To Secure These Rights

HARRY S. TRUMAN
To Secure These Rights

THE REPORT
OF THE PRESIDENTS COMMITTEE
ON CIVIL RIGHTS

"... to secure these rights governments
are instituted among men . . . ."

—THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

Washington : 1947
Mr. President:

Your Committee has reviewed the American heritage and we have found in it again the great goals of human freedom and equality under just laws. We have surveyed the flaws in the nation's record and have found them to be serious. We have considered what government's appropriate role should be in the securing of our rights, and have concluded that it must assume greater leadership.

We believe that the time for action is now. Our recommendations for bringing the United States closer to its historic goal follow.
A REPORT THAT TAKES ITS PLACE IN HISTORY

Twice before in American history, the nation has reviewed the status of its civil rights. The first scrutiny, when the new Constitution was ratified in 1791, resulted in the first ten amendments—the Bill of Rights. Again, during the Civil War, when it became clear that we could not survive “half-slave, half-free,” civil rights moved forward with the Emancipation Proclamation and three new amendments to the Constitution.

Today there are compelling reasons for a third re-examination of our civil rights—to eliminate abuses arising from discrimination on the grounds of race, creed, national origin or social and economic status:

1) A moral reason—the United States can no longer countenance these burdens on our common conscience, these inroads on its moral fibre.

2) An economic reason—the United States can no longer afford this heavy drain upon its human wealth, its national competence.

3) An international reason—the United States is not so strong, the final triumph of the democratic idea is not so inevitable that we can ignore what the world thinks of us or our record.

FOUR ESSENTIAL RIGHTS

The President’s Committee sets forth four basic rights essential to the well-being of the individual:

1) The Right to Safety and Security of Person
2) The Right to Citizenship and its Privileges
3) The Right to Freedom of Conscience and Expression
4) The Right to Equality of Opportunity

I. The right to safety and security of person

Freedom exists only where everyone is secure against bondage, lawless violence, and arbitrary arrest and punishment. Where individuals or mobs take the law in their own hands, where justice is unequal, no man is safe.

The Committee found that many Americans still live in fear of mob violence and brutal treatment by police officers.
FOUR ESSENTIAL RIGHTS

1. The right to safety and security of the person
2. The right to citizenship and its privileges
3. The right to freedom of conscience and expression
4. The right to equality of opportunity
SUFFRAGE IN POLL TAX STATES

POTENTIAL VOTERS WHO VOTED IN THE 1944 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

8 POLL TAX STATES --- 18.31%

40 NON-POLL TAX STATES --- 68.74%

* EXCLUDING GEORGIA.

NEGRO MILITARY MANPOWER

ALL SERVICES COMBINED

PEAK STRENGTH: 1945
(12,800,004)

WHITE  92.6%
NEGRO  7.4%

AFTER DEMOBILIZATION: 1947
(5,700,000)

WHITE  95.2%
NEGRO  4.8%

OFFICERS (PERCENT OF TOTAL WHITE OR NEGRO PERSONNEL)

PEAK STRENGTH: 1945

WHITE...  4%
NEGRO...  6%

AFTER DEMOBILIZATION: 1947

WHITE...  12%
NEGRO...  8%

BEFORE UNIFICATION OF THE ARMED SERVICES: 1947

THE ARMY

TOTAL (1,147,948)...

WHITE  99.6%
NEGRO  0.4%

OFFICERS...

ONE NEGRO OFFICER FOR EVERY 70 NEGRO ENLISTED MEN
ONE WHITE OFFICER FOR EVERY 7 WHITE ENLISTED MEN

ENLISTED MEN...

LESS THAN 0.5% OF NEGRO ENLISTED MEN IN TOP THREE GRADES
ALMOST 16% OF WHITE ENLISTED MEN IN TOP THREE GRADES
THE NAVY

TOTAL (489,910)...

WHITE 99.6%
NEGRO 0.4%

OFFICERS... ONLY TWO NEGRO OFFICERS.
21,793 NEGRO ENLISTED MEN
ONE WHITE OFFICER FOR EVERY 7 WHITE ENLISTED MEN

ENLISTED MEN...

ALMOST 90% OF NEGROES ARE COOKS, STEWARDESS, OR STEWARDS' MATES.
LESS THAN 2% OF WHITES ARE COOKS, STEWARDESS, OR STEWARDS' MATES.

THE MARINES...

TOTAL (105,337)...

WHITE 99.5%
NEGRO 0.5%

...THE MARINE CORPS HAS 7,798 OFFICERS... ALL WHITE

ENLISTED MEN...

LESS THAN 3% OF NEGRO ENLISTED MEN IN TOP THREE GRADES.
ALMOST 15% OF WHITE ENLISTED MEN IN TOP THREE GRADES.

THE COAST GUARD

TOTAL (21,688)...

WHITE 95.4%
NEGRO 4.6%

ONLY ONE NEGRO OFFICER.
ONE WHITE OFFICER FOR EVERY 6 WHITE ENLISTED MEN.

SOURCE: From data supplied by War, Navy, and Treasury Departments.
THE NATION'S CAPITAL
A SYMBOL OF FREEDOM AND EQUALITY?

A NEGRO TRAVELING FROM NORTH TO SOUTH

NORTH

WASHINGTON, D.C.

SOUTH

MUST CHANGE TO JIM CROW TRAINS IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

IF HE DECIDES TO REMAIN IN D.C. OVERNIGHT HE WILL FIND THAT:

HE CANNOT EAT IN A DOWNTOWN RESTAURANT

HE CANNOT ATTEND A DOWNTOWN MOVIE OR PLAY.

HE CANNOT SLEEP IN A DOWNTOWN HOTEL.

IF HE DECIDES TO STAY IN D.C.

HE USUALLY MUST FIND A HOME IN AN OVERCROWDED, SUB-STANDARD, SEGREGATED AREA:

NEGRO-OCUPIED DWELLINGS

40% SUB-STANDARD

WHITE-OCUPIED DWELLINGS

12% SUB-STANDARD

HE MUST SEND HIS CHILDREN TO INFERIOR JIM CROW SCHOOLS:

CAPACITY EXCEEDS ENROLLMENT BY 27%

ENROLLMENT EXCEEDS CAPACITY BY 8%

HE MUST ENTRUST HIS FAMILY'S HEALTH TO MEDICAL AGENCIES WHICH GIVE THEM INFERIOR SERVICES:

HOSPITALS IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA EITHER DO NOT ADMIT NEGROES OR ADMIT THEM ON A SEGREGATED BASIS
To Secure These Rights

ALTHOUGH LYNCHING HAS DECLINED SHARPLY...
NO YEAR SINCE 1882 HAS BEEN FREE OF IT!

LYNCHINGS, WHITES AND NEGROES (1882-1946)

LYNCHINGS BY STATES (1882-1945)

SOURCE: Tuskegee Institute, Alabama
The bases of job discrimination

(Complaints to FEPC, Fiscal Year 1943-44)

Race

.....of which 96.7% were Negroes

Religion

.....of which 72.7% were Jews

Aliens

National Origin

.....of which 71.9% were Mexican-Americans

Those charged with discrimination

Business----- 69.4%

Government----- 24.5%

Labor Unions----- 6.1%

Source: First Report, FEPC, based on 4,081 complaints for fiscal year 1943-44
DISCRIMINATION CONtributes TO POOR HEALTH

Life expectancy of Negroes 10 years less than whites...
(1940)

White: 42.8
Negro: 32.6

Maternal death rate of Negroes is more than double that of whites
(1940)

White: 3.5 per 1000
Negro: 8.0 per 1000

SOME UNDERLYING CAUSES

1. POOR ECONOMIC STATUS OF NEGROES...
   INCOME OF NEGRO WORKERS (1939)
   
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Less than $1000</th>
<th>Over $1000</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>85%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

   INCOME OF WHITE WORKERS (1939)
   
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Less than $1000</th>
<th>Over $1000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. DISCRIMINATION IN MEDICAL FACILITIES...
   In 1946 only 1% of all hospital beds were available to Negroes (10% of population)

   Approximately 13,000 beds
   
   Approximately 1,450,000 beds

3. SHORTAGE OF TRAINED NEGRO PERSONNEL...
   (1942)

   1 Negro doctor for every 3,377 Negroes
   
   Ratio of doctors to general population: 1 to every 750 persons

   In 1940 there were only 7,192 trained and student Negro nurses...
   
   ...and only 1,471 Negro dentists

   ...to serve a Negro population of 13,000,000

SOURCES: U.S. Bureau of the Census and U.S. Public Health Service
SEgregation and Prejudice

The following question was asked of 1,710 white enlisted men:

"Some Army divisions have companies which include Negro platoons and white platoons. How would you feel about it if your outfit was set up something like that?"

The answers...

Infantrymen in a company which has a Negro platoon (80 men):

- Would like it: 10%
- Just as soon have it as any other set-up: 10%
- Rather not, but it would not matter too much: 40%
- Would dislike it very much: 40%

Infantrymen in other companies in the same regiment (60 men):

- Would like it: 10%
- Just as soon have it as any other set-up: 10%
- Rather not, but it would not matter too much: 40%
- Would dislike it very much: 40%

Field Artillery, Anti-Tank, and HQ units in the same division (112 men):

- Would like it: 10%
- Just as soon have it as any other set-up: 10%
- Rather not, but it would not matter too much: 40%
- Would dislike it very much: 40%

Cross-section of other Field Forces units which do not have colored platoons in white companies (1,450 men):

- Would like it: 10%
- Just as soon have it as any other set-up: 10%
- Rather not, but it would not matter too much: 40%
- Would dislike it very much: 40%

*Based on a survey in France, Research Branch, Information and Education Division, Major, ETO, Report ETO-82, June 1945.*
Our Federal Civil Rights Machinery Needs Strengthening

- United States Department of Justice
- Civil Rights Section
- Present Inadequacies
  - Subordinate position in Justice Department limits its effectiveness
  - Sometimes frustrated by hostility of local law enforcement officers or private citizens
  - Has to depend, for its investigative work, on the FBI which has many other assignments
  - Insufficient personnel (only 7 lawyers, all in Washington)
  - Sometimes hampered by inadequate cooperation by U.S. Attorneys in the field
  - Hampered by ineffective statutes

Organization

FBI
To Secure These Rights
FOR STRONGER CIVIL RIGHTS ENFORCEMENT MACHINERY
THE PRESIDENT'S COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS

EXECUTIVE OFFICES OF THE PRESIDENT
PERMANENT CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION
REPORTS
THE PRESIDENT
ATTORNEY GENERAL
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
DIVISION OF CIVIL RIGHTS
F. B. I.
CIVIL RIGHTS UNIT
THE CONGRESS
STANDING HOUSE AND SENATE JOINT COMMITTEE ON CIVIL RIGHTS
LEGISLATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS
LEGISLATION
REGIONAL OFFICE
REGIONAL OFFICE
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A PLAN ALONG SIMILAR LINES IS RECOMMENDED FOR STATES GOVERNMENTS WITH INCREASED PROFESSIONALIZATION OF STATE AND LOCAL POLICE FORCES.