

The Newest Left: Fighting the CIA, Saving the World

By Paul W. Valentine

Valentine is a writer on The Washington Post's metropolitan staff.

NEW YORK—Pale, intense, humorless, disciplined, the men and women work night and day in the cramped offices eight floors above the Manhattan streets.

Phones ring constantly. Staff workers take the calls, confer, snap brief orders to each other, tap memos on one of several typewriters, rummage through bulging file cabinets backed against the peeling walls and opaque painted windows.

The unmarked door to the offices is perpetually bolted. No stranger enters until security officers inside inspect him carefully through a peephole. Then there is a physical search.

This is the headquarters and nerve center of the National Caucus of Labor Committees (NCLC), a small, increasingly militant Marxist organization.

One of its obsessions is the Central Intelligence Agency. In emotionally supercharged tones, NCLC disciples proclaim they are gripped in a nightmarish web of CIA-directed conspiracy, brainwashing and assassination attempts designed to obliterate NCLC and its leader, Lyn Marcus.

The claims are shrouded in the demonic shadow world of psychological "programming," hypnotism, electroshock, drugs, sado-masochistic torture and sexual degradation forced on key NCLC members by CIA operatives and other sinister forces—not only to effect the assassination of NCLC leadership but also help trigger a fascist takeover of America.

Fervid NCLC followers see their organization—a spin-off of the now moribund Students for a Democratic

child-parent relationship to an adult-to-adult relationship."

The CIA Plot Theory

DIRECTOR, a small, wiry man with bright, darting eyes, who lives in Silver Spring, says that NCLC members are not congenitally conspiracy-minded, and that many like himself at first doubted the CIA "master plot" ballyhooed by NCLC.

"I received it with some skepticism at first," he says. "I knew the country was not run by bourgeois democracy, but I was not exactly sure who was running it. . . . NCLC made it clear to me who it is and how these real powers have had to mount a worldwide psychological operation to implement what they want."

NCLC leaders acknowledge that they have little direct concrete evidence of the "master plot" but through a network of "sources" and 24-hour-a-day monitoring of political, economic, trade union and other developments throughout the world, they say they are able to construct their conclusions on "inferential reasoning."

Principal architect of the CIA plot theory is Lyn Marcus, the lean and garrulous national chairman of NCLC who leads his organization with an authoritarian hand from the eighth floor headquarters at 231 W. 29th St. in Manhattan's garment district.

During a five-hour nonstop interview, he described in minute detail what he said was the abduction last fall of a 26-year-old British member of his organization, Christopher White



NCLC members

In addition to its self-proclaimed struggle with the government, NCLC is locked in an ongoing feud with competing socialist organizations, exchanging vitriolic charges and denials of violence and hooliganism.

The Communist Party USA accused NCLC last summer of sending in trained "goon squads" to disrupt meetings and beat members with Japanese-style "numchuk" cudgels. NCLC denies the charges, contending its publicly avowed "Operation Mop-Up" to "destroy" the Communist Party and other socialist organizations is not based on violent tactics. It says its members have been forced to defend themselves when others initiated violence against them in verbal confrontations.

NCLC acknowledges existence of its elite "defense squad" of 30 to 40 members trained in the "martial arts," including karate, but emphasizes their purpose is solely defensive.

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Fervid NCLC followers see their organization—a spin-off of the now moribund Students for a Democratic Society (SDS)—as a pivotal force in bringing worldwide socialist revolution, and thus as a prime target of CIA “counter-insurgency.”

“We must work all the time,” says NCLC Washington member Bruce Director with apocalyptic urgency, “. . . because if we don’t succeed, the end of the world as we know it is in sight.”

Like Early Christians

ONE OF THE MOST active radical groups in the doldrum-like aftermath of the Vietnam war, NCLC pursues its various missions with something akin to messianic hysteria, deluging the news media with crisis-pitch press releases, leafleting factories and plants, predicting chaos, class war, and revolution in four to five years and accusing the government of fomenting inflation, unemployment, strikes, urban gang warfare and other disruptive acts to justify a fascist crackdown.

“CIA Plans Assassinations of Revolutionary Youth,” screams one press release headline. “CIA Brainwash Victim Recovering,” says another.

Though small in numbers (New York police estimate nationwide membership at 700 to 1,000), NCLC has attracted into its bizarre world not only sons and daughters of old-line radical families of the 1930s but also children of politically conventional and even prominent families, including the sons of a Ford Foundation vice president, the daughter of the president of Sarah Lawrence College and the son of a high-ranking State Department official.

NCLC is “like an early Christian sect,” says W. McNeil Lowry, the Ford Foundation vice president whose son, Graham, is a Boston NCLC member. “They think they’re the only ones who can save the world.”

“I stumbled into an NCLC study group at the University of Michigan,” says New York NCLC member Susan Wagner, 24. “I was attracted to it because it was the only serious group that seemed to know what it was doing and how to do it.”

While other leftist organizations issued learned papers and spouted rhetoric, she says, NCLC organized support for a sanitation strike in Detroit. “It was direct action on a real issue—getting a living wage for the workers.”

Miss Wagner says she grew up in a conventional Midwestern family — “basically apolitical, but humanist.” Her father is an executive for a “Detroit auto firm,” she says, and her mother is a housewife and part-time

who leads his organization with an authoritarian hand from the eighth floor headquarters at 231 W. 29th St. in Manhattan’s garment district.

During a five-hour nonstop interview, he described in minute detail what he said was the abduction last fall of a 26-year-old British member of his organization, Christopher White, by CIA operatives who forced him to undergo a series of harrowing brainwashing procedures in England over the course of 50 days.

White was subjected, Marcus claims, to heavy drugs, electro-shock and actual or threatened homosexual acts, animal sodomy and the eating of his own excrement. Thus reduced to a zombie-like servant of his captors, Marcus says, White was psychologically “programmed” to fly to New York Dec. 30 and trigger the assassination of Marcus the next day by calling in a seven-man Cuban hit squad.

The assassination was narrowly averted, Marcus continues, when on the night of Dec. 30, after seeing the dazed White close at hand, “I realized he was brainwashed.” NCLC quickly threw up a specially trained 24-member “defense squad” cordon around Marcus’ apartment in Manhattan, sequestered the stricken White and began an elaborate tape-recorded “de-programming” procedure, Marcus says.

That procedure is continuing on a periodic basis, says Marcus, with the layers of CIA-imposed programming being pulled back one by one through gentle psychotherapeutic prodding.

White, a quiet, soft-spoken Englishman, says he believes he was brainwashed. But when pressed for details he says his true memory, at this partially de-programmed stage, is still “scrambled” by an intricate set of false memories implanted during the original brainwashing.

The CIA refuses to comment on the NCLC claims. Specialists in psychological warfare, hypnosis and related fields say such brainwashing is theoretically possible but unlikely.

“It all sounds like fiction to me,” says Harry Arons, founder of the American Association to Advance Ethical Hypnosis and a leading researcher in a classified U.S. Air Force study of Russian and Communist Chinese brainwashing techniques used in the Korean war. “It’s Manchurian Candidate stuff.”



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The abolition or absorption of all other leftist organizations is an essential first step to achieving revolution in America, according to NCLC doctrine. Members see NCLC as grandly destined for this task.

Since the 1930s, “I was resolved that no revolutionary movement was going to be brought into being in the U.S.A. unless I brought it into being,” says NCLC chieftain Marcus. For many years a Trotskyite activist in the Socialist Workers Party, Marcus formed NCLC in the late 1960s.

Dressed in a dark, double-breasted suit and natty bow tie, Marcus stands in stark contrast to the mostly youthful staff workers scurrying around him in blue jeans, boots and shaggy sweaters.

The headquarters is manned 24 hours a day by a 60-member staff. They function in a tightly structured, almost puritanical atmosphere, rejecting the free-wheeling self-indulgence of much of the radical counterculture. Clothing and hair styles are subdued. Workers rarely utter obscenities. The smoking of marijuana is specifically prohibited. An authoritarian air hangs in the offices.

“Pot and rock music are destructive to creative abilities—they’re an escape thing,” says Susan Wagner. “The counterculture motto ‘do your own thing’ is absolutely bestial . . . a hideous withdrawal from the whole human race.”

Proletarian Solidarity

NCLC MEMBERS perceive almost all major political and economic developments in the capitalist world (and the reporting of them in the press) as manipulated by the unseen hand of the CIA and its allies.

To educate the masses against this cabal, closely organized cadres of NCLC workers are under constant pressure to distribute leaflets and mobilize political action at factories and urban slum work sites. They often show up at industrial strikes to talk with disgruntled workers. During a brief work stoppage by printers at The Washington Post last November, NCLC staffers handed out leaflets at entrances to the Post building, urging employees to fight against “slave labor” conditions of capitalist industry.

NCLC also inveighs against local school decentralization, ghetto community control projects and other programs which it sees as factionalizing working class populations along neighborhood and racial lines and thus undermining proletarian solidarity. Imamu Baraka, black activist and playwright in Newark, N.J., is a special NCLC target and has been branded by NCLC as a CIA agent. Baraka denies the charge.

In organizational terms, NCLC

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Miss Wagner says she grew up in a conventional Midwestern family -- "basically apolitical, but humanist." Her father is an executive for a "Detroit auto firm," she says, and her mother is a housewife and part-time secretary. Like many NCLC members, she is reluctant to give identifying particulars about family members.

Speaking in clipped, unemotional tones, Miss Wagner says she has one brother, "a very traditional engineer . . . but at least he's useful. I told him we can use him after the revolution."

This utilitarian view of the family pervades much of NCLC thinking.

"Part of our work is organizing our parents," says 20-year-old Bruce Director.

"It's just like organizing workers at a plant," says Miss Wagner. ". . . It requires a fundamental change in the relationship with our families—from a

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NCLC Photo

Chairman Lyn Marcus: "Either we win or there is no humanity."

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In organizational terms, NCLC stands as a central coordinating unit for three other groups:

- Revolutionary Youth Movement (RYM), a teen-age-oriented organization used for political organizing in urban ghettos.
- National Unemployed and Welfare Rights Organization (NU-WRO), formed in early 1973 in direct competition with the older and broader-based National Welfare Rights Organization (NWRO).
- U.S. Labor Party, electoral arm of NU-WRO. The party has run candidates for local office in cities throughout the nation, gathering few votes. Tony Chalkin, an NCLC member who lost in his recent bid for mayor of



NCLC members demonstrating in Newark last summer.

But he challenges the claim of some detractors that NCLC is violence-prone. "The members I've seen . . . are loving, smart, humane people," he says. "They've been surveilled and harassed by police . . . and have been in fights where I'm sure they had to defend themselves from others. But I have no evidence that they initiated any violence."

Recently, six NCLC members were arrested here and charged with unlawful imprisonment of fellow member Alice Weitzman, 22. She claims they held her in her Washington Heights apartment against her will, according to police. NCLC says she was a suspected brainwash victim who was voluntarily sequestered for her own protection and now wants to drop the charges.

Daniel Sneider, son of Richard L. Sneider, deputy assistant secretary of state for East Asian-Pacific affairs, was among those arrested in the case. His parents decline to discuss the matter.

"The Human Race Is at Stake"

LYN MARCUS (a pseudonym he has used since the late 1940s, his real name being Lyndon Hermyle LaRouche Jr.), acknowledges he has no formal training in psychology or related fields for dealing with the issue of brainwashing. He says he is largely self-educated in political economics and "epistemology, the study of the actual nature and phenomenology of the mind."

Marcus was born in New Hampshire of a Quaker family. He never completed formal education, he says, becoming "bored" with studies in his first year at Northeastern University in Boston. He has worked periodically in marketing research and computer programming since then.

An indefatigable writer and talker, Marcus peppers his conversation with computer jargon, arcane psychological references and foreign phrases.

Customarily aloof and academic, he occasionally blurts "swine" or "pig" at the mention of purported NCLC enemies.

Once, during a Jan. 3 speech in which he described details of the alleged CIA brainwashing to a group in New York, he reportedly shouted:

"Any of you who say this is a hoax—you're cruds! You're subhuman! You're not serious. The human race is at stake. Either we win or there is no humanity. That's the way she's cut."

New York City, is now running for governor of New York.

Marcus estimates NCLC membership strength at 1,000 and the other organizations at 1,000 to 2,000 combined. There are some 23 NCLC chapters scattered among major American cities and several international affiliates in Canada and Europe.

As the central controlling agency for its far-flung operations, NCLC is a "cadre organization requiring intellectual discipline" among its members, Marcus says.

Members are required to undergo periodic 8-hour "leadership sessions" conducted by Marcus to learn the rigors of political organizing. Few members are salaried, and most must pay \$24 a month dues to NCLC, a remarkably high fee. Marcus says he receives a \$50-a-week stipend.

In addition to its other duties, NCLC puts out a weekly paper, *New Solidarity*, with a circulation of 40,000 to 42,000. Marcus estimates the monthly headquarters budget at \$30,

000, with most of it coming from membership dues, newspaper sales and limited private contributions.

Family Strains

THE ACTIVITIES of NCLC have generated family strains between some parents and their children who have joined NCLC.

"I have violent disagreements with my daughter about this whole thing," says Sarah Lawrence College president Charles deCarlo, whose 24-year-old daughter, Tessa, is an NCLC member. "I think their talk of CIA brainwashing is bizarre and out of reason."

McNeil Lowry of the Ford Foundation is reluctant to discuss family strains but describes his son, Graham, as having a "very inquiring, combative, skeptical mind," not easily captivated by any person or organization.

A former newsman, Lowry says he finds NCLC's brainwashing claims neither "believable . . . provable . . . or usable" in journalistic terms.

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