and a veterans appropriation bill.

With the adjournment of Congress, Truman considered the stage set for the Presidential campaign of 1948. From September 6 through October 30, he traveled some 31,700 miles denouncing the Republican Eightieth Congress for refusing to combat the high cost of living, for the passage of the Taft-Hartley Act, and for being a tool of the "special interest" groups in opposition to "the people." Contrary to the expectations of everyone, including the voters who

elected him, on November 2, 1948, Harry S Truman was elected President of the United States.

Implications of the Special Session

President Truman's use of the special session in the summer of 1948 suggests several conclusions of both a particular and general nature. These conclusions may be summarized as follows:

(1) President Truman's call for a special session of the Eightieth Congress in the midst of the Democratic National Convention was somewhat indicative of his political style and personality. Certainly it was in keeping with his actions of the previous four years. For example, to stop the railroad strike, Truman addressed Congress on May 25, 1946, and asked for authority to draft into the armed services all workers who were then (or who might go) on strike against the government. In June, 1946, he had refused to sign the emasculated OPA price control bill, leaving the nation standing on the brink of runaway inflation and Congress split between outrage and support. Contrary to political expediency, Truman had vetoed two tax-reduction bills in the spring of 1947. In the election year of 1948, he again vetoed a tax-reduction bill although his veto was overridden. President Truman's call for the special session in the summer of 1948 was an addition to a long series of bold and intensely partisan maneuvers.

(2) The special session was unique and proved to be a successful campaign tactic. By calling the special session, President Truman took the offensive position and set the terms for the campaign debate. As is generally the case in a debate, the person who sets the terms has the advantage. The President was able to dramatize the issues upon which he wished to campaign. Ignoring his campaign opponent, Thomas E. Dewey, Truman chose to run instead against the Republican Eightieth Congress. The Republican Congressional leaders were placed in a defensive position and because of their numbers, heterogeneity, and less access to publicity were in a weak position to adequately respond to the President's criticism. By taking this approach, the sharp line of distinction between the Republican national ticket and the record of the Republican Eightieth Congress was dramatically exposed. Attention was focused on the conservative congressional members of the party, and their reaction to the special session emphatically proved that they would not honor their party's campaign pledges. This gave President Truman an excellent sounding board against which to make his campaign speeches. As the Rosenman memorandum suggested, the special session showed the President in action on Capitol Hill fighting for the people and leading his party in a crusade for the millions of Americans ignored by the "rich man's Congress." Also, as the memorandum suggested, the special session publicly displayed the Republicans' split on the major questions of

how to deal with domestic problems, and they were unable to present a united front in the election of 1948.

(3) The criticism most often leveled at President Truman's call for a special session of Congress was that a Presidential power was being used for partisan purposes. All evidence indicates that this was indeed the case. The special session was first and foremost a tactic to be employed in Truman's overall campaign strategy. The obvious question is: Was President Truman acting in accord with precedent and in accord with the Constitutional provision in calling Congress into special session on July 26, 1948?

In looking at previous sessions, it is quite evident that Truman was not following precedent. A special session of Congress had not been called in an election year since 1856, when President Franklin Pierce recalled Congress to pass an Army appropriation bill. Furthermore, President Pierce was not running for reelection. It would also seem that the reasons for recalling Congress in the previous sessions were much more of an emergency nature. For example, prior Presidents had recalled Congress for such purposes as passage of essential appropriation bills, suspension of diplomatic relations, relief of severe economic depression, and declaration of war. (See Appendix A on page 161 for details on previous sessions.) Certainly no other President had announced his intention of recalling Congress in the partisan manner as used by President Truman.

Although President Truman's call for a special session was without circumstantial precedent, it appeared to be entirely in keeping with the Constitutional provision. Article II, Section 3 of the U. S. Constitution provides:

> He [the President] shall from time to time give to the Congress information of the State of the Union, and recommend to their Consideration such Measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient; he may, on extraordinary Occasions, convene both Houses, or either of them . . .

Thus, by the Constitution, it is entirely up to the President to judge whether or not there is an "extraordinary Occasion" which requires the recalling of Congress into special session. Also, by the first Clause of Section 3, the Constitution requires that the President recommend to Congress such measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient. The fact that President Truman was running for another term of office did not make it unconstitutional or necessarily sinful for him to call a special session in an attempt to influence public opinion in behalf of those measures or the political party which he believed would benefit the citizens of the United States. Although Truman was using a Presidential power for partisan purposes, he was more politically honest than the Republicans were in setting forth a campaign platform which they had no intention of honoring as indicated by the record of the Eightieth Congress.

(4) Public response to Republican candidate Thomas E. Dewey indicates that it is dangerous for a Presidential candidate to try to dissociate himself from the political

record of his party. Regardless of whether his party's record is politically advantageous or not, candidate and party must "sink or swim" together. With the Republican Congressional leaders unable to adequately respond to the President's criticisms, and with Dewey refusing to uphold the party's record, Truman was in a very favorable position. He was able to attack the opposition party, with only a weak rebuttal to his charges. Whether Dewey liked it or not, he was running as a candidate of the Republican Party, which had a political philosophy and a political record.

(5) The special session brought into focus the essential question to be answered in the national election of 1948: What was the political faith of the American electorate? President Truman and the Congressional leaders were in agreement that basically the President's quarrel with Congress was because of a fundamental difference in political philosophy. The Republican leadership interpreted the election of 1946 as being ample proof of a conservative trend and a chance, if not a mandate, to reverse the New Deal. If they were not able to reverse the New Deal, they could at least stop the Fair Deal before it was even started. With the use of the special session and later campaign speeches, Truman was able to make crystal clear the differences between his position on domestic issues and that of the Republican Party as evidenced by the record of the Eightieth Congress. While it is speculative whether or not the American electorate

voted its political philosophy in 1948, all evidence indicates that the voters were more closely aligned with the political position of President Truman than with the position of the Republican Party.

(6) Although the special session tactic was highly successful for President Truman, it is unlikely that the maneuver can again be employed successfully. Besides the fact that the present business of Congress almost always requires that its sessions convene for a full year with only short recesses, the political environment of 1948 was unique, as is each President and each Congress. There is some indication, however, that Republican President Richard Nixon may employ the overall Truman strategy in the Congressional elections of 1970 and the Presidential election of 1972 by initiating a vendetta upon the Democratic Ninety-first Congress, accusing it of "spending [its] way into more inflation."[1] It is somewhat ironical that the political positions of the two Presidents are reversed; the Ninety-first Congress is interested in education, housing, health, hunger, social security, and kindred matters, while President Nixon's priorities lie in defense, missiles, and supersonic transports. While Nixon's success or failure will lie in his political skill in convincing the people of the justness of

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[1] Fort Worth Star Telegram, July 28, 1970, Sec. 3, p. 4.

his cause, it will be interesting to see whether the Truman strategy can be successfully employed from either political position.

(7) Aside from the fact that the special session was a partisan maneuver, President Truman's action may be justified by the legislation passed. Although the anti-inflation and housing bills were inadequate to cope with the domestic problems of 1948, they were better than no legislation. Certainly the disabled World War II veterans would consider the veterans appropriation bill as ample justification of the special session. The approval of the $65,000,000 construction loan for a United Nations headquarters' building in New York alone probably justified the special session. According to Newsweek, if the loan had not been approved by the Eightieth Congress, there was to be strong international pressure to move the United Nations to Europe in the September, 1948, Assembly meeting in Paris.[2] Actually, the special session was quite productive in its eleven-day session.

(8) Beyond the fact that Truman's action was without circumstantial precedent, was within Constitutional prescriptions, and may be justified by the legislation passed, the call for a special session of the Eightieth Congress, as well as the whole history of the executive-legislative relationships between Harry S Truman and the Eightieth Congress,

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[2]"The Periscope," Newsweek, XXXI (August 9, 1948), 11.

emphatically points out that the office of the President is always a political one. The President plays many roles all at the same time. Although they can be separated for analytical purposes, in practice and operation they cannot be separated. At the same time the President is Legislative Leader, he is also the Political Leader of his party. The special session clearly illustrated that politics is an essential element of the legislative process.

(9) Truman's special session tactic demonstrated that when the Presidential candidate of a political party is the incumbent President, he has an added advantage over the opposition in several respects. First, as President the attention of the nation is focused upon him. His every word and action is newsworthy while the opposition must manufacture its news. Second, he has at his disposal the powers of the office which he can use to his political advantage. For example, he can summon Congress into special session and time the summons with his political advantage in view, and Congress must appear. Third, because of the power, prestige, and responsibilities of his position, he is not expected to answer all charges leveled at him. He can pick and choose which critics he will answer while his oppositon is expected to answer and explain all criticism.

(10) The special session, however, was not without its disadvantages. Because of the sweeping legislative program which he presented to Congress in his address to the special

session and his later campaign speeches on its inaction on his proposals, Truman completely committed himself to an extensive, heterogeneous, and highly controversial program and was almost inevitably a prisoner of his own campaign strategy. An eminent danger was the possibility of his losing flexibility in his future relationship with the Eighty-first Congress. His campaign strategy all but required him to seek repeal of the Taft-Hartley Act and the passage of legislation on price controls, public housing, education, health, social security, minimum wage, and civil rights.

(11) Although the special session was a successful campaign maneuver, it was a poor legislative tactic. It is highly probable that it had a disagreeable impact on Truman's long-term relationship with the Congressional establishment on both sides of the aisle. Much of the recent research on Congress has emphasized its institutional characteristics. Although partisan loyalties are evident, there is also a certain camaraderie between most members of Congress regardless of their party membership.[3] Truman's unprecedented call for the special session offended Congressional dignity, and undoubtedly many Congressmen, both Democratic and Republican, resented his action.

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[3]Elmer E. Cornwell, Jr., "The Truman Presidency," The Truman Period as a Research Field, edited by Richard S. Kirkendall (Columbia, Mo., 1967), pp. 233-235.

(12) The special session of the Eightieth Congress and the executive-legislative relationships between President Truman and the Eightieth Congress indicate that when the President is of one political party and Congress is under the control of the opposition party, the result is a conflict added to the adversary relationship between the President and Congress.

Broader Implications of Executive-Legislative Relations

A basic principle of American government contained in the United States Constitution is that the United States government was created with a separation of powers: a legislature to make the laws, an executive to execute the laws, and a judiciary to interpret the laws. However, in the making of public policy, there is no clear separation between the branches of government; there are separated institutions sharing power, authority, and responsibility. The President and Congress together provide for the formulation, authentication, and implementation of public policy. Yet, because of the separateness of the institutions and the sharing of power, authority, and responsibility, there is the unique situation of both a conflict of interest and an interdependence in the legislative process. This thesis has attempted to provide an insight into the executive-legislative relationships in general and Truman's relationship with the Eightieth Congress in particular. President Truman's

relationship with the Republican-dominated Eightieth Congress on domestic policy provides an interesting and informative illustration of the conflict of interest and the interdependence of the two branches of government in the making of public policy. This thesis has also attempted to analyze and describe the political significance of President Harry S Truman's use of his Presidential prerogative in calling the Eightieth Congress into special session in the summer of 1948. Although his course of action was hazardous politically, the result was his election for another term of office as President of the United States. Joseph W. Martin, Speaker of the Eightieth Congress, testified to the political effectiveness of President Truman's use of the special session and gave it the most apt appraisal when he described it as a "devilishly astute piece of politics."[4] Whether it would produce similar results in differing circumstances is, at best, problematical.

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[4]Joe Martin, My First Fifty Years in Politics (New York, 1960), p. 188.

APPENDIX A

ALL SPECIAL SESSIONS OF CONGRESS CALLED BY PRESIDENTS PRIOR TO HARRY S TRUMAN

1797: By President John Adams, to suspend diplomatic relations with France.

1803: By President Thomas Jefferson, on Spain's cession of Louisiana to France.

1807: By President Thomas Jefferson, to consider relations with Great Britain.

1811: By President James Madison, preparatory to declaring war on Great Britain.

1814: By President James Madison, on matters concerning the war with Great Britain.

1837: By President Martin Van Buren, to suspend specie payments.

1841: By President William H. Harrison, to consider finances and revenue.

1856: By President Franklin Pierce, to pass an Army appropriation bill.

1861: By President Abraham Lincoln, because of insurrection in certain Southern States.

1877: By President Rutherford B. Hayes, to pass an Army appropriation bill.

1879: By President Rutherford B. Hayes, for legislative, executive, judicial, and Army appropriations.

1893: By President Grover Cleveland, to repeal the Silver Purchase Act.

1897: By President William McKinley, to pass the Dingley Tariff Act.

1903: By President Theodore Roosevelt, to consider a commercial treaty with Cuba.

1909: By President William H. Taft, to revise the Dingley Tariff Act.

1911: By President William H. Taft, to consider a reciprocal trade agreement with Canada.

1913: By President Woodrow Wilson, to change tariffs.

1917: By President Woodrow Wilson, to declare war on Germany.

1919: By President Woodrow Wilson, to appropriate funds for Government operation.

1921: By President Warren G. Harding, to consider war-caused economic problems.

1922: By President Warren G. Harding, to consider a merchant marine.

1929: By President Herbert Hoover, to consider farm relief and tariff changes.

1933: By President Franklin D. Roosevelt, to take steps to relieve the depression.

1937: By President Franklin D. Roosevelt, to fight the industrial recession.

1939: By President Franklin D. Roosevelt, to repeal the Neutrality Act on the outbreak of World War II.

Source: Congressional Record, 80th Congress, 2nd Session, XCIV, p. 9381.

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