

acceptable to the party, with the most radical of three contenders, Klaus-Uwe Benneter. This 30-year-old Berlin lawyer (the Jusos' age limit is a rather mature 35 years) subscribes to the so-called *Stamokap* theory, which sees in the modern capitalist state little more than the arm of monopoly capitalism.

The Stamokap theory, however, is not the major source of conflict between the Jusos and the party. It may hurt the party's public image among middle-class voters, but it is contradicted by the Jusos' ultimate willingness to work for reform within the system in the absence of any revolutionary prospects. The real issue is Benneter's intention to lead his group into collaboration with the DKP and its satellite organizations such as the "Committee for Peace, Disarmament and Cooperation." Such connections have long been banned in the SPD.

Benneter, meanwhile, has been talking out of both sides of his mouth: in an interview in the *Spiegel* he intimated that he might pull back from such collaboration for purely tactical reasons; in the radical monthly *Konkret* he says that he envisages a separation from the SPD. The party's Executive Committee has seized upon the *Konkret* interview to suspend Benneter as Juso chairman, and has initiated proceedings to expel him from the party. This, in effect, means a kind of split within the Young Socialist organization whose form will probably minimize the radicals' exodus. The party's right wing has long advocated such a step, and only the intervention of Brandt and his associates had kept open this avenue for a badly needed input of new blood and thereby brought a number of promising young leftists into the Bundestag and government.

The Jusos themselves have been beset by problems of recruitment because of the recent change of spirit among students who in Germany as elsewhere are now more interested in careers than in changing the world.

In a number of local organizations—the city of Munich is the most notable example—Jusos have managed to achieve control, often with disastrous political results, including the threat of secession by the right wing of the SPD. As students and young academics, Juso members have at times outtalked and outlasted the ordinary membership in long night meetings, pushing through resolutions and delegate slates after many of the older members with jobs and family had gone home. These tactics have alienated many old cadres. Besides, much of

the Jusos' verbal radicalism is exploited and used against the party by the conservative press. Yet, in some other places, Jusos in office have initiated valuable reforms.

At this moment, one encounters in the party a spirit of frustration bordering on defeatism. It is particularly unfortunate that this comes at a time when the political developments in France, Italy, and the United States, and on the other hand in Eastern Europe, pose new problems and present new opportunities. Under a vital Social Democratic leadership West Germany could play a prominent role in this period. Reversion to a conservative government that is not in step with the times would thus be all the more deplorable. □

Jon Wiener

## Whatever Happened to George Wallace?

Political memories are sometimes short. A year before the election, it seemed that it would be easy for any one of several Democrats to defeat the man who pardoned Nixon. What seemed difficult was for any of them to defeat George Wallace, lock up the nomination, and thus avoid a brokered convention in which Wallace would play a powerful role. Wallace was a specter that had haunted the Democratic party ever since the 1964 Wisconsin primary, in which he got 34 percent of the vote; his growing strength in 1968 and 1972 suggested that in 1976 he might finally succeed in destroying the dwindling New Deal coalition that had been an organizing focus of American politics for 30 years.

George Wallace is the man who proclaimed in 1962, "I'm gonna make race the basis of politics in this state, and I'm gonna make it the basis of politics in this country." In 1958, after losing the

campaign for governor, he said of his opponent, "Patterson outniggued me. And boys, I ain't gonna be outniggued again.<sup>1</sup> Wallace's insatiable hunger to win sometimes required that he fall back on code words—"law and order," "states' rights," opposition to "busin'"—but when he denounced "welfare freeloaders, you know who they are," everyone knew where Wallace stood.

Wallace's 1976 campaign was to be built on the foundation laid in 1968 and 1972. In '68, running as a third-party candidate, his strength in the polls grew from 9 percent in April to 21 percent in September, when it looked as if he was on his way to getting 30 percent on election day, enough to deny either major candidate an electoral-college majority—an "absolute political disaster," Theodore White called it.<sup>2</sup> Wallace got almost 10 million votes, 14 percent of the total, and won 45 electoral votes in five Deep South states, more than any third-party candidate in this century. It was calculated that he disturbed the balance of power between the two parties in 30 states. Wallace support among white workers outside the South did not materialize on election day; they stuck with Humphrey. But in the South, Wallace won the support of 53 percent of white manual workers (compared to only 22 percent of the middle class), according to S.M. Lipset.<sup>3</sup> Humphrey got only 31 percent of the southern vote, more than two-thirds of which was black.

The 1972 Wallace campaign in the Democratic primaries showed him stronger than ever before. He finished third, after Humphrey and McGovern, with 24 percent of the vote. Wallace won in Tennessee, North Carolina, Florida, Maryland and, most threatening of all, Michigan where, in May 1972, he got 51 percent of the vote. Many of these were Republican crossovers, but still the total sent a shudder down the spines of Michigan's liberals. And Wallace finished second in Pennsylvania, Indiana, and Wisconsin, swing states essential to any Democratic victory.

The meaning of these primaries was clear to everyone: Wallace was on his way to destroying the

New Deal coalition by pulling out the white working class. He sought to mobilize the white working class by appealing both to racism and to a class-conscious resentment of the elite, those who "look down their nose at every workingman in the United States and call them a bunch of rednecks." His apparent success terrified authorities on electoral politics. Theodore White was representative: he described Wallace supporters as the "blue-collared, surly men. . . frequently on the threshold of violence. . . the workers with muscular biceps growling or grinning approval." They believed in Wallace because "he was saying what was on their minds. . . the way they said it to each other in the bars." The workers were deserting the New Deal coalition, in White's view, not so much on the basis of their interests but because "it runs against their animal instinct."<sup>4</sup> The Wallace primary victories in 1972 were seen as proof that America's white workers, once the basis of the party of progressive social change, had become a reactionary and racist political force.

The Republicans were ready to seize the opportunity by wooing the Wallace vote. Kevin Phillips, John Mitchell's boy-wonder theorist, laid out the Southern Strategy: a new Republican majority could be built by bringing the disaffected white workers, particularly the southerners, into the Republican party, the party that defended their interests by blocking the expansion of social programs.<sup>5</sup> Nixon eagerly sought to enlist the Wallace voters in his own campaign. Spiro Agnew was the incarnation of the Southern Strategy. Wallace understood the threat and denounced Agnew as a "copy-cat."

The question in 1972 was whether the southern white workers would support Nixon or Wallace. When Wallace was shot, Nixon succeeded beyond his greatest expectations, and political sociologists proclaimed the end of the New Deal coalition. "The Nixon victory in the South was something with which history had been pregnant for almost a generation," said Theodore White, and Wallace had been the midwife.<sup>6</sup> "This country is going so far to the right you won't recognize it," Attorney General John Mitchell announced early in 1973.

<sup>1</sup>Marshall Frady, *Wallace* (New York: World Publishing Co., 1968); see also Pat Watters, "George Wallace—Persistent Presence," *Dissent*, Fall 1975, pp. 318-21.

<sup>2</sup>Theodore H. White, *The Making of the President 1968* (New York: Atheneum, 1969), pp. 347-48.

<sup>3</sup>Seymour Martin Lipset and Earl Raab, *The Politics of Unreason: Right-Wing Extremism in America, 1790-1970* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970).

<sup>4</sup>Theodore H. White, *The Making of the President 1972* (New York: Atheneum, 1973), p. 92; White, *1968*, pp. 349, 401.

<sup>5</sup>Kevin Phillips, *The Emerging Republican Majority* (New Rochelle, N.Y.: Arlington House, 1969).

<sup>6</sup>White, *1972*, p. 343.

## II

BUT WALLACE was not conceding his followers to the Republicans. Where his 1972 campaign had been a patchwork affair, poorly financed and run by amateurs, he emerged in 1976 determined to run an effective national primary effort, despite his paralysis from the waist down.

Those familiar with the new rules reforming campaign-financing and the Democratic delegate selection process saw Wallace as the principal beneficiary of these changes. The new federal spending rules, which banned large contributions, were a disaster for the regular party leaders who had always been supported by the big spenders, while Wallace had a list of half a million small contributors. He rapidly raised \$3 million and was the first candidate to qualify for federal matching funds under the new law. The end of the winner-take-all primary would give Wallace substantial delegate blocs in the many states where he finished second or third. He also expected to gain from the fact that many more primaries were scheduled for 1976, since he usually did better in primaries than in state caucuses, which tended to be controlled by the party regulars. In addition, more of the southern states, his natural base of support, were to have primaries.<sup>7</sup>

Ten candidates were running in addition to Wallace, all of them liberals or "centrists." The best guess about what would happen was that several of them would win a few states each, but no single leader would emerge who would be capable of locking up the nomination before the convention and thereby shut out Wallace. And so Wallace would arrive with the largest single delegate block, probably 15 to 20 percent. Although this would not be enough to get him the presidential nomination, it would empower him to play a powerful role in a brokered convention.

Republican Southern Strategy conservatives hoped to repeat their 1972 triumph in 1976 and keep the southern white workers out of the Democratic party, more or less for good. *National Review* publisher William Rusher organized a "Committee on Conservative Alternatives," which would build the New Conservative Majority out of the ruins of both the post-New Deal Democratic party and the post-Watergate Republicans. He

proposed a Reagan-Wallace party, "conservative" and "populist," united against the "Eastern Establishment-university-foundation-media-bureaucracy axis." The Gallup Poll obligingly went out and asked a cross-section of the American people what they thought of Mr. Rusher's idea and found that, in the spring of 1975, 25 percent of all Americans said they would support a new right-wing party organized along Reagan-Wallace lines—about 7 percent more than were willing to call themselves Republicans. Kevin Phillips took to the pages of *Newsweek* to argue for the Reagan-Wallace ticket, Rusher's committee prepared to get a position on the ballot, Wallace kept his options open, and conservatives hoped Reagan could be persuaded.<sup>8</sup>

As the primary season began, the worst fears of liberal Democrats were realized. The Gallup Poll published early in March, before the first primaries, indicated that among labor union members, always the core of the Democratic alliance, Wallace was virtually tied with Humphrey as the favorite candidate. And Wallace usually ran better in the primaries than the polls indicated. "Forget the polls," a politician told the *New Republic's* TRB. "Wallace voters keep it a secret."<sup>9</sup> In Wallace's first contest, the South Carolina precinct caucuses on February 29, he got more than any other candidate—28 percent, against Carter's 23 percent (with 43 percent voting for an uncommitted slate).

Massachusetts was next for Wallace, the only state that had voted for McGovern, and the Alabama governor finished a stunning third in the popular vote, with 18 percent. "Can you believe that?" he chortled. Even more ominous for the New Deal coalition was that the winner, Henry Jackson, had gained first place only by outbidding Wallace's efforts to capture the racist vote in the white working class. Jackson met with Louise Day Hicks, and he ran full-page newspaper ads in Boston that said, "I Am Against Busing"; the ads accused Wallace of engaging in antibusing talk without action, and concluded that Jackson was the "one candidate who has a plan that can stop it."

The first- and third-place finishers had both run

<sup>7</sup>Ken Bode, "The Democrats' Wallace Problem," *New Republic*, Oct. 25, 1976, p. 6; see also James T. Wooten, "Wallace's Last Hurrah?" *New York Times Magazine*, Jan. 11, 1976, p. 14.

<sup>8</sup>William Rusher, *The Making of a New Majority Party* (Mission, Kansas: Sheed, Andrews & McMeel, 1975); Kevin Phillips, "A Reagan-Wallace Ticket," *Newsweek*, May 19, 1975, p. 13.

<sup>9</sup>TRB, "The Woodwork Vote," *New Republic*, Dec. 20, 1975, p. 2.

campaigns that appealed to racism; the *New York Times* editorial concluded that the lesson of Massachusetts was that "the old Democratic coalition is vulnerable to being split apart by racial issues." The Democrats could never capture the White House without the blacks and liberals, but Jackson the front-runner would find it difficult to win their support after his Massachusetts campaign. A refusal by blacks and liberal whites to support Jackson would make a brokered and deadlocked convention more likely.<sup>10</sup>

Jackson had not succeeded in winning over the bulk of the Wallace voters. Jackson lost Boston to Wallace; in the city as a whole, Wallace got 23,000 to Jackson's 17,000, and Wallace ran five to one ahead of Jackson in South Boston, the working-class Democratic stronghold preoccupied with busing. Nearly two-thirds of the Wallace voters, interviewed after they cast their ballots, refused to name a second choice should Wallace lose; they suggested they would bolt from the Democratic party if Wallace was not the nominee. Wallace himself was keeping the door open to a third-party candidacy.

Wallace thus emerged from his first two contests high in the polls, a winner in the South, his natural base, and doing dismayingly well appealing to the racism of northern white workers. The combination looked fatal to the Democratic party. More than ever, after Massachusetts, Wallace was the man to beat, and if there was a man who could beat him without alienating the blacks, he would

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<sup>10</sup>*New York Times*, March 4, 1976, p. 30; Paul R. Weik, "The Wallace Message from Massachusetts," *New Republic*, March 28, 1976, p. 9.

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- "Why are you in the hole?"
  - "Me? Because I was against Teng Hsiao-ping," said the first.
  - "Me? Because I was for Teng Hsiao-ping," said the second.
  - "And why you," said these two to the third who kept himself apart.
  - "Oh, me? It's different. I AM Teng Hsiao-ping."

—Pierre Rigoulot, "The Revolutionary Situation in China," *Les Temps Modernes*, February, 1977

probably become the nominee and glide into office over the inept incumbent.

The Florida primary on March 14 was to be the critical test of Wallace's strength in 1976. However "different" Florida might seem as a southern state, Wallace had won a stunning victory there in 1972, with 42 percent of the vote, an incredible 23 points ahead of the second-place finisher, Hubert Humphrey. Wallace got as many votes as the next three candidates combined; he carried every county in the state.

### III

ENTER JIMMY CARTER: he had been campaigning against Wallace in Florida for more than a year. He built one of the biggest organizations ever seen in the state, and made 34 visits there in 15 months. He hoped for a respectable second-place finish, which would show that Wallace's strength was on the wane and that Carter was a front-runner. And Carter was steadily making progress within the South, defining the primaries as a Carter-Wallace contest. A poll of Democrats in seven southern states asked who voters would favor in a Carter-Wallace contest. In September 1975 Wallace had 51 percent and Carter only 29; in January 1976 Wallace had slipped to 42 percent, and in March, before the Florida primary, Carter pulled ahead, 47 to 34.

Wallace also knew that Florida was a crucial test, and he lavished his resources on his campaign there, spending \$200,000 and three weeks in the state. His issues were classically racist and reactionary. At the end of the campaign, fearful that he was slipping, he turned more and more to the old code words, emphasizing his hostility to welfare recipients, busing advocates, and criminals, "you know who they are."

The best predictions for Florida were that Carter would split the anti-Wallace vote with a resurgent Jackson, permitting Wallace to win and depriving Carter of the strong second-place finish he wanted, not far behind Wallace and well ahead of Jackson. Jackson had the priceless commodity, "momentum," coming out of Massachusetts, which enabled him to argue that since he had beaten Wallace there, he was a better alternative than Carter.

On March 9, Carter got 35 percent to Wallace's 31, Jackson running a poor third with 23. Wallace ran fully 10 percentage points behind his 1972 total. The rest, as they say, is history: the next week

Carter overwhelmed Wallace in Illinois, 48 to 28 percent, and the following week Carter smashed him in North Carolina, 54 to 35, another state Wallace had carried by an overwhelming margin in 1972. Having been beaten by Carter in three straight primaries, Wallace saw the handwriting on the wall: "I've lost the election."

From this perspective, the principal question posed by the primaries is, why did the Wallace candidacy collapse so quickly? The columnists said he never had a chance in 1976 because of his health. But they hadn't said that when he was the first to qualify for federal matching funds, when the early polls showed him a front-runner, or when he beat the other candidates in South Carolina and finished third in Massachusetts. Wallace was beaten because Carter successfully claimed Wallace's "populism" for himself, while joining it with an antiracist politics, thereby allying working-class whites with blacks. In Florida, Carter was in his "anti-Washington" phase, denouncing "Wash-

ington insiders," calling for "a new face," one who would "cut the bureaucracy down to size"—an issue that had been nurtured by George Wallace. Carter tapped the same resentment against patronizing upper-middle-class northerners that Wallace mobilized; white southerners supported Carter, Robert Coles argues, because they believed he would defend them against the "big interests. . . who have ignored, cheated, exploited, and scorned" them.<sup>11</sup>

Carter's most significant achievement was bringing this southern white populist constituency into a coalition with blacks on the basis of a rejection of racism. Carter refused to use the code words that not only Wallace but also Jackson had fallen back on. "To run my campaign on an antibusing issue," he said in Florida, "is just contrary to my basic nature. If I have to win by appealing to a basically negative, emotional issue, which has connotations of racism, I don't care to win that way." (In what has become a familiar Carter procedure of taking-both-sides, he added that he did not favor busing.)<sup>12</sup> Thus the principal lesson of the Wallace defeat was that the southern white working class can be won to an openly antiracist position if it is part of a broader populist attack on "the big interests" and "Washington insiders."

A white gas-station attendant outside Americus, Georgia, told Robert Coles, "I think Jimmy Carter will keep his eye out for the average person, like myself. I believe we'll be on his mind a lot." Can this constituency avoid feeling betrayed by Carter's hasty embrace of "the big interests"? Carter hopes they will be satisfied with humble talk and ostentatious symbols of folksiness (Jimmy carrying his own luggage, wearing leisure suits to cabinet meetings, refusing to ride in his limousine). The betrayal of populist promises by the antiracist President may push white working-class southerners back toward the politics of racism. If a new George Wallace, or even the old one, rises to power calling on their newly sparked resentment over being sold out again, Jimmy Carter will share much of the responsibility. □

<sup>11</sup>Robert Coles, "Jimmy Carter: Agrarian Rebel?" *New Republic*, June 26, 1976, a remarkable article; see also James T. Wooten, "The Well-Planned Enigma of Jimmy Carter," *New York Times Magazine*, June 6, 1976, p. 16.

<sup>12</sup>*New York Times*, March 4, 1976, p. 20.

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