

Wipe Out Discrimination (1949), a poster by Milton Ackoff, depicts the civil rights consciousness that angered the Dixiecrats.

African Americans from residential neighborhoods. These actions represented the beginnings of a federal commitment to dealing with racial issues. **D**

THE 1948 ELECTION Although many Americans blamed Truman for the nation's inflation and labor unrest, the Democrats nominated him for president in 1948. To protest Truman's emphasis on civil rights, a number of Southern Democrats—who became known as **Dixiecrats**—formed the States' Rights Democratic Party, and nominated their own presidential candidate, Governor J. Strom Thurmond of South Carolina. Discontent reigned at the far left of the Democratic spectrum as well. The former vice-president Henry A. Wallace led his supporters out of mainstream Democratic ranks to form a more liberal Progressive Party.

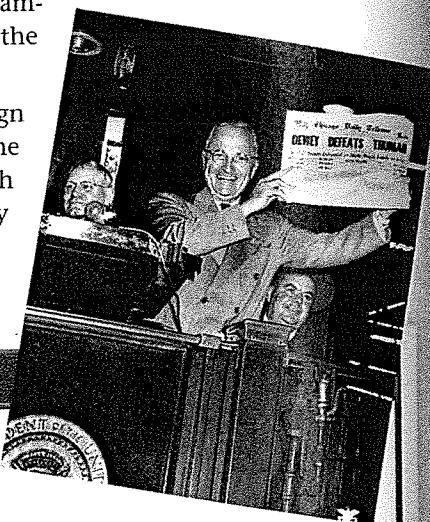
As the election approached, opinion polls gave the Republican candidate, New York Governor Thomas E. Dewey, a comfortable lead. Refusing to believe the polls, Truman poured his energy into the campaign. First, he called the Republican-dominated Congress into a special session. He challenged it to pass laws supporting such elements of the Democratic Party platform as public housing, federal aid to education, a higher minimum wage, and extended Social Security coverage. Not one of these laws was passed. Then he took his campaign to the people. He traveled from one end of the country to the other by train, speaking from the rear platform in a sweeping "whistlestop campaign." Day after day, people heard the president denounce the "do-nothing, 80th Congress."

STUNNING UPSET Truman's "Give 'em hell, Harry" campaign worked. He won the election in a close political upset. The Democrats gained control of Congress as well, even though they suffered losses in the South, which had been solidly Democratic since Reconstruction.

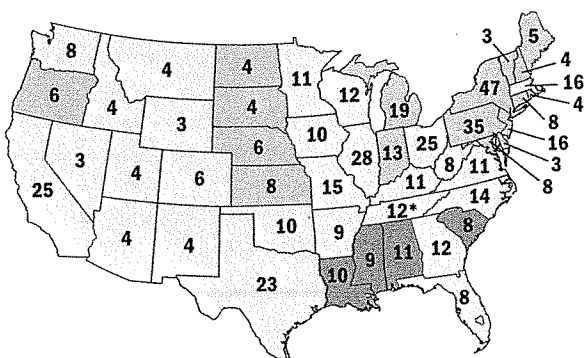
MAIN IDEA

Summarizing

D How did Truman use his executive power to advance civil rights?



Presidential Election of 1948



* Tennessee—11 electoral votes for Truman, 1 electoral vote for Thurmond

Truman surprised the newspapers by winning the 1948 election.

Party	Candidate	Electoral Votes	Popular Votes
<input type="checkbox"/> Democratic	Harry S. Truman	303	24,179,000
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Republican	Thomas E. Dewey	189	21,991,000
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> States' Rights	J. Strom Thurmond	39	1,176,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Progressive	Henry A. Wallace	—	1,157,000

GEOGRAPHY SKILLBUILDER

- 1. Region** In which regions of the country did Truman carry states? Dewey? Thurmond?
- 2. Region** In which regions was support for Truman the weakest?

MAIN IDEA

Evaluating Leadership

What were some of Truman's achievements as president?

THE FAIR DEAL After his victory, Truman continued proposing an ambitious economic program. Truman's **Fair Deal**, an extension of Roosevelt's New Deal, included proposals for a nationwide system of compulsory health insurance and a crop-subsidy system to provide a steady income for farmers. In Congress, some Northern Democrats joined Dixiecrats and Republicans in defeating both measures.

In other instances, however, Truman's ideas prevailed. Congress raised the hourly minimum wage from 40 cents to 75 cents, extended Social Security coverage to about 10 million more people, and initiated flood control and irrigation projects. Congress also provided financial support for cities to clear out slums and build 810,000 housing units for low-income families. **E**

Republicans Take the Middle Road

Despite these social and economic victories, Truman's approval rating sank to an all-time low of 23 percent in 1951. The stalemate in the Korean War and the rising tide of McCarthyism, which cast doubt on the loyalty of some federal employees, became overwhelming issues. Truman decided not to run for reelection. The Democrats nominated the intellectual and articulate governor Adlai Stevenson of Illinois to run against the Republican candidate, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, known popularly as "Ike."

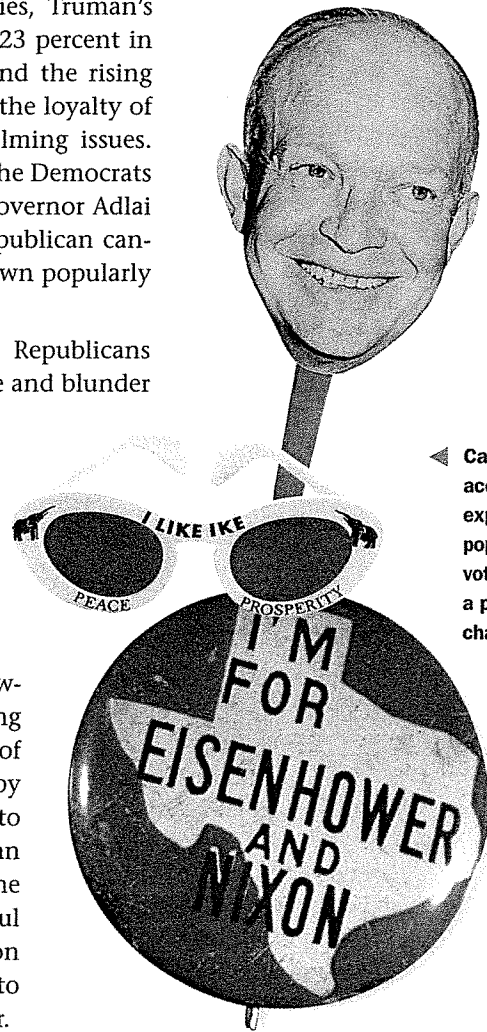
I LIKE IKE! During the campaign, the Republicans accused the Democrats of "plunder at home and blunder abroad." To fan the anti-Communist hysteria that was sweeping over the country, Republicans raised the specter of the rise of communism in China and Eastern Europe. They also criticized the growing power of the federal government and the alleged bribery and corruption among Truman's political allies.

Eisenhower's campaign hit a snag, however, when newspapers accused his running mate, California Senator Richard M. Nixon, of profiting from a secret slush fund set up by wealthy supporters. Nixon decided to reply to the charges. In an emotional speech to an audience of 58 million, now known as the "Checkers speech," he exhibited masterful use of a new medium—television. Nixon denied any wrongdoing, but he did admit to accepting one gift from a political supporter.

A PERSONAL VOICE RICHARD M. NIXON

"You know what it was? It was a little cocker spaniel dog in a crate, that he'd [the political supporter] sent all the way from Texas. Black and white spotted. And our little girl—Tricia, the six-year-old—named it Checkers. And you know the kids, like all kids, love the dog and I just want to say this right now, that regardless of what they say about it, we're going to keep it."

—"Checkers speech," September 23, 1952



◀ Campaign accessories expressed Ike's popularity and voters' desire for a positive political change.

Vocabulary

slush fund: a fund often designated for corrupt practices, such as bribery



▲ Countering slush fund charges, Richard Nixon speaks to TV viewers about his daughters and their dog, Checkers.

Nixon's speech saved his place on the Republican ticket. In November 1952, Eisenhower won 55 percent of the popular vote and a majority of the electoral college votes, while the Republicans narrowly captured Congress.

WALKING THE MIDDLE OF THE ROAD
President Eisenhower's style of governing differed from that of the Democrats. His approach, which he called "dynamic conservatism," was also known as "Modern Republicanism." He called for government to be "conservative when it comes to money and liberal when it comes to human beings."

Eisenhower followed a middle-of-the-road course and avoided many controversial issues, but he could not completely sidestep a persistent domestic issue—civil rights—that gained national attention due to court rulings and acts of civil disobedience in the mid-1950s. The most significant judicial action occurred in 1954, when the Supreme Court ruled in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* that public schools must be racially integrated. (See page 708.) In a landmark act of civil disobedience a year later, a black seamstress named Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a bus to a white man. Her arrest sparked a boycott of the entire Montgomery, Alabama, bus system. The civil rights movement had entered a new era.

Although Eisenhower did not assume leadership on civil rights issues, he accomplished much on the domestic scene. Shortly after becoming president, Eisenhower pressed hard for programs that would bring around a balanced budget and a cut in taxes. During his two terms, Ike's administration raised the minimum wage, extended Social Security and unemployment benefits, increased funding for public housing, and backed the creation of interstate highways and the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. His popularity soared, and he won reelection in 1956.

SECTION 1

ASSESSMENT

1. TERMS & NAMES For each term or name, write a sentence explaining its significance.

- GI Bill of Rights
- suburb

• Harry S. Truman

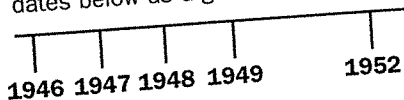
• Dixiecrat

• Fair Deal

MAIN IDEA

2. TAKING NOTES

Create a time line of key events relating to postwar America. Use the dates below as a guide.



Write a paragraph describing the effects of one of these events.

CRITICAL THINKING

3. DRAWING CONCLUSIONS

Do you think Eisenhower's actions reflected his philosophy of dynamic conservatism? Why or why not?

Think About:

- the definition of dynamic conservatism
- Eisenhower's actions on civil rights policies
- Eisenhower's accomplishments on other domestic issues

4. EVALUATING LEADERSHIP

Why do you think most Americans went along with Eisenhower's conservative approach to domestic policy?

5. CONTRASTING

How did Presidents Truman and Eisenhower differ regarding civil rights?