

## An uproar in the world's press

### United States

The *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* of July 21 carried this report, datelined Atlanta:

"This just in from the eccentric followers of Lyndon LaRouche: Michael Dukakis is mentally ill, is controlled by a secretive business cabal, is 'psychologically dependent' on Harvard advisors and once suffered a virtual nervous breakdown."

From the *Wall Street Journal's* Aug. 3 editorial:

"What strikes us in the health-record issue, though, is how little the American people know about this man nominated to be their President. . . . In Mr. Dukakis' case depression rumors were predictable enough from two incidents in his biography—*Dukakis, an American Odyssey*. . . .

"Mr. Dukakis' brother Stelian, who died in 1973 after being hit by a car while riding a bicycle, clearly did suffer from depression. While at college in 1951, he suffered a mental breakdown, attempted suicide, was institutionalized for three or four months and received insulin and shock treatments. . . .

"Edward King's victory left [Dukakis] 'very dejected,' his appointments secretary said. 'He would spend long periods sitting in his office, introspectively staring off into space.' . . .

"His biographers also note, 'Incredibly, Michael says he does not remember whether Stelian tried to kill himself.' . . .

"The question is not so much is Michael Dukakis in good health, but rather, is Michael Dukakis really what the voters think they see?"

The *Washington Post* of Aug. 4 had the following to say, under the headline, "Dukakis Acts to Kill Rumor":

"In Washington, Reagan set today's developments in motion when he was asked by a representative of political extremist Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr. whether he thought Dukakis should make public his medical records. . . .

"The rumors about Dukakis have centered on two critical events in his life: the 1973 death, from injuries sustained in a hit-and-run accident, of his older brother, Stelian Dukakis,

who suffered a mental breakdown in 1951 and tried to kill himself at that time; and Dukakis' upset defeat in his first race for re-election as governor of Massachusetts in 1978. . . .

"The rumors are at least a year old, promoted by the LaRouche organization that makes a practice of circulating wild, inflammatory charges about people in public life. . . .

"Most of the speculation about Dukakis has centered on his emotional health following the unexpected loss of the governorship in the Democratic primary in 1978, a period friends and family members have described as devastating for him and that his wife, Kitty, has called an experience 'like a public death.'

"That the defeat was a deep, depressing loss to Dukakis has never been disputed and has been written about extensively. In the recent biography of the governor, *Dukakis, an American Odyssey*, Kitty Dukakis is quoted as saying her husband was so depressed at the time 'that at one time I was really worried about him.'

"In the book, she and other close aides describe a depressed, dejected, sullen official going through what Kitty Dukakis calls 'a period of mourning.' "

The *San Jose Mercury News* on Aug. 5 ran a front-page article titled, "How Dukakis Rumors Spread," by Carl M. Cannon.

"Only two weeks after the Democratic convention, the innuendo peddled by the LaRouche organization that Michael Dukakis might have suffered from mental depression at some point in his life found its way, in one form or another, into the nation's major newspapers and television networks. . . .

"The flier and a subsequent July 28 article in *The New Federalist*, a LaRouche-owned newspaper, drew on quotes from previously published biographies detailing how unhappy Dukakis had been after each of those episodes and implied that he would crack under the pressures of the White House.

"The same article also asserted that Dukakis 'pulled the life-support systems' on his brother after he had shown signs of recovering from a coma. . . .

"[Since most] . . . of this material is widely known, we must assume that the Bush campaign is fully aware of it and that Bush may be planning to use these questions as a weapon against the Democratic ticket later in the campaign.

"As it turned out, it didn't take that long. In the past 10 days, reporters for several news organizations, including CBS News and Knight-Ridder News Service, were tipped by Bush campaign aides about supposedly impending stories about Dukakis' mental health. . . ."

From the *Wall Street Journal's* Aug. 4 editorial, "Medical Footnote":

"Unless someone in the press wants to argue over whether the public has a right to know about health questions, it seems to us the big press issue is why most establishment watchdogs

left a legitimate question to someone from a fringe group.”

From the *Baltimore Evening Sun*'s Aug. 5 editorial, “A Dangerous Stigma”:

“What lingers . . . is the disturbing reality that it becomes a shameful stigma for an individual to seek medical treatment for a condition—clinical depression.”

From the *New York Times*' Aug. 5 editorial, “The Psychological Barrier”:

It would have been “no disgrace if [Dukakis] had sought psychiatric help,” but would actually have “reflected healthy common sense, no more disqualifying for public office than a divorce, gender, race, or the ‘wrong’ religion.”

The *Philadelphia Inquirer* on Aug. 5 devoted its second editorial to the subject, “What If He Had Seen a Shrink?”

“Well, the Duke seems to have made it this far without going off the deep end. . . .

“But we almost wish it'd been otherwise—that, like millions of his countrymen, he'd sought counseling, benefitted from it and come out the other end with a few insights on how to cope with stress or grief. Such an admission might have destroyed another taboo, just as John F. Kennedy made Catholicism a non-issue and President Reagan buried divorce as a liability.”

From an Aug. 8 article by syndicated columnists Rowland Evans and Robert Novak, titled, “Behind Those Dukakis Rumors”:

“Thus, rumors long extant about two instances of depression by Dukakis attracted the Bush campaign's interest long before they were spread by Lyndon LaRouche's minions. Because [Bush campaign manager Lee] Atwater's “opposition research” could not risk being caught, his lieutenants asked outside Republican operatives to do the digging and then quietly broadcast whatever they might find. . . .

“The fast-dying story was revived by President Reagan on Aug. 3 with his reference, in answer to a LaRouche magazine correspondent's question about medical records, to Dukakis as an ‘invalid.’ . . . Apart from his half-apology, Reagan was unrepentant (perhaps reflecting Nancy Reagan's fury over Dukakis' crack at her husband that when a fish rots, the rot starts at the head). . . .

“The incident seemed to end with a classic backfire, Dukakis apparently unhurt and the Bush campaign linked to Lyndon LaRouche.”

## Europe

Italy's *Corriere della Sera* of Aug. 3 ran a story with the headline, “This ‘Secret Illness’ of Mike Dukakis,” sub-titled, “The Democratic candidate (who has already denied it) reportedly suffered a nervous breakdown.” The article begins:

“Dukakis in psychiatric cure for a serious depression?”

‘Not true, the Governor was not in treatment for a mental depression or for any sort of mental illness,’ stated a spokesman for the organization of the Democratic candidate. But, the rumors have been growing in the past months, and took on new force after the Atlanta convention, and Dukakis's men have felt the need to call up journalists to deny that it had any foundation.”

The London *Guardian* ran a front-page article Aug. 3, titled “Rumors Depress Dukakis.” Washington correspondent Alex Brummer wrote:

“Democratic Party insiders are advising Mr. Michael Dukakis to release his medical records to quash rumors that he was once treated for depression. . . .

“He showed acute signs of stress in 1978 after he was voted out of the Massachusetts State House. His wife, Kitty, says he had difficulty sleeping and became unusually quiet. She consulted a family friend and psychiatrist, Dr. Dan Lipsett, who reassured her that her husband was just grieving.

“Mrs. Dukakis has said the Governor went through a ‘public death’ and became so depressed that ‘at one point I became really worried about him.’

“The Governor also seems to have had serious trouble handling the death of his brother Stelian Dukakis, who died in a motor accident in 1979. Stelian had a long, documented history of mental illness.”

William Lowther, in the London *Daily Mail* of Aug. 3 wrote:

“[LaRouche] alleged that Mr. Dukakis was treated for clinical depression after his brother was killed by a hit and run driver in 1973, and again five years later when he unexpectedly lost a re-election race for Governor of Massachusetts. . . . It is generally accepted that anyone with a record of mental problems cannot be elected to the White House.”

The Italian daily *La Stampa* on Aug. 3 featured LaRouche as the force behind reports about Dukakis's mental illness. It ran an uncomplimentary photo of Dukakis, with an article titled, “Dukakis: I Am Not Mentally Ill.”

From the *Daily Express* of London, Aug. 4:

“At one stage, [Dukakis] is believed to have received electro-shock therapy. The question of Mr. Dukakis's mental stability was, by last night, a blazing issue in the Presidential race. In spite of denials from his aides, leading Democrats were insisting that the Governor's refusal to publish his full medical records was only fueling suspicion and leading to allegations of a cover-up.”

From the London *Guardian* of Aug. 4, under the headline, “Reagan Gaffe Puts Dukakis on the Spot”:

Although President Reagan swiftly retracted his joke about Dukakis being an “invalid,” “he was successful in putting a national focus on repeated but unsubstantiated speculation

that Mr. Dukakis has received psychiatric treatment for depression.”

The liberal *Guardian*'s editorial defended Dukakis, saying that his problems are “part of the human condition . . . acting and feeling like a recognizable human being,” which should not be regarded as a “disqualification for holding the highest office.”

Danish TV Aug. 4 had prominent coverage of the interchange between *EIR*'s White House correspondent Nicholas F. Benton and President Reagan, in which Reagan joked about Dukakis being an “invalid.” The broadcast described the incident as “dirty American politics,” but added, “The fact is, that Dukakis *did* suffer from a severe depression after his election defeat in 1978.”

“New ‘Time-Bomb’ for Dukakis, With Cries Throughout Massachusetts to ‘Dump the Duke.’ The Next Disaster Looms for Dukakis,” is the headline of a feature in the Aug. 5 London *Daily Express*, written by Philip Finn in Boston, accompanied by a photo of Dukakis and wife Kitty, with the caption, “The honeymoon is over.” The text starts:

“Widening hints that presidential candidate Michael Dukakis may not have told all there is to know about his state of mental health are now seriously undermining the recent euphoria of the Democrats’ Atlanta convention.”

The Rome daily *La Repubblica* Aug. 5 headlined its coverage, “Dukakis Declares: ‘I Am Sane!’ ”

The Milan daily *Avvenire* on Aug. 6, published by the archdiocese of Milan, ran an article on LaRouche by Maurizio Blondet:

“The piece of news on the ‘psychic problem’ of Dukakis . . . was circulated by a man called Lyndon LaRouche: He is also a Democratic candidate, without hope for success, whom the very ‘authoritative’ papers define as ‘crazy’ and ‘right-wing extremist.’ It is not true: LaRouche (who even has a leftist past) was listened to by the White House in the early years of the so-called ‘star shield’; he has given the administration information of strategic value; has a political program, which might not be shared in total, but cannot be rejected either. Somehow, he is an important figure, a resolute critic of certain corruption and occult powers of American politics: For this he underwent political-judicial persecution inspired by no less than Henry Kissinger. For the rest, he promoted two or three referenda in California, asking for the adoption of effective measures to contain AIDS. If, notwithstanding, in Italy you never heard about LaRouche, there is a reason: In some cases and about certain men who ‘disturb’ the most real and feared powers (from Kissinger to the homosexual lobby), the American newspapers know well how to exert self-censorship.

“Around LaRouche, ‘crazy,’ ‘Nazi,’ there has been for

years a wall of silence and contempt. LaRouche has only now been able to break through it, thanks to his indiscretion on Dukakis’s ‘depression.’ But he is victimized, too, since LaRouche, who is always very well-informed, had publicized much more important information on Dukakis. He is really capable of throwing a big shadow over the candidate’s capacity to lead the United States. For example: Dukakis claims that he was able to ‘put in order’ the budget in Massachusetts. In reality, to cover the state deficit of about \$500 million, he manipulated the budget of the state, illegally putting into it money coming from lotteries, funds already allocated for public services, money taken out of pension funds. It is for these reasons that the Democrats of Massachusetts do not want to have him re-elected governor. . . .

“But the ‘authoritative’ U.S. papers did not say anything about all this; the issue of *Newsweek*, obviously extremely authoritative, is still being sold which repeats that Dukakis is the author of ‘an economic miracle’ in Massachusetts. But the history of Dukakis’s depression is different: This is really what provokes front-page headlines and television debates. . . .”

The London *Observer* of Aug. 7, owned by ‘Tiny’ Rowland, has a feature entitled, “How the Smear Became the Story.”

Reporter Patrick Brogan from Washington first attributes the Dukakis story to the desperation of some campaign workers of George Bush, who “put out the story that Michael Dukakis has a psychotic and unstable personality and was twice treated for severe depression. . . . Dukakis has denied it and his doctor came forward to insist that the stories are quite untrue. If anyone can prove otherwise, as George Bush would put it, the Duke is in deep doo-doo.”

## Asia

*The Hindu*, New Delhi, Aug. 6 carried this report, datelined Washington, Aug. 5:

“The President, Mr. Ronald Reagan, on Wednesday gave credence to a rumour about the Democratic Presidential candidate, Mr Michael Dukakis’s mental health in the past by calling him an “invalid” but withdrew his remark. . . .

“The rumour had its origin in a pamphlet issued by supporters of Mr Lyndon LaRouche, a longtime Presidential candidate known for his controversial views on domestic and foreign policy issues. It had questioned the competence of Mr Dukakis to become President after charging that he had sought psychiatric counseling in his early past. Supporters of Mr Larouche distributed the pamphlet to those attending the Atlanta Democratic national convention. . . .

“Reports have it that White House aides were worried at the President’s gaffe. There have been allegations that Mr Reagan was promoting Mr Bush’s chances in the poll through actions like vetoing the Defence Bill sent by the Congress with reduced allocation for the ‘Star Wars’ programme. . . .”