

Elephants & Donkeys by Kathleen Klenetsky

Who's on first?

It's been quite a spectacle watching the various pundits, pollsters, and commentators try to figure out who the new Democratic presidential nomination frontrunner is, now that Gary Hart is out of the race.

Depending on which TV station or newspaper you tuned into during the week following Hart's withdrawal, you would have learned that:

- Jesse Jackson now leads the pack (the *Washington Times, Newsweek*);
- Massachusetts Gov. Mike Dukakis has taken the lead (the *Los Angeles Times*);
- Rep. Richard Gephardt has moved into Hart's top-ranking position, at least in Iowa (the *Baltimore Sun*);
- The ultimate winner is not even in the race yet (former Democratic National Committee chairman Bob Strauss).

And that's just a sampling of the widely divergent opinions being expressed by the so-called experts.

The truth of the matter is that the real frontrunner is "undecided." In the *Los Angeles Times* poll, for example, undecided scored 42%, with Dukakis the next highest with a measly 12%.

The same holds true for the *Newsweek* poll, which gave Jackson 22%, Dukakis 11%—and undecided 37%.

Hart's presence in the race had obscured this fundamental fact—that the electorate is not in the least impressed

by the seven candidates acknowledged by the media to be vying for the Democratic nomination.

Although Hart held a commanding lead over his opponents, that derived far more from the higher name recognition he enjoyed, and not because of any deeply felt grassroots support.

The most ironic aspect of all this poll-taking and punditry, is that the one candidate whose name recognition alone makes him a far more serious contender than the "seven dwarves," has been carefully (hysterically) omitted from the polls.

Black-out on LaRouche

That candidate is *EIR* founder Lyndon H. LaRouche, who, according to a poll commissioned by *Time* magazine one year ago, had a name recognition factor of 39%. The only person now in the race who ranked higher, was Jackson, while three of the current crop of "major candidates"—Gephardt, former Arizona governor Bruce Babbitt, and Sen. Joe Biden—ranked 14%, 8%, and 6%, respectively.

The glaring omission of LaRouche's name from recent polls is a rather pathetic attempt by his enemies to deny him "credibility." by pretending he is not a candidate. No matter what is being put out for public consumption, you can bet your bottom dollar that the DNC is keeping a minute-to-minute watch on the growing support for LaRouche and his policies.

Claims that LaRouche is not a serious candidate are laughable: If that were the case, why would the DNC have passed a resolution at its Santa Fe meeting in late April, vowing to deny the Democratic Party label to any candidate suspected of supporting LaRouche's program? The resolution was sponsored by Illinois state comp-

troller Roland Burris, a top DNC official and protégé of DNC chairman Paul Kirk.

Clearly, there's rampaging fear among the "backroom boys" that the confluence of the AIDS crisis, the collapse of the economy, and Moscow's pre-war moves, will push many people into the LaRouche camp, especially since none of the other candidates has the slightest idea how to deal with these major threats.

The *Wall Street Journal* published a telling article May 13, reporting that AIDS has emerged as *the* issue of the 1988 campaign (something which LaRouche predicted in the fall of 1985) and that every candidate in the race is now being forced to formulate a position on the epidemic. But with the exception of LaRouche, the rest of the candidates either take the homosexual lobby's position that measures such as universal mandatory testing and quarantine are a violation of civil rights, or that the nation cannot afford to spend the money necessary to treat AIDS victims, and find a cure.

Just how intense are the DNC's fears of LaRouche, can also be measured in the recent move by some top Democratic powerbrokers to come up with a candidate with more stature than the present gaggle.

In a May 10 interview on NBC-TV's "Meet the Press," Bob Strauss (who, by the way, engineered the set-up of Gary Hart), promoted Sen. Sam Nunn (D-Ga.) for the nomination.

Calling the race "wide open," Strauss said he expected one or two new candidates to enter the race—including Nunn.

Meantime, New York Gov. Mafia Cuomo continues to coyly refuse to rule out a draft, while at least two prominent Democratic insiders, George Ball and Felix Rohatyn, are urging Sen. Bill Bradley (D-N.J.) to take the plunge.