

AN ANSWER TO THE WALLACE CHALLENGE

BY BAYARD RUSTIN

George Wallace's performance in the presidential primaries has pointedly established that he, the issues he represents and the emotions he evokes are still capable of etching a formidable imprint in American politics. Despite the absence of the racial turmoil and mood of dislocation which conspired to catapult Wallace into prominence in 1968, the Alabama governor can still attract the support of sizeable segments of the electorate even in generally liberal states --such as Wisconsin and Pennsylvania--while mounting the most limited of campaigns.

Black Americans are justifiably concerned about Wallace's influence within the Democratic Party. For while he no longer brags of having stood in front of the schoolhouse door Wallace is still the candidate who most eagerly strains for the vote of backlash and reaction.

But it is important not to oversimplify the impulses which produce Wallace support. Many Wallace votes are not the product of racial prejudice, or even the volatile issue of bussing, on which Wallace is attempting so strenuously to capitalize.

Many whites who have cast their ballots for Wallace are, in fact, motivated by problems quite similar to those which most profoundly disturb blacks. These include an increasingly inequitable tax burden, a soaring crime rate, exorbitant increase in such essential services as medical care, housing, and education, and a gnawing impression that mainstream politicians are incapable of resolving these problems.

We must be careful to distinguish between how some voters perceive Wallace and what he actually represents. Blacks know well that while Wallace may soften his rhetoric, scrub up his image and talk about tax reform, his essential message is the same as in 1964 and 1968. We also understand that while Wallace may promise tax reform, he has no program, and while he may speak of his concern for the working man, his political career has proven him anti-worker to the core.

It was this message which was used so effectively by the labor movement in 1968, when Wallace, running as a third party candidate, appeared to have captured considerable support from blue collar workers. As late as six weeks prior to the election the Gallup Poll showed Wallace with 21 percent of the vote, with a sizeable portion coming from unionized workers. By election time, following a massive education campaign Wallace's support had been cut in half in most northern states.

Labor is repeating that message this year. By the end of the primaries up to 7 million pieces of literature will have been distributed to union members detailing the Wallace record and thousands will have viewed labor produced films on Wallace.

The message labor brings is simple: George Wallace, while masquerading as the ally of the working man, has done nothing for working people during the two terms as governor while aligning himself with some of the most anti-worker elements in society. Alabama's per capita income is one of the lowest in the nation while its poverty rate is among the highest. Unemployment compensation benefits and workmen's compensation payments rival the nation's worst, as does per capita expenditure for education.

Labor has also demonstrated the hollowness of Wallace's claim as champion of law and order. Quoting from federal statistics, labor points out that major crimes--robberies, murder, rape, assaults--have risen in the three largest Alabama cities at a dramatically higher rate than has the national crime average.

Labor has, in effect, assumed an overwhelming share of the task of neutralizing Wallace. Labor does this because it knows that while Wallace may speak of tax reform, he is not at the same time seeking support from those of the conservative fringes who have a vested stake in the economic status quo. Labor understands that it was Wallace and his fellow Dixiecrats who, by neglecting the poorest among them, produced the black migration which has created the miseries of the ghetto and a crumbling welfare system they so cynically denounce.

Lane Kirkland, secretary-treasurer of the AFL-CIO, perhaps summed up best labor's attitude towards the Wallace message: "Hear-

Creating "Mass Hysteria" Against Busing...

*"IN TWO DECADES THE PATTERN OF SEGREGATED LIFE HAS BEEN BROKEN IN LAW AND IN FACT. IT HAS BEEN ONE OF THE GREAT SOCIAL AND MORAL ACHIEVEMENTS IN AMERICAN HISTORY, PERHAPS THE GREATEST. THE SOUTH MET COURT ORDERS WITH EVASION AND VIOLENCE, BUT THE COURTS STOOD FIRM."
"IT IS THAT HISTORY, THAT ACHIEVEMENT OF THE LAST TWENTY YEARS THAT PRESIDENT NIXON'S PROGRAM AGAINST SCHOOL BUSING NOW THREATENS!"*

ANTHONY LEWIS, NY TIMES



ing George Wallace speak of the little man is like hearing the word 'love' from the mouth of a whore."

Minority Report

by James E. Alsbrook, Ph.D.

BLACK FLIMFLAMMED BY POLITICIANS' PLAYING GAMES WITH 'BUSING' ISSUE

Nationwide polls indicate that millions of black people in recent weeks have been victimized in the school-busing controversy by one of the oldest flimflam tricks in the repertory of political propagandists and public relations tacticians.

These blacks have been flimflammed into the notion that they should oppose the busing of school children--a notion that helps create conditions tending to weaken the 14th Amendment and endanger civil rights progress.

The flimflamming was accomplished by a technique similar to those used by some ancient philosophers (later sophists) and touched upon by the devious Prince Machiavelli about 500 years ago.

The purpose of the gimmick is the destruction of a legitimate goal one does not like but cannot oppose openly because it is cherished and praiseworthy.

Resembling the "bait and switch" gimmick used by confidence men, the technique has become the tool of some national dictators, some advertising men, and unethical politicians who would orchestrate public behavior by capitalizing upon false premises, contrived confusion and group prejudice.

MAGIC FORMULA

Although its dynamics may seem complex, the basic formula for the flimflam is simple:

1. Thoroughly becloud the central issue or legitimate goal if you oppose it.
2. Bait the public and switch issues and priorities. How? With the legitimate goal beclouded, point out faults in the logical mean of attaining the goal (all means have disadvantages). With emotion aroused and attention diverted to the means, upgrade the means and switch it

3. Publicly denounce this upgraded and attention-getting means which now has become the central issue during the confusion. Give it top billing. Let the demagogues take over.
4. When the time is ripe, gallantly and dramatically "respond" to the public "demand" and "solve the problem" (upgraded and condemned means) by destroying the original and legitimate goal explaining that you do this act in response to "public demand" and for "the good of the nation."
5. Laud the people for their "wisdom" and proclaim the "greatness" of the people.

FORMULA AT WORK

The above formula is being followed generally by the Nixon Administration in the "busing" controversy.

Let us examine what has happened:

1. The central issue or legitimate goal is EQUAL PROTECTION OF THE LAW expressed in terms of EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL CHILDREN--a provision embodying the essence of the 14th Amendment. But equal educational opportunity and racial integration in the classroom were found to be inseparable. The eloquent and legitimate goal (See Minority Report page 3)

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