

October 23, 1941

Hon. Harry S. Truman,  
Senate Office Building,  
Washington, D. C.

My dear Senator:

I have read and re-read your letter of October 9th with a great deal of interest.

I think you are absolutely right in not attempting to reorganize the democratic machinery in Missouri at this time and that it will be much better to let more water run under the bridge. I am not, however, giving up the idea that eventually you should take the lead in revamping the party machinery. The opportunity is too good to pass up for your own good awl for the good of the party. In agreeing with your letter of October 9th I am merely agreeing that it is wise to defer action for the time being.

Before receiving your letter of October 9th I had received certain information which led me to believe that it would be wise to let matters rest for the time being and after receiving your letter and further information which I have picked up, I am convinced that you are right in not attempting to do anything at this time.

Colonel Bob Walton was in to see me last week and to agrees that no attempt should be made to reorganize the party at this time. He holds the same view as you, namely, that if an attempt should be made now to straighten out things, that the Stark and Clark farces would jump into the fight up to their ears and it would be a knock-down, drag-out affair between the Clark and Stark forces and whichever one emerged victor would be bad for the party. Walton says that neither Clark nor Stark can successfully lead the party and that you are the only man who can do so. to understands that neither Mrs. McDaniel nor Hulen will resign and it would to foolish for you to attempt to do something for the party at this time.

Following the convention of the Women's Democratic Clubs at Jefferson City, I wrote to Mrs. Schuyler Smith of St. Louis and requested that she give me a report of the happenings at that meeting. She gave was a lengthy report in which she stated that Mrs. Tillet and Miss Hickok of the National Headquarters, Washington, D.C., came out to attend this meeting. Mrs. Smith had a three-hour conference with these ladies. The Missouri situation was very thoroughly discussed and Mrs. Tillet asked Mrs. Smith

numerous questions. Mrs. Smith told these ladies that you were the only man in the state who was in a position to reorganize the party and lead it out of its present bad situation in this state. Mrs. Smith informed them that you had received little recognition from the Roosevelt administration and that your continued loyal support certainly warranted their giving every support and that you could save the situation in this state if you had the proper support of the National administration.

Mrs. Tillet said that she considered her trip to Missouri very worthwhile and that she was going back to Washington to take the matter up with Flynn and that she and Flynn would call on you and that they would offer you every support and that through the White House and through the National Office, every courtesy would be extended to you and Mrs. Truman to make you feel that you had the entire sympathy and support of the administration. Whether this will happen I do not know but at least Mrs. Tillet is in favor of such a move on the part of the National administration and on the part of the National organization. I shall be interested to know what Mrs. Tillet is able to accomplish along this line.

Mrs. Smith informed me that Mrs. Tillet had invited her (Mrs. Smith) to address a women's democratic meeting at Des Moines, Iowa, on October 22nd. I shall expect another report from Mrs. Smith on this meeting and doubtless she will have further information from Mrs. Tillet.

Mrs. Smith further informed me that both Mrs. Tillet and Miss Hickok are thoroughly disgusted with Mrs. McDaniel and they had little or nothing to do with her during the Jefferson City convention.

Mrs. Smith further informed me she had a talk with Marion Hulen at Jefferson City and he informed her that he plans to go into St. Louis county very soon for a three days reorganization campaign.

She says that nothing could be worse than Marion Hulen attempting to reorganize in St. Louis county.

I am further informed that Mrs. Sanders, State Vice-Chairman of the Women's Democratic Clubs, has informed the six State Chairman Directors of the Women's Division that their terms have been terminated. This includes the term of Mrs. Smith who has been State Radio Chairman and from all accounts that I have received she has been

a good one. Any way, the information I had is that the women's organization is to be packed with Stark women. For example, I am reliably informed that Mrs. Witten of Versailles, Director of Finance, has been told that her successor in office will be a Mrs. Thurman of Pike County. That Mrs. Sanders told Mrs. Witten that she had received a substantial check from Mrs. Lloyd C. Stark for the work of the democratic women in this state and that she was holding this check to give to her new appointee, Mrs. Thurman of Pike County. It seems that no one ever heard of Mrs. Thurman.

From the foregoing it is quite evident and very clear that Stark is devoting considerable time and effort toward gaining control of the women's organization in this state. He is gaining their support for the reason that the women for the most part, as I understand it, are with the President on his foreign policy and they are thoroughly disgusted with Bennett Clark and since they will not go with Clark they are turning to Stark. I am further informed that it is quite evident that the McDaniel supporters are casting their lot with Clark. I am further informed that Stark has or soon will open up an office in the Boatmen's Bank Building in St. Louis. This matter will have to be checked further.

Mrs. Smith advised me that she recently saw Allen McReynolds in St. Louis and that McReynolds told her about his conversation with you, that McReynolds stated he did not consider himself the one to take the lead in reorganizing the party and that he had issued a call for the reorganization in the hope of rallying together all those who would put their shoulders to the wheel to rebuild the party. McReynolds further stated that if you took the lead, as it appeared you might do, that he would be most willing to work with you and assist in any way possible. Mrs. Smith also says that Russell Dearmont is of the same frame of mind. She further says that everyone with whom she has talked has the utmost confidence in you and they are all looking to you for leadership.

I have previously sent you a copy of a letter that I wrote to Wayne Coy. I enclose a copy of his reply.

I assume that you take the Kansas City Journal and that you have read with much interest the articles by Kenneth P. Middleton on the prison situation and about Stark having his furniture and clothes made at the penitentiary. I enclose two of these articles and in the event that you have not seen all of them I will send you the entire list of articles.

Doubtless you have heard of a movement on foot by Williamson, President of the Young Democrats to hold a "harmony" dinner at Jefferson City sometime in November.

Personally I am against such an idea at this time. I doubt if a harmony dinner this fall would accomplish very much in view of present conditions in this state and I doubt the advisability of Flynn coming out to such a dinner at this time. I think you ought to control this situation and if a harmony dinner is held you certainly should come back and attend the dinner and accompany Flynn to this state if he comes out here.

It seems to me that such a dinner would be much better next spring and possibly it might be a good idea to hold such a dinner, say in Kansas City just prior to the city election, but all of this is a matter to think about before coming to any conclusion as to whether a dinner should be held at all or not and if so where it should be held. After all, Jefferson City may be the best place to hold it. I don't know.

I have written you about the turmoil in the Commodity Credit Corporation where two Republicans, Lathrop and Walton, are firing the Democrats and keeping on the Republicans. Ralph McNergny told me yesterday that it is awful the way they are doing. With reference to the above firings I was informed that Jim Aylward said that you were too much occupied with other matters to look after the jobs of local Democrats. I sent word back to him that you are not too much occupied to look after a local situation, that you were doing the very best you could, but so far you had not been able to secure any support from the administration. I don't know whether my word reached him or not but I didn't like his remark and I didn't hesitate to air my thoughts on the matter. I am giving you this in confidence for your information.

I am glad to know that you are going to call the Missouri Congressmen together and give them the information as to the real situation in Missouri. I know that you are more familiar with our situation than anyone in the state. You have been over the state and talked with the men who are able to give you the real facts.

Doubtless you know that Harry Newman of Washington has bought into the Kansas City Journal and that he is now editor of the paper. McPherson is staying on as President and Associate Editor. Just what the hook-up and the new arrangement is I don't know. I met Newman a couple of days ago. He is from Washington and you may know him.

With personal regards and best wishes, I remain

Very cordially yours,

WAK:BP

Encs.