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James R. Sweeney
Old Dominion University

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REVOLT IN VIRGINIA

Harry Byrd and the 1952 Presidential Election

by JAMES R. SWEENEY*

PRIOR to 1952 Virginians had voted for a Republican president only once in the twentieth century. In 1928 Herbert Hoover defeated Al Smith by 24,463 votes. Extraordinary circumstances produced that result. Smith's Catholicism and his opposition to Prohibition made him unacceptable to many Virginians, including the politically powerful Methodist Bishop James Cannon, Jr. By 1952 an entirely different political situation had developed in the Democratic Party, but Virginia Democrats were confronted with the same problem as in 1928, namely, whether or not to support a presidential candidate for whom they had a distinct lack of enthusiasm.¹ Since the inception of the New Deal, the dominant wing of the Virginia Democratic Party, headed by Senator Harry F. Byrd, Sr., had developed a growing disdain for the Democratic Party's presidential candidates. In 1960 Harry Byrd described his accustomed position during presidential campaigns: "I have found at times that silence is golden."²

By 1952 Senator Byrd had become completely estranged from the Democratic administration of Harry S. Truman. The *Richmond News Leader* reported a study by the *Congressional Quarterly* which indicated that Byrd was the "least Democratic Democrat." On party-line votes, i.e., votes in which a majority of the Democrats voted one way and a majority of Republicans the other, Byrd had voted with the Democrats thirty-one percent of the time in 1947 and fifty percent in 1948. He opposed the Greek-Turkish aid bill, the British loan, the Marshall Plan, and Point Four on grounds of economy and overcommitment. In early 1949 President Truman nominated his friend, Monrad C. Wallgren, former governor of Washington, to be head of the new National Security Resources Board, which was created to take over the duties of several wartime agencies such as the War Production Board. The nomination had to be confirmed by the Senate Armed Services Committee of which Byrd was a member. It was known that the six Republican members of the committee intended to vote against Wallgren's confirmation.

* Dr. Sweeney is an associate professor of history and archivist at Old Dominion University, Norfolk, Virginia.

¹ Ralph Eisenberg, *Virginia Votes, 1924-1968* (Charlottesville, 1971), p. 23; Virginius Dabney, *Virginia: The New Dominion* (Garden City, New York, 1971), pp. 484-487.

² Alden Hatch, *The Byrds of Virginia* (New York, 1969), p. 503.

Senator Byrd announced on March 14 that he had "reluctantly reached the conclusion that Mr. Wallgren does not possess the administrative qualifications from the standpoint of training, experience and competency to perform the extremely important functions" of the chairman of the National Security Resources Board. The Senate Armed Services Committee rejected Wallgren's nomination by a vote of seven to six with Byrd casting the deciding vote.³

As Senator Byrd's opposition to President Truman's program became more pronounced, the president's anger increased. In early May 1949 Byrd called for a ten percent cut in Truman's budget. He described Truman's farm program as "horrible" and said that the president's long-range spending proposals would mean deficits that would destroy the nation's credit or lead to confiscatory taxes and depression. On May 9 President Truman told Gilbert Harrison, national commander of the American Veterans Committee, that there were "too many Byrds in Congress." The senator was infuriated. "As long as I remain in the Senate," he declared, "I will vote as my conscience dictates and to represent the wishes of my constituents." Byrd added defiantly that, if the president intended to purge him from the Senate because he would not accept Truman's "dictation in matters of legislation, then I'll be on hand when the purging starts."⁴

Byrd continued his attacks on the Truman administration from a variety of public forums. At his annual apple orchard picnic in 1951 the senator stated, "If I were asked today to name the New Deal measures that I favor, I could not name a single one." Speaking before the Richmond Chamber of Commerce's annual forum on national affairs in November 1951, Byrd described the "Truman Democratic Party" as "a greater menace to this country than Russia." He added that southern Democrats should take "harsh measures" to save their party and their country. Invited to deliver the Jefferson-Jackson Day address to the Democrats of Georgia on June 25, Byrd administered a severe tongue-lashing in a speech entitled "The Truth at Washington as I See It." He described the president's budget as "the very height of fiscal irresponsibility." If President Truman's proposals on agriculture, medical care, and housing should be adopted, he predicted, "we would become a socialist state from which there can be no retreat." Truman's civil-rights program constituted "a mass invasion of State's rights." In a ref-

³ *Richmond News Leader*, July 22, 1948; *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, March 15, 16, 1949; *Washington Post*, October 19, 1952; Susan M. Hartmann, *Truman and the 80th Congress* (Columbia, Missouri, 1971), p. 63; Hatch, *The Byrds*, p. 483.

⁴ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, May 10, 1949.

erence to the scandals plaguing the administration, Byrd scored "the moral deterioration of government under Mr. Truman."⁵

The senator spoke out again at Selma, Alabama, in early November 1951. He declared that the South's political strength derived from the fact that it held the balance between the "Trumanites" and the Republicans. The South, the last bastion of resistance to Truman's Fair Deal, was challenged to save the Democratic Party and restore it as the party of states' rights, decency, honesty, and solvency. No longer, in Byrd's words, should "the Democrats of the South . . . permit the Trumanites to press down on the brow of America the undemocratic crown of waste, of Socialism and of dictation from Washington."⁶

President Harry S. Truman announced on March 30, 1952, that he would not be a candidate for reelection. Political leaders in Virginia, whether of the Byrd Organization or anti-Organization factions, approved the president's decision. Francis Pickens Miller, who had begun to give indications in February that he would oppose Senator Byrd in the Democratic primary, told reporters that he approved the president's decision to retire, but he believed that "On every one of the great issues which have confronted him, during his administration, the President has made the right decision. He has made the right decision on this one." Byrd, exploiting the hostility to Truman in Virginia, would not let Colonel Miller forget that statement.⁷

Senator Byrd seemed to be at the zenith of his political strength in 1952. One of the major themes of his campaign against Colonel Miller was the issue of "Trumanism," i.e., support of Truman's Fair Deal policies. Byrd asked whether or not Miller was a "Trumanite," and then boasted, "I am not a Truman Democrat. I am a true Democrat. There is a vast difference between the two." Miller answered, "I am not a Trumanite; I am a Democrat. My primary allegiance is . . . to the fundamental principles of the Democratic Party in which I believe." The challenger, however, could not dissociate himself from President Truman. When the ballots were counted on July 15, Byrd received 216,438 votes or 62.7 percent, while Miller polled only 128,869 votes or 37.3 percent. One of the reasons for Colonel Miller's

⁵ *Washington Evening Star*, August 26, 1951; *Norfolk Virginian-Pilot*, November 9, 1951; *Congressional Record*, 82 Congress, 1 Session (June 27, 1951).

⁶ "Political Revolt in the South," *United States News and World Report*, November 9, 1951, pp. 32-33.

⁷ *Norfolk Virginian-Pilot*, March 31, 1952. Miller, a former delegate from Fairfax County, had been the candidate of the anti-Organization faction in the 1949 gubernatorial primary. He had placed second among four candidates (Peter R. Henriques, "The Organization Challenged: John S. Battle, Francis P. Miller, and Horace Edwards Run for Governor in 1949," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, LXXII [1974], 372-406). Miller served in the U.S. Army during both World Wars; he had been a colonel on General Eisenhower's staff in World War II.

defeat was unquestionably the mantle of unpopularity he inherited from President Truman.⁸

Immediately after Senator Byrd's victory, Virginia's Democrats assembled for their state convention at Roanoke. The delegates seemed ready to instruct the delegation to the national convention for Senator Richard B. Russell of Georgia. The evening before the convention opened, Russell declared that a labor-management conference should be called to revise the Taft-Hartley Act. Virginia's Democratic leaders were stunned. They regarded the Taft-Hartley Act as the keystone of industrial peace. Russell-for-president buttons were thrown away; former Governor William M. Tuck removed a reference to the Georgian from his keynote speech and the move to endorse Russell died.⁹

Governor Tuck delivered a scathing keynote speech. He referred to the leadership of the national Democratic Party in the flamboyant rhetoric Virginians had come to expect from him:

The wastrels and the squanderers who already have debauched our currency and who would not hesitate to sacrifice the American people for their own selfish gain. . . . The National Democratic Party as at present constituted cannot long endure. Its very vitals have been eaten away by an insidious rot, foisted on it by politically ruthless, unprincipled and conscienceless men, more concerned with winning elections and a distribution of favors than with preserving a system of free government. . . .

Not only the South, but the country as a whole, virtually has been sold into Socialism by the architects of Democratic doom who have traded our party principles for a mess of Pendergast pottage.

Tuck concluded by hinting at a possible bolt by the Virginia Democratic Party from the Democratic nominee rather than "servilely genuflect to Trumanism and 'Fair Dealism.'" ¹⁰

The state convention chose Tuck to succeed state chairman G. Alvin Massenburg. It also adopted a resolution, as it did in 1948, to give the state central committee the power to recall the state convention after the Democratic National Convention to decide whether Virginia's Democrats wished to nominate their own presidential candidate. The delegation to the

⁸ *Norfolk Virginian-Pilot*, May 19, 20, 1952; Eisenberg, *Virginia Votes*, p. 192. For a more detailed account of the 1952 Democratic senatorial primary see the author's "Byrd and Anti-Byrd: The Struggle for Political Supremacy in Virginia, 1945-1954," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Notre Dame, 1973.

⁹ Benjamin Muse, "Virginia" in *Presidential Nominating Politics in 1952—the South*, edited by Paul T. David, Malcolm Moos, and Ralph Goldman (Baltimore, 1954), p. 19.

¹⁰ Text of speech delivered by William M. Tuck, July 17, 1952, Harry F. Byrd Papers, University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville.

national convention departed Roanoke for Chicago without instructions to support any candidate for the Democratic nomination.¹¹

The Democratic National Convention proved to be a tumultuous and nerve-wracking experience for the Virginia delegation. At the Monday evening session the convention adopted a loyalty pledge, the so-called "Moody Amendment" to its temporary rules.

Be it resolved, that this convention believes in the great American principle of majority rule. No delegate shall be seated unless he shall give assurance to the Credentials Committee that he will exert every honorable means available to him in any official capacity he may have to provide that the nominees of this convention for President and Vice-President through their names or those of electors pledged to them, appear on the election ballot under the heading, name or designation of the Democratic Party. Such assurance shall be given by the chairman of each delegation, and shall not be binding upon those delegates who shall so signify to the Credentials Committee prior to its report to this Convention.

The convention adopted an amendment which stated that the resolution was not to be considered as contravening any state laws or the instructions of state Democratic governing bodies.¹²

The Virginia delegation adamantly opposed taking any such oath. Senator A. Willis Robertson and Governor John S. Battle spoke against it on the floor of the convention. Senator Byrd described it as "improper, absurd and asinine." Specifically the leaders of the Virginia Democratic Party had two objections: a) Under Virginia law (Statutes of Virginia, Chapter 357, Acts of 1948) any properly certified nominee and electors of the national Democratic Party had to appear on the Virginia ballot provided the national party officers secured the proper certification in the time after the state convention reconvened to nominate its own candidates for president and vice president and before the filing deadline; b) The delegation believed it was acting under restricted powers because the State Convention had re-

¹¹ Muse, "Virginia," *Presidential Nominating Politics*, p. 20; J. Harvie Wilkinson, III, *Harry Byrd and the Changing Face of Virginia Politics, 1945-1966* (Charlottesville, 1968), p. 81. The resolution was in accordance with the so-called anti-Truman bill adopted by the 1948 Virginia General Assembly to show Virginia's displeasure with President Truman's civil-rights program. The bill provided that, if the nominee of the national Democratic Party were unacceptable to the Virginia Democrats, the state convention could reconvene and instruct the party's presidential electors to vote for someone else. The supporters of the national Democratic nominee then could get his name on the ballot by obtaining the signatures of one thousand voters and filing these with the State Board of Elections. See also James R. Sweeney, "The Golden Silence: The Virginia Democratic Party and the Presidential Election of 1948," *VMHB*, LXXII (1974), 351-371.

¹² Lewis Preston Collins, "The Memoir and Analysis of Virginia's Participation in the Chicago National Democratic Convention," August 6, 1952, pp. 3-4, John S. Battle Executive Papers, Virginia State Library, Richmond.

served to the State Central Committee the power to reconvene the State Democratic Convention after the Chicago convention. The Moody amendment, in fact, was a weak loyalty oath because it did not require any pledge to support the Democratic nominee. The Virginia leaders, however, believed that even this weak pledge might be construed as binding them to support the party's platform and nominee before either were known. The Moody amendment, then, had acquired a symbolic meaning in the minds of the Virginians which went beyond the actual words of the resolution as adopted by the convention.¹³

The Virginia delegation met in a caucus on Tuesday morning, July 22, to determine its course of action. After much discussion Tuck moved that a committee be appointed to draft a statement explaining Virginia's position. Governor Battle as chairman of the delegation appointed a six-man committee consisting of Tuck, Lieutenant Governor Lewis Preston Collins, Senator Charles R. Fenwick, Delegate George S. Aldhizer, former Congressman Norman R. Hamilton, and Delegate Lewis A. McMurrin. The committee reported back at another caucus at 4:00 P.M. The caucus approved unanimously the committee's reply to the Moody amendment. The committee's statement read as follows:

The Virginia delegation calls attention to the credentials and instructions previously filed with this convention and further directs attention to the Statutes of Virginia (Chaper 357, Acts of 1948) by which it is mandatory that the names of the nominees of this national convention and their electors be placed on the ballot of Virginia under the name of the national Democratic Party upon proper certification by the chairman of the Democratic National Committee.

This convention has notice of the freedom of action reserved to this delegation, as defined in the resolution of the Virginia Democratic Convention filed with this Convention and by reason of the laws of Virginia.

Governor Battle submitted that statement to the Credentials Committee and added that the Virginia delegation had unanimously directed that "no loyalty pledge be taken or agreed to by any . . . member of the delegation . . . under the Moody resolution."¹⁴

As the Wednesday session of the convention began, the chairman of the Credentials Committee submitted his report and listed Virginia as one of the states which had failed to give the required assurance under the Moody

¹³ Muse, "Virginia," *Presidential Nominating Politics*, p. 22; *Norfolk Virginian-Pilot*, July 22, 1952; Collins, "Memoir and Analysis," p. 2; James Latimer, "Virginia Politics, 1950-1960," undated manuscript in the possession of Mr. Latimer, p. 49.

¹⁴ Collins, "Memoir and Analysis," pp. 6-11; Muse, "Virginia," *Presidential Nominating Politics*, pp. 22-24.

amendment. The temporary chairman of the convention, Governor Paul Dever of Massachusetts, ruled that Virginia, South Carolina, and Louisiana, the three nonsigning states, could not vote on the Credentials Committee's report. The Democratic National Chairman, Frank McKinney, intervened to bring about a compromise. He invited Senator Byrd, Governor Battle, and Governors James F. Byrnes of South Carolina and Robert F. Kennon of Louisiana to a conference in his office at the rear of the platform. McKinney said that the party leaders, having reexamined the states' laws, were now prepared to seat Virginia, South Carolina, and Louisiana. Governor Battle and Senator Byrd were not satisfied with this concession. Battle said that the Virginians would "not be a party to any effort to seat this delegation by subterfuge." To prevent any misinterpretation of Virginia's stand by the public, Battle insisted on appearing before the convention to explain Virginia's "stand on principle" and refusal to be "rubber stamps for this convention or any other convention."¹⁵

Tuck suggested that Virginia, South Carolina, and Louisiana make a joint inquiry as to their status in the convention. A letter was sent to Sam Rayburn, the permanent chairman of the convention, which noted that the secretary of the convention had not been instructed to remove the names of the three nonsigning states from the permanent rolls. When the roll was called, the names of these states would be called. Yet the temporary chairman had ruled that they could not vote in the convention. The three states sought a ruling "as to whether or not we are entitled to full participation in the deliberations and votes of this convention." Rayburn did not answer the letter. He declared that he could not rule until the issue was presented on a convention roll call.¹⁶

Chairman Rayburn's statement set the stage for the dramatic events of the Thursday night session. When the roll call of the states to place in nomination candidates for the presidency reached Louisiana, that state yielded to Virginia by pre-arrangement. Governor Battle requested the privilege of stating a point of order. Amid much confusion and noise the tall governor found it difficult to read his statement into a low microphone. The delegation insisted that he go to the platform. Having reached the platform, Battle was recognized by Chairman Rayburn. The silver-haired governor spoke in tones of deep sincerity and conviction. He assured the convention that

¹⁵ Muse, "Virginia," *Presidential Nominating Politics*, pp. 24-25; Collins, "Memoir and Analysis," pp. 14-15.

¹⁶ Collins, "Memoir and Analysis," pp. 16-17; Muse, "Virginia," *Presidential Nominating Politics*, pp. 25-26.

Virginia law required placing the names of the nominees of the Democratic National Convention on the ballot. He made his main point in these words:

What, my Democratic friends, we in Virginia object to is the language of this Resolution under which it may be construed, as we construe it, that this Delegation and the Democrats of Virginia, insofar as we are able to commit them, would be committed to support any future action which might be taken by this Convention.

We are unwilling, frankly, to take the Pledge. . . . The great Vice-President of the United States said that this was a nation of free people living in a free country, and we are simply reserving to ourselves the freedom enunciated by Thomas Jefferson—in whose County I happen to live—the great patron saint of this Party, who believed in freedom of thought and freedom of action, and we are not going to sign any pledge or any commitment which will abridge that freedom which we claim for ourselves and believe you would like for yourselves.¹⁷

It has been alleged that Governor Battle had won a “great foot race” to the platform with former Governor Tuck who was “armed with a defiant Dixiecrat manuscript.”¹⁸ Tuck later disputed this version of the events. He has written that “Governor Battle, as chairman of the Virginia delegation was our logical spokesman. . . . He alone had the right to address the Convention at that juncture, hence it is absurd to say that I ‘raced him to the platform.’” Tuck did follow Battle to the platform, but his purpose was to “support and sustain him.” In fact, Tuck has recalled, “The sentiments he (Battle) expressed in his eloquent, forceful, and effective speech coincided with the views I had already expressed to him and others.”¹⁹

Battle’s eloquent oration impressed many of the delegates. Representative Lansdale G. Sasscer of Maryland moved that the convention regard Battle’s statement as being substantially in agreement with the Moody amendment. If the convention agreed with Sasscer, Virginia could be seated. Senator Willis Smith of North Carolina spoke in favor of the motion. Chairman Rayburn called for a voice vote. It was impossible to say whether the “ayes” or the “noes” had it. Rayburn asked for a roll call of the states. At first it seemed that Sasscer’s motion would be defeated but delegations began to change their votes. The Illinois delegation, declaring its “confidence in Governor Battle,” changed from forty-five “no,” fifteen “yes” to fifty-two “yes,” eight “no.”²⁰ The final tally read 615 in favor of the seating of Virginia,

¹⁷ Collins, “Memoir and Analysis,” p. 18; text of Governor Battle’s speech, July 24, 1952, Battle Executive Papers.

¹⁸ Wilkinson, *Harry Byrd*, p. 82; Virginius Dabney also repeats this story in *Virginia: The New Dominion*, p. 526.

¹⁹ William M. Tuck to the author, April 17, 1972.

²⁰ The action of the Illinois delegation was prompted by practical political considerations rather than sympathy for the Virginians. Colonel Jacob Arvey, the boss of the Chicago Demo-

529 against, and 86 not voting. Governor Battle returned to the platform and declared, "I shall never betray your confidence." Battle also moved that the South Carolina and Louisiana delegations be seated and after certain parliamentary maneuvers these delegations were seated. On the presidential nomination Senator Byrd had said, "I'm for Dick Russell . . . and I've no second choice in mind now." Virginia proceeded to cast its twenty-eight votes for the Georgia senator,²¹ but Governor Adlai E. Stevenson of Illinois won the nomination on the third ballot.

Governor Battle's actions at the Democratic Convention had made him a national figure and a Virginia hero. A crowd estimated at three thousand cheered him on his return to Richmond. The rejoicing over Virginia's stand at the national convention masked deep divisions among the leaders of the Byrd Organization over what course to pursue in the presidential campaign of Adlai E. Stevenson²² against the Republican nominee, General Dwight D. Eisenhower.

There was an early indication that the "high command" of the Virginia Democratic Party would accept Governor Stevenson. On July 31 Senator Robertson announced, "I shall . . . vote the straight Democratic ticket next November." He described Stevenson as "An honest and able man . . . who refused to be placed under obligation either to President Truman or the CIO." Robertson's statement disturbed Senator Byrd, who believed it was "premature" and showed "a lack of consideration for all of us." Troubled by the presidential campaign, the Senator wrote Tuck, "I made the main issue of my campaign anti-Trumanism and it is a difficult situation for me to meet before the election. I want your advice." G. Fred Switzer, Virginia's Democratic National Committeeman, advised Byrd that because of the approaching gubernatorial election in 1953, the Democratic State Central Committee should set up a campaign committee "with a State Manager in behalf of the entire Democratic ticket." He added, "I see no reason to go further than this."²³

cratic organization, later revealed his reasons for changing the Illinois vote. Summoned from dinner while the roll call was in progress, Arvey acted quickly to keep the Southerners from leaving the convention and thereby decreasing the total convention vote, and giving Senator Estes Kefauver of Tennessee, whom Arvey opposed, a better chance to win. Arvey's choice for the presidential nomination, Governor Adlai E. Stevenson, of Illinois, was in seclusion and offered no advice to the Illinois delegation.

²¹ Collins, "Memoir and Analysis," pp. 19-22; Muse, "Virginia," *Presidential Nominating Politics*, p. 26; Allan P. Sindler, "The Unsolid South: A Challenge to the Democratic National Party" in *The Uses of Power: 7 Cases in American Politics*, edited by Alan F. Westin (New York, 1962), pp. 260-267; *Norfolk Virginian-Pilot*, July 21, 1952.

²² Muse, "Virginia," *Presidential Nominating Politics*, p. 27.

²³ Statement of A. Willis Robertson, July 31, 1952, A. Willis Robertson Papers, Swem Library, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg; Harry F. Byrd to G. Fred Switzer, August

The Democratic State Central Committee met on August 28. The growing support for Stevenson among Democratic politicians had eliminated the possibility of calling back the state convention. Tuck, however, resigned as state chairman because he was "unwilling to choose a definite course" on the presidential election. Tuck has recalled that "about this time" he and Senator Byrd "tentatively agreed not to say anything at all in regard to the presidential campaign." The Committee chose T. Nelson Parker, an attorney from Richmond, to be the new state chairman. He was to open campaign headquarters and work for all the Democratic candidates, "state, national and local." Parker recalled that he and his associates campaigned vigorously for Stevenson. They established headquarters in the various sections of the state and spent all the money they could get—a total of twenty-one thousand dollars—in efforts to elect the Democratic nominee.²⁴

In mid-August an interesting exchange of correspondence occurred among Governors Battle and Stevenson and Senator Byrd. The senator wrote Governor Battle on August 14 that he had information from an "entirely credible source" that Governor Stevenson would announce his support for the following policies: a) a modification of Senate Rule 22 on unlimited debate; b) the immediate passage of federal legislation for repeal of the poll tax; c) the immediate passage of an anti-lynching law; d) the establishment of a Fair Employment Practices Commission; and e) federal aid to education. Byrd concluded, "In other words, I am told that he promised the President that he would support practically everything that we now know under the head of Trumanism." Governor Battle wrote to Adlai Stevenson to learn whether Byrd's allegations were correct. Without mentioning the senator's name, Battle informed Stevenson of the rumors which had reached his ears. The governor closed with the remark that "some expression from you would be extremely helpful."²⁵

Governor Stevenson replied most cautiously that he was "steering as best I can, albeit clumsily, between the countless pitfalls on this intricate and unfamiliar course." He knew that a "multitude of views" had been expressed about his positions. "As to the civil rights business," Stevenson continued, "I wish we had a chance to talk." He was convinced that the "sledge hammer approach has been all wrong." A compulsory FEPC could not be

2, 1952, and Switzer to Byrd, August 8, 1952, G. Fred Switzer Papers, University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville; Byrd to William M. Tuck, August 1, 1952, Byrd Papers.

²⁴ Muse, "Virginia," *Presidential Nominating Politics*, p. 27; Tuck to J. R. Sweeney, November 27, 1972; personal interview with T. Nelson Parker, April 3, 1972.

²⁵ Harry F. Byrd to John S. Battle, August 14, 1952, Battle Executive Papers; Battle to Adlai E. Stevenson, Jr., August 19, 1952, Byrd Papers.

enacted into law, and much could be done without it. The candidate stated that Senator Russell felt "confident that the South will support a poll tax constitutional amendment and that an anti-lynching law, although obsolete, could readily be enacted." If, in addition, "something on the employment discrimination line" could be done, "I think we will have demonstrated both our purposes and direction as a party and have fully satisfied the expectations of the more moderate and understanding Negro leaders." On federal aid to education the governor had "not formulated my views conclusively," but, he added, "we may have to help medical schools and very soon." Stevenson assured Battle that none of the issues which the Virginian had listed had even been mentioned when he had met with President Truman. Governor Battle forwarded his correspondence with Stevenson to Senator Byrd. Stevenson's positions must not have displeased Governor Battle too much, because, after the State Central Committee meeting in late August, he endorsed Stevenson's candidacy and described him as a "high type, Christian gentleman."²⁶

The anti-Organization leaders cooperated with the State Central Committee in its campaign for Stevenson. Francis Pickens Miller informed Wilson Wyatt of Stevenson's national headquarters that Nelson Parker was "an honest man and . . . he is doing the very best he can." Miller had decided that the proper strategy for the anti-Organization people was "to encourage Byrd Organization men to carry the ball, and for us to give them our active support." He assumed that if many Organization men supported Stevenson aggressively, and if the anti-Organization leaders roused the enthusiasm of their supporters, then Stevenson could carry Virginia. Miller, Robert Whitehead, and Martin Hutchinson, however, became disillusioned very quickly with the campaign being conducted for Stevenson by the Democratic State Central Committee. They believed that they were being kept in the background and not given sufficient speaking engagements. Miller concluded that Parker's campaign for Stevenson was "a holding operation" giving the national Democratic Party the impression that a campaign was being waged while at the same time preventing Whitehead, Miller, and Hutchinson "from giving any public leadership to our people." Parker has denied that the anti-Organization men were placed in a subordinate role during the campaign. He consulted with Miller and Whitehead "on various occasions" during the campaign. Stevenson's position in Virginia was such

²⁶ Adlai E. Stevenson, Jr., to John S. Battle, August 23, 1952, Battle to Harry F. Byrd, August 27, 1952, Byrd Papers; *Norfolk Virginian-Pilot*, August 29, 1952.

that, as Parker has said, "we were very anxious to have any help we could get." Some of the Organization's supporters even accused Parker of favoring the anti-Organization men because he utilized their services at all.²⁷

Parker invited Governor Stevenson to speak in Richmond. The candidate spoke on September 20 before a crowd of five thousand, which overflowed the Mosque. Governor Battle and Senator Robertson were present at the rally, but Senator Byrd was absent. George Kelley, a political writer for the *Norfolk Virginian-Pilot*, reported that several people believed that Virginia would be "in the bag" for Stevenson, if Byrd would only endorse him.²⁸

Senator Byrd announced on October 13 that he would make an address on the "Issues of the Campaign" on Friday evening, October 17. Miller informed an aide at Stevenson's national headquarters of Byrd's speech. He wrote, "No one in Richmond has the slightest inkling of what he is going to say. If he throws his full weight on one side or the other, his speech may very well decide the outcome of the election in Virginia." A few days before Byrd's announcement Governor Battle had spoken at Lebanon, in Russell County, and had praised Stevenson for his forthrightness. He had declared, "Yes, we have a man of ability, experience, integrity and high courage. I shall support him and I commend him to you." Byrd telephoned Tuck on Sunday evening, the day after Battle's speech. Tuck later recalled that Byrd believed "we should explain to the people of Virginia through some method, either by a public speech or by a newspaper or radio statement, why we had not endorsed Stevenson." Tuck replied that he would do whatever the senator thought best. Byrd suggested that a statement on the radio would be best and that Tuck should speak first and "after he spoke there would be no interest in what I had to say."²⁹

After making his difficult decision to speak out, Senator Byrd wrote to his intimate friend, Frank Wysor of Pulaski County, that because of the governor's speech at Lebanon, "I have reluctantly reached the conclusion that I should make a statement by radio on Friday night. I feel this will have some bad repercussions, but I will handle it the best I can." The basic question, as Byrd saw it, was that "everything that the (Democratic) candidates

²⁷ Francis Pickens Miller to Wilson W. Wyatt, September 24, 1952, Francis Pickens Miller Papers, University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville; Miller to Wyatt, October 21, 1952, Martin A. Hutchinson Papers, University of Virginia Library; T. Nelson Parker to the author, August 2, 1972. Hutchinson, an attorney in Richmond, had challenged Byrd unsuccessfully in the 1946 senatorial primary. Whitehead was an independent Democratic delegate from Nelson County.

²⁸ *Norfolk Virginian-Pilot*, September 21, 1952.

²⁹ Francis Pickens Miller to Wilson W. Wyatt, October 14, 1952, Miller Papers; *Norfolk Virginian-Pilot*, October 12, 1952; William M. Tuck to J. R. Sweeney, November 27, 1972.

and the platform stand for were made issues in my campaign, and I was nominated in opposition to these measures.”³⁰

Harry Byrd spoke over a state-wide radio network on Friday evening, October 17, 1952. He began, “In my twenty years in the Senate I have fought many lone battles. Rightly or wrongly I have not always trod the popular road.” He attacked the Truman Administration for its fiscal policies, the proposed repeal of the Taft-Hartley Act, and its civil-rights program. In the senatorial primary, Byrd continued, “I was nominated as a Virginia Democrat and during the campaign repeatedly stated that I was not a Truman Democrat.” He declared that Trumanism had been the dominant issue of the senatorial campaign and was again the most important issue of the presidential election. If he were to support a candidate urging a continuation of Truman’s policies, Byrd declared, he could not be true to the pledges which he made in the primary campaign. He said in conclusion: “I will not, and cannot, in good conscience, endorse the Democratic platform or the Stevenson-Sparkman ticket. Endorsement means to recommend, and this I cannot do.”³¹

Tuck delivered his speech over a state-wide radio network on October 22. He described Governor Stevenson as “a Truman dominated candidate,” who would seek to enact the Truman program if he were elected. Stevenson had “succeeded in attracting to his standard a motley collection of many of the most evil influences in America” such as the Americans for Democratic Action and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. He concluded:

I am a Democrat. I always intend to be a Democrat. I have not shifted my views on fundamental questions. Candor compels me to say that the Eisenhower platform in many vital particulars as well as the Eisenhower candidacy more nearly conforms to traditional principles of the Democratic Party than does the Truman platform or the Truman candidate.

I cannot endorse Stevenson and become affiliated with his campaign.³²

The anti-Organization Democrats were shocked by Byrd’s speech. Colonel Miller declared, “The implications of Senator Byrd’s statement for the Democratic Party in Virginia are so serious that it will be some time before the full consequences of his action can be determined.” Miller accused Byrd of betraying the party and pledged that “Under the leadership of

³⁰ Harry F. Byrd to J. Frank Wysor, October 14, 1952, Byrd Papers.

³¹ Text of speech by Harry F. Byrd, October 17, 1952, Byrd Papers.

³² Text of speech by William M. Tuck, October 22, 1952, Byrd Papers.

Governor Battle . . . we will carry Virginia for Stevenson and Sparkman in spite of Harry Byrd." Robert Whitehead believed that Byrd "lacked the courage of his convictions" because "he stopped short of saying that he was voting the Republican ticket." Henry Howell, an attorney in Norfolk, wrote that Byrd was obligated for his election to the Republican voters, and in his speech he had "paid his debt to the Taft wing of the Republican Party which will control General Eisenhower if he is elected."³³

The press generally applauded Senator Byrd's speech. The *Richmond Times-Dispatch* described the address as "a credit to his [Byrd's] integrity" in which he demonstrated "a devotion to principle in keeping with his long and courageous career of public service." The *Norfolk Virginian-Pilot* praised Byrd for his "sincerity and conviction." In the opinion of the *Lynchburg News*, it was "one of the best speeches the Senator had ever made."³⁴

The speech undoubtedly destroyed whatever chance Adlai Stevenson might have had for carrying Virginia. Parker later remarked that Byrd had informed him that he could not support Stevenson. The people at Democratic State Headquarters had been hoping for another "golden silence" on Byrd's part and they were most upset by the senator's speech. State Senator A. E. S. Stephens of Smithfield, who had been nominated to succeed the deceased Lieutenant Governor L. Preston Collins, campaigned vigorously for Stevenson. He later said that if the Byrd Organization had actively supported Stevenson, the Illinois governor would have carried Virginia. Lewis F. Powell, Jr., a prominent attorney in Richmond and a supporter of Eisenhower, wrote Senator Byrd, "I believe your speech was a turning point in the campaign, as it influenced a number of other leaders as well as countless thousands of voters."³⁵

The Byrd Organization was much divided as election day approached. Speaker E. Blackburn Moore of the House of Delegates made a statement similar to the broadcast speeches of Byrd and Tuck. He declared that, "Believing as I do in the principles of government asserted by the 1952 Virginia Democratic Convention, I feel that I cannot conscientiously recommend or endorse the Stevenson-Sparkman ticket." Moore was a neighbor of Sena-

³³ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, October 18, 1952; Robert Whitehead to Francis Pickens Miller, October 18, 1952, Miller Papers; *Norfolk Virginian-Pilot*, October 21, 1952. Henry Howell later served in both houses of the General Assembly, was elected lieutenant governor of Virginia in 1971, and was an unsuccessful candidate for governor in 1969, 1973, and 1977.

³⁴ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, October 18, 1952; *Norfolk Virginian-Pilot*, October 19, 1952; *Lynchburg News*, October 18, 1952.

³⁵ Parker interview; personal interview with A. E. S. Stephens, March 6, 1972; Lewis F. Powell, Jr., to Harry F. Byrd, November 6, 1952, Byrd Papers. Powell was appointed by President Richard M. Nixon to the United States Supreme Court in 1971.

tor Byrd in Berryville, a fellow apple-grower, and the senator's favorite hiking companion. Many other high Democratic officials, however, had endorsed Stevenson's candidacy. In addition to Senator Robertson and Governor Battle prominent Democrats supporting Stevenson included Congressmen Howard W. Smith, Watkins Abbitt, Porter Hardy, Jr., J. Vaughan Gary, Thomas Stanley, Attorney General J. Lindsay Almond, Jr., and State Senator A. E. S. Stephens.³⁶

Dwight D. Eisenhower carried Virginia in 1952 with 349,037 votes (56.3 percent) to 268,677 votes (43.4 percent) for Adlai E. Stevenson. Eisenhower carried sixty-five of Virginia's counties to Stevenson's thirty-three. Stevenson's strength was concentrated in a block of four counties in southwest Virginia, and in nineteen counties across the Southside.³⁷ Of twenty-nine independent cities Eisenhower carried twenty-five. Stevenson won Hopewell, Newport News, Portsmouth, and South Norfolk. Senator Byrd believed the result in Virginia was "magnificent." "I do not think," he wrote, "we will be treated with such contempt by the National Party in the future." On election night Harold S. Vanderbilt of New York had telephoned his congratulations to Senator Byrd and General Eisenhower. He said to the president-elect, "General, I have just had Senator Harry Byrd of Virginia on the 'phone and he told me that, in his opinion, Virginia was in the bag, and he asked me to tell you how glad he was." Eisenhower replied, "That man is a wonderful guy, isn't he?"³⁸

In its postelection analysis the *Norfolk Virginian-Pilot* stressed the importance of the attitude of Virginia's leaders in explaining Virginia's "historic vote." Not only had the state given its electoral vote to a Republican, General Eisenhower, but also three Republicans, Joel Broyhill, Richard Poff, and William Wampler, were elected to the House of Representatives from Virginia's Tenth, Sixth, and Ninth Districts, respectively. The *Virginian-Pilot* believed that General Eisenhower, possessing "fine merits in his own right" and burdened with "no long record of Republicanism to embarrass traditional Democrats," provided an attractive alternative for conservative Virginians to Governor Stevenson, who failed to dissociate himself from the

³⁶ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, October 28, 1952; Wilkinson, *Harry Byrd*, p. 83; Muse, "Virginia," *Presidential Nominating Politics*, p. 28. Eight of the nine members of Virginia's delegation in the United States House of Representatives supported Stevenson. Representative Burr Harrison of the Seventh District (the Shenandoah Valley) remained neutral.

³⁷ The four southwestern counties were Buchanan, Dickenson, Russell, and Wise. The Southside counties were Nansemond, Southampton, Greensville, Brunswick, Mecklenburg, Halifax, Pittsylvania, Henry, Patrick, Campbell, Appomattox, Buckingham, Charlotte, Lunenburg, Dinwiddie, Prince George, Surry, Sussex, Isle of Wight.

³⁸ Eisenberg, *Virginia Votes*, pp. 181-184; Harry F. Byrd to R. H. Gore, November 5, 1952, Harold S. Vanderbilt to Byrd, November 5, 1952, Byrd Papers.

Fair Deal policies of President Truman. Colonel Francis Pickens Miller offered an election analysis of his own. He stated that "the Democratic Party in Virginia has been sold down the river by some of its erstwhile leaders." "The Trojan horse tactics of these renegades" had cost the Democratic Party three seats in Congress. "The job now," Miller concluded, "is to reconstruct a Democratic Party in Virginia under the leadership that can be trusted."³⁹

Intraparty strife in the Democratic household has continued in Virginia since 1952 accompanied by a resurgence of the state's Republican Party. The liberal elements have captured control of the Democratic Party while conservatives have drifted into independent or Republican status. Since 1952 the Democratic presidential candidate has carried Virginia only once—in 1964 when Lyndon B. Johnson defeated Barry M. Goldwater by 76,704 votes. In 1972 Richard Nixon received 67.8 percent of the vote while the Democratic nominee George McGovern polled only 30.1 percent. The Republican Party had captured and retained the governorship and had increased its share of Virginia's delegation in the House of Representatives to seven out of ten seats by 1973. Senator Harry F. Byrd's stand in the 1952 presidential election had been most significant. He had raised the standard of a political revolt that is still going on in the Old Dominion a quarter century later.⁴⁰

³⁹ *Norfolk Virginian-Pilot*, November 5, 1952; statement by Francis Pickens Miller, November 5, 1952, Miller Papers.

⁴⁰ Eisenberg, *Virginia Votes*, p. 24; *Official Election Results—1972* (Richmond, 1973), p. 7; Nixon received 988,493 votes to 438,887 for McGovern.