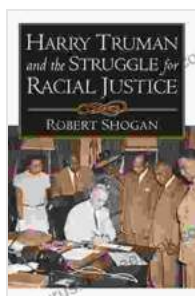


Harry Truman: The "Accidental President" Who Pushed for Racial Justice Despite Resistance

Harry S. Truman, the 33rd President of the United States, entered office in 1945 after the sudden death of Franklin D. Roosevelt. Initially viewed as a caretaker president, Truman surprised many with his bold leadership, particularly in the area of racial justice. Despite facing immense resistance from both the public and his own party, Truman emerged as a key figure in the civil rights movement of the 20th century.



Harry Truman and the Struggle for Racial Justice

by Robert Shogan

★★★★☆ 4.2 out of 5

Language : English
File size : 2743 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 248 pages



Background: Pre-Presidency Views

Truman grew up in a segregated Missouri town and witnessed firsthand the injustices faced by African Americans. Although he held some racial biases, Truman also expressed support for anti-lynching legislation and fair wages. As a senator, he sponsored a bill to establish a Fair Employment Practices

Commission (FEPC), which would have prohibited discrimination in employment. However, the bill was defeated due to Southern opposition.

The Truman Committee on Civil Rights

Upon taking office, Truman established a Committee on Civil Rights to investigate racial discrimination and recommend solutions. The committee's report, issued in 1947, was groundbreaking in its scope and recommendations. It called for an end to segregation, the creation of a permanent FEPC, and federal action to enforce voting rights.

Jackie Robinson and Executive Order 9981

In 1947, Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier in Major League Baseball with the support of Brooklyn Dodgers owner Branch Rickey. Inspired by this milestone, Truman issued Executive Order 9981, which prohibited racial discrimination in the armed forces. This order marked a significant step forward in dismantling segregation and paved the way for integration in other areas of society.

Domestic Resistance and Political Challenges

Truman's efforts to promote racial justice faced fierce opposition from Southern Democrats and conservative groups. They threatened to block his legislative agenda and even threatened to impeach him for overstepping his authority. Despite these threats, Truman remained steadfast in his commitment to equality.

Impact on Civil Rights Movement

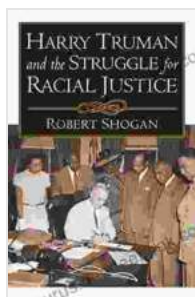
Truman's actions had a profound impact on the civil rights movement. The Truman Committee report provided a blueprint for future civil rights

legislation, while Executive Order 9981 laid the groundwork for desegregation. Truman's leadership emboldened civil rights leaders and helped to create a more favorable climate for change.

Legacy and Historical Significance

Although Truman's efforts to achieve racial justice were incomplete, his legacy remains significant. He is remembered as a president who confronted racial inequality head-on, even at great political cost. His actions paved the way for the more comprehensive civil rights legislation of the 1950s and 1960s and helped to shape the United States into a more just and equitable society.

Harry Truman's presidency marked a turning point in the struggle for racial justice in the United States. Despite facing immense resistance, he used his political power to advance this cause and helped to set the stage for future progress. Truman's legacy as a civil rights pioneer reminds us of the importance of leadership, perseverance, and the ability to overcome prejudice in the pursuit of equality.



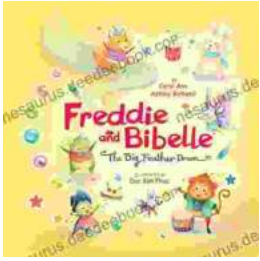
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