

By John Norton

COLUMBIA, S.C.

A FORMER CAMPAIGN MANAGER for George Wallace is well on his way towards forging a progressive political coalition in this state that might propel him into the State House. Tom Turnipseed managed Wallace's 1968 presidential campaign and served as an aide to the Alabama governor. Now, he has rejected the racist stances that characterized the Wallace movement and has reached out to labor, blacks, environmentalists and a latent populist sentiment in hopes of winning the South Carolina Democratic gubernatorial nomination. In the process he has upset the traditional Democratic political structure of this state.

In the weeks following his Halloween campaign announcement, staged before power company offices in the state's six largest cities, a traditionally restrained press has freely quoted unidentified politicians who describe Turnipseed as "an inspired madman," "dangerous," and "demagogic."

"Turnipseed is a latter-day Huey Long," one Republican declared in a widely reprinted remark. "He's crazy as a damn bedbug, but crazy in a smart way."

Amidst doubts as to the sincerity of his political transformation, fears of his populist rhetoric and questions about his emotional stability, Turnipseed is well on his way to a chance for the governor's office.

Black leaders are divided about the former segregated academy organizer. "It would be a national disgrace and embarrassment for a former Wallace segregationist to come from Alabama and be elected governor of South Carolina by blacks," the senior member of the black legislative caucus told a reporter.

But Isaac Williams, state field representative for the NAACP, demurs: "No one is capable of examining a man's heart, so you have to look at his actions. We have been able to get Tom's support on many issues of interest to blacks... I think people aren't discrediting Tom's new convictions."

Political polls indicate Turnipseed is presently better known and more respected among voters than any of the other candidates now being mentioned as contenders in the June 1978 Democratic primary.

Supporters believe, and detractors fear, he may be able to organize the most broadly-based political coalition in state history, a coalition of blacks, labor, and middle-class suburbanites often dreamed of by Southern politicians.

"Forget, hell" school.

Born in Mobile in 1936, Turnipseed says he was educated in the "forget, hell" school of Southern sociology. "I remember during World War II down in Mobile, we had some Northern people move in behind us. I don't know where we got it from, but it was like we were supposed to fight them. We were taught in the public schools some real strong biased-type things. We were taught that black people were not really 'people' people. It was the worst kind of insulation and isolation."

Turnipseed was also exposed to Alabama's populist tradition, and he says he developed a general resentment toward arbitrary power and privilege at an early age. His father was an entomologist; when Turnipseed was ten, the family moved to Virginia where his father took a job developing oil-based insecticides for Shell Oil Company.

"We lived there about two years and then all of a sudden Shell created the Shell Chemical Company, some big corporate move, you know, and all of my daddy's colleagues were told, 'You don't have a job anymore.' And here he is with three young kids, up in Virginia, an Alabama boy without a job. My father wasn't a very articulate man, just very good at his research. I never will forget how disillusioned he was with the corporation and the idea that the bottom line is everything."

Turnipseed's father found a job with North Carolina State University helping

ONCE RACIST, NOW POPULIST, TOM TURNIPSEED TAKES ON S. CAROLINA



Tom Turnipseed ran George Wallace's '68 campaign. Now he admits he was racist and is out to build a populist political coalition in South Carolina.

Wilkes County, N.C., farmers develop a commercial apple crop. At age 16, Turnipseed experienced the first of three emotional breakdowns and was hospitalized for three weeks for treatment of mental depression. (Details of his psychiatric treatment were released recently after opponents "leaked" the information to the press.)

"I just got depressed," he says. "I was president of my class in high school and playing football and doing everything, and then all of a sudden I started withdrawing. It was a situation of not being able to cope with society as it was."

Turnipseed played football on scholarship at a North Carolina junior college, then joined the military. Two years later he enrolled as an undergraduate in history at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. In 1958 and again in 1959

he was hospitalized for depression.

"Always in late winter," he recalls. "It was a terrible experience, but I think I'm stronger today because of it. I found out what I have to do to be happy is to become totally involved in society and absolutely totally involved in helping people."

In the early '60s Turnipseed set out to help white Southerners. He finished law school at Chapel Hill and moved to Barnwell, S.C., where he accepted a post as director of the struggling South Carolina Independent Schools Association, a loose-knit coalition of segregated private schools organized in anticipation of court-ordered desegregation.

"I just felt like it was another example of the South being set upon," he explained recently. "I was a racist, no doubt about that. And I'm sorry for it. I felt instinctively that the South was being done

wrong, but I didn't really understand the reason. Now I understand and totally believe that the biggest problem we had was being an economic colony. And the thing that has helped perpetuate it has been the racial thing—keeping people divided on race, teaching white people to be poor and proud and hate black people."

Turnipseed left South Carolina in 1967 and joined the Wallace presidential campaign. "I was attracted to his populism. He was a great deal more of a populist than a lot of people realize, but it was exclusionary to black people to a large extent and that was totally wrong."

Turnipseed served as Wallace's national campaign director in 1968 and was instrumental in organizing the petition drives that helped place Wallace on the presidential ballot in 50 states. After the defeat, Turnipseed stayed on to organize Wallace's successful bid for governor and to lay groundwork for the 1972 presidential race.

He left Wallace in 1971 for reasons that remain cloudy. Turnipseed says he was turned off by the political intriguers who surrounded the governor. Some accounts say Turnipseed was fired after he told *Parade* magazine he would "make Cornelia the Jackie Kennedy of the rednecks," but Wallace has always insisted they parted on good terms.

Taxpayers Association.

Shortly after his return to South Carolina, Turnipseed organized the South Carolina Taxpayers Association and became its first and only executive director. In press releases he described the group as the foundation of a grassroots movement to return control of government to taxpayers.

In the beginning a strong conservative influence was apparent within the group, and Turnipseed continued to be attracted to Wallace. After the Maryland assassination attempt and Wallace's decision to withdraw from the presidential race, Turnipseed tried to organize a draft-Wallace movement in South Carolina.

The Taxpayers Association served as Turnipseed's first forum for attacks on the political and economic establishment, and his first assault was on the South Carolina Public Service Commission (PSC). The commissioners, Turnipseed said, were dominated by a small group of senior state senators who controlled appointments to the PSC and who were themselves influenced by large retainer fees from utilities. The payment of retainers to legislators by regulated utilities has been an integral part of Turnipseed's rhetoric in three campaigns for public office.

Turnipseed says the formation of the Taxpayers Association marked the turning point in his attitude toward blacks. "I'd never really known any black people. When I got to know them through my work with the Taxpayers, I just said, my God, what have we done? I started thinking how it would be to be black. To endure what they've endured. I began to realize that blacks and whites were going to have to get together to change things."

Turnipseed began to articulate what has become the underlying theme in all of his battles with the power structure. The South, he said, has been under the control of outside economic forces, epitomized by the New York financial structure headed by David Rockefeller. These forces control the flow of money and use this power to exploit the South, to keep wages low, to keep unions out and to encourage the divisiveness among poor blacks and whites that serves to maintain a cheap labor market.

At rate hike hearings, Turnipseed closely questioned power company executives and was able to document a series of financial ties between Northern banks and state power companies. He charged that rate hike requests were a direct result of the banks' conspiracy to reap excessive profits from the Southern colony.

In the spring of 1972 Turnipseed made a well-received speech before the state NAACP in which he pled for black-white unity. The remarks by a former Wallace operative attracted national media attention; Turnipseed was interviewed on the CBS

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IN THE NATION

LEGISLATION

The arms budget is challenged

By Brad Karkkainen

BY MID-MAY, CONGRESS MUST decide how to spend some \$300 billion — the “controllable” portion of a half-trillion dollar federal budget. To no one’s surprise, the lion’s share of that budget will again go to the Pentagon, as it has every year since World War II.

But just how much the Pentagon will get—and how much will go for job-creation, economic conversion, solar energy and rebuilding the nation’s decaying railbeds—promises to be the subject of dramatic congressional confrontations with implications for federal budgets and policies in the 1980s.

“Since the end of our involvement in Indochina adequate funding for domestic economic and social programs has been held hostage to unrealistic military demands that exceed our defense needs,” charges Sen. George McGovern (D-SD).

The Carter administration’s budget request for fiscal year ’79 bears out McGovern’s charge. Carter seeks a record \$128.4 billion for the military. This represents a \$10 billion increase—3.4 percent real growth—over FY ’78, while domestic spending barely keeps pace with inflation. And the administration plans to increase military spending at 3 percent annually into the 1980s, even while “holding the line” on domestic spending.

Left members of Congress, led by McGovern and Rep. Parren Mitchell (D-MD, chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus), will challenge this trend. They are seeking to cut \$4 to \$6 billion from the administration’s military budget request, and to transfer the savings to domestic programs.

Mitchell and McGovern will wage their fight through “transfer amendments” to the First Budget Resolution in the Senate in late April and the House in early May. The Budget Resolution sets ceilings on broad categories of federal spending. By lowering the ceiling in a category judged to be excessive (like the military) and raising ceilings for under-funded categories, a “transfer amendment” can effectively redirect federal spending priorities through a single legislative device.

McGovern’s Senate transfer amendment will emphasize additional funds for job-creation, economic conversion (to protect laid-off defense production workers), solar energy development, and rail and mass transit upgrading and revitalization.

Prospects for the transfer proposal.

Proponents of the transfer concept believe that their support is growing. “The combined Washington and grassroots effort has become much more sophisticated in the last year,” says Vicki Otten of Americans for Democratic Action (ADA), a leading lobbyist in the transfer campaign.

Earlier this year, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, Urban League, National Education Association, UAW, International Association of Machinists and AFSCME argued that “trimming unnecessary defense expenditures will generate an important source of funds for meeting our vital needs at home.” The NAACP and the AFL-CIO’s Industrial Union Department are on record in support of new budget priorities, as are city councils in St. Louis, Buffalo, San Francisco, Pittsburgh and other cities.

The Washington-based Priorities Working Group of the Coalition for a New Foreign and Military Policy, which includes representatives of urban, farm and rural, minority, labor, religious, peace and public interest constituencies plans to lobby congressional offices as the budget debate approaches.



Sen. George McGovern, who is leading the fight for the Transfer Amendment in the Senate, addresses the Priorities Working Group of the Coalition for a New Foreign and Military Policy.

But despite the broad constituency for the transfer concept, many Members of Congress hesitate to oppose military spending, especially in an election year. They fear the well-organized right, and what they see as a rightward drift among constituents who have flooded them with mail opposing the Panama Canal Treaties.

“We’ve always had to counter the Soviet ‘threat’ argument in working on the military budget,” says ADA’s Vicki Otten. “But the right-wing is raising issues above and beyond the direct threat from the Soviets.... In the Panama Canal debate they’re arguing for a new element to national security—our right to intervene” in the Third World. This, Otten says, adds pressure for increased military spending.

“They’re just not hearing enough from our side,” Otten warns. “Unless we do something, and do something very quickly, we’ll see regression on a variety of issues.”

Across the country, activity in support of the Mitchell and McGovern transfer amendments by peace and foreign policy activists in organizations like the Mobilization for Survival, Clergy and Laity Concerned, the American Friends Service

Committee, and Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom is increasing. Like the national campaign, local efforts are seeking to embrace a broader constituency of labor, minorities, churches, progressive public officials, community organizations, environmental and energy activists.

“In the course of three transfer campaigns the constituency has gradually broadened,” says Mark Shanahan of the Northern Ohio Project on National Priorities. Shanahan, a former anti-war activist and a veteran of two previous budget fights—in 1976, when Rep. Elizabeth Holtzman (D-NY) offered the first transfer amendment and in 1977, when Rep. Parren Mitchell offered his. Shanahan’s Northern Ohio Project is unique—a strong regional coalition of labor, religious, peace and public interest groups that reflects the potential breadth of the transfer campaign.

“One of the most valuable things about the transfer strategy is that it allows you to address two of the most fundamental problems in this country—inflation and unemployment,” Shanahan says. “Once people begin to realize the negative impact of military spending in

those areas, they respond very favorably to the transfer concept.” But “it’s a complex issue, one that has to challenge the basic assumptions of American foreign policy—so it’s going to take time,” he cautions.

National campaign.

In Chicago, Atlanta, Denver, Portland, St. Petersburg, Philadelphia, Minneapolis, New York and dozens of other cities, local organizations are forming around the transfer idea. In some cities local coalitions are already in place; in others the long process of educating and influencing public attitudes, and translating those attitudes into organization and active pressure on Congress is beginning.

But in the short term, the specter of the right looms large. “People aren’t shifting to the right nearly as much as Congresspeople think they are,” says transfer organizer Shanahan. “But the right-wing is well-financed and well-organized, and progressive elements, ranging from progressive Democrats on out, just haven’t done as good a job organizing.” ■

Brad Karkkainen works with the Coalition for a New Foreign and Military Policy in Washington.

NUCLEAR

N.Y. ban on nuclear shipments upheld

By Susan Lynne Berger

ON APRIL 4TH, NEW YORK OFFICIALS and citizen and environmentalist groups won a victory in upholding the two-year old ban on radioactive nuclear waste shipments through the city. The U.S. Department of Transportation ruled that there was no current federal regulation concerning the transportation of nuclear wastes, and that New York City had legal authority to impose the ban.

This is the first decision in which the Transportation Department upheld a municipal ban directly affecting the regulation of interstate commerce.

The decision leaves open the possibility of future Department of Transportation regulations governing the shipment of nuclear wastes. These could supercede New York’s ban.

At a public hearing held last November, 80 speakers expressed outrage about the danger to public health in the possi-

The nuclear waste shippers feared that if N.Y.’s ban was upheld, other cities would enact similar bans.

bility that radioactive waste material could—by accident or sabotage—be released onto the streets of New York City.

The April 4th hearing was held in response to a challenge to the New York City regulation by the Associated Universities Incorporated (an organization engaged in nuclear energy research). Associated Universities saw the ban as an attack on nuclear power research. AUI serves as the board of directors for Brookhaven National Laboratory in Upton, Long Island, and also operates the facility. As such it is both a consignee and shipper of radioactive waste materials.

Before the city’s health code became operational (January 1976), radioactive nuclear waste (spent fuel elements) was transported from Brookhaven through the streets of Queens and Manhattan to their final destination at the U.S. Energy Research and Development Administration’s nuclear reprocessing center at Savannah River, S.C. The shipments were made in a series of about six, twice a year.

N. Peter Rathvon, a spokesman for Brookhaven, said, “Once New York does it, they’ll all ban shipments all over, and we’ll never get off the island.” He cited as an example New London, Conn., which is the terminus of a ferry that runs there from Orient Point, L.I., on which the wastes were carried after the New York council voted the ban. New London is now considering banning future shipments. After half a dozen shipments over the Orient Point-New London Ferry in 1976, the laboratory began to store its wastes on its premises.

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