

nately, the Republican Party, while significantly better than the Democrats on domestic policy, has been, if anything, worse and more interventionist on foreign affairs. Note the Republican take on Slick Willie: they accuse him of bumbling, evasion, continual changes of line (all true), but except on Haiti, they don't really oppose intervention *per se*. Sure, it would be nice to have a clear-cut, consistent foreign policy, but clear-cut in *what* direction? A clear-cut Enemy is not exactly an un-mixed blessing.

Meanwhile, things are far from hopeless. There is both an anti-war and paleo-grass roots ferment in this country that is heartwarming. There are all sorts of manifestations: Conservative Citizens Councils, county militia movements, sheriffs who refuse to enforce the Brady Bill, rightist radio talk show hosts, lack of enthusiasm for American troops getting killed in Somalia or Haiti, a Buchananite movement, and increasingly good sense on this question from syndicated columnist Robert Novak. Meantime, the least we at *RRR* can do is accelerate the Climate of Hate in America, and hope for the best. ■

## The New York Political Circus

by M.N.R.

For political junkies like myself there is nothing quite so bracing as the tangle, the complexity, the ethnopolitics, the back-stabbing, and the

d o w n r i g h t  
sleaze of New York politics in an election year. The state elections laws establish, for each primary, a state convention in late May, or early June, followed by a primary in September. A party convention endorsement carries more than moral or financial clout; one

crucial clause mandates that a losing candidate for a state post gets automatically on the ballot in the party's September primary, *provided* that he gets at least 25 percent of the vote at the convention. Getting anything less than the magic 25 percent means that the poor candidate can only get on the primary ballot via petition, a route which, in New York, has been deliberately made arcane and extremely difficult by the state's ruling political class. Going the petition route costs a great deal of time, money, and energy, and only someone with the unlimited funds or sup-

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port of Ross Perot in 1992 never has to worry about the process.

1994 is an election year for all the major New York posts: Governor and Lieutenant-Governor, Comptroller, and Attorney-General in the executive branch, and U.S. Senator. All these plum jobs are now in Democrat hands, and the Republicans, rising up throughout the nation in this horrible Age of Clinton, have been feeling their oats this year. Unfortunately, as usual, the New York Republicans quickly began their traditional mode of shooting themselves in the foot.

There have long been not two but four major (or at least quasi-major) parties in New York. In addition to the Democrats and Republicans, there is the Liberal Party, founded by Jewish Social Democrats in the Ladies Garment Workers and Hat Workers Unions after World War II to provide a Left-Democrat alternative to the Communist-dominated (now defunct) America Labor Party; and the Conservative Party, founded by the Buckley family to form a principled conservative opposition to the then Rockefeller-dominated, Leftist Republican party. Ever since, the Conservative Party, now dominated by Brooklyn Conservative head Michael Long, has been struggling between principle and pragmatism, with the latter, of course, all too often winning out.

This year seemed to present a golden opportunity to

topple the famed three-term governor: the smart, eloquent, witty, alert, thin-skinned pretend-philosopher and Left Catholic lay theologian Mario Cuomo. A disciple of the late Left -heretical French Jesuit Teilhard de Chardin, Mario is the well-known expounder of the view that America (the world?) is an organic "family." The result is the sort of collectivist ideology one might expect from that kind of world-outlook.

Mario, however, has palled in office; New Yorkers are tired of Mario, of his lousy performance, the rampant crime, the high taxes and spending, the visible decay of New York in his twelve years of office. His coy and evasive performance every national election finally irritated and exhausted his supporters after he finally pulled out of the presidential race in 1992. The Republicans sensed victory, and their theme at this year's convention is the plausible "It's all Mario's fault."

In 1988, however, Mario seemed vulnerable too, and the Republicans kicked away any chance of toppling him by alienating their natural allies, the Conservatives, by nominating the unknown and tom-fool leftist economist and former adviser to President Nixon, Pierre Rinfret. Rinfret, the only Nixon adviser who actually *believed* in price controls, proved to be a clown and a disaster on the stump, and as a result he barely edged out the Conservative nominee, Jewish aca-

demical Dr. Herbert London.

The 1994 lesson for Republicans, and for Conservatives, seemed clear: unity against Mario. But, on deeper look, the question is not so simple. For both parties, the question soon became: Unity at what price? How much principle would have to be abandoned?

Unity turned out not to be easy to achieve. For one thing, the two major Republican leaders, both Italo-Americans: U.S. Senator Alfonse D'Amato, and State Senate Majority Leader Ralph Marino, are ferocious enemies. D'Amato, the abrasive product of the notorious Margiotta machine of Nassau County, is the leader of the center-right of the party. As the champion of conservative forces, however, D'Amato is, to the say the least, a weak reed; if ever there was a politician who fit the word "opportunist" D'Amato would be it. Marino, for his part, is the leader of the Republican Left; a close friend of the governor, he might well be termed a "Mario Cuomo Republican."

As the Republican convention approached in late May, it was clear that the D'Amato machine was in charge of the delegates. Unfortunately, however, D'Amato could come up only with a hand-picked unknown, State Senator George Pataki of Peekskill. Running hard against Pataki was Herb London, appealing to the conservative elements of the party, and fresh from his sterling campaign in 1988. One of the critical issues in

the New York right is the vexed abortion question; D'Amato had been pledged against abortion, but, his finger characteristically to the wind, he has begun to move leftward on the issue. Pataki, an economic conservative and a Hungarian-American Catholic, is pro-choice but opposed to taxpayer funding of abortions. London, an Orthodox Jew, is strongly anti-abortion.

Herb London came into the Republican convention with a pledge of something like 35 percent of the votes. If D'Amato had only treated his opposition with respect, he would have gotten the 65-70 percent of the delegates for Pataki, and allowed London to get his merited automatic spot on the primary ballot. But since no one, including his own state Senatorial constituents, had ever heard of Pataki, D'Amato didn't want to take the chance. As a result, D'Amato and his machine played hardball, exercising an unseemly display of political muscle, and managed in 24 hours to jimmy London's votes down to *just* below 25 percent. It was reminiscent of one of Clinton's one-voters, and all hands denounced D'Amato for being "thuggish," "disgusting," etc. Displays of political muscle should never be that blatant, for then they become counterproductive.

Herb London was justifiably livid. He felt he had been robbed, and he denounced D'Amato and the convention in no uncertain terms. But if

London was permanently alienated, what would happen to the Conservative alliance (Conservatives were coming up with *their* convention in early June). London was threatening to run for governor on the Conservative ticket.

Something had to be done, but to D'Amato that something was all too narrow: buy off Herb London and thereby corral the Conservative Party line. I don't know what D'Amato had his henchmen tell London in the next 24 hours. It must have been a wild time, for at the end of it, Herb London had taken his place as a happy nominee for Comptroller on the Republican ticket for the fall. There had, of course, never been a smidgen of interest displayed by London in the Comptroller's spot; on the contrary, the popular Assemblyman James Faso had been running for the comptroller position for a year, and expected to get it. Poor Jimmy Faso was induced to take the fall, and to withdraw gracefully from the Comptroller's nomination on London's behalf.

The rest of the ticket engineered by D'Amato, however, was a slap in the face to the conservative principles, if

not the Conservative Party. Shifting dramatically leftward, D'Amato decided to discover... Women! Or is it "Womyn"? Sex! For U.S. Senate against Daniel Patrick Moynihan (more later). D'Amato put up Bernadette Castro, who has no political experience, and is only known to the public for her longtime Castro convertible sofabed commercials. Castro favors not only abortion, but also taxpayer funding, and gay rights. While putting up for Attorney-General the little-known Italo-American U.S. Attorney for Buffalo Dennis Vacco, D'Amato's major publicity coup was selecting for Lieutenant-Governor under Pataki, the beautiful blond bombshell Dr. Elizabeth ("Betsy")

McCaughey.

The conservative Murdoch-run tabloid *New York Post* went ga-ga at this choice. Grabbing the heaven-sent opportunity to combine its two favorite things: Sex and conservatism, the *Post* ran a large picture of Betsy replete in clinging evening gown

(from *Vanity Fair*), and the choice was particularly heralded by *Post* sob sister Andrea Peyser, who gushed all over the page: She's beautiful! She's blond! She's sexy! She's

brainy! Isn't it wonderful how the Republicans have become mature, and now realize that brains and beauty can go together? And on and on.

The Brains of La McCaughey was attested to by the fact that she has a Ph.D. in political science (Ooh! Wow!), and is also a certified brainy free-market economist. The certification came from the fact that Betsy Baby is on the staff of the Left-libertarian/neocon Manhattan Institute, a New York thinktank. Not only that: Betsy wrote a celebrated article in the *New Republic*, attacking the Clintonian health plan for imposing price controls and medical rationing, and criminalizing the free choice of doctors by patients, whenever such choice breaks the decrees of the Clintonian Health authorities. McCaughey won the accolade of drawing bitter attacks by the White House, which McCaughey and Manhattan Institute justifiably treated as a badge of honor.

Brains, beauty, and free-markets too; ethno-religiously, McCaughey, like the colorless and virtually unknown incumbent Lieutenant-Governor, Stan Lundine, is an authentic WASP. The difference is that Lundine is a WASP from Upstate New York, where WASPS indeed abound, whereas Betsy is an Episcopalian from New York City, where such folk are virtually on the endangered species list. No one knew Betsy's views on social matters, but everyone assumed she took the Pataki line of pro-choice

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but anti-taxpayer funding; thus, she seemed to fit the new ideal Image for a Republican of the 1990s: "economic conservative" but (moderately) social liberal. All this and a blond too!

Thus, two WOMYN had gotten key slots on the Republican ticket, and the hordes of militant Democrat womyn looked at the looming Democrat ticket and they were not pleased. Cuomo, an Italian male; Lundine, a male WASP; Carl McCall for Comptroller, a black male from Harlem; and of course Moynihan, Irish Catholic male from Manhattan, for U.S. Senate. Where in the world were the WOMYN in their own Democrat heartland? The only possible female spot was for Attorney-General. After the hapless Bronx-based Attorney-General Bob Abrams had resigned to run for Senate and was roundly beaten by D'Amato, Cuomo appointed a fellow-Democrat hack from the Bronx, the undistinguished Assemblyman Oliver Koppell. Koppell, of course, had every intention to run for re-election, but he was opposed at the Democrat convention by two left dissidents. One was Queens U.S. Attorney Charles Hynes, an Irish Catholic who had won notoriety by persecuting alleged "white racism" in the Howard Beach incident. The other was a WOMYN, if not perhaps a *woman*, the beloved Jewish ultra-left-lesbian activist State Senator Karen Burstein from Nassau County, formerly

from New York City. As a leftist and as a lesbian, and also in possession of an androgynous personality, La Burstein had a lot of brownie points going for her; and the organized WOMYN were demanding her nomination.

In its own quiet way, however, the Cuomo machine at the Democrat convention proved every bit as ruthless as the D'Amato crew among the Republicans. Charlie Hynes threw his support to La Burstein, who came into the convention, once again, with a pledge of about 25 percent of the vote; but once again, come the vote, she got slightly excruciatingly under the magic 25.

It was now left for the Conservatives to have *their* convention in early June. Among the Conservatives, it was Michael Long's turn to wield the Bludgeon. Long had determined upon unity under Pataki, and now that Herb London had caved in, nominating the entire Pataki ticket seemed easy. (Except that the Conservatives refused to swallow La Castro, and selected instead Henry Hewes, Senatorial candidate of the small single-issue Right to Life Party, which often functions as the conscience of the Conservatives on abortion matters. The Right-to-Lifers pose no real challenge to the Conservatives, however, since, if anything, their leadership is left-liberal on all questions except abortion.)

The principled opposition among the Conservatives

was led by Thomas Cook, head of the Rochester party, as well as several other upstate county leaders. Cook looked desperately around for someone to run against Pataki. Michael Long, denouncing Cook's opposition, waded in with absurd rhetorical overkill. Cook, he thundered, suffered from a "Napoleonic complex," and Cook ruled by "force, fraud, and terror." Come again? Among the *conservatives*? Finally, after several biggies such as former Republican state chairman J. Patrick Barrett refused to run, Cook & Company fell back to support the unknown Robert Relph from upstate Watertown. Relph *did* get the requisite 25 percent of the delegates, however, and so at least there will be a primary challenge among the Conservatives.

Thus, the lines were drawn, although how many people will be able to make the petition route won't be known until later. Richard Rosenbaum, former New York State Republican Chairman and the booming, bald voice of Rockefeller Republicanism for many years, and long hated by conservatives in the party, issued left-wing denunciations of the Republicans, and threatens to go the petition route for governor.

We are left with the beautiful La McCaughey. Exactly *how* free-market, how much of an "economic conservative," is she? The answer, despite her Manhattan Institute credentials, is not very. Allegedly

Our Gal against Clintonian Health, her phoniness as a free-marketeer was revealed by our own Lew Rockwell on a conservative panel on health. For Betsy turns out to be a strong supporter of *the* crucial plank of Clintonian Health: guaranteed universal access. In other words, her criticisms in the *New Republic* article were peripheral, not central. In fact, she was stunned that *anyone* such as Lew was, in this day and age, opposed to guaranteed universal access, i.e. opposed to socialized medicine. Betsy went so far as to accuse our Lew of "lacking compassion," which is, of course, the ultimate charge of every statist scoundrel.

If Betsy McCaughey's "economic conservatism" is mostly malarkey, how much of a "social liberal" is she really? Republican leaders were stunned in early June to find out that the beautiful Betsy did not exactly take the moderate Pataki line on abortion. On the contrary: they found, to their horror, that Betsy is strongly in favor of taxpayer funding for abortions. So once again: "economic conservative, social liberal" turns out to be a formula that merely provides a convenient camouflage for...our old buddy, left-liberalism, with an updated, blond and evening-gown patina.

At this writing, Pataki and the Conservatives are livid. Fred Dicker, the *New York Post's* expert on New York politics, writes (June 6) that McCaughey has struck politi-

cal professionals as a "prima donna" and "even more narcissistic than most politicians." Will it all be smoothed over? Will McCaughey back down? Or will she be dumped from the ticket after all the Hoopla? Whichever happens, the Republico-Conservative ticket is damaged goods, and it looks like another blown opportunity to depose Mario.

And what of Daniel Patrick Moynihan? I don't want to disillusion any idealistic readers, but Moynihan is set for life in his Senatorial position. Why? Because he is a centrist Irish Catholic, touched with the requisite bit of blarney, neatly fueled by Irish whiskey. Centrist Irish Catholic Democrats who have the advantage of incumbency cannot lose in a statewide race in New York. In his first race for Senate, Moynihan beat out the then leader of the Democrat ultra-left, the loud-mouthed, big-hatted Jewish Congresswoman Bella Abzug by a very small margin. Once he squeaked through the primary, however, Moynihan was as good as elected, and this has continued ever since. Why? Because left-wing Jews vote

heavily in the Democratic primary; centrist Irish and Italian Catholics are generally evenly split between Democrat and Republicans; blacks and Puerto Ricans vote overwhelmingly Democrat but don't bother voting in prima-

ries; and Upstate WASPs constitute the mass base of the Republican party in the state. Once Moynihan got past Abzug, the Irish and Italians, who constitute the swing vote in the state, were bound to vote heavily for a centrist Catholic, and the pattern has continued to this day. In 1988, the Republicans put up virtually no

campaign against Moynihan, and it is only the new liberal-WOMYN ticket that got them to surface this year. But in the Senatorial race, it won't matter a bit. Unfortunately, Moynihan and his rococo rhetoric are a permanent fixture in the U.S. Senate.

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There is nothing quite like New York in a year where a governor and senator are both at stake. One decision made by all the biggies in both parties: that they would not challenge petitions to get

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on the September primary ballot by candidates who were muscled out of the minimum 25% needed at the May convention to get automatically on the ballot. Why did the leaders of both parties make this decision? A sudden attack of fairness? Not hardly. Undoubtedly because it would look bad to the public in a tight election year.

In the latest *New York Post* poll (Aug. 10), Cuomo has a 9-point lead over Pataki (46-37) but this is by no means fatal, since a hefty 17 percent are listed as undecided, and Pataki's name recognition is still very low. Old-time Rockefeller Republican Richard Rosenbaum is running against Pataki in the primary by petition route, and the policy of no-challenge assures him of a ballot spot. Rosenbaum is clearly a stalking horse for Cuomo, timing his attacks on Pataki to coincide with the Cuomo line. Although he has virtually no chance of beating Pataki, Rosenbaum has adopted a cunning strategy to embarrass the front-runner. Under the tutelage of prominent conservative political strategist Dick Morris, Rosenbaum has maneuvered sharply *to the right* of Pataki: advocating very large tax cuts, budget cuts, and substantial privatization; and then calling for Pataki to unveil his own undoubtedly puny program.

On the other hand, the pull-out of Howard Stern from the race on the LP ticket, will probably mean a several percentage points edge to Pataki.

In the polls, Stern ranged from 5 to 12 percent of the vote, most of which probably came from Pataki.

In the Senatorial race, "the Rev." Al Sharpton, clownish black radical, was muscled below his 25 percent in his challenge to Democrat Senator Daniel Patrick ("Pat") Moynihan. Sharpton is running against Pat in the primary, and with the newfound "tolerance" permeating the state, the bonafides of his primary petitions will not be challenged. There is no problem for Moynihan: his poll lead is a phenomenal 78-12 over Sharpton. But there is more involved. Sharpton is threatening, after losing the primary, to set up his own "third party" Freedom Party, to run someone against Cuomo in November; in particular, Sharpton expressly desires to punish the Liberal Party for endorsing Giuliani for Mayor last year against his beloved Mayor Dinkins. Sharpton wants Cuomo to repudiate the Liberal endorsement this year; of which there is a chance of a snowball in Hell. Moynihan is safe whatever happens; but if Sharpton actually gets the Freedom Party on the ballot, black defections from the Democracy may just cost Mario the governor's mansion.

Another fascinating race is for Attorney-General of New York State. Bob Abrams, previous holder of the office, fell on his sword in opposing Al D'Amato for Senator; he later resigned, and his place was

taken by appointment only last December by veteran Bronx party hack G. Oliver Koppell. Since Koppell is running for election to legitimize his recent appointment, few people know who he is, and his most formidable primary challenger (under the no-challenge rule) is the tough, abrasive, ultra-leftist lesbian Jewess, former Assemblyman and former Family Court Judge Karen S. Burstein. Burstein has a unique style of grass-roots campaigning, a style that could only hope to succeed in sado-masochistic New York City. Burstein stands near a subway station, and stretches out her hand to greet the passing voter. When, as usually happens in New York, the mark rushes by refusing to acknowledge the intruder, La Burstein denounces him! "You know, that's rude," she snaps. "Would it hurt to shake a hand?" she yells out. Finally, Burstein proclaims to a reporter that as Attorney General, she will be obliged to transform human nature: "I've got to get these people better prepared as human beings. As Attorney-General, I've got to do something about this absence of civility." And you're the one to do this transforming eh babe? That's all New York needs: another "politics of meaning," a Jewish version of Hillary Rodham.

The latest A-G poll in the Democrat primary rates the race as very close: Koppell at 22 percent, Burstein at 19, and "anti-racist" Brooklyn D.A.

Charles Hynes at 14 percent. Unknown former Asst. D.A. Eliot Spitzer, who's been running a lot of ads on TV, is only getting 1 percent of the poll so far, perhaps the least productive TV campaign ads in memory. The undecided vote is very high at 44 percent. Whoever wins the primary will face former Buffalo U.S. Attorney Dennis Vacco in the general election.

The final statewide race is over Comptroller; here, Manhattan black incumbent Carl McCail, will face Republican-Conservative Herb London. So far, in the early going, McCall is leading London by only five percent, 27 to 22.

Finally, a recent blow to the Pataki camp: former New York Republican chairman, the self-made millionaire [Avis] J. Patrick Barrett, has been denouncing the antics of the D'Amato machine at the convention, and has threatened to refuse to back Pataki, even if he wins the primary. Strange behavior for a recent Republican party chairman! But that's New York. ■

## For Mel Bradford

by M.N.R.

I was happy to see *Chronicles* dedicate its May issue to Mel Bradford, who died last year. Appropriately enough, the issue contains a posthumous article by Bradford, "Donald Davidson and

the Calculus of Memory," on the great Southern poet, and literary critic, and on theme of memory in poetry.

No one who knew Mel Bradford could ever forget him. An erudite scholar, historian and literary critic, Mel radiated kindness, benevolence, and good humor. The term "gentle giant" could have been fashioned for Mel. Combined with his pervading goodness was firm devotion to principle, and a great love for the South.

Mel Bradford also played a crucial role in that historic

first coming together of leading paleo-conservatives and paleolibertarians at Rockford, Illinois, in December 1989. Except for Mel, no one on what was then "either side" had met anyone on the "other side." Mel was therefore the original bridge between the two groups.

I had met Mel Bradford some time in the late 1970s, when I spoke on some aspect of economics at the University of Dallas. Mel and Marie were there; I was amazed, in our age of academic specialization, that anyone from the English department would bother. I liked Mel enormously from that first meeting;

any person would whose attitude had not been so corrupted by ideology as to believe that "the personal is the political." In those days of the Cold War, I had lost contact with most conservatives who were not economists, and so I valued meeting Mel all the more.

Then, in the first year of the Reagan Administration, I noted with sadness and astonishment that Mel, who was slated for appointment as head of the National Endowment for the Humanities, had lost the position as a result of a coordinated neocon

smear campaign in Washington orchestrated by Irving Kristof. It was the success of that campaign, which resulted in the appointment to head NEH of the then unknown Bill Bennett, that inaugurated the dominance of the neocons in the Reagan Administration and in the conservative movement generally, and led, in response,

to the creation of an embittered paleoconservative minority.

As an Old Rightist, I had always considered the neocons as once and always social democrats carrying on the old Menshevik/Trotskyite struggle against Stalin, but I

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