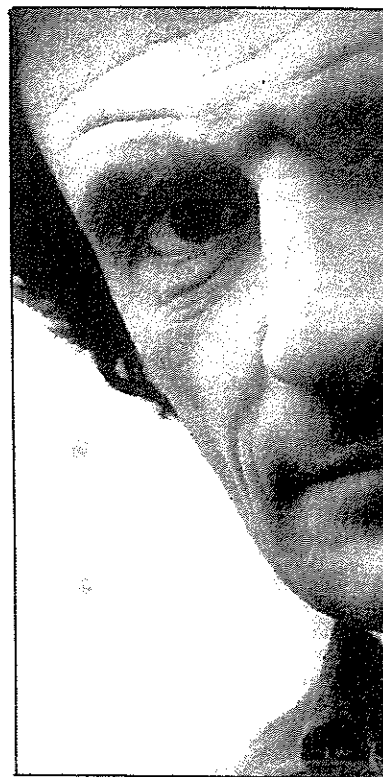


Cuomo: Too True To Be Good?

By Jim Sleeper

It takes most people a while to catch on to Mario Cuomo's way of thinking about society and his place in it, but once you catch on, his thoughts begin to haunt you in a troubling yet beguiling way. Consider a story he likes to tell about the time a patrician Virginian took him to lunch at an exclusive club 25 years ago. Cuomo, a junior associate in the blue chip, old money law firm the Virginian had retained, had rendered the client some extra service that merited a token of regard.

Cuomo recalls a stuffy private dining room where censorious waiters seemed to join with their eyes in his host's whittling inquiries about how such a capable young man could have grown up in the back of a grocery store owned by poor Italian immigrant parents. The menu was in French, the service a pageant of manners in a minefield. As Cuomo, still smarting from the cross-examination, studied the offerings, his patron demanded a glass of fresh clam juice and, with a touch of ostentation, admonished the waiter to (Continued on page 11)



Jerzy Kosciuszko Tainted

By Geoffrey Stokes

Not a single comma, not mere presence of the word manuscript, middle drafts first page proofs, second and back editions. —Jerzy Kosciuszko

None of the trappings—adulatory profile in the *Tin* would matter if Jerzy Kosciuszko But he did astonish the world in 1965, and followed that with the Award for *Steps* in 1969. The decline since then—*Pinba*



Cuomo: Too True To Be Good?

By Jim Sleeper

(Cont. from page one) make sure there was a clam in it. "Ah," he said, quaffing the drink a moment later, an eye fixed almost belligerently on his young guest, "that's fresh clam juice."

"I'd like the turtle soup, please," said Cuomo to the waiter. "And make sure there's a turtle in it." The Virginian rose and stalked out of the room.

The story sounds a bit square in the wake of more recent and serious trashings of authority and privilege. But the listener allows as how Cuomo had reason to be furious enough to risk what amounted to a major confrontation in that time and place.

"It wasn't anger," Cuomo replies matter-of-factly. "It was appropriate for it to happen to him."

"It was appropriate." Hovering in that room was some truth bigger than the young lawyer and his host, some standard of social fairness that had been violated and needed somehow to right itself. This is how Mario Cuomo thinks, and such thinking drives interest-brokers like Hugh Carey and Stanley Fink crazy. It's dis-

orienting and suspect, this tendency to put personal feelings in a godly perspective. How the hell can you broker a deal when one of the parties is the "All Seeing Eye"? Who could even breathe in such an atmosphere? What if Meade Esposito, the patron of Brooklyn patronage, invited Mario Cuomo to lunch?

"When I refused to make a deal in the 1977 mayoral runoff, and they accused me, even my closest friends, of naiveté, my theory was, look, I want to be very powerful when I win, and if I play the game to get there, then I lose power," Cuomo says. "If I win this governor's race, doing it the way I'm doing it, I won't owe anybody anything."

That kind of thinking loses elections, say many of Cuomo's friends, but Cuomo sees it differently. "I was not as happy to run for mayor as I am now to run for governor, because in 1977 I looked around at the field—Abzug, Badillo, even Koch—and it was very difficult for me to say, I am so superior to these people that for the good of the city they need me. That's one of the reasons I had difficulty in that campaign. And what Doug Ireland described as Hamlet, well, B.S., that was me posing these questions. I don't have those questions this year. There may be 36 people in this state who'd make a better governor than I. But they are not in this race. I go at this very convinced I'm better. Because I'm so good? Or because they're so weak? What's the difference?"

This is how Mario Cuomo thinks. Whenever he talks about something for more than a few minutes, a trap door opens somewhere in the ceiling and suddenly you're looking down at the issue from a vantage point that makes ego seem ancillary and rather small. Politics is a brokering of interests, yes, but in order to do the brokering, he feels, chief executives and judges must transcend their own political and personal interests to care for society as a whole.

Not only does Cuomo think he's the only candidate trained and disposed to look at things this way; by his own higher calculus, he is the only candidate who can

afford to. He has little real estate or other special interest money, though his campaign manager, Bill Haddad, reports a growing trickle of "hedge-your-bet" contributions from such interests now that the gap in the polls is closing to within seven points, according to Gannett and several private polls. What he does have is labor support, the big, serious kind that carried the state for Kennedy in the 1980 presidential primary. He is happy to have it. Cuomo would prefer public campaign financing, and he has challenged Koch to publish his checks as they come in, so that the press can scrutinize every "inference of influence" and quid pro quo (Koch has refused, but Cuomo has adopted the practice). But he thinks it's specious to compare broad labor support to special interest domination.

What Reaganomics says of capital Cuomo says of labor: its gifts to "society as a whole" transcend its special needs. "I am a traditional Democrat who believes you have to keep the working middle class and the poor in one party because once you don't, once the middle class goes over to the right with the rich, they bludgeon the poor," he says. "The whole society suffers because of the social disorientation that produces crime, deterioration, everything evil. You cannot live with a large part of this state or nation deprived. It can't be done. You can't build a wall between you and them and say maybe they'll go away.

"Reaganomics says that God helps those whom God has helped, and that if God left you out, who am I to presume on God? We hope that the rich, in the fullness of their good disposition, will find the occasion to drop some morsels on the South Bronx or invest in a plant in Utica, and that it'll be good for you in the long run. It doesn't work. The antiunion movement reflects the truth that ever since Adam and Eve bit the apple, you can't leave it to the rich to do the right thing, any more than we could leave it to the business people to provide safe quarters for the garment workers a hundred years ago. That's why people burned to death in factories, that's why children choked to death in mines.

You need unions the same way you need policemen. You need laws that say to the rich, you're gonna have to share some of your wealth—that's why we have the income tax."

Pretty tame stuff. Jimmy Carter believed in unions, too, and he called our battered tax codes "a disgrace to civilization." Even public campaign financing won't free a government that's a debtor to banks and a hostage to financial control boards. In a contracting yet increasingly corporate-dominated economy, trade unionism and progressive taxation don't put people to work producing goods and services to meet basic needs. They don't stop the social deterioration Cuomo says occurs when "all power's massed on one side of the spectrum." Mario Cuomo is not at the cutting edge of the coming debate about socially responsible investment and about the limits of free enterprise and corporate capitalism in meeting basic human needs. "We're in a race between a Reagan Democrat and a Carter Democrat, which means a majority of Democrats are disenfranchised in this state," says one political observer.

Cuomo's resemblance to Carter, whose campaign he ran in New York State in 1980, is indeed striking. Both are intelligent, well-read men. Both are family men who uphold traditional social values. Both are religious, not so much arrogant as simply *vertical* in their orientations, serene in a faith that some say insulates them from the grim urgency of struggles they ought to lead. Both are conciliators more than seasoned wielders of power: Cuomo made a name for himself as Lindsay's independent mediator between predominantly Jewish homeowners and low-income housing advocates in Forest Hills in 1972; Carter's triumph was with Sadat and Begin at Camp David.

And both of them know that trapdoor in the ceiling. The day after he announced for governor, Mario Cuomo crammed his tall, broad-shouldered frame into a pay phone booth to hear Jimmy Carter tell

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him, "I'm glad you're running. It's right you should be. You're a truth-teller, and in the end they'll recognize that. I'm not willing to get involved in any primaries except this one." Cuomo hasn't yet decided whether to take Carter up on that.

And yet modest protections for working people though trade unions and progressive taxation may be, Cuomo's opponent, like Carter's, has tried to erode them—by his posturing on the Brooklyn Bridge during the April 1980 transit strike, by his staunch defense of the massive giveaways involved in the J-51 tax abatement and exemption program for upscale housing conversion, and by his efforts to delay and then repeal the capital gains tax for real estate sales of more than \$1 million—"a near-perfect tax," as Cuomo called it in a recent statement denouncing Koch as a "junior Ronald Reagan." And while Cuomo may not cement a "pure" progressive coalition, there is no mistaking Koch's efforts to divide the working middle class from the poor with the wedge of the death penalty and loose talk about "poverty pimps."

Cuomo the conciliator would argue that Manhattan liberals and leftists habitually underestimate the fear he's witnessed among the working middle class in Forest Hills and around the state; that he knows in his gut where that kind of fear comes from; that his talent is at softening people half-crazed with hatred, coaxing them back to the realm of civilized discourse. While Cuomo soothed and cajoled Forest Hills homeowners in 1972, Koch, seeking to float his first mayoral campaign, marched with the most demagogic of those protesting low-income housing. Cuomo's empathy with them ran deeper that year than Koch's fear-mongering; Koch's effort fizzled, while Cuomo's compromise was accepted.

The same empathy told Cuomo that only Carter stood a chance of keeping Reagan at bay. "I first met Carter in 1976 at a political meeting, when he found out I

knew the state of Georgia. I'd signed with the Pittsburgh Pirates and played with the farm team in Georgia, and knew all the little dusty towns dear to his heart. We hit it off. He came to me in 1979 [shortly after Cuomo had become lieutenant governor] and asked if I would run the campaign. I liked him. I thought he was not a good communicator, so that to this day people don't know Jimmy Carter. They don't know his intelligence, his subtlety . . .

"In the early stage, when I talked to people like Peter Edelman, Jack Newfield, Bill Haddad, Jimmy Breslin, David Burke, they all said the same thing—Kennedy's definitely not running; and they'd all encouraged him not to run. And so I got in [with Carter], and of course once I did, I was not about to step out, especially because, if you remember, when Kennedy came in, he made no case: 'I agree with you 90 per cent of the time,' he said, 'but I'm a better leader than you.'

"What would've happened if I'd known when Jimmy Carter asked me that Kennedy was also running? Would I have remained neutral? It's academic. I was with Carter."

Ask Cuomo whether Chappaquiddick was a factor, and that trapdoor in the ceiling opens again, confounding what you might expect from one who battled Kennedy to the end. "No," he says. "There are only two truths, the objective truth that God knows, and the truth that the system establishes. When the jury says you're guilty, you're either really, truly guilty, in the all-seeing vision, or you're not. We settle on the truth that's in the trial. Personally you may have reservations, but I can't believe that simply because allegations are made, he's been blemished. That's a very bad precedent, because then every indictment kills. How could I make that judgment on him? Especially a person like me, who spent 20 years cross-examining people. You spend three hours with somebody in a chair under an oath, you watch him sweat after an hour and a half, you watch the story change after two, you watch him cry after two hours and 30 minutes, you watch him surrender after

three and say, 'Yeah, I lied, please don't hold me for perjury.'

"On Chappaquiddick, I don't know what really happened. Only God knows. I believe the system, that he was exonerated. The system also revealed he had a moment of weakness; he said so in his own words. I accept that. I accept that he exercised poor judgment. I don't think that bespeaks a weakness so pervasive that it should disqualify him."

So Cuomo didn't trade on Chappaquiddick in the bitter New York primary campaign. Which may be one reason why Kennedy has given Cuomo photo sessions and nice quotes to use on television this summer. It says something about Cuomo that both Carter and Kennedy support him, though it also probably says as much about the two men's loathing of Ed Koch.

That loathing, too, is part of the point: at a time when a rearguard action is necessary against hatemongering and social disintegration in tandem with any moving forward, Mario Cuomo feels he's the one who can face down the hatred. He has an important job to do, and is glad of it, and he runs with a near-serenity that some mistake for passivity but that he sees as good conscience and the peculiar, understated confidence it breeds.

Cuomo came of age in the New York City public schools' waning days of glory in the late '40s, and is still carrying on that schoolboy's love affair with America that most of us have consigned to a time out of mind. He reached intellectual maturity among the Jesuits of St. John's (where he went to college, law school, and taught law) and in the liberal ecumenical spirit of Pope John XXIII and Vatican II; whence his love of a "higher truth" which tempers his secular awe of American institutions and the system's truth. It makes him something of a celebrant of the state he would serve. He is not so much equivocal as he is—his word—"ontological," attuned to higher truths about the way things are and should be.



D. W. McDARRAH

"The easy political position is to carve out an identifiable constituency, and if they're 54 per cent you win," he says. "The hard position is between Scylla and Charybdis, because you miss them both and they're both unhappy. I think Koch's greatest political strength is his ability to gauge what the majority of the *voting* people perceive as their best interest and to ally himself with it. But that's not what representative government is. It says we have to work an exquisitely difficult balance between the will of the people and the judgment of the elected people who are given the assignment of leading and legislating in the two- and four-year intervals allowed them."

But in truth, Cuomo is anything but passive. What he lacks is that instinct for the jugular, for the political kill at any price, increasingly predominant in New York under Koch, Garth, and Murdoch. But that is what he is campaigning against, and he believes he has other resources. A man possessed of athletic grace and power even at 50, he plunges into crowds more easily than before, smiling almost as if he can barely suppress some mischievous mirth, winking as if he had destiny up his sleeve. He fairly bounds up to the high podium of the senate, over which he loves to preside, swapping baseball trivia with his counsel and clerk while calling on senators in an amiable chaos of motions and debates. He has a bit of an altar boy's levity, a nervous energy borne of respect for the institution. The senators join in it, and they like him for it.

Ontological, not equivocal: marching several ranks behind Koch in the St. Patrick's Day Parade, both of them behind Carey, Cuomo is asked whether he looks forward to marching in front of Koch next year. "No," he replies spontaneously, "I look forward to marching side by side, because a governor and a mayor must work together." It is not my vindication that counts, in other words; it is how things are.

Emerging from a garment factory where he stood on a lunchroom chair and roused a little United Nations of workers to robust applause by telling them of his ammi-

grant parents and the importance of unions and voting, he's asked if the reception makes him feel encouraged. "No," he replies. "I feel *good* showing them there's someone in the nether reaches of government who's in some way like them. What grabs at you is that so many of them aren't registered—not because they're illegal, but because there's so little outreach."

After a standing ovation from an Israel Bonds dinner crowd in Rockland County, he is asked if he feels like he's really going to win. "No," he replies, "I feel that I *should* win." It is, he feels, appropriate, logically if not ontologically. "What sense does it make to distort a mayor into a governor, make Carol Bellamy an interim mayor with a new fight nine months later, and kick Cuomo out of public service? Let the mayor be the mayor, and let the lieutenant governor be the governor."

State Senator Linda Winikow is at the Rockland County dinner, hedging her bets: "I came down here specially to introduce you to a very good friend," she tells the audience. "Mario is one of the few politicians who, when the going gets rough, stays right in there . . ." Winikow has the distinction of being the only senator who caved in to vote for the death penalty this year after opposing it in the past. Outside the hall, she equivocates on Koch versus Cuomo, saying, "Oh, the sentiment here is very much up in the air. People respect Mario tremendously, and they love Ed Koch. No, I haven't made up my mind. I think Mario is such a fine man. Ed Koch visited me in the hospital when I had polyps on my throat, and he didn't even talk politics."

On the way home in the car, Cuomo says, "Tell me what you asked Winikow and I'll tell you what she said."

"Ms. Winikow," the reporter dutifully intones, "what's the sentiment around here on the governor's race?"

"Oh," cries Cuomo in a high-pitched whine, "everything around here is so up in

the air; everyone *respects* Mario, but they love Ed Koch . . . ”

He breaks up laughing and sighs, “To thine own self be true.”

(Last week, Winikow was appointed a state coordinator for Koch’s campaign.)

“The people who endorse *me*, I can’t frighten them into doing it,” says Cuomo. “So they must do it either because they’re anti-Koch, or because they really support me. That means they’ll work hard on the campaign.

“Koch picked off, early in the game, a lot of political people who didn’t like him but thought he was going to win. A lot of people who condemned him in 1980 for embracing Reagan, like [Al] DelBello and Lee Alexander, who fought with me for Carter, they decided they wanted to be with a winner, especially one who said he never forgets an enemy. Also he came up with a very good ploy of going around the state suggesting to everybody that they could be lieutenant governor. At one time he had so many candidates for the office, he’d need a politburo. It’s like a groom who has 16 brides coming down the aisle—Jimmy Griffin [mayor of Buffalo], Lee Alexander [mayor of Syracuse], Al DelBello [Westchester County executive], Congressman Stan Lundine, and Assemblyman Jim Tallon. Now that they know the truth and they’ve seen the polls, I think his support is extremely thin.”

So it may be. After Koch’s upstate stars had spoken, a remarkable thing happened: the people directly under them spoke differently. In Westchester, DelBello’s endorsement of Koch was followed by a declaration from 11 of the county’s 15 state committee members that they were for Cuomo. So, as it turned out, were former county chairpersons Sam Fredman and Miriam Jackson, the latter a grand dame of the Westchester Democratic Party. So

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were Representative Richard Ottinger, and the mayors and supervisors of Mamaroneck, Greenburgh, Rye, Harrison, Mount Vernon, and on—a total of 66 local leaders by April 11.

In Rockland County, Chairman Vincent Monte went for Koch; three of his four state committee members came out for Cuomo. The Orange County Democratic Committee endorsed Cuomo unanimously. In the Rochester area, eight of 13 state committee members endorsed Cuomo. In Albany, the indomitable octogenarian Mayor Erastus Corning promised all-out support.

The deluge of plain-spoken endorsements rolled on. As secretary of state and lieutenant governor, Cuomo had done his homework in every hamlet and hillock of the state, getting to know the people and their problems. He'd earned his stripes with up-country folks in 1976, when his mission was to sell the financial rescue plan for New York City. "There was enormous hostility at first," he recalls. "Everybody said, 'To hell with them, they're trouble, they're arrogant big mouths, they're wasted, sin city, they've always rubbed our noses in it, they think we're a bunch of hicks'—that's what Koch's *Playboy* boy problem is all about."

Once again Cuomo found himself in the role of conciliator and unifier. He thrived. As ombudsman for state government, he was able to follow up on some of the other concerns local leaders had expressed during their skull sessions on New York City. And he embellished a theme that now dominates his campaign—that New York State must begin to think like a family. "If Brooklyn cannot learn to help Buffalo, if Cataraugus can't learn to help Queens, we will never make it."

This is just rhetoric to many New York City dwellers, as Koch's derisive comments about the rest of the state make clear. But it has won Cuomo many hearts upstate, and has given him a solid footing even in

the more affluent suburbs, which are presumed to be Koch's natural constituency.

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Cuomo's second wave of endorsements came from unions. "It's gone almost without notice that the tremendous union involvement, emotionally and financially in this primary, is a departure from the norm in the past," says Jan Pierce of the Communications Workers of America. "Since George Meany died, it's been the expressed policy of the AFL-CIO to be actively involved in Democratic primaries. We're genuinely concerned about the direction of the Democratic Party if the choice is Koch. It is repugnant to the trade union movement, because we feel that union busting started with his stand on the Brooklyn Bridge, and continued with his embrace, at Gracie Mansion on Labor Day, of the man who busted PATCO. If labor's desires are ignored by the Democratic Party, it's time to decide whether a third party is better. That debate is already started. That's why those of us who would prefer to work within the Democratic Party are so heavily involved in this race."

The Labor Committee for Cuomo, represented by Norman Adler of Victor Gotbaum's AFSCME District Council 37, has equal status with Cuomo's son Andrew, a lawyer, as a chair of the campaign. In addition to contributing more than \$250,000 to the battle, several unions, including the Communications Workers, AFSCME, the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers, the ILGWU, the Maritime Port Council, the Civil Service Employees Association, the Transportation Workers Union, the International Union of Electrical Workers, the International Union of Office Employees, the Seafarers International Union, Teamsters Local 840, the International Union of Operating Engineers, and the Brotherhood of Railway and Airline Clerks Local 1907, have divided the state up into regions, donating office space and muscle to the Cuomo campaign.

In Long Island, for example, the Communications Workers have positioned Steve Rosenthal and Tom DeJesus, who ran Nassau and Suffolk for Kennedy in 1980. Using computer retrievals, they are able to identify the hundreds of members from participating unions living in each assembly district, and to cull the most activist among them to set up offices, phone banks, and direct mailings. It's the same operation that in 1980 took Kennedy past Carter and Holtzman past Myerson. This year, Pierce promises "a larger network of volunteers than the state has ever seen before."

"Union members these days are either unemployed or scared of losing their jobs," Pierce says. "It's made them more willing to listen to leadership and to get involved. What people don't realize is that none of the polls you've seen so far can take this operation into account. We're just finishing our structuring stage and beginning to call the voters."

The Civil Service Employees Association, so large and strong that it makes a Cuomo petition drive credible if the bosses try to lock him out of the state Democratic convention next week, owes Cuomo a spiritual as well as substantive debt for his policies as secretary of state during Carey's first term. The office has been described as a "great notary in the sky," with 660 employees issuing licenses to real estate brokers, barbers, cosmetologists, and three or four other semiprofessions, and filing certificates of incorporation for every corporation in the state. Al Levine, who directed the office's management systems for Cuomo, recalls his boss's enthusiasm for a plan, rejected by his predecessors, to promote clerks up through the ranks to higher grades within the agency, rather than bring in fancy number-crunchers from outside.

Cuomo prides himself on having carried a number of civil service employees with him into the lieutenant governor's office in positions usually given over to patronage.

Again, the updraft in morale was felt throughout the union and the state. "he broke the vicious cycle where civil servants are dumped on and do less and less work," said one employee.

The union effort gives Cuomo a field operation Ed Koch won't be able to match for love or money. "I showed the setup to a reporter who said, 'Ah, you're making the same mistake Ken Auletta made in managing Howard Samuel's campaign for governor in 1974, spending all your money on organization, with not enough left over for media,'" Bill Haddad, Cuomo's campaign manager, recalls with a laugh. "What he didn't realize was that we're spending virtually *nothing* on organization, thanks to the unions."

Even so, Ed Koch is set to outspend Cuomo on television commercials by as much as \$4 million to \$1.5 million. "He'll come in soon, wide, and deep," Haddad predicts. "We'll have to be more sparing." The primary campaign pits Koch's media-heavy approach, via David Garth, against what has all the earmarks of a grass-roots and labor coalition—the traditional Democratic one, at that:

Minority leaders have a careful strategy designed to help Cuomo without provoking Koch into some of the more obnoxious tactics he's been known to use. "No pictures of our shining black faces around Mario for Koch to send around upstate," cautions Assemblyman Herman "Denny" Farrell, leader of New York County (Manhattan). "We'll endorse him one by one, and concentrate on minority registration. We think we can register over 100,000 blacks for the primary, beyond the 625,000 we have now."

"Did you know that there are 650,000 Jews registered in the state as Democrats? The thing is, the Jewish primary turnout is usually 30 per cent, while the black turnout is closer to 14 per cent. But recent races have broken that pattern, with high turnouts for Barbaro, Holtzman, and

FRED W. MCDONNAN



Cuomo talks to a group of Manhattan factory workers last week.

Dinkins. In Buffalo, when [Assemblyman] Arthur Eve captured the Democratic mayoral nomination against Jimmy Griffin, the turnout was over 70 per cent. Eve just happens to be coordinating the minority effort for Cuomo in Buffalo this year."

Assemblyman Roger Green of Brooklyn notes, "The Barbaro campaign taught us that you have to get people out to vote for someone, not *against* Ed Koch. That's the importance of Carl McCall's candidacy for lieutenant governor." McCall, a black former state senator and alternate United States delegate to the UN, is sure to bring thousands of blacks into the polling booths on primary day; once there, they are more likely to pull the lever for Cuomo than for Koch.

Campaign observers speculate that Koch forces may try to deflect such a trend by making McCall the mayor's "running mate." But voters choose the nominees for governor and lieutenant governor separately on the ballot, making a "split ticket" more likely where Koch is concerned.

In Ed Koch's erstwhile liberal constituency, meanwhile, defections are running fast and thick. Cuomo took the overwhelming support of the New Democratic Coalition (NDC), a statewide umbrella group of liberal clubs in the Democratic Party. The significance here is that Cuomo got no NDC support against Koch five years ago during the mayoral campaign. On June 9, Koch's own home club, the Village Independent Democrats (VID) chose Cuomo by a vote of 262 to 207, thus turning on its head the mayor's triumphant boast when he carried Frank Barbaro best, voted for me," exulted the mayor. "The people who know Ed Koch best, voted for me," Cuomo can now say. VID also endorsed McCall for lieutenant governor by a vote of 71 to DelBello's 17 and John Dyson's one. On June 10, however, Koch got the support of New York (Manhattan) County's district leaders by a margin of just one vote, 143 to 142, after traditional Koch critics Fred Samuel, Wilhelmina Daniel, Euzie Hutchinson, Kathy Freed, and Bill

→ the city:
"The people who know

Nuchow failed to show up. (Nuchow was a strong Barbaro supporter in last year's mayoral race.) Meanwhile, a membership meeting of the state Americans for Democratic Action went for Cuomo, 86.1 percent against Koch's 12 per cent. Cuomo has also received the Liberal Party's nomination, good for a waning but still critical number of votes in the general election.

Of course, endorsements are more symbolic than sure-fire predictors of the actual primary outcome. But Cuomo supporters are elated. "Keep in mind that if we can match Barbaro's numbers in Manhattan and do at least as well in the other boroughs as we did in the 1977 mayoral runoff, we start with 48 per cent of the city," says Andrew Cuomo. Since Frank Barbaro ran as an unknown on a \$170,000 budget to Koch's \$1.5 million last year, Cuomo's chances of outdoing him and carrying the city look very good indeed—if he can avoid any slippage from his 1977 returns in the other boroughs.

Sunday, June 6: the Avenue M street fair in the heart of Koch country, the 45th Assembly District, Midwood-Kings Highway. Creased, super-tanned faces, golf caps and polyester, people waddling by tables of literature, food, and crafts. Hand them a leaflet, any leaflet, and they manage to affect a sovereign's disdain for the offering. Yet try to bypass them and you hear, "Give me one, too, please," in a tone that can only be called a commanding whine.

District leader Nancy Nirenberg and local activist I. Stephen Miller are explaining Koch's popularity. "He's a real New Yorker, ya know? He's your uncle, he's the man next door." Asked about Mario Cuomo, Miller draws himself up and gets serious, measuring his words for posterity. "We who have met Mario personally know him to be a highly intelligent, articulate, gifted man. But we have changing times here—crime, for example. People feel very strongly about this death penalty thing.

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Personally I know it's not a deterrent, but people want it very much."

The 45th boasts a turnout of 20,000 in major primaries, second only to Co-op City. Cuomo took 27 per cent of it in 1977. What percentage of the turnout is Jewish?

"Oh, easily 80 to 90 per cent," says Nirenberg.

Then Cuomo did pretty well, with 27 per cent.

"Wait, wait!" cries Nirenberg, one hand raised. "This happens to be one of the most well-educated electorates in the city, and we have produced some of the best educated officials—Solarz, Schumer, Feldman. People here aren't going to vote ethnically, by name alone, in a statewide or citywide race. They know the issues."

Well, do they think Koch will do more for the subways as governor than he did as mayor?

"You see, the death penalty is really important."

And yet, on June 6, a street poll of 1000 people attending the fair taken by the Kings Highway Community Democrats, a strong Koch club, reports 32 per cent for Mario Cuomo.

"No question Koch is solid here," says male district leader Herb Lupka. "But yes, Cuomo will probably gain some between now and the primary."

Cuomo tends to tackle the death penalty head on wherever he goes. One of the strangest phenomena of this campaign is that some audiences who had beat up on him for it give him standing ovations as he leaves. It happened that way at the Columbian Association of the New York City Police Department, before 300 police officers of Italian background. "We didn't like his stand, but we respected him all the more for standing by his position. He did an outstanding job," says Columbia president John Ranieri. "They would hang Sacco and Vanzetti again," says Cuomo ruefully. Part of the truth was that when

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the cops began to think of their pocket-books and of themselves as union members, they found Cuomo much closer to them than Koch's man John LoCicero, who appeared for the mayor and gave dismissive answers to questions about pay-backs of deferred wages and cost of living increases, which Cuomo supports and the mayor resists.

That may be why the New York State Federation of Police, an umbrella organization of benevolent associations of police officers at all levels of government throughout the state, is preparing to endorse Cuomo within the next two weeks. Advance word is that the group's statement will begin by saying that while the federation disagrees 100 per cent with Cuomo on the death penalty, it respects him as a leader and shares his views on many other issues of vital concern to the police.

For all his apparent evangelism on the subject, Mario Cuomo is basically trying to be a good defense lawyer in a confrontation that others have forced. His arguments against it are classical and well known, his delivery passionate and eloquent. Less well known, however, and probably more interesting, are his musings about the supporters themselves.

"It's a unique situation. I have never seen the anger of the people and the fear of the people as high as it is now. You see it expressed in the bitterness with which people ask for the death penalty. I mean, just as an expression of the dissatisfaction of the people's soul, it's unique, and we ought to be doing different things, which is why I support the Biaggi superfund [an anticrime tax of \$1 per week from every paycheck for more police], though I am normally not in favor of dedicated taxes. We're more afraid, we're more bitter, we're more extreme than we've been in my lifetime. What is it? What does it mean when people have to stand up and shout for death? What are you saying about yourselves? I'm not saying those people are wrong. I'm saying that that kind of unhappiness, that kind of distress, that kind of dissatisfaction, confusion, that's a unique condition.

"See, the question here is much harder than it used to be. It used to be deterrence. I think you can make a fairly convincing

argument that it's not a deterrent, but that's not a question anymore. Now they're making it the public's right to 'satisfaction.' If you want to use a heavier word, you'd say 'vengeance,' and then some people are insulted. And yet, if it were a referendum, I'm not so sure that if you give me six months to argue it, with all the attention it would get, I'm not so sure it would pass. I know what the polls say now, but that is mostly an expression of indignation. If people focused, and heard all the arguments, and thought it through, and looked at that lever in the polling booth as the switch on the electric chair, I'm not so sure 51 per cent of them would pull it down."

As on most issues, Cuomo ends up relying on some commingling of logic and faith, which he thinks good leadership can summon in the people. Unfortunately, Ed Koch's style of leadership runs in a different direction, and, as if it were part of his campaign, the *New York Post* is giving especially lurid play to every murder story it can find. The more Cuomo hopes the death penalty won't eclipse people's other concerns, the more Ed Koch pumps up the issue.

There is another issue this year which seems to have been insinuated into campaign after campaign over the past decade, that of alleged bigotry by a candidate against a sensitive and critical group of voters. The charges often emerge with a good deal of sophistication and careful timing, yet their origins are almost always impossible to prove, and their impact almost impossible for the candidate to deflect. It's necessary to flush out these charges continually, and important for those who might seem to be benefiting from them to join in repudiating them, because they are so poisonous to the demo-

cratic process itself.

• In 1974, Hugh Carey unexpectedly took half the Jewish vote as his opponent, Howard Samuels, tried to dispel spurious charges, aired in the press, that one of his in-laws had been a Nazi collaborator in Vichy France. Carey himself was falsely tied to Libyan oil interests in scurrilous literature circulated in Brooklyn.

• Just before the 1977 mayoral runoff between Koch and Cuomo, a letter signed by some prominent staff people at the American Jewish Congress was sent to an unknown number of New York rabbis, passing on an incomplete news account of Cuomo's observation to the effect that "You don't want a 'Jewish mayor' created by a 'Jewish vote,'" but omitting that he'd said the same thing about an "Italian mayor" in the same sentence. "They never bothered to check with me before sending that around and denouncing me for it," says Cuomo.

• There was, of course, a serious charge of bigotry against Cuomo in the 1977 runoff, when a "Vote for Cuomo, not the homo" message emerged from a soundtruck and on some posters in Queens. Cuomo promptly repudiated these messages and rebutted charges of antigay bigotry; his gay rights record, which dates at least from his issuing an antidiscrimination executive order on becoming secretary of state in 1974, has been unambiguous (see sidebar).

• In 1978, blatantly racist attacks against Congressman Fred Richmond's black opponent Bernard Gifford were circulated in the district's Hasidic newspaper *Der Yid*, in an anonymously authored ad calling Gifford racist names and accusing him of wanting to destroy Hasidic interests.

• Last year the *New York Post* seized upon some anti-Semitic comments by *Amsterdam News* columnist Fred Weaver about the Manhattan borough presidency race between Andrew Stein and David Dinkins, attributing them to "Dinkins supporters" in an October 28, 1981, editorial. Though Dinkins had already denounced and repudiated the remarks, which in any case had been no part of his campaign, the *Post* chose to link them to him before its 900,000 readers. Dinkins had to appear in a City Hall press con-

Howard Samuels to assure the world he's a friend of the Jews; but by then the *Post* had done its utmost to spur racist voting among Jews under the very guise of condemning "dangerous bigotry" in the Dinkins campaign.

• In that same campaign, Marty McLaughlin, then press secretary to incumbent Stein and now Koch's gubernatorial campaign press secretary, acknowledged spending \$7600 of Stein's campaign money to print and mail 40,000 copies of a letter from Bradley Lawrence Jr. to Republicans, which State Senator and Republican County Leader Roy Goodman subsequently denounced as a racist attack on Dinkins. Following the *Post*'s example, Lawrence accused Dinkins of waging "an inflammatory, one-issue campaign" based on "racism," a near-perfect reenactment of the "big lie" scenario developed by Senator Joe McCarthy.

• Now, in the current gubernatorial campaign, a Jewish voter has told the *Voice* she was called by a "poll" which asks, after determining party affiliation, religion, and candidate preference, whether the voter is aware of rumors that Mario "has anti-Semitic leanings." Challenged by the voter, the pollster insisted that "we're not making any allegations," only testing the prevalence of the rumor—a sophisticated answer.

Even before this year's Cuomo-Koch race was joined, at least one person now involved in it had echoed similar rumors to several politically active New Yorkers over the previous year and a half. Asked by the *Voice* whether he had heard that Mario Cuomo had anti-Semitic leanings, Harold Ickes, who is working for Koch at next week's state Democratic convention, said that he had. Asked whether he had ever passed such rumors on to others, Ickes

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conceded that he "might have." Asked whether he could substantiate them in any way, Ickes would say only, "I've heard nothing that actually goes back to Mario." Asked if that meant he'd heard of problems somewhere close to Cuomo, Ickes would say only that he'd "heard there were problems." What makes this kind of loose talk so destructive is that it cannot be countered by its victim without being given even greater currency than it already had. Yet even when public silence is preserved, "polls" and rumors can do enormous damage. It is important to raise and follow these trends early on, to keep them from gathering steam without substantiation.

Mario Cuomo turned 50 on June 15. It gives him pause. "I wrote somewhere, I think in the diary [Cuomo has kept a diary for more than 10 years; a section of it, his *Forest Hills Diary*, was published in 1973] that in analyzing why you do this, it can't be for the applause and the acceptance, because anyone who's done it for a while knows that they will applaud an act of prostitution, and they will condemn the most heroic and noble. If I want the power to do good things, I have to persuade them to like me enough to elect me, so practically it's very important to get their respect. But the satisfaction doesn't come in winning their approval.

"A governor has to balance a budget, has to achieve a result, and almost always it's a compromise, sometimes a compromise so severe that you question whether you've achieved any of a number of even alternative goods. The result can appear so diluted, so perverted, that you wonder how much you've accomplished. A governor ought to be a person who is capable of suffering great unhappiness.

"If somebody could convince me I'd make a greater contribution to mankind as

a judge in the court of appeals, boy, I'd be happy as a clam, because that'd be a much easier life for me. I'd love to be on the court of appeals personally to be able never to have to go to a cocktail party, never to have to do anything you don't want to do, just show up, listen to arguments, study, read, tell the truth. *Can you imagine that?* Never really have to compromise. You listen, you write your view, you can be Oliver Wendell Holmes, always in the dissent."

And yet Cuomo feels he can make "a greater contribution to mankind" by running for governor—in fact, that he's the best candidate in the race. And one can't help wondering whether, for all his talk of the "great unhappiness" a chief executive must suffer, he really craves the office as the "bully pulpit" Theodore Roosevelt found in the presidency. There is something self-invented, didactic about his political persona that demands display; anyone who takes imaginary batting practice swings and shoots imaginary lay-ups in the high-ceilinged lieutenant governor's office, salting his discourse with Greek mythology and Latin phrases like *de gustibus*, is itching to get out there and perform.

But being governor of a state like New York, which has more children on welfare than many states in the union have total populations, means playing a fierce fiscal, managerial, and legislative game at very high stakes. It means wielding power. This Mario Cuomo has not yet done. Ed Koch has. It is the most formidable argument one can make against Cuomo's candidacy, and it will not be dispelled by fine phrases and high sentiments.

By all accounts, Cuomo did an excellent, even trailblazing job as secretary of state. He oversaw the computerization of its operations, insuring that license applicants get their exams scheduled within several days, instead of 14 to 16 weeks. He combined two other agencies, the Office of Planning Services and the Office of Local Government, with staffs of more than 200 each, and merged them with his own office,

coordinating the delivery of technical advice to dozens of local and county governments. At the same time the Department of State reduced its budget from \$12 million-plus to around \$9 million, even with the addition of the other two agencies. Personnel savings were handled only by attrition, at Cuomo's insistence. He learned a lot about organization, management, and personnel matters, which will undoubtedly serve him well in scrutinizing other state agencies.

As lieutenant governor, Cuomo has done little but facilitate, visit, and listen. He has sponsored several studies and issued many reports, with little concrete effect. Carey seems to have frozen him out since around the time they split over Jimmy Carter's candidacy (Carey nursed "favorite son" visions for himself). It was then that the governor made his well-publicized, stinging remarks about not knowing what his lieutenant governor was doing or where he was.

In fairness to Cuomo, the lieutenant governor's constitutional responsibilities are almost nil. He presides over the Senate, an honorific about as meaningful as Carol Bellamy's technical presidency of the City Council. His budget allows him a mere 30 to 40 staff people. But it is often said that Mario Cuomo hasn't done as much as one might with those slots. With a job much like Cuomo's and a staff of 50, Bellamy has done considerably more, even aside from her Board of Estimate vote, the one substantial increment of power that Cuomo doesn't have. Then again, Bellamy's BOE vote cannot really be left aside; it makes her independent of the mayor, while Cuomo is supposed to do what the governor tells him. And Bellamy has, in effect, a charter mandate to take on the city administration over matters as diverse as foster-care or ambulatory-care and the J-51 tax abatement program; her independent vote allows her to force occasional appropriations and policy challenges. Cuomo has no such mandate.

He has no such power.

One of Cuomo's first acts as governor, he says, will be to find a coordinator for the criminal justice system, a system he says he's known well since the days he defended homicide cases before the court of appeals. He has already established, despite his death penalty stance, that he will have the respect of most police officers. Many lawyers and judges respect him; Charles Desmond, former chief judge of New York State, has endorsed Cuomo because he says he has confidence in his ability to name replacements for five of the seven judges who will have to retire in the next four years from the court of appeals, the state's highest.

Cuomo will be fiscally conservative. That should reassure the investment bankers and others with a say in what kind of money New York State can borrow. Recipients of social services will have to depend on Cuomo's commitment to replicate the kinds of savings he accomplished in the Department of Social Services without hurting anybody. But since he acknowledges, indeed insists, that waste is not the real problem, we will also have to depend upon his ability to set priorities among alternative goods and to "suffer great unhappiness" while kicking ass as well as conciliating to get them implemented.

Will Cuomo prove as forceful a spokesman against Ronald Reagan's threadbare "new federalism" as has Governor Richard Snelling of Vermont, a Republican who chairs the National Governor's Conference? Beyond that, will he bring anything to the larger struggle that Reaganomics has brought to the fore—the struggle over how capital beyond the reach of public sector budgets can be channeled toward housing, health-care, education, and other critical needs of low- and middle-income people? Will Cuomo fight to expand the meager share of this country's wealth now at least nominally subject to

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the democratically representative, reasoned debate he's been trained to prize? Or will his love of society somehow fail to propel him toward the most obvious criticisms about how corporate capital is accumulated and invested these days?

Cuomo does have more forceful leaders around him now in the campaign—Bill Haddad, the union people like Jan Pierce, and, not least, his son Andrew and wife Matilda. One senses his growth because of it; it's almost as if his "family kind of politics" theme has found root and expression at last. He seems genuinely buoyed by it, though that may be as much because of the "family" part as because of the "political": on June 5, Andrew, 24, graduated from law school; Margaret, 27, a medical doctor, announced her engagement; Madeline, 17, graduated from St. Francis Preparatory School; and Mario and Matilda celebrated their 28th wedding anniversary.

If there is a movement in Cuomo's life, it's not so much a rising of social classes to remake our economy as it is a chain of handings-on across the generations. He is a man still happy in the gifts of those who came before; happy, too, at the prospect of giving and teaching those who will go after.

That is his strength. But in this campaign it could also prove his undoing.

For too many people in our tightening political economy, the family ties and values he loves have been broken or twisted so that they bear no fruit in good health or fresh opportunities. And as openness and hope become overwhelmed by fear and hatred in enough people's lives—openness curdles to bitterness and hope shrivels to a craving for revenge—hard-pressed voters turn to leaders with a streak of malevolence resembling their own—leaders who reassure them perversely by showing them where they can extract vengeance for their own diminished lives. That's what Ed Koch does, and what his campaign for death accomplishes. Any manipulations of anti-Semitism or racism would only further debase the democratic process upon which people depend.

A guy who goes around in the middle of it talking about conciliation and harmony willy-nilly gathers around him those who resent and resist the politics of despair and who are trying to expand the possibilities for reason and hope. But where will he lead them? As he battles Ed Koch, Mario Cuomo will be trying to show us his answer. The battle will tell us something about who he really is, and what we as a society really are.

From Abortion to Westway: Mario Cuomo's Record

17.

One of Mario Cuomo's deepest frustrations about the campaign so far is the persistent suggestion that he has no clear positions on issues facing the state. Most of his positions are well documented and long-standing, if not always congenial to progressives. One reason his stands aren't well known is that he hasn't played to the New York City media market much during his terms as secretary of state and lieutenant governor. Another reason is that few people care what the occupants of those offices think.

The charge of indecision is made doubly frustrating for Cuomo by Ed Koch's apparent ability to do complete somersaults on everything from the Biaggi anticrime "superfund" and the suburban commuter tax to Democratic party loyalty, the nuclear freeze movement, and Westway—and get away with it. Cuomo campaign manager Bill Haddad recalls that "whenver Chicago's mayor Richard Daley looked out the window and saw a parade, he ran out to lead it." So it has been with Koch, whether for the hostages, John Lennon's memorial, or the June 12 disarmament rally.

"As a matter of fact," Cuomo muses, "I'm getting the feeling he's fashioning some of his positions after mine. For example, the Dyson proposal to reallocate [hydroelectric] power downstate, which I oppose because it would cause enormous dislocations upstate while benefiting the city relatively little. When the *Times* editorialized in favor of it six months ago, you didn't hear the mayor condemning it. He now disapproves of it upstate, where it's convenient, in almost the same language I used six months ago and have used consistently since then. Coincidence? Perhaps.

"You have to have the money to go on television to expose him. Or you have to get him to stop refusing to go on a platform with you and debate." Now that Cuomo's campaign has money and momentum, he relishes the head-on confrontations Ed Koch won't be able to avoid.

They can't come too soon. Frank

"one day in August to slip it all by." (Koch opposes these measures; Cuomo now publishes contributions as they come in.)

Capital Punishment:* Opposed, but might not automatically commute every sentence, for constitutional reasons. Is working hard against the death penalty bill all over the state. (Koch supports capital punishment.)

Civil Service Reform:* Favors retention of merit system; sees patronage and other dangers in Koch "reform" package now in Albany. Believes merit system can be made to work if managed well, with minor modifications. (Koch proposes sweeping reforms, to exempt many more public employees from civil service requirements.)

Commuter Tax For Suburbanites: Opposes; says real estate capital gains taxes could have gotten much more revenue for city. (Koch proposed it, now appears to have dropped it.)

Consumer Credit: Took no position on the banks' move to lift the state's 18 per cent usury ceiling on credit card rates, which passed the legislature under great industry pressure. (Koch favored.)

Crime:* Supported the narrowly defeated \$500-million prison bond issue (Koch also supported). Supports Representative Mario Biaggi's anticrime "superfund" proposal. (Koch originally opposed, now supports it.) Supports state money for neighborhood crime prevention efforts.

Equal Rights Amendment: Strong supporter and national advocate. (Koch same.)

Freedom Of Information: Pushed for years and finally passed, despite Koch's opposition, a law to provide attorney's fees for successful Freedom of Information suits where the court finds info was arbitrarily withheld. Had been vetoed by Carey in years past, but he signed it this year.

Gay Rights: Strong supporter; as Secretary of State, issued executive order 1974

Ed Koch on his record, warns that "there are two things to remember about campaigning against Ed Koch. First, if you let him intimidate you, you're finished. You have to take the offensive. Second, you have to be well prepared to expose his numbers. Once he knows he can't run to the refuge of distortion, he's terrorized. But to do that you have to have the facts. I did some of that, without television time or staff, and I got 36 per cent in the primary. Mario will have the time and money to do it right, but so far I haven't seen him do it. He has to show that while Koch calls on people to bite the bullet, he's giving away hundreds of millions of dollars. I ask, will Koch defeat Cuomo? Or will caution do it? He's got to get out there."

Herewith a short list of Cuomo's positions to date (an asterik indicates that the issue is discussed in the article):

Abortion: Consistent prochoice advocate, supports use of Medicaid funds for abortion and aggressive outreach on family planning and teen pregnancy counseling. Supports Planned Parenthood agenda. (Koch position the same.)

Bottle Bill: Leans toward deposit/return system. Will watch Suffolk County's experiment with that system before deciding on statewide bill. (Koch supports statewide deposit/return.)

Campaign Financing:* Supports push each year for public financing and spending limits. "I have a suggestion for the Democrats: If we can't get a bill through, why don't we at least adopt for our own party within our primary what we say society should do? It wouldn't put us at a disadvantage in November." Advocates publishing contributions as they come in, for closer scrutiny, instead of waiting for

in granting licenses and certificates to individuals and groups. Took lead in getting phrasing into platform of Democratic National Convention as member of platform drafting committee. Supported gay rights bill in City Council. Would issue executive order as governor. (Koch similar, but did not push City Council.)

Housing: Supports Flynn-Dearie (Koch opposed) and Emergency Tenant Protection Act (Koch equivocal); supports Lehner/Grannis bill to raise percentage of residents required to approve a co-op (Koch opposes); opposes full-value assessment; would not raise homeowner property taxes through increased assessments. Concurs with NYPIRG study arguing the lower-income properties tend to be over-assessed. Has some common ground with Esposito/Padavan positions. (Koch opposed Esposito/Padavan.) Condemns Koch-sponsored repeal of real estate capital gains tax; condemns Koch-sponsored extension of J-51.

Nuclear Freeze: Supports Kennedy-Hatfield proposal. "If our government doesn't do more to control the spread of nuclear arms, then we must do more to control our government." (Koch opposed, currently "supports.")

Nuclear Power: Opposes any new construction of nuclear power plants in New York state, favors closings at Indian Point. (Koch supports nuclear power.)

Transit Bond Issue, 1979: Supported it. (Koch same.)

Tuition Tax Credit: for private schools: undecided. (Koch supports.)

Westway: Has always supported for jobs, believes trade-in isn't real. (Koch ran opposed to Westway in 1978, now supports it.) —J.S.