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Address at Texarkana, Texas

Strom Thurmond

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ADDRESS OF J. STROM THURMOND, GOVERNOR OF SOUTH CAROLINA, AND STATES' RIGHTS DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, AT TEXARKANA, TEXAS, OCTOBER 27, 1948

MY FELLOW AMERICANS:

You who are gathered here tonight represent a
unity of viewpoint among the people of at least three great
states -- Texas, Arkansas, and Louisiana. You are united in
the determination that the American way of life shall be preserved,
and that government by the terms of the United States Constitution
shall be preserved in this nation.

Your unity is one of loyalty to principle. It is
the kind of unity that has kept the United States/free of
domination by anyone/who sought to take away the rights of the
individual man in our country. It is well that we armor ourselves
with loyalty to principle today. We have come together here tonight/
at a time when the world is pleading for a demonstration from the
United States/that mankind is capable of governing himself in a
democratic way.

I believe that the people before me tonight/are
citizens of states which have always cherished the traditional
American principles/of individual freedom of thought and freedom
of action. I believe that you are no less concerned than I am,
over the dangers to those freedoms now being manifested all
over the world, and in truth, right here in our own land.
Here in the United States we are in danger of sacrificing our liberties for the political expediency of the moment. We are living in an age when American political leaders have been willing to sell out our Constitution for the sake of gaining political power. Having sold out our principles, they now cry for "party loyalty" -- when they have destroyed the only real basis loyalty can have.

This disgraceful development in our political history has been made possible by the growth of a minority machine in big-city states. By throwing its weight around, this machine boasts that it can swing Presidential elections in states which may decide those elections.

The minority machine has offered support to our major parties, provided their candidates will promise to carry out the minority program.

It so happens that the minority program of racial gains by legislation is a direct violation of the United States Constitution on every count. (Of course, the minority leaders don't give a hoot what happens to the Constitution.)

And now, by forcing the National Democrats and the Republicans to bargain with them, they have forced two once-great political groups to say they don't give a hoot for the Constitution, either.
A debasement of principle such as this would not have surprised us, had it come only from the Republicans, or from the Wallace Progressives. But we could not remain silent when the Democratic Party was forced to drop its loyalty to principle like a hot potato.

The American people -- the folks back home -- have found a way of expressing their faith in the Constitution.

The States' Rights Democrats have become their voice -- the voice of those who say that the principles of American self-government, of State Sovereignty, of the right of a state to regulate its own internal affairs, of individual liberty and constitutional government, democracy must not be violated and destroyed in a cheap effort to win an election!

At Philadelphia, it seemed that the minority machine had thrown its weight with supreme effect. Demagogues were able to scream out their defiance of constitutional government in the name of human rights, and then force the conventions to adopt the program of the minority faction. It was a pitiful sight to anyone who loves his country.

Many well-meaning Americans are blinded by the sweet phrases of these human rights agitators. Some have been stricken so blind that they cannot see the dangers beneath the sweet talk.
But those Americans who think we are safe from the destruction of our kind of democracy, had better take a closer look at recent developments. The record of recent years does not make pleasant reading. The inescapable conclusion is that we are going to lose our form of government if we do not fight, and fight now.

The nomination of Truman by the Democrats at Philadelphia was a surface demonstration of the extent to which the American political system has yielded to those who are master-minding the effort to centralize all power in Washington.

The nomination of Truman was clear evidence that a selfish minority machine in big-city states had won a complete victory in its effort to advance its false racial theories, no matter what the cost.

This group had already won endorsement of its unconstitutional program by the Republicans, who nominated a man well-schooled in the art of using racial minorities to gain political power.

Having made a mouthpiece out of Truman and a puppet prince out of Dewey, the minority machine is now planning its fight to force one or the other of them to carry out his platform promises if he is elected.

If Truman or Dewey is elected, you may expect to see the agents of the Civil Rights program swarm over Washington like
bees around the hive. They have already been in evidence at every Congressional hearing that has the remotest relation to their unconstitutional demands. But that will be as nothing compared to what they will do if Truman or Dewey is given a mandate of the people to carry out platform promises.

One of the machine's Congressional stooges has already announced that he will try to make the imposition of the cloture rule in the Senate the first order of business in January. This would mean that the last weapon of Southern Senators against their unconstitutional program would be taken away.

Not only has Harry Truman endorsed cloture, but as a matter of fact, Senator Alben Barkley, candidate for Vice President of the Truman-Civil Wrongs Democrats, is a champion of cloture. He attempted to impose the cloture rule to force a vote on the FEPC bill in February, after it had passed the House of Representatives over objection from the North and the South. He came very near to success. That is how close the Congress has come to violating the Constitution at the behest of the minority machine.

And what about Governor Dewey and FEPC? The facts are not pretty. It was a hand-picked mouthpiece of Governor Dewey--Senator Ives of New York--who wrote the very FEPC bill now pending in the Senate. Dewey claims credit for
Now he announces his intention of forcing the law on the whole nation, without benefit of a vote by the people.

Yes, you may be sure that the minority-machine are preparing their own ready to throw its weight around in Washington next year to force the passage of all the Truman-Dewey civil wrongs legislation.

However, by the grace of God and the patriotism of Americans, there will be a counter-weight. There will be a counter-weight of a great mass of votes for the States' Rights Democrats. The counter-balance of those votes will be more powerful than the minority-machine ever hoped to be.

My fellow Americans, every vote for the States' Rights Democrats will be another counter-weight thrown in the balance to strip the minority-machine of its evil power, and to repudiate forever its unconstitutional demands!

At a time when all Americans should be united in a demonstration to the world that our kind of representative government is the best hope of free men, we are being asked to change that form of government. At a time when our leaders should be united, not only on foreign policy, but on faith in the American way, we are being asked to change that way.
The minority machine wants us to give up the right of our people to control their elections within their own states, by enacting the Anti-Poll Tax bill.

This machine wants us to give up our control of our state laws and state courts with the Anti-Lynching bill. They want us to give up our state laws on the separation of the races -- laws which we have passed because they have been found to be best suited to the needs of our states.

They want us to give up our control of our business men to employ whom they please, and the rights of our working men and women to say who shall belong to their labor unions, with the enactment of the FEPC bill.

And they say we must establish a national police, as Hitler did, to enforce their demands upon us, thus giving up the Constitutional right to control our local police within our states.

It is difficult to believe that this wholesale attack on the United States Constitution could have won the support of our two major parties. And yet we know it is close to passage in Congress, and we know that Truman and Dewey have promised to support it.
Of these proposals, the FEPC alone/is enough to provide an entering wedge through which the Federal Government might eventually reach down and control the daily lives of every American. This law, which Truman and Dewey propose to force us to accept without a vote, is a direct usurpation of the rights of the business man and of his employees.

It would deny the right of a business man to limit his employees to one race, if he thinks the success of his business depends on it. And it would force his employees into involuntary servitude by compelling them to stay on the job and work beside persons they do not care to associate with, with the threat of fines or imprisonment if they resist.

This law that the minority machine has forced Truman and Dewey to endorse is a replica of Stalin's Russian law, and it would be used by the Communists in this country just as Stalin used it to gain power. If it is passed, there will be nothing to enable an industrial plant to weed out its Communists, who could claim discrimination on racial grounds, and be upheld by law.

Under the FEPC bill, the Federal Commission would have power to write its own rules, just as Dewey's New York commission has done. In order to see how the Communists might make use of those regulations, let us look at Dewey's New York FEPC rules.
In New York you cannot ask an applicant for employment where he was born. You can't ask him to show a birth certificate, to tell whether he is native-born, or what his former name was if he had changed it. You can't get any clue as to his Communist background by asking what his religion is — that's against the law in New York. You can't get any clue from his military record, or from his experience in World War I — that's also against the law.

Is that what you want in Arkansas — in Texas — in Louisiana? and in other States in the nation?

Dewey and Truman say that you must accept it.

But you can force them to forget it, and you can force the Communist-inspired agitators for this law to crawl back in their holes, by voting for the States' Rights Democrats.

When the size of our vote is computed, there will be no longer any doubt as to whether the FEPC — or any other violation of the Constitution — will be forced upon the American people!

My friends, those of us who contend that the American system of local self-government is best for our people, have no apologies to make. And in particular, we in the Southern states have no apologies for the progress we have made under it, for the betterment of all races.
We are going forward in the South. We are bringing in new industries, developing our ports and harbors, increasing our public facilities, and creating a better standard of living for all our people. Under the development program now going forward in every Southern state, our two races will be lifted up together.

But we are doing this thing by exercising the rights of our states to solve their own internal problems without dictation from Washington. We are lifting up our people by leading them -- not by driving them. And we know very well indeed that our progress will be set back a half-century, if the agitators are permitted to have their way.

We are stronger now in our prosperity than ever before. There is no need for us to change our way of life to conform with a federal pattern which would bring joy to the hearts of the Communists. We can resist them with our God-given privilege of the ballot -- by going to the polls on November 2 and lifting up our united voices in an overwhelming testimony to our faith in our way of life.

That is our challenge. And it will bring about a great reform in the American political system -- a reform which will mean the preservation forever of the kind of democracy under which we have flourished for 160 years.
We are Democrats. Let us remain so. But let us restore the Democratic Party to the ideals for which it has stood all these years. Let us return it to its historic function of standing as a bulwark against centralization of power in government, and as a champion of the rights of states to manage their own internal affairs.

If America is to remain strong, it must have a two-party system. But if that system is to mean anything, we must have at least one party which upholds the sovereignty of states and local self-government.

Truman has carried the Democrats down the road toward centralization of power. Dewey -- a great believer in big government and in the power of the executive -- has carried the Republican Party down the same road. Both have said they will violate the Constitution.

We States' Rights Democrats are dedicated to the reclamation of the Democratic Party. We will not cease our efforts until our party stands once again as a symbol of the right of our people to govern themselves.

In this election we shall create a tremendous movement for Constitutional government, and for the American way of life. We invite your support in this historic undertaking.

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