

Cashin visits Wallace, discusses constitution

MONTGOMERY (AP) — John Cashin, who once directed a black political organization that fought George Wallace's segregationist stands, visited the former four-term governor Thursday, seeking support for a new cause.

Cashin wants to shelve the heavily amended Alabama Constitution of 1901 and adopt a new one in a constitutional convention. The Huntsville resident said the state needs a new organic law "which we all will respect and obey."

Stopping at Wallace's home, Cashin said, "Governor Wallace has dominated Alabama politics for the last 30 years. It would be foolish to try and work up this system without his support."

Wallace, who has been in poor health and talks with difficulty, commented, "I don't think we need a new constitution. The courts protect the blacks now." But he said he would support the spirit and the concept.

He also said in a statement that "at such time as there is an occasion for the constitution to be rewritten, I will gladly provide input if requested."

Cashin founded the National Democratic Party of Alabama, which was instrumental in getting some of the first blacks elected to local offices in Alabama after the 1965 voting rights act.



Cashin and Wallace

He said Thursday that the 1901 constitution was conceived for the primary purpose of keeping blacks out of the political life of the state forever. Although courts have struck down many of its racially exclusive aspects, Cashin said that "the whole thing is offensive. We need to start all over."

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FAX MESSAGE TO:

MR. CHARLES CARR, DIRECTOR,
THE GEORGE C. WALLACE FOUNDATION
MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA

PLEASE RELAY THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION TO THE GOVERNOR SO THAT OUR SCHEDULED MEETING TOMORROW CAN PROCEED WITH CLARITY, ALACRITY, AND OBJECTIVITY.

FEBRUARY 7, 1996

DEAR SIR;

SINCE I WAS THE FOUNDER OF OUR OWN POLITICAL PARTY, THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF ALABAMA, WHOSE MOTTO IS "TO END RACISM, AND POVERTY, AND BRING DEMOCRACY TO ALABAMA," I HAVE NOT WAVERED IN TRYING TO ACHIEVE THAT OBJECTIVE, BEARING THAT HEAVY CROSS MUCH IN THE SAME WAY THE GOVERNOR HAS BORNE HIS. GOVERNOR WALLACE ASKS, "WHY WON'T THEY REHABILITATE ME?" I SEE OUR MEETING TOMORROW AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR BOTH OF OUR OBJECTIVES TO BE ACHIEVED. I AM PERFECTLY WILLING TO FORGIVE HIS RACIAL TRANSGRESSIONS OF THE 1960's BECAUSE I RECOGNIZE THE DYNAMICS OF THE FAUSTIAN BARGAIN HE STRUCK TO ACHIEVE POWER, AND THE TERRIBLE CONSEQUENCES HE HAS SUFFERED AS A RESULT. THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXTIRPATE RACISM FROM ALABAMA, AND SIMULTANEOUSLY ACHIEVE HIS "REHABILITATION" WILL BE ALTRUISTICALLY SERVED IF HE AND I JOIN TOGETHER TO BRING ABOUT A NEW CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION FOR ALABAMA IN 1996, 1997, OR 1998. AS HE KNOWS, THE ALABAMA CONSTITUTION OF 1901 WAS CONCEIVED IN INIQUITY BY THE STATE DEMOCRATIC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, WITH THE PUBLICLY EXPRESSED PURPOSE, "TO REMOVE THE NEGRO FOREVER FROM THE POLITICAL LIFE OF THE STATE OF ALABAMA." WITH THE ADOPTION OF OLD SOLDIER CLAUSES, GRANDFATHER CLAUSES, WHITES ONLY PRIMARY ELECTIONS, POLL TAXES, AND LITERACY TESTS, WHITE MALE SUPREMACY WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1901 TO THE EXCLUSION OF EVERY OTHER RACE AND SEX. IT ALSO WAS A GROSS VIOLATION OF THE U.S. CONSTITUTION, AND SET THE STAGE FOR INEVITABLE RACE AND GENDER CONFLICTS WHICH HAVE DISTURBED THE BODY POLITIC IMMEASURABLY THROUGHOUT THIS CENTURY.

THE TIMING IS RIGHT FOR AN ALTRUISTIC ENDEAVOR LIKE THIS TO SUCCEED. A NEW ALABAMA CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION, CONSISTING OF DELEGATES REFLECTING PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION FROM ALL ETHNIC AND GENDER FACTIONS LIVING IN ALABAMA, CAN WRITE A SET OF LAWS WHICH WE **ALL** WILL RESPECT AND OBEY, AND PERHAPS CASTING ALABAMA AS "THE PERFECT STATE" FOR OTHERS TO IMITATE AND FOLLOW. ALABAMA, AMERICA, AND THE WORLD CRY FOR THE HEALING OF OLD AND CURRENT WOUNDS. TOGETHER, WE CAN AGAIN BRING ALABAMA TO THE FOREFRONT - - THIS TIME WITH A **POSITIVE** IMAGE.

I EARNESTLY SOLICIT YOUR SUPPORT AND COOPERATION IN MAKING THIS ALL COME TRUE. I LOOK FORWARD TO OUR MEETING TOMORROW AS THE BEGINNING OF A NEW ERA, WITH ALABAMA TAKING THE LEAD, OF COURSE!!

VERY SINCERELY YOURS,


DR. JOHN L. CASHIN, JR.

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