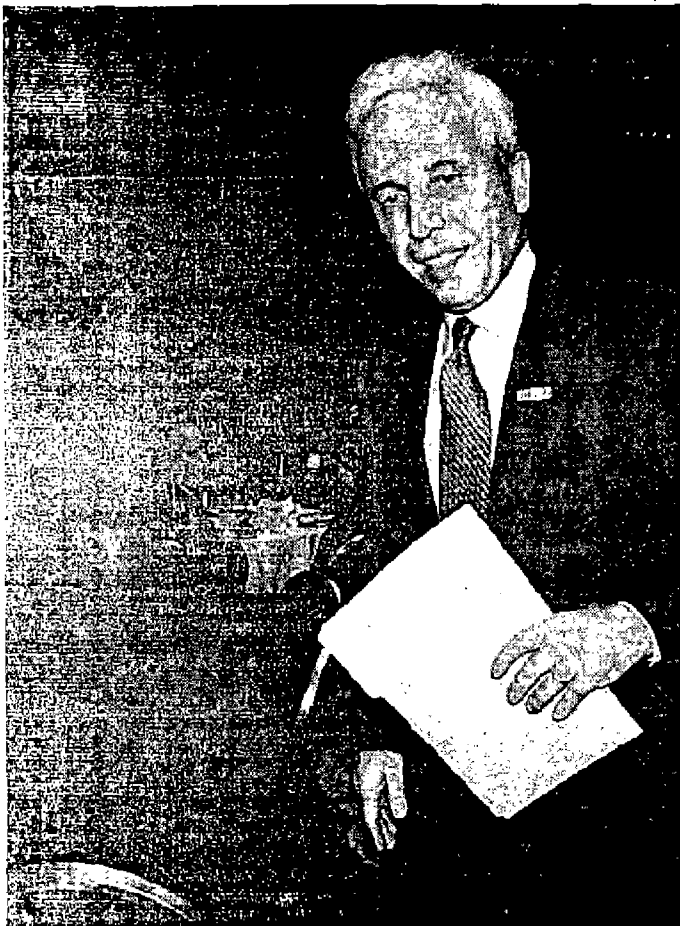


Bloomberg: Green's a lefty defender of Stalin

Dem camp dismisses charge as desperate act



DOING BUSINESS

Democratic mayoral candidate Mark Green at

SUSAN WATTS DAILY NEWS

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Mayoral candidate Michael Bloomberg is shifting tactics, going on the attack by branding Mark Green as anti-cop, anti-business and — in an unexpected throwback to the 1950s — a defender of Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin.

Bloomberg's offensive began when the Democratic Party united behind Green, and it reached new heights yesterday, when a top Bloomberg aide shadowed the public advocate at a forum and repeatedly trashed him afterward.

"He once tried to denigrate Ronald Reagan by praising Joseph Stalin," aide Bill Cunningham told reporters.

Green aide Joe DePlasco called the attacks a sign of desperation, adding, "This is complete crap and they know it."

Bloomberg's shift comes as the campaign's dynamics are working against him. The election is in two weeks, and voters' preoccupation with anthrax, Afghanistan and the Yankees makes it hard for him to grab their attention and overcome Green's double-digit lead in the polls.

Trading barbs

And any lift Mayor Giuliani could provide does not seem imminent. Asked when he will endorse the media mogul, Giuliani said yesterday, "Obviously, not right now. . . . That is not at the center of what I am doing every day."

The focus of Bloomberg's offensive is to question Green's move to the political center and paint him as a pol who will say anything to win.

"Mark is a very liberal, leftist kind of guy," the GOP candidate said yesterday. "He has never been pro-business, and he has never been pro-law enforcement, and the record shows that and he may be trying to reinvent himself to something he isn't."

Cunningham trashed Green after the public advocate spoke to 300 business and civic leaders at a Crain's New York breakfast. Cunningham cited a passage from Green's 1982 book, "Winning Back America," that he said "applaud-

Green wrote that then-President Reagan has a tendency to "rewrite history" for political purposes. "Reagan said he knew of 'no leader of the Soviet Union since the revolution' whose aim was not world revolution, a view which ignores a Soviet leader named Joseph Stalin who pushed for 'socialism in one country' instead of Leon Trotsky's approach of 'world revolution.'"

Green responded yesterday, "I have no memory of writing that, and it is irrelevant."

"What is more interesting is that Bloomberg this week said he has more experience in dealing with government than anyone in the whole world. Now that's a quote he said last week, not 30 years ago, and I think it shows that he is funny," Green said.

Also yesterday, Bloomberg opposed legalizing casinos in the city while Green said he would "take a fresh look at it" because the World Trade Center crisis will punch a \$4 billion to \$6 billion hole in the next city budget.

"There are some moral questions," he said. But "it generates revenue, and we need it more than ever."

Beneficiary backs Bloomy

The good-government group Citizens Union announced its endorsement of Bloomberg, culminating a contentious process that resulted in at least one board member resigning in protest.

Citizens Union Executive Director Lini Davidoff confirmed the resignation, saying the group regretted it. But she countered, "I don't believe that anyone on the board thought of procedure was anything but careful, thorough and completely nonpartisan."

Since 1994, Bloomberg's financial data company has given \$85,000 to Citizens Union and the Citizens Union Foundation — including \$25,000 last year.

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