

Uwe Backes/Eckhard Jesse (Editors)

Yearbook of Extremism and Democracy (E & D)

7th Year 1995

Nomos Publishers
Baden-Baden

The LaRouche-Organization
In the Gray Zone between Extremism, Cultism and Political Exoticism

By Matthias Mletzko

1. Introduction

The international *LaRouche Organization* (LO) has had a presence in Germany (the German branch currently has approximately 100 active members) since the beginning of the 1970s – thus for more than 23 years. While other small spin-offs from the Extraparliamentary Opposition (EO) have either long since disappeared from the scene by disbanding or splitting, or merged into other institutions, the German LaRouche branch has continued to distinguish itself with stubborn activism despite isolation, large losses in membership, and reduced financial resources. Despite its minimal influence, this political exotic is active internationally with a variety of writings and definitely has some of the distinctive structural traits observed among extremist groups as well as among those organizations (cults) that demand the complete immersion of their members. After giving a portrait of the LO, this article will use new material to depict its distinguishing cultish traits. The article ends with an overall evaluation of the LO.¹

2. Organizational History

The LO began as a spin-off from the American student uprisings at the end of the 1960s. Its founder, Lyndon Hermyle LaRouche (born September 8, 1922) had already had a long history in the American extremist left: from 1949 until 1966 in the Trotskyite *Socialist Workers Party* (SWP) and thereafter in smaller Trotskyite splinter groups. After 1967 LaRouche tried to gain a foothold in the incipient student movement. In seminars purporting to offer a development of Marxist theory and to further the cultural “hegemony” of the left, he gathered a group of sometimes very intellectually talented students around him. From this circle emerged the *National Caucus of Labor Committees* (NCLC) in 1969/1970. By 1973 there was an activist core of about 600 people in 25 states. The *U.S. Labor Party* (USLP) was created as the movement’s political vehicle.²

At the same time, during a stay in Europe, some NCLC cadres used “study groups” to recruit followers among students who for the most part had already been active in extremist left groups like the *MBS Spartakus*, a sub-party of the German Communist Party, or the tiny Trotskyite *Spartacus BL*. This group of students established itself first as the *European Labor Committee* (ELC), then at the end of 1974 as the *Europäische Arbeiterpartei* (European Workers Party) (EAP) with a weekly newspaper, *Neue Solidarität* (New Solidarity). The

¹ This article is based on personal knowledge gained over many years as well as on fact finding by the author, which formed the basis of the author’s contribution “Die LaRouche Organisation” in Rainer Fromm’s and Barbara Kernbach’s book *Europas braune Saat --Die internationale Verflechtung der rechtsradikalen Szene*, (Bonn, 1994) (Europe’s Brown Seed – the International Entwinning of the Extremist Right).

² On the early period, see Dennis King, *Lyndon LaRouche and the New American Fascism*, (New York, 1989), pp. 11-18. This is the most informative book on the LO and provides a wealth of information.

membership was very young, mostly between 17 and the early 20s.³ The group soon distinguished itself through its attempts to break the left into fractions (especially the young socialists in the SPD), as well as through its aggressive claim to be the sole voice of the left and an intense missionary zeal. The main points of the teachings were a putative “reconstruction program for the world economy” and an apocalyptic vision of impending fascism and world war arising from the dark plans of the “Rockefeller/Kissinger Fraction”.⁴

In the summer of 1973, LaRouche, then already over 50 years old, subjected the European leadership of the movement to an intensive focused psychological conditioning. As European leader he chose his then 22-year old girlfriend and later wife Helga Zepp (they were married in 1977). Then a young student of philosophy, history and political science, born in Trier in 1948, Zepp had almost no political experience and did not belong to any political group or party. She had previously worked as a trainee with a north German regional newspaper and taken a trip to China.

Thus there arose an obedient and centralized leadership structure. This strictly hierarchical structure allowed for quick action true to the party line, internationally and under rapidly changing political conditions.⁵ The leading European committee remains the *European Executive Committee* (EEC), selected and led by the LaRouche husband-wife team. The EEC announces the current political line in so-called “marching orders” and controls key matters such as finances and “security”. A *European Committee* (EC), subordinate to the EEC, which determines its make-up, performs leadership functions on the regional level.

After its originally extreme leftist propaganda, in 1977 the LO made an ideological swing into the conservative camp, championing unlimited industrial development and nuclear power. The LO founded front organizations like the *Akademie für humanistische Studien e.V.* (Academy for Humanistic Studies)(December 1977), or the *Fusions Energie Forum* (FEF, 1978). The beginning of the 1980s brought new themes for agitation like narcotics and the Reagan administration’s Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI). This agitation was supported by new firms and associations like the *Anti-Drogen-Koalition e.V.* (Anti-Drug Coalition) (ADC, 1980), *Club of Life, e.V.*, (1982), and the *Schiller-Institut--Institut für republikanische Außenpolitik e.V.* (Schiller Institute – Institute for a Republican Foreign Policy)(1984). The EAP party vehicle moved into the background and was replaced in 1986 by the *Patrioten für Deutschland*. The targets of agitation were primarily military circles, the

³ On the beginnings in Europe, see Hella Ralfs-Horeis, “Menschheitsretter” LaRouche. Innenansichten einer totalitären Bewegung. (LaRouche the Savior of Mankind. An Inside View of a Totalitarian Movement). (Stuttgart, 1990); Aglaja Beyes-Corleis, Verirrt. Mein Leben in einer radikalen Politorganisation. (Gone Astray. My Life in a Radical Political Organization), (Freiburg, 1994). Both books offer particularly accurate descriptions of the psychological manipulation of young activists.

⁴ One of the campaign slogans of the EAP in the 1976 campaign was “we get 5% in the Bundestag or atomic war in 1977 is unavoidable.” (*Neue Solidarität*, April 15, 1976). The already pronounced fixation on conspiracy theories led to such rare blossoms as a title line in *Neue Solidarität* “Kissinger’s artificial storm tide to unleash the Third World War” (January 8, 1976). According to the EAP, a mentally ill Nelson Rockefeller, together with Kissinger’s National Security Council, were unleashing “meteorological warfare”.

⁵ This control structure made it possible, for example, for the European affiliates to continue to rely for propaganda on hardliners in the communist apparatuses (among others, the Portuguese Communist Party leader Cunhal, Communist Party of the Soviet Union leader Brezhnev, Fidel Castro and Enrique Lister, the recently deceased leader of the orthodox wing of the Spanish Communist Party loyal to Moscow), while in the USA, curiously, feelers were already being extended into the extreme right. On the contacts with the extreme right in the USA, see King, (fn.2), pp. 39-41.

high-tech industry, conservative movements as well a number of governments in the developing world. Particular successes of the US core group, like the Illinois primary or the 1986 AIDS referendum in California, could not prevent the isolation of the European affiliates.⁶

The strongly pro-American rhetoric became muted in 1986 with the increased financial scrutiny of the group by American agencies⁷, and wild outbursts against the US administration (“Bush is like Adolf Hitler”) began to come out after LaRouche’s arrest in 1989. Since 1990/1991 attempts have been made to gain a foothold in Russia, ex-Yugoslavia and other east European countries.⁸ In November 1992 the *Bürgerrechtsbewegung Solidarität* (Civil Rights Solidarity)(BBS) was founded as a party, purportedly based on the American tradition of civil rights.

After giving propaganda support to the regime of Saddam Hussein during the course of the Gulf War, the LO made attempts to gain a foothold within the radical Islamist camp during the early 1990s. Notable here are the contacts to the Sudanese military government under the influence of the leading Islamist Hassan al-Turabi, as well as ties to the American *Nation of Islam* (NOI). Despite these attempts to establish contacts with shrilly anti-American groups and regimes, 1993/1994 also saw propaganda overtures to President Clinton, who, in the conspiracy world of the LO, was fashioned an opponent of the American-British “special relationship” and who, therefore, was in danger of being assassinated.

Since the end of the 1980s the LO has suffered great losses in membership in Europe and the USA. In November 1991 the entire Italian contingent quit, among them long-time associates and close confidants of the LaRouches. Besides the main organization in the USA and Germany there are also presently significant groups, cells of activists or contacts in Sweden, Denmark, France, Italy, Poland, Russia, Ukraine, Mexico, Columbia, Brasil, Thailand and India.

3. Examination of Extremist Traits

A conclusive evaluation of the seemingly impenetrable thickets of LO activity is more difficult than for other, more structurally stable, extremist groups. This is especially true because the propaganda often deals with real problems, and superficially seems at times

⁶ On some high points of activity in the USA, see King (fn.2), pp. 103-111, p. 140 fn. On the main points of the German group’s agitation see Helmut Lorscheid/Leo A. Müller, Deckname Schiller – Die deutschen Patrioten des Lyndon LaRouche (Cover Name Schiller: Lyndon LaRouche’s German Patriots (Reinbek,1986). Lorscheid/Müller have written the thus far only book in German on the LO; they want to “warn about dangerous developments” and are not satisfied with the previous official evaluation of the LO as “not raising security-related considerations”.

⁷ For details on the LO’s financial machinations, see King (fn.2), p. 295 fn.; Mira Boland, Paroled: The LaRouche Political Cult Regroups, published by the Anti-Defamation League (Washington, 1994), pp. 14-20 as well as Fromm/Kernbach (fn.1), p. 133 fn.

⁸ For example, in July 1992 the establishment of a Moscow branch of the *Schiller Institut* was announced. According to the *Neue Solidarität* (October 27, 1993), a certain “International Ecological Academy of Russia” elected LaRouche as a “corresponding member” on the basis of an evaluation of him as a “genuine genius” and potential “founder of a new direction on the natural sciences” by Professors Taras W. Maraniwskij and Bencion Fleischmann. The propaganda in Moscow continues and occasionally resonates in the media there.

to offer reasonable suggestions and professionally recognized facts.⁹ This is precisely why the LO group is an interesting case for analysis using the strict criteria of scholarship on extremism.

3.1 Basic Definitions

The “positive definition” of extremism offered by Uwe Backes in 1989 serves as the basis for selecting the analytical criteria to be used here. This should help us extend the analysis and sharpen our distinctions beyond what is possible using the purely “negative definition” of extremism stipulated by the Bundesverfassungsschutzgesetz (Act on the Protection of the German Constitution)(BVerfSchG) (opposition to fundamentals of the constitution as defined in Section 4 Paragraph 2 of the BVerfSchG.¹⁰ The “positive definition” seeks to grasp the inherent structural elements (among others, absolutist claims, dogmatism, friend/enemy stereotypes, conspiracy theories, fanaticism/activism) common to various extremist movements. As the special case examined here will show, the “positive definition” leads to a substantially more textured picture than do the “negative criteria”.¹¹

3.2 Absolutist Claims

Extremist thought structures need absolutist and exclusivist claims “like addicts need their drugs”.¹² The claim to be an exceptional elite with an intellectual and moral apparatus superior to that of others and capable of solving the world’s most urgent problems is very pronounced in the LO and forms a constant in its development. This also explains the group’s inherent inability to realize its potentials strategically in the long term because the self-appointment as savior of the world and of Western civilization sooner or later scares off even sympathetic supporters.

Whereas the LO originally felt itself to be the intellectual avant garde of the working class -- the embodiment of the “class for itself” -- it came later to see itself as essentially the sole remaining defender of the heritage of the Christian/Humanist civilization. The outside world is seen as morally degenerate and even the Vatican, to which the LO had, especially in the 1980s, felt spiritually bound, is ultimately relegated to the role of savior of mankind of only limited usefulness.¹³

⁹ Some statements by decision makers in the US administration cited by King are characteristic: on the FEF in the American debate on the SDI program see King (fn.2) (pp .66-74); on contacts in the US administration see King (pp. 121-134 and pp. 159-164). Serious attempts by some members of the LO group to develop expertise in specific subjects (for example, Middle East analysis, terrorism/extremism or agriculture) have been labeled “pragmatism” and “specialized idiocy”, and rejected and undermined by the leadership. This rejection is due to the justifiable fear that such specialized branches could move toward more independence.

¹⁰ See Uwe Backes, Politischer Extremismus in demokratischen Verfassungsstaaten. Elemente einer normativen Rahmentheorie (Political Extremism in Democratic Constitutional States. Elements of a Framework Theory), (Opladen, 1989)(esp. pp. 298-311).

¹¹ For reasons of space, this discussion is limited to the criteria of absolutist claims, friend/enemy stereotypes and conspiracy theories. The other traits such as utopianism and especially fanaticism/activism will be well enough illustrated through the other criteria.

¹² See Backes (fn.10) pp. 298-300.

¹³ Thus LaRouche in an internal paper from August 11, 1991: “In terms of morals, the generation which has come up in the past 20 years, by and large, as a generation, as a cultural force, HAS NO MORALITY. None.”

The claim to indisputable competence, often described in group theory jargon as “hubris”, extends to all areas of life and knowledge. This quality, designated the “LaRouche” method, comprises at the least morality, religion, scholarship (physics, psychology, philosophy, history, music, economics), politics and strategy and entitles LaRouche, according to his wife, to the status of “the most extraordinary and greatest thinker of this century”. There is “no other strategic thinker of the West” in sight who can guarantee peace the way LaRouche can. His scientific knowledge surpasses that of “most experts”.¹⁴ Internal group reports are even more grandiose. Zepp-LaRouche once called her husband “the greatest genius in history, even more significant than Leibniz or Cusa”.¹⁵ LaRouche not only regularly refers to himself as “the world’s leading economist”, but also lays claim to “one of the most important, if not the most important” scientific discoveries of the last centuries.¹⁶ Despite this boundless egomania, Zepp-LaRouche described her husband elsewhere as “the most noble and selfless person that I know”. This systematic saturating of Group activists with the message of the leader’s uniqueness fulfills one of the criterion of a sect – a personality cult.¹⁷

Another dominant trend in the Group’s worldview since its early history has been the naïve believe that it possessed the only viable program for solving all the world’s conflicts and problems of survival in short order through unlimited economic growth and the massive application of science and technology. Beyes-Corleis describe this accurately as “a fantastic mixture of grand schemes”.¹⁸ These visions of exclusiveness have also led in their own logic to the conclusion, insisted upon by LaRouche and his leading cohorts, that it is morally perfectly legitimate to collect money from free riders for whose continued existence the world-saving LO is working itself to the bone.¹⁹

The supposedly close ties to the Vatican during the nineteen-eighties were, despite all propagandistic and organizational efforts, essentially one-sided.

¹⁴ See here, richly: Festschrift für Lyndon LaRouche anlässlich seines 65. Geburtstages (Festschrift for Lyndon LaRouche on his 65th Birthday), (Wiesbaden, 1987). Here LaRouche’s wife puts him on the level of, among others, Friedrich Schiller and describes him as one of the few “intellectual giants” in history who have “overcome the finiteness of man”

¹⁵ Ralfs-Horeis (fn.3), p. 8.

¹⁶ For example, LaRouche in an internal communique from October 27, 1991: “Recognize that what I have done in my fundamental discovery [...] is probably one of the most important if not the most important discovery of the past centuries, my refutation of Wiener”.

¹⁷ See Hugo Stamm, Sekten. Im Bann von Sucht and Macht. Ausstiegshilfen für Betroffene und Angehörige. (Sects. Under the Influence of Addiction and Power. Exit Help for Victims and Those Concerned for Them) (Zürich,1994), pp. 125-128.

¹⁸ Beyes-Corleis (fn.3), p. 23. After concepts and programs like the “International Development Bank” and the “New World Order” in the 1970s, the grand scheme for solving mankind’s problems is currently being pursued through, among other things, agitation for a “Berlin—Vienna—Paris” triangle.

¹⁹ On this, see Boland (fn.7), especially pp.16-20 where a former “Fundraiser” pointedly describes the instructions to the leading cadres: “If you are talking to a little old lady and she says she is going to lose her house, ignore it. Get the money. [...] Most of these people are immoral anyway. This is the most moral thing they have ever done is giving you money.” Or see how leading cadres responded to demands for repayment of a loan: “Piss on him. Fuck him. That’s what he gets for lending us money”, King, p. 305; see further the on-the-record statement of William Wertz, a one time LaRouche lieutenant in charge of fundraising: “There is no such thing as loan” . King, (fn.2), p. 311.

3.3 Friend/Enemy Stereotypes

Another distinguishing characteristic of extremist thinking is the simplistic division of the world into opposing camps of absolute good and absolute evil, with the accompanying self-image of missionaries with a unique world-historic mission and a systematically exaggerated portrait of an ever-present enemy. The LO evinces all these traits in particularly crude form. In the LaRouche worldview the monolithic bloc of the Good is embodied first of all by himself, and to a lesser degree by the Pope. As LaRouche put it in an internal communiqué from March 2, 1991: “We, together with the Pope, are perhaps the last bastions of morality in this stinking world.” The bloc of Evil is comprised of British-Freemason-oligarchic circles.

Firmly embedded in this thought structure is the necessity of ruthless action (in LO jargon this is called “killer instinct”) against the ideological or political “enemy” identified by the LaRouche worldview. Concepts like “enemy of the human race” to describe an opponent belong to the Group’s basic vocabulary. Aggressive propaganda aimed at provoking and creating confrontation with “enemies” is regularly publicized; the German affiliate’s development has occasionally been accompanied by criminally prosecutable outbursts. The spectrum of confrontational tactics runs from verbal injuries to “irregular” activities near the persons or property of the purported enemy. Even in its early phase the US Group occasionally used violence.²⁰ In Europe things remained on the level of a series of skirmishes, limited to provocative and denunciatory propaganda, with Communist groups (1975/1976), militant anti-nuclear activists (1977-1979) and anti-fascist groups (from the middle of the 1980s).

The Group gained notice in Europe through a number of defamation campaigns organized by LaRouche against “enemies of mankind”. At the beginning of 1975 the German affiliate launched a campaign against Willy Brandt, depicting him on a poster in a SS uniform and in writings calling him a “CIA-bootlicker”, “Nürnberg criminal” or “perpetrator of genocide”.²¹ The Swedish prime minister Olof Palme suffered a similar fate, being portrayed on a poster as an axe murderer. An extremely aggressive campaign against Henry Kissinger reached its peak in the early 1980s. Kissinger had been a steady target of the LO since the mid 1970s. Even according to official evaluation the “Get Kissinger” campaign as well as a series of irregular methods against the controversial and influential New York lawyer Roy Cohn met the criteria of professional “dirty trick” expertise.²² This

²⁰ Already during the Group’s building phase in the US in 1973 there were violent confrontations arising from controversies between the Communist Party of the USA and LaRouche supporters. The LaRouche Group called this “Operation Mop-up”, which included attacks on Communist Party meetings using nunchucks.

²¹ During the peak of the Guillaume Affair, in spring 1974, a Group flier had still called for support of Willy Brandt; shortly thereafter came his designation of “Nürnberg criminal” and in 1990/1991 he was reinstated as a hero due to his opposition to the Gulf War. Such curious fluctuations between friend and enemy are not rare in LO thought.

²² See for details King (fn.2), pp. 145-155 (Kissinger) and pp. 252-266 (Cohn). The occasional extreme intensity of these campaigns also serves to advertise the LO’s value as an economical provider of propaganda and smear jobs. These services have benefited the Reagan campaigns and related constellations in the USA as well a number of collapsing governments and dubious regimes under international pressure. Among others, the South African apartheid regime, Marcos, Noriega and Saddam Hussein have enjoyed extensive propaganda support from the LO. More limited episodes involved the Polish Gierek government (1980), the Ceausescu regime (1983), the military government of Guatemala (1985/1986) as well as Argentine and Brazilian,

category also includes an international harassment campaign against Petra Kelly which has been ongoing since 1982. Tactics applied against Kelly have included insults (the title of one article in the US Group's newspaper was "Did you see this whore on television?"), systematic disruption of events, threats, obscenities, anonymous calls and visits near her house.²³ LaRouche repeatedly praised the German activists who coordinated this campaign and held it up as exemplary.

LaRouche and his leading cadres react with anger to any media reports they don't like. Regular functions of the LO "security staff" include gathering media-related "enemy information", creating and maintaining a database, lists and graphs of "the peculiar enemies of the Schiller Institute", and campaigns against disfavored persons. A typical recent example is the actions taken against the particularly hated Mira Boland, the American expert on extremism with the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith (ADL).²⁴ Even official investigators are occasionally the object of such "enemy education".²⁵

Lapsed LaRouche followers can be assured of being classified in the worst category of "traitors of mankind", especially if they had wide experience in or knowledge of the Group and share this information either within or outside the Group. In order to head off any doubts among the activists, LaRouche used malicious internal papers to attack a former Group leader who had enjoyed respect among the membership but had left the Group in 1980.²⁶ In 1984 LaRouche told his security staff to call the former American Group leader Gus Kalimtgis and threaten him with violence.²⁷ After an expert published an accurate report about the LO, the group distributed malicious fliers in front of the church in that person's hometown. In an article in the Group newspaper, *New Solidarity*, EEC leading cadre Anno Hellenbroich, leader of the "security staff" responsible for such special operations, attempted to defame author Aglaja Beyes-Corleis by using the Group's familiar formula of labeling her as mentally unstable.

Further elements of the Friend/Enemy stereotype are a pronounced paranoia and obsession with security. Numerous imaginary enemy camps are used within the Group to highlight its own importance. This obsession with security is congruent with the persecution

Taiwanese and Thai military governments and regimes. See, among others, King (fn.2) pp. 172-186; Boland (fn.7) pp. 8-12.

²³ Müller/Lorscheid (fn.6), pp. 93-100.

²⁴ Boland is the author of regularly appearing background reports on extremist American groups (including the LO) and is therefore in demand by investigative agencies. In the winter of 1993 a number of pamphlets were circulated in Boland's neighborhood, which is populated by many exiled Ukrainians, with a message tailored for this audience (relating to the controversial case of the suspected Nazi war criminal and exiled Ukrainian John Demjanjuk). The pamphlets said, among other things: "Did Mira Boland try to 'kill' John Demjanjuk?" and "Wanted: for the planning and directing of kidnapping, espionage, theft at the behest of drug dealers, terrorists and murderers." In Germany in the summer of 1994 LaRouche activists launched a campaign directed toward security agencies and others to smear Boland by claiming that she had links to a number of secret services and criminal organizations.

²⁵ See King (fn.2), p. 233.

²⁶ In two internal papers from June 1981 this person was labeled, among other things, as an "agent for pro-genocide political interests", a "brainwashed person", part of the "same fascist networks with ties to the Italian P2 freemason lodge", "morally degenerate" and "morally dead", "enemy of mankind", "controlled by the transatlantic porno/drug lobby network that wants to kill LaRouche", an anarchist who had become a "fascist gangster", "mentally degenerate", "insane" and "paranoid". People like this are "corpses" that should be left to rot at a place of their choosing.

²⁷ See King (fn.2), p. 231

complex typical of cults.²⁸ Since the early 1970s LaRouche has intensively indoctrinated members about assassinations plotted against him and other such threats, using this indoctrination to create the above-mentioned “security staff” for continuous identification of and combat with internal and external “enemies”.²⁹

In 1973/1974 the “security staff” carried out its first paramilitary exercises; in the USA these included assassination scenarios in case the Group should need this option to avenge an attack against LaRouche. At that time the use of code names was usual. In 1977 the “security” detail underwent another phase in its conditioning: it was suddenly announced that LaRouche was on the same “assassination list” as the banker Jürgen Ponto who had just been killed by the Rote Armee Fraktion (RAF)(Red Army Faction). This hot tip came from the American extreme right-winger (Grand Dragon of the *Ku Klux Klan*) Roy Everett Frankhouser, who was one of LaRouche’s highly-paid “security consultants” until the mid-1980s.³⁰

In 1979 some members of the LO enrolled in “anti-terrorist” courses offered by the weapons dealer, mercenary and alcoholic Mitchell WerBell III, who died in December 1983.³¹ These lucrative courses, couched in paramilitary mumbo-jumbo, brought WerBell a lot of liquid income but actually offered participants little beyond basic handgun and security detail training. In 1980 there was a multi-day refresher program in Germany with a former first-generation GSG (German border guard) trainer. At the same time a number of security firms were established in the USA and Germany and applied for weapons permits. Since then the LaRouches have surrounded themselves with armed guards from their own and external forces.³²

The egomania of the Group leader LaRouche is evident in this obsession with security, which is driven to the level of a superstition. LaRouche has repeatedly insisted that he himself is qualified to lead the commandos, even in operations in the field. The repeated “security mobilizations” have led to ridiculous episodes. LaRouche has greeted guests at his estate wearing a sidearm. In 1982 he instructed his security people to put NATO barbed wire around the property and the roofs of the estate he then had in the Rhine-Hessian town of Stackeden-Elsheim, which irritated the inhabitants of the quiet wine-producing town. At the same time LaRouche claimed to have seen a hit man of the “dirty thirteen” in Wiesbaden. The “dirty thirteen”, supposedly a group plotting assassinations, actually existed only in the reports of LaRouche’s “security consultants” and “sources”. LaRouche insisted upon the production and Germany-wide distribution of a flier with dramatic pictures showing “three assassination attempts” on Zepp-LaRouche. This bunker mentality cultivated by LaRouche evoked potentially dangerous behavior.³³ During a mobilization in 1982 LaRouche

²⁸ See Stamm (fn.17), pp. 125-128.

²⁹ On the early period in the USA, see King (fn.2), pp. 25-31.

³⁰ King (fn.2), pp.197-207, offers a detailed and accurate characterization of Frankhouser as a gifted conman. The profile of LaRouche as a tough but ready-to-pay security fetishist quickly got around among former members of US security and military forces, so that LaRouche could soon surround himself in the USA with a whole team of highly-paid “consultants”. See King (fn.2), p 195.

³¹ On WerBell see King (fn.2), pp. 188-194 and pp. 327-331.

³² At the end of the 1970s this included a number of former German Intelligence and German Federal Criminal Office officials.

³³ For the statement in a 1984 NBC report that LaRouche called for the murder of Carter and other people, see King (fn.2), pp. 231-232. At that time Carter was labeled in Group jargon as a planner of “genocide” and “nuclear blitzkrieg”.

demanded that his convoy of four cars be accompanied by at least eight armed guards. In case an enemy vehicle tried to infiltrate the convoy, the guards were to train their weapons on LaRouche's head. Any contradiction of these orders sufficed for dismissal from the security team.

Attempts to analyze threats objectively and to train soberly the security personnel were of secondary importance, since LaRouche and his deputy for security Hellenbroich were constantly stressing "mental preparedness for battle" and considered "police security thinking" to be defensive. For example, the proposal to keep firearms unloaded due to inadequate control was dismissed as undermining the security efforts. LaRouche's own stated determination to use these weapons even against police if need be played into this John Wayne mentality. In the wake of a heavily armed police raid on the LO's properties in October 1986 in Leesburg Virginia LaRouche even put these intentions into writing, whereas previously he had only spoken of them in endless nighttime meetings. In a telegram to President Reagan LaRouche threatened to view any move to arrest him as an "attempt to kill me". He would not "give up passively" but would "defend himself". The situation did not escalate thanks only to the more reasonable security people (who shortly thereafter turned their backs on this wild scene with curses).

The psychological dependence on LaRouche and his wife, and the corresponding submissiveness, of some activists in the "security staff" have led to some absurd and humiliating measures, which no one in the Group spoke out against.³⁴ Illustrative of this ardor to serve is a situation from 1990: one night a group of German troops on maneuver passed by the guarded LaRouche estate in Hunsrück and sent the LaRouche security team into "condition red". One of the activists on the night security detail said the next morning that if the troops had passed not by the door, but on the other side, he would have opened fire immediately. At the end of the 1980s the authorities in Hessen refused to renew the weapons permit of a long-time associate and security guard of LaRouche, due to lack of an established threat. Similar attempts to obtain weapons permits had previously been made in the USA, and thereafter also in the new German (former East German) states.³⁵

3.4 Conspiracy Theories

With extremist thought patterns, dogmatic one-way-streets are particularly likely to lead to deficiencies in the explanation of complex reality. Conspiracy theories and myths therefore form an indispensable support in escaping this mental dilemma. Moreover, the pressure of longstanding lack of political success demands, especially for small groups, "explanatory crutches" for their tormenting isolation.³⁶

³⁴ Some branches in a public forest (Soonwald), which bothered Zepp while she was out riding, were cut down at her instruction. In the pedestrian zone of a town in Baden-Württemberg a security guard ordered pedestrians to make way for Zepp and her two dogs (both of which dogs were unpredictable and a constant source of trouble).

³⁵ Curiously, from the early to mid-1980s the LaRouches were able to get official permission to travel in Paris, Rome, Madrid, Ankara, New Delhi, Bangkok and Brazil. On a trip to Paris in 1982 the LaRouche's were met at the border by a car from the Renseignements Generaux, which smoothed their trip and even allowed them to bring in about 10 pistols and several pump-action rifles.

³⁶ See Backes (fn.10), pp. 306-309.

The skill in creating conspiracy theories with regularly recurring anti-Semitic undertones is therefore also a further conspicuous characteristic of the LO. Embedded in the already discussed worldview of “good versus evil,” various evils of the world (terrorism, wars, AIDS, collapse of values, etc.) are controlled by a world-wide conspiratorial center. During the course of the group’s development, this center has shifted multiple times from West to East and back again: from the early to mid-1970s, it was Rockefeller and the CIA; from the end of the 1970s, it was Britain, Freemasons, Zionists and a “black international” of oligarchs; during the phase of leaning towards the Reagan Administration, it was the KGB and a Russian “Third Rome”; towards the end of the 1980s, a “condominium” of Anglo-American-Soviet plans for world rule; and from the beginning of the 1990s, accompanying a tilt towards the anti-US line, it was again the CIA and a “secret parallel government of the USA”, etc.

With this type of fluctuation in the identity of the bogeyman, it can be the case that multiple sinister institutions can, at different times, be held responsible for the same crime. The different explanations offered by the LO for the murder of the banker Jürgen Ponto by the RAF are typical: first Ponto was allegedly shot at the behest of Carter, later London, then the KGB, and then, not long ago, the allegation shifted back to the “secret shadow government” of the USA. Astoundingly, there are, again and again, institutions and authors who are taken in by relevant Larouche propaganda. A telling example in the German-speaking world is the book *Das RAF-Phantom (The RAF Phantom)* by Gerhard Wisnewski, Wolfgang Landgraeber and Ekkehard Sieker, which, though discredited by experts, is still relatively widely disseminated. The authors, with their fixation on the idea that the RAF is a synthetic formation under the control of Western centers of power and secret services, have, to a considerable degree, been taken in by treatises of the LO. They refer to the Larouche “news agency” EIR as an “interesting news service, that demonstrates an “unusually good grasp of the latest information.”³⁷

An anti-British, anti-Freemason conspiracy myth, that partially expresses itself in excessive anti-British tirades (e.g. an NBC broadcast of March 4, 1984, LaRouche on Queen Elizabeth II: “Of course she pushes drugs, that is to say in the sense of being responsible: the head of a gang, that pushes drugs; she knows that it happens, and she doesn’t do anything to stop it.”) appears as a further component of the LO ideology and turns up again and again with different embellishments.³⁸

³⁷ See Gerhard Wisnewski/Wolfgang Landgraeber/Ekkehard Sieker, *Das RAF Phantom: Wozu Politik und Wirtschaft Terroristen Brauchen* (The RAF Phantom: Why Politics and Economics need Terrorists), Munich, 1992, pp.188-190. The three authors recommend making use of the “unusually good grasp of the latest information” of the LaRouche media, and explain their use of several EIR publications in the following pages. As it became clear (perhaps too late), what they had become involved in, Wisnewski attempted to distance himself in an embarrassingly overdrawn way in the SZ-Magazin (magazine of the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*) of 27 November 1992. Suddenly, it was insinuated that LaRouche – in the camp of the SDI supporters – was implicitly involved in the attack on von Braunmühl, an SDI opponent. In their follow-up book, *Operation RAF* (Munich, 1994), the authors finally attempted to simply deny their terrible gaffe (p 15.)

³⁸ This obsession with conspiracies is regularly the subject of endless litanies in internal papers as well as in public announcements. So, for example, in an internal paper from May 23, 1991, LaRouche sees the following events and persons as belonging to the sphere of responsibility of these world-wide British control structures: the First and at least implicitly, the Second World War, as well as potentially a Third; the mental control exercised over the Anglo-American population through a “propaganda/control/training mechanism” embodied in “British liberal philosophy; this “anti-scientific cult” is disseminated by ideologues like “Alistair Crowley, H.G. Wells and Bertrand Russell through the media of Chatham House” as well as by Henry Kissinger as an

3.5 Anti-Semitic Overtones

Since the mid- to late 1970s and parallel to the previously mentioned tilt to the right as well as the initial contact with the right-wing extremist American *Liberty Lobby*, “anti-Zionist” slogans have been a continuous component of the LO hack writing. Several formulations on the Nazi annihilation of the Jews border on those found in right-extreme, revisionist agitation.³⁹ Noteworthy in this context is the article “The Zionist Holocaust Today” authored by Zepp-LaRouche on the occasion of the film “Holocaust.”⁴⁰ Similar to the recent film “Schindler’s List”, at that time “Holocaust” served the right-wing scene as a peg for propaganda campaigns and coups. In this context and time, Zepp-Larouche claimed in her tract that “Zionist-British circles” were kindling a “completely artificial and controlled faux-debate” with this film, and moreover, were themselves just at the point of “toppling the world into a holocaust, next to which the crimes of the Nazis appear to be a charity function.”⁴¹

Moreover, LO writings frequently refer to the historic “classic” of the anti-Semitic conspiracy myth, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, as a trustworthy document. The statements made in *The Protocols* more or less simply need to be refined, so that one doesn’t speak “generally” of a Jewish conspiracy, but limits this to circles such as the Jewish B’nai B’rith.⁴² The campaign waged with long-standing continuity against the Jewish “Freemason” organization B’nai B’rith and its Anti-Defamation League is, however, carried out with an insistency that can only be described as obsessive. This section of the American Jewish community has become the central object of hatred for the LO, for, among other things its uncompromising reporting and support for investigating agencies in connection with criminal proceedings against the LO.⁴³ In addition, outbursts against the state of Israel (“British

“agent of Chatham House” as well as by the Council on Foreign Relations; the politics dictated by London to British agents like Kissinger and Scowcroft controlled the Nixon and Ford Administrations.

³⁹ For citations, see Boland (fn.7), pp. 6-8. Formulations such as “Fascist disease called Zionism” were common well into the 1990s.

⁴⁰ *Neue Solidarität* from 25 January 1979.

⁴¹ Among other statements they wrote: “The Zionist-British circles, which have produced and propagated the film “Holocaust” and whose representatives in the Federal Republic have now provoked a completely artificial and controlled faux-debate around this film, are today at the point of toppling the world into a holocaust next to which the crimes of the Nazis appear to be a charity function. The Zionist-British policy deliberately risks toppling the world into a nuclear holocaust, and precisely because of this, there is not the slightest difference between the morality of the Zionists and that of the worst Nazis.” Further citations in the book by Fromm/Kernbach (fn.1), p. 131.

⁴² Compare Müller/Lorscheid, (footnote 6), pp. 115-116 as well as King, (footnote 2), pp. 38-46.

⁴³ Above all, outbursts against the ADL belong to the basic vocabulary of internal pronouncements by Larouche: Circles allied with the ADL are the powerbrokers behind the assassinations of Indira and Rajiv Gandhi; the ADL is “one of the leading pro-drug lobby organizations in the world.” Supporters of the ADL are “the lowest scum on this planet” (May 22, 1991); the authors of the murderous attack on Jürgen Ponto are “the British. Those were our enemies. Those were friends of the ADL. Bronfman’s friends” (April 3, 1991); Bronfman and Galinski are “butchers and criminals, enemies of mankind” (September 19, 1990). In 1992, the LO in the USA came out with a special pamphlet with the title “The Ugly Truth about the ADL”, where the ADL was, among other things, denigrated as: “a branch of the British intelligence and secret societies”; “closer to the racist Ku Klux Klan than to Judaism”; “closer to the Medellín cocaine cartel than to any civil rights group” or “at the center of the corruption of our most valuable institutions: the schools, the courts and elected representatives of the people.”

zombie-state”, “criminal state” that is distinguished by “Nazi-like bestiality” etc.) also belong to the regularly used speech patterns, particularly those meant for internal consumption.⁴⁴

One cannot, however, speak here of the stringent anti-Semitic worldview of those who provided the ideological impetus of the NSDAP and the neo-Nazi groups of the postwar period. The LO’s anti-Semitism is far closer to one of the numerous variants of the anti-Freemason anti-Semitic conspiracy myth.⁴⁵ The outbursts here are not directed towards “Everyjew” per se, but towards a specific group of “bad Jews” – the “Jew, who is not really a Jew”, the “Babylonian Jews”, “the Satanic version of the Talmud”⁴⁶ – on whom, however, the excommunicative spotlight of the LaRouche inquisition falls even harder. We see here, therefore, some ingredients from the ideological stew of the turn of the twentieth century and early 1920s, woven into LaRouche’s previously discussed anti-British conspiracy myth.

3.6 Contacts with extremist groups/regimes

Among other episodes,⁴⁷ the LO’s lasting contacts with the Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein, with the Sudanese Islamist regime, and the militant anti-Semitic American group “Nation of Islam” (NOI) stand out.

The first contacts between the LO and Iraq already occurred in 1975⁴⁸; these contacts were used again when similar bogeymen were need during the Gulf War. To support this propaganda campaign “Americans Against War” was created, consisting of a handful of American LaRouche activists living in Wiesbaden. A further propaganda campaign was called “Save the Children of Iraq.” The LO-members were exposed to pro-Iraqi war propaganda of the most primitive kind.⁴⁹ The writings of the group show no scruples or consideration that they are championing a violently criminal regime, whose extermination

⁴⁴ In one place, LaRouche claimed in a “campaign statement” from January 10, 1991, that Israel was heavily involved in the “international drug trade from Medellin to the far East”, even if in addition some legal diamonds and “who knows, perhaps also some used foreskins” were also exported. Israel is characterized by the adoption of “evil as such” (February 10, 1991).

⁴⁵ See Armin Pfahl-Traughber, Der antisemitisch-antifreimaurerische Verschwörungsmythos in der Weimarer Republik und dem NS-Staat (The Anti-Semitic-Anti-Freemason Conspiracy Myth in the Weimar Republic and the Nazi State), Wien 1993.

⁴⁶ For example, LaRouche in an internal paper, “On Methodology in Intelligence Work”, from September 11, 1990. This variant of “Babylonian Jews” is identical with the “Pantheon of the Mother of Satan, Ishtar and her son, Baal, Beelzebub, etc.” or the type of “oligarchs practicing extortion.”

⁴⁷ From the mid-1970s to the end of the decade, the LO maintained relationships with the American right-wing extremist “Liberty Lobby” of Willis Carto. The “Liberty Lobby” is one of the most important and best-financed organizations in the US spectrum of right-wing extremists. With the “Institute for Historical Review” (IHR) founded in 1978, this organization functions as a producer and distributor of revisionist propaganda material. Among other places, Carto and LaRouche met in Wiesbaden in 1977. See King (fn. 2), pp.38-46, Boland (fn.7), pp. 27-28. Since the beginning of the 1980s, the right-extreme publication CODE of Ekkehard Franke-Gricksch more or less regularly prints signed articles and other materials from the LO.

⁴⁸ See Beyes-Corleis (fn.3), pp.57-60.

⁴⁹ Citation from the internal “Morning Grouping”, from January 18, 1991: “Response to Iraqi hit on Israel: ‘Dancing in the streets in Cairo.’ A well-placed source in Amman, Jordan, reported today on the strategic importance of Iraq having hit Israel last night. The whole Arab world is jubilant. They are dancing in the streets of Cairo and every major city of the Arab world, expressing profound pride in Saddam Hussein.” LaRouche in an internal paper of October 13, 1990: There are two sides to the world, the “human beings” who have Iraq on their side, and the “anti-human beings, the devils, the Satanists”, who are against Iraq.

campaign at the end of the 1980s took the lives of 50,000 to 100,000 Kurdish victims.⁵⁰ Since the summer of 1991, one of the leaders of the LO, Muriel Mirak-Weißbach, as the head of Middle East affairs traveled multiple times to Iraq and, for example, met the Building- and Agriculture Ministers there in 1992. Other decision-makers in the Iraqi government also commented occasionally in the periodicals of the LO.⁵¹

Since 1992, the LO's propaganda reveals a definite siding with groups and governments which take positions close to or directly representative of Islamic extremists. This new alliance in the sense of an affinity towards fundamentalist thought structures should obviously dissolve the previously claimed spiritual affinity with the Vatican. For example, from the summer to the winter of 1992, the LO carried out an international campaign of support for the Jordanian Islamist Laith Schubailat in conjunction with a trial against him brought by the government in Amman.⁵² Since then, Schubailat has discovered "a great similarity to Islamic thinking" in the publications of LaRouche; a "brain-washing propaganda apparatus" controls opinion about "this great thinker, who genuinely loves mankind."

Since early 1993, there have been continued contacts between the Sudanese military government, which is under the influence of the National Islamic Front (NIF) and its leader Hassan al-Turabi.⁵³ Zepp-Larouche and Mirak-Weißbach took part in a "Conference on Religious Questions" from 26 to 30 April 1993. Zepp-Larouche made the opening speech. Among others, she met the then chief of the military government, Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Baschir. A glowing endorsement followed in the LaRouche newspaper: the military government was inspired by the "world-famous Muslim leader" al-Turabi – a "clever and elegant thinker" – and has introduced "a unique form of Islamic law"; however, it is "mostly portrayed as a criminal gang of religious fanatics and bloodthirsty militarists."⁵⁴ The new alliance was announced in a press conference on July 9, 1993 in Germany, during which the former Sudanese foreign minister Hashim Osman, the Sudanese ambassador in Bonn and his press attaché appeared jointly with Zepp-Larouche, who proclaimed there that the political leadership of the Sudan promoted "optimism among the population" and had impressed her more "than that which is described as the political 'Elite' in this country."⁵⁵

In August 1993, the LO newspaper disseminated an interview with the Sudanese minister for federal matters, Dr. Ali Elhag Mohamed, and reported in July 1994 on a trip by two activists of the "Schiller Institute" as the result of a project that "the Schiller Institute began with the Agriculture Ministry in Khartoum." In January 1995, it was reported that, during their visit to Sudan from the 17th to the 23rd of December 1994, the LaRouches met with "President Bashir and the distinguished Islamic scholar Dr. Hassan Abdullah al-Turabi"

⁵⁰ See also among others the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* from May 11, 1994, with an in-depth description of the evaluation of documents by the American human rights group, "Middle East Watch", who came to the conclusion that Iraq displayed a system that was reminiscent of the "Nazi henchmen in the extermination camps."

⁵¹ For example, an interview with the Iraqi trade minister, Dr. Mohammed Mehdi Salih, in *Neue Solidarität*, from June 1, 1994.

⁵² On Schubailat, see among others the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* from 25 September 1992 and the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* from November 12, 1992.

⁵³ German federal authorities believe that in the interim, Sudan has evolved into an important control center for the operations of the Iranian secret service, and that Egyptian and Tunisian Islamists are being trained in Sudanese camps alongside members of the Algerian FIS, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Hamas, Hizbollah and the Iranian Pasdaran.

⁵⁴ *Neue Solidarität*, May 12, 1993.

⁵⁵ *Neue Solidarität*, June 30, 1993.

for an “extensive exchange of views.”⁵⁶ In February 1995, there were events organized in Germany on the theme “The Truth about the Sudan”, at which Mirak-Weißberg promoted the Bashir/Turabi regime.

Since 1990, there has been a strengthening of ties between the LO and the Nation of Islam (NOI). The NOI, led by Louis Farrakhan, emerged at the end of the 1970s as the militant counterpart to the more measured trends in the black Muslim movement in the United States. The Islamic extremist NOI calls for a separate state for the African-American population of the USA and, through its continuous and aggressive anti-Semitic propaganda, has also achieved international recognition. One of the tactics utilized by the NOI, which is present in 80 American cities, is occasionally successful work in the inner cities to intervene in serious problem areas such as the failed fight against drug addiction.⁵⁷ In 1994, representatives of the NOI and the LO held joint events with themes like “The Ugly Truth about the ADL” or “The Anti-Defamation League – The New Ku Klux Klan?”⁵⁸ Farrakhan spokesperson Dr. Abdul Alim Muhammad appeared at a conference of the “Schiller Institute” in Washington in February 1995 and read a speech by Farrakhan. The statement praised LaRouche as one of the “true patriots, who show us solutions” and who are “tried under false accusations, defamed, arrested or even murdered for their ideas.”⁵⁹

3.7 *Psychic Pressure/Group Pressure*

A characteristic of the LO since its early phase is the intensive to total immersion of the inner activist circle by the leaders. The intensity of this immersion raises the question whether the LO’s open disdain for the right of a personality to its full development and through its open disdain for the inviolability of human dignity represents a crime against constitutional clauses (“human rights” in the Katalog, §4, Paragraph 2, Federal Constitutional Law).

The submersion of all areas of life of the core activists has been typical of the LO from the beginning. The membership is put under permanent pressure to act through periodic “mobilizations”, and this allows (self-) reflection only in exceptional cases. In 1973, LaRouche succeeded in putting the young leadership circle through an effective, albeit relatively primitive, psychological special training that lasted several weeks, and thereby tied them to him. Simple tactical means were frontal attacks on previous emotional and intellectual identification objects (parents, partners in relationships, social circles, studies, academic work), making use of conflicts typical for the age of the participants, as well as simple sleep-deprivation. Significantly, the egomaniac LaRouche saw himself in the role of Goethe’s Prometheus during these sessions, and claimed that he embodied the ability expressed in the core phrase, “Here I sit and form people according to my model.” The leadership group then subsequently tried to use this pressure on the lesser ranked activists.

⁵⁶ *Neue Solidarität*, January 11, 1995

⁵⁷ So-called “Dope Buster” groups composed of NOI activists have shown successes, for example through the forced eviction of drug dealers from areas of the city and by the political occupation of the vacuum left by political and bureaucratic neglect. (compare also *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* from June 1, 1994.)

⁵⁸ For a more detailed account, see Mira Boland, *Partners in Bigotry. The LaRouche Cult and the Nation of Islam*, ADL, Washington, 1994.

⁵⁹ *Neue Solidarität* from March 1, 1995.

The results of this type of indoctrination were usually a break with parents, erstwhile friends and personal inclinations, as well as quitting studies or other types of professional qualifications. At least until the beginning of the 1990s, vacations or hobbies outside the internal group activities were despised as banal or degenerate. Exceptions were made for the leadership cadre or donors belonging to the inner circle. Professional activity or specialized qualifications outside the organization were considered a particular offense, incompatible with the claim to moral absolutism. Outside friendships, unlikely due to time demands placed on Group members, were viewed mistrustfully. Through the allocation of so-called “stipends” – not a fixed payment, but as maintenance for urgent needs – control was exercised over private finances.

This type of internal pressure went so far in the 1980s that it was suggested (successfully) that some members have abortions, in consideration of their world-historical mission. At an internal conference in 1988, Zepp-Larouche openly urged members: “But please, no more children. And no second or third children.”⁶⁰ Among other effects, this pressure led to clearly perceivable compensatory behaviors such as an exaggerated passion for pets, verging on hysteria. In the 1970s through the 1980s, the leadership would break up relationships if it believed that they would stand in the way of the political development of the affected partners.⁶¹

In order to secretly retain at least minimal personal space, many members retreated into sickness; in many cases, chronic illnesses were psychosomatically conditioned or worsened. Periodic psychic crises as well as phases of retirement for activists were also not unusual. A suicide in 1980 by an intelligent and sensitive young woman was kept secret. In addition there were a series of cases of permanent psychic defects, which were at a minimum strengthened by the constant use of psychic pressure.⁶²

LaRouche can be blamed, as a 50-year old during the building phase of the organization, for consciously and cynically⁶³ misusing the sometimes extraordinary idealism of numerous young members from the ages of 17 to the early 20s. Among the membership, there were many people with above-average talents, who were in many instances robbed of the possibility of developing those talents through further qualifications and professional experience. Many now 40- and 50-year old activists eke out their lives today as street vendors or telemarketers, when they have not managed to rise into the leadership circle.

⁶⁰ Beyes-Corleis (fn.3), pp. 50-51, pp. 165-172, as well as Ralfs-Horeis (fn.3), pp. 9-12, and King (fn.2), p. 299. Public humiliations of those deemed to be “weaklings” were not unusual at conferences or group meetings. See among others Beyes-Corleis (fn.3), p. 117.

⁶¹ Beyes-Corleis (fn.3), p. 48.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 65, p. 71.

⁶³ In his “Christmas Message” of December 15, 1990, LaRouche instructed the membership in regards to their incomplete grasp of his “secret of, shall we say, my genius” as follows: And I understand, also, why people have difficulty in understanding it. It’s not, shall we say my fault, that people haven’t understood what I’ve said; but it has to do with the relationship between what goes from the neck up, and what goes from the waist down ... I challenge you, for once and for all: really see what it is that I represent.” The perfidiousness of such indoctrination is only visible when one considers that Larouche and his wife Zepp-Larouche, sometimes styled “the symbol of the American civil rights’ movement and the poor” led the life of landed gentry (at least from the mid- to late 1980s) – mostly at the expense of the membership: -- luxurious homes in Leesburg, Virginia and in Germany (including the Schloß Soonruhe in Mengershied/Hunsrück from 1987 to 1990); an armored Mercedes-Benz 500 SEL limousine; and internal estimates for payouts to a self-styled security consultant (there were others also paid) from Southern Virginia came out to around US\$1,000,000.

4.Evaluation

Unlike more consistently left- or right-oriented extremist groups, the LO has had no firm or lasting political or ideological direction, the only constants being its extreme missionary consciousness and sense of exclusiveness (as the only embodiment of the true Christian/Humanist tradition). These beliefs are bizarre and incoherent. The Group acts like a chameleon in its dealings with perceived enemies and with supposed or real allies. Earlier strongly-defended positions are unceremoniously dropped and the new positions adopted may completely contradict the former ones. Characterizing the LO as either “leftist” or “rightist” would therefore be inadequate.

The LO is effective at taking up topics and fields for agitation based on its keen ability to sniff out insufficiently covered topics or crisis situations, political mistakes or negligence or other problems of insecure and vulnerable potential clients. This approach can forge ever new circles of interests, even if only temporarily. The LO is not fussy in its choice of methods. The fantasizing about “enemies” is pronounced. The breadth of its contacts and propaganda allows the LO to act as a provider of propaganda services (often at no cost), which can, in certain circumstances, produce concrete results. Despite these activities, repeated speculations about the LO’s ties to intelligence agencies have never been seriously substantiated. To what extent the LO has managed to establish real ties, beyond its usual propaganda services, with radical Islamic groups remains to be seen.

Classical features of extremist doctrine like absolutist claims, friend/enemy stereotypes and conspiracy theories are more pronounced in the LO than in other groups on the extreme political spectrum. This is more a reflection of a group dynamic strongly conditioned by the leaders with their pathological traits than it is a stable or strategic direction. The extent to which the individual members are subsumed in the Group only has parallels in cults. Despite these qualitative traits, the Group’s small membership and almost imperceptible influence should limit the damage it can do in the future, at least in Germany, only to its existing members, a few potential recruits and some financial donors.

The LO can therefore be seen as a borderline case. It incorporates characteristics of both extremist groups and sects that are rarely combined in such a concentrated way. The LO is a unique case in the landscape of political extremism and cults.