

## Editorial

### *Who'd Miss 'Ole Miss' Lott?*

Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott's appalling, but sincere remark on the occasion of Sen. Strom Thurmond's 100th birthday party, may inadvertently contribute to a long-overdue house-cleaning in the Republican Party and in Washington. What is being tested is the pro-racist Southern Strategy, which has had control of *both* major political parties and of our leading policymaking institutions since the election of Richard Nixon in 1968.

Lott's statement, regardless of subsequent spin applied by him and the press, was unequivocally racist. He said: "I want to say this about my state: When Strom Thurmond ran for President, we voted for him. We're proud of it. And if the rest of the country had followed our lead, we wouldn't have had all these problems over all these years, either."

That's about as explicit an endorsement of Thurmond's Presidential platform—the save-segregation program of the States' Rights Party—as you can get.

Nor was this the first time that Lott, who served as a cheerleader for the segregated university of "Ole Miss" in his youth, put forward this racist sentiment. In an 1984 interview with *Southern Partisan*, the magazine of the Confederate "Lost Cause," Lott said, "A lot of the fundamental principles that Jefferson Davis believed in are very important today to people all across the country, and they apply to the Republican Party. It is the more conservative party. It is the party more concerned about not having government dominance. It is the party that believes the least government is the best government. . . . The platform we had in Dallas, the 1984 Republican platform, all the ideas we supported there—from tax policy to foreign policy, from individual rights to neighborhood security—are things that Jefferson Davis and his people believed in."

But, up until now, both parties have chosen to make light of, or disregard, such remarks, and even actions such as Lott's continued meetings with the Conservative Citizens' Councils of Mississippi, a very obvious, and light, makeover of the White Citizens Councils of yore. Nor were Lott's votes against civil rights in the Senate enough to get him in trouble. After all, both the Democratic and Republican parties have increasingly

embraced the anti-FDR ethos of the Southern racists, complete with allegiance to a Constitution stripped of the commitment to the General Welfare, as was Jefferson Davis's Confederate Constitution.

Lott himself has been rivalled by such pro-Confederates as Attorney General John Ashcroft, and no less prominent a "Democrat" than Al Gore, whose Presidential campaign ripped up the great civil rights achievement called the Voting Rights Act, during the 2000 elections.

But, increasingly over the last year, there have been signs that the Southern Strategy consensus is crumbling. Some of the "old guard," like Sen. Jesse Helms and Thurmond, have retired, and, more and more, the pro-Confederate base is being made up of the likes of crazed Christian Zionists, like Jerry Falwell and John Hagee. And as the depression crisis deepens, it becomes increasingly difficult for such ideologues for war, racism, and vicious budget austerity, to command broad popular support.

Thus, the Republican Party itself—the biggest beneficiary of the Southern Strategy—and even parts of its neo-conservative base, have reacted with alarm at Lott's self-revelation. Calls for his censure and resignation have been rife, including from traditionally Confederate-friendly quarters such as the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*. President Bush himself came out with a public, if soft, rebuke, and it is by no means certain that Lott will not be forced to "gracefully" withdraw as a candidate for Senate Majority leader. The Democrats, too, are being put to the test on their reaction.

Back in November 2000, Lyndon LaRouche emphasized the horror which the world rightfully felt at the United States being taken over by "this bunch of hooligans, typified by a guy who is, at very best, a Ku Klux Klan freak, fellow-traveller, Trent Lott." How lawful it would be, with LaRouche's emergence as the only competent political leader in this time of crisis, that KKK-supporter Trent Lott would be forced to resign his leadership post, if not his seat. It would be a step toward the revival of the FDR-style policies this nation so desperately needs.