

Jerry DeMuth
1943 West Chase Ave.
Chicago, Ill. 60626

circulate '60s.

Former Alabama Gov. George C. Wallace proudly proclaims he is for the "little man"--the blue collar worker who is affraid of increasing taxes and wasteful government spending.

The appeal Wallace generates in his quest for the presidency is the same appeal he used in his campaign for governor. But it's a false appeal. Wallace's programs and actions have hurt the most those who he promises to help.

Wallace said he stood against the sales tax. After he became governor, instead of working to abolish the 3 per cent state sales tax, he helped raise it to 4 per cent, with municipalities adding another 2 per cent. The total sales tax of 6 per cent is the highest of any state in the nation and it covers virtually everything including groceries and medicines.

At the same time, the state has the lowest real estate, corporate and income taxes of any state. Alabama collects twice as much from the state sales tax as it does from income tax.

Farther, in violation of the state constitution, Wallace blocked all attempts to equalize property-tax assessments so that wealthy industrialists and landowners would continue to receive a tax break.

Also working against the "little man" in Alabama is the lack of a minimum wage law, lack of an adequate workmen's compensation law, and the existence of an anti-union, right-to-work law. Wallace had promised to change all this while campaigning for governor but, once elected, neglected those promises.

It is no wonder then that while campaigning for his wife to succeed him as governor in 1966, Wallace could comment, "I haven't talked to a single industrialist from New York to California who didn't say, 'I agree with the effort being made in your state.'"

While increasing Alabama's sales tax, Wallace was also increasing its bonded indebtedness. In 1960, the figure stood at \$121,839,000. In 1967, after five years of the Wallaces, it had jumped to \$501,491,000.

Wallace while governor claimed that ^{the} state needed \$60,000,000 for highways, then put through a bond issue of \$100,000,000. He amortized the bonds so that the first interest payment would not be due until four years after he left the governorship (or the year his wife would have left the post). It meant that the state wouldn't pay out anything while the Wallaces were governor, but also meant that Alabama would pay out extra amounts later. Interest, in fact, will total more than half of the principal.

While talking of thrift, Wallace also bought a \$250,000 Lockheed Lodestar with state funds to carry him on out-of-state speaking engagement--and then, at state expense, always took with him three state troopers, a public relations staff, and a number of appointed officials.

Gov. Wallace also required road contractorsto hire as "agents" friends of his administration, including Klan leader Robert Shelton, according to the U. S. Bureau of Roads.

Contracts for asphalt for the state's road building did not go to the lowest bidders. One such contract went to a firm, American Materials and Supply, which had been formed only one week earlier. A suit, filed by one of the losing low bidding firms, charged that contracts were awarded to firms who made kickbacks to the Wallace administration. The suit was settled out of court and one defendant in the suit, Seymore Trammell, quit his post as state finance director. Trammell now serves as Wallace's national campaign chairman and finance director.

The state-operated liquor stores also have been charged with graft. One company, Montgomery Wine, sold the state \$2,000,000 worth of whiskey although it had no employees and no telephone.

Capitol watchbirds charged that during his administration Wallace's friends made small fortunes selling road gravel to the state highway department and office equipment to the state.

This financial record prompted State Sen. Bob Gilchrist to comment after two years of Wallace as governor: "He has borrowed, taxed and spent more money in his term than in any other two-year period of Alabama history."

Wallace tried to spend even more money. For example, he unsuccessfully fought to get a bill passed which would have given him the power to hire as many attorneys as he wanted, at any salary, for any purpose, for the state highway department. The money would have come from the state's education and highway funds.

Bills such as this one prompted State Sen. Vaughan Hill Robison to ask: "On what meat does this little Caesar feed?"

Wallace also established two spy networks. One, with a card file of at least 33,000 names, kept track of newsmen, civil rights workers and others. The other network consisted of 30 political informers who kept an eye out for anyone opposing Wallace.

Although residents of Tuskegee accepted school integration, Wallace tried to block integration by closing their schools.

"Some of us didn't want our schools closed," commented Tuskegee bank president J. Allen Parker. "We questioned Wallace's right to close them. Our Alabama constitution guarantees local control of schools, not state control."

Wallace appointed as president of Troy State College, Ralph Adams. Adams lacked a Ph.D. but he did have one qualification in Wallace's eyes. He had driven a sound truck for one of the governor's campaigns. A \$1,000,000 dorm for athletes, with color tvs in rooms, was built at the college and Adams appointed his wife to the faculty--after firing the department head who opposed the move.

Wallace also tried to get the power to appoint trustees to the University of Alabama in order to control that institution but failed.

Counterbalancing the extravagance in building the athletic dorm at Troy State is teachers' pay in Alabama--the second lowest of any state in the nation.

To quote author Robert Sherrill, Wallace's reputation is really one of "debt and taxation, favoritism, hypocrisy and ruthlessness."

#