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CLARA
FRASER

SHE WROTE

INTRODUCTION BY JOANNA RUSS

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*To the wonderful, communal world of
comrades and the intense sphere of co-workers
who taught me about life in this
paradoxical country and gave me
firm encouragement when I most needed it
in my jousting with the bad guys.*

*And to the historical pantheon of free-thinkers,
doers, and geniuses who impacted my mind
from my earliest years and
whose dynamic hold never let loose of me—
Clara Zetkin, Rosa Luxemburg,
Meridel LeSueur, Sojourner Truth,
Karl Marx, Frederick Engels,
Lenin, James P. Cannon
and, above all, Leon Trotsky.*

*Great feminists all of them, whose profound ideas are
always there to guide me out of thickets and
illuminate the road ahead.*

*From them I learned that the act of fighting injustice
is full of hope and joy when it is viewed,
and properly so, as a slice of an innate
historical tradition, an ancient reaching out
for universal human fulfillment.*

political organizing she excels at go uncreated. What has to lie fallow is her mind and her talent.

In Iran she was arrested and subjected to the terror of armed men representing the bourgeois state. "Powerless individuals shouldn't be treated like that," she says. "It just isn't fair." And neither is it fair for a Kate Millett to be underpaid and politically prevented from reaching the marketplace for her wares.

She is a pacifist; I am not. (We argued heatedly about this.) She underplays her socialism; I do not. But she is one of the bravest and most principled figures to emerge from the huge wave of radical feminism, and if the women's movement doesn't bestir itself to help shield its few real leaders from the capitalist double-cross against women's earnings, that movement will behead itself.

It was four in the morning when I deposited Millett back at the hotel, and we were still wide awake. A hard look at the economics of being female will do that to you every time.

LaRouche: Sex Maniac & Demagogue

1986

Something salient is missing from the reams of media exposés about Lyndon LaRouche, the ultra-reactionary demonologist, millionaire entrepreneur, and terrorizer of radicals, Jews, and now Democrats.

The pundits are intrigued and puzzled by his amalgam of right and left politics, a tangled web of KKK, Freudian, encounter therapy, Populist, Ayn Rand-like, and Marxist notions. They needn't be.

His is the prototypical face of fascism, which is classically a hodgepodge of pseudo-theories crafted for mass appeal and calculated to bring about the glacial-age law'n'order coveted by imperialists and impoverished super-patriots.

As a middleclass movement designed to make the world safe for giant capital, fascism has no theories of its own. It is by nature an intellectual pillager, derivative and vulgarized, a patchwork of illusion and reality, of myth and madness, of truth and absurdity.

LaRouche is not Mussolini or Hitler or Franco—but he is all of them, in American garb and speaking the jargon of the '80s. Beneath the jargon, the commie- and Black- and Jew-baiting essence is clearly heard.

What caused his turnabout from Marxism? Mainstream analysts are ever fascinated by this phenomenon, and smug in their assumption that his was a logical jump from leftwing to

rightwing "extremism." But this kind of wild jump isn't ever logical and it isn't typical. However, it happens.

LaRouche is not the first former Marxist to turn inside out. Mussolini started as a revolutionary socialist. Thousands of ex-Stalinists, of course, have become avid apostles of conservatism and witch hunts. (Whittaker Chambers comes quickly to mind.) What is interesting about LaRouche's metamorphosis is that he is a product of Trotskyism, not Stalinism, and I can think of no similar apostasy of such melodramatic proportions, although Professor James Burnham, who became William F. Buckley's right-hand man on the *National Review*, came damn close.

I know what hit Lyndon LaRouche. I was in the Socialist Workers Party all through his 17 years of membership, from 1949 to the mid-60s. What knocked him off his underpinnings was the good old Woman Question. Feminism undid him, and Radical Women played a role in the bizarre scenario.

He called himself Lynn Marcus back then. He never seemed to belong to any SWP branch; he was a loner. He was never active, never involved in any mass movement or internal organizational work. What he did was write—and write and write and write, until we all wished he'd be stricken by digital rheumatism.

Marcus wrote thick, dull, endless Internal Bulletins, which were dutifully distributed to the membership by the obliging National Office. (It was probably the memory of his super-prolific effusions that eventually helped destroy the vaunted internal democracy of the early SWP!) For years and years his eternal Bulletins appeared, on one of two subjects: the United Front or Economics.

I never understood any of them. Neither did anybody else. Nobody ever responded to any of them, either, but he couldn't care less. He would appear at national conventions every two years, but he wouldn't take the floor. I know he was

there because I never recognized him and would ask who he was; he had that kind of non-presence, non-personality.

They said he was an economist, but nobody seemed to know where he worked or what he did. Sometimes I would feel sorry for him and go up and say hello; he never replied except in a mumble or a curt rejoinder. Once I mustered the audacity to ask him to explain his latest document. My polite interest evoked nothing but a look of utter contempt.

I gave up on Lynn Marcus. Just one of those fringie eccentrics.

I left the SWP in 1965. He left soon afterwards with Jim Robertson and the Spartacist League, but I heard nothing about him. Then in 1968, Students for a Democratic Society spawned a mammoth strike at Columbia University, and who should turn out to be one of its spokesmen but Lynn Marcus—now Lyndon LaRouche—and his group, the SDS Labor Committee. I couldn't believe it—Lynn Marcus, a popular leader?

Soon there were LaRouche people, known as the National Caucus of Labor Committees, all over the country, including the University of Washington. My older son Marc was a fervent SDSer, editor of its paper, and an editor of the *University of Washington Daily*, and he was buddies with some local NCLCers. I was in Radical Women and the FSP, and the NCLC worked harmoniously with us, because we, alone on the Left, connected our labor background and workingclass orientation with what was fresh and valid in New Left and campus politics.

And NCLC, virtually alone among New Lefties, respected trade unionists. They also enjoyed observing traditional socialist holidays like May Day and the anniversary of the Russian Revolution, so we jointly sponsored commemorations, as well as forums, fund-raisers, and mass actions against the war and racism.

And NCLC didn't oppose our feminism. They didn't support it either—they were neutrals.

By 1970 the women's movement was in full sail. And the male Left, new and old, didn't like it. We were demanding that they change their ways and learn to share power with the second sex. They didn't want to change.

We were denounced: we were divisive, subjective, petty-bourgeois, off-balance, off-side, unable to differentiate between "primary" and "secondary" questions, etcetera and ad infinitum. The campus male charismatics were particularly affronted; they secretly agreed with Stokely Carmichael that the "proper position for women in the struggle is prone" (except for secretarial and organizing duties).

Some of the men got pretty hot under the collar as our movement burgeoned and theirs trembled or decomposed.

LaRouche got hot all over. Feminist radicals were competing with *him!* LaRouche developed such an acute case of political sunburn that all his Marxist skin peeled off and his quivering Napoleonic nerves were painfully exposed to an incredulous world. LaRouche went ape.

Feminism is shit, roared *New Solidarity* one day. Mothers are fuckers, the enemy, witches. Women are the Achilles heels of revolutionaries, the cause of IMPOTENCE. Women turn men into deviants, queers, and schlemiels.

And then in an explosion of Nietzscheanism that made Wagner look like a matriarchist, Lynn uncorked his *pièce de résistance*: the Leader must be Superman, Siegfried incarnate, and the Superman must be served by good girlies who appreciate the honor and know how to bow and scrape. Supermán is the hope and salvation of the revolution; woman must cast off her intrinsic sinfulness and restore VIRILITY to her Master. And on and on like that.

A young Radical Women leader ran into the office waving this issue of *New Solidarity* and crying. She had never read

anything like it, and she was frightened. "What are we going to do?"

I tried to explain. He's gone off his rocker. He's on a new road, to Nazism. He's a misogynist, a sex-role egomaniac. You don't dump on women and gays like *that* unless you've jumped the socialist ship and clambered aboard with the pirates to preserve your puerile penile prerogatives. The man is a menace, I said. In a few years he'll have storm troopers to beat up on workers.

She didn't quite get it and promised to study up on fascism.

Within a year, LaRouche's old guard members were gone and his newly recruited troopers were in the streets. We got some telephone threats at our headquarters, Freeway Hall. Just try it, we said, out-machoing them. They beat up Communists, and SWPers, but left us alone. Nevertheless, they caused a casualty in our ranks; one of our leading female comrades was married to an NCLC admirer (famous John Chambless of the UW Philosophy Department, who organized the first Sky River Rock Festival and became a theatrical producer for the city of Seattle Parks Department), and she was so disoriented by his growing hostility to us that she faded away from politics.

In 1973, LaRouche provided the following advice to the ladies: "Be a rat! Be a sadist! If you are a woman, find a susceptible man for your female sadism. You feel better; you are one of the rats; the rats, therefore, may not attack you, especially the gigantic, awful rat of a mother-image inside you!" And this man was still calling himself a socialist.

What better illustration of the centrality of feminism to socialism: you simply can't have one without the other.

Newsweek speculates that "a romantic setback triggered a change in LaRouche's personality and a shift to a more

authoritarian style." Come on. Let's don't Hollywoodize, let's not trivialize and obscure a simple law of politics: once someone starts unraveling one key thread in the complex of programmatic embroidery the whole pattern falls apart. Romantic, roshmantic—it was feminist rage and dynamic organizing that triggered Lyndon LaRouche's counter-rage and sent him hurtling pell-mell into an ideology more compatible with his comfort zone. (You'll notice I didn't say his glands or genes; some of my best friends and comrades and kids are men!)

LaRouche was sorely challenged by the anti-sexist revolution and he reacted not only wrongly, but paranoiically. His own history and character determined that reflex, and that obsession with stereotypical gender behavior and with male sexual power as synonym for the driving force of history. The fullest expression of male-power dominance, of course, is fascism. LaRouche, like all sex maniacs, is a clear and present political danger.

Lyndon, we hardly knew you, but we learned about you and know you now, while others thrash about in the effort to decipher your "mystery" and clout. For every man whose evil fantasies you express, another man, and almost every woman is revolted by your fascism à la mode. When push comes to shove, the women and the workers, the ethnics and the gays, the anti-fascists and the Jews, and folks with a decent respect for humankind will return you to your origins—as a loner.

Life and Death in New York Town

1982

And what was an ingrained West Coaster like me doing in New York last December?

Well, I'm sorry it wasn't April in Paris, or whenever it is one does the Italian Riviera. I've never been to Paris in April. I've never been to Paris. And I always manage to get to Manhattan in the dead of winter.

But it's always worth it, and this trip was fascinating, memorable, delightful—and stained by tragedy.

The good part came first. Flying on Canadian airlines, to buttress our striking air traffic controller friends in PATCO, was great. I had never seen Toronto, and the trip between the airport and the Amtrak depot permitted a panoramic view of the great city.

The train trip to New York was not a good part. Down with the evil-tempered U.S. Immigration agent who woke us up and grilled us as if we were heinous public enemies smuggling ourselves across the sacred border. I was magnanimously permitted to re-enter my own country, but travelers of color fare much worse with both Yankee and Canadian officials.

Travel tip: try not to cross the border by bus, as I did on the return trip. The baggage inspection ordeal reduces everyone to cattle.