

STATEMENT OF J. STROM THURMOND, GOVERNOR OF SOUTH
CAROLINA, ON ATTENDANCE OF GERALD L. K. SMITH AT
BIRMINGHAM CONFERENCE. JULY 20, 1948

"We do not invite, and we do not need, the support of Gerald L. K. Smith or any other rabble-rousers who use race prejudice and class hatred to inflame the emotions of our people," Governor J. Strom Thurmond, endorsed by the Birmingham conference of Southern Democrats for President, declared this morning.

His statement came in reply to a request for his reactions to the proffer of support made by Gerald L. K. Smith, Christian Nationalist crusader who specializes in race hatreds.

"I have never met Mr. Smith, and I was totally unaware that he was in Birmingham," Governor Thurmond said. "He had no part whatever in the conference of Southern Democrats Saturday."

The South Carolina governor said the Southern fight is not a race fight but an effort to protect the principle of States' Rights, "without which the United States government cannot exist under its Constitution."

Governor Thurmond said he is "deeply concerned" over the effort of opposing groups to "smear our efforts with the false trappings of race hatreds. We are interested solely in protecting the rights of States to manage their own internal affairs, which is a fundamental guarantee of the Constitution of the United States," he declared.

"I call upon all true Americans to study our form of government in order to determine the true issues in this fight. They will be on our side unless they want a Federal totalitarian form of government, and I do not believe they want it."