

## Elephants & Donkeys by Kathleen Klenetsky

### Duke revs up dirty tricks apparatus

Michael Dukakis's decision, in the last week in August, to rehire former aide John Sasso for a top post in his campaign signals that the Duke has decided that the only way to revive his floundering campaign is by getting its dirty-tricks capability in high gear.

Sasso was fired from the campaign last fall, after it came out that he was responsible for the so-called "attack video" which drove one of Dukakis's key rivals, Sen. Joe Biden, out of the presidential race.

That wasn't some one-time "youthful indiscretion," as Dukakis would have people believe—but, in fact, a pretty mild Sasso campaign tactic.

A more typical Sasso operation took place during Dukakis's 1982 gubernatorial comeback bid. Sasso—who is widely credited with having orchestrated the successful campaign—circulated a pornographic parody of a campaign commercial which incumbent Gov. Ed King's wife, a polio victim, had made, discussing how her husband helped her fight her disease.

Sasso is no stranger to pornography. He began his political career as an aide to Rep. Gerry Studds, one of two openly homosexual congressmen from Massachusetts, and the only congressman to have been censured by his colleagues (in 1983) for sodomy with a minor. That's just the kind of experience Sasso needed when Dukakis lent him out to Geraldine Ferraro's 1984 vice presidential campaign, which fell apart after revelations linking her husband, John Zaccaro, to an organized-crime pornography ring.

Apparently, Dukakis is looking for help wherever he can get it. His 17-point lead coming out of the Atlanta convention has evaporated. According to a new *Time* magazine poll, Dukakis is *trailing* George Bush by five points (42% to 47%). And even in his home state of Massachusetts, several recent polls show him running neck-to-neck with the Republican candidate.

### Dukakis defensive on military policy

Dukakis's predicament is due in part to his espousal of the "McGovern Democrats" left-liberal foreign and strategic policy agenda. His cynical pitch to voters that the U.S. should stop spending so much money on defense, and start investing more in "human capital," hasn't worked—American voters aren't quite as gullible as Dukakis and his advisers think.

Meanwhile, the Republicans have focused on Dukakis's opposition to the MX, SDI, Midgetman, and other weapons systems to such great effect, that Dukakis has been forced to modify—at least rhetorically—some of his more outrageous positions.

The first signs of a "new" allegedly pro-defense Dukakis came Sept. 8, when the candidate addressed an American Legion convention in Louisville, Kentucky. The candidate told a news conference that he backs continued SDI research and might take a second look at the anti-missile defense system. "If I and the Congress make the judgment that it was essential to our national security, then obviously I would do so," he said, adding that "doing research is perfectly appropriate," and that "for our own sake, we've got to continue the research."

In the past, Dukakis has ridiculed the SDI as a "fantasy" and demanded that "Star Wars" be replaced by "star schools."

Although he may be trying to sound more moderate on the issue now, judging by the amount of money he thinks SDI should get shows that his "support" for the SDI is election-year deep. He announced that he's prepared to spend no more than a paltry \$1 billion a year—the approximate funding levels devoted to strategic defense during the Carter years—on SDI.

### Bush fires aide for supporting Demjanjuk

Bush campaign spokesman Mark Goodin announced on Sept. 8 that Jerome Brentar, co-chairman of George Bush's ethnic outreach campaign committee, the Coalition of American Nationalities, had been fired because of his efforts to solicit support for John Demjanjuk, the former Cleveland autoworker who was convicted in Israel in April of Nazi death-camp killings. As *EIR* has documented, Demjanjuk was the victim of a frameup jointly run by Israeli, Soviet, the U.S. Justice Department officials. He is appealing the Israeli ruling.

According to a report in the *New York Times* on Sept. 9, Brentar commented angrily on his dismissal: "I could have been an atheist. I could have been a polygamist. I could have been anything else and questions wouldn't have been asked. And now because I helped a poor victim, I'm everything under the sun."

Brentar's firing came after *Jewish Week* newspaper ran an article claiming that he and two other Bush campaign aides were anti-Semitic, a claim picked up by five Democratic congressmen, who demanded that Bush fire the individuals in question.