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Theorist of the weird in a Democrat's guise

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Lyndon Hermyle LaRouche Jr. has said the Nazi Holocaust was nothing more than a Zionist hoax since it was the Jews who brought Adolf Hitler to power.

He has alleged that Queen Elizabeth II runs a worldwide drug-smuggling operation. He says that his followers beat up and hospitalized members of Communist Party U.S.A. when it rejected his offer to merge the party with one of his organizations.

In his autobiography, Mr. LaRouche says: "My principal accomplishment is that of being, by a large margin of advantage, the leading economist of the 20th century."

Mr. LaRouche, to the chagrin of Democratic Party regulars, is on a roll. Two of his followers won nomi-

nation for lieutenant governor and secretary of state, leaving regular Illinois Democrats scrambling to find a way to recast their slate in the coming general election.

Nationwide, 149 LaRouche candidates are running for the House of Representatives, 14 for the Senate, six for governor and 618 for other offices.

The Illinois election, besides drawing attention to the two state candidates, has cast a spotlight on Mr. LaRouche and how, through the last quarter century, he has been regarded as a political chameleon.

Mr. LaRouche's past, says Warren Hamerman, the chairman of Mr. LaRouche's latest political cult, the National Democratic Policy Committee, is something Mr. LaRouche is proud of.

"The left says he's right, the right

says he's left," said Mr. Hamerman. "But Lyndon LaRouche is a remarkably consistent individual on policies."

An economist and prolific author, Mr. LaRouche, now 63, has had a unique political career marked by ties to radical groups on both the extreme right and left. His followers, to the dismay of the Democratic Party, are now trying to find credibility as Democratic primary candidates.

The LaRouche movement, while regarded as something less than an organized political party, is believed to be comprised of several thousand followers who regularly seek to find their way onto electoral ballots.

In the March 19 Illinois primary, LaRouche followers Mark J. Fairchild, 28, and Janice Hart, 31, won races for lieutenant governor and secretary of state, respectively, defeating the hand-picked favorites of Democratic gubernatorial nominee Adlai E. Stevenson III.

Mr. Stevenson said "these candidates are not Democrats . . . we have to purge ourselves of them. We have to get them off the ticket."

But he couldn't. Mr. Stevenson announced yesterday that he was getting off their ticket, and will run as an independent.

Mrs. Hart, who compared herself to a hell-raising Joan of Arc, promised to "put every drug pusher behind bars" and, to do that, she said she would "roll those tanks down State Street," the main drug haven in Chicago.

Her colleague, Mr. Fairchild, calls for universal testing for AIDS and quarantines for carriers of the deadly virus.

Those positions represent only the tip of the LaRouche message to America — a view of the political scene that critics say is warped by attempts to harass opponents and create a climate of fear.

"He's on the fringe of American politics where cults merge with paranoia and doctrine can be best understood in terms of pathology," according to Mid-Atlantic Research Associates Inc. (MARA), a private intelligence-gathering service.

MARA said that Mr. LaRouche has tried to gain a wider audience for "his bizarre theories and fanaticism" by running for president, raising and spending millions of dollars in the process.

Just as he sabotaged the electoral process in the Democratic primary in Illinois, so Mr. LaRouche has sabotaged legitimate debate. He has become adept at mixing fact and malicious fantasy so skillfully that he sometimes succeeds with attacks on legitimate conservatives. He constantly targets these conservatives, typically accusing them of being secretly employed by the KGB, so that casual or unsophisticated readers or

listeners cannot distinguish between the real and the wrong.

"LaRouche represents the kook branch of American politics," said Terry Michael, spokesman for the Democratic National Committee. He said Mr. LaRouche has been "falsely portraying himself as affiliated with the national Democratic Party."

Mr. Hamerman asks Democrats to welcome LaRouche candidates into their fold to "focus on the issues that dominate the world of reality for the voters and to initiate a discussion on these issues."

Instead, Democratic National

Committee Chairman Paul G. Kirk has warned state party officials to screen candidates for LaRouche ties, because Mr. LaRouche's National Democratic Policy Committee is in no way affiliated with the DNC.

"The Illinois results indicate we must take additional steps to educate voters about extremist candidates whose views, once known, would be rejected by legitimate Democrats," Mr. Kirk said.

"The best way to explode their chances for success is to let them speak for themselves," said Ann Lewis, national director for Americans for Democratic Action, which this week is sending its members a list of quotes from Mr. LaRouche showing his "irrational" philosophy.

The LaRouche message charges that former Vice President Walter Mondale was a KGB mole and former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger is an agent of Soviet influence. LaRouche followers have gone so far as to kill the household pets of a reporter who wrote critically about the movement.

Still, Mr. Hamerman insists, "We have to restore open debate on the issues. Not slander, not innuendo, not personality, but what are the issues that are facing the nation and where do people stand?"

MARA reported that Mr. LaRouche's political movement uses several constant tactics to achieve his ends: "character assassination . . . when LaRouche feels there is some advantage to him by discrediting them; multiple fronts . . . to mute the evidence of LaRouche control; and penetration of target groups either to gather information or to attempt to disrupt the group."

"The LaRouche political saga has been marked by repeated attempts

to penetrate other totalitarian groups of the 'international socialist' and 'national socialist' varieties in

order to manipulate elements of the Democratic and Republican parties," MARA says.

Mr. LaRouche's history of vicious rhetoric, violence and his claim to be a conservative led three mainstream conservative leaders Tuesday to warn that the LaRouche network poses dangers for Republicans, as well as Democrats.

Paul Weyrich, president of the Free Congress Research and Education Foundation, denounced as an "outrage" Mr. LaRouche's assertion that he is "connected with the right" and said "they [the LaRouche movement] are anti-American."

Dubbing Mr. LaRouche the "Bhagwan of American politics," Mr. Weyrich said of Mr. LaRouche and his followers, "they have no place in American politics."

"They never were, are not and never will be connected with anything we do or stand for," Mr. Weyrich said. "I don't want them to be allowed to tell that lie to a national audience."

Milton Copulos, a senior policy analyst for the conservative Heritage Foundation, said Mr. LaRouche has, in the past, been associated with the Ku Klux Klan, makes anti-Semitic statements and his followers have made physical attacks against Communist Party U.S.A.

"We're not talking about your garden variety fruitcake," Mr. Copulos said. "We're talking about somebody who's actually engaged in violence in the past."

Retired Army Lt. General Daniel Graham, director of High Frontier Inc., an organization backing President Reagan's Strategic Defense

Initiative, also disassociated his movement from Mr. LaRouche.

Two years ago Gen. Graham rejected Mr. LaRouche's attempts to join forces in support of the SDI plan. Shortly thereafter a LaRouche publication, Executive Intelligence Review, carried a front-page picture of Mr. Graham with the headline "The psycho-sexual impotence of General Danny Graham."

"That's a rather strange description of a man with seven children, isn't it?" Gen. Graham said. "He said I was shackled up with a KGB agent — my wife was quite surprised."

Critics, such as Gen. Graham, Mr. Weyrich and Mr. Copoulos say Mr. LaRouche's stand on issues like SDI are examples of how the LaRouche positions are designed solely to attract conservatives to their fold.

"This man is not for SDI," Gen. Graham said. "He insists on the most difficult way, politically and technically, to achieve it and ridicules anyone who doesn't agree with him. They [the LaRouche people] take an issue like SDI and do their best to destroy it by behaving like idiots."

Whatever his politics, or motivations, Mr. LaRouche has remained a shadowy figure, sequestered behind armed guards — even while at home at a sprawling estate in Northern Virginia's horse country.

The literature he has produced outlines wide-ranging conspiracy theories which finger the Rockefellers, Israel, London bankers and mainstream U.S. political figures as being involved with an elaborate attempt to dominate the world through economic destruction.

As a propagandist, an illusionist of words, Mr. LaRouche is a master.

The son of a shoe industry consultant in Lynn, Mass., Mr. LaRouche's rise to dubious prominence came as Lyn Marcus — a play on words that some ascribe to his veneration of Lenin and Marx.

Politically, Mr. LaRouche was unfocused. He moved from the philosophy of Immanuel Kant to the communist teachings of Marx. He has said he then became a socialist after watching leftist demonstrations against British rule.

After leaving the Socialist Workers Party in 1957, Mr. LaRouche billed himself as a "professional economist and Marxist" and tried to start his own cult movement. In 1966 he taught at the Free University of New York — which was organized by a splinter faction of the Communist Party U.S.A.

Breaking out of his self-contained political shell, Mr. LaRouche became an activist at the age of 45. He authored "The Power of Reason," an autobiography, and wrote "The Secrets Known Only to the Inner Elite" and "What Every Conservative Should Know About Communists."

Mr. LaRouche became the leader of the radical Students for a Democratic Society's Labor Committee, but in 1969, following a dispute over support of the New York City teachers' strike, the SDS forbade him to use its name.

So Mr. LaRouche took another stab at creating his own movement, dubbing itself the National Caucus of Labor Committees and the International Caucus of Labor Committees. Claiming chapters around the United States and in Europe, the group concentrated on recruiting new members, distributing a news-

paper called "Solidarity" and purging members who questioned its leaders' interpretations of Marxist theories.

The New York Times reported that in the early 1970s Mr. LaRouche advocated self-defense training for members and that dissidents of the group were kidnapped and "deprogrammed" by LaRouche loyalists.

Mr. LaRouche's organization has grown despite his vacillating from alliances with the Socialist Workers Party and the U.S. Communist Party to his current, self-proclaimed label as a "conservative Democrat" who claims he wants to guide his followers along the path of Franklin D. Roosevelt.

The sources of funding for his political network are obscure, cloaked in myriad political groups, publications and business enterprises. The most active political arm is the National Democratic Policy Committee, a name that falsely associates it in the public mind with the Democratic National Committee, set up by Mr. LaRouche in August 1980.

It is Mr. LaRouche's NDPC that is fielding candidates across the nation, but some experts doubt that the LaRouche philosophy was instrumental in bringing success in Illinois.

Pollster J. Michael McKeon, who detected a "big core vote" for LaRouche candidates, said "most people didn't know what the LaRouche party stood for but they were fed up with both the other parties. Both parties were missing most of the emotional issues... not keying into the working-class people and getting the common-man touch."

Mr. McKeon said that the LaRouche candidates "hit the airwaves with high intensity emotional issues that they pick up from talking with people on the streets."

"They've been out there for the last three years, handing out literature on the streets and in front of K mart and two blocks from my house in Joliet," he said. "They're not talking radical Third World stuff — they're talking hot emotional issues like crime, drugs and unemployment."

The ability of Mr. LaRouche's network to sway the public with superficial approaches to middle-class issues was proven to Mr. Weyrich when his wife and son came home saying they had donated money to solicitors for an anti-drug group and a group that supports "star wars," Mr. Weyrich said.

"I saw their literature and I went through the ceiling when I realized it was from LaRouche," Mr. Weyrich said, adding his wife had given about \$10 to a person who approached her at a supermarket in Annandale asking her to help stop drug abuse in the neighborhood.

His son, a high-school student who favors President Reagan's SDI policy, had given about \$2 to another LaRouche worker.

"People are drawn in because of the message they hear," Mr. Weyrich said. "They [LaRouche people] cloak

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themselves in conservatism, but unless you look beneath the surface you're liable to be taken in by this sort of lying deceit."

Even well-informed politicians have fallen prey to Mr. LaRouche's methods, Mr. Weyrich said, remembering a call years ago from then-Sen. Carl Curtis, Nebraska Republican, who was excited after reading a LaRouche flyer.

"He thought there was a resurgence of conservatism in the Democratic Party and I said 'You stay as far away from them as you can get,'" Mr. Weyrich said.