

Benchmark fight over New York mayoralty

by Vin Berg

Mel Klenetsky is a mayoral candidate in New York City's Democratic primary this September. He is a Democrat, his parents have been Democrats for 50 years, he worked for a Democrat in last year's presidential primaries, and for the past year, he has directed national operations for a political action committee, the National Democratic Policy Committee (NDPC). He became a New York mayoral candidate by submitting over 25,000 registered Democrats' signatures (he only needed 10,000).

But another candidate, Frank Barbaro, has tried to invalidate Klenetsky's signatures, and that failing, asked a court to deny Klenetsky ballot status because he is "not a real Democrat." Barbaro's lawyers have spent roughly \$100,000 pursuing this manifestly frivolous effort, though his campaign has reported total contributions of only \$60,000, raising the question of whether a Koch dirty trick is being performed by proxy.

In fact, the future of the Democratic Party is at stake. Klenetsky is a "LaRouche Democrat"—Lyndon LaRouche, *EIR* founder and a 1980 Democratic presidential precandidate, is chairman of the NDPC's advisory council. Behind Frank Barbaro's attack on Klenetsky are forces well positioned in the Democratic Party's national leadership, but who fear LaRouche's growing influence over the labor, business, farmer, and minority constituencies that are the traditional backbone of the party. For these forces, the Klenetsky case is a "trial balloon" for a national campaign to drive LaRouche Democrats out of the party.

It is the proverbial strange assortment of bed-fellows, but all hate the very thing constituencies like about LaRouche: his program for scientific and industrial progress.

Barbaro personally represents the Socialist International, whose American arm, the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee (DSOC), decided to run him at their May convention in Philadelphia. But direction for the anti-Klenetsky effort comes from the office of former Rep. Elizabeth Holtzman, now running for Brooklyn District Attorney; her campaign chairman, Paul Asofsky, is Barbaro's lawyer. Asofsky was given material for his Klenetsky case, however, by one Dennis King, a creature of Roy M. Cohn, the McCarthyite lawyer for the heroin-mob, and head of New York's "East Side Conservative Club." King has slandered LaRouche a

dozen times in city neighborhood-newspapers. King has recently moved his literary operation to the office of *High Times*, the national drug-and-pornography magazine.

Barbaro's profuse legal financing may relate to the fact that Elizabeth Holtzman's major campaign contributor is Xerox board chairman Max Palevsky, who like Roy Cohn is closely linked to "Dope, Inc." Palevsky is an adviser to the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML).

It is known that Holtzman, while in Congress, tried to use her influence to prompt baseless and harassing Justice Department investigations of LaRouche's 1980 presidential campaign. She is a product of the Paul, Weiss, Rifkind law firm, whose partners include an unsuccessful Carter nominee for CIA director, Ted Sorenson. Sorenson is chairman of a subcommittee of the Democratic National Committee, with oversight for political action committees. A source close to the body says that he plans to use his position to run a dirty tricks campaign against the NDPC.

The Socialist International, Roy Cohn's drug lobby, Elizabeth Holtzman, Ted Sorenson—all have a common objective. From the traditional form of constituency-based institution corresponding to the American form of government, they would like to transform the Democratic Party into a European-style social-democratic party, run by its leadership independent of constituency interests, as in the British parliamentary system. "LaRouche Democrats" like Klenetsky don't want it that way.

But Averell Harriman's wife, Pamela, for example, set up a political action committee, Democrats for the '80s, solely to work for a parliamentary system corresponding to a Socialist International takeover of the Democratic Party. Last December in Washington, the Socialist International met and decided that if Ronald Reagan could be Hooverized by cutting social programs while maintaining high interest rates, the Socialists could position themselves to take advantage of popular frustration, leading to urban race riots and disruptive labor strikes, and other forms of "class warfare"—in the process, taking over a splintered Democratic Party.

Klenetsky is in effect the only straight Democrat in the race. Koch is also running on the Republican line, has been endorsed by four out of five of the borough GOP organizations, and though the New York Conservative Party officially supports Queens Assemblyman John Esposito, the party's vice-chairman says that he and most of his associates will vote for Koch. For his part, Barbaro, while accusing Klenetsky of not being a "real Democrat," is preparing to run in November, after Koch wins the primary, on the Unity Party ticket; the Unity Party's formation was announced by Barbaro and anti-labor negotiator Ted Kheel on Aug. 20. The Barbaro front party will coalesce the forces of DSOC, the Communist Party and counterculture radicals.