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## The Democratic Party

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# Battle continues after New York primary

by Joseph Brewda

Following the results of New York City's Sept. 22 primary election, in which incumbent Mayor Edward Koch won both the Democratic and Republican mayoral nominations, Democratic candidate Mel Klenetsky commented that he is the only Democratic spokesman the party has left—referring to the choice for voters in November between the Thatcher-style austerity of the Koch administration, and the Socialist International race-riot apparatus of State Assemblyman Frank Barbaro, who is bolting the Democratic Party to run on a left-wing "Unity Party" ticket. Klenetsky was backed by the National Democratic Policy Committee (NDPC), representing the "LaRouche wing" of the party.

The primary's unofficial results were 60 percent for Koch, 36 percent for Barbaro, and 4.4 percent for Klenetsky, who was credited with 25,467 votes, a higher total than the 22,987 won by John Esposito, Koch's challenger on the Republican side of the ballot.

Even allowing for the possible theft of a sizeable number of Klenetsky votes, the results for the NDPC newcomer were considered impressive by party regulars. In the Bronx, his vote averaged 6.2 percent; citywide, the range of Klenetsky votes, as reported preliminarily by the press, varied from 1.9 percent in ultraliberal Greenwich Village to 12.2 percent in the Morrisania section of the Bronx. Klenetsky's vote exceeded 9 percent in five assembly districts in the Bronx and two districts in the borough of Brooklyn, all heavily black and Hispanic areas.

"Politics will never be the same in New York," Klenetsky told an election-night gathering. He vowed to continue, he said, to give New Yorkers a sense of the possibility of restoring the city to greatness, bringing classical education into the schools, driving out illegal drugs, and rebuilding industrial and technological pre-eminence. During the primary debates, Koch had been reduced to muttering, "Enough of Hong Kong already"—referring to Klenetsky's characterization of the mayor's policies—while the name of Hitler's economics chief Hjalmar Schacht began to become a household word as the *New York Times* laboriously editorialized against Klenetsky's charges that Koch's austerity programs lead in the same direction of eliminating "useless eaters."

A major race in November will be for the Brooklyn attorney generalship. Former Rep. Elizabeth Holtzman won the Democratic nomination, defeating the pallid Norman Rosen, who is now running on the Republican line for the patronage-rich post.

Holtzman has characterized herself as a fearless crime-fighter, pointing to her role in Watergate and her highly publicized attacks against "waste and corruption." Yet over one-quarter of the primary campaign funding came from two individuals, both living in Los Angeles: Max Palevsky, former chairman of Xerox-Rank, an early financier of the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws and later a member of its board; and Joyce Ashley, the wife of the recently retired chairman of Warner Communications, the mass-media giant implicated in conducting drug-tainted money into Jimmy Carter's 1976 campaign chest. Christie Hefner, daughter of *Playboy's* Hugh Hefner, is among Holtzman's other listed financial backers.

## From the record

Elizabeth Holtzman launched her political career in the mid-1970s by hounding into bankruptcy the B'nai Torah Institute, a company that was a competitor with a firm for which her father Sidney acted as an attorney. Latin Belly Inc. a food-catering service, garnered a big chunk of the \$25 million in federal school-lunch contracts after Liz Holtzman leveled "kickback" charges against the B'nai Torah Institute, which had done much of the catering until then. Liz Holtzman's charges were proven false in court, but after drawn-out trials, B'nai Torah went bankrupt.

Sidney Holtzman's status as counsel for Latin Belly owner Ismael Betancourt—a status he admitted in an interview on Sept. 18—while his daughter was destroying Betancourt's competition raises the question of conspiracy, fraud, illegal use of federal money, and bribery against Holtzman.

The B'nai Torah Institute was associated with then-Mayor Abe Beame and other old-line East Coast Democrats. As for Ismael Betancourt, he had intended to run for Bronx borough president, but was removed from the ballot for petition irregularities. Holtzman, having received the endorsement of Brooklyn Democratic chief Meade Esposito, is now considered a shoo-in unless the scandal breaks open.