

Demos' Florida Troubles Revealed

Tampa, Fla.

Democratic political sources here say that saboteurs, as yet unidentified, played havoc with the party's presidential primary in Florida last winter.

The staffs of several candidates for the Democratic presidential nomination say they were kept continually puzzled by phony campaign literature mailed out on their candidates' stationery and by press releases advertising nonscheduled news conferences, cocktail parties and dinners.

They say they do not know exactly how many pieces of material were distributed, but they estimated it as in the thousands.

Some of the material was considered so scurrilous by the candidates that last March the United States Attorney in Tampa was asked to investigate. Thus far the United States Attorney has not issued a public report on what has been found.

Although almost all of the attempted political sabotage took place last winter, Dem-

ocrats here made no effort to find out how widespread it was until Senator George McGovern, and others accused the national Republican party last week of a systematic scheme to destroy the national Democratic campaign.

The Democrats have no proof that Republicans were responsible for any of it.

One letter was mailed by the thousands from St. Petersburg three to five days before the March 14 primary. It was printed on paper with Senator Edmund Muskie's picture and campaign emblem at the top and was mailed in envelopes identical with those used by the Muskie staff.

After stating that Muskie was the best qualified candidate for the presidency, the letter went on to smear two of his rivals, Senator Henry M. Jackson of Washington and Senator Hubert H. Humphrey of Minnesota.

Among other things, it accused Jackson of sexual misconduct and said that Humphrey had been arrested on a drunken driving charge.

"These are not pleasant facts, but they should be considered by you before you vote on March 14," the letter said.

"There was not a word of truth in it," said a former aide to Jackson. "But it was so well done, with dates and names, that it had to be written by a real professional."

Michael Sierra, a Tampa attorney who was a top official in the Jackson campaign in Florida, said he began getting calls about the letter immediately.

After making sure that none of the "facts" in the letter were true, Sierra asked professional staff members working for Jackson to try to find out who had mailed the letter.

At the same time, he said he had turned copies of it over to the United States Attorney.

A couple of days after the last mailing of the letters, a woman who would not give her name telephoned the Jackson headquarters and said that she had been in-

involved in mailing the letters.

She said the operation had been run by a St. Petersburg "evangelist" who has been linked at times with the American Nazi party.

Governor George C. Wallace of Alabama was the target of at least two series of phony campaign flyers.

Both series said, "If you like Hitler, you'll love George Wallace." One series of flyers carried the campaign symbol of Mayor John V. Lindsay of New York City, the other carried that of Muskie.

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