

Elephants and Donkeys by Kathleen Klenetsky

The decline and fall of Gary Hart

Two months ago, Gary Hart was being hailed by the media as the political phenomenon of the decade, a fresh, new face with fresh, new ideas who would gather around him a fresh, new constituency, win the White House, and usher in the technetronic paradise for which all true "yuppies" yearn.

But things have changed drastically indeed. Beginning with the New York primary April 3, where Hart was routed by Mondale, the Colorado senator has hit the political ropes. His so-called political base has dried up or turned against him; his former admirers in the media treat him as an oddball or a loser; and rumors are flying that his wife is about to leave him for the third time. The way things look now, Hart may wind up considering himself lucky if DNC chairman Charlie Manatt deigns to say hello to him six months from now.

What turned Hart's meteoric rise into an equally meteoric decline? The Eastern Establishment's kingmakers apparently decided that Hart just wasn't up to snuff and cut him loose. Since Hart's alleged popularity rested on little more than a combination of media hype and voter disgust with Walter Mondale, their decision spelled doom for Hart's presidential hopes.

In the face of these grim prospects, Hart has actually resorted to tackling Mondale on some real issues. Campaigning in Texas April 30, Hart charged that Fritz, as Vice-President,

had been part of an administration that was "weak," "inept," "uncertain," and marked by "days of shame in Iran." "Walter Mondale now promises an America that can and will stand up for its vital interests," he said at Texas A&M University, "but Carter-Mondale actually gave us an America held hostage to the Ayatollahs of the world."

Hart's charges were true, but they certainly weren't one of his "new ideas." Instead, they were borrowed from another Democratic presidential candidate, Lyndon H. LaRouche. LaRouche—who recently noted that Gary Hart's new ideas "must be new because they were invented two centuries before the discovery of mud and just reappeared again"—had made the Carter administration's support for Khomeini a major issue in the 1980 campaign. LaRouche has continued to make the Carter-Mondale sell-out of U.S. strategic interests a major theme of his current campaign.

Hart's accusations contrast sharply with his previous position, an insistence that the United States should not even consider using military force in the Persian Gulf, even to protect oil flows to the West. And as former Carter-Mondale Secretary of State Cyrus Vance pointed out in his irate rebuttal of Hart, the State Department "never heard anything from Gary [during the hostage seizure] about how to deal with the problem."

Hart's echo of LaRouche's charges caused an uproar among the Establishment elite. Cyrus Vance whined that for Hart "to hang this tragedy on Mondale is unfair, and to turn it into a general condemnation of weakness . . . was a cheap shot, hurting him and his party."

Vance's comments appeared in a May 1 column by *New York Times* scribbler James Reston, who complained that by attacking the record of his own party and crossing "the line of fair opposition on policy and principle. . . . Hart has just made what

seems like a major and maybe even fatal blunder in his campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination."

And New York Governor Mario Cuomo stated bluntly that Hart's "hyperbolic negativism" was so "unseemly" that the Colorado senator should no longer be considered a possible vice-presidential candidate. Cuomo, who entertains national political aspirations of his own, urged that the party look instead to the South for a vice-presidential nominee and listed Texas governor Mark White, Sen. Dale Bumpers (D-Ala.), Sen. Lloyd Bentsen (D-Tex.) and former presidential candidate Sen. Ernest Hollings (D-S.C.) as potential nominees.

Pamela Harriman's hanky-panky

LaRouche's impact on the campaign is being felt throughout the East Coast elite. Another case in point is Pamela Harriman's recent intervention into Louisiana politics.

Our sources tell us that Pamela, wife of Averell and head of a political action group called Democrats for the '80s, recently sat down Louisiana governor Edwin Edwards for a long chat about the 1984 elections in general, and his state's May 5 primary in particular.

We don't know what was said, or who offered what to whom, but shortly thereafter, several of Edwards's closest political associates (including his brother) who had previously been uncommitted suddenly endorsed Mondale and actively campaigned for him in the state.

The Harrimans are known to fear and hate LaRouche, who had exposed them as sponsors of the racist eugenics movement in the United States. LaRouche is now kicking up a political storm in the state, especially with his radio-TV blitz blasting Harriman intimate Henry Kissinger as a Soviet agent of influence.