

'Movement' May Be

By PAUL HOPE
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George Wallace is still alive but the "movement" may have been mortally wounded.

Populism or demagoguery — whatever one chooses to call it — the "movement" is George Wallace and without him to lead it, there is no movement.

Its survival depends on the future state of his health and whether Wallace — a cautious man despite his political ferocity — is inclined to lead it in the face of additional threat of bodily harm.

He can't lead it from a hospital bed. And its doubtful he could lead it from a wheelchair. That isn't his style.

The movement is defiance. It's standing in a school house door.

It's standing against school busing.

It's standing on a platform in the middle of the street in Bessemer, Ala. and a thousand other places and telling the "average man" that big guys and big government are against him.

It's "us" against "them."

But most of all, it's George Wallace standing tall — all 5 feet, 7 inches and he probably fibbed a half inch about that) — fashioning a personal "movement" unique in American politics.

His Own Creation

Yes, the movement has millions of followers. But there is no one to keep it together if George Wallace can't.

Wallace had no second in command. The movement has no formal organization, as a

political party usually does. Even his personal staff is not the same one he started with.

The movement is Wallace's creation — a blend of showmanship, political savvy, populism, racism, and ability to "put the hay down where the goats can get at it."

Personal traits that made him something of a "character" were part of it — like pulling out his handkerchief at the most unlikely moment and spitting loudly into it, and pumping catsup over his food, and sliding into his thickest southern accent during interviews when he thought it would be most effective, and having a barely controllable fear of flying.

The trappings were part of his movement. The Grand Ole Opry stars that warmed up the audience. The revivalist ministers who called down the blessings of the Lord on the leader and the movement. The fried chicken buckets that young girls passed through the crowds to collect the dimes and quarters and dollars — once in a while a ten-spot would show up.

Fear of Harm

Ironically, one of the trappings was the bullet-proof podium that Wallace hauled everywhere and stood behind when he made speeches. He had a great fear of being personally harmed and frequently cut short his speeches if hecklers seemed to be getting out of hand.

The "movement" started — although neither he nor anyone else saw it at the time — when he stood on the steps of

the Alabama state capital in 1963, when he first was inaugurated as governor, and declared, "Segregation now . . . segregation tomorrow . . . segregation forever."

It was the spot on which Jefferson Davis had taken the oath of office as president of the Confederacy a century earlier.

The race issue got him to that exalted spot. After losing his first campaign for governor by being, as he has often been quoted, "out-niggered," he vowed that it would never happen again.

The Supreme Court decision that struck down segregated schools was nearly a decade old when Wallace took office, but barely a beginning had been made in integrating schools of the South.

Gauntlet Tossed

In his inaugural, he spoke of the "tyranny that clanks its chains upon the South" and said:

"In the name of the greatest people that have ever trod this earth, I draw the line in the dust and toss the gauntlet before the feet of tyranny . . . and I say . . . segregation now . . . segregation tomorrow . . . segregation forever."

He called on the South then to "send this message back to Washington." In 1972, it became his national slogan — "Send them a message."

Though he could not foresee the bounds of his movement then, Wallace said prophetically:

"Hear me, Southerners. You sons and daughters who have moved north, and west

throughout the nation . . . We call on you from your native soil to join with us in national support and vote, and we know wherever you are, away from the hearths of the Southland, that you will respond, for though you may live in the farthest reaches of this vast country, your heart has never left Dixieland.

"And you native sons and daughters of old New England's rockribbed patriotism, and you sturdy natives of the great Midwest, and West, flaming spirit of pioneer freedom, we invite you to come and be with us, for you are of the Southern mind, and the Southern spirit, and the Southern philosophy. You are South-us in our fight."

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"A Mongrel Unit"

To the blacks, he said: "It was meant in our racial lives — each race, within its own framework, has the freedom to teach, to instruct, to develop to ask for and receive help from others — of separate racial stations. This is the great freedom of our American founding fathers.

"But if we amalgamate into the one suit as advocated by the Communist philosophers, then the enrichment of our lives, the freedom of our development is gone forever. We become, therefore, a mongrel unit of one under a single all powerful government, and we stand for everything, and for nothing. We invite the Negro citizens to work with us from his separate racial station, as we will work with him, to develop, to grow in individual freedom and enrichment."

Mortally Wounded

Race kept Wallace's political pot boiling and drew national attention to him. The Montgomery, Ala., bus boycott and the Birmingham demonstrations under Martin Luther King, Jr., turned Alabama in 1963 into an inferno of racial violence.

That fall Wallace stood in the door at the University of Alabama trying to bar the first Negro admitted under court order. President John F. Kennedy, at the request of his brother, then Atty. Gen. Robert F. Kennedy, faced him down with federal troops.

When he couldn't run for re-election because of a prohibition against serving consecutive terms, he ran his wife, Lurleen, and got her elected.

Having dipped his foot in national politics by running in three Democratic presidential primaries in 1964, he was ready for a bigger fling in 1968 with his third party movement.

A Broader Base

Though race was still the underlying element of his movement, Wallace began trying to give it a broader base. He became the champion of the "average man" who was fed up with race riots, long-haired students, peace-niks, high taxes, welfare loafers, lenient judges, and Washington bureaucrats.

Wallace's campaign that year always seemed on the edge of violence. He was heckled severely everywhere he went outside the South and shoving matches were a frequent occurrence at his rallies. He taunted his tormentors

and used such inflammatory statements as threatening to run over any demonstrator who lay down in front of his car.

Still, he drew nearly 10 million votes, 13 percent of the total votes cast.

With Lurleen dead of cancer and the lieutenant governor in her chair, Wallace ran again in 1970 for Alabama's highest office and won. He acquired a new wife and began to dress more modishly.

By 1972 Wallace changed his tactics and altered his style. He chose the Democratic primaries as the vehicle for his movement instead of a third party — although no one was really sure whether he was thinking about mounting another third party campaign this fall if his movement fell upon hard times with the Democrats.

Tone More Muted

Most of his issues were the same but his tone more muted. His words were less violent. He quit taunting hecklers. There were, in fact, fewer hecklers to taunt.

Ironically, at the time he was shot down, his movement had gained a good deal of the respectability he had been seeking.

Although the race issue — by way of the school busing controversy — was the fuel for his movement again, his campaign had a solid underpinning than before. Better than any other candidate, he was able to articulate the problems bothering people.

Though most Democratic leaders said he didn't have a

chance for the presidential nomination — and probably Wallace didn't think so either — he was having success beyond his own expectations of a few months ago.

He had won four primaries and was favored to win two more today.

"Truly Great American"

"Since Florida, many things have come to pass that even I didn't foresee," he told some 2,000 members of the Michigan Junior Chamber of Commerce in Lansing last Saturday.

Florida was the first primary he won on March 14. Since then he carried Alabama, Tennessee and North Carolina, and came in second in Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Indiana and West Virginia.

The Michigan Jaycee convention was an illustration of Wallace's new respectability. He was given a standing ovation when he walked in, was interrupted frequently by heavy applause and was given a tremendous ovation when he finished. Sen. Hubert H. Humphrey came on a few hours later and received much less applause.

The Jaycee president called him an "outstanding governor" and a "truly great American."

Wallace talked of the "rotteness of the government and the Democratic party from the average citizen."

He said the "false liberals" have brought violence to the streets, taken prayers out of schools and put four-letter words into common speech.

He said the middle class is being crushed by taxes and

that high property taxes are an attack on the system of private property ownership.

Platform Projected

He said he would recommend to the Democratic party's platform committee a plank advocating the reconfirmation of Supreme Court judges every 6 or 8 years and the election of federal district judges by the voters.

He said he would recommend that desertion of children by parents be made a criminal offense, and that this would result in lower welfare costs.

He said he would get welfare cheaters off the rolls.

He said the other candidates claimed four years ago that he was "demagoguing" on the issues but that in 1972 "on 8 out of 10 issues they're saying what I did in 1968."

He said everyone's life is being run from Washington, and he saved school busing for last to make that point.

"If they can do that (busing), they can do almost anything," he said. The Jaycees applauded vigorously.

"A good message on this astine business can go back from Michigan and Maryland," he said. "If I get a good vote, I'm going to shake the eyeteeth of all these pseudo liberals and they're going to have the St. Vitus dance all over Michigan and everywhere else."

Wallace, as he says, puts the hay down where the goats can get at it. Without him, there still are goats and hay — but no "movement."