

LABOR ACTION

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The Liberal Party and Tammany Hall: 'The Tiger Still Roams the Streets'

By PETER WHITNEY

NEW YORK—Some 5000 unionists jammed Manhattan Center on October 5 to attend the opening rally in the Liberal Party's 1950 election campaign, a Shop and District Delegated Conference. Huge portraits of Democratic candidates Lehman, Lynch, and Pecora (for senator, governor, and mayor respectively) smiled down on the audience; brass bands blared whenever speakers made a point or paused for breath; and the Liberal Party leadership proved that it could run a political sideshow with the rest of them.

The delegates were exhorted by the party leaders to go out and work for a huge registration in New York City and thus guarantee a pro-labor victory. The rank and file responded warmly and enthusiastically only for Senator Lehman when he entered the hall; they were lukewarm in their reception to Lynch and Pecora, indicating that they are far from completely accepting these gentlemen as "their" candidates.

Party leaders Alex Rose of the Hatters Union and David Dubinsky of the Ladies Garment Workers Union spoke of the urgent necessity to guarantee Lehman's reelection and to avoid any confusion, such as a split ballot for the top offices (that is, an independent Liberal candidate for governor or mayor). They protested loudly that Pecora had to be rammed down the throats of the Democratic Party bosses and that he was really their man.

However, their own statements about the insistence of Lehman himself that the Liberals not

"split" their ballot, and their speeches insisting that everything must be subordinated to guarantee Lehman's victory, were a clear indication that they were scarcely in a position to dictate Pecora's candidacy, if the Democratic bosses had not been willing to accede to him anyway.

Actually it was Lehman who dictated to the Liberals that, if they wanted to endorse him, they would have to endorse his running mates too. Lehman had found the 1949 election situation (Republican-Fusionist Newbold Morris was then on the Liberal Party ticket with him) too "embarrassing" and irregular for him.

POLITICAL AMNESIA

Rose, for example, in castigating Acting Mayor Impellitteri for entering the free-for-all for mayor, unwittingly revealed that he was perfectly aware that Pecora was acceptable to the Tammany bosses. He charged that Impellitteri was working for Pecora's defeat in the hope that he could challenge the regular organization of the Democratic Party, i.e., Tammany Hall. What other conclusion could the workers present reach except that they were being called upon to elect the candidate acceptable to Tammany Hall?

These same party leaders, just one year ago, had blasted away at Tammany Hall and its candidate, Mayor O'Dwyer, as typifying machine politics and its vile corruption. The Democratic Party bosses were the hideous danger threatening every worker in New York City, and the workers were called to rally to the unstained banner of Newbold Morris and carry it to victory.

But now it is 1950 . . . and political amnesia has afflicted the Liberal Party leaders. Somehow the very words "Tammany Hall" and "Democratic Party

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Union Democracy Under Attack in UAW-Ford Trial

By WALTER JASON

DETROIT, Oct. 8—Nothing illustrates the tragic state of affairs which dominates the United Auto Workers (CIO) than current events in the giant Ford Local 600. For what is happening there is without precedent in the UAW-CIO and, unfortunately, may well be the prelude to similar retrogression elsewhere in the union.

Last week, the union officialdom broke a wildcat strike caused by the loss of overtime pay in the rolling mill, under an empire's ruling on a controversy between the union and the company.

This week the notorious trial of five minor officials of Ford Local 600 begins. It is the climax to the struggle that Carl Stellato, Ford 600 president, has been waging against the Stalinist forces and their followers in the local union.

These two events are related, as we shall indicate, and they are a portent of the future course of the UAW, whose leadership now finds itself unwilling and unable to defeat the Stalinists on the progressive basis of a su-

perior program, but rather leans more on time-worn and reactionary bureaucratic methods to smash opposition.

As most readers of LABOR ACTION know, the unrest in the auto industry recently reached a peak which forced the companies, including Ford, to make important wage concessions, but for which the companies obtained in return the provision of five-year contracts.

To the surprise of most UAW officials, the Ford auto workers failed to approve the new contract with the overwhelming majority they expected. Two key Reutherite locals, 900 and 400, voted against ratifying the contract because of the five-year clause. All of which caused Ken Bannon, UAW Ford director, to issue a stupid blast against "Communist" influence, which he personally knows is negligible in those two locals. At Ford 600, the vote was 18,000 to 12,000 for the new five-year contract.

Obviously, this kind of continued unrest furnishes fertile soil for the opposition. At Ford 600, the small and until recently discredited Stalinist clique saw the possibility of better days ahead.

RED-HUNTING

Taking advantage of the national hysteria after the invasion of South Korea, Carl Stellato sought to make factional capital by introducing a loyalty oath for all officials of Ford 600. After a bitter fight, Stellato won a clear-cut majority of the General Council; and then everybody signed the loyalty oath, thereby outmaneuvering Stellato, who hoped that Stalinists or their sympathizers or any other opposition might be isolated and smashed for refusing to sign it. Stellato's next move was to

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INSIDE STALINIST GERMANY—

Prussian-Style 'Socialism'

By BENNO SAREL

BERLIN—"We were opening up new roads," says the song of the FDJ, the blue-shirted Stalinist youth, whom you meet on every street corner in every town of the Russian zone, standing in noisy, gay groups.

"We are opening up new roads," you will be told by the cadres of every section of the party—the SED, ruling Stalinist party of Eastern Germany.

Talk to the young Stalinists: They are not happy about what they see around them—far from that—but they are enthusiastic, they have confidence in the future. They will try to show you that life is getting better, that a new generation sprung from the people is arising and replacing the old cadres, and that this new generation is discarding the old ways. They will end by averring that the future belongs to socialism—that is, in their mind, to the party.

Talk to the cadres of the party or, with workers who are sincere Communists. Rarely are they entirely in line. They often admit

that the Stalinist regime is full of faults. But, every time, you will find out that what keeps the sincere elements attached to the party is, in the first place, hostility to capitalism; the inability of the West to offer an acceptable way out; finally, their feeling that the last word has not yet been said, that the regime has not yet shown everything it can do.

How numerous are these elements whom the regime has won over on the basis of its anti-capitalism? Some hundreds of thousands of youth and perhaps an equal number of adults—at most, 10 per cent of the population. That is clearly a small number. But it is enormous when you remember that five years ago there were only 400 who arrived from Moscow on the gun carriages of the Russian army.

What are the intentions and methods of the regime with regard to the greater mass of the 90 per cent?

"We want socialism," a journalist said to me, one of the best in the country. "But the masses do not yet understand where their interests lie. It is necessary to hold on at any cost and if necessary force the people to follow us."

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N. Y. Public Meeting:

MAX SHACHTMAN on

The Socialist Movement: 33 Years After the Russian Revolution

Thursday, November 2, at 8:15 p.m.

Cornish Arms Hotel, 23rd Street and 8th Avenue

Auspices: Independent Socialist League, Local New York
Admission: 50 cents (including tax)

