

Sound-Effects Coming Out of South May Be Heralding Two-Party System

Editor's Note—President Eisenhower's election last November split the Democratic "Solid South" and raised Republican hopes for a two-party system in Dixie. Have the Southern Republicans capitalized on Eisenhower's popularity to build up party strength? Is a two-party system beginning to emerge? The Associated Press asked correspondents in 14 Southern and border states to answer these questions and others in assessing the South's political situation today. Here is the first of three stories reporting the conclusions. It is written by Don Whitehead, Pulitzer Prize winner who toured the South himself last year and accompanied Eisenhower on his Dixie campaign swing.

By DON WHITEHEAD
WASHINGTON (AP)—Dixie Republicans are feuding, fusing and fighting among themselves today in political skirmishes which may prove to be the sound effects heralding a genuine two-party system in the long-Democratic Southland—some day.

From the plains of Texas into Virginia's Shenandoah Valley there is a stir of Republican hopes and activity.

Much of it is merely talk. But an Associated Press survey of 14 Southern and border states shows that beneath the talk and the factional turmoil there is a solidly based effort in many of the states to challenge the Democrats at the grass roots level.

President Eisenhower's smashing victory last November gave impetus to the move. It hasn't subsided into the do-nothing lethargy that followed Herbert Hoover's victory in some Southern states over Democrat Al Smith a quarter of a century ago.

Yet the reports make it clear the Republicans have a long, uphill fight before they can achieve any widespread effectiveness in local and state elections—the key-stones of party strength.

The big question still is whether the Democrats who voted for Eisenhower will shift their party allegiance to the Republicans or will quietly return to the Democratic fold.

Democratic Gov. Gordon Persons of Alabama says: "The next Republican candidate in Alabama will find out his name is not Eisenhower."

That is the general attitude among the Democrats, but Republicans contend Eisenhower's victory showed the South is ready for a two-party system.

Eisenhower swept Texas, Virginia, Tennessee, Oklahoma, Missouri and Florida out of their normal Democratic voting habits. He missed by small margins in Kentucky, Louisiana and South Carolina.

Since then, Republicans in some of the states have been busy fighting among themselves for power and patronage, giving little effort to build up the party organization. Ben Ray, Alabama Democratic state chairman, puts it this way: "Eisenhower brought home the bacon for the Republicans, but when he put it on the table, they didn't know how to cut it."

That is an apt description of what has happened in some states. It doesn't hold true throughout. Let's look at what is happening in Texas, Florida, Tennessee and Virginia—the four "Solid South" states that went Republican last fall.

Texas
AP's Austin correspondent, Dave Cheavens, writes: "Texas Republicans are looking with lustful eyes on one U. S. Senate seat and half a dozen House places they think they might win in 1954."

"But their enthusiastic plans to nail down and clinch their history-making victory with Dwight D. Eisenhower will not be confined to a flashy drive for major offices. They are already deep into a door-to-door precinct organization campaign that has as its objective a militant, long-lasting machine to build up Texas as a two-party state. They are playing patronage for all its political power. Their knives are out and already working on Democratic appointees."

This new organization is headed

by GOP National Committeeman H. J. (Jack) Porter, wealthy Houston oilman. His plan is to appeal to all who regard themselves as conservatives to join the GOP camp.

Cheavens says: "Sometimes the shades of difference in the political philosophy of conservative Democrats and Republicans in Texas are so slight as to be barely perceptible."

Porter and his aides already are raising money for 1954. They are bringing new blood into the organization, setting up organizations from precinct to state senatorial districts, and looking for respected citizens to run as Republicans for local, district and state offices.

Porter has announced, too, the Texas GOP is looking for a strong candidate to oppose Democratic Sen. Lyndon B. Johnson, who is up for re-election next year.

Some Democrats are being asked to file as candidates of both parties in 1954. Texas law permits this. And if a candidate should be beaten in the Democratic primary, he still would have a chance to be elected in November as the Republican candidate for the same job.

Florida
From Tallahassee, Correspondent Malcolm B. Johnson writes: "Republicans think they're on the way to establishing a two-party system in Florida, and Democratic leaders are wondering if it might not be true."

"Despite the remnants of an old, intense intraparty squabble that has lately flared up in what may be a final battle over patronage rights, leaders of the Republican majority faction are confident they are on the way to bigger things."

"While trying to beat down the rebellious group they are missing few tricks in their effort to consolidate the other varied interests that backed the party ticket in 1952 and build up strength for the congressional and local elections in 1954."

Johnson said party leaders publicly talk hopefully of winning four of the eight seats in Congress next year—but "some of them say privately they'll be happy with one and overjoyed with two." Florida hasn't had a Republican congressman since carpetbagger days.

G. Harold Alexander, chairman of the GOP State Executive Committee, says: "We're making great strides and the two-party system is much closer than most people realize."

Democratic leader James T. Vocelle says: "The day is not far distant that Florida will have a two-party system. I don't think the Democrats can ever take Florida for granted again in a national election. Statewide, it's different; but there may even be a two-party system developing there too."

Republicans are wooing the Democrats who flocked to the Eisenhower ticket last November. They are being urged to switch their registrations and to campaign, vote and run for office as Republicans. However, in the main, the Eisenhower Democratic leaders are remaining independent.

But Republican leaders are giving concessions to his powerful group. D. Peyton Yon of Tallahassee, an Eisenhower Democrat, is now a member of the GOP patronage advisory committee. Another Eisenhower Democrat won the job as Northern District U. S. attorney, and others have won postmasterhips in the northern part of the state.

Tennessee
From Nashville, AP's Barney Ballard writes: "Tennessee Republicans last year got their first big taste of victory in a quarter of a century and they are hungry for more."

"Republicans say they plan to put out a full slate of candidates next year and have high hopes of winning two more congressional seats (those now held by Rep. James B. Frazier Jr. of Chattanooga in the 3rd District, and Rep. Tom Murray of Jackson in the 7th District, both Democrats)."

"Guy L. Smith, state Republican chairman and editor of the Knoxville Journal, says his party will make a real fight for some of the political posts which in the past have gone to the Democrats by default."

Tennessee Republicans have internal troubles too. Smith and Rep. B. Carroll Reece of Johnson City head the "regular" faction while Nashville's John A. Pritchett leads a militant minority group. The Smith-Reece group appears to be in control of patronage since

all the first major appointments have had the support of Smith and Reece along with Rep. Howard Baker of Huntsville, the other GOP congressman from Tennessee.

Although Eisenhower swung Tennessee into the Republican column in the presidential election, the GOP won only its usual state victories in the eastern section of the state.

Ballard says: "It would take an optimist to forecast any major Republican improvement in 1954 in a state which has been predominantly Democratic since Civil War days."

Virginia
Virginia's gubernatorial election in November will provide a clue to whether Virginians picked up new voting habits last November, as Republicans would like to believe. Republicans are challenging the state Democratic organization for the governorship. GOP National Committeeman Ted Dalton, a state senator from Radford, Va., will go against former Rep. Thomas B. Stanley, who was nominated by the Democrats July 14. Stanley is supported by the Democratic organization headed by U. S. Sen. Harry F. Byrd.

Byrd says the Democratic organization will produce a "normal Democratic majority" for Stanley. Republicans concede they have a monumental task ahead. The vote in November might well indicate whether the Republicans will be able to hold on to the three congressional seats won last November in the Eisenhower sweep.

One big problem for Virginia Republicans is the fact that their chief enemy—Sen. Byrd—is on friendly terms with Eisenhower. The first major appointments from Virginia have gone to Democrats, even though they were Eisenhower Democrats.

This patronage situation has brought anguished cries from the Republicans even though they have been getting a number of lesser jobs. It hasn't helped to bolster the party's strength or morale.

RESETTLEMENT
HAIPHONG, Indochina (AP)—The Vietnamese government Wednesday formally opened the first of three resettlement villages for war refugees in Northeast Indochina. They are financed principally with American Mutual Security Agency funds.



GUY E. BELLANT JR. has been assigned to Battery "B" 434th A. E. A. Bn., Camp Roberts, Calif., to begin his military training. His parents live at 3943 Clinton Ave. Camp Roberts was one of the largest replacement Training Centers during World War II and is now the home of the "Lucky Seventh" Armored Division.

Boys Die Prowling Around Substation

HAGERSTOWN, Md. (AP)—Neighbors rushed to a power substation after hearing a muffled explosion yesterday and found two young boys lying on the ground, their clothing in flames.

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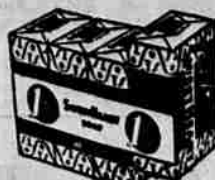
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