

Elephants & Donkeys by Kathleen Klenetsky

Bush flails 'liberal elite'

George Bush created quite a little uproar when he blasted the "liberal elite" for being soft on defense, in a commencement address at West Point May 25.

"The liberal elite do not understand—they never understood," Bush intoned. "They act as if they believe that strength is the preoccupation of bullies—as if they believe that our desire to remain strong is proof that we are the aggressor. They are so blinded by ideology that they cannot see what Americans have understood for 40 years: that peace flows from strength."

In this instance, at least, Bush knows whereof he speaks. If anyone on the public scene epitomizes the "liberal elite," it is the Vice President himself.

Bush is no down-home Texan, as he arduously strives to portray himself, but a Connecticut-born blue-blood with all the right stuff. Aside from his aristocratic education—Andover, Yale, the supersecret Skull and Bones society—Bush's family connections place him smack in the middle of the "liberal elite." Poppy, as he's nicknamed, is linked directly to the super-liberal Harriman interests on both sides of his family.

Not only was his father Prescott a long-time member of the board of Brown Brothers, Harriman, the Harriman family's major investment firm, but his maternal grandfather, George Herbert Walker, after whom he is named, served as president of W.A. Harriman Co., the investment firm set up personally by W. Averell Harriman.

Bush has always been associated with the liberal wing of the Republi-

can Party—no matter how much he may pretend otherwise. Indeed, he was soundly defeated in the 1980 New Hampshire primary because of his membership in the Trilateral Commission and the New York Council on Foreign Relations.

So, by blasting the liberal elite for failing to recognize the need for a strong defense, Bush is effectively attacking himself.

Why's he doing this, you may ask? The answer is pretty straightforward. Trailing Mike Dukakis in the polls, Bush has been told by certain of his strategists that he must make a big play for the conservative wing of the Republican Party—which historically despises him—as well as the blue-collar ethnic voters who deserted the Democratic Party to vote for Ronald Reagan in 1980 and 1984.

The result of this advice was Bush's West Point speech, and his plans to zero in on Dukakis's Walter Mondale defense policies.

Political insiders don't give Bush's gambit much of a chance. "Bush must be off his rocker to think he can shake his silk-stocking image," one observer told *EIR*. "It just runs too deep. Everyone knows he wears silk underpants."

And as far as his attack on the liberals' anti-defense posture is concerned, the same source commented, "That's a laugh, especially when you consider that the Reagan-Bush administration did more for the liberal elite's arms-control push than any Democratic administration could have hoped for."

Budget woes put squeeze on Dukakis

The \$500 million deficit in the Massachusetts budget is causing no end of

problems for Michael Dukakis, who has made the "economic miracle" he had supposedly wrought in his home state the centerpiece of his presidential campaign.

The mushrooming deficit has put Dukakis in an extremely embarrassing situation. He has already pulled back \$233 million in current spending, which has translated into cuts in AIDS research and assistance for the handicapped, and may have to cut more than twice that much from next year's budget proposal.

Not only will such social spending cuts hurt him in his home state come November, but Jesse Jackson, who's positioning himself to make a big stand at the Democratic convention, will no doubt exploit them as part of his effort to paint Dukakis as just another Reagan Republican.

Jackson is carefully preparing for a major intervention at the Democratic convention, especially around the platform, and has just released a detailed budget proposal, which calls for sharp cutbacks in defense spending, and large increases in domestic programs.

On the other hand, if Dukakis opts for a tax hike, George Bush and the Republicans will seize upon that to prove their contention that he's just another tax-and-spend Democrat.

Recent news stories about the decline in Massachusetts manufacturing jobs under Dukakis' reign are also expected to hurt his "supermanager" image. Since 1984, Dukakis's miracle has resulted in the disappearance of 13.4% of its manufacturing jobs, accounting for 41% of the total manufacturing jobs that have been lost in the entire country during the same period.

While Dukakis, that devotee of the Information Age, might think this miraculous, to normal people, it's downright criminal.