

Anti-Conservative Plot?

Novel Suppressed, Thurmond Says

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Sen. Strom Thurmond (R-S.C.), unable to find a copy of a recent novel about conservative politics has charged that a conspiracy exists among Washington bookstores to suppress conservative literature. He says a congressional investigation may be in order.

In a speech in the Senate recently, Thurmond said he had tried to track down "The Spirit of '76," a fictionalized account by syndicated columnist Holmes Alexander of the election of a conservative president in 1976.

Of the 45 area stores queried, the Senator said, 36 said they were not carrying the book and the rest said they could order it or didn't have it in stock at the moment.

"I think there is certainly ground for suspicion that there are some bookburners somewhere in the background," Thurmond said. "This is a fast-moving story about politics and intrigue... One would think this is the sort of book that any bookstore would want to put on its shelves; a book that should sell at least reasonably well, and bring profits to the bookstore proprietor."

Cities Book Reviews

The Senator who was a States' Rights candidate for President in 1948, entered several newspaper reviews into the record to attest to the novel's merit. "Sprightly," said the Omaha World-Herald. "It should enrage the liberals, if they ever read it," said the Buffalo Courier-Express, "and doubtless it will even offend many middle-of-the-roaders while, of course, delighting the conservatives."

Thurmond said he has "noted this situation before" when trying to locate conservative literature here. "If the situation persists, I think the rights of free speech and of free press are involved in this

kind of situation to such an extent that a careful investigation by a Committee would be in order, to determine the forces seeking to suppress certain books by preventing or curtailing their sale and distribution."

Stanley Loth, manager of Brentano's F Street branch, said his store has copies of Alexander's book, which was published last September by Arlington House in New Rochelle, N.Y., an arm of the Conservative Book Club. Loth said Brentano's would not re-

fuse to stock books because of their political overtones and said he doubted if most stores would suppress any literature in demand. "Book sellers are not that type," he said.

Sales to Friends

Area booksellers agreed. "If it sells, we'll stock it," was the consensus.

"We simply don't have the calls for these minor publishing houses," said James Tenney, owner of the Savile Book Shop in Georgetown. He said he had looked over "The Spirit of '76" but decided not to stock it.

"My feelings were that if we did sell it, it would be to friends of the author to have on their coffee tables," he said.

The Savile, Tenney said, carries a heavy stock of conservative literature.

Columnist Alexander, who says his book has sold about 15,000 copies nationally, doesn't necessarily accuse bookstores of keeping conservative literature off their shelves, although he thinks "there's a public accommodation issue here." The conspiracy, he says, lies elsewhere.

"In the liberal establishment there are book burners who try to destroy books. They are just as guilty as Hitler." The main character in "The Spirit of '76" is a Republican from Virginia.