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Senate campaign meeting. Segregation in the Armed Forces; Pardons

Strom Thurmond

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SPARTANBURG MEETING

SEGREGATION IN THE ARMED FORCES.

My opponent, in his desperation, is again seeking outside help in his race for re-election to the United States Senate. He now realizes that he cannot win this fight on his own man, but he has got to have the support of outside organizations. He has got to have support from without the State.

Everyone knows that the C.I.O. 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 Advancement of Colored People have done in boosting your registration. You people here in Spartanburg also saw at work first hand the alignment in your County Convention by the C.I.O. Political Action Committee and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

You also know that President Truman has undertaken to dabble in this Primary Election and that Senatorial Agents have been sent down here to investigate what was called the Dixiecrat Money.

Now my opponent has produced a telegram from Senator Russell of Georgia. I have the highest respect for the Senator from Georgia and I was one of those who seconded his nomination
for President at the 1948 Democratic Convention. I met the
catcalls and boos of the Trumanites, at Philadelphia.

My opponent was a delegate at that Convention but
he did not have the courage to stand up and face those Trumanites
and make a speech in behalf of Senator George of Georgia, yet he
comes down here now, interjecting Senator Russell into this
Campaign.

I want to ask my opponent these simple questions:

Did he solicit the support of the C.I.O. Political
Action Committee in this primary?

Did he request that Senate Agents be sent down here to
meddle in this Primary?

Did he request Senator Russell to send him the telegram
which he is boasting about?

I charge my opponent, and I again request him to
deny it, that he sat in the Senate and did not open his mouth
when President Truman handed down his order to abolish segregation
in the United States Senate.

I have searched the record and I cannot find where he
used the great powers as a member of the United States Senate to
express himself against this order. Was he afraid to do this because
he thought it might cost him some negro votes which the Trumanites
have leaped into our Primary in an effort to dominate this
Senatorial Election?

I have before me Volume 94, Part 6, of the Congressional
Record. On June 8, 1948, Senator Russell arose at his desk in the
United States Senate and offered an amendment which would have
prohibited President Truman from breaking down segregation in the
Armed Forces. Senator Russell made a long speech, in which he told
of the program of the President which was 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."

That is taken from Senator Russell's speech, Page 7357 of the
Congressional Record. Senator Russell went on in his speech, which
ran for several hours, and quoted General Eisenhower as being opposed
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, which was referred to as the Russell-Maybank Amendment. Senator Ellender of Louisiana, Senator McLellan, Senator Eastman, and others made strong arguments in favor of the Amendment and denounced the President's policy.

Senator Pepper, of Florida, of course protested against the Amendment.

The debate lasted for two days and here is the record, and I challenge my opponent to find one word he uttered in that debate, either in support of the Russell 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.

When I called this record to the attention of the people of South Carolina in Newberry this week, my opponent got mad and shouted an epithet which only those who are facing defeat and are desperate. Remember that whom the Gods destroy, they first make mad. And since my opponent has seen fit to inject Senator Russell into this campaign, I want to tell him about another telegram that he sent in 1948. It was during the States Rights Campaign, when my opponent
turned his back on the people of South Carolina and supported for President, Harry S. Truman, the man who is today trying to "ram his civil rights program down our throats and destroy our institutions."

Those of us who supported Senator Russell at Philadelphia had hoped that he would be the Candidate of the States Rights Party.

Some of my friends talked with him and urged him to make the race. He said his sympathy was with us but he said that he had run in the Democratic Primary of Georgia and, therefore, he was honor bound by his oath to support the Presidential nominees of the Democratic Party of Georgia. The Democratic Party of Georgia selected Truman electors, but Senator Russell of Georgia did not hesitate to write his friends that if the Democratic Party of Georgia had done what the Democratic Party of South Carolina had done, he would have supported States Rights Electors.

I have a copy of that telegram and I challenge my opponent to get a telegram from Senator Russell saying that he would not have supported States Rights Electors in Georgia if the Democratic Party stood firm as we did in South Carolina. What Senator Russell expected them to.

But my opponent, he did just the opposite of what Senator.
Russell did. He wanted to support Electors against Truman but was bound by his pledge and could not do it. My opponent was bound by his pledge to support States' Rights Electors. He violated that pledge and supported Truman Electors and, if for no other reason, the real Democrats of South Carolina, ninety percent of whom voted the States Rights ticket in 1948, are going to spew from their mouths this traitor from the cause.

The difference between my opponent and Senator Russell is that Senator Russell respects his oath to the Party of his State, but my opponent does not respect his pledge to the Democratic Party of South Carolina.

And that brings me to a subject that I wanted to discuss throughout this Campaign, but I waited until I got to my opponent's home town to do so. Down at Greenwood this week, my opponent was presented with an umbrella, and I think it was very appropriate and I want to tell you why.

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 whom 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 States Rights Electors, but when he saw how the tide was running in South Carolina, he more or less went into his shell, so far as the people of South Carolina were concerned. It was not until eleven o'clock on Election night did we hear 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 him. 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 a man is that?

You see, he was all set to jump either way. If the Election returns that night had shown that Dewey was winning, he could have come out and said "I stood with the Democratic Party of South Carolina today."
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 that I did. I just would like to keep the record straight. If you will call Dixiecrats (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. I have in my brief case, a list of over 3,000 pardons, paroles, and leaves of absence, which are "back door" pardons, which he granted while he was Governor.

He has not defended the pardon record. He cannot defend it. He has said something about the power which was his under the State Constitution, which no one denies. But he was Governor for two terms 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 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 Blackwood. You and I know he left the Governor's office a poor 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 Blease, the
late Senator Ellison D. Smith, and I am sure most of you here will
remember how he abused Senator Maybank and even reflected on his
personal habits 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
cover up with his shocking record and that I could not expose it

close to
if he could wage what he called a "Christian" Campaign. He even

insinuated that I was slinging 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 slinging mud, it is the mud of his

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 Junior Senator with a real South Carolina Democrat, who led the South's fight for Southern Democracy in 1948.