

Anger and Remorse Subside in the South

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MONTGOMERY, Ala., May 16—Today was just an average day in Alabama, and for that matter in the rest of the South.

After the initial anger and remorse over the shooting yesterday of Gov. George C. Wallace subsided with encouraging medical reports from Maryland, the pace of life in the region apparently returned to normal.

The public reaction in Alabama was one of shock and consternation that the Governor could be cut down up North, although most persons here seem to have been conscious of that possibility ever since Mr. Wallace set out on the national campaign trail eight years ago.

But if the grief felt at the first news of the shooting still remained, it was hidden from public view. There were no special prayer services or rallies scheduled, and individuals went about their business without displaying anything more than a vague uneasiness about which way events might lead the state and the nation. Most of the Governor's national campaign staff and family had traveled to his bedside.

Sense of Optimism

There appeared to be a conviction here among those who see Mr. Wallace as a kind of national savior that the Governor will once again convert misfortune into an asset, mysteriously coupling the sympathy vote with the protest vote to reach heights few had ever considered attainable.

"I don't think George Wallace is going to crawl under a rock as a result of this," said Carl Sanders, former Governor of Georgia. "Whether he is able to stand on his own two legs or whether he is going to have to stand on two artificial legs, I think he is still going to be preaching his gospel."

That sentiment was expressed in one form or another by Southerners who believed that Mr. Wallace's uncanny ability to bounce back from adversity was once again at work.

"He already has quite a bit of base support as we well know," commented Don Petit, a Miami public relations man who helped manage the primary campaign of United

States Senator Henry M. Jackson, Democratic of Washington, in Florida. "If he campaigns in a wheelchair, it might tip a lot of people toward him who are already leaning in that direction."

Wide Sympathy Seen

Marvin Griffin, the former Governor of Georgia who was briefly Mr. Wallace's running-mate in his third-party bid for the Presidency in 1968, foresaw an outpouring of public sympathy for Governor Wallace.

"If he were to be crippled, he's got a lot of determination and courage, and people seem to appreciate that—they did in the case of Franklin Roosevelt and I don't see why George would be any exception," Mr. Griffin said. "George is the sparkplug of his own campaign and naturally he would be at a disadvantage if crippled, but knowing him like I know him, I think he will carry on even in a wheelchair."

A typical reaction of newspapers in the South was that of The Montgomery (Ala.) Advertiser, which said:

"Here in Alabama, Governor Wallace's critics no less than his admirers are stunned and grief-stricken. Partisan politics is one thing, a rough game played by opponents who may seem to detest each other but who usually retain personal friendship in a civilized compartment of their minds and hearts.

"Let us not have any more charges of collective guilt. The people of Maryland didn't shoot the Governor of Alabama, nor did the people in any other part of the country.

"He was felled, apparently, by one pathological opponent who could not separate in his poor mind political disagreement from the urge to kill.

"What can one say at such a time? Words are empty while hearts are full beyond the power of expression."