Rebels and Renegades

A Chronology of Social and Political Dissent in the United States

Neil A. Hamilton
heritage. Several years later he said, "Wounded Knee woke up America. We’re still here, and we’re resisting. John Wayne did not kill us all."

In October 1973, Means stood trial in St. Paul, Minnesota, for his role at Wounded Knee. At the same time, he ran against Wilson for the Pine Ridge tribal presidency. Means lost, with the results widely viewed as tainted by Wilson’s corrupt tactics; Means, however, won his case at St. Paul when the judge threw out the charges against him and another AIM leader, Dennis Banks, on grounds that the FBI had violated the wiretap law and that the federal government had engaged in illegal activities.

At the end of the 1970s, AIM disbanded as a national group, though it continued to operate in several localities; in the 1990s, it helped Indians in Wisconsin defend their traditional treaty rights. Means observed: "AIM never died. It only changed form."

Further Reading

1973 Lyndon LaRouche Organizes Right-Wing Street Gangs

In 1973, extremist Lyndon LaRouche ordered his National Caucus of Labor Committees (NCLC) to unite with urban street gangs and form political street-fighting units called the Revolutionary Youth Movement.

The NCLC emerged from the contorted transformation of its founder, Lyndon LaRouche (1922–). Originally a leftist who had been a member of the communist-affiliated Socialist Workers Party, he
converted to the other extreme in the 1970s, accused the CIA of targeting him for assassination, and organized a far right militia movement. The CIA, he said, had been kidnapping his followers, brainwashing them, and changing them into killers who would be set into action by code words.

LaRouche's right-wing tactics remained largely the same as his left-wing ones, however, and ranged from TV advertising to violence. LaRouche directed members of the NCLC to disrupt Communist Party meetings and beat up its leaders (in what he called Operation Mop Up); he held ego-stripping sessions to rid members of their individuality and maintain their ideological purity; and he invented more stories of assassination plots to keep the group united through hysteria. By 1973, the NCLC had 600 members in 25 cities and was publishing a newspaper, *New Solidarity*.

That same year, LaRouche organized street-fighting units, or what he called a paramilitary structure, to unite urban gangs and politicize them. This Revolutionary Youth Movement, as he called it, collapsed after police arrested several gang members on weapons charges.

LaRouche infused the NCLC's paranoid political style with anti-Semitism. He declared that an evil dictatorship, dominated by international Zionist bankers, existed in the United States. He wanted this Zionist apparatus replaced by an authoritarian regime with a centralized, disciplined economy, led by engineers and scientists trained and totally committed to advancing United States world domination. In LaRouche's scenario, all political opposition would be purged by the police, and Jews would be expelled from the country. The Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith accused him of injecting "anti-Semitic poison into the American political bloodstream."

To further his plan, LaRouche allied with the Ku Klux Klan. Michigan Klan leader Robert Miles praised him for "exposing the neo-racist materialism of [secretary of state Henry] Kissinger." At the same time, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, LaRouche entered mainstream politics. He tried to win Democratic presidential primaries, but never received more than 2 percent of the vote. Political experts are uncertain about why LaRouche decided to run as a Democrat rather than a Republican. Some believe it was an opportunistic move—in the 1980s, the Democratic Party was struggling to reshape its identity in the wake of conservative Republican victories, thus LaRouche may have thought he could direct the party to embrace his ideas. Others believe he saw the Democratic Party as his greatest enemy and that he concluded he could more effectively defeat this enemy by infiltrating it and taking it over rather than by fighting it from the outside as a Republican.

Whatever the case, LaRouche supported Ronald Reagan's campaign to win the Republican presidential nomination, and though Reagan never publicly embraced LaRouche, the NCLC leader briefly wielded considerable influence within the Reagan Administration. Meanwhile, LaRouche established a secret paramilitary boot camp near Argyle, New York, where participants learned how to use rifles and explosives and formed several local militia units.

In 1988, LaRouche's political ambitions suffered a severe setback when he was convicted for loan fraud.

The NCLC continued, but in diminished form. In 1996 LaRouche, out of prison, again entered the race for the Democratic presidential nomination and again lost. He entered and lost a third time in the year 2000. LaRouche's brief fling as leader of the NCLC represented the assertion of a far-right ideology in the 1970s in reaction to liberalism and the upheaval from the counterculture in the 1960s. To offset the counterculture, LaRouche proposed an authoritarianism that would restore order to a badly divided and dispirited country suffering from increased crime and a loss of faith in leadership as a result of the Vietnam War.

Further Reading
