Analysis of the Southern Democratic Revolt

GENERAL

The anti-Truman sentiment in the South extends from Texas to Virginia throughout the eleven "Confederate States". Its nature and intensity varies from state to state. In the "black belt" it revolves around the racial issue. In Virginia it springs from a strong sentiment for conservatism. In Texas it's a question of boundless enthusiasm for "free enterprise". In all the states it involves a real, deep-seated adherence to states' rights and a violent antagonism to centralization and collectivist movements.

There are three general classifications among the Southern states, viz.: (1) Those where the movement controls the Democratic party machinery; (2) Those where the Republican party will serve as the vehicle for expression; and (3) Those where the outcome is uncertain.

(1) States "Out of the Bag".

These are:

Mississippi - whose 9 electors are instructed by convention to vote against Truman.

Alabama - whose 11 electors are instructed by primary to vote against Truman.

The party machinery is in the hands of the revolters and it would seem only Republican or "nominating petition" electors stand in the way. This opposition should be nominal. These 20 electoral votes would seem to be a certainty to be cast against Truman.

Florida - here 5 of the 8 Democratic electors, nominated by the primary, declared in advance against Truman. The party machinery here however is not "nailed down" as in Mississippi and Alabama. At least one anti-Truman elector is wavering.

South Carolina - eight electoral votes here will likely fall Governor Thurmond, who is the Southern nominee for President. There are a number of divisions here due to intra-party factions and personal ambitions.

The sum total of these four states should total 32 electoral votes certain or fairly certain to be cast against Truman.
(2) States with Republican Chance.

North Carolina - Here the revolting sentiment is offset somewhat by the ambitions of old line Democrats to meet the challenge of a growing Republican sentiment. A Wallace ticket will take the left wing Democrat. There will be no revolting ticket. This should give the Republicans an excellent chance to capture 14 electoral votes.

Virginia - The Democratic party machinery here is controlled by the states rights Democrats. If Wallace has a ticket here it will detract from the Democratic vote. It is conceivable that this could result in a Republican victory. Conservatives of both parties consider this an unfortunate situation. Certainly it has handicapped the Southern revolt because it has immobilized such figures as Hymy and Tank and kept them tied down to the Virginia fight. It would seem, however, that these 11 electors will not go for Truman.

Tennessee - Here the situation is similar to Virginia. It is thought that the Grump machine, openly against Truman within the party, would not be unhappy with a Republican victory. 12 electoral votes are involved.

Florida - with 8 electoral votes is anti-Truman. As stated above, 4 of the Democratic elector nominees are committed against Truman and will vote the Thurmond-Wright ticket. This state, however, with new northern population, is considered fertile territory for a Republican campaign.

The 45 electors in these states, or a big majority thereof, should fall in an anti-Truman column, either Republican or Southern Democratic.

(3) Doubtful States.

Georgia - This depends on the outcome of the state race for governor. If Talmadge wins, the Southern ticket should get the 12 electors. If Thompson (the Ellis Arnall candidate) wins, Truman will get the 12 electors. A Talmadge victory is indicated.

Louisiana - Here Governor Long has been distinctly pro-Truman, but his followers voted for Russell at Philadelphia. While they were doing this, he was vetoring a bill which would have permitted a set of Southern Democratic electors and which was adopted by his legislature with only 3 dissenting votes out of 139. At least 2 of the 10 Democratic electors are against Truman. The "fly in the ointment" here is that there is a pending income tax matter against Long which seems to keep him in line. More political developments are expected.

Arkansas - A strong state's rights movement has been stymied here by the withdrawal of Governor Laney from the fight. The assumption is that John Snyder and Les Heflin have done effective work for Truman in this state. Notwithstanding the strong anti-Truman sentiment, the "pro-Democratic party" sentiment is probably stronger at the moment. The 9 electoral votes are leaning to Truman, but the governor's primary may have a bearing.
Texas - Texas, with 23 votes, wanted a candidate to vote for, not a set of electors. This accounts for the adoption of that course at Birmingham. The states righters will try first to convince their regular democrates to fall in line. Failing in this, they can and will put their electors on the ballot under the Thurmond banner.

These 4 doubtful states with 54 electors constitute a battleground that the pro and anti Truman Democrats will fight over.

CONCLUSION

A grass roots sentiment against Truman and the National Democratic party exists. A part of the sentiment is based on the racial issue. Much more is a growing sentiment against centralization, communistic trends in the Democratic party, and the disregard of southern views to court the fringes or radical elements in doubtful northern states. The situation indicates both a regional party and a fight by the Republicans to gain a permanent foothold. The day calls for bold action. Alabama and Mississippi Democrats have broken a tradition of 80 years. If the Republican party campaigns in North Carolina, Tennessee and Florida, there may well be the commencement of new party alignments in the United States and a two-party system in the South.