

Come From Campuses, Pulpits, Ghettos To Press Views

Concerned Dems Put Strength Behind McCarthy

By DON HOENSELL

Intellectuals and liberals who are walking away from President Johnson on Vietnam and estranged by a faltering war on poverty and racism will be heard in the Democratic party in 1968. They want that they want more than a one-shot nod in 1968, that they are shooting for a hand on the levers of power.

They came to Cobo Hall Saturday through the ice and drizzle to the convention of the Michigan Conference of Concerned Democrats.

THERE WAS a shortage of the old familiar faces and voices from the halcyon days of the 1950s as more than 500 revived the image of Briefcase Democrats, less concerned with candidates than with issues.

They came from the campuses and the pulpits, from the ghettos and the suburbs to seek involvement.

Concerned Democrats, headed by temporary chairman, James Pino, the Grafton County Democratic chairman, are massing behind Minnesota Senator Eugene McCarthy, a challenger to President Johnson in early primaries and, in Michigan, behind resigned Democratic State Chairman Zolton A. Ferency.

They heard Ferency and U.S. Rep. John Conyers, of Detroit's First District, preach the gospel of self-determination — in politics as well as in foreign policy — they took a dose of general liberalism from TV Star Robert Vaughn and heard McCarthy's speech piped in from Chicago.

Even McCarthy doesn't believe he can dump Mr. Johnson as the party's candidate in 1968; but states with Ferency and others that this growing voice should be heard.

Ferency, who said earlier he will resign Jan. 15 or sooner if a successor is chosen, said he is backing the Establishment on the approach to issues, not philosophy.

"Hopefully, we'll have a slate in Michigan for McCarthy and slates on the issues," he said. "When I say 'we,' I place myself in the category of seeking alternatives on candidates and issues on the great questions of our time."

Ferency reiterated he has no plan to join Concerned Democrats or, if he does, to take a leadership role, but said the reasons for the organization are many of the reasons he quit.

Throughout the day there ran a series of consistent points:

- Vietnam is an "immoral war" and the United States should withdraw in that the sending of troops to Asia is of doubtful legality.
- Domestic policies, such as the War on Poverty, have not substantially helped the have-nots of either major race or lesser racial tensions which brought riots to the major cities last summer.
- Concerned Democrats are rebelling against the party hierarchy.

"We will serve notice on the gentlemen at 900 W. Michigan (state party headquarters) that this organization is no longer a plaything," said Lynn Parsons, of the 17th district. Bernard Klein, Detroit city controller, welcomed the delegates, adding that "you are providing a spirit of dissent that challenges the warped sense of priorities that seems to be taking place in our society today."

LIVONIA'S RON MARDIROS, fired from his license plate fee office by Secretary of State James M. Hare who said he might run for Congress against Rep. Jack H. McDonald as a peace candidate, said:

"He (Ferency) has paid a price, as you all know. But our work here today will be a testimonial to his cause."

Ferency, responding to a standing ovation, started with knuckle-cracking humor and smacked the administration in Washington and party

leadership here with head-cracking criticism: "I want to thank those who worked so hard to make this possible—Lyndon Johnson, Neil Staebler . . .

"There are some risks in doing what we are doing here today. You will become outcasts in the minds of some people if you have the courage of your convictions."

"But this is where the action is and this is where you belong."

He said that "liberals tend to engage in cannibalism," and urged the delegates to move ahead with their organization rather than get bogged down in fly-specking and structural disagreements.

"You should devote most of your energies to the cause in which you seek to struggle," he said. "I think the American people are now concerned by the overriding issues of our time."

"Each of us knows in his heart of hearts that if there were no Vietnam, there would be another issue—race, poverty, perhaps—to bring about critical dissent."

He said the nation still faces major problems in mass transportation, in water and air pollution, "in our very environment."

"Don't let anyone say we're a single-issue organization," Ferency said. "We are not."

Ferency urged the delegates to work through the Democratic party.

"That's where I'm going to stay whether as state chairman or delegate from Precinct 6, East Lansing," he said. "That's where I'm going to stay. I'm not going to depart the premises."

"Let them know in the halls of the party and make them listen to you. You can fight for a free convention in 1968."

HE SAID the Michigan Democratic leadership already has committed themselves to President Johnson as the 1968 nominee, and quoted a letter from National Chairman John N. Bailey urging Democrats to work for the nominee "and we all know who that will be."

Ferency quoted McCarthy as saying that he is "at least one of the" anti-LBJ candidates, adding that "I share Senator McCarthy's view that there is room for others to come forward."

"Because of groups like this, there may be a re-examination of its position by the National Committee," he said. "I'm sure you will be able to deliver Michigan to the Senator McCarthy cause if you work like you have shown you can in the past."

Ferency lashed out at the "power vacuum" in the party in Michigan, adding that it is in the hands of fewer than 5,000 people.

"There is enough spirit right here in this room to take over the Democratic party of Michigan," he said. "Don't overlook the power of your individual presence at political meetings."

Ferency said the average Republican "doesn't know how he stands on Vietnam."

"But before you laugh too loudly, consider the plight of the average Democrat," Ferency said. "He has the position of LBJ or lump it."

LATER CONYERS, who won by 48 votes in a bitter primary in the First District against Richard A. Austin, defined the major issues as war and poverty, both colored by the overriding posture of racism.

He said 50 per cent of the Negro ninth graders in Detroit schools do not graduate from high school, creating "functional illiterates."

"We need in the Negro community voices to speak out," he said. "It is time we began to look at the great struggle going on in the Negro community."

Conyers said that the white-vs-white problem is just as compelling, that institutional prejudice works within the races as well as between them. "It is out of this kind of association that we're going to see some results of the struggles that have been going on for these many years."

The First and 13th district organizations already are planning to go to the national convention backing McCarthy as a favorite son.

The Concerned Democrats' statement of purpose opposed the war in Vietnam, called for self-determination among the races in this country and a marshaling of resources to solve domestic problems. It added:

"The MCD believes that the Democratic Party is the property of its members, not of its officers and candidates. It therefore will continue to seek means by which grassroots opinion may be expressed, and by which all Democrats may participate in decision-making."

public affairs

Stunned Dem Bosses Map Recoup Plans

By DWIGHT JARRELL
Staff Writer

CLARE, Mich.—This small central rural community sits at the intersection of US-40 and Highway 75 and proclaims itself proudly as the crossroads of Michigan.

It was here the Michigan Democratic Party met to map its direction at another crossroads, one of political crisis. It is a party that is still stunned and hurt by the political treachery of a top general in its ranks, State Democratic Chairman Zolton Ferency.

After the party's big defeat in 1966, infectious apathy swept the rank and file, morale plummeted, recruitment fell and the rout was an easy ambush.

The bones of old party war horses were left beside the roadside of retreat that year. Yet all seemed merely space settling as Ferency went on to organize the splinter organization of Concerned Democrats (now more and more often referred to as the hyphenated Democrats as differentiated from concerned Democrats) and to back the presidential candidacy of Minnesota Sen. Eugene McCarthy in grandiose move to dump President Lyndon Johnson.

The meeting in Clare, Mich., was without precedent in the annals of the State Democratic Party.

In attendance were County and District chairmen or representatives from across the Mackinac Bridge and the Upper Peninsula, to Berrien County on the Indiana border and Newberry, more than 300 miles away.

Ferency who in Detroit was a speaker at a conference of his rebel group of concerned Democrats numbering little more than 200 in the state espouse of empty seats in Cobo Hall.

Saturday in Clare and most of Michigan was a day of freezing rain and sleet but inside the Clare meeting the talk was of the green political pastures of grassroots politics.

Prominent by the implication of his presence as representative of Secretary of State James M. Hare, possibly the most powerful Democrat in Michigan today, was Assistant Secretary

of State James F. McClure. OSTENSIBLY, MCCLURE was there to lay plans for the reconstruction of the party after its political and financial bankruptcy in the wake of Ferency's firebrand secession.

The goals ahead are plain to see. A poll financed by the party earlier this year reveals that 49 per cent of the people of Michigan are Democrats, 35 per cent are Republicans, 15 per cent are independents.

The inference and the party's defeat in 1966 is obvious. The party is not turning out that 49 per cent.

Party Figures Come To Watch

Democratic Vice Chairman Paul Knox paid cash for her registration and listened to the new voice rising in the party in Michigan.

She had opposed Chairman Zolton A. Ferency's anti-Johnson position earlier and now must carry the load with his impending departure. Asked if she was signing up, she said: "We just paid my registration fee. There is no corner on the Democratic party. We need all kinds of Democrats. We have an election to win."

Mrs. Knox was the Concerned Establishment figure at the Convention of Concerned Democrats in Cobo Hall Saturday.

There were others. UAW'S POLITICAL ARM,

COPE, had observers and one of the union's top political powers, Paul Silver, arrived today a delegate into the corridor for a talk. Neither would discuss later.

There are others there without a direct organizational stake in either side, but long associated with the party. It was plain everybody expects Concerned Democrats to stay inside the party fold.

THE WAYNE and Oakland 10th appeared to be active in the Conference of Concerned Democrats. There was Bob Rowland, of Redford Township, whose wife, Miltie, is chairwoman of the movement in the 10th.

There was Tony Probe, of the 11th and Gerald Fay, one time candidate for Congress from Ann Arbor, later aide to House Democrats in Lansing, and now a professor at Oakland University.

From Livonia there was Ron Mardiros, a boyhood neighbor in the downriver area of Detroit to Ferency, a possible peace candidate for Congress from the 10th last year.

Paul Kadish, president of the Livonia Democratic Club, attended with a delegation, and scores of others from Farmington, Bedford, and other points in the northwest suburbs were there.



RON MARDIROS

ZOLTON FERENCY

Camera Catches Dem Dissidents In These Poses During Talks To Conference

'Soapy' Turns Down Plea

EX-GOV. G. Mennen Williams turned down an appeal by the State Democratic Party's hierarchy to "take over" the state chairmanship held by anti-Johnson rebel Zolton Ferency, it was learned this week by The Observer Newspapers.

Williams, who led his Party to unprecedented victories in

his five consecutive terms as governor (1949-1960), declined for personal reasons that have taken him out of the country on at least two occasions, this newspaper was told.

The "personal reasons" were believed connected with his expressed desire on previous occasions to make a more individual contribution in various missionary works of the church of his faith. Williams is an Episcopalian.

AT THE TIME the request was first made by Democratic leaders, as long ago as October, Williams told them, also, that he felt the position required a full time chairman.

Top Party leaders felt that Williams' political magnetism could quickly put the crippled Democratic Party back on its feet and again in step with the people in time to overcome immense political setbacks and a mounting dissipation of prestige before the 1966 general state and national elections.

THE LATTER, which resulted in a political catastrophe for the Democrats in Michigan in 1966 when Republican Gov. Romney returned to office in a landslide with a swarm of GOP office holders statewide on his coattails, was a monster Frankenstein loosed by Ferency's desertion of his duties as State Democratic Chairman.

See Levin As Probable State Chief

State Senator Sander M. Levin has emerged as the top-heavy favorite to succeed the dissident Zolton A. Ferency as Democratic State Chairman.

Support developed strongly over the last week for the 35-year-old former labor lawyer and Oakland County Chairman, Vice Chairman Paul Knox, boomed by some for the post as the state's first distasteful Democratic chieftain (a neat balance for GOP State Chairman Ely (Peterson) took himself out of the race.

Mrs. Knox, wife of Detroit Housing Director Robert A. Knox, endorsed Levin. In a Clare meeting for district and county chairmen, Charles Moskowitz, 10th district chairman from Mt. Pleasant, went on record favoring Levin.

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