

Florida Democrats Allege Primary Was Sabotaged

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TAMPA, Fla., Oct. 19 — 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. A former member of the staff of Senator Edmund S. Muskie of Maine said he had a box full of phony literature.

Some of the material was considered by the candidates so scurrilous by the candidates that last March the United States Attorney in Tampa was asked to investigate. Thus for 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, it generally escaped public notice at the time. Democrats here made no effort to find out how widespread it was until Senator George McGovern, the Democratic Presidential candidate, and others accused the national Republican party last week of a systematic scheme to destroy the national Democratic campaign.

It appears that the use of fictitious material in Florida was much more extensive than had been realized. But 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 Muskie's picture and campaign emblem at the top and was mailed in envelopes identical with those used by the Muskie staff.

Jackson and Humphrey Targets

After stating that Senator 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 Senator Jackson of Sexual misconduct and said that Senator 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 Senator Jackson. "But it was so well done, with dates and names, that it had to be written by a real professional."

Immediate Reaction

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, Mr. Sierra asked professional staff members working for Mr. 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.

Reports of the letter having been received came to Senator Jackson's office from Jacksonville, Miami, Fort Lauderdale, Orlando and St. Petersburg, as well as Tampa. All of the letters were mailed from St. Petersburg and had been addressed by hand.

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 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.

The woman said that she was informing on the "evangelist" in the hope that he would be arrested and thus lose a "hold" that he seemed to have on her husband.

She said that the scurrilous material had been prepared in Ocala, Fla.

The "evangelist" could not be reached today for comment.

Muskie Staff 'Upset'

A member of Senator Jackson's staff said that when Senator Muskie's staff was shown copies of the letter, "they became very upset."

"This was a very clever letter," the Jackson man said. "It very effectively smeared Senator Jackson and Senator Humphrey with those lies, and of course anyone who happened to believe them or believed that it was sent out by Senator Muskie would lose all respect for him."

Gov. George C. Wallace of Alabama was the target of at least two series of phoney campaign flyers.

Both series said, "If you like Hitler, you'll love George Wallace." One series of flyers car-

ried the campaign symbol of Mayor Lindsay of New York City, the other carried that of Senator Muskie.

Senator Muskie, the Democratic frontrunner at the time and heavily favored then to win his party's Presidential nomination, was the victim of much of

the phony campaign material released in Florida.

In February, a "news release" on letterheads of Senator Jackson's campaign went to newspapers and radio and television stations in Florida.

The "release" accused Senator Muskie of having had typewriters and other equipment belonging to Congress brought to Florida for campaign use. The "release" listed serial numbers of the various pieces of equipment and contended that Representative Sam Gibbons, Tampa Democrat, had arranged for the equipment.

Mr. Gibbons's assistant, Hector Alcalde, said that when he had heard about the "news release," he checked with employees in Mr. Gibbons's Washington office and found that the serial numbers in the "release" were the actual serial numbers of typewriters and other equipment assigned to the office.

"But, the equipment was still in Washington, and none of it was ever brought to Florida, nor was there any contemplation of bringing it to Florida," Mr. Alcalde said.

The use of the actual serial numbers indicated to Mr. Alcalde that whoever prepared the "news release" had access to inventory or purchase records in Washington.

Mr. Alcalde said he had checked with a close friend of his who was working for Senator Jackson and found that the Jackson people had not issued any such statements.

A Jackson staff member said today that the only anti-Muskie flyer or news release issued during the Florida campaign had said, "If you don't vote for Senator Muskie, he will cry."

Senator Muskie was also the target of another phony news release in Florida in last winter's Presidential primary campaign.

The Senator's staff had planned a reception for him at the Manger Hotel in downtown Tampa for Jan. 7. The public was invited.

The day before the reception, Tampa newspapers and radio and television stations received a "news release" on Senator Muskie's stationery saying that the reception in reality would be a \$1,000-per-person fund-

raising affair and that 10,000 invitations had been mailed.

Senator Muskie's staff was unable to find out who disrupted the reception by sending out the fictitious news release.

At the time, Bob Williams of Winter Haven, the statewide coordinator for Mr. Muskie, commented, "I suppose these are the kinds of things you have to expect in a campaign."

State Representative Richard A. Pettigrew of Miami, the Speaker of the Florida House of Representatives, and state chairman for Senator Muskie last winter, said today, "We all had our opinions at the time as to who was doing these things."

"But we turned out to have been wrong," he said. "Now, we know it was Republicans trying to get the nomination for Senator McGovern because they thought he would be easiest to beat." Mr. Pettigrew acknowledged, however, that there was no proof that the Republicans had been responsible.