

U.A.W. Officials Deny a Shift From Social Activism of Reuther Era

By JERRY M. FLINT
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ATLANTIC CITY, April 26—The United Auto Workers are considering holding a convention in Miami Beach, and Paul Schrade, the West Coast regional director, has lost his high-ranking post within the union.

For union watchers, those two items are likely to symbolize a tilt in the U.A.W., a swing toward the center of the political spectrum.

Top union men at the auto workers' convention here deny there is such a tilt from the social activism espoused by the late Walter P. Reuther, who headed the union until his death in 1970.

Mr. Schrade, they say, lost his position as regional director and his seat on the union's

executive board not because he was an outspoken liberal but because he did not pay enough attention to union affairs. And a move to Miami Beach, they say, may be triggered by scheduling problems at the big Convention Hall in Atlantic City.

But Mr. Reuther always pointed to a Miami Beach meeting place—and that city is the favorite meeting spot for unions affiliated with the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations — as a symbol that unions were getting fat and soft and moving away from the cause of social justice.

Atlantic City remained the favorite meeting place of the U.A.W. as long as he headed it. Officials of the union conceded today that Miami Beach was being considered for the 1974 convention.

Mr. Schrade, who became widely known for his activist stands against the Vietnam war and his involvement with black and farm worker groups on the West Coast, was challenged in his re-election effort and defeated tonight in a vote of delegates from the West Coast.

Last night Mr. Schrade said that if he was defeated he would go back to work in a West Coast defense plant, and he said so again this evening after his defeat.

"I think this union is changing and I don't like some of the ways it's changing," he said.

Earlier, he had talked about going to work with Cesar Chavez, the farm union leader, if defeated. An aide said that Mr. Schrade had earlier turned down a post with the American Civil Liberties Union.

Mr. Schrade, who was

wounded when Senator Robert F. Kennedy was assassinated, complained that some of the top leaders of the U.A.W., including Leonard Woodcock, the union president, had failed to give him their full support in his re-election effort.

"Walter Reuther never would have done that," he said.

After the loss he said, "I feel no bitterness." However, he said that he was not willing to forgive those that did not back him.

But other executives of the union said that they worked to save Mr. Schrade's job two years ago and would not do so again. They said that Mr. Reuther had warned Mr. Schrade, in writing, to pay more attention to union business.

The winner in the race for regional director on the West Coast was Jerry Whipple,

president of Local 509 at Los Angeles. Despite Mr. Schrade's well-known support of black groups in the Watts area of Los Angeles and of Chicano farm workers, he was not endorsed by black and Chicano caucuses in his own district.

"I feel very strongly that our union has to get back to the problems of the people in the shop," Mr. Whipple said.

Mr. Woodcock, who succeeded Mr. Reuther as U.A.W. president in 1970, was elected to the union presidency today for a two-year term with only token opposition.

If there is any criticism of Mr. Woodcock here — and this is mild — it's that he pushed the union into an early political endorsement of Senator Edmund S. Muskie for the Democratic Presidential nomination.

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