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Le Pen and LaRouche: Political Extremism in Democratic Societies

ANTONY LERMAN

The two extremist political groups that achieved most prominence in 1986 were the Front National in France, led by Jean Marie Le Pen, and the National Democratic Policy Committee (NDPC) in the US, a front organization for the National Caucus of Labor Committees (NCLC), led by Lyndon Hermyle LaRouche. It could be argued that any one of a number of terrorist groups—the French Action Directe, the West German Red Army Fraction, the cluster of groups associated with the Christian Identity movement in the United States, and the Armed Revolutionary Lebanese Fraction—deserves this accolade. After all, particularly in the case of France, terrorism has had a marked political effect on the societies that have suffered from it most. But the Front National and the NDPC are especially significant for Jews. Not only do they either covertly or overtly espouse anti-Semitism, they have successfully used mainstream political systems in France and the United States by appearing to voters as legitimate political alternatives. The vast majority of extremist groups, especially those on the far right, eschew participation in the electoral process. Le Pen and LaRouche have shown that stable democratic societies are not invulnerable to groups who wish to subvert democracy by skillfully playing the democratic system.

The Front National emerged from the traditional far right in France and based its ideology on old theories rediscovered or rebaptized. The NCLC, often characterized as a cult, drew on a range of ideas—partly bizarre and partly mainstream conservative—for its extremist ideology. Both groups could legitimately be described as extreme right, but in the case of

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LaRouche, the label says very little about the way the group operates and the precise nature of its ideas.

The Relevance of the Extreme Right Label

At any one time, there are hundreds of extreme right-wing groups throughout the world that use anti-Semitism in their propaganda and ideology. Most of them are neo-Nazi or neo-Fascist *groupuscules* propagating ideas of white racial purity and aryanism as if the collapse of the Nazi and Fascist systems built by Hitler and Mussolini had never taken place. These groups are pale reflections of the Fascist parties of the 1920s and 1930s and since the Second World War have been confined to the margins of politics with no mass support. In fact, their role in 1986 was very different from that of the interwar years:

Historically, the Right has been associated with authority rather than protest. Its foundations have rested on traditional symbols and institutions such as monarchy, church, army, law and the state. The notion that the Right could be a radical as well as a conservative force, with a strong populist base came with fascism. Here was a movement which set out to turn mass unrest into a new totalitarianism. It established a link between protest and authority by manipulating the former to gain the latter and, once in power, by ruthlessly crushing all opposition.¹

The possibility of today's extreme right groups taking power and creating a new totalitarianism in Western societies is remote even in those countries, like Spain and Portugal, that were most recently governed by authoritarian, quasi-Fascist dictatorships. Since the war, the extreme right has been largely confined to the role of protest in public life.

Anti-Semitism—naked and undisguised, or hidden by the cloak of anti-Zionism—continues to play an important part in the ideology and propaganda of extreme-right groups. Their publications continue to peddle traditional conspiracy theories: world Jewry has "immense political and financial muscle," "controls the media," dominates the right and the left, and aims to destroy "our race, nation, culture, and faith." This quotation comes from the British National Front, but the same formulation can be found in any extreme-right publication published in any part of the world. The *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* are still widely quoted as if they had never been proved a forgery. While anti-Semitism remains a crucial element in their ideological self-legitimation, the thrust of the protest and activity of extreme right groups is not toward Jews but rather immigrants, "guest workers," blacks, and other ethnic minorities. In so far as the extreme right has had any success in gaining adherents, it has been by exploiting social tensions, economic decline, unemployment, inner-city decay, rising crime—blaming these on the

presence of migrants and immigrants with cultural traditions different from those of the majority in the society into which they have come.

Any assessment of the danger of extremist politics for Jews in 1986 faces two specific problems. The first concerns the relevance of the term extreme right in current political conditions. Since extreme-right ideologies have been so discredited, groups with serious political ambitions either describe themselves using some other terminology or if they embrace the extreme-right label, distance themselves from the unacceptable elements of the associated ideologies, such as anti-Semitism. Simply to trawl for groups using the net of old definitions of extreme right would not therefore ensure that the big fish are caught. To look only for manifestations of anti-Semitism—as if this were the only danger such groups present to Jews as Jews—might result in overlooking other aspects that represent a far greater threat.

Use of the term right today presents additional difficulties. Extreme right and radical right were once interchangeable terms, but in the postwar period, it has become increasingly difficult to see extreme-right groups as in any sense radical. Except for the current vogue of "Strasserism" and the "third way," most of these groups have advocated, in one form or another, the restoration of the ideologies of prewar regimes. Such groups can be fairly categorized as conservative, drawn to the past by a twisted nostalgia. If the word revolt can be attached to them in any appropriate sense, they represent a revolt into style. Yesterday's authentic Fascist radicalism has become today's neo-Fascist shadowboxing. The nomenclature of the radical right has passed to an altogether different group—often loosely categorized as the new right (although not the same as the Nouvelle Droite in France, which advocates racial purity and eliminating the Judeo-Christian ethos)—which has profoundly influenced political parties in Europe and America. Advocating economic liberalism, dismantling the collectivist state, restoration of a strict moral code, and revival of an assertive nationalism, this radical right cannot justly be bracketed with the neo-Fascists and their populist racialism although it is common for the extreme left to argue that such a connection exists.

The second problem in assessing the extreme right concerns assumptions about overall trends. There is a tendency to make different judgments about current developments on the extreme right according to whether we are experiencing a resurgence of such phenomena or there are only relatively minor fluctuations around a level of activity that is mostly marginal and does not pose a threat to Western civilization. In Europe, there has been a lively debate on this issue. In 1980, a report prepared for the Council of Europe concluded:

[I]t would be foolish, and premature, to say that a major revival of fascist or racist ideology was taking place in Europe today . . . fascism still seems an unlikely starter as the new solution to the problems of Western democracy. . . . However, there have been enough examples of recent fascist and

racialist outbursts for us to say that, whilst they do not present a significant threat in themselves, they do warn us that the point where indifference or toleration could be the response has already passed.²

This conclusion was endorsed much more recently by a Committee of Inquiry of the European Parliament set up to examine the rise of fascism and racism in Europe. In the committee's view (endorsed by the European Parliament in January 1986):

There is no question of an increase in organized fascism. It ebbs and flows irregularly, with groups claiming innovation employing age-old tactics. The statistics available to us suggest that the number of militant members of right-wing extremist organizations decreased sharply during most of the seventies and is stable today although in some cases, there has been a slight increase again. At all events [the number] represents a minute percentage of the population.³

This sober conclusion by an all-party committee contrasted sharply with dire warnings sounded by some on the left—these warnings had their opposite image on the right. Politicians speaking from a party perspective have their own reasons for arguing that the extreme right is either resurgent or totally insignificant. Assessments made by those with access to genuine research materials tended to follow the approach of the European Parliament's committee, at least as far as Europe was concerned.

It is against this background—the less than entirely adequate usefulness of the label extreme right and the continued marginal nature of extreme-right organizations—that the progress of the Le Pen and LaRouche organizations must be seen.

The Front National

Led by Jean Marie Le Pen, the Front National achieved a significant political breakthrough on 17 June 1984, when it won 11 percent of the vote in the elections to the European Parliament, sending ten representatives to Strasbourg out of a total French contingent of eighty-one MEPs.⁴ This was far more than predicted in the opinion polls, and it marked the revival of the extreme right in French national politics.

The success of the Front National in the European elections merely endorsed the run of electoral successes achieved from 1982 to 1984. It won 11 percent of the vote in the municipal elections of the twentieth *arrondissement* in Paris in March 1982, 17 percent in the municipal election in Dreux in 1983, and 9.38 percent and 12 percent in by-elections in Aulnay and Auray. Maintaining its momentum, Le Pen's party won 9 percent of the vote both in the elections to the regional assembly of Corsica in August 1984, and in the French local government elections in March 1985. On these last two occa-

sions, the Front proved itself capable of making up the potentially critical deficit in order for right-wing opposition parties to obtain an overall majority. This led to speculation that the party could hold the balance of power if no clear winner emerged in the national parliamentary elections on 16 March 1986.

Although the party did not achieve the number of seats predicted by Le Pen during the campaign (50 to 100 deputies with at least 15 percent of the vote), its haul of 2,705,497 votes (9.72 percent of the total vote) in the new system of proportional representation introduced by the Socialist government produced thirty-five deputies—a substantial achievement, and almost as many seats as the Parti Communiste. The Front did almost as well in the regional elections held at the same time: 9.69 percent of the vote; 135 councilors out of a total of 1,840.

Le Pen formed the Front National in 1972 in a bid to achieve political respectability for the extreme right. In spirit, it was little different from its more militant counterparts, but Le Pen intended to play the democratic process rather than fight against it. The electoral successes of the Movimento Sociale Italiano (MSI) encouraged the French right wing to build a similar organization based on grass-roots support, and after ten years, the strategy began to produce results.

From the very beginning, Le Pen kept his political philosophy simple. His values are those of Vichy—work, family, country—and his anti-Communist stance constantly prominent. To call his ideology fascism would be to assume the existence of a body of doctrine available for study, but no such clearly enunciated doctrine exists. Election campaign slogans like “France for the French” and “two million immigrants equals two million unemployed” emphasize the party’s xenophobia, and Le Pen offers himself as a strong man who claims that he says aloud what everyone else is thinking.

Le Pen’s program (such as it is) can be gleaned from his autobiographical profession of faith, *Les Français d’abord* (The French First). While he does not question the democratic structure of French political institutions, he favors an autocracy in which the president of the republic holds most of the power, supported by the people through referendums. He advocates disbanding state industrial monopolies and introducing unrestricted economic liberalism, thereby ushering in an era of populist capitalism. The right to strike would be limited and forbidden altogether in the public sector. With the country having drifted into moral laxity, values associated with the family would be encouraged. Aid would be given to large families and a rise in the French birthrate encouraged by repealing the Abortion Act.

Many of these ideas would not be out of place in mainstream right-wing parties. What sets Le Pen apart is his attack on France’s immigrant population, his stress on problems of law and order, and linking these two elements with France’s social and economic malaise. Moreover, it is the way these features of his political message are expressed at meetings and in articles in

the right-wing press (never signed by Le Pen himself) that mark the Front National as undeniably extremist. In his book, Le Pen advocates the gradual repatriation of immigrants without compensation except for a “worthy minority” who could be granted an allowance. But the immigrant minority has been abused in much coarser terms during public meetings. Immigrants are blamed for France’s moral decline, lawlessness, violence, the drug problem, and so on.

Harassment of France’s immigrant population, which increased alarmingly over the last two years, was associated in the public mind with ideas and slogans advocated by Le Pen. What is clear is that his party gave a new legitimacy to racial prejudice in France that led more moderate parties to accept that questions Le Pen had been asking were the right ones and therefore to adopt for themselves policies on immigration and law and order designed to wean voters away from the Front National.

Polled at the time of the March 1986 elections, 60 percent of Front National voters confirmed that their main concern was immigration (an opinion shared by only 16 percent of those who voted for the main grouping of the right center); 50 percent referred to the problem of *insécurité*. Far less important were the economic crisis and unemployment. Unlike the short-lived extreme-right political phenomenon of the 1950s, Poujadism, those who voted for the Front were not drawn from one social category. The main groups were small business and tradespeople (14 percent) and the unemployed (14 percent), but there were also private-sector employees (12 percent), the self-employed (13 percent), farmers (11 percent), workers (11 percent), and middle management (10 percent). In addition, the Front drew support from right-extremists formerly associated with now defunct groups like Action Française and Algérie Française.

In the wake of Le Pen’s success, a feeling of profound disquiet was expressed by the Conseil Représentatif des Institutions Juives de France (CRIF) and B’nai B’rith. Such institutions had been warning of the consequences of ignoring the Front’s message and had also warned against forming alliances with the party. These warnings were largely ignored. Before the election, Le Pen was condemned in a civil court for anti-Semitism, but this did not seem to work against him or his party.

Le Pen himself denied that he was anti-Semitic and challenged people to quote an anti-Semitic statement he had made. It is certainly true that the brunt of his attacks were borne by the North African immigrant community and direct attacks on the Jewish community were infrequent. Nevertheless, anti-Semitism was not far below the surface of Front National discourse and found expression in ways that the party’s constituency would clearly understand.

Le Pen spent a disproportionate amount of time singling out for abuse politicians who are Jewish, for example: Robert Badinter, Laurent Fabius, Charles Fiterman, Jack Lang, Simone Veil. Although he never declared

publicly that he disliked Jews, he was forced to admit in a television interview that he thought Jews received preferential treatment. His method was to launch counterattacks against those who accused him of anti-Semitism and, in doing so, legitimized his extreme views by an aggressive bravado that appealed to his audiences. Le Pen alleged that charges of his anti-Semitism stemmed from "intellectual terrorism."⁵ To prove that he was not an anti-Semite, he asserted, did not mean that he had "to love the Veil law [on abortion], the paintings of Chagall, and the politics of Mendès-France" (the former Jewish prime minister about whom Le Pen said in 1958 that a "patriot" felt "almost physical revulsion in his presence").

The daily newspaper *Présent*, which supported the Front National but was not an official organ of the party, founded in 1981 and edited by Romain Marie (a Front member of the European Parliament), was less circumspect. It has campaigned for a repeal of the 1972 law against incitement to racial hatred and discrimination. In 1983, it addressed Simone Veil in these terms: "There is no other morality traditionally accepted in French political life than Christian morality, to which you are, Madam, a total stranger." The paper has argued that there are "powers in France" for which "the interests of Judaism are more important than those of French society." In 1983, the editor denounced Minister of Justice Robert Badinter's alleged laxity toward criminals and charged that he supported "the nomad against the settler, the cosmopolitan against the indigenous . . . the outcast against a society which has so long done without Badinter and his tribe, the murderer against the murdered." He added: "the only thing French about such men is where they live. When we stop and consider how far they have taken control of this country, then it is indeed time for us to be afraid." *Présent* has only a small circulation, but the articles it published showed how Le Pen left it to others to demonstrate that anti-Semitism was an integral part of his xenophobic message.

Further evidence of the Front National's anti-Semitism was apparent from the company Le Pen kept and the doubtful connections of his supporters. Le Pen was approvingly interviewed for *Spotlight*, the organ of the US anti-Semitic Liberty Lobby organization. In September 1984, another US anti-Semitic publication, *Instauration*, alluded to Le Pen as "a new, younger Pétain . . . who will again seek to hold France together in a time of troubles." A former Front National candidate, Eric Delcroix, the lawyer who defended Robert Faurisson, the French professor convicted of libel for publicly denying the facts of the Holocaust, has been published in the *Journal of Historical Review*. This publication is produced by the Institute for Historical Review, the leading Holocaust denial organization in the United States, which is funded by the Liberty Lobby.

Despite clear proof of the Front National's anti-Semitism, it would be wrong to overestimate the party's use of anti-Jewish sentiment as a force for political mobilization. As one observer has written: "It simply forms part of

the movement's ideological background."⁶ What it might lead to, depending on circumstances, is a more open expression of the anti-Semitic attitudes that are latent in French society.

The last outburst of right-wing populism to seize the French political system brought Pierre Poujade and fifty-one "Poujadist" deputies into the National Assembly in 1956. Their platform was "ultraconservative, ultranationalist and decidedly—if mutedly—anti-Semitic."⁷ Two years later, they "passed into an obscurity from which they would never emerge." Whether Le Pen and his party will suffer the same fate—he was one of the Poujadist deputies in 1956—remains to be seen. Meanwhile, the danger presented to the French democratic political system and to France's open society—preconditions for the continued welfare of France's Jewish community—was already apparent.

Support that the Front National received in March 1986 was not just a temporary expression of ill humor, and the party's rise cannot simply be attributed to the single issue of immigration. A significant proportion of the French electorate was responding to a sense of disenchantment with a political system that was judged to have betrayed a deeply engrained set of values on which French national life is based. Le Pen posed as the man who can "regenerate" the French spirit although exactly how he planned to do this has never been fully spelled out. The electorate may very well come to realize that the Front National does not have the answers to its fears and uncertainties, but until then, Le Pen and his fellow deputies have a platform and a new found respectability that they believe they could use to repeat their political messages. Particularly worrying was the fact that some deals were struck on the regional level between Front candidates and politicians from mainstream right-wing parties despite declarations and promises to the contrary made by national political leaders. And this cooperation has been seen by political observers as symptomatic of the effect that the Front has had in bringing about a radicalization of political debate, with the mainstream right and even the Socialist party being seen to attempt to outbid Le Pen in the tough approach they offer to solve France's problems. The Union pour la Démocratie Française-Rassemblement pour la République (UDF-RPR) proposal to amend the Nationality Code and thereby call into question the *jus soli* that grants French citizenship to those born on French soil (a measure supported by 57 percent of the people questioned in a postelection poll) is a sign of this.

But parliamentary respectability also has its downside, as the Front's experiences since March showed. Le Pen and his deputies lost much of their news value. Participating in the national political process on the inside, their ability to influence events as an extraparliamentary opposition disappeared. The everyday reality of parliamentary business meant that they were not able to dominate debates or put forward their views effectively, and they have had practically no influence whatsoever on legislation. Le Pen regretted that his

party had been labeled as part of the opposition. The ruling UDF-RPR coalition was not dependent on the votes of Front deputies so it was not even in a position to act as a pressure group.

Internal party discontent was reflected in the defection of two deputies, Bruno Chauvière and Yvon Briant, in April and June, bringing the Front dangerously close to falling below the figure of thirty representatives, the minimum a party needs to maintain its parliamentary privileges. More important was the government's decision to abandon the system of proportional representation (PR) in parliamentary elections, introduced by the former Socialist government. Had PR not been in place in March 1986, the Front National would have won only seven seats. As of December 1986, it was estimated that under a single-member constituency electoral system, the Front would win no seats at all.

If the Front's parliamentary performance left them marginalized and impotent, they fared much better in regional politics. In five regional councils, they hold the balance of power. In three of those councils, they have been associated with running the administration; in the other two, they proved their strength by decisively affecting decisions concerning the regional budgets.

In various by-elections since March 1986, the Front National's share of the vote fell, a development confirmed in the opinion polls. Le Pen's response was to distance himself somewhat from his party as he prepared to launch his candidature for the presidential elections due in 1988. He was no longer so involved in the party's day-to-day parliamentary work and tended only to intervene in parliament on issues where he could present himself as supporting the unity of the nation.

But Le Pen's actions were not well received by some of his lieutenants. Anxious to be seen as a viable presidential candidate, Le Pen concentrated his attacks on Prime Minister Jacques Chirac, whom he considered his principal adversary. Le Pen accused Chirac of stealing his ideas and at the same time berated him for his "embryonic socialism." However presidential he may try to appear, Le Pen has very little hope of getting past the first round in the presidential election. His main aim therefore is to exert influence on the successful candidate through the votes he commands. But there is no certainty that those who vote for Le Pen in the first round will consider themselves to owe him special allegiance. Despite the 10 percent who voted Front National in 1986, the French electorate remains heterogeneous.

In April 1986, Roger Ascot wrote in the French Jewish monthly *L'Arche*:

Such slogans as "France for the French" can only offer division, violence, xenophobia, racism. It should be repeated, therefore, the danger is there. . . . However, let us not exaggerate the real peril. Nine of ten Frenchmen are opposed to the denial of others' rights. It is important that these 90 percent remain united, that no other elected official yield to the

worst possible temptation [by pursuing the racist vote] even if their short-term political interests might be served.

What is most disturbing, however, whether or not the Front continues to be marginalized, is the extent to which this current manifestation of right extremism is so deeply rooted in French political life. As historians of Vichy have shown, the neo-Fascist tendency in French life is not an aberration.

LaRouche and the NCLC

On 18 March 1986, two candidates from the LaRouche organization, Janice Hart and Mark Fairchild, won the Democratic party nominations for lieutenant governor and secretary of state in the Illinois primary. This "startling victory," as the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) described it,⁸ was greeted by an avalanche of media attention and condemnation. From being an organization that attracted little notice, LaRouche's National Democratic Policy Committee (NDPC), a front organization for the National Caucus of Labor Committees (NCLC), became an object of major media attention not only in the United States but also in Europe and elsewhere. The conservative Heritage Foundation in Washington called it "one of the most bizarre cults in the history of the United States."

Contrary to the impression given in a number of articles that appeared at the time, LaRouche did not simply leap from the fringe of politics to center stage without warning.⁹ During the past few years, his political front organizations have been increasingly active in Democratic primary races for the US Senate and House of Representatives and state legislature seats, sometimes gaining impressive percentages. At the grass roots, LaRouche candidates have won Democratic county committee seats in a number of states.

LaRouche, born in 1922, began his political life on the far left. In 1949, he joined the Socialist Workers' party, a Trotskyist Communist group, and was active in it until the early 1960s. He remained involved in extreme-left politics but sponsored by his father, set up his own management firm specializing in the use of computer simulations to help corporations reduce costs. With the emergence of the anti-Vietnam war movement in the 1960s, LaRouche presented himself as a revolutionary leader and attracted several dozen young people from the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and the Maoist-oriented Progressive Labor party (PLP), while lecturing on Marxist economics in Greenwich Village. Offering a variant of the left-wing political activism available at the time, LaRouche formed a splinter group that, after being expelled from the SDS, became the National Caucus of Labor Committees and by 1973 to 1974 was one of the largest and most visible of ultraleft sects, with over one thousand members. Central to the NCLC's approach was a

conspiracy theory of politics, total obedience from the membership, and abuse not only of the establishment but also of those who had dropped out of the NCLC, leaders of rival leftist groups, and anyone who refused to take LaRouche's ideas seriously.

From 1973, LaRouche began to abandon his Marxism and started, with little warning, to embrace far-right and neo-Nazi ideas. The process began with a campaign of street violence against leftist groups and the development of increasingly paranoid conspiracy theories often centered around alleged attempts to assassinate LaRouche himself. Many NCLC members left the organization, but those who remained were able to accept LaRouche's justifications for forming alliances with openly racist groups and for adopting anti-Semitic ideas. Internally, the organization became ever more repressive, with intense psychological pressure being brought to bear on members to ensure their loyalty.

In 1979, having moved fully to the far right—developing contacts with the Ku Klux Klan and the Liberty Lobby for example—the group began to seek respectability by toning down its violent rhetoric and adopting some of the ideas, like the strategic defense initiative (Star Wars), that became policies of the Reagan administration. In 1980, LaRouche formed a new electoral arm, the NDPC, aimed at attracting support of labor leaders and deliberately designed to appear as an adjunct to the Democratic party.

LaRouche uses many front organizations, such as the Fusion Energy Foundation, the National Antidrug Coalition, and the Lafayette Foundation for the Arts and Sciences. The NCLC publishes a biweekly newspaper, *New Solidarity*, a theoretical journal, the *Campaigner*, and a weekly news magazine, *Executive Intelligence Review*, aimed primarily at businessmen. A French language edition of *New Solidarity*, *Nouvelle Solidarité*, is published in Paris, and a German edition has also appeared. Numerous other publications—intelligence reports, press releases, LaRouche's speeches—are often expensively produced and well designed. Some of these are published under the imprint of the New Solidarity International Press Service, which claims offices in numerous major cities throughout the world.

Formerly based in Manhattan, LaRouche moved his headquarters to a heavily guarded estate in Leesburg, Virginia to avoid real or imagined enemies. There are also offices in Wiesbaden, West Germany, where a right-wing think-tank, the Schiller Institute, was set up four years ago by LaRouche's German wife, Helga Zepp-LaRouche.

The sources of NCLC funds was something of a mystery. LaRouche's business ventures were no doubt one source. At \$400 for a year's subscription, the *Executive Intelligence Review* also produced some revenues (NCLC claim 7,000 subscribers), as did aggressively selling other NCLC publications at airports throughout the United States. Possibly more lucrative was the alleged nationwide unauthorized use of credit card numbers by LaRouche-related entities and individuals, which was investigated by a federal grand

jury in Boston. Also, Federal Election Commission documents showed that the agency was investigating allegations that LaRouche-affiliated groups borrowed money from individuals for LaRouche's presidential campaign, then failed to repay it.¹⁰

LaRouche's ideology is so extreme and bizarre that it is difficult to categorize. It has been described as neo-Nazism, given "the hundreds of NCLC articles since the mid-1970s expressing violent hatred of Jews, Judaism, Zionism, and the State of Israel,"¹¹ and the LaRouche network is often described as a cult. The key to LaRouche's ideology is his overriding belief in conspiracy theories. In a rare interview, he said, "History is nothing but conspiracies."¹² The main group behind these conspiracies is the Jews, especially wealthy Jews who have been responsible for a vast range of conspiratorial crimes through the centuries. However, LaRouche uses a code word for Jews—the "British"—which enables him to deny any anti-Semitism. LaRouche's ravings against the British are based on a doctrine of anti-Semitic racialism: The British have evolved through moral depravity and inbreeding into a separate species outside the human race ("the Zionist-British organism"). The historic mission of the NCLC is to rally the human race for an all-out struggle to wipe out the British who, led by the Rothschilds and other wealthy Jews, control drug and terrorism networks. America "must be cleansed . . . [for this] righteous war . . . [by the] immediate elimination . . . [of the] Jewish lobby and other British agents" from government, business, and labor.

LaRouche subscribes to the hoax lies about the Nazi Holocaust. He calls it mythical, and his wife calls it a "Zionist swindle." Writers in NCLC publications have attacked the Holocaust curriculum in New York public schools as viciously anti-German and filth. They accuse B'nai B'rith of "resurrect[ing] the tradition of the Jews who demanded the crucifixion of Jesus Christ."¹³

Attacks on the LaRouchites served to make the group more cohesive and even more hostile to its detractors. Attempts have been made to silence critics, and former members who speak against LaRouche; news media have been discouraged by use of questionable tactics from reporting about the group. The NCLC literature frequently alleged that critics were drug pushers, sexual deviants, or psychopaths.

The success of the LaRouchites in Illinois followed their attempts to gain electoral respectability and present themselves as an acceptable political alternative. In the 1984 primaries, LaRouche ran more than two hundred candidates who frequently drew as much as 30 percent of the vote. Some were elected to local school boards, city councils, and party committees.¹⁴ At that time, the LaRouchites claimed that the NDPC had 26,000 members in over forty-three states. While these figures are almost certainly an exaggeration, a wide range of Americans from influential walks of life were willing to contribute money to LaRouche's primary and general election campaigns. In the year up to the presidential election, LaRouche's campaign committees

raised almost \$2 million in contributions and over \$3 million in loans, qualifying for \$488,396 in federal matching funds. With this money, LaRouche was able to appear in fourteen half-hour television commercials costing \$230,000 each.¹⁵ In the election itself he received 78,773 votes.

To some extent, LaRouchites had managed to convince officials in governments and civil services throughout the world that they were an organization with which legitimate contacts could be made. In 1984, Dennis King and Ronald Radosh drew attention to contacts LaRouchites had made with officials in the Reagan administration. They outlined in considerable detail the range of these contacts and the apparent willingness of administration officials to allow themselves to be publicly associated with the NCLC or its front organizations: "LaRouche and his followers have gained repeated access to a wide range of administration officials—including high-level aides at the National Security Council and the Central Intelligence Agency—who have found LaRouche as useful in supplying information and promoting their policies as LaRouche has found them in legitimizing his cause."¹⁶ It seems that most of the group's contacts with government officials ended in 1985 because of news stories about LaRouche, according to the group and former members.

Many supposed contacts that LaRouchites claimed to have with people in high places were often revealed to have been nothing of the kind. LaRouchite tactics were to telephone officials and politicians and then claim the existence of some relationship. This was no doubt the explanation for extensive contacts LaRouche claimed to have with prominent Israeli politicians in an interview published in Israel's premier daily newspaper, *Ha'aretz*.¹⁷ After referring to discussions with leading government ministers, LaRouche added: "I was not involved in this personally." Similarly, after claiming that his organization had worked with the peace camp in the Palestine Liberation Organization and with the Israel-Palestine group in Paris and was very close to the late Issam Sartawi, LaRouche said: "I did not meet with him myself." Nevertheless, LaRouche cleverly attempted to leave the impression that his organization was acceptable to mainstream political figures worldwide. But given time, he invariably revealed that conspiracy theories of fantastic dimensions remain at the root of his ideology. In the same interview, he alleged that the ADL wanted to assassinate him because it is part of an international drug network, and he is against drugs. For good measure, he added "Irving Suall [head of ADL's research department], Nathan Perlmutter [ADL national director], Kenneth Bialkin [ADL national chairman] are gangsters. They are not Jews, they are gangsters."

The two NDPC members who won the Illinois Democratic nominations campaigned on a platform that included such proposals as eliminating Gramm-Rudman (the act designed to compel the government to reduce the federal budget deficit by fixed amounts each year), funding for Star Wars,

testing everyone for AIDS, and forming a "Nuremburg Tribunal" to investigate drug dealing by Zionists and journalists, represented by former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and the proprietor of the *Washington Post*, Katharine Graham.

Naturally enough, Democrats were horrified at the success of the LaRouche campaign and embarked on a drive to alert party workers to the fact that the same thing might happen elsewhere. Jewish community officials in Chicago said the electoral success was not an indication of support for LaRouche and the views of his followers, but the American Jewish Committee representative there, Jonathan Levine, said, "The election does demonstrate the continuing efforts by the LaRouche people to try and get a foothold or to infiltrate the Democratic party."¹⁸

Most of those who voted had no idea what Hart and Fairchild stood for; their victory was due to a number of factors. First, many voters cast their ballots in favor of last names with an Anglo-Saxon ring and against "foreign-sounding" ones of their opponents—George Sangmeister and Aurelia Pucinski. Second, Adlai Stevenson III, the gubernatorial nominee, did little to help candidates on his slate, and other important Democratic figures failed to deliver votes. Third, the news media were not alert to the bizarre ideology of the LaRouchites and failed to warn voters about their strength. Most important, however, was the low voter turnout (about 25 percent of the state's 1.6 million registered voters), reflecting apathy in the political process. As the *New Republic* put it, "If more people had voted and if those who did vote had based their decisions on more than position on the ballot or the sound of a name, the LaRouchites wouldn't have won."¹⁹

LaRouche's ideas, when spelled out, had very little appeal. A *New York Times*-CBS poll taken in February found only 1 percent of the public thought well of LaRouche; 20 percent viewed him unfavorably, and the rest held no opinion. Considering that one of his main points was that the queen of England was directly involved in drug peddling, it was not surprising that the LaRouchites found little sympathy.

After the Illinois primary, the extent of the LaRouchite nationwide primary campaign became clear. The NDPC claimed to have 800 candidates running in Democratic primaries across the country, most of these for various state offices. One analysis tracked 234 LaRouche candidacies (18 for Republican party positions) among which were 6 gubernatorial primaries, 14 US Senate primaries, 144 contests for the US House, 27 state senate races and 33 state house races.²⁰ This certainly proved the organizational ability of the LaRouchites and their mastery of the rules governing the electoral process. But their most impressive feat after Illinois was to gather almost 700,000 signatures in California to place Proposition 64—that the names of anyone carrying the AIDS virus be reported to the state's health authorities—on the ballot of that state. In a state that had the second highest number of AIDS

cases, such a proposal was bound to attract attention. The proposition was not adopted, but it nevertheless pointed to the LaRouche organization's ability to influence public debate.

Some reports suggested that the organization's policies had struck a chord in the troubled farm states and some well-known names were attracted to speak on LaRouche platforms. The NCLC courted the black vote in cities like Atlanta, and some prominent blacks appeared at LaRouche functions. In California, the LaRouchites claimed a membership of 10,000, with 200 candidates running in the state elections. In Texas, a LaRouche supporter ran in the Democratic primary for agriculture commissioner.²¹

The maxim "all publicity is good publicity" certainly has not applied in the case of Larouche and the NDPC. After Illinois, the extremist nature of LaRouchite views was well-exposed in the media. Despite fielding so many candidates in primaries, LaRouchites were singularly unsuccessful in winning nominations. The analysis published in mid-October showed that of 234 candidates in 267 states, only 13 managed to win, and 9 of those were for uncontested nominations. None of the thirteen were expected to win in the November midterm elections. Although LaRouche candidates avoided expressing anti-Semitic views during campaigns, they systematically played on the average voter's fears, especially of AIDS and the drug problem. In certain instances, Larouchites benefited from low primary turnout, but three-quarters of the candidates achieved less than 20 percent of the vote in races they entered, and a majority failed to obtain even one-tenth of the vote.

In the 5 November elections, none of the thirteen NDPC candidates succeeded in their bids for state and federal offices, but some made strong showings, winning 27 and 28 percent of the vote in two races for House seats in Texas and Illinois. One reason for the high level of support was the fact that many people tended to vote on party lines and probably had no knowledge that some of the candidates on the Democratic ticket in their states supported LaRouche.

Failure in the elections was preceded by the FBI finally taking action against LaRouche, his followers, and five affiliated bodies for alleged credit card fraud and attempts to obstruct justice. On 6 October, 275 officers carried out a dawn raid on LaRouche's Leesburg headquarters, but four of the ten people indicted were believed to be in Europe. This was the climax of several investigations involving the FBI and the US attorney's office in Boston where a federal grand jury returned a 117-count indictment. After the raid, LaRouche said, "I have committed no crime . . . [and] will not submit passively to an arrest." A top aide added, "He will defend himself by whatever means necessary . . . He will not capitulate to the Russians."²²

Bizarre they might be, but Larouchites certainly succeeded in showing weaknesses in the US electoral system, and their tactic of concealing their more extreme and outrageous views during election campaigns allowed them to pose as a respectable political party. Nevertheless, the LaRouchites'

ideology holds no significant appeal for the US population. Their success in Illinois in March showed the crucial role democracy can play in either impeding or allowing the progress of extreme political sects and groups. A well-organized group can exploit apathy to great advantage. More widespread participation in the democratic process and taking democratic responsibilities seriously will prevent the advance of the NCLC and ensure that it remains on the fringe of the political system—an unpleasant irritant (like the Front National) but part of the price to be paid for having a democratic system at all.

Terrorism and Other Extremes

Both the NCLC and the Front National have been associated with physical violence, but neither organization has used it as a political tool. This is not surprising, since it would hardly be compatible with their strategies for participating in the democratic political process. But among other extremist political organizations on the left and the right, the use of violence, ideologically justified, is increasingly common.

On one level, there is the violence perpetrated daily against members of ethnic minorities, particularly in countries like France and the United Kingdom. It is difficult to assess how much of this is organized by extreme-right groups and how much stems from the hooligan element imbued with racist and xenophobic sentiments. On another level, there is organized national or international terrorism to which Jews are particularly vulnerable.²³

When discussing terrorism, it is important to remember that use of the word often raises more questions than it answers. One of the most judicious writers on terrorism (and there are very few), Paul Wilkinson, confirms this when he writes that "Context is all in the analysis of political terrorism."²⁴ A reviewer assessing a number of books on terrorism published in 1986 put the problem like this: "Since what usually brings the word terrorism to anyone's lips is its instant handiness for stigmatizing any use of violence outside the categories of violence which the stigmatizer finds more acceptable, the first steps towards sorting out the wheat from the chaff must be to note the position he stands in, and where he gets his categories from."²⁵ Far too much of the so-called academic study of terrorism fails to take this into account.

However, there can be little sensible objection to describing as terrorism the violence perpetrated or advocated by some of the major groups that were prominent in 1986. In France, the extreme left Action Directe and the Armed Revolutionary Lebanese Fraction caused considerable havoc, especially during the second half of 1986, bringing fear and consternation to the people of Paris and rocking the government of Jacques Chirac, which took power vowing to implement a tough policy on terrorism. In Germany, the Red Army Fraction claimed to have carried out a number of attacks, the most spec-

tacular being the murder in October of Gerold von Braunmühl, a senior figure in the German Foreign Office. Also in Germany, neo-Nazi terrorism, although effectively kept in check by police and security authorities, continued to be a potential danger as a police raid in West Berlin in September 1986 demonstrated.²⁶ Weapons and propaganda were seized, and fourteen people were arrested and charged with forming a neo-Nazi party.

The United States also saw the emergence of a number of extreme right-wing terrorist groups associated with the so-called Christian Identity movement. It preaches "the doctrine of the inherent superiority of the white race, particularly the people of Northern European stock; the notion that those Nordic people are the descendants of the Biblical Israelites and the necessary corollary that contemporary Jews are not. Vicious hostility towards nonwhite races and relentless vilification of Jews are further characteristics of this movement's theology of hate."²⁷ The various Identity groups are geographically widespread and claim a membership of some 2,000 to 5,000 and many of them are oriented toward survivalism (the notion that man-made and natural disasters will soon lead to the breakdown of organized society and people who wish to survive must become completely self-dependent).²⁸ The Order is perhaps the most widely known group, as a result of the murder of a Denver talk-show host, Alan Berg, in June 1984. Berg, a Jew, often criticized and baited white supremacists on the air. Among other groups in this disparate network are the Aryan Nations, the Covenant, the Sword and the Arm of the Lord (CSA), Posse Comitatus and the Church of Jesus Christ Christian. Other neo-Nazi groups predate the Identity movement, but what is particularly worrying about the current crop is their stated readiness to use weapons and explosives and the fact that many of their members are highly trained to do just that.

Membership in right-extremist groups in both Europe and the United States that espouse political violence remains small, and despite the very real danger presented to society by the possibility of that violence occurring, the groups themselves must be seen essentially as vehicles of protest. The more traditional neo-Nazi groups, like the National Front in Britain, conscious of their failure either to make advances through the electoral system or to attract significant numbers to their ranks by spreading racist propaganda, have turned to what they believe to be a more radical and revolutionary ideology. Slavish admiration for Hitler and Mussolini has been replaced by what is sometimes called "revolutionary nationalism" or "Strasserism," which is based on the ideas of the Italian Fascist philosopher Julius Evola and the Strasser brothers, Otto and Gregor who led the brownshirt wing of the Nazi party during Hitler's rise to power. The Strasser brothers stressed "Socialist" aspects of national socialism, though they were no less anti-Semitic than other Nazis. Hitler eliminated this radical tendency when he made a deal with Germany's industrial barons—the brownshirts were massacred in the Night of the Long Knives.

Groups who adhere to Strasserism claim to support the white working class against Jewish capitalism, and they maintain that the spiritual values of the white race can be preserved only by returning to a medieval rural lifestyle, with all that this entails in depopulating urban areas. Also referred to as the "third position"—between communism and capitalism—this doctrine has been influentially advocated by an Italian group called Third Position (Terza Posizione) whose armed wing, the Armed Revolutionary Nuclei (NAR), is believed to have been behind bombing the Bologna railway station in August 1980 in which eighty-five people were killed.

As far as Le Pen and LaRouche are concerned, 1986 ended on a much less promising note than it began. The danger presented by the success of their organizations in exploiting electoral systems in France and the United States had never been that they might gain power. The real danger lay elsewhere. With Le Pen and the Front National, it was the possibility of mainstream parties feeling obliged to adopt more radical policies on immigration and law and order because they feared diminution of their support. The boost this could give to racist sentiment and the erosion of civil liberties would be extremely damaging. With LaRouche and the NDPC/NCLC, the danger lay in the apathy exhibited by such a large section of the American electorate and the opportunity this provided for extremist groups to abuse the democratic process. And where apathy reigns, it is not only extremist groups that can abuse the system. The success of both groups shows the vulnerability and fallibility of democracy, but their setbacks later in the year demonstrated that democracy can also be flexible enough to absorb, neutralize, and even fight against such extremism.

Notes

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2. M. Kriepps, *Report on the Need to Combat Resurgent Fascist Propaganda and Its Racist Aspects*, Council of Europe, Parliamentary Assembly, 15 September 1980, doc. 4590, p. 15.
3. *Report drawn up on behalf of the Committee of Inquiry into the Rise of Fascism and Racism in Europe on the Findings of the Committee of Inquiry*, rapporteur, D. Evrigenis, series A, doc. A 2-160/85, 25 November 1985.
4. This section relies heavily on the excellent research into the Front National by Nelly Hansson (Gutman), "The Rise of the Front National in France," *IJA Research Reports*, no. 11, October 1984; "The French Elections of 16 March 1986," *IJA Research Reports*, no. 6, June 1986; and by James G. Shields, "Jean Marie Le Pen and the New Radical Right in France," *Patterns of Prejudice* 20, no. 1 (January 1986): 3-10.
5. Quoted in Alison B. Carb, "Le Pen: The Anti-Semitic Connection," *ADL Bulletin* (October 1986).
6. Gutman, "Rise of the Front National," p. 8.
7. Shields, "Jean Marie Le Pen," p. 9.

8. ADL analysis and chart on the 1986 LaRouche primary campaign, New York, 10 October 1986, p. 1.

9. This section incorporates some of the material from the author's "The Lyndon LaRouche Cult: Bizarre but Effective," *Patterns of Prejudice* 20, no. 2 (April 1986):27-32, and relies heavily on a number of first-class exposés of the LaRouche organization published over the last few years: Dennis King, *Nazis without Swastikas: The Lyndon LaRouche Cult and Its War on American Labor* (New York: League for Industrial Democracy 1982); *ADL Facts. The LaRouche Network: A Political Cult*, (New York: Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith/Civil Rights Division), vol. 27, no. 2, spring 1982, Dennis King and Ronald Radosh, "The LaRouche Connection," *New Republic* (19 November 1984); *The LaRouche Political Cult: Packaging of Extremism. A Case Study* (New York: Anti-Defamation League Special Report, spring 1986).

10. *Washington Post*, 7 April 1986.

11. King, *Nazis without Swastikas*, p. 1.

12. Quoted in James Cox, "An Ultracrazy Cult with Method in Its Madness," *Listener*, 8 May 1986.

13. King, *Nazis without Swastikas*, p. 10.

14. *The Economist*, 26 April 1986.

15. King and Radosh, "The LaRouche Connection."

16. *Ibid.*

17. 4 April 1986.

18. *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, Daily News Bulletin, 21 March 1986.

19. 14 April 1986.

20. ADL analysis and chart on the 1986 LaRouche primary campaign.

21. *The Economist*, 26 April 1986.

22. *Washington Post*, 26 October 1986, and *International Herald Tribune*, 9 October 1986.

23. See Michael May, "Terrorism against Jewish and Israeli Targets in Europe 1980-85. A presentation of data," *IJA Research Reports*, no. 8 (September 1986).

24. Noel O'Sullivan, ed., *Terrorism, Ideology, and Revolution: The Origins of Modern Political Violence* (London, 1986).

25. Geoffrey Best, "A Species of Public Nastiness," *Times Higher Education Supplement*, 19 September 1986.

26. See Bruce Hoffman, "Right-Wing Terrorism in Germany," *IJA Research Reports*, no. 13 (December 1986).

27. *Hate Groups in America: A Record of Bigotry and Violence* (New York: ADL, 1982), p. 57.

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14

World Jewish Fundamentalism

LOUIS JACOBS

The term fundamentalism, much bandied about during the past decade, has its origin in the United States at the beginning of this century, when a group of Protestant Christians formed an alliance to oppose liberalism. Liberals held the view that Biblical criticism and modern science had made untenable the idea that Scripture, taken at its face value, conveys accurate information regarding such matters as the age of the earth and the way animals and human beings have evolved. Fundamentalists adopted this name in their belief that to accept liberalism was to deny *fundamental* Christian doctrine. Professor James Barr (*Fundamentalism*, London, 1977) shows that Christian fundamentalists no longer insist on a literal interpretation of Scripture. They are prepared to interpret the Bible in a nonliteral fashion (the days of Genesis being understood as vast periods of time, and so forth), so that it is not in contradiction with present-day knowledge. But they continue to insist on the inerrancy of Scripture. The Bible, for them, is the very word of God, and God cannot be in error. As Billy Graham is said to have put it, God wrote the Bible using sixty-three amanuenses.

It has frequently been argued that the term fundamentalism is inapplicable to Jews both because it is taken from Christian debates and because no traditional Jew can ever be a literalist, since, for him or her, authority is not vested in the plain meaning of the Bible but in the oral Torah, that is, in the interpretation of the Bible now found in the rabbinic literature. This argument is unacceptable. Admittedly, the term was first used in Christian discussion, but the phenomenon it represents is of wider application. As for the question of literalism, this, as Barr has noted, is not the main thrust of fundamentalism. It is the doctrine of the inerrancy of Scripture, and on this Jewish

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