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## Correspondence, John C. Stennis, June 7-15, 1954

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office*

Jackson, Mississippi  
June 7, 1954.

Honorable John C. Stennis  
United States Senate  
Washington, D. C.

My Dear Senator:

Permit me to take this means of extending congratulations to you on being chosen "Man of the Week" on the CBS Television Show of the same name, Sunday June 6. It was with no little feeling of pride, shared I am sure with many others viewing the show, that our Great State of Mississippi was most ably represented.

Being a native of Noxubee County Mississippi it was my pleasure to first know you as Circuit Judge. I met you personally in 1947 in your office in De Kalb on the occasion of your considering air conditioning for your offices, this being my business at the time. Again, later that year I visited you along with our mutual friend Joe Pollard at your campaign headquarters in the Edwards Hotel on the night of your first election to the United States Senate.

It is regarding the very grave crisis facing the people of the South including our state, your main topic of discussion on the above show, that I respectfully direct my remarks. With the hope that I may convey to you perhaps a new idea or slant that you may find helpful in our defense against those evil forces threatening the peace and security of not only the South but the entire nation. If you but glean a single effective phrase from my simple words then my purpose has been served.

Since this effort on the part of some to enforce non-segregation in the Southern Public Schools bears the familiar stinch of Communism, creating dissension and division among the people designed to destroy the nation from within, must first be proved, another line of defense is indicated. I might add without airing all of my views on the matter that the current Senate Investigating Sub-committee hearings has revealed the shocking fact that Communism has now found refuge in the dignities of men in high offices, it might well be possible that Communism may succeed in spite of all of the other efforts. Which efforts become useless when given such protection.

The Negro operating under whatever influence whether Communism or a simple desire to 'get something for nothing' has in fact been sold on the idea that he is entitled to "equality". It was during the reign of the Roosevelts, Mr. and Mrs., that he was given the magic words ".....regardless of race, color or creed", made him know when used by those who would exploit him and the innocent 'flag wavers' that he had something more coming to him, something that he did not now have. Aladdin never had more powerful words of magic.

Let no one be deceived: the Negro does want to be free of segregation. Various spokesmen for the South may put words in his mouth contrary to this, but it does not change his thinking. What is more, in accomplishing this he will demand more, namely: full and complete "equality". Of course, the burning question becomes: What is equality? Where do you draw the line? At what point in social and economic achievement does anyone consider himself "equal".

The recent ruling of the United States Supreme Court involves matters of law and any defense in this area can best be handled by you men of law. However, the question here becomes, can the efforts of any group of lawyers regardless of their abilities and efforts have any influence on that tribunal in effecting a rescission, while appearing before it in the glaring light of opinions of the majority of people of this nation crystallized against them.

The forces bringing about such Socialistic Judicial Legislation are well organized having a powerful front in the NAACP, operating under the guise of improving the Negro's social and economic status, charging racial discrimination. The Supreme Court ruling represents a victory in step one of a long range program. There will be more action to follow. Anyone in disagreement with these views should acquaint himself with the facts.

Any efforts on the part of the South to circumvent the ruling of the Supreme Court by any of the presently proposed methods; (1) ignore the ruling, (2) private schools, (3) school board designation of attendance, or any other method will only invite trouble. The NAACP is ready for battle, their big guns are loaded. Such intentions were so announced through the press.

While States Rights may be in violation in these actions, I believe it would be a serious mistake to build a defense on it; for many reasons to name two: firstly, the charges of racial discrimination against us and other charges would remain unanswered, therefore, reseeding itself to grow up later, Secondly, States Rights was used many times in the past by other states or group of states as a defensive weapon, to such an extent by some as to become almost as unpopular as the currently familiar use of the Fifth Amendment on the part of certain individuals as a defensive weapon. Violations of States Rights finds sympathy only in the minds of the people so affected.

We must, therefore, recognize the actions of NAACP along with the other promoters and agitators for what they really are - Socialistic. Any group of people finding success to any extent in forcing their will over that of another group under the laws of the nation prove that both the law and the action are not Democratic. The recent Huey Long "share the wealth" movement was properly branded Socialistic, found oponents in all sections of the country. Because it would take money from the pockets of all the people of financial means the movement died a natural death. Free medical aid under government sponsorship threatened us many times through the past like giant tidal waves. In this case the proponents of such Socialistic Welfare Legislation met a superior counter force in the American Medical Association. All of the medical men of this nation joined together in a united effort and brought about the defeat of this movement. Only through organized effort were they successful. This was no easy thing because socialized medicine had gained

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Hon. John C. Stennis  
June 7, 1954

considerable momentum reflected in the vast number of County Hospitals built throughout the country.

Again this nation is faced with Socialism. Normally the effects of Socialism are slow (but sure) in degenerating the economy of a nation, but this time it is different. This time it carries with it all of the objectives sought by the Fascists, Nazis and the Communists, to divide the people from within, then take over. I am not an alarmist, neither am I one that when he hears the burglar alarm in a bank go off, turn his back and say, "there is no cause for alarm, it is only someone making a deposit. The long hard road is before us. The burglar alarm has sounded.

God saw fit to create only one David, who with a single blow stopped a giant who threatened the peace and security of his nation. In the absence of such a champion we will find our individual efforts, regardless of numbers, to be futile against a well organized oponent whose early labors now bear fruit of public opinion of that vast majority of the people of this nation, outside the Southern States, earrying with them the great majority of wealth and the voting control of the Congress.

It is, therefore, clearly indicated that an organization is now needed, the leaders among us should be called on, those capable of forming an organization that will effectively wage a counter-offensive against the evil forces now operating against us. We owe it not only to ourselves as the people of the South, but as members of a great nation.

Being a religious man I could not close without stating what I believe to be the most important point: Miscegenation is already in evidence, even to the casual observer, reaching its present stage through the windows of immorality. Should the doors be opened or the bearers otherwise breached those people so engaged will in effect, say by their actions to Almighty God - "we now reverse your decision as been unwise in creating the different races, our purpose now takes precedence". That the Negro was brought to this country in slavery was the first sin committed for which payment became due. Blood was shed in a civil war in payment, no mere human could possibly know if the debt was then settled in full. It is reasonable to assume that any sins committed in the present stage of miscegenation are answerable by those individuals committing them. But when ratified by the successful action of the present movement ~~and~~<sup>and</sup> becomes a new sin on the nation. What are the wages of this sin?

The forgoing views could be enlarged in a colloquial sense to an advantage adding certain collateral points that are in evidence. However, in an effort to avoid taking too much of your valuable time, I exercise brevity.

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I feel very strongly in this matter, with the personal conviction that immediate action is now necessary on the part of all persons. I stand ready to serve in any area that my limited ability would be most useful. Other officials and leaders of this state have been perhaps more outspoken than you in these matters, however, due to your present position of high honor, and your knowledge, experience, and background with which I am more familiar, I first turn to you in an appeal for action and leadership.

Very respectfully,

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature and name of the sender.

COPY

June 15, 1954

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
Jackson, Mississippi

Dear [REDACTED]

It is good to hear from you and I appreciate very much your taking time out to write me your letter of June 7th, and there is certainly much timely thought and many good ideas therein. This Supreme Court decision has presented possibly the gravest and most serious problem we shall ever have to face. I appreciate your very generous remarks concerning the Man Of The Week program and of course it pleases me that you approved and were pleased with my statements. I accepted the invitation to participate in that nationwide program to try to show to the people from other sections of the country just what our problem is and to point out that we were trying to be reasonable in seeking a solution.

I am taking the liberty of enclosing a copy of excerpts from a recent radio broadcast in which I discussed the Supreme Court decision, and also enclose a copy of the Congressional Record for May 18th, which contains some of my remarks on the floor of the Senate. My further thought is that this is a matter which will have to be settled in Mississippi at the county level, largely as such things have been settled in the past, with the white leaders making it clear to the negroes that we are willing for them to have better schools and want them to have better schools - but that the schools will continue to be separate. I feel that our negroes will accept our leadership on this question and of course if we sit down and let outsiders and agitators lead our negroes, then we shall have no one to blame except ourselves. I think some unofficial organization in each county, which would include our school leaders and other leaders from each community, could map out plans for the schools within that county, with each race its separate schools of course, and then this organization could take this plan to the negro leaders, especially the teachers and ministers, and make it clear that this was the plan of cooperation and that they will have better schools, but that the schools must continue to be separate. You are all too correct in that our negro leaders are going to be subjected to a lot of pressure from the outside not to go along with a plan such as I have outlined. I am opposed to abolishing our public school system except as a last resort and I feel that our negro leaders, with some encouragement, will cause most of our negroes to continue to be satisfied with separate schools - but it is up to us to give them the proper leadership in this direction.

I greatly appreciate your letter and hope that you will write me

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more often. Your thinking and observations will be very helpful and I shall also be glad to hear from you further on this school problem. You are certainly taking the necessary approach when you say that every individual citizen has a responsibility.

With all good wishes and hoping to see you in Mississippi again before too long, I am

Sincerely yours,

John Stennis  
United States Senator