NO DEAL, NEW DEAL:
SOCIAL SECURITY AND THE EIGHTIETH CONGRESS

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis examines the New Deal program of Old Age and Survivors' Insurance as it applied to the elderly, the attitudes of the Republican Eightieth Congress toward it, and the legislation they proposed and passed to alter it. In this way I will prove that by the time of Roosevelt's death the New Deal was not as firmly entrenched as some historians would lead us to believe. Using the Congressional Record, Congressional Digest, Congressional Quarterly Almanac, manuscript collections of Democratic and Republican Congressmen, and autobiographies it was discovered that under the Eightieth Congress the OASI program took two steps backward for every half-step forward. The Republicans attempted to dismantle OASI through, what they thought would be, small unnoticeable changes in legislation. They attempted to halt the coverage of new employees by the system and even remove coverage from some groups that were already protected by the program.

To my parents,
Ralph and Marie
and my grandmother,
Bernice

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Finally, to all my relatives, friends, and complete strangers who ever asked me: "Aren't you done yet?!?" The answer is finally--YES!

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INTRODUCTION

> It was once said that the moral test of government is how that government treats those who are in the dawn of life--the children, those in the twilight of life--the elderly, and those in the shadows of life--the sick, the needy, and handicapped.
>
> Hubert H. Humphrey

The elderly in 1947 were a generation caught in change. The estimated 11,185,000 who were 65 or older[1] had been born in an era of rural life and self-sufficiency. They had lived through some of the more dramatic changes in national history. They had grown into maturity observing and participating in the migration from rural to urban life. They had experienced the Depression, the ultimate in economic displacement, and had seen the experimental programs of Franlkin Roosevelt stem political anarchy until the production demands of World War II corrected the economic imbalance.[2]

They saw that with the pressures of war and foreign concerns the domestic programs and goals of the New Deal were, if not forgotten, realistically relegated to lesser importance. This caused some concern, but most people believed once the war had ended the liberal progression would at least stabilize if not continue.[3] With the death of FDR, the succession of Harry S. Truman, and the end of

the war in 1945 the uncertainty increased. The retired or soon-to-be-retired were especially concerned.[4] They were one of the groups specifically provided for in the New Deal, under the old age pension provisions of the Social Security programs. But their concern heightened in 1947 when most found themselves retired; without a job, without FDR, and without a Democratic Congress for the first time in 16 years.

The elderly's questioning now began in earnest: would the Republicans carry through with the New Deal programs they had sniped at while out of power? Would Truman be strong enough or willing enough to stop them if they tried to destroy the legacy of Roosevelt? The elderly waited while the Eightieth Congress rolled into motion and attempted to roll over Social Security.

This thesis will examine the New Deal program of Social Security as it applied to the elderly, the attitudes of the Republican Eightieth Congress toward it, and the legislation they proposed and passed to alter it. In this way I will attempt to prove that by the time of Roosevelt's death the New Deal was not as firmly entrenched as some historians would lead us to believe. In fact, the continued existence, let alone the expansion of various New Deal programs, had become questionable. This thesis will follow the argument of Alonzo Hamby in Beyond the New Deal: Harry S. Truman and Liberalism. Hamby argues that without

the election of Harry S. Truman in 1948 much of the New Deal would most likely have been disbanded by the Republicans and conservatives.[5]

The selection of Social Security as the particular New Deal program to be studied is important. The ethics of America, in fact of much of the world, calls for symbolic reverence for certain groups in society. For the initial purpose of this thesis it matters little whether they are in reality treated fairly.

Children were one such group. Young children were usually held free from verbal attacks in Congress. Another such group were the elderly, the aged parents of the nation. Although America's love affair with youth began well before the 1940s, the elderly had never been targets for open attacks.[6] Few Congressmen, at that time, were daring enough to stand forward and label the elderly as worthless appendages to society, who free-loaded off the workers by accepting inflated Social Security payments. Even fewer were the Congressmen who made such a statement and survived the next election.[7] Respect for the elderly, accolades for their unselfish sacrifices in building America, and calls for their better treatment, were the benchmark of most congressional statements on the elderly.

Because of this accepted level of public respect,[8] the elderly were somewhat protected from obvious attacks during the time period studied. If the Republicans were

determined to dismantle the New Deal, the Social Security programs which dealt specifically with the elderly would be the most difficult to tear down. Therefore, if the Republicans were successful in destroying Social Security, they would have less trouble with other New Deal programs with a less popular or morally acceptable footing. The Republicans would perhaps move quite swiftly with this destruction under a congenial, party-loyal, Republican president.

As mentioned above, only those Social Security programs dealing predominantly with the elderly will be examined here. The Social Security system, as created in 1935 legislation, consisted of five basic parts: Aid to the Blind, Aid to Dependent Children, Unemployment Insurance, Old Age Assistance (public assistance), and Old Age and Survivors' Insurance (OASI). The primary purpose of the 1935 Act was to provide for the United States a permanent, national system by which workers' incomes would be assured upon their retirement or dismissal from employment. Prior to this time income replacement was primarily the function of either the family, private charitable organizations, or local and state governments. But the magnitude of the Depression overwhelmed the traditional charitable organizations and their ability to cover the needs of the destitute. Despite Republican arguments that the Old Age and Surviors'

Insurance aspect centered too much power in the hands of the Federal Government the Act was passed overwhelmingly by the House and Senate.[9]

Although the other areas of income assurance are important, this thesis will be concerned only with the Old Age and Survivors' Insurance aspect.[10] At times Old Age Assistance (OAA) will be included in the discussion of OASI. Often times Congressmen, in the heat of an argument, would confuse the two and begin ranting about one program when actually they were referring to the other. This is perhaps related to the original purpose of the two. In theory OAA was meant to achieve the same end as OASI but through different means.

Old Age Assistance was a program whereby the Federal Government and individual states combined to give pensions to the indigent elderly 65 or older. Only those individuals who were not working, had no savings or other income, no property, and no relatives to fall back on for support, were eligible. Unlike OASI, OAA was not given as a right, but as charity, with the elderly often having to submit to degrading means tests.

The states were under no requirement to take part in this program. But as over half the states already had such pension programs it was to their advantage to participate in this Federal program which left the direct administration to the individual states, with minimum Federal

interference. The only restriction was the amount of money the Federal Government would reimburse the individual state for participating in OAA. The first years the reimbursement was $15 per OAA recipient, but in years after it did increase, although not in large amounts and often as a political ploy, aspects which will be illustrated in later chapters. OAA was meant to fade away as OASI matured and only cover those not covered by OASI, and those whose insurance payments were too low to sustain life. In fact, Jerry R. Cates, a researcher in Social Security policy-making, has found that the administrators in the Federal Security Agency saw the OAA as a threat to OASI and often tried to hold it back so as not to rival OASI.[11]

Old Age and Survivors' Insurance, on the other hand, was exactly what the title states, that is, insurance. If working in one of the covered professions,[12] the worker made a contribution in a certain set percentage of his gross wages to the fund. In 1947-48, as from its beginning, the employee had a one percent tax for OASI removed from his paycheck. The employer was also required to match this amount for each of his covered employees. Requiring employers to contribute to the fund caused some concern. It was argued, however, that employers should provide for depreciation and obsolescence of their workers just as they did for their plant and machinery.[13] After working a set amount of years (after the 1939 amendments: a minimum

of six and a maximum of 40 quarters) and upon reaching the age of 65 the worker was eligible for a monthly, life-long payment. The amount of the monthly payments was set between upper and lower limits, as directed by Congress, but most often two-thirds of the retiree's normal salary.[14]

To explore the actions and attitudes of Congress toward OASI a number of primary sources were consulted. Among the primary sources used were: the Congressional Record, Congressional Quarterly, Social Security Bulletin, and manuscript sources of various Congressmen.

Although it is well known that Congressmen are allowed to alter, add to, or completely delete their remarks before they are printed in the Congressional Record it is still an important source. The Record gives an indication of what Congressmen believe portrays themselves in the best light to the press, to their constituents and to one another. It may be considered, in a way, a reflection of popular sentiment on any given subject at a given time.

The Congressional Quarterly, on the other hand, is a nonpartisan publication which devotes its weekly issues to the thorough investigation of different legislative problems facing Congress. Its annual issue is a consolidation of the weekly issues. Included in the annual issue are comparisons of party voting in Congress with official positions taken by both major parties.

One of the most important features of both the Congressional Record and Congressional Quarterly are the roll-call votes. Once the vote had been recorded, Congressmen cannot change it; they can only try to justify it by their comments and remarks inserted into the Record.

The next major sources used were the Social Security Bulletin and Harry S. Truman's Memoirs. The first was used to investigate what the Federal Security Agency[15] desired in terms of the program. The Social Security Bulletin also gave breakdowns of various Congressional actions and how they changed the program and affected the people involved. Truman's goals, as stated in his Memoirs, were used to contrast the administrative goals of the FSA. Truman was concerned with his political future, and as President was responsible for a number of policy areas including Social Security and other programs. The President had to make decisions which would balance the strength of all programs without playing favorites. The Federal Security Agency, on the other hand, was responsible for a very definite range of programs and worked very hard for the recognition and advancement in these specific areas. Therefore, the goals of the President and the FSA were not always the same. The Bureau of the Budget even admitted that at times agencies would revolt against too much control from the White House.[16] Both of these sources

gave some idea of what opposition or support Congress faced and what they had to react for or react against.

Finally, the manuscript sources were used to see how Congressmen explained their actions to their constituents and to one another. The papers of Robert A. Taft, Arthur Vandenberg, Joseph Martin, Sam Rayburn, Emanuel Celler, Alben W. Barkley, John Sherman Cooper, Wallace White, Theodore F. Green, and Tom Connally were all examined. Most of the collections contained letters to constituents and to campaign managers, along with speeches and policy statements.

To supplement these primary sources I also used published biographies and autobiographies of members of the Eightieth Congress and Administration appointees. Although there were no great or astonishing revelations found in the manuscript sources that were not reflected, to an extent, in the Congressional Record they did contain some attempts at justification of what was done in the Eightieth Congress.

In the autobiographies and biographies I expected the Republicans, who bore the brunt of Truman's accusations in the 1948 campaign, to defend the actions of the Eightieth Congress vehemently. In contrast I expected the Democrats to accept what Truman said about the "do nothing" Eightieth Congress and even add to the accusations against the Republicans.

The autobiographies and biographies were not quite as rigid as I had first believed. For instance, among the participants' autobiographies only one spoke directly of the Eightieth Congress: Texas' Democratic Senator Tom Connally. Although a staunch southerner, Connally, along with Representative Sam Rayburn, felt the South should support Truman, the 1948 Democratic presidential nominee, despite their dislike of him and his programs. Connally shunned the Dixiecrat Party and feared that division of the Democratic Party would lead to a Republican victory. Connally was also rather hostile about losing his position of power once the 1946 Republican Congress came in. So although he was a member of Congress, Connally agreed with Truman's attacks on the Eightieth. He agreed that Truman's detailed complaints about the Eightieth Congress were the real reason the President won in 1948.[17]

In his autobiography, Representative Jacob Javits of New York also criticized the Republicans. Although Javits was a Republican, he was elected from a traditional Democratic stronghold, so often voted with the Democrats against the Republicans. Javits felt that although much was done in Congress what received the most attention was reactionary, retaliatory legislation. He believed that the Republicans were determined to make their mark on the country, especially if that meant destroying the New Deal.[18]

Arthur Altmeyer was another participant, although in the Administration, rather than the Legislature. He accused the Republicans of deliberately attempting to destroy the old age security feature of Social Security. He also credits this blatant maliciousness for clinching the 1948 election for Truman.[19]

Those writing biographies of legislators were very open in their attacks, perhaps because not being members themselves they felt they had no responsibility for the actions of the Eightieth Congress. Or perhaps it is because they relied on the campaign speeches used, where some Congressmen jumped on the Truman bandwagon, accusing the Congress of playing favorites with special interests. This is evident in the biographies of Representatives William Lemke and Sam Rayburn and Senators Olin Johnston, Theodore Green and Harley Kilgore.[20]

Most other autobiographies and biographies simply mentioned programs passed, or skipped over the entire 1947-48 period completely, unless they simply mentioned the outcome of the election. Others mouthed the 1948 Truman campaign line of the "do nothing" Congress with no attempt at justification, evaluation or explanation.[21]

Among the personal memoirs there are those who felt the Eightieth really was much maligned by Truman. Many believed that if the Eightieth was not much better than past Congresses, it was in reality not any worse.

Representatives Joseph Martin of Massachusetts and Norris Cotton of New Hampshire were the staunchest supporters of the Eightieth Congress' record, and not surprisingly both were Republicans. Both men showed respect for Truman, but argued that he was wrong in leveling the charge of "do nothing" in 1948.[22]

Martin did admit that previous Congresses had tried to stop the New Deal and failed. But the domestic programs in 1948, precursor to the full Fair Deal programs, he claimed "...we stopped in its tracks."[23] This is not to say that Martin thought this a bad thing. In fact, Martin took pride in this action. He felt that the Congress had stopped the Fair Deal, and had substituted a record of good, solid legislation. He also blamed Dewey's lackluster campaign for the losses in 1948.[24] Martin sums up the problem as such:

> It was a strong, independent Congress. In Truman it was pitted against a strong, impulsive President. The result, naturally, was almost continual conflict, much of it going to fundamental differences between the Democratic and Republican parties.[25]

The remaining biographies, all of Republican Party members, reiterated the beliefs of their studies. Lending credence to the prior argument that many biographers simply took campaign speeches at face value without any analysis. For instance, George Mayer gives glowing reports to the Republicans in his work: The Republican Party, 1854-1964.

He supports Martin's argument that the Republicans in their attempts to implement their party's programs succeeded in alienating many voters.[26] The remaining biographies on Representative Charlie Halleck and Senators Robert Taft and Kenneth Wherry all illustrated the Republican's hostility towards Truman and their belief that the Eightieth Congress really made positive steps in running the country.[27]

There was also a large amount of secondary literature consulted on this period. Most of these studies dealt with Truman, very few investigated the problems facing Social Security in 1947-48.

The early historical accounts of the Truman presidency are positive, idealized versions of the President.[28] Among the better known of these idealistic accounts are Fonathan Daniels' The Man of Independence, Eric F. Goldman's The Crucial Decade and After: America 1945-1960, and Cabell Phillips' The Truman Presidency: The History of Triumphant Succession.[29] Another such writer was Richard E. Neustadt, who as a staff member in the Bureau of the Budget 1946-50 and special assistant in the White House Office 1950-53 presents a particularly sticky problem. Neustadt, a political scientist, wrote numerous articles and books in a very obvious pro-Truman style. When reading one of Neustadt's works, it is important to keep in mind his participant status when judging the merit of his

analysis. In fact, Neustadt has been faulted by revisionists for misleading the traditionalists with his biased analysis in "Congress and the Fair Deal."[30]

Following this highly idealized pro-Truman literature came the emergence of what was to form the core of the traditionalists school of historical thought. Centered around Richard S. Kirkendall, at the University of Missouri, this group is also known as the Missouri School.

Most members of this group admit that Truman had failures, but instead of zeroing in solely on those failures the historians in the Missouri School also point to successes. Perhaps the most common thread running through the traditionalists' theory is their acceptance of the existence of a conservative coalition which Truman was forced to fight in trying to promote his Fair Deal program. Some of the best-known works from the traditionalist school are Kirkendall's "Harry Truman" in America's Eleven Greatest Presidents, as well as the introductory comments in The Truman Period as a Research Field: A Reappraisal, 1972. Kirkendall's successors include Alonzo L. Hamby and his early landmark book on the Truman era, Beyond the New Deal: Harry S. Truman and American Liberalism. Finally, Susan M. Hartmann deals specifically with Executive-Legislative problems in her work: Truman and the 80th Congress.[31] Although these works do not take a hands-off

policy when it comes to criticizing Truman, they argue that the programs he advocated were timely.

Combining criticism with appreciation the Missouri School studies of Truman appeared to halt the candy-coated versions of his life. After Truman's death in 1972, however, the spate of 'Truman the Great' books returned. This reappearance was lead by the publication of a very loving biography of Truman by the "Boss's Boss" as Truman called his daughter. Margaret Truman, in Harry S. Truman, painted a warm picture of her father as a wonderful man, a good President and a loving devoted family man. Merle Miller's Plain Speaking: An Oral Biography of Harry S. Truman reinforced the view of Truman as a scrappy man, fighting against the odds for the good of the people.[32] Although this type of popular literature captured the interest and admiration of the American public it only increased the intensity of the feud between professional Truman scholars.

While the Missouri School places Truman out in front to absorb the criticism, they shield his programs behind them in a protective stance. Meanwhile, behind the traditionalists are the revisionists, sniping at the Fair Deal and post war liberalism. The revisionists are critical of both Truman and his programs. They argue that Truman's policies were not the liberal programs previous historians have made them out to be. The revisionists'

literature states that Truman was an inept President, that he was ill-prepared to deal with the conservative coalition and that instead of solving the problems Truman stopped any chance of New Deal liberalism reasserting itself by substituting his own limited program.

Revisionists began their attack by writing counter assaults on traditionalists' works. Perhaps the best known revisionists is Barton J. Bernstein. His essay in Politics and Policies of the Truman Administration and Towards a New Past: Dissenting Essays in American History, two books which he editied, best exemplify his revisionist interpretation. Bert Cochran's Harry Truman and the Crisis Presidency is also an example of revisionist' thought. Allen Yarnell in Democrats and Progressives: The 1948 Presidential Election as a Test of Postwar Liberalism, also attacks both Truman and his program.[33]

For the study of Social Security under Truman and the Eightieth Congress little literature, whether revisionist or traditionalist, exists. Except for the afore mentioned Cates study, and a study of the Social Security Administration by Martha Derthicks, there is nothing.[34] There is a need for this type of study, dealing specifically with Social Security. Hopefully, the attention Social Security is receiving in present-day politics will encourage more historians to delve into its heritage.

Despite the lack of secondary material covering the question of Social Security in 1947-48 the primary sources painted a consistent view. Under the Eightieth Congress the OASI program took two steps backward for every half-step forward, all in the name of Republican progress. The Republicans attempted to dismantle OASI through, what they thought would be, small unnoticeable changes in legislation. They attempted to halt the coverage of new employees by the system and even remove coverage from some groups that were already protected by the program.

[1]By 1948 the number of those estimated to be 65 or older had risen to 11,538,000. U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1970, pt. 1 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1975), p. 10.

[2]The 1938 recession, for a time, lessened public confidence in FDR's economic recovery plans.

[3]The 1944 Economic Bill of Rights FDR presented in his State of the Union message indicated that the New Deal was coming out of retirement once the necessity for 'Dr. Win-the-War' had faded.

[4]Many people came out of retirement to ease the labor shortage during World War II. Most returned by choice to retirement or were forced out of the market once the servicemen began returning.

[5]Alonzo L. Hamby, Beyond the New Deal: Harry S. Truman and American Liberalism (New York: Columbia University Press, 1973), pp. 256-59, 267. Alonzo L. Hamby, Imperial Years: The United States Since 1939 (New York: Weybright and Talley, 1976), p. 146. Truman himself reflected this fear in his memoirs. Harry S. Truman, Memoirs, vol. 2: Years of Trial and Hope (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co., 1956), p. 172. Irwin Ross, The Loneliest Campaign: The Truman Victory of 1948 (New York: New American Library, 1968), pp. 237-45. In fact, some authors credit Truman's 1948 victory solely to the electorate's perception of what the Republicans would do to the New Deal should they win both Congress and the Presidency. Hamby believes liberals eventually supported Truman rather than Wallace not because of their great confidence in Truman's ability or desire to carry on the New Deal but rather to defeat the Republicans who they believed would eliminate the progress made under the New Deal. Others voted for Truman for narrower self-interests: they were not concerned with the entire New Deal; instead they feared the destruction of certain portions of the New Deal which would effect them personally. This idea is dealt with in more detail in the conclusion of this thesis. Republicans did little to reduce this fear. For instance, in "The Record of the First Five Months," Congressional Digest 27, #6-7 (1947): 178, a Digest writer indicated that the Eightieth Congress began session "with

the intent of putting the brakes on the remainder of the New Deal program and its own agenda formulated and underway." Allen Yarnell, Democrats and Progressives: The 1948 Presidential Election As A Test of Post War Liberalism (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), p. 144, argues just the opposite. Representing the revisionist school of thought, Yarnell suggests that the 1948 victory was not a victory of liberalism. It was just the opposite. Truman's victory insured that liberalism would be pushed aside in favor of more mediocre reforms.

[6]America's love affair with youth had begun almost 30 years earlier, stemming from youth's disillusionment with World War I. Still the cultural praise of, and fascination with the young was not as open in 1947-48 as it would become in the late 1950s, 60s and 70s.

[7]One of the only Congressmen to question the aged and their right to support was Walter Horan, third term Republican Representative from the state of Washington. He inserted, into the Congressional Record, an article by Howard Ordey entitled: "Land of Milk and Honey--Relief Cash Plentiful in State of Washington." The article dealt with supposed Social Security abuses in Washington State. But the article played it safe and instead of criticizing the elderly as a group, asked: "Are All These Our Senior Citizens?" Horan was re-elected in 1948. U.S., Congress, House, Article by Howard Ordey on Social Security Abuses in Washington State, "Land of Milk and Honey--Relief Cash Plentiful in State of Washington," 80th Cong., 1st sess., 20 March 1947, Congressional Record 93: 2338-39. This was the most daring attack leveled against the elderly in the Eightieth Congress. As will be seen in later chapters, the aged were usually praised in every debate on Social Security, no matter what the speaker was arguing for.

[8]A strong influence on this sentiment may be traced directly to World War II. As mentioned earlier, retirees went back into the work force to shore up the lagging number of workers. There was also the strong sentimental appeal of the waiting mothers and elderly parents who had lost sons in the war.

[9]In the House the roll call vote on the 1935 Social Security Act was 372 for passage and 33 against passage (Democrats 297 for, 13 against; Republicans 68 for, 18 against; Independents seven for, two against). The Senate passed the bill on a voice vote. Congress and the Nation: A Review of Government and Politics in the Post-War Years, 1945-1961 (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1965), p. 1227. There was a very strong reluctance to pass the bill by the Republcians. This reluctance was evident when the House Ways and Means Committee originally voted on whether to report the bill or not. At that time, all Democrats, except one, voted for reporting out the bill, and all Republicans voted against it. Arthur J. Altmeyer, The Formative Years of Social Security (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1966), p. 37.

[10]Common usage has replaced Old Age and Survivors' Insurance (the present day Old Age, Survivors' and Disability Insurance) with the term Social Security. Therefore, when I refer to Social Security in this thesis I mean, in specific terms, OASI as it refers to the elderly.

[11]Jerry R. Cates, Insuring Inequality: Administrative Leadership in Social Security, 1935-1954 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1983), pp. 20, 39.

[12]Covered employment was usually that which involved manual labor, such as factory work, and some white collar employees. Among the uncovered employees were: farmers, farm workers, domestic labor, state and local government workers, and employees of non-profit organizations. Also excluded were the self-employed such as: insurance agents, doctors, lawyers, other professionals, those covered by private pension plans and other small groups.

[13]Eveline Burns, Social Security and Public Policy (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1956), p. 161.

[14]Partial benefits were available for those retiring at age 62.

[15]In 1946 Congress opposed but passed President Truman's proposal that the old Social Security Board be abolished and all its duties transferred to the FSA.

[16]The FSA, as a branch of the Executive, did not always reflect the policy of the President. Cates, Insuring Inequality, pp. 23, 58. Robert J. Donovan also reinforces this idea by arguing that governmental departments had a freer role in "initiating programs and dealing with Congress" than in later years when the White House centralized control. Robert J. Donovan, Conflict and Crisis: The Presidency of Harry S. Truman, 1945-1948 (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1977), p. 22. Roger W. Jones, Assistant Director, Bureau of the Budget 1945-59 spoke of agencies' independent streak in: Francis H. Heller, ed., The Truman White House: The Administration of the Presidency, 1945-1953 (Lawrence: The Regents Press of Kansas, 1980), pp. 227-28.

[17]Tom Connally, My Name is Tom Connally (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1954), pp. 330-32.

[18]Jacob J. Javits and Rafael Steinberg, Javits: The Autobiography of a Public Man (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1981), p. 134.

[19]Altmeyer, Formative Years, pp. 160, 163, 169.

[20]Edward C. Blackorby, Prarie Rebel: The Public Life of William Lemke (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1963), p. 774. John E. Huss, Senator for the South: A Biography of Olin D. Johnston (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co., 1961), p. 147. Erwin L. Levine, Theodore Francis Green: The Washington Years, 1937-1960 (Providence: Brown University Press, 1971), pp. 20-23, 109. Robert Franklin Maddox, The Senatorial Career of Harley Martin Kilgore (New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1981), pp. 258-64, 267. Alfred Steinberg, Sam Rayburn: A Biography (New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1975), p. 244. Dwight C. Dorough, Mr. Sam (New York: Random House, 1962), p. 398.

[21]Helen Gahagan Douglas, A Full Life (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co., 1982), p. 274 simply mentions the 1948 election and tactics with no judgement on domestic policies. Ralph E. Flanders, Senator From Vermont (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1961), pp. 220-24. Flanders relates actions of the Eightieth, but also praises Truman. Brooks Hays, A Hotbed of Tranquillity: My Life In Five Worlds (New York: MacMillan Co., 1968), pp. 103-05. Although Hays pretty much ignores the Eightieth Congress, his

dislike of Truman is very evident. F. Edward Hèbert and John McMillan, Last of the Titans: The Life and Times of Congressman F. Edward Hèbert of Louisiana (Layfayette: Center for Louisiana Studies, 1976), p. 321. Hèbert deals mostly with the Dixiecrats, and though there was some animosity between Truman and Hèbert after the election, Hebert's picture of Truman is fairly positive. Edward Keating, The Gentleman From Colorado: A Memoir (Denver: Sage Books, 1964). Keating totally ignores the Eightieth Congress. Louis W. Koenig, ed., The Truman Administration: Its Principles and Practice (Washington Square, New York: New York University Press, 1956), p. 3, gives the usual story of the 1948 election and mistreatment of Truman by the Eightieth Congress. However, Koenig also reminds the reader that the Democratic Seventy-ninth and Eighty-first Congresses did not treat Truman much better. F. Ross Patterson, Prophet Without Honor: Glen H. Taylor and the Fight for American Liberalism (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1974), p. 139. The author nonjudgementally emphasizes the political astuteness of Truman in his 1948 campaign of demanding liberal reforms and the failure of Congress to pass them. Robert A. Smith, The Tiger in the Senate: The Biography of Wayne Morse (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co., 1962), pp. 18, 132. Smith argues that although Morse appeared anti-New Deal, he was really an independent, if not in actuality a liberal. Morse's votes on some Social Security issues in the Eightieth Congress supports this theory. Smith also states that although Morse was not overly fond of Truman he gave him the necessary support.

[22]Norris Cotton, In the Senate: Amidst the Conflict and Turmoil (New York: Dodd, Meade & Co., 1978), p. 127.

[23]Joe Martin, My First Fifty Years in Politics (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1960), pp. 178-79.

[24]Ibid., pp. 178-79, 195-98.

[25]Ibid., p. 190.

[26]George H. Mayer, The Republican Party, 1854-1964 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), pp. 469, 471.

[27]Henry Z. Scheele, Charlie Halleck: A Political Biography (New York: Exposition Press, 1966), pp. 115, 117, 124-25. Halleck did not like Truman but he cooperated

with him. Therefore, he was especially angry when Truman leveled the charges of inactivity against the Congress. Marvin E. Stromer, The Making of A Political Leader: Kenneth S. Wherry and the United States Senate (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1969), pp. 38-39. The Wherry biography followed closely Scheele's argument in Halleck's biography. Finally, Robert A. Taft's biographies also mirror the obvious dislike between Taft and Truman and the indignation Taft felt at Truman's congressional jabs. James T. Patterson, Mr. Republican: A Biography of Robert A. Taft (Boston: Houghton Miffin Co., 1972), p. 394. William S. White, The Taft Story (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1954), pp. 62-63. This last book reflects the candy-coated biography version of Taft's life, but appears to argue the same type of description of the Taft-Truman feud as is found in later more thoughtful biographies.

[28]The most obvious exception to this statement is Samuel Lubell, Future of American Politics (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1951). In comparison to other works of the time, Lubell seems overly critical of Truman. But closer analysis reveals that Lubell was not so much critical of Truman, as he was realistic about Truman's intentions and actions. Lubell paints Truman as the conservative in 1948 rather than Dewey. Truman represented safety and continuation to a public afraid of losing ground. (Ibid., p. 60.) Lubell illustrates that Truman was not intent upon change, as others have stated, but wanted to retain the status quo, (Ibid., pp. 10, 176-77, 196, 229, 230-31, 232, 254.)

[29]Jonathan Daniels, The Man of Independence (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1950). Eric F. Goldman, The Crucial Decade and After: America 1945-1960 (New York: Vinatage Books, 1960). Cabell Phillips, The Truman Presidency: The History of Triumphant Succession (New York: MacMillan Co., 1966). See also, Morris L. Ernst and David Loth, The People Know Best: The Ballots vs. The Polls (Washington, D.C.: The Public Affairs Press, 1949). This book is so highly biased and one-sided in examining the Truman election of 1948 and the error of the opinion polls in predicting the victory, that it is a valuable source for comic relief. But it is also an excellent example of the worst type of laudatory literature published on Truman at this time. Another example of the myth making books is Jules Abels, Out of the Jaws of Victory (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1959). See also

Truman appointee, George E. Allen, Presidents Who Have Known Me (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1950). More recent works in this tradition include: Alton Lee, "The Turnip Session of the Do-Nothing Congress: Presidential Campaign Strategy," Southwestern Social Science Quarterly 44 (December 1963): 256-67. Irwin Ross, The Loneliest Campaign: The Truman Victory of 1948 (New York: New American Library, Inc., 1968). Alfred Steinberg, The Man from Missouri: The Life and Times of Harry S. Truman (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1962).

[30]Richard E. Neustadt, "Congress and the Fair Deal: A Legislative Balance Sheet," Public Policy 5 (1954): 351-81. Also Neustadt, "Presidency and Legislation: The Growth of Central Clearance," American Political Science Review 48, #3 (1954): 641-71. And Neustadt, Presidential Power: The Politics of Leadership (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1960).

[31]Richard S. Kirkendall, "Harry Truman," in Morton Borden, ed., America's Eleven Greatest Presidents (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1971). Kirkendall, ed., The Truman Period As A Research Field (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1967). Kirkendall, ed., The Truman Period As A Research Field: A Reappraisal, 1972 (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1974). Alonzo L. Hamby, Beyond the New Deal: Harry S. Truman and American Liberalism (New York: Columbia University Press, 1973). Hamby, The Imperial Years: The United States Since 1939 (New York: Weybright & Talley, 1976). Although more general and textbook in style than his first works, The Imperial Years also reinforces the traditionalist school views on Truman both in his domestic and foreign policies. For an analysis of legislative response 1944-46 to FDR's and Truman's attempts to bring back the early enthusiasm of the New Deal and its failure see Mary Hedge Hinchey, "The Frustration of the New Deal Revival, 1944-46" Diss., University of Missouri, 1965. Robert J. Donovan, journalist turned historian, should also be grouped with the traditionalists, perhaps more by default than from any real, clear classification of views. He presents a very readable narrative of Truman's life, and a generally sympathetic view of the President. He differs from the earlier biographies on Truman, in that he also attempts to analyze Truman's actions and sometimes false accusations against Republican inaction in the Eightieth Congress. Robert J. Donovan, Conflict and Crisis: The Presidency of Harry S. Truman, 1945-1948 (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1977).

[32]Margaret Truman, Harry S. Truman (New York: William Morrow & Co., 1973). As was to be expected this theme is reinforced in editorial comments in Margaret Truman, ed., Letters From Father: The Truman Family's Personal Correspondence (New York: Arbor House, 1981). Merle Miller, Plain Speaking: An Oral Biography of Harry S. Truman (New York: Berkley Publishing Corp., 1973). Part of the very positive image reflected by the public, and the popular easy reading books on his Presidency may be traced to Truman's quick wit and easy speaking style. As evident from the speeches in his whistle stop campaign, Truman's own books and the Miller biography, Truman had an earthy sense of humor. When Truman made a pun or told a joke its language and style made it easily understood by most. His link to the average citizen was reinforced by his use of expletives in speeches and comments. Even the one-man stage show on Truman in the early 1970s helped reinforce this popular image of a President of the people.

[33]Barton J. Bernstein, ed., Politics and Policies of the Truman Administration (Chicago: Quadrangel Books, 1970). Bernstein, ed., Towards a New Past: Dissenting Essays In American History (New York: Vintage Books, Inc., 1967). Bert Cochran, Harry Truman and the Crisis Presidency (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1973). Allen Yarnell, Democrats and Progressives: The 1948 Election as a Test of Postwar Liberalism (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974).

[34]Martha Derthick, Policymaking for Social Security (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institute, 1979). Others are business studies of coverage and the like, with little or no historical study or analysis. This is not to say that Arthur Altmeyer's book is of little use. But his participant status in the events limits his objectivity.

ONE

TO ERR IS TRUMAN, 1945-46

The initial session of the Eightieth Congress began calmly. There was present, to be sure, the self-righteousness of a group of politicians who felt they had just been given a mandate from the people. Surprisingly, however, there was also a sort of benign compatibility between the Republican-dominated Congress and Democratic President Harry S. Truman.

In the mid-term election of 1946 the Republicans had run a campaign based on discrediting Truman and the New Deal legacy. A campaign slogan such as the famous "To err is Truman" could hardly be counted on to set the stage for good relations between Congress and the President. Yet, for a time, relations were cordial, almost friendly, between the legislative and administrative branches of government.[1]

Much of this cordiality had to do with the attitude of Harry Truman. His tenure in the Senate had given him some idea of what it was like to function on Capitol Hill with all its freedoms and restraints. For ten years Truman had served in Congresses which often blanched under what

they viewed as the unnecessary interfering, meddling tactics of the Roosevelt White House.[2]

Truman had begun congenial relations with Congress almost as soon as he assumed the Presidency after FDR's death. In fact, on his very first day in office in 1945 he went to Capitol Hill for lunch with 17 Senators and Representatives of both parties. Among the luncheon group were Congressmen whose tenure would extend to the Eightieth Congress. This initial, unusual act for a President, left a positive effect on most Congressmen. Republican Senator Arthur Vandenberg praised this initial informal meeting.

> It was both wise and smart. It means that the days of executive contempt for Congress are ended. That we are returning to a government in which Congress will take its rightful place.[3]

This statement by Vandenberg although made in 1945, sums up the attitudes of many members of the Eightieth Congress as well. As will be seen in Chapter 3, Congress was very concerned with its role in the nation as the initiators of legislation. They felt much of their power had been usurped by Roosevelt. They were now like children beginning to show their independence against a domineering parent. They were willing to go to almost any length to re-establish their role. At times Congress would back themselves out on a limb and then saw it off all in the name of Congressional independence.

Truman's honeymoon with the Seventy-ninth soon ended, just as, two years later, his relations with the Eightieth Congress would quickly grow bitter.[4] The Congressional good will Truman had built up on his first few months in office was shattered on September 6, 1945 when he submitted his "Twenty-one Point Message" on domestic problems.[5] Republicans and Southern Democrats believed Truman's suggestions were too close to Roosevelt's 1944 Economic Bill of Rights, and this attempted resurrection of the New Deal galvanized the conservatives in the Seventy-ninth Congress. In his September 6 message Truman asked for a modernized New Deal: full-employment legislation, public housing, farm price supports, national health insurance, expanded social security and a permanent Fair Employment Practices Commission. Instead he received from Congress either conservative measures or stony silence and total inactivity.

For example, Truman's request for legislation to assure full employment was met with the passage of the Employment Act of 1946, which contained no implementation provisions to assure full employment. Rather the 1946 Act simply proclaimed full employment to be a desirable national objective and created a Council of Economic Advisors to furnish the President with information on the economy and recommendations for change. In addition, Congress also passed a small aid program for veteran's housing, hardly

comparable to Truman's original program, which had called for over two million housing starts in a two-year period. The rest of the proposals in the Twenty-one Point message were either killed or ignored, as was the case with the Fair Employment Practices Commission which was allowed to expire.

Truman went on to criticize the Seventy-ninth Congress for the same lack of action for which he would criticize the Eightieth.[6] Unfortunately, this tactic suffered from the fact that unlike the Republican Eightieth Congress the Seventy-ninth was Democratic. Truman was thus put in the peculiar position of criticizing his own party. Critics have since argued that Truman's criticism was one reason the Democrats lost the Eightieth Congress to the Republicans. But ironically the 1946 election results would free Truman from this restriction, for he would now be able to criticize Congress without jeopardizing the election chances of the Democrats.[7]

Congress as an institution is a homogeneous mixture of politicians representing a heterogeneous group of Americans. Individual Congressmen may be divided into numerous categories--southern, northern; western, eastern, midwestern; urban, rural; pro-labor, pro-business; and so on. But no division is so obvious as that of political party: especially Democrats and Republicans. This is why

party divisions of the Eightieth Congress were of special interest.

As they entered the 1946 campaign the Republicans had not held a majority in Congress for 16 years. The last Republican-dominated Congress, elected in 1928, had been tied to the ill-fated career of Herbert Hoover. Whether rightly or wrongly blamed for the Depression, almost the entire Republican Party was swept from power in 1932 and replaced by the Democrats, or more precisely, by Franklin Delano Roosevelt and his associates. At various points during the ensuing years the Republicans increased their strength and occasionally came close to regaining control. It was, therefore, with considerable interest that the people, media, and the Truman Administration viewed the new Republican-dominated Eightieth Congress.

The Republicans needed to do something dramatically different from their Democratic predecessors. In fact, they had run their political campaign on that promise. Like other politicians, before and after, they felt they had a mandate from the people, a demand for striking political changes.[8] On January 5, 1947 the night before the new Eightieth Congress was to go into session, Senator Robert A. Taft said in a radio broadcast:

> The main issue of the election was the restoration of freedom and the elimination or reduction of constantly increasing interference with family life and with business by autocratic government bureaus and autocratic labor leaders.[9]

The Democrats, fearing the Republicans were right, were more likely to go along with the new majority or at least not to openly antagonize them until they had reassessed the mood of the electorate. This attitude was especially prevalent in the two major areas of Republican-Democratic conflict: government spending and the power labor had accrued under Roosevelt's tutelage.[10]

After the 1946 election, Senate Republicans controlled 51 of the 96 seats: they had gained 13 seats in the election.[11] The South was joined in its united Deomocratic front only by Arizona and New Mexico.[12]

The relative experience of the Senators, both Republican and Democratic, is also important. The majority of Senators were relatively new and inexperienced in Congressional politics, thus leaving a few old-timers with most of the power. New Senators, those elected to Congress for the first time, are more likely to be close followers of the party line.[13] Although they arrive with a certain amount of arrogance, most are quickly brought to the realization that they are probably there because of backing from their party, or because of voter association of the candidate with the party.[14] More important, if they have any desire to advance through the ranks from less to more desirable committees they had better follow the party leaders.[15]

Conversely, those Senators who have been in office for more than one term are the ones more likely to buck party line.[16] Although not so dependent on party favor as the new Senators, most realize that the legislature runs on a process of cooperation. The most likely place for cooperation is within the party itself.

Finally, those Senators who are able to return after two terms may be considered the party leadership.[17] Unless an unusual circumstance should arise--a personal scandal or dramatic change in their ideology--most Senators in this final bracket will have advanced far enough up the ladder of party authority that they would be less likely to question party tenets, even though they probably have the power and prestige to do so. In fact, one study shows that Senators in this bracket are more likely to be neutral as long as the item in question does not affect their state in particular.[18]

There were 49 Senators who had completed less than one complete six-year term. The next group, those who were beginning or were in their second term of office, tallied in at 26 members. The final group, those who had over two terms experience, numbered 21 members of the Senate.

Examining the Republican Senators by this method shows there were 34 first-term Republican Senators. Those Republican Senators beginning or in their second terms made up a group of 14. But there were only three Republican

Senators with more than two terms behind them. As illustrated by these figures most Republicans in the Senate were in their first term and, according to the before mentioned study, they could be expected to vote the party line as set by leaders such as Taft and Vandenberg. As for the other categories, since the number of Republicans with a long tenure in the Senate was small, the Republicans had to delve into lower ranks to find committee chairmen and therefore almost insured loyalty among what could have become that middle maverick group.

Democratic tenure was structured a bit differently. There were 15 first-term Democrats in the Senate. There were 12 Democratic Senators in office for more than one term but less than two terms. There were 18 Democratic Senators who had been in office for more than two terms. The Democrats were concentrated in this most senior group of Senators. A third of this final most powerful group of Senators came from the South. Southern Senators were consistently re-elected to office resulting in long tenures. Republicans charged this is how they amassed so much power.[19] The seniority system bears out this claim. As mentioned before, the desertion of some Southerners in 1948 casts doubts on their loyalty in 1947-48, so the strength of the Democratic Party in the Senate should not be viewed as strong support for Truman.

The House of Representative mirrored the Senate in terms of Republican gains. After the 1946 election, House Republicans controlled 246 seats of the 435 seats, they had gained 56 seats. The Democrats held on to 188 seats and the American Labor Party held on to one seat.[20]

The House provided a much more diverse group than the Senate in terms of the geographic distribution of the parties. In comparison to the Senate, the Republicans were able to capture very few states completely in the House. The Democrats, on the other hand, retained their hold over the South, just as they had in the Senate.

The pattern of office tenure in the House of Representatives was similar to, though not as clear cut as, that in the Senate. One difference, obviously, was in the term of office. Representatives are up for election every two years rather than every six, so the chance for turnover is greater. As the Founding Fathers had predicted, House membership is more tied to current issues.[21] So if public opinion should shift drastically on an issue, some once very popular Representatives could find themselves out of a job after an election. For clarity, however, the same numerical divisions of years as used for the Senate will apply here.[22]

There were 215 Representatives who had served less than six years. In fact, 91 of these were first-term Representatives with no previous experience at the national

legislative level. This is quite a large amount of incoming Representatives, comprising over one-fifth of the House membership. There were 130 Representatives who had served more than six years but less than 12 years. There were 89 Representatives who had served for six terms or longer. Of these 89 members, 47 had served less than 18 years and 42 more than 18 years. There was also one vacancy later filled by a first-term Republican.

Divided by party, the Republicans had 135 of all their members in the House less than three terms. In fact, their members comprised 62 of the 91 first term members. Those Republicans who had been in the House more than three terms, but under six, numbered 70. Finally, there were 40 Republicans who had been in the House 12 years or longer. Of these 40 Republicans, 23 had served less than 18 years and 17 had served 18 years or longer.

The Democrats tallied up a bit differently. There were 80 Democratic Representatives who had been in the House less than six years. There were 29 first time Democratic Representatives in this group. Those Democratic Representatives who had served six years, yet under 12 years, numbered 59. This was considerably less than their Republican counterparts. There were 49 Democrats who had extended their tenure at least 12 years or beyond. Of these 49, 24 served between 12 and 18 years. The additional 25 Democrats had been in Congress 18 years or longer.

If compared, it is obvious that once again the Democrats had their strength spread through all levels of experience. Although quite a few Democrats were in the somewhat new category, they had predominantly more of their party represented in the older, more experienced brackets, than the Republicans.[23] The Republicans concentration was among the newer arrivals.

Even with their majority, the Republicans were faced with a large percentage of new or relatively new members of Congress. There was potential for some trouble as studies have found that Republicans tend to stick closer together in party ideology when they are out of power.[24] The Democrats, on the other hand, always seem to have their problems holding their members to a strict party line, simply because of their greater diversity of party membership. But in the Eightieth Congress the inexperience of most Republican members offset the tendency and most Republicans held to the party line.

Judging from the above figures, the Republicans in the Eightieth Congress were primarily new and inexperienced.[25] If the aforementioned studies apply here, the Republicans would find themselves leading a large group of rather pliable first-time Congressmen and therefore would present a very unified party line along the Taft-Vandenberg persuasion. The Democrats, on the other hand, had a majority of experienced legislators, used to controlling

committees and embittered by their loss of power for which they blamed Truman. Since they blamed Truman's political ineptitude for the loss of Congress in 1946 they were less likely to support what appeared like more of the same Administration proposals which had defeated the Democrats in 1946, thus presenting the Republicans with little organized Democratic resistance.

Surprisingly, in view of all this, after the 1946 election Truman believed that he might have a better chance to get proposals past a new Congress, Republican or not, than he had had with the hard-headed Seventy-ninth Democratic Congress. In response to Eleanor Roosevelt's letter that the new Congress might be easier to deal with than the old, Truman wrote:

> I think we will be in a position to get more things done for the welfare of the country, or at least to make a record of things recommended for the welfare of the country, than we would have been had we been responsible for a Democratic Congress which was not loyal to the party.[26]

On November 14, 1946 Truman echoed this sentiment to an old friend.

> I don't expect to knuckle under to the Republicans. . . . Between you and me I don't expect this Congress to be any worse than the one I had to deal with for the last two years.[27]

As the time drew near for the new Congress to go into session, Truman continued his conciliatory remarks. On New Year's Day 1947 Truman called up the new Republican leaders of the Senate and the House. Arthur H. Vandenberg

of Michigan, the new Senate Majority Leader, only suggested that the President wait until after his January 6 State of the Union message to meet with Republican leaders. Joseph W. Martin, Jr. of Massachusetts, the new Speaker of the House, gave an even more positive and, most importantly to Truman, believable response. Martin spoke of cooperation for the "general welfare" of the country, as well as a willingness to discuss these things.[28] Robert Taft, the de facto leader on domestic issues for the Republicans, was not as conciliatory, nor is there any indication that Truman tried to push a friendly relationship with Taft.[29] In fact, by November 1947 Truman was referring to Taft in private letters as one of a group of "liars and demagogues."[30] Taft took a harder line than either Vandenberg or Martin. As reflected in his radio broadcast prior to the opening of the Eightieth Congress, Taft thought the Republican Congress would come out swinging, no matter what the White House wanted.

Still, the initial relations between Harry Truman and the Eightieth Congress were considered good, mostly because of good will and a desire to cooperate. With these congenial relations it would seem that Congress and the President would have been able to move to agreement on many issues, foreign as well as domestic. But the honeymoon would end on numerous issues, and especially on Social Security.

[1]The first cracks in Presidential-Congressional relations began to show in February 1947 with the David E. Lilienthal appointment as chairman of the civilian Atomic Energy Commission. After Lilienthal was confirmed, with Vandenberg's help, Truman did show disgust with Congress. In his typical style, Truman confided in his mother and sister that "I am of the opinion that the country has had enough of their pinhead antics." Margaret Truman, Harry S. Truman, p. 349.

[2]Neustadt, Presidential Power, p. 173. For a statement on Truman's belief in separation of powers between President and Congress see Daniels, Man of Independence, pp. 294-95.

[3]Arthur H. Vandenberg, Jr. and Alex Morris, eds., The Private Papers of Senator Vandenberg (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Co., 1952), p. 167.

[4]Donovan, Conflict and Crisis, pp. 114, 118, claims this chilly relationship between Truman and Congress resulted because Truman followed to closely the policies of the former administration. Hamby, Beyond the New Deal, pp. 53-54, 83-84 argues that at the time in question, it seems Truman could do nothing right. The conservatives thought he was too close to the liberals. The liberals thought he catered to big business and the conservatives. The South thought he mollycoddled labor. Labor felt he ignored their needs. Most important, to the chagrin of the liberals and delight of the conservatives, Truman was not Franklin D. Roosevelt.

[5]U.S., President, Public Papers of the President of the United States (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Service, 1963), 1945, p. 263. Following references to this collection will be listed as Presidential Papers.

[6]Ibid., p. 263. See also Donovan, Conflict and Crisis, p. 260.

[7]Hamby, Beyond the New Deal, p. 183. Donovan, Conflict and Crisis, pp. 163-64.

[8]The so called mandate might be better understood in the context of the disjointed 1946 Democratic campaign. Two major problems plagued the administration in 1946.

First, Truman had fired Secretary of Commerce Henry Wallace on September 20. Wallace was one of the last major New Dealers left in the Cabinet. By this action Truman severely damaged his image among liberals as the heir to FDR. To a party so dependent upon the image (and coattails at election time) of Roosevelt for so long, this action gave the impression they were cut free from the non-existent New Deal ideology and presented an uncertain, confusing political front.

Second, Truman ended meat controls on October 14. He did this as a campaign ploy to give the Republicans one less example of supposed government intervention in the public's private life. Unfortunately, this action also disillusioned labor, one of the strongest links of the New Deal coalition.

The Republicans campaigned with such slogans as "It's time for a change" and "Had enough?" and appeared to still be running against Roosevelt. The Democrats played right into their hands. Rather than allowing Truman to campaign for them the Democrats instead relied on Roosevelt's recorded campaign addresses. This presented the confusing image to the public of a party being run by a dead President, and as is common in off year elections, the Republicans made major gains from this confusion.

For an in-depth look at the 1946 election see James Boylan, The New Deal Coalition and the Election of 1946 (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1981).

[9]Robert A. Taft, quoted in Donovan, Conflict and Crisis, p. 260. See also Congressional Digest 26, #2 (1947): 33, which claims that the victory was because American voters wanted a reduction in Federal Government expenditures, a reduction in taxes and an overhauling of New Deal labor laws. This anger associated with Democratic over indulgence with labor is also discussed by Lubell, Future of American Politics, p. 2, 194-98, and Congressional Digest 26, #6-7 (1947): 163.

[10]Congressional Digest 26, #2 (1947): 33.

[11]The one seat discrepancy between the 12 seats the Democrats lost and the 13 seats the Republicans gained was due to the loss of Progressive Robert LaFollette to Republican Joseph McCarthy.

[12]Considering what would happen in the 1948 election with the split off of some Southern Democrats into the Dixiecrat Party, perhaps the Democratic South was not so Democratic after all. Perhaps it was best described as

simply anti-Republican. In retrospect even Truman saw the South as a threat to the party. Chief Truman advisor Clark Cliffor thought the South would remain Democratic no matter what, as did many others. Truman, Years of Trial and Hope, 2: 172.

[13]Roger H. Davidson, The Role of the Congressman (New York: Pegasus, 1969), p. 152.

[14]Ibid., p. 146.

[15]Barbara Hinckley, The Seniority System In Congress (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1971), pp. 3-4. Hinckley describes the seniority system and the procedure for deciding upon the leaders in Congress. The power structure hinged upon years of service in a committee, rather than the total number of years in Congress. So it was important for a Congressman to be assigned to the proper committee as soon after his entrance into Congress as possible. This idea is reinforced also by Davidson, Role of Congressman, p. 153, Randall B. Ripley, Party Leaders In The House of Representatives (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1967), p. 197, and Donald R. Matthews, U.S. Senators and Their World (New York: Vintage Books, 1960), p. 96.

[16]Hinckley proves this point in her 1947-66 study. Although the study covers a longer time span than this thesis it reinforces the idea that median tenure Congressmen are more likely to be mavericks than their colleagues. Hinckley, Seniority System, pp. 3-4, 40, 44, 66-67.

[17]According to the Hinckley study, the median number of years necessary to reach the chairmanship of a committee or ranking minority member was as follows in the Senate:

Democrats needed 10 years (2 elections)
Republicans needed 7 years (2 elections)

The higher tenure required for Democrats is due to their normally larger numbers and to southern tenacity. Ibid., p. 20.

[18]Since Congressmen with this length of tenure usually come from a safe district they do not need the party to be re-elected. This group is where the mavericks will be found, provided they are not in the party leadership. Davidson, Role of Congressman, pp. 146, 153-55.

[19]Cotton, In The Senate, p. 7. Hinckley, Seniority System, pp. 3-4.

[20]The American Labor Party gained an additional seat in a special election, bringing their number to two.

[21]Cotton, In The Senate, pp. 50-51, argues it was the House not the Senate which was conservative. Since House members represented small and usually homogeneous areas they were well aware how they were expected to vote. The Senate, on the other hand, was the "radical and impulsive body" because they represented a larger, more mixed group and they had to try and please everyone.

[22]Hinckley, Seniority System, p. 20, lists the average number of years needed to gain committee chairmanship or ranking minority member in the House as:
Democrats needed 16 years (9 elections)
Republicans needed 12 years (7 elections).

[23]Much of this concentration was in the South and there was no love between the northern and southern Democrats. In fact, the two factions were arguing from the beginning, trying to decide who would be House Minority Leader. Northerners and Sam Rayburn wanted John McCormack from Massachusetts. The South wanted Rayburn. Eugene Cox of Georgia warned Rayburn that if McCormack won "the rift within the ranks of the House Democrats will be wider than that between the Democrats and Republicans." Eugene E. Cox to Sam Rayburn, 30 December 1946, Miscellaneous Files 1946, Sam Rayburn Papers, Rayburn Library, Bonham Texas.

[24]But Ripley indicates that by time the Republicans gained power, the party leadership had long experience at opposing a Democratic President and were able to use this experience to hold the party together. Randall Ripley, Majority Party Leadership in Congress (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1969), p. 147. The "Party Unity Records" compiled by the Congressional Quarterly support the contention that Republicans were more party cohesive at this time than the Democrats, expecially in the House.

	80th Congress			
	Senate		House	
Voted with party	GOP	Dems	GOP	Dems
90 per cent or more	29	12	147	73
75 to 89 per cent	16	18	84	69
50 to 74 per cent	4	13	10	40
less than 50 per cent	2	2	1	3

Congressional Quarterly Almanac 4 (1948): 37.

[25]Senator Ralph E. Flanders, Republican from Vermont, backed this idea. "It is a well-established maxim that freshmen Senators should be seen and not heard. That maxim was more honored in the breach than in observance in the 80th Congress. There were not enough elder statesmen to go around." Ralph E. Flanders, Senator From Vermont, p. 216.

[26]Donovan, Conflict and Crisis, p. 180.

[27]Harry S. Truman to Sherman Minton, 14 November 1946, President's Secretary's File, Harry S. Truman Library, Independence, Missouri, quoted in Donovan, Conflict and Crisis, p. 239.

[28]Truman, Years of Trial and Hope, 2: 172. Truman appeared to like or at least respect Vandenberg and to view him as an ally rather than an enemy. Truman's diary entry for January 1, 1947 quoted in Robert H. Ferrell, ed., Off the Record: The Private Papers of Harry S. Truman (New York: Harper & Row, 1980), p. 107. In his diary Truman paraphrases Martin's response as: "He assured me that cooperation was at the top of his consideration. And that he wanted very much to help run the country for the general welfare. He told me that he would be most happy to talk to me at anytime on any subject. I am inclined to believe that he meant what he said."

[29]Mayer, The Republican Party, pp. 454, 467-68, 470, gives some examples of Taft's hostility toward the New Deal and its adherents, especially Truman. According to the diary of Eben A. Ayers, Truman had remarked once that even Vandenberg was afraid of Taft. Truman had compared the two to "roosters-squaring off". Diary of Eben A. Ayers, 25 November 1948, quoted in Donovan, Conflict and Crisis, p. 258.

[30]Harry S. Truman to Mary Jane Truman, 14 November 1947 quoted in Ferrell, Off the Record, pp. 118-19.

TWO

CHARITY BEGINS AT HOME, 1947

Alf Landon, former Republican Presidential candidate, warned after the 1946 Republican victory: "people will expect more of us than we can probably deliver."[1] Little did anyone realize how true these words were, especially in relation to what Harry Truman would ask the Eightieth Congress to change in the Social Security Act.

But the stage was set, the actors present, and as the curtain rose the audience across the country settled back to watch the play unfold. Truman entered Congress and began his State of the Union message and the sides began to choose up.

"It looks like a good many of you have moved over to the left since I was here last!"[2] Truman's opening quip to Congress was most certainly an ironic indication of the traditional physical placements of the parties as opposed to their political preference for liberal and conservative beliefs. Truman went on to speak of the need for understanding and cooperation between the Legislative and Administrative branches. He suggested five major economic

policies which he wanted Congress to help him attain.[3] They were:

1) Better labor-management relations.

2) Tightened controls on monopoly and encouragement of private enterprise.

3) More home construction.

4) A balanced budget and reduction of the public debt.

5) The stabilization of prices for agricultural products.

It was under the first policy area that Truman slyly included Social Security. Truman reminded Congress that the best way to achieve better relations between labor and management was not through the passage of legislation dealing only with labor relations and directed against labor unions. Instead, he maintained, the nation must remove the anxieties a worker faces in an industrial society. One of the anxieties was the laborers' insecurity of being separated from the tools of production and having his livelihood depend upon the good will of another. Increased Social Security, among other things, would help lessen this fear and put some trust back into the relationship between labor and management.[4]

In keeping with his conciliatory style of early 1947 Truman did not really demand as much as he would in 1948. Instead Truman simply described the changes he would like Congress to legislate into Social Security. Just in case

Congress had missed the point, Truman reiterated in more detail in his "Special Message to Congress: The President's First Economic Report" of January 8, 1947 and once again in his "Annual Budget Message to Congress: Fiscal Year 1948" of January 10, 1947.[5]

In terms of Social Security Truman wanted specifically:

1) To expand Social Security to cover those groups not covered.[6]

2) To increase Social Security benefits.

He also made other suggestions:

1) Alteration in the financing for Social Security so there would not be so much reliance on simple employee/employer taxes, but on supplementation from the general budget.[7]

2) The creation of a Department of Health, Education and Security to organize Social Security and all other welfare programs. This would replace the FSA and other agencies which welfare programs were placed under.

3) The requirement that the states be uniform in their public assistance that is supplemented by the government, and the passage of permanent legislation to continue this assistance.[8]

Congress listened, but how well they heard what Truman was saying is questionable. In 1947 Truman delivered only those three policy statements to Congress dealing with Social Security (aside from the veto message dealt with later in this chapter). Congress did very little with the suggestions in its first session. In fact, they did very little with Social Security at all in 1947. What they did mostly was talk.[9]

For a time it was not clear if Congressmen were arguing about Social Security specifically or using Social Security as a weapon to attack other legislation before them. As mentioned in the Introduction, when speaking of the program most Congressmen called for increased aid. There were three specific arguments given for this. The first was used as a basis for the next two. First, if the country could provide aid for Europe it could provide adequate aid at home. Second, increased aid would fight Communism at home by keeping the elderly and soon-to-be elderly content. Finally, it was the earned right of the aged to be provided with a respectable standard of living by the nation they had helped to build.

The actions of the Eightieth Congress in foreign policy went smoother than their actions in domestic issues. This was due mostly to the great persuasive power Senator Vandenberg held over foreign policy action and his cooperation with Truman. Yet it was not as though all foreign policy changes went through Congress without a hitch, despite the power Senator Vandenberg wielded. One aspect of foreign policy was the major battleground on which Social Security was fought on, the question of financial aid to foreign countries, specifically under the Marshall Plan and the Truman Doctrine. This is not to say that calls for increased OASI and OAA would not have arisen,

but just that the demands were linked in their attack to these foreign aid programs.

Portraying the situation in Greece and Turkey as one of unchecked expansion of the forces of Communism against those of democracy, President Truman proclaimed to Congress the Truman Doctrine on March 12, 1947. His specific request was for 350 million dollars in military aid to Greece and 50 million for Turkey.[10] The military aid package was passed in April by the Senate and May by the House. June 5, of the same year, General George Marshall, Secretary of State, set forth in his address at Harvard the blue print of what would become the Marshall Plan. Although the rhetoric of crisis and the actions of the Soviet Union and its satellites helped to bring success to both these plans, it also laid the groundwork for attacks by Congress on what they viewed as a faulty Social Security system.

The major argument centered around the fact that the United States was sending massive amounts of aid to foreign countries while seemingly ignoring the calls for better living conditions of her own citizens, specifically the elderly. This argument did not occur in floor debate but rather as an insertion into the Record of prepared statements. Most statements of this type centered around the time that the considerations for foreign aid were in the forefront of Congress, April through July and December 1947.[11]

The House was more adamant in using Social Security in its attacks on foreign aid. The only Senator to attack foreign aid using Social Security as the basis was William Langer, second-term Republican Senator from North Dakota. He claimed that:

> the aged people are still in want, and misery, and despair--in many cases comparable to the plight of displaced persons in Europe who in concentration camps are being fed better, and clothed better, and housed better at our expense than these pioneer citizens in our own country.[12]

This relative imbalance of attacks between the House and the Senate could be explained in two ways. First, the control of Senator Vandenberg over foreign policy in the Senate would lessen these roundabout attacks. Since the Republicans were in such a small majority they had more of a tendency to stick together.[13] Second, Social Security was introduced in 1935 as a tax. Although it was argued that it was wrongfully represented as such,[14] its status as a tax limited initial action on the program to the House of Representatives where all tax bills must initiate. Until specific legislation was offered by the House, the Senate was confined to merely commenting on inadequacies. Since very little ever reached the Senate in way of House approved legislation, Senators were limited in their criticisms.

The House, on the other hand, saw no reason to restrict itself, and let loose with a vengeful attack on

foreign aid, using Social Security as the battering ram. Most attacks came from Republican Congressmen.[15] The first attack began in January, Representative Gerald W. Landis, fifth-term Republican from Indiana's Seventh District accused the Administration of "loaning" money (loans which would never be repaid) to foreign governments to raise their standard of living while they failed to propose adequate programs for the elderly.[16] Ironically, in the second session of the Eightieth Congress, its leaders would accuse the Administration of proposing too much and therefore hampering Congressional initiative in constructing Social Security legislation.

As other issues crowded into the forefront, Representatives abandoned this line of attack until the Greek-Turkish Aid Bill was nearing a vote. Five days before the Senate approved the bill, and three weeks prior to the House approval, the attacks began again and followed in close succession and increasing ferocity. California Republican Gordon L. McDonough was not as vehement as later attackers, due perhaps to his relative newness to Congress; he was beginning only his second term in office. In fact, he praised American generosity but gently reprimanded the government for failing "to provide adequate measures of security for our senior citizens."[17] Charles R. Clason, a Massachusetts Republican, followed McDonough's lead on April 30.[18]

These relatively mild attacks ceased the day after the House passed the Greek-Turkish Aid Bill. Republican Homer Angell of Oregon, beginning his fifth term and an outspoken advocate of the Townsend National Recovery Plan, led the attack.

> We are now considering opening the Public Treasury to send $400,000,000 overseas . . . for the relief of the peoples of foreign lands, some of whom did not join with us in the recent war . . . . Would it not be good judgement while considering this huge expenditure of the Congress to grant some relief to the old folks here in America as well?[19]

Michigan Republican John Bennett, not to be outdone, stated:

> Within the last week Congress voted an additional $400,000,000 to bail out bankrupt and decadent governments of foreign countries . . . . I do not favor this kind of policy which is made without regard to our own financial security. Nevertheless, if we can afford to spend millions on people and governments of foreign lands, we can certainly afford to be a little more liberal with our own people.[20]

On the very same day, one of the four Democrats to advocate extended Social Security while attacking foreign aid spoke up. Massachusetts Democrat Thomas J. Lane argued:

> In addition to the billions we have spent abroad for relief, we have hurried through legislation to provide other billions in loans more properly called gifts to foreign governments. But when our own dispossessed citizens ask for the relief they are met with a stony silence . . . . We are withholding assistance from the people who helped to build our Nation and giving it to strangers who may, at some future time, be our enemies.[21]

Clason spoke up again: "As we vote help for victims of

the war all over the world, let us give due condiseration to our aged people at home. They also need our help."[22]

At the end of June the Townsend National Recovery Plan Association held its annual convention in Washington. The Townsend Plan Association had been following the same basic theory since 1933 when it was founded by Dr. Francis Townsend. Under the Townsend Plan both OASI and OAA would be abolished. Instead the Government would pay to every citized over 60 a flat pension, as long as that person was not working, was a citizen and had never been incarcerated for committing a crime. The pensioner would then be required to spend the entire amount within the month, thereby pumping money back into the economy. The problems with the plan--the requirement that the entire amount was spent each month, and how the money would be raised--were glaring and had been pointed out many times by economists and administrators. But ridicule had not prevented the growth of this extremely popular Association. In the 1930s the Townsendites wielded enormous political power in certain areas. In fact, at one point they were able to demand a recall election and were successful in replacing a Congressman who did not vote for the Townsend Plan as promised. In the 1940s, even with the large membership they boasted, the Townsendites had lost much of their political sway. Still they were a force with which to

reckon especially by Congressmen with an unusually large number of elderly constituents in their districts.

Therefore, once the Townsend conventioners began to invade Washington, D.C. the rhetoric, provided by Oregon Republican Homer Angell, began to flow. Angell continued his accusations that the U.S. was ignoring its own citizens to help foreign countries who did not even help in the war and that "our old folks must move to foreign countries to share in old age benefits from Uncle Sam's treasury."[23]

Democrat John E. Rankin of Mississippi also decided to cash in on the Townsend votes, by criticizing those who "voted to send money abroad to give to people who will not work, never have worked, and never will work," while ignoring the aged. He was followed by Minnesota Republican Harold C. Hagen on the same issue and Ohio Republican J. Harry McGregor. McGregor went the farthest of all in his attacks. He did not accuse the foreign aid recipients of being lazy, or of not being allied with the U.S. in the war. Instead he claimed that aid was going to certain persons, "some of whom not many months ago were killing our American boys and girls."[24]

There existed only a single attack in July by Republican Merlin Hull of Wisconsin. Then in December, when Truman called Congress back into special session to work on inflation and foreign aid, the Marshall Plan re-emerged into the spotlight and the attacks began again.

Only California Democrat Helen Gahagan Douglas would admit that foreign aid and payments to the elderly were not mutually exclusive.[25]

Closely linked to the above line of attack was the second major argument used when fighting for Social Security. If want and despair abroad opened those nations to Communist take over, then how could the United States itself be immune from this type of political upheaval? To fight Communism and ensure national security at home the government must make sure that all citizens share in the benefits and wealth of the democratic society. At times it appeared that the Congressmen were afraid Communist cells would spring up in the senior citizens groups and that a revolution of golden agers would have the nation burning. But rather than dwelling upon the threat of the aged, Congressmen argued more in fear of, and for the rights of, those still in the work force.

Most arguments for changes in the Social Security program, as mentioned in the Introduction, dealt with those free-loaders currently in the work force. These were supposedly young, healthy adults who should have enough sense to save for their retirement rather than squander it on luxuries and expect the government to keep them in style when they were older. Therefore, proposed cutbacks were meant to be a reprimand to those still in the working years of their life. But in this second

argument, that of fighting Communism at home through ensuring a strong national economy, promises of better treatment upon retirement were meant to placate any feelings of resentment this group might have had. If they saw retired persons being treated fairly, they could rest assured that they too would be cared for and therefore would have no reason to look for an alternate form of government.

Like the first argument, most of the examples came from the House rather than the Senate, and were related to current events. The argument for Social Security centering around foreign aid proposals intensified about the time of the Greek-Turkish Aid Bill and the Marshall Plan. The argument for increased Social Security to fight Communism at home and ensure national security intensified during the time of consideration of the federal loyalty program.

Begun as a campaign strategy in 1946 the government loyalty program gained strength and notoriety. On March 21, 1947 just two weeks after requesting the Greek-Turkish Aid Bill from Congress, President Truman signed an executive order bringing the overzealous loyalty program into existence. This loyalty program, suggesting that there might be Communist sympathizers within the government, helped turn the debates on the need for better Social Security from an emphasis on foreign aid to an emphasis on Communism and national security.

There were no direct comments by the Senate arguing for the need for adequate Social Security to deter Communism. Only Senator Alexander Wiley, a Wisconsin Republican, mentioned the need for security in an "insecure world."[26]

In the House both Democrats and Republicans tried to tie the need for Social Security to national security, although Democrats were more likely than Republicans to use this method of attack. This specific method was used five times by the Democrats and three times by the Republicans. Only one Democrat named Communism as the enemy to be fought, the other Democrats tried to link inadequate Social Security to another economic upheaval with governmental changes the possible outcome. The Republicans, on the other hand, did try to link a shoddy Social Security system to Communist take over. They could hardly use the economic upheaval argument as it might conjure up the ghost of the Depression and refreshen in the public's mind their link to it.[27]

Democrats made statements such as: "Social Security for all will strengthen our national security."[28] In reference to extending the programs, Oklahoma Democrat Toby Morris said:

> Talk about building a bulwark against Communism . . . . .there is no better way in the world to do it. . . .Because the psychology of it is such that it will make the young folk, as well as the

> old folk, love the old red, white, and blue more, and love our way of life all the more. It will give a feeling of security to all.[29]

Adressing a Townsend audience Representative George P. Miller, a California Democrat, warned:

> For the first time in history, the old folks (senior citizens) are organized, militant and demanding . . . . All of us who believe in the free-enterprise system know that it cannot stand up under a cycle of boom and bust--of feast and famine . . . . What we need above all, is an adequate insurance in the form of a national old age pension system, not for humanitarian reasons alone, but because it is necessary to avoid economic anarchy.[30]

Finally, Florida Democrat George S. Smathers stated:

> I think that the problem of assistance for old people is not alone sentimental, but practical and realistic. The problem is basically an economic one which is virtually inextricably bound up with our whole economic structure and one which, if not met now, will in the future plague and weigh down our entire economy.[31]

Republicans pursued more closely the possibility of a Communist take over. Representative Gordon L. McDonough stated:

> In a post-war period technological unemployment is likely to continue; indeed it appears to be accelerating. Increased security on the part of the people in the lower income brackets will make for national stability, less labor unrest, less demand for extreme economic measures. This will safeguard free enterprise.[32]

Edwin Hall of New York stated more bluntly: "We can successfully fight off Communism by making our American system work. The most natural desire of everyone is to have security in his declining years."[33] Ohio Republican

Homer A. Ramey echoed this idea in calling for better Social Security because

> Now we know that insecurity breeds fear and distrust. We know fear and distrust are among the most important factors involved in social unrest and wars between nations. If we are to do our utmost to avoid war and revolution in this time of change and uncertainty throughout the world, we must look for causes and find cures.[34]

The final argument used to promote Social Security permeated almost every speech or statement made upon any issue even remotely connected with the elderly. This final argument was the powerful argument of the right of the aged to be provided with a decent standard of living by the nation they helped to build. The elderly, whether receiving federally subsidized Old Age Assistance or Old Age Insurance payments were to be reassured they were the beneficiaries not because of charity, but because they deserved this compensation. They deserved this aid, and so much more, for what they had unselfishly given to the country. These statements were not clustered around any particular event, although they did appear around the events mentioned previously which set off other attacks. These calls for fair treatment were also more prevalent among Republicans. This is ironic considering their later actions which would weaken OASI. While Republicans called for better treatment of the elderly they voted in ways

which undermined the very program designed to help the aged. These actions cast doubt upon their initial laudatory statements concerning Social Security.[35]

The statements of the rights of the aged to be provided for stressed the fact that shoddy treatment of the elderly "is not American." "By our neglect and abuse of the aged do we make (their life) a tragedy." "There . . . should be old age security as a matter of right . . . pay benefits as a matter of right to every aged citizen." "Congress has a sacred obligation to our old folks . . . surely we can afford funds to provide economic security to the fathers and mothers in America." Sacred as well as secular justifications were included, as in: "Congress has failed in its Christian duty by refusing to act. The consideration and respect that a people give the aged reflects their level of civilization." The vision of the aged working in war production plants was also involved:

> Millions of old people well beyond their ordinary retirement age labored assiduously in the common cause of our Nation. Now that peace has come again, they ask that their own cause shall be heard and that there shall be action thereon.[36]

The Senate produced only two statements. One was by Republican William Langer calling on the elderly

> . . . to join together politically to get justice, to get equality, to get fair play, to get a part even a small part of the vast wealth which they helped create and which today is being kept from them by the unscrupulous, selfish monopolists

> who no longer need them in their scheme of living and who are perfectly willing to see them slowly starve to death on the pittance handed out to them.[37]

Senator James E. Murray, of Montana, linked this earned right to strong economic conditions by stating: "True social security because it consists of rights which are earned rights, reinforces the human values of independence and individual enterprise."[38]

With all the calls for expanded coverage, better treatment, and a revised Social Security system, it is somewhat surprising to find out exactly what resulted in legislation from this first session of the Eightieth Congress. There were 65 bills proposed dealing with some aspect of the legislation proposed under the initial Social Security Act.[39] Almost two-thirds of the bills, 39 to be exact, dealt with either OASI alone or combined action on OAA and OASI. Of these 39 bill, 27 were concerned with OASI alone. The rest of the bills dealt with Unemployment Insurance, Railroad Retirement Insurance, or Old Age Assistance. Most of these bills called for some sort of liberalization of OASI. For example some called for program extension of coverage, as there were approximately 32 million workers not covered.[40] (HR 20, HR 2046, HR 1992, HR 2448, HR 3460, HR 1892, HR 2022, HR 3457, HR 4359, HR 4303, HR 4573, S 1679, S1768).

Of the 13 bills calling for extension of coverage, seven called for voluntary coverage and six for mandatory coverage. In keeping with party ideology, five of the seven bills calling for voluntary coverage, (that is, coverage which could be extended depending upon the wishes of the employee and employer) were backed by the Republicans. This was keeping with their 1946 campaign promise to keep government from interferring with private life. The two Democratic-backed bills came from Maryland Representative Harold D. Donohue, and from William M. Colmer of Mississippi. The six remaining bills called for expansion of required coverage into such areas as the self-employed, educational religious, and scientific institutions and there would be no voluntary clause. Once workers were voted coverage by Congress they would be included. All six of these bills were Democratic-backed. With the exception of HR 20, proposed by Lindley Beckworth, from Texas's Third District, all other House bills in this category were sponsored by Representatives from urban areas, such as Herman P. Eberharter from the Thirty-second District of Pennsylvania (encompassing Pittsburgh); Walter A. Lynch from the Twenty-third District of New York; Emanuel Celler from the Forty-fifth District of New York (these last two coming from the New York City area); and finally, John D. Dingell from the Fifteenth District

of Michigan (the Detroit area). The final bill was proposed in the Senate by James E. Murray of Montana, Robert F. Wagner of New York and J. Howard McGrath of Rhode Island.

A second major area of concern was the age at which a person could collect benefits. Most felt the 65-year age limit was too stringent and favored lowering it. Some suggested an age as low as 55 (HR 3339, James H. Morrison a Louisiana Democrat and HR 1568, James D. Scoblick a Pennsylvania Republican). Scoblick thought that overseas veterans should receive payments beginning at 55 and other veterans should be eligible anywhere from 55 to 59. Finally, Emanuel Celler advocated the age of 55 for women (HR 3459). The most other popular ages suggested were 60 (HR 1568, HR 3458 for men only) and 62 (HR 3097, HR 3133).

Another area of concern was the amount of money a person could earn and still receive the insurance payments. With average monthly payments only $24.90, many senior citizens needed to supplement their income with additional work when they could find it.[41] Since the government limited outside earnings to $14.99 per month, many elderly people were being forced into poverty, malnutrition, under inadequate living and medical conditions. There were two figures proposed, delineating the amount of income a person could earn and still receive OASI: $25.00 (S 1403,

Alexander Wiley a Wisconsin Republican) and $75.00 (HR 4532, Ellsworth B. Buck a New York Republican).

The final major area of concern centered around the Townsend Plan. Dr. Francis Townsend had advocated the same basic theory since 1933, although changing pension amounts. Legislation introduced by his advocates in Congress called for the abolishment of both OASI and OAA, and replacing them with the Townsend National Recovery Plan. The unworkability of a flat pension had been discussed and discarded many times before. However, this did not stop a veritable landslide of 16 bills advocating exactly this. Six of the bills came from Republicans and the remaining ten from Democrats. The limiting factor was that most bills came from states with particularly strong Townsend followings and/or a large percentage of the elderly such as Oregon, Florida, California, Indiana, Washington, and Oklahoma.

All in all, of the 27 bills concerning OASI alone, 12 were proposed by Democrats and 15 by Republicans. The Democratic-backed bills dealt mostly with liberalizing OASI, either having compulsory extension of coverage or lowering the age for benefits to begin. In this way they were following Roosevelt's plan of universal OASI coverage and the eventual destruction of OAA.

The Republicans, on the other hand, called for changes which would move control of the program out of the

government's hands. Traditionally, Republicans believed that the individual was responsible for his own economic welfare. This personal responsibility included making provisions for retirement or relying on family or state and local governments for relief rather than the Federal Government. The Republicans acknowledged that old age insurance was an intelligent investment for the individual. But many Republicans, beginning as early as 1935, felt that the insurance business would be better left to private enterprise.[42]

The two Republican-backed bills, the only ones to pass Congress in 1947 dealing with OASI, reflected the Republican point of view. The first bill froze the Old Age and Survivors' Insurance tax rate on employers and employees. The second bill excluded newspaper and magazine vendors employed by publishers from OASI coverage.

In more detail, the first amendment passed was really not shocking or out of step with previous policy. The original 1935 Social Security Act had set up a tax rate of one percent on both employers and employees. This rate was to be valid from 1935 to 1939. Beginning in 1940 there were to be set rate increases at certain intervals. Specifically this would have amounted to two and one-half percent in 1940 and three percent in 1949. In August 1939 Congress amended the Act to keep the tax rate at one percent through 1942, when graduated rate increases would

begin again. However, 1942 being an election year, Congress once again managed to hold the rate at one percent in a pre-Election Day decision October 21, 1942. This pattern of postponing contribution rate hikes was followed again in 1943, 1944, 1945, and 1946.

When the question arose in 1947 a precedent had already been set by previous Congresses postponing contribution rate hikes. The Republicans had also promised in the 1946 campaign to cut taxes. To allow an increase in OASI taxes to go into effect would have made the Republicans seem weak and their campaign promises mere lies. The $8.7 billion surplus in the fund soothed any qualms members of Congress might have had.[43] The Administration and FSA argued that this surplus was needed to offset higher claim rates in the late 1950s. But the Republicans countered that the Administration was already using the huge surplus and replacing the actual money with promissory notes to the fund. So when the notes came due the government would have to meet them by increasing the income tax on citizens.

On this basis Republicans began their argument for the pay-as-you-go plan supported by Senator Taft and others.[44] The government would collect the taxes and divide up the revenue each month between OASI recipients. In that way there would be no surplus accruing and the government would not be paying interest to itself. No debts would be

accruing since the government could only pay out what they had taken in annually. The next step would be to turn over control to the private insurance industry.[45]

Still unable to make such a major change in the Act the House amendment called for the one percent rate to be in effect through 1949. The rate would increase to one and one-half percent from 1950 to 1956 and two percent in 1957. New York Republican Daniel Reed presented HR 3818, and by couching the explanation in the above terms managed the bill through the House with a voice vote and no debate, June 18, 1947.

The Senate had different ideas about the rate increases, although along the same lines. On July 24, the Senate amended the bill to keep the one percent tax rate, but in 1950 the rate would be allowed to rise to three percent as originally planned in the 1935 Act. A compromise was eventually agreed upon which kept the one percent rate until 1949, raised it to one and one-half percent from 1950 to 1956 and finally to two percent in 1957.

The same day as the Senate approved the conference report compromise, July 24; the House did the same. Both used voice votes without discussion or debate. The only dissenting vote came from Republican Representative Robert F. Rich of Pennsylvania, who saw no reason for the rates to be increased in 1957, if the current surplus was so large. He questioned Daniel Reed in this method: "If the rates

are all right today and will protect the fund for several years how does the gentleman know they are not going to be all right in 1957?"[46]

President Truman signed HR 3818 with no comment. Considering the actions of previous Congresses he could hardly accuse the Eightieth Congress of taking unprecedented action. It was the second attempted Social Security amendment in 1947 which really gave an indication of where Social Security legislation would be headed in 1948--down a path of destruction.

In July 1947, HR 3997 passed both the House and the Senate with little comment.[47] Proposed by California Republican Bertrand W. Gearhart, this legislation excluded newspaper and magazine vendors, employed by publishers, from OASI coverage. The argument, more fully discussed in Chapter 3, centered around the idea of whether the vendors were truly employees of the publishing companies or independent businessmen.[48] News vendors who sold more than one publisher's products were already excluded. But those working for one publisher only were considered employees and covered. HR 3997 would change their status to independent businessmen thereby making them ineligible for coverage.

Truman vetoed the bill immediately. He sent back a message which illustrated what the Administration (and very soon the public) would fear the Republican Party was

planning: the weakening and eventual destruction of OASI. He stated in his veto message that the acceptance of this exclusion ". . . proceeds in a direction which is exactly opposed to the one our Nation should pursue." The bill would "open our social security system to piece-meal attack and to slow undermining."[49]

Congress accepted the veto at this time, but things were fast changing in the Presidential-Congressional relationship. A campaign mentality would soon dominate both sides and close communications. This, combined with some of the Administration's actions in 1948, would bring open hostility to the forefront on both sides.

In retrospect, there was little action taken in terms of 1947 Social Security legislation. Although much as proposed, little was done. As illustrated in the beginning of this chapter, Social Security was often used as a weapon to attack other issues rather than as the issue itself. This was the case for Democrats as well as Republicans, only in 1948 did Republican beliefs that Social Security should undergo drastic, and in the opinion of Truman and others, undesirable changes come out into the open.

[1]Alf Landon to Harold Johnson, 12 November 1946, Landon Papers, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, quoted in Mayer, Republican Party, p. 467.

[2]Presidential Papers, "Annual Message to the Congress on the State of the Union," 6 January 1947, p. 1.

[3]Ibid., pp. 3-8.

[4]Ibid., p. 5.

[5]Ibid., "Special Message to the Congress: The President's First Economic Report," 8 January 1947, pp. 29, 36-37, and "Annual Budget Message to the Congress: Fiscal Year 1948," Dated 3 January 1947, Released 10 January 1947, pp. 58, 71-73.

[6]Ibid., pp. 36-37, 71.

[7]Ibid., p. 37.

[8]Ibid., p. 71.

[9]Not that just talking its first session was so unusual. Most of the time Congress develops legislation and discusses its merits and drawbacks the first session. After obtaining feedback from their constituencies between sessions Congress will then act on the proposed legislation the second session. Congressional Digest 26, #6-7 (1947): 163. This is not to say that the country did not expect immediate action from the Eightieth Congress in 1947 as suggested below in the Vandenberg correspondence.

"I just want to tell you that I do not agree with the opinion of certain newspapers and some of the news commentators who severely criticized Congress for what they say is a lack of accomplishments since the Republicans have taken over."

John M. Bush to Arthur H. Vandenberg, 2 April 1947, Arthur H. Vandenberg Collection, Michigan Historical Collections, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

To which letter Vandenberg replied:

"In order to avoid the mistakes of pell-mell legislation which has cursed the country for 15 years we had to

proceed with some degree of prudent inquiry before our committees could produce net results....Our impatient Republicans have a right to hold us to strict accountability at the end of the session. But in my opinion they have no right to start sniping now."

Ibid., Vandenberg to John Bush, 23 April 1947.

Even Taft had to deal with problems of Congressional inactivity, except he blamed it on a faulty budget, for which the Democrats were responsible.

Robert A. Taft speech, 26 September 1947, "Public Welfare and the Federal Government," Jack Martin Correspondence, Robert A. Taft Collection, Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Washington, D.C.

[10]Hamby, Imperial Years, p. 125. Donovan, Conflict and Crisis, p. 285 quotes the figures at $300 million for Greece and $100 million for Turkey.

[11]The April and June activity may be accounted for, in part, by the voting on Greek and Turkish aid and the introduction of the Marshall Plan. Much of the action around the end of June, beginning of July can be traced directly to the National Convention of the Townsend National Recovery Organization which was meeting in Washington at the time. The Townsendites were very thorough in their mail campaigns, flooding the offices of Congressmen with letters to bring attention to their problems, during the convention.

[12]U.S., Congress, Senate, Senator William Langer, 80 Cong., 1st sess., 26 July 1947, Congressional Record 93: 10334. Succeeding references to the Congressional Record will consist of the speaker's name, date of comment, CR, the volume and page number.

[13]Studies have shown that the party in the minority tends to be more cohesive than the majority party. N. L. Gage and Ben Shemberg, "Measuring Senatorial Progressivism" Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology 44 (January 1949): 112-17, quoted in Duncan MacRae, Jr., and Fred H. Goldner, Dimensions of Congressional Voting: A Statistical Study of the House of Representatives in the Eighty-first Congress (Berkely: University of California Press, 1958), p. 307. This did not necessarily apply to the Eightieth Congress. As discussed in Chapter 2, the high number of first time Congressmen on the Republican side, plus the long years of exclusion from the majority would lead them to a more cohesive voting pattern. The Democrats, on the other hand,

were already dividing up into various groups, such as the Southern Democrats.

[14]Senator James E. Murray, 26 July 1947, CR 93: 10413. Murray argued that OASI taxes were in fact "premiums for insurance protection--not general taxes for paying the expenses of the government." Therefore, the prerogative for action should not be restricted to the House only.

[15]There were 14 Republican Congressional attacks as compared to 4 Democratic attacks.

[16]Representative Gerald W. Landis, 20 January 1947, CR 93: A185.

[17]Representative Gordon L. McDonough, 17 April 1947, CR 93: A1750.

[18]Representative Charles R. Clason, 30 April 1947, CR 93: A2030-31.

[19]Representative Homer D. Angell, 9 May 1947, CR 93: 4908.

[20]Representative John B. Bennett, 14 May 1947, CR 93: A2306.

[21]Representative Thomas J. Lane, 14 May 1947, CR 93: 5277-78.

[22]Representative Charles R. Clason, 6 June 1947, CR 93: A270.

[23]Representative Homer D. Angell, 20 June 1947, CR 93: A3001; 24 June 1947, CR 93: 7608 and 26 June 1947, CR 93: A3168-69.

[24]Representative John E. Rankin, 27 June 1947, CR 93: 7822. Representative Harold C. Hagen, 30 June 1947, CR 93: 3244. Representative J. Harry McGregor, 8 July 1947, CR 93: A3389.

[25]Representative Merlin Hull, 25 July 1947, CR 93: A4044. Representative Glen D. Johnson, 2 December 1947, CR 93: A4444. Representative Noble J. Johnson, 2 December

1947, CR 93: A4442-43. Representative Helen Gahagan Douglas, 4 December 1947, CR 93: A4581. Representative Homer D. Angell inserts article by Francis E. Townsend, 5 December 1947, CR 93: A4525.

[26]Senator Alexander Wiley 2 April 1947, CR 93: 3005.

[27]Truman points out this reluctance clearly in a campaign speech. "Republicans don't like to talk about depressions. You can hardly blame them for that. You remember the old saying, 'Don't talk about rope in the house where somebody has been hanged.'" Presidential Papers, Address in Indianapolis at the Indiana World War Memorial, 15 October 1948, p. 802.

[28]Representative Thomas J. Lane, 11 March 1947, CR 93: 1908; 11 July 1947, CR 93: A3490.

[29]Representative Toby Morris, 11 June 1947, CR 93: 6796.

[30]Representative George P. Miller, 7 July 1947, CR 93: A3332-33.

[31]Representative George A. Smathers, 22 July 1947, CR 93: A3703.

[32]Representative Gordon L. McDonough, 10 April 1947, CR 93: A1612.

[33]Representative Edwin Arthur Hull, 3 June 1947, CR 93: 6265.

[34]Representative Homer A. Ramey, 27 June 1947, CR 93: A3183.

[35]Republicans were more apt to call for charity as the mainstay of the program. But they were just as vehement as Democrats when using this line of argument. Altmeyer, Formative Years, p. 259, argues that Taft really wanted universal pensions (pensions not related to wages) although he earlier contends that the Republicans wanted exactly the opposite, Ibid., p. 232.

[36]Representative Toby Morris, 11 March 1947, CR 93: 1909. Representative Thomas J. Lane inserts article by Edith M. Stearn, 6 June 1947, CR 93: A2703. Representative Alvin F. Weichel, 27 June 1947, CR 93: A3200. Representative John A. Blatnik, 18 July 1947, CR 93: A3613, A3612. Representative Merlin Hull, 25 July 1947, CR 93: A4044.

[37]Senator William Langer, 26 July 1947, CR 93: 10334.

[38]Senator James E. Murray, 26 July 1947, CR 93: 10414.

[39]The proposed bills were researched using the Congressional Quarterly Almanac 3 (1947) and the Congressional Record, 80th Cong., 1st sess., vol. 93.

[40]Congressional Quarterly Almanac 3 (1947): 588.

[41]Couples received $39.60.

[42]Senator Robert Taft was among the more vocal. In a September 26, 1947 speech he referred to local charity and how the New Deal appealed to this self help, then destroyed it. Robert A. Taft, "Welfare and the Government," Jack Martin Correspondence, 26 September 1947, Robert A. Taft Collection, Library of Congress, Manuscritp Division, Washington, D.C.

In a December 29, 1947 letter Robert Taft to George E. Martin, Taft writes that "The present old age insurance feature of the Social Security law is contrary to all of the principles in which I believe. It is unfortunate it was even adopted but I do not quite see how we can repeal it at this time with all the vested rights which have occurred." Ibid.

[43]Congressional Quarterly Almanac 3 (1947): 238.

[44]Altmeyer, Formative Years, pp. 34, 37, 259. As mentioned in footnote 35, Republicans believed that old age security should consist of charity rather than insurance. This was because they believed that it would interfere with the private insurance companies. See also: Cotton, In the Senate, p. 189.

[45]Altmeyer, Formative Years, p. 37. Besides interferring with private insurance companies, Republicans argued that OASI would destroy pension systems set up by private industry.

46 Representative Robert F. Rich, 24 July 1947, CR 93: 10045.

[47]Aime D. Forand, a Rhode Island Democrat, was one of the few Congressmen to openly question the bill. Representative Aime D. Forand, 16 July 1947, CR 93: 9058.

[48]As early as 1936 the Hearst press was attacking the concept of the entire Social Security system. Altmeyer, Formative Years, pp. 68-69.

[49]Presidential Papers, "Memorandum of Disapproval of Bill to Exclude Newspaper and Magazine Vendors from the Social Security System," 6 August 1947, pp. 371-72.

THREE

ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS, 1948

As the election year of 1948 rolled around it became obvious that Harry Truman had decided that he was going to become President in his own right. The conciliatory, compromising Truman of 1947 was gone. The insecure, vacillating Truman of 1945 had faded from sight.[1] In 1948 the Eightieth Congress found itself faced with a headstrong, demanding Truman, a Truman that hoped to delineate his stand as a liberal by bringing to light his obvious difference with the conservative Congress.[2] So different was the 1948 Truman from the 1947 Truman that Congress might have believed a double was standing in for him.

Congress knew things had changed as soon as Truman gave the 1948 State of the Union message. The Congressional Digest described it this way:

> Democratic Truman talking to a Republican-controlled Congress, pulled out almost all the New Deal stops sounding the Roosevelt social aims, and added a few new twists of his own . . . .Republican leaders on 'The Hill' sat still for the address literally--in fact the President was generally heard in frigid silence--but figuratively they did not sit still for it at all . . . . "The President out-Wallaced Wallace" was an average G.O.P. comment, "He might as well have said, 'Henry come home'"[3]

The 1948 State of the Union message certainly was an abrupt change from the 1947 message, in style as well as content. Even Truman realized that Congress was in for a shock.[4] Truman called for:

1) The advancement of human rights of U.S. citizens.
2) The protection and development of human resources.
3) The conservation and wise use of natural resources.
4) The raising of the standard of living by revitalizing the national economic system.
5) The achievement of world peace based on the principles of democracy.

Specifically Truman wanted Congress to deal with such problems as racial discrimination, health insurance, Social Security, education, housing, expansion of the TVA, soil conservation, crop insurance, a tax cut and a raise in the minimum wage from 40 cents to 75 cents per hour, more government involvement in labor-management relations, expanded foreign aid programs and universal military training.[5]

The major problem Truman wanted tackled was inflation. He had already called Congress back into a special session in December 1947. Specifically he had wanted Congress to deal with the problems of inflation, along with foreign aid. This emphasis on inflation goes back to the 1946 campaign when Truman's apparent inability to deal with rising inflation helped swing the election for the Republicans. In November 1947, he had presented a

ten-part program to Congress, most of which was ignored. Congress had been promising tax reduction in 1947 and Truman, in his 1948 State of the Union message, attacked Congress in such a way that the political implications were obvious. To stem inflation Truman said that government revenues must be kept at their current level. However, there was no reason that the individual should bear the burden of this. Instead, he argued, the additional $4.5 billion in profits which corporations had amassed from 1946 to 1947 ($12.5 billion in 1946 and $17 billion in 1947, after taxes) would indicate that they were well placed enough to carry more of the tax burden Truman suggested that Congress grant, effective January 1, 1948, a tax credit of $40 to each taxpayer and $40 for each dependent. He estimated that the resulting $3.2 billion reduction in revenue would be made up by corporations, particularly large corporations.[6] This was not at all what Congress wanted and they realized that Truman had already begun his re-election campaign.

In the area of Social Security Truman echoed his suggestions from 1947. The basic premise remained the same, but the openness and terms in which they were couched changed drastically. There was no doubt as to what Truman wanted from Congress. "Our system has gaps and inconsistencies; it is only half-finished. We should now extend unemployment compensation, old age benefits, and survivors'

benefits to millions who are not now protected. We should also raise the level of benefits."[7]

As in 1947, Truman restated this message in his Annual Budget message to Congress and his Annual Economic Report to Congress. Old Age and Survivor' Insurance must be extended to cover "all gainful workers, including agricultural and domestic employees, farmers and other self-employed persons." To finance this expansion, the present pay-roll tax would apply to the newly insured and their employers.[8] Truman repeated the same message again two days later. "Social Security . . . should be increased and its coverage should be made more general."[9] His use of specifics highlighted the problem and cinched his major line of attack on Congress.

> There are now more than ten million people in the United States, about eight percent of the total population, who have reached the age of 65 . . . . Our systems of protection against the economic hazards of old age and dependency are inadequate. There are now some 17 million jobs in which workers cannot build up wage credits for old age retirement. The coverage of old age and survivors' insurance should be extended, and benefits should be adjusted upward with a higher limit upon earnings which may be received after retirement without loss of benefits.[10]

Truman's messages to Congress on Social Security for both 1947 and 1948 seem quite similar except in their tone, 1948 being more demanding than suggestive. Yet the differences between the two years, and the developing campaign strategy becomes obvious with closer examination.

In 1947 Truman presented the need for increased OASI benefits as most important, with extension of coverage suggested but not demanded. In 1948, as demonstrated above, the extension of coverage became the main issue. Calls for more liberal benefits were still present to be sure, but they were mentioned more as a side or second thought to the extension message.

The changes in the messages between 1947 and 1948 may seem small and inconsequential but they really touched a nerve in the Republican Congress. As mentioned previously (see Chapter 2), the Republicans had very specific ideas of what old age security should consist. Charity should be the major cornerstone of the project--with family and community charity ideally taking full responsibility for the upkeep of the aged. If any insurance programs were to be implemented to take the place of this charity, they should be on private initiative and by private insurance companies. According to the Republicans, the government should play a very small part in the entire system if, in fact, it should play any part at all. When President Truman called for increased coverage, what he did was to bring to the forefront the differences between the Republicans and the New Deal legislation. Republicans were faced with a choice: they could accept the idea that Social Security in its present form was here to stay and therefore should be expanded, or instead they could continue the

piecemeal attacks on it that Truman had accused them of in his 1947 veto message of the News Vendors Exclusion Act.

The remainder of this chapter will illustrate that the Republican Congress chose the second option. After promising to get the Federal Government out of people's homes they could hardly vote to increase its interference. Even if Congress had decided to compromise with Truman it would have been next to impossible. Truman was determined to place the Eightieth Congress as far to the right of himself on all the issues he could, the earlier-mentioned tax reduction and minimum-wage fights being the best examples. Not only did he want the Republicans to appear reactionary, he wanted them to appear reactionary and wrong on all issues.

From January on, Truman increased the frequency and the ferocity of his attacks. In 1947 Truman gave few messages to Congress. But as Charles Murphy, assistant to Truman, recalls part of Truman's strategy, "We did not have an iron-clad rule, but our general operating rule that spring was that we were to have a special message ready to go to Congress every Monday morning."[11] No matter what Congress gave him, within a week Truman wanted more, and he wanted it faster. This culminated in the President's July call for a special session and his well-known charge of the "do nothing" Eightieth Congress. It is little wonder why Truman had to ask Senator Vandenberg at all: "Wish you'd

tell me why the Senate no longer loves me."[12] His vehement attacks on both houses of Congress would ensure that neither would be even remotely fond of him by November 1948.

The cooling relationship between Truman and Congress was evident from a January 6, 1948 Truman diary exerpt. The day before the first day of the second session of the Eightieth Congress, Truman wrote:

> Congress meets--Too bad too.
> They'll do nothing but wrangle, pull phoney investigations, and generally upset the affairs of the Nation.[13]

The tone of Truman's diary entry clearly illustrates his feelings about the Congress. But perhaps he did not realize at that point exactly how far to the brink he would be able to push Congress. In the area of Social Security legislation Congress provided him with actions that would demonstrate to the electorate the probable fate of the program if it was left unprotected in the hands of a Republican President and Congress.[14]

The second session of Congress began and progressed, for a time, in much the same way as the first session. When dealing with OASI Congress spent much of its time talking, mostly along the lines of the first session. Present were the three major arguments for changes in OASI, centering around foreign aid, national security and the right of the elderly to Social Security. Some things had changed in the way the arguments were presented. The tone

was more accusatory, the upcoming elections had made major issues out of what had, the previous year, been minor irritants.

The argument revolving around foreign aid was again the major one, as it had been in 1947. In 1948, spanning January through August, twenty-two separate attacks were made on the lavishness of foreign aid versus the sparsity of Social Security benefits. All attacks issued from the House. Only four of the involved were Democrats.[15] Their party affiliation did soften the blow of their words a bit. They avoided placing the blame on the Truman Administration, which had proposed the programs, and instead pointed an accusing finger at Congress for passing them.

The Republicans seemed determined to use this foreign aid argument as an election year issue. Surprisingly they did not finger Truman as the culprit, as one who would deny benefits to the aged citizens while lavishing funds on foreign nations, until Truman had launched one of his more bitter attacks in August.[16] In fact, from February to mid-June with one exception, most statements had a double purpose.[17] They first praised the concern of the U.S. and the foresightedness of Congress for providing aid programs.[18] But they then went on to ask why the U.S. should have been so generous as to leave so little for its own people. What they suggested was not a complete abandonment

of foreign problems, but a limitation on the financial aid used to solve the problems.

Once the heat of the election was turned on, and Truman began barraging the nation with horror stories of Congress's inactivity, while the Republicans prepared for their National Convention, the mood of the attacks changed. Just prior to their June 21-25 convention, Republicans referred to Administration-proposed foreign aid programs as "squandering billions abroad, including many millions to kings and their corrupt courts and agencies," or as "money . . . considered having been poured down a rat hole."[19]

But it was not until after Truman's scathing accusations in late July and August that Congress really started to swing wildly. The limited amount of time left to the session before Congress recessed for election campaigning was short. Therefore, the attacks were direct and administered by Republicans high up in party leadership. Representative William Lemke, North Dakota Republican and a veteran of 13 years in the House, launched the attack August 7, 1948. He made it clear who the Republicans felt should be blamed for the inequality between foreign aid and the lack of proper living conditions for the elderly. "While the Truman Administration is making loans and gifts to inefficient, and in some cases, grafting foreign governments, it has woefully neglected the old people.

They are among the forgotten people. While the Administration is feeding some able-bodied foreigners, too lazy to work, it has permitted the aged to go hungry, and in some cases ill-clad and ill-housed. It has been, and is, 'foreigners preferred, Americans forgotten.' It is time that our people realized that our old people created the wealth that the President is so lavishly giving away to other nations . . . . The truth is that we require more proof of the inability of our aged to support themselves than we do of foreigners." Although Lemke did mention Congress in his tirade he placed only the blame of forgetfulness on them and let Truman alone shoulder the entire responsibility for the inadequacies of the economic standards of the elderly vis-a-vis the foreign aid program. Lemke followed the Republican line until later in his remarks when he stated: "It (Congress) knows that the case of the aged is a Federal responsibility." He eventually tried to soften the statement by once again bringing in familial responsibility in the care of the aged.[20]

The two arguments of fighting Communism and the earned right of the aged to good living conditions were seldom made in 1948, as compared to the first session. Rather than playing upon the possible New Deal-Communist link the Republicans in Congressional statements simply ignored it. Only Walter Brehm, an Ohio Republican, warned the House that Communism was closer than they imagined, "the threat

to our Government by Communism operating within the borders of our country is no idle dream." The remaining Congressmen commenting on the issue in 1948, simply echoed the sentiments of the first session.[21]

Had the Congress restricted itself to talk, as it did in its first session, it might have been able to slip by the electorate with only the notice of inactivity that Truman would be able to draw to it. Unfortunately Congress did act, passing two major Social Security bills, both restricting the Act and both over Truman's veto.

The Republicans were still on record for supporting an extension of coverage of OASI, although their actions and the Administration's charges would prove differently.[22] One of the more surprising actions, yet indicative of the frigid relationship between Congress and the President, was proposed early in 1948. HR 5052, proposed by California Republican Bertrand W. Gearhart, was designed to decrease Social Security coverage. Under this bill, newspaper and periodical vendors were to be excluded from coverage. HR 3997, which was passed quickly by the House and Senate in July 1947 (see Chapter 2) was also sponsored by Gearhart and, not surprisingly, HR 3997 and the 1948 HR 5052 were very similar. The 1947 version was vetoed by the President. The 1948 version would suffer the same fate but would be saved by Congress.

The actions taken in regard to the bill were commonplace at first. It was reported out of the House Ways and Means Committee February 3, 1948. Little was said about the bill between this time and March 4, when the House passed the bill on voice vote.[23] The bill went to the Senate Finance Committee and was reported out with no amendment on March 13. Things appeared smooth for the bill despite vigorous opposition by the Federal Security Agency and Truman's position that he would tolerate no reduction of coverage in the Social Security Act.

One lone Senator questioned the bill and its validity. On March 15 Florida Democrat Claude Pepper asked that the bill be held on to until the Senate could review it more thoroughly. (The bill was proposed under the five-minute debate rule.) Pepper brought up what should have been obvious from the start ". . . it is my information that the bill is substantially the same as the bill which the President vetoed last year."[24] On March 23, Pepper withdrew his opposition and the Senate passed the bill.

If any Congressman doubted what Senator Pepper had questioned earlier, Harry Truman quickly reminded them in his April 5 veto message. "This bill is identical with HR 3997, which I declined to approve in August, 1947." Truman went on to accuse the Congress of trying to undermine " . . . the integrity of our social security system." He also accused Congress of favoring employers

who "desiring to avoid the payment of taxes which would be the basis for social security benefits for their employees could do so by the establishment of artificial legal arrangements governing their relationships with their employees."[25] And why, if vendors would be covered as independent contractors before this session of Congress was out as Representative Gearhart had promised,[26] could they simply not remain covered until the switch took place? Finally, Truman charged that his warning of opening "Social Security to piecemeal attack" in vetoing the 1947 bill had been well founded.[27] This was exemplified by Congress' attempt to push through a similar bill in their second session and more importantly by the upcoming fight on House Joint Resolution 296, discussed later in this chapter.

President Truman might have believed that his veto would end discussion of the question as it had in 1947. He may have also hoped that it would not and that Congress would continue to haggle over the issue and eventually override his veto. It was this second avenue which Congress chose.

Pennsylvania Democrat Herman P. Eberharter expanded upon the implications Truman had made in reference to the Republican Congress. He charged that "the Republicans who originally opposed the enactment of Social Security

legislation have never really gotten over their hostility and that they now plan systematically to undermine the foundation of this all-important security legislation." He also charged that the obvious benefactors of this entire legislation would be the huge publishing companies, in particular Hearst Publications, Inc.[28]

Gearhart countered the attack on April 14. He presented a contradictory, but obviously convincing argument. Should the bill not pass there would result a confusing state of affairs. First there would be the problem of trying to collect taxes from these vendors. If they had differing rates of profits, the paperwork involved in determining how much each employer and employee paid would be staggering. Besides it would effect perhaps only a thousand persons (a number he changed to thousands and thousands and back again at his whim) throughout the country. And even the vendors involved wanted the bill passed. For instance, the Newspaper and Periodical Vendors and Distributors Union, Local 468 (AFL, San Francisco) wired their support of HR 5052. (Eberharter would later argue this union represented the Hearst Corporation and had given their support in fear of retaliation.) Others supporting HR 5052 were News Vendors Union Local 460 and C.A. Newspaper Distributors, Chicago, Illinois.[29] Gearhart failed to mention also that one of the biggest lobbies for

the bill was the American Newspaper Publishers Association, who would gain the most from not having to pay employer contributions to the Social Security fund.[30]

Eberharter countered once more with a description of what the real problem was. Local Union 496 supposedly supported the bill since they were independent contractors and not employees of the Hearst Corporation. But Eberharter described their working conditions so as to leave little doubt as to their status. The union and Hearst Corporation fixed terms and conditions of employment, fixed minimum wages, minimum commissions, fixed hours of employment, and conditions under which they must work. The Hearst Corporation even had supervisors to go around and check that these conditions were being met. If these vendors were in reality independent businessmen why did they allow Hearst Corporation to set their prices, days and hours of service and places in which they were to work? Finally why, if they were indeed independent contractors or businessmen, did they feel they had to belong to a union in the AFL?[31] This last condition was questionable. After all a union is meant to be a go-between for employee to employer, a businessman or independent contractor would have belonged to a professional organization instead.

Eberharter argued in vain for on April 14 the House overrode Truman's veto 308-28. This represented the largest amount by which a veto had ever been overridden

up to that time.[32] The Senate also overrode the veto April 20, 77-7. In the House two Republicans (Merlin Hull of Wisconsin and Jacob Javits of New York) along with both American Labor Party Representatives (Leo Isacson nad Vito Marcantonio) and 24 Democrats voted against overriding the veto.[33] The seven nay votes in the Senate were all Democratic.[34]

Congress handed Truman a stinging rebuff. The Republicans had, as expected, voted with their party. But the large percentage of Democrats also siding with the Republicans should have indicated to Truman that he was losing any control he might have had over the legislature. If Truman had doubts of this, the next major piece of Social Security legislation passed wiped away any possibility of Congressional-Executive cooperation. Each side was out to prove something; it also appears that only one side was truly aware of the consequences their actions might have upon the electorate.

The second major piece of Social Security legislation to be passed in 1948 hinged upon a court decision. But the consequence of this action by Congress gave Truman exactly the issue that he needed to boost his nomination and re-election campaign.

Since the inception of the Social Security Act in 1935 one of the gray areas had always been the interpretation of the term "employee" versus "independent contrator"

or "self employed," in determining who should be covered under the Act. Finally, in 1947 the Supreme Court in two decisions, United States v. Silk and Bartels et al v. Birmingham et al, clarified the term.[35] These decisions alone would probably have caused little controversy. However, the Treasury Department immediately announced that, under the definition set by the Supreme Court, they would begin collecting OASI and Unemployment taxes for approximately 500,000 to 750,000 workers who had previously been considered independent contractors and ineligible for coverage.[36] The new tax would begin January 1, 1948. Some persons coming under coverage would be door-to-door salesmen, life insurance agents, and piece workers, to name a few.[37]

Congress reacted immediately. Again, it was Representative Gearhart who took the initiative. On January 15, 1948 he proposed a resolution to the House Ways and Means Committee which would "maintain the status quo" of the Social Security Program. The major issue involved, argued Gearhart, was whether the judicial and administrative branches could bring in additional persons under the Act when Congress had never intended them to be covered? To a Congress whose leading members remembered all too well the overbearing, pushy methods of FDR, the accusations struck home. The fight became not one of merely granting or prohibiting extended coverage, but of maintaining the

legislative prerogative of Congress. The result of a weakened Federal Social Security program was an added plus for the Republicans. A weakened Social Security program would aid in the eventual destruction of the federally run OASI and replacement with programs offered by private insurance companies. By February 3, House Joint Resolution 296 was reported out of committee. Outside observers saw little chance of the bill succeeding. One newsletter stated: "Passage is unlikely, Republicans are far from united on question, and Administration Democrats think Commissioner Schoeneman's pending regulation 'good politics'."[38] But outside observers often underestimate or misinterpret the events that effect Congress.

On February 27, two hours of debate took place in the House on the proposed resolution. Gearhart began the assault, once again insisting that the resolution was meant to preserve the right of Congress and Congress alone to make laws. The intent of Congress in 1935, he maintained, had been to use the ancient common-law definition of "master" and "servant" or "employer" and "employee", and that the inclusion of the additional "625,000" would go against that original decision. Instead, Gearhart suggested that Congress return to that original definition, "one that simply says in so many words that an employee is a person who is engaged for hire, one who, in his employment submits

himself to the control of his employer in respect to how and why and when his service shall be performed."[39]

If this first argument failed to convince wavering legislators of the correctness of the resolution, Gearhart offered two more. First, if the Administration was allowed to get away with this action they would be bringing in 625,000 free-loaders. These newly defined employees would be receiving benefits for which they contributed nothing; at a cost of $12 million to the government over the next ten years. Second, and in almost complete contradiction with the first argument, Gearhart along with Republican Representative Carl T. Curtis and Richard M. Simpson suggested that these free-loaders must also be protected. He insisted that the IRS would collect back-contributory taxes for the time these people considered themselves not covered. This would produce a reign of terror for these persons rather than any comfort at being covered.[40] (Representative Eberharter, the Democrat's chief spokesman in the House on Social Security, later pointed out that Par. 8, SE 379 of the proposed Treasury regulations prohibited retroactive tax collection prior to January 1, 1948 when the new coverage began.[41])

The other Republicans who spoke up that day echoed Gearhart's sentiments. Forest A. Harness, Republican from Indiana, reiterated the Congressional prerogative to

legislate. He pointed out that

> the question involved here is not whether the scope of social security coverage should be broadened--the question here is whether it should be done by the Congress of the United States, or by Administrative orders from appointed bureau heads . . . whether the Congress will continue to make the laws for the United States or whether we will lose this function by default to the bureaucrats.[42]

Indiana Republican Robert A. Grant also supported the argument that these new people brought under coverage without having made previous contributions would "drain the fund."[43] Considering the previous term's argument that the fund surplus was too large anyway, the persons following this line of logic had to be very careful in their choice of words. They had to rely primarily on the use of the funds as unfair, rather than as a dangerous depletion. The remaining Republicans to speak up that day included Daniel A. Reed of New York, who argued with Eberharter that the Ways and Means Committee had considered the report from the Federal Security Agency when examining the bill.[44] Clare E. Hoffman, a Michigan Republican, argued with Democrat Adolph J. Sabath, forty-year veteran from Illinois, about Congress's concern for people. He took a pot-shot at the Democratic Administration by asking if they had neglected the Europeans with all the aid requested. To which Sabath replied, "I regret very much that the Democratic Party permitted itself to be used by the

present Republican majority. I think it is unfortunate because it is not in the best interest of our country and the people.[45] Finally, there was a very timid comment from Connecticut Republican Ellsworth B. Foote, who issued an indecisive statement in favor of H. J. Res. 296 but also in favor of liberalizing Social Security coverage and benefits.[46]

Not surprisingly, with the exception of first-term Representative Foote, all other Republicans arguing on this day had been members of Congress while FDR was President: Daniel Reed for 28 years, Gearhart and Clare E. Hoffman for 13 years, Richard M. Simpson 11 years; Carl T. Curtis, Forest A. Harness and Robert A. Grant nine years. The membership of Reed, Gearhart, Simpson, Curtis and Grant on the Ways and Means Committee suggested their involvement might be more than simple retaliation. Yet the resentment of Congress against the tight hold FDR held over them is not to be underestimated, especially among the Republicans. It is quite logical to believe that the Republicans in this case were not out to deliberately undermine Social Security as a means to harm the elderly but were, in fact, trying to retaliate for the years of restriction and constraint they suffered under Roosevelt. As already explained, Congress was quite aware of the power they had lost during the New Deal years and they were extremely anxious to

regain it. This resolution appeared to offer them this opportunity as well as an opportunity for the Republicans to shape Social Security to conform closer to their beliefs.

The Democrats made it quite clear that they were opposed to H. J. Res. 296 since in their view its major purpose was not to keep intact the power of Congress, but instead to damage the Social Security program in an effort to destroy the entire New Deal legacy. The only Democrat to verbally support the resolution was Brooks Hays of Arkansas. Although he supported the resolution, he demanded that Congress take the prerogative and extend coverage through legislation as soon as possible.[47]

Eberharter, who was one of the most vocal Democrats on all issues of Social Security, pointed to one of the obvious misinterpretations of the resolution--its title.

> I have had many Members come to me and say "this bill states it is to keep the status quo." But it does nothing of the sort. It changes the status quo. When did you ever need legislation to keep the status quo? "Status quo" means "as is". Did you ever pass any measures to keep things as is? You pass laws when you want to change things.[48]

He also attempted, as did many other Democrats who followed, to make the connection between the Republicans and big business. "The purpose of the resolution before us today is to do only one thing, and that is absolve a certain group of employers from the payment of social security taxes. That is the only purpose of this bill."[49]

Eberharter also claimed, and was supported in his claim by New York Democrat Walter A. Lynch, that the resolution would bring back the confusion the Supreme Court decision had cleared up on who was an employee.[50]

Illinois Democrat Sabath put the accusation in clearer terms.

> Of course, I am not the least suprised at what you are seeking to do again because all that the people can expect from the Republican party now in power is legislation against the best interests of those that need aid and protection from Congress . . . . You are set to do what the National Association of Manufacturers and certain great interests demand of you. They seem to have complete control over you.[51]

Helen Gahagan Douglas, a California Democrat completing her second term in office and therefore a relatively new member of Congress, was just as brutal in her attacks.

> In view of the spotty initial record of the Republican Party on social security . . . my fear is that this is just the beginning. There will be other holes in the dike against economic distress from old age . . . you are either for social security or against. This bill is the first attack on the social security program by those who never really believed in it. A vote for this bill is a vote to begin the destruction of the greatest social program in the history of the country.

And if the Supreme Court was being criticized for misinterpreting the will of Congress in 1935, Mrs. Douglas argued, how can Gearhart in all good conscience say he is able to do the same thing? No, instead Congress is "turning back the clock--crippling where they do not dare repeal, or

boring away like termites in an effort to undermine the progress of the proceeding 14 years."[52]

The final three Democrats to speak that day repeated the above sentiments. Pennsylvania Democrat Augustine B. Kelley called for a broader not narrower program. Illinois Democrat Melvin Price stated that employers were eager to have an amorphous, confusing wording of the employee definition so that they would be able to escape payment for Social Security contributions. Aimé Forand, a Rhode Island Democrat, attacked the shortsightedness of Congress for trying to remove from coverage a half million or more people who were just as much in need of it as those already covered. Forand was disgusted, as was Eberharter, with the inadequate working as well as the faulty language of the bill and attacked it and its arguments. Forand pointed out that Congress was claiming that the Supreme Court was not aware of a 1939 amendment to the Act which had clarified the definition of employee. However, four consecutive pages of the Government brief indicated that they had dealt specifically with the 1939 amendment. Forand also pointed out, much to the embarrassment of Congress, that the amendment upon which they were basing their argument was not passed in 1939 and in fact had never passed.[53]

Unlike the Republicans the Democrats who argued against the resolution were somewhat more diverse in their Congressional terms of service. In fact, only three

Democrats who spoke up were members of the Ways and Means Committee: Lynch, Forand and Eberharter. Unlike the Republicans whose terms of service concentrated in the 13 to 9 years of service, the Democrats covered a somewhat wider range. Sabath served 41 years, Eberharter 11, Forand nine, Lynch eight, Kelley seven, Hays five, Douglas and Price three. Unlike the Republicans, who were arguing for the legislative powers of Congress, the Democrats seemed less concerned with the Congressional power argument. At least those who might have agreed with the Republicans' argument were less likely to vocalize it. Instead the Democrats appeared more concerned about the New Deal, the survival of one of its programs, and the need to protect it from Republican onslaughts.

Despite what the vocal Democrats believed, their arguments fell on deaf ears, of the Republicans and of members of their own party. The House passed the resolution 274 to 53. The Republicans voted 197 for, 4 against the resolution. The Democrats voted 77 for, 48 against. One American Labor Party member voted against it also.[54]

The resolution went on to the Senate Finance Committee which reported it out May 6 with one amendment. The Committee decided that persons already receiving benefits should not be effected by the resolution, if passed.[55] Eugene Millikin of Colorado, was the only Republican to speak in defense of the resolution; all other Republicans

remained silent. Millikin reiterated the House Republican arguments and even went beyond the usual Republican position in calling for eventual coverage for all employees.[56] However, the Republican platform for 1948, already shaping up, did call for support for Social Security and its eventual broadened coverage. So perhaps he was not as far from the public Republican line as it first appears.[57]

The Democrats fought back rather weakly. Senator James E. Murray was the most vocal. He relied upon the details of who would be refused coverage, as well as letters from the organizations calling for coverage to be retained. He also pointed out, though not as vehemently as some in the House, that H. J. Res. 296 was another move designed to undermine the entire Social Security system.[58]

New Mexico Democrat Carl A. Hatch joined with Murray to denounce the resolution. He argued that the experience and knowledge of the Supreme Court would prevent them from making such a terrible mistake as the Republicans had accused them. He also attacked employers, giving examples of testimony to the Finance Committee where employers had written contracts which under the common-law an employee would be defined as an independent contractor. Under the Supreme Court Decision, on the other hand, the written contract would be disregarded if it was in opposition to the true situation of the worker.[59]

Things progressed pretty much as they had in the House until Ernest W. McFarland, an Arizona Democrat, spoke up. In one action he assured the success of H. J. Res. 296, surprising and embarrassing the Republicans for not having thought of the solution earlier. McFarland also brought upon himself the chagrin and anger of some of his own party members for proposing such an action. McFarland proposed an amendment which would increase old age assistance. Under the amendment Federal contributions would be raised $5 for the aged and the blind and $3 for dependent children.[60] In this way the usual attacks of the Congress were eliminated. The attacks were on those still working, who would be excluded. The praise came in increased benefits for the aged, who would receive larger pensions, while others were barred from the OASI system.[61] The House, in conference, agreed to the amendment. Now those voting for the resolution could escape criticism by stating they were personally opposed to the resolution and removing persons from coverage, but they did support increased aid.

A final statement came from Indiana Republican Homer Capehart, who nervously asked the Congress to hurry and adjorn on June 19 to save the taxpayers' money. But the underlying theme behind his statements clearly was preparation for the eagerly awaited, upcoming Republican National Convention. Maryland Democrat Millard E. Tydings prophetically and bitterly suggested that the "Republican Party

. . . call off its national convention and leave the country in good Democratic hands."[62] Had the Republicans realized the far-reaching effect H. J. Res. 296 would have on their campaign they might have called for adjournment before the resolution had even come up.

June 4 the resolution passed the Senate 74 to 6, though not without some last minute comments.[63] Millikin, in an attempt to once again justify excluding persons from coverage even though the fund was large enough to cover them, said: "that surplus is not a grab-bag which is available for irresponsible deposition, the surplus has been built up by 30,000,000 wage earners, who have created it in order to assure the protection of benefits which they will ultimately receive. . ." in later years as the load becomes heavier on the fund. Considering the line of attack the Republicans had used to discredit the surplus in the previous session this statement was out of line with the reasoning. In fact, one is led to believe that the Republicans did not oppose the surplus fund as simply unnecessary. Instead the Republicans feared the excess as a means by which more people could be added to the program, thereby increasing its scope and power, making it more difficult for the Republicans to eliminate. Alexander Smith of New Jersey was the only other Senate Republican to speak up that day on the issue. He gave the same type of response as had Foote in previous debate. He simply

stated that the resolution was necessary but that the program should be expanded.[64]

The Democrats also limited their discussion. The Democratic argument was confined to comments by Claude Pepper, who stated that the proposed amendment for a $5 increase in aid payments was woefully inadequate and that members should feel no remorse voting against it.[65] But it was Alben Barkley of Kentucky, who really placed the Republicans on the spot. He confronted them with the simple question of what qualified them to second guess the Supreme Court. He was joined by Senator Pepper in the assault. Speaking to Pepper, but jabbing at the Republicans, Barkley asked: "Does not the Senator regret the seeming tendency on the part of Congress, every time the Supreme Court renders a decision which some member of Congress does not think it ought to have rendered, to propose to reverse that decision by an Act of Congress?" Pepper quickly responded: "I heartily share that sentiment. In case after case Congress has considered itself the final court of appeal to review decisions of the highest court in the land interpreting acts of Congress. . ."[66]

The Republicans were caught in a embarrassing predicament. When Roosevelt had attempted the Court packing fiasco in 1937, the Republicans and some Democrats had spoken long and hard about the injustice of the attempt. The Supreme Court should be above reproach on such issues,

they charged; simply because a politician did not agree with the decision he did not have the right to change the Court or the decision. Now the Republicans were proposing much the same thing.

The Republicans remained embarrassedly silent about the whole issue. Finally, a quick-thinking Daniel Reed, in the House, countered the attacks and once again pointed the finger not at the Supreme Court but at the bureaucracy:

> Actually they (Treasury Department) do not rely upon the decisions of the Court at all, but upon purely incidental, prefatory language in the Court's opinion which confer no authority whatever upon the Treasury Department or the Federal Security Agency to decide for itself the matter of coverage under the Social Security Act. Rather than giving the Government a broader license than it now has, these decisions actually held in effect that the Government had overextended the power it already had under the existing Treasury regulation . . . . Rather than implementing the Supreme Court decision the proposed Treasury regulation attempts to surmount, supersede, and negative them.[67]

Congress breathed a collective sigh of relief and hoped that the issue would be gone. In any case, the Senate passed the resolution June 4, 74 to 6.[68] Congress must have suspected how Truman would react, but once again the Republicans banking on their mandate from the electorate and Truman's own low standing, gave his displeasure little thought.

It is next to impossible to gauge exactly how Truman reacted when handed H. J. Res. 296 for his signature. He certainly had given Congress every indication that

coverage should be extended, both in his beginning of the year statements and in a May 24 statement dealing specifically with Social Security and its extension.[69] But he might have shown some pleasure in being handed such a neatly packaged campaign issue, and so close to convention time.

In any case, on June 14 Truman attacked H. J. Res. 296 and Congress with the relish of a crusading messiah. He presented all the arguments the Democrats had used while debating against the bill and he did it without the constrained civility Congress usually showed in debate. He questioned Congress's ability to second guess the Supreme Court. He questioned why the convenience of employers should be placed over that of workers and their families. He even questioned the increased aid amendment. Truman admitted that he had considered signing the resolution into law only because of the increased aid section. But he did not because

> Speedy action on public assistance legislation is clearly possible. I note that section 3 (the assistance section) of this resolution was adopted as an amendment on the floor of the Senate, and passed by both houses in a single afternoon. Accordingly, I am placing this matter before the Congress in adequate time so that the public assistance program will not suffer because of my disapproval of this resolution.[70]

Congress responded quickly. The Democrats who spoke up to sustain the veto echoed Truman's arguments. Democrats Lynch and Cooper continued the argument of the resulting

confusion if the veto was overridden. Dingell accused the Republicans of being so desperate to please the National Association of Manufacturers that they included the same restrictions in HR 6777 (a bill which would extend some voluntary coverage but excluded the same persons as H. J. Res. 296) which had recently passed through the House. Finally, Eberharter, in a last attempt to sustain the veto, explained that the members could uphold the veto and still get the aid increase by voting for HR 6838.[71]

But the Republicans needed only the scathing attack of Gearhart to discredit the President. Gearhart stated that Truman had used the very same arguments the year before and they had been rejected by Congress as simple hysterics.

> In each instance those arguments were rejected as fear arguments, arguments unworthy of the attention of a legislative body. In view of the Chief Executive's poverty of argument, his utter inability to advance anything worthy of our attention, I ask that the resolution be passed the objections of the President not withstanding.[72]

The House responded to the Republican plea and voted to override the veto, 298 to 75.[73] Of the 75 Representatives voting no, 69 were Democrats, four were Republicans (Fulton, Javits, Keating and Welch), both American Labor Party members also voted no. With the exception of Javits, the same Republicans who had voted against the original resolution also voted for sustaining the veto.[74]

The Senate followed the House's lead. McFarland warned that if the veto was allowed to stand the aid bill would be lost, while Senators Millikin and Pepper once again resumed the argument of the Supreme Court's right to clarify issues and terms such as "employee".[75] Pepper's arguments accomplished little as the Senate voted to override the veto 65 to 12. Two Republicans, Langer and Morse, voted with the 10 Democrats to sustain the President.[76]

With the resolution passed, vetoed, and overridden the Congress had given Truman precisely the type of campaign issue he was after. The representation of Congress as an uncaring group of Republicans interested only in the welfare of big business became Truman's major campaign theme. He brought it up in his acceptance speech at the Democratic National Convention and his call for a special session; he brought it up whenever possible in his campaign speeches. In fact, Truman so conditioned the electorate that his mention of the "do nothing" or "good-for-nothing" Eightieth Congress brought back images of persons removed from Social Security coverage as well as a host of other attacks against the New Deal liberalism. If many were not concerned with expansion and continuation of the New Deal they were certainly concerned with holding their own ground. An indication that Congress might be taking away some of their gains aroused hostile feelings toward the

legislature at election time. In fact, commentators often noted that Truman was not so much running against the Republican candidate Dewey, as against the record of the Republican Eightieth Congress.[77]

The campaign strategy worked. In the November election Truman won the Presidency and in Congress the Republicans were once again pushed from power. In the House, Democrats won 75 seats giving them a 263-171 advantage. (The American Labor Party held on to one seat.) The Senate showed a Democratic gain of nine seats, giving the Democrats 54 members and the Republicans 42. Even the states once again shifted governorships in favor of the Democrats, 30-18.[78]

From the results it appears that even though the Republicans attempted to shift some of the blame for the record of the Eightieth Congress onto Congressional Democrats, this line of attack did little to influence the electorate.[79] Under Truman's insistence, the electorate could hardly disassociate the "do nothing" Congress from the Republican Party.

[1]Alben W. Barkley, That Reminds Me (Garden City. New York: Doubleday, 1954), p. 197. When Truman first took up the Presidency after FDR's death, he was so self-deprecating that Barkley had to take him aside and tell him to stop the humility act or people would lose confidence in him.

[2]Hamby, Beyond the New Deal, p. 183.

[3]Congressional Digest 27, #2 (1948): 33.

[4]Truman's diary entry for 6 January 1948 quoted in Robert H. Ferrell, ed., Off the Record, p. 122. Truman wrote "I'm to address them (Congress) soon. They won't like the address either."

[5]Presidential Papers, "Annual Message to Congress on the State of the Union," 7 January 1948, pp. 1-10.

[6]Ibid., pp. 9-10. Truman had vetoed Republican tax cut bills twice in 1947. This request for a tax cut by the President was a blatant political move to gain a political advantage for the Democrats. Donovan, Conflict and Crisis, p. 352. Susan M. Hartmann, Truman and the 80th Congress, p. 149 gives another example of Truman's one-up-manship. Truman asked for a minimum wage of 65 cents, the Republicans complied. Truman upped his request to 75 cents to appear different from the Republicans.

[7]Presidential Papers, "Annual Message to Congress on the State of the Union," p. 3.

[8]Presidential Papers, "Annual Budget Message to Congress, Fiscal Year 1949," Dated 6 January 1948, Released 12 January 1948; pp. 34, 37.

[9]Presidential Papers, "President's Economic Report to the Congress," 14 January 1948, p. 68.

[10]Ibid., p. 87.

[11]Heller, Truman White House, pp. 89-90.

[12]Hand written note from President Harry S. Truman to Arthur H. Vandenberg, 8 February 1948, Correspondence February 1948, Arthur H. Vandenberg Collection, Michigan Historical Collections, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

[13]Truman's diary entry for 6 January 1948 as quoted in Ferrell, Off the Record, p. 122.

[14]The actions of the Eighty-third Republican Congress under Republican President Dwight D. Eisenhower does not bear out this conclusion. This may be credited to the reluctant Republican acceptance of the program. This acceptance was reinforced by the public's reaction in 1948 to the possible destruction of Social Security as described by Truman. The acceptance was also due, in part, to the uniquely Democratic view Eisenhower took of the program. In fact, some of the more liberal changes in OASI were made under the Republicans in the Eighty-third Congress at the insistence of Eisenhower. Also of importance was the absence of some of the more conservative and powerful Congressional Republicans, who had served in the Eightieth Congress.

[15]Representative George G. Sadowski, 27 January 1948, CR 94: 601. Representative Emory H. Price, 28 May 1948, CR 94: 6737. Representative John A. Blatnik, 7 June 1948, CR 94: A3602. Representative Chet Holifield, 19 June 1948, CR 94: A4347.

[16]Presidential Papers, "Statement of the President on the Record of the Special Session of Congress," 12 August 1948, pp. 431-32. This statement gave a summary of the action taken by Congress on the President's recommendations to the Special Session of Congress.

[17]Representative James E. Van Zandt, 1 March 1948, CR 94: A1250. Van Zandt referred to the aid as "international handouts without any hope of a dollar ever being repaid." Van Zandt did make a milder statement in June, see following note.

[18]Representative Homer D. Angell, 2 February 1948, CR 94: 912-14. Representative Leon H. Gavin, 23 February 1948, CR 94: 1551. Representative Gerald W. Landis, 24 February 1948, CR 94: 1656. Representative John C. Butler,

22 March 1948, CR 94: 1804. Representative Kenneth B. Keating, 6 April 1948, CR 94: A2167. Representative Millet Hand, 13 May 1948, CR 94: A3010. Representative Dewey Short, 14 May 1948, CR 94: 5831-32. Representative John B. Bennett, 26 May 1948, CR 94: A3340. Representative Homer D. Angell, 7 June 1948, CR 94: A3604-05. Representative James E. Van Zandt, 8 June 1948, CR 94: A3636. Petition by Members of Congress to Committee on Ways and Means, 15 June 1948, CR 94: A39-0. Representative William H. Stevenson, 29 July 1948, CR 94: 9543. Representative John C. Butler, 6 August 1948, CR 94: A4948.

[19]Representative Merlin Hull, 16 June 1948, CR 94: A4257. Representative Fred E. Busbey, 19 June 1948, CR 94: 9175.

[20]Representative William Lemke, 7 August 1948, CR 94: A5242-43.

[21]Representative Walter E. Brehm, 7 April 1948, CR 94: 4191.

Using the argument of discouraging Communism in the U.S., promoting national security, and a strong economy were the following: Senator Carl A. Hatch inserting a speech by Rev. Edmund A. Walsh, 3 June 1948, CR 94: 7027. Representative Homer D. Angell, 7 June 1948, CR 94: A3604. Representative George P. Miller, 19 June 1948, CR 94: A4310. Hatch and Miller were the only Democrats using this argument.

Marjorie Shearon, one of the more reactionary Republicans to advise Taft, tried to make a direct connection between Social Security and state socialism. Taft, to his credit, did not use the charges. Specifically Shearon accused Arthur Altmeyer, Commissioner of the Social Security Administration, of following plans of the International Labor Organization. The plans, which he received at a Social Security Administration meeting attended by 22 other countries in May 1948, would expand Social Security until state socialism resulted. Marjorie Shearon to Robert A. Taft, 15 June 1948, Legislative File, Soical Security Miscellaneous, 1948-49. Robert Taft Collection, Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Washington, D.C.

Using the argument of an earned right were: Representative Homer D. Angell, 7 June 1948, CR 94: A3604. Representative Chet Holifield, 19 June 1948, CR 94: A4342. Representative William Lemke, 7 August 1948, CR 94: A5247. Representative Homer D. Angell, 2 February 1948, CR 94: 914. Representative William H. Stevenson, 29 July 1948,

CR 94: 9544. Representative John B. Bennett, 26 May 1948, CR 94: A3340. With the exception of Holifield, all others using this argument were Republicans.

[22]"Congressional Quarterly's Box Score: Recommendations vs. Congressional Action," Congressional Quarterly Almanac 4 (1948): 50.

[23]There was only one comment on the bill and it came from Representative Lyndon B. Johnson, 16 February 1948, CR 94: A851. Bertrand W. Gearhart spoke of the bill the day it was passed by the House. Referring also to H. J. Res. 296, which will be discussed later in this chapter, Gearhart painted a picture of the vendors forced against their will to participate in the Social Security program, under false pretenses. Representatvie Bertrand W. Gearhart, 4 March 1948, CR 94: 2143.

[24]Senator Claude Pepper, 15 March 1948, CR 94: 2809. Pepper later withdrew his opposition, Senator Claude Pepper, 23 March 1948, CR 94: 3267.

[25]Presidential Papers, "Veto of Bill to Exclude Vendors of Newspapers and Magazines From Social Security Coverage," 5 April 1948, p. 205.

[26]Representative Bertrand W. Gearhart, 4 March 1948, CR 94: 2143.

[27]Presidential Papers, "Veto Message," p. 206.

[28]Representative Herman P. Eberharter, 12 April 1948, CR 94: 4360, 4359. Truman's great dislike of the large publishing companies might have played a part in this. Beginning with the attempts to discredit Truman in his early Senate races, to the Vice Presidential nomination, Truman had built up a great distaste for the media. At times it seemed as though he used the term "Newspaper publisher" more as an expletive than a description of a profession. See also Hamby, Beyond the New Deal, p. 49 and Truman, Years of Trial and Hope, 2: 175-76.

[29]Representative Bertrand W. Gearhart, 14 April 1948, CR 94: 4428-29.

[30]"Lobbies," Congressional Quarterly Almanac 4 (1948): 145.

[31]Representative Herman P. Eberharter, 14 April 1948, CR 94: 4430.

[32]Congressional Quarterly Almanac 4 (1948): 145.

[33]House Vote on Overriding the Veto, 20 April 1948, CR 94: 4432-33.

[34]Senate Vote on Overriding the Veto, 20 April 1948, CR 94: 4594.

[35]United States v. Silk, 331 U.S. 704-72, 321 Sup. Ct. 91 L. Ed. 1757-1772 (1947). Bartels et al v. Birmingham et al, 332 U.S. 126-133, 126 Sup. Ct. 91 L. Ed. 1947-1955 (1947).

[36]Congress and the Nation, p. 1241. See also Social Security Bulletin 11 #7 (1948): 3, 5.

[37]Senator James E. Murray, 3 June 1948, CR 94: 7034, gives a more detailed list, including:

30,000 salesmen
200,000 journey men, subcontractors and contract filling station operators
40,000 industrial home workers
70,000 house to house salesmen
10,000 mine leasees
36,000 entertainers
17,000 contract loggers

[38]"What's Happening in Washington?" 2 February 1948, Sec. 2, as found in the Legislative File--Social Security Miscellaneous, 1944-1947. Robert Taft Collection. Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Washington, D.C.

[39]Representative Bertrand W. Gearhart, 27 February 1948, CR 94: 1893-95.

[40]Ibid., p. 1894.

[41]Representative Herman P. Eberharter, 27 February 1948, CR 94: 1894.

[42]Representative Forest A. Harness, 27 February 1948, CR 94: 1888.

[43]Representative Robert A. Grant, 27 February 1948, CR 94: 1905-06.

[44]Representative Herman P. Eberharter and Daniel A. Reed, 27 February 1948, CR 94: 8198, 8190. Eberharter claimed that the report was never before the Committee and therefore the bill was considered without all the pertinent information present. Eberharter claimed that the clerk was asked if the reports from the FSA and Treasury Department were at hand. He replied that they were not, he had received them and left them in his office. Without going for the reports, both of which recommended voting against the resolution, a vote was taken to report the resolution out of committee.

[45]Representative Clare E. Hoffman and Adolph J. Sabath, 27 February 1948, CR 94: 1889.

[46]Representative Ellsworth B. Foote, 27 February 1948, CR 94: 1899.

[47]Representative Brooks Hays, 27 February 1948, CR 94: 1908.

[48]Representative Herman P. Eberharter, 27 February 1948, CR 94: 1891.

[49]Representative Herman P. Eberharter, 27 February 1948, CR 94: 1890.

[50]Representative Walter A. Lynch, 27 February 1948, CR 94: 1890-91, 1893. Lynch accused Gearhart of overkill because H. J. Res. 296 would also cut coverage of Newspaper and Magazine Vendors. Lynch suggested that instead of taking such a broad attack that Gearhart restrict his ambition to have the vendors cut from coverage to HR 5052 which did this specifically. (See previous argument in this chapter covering HR 5052.)

[51]Representative Adolph J. Sabath, 27 February 1948, CR 94: 1889-90.

[52]Representative Helen Gahagan Douglas, 27 February 1948, CR 94: 1908, 1906.

[53]Representative Augustine B. Kelley, 27 February 1948, CR 94: 1893. Representative Melvin Price, 27 February 1948, CR 94: 1906. Representative Aimé Forand, 27 February 1948, CR 94: 1892.

[54]Vote on House Joint Resolution 296, 27 February 1948, CR 94: 1908-09. The four Republicans to vote against the bill were James G. Fulton of Pennsylvania, former Progressive (1935-1947) Merlin Hull of Wisconsin, Kenneth B. Keating of New York and Richard J. Welch of California. All, with the exception of Hull, were from urban areas.

[55]Explanation of the amendment may be found in "Senate Remarks Relative to Removal of Salesmen from Coverage by Social Security," 3 June 1948, CR 94: 7033.

[56]Senator Eugene Millikin, 3 June 1948, CR 94: 7024.

[57]"Platform vs. Performance in Congress," Congressional Quarterly Almanac 4 (1948): 31.

[58]Senator James E. Murray, 3 June 1948, CR 94: 7033-34.

[59]Senator Carl A. Hatch, 3 June 1948, CR 94: 7027-29.

[60]Senator Ernest W. McFarland, 3 June 1948, CR 94: 7035, 7039. Congressional Quarterly Almanac 4 (1948): 144. Unfortunately the increased aid was only a temporary action and the limits of the bill would expire in 1949.

[61]The amendment passed 77-2, with Democrat Byrd and Republican Knowland against it. "Senate Vote on McFarland Amendment," 3 June 1948, CR 94: 7133.

[62]Senators Homer Capehart and Millard E. Tydings, 3 June 1948, CR 94: 7039.

[63]"Senate Voting on H. J. Res. 296," 4 June 1948, CR 94: 7134. Voting against the resolution were Democrats Barkley, McMahon, Pepper and Taylor. Republicans Ives and Morse also voted against it.

[64]Senator Eugene Millikin, 4 June 1948, CR 94: 7129. Senator Alexander Smith, 4 June 1948, CR 94: 7128.

[65]Senator Claude Pepper illustrated the inadequacy of the $5 increase in aid payments. Using the Social Security Board estimated cost of living for an aged person in June 1948, as opposed to what they received from OAA the difference between the numbers was quite glaring.

	Couple	Single
Cost of living	$1,250.00	$800.00

The average monthly benefit of $40.00 equaled to only $480.00 annually, much under the standard of living set by the FSA. Even with the additional $60.00 per year under the McFarland amendment the aid would be too low. Pepper's argument was supported by Senator John C. Stennis, 4 June 1948, CR 94: 7125 and Senator Alben Barkley, 4 June 1948, CR 94: 7123 who also argued that the assistance raise was too small to be considered even adequate.

[66]Some examples of Congressional tampering with Supreme Court decisions were given.

1) Southern Underwriters--Supreme Court said they were subject to prosecution under the anti-trust laws; legislation was passed granting them immunity.

2) Fixing of rail rates--Supreme Court said this was subject to prosecution under the anti-trust laws, Congressional legislation allowed those involved to override the liability.

3) Mount Clemens Pottery Case--Supreme Court said workers must be paid for all work they do (e.g. preparation time for work). Congress proposed portal to portal pay.

Senators Alben Barkley and Claude Pepper, 4 June 1948, CR 94: 7125.

[67]Ironically Truman had backed FDR's court packing scheme, because "the Court had assumed legislative powers which in no sense it constitutionally possesses." Truman, Years of Trial and Hope, 2: 151.

[68]"Senate Vote on H. J. Res. 296," 4 June 1948, CR 94: 7134. Voting nay were Barkley, Ives, McMahon, Pepper, Morse and Taylor.

[69]Presidential Papers, "Special Message to the Congress on Social Security," 24 May 1948, pp. 272-76.

[70]Presidential Papers, "Veto of Resolution Excluding Certain Groups From Social Security Coverage," 14 June 1948, pp. 344-46.

[71]Representative Walter A. Lynch, 14 June 1948, CR 94: 8190. Representative Jere Cooper, 14 June 1948, CR 94: 8189. Representative John Dingell, 14 June 1948, CR 94: 8189. Representative Herman P. Eberharter, 14 June 1948, CR 94: 8190.

[72]Representative Bertrand W. Gearhart, 14 June 1948, CR 94: 8189.

[73]"House Voting to Override Veto of H. J. Res. 296," 14 June 1948, CR 94: 8191.

[74]Javits, in his autobiography, claims he was a Republican representing a long-time Democratic district, so he often voted Democratic out of fear of retaliation at the next election. Javits, The Autobiography of a Public Man, p. 134.

[75]Senator Ernest W. McFarland, 14 June 1948, CR 94: 8088. Senators Eugene Millikin and Claude Pepper, 14 June 1948, CR 94: 8092.

[76]"Senate Vote to Override Veto of H. J. Res. 296," 14 June 1948, CR 94: 8093.

[77]Most Republicans recognized Truman's ploy and wanted to refocus the attention back on Truman and Dewey and away from the Eightieth Congress. Story of the 80th Congress, p. 107, as found in the Joseph W. Martin Papers, Cushing-Martin Library, Stonehill College, North Easton, Mass. Also see letter from John Foster Dulles to Arthur H. Vandenberg, 17 August 1948, Correspondence August, in Arthur H. Vandenberg Collection. Dulles warned that "Truman is attempting to make the campaign issue one of Truman versus Congress and while that is not an issue to be ignored, particularly in the face of your magnificient record, also it is well to keep to the fore the issue of Truman vs. Dewey, which apparently, Truman is trying to duck."

[78]Congress and the Nation, p. 5.

[79]Some Congressional Republicans spoke up and tried to discredit Truman and the Congressional Democrats. For example, Thomas Jenkins, 6 August 1948, CR 94: A4969-70, 10104. Representative Hubert S. Ellis, 7 August 1948, CR 94: A5165-66. Representative Daniel Reed, 19 June 1948, CR 94: A4550, who argued that without Democratic support H. J. Res. 296 never would have passed the first time and certainly the Republicans would never have been able to override the veto.

Surprisingly, although some Republican Congressmen appeared to be fighting against the New Deal specter, 1948 was the first time in 16 years there was no attack on the New Deal specifically in either the Republican platform or acceptance speeches of Dewey or Warren. Hartmann, Truman and the 80th Congress, pp. 191-92. See also Mayer, Republican Party, p. 470.

FOUR

CONCLUSION

Were the Republicans really bent upon destroying the New Deal legacy as some historians would have us believe? Few but the actual participants can answer this question decisively. But from the evidence presented in this thesis it is certainly evident that they were intent upon redefining the direction in which the Federal Government moved. They wanted the Federal Government to stop interfering in the private life of the public. This unnecessary interference, the Republicans believed, had been legislated by the New Deal. Therefore, the interference could be stopped only by eliminating the New Deal.

It is not as though one can refer to the "Republicans" as if they were a single thinking entity. The diversity of its members would belie any such all-encompassing statement. So to say that the Republicans had one unified thought about Social Security or any other program would be misleading. But the Republicans did represent a type of unified strategy and way of thinking, just as the Democrats did in their own scattered way. The Republicans believed, and the 1946 election results appeared to support the belief, that they were offering a program which was acceptable and even

desired by the nation. Their program of government non-involvement, their preference for private business activity, their opposition to what they saw as "big labor" demands, was the touchstone from which they launched their Congressional programs. It was this philosophy which would bring about changes in government that would reverberate through to such New Deal programs as Social Security. It was almost by chance that Social Security happened to be forced to the forefront during the highly emotionalized 1948 campaign. But it was precisely their actions on Social Security which give the conclusion that the Republicans would have moved to undermine the strength of the New Deal, specifically OASI, unless restrained by a New Deal advocate such as Truman.

Like any large group, the Congress of the United States most often moves at a lumbering, slow pace. Despite partisan accusations and periodic cries to the contrary this is how most Americans prefer that it move, unless of course they are concerned about a particular issue. Except in time of extreme crisis, the American public is most at ease with this change by degrees in American politics. This is how the Republicans, at least their leaders, wanted the changes to take place also. The political shrewdness of Harry S. Truman prevented the slow methodical changes from occurring and instead forced the Republicans to take immediate action to forestall the New Deal.

expansion Truman was promoting. The abrupt and seemingly destructive changes instituted by Republican legislation frightened the electorate.

However, some historians may argue that had Thomas E. Dewey, as representative of the more liberal wing of the Republican Party, won the election he would have forestalled conservative Republican action in Congress. This theory is in direct opposition to Hamby's argument that a Republican President and Congress would have destroyed the New Deal. But even though Dewey appeared to have accepted OASI and some of the other New Deal social programs, as reflected in the Dewey-sponsored 1944 and 1948 Republican platforms calling for the preservation of Social Security, he never quite accepted the methods used to achieve the New Deal goals. This dislike of the methods necessary to operate OASI, in particular, was common to the Republican Party.

Even had Dewey accepted the Democratic theory for running OASI, he would have suffered from the same type of personality and ideology conflicts with Congress as Truman had. Dewey was relatively young for a presidential candidate, he had never served in Congress, he appeared to lack personal warmth when dealing with people and he believed that unquestioning loyalty and party unity were necessary for victory. As District Attorney and Governor of New York Dewey was successful in keeping the state Republican Party in line. He achieved this by replacing

malcontents with Republicans loyal to his way of thinking. Had Dewey attempted this type of discipline with Congress it is unlikely that he would have been any more successful than FDR was in his 1938 purge of anti-New Deal Senators.

Dewey's demand that Congressional Republicans follow his lead unquestioningly would have put Congressional leaders such as Taft on the defensive. Congress had fought against Truman to regain the powers they felt they had lost to Roosevelt. It is doubtful that they would have buckled so soon to Dewey's demands for their unquestioning approval. This is especially true as Dewey's personality and attitude toward the legislative branch, exemplified by his New York governorship, has been described as "dictatorial, off-handed indifference, bordering almost upon contempt." Dewey's leadership was that of an omnipotent commander in chief who expected unquestioning loyalty from his followers. Although Dewey would listen to divergent ideas, as long as he had requested discussion, he viewed himself as the decision-maker and tolerated no insubordination from party members. Republican Congressional leaders viewed themselves as equal partners with the President, however, and expected compromise and respect from the Executive. This would not have been the case with Dewey had he been elected President.[1]

The Southern conservative Democrats must also be considered. They had not cooperated with a Democratic

President's plea for liberalism. There is no reason to believe they would have responded to a Republican President's request either. This loss of Southern votes in Congress would have been a sticky problem to overcome. It would have resulted in almost the same type of problem Truman faced in 1947 and 1948; a liberal-to-moderate President confronted with a conservative Congress.

Therefore, despite the 1944 and 1948 Republican platforms calling for a strengthening and extension of Social Security, Congressional Republicans did not intend that it follow along the original liberal New Deal line of universal coverage guaranteed by the Federal Government with liberal benefits. Instead, under their program Social Security would probably have ceased to be solely a government function. There would have been a slow change, stealthily channeling the responsibility for old age insurance into private companies. Dismantling the system bit by bit until it was either so small as to draw little or no interest or completely in the hands of private business. This is evident by the movement to have such groups as news vendors removed from coverage, despite a congressionally-appointed committee which suggested reduction of coverage in any aspect was wrong.[2]

The move to hold contribution rate increases, although as mentioned previously was hardly an unusual occurrence, was a follow-up on the Republican belief that Social

Security should be under a pay-as-you-go method. This was keeping with their philosophy of curbing government spending. For if there was no surplus accruing annually in the fund, the government would have less money available to funnel into other areas.[3] Future insurance recipients would also realize that they would have to make other arrangements to supplement their income, through private investments, savings plans or reliance on private charity.[4] This would return to the Republican theory of self-sufficiency and old age insurance administrated through the private insurance companies. Therefore, this seemingly harmless action of holding back OASI contribution rates was really the first step in Republican destruction of Social Security.

However, the slow methodical, almost unnoticeable changes advocated by the Republicans were not to prevail. The change in relationship between Truman and Congress brought antagonization and hostility to Executive-Legislative relations. The Administration by approving extension of coverage, relying upon the 1947 Supreme Court decisions; pushed the Republican plans into the limelight. Now Congress acted, and acted as much out of anger with Truman's disregard for their sphere of power, as out of maliciousness for the New Deal. They established their supremacy as initators of legislation but they also embarrassingly exposed some more unacceptable Republican

designs on the now popular and accepted Social Security programs. According to Republican plans OASI should be decreased and the system weakened and eventually eliminated not expanded and strengthened as it was by the Administration's actions.

House Joint Resolution 296, in essence, gave the employer the right to decide if those persons involved economically with him were employees or not. The chance to rewrite contracts and redefine the financial connections between them would give enormous power to business. Through legal loopholes they could technically and legally define persons economically attached to them as independent contractors. Despite the legal language, the reality of the situation would still show business exerting control and putting limiting restrictions upon their underlings, as if they were employees. The same old argument of business shackled by unnecessary taxes, in this case OASI contributions, arose. If businesses were free from the constraints, they would produce a strong economy, capable of supporting all. The workers would benefit enough to be able to contract their own insurance agreements with private companies. In short, the entire system would work faster, more efficiently, and more economically than with government interference, or so the Republicans claimed.

This would have been the future of Old Age and Survivors' Insurance in Republican hands. To say that

they were maliciously intent upon destroying it is perhaps too harsh a statement. Destruction implies sudden and wrenching change, more in line with an ideological, political coup. A better interpretation would be to say that the Republicans were intent upon redefining the role of government according to their own plan. The results may have been the same, loss of security for the aged and the dependent, but the time span necessary to extract change would have been longer and the public attention it attracted much less noticeable. Had the Republicans won the 1948 election, placing a Republican President with a Republican Congress, they would have been reassured of the public's acceptance of their programs. They would have been foolish to proceed in any direction other than a decrease in Federal interference as promised the public in 1948, and demonstrated to them under the Eightieth Congress. But the stunning losses Republicans suffered revealed to them that perhaps they had misjudged public attachment to certain New Deal programs.[5] This change is illustrated by Eisenhower's election in 1952. Although Eisenhower and the Republicans were still anti-big government and anti-big spending they realized that the OASI program was so widely accepted by the public that destruction would have been impossible. But even in 1954 it took Eisenhower's insistance that expansion of OASI would decrease the

government's role in other areas such as welfare, before the Republican Eighty-third Congress would pass the program.[6]

The 1948 reaffirmation of the public's belief in the New Deal, specifically Social Security, would be strong enough to carry the program through additional growth and expansion in the ensuing years. The Republicans were forced to admit that they had erred in underestimating the attraction the liberal legacy held for America.

[1]Barry K. Beyer, Thomas E. Dewey, 1937-1947: A Study In Political Leadership (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1979), pp. 63-68, 98-99, 135, 229, 243, 251-52, 259, 272, 276.

[2]The proposals of the Advisory Council on Social Security to the Senate Finance Committee were almost exactly the same as the recommendations the previous year. For text of FSA recommendations see Social Security Bulletin 10, #12 (1947): 3-5. For brief text of Advisory Council on Social Security see: Social Security Bulletin 11, #5 (1948): 21, 24. For full text see Senate, "Questions and Answers in Report of Advisory Council of Social Security," 21 April 1948, CR 94: 4664-65.

[3]Again, it was not as though the government was stealing money from the fund. The intricacies of government finance indicate that the fund was there, but only on paper. When the OASI revenues arrived at the FSA, the government took the money and left behind bonds. When benefits came due the government would simply transfer money from its other accounts to pay out benefits and pay interest into the fund. This led to the Republican charge that the government was borrowing money form itself and paying itself interest.

[4]Only wages were linked to Social Security payments, not profits or dividends. Therefore, an OASI recipient was restricted to a limited amount of money he could receive in wages each month and still receive a Social Security check. But the amount of money he could receive from investments such as stocks, bonds, savings, and rental property, was unlimited.

[5]Altmeyer claims that the loss in 1948 was due exclusively to Social Security. This claim is a bit overzealous. But the public reaction to Truman's claim of Republican destruction of Social Security should not be taken lightly. The reaction illustrated that the public had formulated an ideal in their mind which represented the New Deal. Any attempts to destroy this ideal would be met with public dissatisfaction, as in the 1948 election. Altmeyer, Formative Years, pp. 163, 169.

[6]Gary W. Reichard, The Reaffirmation of Republicanism: Eisenhower and the Eighty-third Congress (Knoxville: University of Tennesse Press, 1975), pp. 84, 146, 174, 184, 193, 198, 218-19, 230-31, 234, 236.

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