

TRUMAN'S TROUBLES

BY FRANK GERVASI

The President's plans to renew his White House lease for four more years are overshadowed by his recent record in office—and party leaders, recalling his manhandling of the civil rights issue, the Palestine partition and other hunks of dynamite, sadly shake their heads

NO PEACETIME President in the history of the United States ever had to face as big an accumulation of domestic and imported woe as confronted Harry Truman in the last 12 months. The troubles of Truman the President were complicated by the difficulties of Truman the Candidate. Whenever he did what he believed to be right for him to do as President, he almost invariably discovered that he had done wrong as Candidate.

This incompatibility became most apparent during March, 1948. Throughout March the possibility of an atomic war with the Soviets, such as might give the world back to the monkeys, quivered in the air like uninterrupted lightning. Loud and stormy were the wails of Democratic party politicians who watched Truman's popularity plummet to a low which practically guaranteed his defeat in November. They attributed the decline in the President's political appeal to ill-timed and ill-advised decisions on domestic and foreign policy.

In 31 days President Truman (1) insisted on legislation guaranteeing civil rights to all Americans regardless of creed or color, (2) demanded revival of Selective Service and inauguration of Universal Military Training, (3) reversed his own advocacy of partition of Palestine. Correspondingly, Candidate Truman (1) alienated the vociferous big shots of the South, (2) antagonized the pacifist and isolationist elements and (3) lost, or so it seemed, the Jewish vote in strategic areas like New York and Chicago.

By the time he celebrated his third anniversary as President in April, Truman had proved to the satisfaction of some powerful members of his party that he apparently would rather be right—or dead wrong—than be President again. They were eloquently willing to let him have his way. Until then, although he had not declared himself, Truman was the party's only potential candidate. Suddenly there were several, among them Associate Justice William Douglas, Virginia's Senator Harry Byrd, Senator Scott Lucas of Illinois, Chief Justice Fred Vinson, Senate Minority Leader Alben Barkley and, inevitably, General Dwight Eisenhower.

This all reached a noisy climax while the President sunned himself between February 20th and March 5th in the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico and Key West. An old friend, Leslie Biffle, director of the party's Senate Minority Policy Committee, visited Truman in Florida. Rumors immediately circulated in Washington that Biffle had gone to advise Truman to step aside for another candidate. Biffle neither confirmed nor denied the reports of his meeting with the President, which seemed to indicate that Truman had testily refused to make way for anyone.

A probably more accurate version of the Biffle-

Truman meeting later current in Democratic circles was to the effect that Les acquainted the President with the indisputable facts of the party's disunity, begun by Henry Wallace's desertion, aggravated by the South's rebellion over civil rights and complicated by the North's disappointment about Palestine. Les is reliably reported to have urged the President to make known his intention to run or not. Truman's remarks to friends that he was "not interested in what happened" to him politically had given rise to doubts that he would run and to hopes that he might not.

On his return the President called in Chairman J. Howard McGrath of the Democratic National Committee and Gael Sullivan, then still executive director of the Committee. They found Truman relaxed, tanned and at least outwardly confident. He was about, he said, to present himself as a candidate at the Democratic party convention in Philadelphia July 12th.

McGrath was more composed than Sullivan when he emerged to announce Truman's candidacy to correspondents. Sullivan wore the frozen grin of a man who had put his conscience in cold stor-

age. He was known to have hoped the party's standard-bearer might have been Douglas.

Sullivan's privately expressed preference for Douglas was, in fact, the indirect cause of his resignation later to take a highly paid job with Theatre Owners of America.

With the convention only weeks away, McGrath and Sullivan examined the party's assets and liabilities with the intentness of bank examiners looking for hidden surpluses and deficits. What they found as they crisscrossed the nation talking to machine bosses, district leaders and precinct captains wasn't heartening.

The liabilities quite obviously outweighed the assets. The party, they discovered, wasn't merely split. It had disintegrated.

The shock of Truman's on-again, off-again, on-again stand on the partition of Palestine, for example, may prove too much for the party's already weakened big-city organizations to absorb. Truman's Palestine policy may be as costly to the Democrats in November, in the opinion of some party bosses, as the President's alienation of the South.

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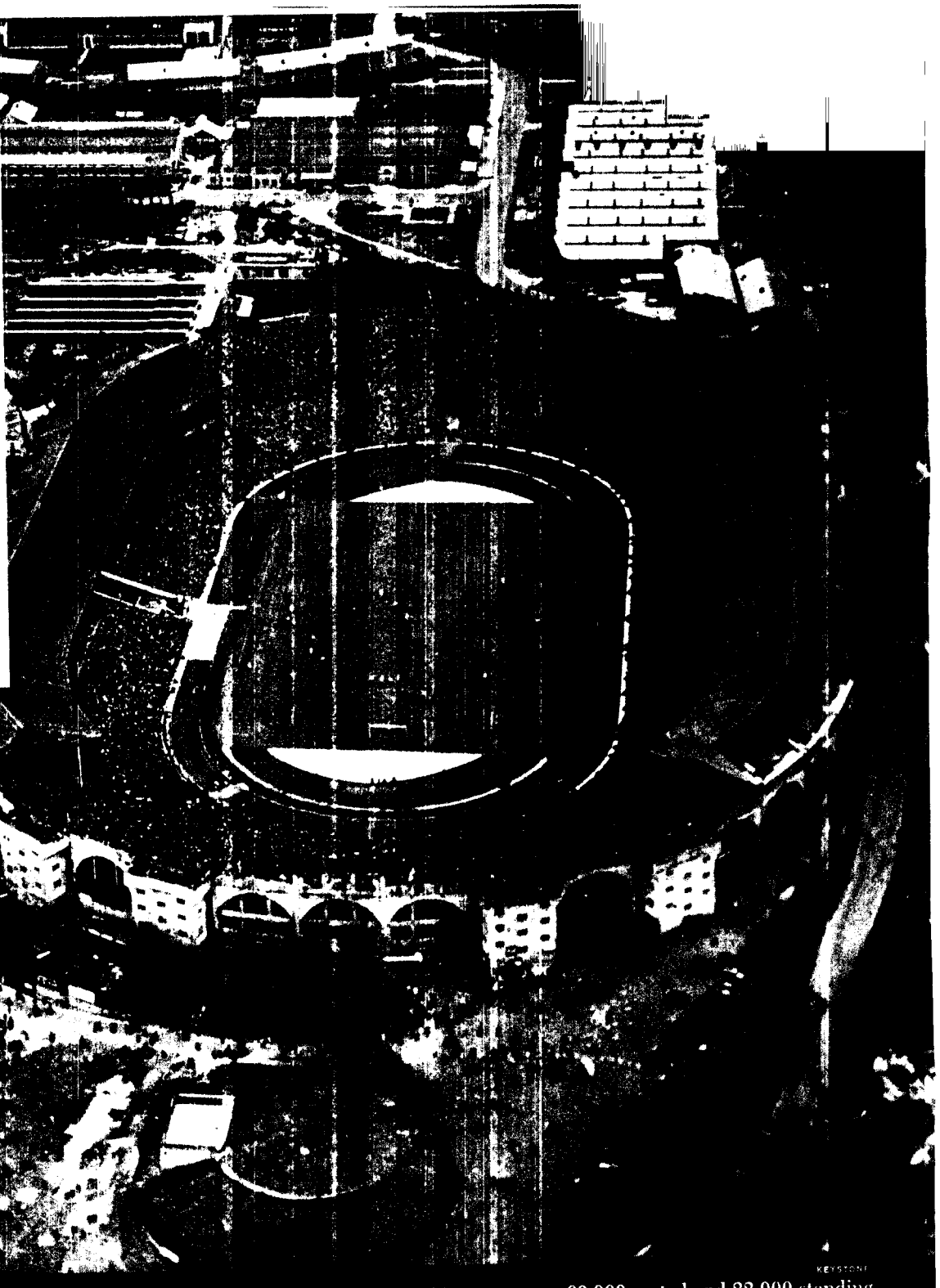


PHOTOGRAPH FOR COLLIER'S BY WILLIAM STONE

THE HOT-POTATO OLYMPICS

BY COLLIE SMALL

Amid international bickering and backbiting, England strains herself at the seams to entertain the 1948 Olympics. It's all in the name of world-wide sportsmanship and amity



Wembley Stadium will be the site of the track and field events of the 1948 Olympic games. It will accommodate 82,000 spectators—60,000 seated and 22,000 standing

Joe Verdeur of Philadelphia will be a strong American contender in swimming. He holds world indoor record in 200-yard and 200-meter breast stroke

INTERNATIONAL

Irving Mondschein, of New York University, will probably represent the United States in the decathlon events. Mondschein is the American champion, but will encounter stiff competition at Wembley Stadium. Here he establishes an I.C. 4A Indoor Meet record in the high jump, clearing the bar at 6 feet 7 1/4 inches

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