

The truth about New York candidate Lewis Lehrman

by Charles Tate

The campaign of Republican Lewis Lehrman for New York Governor has won a national media forum in the bellwether mid-term elections Nov. 2. Lehrman, an unknown dubbed "Lew who?" during his primary campaign, had by late October spent well in excess of \$10 million to create and project an image as an intellectual leader and successful small businessman with a novel, if conservative, program for economic recovery and fighting crime. Even if he loses the close gubernatorial race, some predict, Lehrman could emerge from the contest as a significant conservative figure.

But there is not one red cent's worth of truth in the multi-million dollar Lehrman fraud. If New Yorkers fall for it, they will have won themselves the distinction of electing the best man to lead the state into an abyss of economic collapse.

Voodoo economics

The economic recovery program Lehrman advertises is, in bald fact, the very same program which plunged the United States into its present depression collapse. Lehrman is among the leading proponents of the now totally discredited "supply side" formula responsible for the Reagan administration's failure to implement an economic policy for development, and which led it to tolerate the economy-wrecking policy of Federal Reserve chief Paul Volcker. Lehrman was so influential in the initial formulation of these disastrous policies that he was considered as a possible Reagan administration Secretary of the Treasury. (Lehrman's bid for this post was entered with his selection of the pseudonym "A. Gallatin," which Lehrman used on his earliest published economic treatises. He thus announced his adherence to the treasonous tradition of the nation's second Treasury Secretary, Albert

Gallatin, who dismantled Alexander Hamilton's First National Bank and treated the United States to its first depression.)

Lehrman's early role in feeding Reagan his disastrous economic policy makes it clear that the central fraud of the Lehrman candidacy is the claim that it represents a referendum on the Reagan administration. Lehrman has attacked what he describes as "Reagonomics," and has marketed his economic theory as a genuine "conservative alternative."

Examination reveals that there is nothing conservative in Lehrman's economic policy, which can be described as a crazy quilt of 19th century British liberalism coupled with Ezra Pound-like diatribes against cheapening the worth of money. Lehrman's proposal for a return to the gold standard, is designed not to create new sources of credit for economic development, but to contract credit even more savagely than Paul Volcker's double-digit interest rates.

For New York, Lehrman has advanced an economic austerity program more savage than any now imposed on a western industrialized economy. The state budget will be balanced, while taxes will be reduced by 40 percent. This will be accomplished, Lehrman admits, by wholesale slashing of social services. Mental hospitals will expel all but the dangerously insane, adding to the menacing glut of "bag people" in communities across the state; school budgets will be slashed, by offering tuition tax-credits explicitly designed to induce parents to send children to private schools and take the burden of paying for education off the state; public employee unions will be made to heel, or face the threat of being busted by an administration devoted to "a free market in labor;" "able-bodied" welfare recipients—including mothers of infants—will be booted off welfare and forced to take any

job they can find—in a labor market now officially at over 10 percent unemployed.

Lehrman's economic plan is so reckless that even the state's ranking Republican leader, State Senator Warren Anderson, has called it "misguided" even at the risk of handing the Democrats a campaign issue. Anderson, known as the Senate's leading financial expert, endorsed Lehrman nonetheless—but pulled a no-show at the press conference called by Lehrman to announce the endorsement. His telegram of apology explained that he had to dedicate a local bridge.

Lehrman, who has no experience in public office at any level, has argued that his brilliant success at the helm of Rite-Aid, the family business, demonstrates his fitness to occupy the statehouse. To hear Lehrman tell it, his business genius was responsible for the meteoric rise of Rite-Aid from a small grocery concern to a multi-million dollar drug-store chain.

But Rite Aid's chairman and chief executive officer, Lehrman's brother-in-law Alex Grass, has disputed Lehrman's account of his business experience, responsibility, and acumen as grossly exaggerated. Lehrman, he points out, was a school boy when the transition from grocery to chain store was made. When he joined company management, it had already passed the crucial million-dollar mark, and it has seen its greatest period of growth after Lehrman left management. The only period of crisis for the company, a 90 percent collapse in the value of its stock, occurred when Lehrman was Rite Aid president.

Although Lehrman's claim that his Rite Aid experience demonstrates special business skill is just another fraud, his relationship with the company does provide insight into what a Lehrman governorship would mean for New York State.

Rite Aid is a notorious anti-union shop. Most of its employees are non-union, and many of these earn less than \$3.60 an hour. Company policy also favors hiring of non-union construction on new stores. Teamster officials have complained bitterly about Rite Aid's use of non-union truckers. Rite Aid has also effectively "red-lined" New York City, refusing to expand there for fear that its workers will be organized by the Health and Hospital Workers Union, Local 1199, itself a low-wage union.

Rite Aid's Chairman Grass is a former trustee of the Pennsylvania Right to Work Foundation. A Teamster leader said of Rite Aid: "They expect slave labor. . . . If they had their way, there would not be any organized labor in America."

Union leaders also claim that Rite Aid engages in illegal spying on its workers to keep them from union organizing, installing two-way mirrors in employee rest rooms and the like. Two years ago, the Attorney General of Maryland sued Rite Aid for "unlawfully forcing job applicants to take lie detector tests." Rite Aid agreed to pay \$57,000 restitution to 22 workers fired for refusing to take the tests.

But an even better image of the Lehrman program can be evoked by a visit to a branch of Rite Aid's \$14 million subsidiary—Sera-Tec Biologicals, a supplier of blood plasma. Here, the unemployed, welfare recipients, minimum-

wage workers like Rite Aid employees, and college students sell their blood for \$7 a pint. (The low price is reportedly the result of a glut in the blood supply, caused by a growing army of donors who need the pittance to get by.)

If Lew Lehrman is given the chance to run New York the way he ran Rite Aid—as he has promised—odds are he will edge out Paul Volcker in public infamy as "the biggest blood-sucker since Dracula."

But probably the most outrageous of the many frauds of Lew Lehrman is his claim to favor a tough anti-crime policy. Of course, Lehrman's budget-slashing mania will not appropriate a single dollar for an expanded war on crime. He has not taken a clear stand in support of the Reagan administration's war on drugs, necessarily the backbone of any real drive to break the back of crime.

Lehrman has instead offered a necrophiliac fixation on the death penalty as a final solution to the problem of crime, and has made his support for death the top issue in his campaign. In a recent interview, Lehrman found a way to smuggle a reavowal of his support for the electric chair into every answer, no matter how irrelevant to the question.

But even more revolting is the law-and-order candidate's association with notorious organized-crime attorney Roy M. Cohn and quondam Meyer Lansky frontman U.S. Ambassador to Italy Maxwell Rabb.

If the duplicity and contrivance of the Lehrman image makes the candidate appear to be a marionette, then with Cohn and Rabb we meet the puppeteers.

Cohn's "closet" backing for Lew Lehrman is reflected in the total control of his campaign by Cohn's haven for organized crime and homosexual degeneracy, the East Side Conservative Club. Club members, and Cohn intimates in the Lehrman campaign include: **William F. Buckley, Jr.**, whose *National Review* first endorsed Lehrman; **Thomas Bolan**, Cohn's law partner and chairman of the club, who functions as a top campaign aide, and **Serfan Maltese**, New York State's Conservative Party chairman.

Most important among East Side Conservative Club members in the creation of the Lehrman fraud, however, is **Maxwell Rabb**, now U.S. Ambassador to Italy. Rabb, himself a protégé of Sen. Henry Cabot Lodge of the Genoese Caboti family which sponsored the United Fruit Company apparatus that brought together the Mazzini mafia with Jewish Mobster Samuel Zemurray, served as Lehrman's mentor. In the 1960s, Rabb served on the board of directors of three corporations later identified as fronts for the Lansky mob: International Airport Hotel Systems; Seven Arts; and American Newspaper Company. Rabb later joined the board of the Lehrman family's Rite Aid, whose chairman, Alex Grass, has been linked with organized crime kingpin, Detroit's Max Fisher. Rabb's most notorious and most recent implication in criminal activity was his interference in attempts to obtain security protection for Lyndon and Helga LaRouche for their scheduled appearance at the Oct. 20-21 founding conference of the Club of Life in Rome.