

PPT: The Politics of the 1950s

On April 12, 1945, Harry Truman became President following the death of FDR.



He told reporters, "I felt like the moon, the stars, and all the planets had fallen on me."

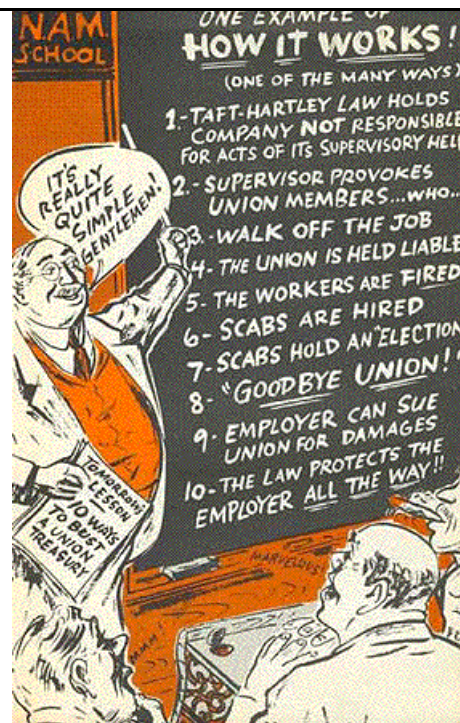
80th Congress.
1947

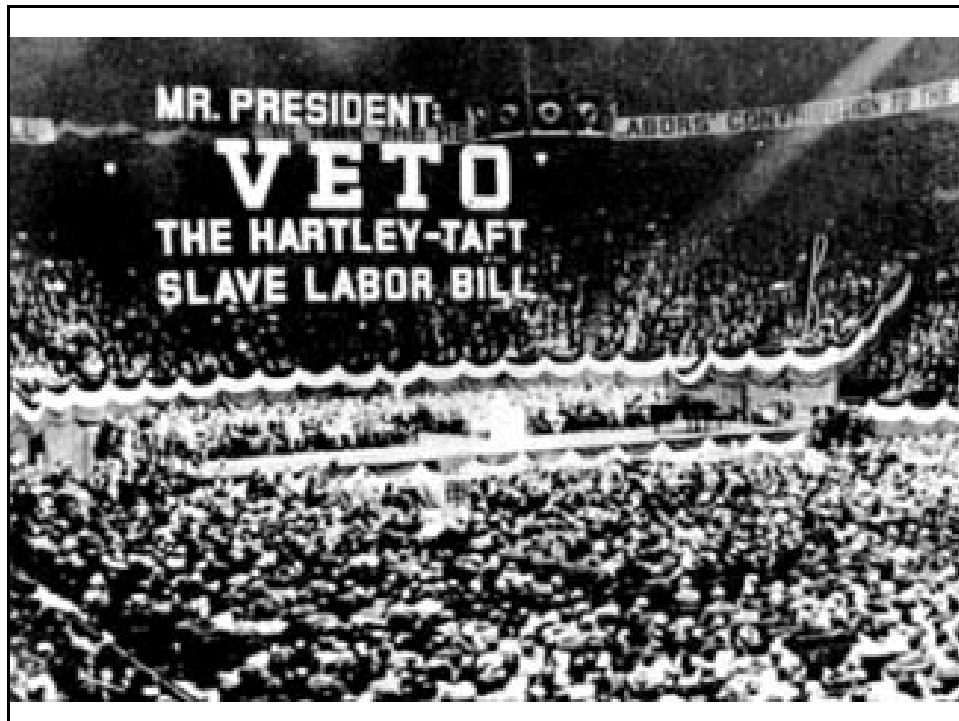


The new Republican majority wanted to end New Deal policies, which they saw as a threat to the nation's economy.

Taft-Hartley Act

- Undo the 1935 National Labor Relations Act
- limited the power of unions by outlawing the closed shop, a workplace in which the employer agrees to hire only members of a certain union.
- 80 day "cooling off period" for strikes
- Union leaders had to pledge they were non-communists



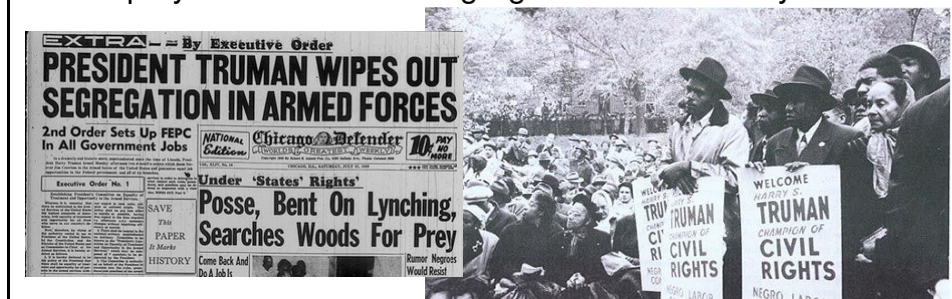


Taft- Hartley Act

- Passed in June of 1947 by Congress over Truman's veto
- By 1954, 15 states passed **"right to work" laws** which allowed nonunion members could work in unionized jobs

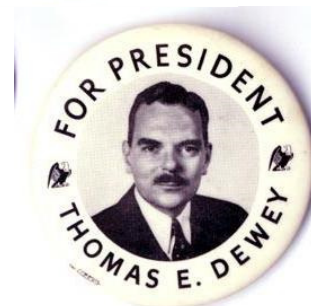


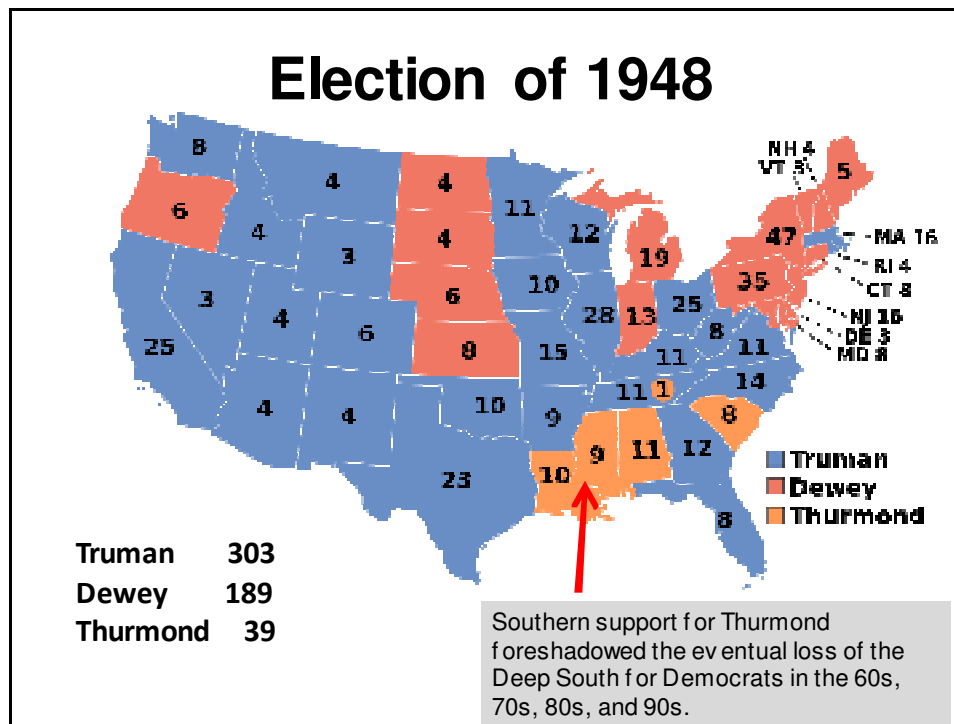
- When a resurgence of lynchings grew the South in 1946, he established “The President’s Committee on Civil Rights,” authorizing a fifteen-man committee to recommend new legislation to protect people from discrimination.
- Based on the committee’s findings, he asked Congress to support federal protection against lynching, better protection of the right to vote, and a permanent Fair Employment Practices Commission.
- In 1947, issued orders prohibiting discrimination in federal employment and to end segregation in the military.



Election of 1948

- Democrats Split
 - Harry S. Truman
 - Strom Thurmond
- Republicans nominated Thomas Dewey
 - anti-labor platform
 - sought to reduce the New Deal





State of the Union Address *January 5, 1949*

Truman stressed that the U.S. “cannot maintain prosperity unless we have a fair distribution of opportunity and a widespread consumption of the products of our factories and farms.”

He petitioned Congress for a “fair deal” for all Americans, including pro-labor reform, comprehensive civil rights legislation, and an extensive social welfare package including education, social security, and medical insurance provisions.



Truman's Fair Deal

- the Housing Act of 1949, which 800,000 new houses for the poor.
- the establishment of the National Science Foundation, an organization dedicated “to promote the progress of science”
- the Social Security Act Amendments of 1950, the first comprehensive Social Security overhaul since the program's enactment in 1935.
- doubled the minimum wage—from 40 cents to 75 cents an hour



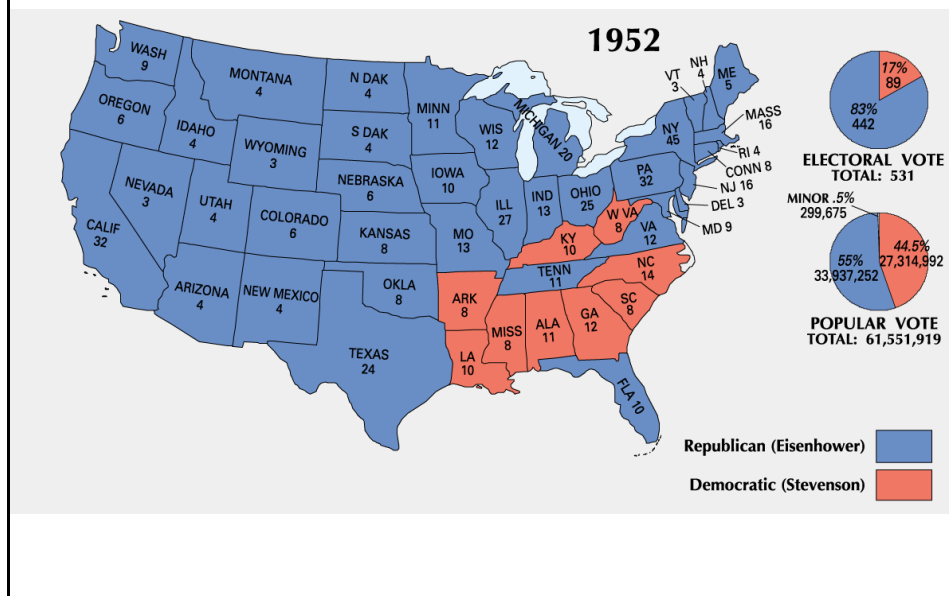
- Truman was able to maintain, but not expand New Deal programs
- Coalition of Republicans and conservative southern Democrats blocked Truman's initiatives
 - Civil Rights
 - Nat'l Health Ins.
 - Repeal of Tariff
 - Fed aid to Education
 - Farm Incomes
- Truman did not run for re-election in 1952

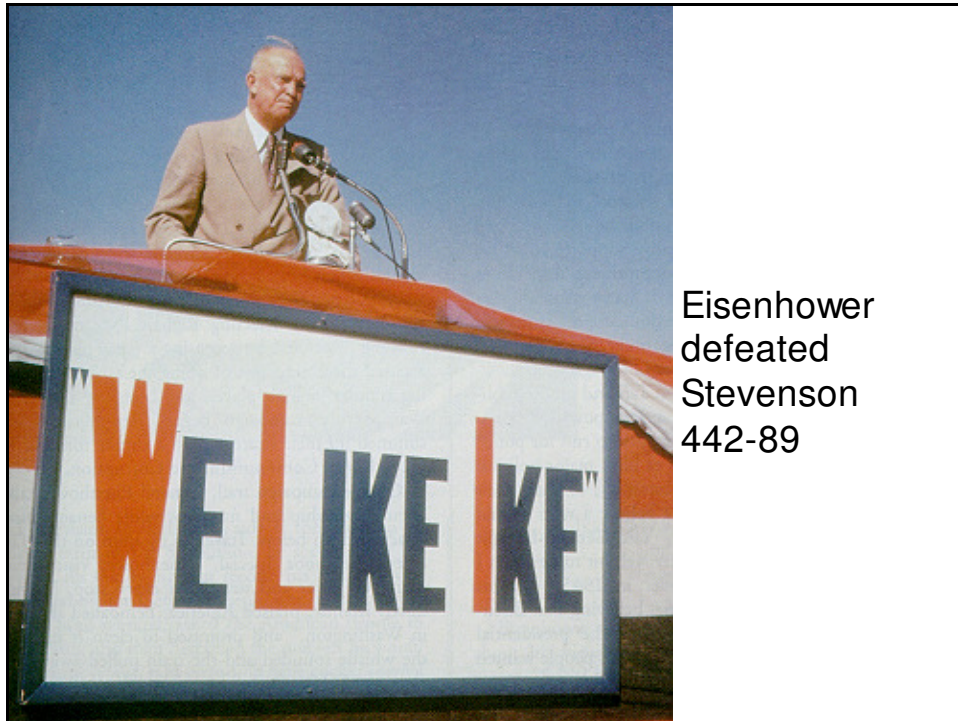
Election of 1952

- Adlai Stevenson
nominated by Democrats
- Dwight D. Eisenhower
nominated by
Republicans
 - Richard Nixon selected as
VP running mate



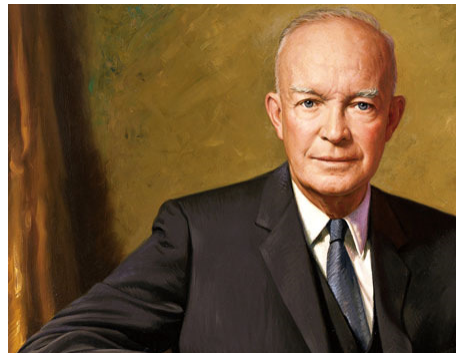
The Election of 1952





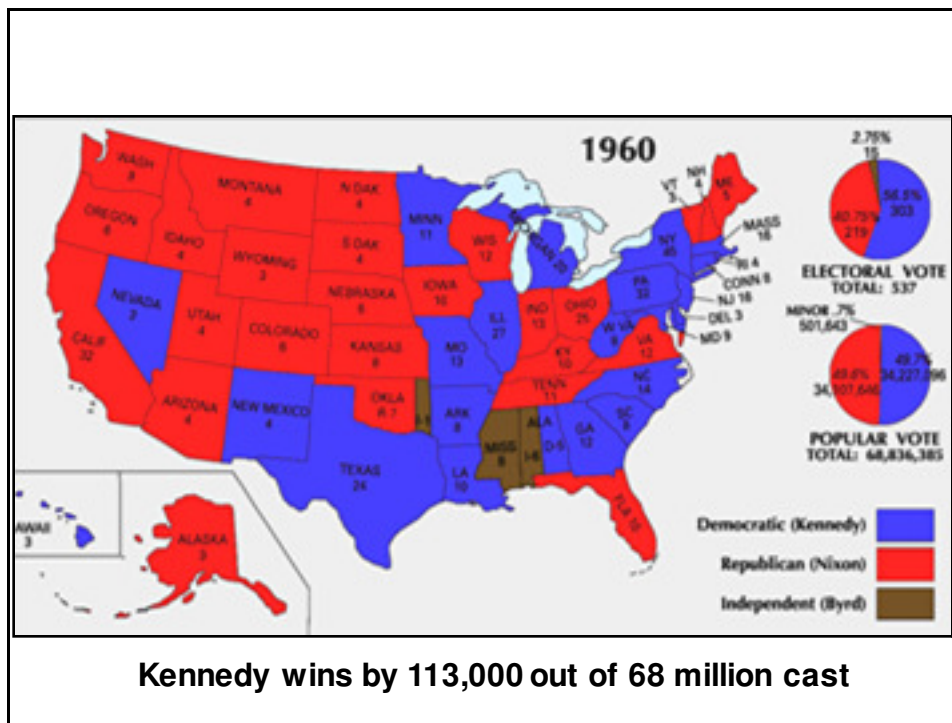
Eisenhower's Modern Republicanism

- In his 8 years as president, Ike had a modest domestic record:
 - Instead of ending New Deal programs, Eisenhower added to social security & minimum wage
 - Used FDR's Federal Housing Admin to help finance building & purchasing of suburban homes
 - Created the Depts of Health, Education, & Welfare





- The election of 1960 between Richard Nixon & John F. Kennedy was the 1st to use TV debates:
 - Nixon was much better known but the TV debates helped swing undecided voters towards JFK
 - 1960 marked the beginning of television dominance in politics
 - Image & appearance became essential traits for candidates



Kennedy wins by 113,000 out of 68 million cast

