

EARL RAAB

# Candid Comments

## George Wallace Revisited

The three top Democratic presidential hopefuls went in to see George Wallace last week—and laid the world at his feet.

Humphrey indicated that Wallace might make a good second man on the slate. Chisholm agreed that she would not be opposed to Wallace as a vice-presidential candidate, if he would just shift his opinion on the matter of school busing. McGovern said he would not rule out the possibility of offering George Wallace a cabinet post.

**George Wallace is indeed sitting on a number of state primary commitments which can be cashed in at the Democratic convention. But is that really what they meant by the New Politics?**

Or perhaps it's just campaign rhetoric, and the candidates don't expect to do these things with Wallace at all. But they've already done something. They've already successfully established his political respectability in their eyes.

The majority of people who voted for Wallace in early opinion polls in 1968, did not vote for him in the final voting booth. In the opinion polls - and primaries are a form of opinion poll-people used Wallace to express their feelings on certain sharp issues which he symbolized, such as street violence and busing — but when it came to balancing all the issues and voting for an actual president, most of them looked elsewhere. He had an air of extremism about him and respectable national leaders warned: "watch out for this man." But now, suddenly, Hubert, Shirley and George are singing a chorus of "For he's a somewhat jolly good fellow."



Raab

Maybe some of us were being too stuffy about Wallace before? After all, a lot of good and respectable people oppose busing, support more vigorous law and order, find too much federal intervention into local affairs offensive and so forth. But it was not those opinions which made Wallace "unrespectable" as a national political leader.

Perhaps Wallace was just stretching his limits of tolerance when he said: "I have no quarrel with the Birch Society." Or when he said about the KKK: "At least a Klansman will fight for his country. He doesn't tear up his draft card . . . they're just concerned with segregation not subversiveness." Or when he said about some of his Cleveland backers who were known for their Klan connections and anti-semitism, that their beliefs were in the area of "academic freedom."

**Indeed, it would perhaps be unfair guilt-by-association to point out that in the Wallace wings have been such associates as Leander Perez who ran the official Wallace campaign in Louisiana, was used as a substitute speaker for Wallace on occasion-and had been excommunicated from the Catholic church for his anti-Negro behavior. Perez had also made such statements as: "Zionist Jews are the most dangerous people in the country."**

But it was Wallace himself who said: "If I did what I'd like to do, I'd pick up something and smash one of these federal judges in the head and then burn the courthouse down."

It was Wallace who said: "Let the police run this country for a year or two and there wouldn't be any riots." And, if an anti-war demonstrator were to lie down in front of a Wallace motorcade, "it will be the last car he ever lies down in front of." If he were President, Wallace said, and anti-war demonstrators continued their activity, "I would have me an attorney general that would drag them in by their long hair."

Perhaps attorney-general wasn't the cabinet post George McGovern had in mind. But these are the values to which he and Chisholm and Humphrey are giving an *imprimatur* when they suggest that Wallace is fit for some high national office. Will some of their various California supporters ask them to renounce their endorsement for the spokesman of such values?

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