6-30-1950

Address at Senate campaign meeting about Johnston's political conduct

Strom Thurmond

Follow this and additional works at: https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/strom

Materials in this collection may be protected by copyright law (Title 17, U.S. code). Use of these materials beyond the exceptions provided for in the Fair Use and Educational Use clauses of the U.S. Copyright Law may violate federal law.

For additional rights information, please contact Kirstin O'Keefe (kokeefe [at] clemson [dot] edu)

For additional information about the collections, please contact the Special Collections and Archives by phone at 864.656.3031 or via email at cuscl [at] clemson [dot] edu

Recommended Citation
Thurmond, Strom, 'Address at Senate campaign meeting about Johnston's political conduct' (1950). Strom Thurmond Collection, Mss100. 894.
https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/strom/894

For additional information about the collection, please contact the Special Collections and Archives by phone at 864.656.3031 or via email at cuscl [at] clemson [dot] edu

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Manuscript Collections at TigerPrints. It has been accepted for inclusion in Strom Thurmond Collection, Mss100 by an authorized administrator of TigerPrints. For more information, please contact kokeefe@clemson.edu.
My opponent now realizes that he cannot win this Senatorial race on his own man, and he is turning to influences outside of South Carolina to prevent his defeat. The Democrats of South Carolina are blowing hot on his neck for his desertion of South Carolina democracy in 1948, and the heat is increasing every day.

Everyone knows that the CIO Political Action Committee has sent people into South Carolina to work for my opponent's return to the Senate. You people here in Spartanburg know what the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People has done in boosting your registration. You also saw in the Spartanburg County Democratic Convention the CIO Political group and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People working hand in hand.

These are the same organizations which prevailed upon President Truman to stab the South in the back and submit his civil rights program. What is their program is Truman's program, and you have seen President Truman undertaking to dabble in this Primary election and you have also seen the Senate agents being sent down here to investigate what they choose to call "Dixiecrat money". They were not sent down here to investigate the slush funds being used by the CIO Political Action Committee and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

I would like for my opponent to answer these simple questions to the people of South Carolina:

Did you solicit the support of the CIO Political Action Committee in this Primary, or was it President Truman who ordered this organization to move into South Carolina and work for you?
Did you request the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People to attempt to dominate this Primary, or did President Truman ask this group to support you?

Did you request that Senate agents be sent down here to meddle in this Primary?

Did you call Senator Russell over the telephone and request him to help you in this campaign by sending you a telegram?

My opponent boasts that the CIO Political group is supporting him, and yet he knows that organization is the most powerful force in the United States in promoting the Truman program to break down segregation. When my opponent accepts the support of this group, he knows he is placing himself under obligation to an organization which, if it has its way, will replace whiteworkers in our mills with colored workers and will destroy every vestige of segregation in this state.

Whose bread you eat—his song you sing.

In accepting the support of the CIO Political Action Committee, my opponent has either to support the political action of this group or be an ingrate.

I call on him to tell the people of South Carolina which course he is going to follow.

The good people who work in the textile mills of Spartanburg County as well as the other counties of the state know what Harry Truman is trying to do to them and what the CIO Political Action Committee is trying to do to them. This is one time my opponent is not going to get by with playing both sides of the street.
My opponent has demonstrated that he thinks more of getting a few crumbs which may drop from the Truman-Pendergast table in Washington than representing the people of South Carolina in the Senate and using the powers of that high office to protect the interests of the people of South Carolina and restoring the National Democratic Party to its true principles.

My opponent sat in the Senate and did not open his mouth when President Truman handed down his order last year to abolish segregation in the armed forces of the United States.

Not only that, but I have looked up the Congressional Record when this matter came before the Senate in 1948, and my opponent did not open his mouth.

I have before me Volume 94, Part 6, of the Congressional Record for June 8 and 9, 1948. During those two days the Senate had under consideration the Russell-Maybank amendment to prohibit by law the breaking down of segregation in the armed forces. At the Committee hearings on the proposal, General Eisenhower expressed his opposition to breaking down segregation in the armed forces. "I do believe that if we attempt merely by passing a lot of laws to force someone to like someone else, we are just going to get into trouble," General Eisenhower said.

Senator Burnet R. Maybank, my opponent's colleague, was not silent. He made a speech in behalf of the amendment. Senator Ellender of Louisiana, Senator McLellan, Senator Eastman and other Southern Senators made strong arguments in favor of the amendment and denounced the President's policy.

The debate lasted two days, and here is the Congressional Record, and I challenge my opponent to find one word he uttered in that debate in support of the Russell-Maybank amendment or in opposition to the President's program to break down segregation in the armed forces.
And my opponent cannot say he was not in the Senate at that time, because a quorum was called for just after the amendment was defeated on a voice vote and showed he was present.

In 1949, President Truman put through his order to "ban discrimination and segregation in the recruitment, assignment, and training of all personnel in all types of military duty. Mess halls, quarters, recreational facilities and post exchanges should be non-segregated. The National Guard Reserve Units and any universal training program should all be administered in accordance with these same standards".

In 1949, my opponent was playing footsies under the table with Mr. Truman and his voice was silent protesting against this dastardly act which weakens our national defense in order that Mr. Truman could win minority bloc votes in doubtful states.

Now, I want to discuss something I have wanted to discuss throughout this campaign, but I have waited until we reached my opponent's home to do so, because it was here that this most unusual event happened.

After my opponent had gone up and down the country denouncing Truman prior to the Democratic Convention in every kind of language known to the dictionary, he did a sudden flop over. Before the Convention he was willing to break away from the National Party, if need be, to defeat this man who he said was seeking to destroy the South. He even said he was going to offer a resolution in the Democratic National Committee prior to the Convention in Philadelphia, calling on the President to withdraw from the race. The Committee meeting was held and Chairman McGrath, the same man my opponent toasted over his confirmation as Attorney General, asked if there were any other resolutions. My opponent was silent. Then, finally, he turned to my opponent and specifically asked him if he was going to offer his resolution and my opponent was again silent.
My opponent flitted in and flitted out during the campaign. At one time, he threatened a court suit against the Electors of the Democratic Party of South Carolina, but when he saw how the tide was running in South Carolina, he went into his shell so far as the people of South Carolina were concerned.

It was not until eleven o'clock on election night that we heard from the Junior Senator from South Carolina. The biggest upset in political history had taken place and my opponent rushed to the news reporters to make the statement that "today I stood for the regular Democratic Party."

This was generally interpreted to mean that he voted for Harry Truman. He went back to Washington and I am told by a reliable newspaper correspondent that when asked a specific question, he confirmed that he voted for Truman. When the President's victory train rolled in from Kansas City, he was down at the station, waving to the conquering hero upon his return. They tell me he knocked over Admirals, Cabinet Officers and Generals in order to get in the front row where the President would be sure and see him.

Those on the President's train said they could not believe their eyes when they saw the Junior Senator from South Carolina, on hand to greet them. The Arrangements Committee had no provision in the Parade for the Junior South Carolina Senator and they hurriedly had to make a provision for him.

And then, lo and behold, on November 10th, the Spartanburg newspapers here uncovered the information that my opponent personally did not vote in the Presidential Election on November 2nd.

He gave as his excuse that he was caught in a rainstorm and could not make it to the polls.
Ladies and Gentlemen, I ask you:
What kind of a Democrat is that?
What kind of a leader is that?
What kind of man is that?

You see, he was all set to jump either way.
The disclosure that my opponent did not vote brought such confusion that he was forced to issue a statement in which he said:

"If you will check up with Democratic(Truman) National Headquarters, you will find that no one gave them any more help than I did. I just would like to keep the record straight. If you will call Dixiecrat (States Rights) Headquarters, you will find that I gave them no help."

In that statement my opponent convicted himself of deserting the Democrats of South Carolina and repudiating the pledge he solemnly made to the Democratic Party of South Carolina.
There is one other thing I want to mention here in Spartanburg. I have challenged my opponent to answer the charge that there existed in the Governor's office a pardon racket while he was Governor. He granted over 3,000 pardons, paroles and leaves of absence, which are "back door" pardons, while he was Governor. He has not defended his pardon record. He cannot defend it. He has said something about the Governor having the pardoning power under the State Constitution, which no one denies. But he was Governor two times and he could have done as I did, propose a Constitutional Amendment which would have removed this stench from the nostrils of law-abiding people of this State.

He also claims that he did not pardon as many people as Governor Blackwood, the late Governor Ibra Blackwood, who was a distinguished citizen of your community. I do not believe in dragging men into a political race who have gone on to their reward, but I feel it is my duty to resent the slur which has been cast upon your devoted public servant, Governor Ibra Blackwood. You and I know he left the Governor's office a good man.

The people of South Carolina know how my opponent went over the State for years, abusing those who opposed him, heaping upon them vituperations and derogatory statements which had no part in the campaign. He not only abused Governor Blackwood, he abused the late Senator Cole Elease, the late Senator Ellison D. Smith, and I am sure most of you here will remember how he abused Senator Maybank and sought to prejudice you people here against him because he happened to live in Charleston.
When this campaign began, my opponent thought he could cover up his shocking record by conducting what he chose to call a "Christian" campaign. He even insinuated that I was slingling mud. I have never slung mud and I have never engaged in personalities in a political campaign and I have not done so in this campaign, but I have brought to the attention of the people of South Carolina the public record of my opponent. If that is slingling mud, it is the mud of my opponent's record and it is he who must answer to the people of South Carolina for that record.

My opponent has gone back on the people of South Carolina. His record in the United States Senate does not entitle him to re-election. He has deserted the party which sent him to the Senate, and on July 11, the real Democrats of South Carolina are going to desert my opponent at the polls, and, come next January 3rd, this State is going to replace this Trumanite Senator with a real South Carolina Democrat, one who led the South's fight for Southern Democracy in 1948.