

Harriman losing control of the Democratic Party

by Criton Zoakos

On May 26, the ancient W. Averell Harriman arrived in Moscow for a round of meetings with Secretary Yuri Andropov, Foreign Minister Gromyko, and others. What he will bring back with him will have important consequences for the future of the Democratic Party, whose National Committee, the DNC, Harriman and his wife Pamela Churchill jointly control. As Harriman's airplane was taxiing into Moscow's Seremetovo Airport, one of Harriman's pet Democrats, Rep. Tony Coelho of California, was speaking from the floor in the U.S. House of Representatives back in Washington, D.C.

"Where is the Democratic Party?" Representative Coelho demanded. "Where is Democratic Party unity? Why did 91 Democratic representatives vote for President Reagan's MX funding request? Why did so many of our congressional leaders vote for the President's MX funding request?" Coelho was lamenting the fact that during the previous day, the House had overwhelmingly voted for the President's request for funds for the development and basing of the MX "Peacemaker" strategic missile. No less than 91 Democrats had defied the wishes of House Majority Leader Tip O'Neill and Appropriations Committee Chairman Joseph Addabbo, and voted in favor of Reagan's proposal. Among the Democratic defectors were important leaders and committee chairmen such as Jim Wright of Texas, Tom Foley of Washington, Bill Alexander of Arkansas, and Gillis Long of Louisiana.

These House Democrats not only defied their House leadership, they also defied all the announced Democratic Presidential hopefuls in the Senate who had campaigned hard against the MX. Whole days had been spent by Sens. John

Glenn, Gary Hart, Alan Cranston, and Ernest Hollings in florid rhetorical denunciations of the MX missile as "destabilizing," a "strategically dangerous" innovation which will force the two nuclear superpowers into the horrid posture of "launch on warning." Ninety-one House Democrats and 12 of their Senate colleagues did not buy their Harrimanite leadership's argument. Instead, they accepted President Reagan's argument that the MX missile is a last chance to force the U.S.S.R. to adopt a serious negotiating posture in the strategic arms control talks.

So, when the octogenarian Averell Harriman and his flirtatious youngish wife presented themselves before Secretary Andropov, they had behind them a fragmented party, bent to the will of President Reagan: a party whose presidential aspirations for 1984 were already next to nil. The Harrimans' hopes to use the Democrats' House majority to blackmail Mr. Reagan on matters of legislation and budgetary policy had also disappeared suddenly and rapidly since March 23, 1983. Harriman had little to offer Andropov. He therefore went to Moscow to ask for favors. Whatever he gets from the Kremlin boss will have important bearing on the fortunes of the Democratic Party in 1983 and 1984.

Most Americans are not familiar with the ways in which this top-level influence-peddling affects developments in their nation's much-cherished "electoral process." Many of the younger elected Democratic officials don't even know Averell Harriman except as a historical personage, even though some of them owe their election to Ave and his wife Pamela. They have no problem acknowledging that without the DNC's infusions of funding in 1982, most of them (and there are 40

freshman congressmen) would not have been elected to office. They overlook the fact that the DNC and DNC money are controlled by the Harrimans.

Then, they overlook the most important aspect of the mechanics of how "party consensus" is manufactured. Party consensus is like a tall, crazy wall built of all sorts of disparate materials: stones, bricks, formica, sand, pie-in-the-sky, and a good dose of baloney. What makes this silly wall stand up are two buttresses: *national security policy* and overall *economic policy*.

Until March 23, these two buttresses, crafted by the Harrimanite leadership, were holding up well. Suddenly they fell apart.

To figure out what happened to the Democratic Party and what its options now are for 1984, compare the situation in Washington as it was in December 1982 with the situation as it is now. After the comparison is drawn, go back to identify the crucial developments that occurred in the interim period which caused the change. You will discover that for certain reasons, some hidden from the public eye, the stuffing was knocked out of the Harrimanites national security and economic policy.

What will happen to the Democratic Party?

On May 14, at the Democratic Strategy Council gathering in Washington, Gov. Mario Cuomo of New York startled many with a keynote speech which was generally interpreted as a slap in the face against the way DNC chairman Chuck Mannatt, a Harrimanite, had been running party strategy up to the Chicago mayoral primary and since.

Cuomo's basic thesis was: cut out the bull about constituency organizing and special interests, and put an end to the clown show of "glamorous" personalities peddling themselves as "presidential hopefuls" to the public. This will be the undoing of the party in 1984. What we need is a comprehensive grand program for economic recovery, industrial expansion which will go to the heart of the "average voter."

Cuomo's message was: If we don't cut out the tactics of the Chicago primaries, the selection of counterculture-infested San Francisco as convention site, and presidential personality peddling, we are going down to defeat in 1984. The same theme was repeated in Santa Fe, New Mexico on May 22 where the Democratic state chairmen had gathered. The keynote speakers intoned: "If the 1984 primaries are dominated exclusively by candidates responding to the demands of interest groups, it won't make much difference who is the nominee. There will be no way for our nominee to reach the average voter." Or, "We have got to develop a universal message to appeal to the American people as individuals and not as part of special interest groups." And then again, "I have felt for a long time that we have become a party of special interests. And until we become a party of Democrats again, we'll have trouble winning elections. old traditional base looks at us and wonders if there is a place for them."

Like most political statements that are not completely devoid of content, these speeches had double cutting edges, working at cross purposes. At the state and county level, all across the country, party organizations are sick and tired of the Carterite and Harrimanite legacy of policies of "post-industrial society," "gay caucuses," "lesbian caucuses," "zebra-striped third sex minorities," "environmentalist" lobbies, et cetera, et cetera. But beware: when the DNC and related national-level power brokers talk against "special interests" they attack in parables those elected federal legislators who have bucked existing national DNC policies and voted on the side of President Reagan.

The party's paradox for the 1984 campaign is this: the DNC's power brokers claim that unless all Democrats in the Senate and the House stop increasing President Reagan's clout by voting for his programs and start voting for the DNC's policies instead, there is no chance of a Democratic victory in 1984. However, at least 12 Democratic Senators and 91 Representatives have made their reckoning the opposite way: unless we buck the Harrimanite DNC's policies and vote with the President, *our own electoral constituency* won't be pleased, and we are not going to get reelected.

The entire moderate wing of the Democratic Party in office, a strategically important voting bloc, has decided that its own survival and the survival of their constituencies' interests are incompatible with the DNC's Harrimanite policies. They are therefore oriented toward responsiveness to local interests and toward—to put it impolitely—"screwing" what the DNC passes as "national policy."

As a result, the Democratic Party as a whole has no national policy. The county and state chairmen's loud complaining about the lack of national policy is genuine and very well justified. When the DNC makes the same complaint, then it is disingenuous double-talk—the DNC merely rebukes elected officials for their reluctance to surrender to Ave Harriman's disastrous national policies.

This state of affairs has spread even among those elected Democrats who still vote with the Harrimanite DNC. As far as Democratic officeholders are concerned, in terms of policy it's every man for himself. The party's non-office-holding organizations are developing a clear sense that this state of affairs has to end, and the party, if it is to avoid disaster in 1984, must rally around a serious national program. The DNC, trying to mediate between party organizations and elected Congressmen, is thus trying to sneak back in under heavy disguise the same old national programs which are being trounced in Congress right now—and which were responsible for the Democrats' landslide defeat in November 1980.

The post-March 23 political world

This is how matters stood as of May 26, 1983. If you look back to December 1982, something different was going on.

President Reagan had lost all his MX votes in Congress, his legislative program, especially his defense commitments

were in ruins, his administration's economic performance was the main object of national derision, and his poll rating had plummeted. The conventional wisdom of the day was that any Democrat whatever who got the party's nomination for 1984 would beat Reagan hands down.

The conventional wisdom of May 1983, however, as expressed by an old Democratic machine leader from one of the country's largest cities, is: "Any national politician getting the Democratic nomination for 1984, will discover it is not a plus." Insiders in the old party machines and other wags have given a new name to the game of trying to find a presidential candidate for 1984: "Who Will Be The George McGovern of 1984?"

The Democrats are searching for a tail to pin on the donkey!

How did the reversal occur? Reagan, according to Harriman's calculations, was supposed to have been smashed by now with a whopping financial collapse and a devastating humiliation in the national security field. He was supposed to have been kissing the feet of Henry Kissinger and Brent Scowcroft and implementing the terms dictated by Yuri Andropov as a broken, lame-duck President already overwhelmed by the most devastating banking crisis in history. Instead, Reagan right now is the undisputed terror of Capitol Hill, and he is already running his next presidential campaign. He is running for President against Congress in a truly bipartisan manner: against both sides of the aisle.

Few citizens and few politicians yet know that the President, by doing so, has probably saved the world from thermonuclear war, and has certainly saved the United States from a massive strategic humiliation planned by Harriman, Kissinger et al. What did the trick was his March 23 speech announcing the new strategic doctrine of "Mutually Assured Survival" to replace that of Kissinger's (and Harriman's) doctrine of "Mutually Assured Destruction." As *EIR* founder Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr., advisory board chairman of the mass-based National Democratic Policy Committee and Chuck Manatt's leading national opponent, noted at the time, "Today, I am prouder to be an American than I have been since the first manned landing on the Moon. For the first time in 20 years, a President of the United States has contributed a public action of great leadership, to give a new basis for hope for humanity's future to an agonized and demoralized world."

The President's speech "grabbed history by the neck and sent it off" in a direction opposite from that calculated by Harriman, Andropov et al. The Democrats' MAD consensus was broken. Senate Minority Leader Robert Byrd's support of President Reagan's anti-missile defense policy is most characteristic of what happened in the Democratic Party. From then on, the President started piling one congressional victory upon another with respect to his defense program.

The question arises: Harriman and the forces he represent, certainly still have enough clout to pull the plug on Reagan in the financial markets and cause history's worst

banking collapse. *Why didn't they do it? Why are they not doing it now?*

The answer is that they are scared stiff! What is unknown to them is how the President will react to such a crisis. What he did on March 23 was quite unexpected and out of profile. He displayed a certain ability to assert command which, they fear, is a repeatable quality.

The White House has conspicuously let it be known that it has ordered the Treasury Department's legal staff to prepare a comprehensive set of measures for the eventuality that the President goes on national television to proclaim to his fellow Americans the declaration of a "National Financial Emergency," in which he has decided to exercise the full emergency powers of the executive branch. Harriman and his banking circles in New York and London must now reckon with the possibility that if they pull the financial plug, they may end up with a President Reagan more powerful than they have imagined in their worst nightmares.

The dilemmas in Moscow

This is how the Harrimanite DNC's two buttresses, the one of economic policy and that of national security policy have fallen apart. With them, the wall of Democratic Party consensus has collapsed. People like Senator Byrd and Rep. Jim Wright in the House and the Senate have busted it up on the issue of national security policy. And this has ruptured the consensus on every other issue. Hence the justified alarm and the clamor for "national policy" coming from the county and state party organizations from all over the country.

So what are Ave and Pam Harriman are trying to get from Secretary Yuri Andropov in Moscow? That clever bird, with his provocative military policies and his blackmail tactics around the ongoing arms control negotiations, has certainly helped many a Democratic congressman see the light and vote for President Reagan's defense buildup. Will Harriman ask him to "cool it" and be more conciliatory at the negotiating table in order to be able to recoup the losses from among the Democratic Party ranks?

This is an interesting dilemma for Professor Andropov: If he gives Harriman what Harriman needs to bring back home, then the Soviets will negotiate, let us say, "seriously." This will vindicate Reagan, who will be able to say to Congress: "You see, the only way to get the Soviets to become serious in negotiations is to vote for my defense measures." And Congress will agree. But Marshal Ogarkov, the chief of staff of the Soviet armed forces, will remove Professor Andropov's head with dispatch. For Marshal Ogarkov and the Soviet General Staff know, since March 23, that the United States is operating under a new strategic doctrine, superseding the doctrine of "deterrence" within whose logic Andropov would be making his arms control concessions to Harriman.

If Harriman gets what he wants from Andropov, Andropov will lose his party. If Harriman does not get what he wants, Harriman loses his party.