CULTURE WARS
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Roger Chapman, Editor

M.E. Sharpe
Armonk, New York
London, England
See also: Christian Radio; Feminism, Second-Wave; Focus on the Family; Fundamentalism, Religious; Gay Rights Movement; Gibson, Mel; Israel; Moore, Roy S.; Moral Majority; Religious Right; Schiavo, Terri; Ten Commandments.

Further Reading

LaRouche, Lyndon H., Jr.
A candidate for the U.S. presidency in every campaign from 1976 through 2004 and the founder of several extremist political organizations, Lyndon LaRouche is regarded by critics as a neo-fascist or simply a political kook. His loyalists energetically distribute flyers warning of impending economic or political cataclysm unless their leader’s advice is followed. Over the years, LaRouche has offered up countless conspiracy theories, warning against the power of the Rockefellers, Zionists, and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), among others. His anti-Semitic writings and speeches have gained him the ire of the Anti-Defamation League. During the 1980s, his political network fielded thousands of candidates, disguised as conservative Democrats, in local elections.

The son of Quaker parents, Lyndon Hermyle LaRouche, Jr., was born on September 8, 1922, in Rochester, New Hampshire. His studies at Northeastern University in Boston were interrupted in 1942 due to World War II. Briefly returning to Northeastern after his discharge from the U.S. Army, LaRouche dropped out and joined the Socialist Workers Party (SWP). Dispatched to the Lynn, Massachusetts, GE River Works to do support work and recruiting for the party, he adopted the pseudonym Lynn Marcus. Moving to New York City in 1954, LaRouche worked as a management consultant while remaining committed to Trotskyite Marxism.

LaRouche’s role as a political leader began in the late 1960s after he was expelled from the SWP. In 1969, after mentoring activists in the labor caucus of the campus-based Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), he led a group in establishing the National Caucus of Labor Committees (NCLC). Four years later, the group had more than 600 members in two dozen cities across the United States and published a newspaper called New Solidarity. In 1973, LaRouche escalated a long-simmering feud with the Communist Party of the United States of America through a confrontation dubbed Operation Mop-Up, which led to some violence. After publishing Dialectical Economics: An Introduction to Marxist Political Economy (1975), LaRouche reversed course and began leading followers into alliances with the political right. Left-wing critics began calling his group a fascist cult, dubbing members “LaRouchies.”

LaRouche, who has often portrayed himself as a dissident Democrat, has been generally rejected and renounced by both major parties. Between 1982 and 1988, his followers ran as Democratic candidates in 4,000 elections in more than thirty states, gathering over 4 million votes. In 1986, two followers of LaRouche won the Democratic primary in Illinois for lieutenant governor and secretary of state, forcing the Democratic gubernatorial candidate, Adlai Stevenson III, to repudiate the official party ticket while calling the LaRouche followers “neo-Nazis.” That same year, LaRouche organizers placed Proposition 64, an AIDS quarantine initiative, on the ballot in California, saying that its stringent measures were required to stop the spread of HIV. The initiative was defeated by gay rights activists, who labeled it authoritarian and homophobic.

After several state and federal investigations, LaRouche was convicted in 1988 and sentenced to fifteen years in prison for federal conspiracy, mail fraud, and tax violations. The U.S. Supreme Court upheld the conviction of LaRouche and six associates, and he served five years in prison before being paroled in 1994. LaRouche supporters claimed that the entire episode was part of an illegal conspiracy by rogue CIA operatives to silence him.

Chip Berlet

See also: AIDS; Anti-Semitism; Central Intelligence Agency; Conspiracy Theories; Democratic Party; Gay Rights Movement; Marxism; Neoliberalism; Students for a Democratic Society.

Further Reading

Lear, Norman

Groundbreaking television writer and producer Norman Lear dominated the airwaves, and discussion of television, in the 1970s with his portrayal of bigots, feminists, political activists, and antiwar radicals in a number of primetime situation comedies. Offering viewers an array of iconic characters in topical situations, Lear was the mind behind such wildly popular