

STATINTL

Dodd's Image in Connecticut Unstained by Charges

By Richard Herwood
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HARTFORD, Conn. April 2—As a missile would fly, Hartford is roughly 312 air miles from the cloak room of the United States Senate. Just next door, so to speak.

It is as remote as Murmansk, however, from Sen. Thomas Dodd's present Washington tribulations.

Within the political community here, there is a vague awareness that columnists Drew Pearson and Jack Anderson have written an unflattering version of the Senator's life and times and that the Senate Committee on Conduct and Standards is quietly and in its own good time exploring the whole affair.

Image Remains Bright

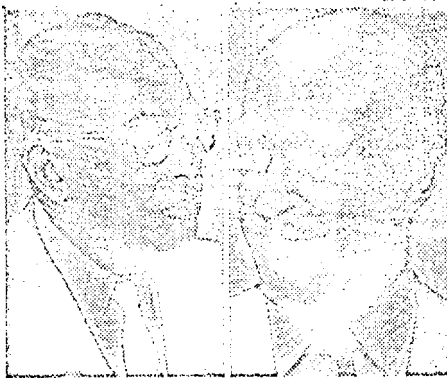
But beyond that, Washington's newest approximation of a political scandal has hit Connecticut with all the impact of a cotton candy fragment. The image of the white-maned, Roman-nosed senior Senator ("he really would look good in a toga") remains bright.

As the leaders of the Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus Assembly in the Northern District of Connecticut put it a few days ago, Dodd is "unstained from the malicious and slanderous articles being published by certain newspaper gossip columnists."

A more common reaction came this week from a puzzled Republican Committeeman in Westport in the heart of exurbia: "The Dodd Case? What Dodd case?"

This vacancy of mind is the product of several factors, the first being that Pearson and Connecticut have barely a nodding acquaintance. The two daily and three weekly newspapers that ordinarily carry his column boast a combined circulation of no more than 50,000 among a population of nearly 3 million. And for the Dodd columns, Pearson's audience has been even smaller (roughly 30,000) because three of his clients have not printed them.

It is common practice, of course, for



SEN. DODD PEARSON
... Connecticut calm; Washington storm

newspapers to plagiarize one another and to get onto the trail of a story someone else has dug up. But in this affair, Connecticut's major papers have reacted with passive caution, in part because Pearson's batting average is erratic and in part because the trail is both cold and unreal.

An example is the Pearson allegation that Dodd has been under the influence of Julius Klein, American lobbyist for West German interests.

"That may mean something in Washington," Republican State Chairman A. Searle Pinney observes, "but it doesn't mean anything here. Nobody ever heard of Julius Klein."

Pinney, on the other hand, has taken a professional interest in Pearson's other principal allegation: that Dodd's 1964 campaign finance reports are full of discrepancies. The Republican problem here is that there is no way to check up because the records have been destroyed by the Connecticut Secretary of State in a routine house-cleaning action that is permissible under State law.

Another problem is that some of Pearson's specific charges haven't checked out.

Item: Pearson claimed in a column on March 14 that Dodd had listed a

campaign expense of \$10,200 for printing done by the University Press of Cambridge at Roxbury, Mass.: "A company spokesman recalled that University Press had done absolutely no printing for Dodd in 1964. In fact the company wrote off as a bad debt a printing bill left over from the Senator's 1956 campaign."

S. M. Cowan, president of the printing company, tells a different story. Dodd did pay him \$10,200 following the 1964 campaign in payment of a printing debt—secured by Dodd's personal note—which dated back to Dodd's losing campaign for the Senate in 1956.

If more politicians would be as honorable about their debts as Sen. Dodd," said Cowan, "I'd be a lot better off. He is outstanding as a man who really kept his word."

Item: Pearson reported on March 25 that Dodd's income in 1961 included a \$50,000 fee from "Jimmy Hoffa's Teamsters Union."

The evidence suggests that the \$50,000 was a fee earned in 1957 before Dodd entered the Senate and that his client was not Hoffa, but a dissident group of Teamsters who had gone to court to keep Hoffa out of office.

Whatever the real facts, the Connecticut press and the Connecticut Republican Party have been reluctant to get into such uncertain waters.

Dodd is not up for reelection until 1970, so there is no urgency to this affair. Furthermore, he has managed to create an all-purpose political image which the Republicans despair of puncturing.

Battled Dillinger

"He's the only politician I ever heard of," said one GOP leader, "who was endorsed by Steve Allen one day and Clare Boothe Luce the next. He's got the labor unions, the Catholics, the ADA, the Italians, the Poles. We even had Goldwater-Dodd clubs in Connecticut in 1964."

This is all explicable. Dodd got out of Yale Law School in 1933, flunked the

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state bar exam, joined the FBI, and had the good political fortune to take part in a gun battle at Rhineland, Wis., with John Dillinger.

A year later he took over the National Youth Administration in Connecticut, worked up to an appointment in the Justice Department where, as he could later claim, he prosecuted the Ku Klux Klan in South Carolina, and took part in anti-espionage investigations during World War II.

After the war, he was a prosecutor of Nazis at the Nuremberg trials, an early and vocal anti-Communist, and was finally admitted to the bar through an act of judicial dispensation.

Thus, his political career was launched. In 1952 and 1954 he was the only Democrat in the Connecticut House delegation. He made it to the Senate in 1958 and is now regarded as a fixture in that office.

Backed by Labor

His anti-Communist credentials are universally acknowledged. His domestic liberalism earns him high marks from ADA and the AFL-CIO. He is top-drawer at the White House, having been a lonely Connecticut advocate of Lyndon Johnson for President in 1960.

Dodd went home to Hartford on the night of February 26, a month after the Pearson columns about him began to appear. The occasion was the Jefferson-Jackson Day dinner and the ballroom at the Statler Hilton was filled with 2000 party functionaries attracted by the evening's featured performer, Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.).

Dodd got there late and as he stepped up to make a little speech, the ovation began. People started standing up and in a moment everyone in the room was on his feet. It went on and on and by the time Dodd sat down it was clear he had no political problems with that crowd.