

ON
THE
EDGE

POLITICAL CULTS
RIGHT AND LEFT

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For Gemma Tourish and Joyce Gibrick,
whose love and encouragement make everything possible.

feared that the world would come to an end, while 12 percent of those surveyed believed it would happen within the next few years.³⁰ These figures represent a lot of people who, when they think of the future, tremble in fear. Each day, the propagandists of hate play with matches in a room packed with explosives.

The dangers we are discussing are not limited to the United States, or even the English-speaking world. Bjorn Soderberg was a trade union representative in a company in Stockholm, Sweden. In October 1999 he publicly denounced the election of a neo-Nazi as a trade union representative. A week later he was dead, shot in the head at point-blank range. Two days later, three youngsters known for their neo-Nazi sympathies were arrested and their firearms seized.³¹ Throughout the world, it seems to be easier than ever to procure weapons, and to move toward turning the nightmare fantasies of the supremacist right into reality.

Not all supremacist organizations are cults. Some do not meet the criteria for cultic organizations that we describe in chapter 1. However, they do possess what we would describe as a cultic mind-set. In some cases, the forms of organization adopted on the far right lag slightly behind the mentality of their members. We believe that cults are best viewed as a continuum. At one end stand healthy, well-functioning groups, in which dissent is respected, people participate in decision making, and members at all times retain a foot in the real world. At the other end we find totalitarian enclaves in which conformity is prized above all else and people are frequently manipulated against their will for the greater good of the cult leader. Totalistic belief systems encourage such formations. People and organizations can move back and forth on this continuum, depending on events. Thus, organizations are not necessarily either cults or not cults. They can be both, at different times and in different places.

Identity theology is particularly prone to activate the process of cultic formation. David Neiwert has accurately described its belief system as “so far astray from those of mainstream Christianity—and so repellant to average Americans—that they induce in the religion’s followers a cult-like closed mind-set: a sense of persecution coupled with self-righteousness.”³²

For those fired by the passions of prejudice, Posse Comitatus, Aryan Nations, and the other groups on the supremacist right offer a warm embrace, a welcoming smile, and the certainty of absolute conviction. Here, there will be no challenge to set convictions, but there will be plenty of simple answers to complex problems. Above all, at long last, there will be someone to blame.

In the eyes of many, it is a welcome refuge from the torrent of change now engulfing the outside world.

Chapter 5

The Travels of Lyndon LaRouche

Once we have begun the permanent colonization of Mars on a sound basis, as we might approximately forty years from now, the philosophical standpoint . . . reflected here, would be hegemonic for humanity.

—Lyndon LaRouche

The Early Days

One morning in late March 1946 Don Morrill was chipping paint off one of the forward hatches of the *SS General Bradley*. It was the last troop ship but one to leave India for the United States. Three young soldiers approached him. One of the men introduced himself as Lyndon LaRouche, from Lynn, Massachusetts, Morrill’s hometown. The four immediately fell into a political discussion. Morrill explained that he had been a supporter of Leon Trotsky prior to the war.

Morrill remembers LaRouche as a brilliant fellow who spoke French and German fluently. His parents, Morrill discovered, were prominent Quakers. He was an excellent chess player, taking on four tables simultaneously and winning. Morrill and LaRouche soon became close friends, spending their time talking politics. It was a heady time. Fascism had been defeated and millions around the globe had hopes of a new and better world emerging from the carnage of war. Morrill and LaRouche had witnessed the revolutionary turbulence of the peoples of the Indian subcontinent who were in the throes of casting off their imperial masters. They were not the only soldiers considering socialist ideas. By the time the boat reached the American shore, LaRouche was a Trotskyist.

Sometime in 1947 LaRouche joined the Lynn branch of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), the main American Trotskyist group, taking on the party name Lyn Marcus. The branch was composed primarily of workers

from the nearby General Electric plant. Morrill was an active union militant. LaRouche, however, displayed little interest in union affairs and divided his time with the nearby, larger Boston branch. By 1952 LaRouche had moved to New York City, where he found employment as a business consultant.¹ Morrill lost touch with him.

Little is known of LaRouche's activities between 1952 and 1961. This is probably because he preoccupied himself with his career, playing little role in the internal life of the SWP. By 1961 he was almost totally inactive in the party, was earning his living as an economic consultant for the shoe industry, and lived in a large apartment on Central Park West.²

LaRouche was very much of a loner in those days, already immersed in his own intellectual pursuits, isolated in a party with strong working-class pretensions, which had little use for intellectuals of any kind and none for him. LaRouche looked then about the same as he does now; he was slightly thinner in the face, but already his hairline was receding and he wore glasses. He was in his early forties.

Building the Fifth International

In the summer of 1965, LaRouche launched a political struggle inside the SWP against the leadership. He was supported only by Carol Larrabee (who also used the names Schnitzer and White), with whom he was then living. He had already developed many of the basic ideas that flowered in his prosperous days as an independent leftist—ideas that he has adapted to his rightist politics.

In this period LaRouche lived with Larrabee in a small apartment crammed with books and documents in the West Village. LaRouche struck those who met him as extremely brilliant and exuded self-confidence. He was convinced he could master any subject and had thoroughly studied Marx's *Capital*, Rosa Luxemburg's *The Accumulation of Capital*, and Hegel's *Logic*.

He drew an elitist view of the world from Lenin, particularly from his famous pamphlet *What Is to Be Done?* This he interpreted to mean that an intellectual layer, the "professional revolutionary," had the key role to play in the process of social transformation of society. The task of this revolutionary cadre was to gain hegemony over the intellectually backward masses.

He borrowed from Gramsci his view of "hegemony."³ He saw this as a twofold process: a struggle of competing intellectuals on the left for dominance, while the left seeks working-class leadership by defeating the "bourgeoisie's" hegemony over the minds of workers. However, he did not accept Gramsci's more equalitarian notion that the working class would develop its own leaders, "organic intellectuals."

He was also influenced by Georg Lukács' concept of "class consciousness," particularly his emphasis on the active role of thought and therefore thinkers in the revolutionary process.⁴ Of course, he saw himself as *the* revolutionary thinker with a critical role to play in the hegemonic struggle to lead the masses to power.

Another element of his thinking was a deep belief in conspiracy theories. He believed that Nelson Rockefeller and associated liberal, internationalist-oriented capitalists were conspiring to corrupt black revolutionaries through antipoverty programs, while saving capitalism internationally through various aid schemes.⁵

LaRouche left the SWP that year and joined a small Trotskyist group associated with Gerry Healy (see chapter 10), then called the American Committee for the Fourth International (ACFI).⁶ This brought him into contact with Healy when he came to Canada to meet with his American supporters. Healy was not impressed. Gurus generally find other gurus intolerable.

LaRouche stayed with ACFI for only six months and then moved on to another minute Trotskyist group, the Spartacist League. Unable to win this group over to "LaRouchism," LaRouche and Larrabee left after a few months. He sent out a letter pompously announcing that all factions and sections of the Trotskyist Fourth International were dead and that he and Larrabee were going to build the Fifth International. In a way, this is what he has done.

LaRouche and SDS

The year was 1968 and the student strike at Columbia had been broken a few months earlier. There were around thirty students in the room, sitting on the floor. They surrounded a tall, stoop-shouldered man sporting a shaggy beard. It was Lyndon H. LaRouche Jr., and he was lecturing his followers, members of the National Caucus of Labor Committees (NCLC). At the time the group was an affiliate of the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). LaRouche had gathered these students around him when he played a very active role in the recent student strike at Columbia.

The meeting started at three P.M. and went on for seven hours. It was difficult to tell where discussions of tactics left off and an educational presentation had begun. LaRouche encouraged the students and gave them esoteric assignments. One was assigned to search through the writings of George Sorel to discover the anarchistic origins of Mark Rudd, the future leader of the Weathermen. Another volunteered to study Rosa Luxemburg's *The Accumulation of Capital*. Since SDS was strong on spirit and action but rather bereft of theory, LaRouche definitely filled a void.⁷

We can see here the embryo of a social-political grouping which would,

in time, evolve into a political cult. The group was based upon this single intellectual leader. LaRouche had become a kind of intellectual and political guru and was training these students as his disciples. Yet the rational still dominated his thinking and that of the group, its structure was informal and its discipline minimal, and it was not without influence among broader New Left intellectual strata.

LaRouche trained his disciples to view themselves as a gifted elite, the only people on earth who fully grasped the nature of the epoch and who had the program that could solve all of society's ills. "One must start with the recruitment and education of a revolutionary intelligentsia," LaRouche wrote in 1970. "By necessity, rather than choice, the source of such cadres is mainly a minority of young intellectuals, such as student radicals, rather than working class, black militant layers, etc., themselves." He expected these student recruits "to commit themselves to a total re-education and life of the most intensive study as well as activism."⁸ These members were trained to view themselves as an elite and to have a very low opinion of the "swinish"⁹ workers they had been self-appointed to lead.

Lyndon LaRouche developed a Marxist worldview in his early leftist NCLC days, which has stayed with him as he evolved into a rightist. LaRouche, basing himself on Marx, believed that the capitalist system needed to continuously expand in order to survive. Once capitalism reached its limits and could no longer grow, it would go into crisis and collapse. LaRouche also shared a modernist outlook with Marx. He believed progress in the form of the growth of the world's productive forces was the central purpose of human activity.

Marx viewed capitalism as a passing phase in societal evolution. Thus capitalist crisis created the conditions for working-class revolution, which in turn would produce a socialist society. Under socialism the productive forces, no longer constricted by capitalist relations, would continue to develop. LaRouche developed a series of proposals aimed at what he viewed as the contradictions of capitalism.

He called this approach the "Theory of Reindustrialization." Capitalism, he claimed, had entered a "third stage of imperialism" and desperately needed new opportunities for capital investment. The Vietnam War was being waged by the United States because it needed the country as a rice bowl to feed India. India, in turn, would be the next area of rapid capital accumulation. This led him to predict the imminent collapse of the system unless his advice was followed. Present leaders of capitalist nations stood as impediments to progress, while only LaRouche, and those who followed him, could prevent catastrophe.¹⁰

Operation Mop-Up

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, LaRoucheite writings and agitation were presented in an increasingly frenetic manner bolstered by predictions of economic doom. He sounded very much like Gerry Healy in this respect. (See chapter 10.) The fate of the world rested with his group and its great leader, Lyndon LaRouche Jr. The resources, both technological and human, were present for a glorious economic transformation. The problem lay with the stupidity of the nation's leaders and the swinishness of the masses. The obvious solution was to bring Lyndon LaRouche Jr., swiftly to power.

LaRouche, like most of the rest of the left, expected the 1970s to be a period of growing discontent in the United States, a continuation of the student movement of the 1960s, this time extended and reinforced by a labor radicalization. Instead a conservative mood engulfed student and worker, leaving pretty slim pickings for the remaining radical groups. Many groups—LaRouche's among them—turned inward, rejecting a world that rejected them.

It was in 1973 that LaRouche began a process that consolidated his followers into a cult while moving the group politically from the extreme left to the extreme right. By this time he had broken with SDS. The process began with "Operation Mop-Up," which raged from May to September 1973.¹¹ His supporters, armed with bats, chains, and martial arts weapons, launched physical attacks on members of the Socialist Workers Party and the Communist Party.¹² LaRouche announced to the world that he intended to remove these two parties as competitors.

Not content to attack these two organizations, he extended his efforts to the "New Communist" groupings, the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP), October League (OL), and Progressive Labor Party (PLP). "If Rockefeller's Maoist Police dogs are still running loose a few weeks from now," his press declared, "you had better kiss your family goodbye. These gangs of rapists, strike breakers, terrorists and brainwashers—RU [Revolutionary Union], PLP, and OL—are the best thing that Rocky has going for himself in his mad push for fascist rule. . . ."¹³

The Labor Committee physically assaulted various groups sixty times between April and September 1973.¹⁴ LaRouche had decided to gain hegemony through physical beatings. People on the left began to wonder about whether LaRouche could still be considered one of them.

Next came a series of actions about as bizarre as any undertaken by religious cults. In the summer of 1973, learning from the confrontational therapy of the New Age psychology cults, LaRouche began holding "ego-stripping" sessions.¹⁵ (See discussions of this same process as used by the Workers Revolutionary Party [chapter 10], the Democratic Workers Party [chapter 9],

and the New Alliance Party [chapter 7].) Anyone who failed in a political task was subjected to “pure psychological terror,” as one victim, Christine Berl, later described the process.¹⁶ Everyone in the group would start attacking the individual, delving into every aspect of their past and their personal life.

In this period LaRouche launched a campaign against the sexual impotence of his membership.

The principal source of impotence, both male and female, is the mother. . . . [T]o the extent that my physical powers do not prevent me, I am now confident and capable of ending your political—and sexual—impotence; the two are interconnected aspects of the same problem. . . . I am going to make you organizers—by taking your bedroom away from you until you make the step to be effective organizers.¹⁷

The Manchurian Candidate

LaRouche became convinced that the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) was determined to assassinate him. After all, LaRouche reasoned, he alone threatened the entrenched ruling powers in the world. It was therefore to be expected that the ruling elite would enlist the services of the CIA to remove him.

In 1972 Carol Larrabee left LaRouche and married a young British disciple, Christopher White. The couple settled in England and worked, rather unsuccessfully, at building the NCLC in that country. Berlet and Bellman believe that Larrabee’s leaving is what so completely unhinged him, contributing to the frenzy of “Operation Mop-Up,” as well as the insanity of his rantings about impotence and his extreme paranoia.¹⁸

LaRouche recalled the couple to the United States to attend a national conference in December 1973. White, realizing he was headed for an ego-stripping session and not being particularly mentally stable, broke down during the flight to America. As he left the plane, he started shouting that the CIA was planning to kill both Larrabee and LaRouche. Larrabee called LaRouche, and the deranged fellow was dragged off to a deprogramming session. White confessed to being a “Manchurian candidate” who had been tortured in a London basement by the CIA and British Intelligence. He claimed he was programmed to kill his wife and set LaRouche up for assassination by Cuban exile frogmen. The whole group was caught up in a frenzy, press releases were issued, and members were given training on how to detect other “Manchurian candidates” and how to withstand CIA torture.

One member, Alice Weitzman, could not swallow the CIA business. Her skepticism was sufficient proof to LaRouche that she must be a CIA agent.

He sent six members to her apartment, near Columbia University. She was held captive and forced to listen to Beethoven at high volume. LaRouche had a high regard for the composer (he was German, after all) and believed his music could deprogram “Manchurian candidates.” Weitzman was able to toss a note out her window. A passerby picked it up and alerted the cops. She was rescued but refused to press charges against her captors.¹⁹ The incident cannot help but bring to mind Irene Gorst’s experience in Gerry Healy’s Red House just two years later (see chapter 10).

The significance of the 1973–1974 period in the evolution of Lyndon LaRouche’s NCLC is not to be underestimated. Only his most unquestioning and devoted followers could possibly have survived the madness of their leader. Those capable of independent judgment and thought were effectively weeded out. The remaining members traveled with LaRouche from the extreme left to the extreme right without even being aware of the political distance involved. The membership of the NCLC had been transformed into cultists.

Life in the LaRouche Cult

Linda Ray, a former member of the LaRouche group, described a group lifestyle that parallels closely the lifestyles of religious cults:

Leaders exploited normal family tensions to separate LaRouche members from their parents, lovers and spouses. Two members of LaRouche’s elite convinced me that my father was laundering money for the drug trade. . . . The LaRouche organization tried to control all aspects of my life. I was told which apartment to live in, when to buy a car, when to quit my job, what to read, what movies not to see, which music was o.k., how to ask my parents for \$2,000 for dental work when I needed money to pay the rent, and when to split up with my boyfriend.²⁰

From 1974 on, the group became increasingly right wing. It abandoned recruitment efforts on the left and substituted Moonie and Hare Krishna-style solicitation at airports and bus terminals. Remarkably, the political transition was so gradual that most members did not even notice what was happening. Linda Ray herself, a 1960s radical who joined in 1974, hung on until 1981. The red, white, and blue replaced the red. Members were told that “Hamilton’s economic policies represented the same ideals of progress and industrialization in this country that Marx represented in Europe,” while Plato and Dante replaced the Marxist reading list. In 1980 members were instructed to vote for Reagan.²¹

Members no longer had time to read, think, or even sleep. They were

working twelve-hour shifts and living on stipends of \$100 or \$125 a week, which were not always paid. "It seemed that we were constantly in a state of mobilization, our bodies filled with adrenaline, ready for fight or flight." In 1981 some 300 to 600 people left the organization, including many, but not all, of the old leftists. Those that remained were committed cult members, completely under LaRouche's control.²²

The New American Fascism

LaRouche's politics became extremely right wing though still populist. Consistent with his views on reindustrialization, he became a strong advocate of nuclear power as well as of Stars Wars technology. This permitted him to raise considerable funds from the industries devoted to those technologies. He became a bitter enemy of "entropists" such as environmentalists. Preaching imminent doom unless his policies were followed, he claimed that only he could save the nation.

Dennis King has documented in detail Lyndon LaRouche's fascist and neo-Nazi connections. "In the early and middle 1980s LaRouche utilized SDI [the Strategic Defense Initiative, also called Star Wars] and beam weapons to draw together the scattered forces of European and American neofascism to defend Nazi war criminals and promote revanchism."²³ Berlet and Bellman have shown LaRouche's connections with the Aryan Nations,²⁴ while McLemee documented his relations with the extreme right anti-Semitic and proto-fascist Liberty Lobby.²⁵

He laced his program with a combination of anti-Semitism and conspiracy theories. For example, much of LaRouche's venom has been directed against the British. The Rothschilds, according to this view, ran Great Britain, creating "the Zionist-British organism."²⁶ He is a Holocaust denier, and the New York State Supreme Court ruled it is "fair comment" to call LaRouche an anti-Semite.²⁷ Rockefeller remained high up in LaRouche's enemies list, while special hatred was directed against Rockefeller associate Henry Kissinger (who is Jewish). LaRoucheites sought out Kissinger and hounded him. Richard Lobenthal of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) characterized LaRouche's NCLC as the "closest thing to an American fascist party that we've got."²⁸

The power of LaRouche's cultist hold on his followers is illustrated in the case of Ed and Nancy Spannaus, as well as Tony Papert, all three well-known young New Left activists in the 1960s, who have remained in the LaRouche group as his chief lieutenants. Just as impressive has been LaRouche's ability to hold on to his Jewish followers, including his former companion Carol Larrabee, despite his blatant anti-Semitism.

LaRouche operated through a series of interlocking front organizations. For example, he organized the Fusion Energy Foundation, which received support from people in and around the nuclear energy and aerospace industry. He put out a journal called *Executive Intelligence Review*, claiming to operate a private intelligence service directed against terrorists and drug cartels.

The federal government under Ronald Reagan was hoodwinked. Top officials of the National Security Council (NSC) and the Central Intelligence Agency met with LaRouche in 1982 and 1983. He even had White House access.²⁹

LaRouche entered the Democratic Party primary in New Hampshire in 1980. Jonathan Prestage, a reporter for the Manchester *Union-Leader*, asked LaRouche about his organization's intelligence-gathering network. He was threatened by NCLC supporters. He wrote the article anyway. "Prestage said the day after the story ran, he awoke in his large old house in rural Barrington to find one of his cats dead on his back doorstep. In all, three cats were left dead on the doorstep over three days."³⁰

He infiltrated the Democratic Party again in 1986, setting up the National Democratic Policy Committee. His people actually won the primary slots in Illinois for lieutenant governor and secretary of state forcing the party's candidate for governor, Adlai Stevenson III, to disassociate himself from them and contributing to the party's losing the election.³¹ He has been a perennial candidate for president, using the United States Labor Party mantle. Other front groups include the Club of Life (which is antichoice on abortion), the Lafayette Foundation for the Arts and Sciences (which promotes LaRouche's cultural tastes), and the Schiller Institute (which publishes LaRouche's writings.) This method of operation closely parallels the methods used by New Alliance Party (chapter 7) and by Gino Perente's NATLFED (chapter 12).

In the 1980s LaRouche launched the Proposition 64 initiative in California, which would have established restrictive public health policies regarding acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS). Proposition 64 was opposed by virtually all public health experts and public officials. It was rejected by a three to one margin by the voters. However, the measure did a lot of damage by causing a good deal of unnecessary fear among the population. In 1987 LaRouche wrote "that unless repeated mass screening and isolation of AIDS victims are undertaken, 'other ways of reducing the number of carriers will become increasingly popular.' Lynch-mobs, he says, 'might be seen by later generations' historians as the only political force which acted to save the human species from extinction. . . . [T]he only solution is either public health measures including isolation as necessary, or "accelerated deaths" of carriers."³²

LaRouche quickly learned how to recruit the disoriented children of the wealthy and to separate them from their money. LaRouche's most famous recruit is Lewis duPont Smith, a duPont heir to an estate worth millions. He gave \$212,000 to LaRouche and moved to rural Virginia to be near the master. However, his family went to court; had him declared mentally ill; and put him on a \$5,000 a month stipend, protecting the rest of his \$10 million fortune.³³ Other large donations included \$2 million from Charles Zimmerman, a retired Bethlehem Steel executive, and more than \$1 million from Elizabeth Rose, another retiree. The *Wall Street Journal* estimated in 1986 that LaRouche's various groups were spending about \$25 to \$30 million a year.³⁴

LaRouche developed quite an empire, centered on a 172-acre estate in Leesburg, Virginia, which he purchased for \$2 million. In 1986 between 250 and 500 people lived and worked at the complex, which included phone banks, offices, and a printing plant. The facility was guarded by armed men with walkie talkies twenty-four-hours a day.³⁵

The LaRouche empire reached its high point in 1986. However, LaRouche's hunger for publicity brought him to the attention of the public and federal officials, while his phone bank operators, working to meet increasingly high quotas for funds, began making unauthorized withdrawals on credit card accounts.

Outside the Boston federal courthouse, a photographer discreetly snaps pictures of certain persons entering the building. In the echoing halls, private security guards whisper into tiny two-way radios. Those entering the second-floor courtroom pass through the gleaming arch of an electronic metal detector. When the main defendant leaves the courtroom, husky bodyguards surround him as he is hustled into a car waiting in the basement parking garage.

So went opening day of the 1987 trial of LaRouche on credit card fraud and conspiracy to obstruct justice. While that proceeding ended in a mistrial, a later criminal trial in Virginia convicted him on charges of illegally soliciting unsecured loans, mail fraud, and tax code violations.³⁶

LaRouche entered a Federal penitentiary in 1989. After being paroled in 1994, he returned to Leesburg.³⁷

The Colonization of Mars

In order to occupy himself while in Federal prison for defrauding old ladies, LaRouche wrote a short book, *In Defense of Common Sense*. It is a rather strange book, typical of his current writings, that combines obscure geometric illustrations, a defense of Platonism, a eulogy to the seventeenth-century

astronomer Johannes Kepler, and denunciations of Kant and most philosophers since Plato with an essential restatement of LaRouche's modernist, Marx-derived worldview. "Scientific and technological progress," LaRouche stated, "reflects a quality of the human individual which sets mankind apart from, and above all other living creatures." Our very nature leads to "potential population-density."

LaRouche was totally opposed to any kind of "entropic" view which might suggest a limit upon the constant expansion of human technology and population. He coined the word "negentropic" for his advocacy of continued industrial and population growth. However, what do we do with all the technology, pollution, and people? No problem! "Once we have begun the permanent colonization of Mars on a sound basis, as we might approximately forty years from now, the philosophical standpoint in spacecraft, which has been reflected here, would be hegemonic for humanity."³⁸

While their leader was thinking deep thoughts in prison, his minions were far from inactive. In addition to the usual phone bank solicitations and airport tabling, the NCLC took what looked on the surface like a lurch to the left. They joined with other antiwar demonstrators to oppose the Gulf War in 1990 and 1991. The NCLC was by no means a lone voice from the right among the left-wing demonstrators. Pat Buchanan, the Populist Party, the Liberty Lobby, and related ultra-rightists and neofascists also joined in. Ultra-nationalism and neo-isolationism brought elements of the right into a "united front" with elements of the left.³⁹

An Offer to President Clinton

Lyndon LaRouche has made a career out of predicting the collapse of the global economic system. Understandably he felt vindicated by the world economic troubles which occurred during 1998. He, of course, has felt no need to explain to his followers how this system has survived, and in fact prospered, over the past forty years despite ignoring LaRouchian nostrums. He simply raised the volume on his rhetoric. "The world is now in a crisis which is best compared to a world war," he stated. We are threatened with a "New Dark Age" and "headed toward Hell."⁴⁰ "There is no economic catastrophe in all modern history," LaRouche wrote, "which compares with the global disaster which, unless prevented, will strike world-wide, within a period more likely countable in weeks, rather than months."⁴¹ There is only one solution: "We appeal to you, President Clinton, to appoint Lyndon LaRouche immediately as economic advisor to your administration."⁴²

LaRouche's reasoning is of interest. He has developed a theoretical framework for contemporary fascism. LaRouche drew from Marx his modernist

identification of human progress with the growth in the productivity of labor through industrial development. This growth is seen as dependent on the development of the “machine tool design sector” of the economy.⁴¹ He called his policy the “American system”⁴⁴ and claimed it was rooted in the views of Alexander Hamilton and the practice of Franklin Roosevelt. This approach, he claimed, was abandoned following the death of Jack Kennedy. Its last great accomplishment was the “German-American”⁴⁵ space program.

It was now time to abandon “crisis management,” and “shilly-shallying”—in other words, democracy. LaRouche believed in “the inherent tendency of popular opinion toward mediocrity. The very tendency to rely upon collective (e.g., ‘collegial’) decisions, rather than decisions based upon validation of principle, is itself a well-spring of mediocrity.”⁴⁶ He further explained, “To propose to assemble a virtual rabble of decision-makers, usually featuring those parties who are still advocates of the policies which have caused and advocated the crisis, is scarcely a noble enterprise, nor a fruitful one. Some relatively few, in the position to issue influential directives must preempt the situation.”⁴⁷ Just in case there should be any question as to LaRouche’s concept of governance, he declared China to be “probably one of the best governments in the world today, in terms of quality of leadership, the kind of leadership required to get through crisis.”⁴⁸

He proposed “directives” in the “Classical military sense.” As LaRouche saw it: “Every sovereign nation has available to it, those inalienable emergency powers inhering in the right of any sovereign nation-state republic to continue to exist.” Such powers were “acknowledged, and specified, with varying degrees of explicit reference” in the United States Declaration of Independence and in the Preamble to the Constitution. He opposed all forms of international organization because “there exists no higher political authority on this planet, than a perfectly sovereign nation-state republic.”⁴⁹

Once the leader of the nation-state—LaRouche addressed his appeal to President Clinton—assumed emergency powers, he was to impose a protectionist trade policy, to set prices, to introduce rationing if necessary, and to institute a large-scale government investment program aimed at strengthening the aforementioned machine tool design sector.

The parallel between LaRouche’s thinking and that of the classic fascist model is striking. LaRouche, like Mussolini and Hitler before him, borrowed from Marx yet changed his theories fundamentally. Most important, Marx’s internationalist outlook was abandoned in favor of a narrow nation-state perspective. Marx’s goal of abolishing capitalism was replaced by the model of a totalitarian state that directs an economy where ownership of the means of production is still largely in private hands. The corporations and their owners remain in place but have to take their orders from LaRouche. Hitler called

this schema “national socialism.” LaRouche hopes the term “the American system” will be more acceptable. Berlet and Bellman believe “Lyndon LaRouche represents the most recent incarnation of the unique twentieth-century phenomenon of totalitarian fascism.”⁵⁰

All this may sound quite far-fetched, especially when President Clinton is viewed as the man to implement these proposals, with LaRouche’s advice. Yet, in an uncanny way, LaRouche has constructed a theoretical basis for a contemporary fascism. At a time when many people see global corporations exporting jobs and undermining wages and social benefits, an autarchic economic program can have its appeal. Pat Buchanan’s and Ross Perot’s nationalist attacks on globalization sound very much like LaRouche’s. His rejection of all international restraints on the nation-state connect up with similar views held by supporters of the militias and by related rightist extremists (see chapter 4). When politicians of both parties are held in such low repute, talk of assuming “emergency powers” could have an appeal in some quarters.

On August 18, 1999, Lyndon LaRouche filed papers with the Federal Election Commission asking for federal matching funds for the presidential election. He planned to run in the Democratic primaries against Al Gore and Bill Bradley. He claimed to have raised more than \$1 million and to have some 7,000 volunteers. The latter figure was surely an exaggeration. The main theme of his campaign is to be—surprise!—the “advanced state of the global economic crisis.” At the time of the filing LaRouche was living in Germany recovering from double bypass surgery.⁵¹

Conclusion: A Long Journey

It is quite possible that, given a different set of circumstances, LaRouche could have continued to lead the uneventful life on the fringe of radical politics that occupied him during the first two decades after he returned on a troop ship from India. What unhinged him?

Lyndon LaRouche in the 1960s was an egotist who showed signs of instability. Yet, for all that, he was an intelligent fellow who attracted serious intellectuals committed to the betterment of society. Some of his thinking was a little strange, but, on the whole, he was rational.

We view LaRouche as a grotesque product of the sixties ferment. The adulation of some of these students created the conditions for him to assemble a grouping around his ideas and personality. The collapse of student radicalism in the 1970s set the stage for his political evolution from left to right. His followers’ loyalty encouraged him in his madness, reinforcing his psychotic view of the world and of his role within it.

We may never know with certainty what caused LaRouche's transformation from a committed leftist for two-and-half decades into a virtual fascist or how he rationalized it. Our guess is—and it is only a guess—that he felt a deep bitterness toward the left because of its lack of appreciation of his brilliance. Convinced he deserved to be worshipped, he had to find a new group of parishioners.

LaRouche's political evolution permits us to bring into focus those aspects of leftist ideology that lend themselves to rightist interpretation. *Catastrophism* is one such element. The extreme left and the extreme right share a common belief that the world economic and political system is on the verge of collapse. More significant is *elitism*. LaRouche was by no means alone in drawing from Lenin the concept of an intellectually elite professional cadre of revolutionaries, with an understanding of the world that is superior to that held by ordinary folk. This elite layer is destined for a special leadership mission in the revolutionary process. Inherent in this view is disdain for the majority of the population and therefore for the democratic process itself. The masses are to be manipulated and mobilized for their own good. LaRouche did not need to change anything in this outlook as he traveled from left to right.

Gathering an elite praetorian guard led to cultic practices that parallel the most extreme religious thought control groups. The LaRouche organization practiced ideological totalism, regimented its followers, had an authoritarian structure, and certainly believed that its members alone possessed the truth. LaRouche perfected methods for breaking the will of members, altering their sense of self. Paranoia clearly delineated the group's boundary with the outside world. Adherents were separated from their families, driven to work extreme hours with little sleep, and maintained on little money. LaRouche's core membership is rather small, perhaps no more than a thousand these days, yet he has been able to have influence far greater than this membership figure would suggest.

LaRouche's millennialist vision, which inspires his members to conduct feverish activity and binds them to him, has political roots quite distinct from religious cults. Even in its current fascist form, the group's beliefs have more in common with "Marxist-Leninism" than with the Bible. Yet the concept of a small cadre group that possesses the critical knowledge needed to save a world threatened with imminent collapse can drive political cult members as powerfully as a dream of a messiah descending from heaven.

Part Three

Therapy Cults and Politics

Chapter 7

Fred Newman

Lenin as Therapist

*Let Hitler take office—he will soon be bankrupt,
and then it will be our day.*

—H. Remmele, Communist member of the Reichstag, 1933

Pat Buchanan and That Woman

In the fall of 1999 Pat Buchanan sat down to lunch with Dr. Lenora Fulani. A pretty, light-skinned African American woman, conservatively dressed, with close-cropped hair, Fulani was by no means a novice to politics. She had been the 1992 presidential candidate of the New Alliance Party (NAP). The party qualified for more than \$1 million in federal matching funds and was on the ballot in nearly all fifty states. In the past Fulani had supported Jesse Jackson and had been a close confidante of Louis Farrakhan and the Reverend Al Sharpton. She had a reputation as an outspoken lesbian and a defender of abortion rights. Buchanan was on a tour promoting a book in which he expressed the view that the United States should not have interfered with Hitler, his subjugation of Europe, and the Holocaust. Some eyebrows were raised in the mainstream press corps.

During an interview later that day, Buchanan was asked about his relations with the “black-nationalist Marxist.” His eyes narrowed and he answered: “I did not have sexual relations with that woman, Lenora Fulani.”¹ Political relations, however, were a different matter. Fulani was about to launch her latest grand political maneuver, promoting Buchanan as the presidential candidate of the Reform Party.

Fred Newman runs the cult, which fuses politics seamlessly with psychotherapy. While Newman is little known, Dr. Lenora Fulani is a national media figure. The Newmanites prove that cults can affect mainstream politics

in the United States in a dangerous way. At the same time Newman’s distinctive method of cadre recruitment gives us an insight into the psychology of cult organization in general.

The Cult’s Obscure Origins

Fred Newman, a Korean War veteran, was awarded a Ph.D. in the philosophy of science from Stanford University.² He has had no formal training in any branch of psychology. He turned to a Maoist version of Marxism in the mid-1960s. In 1970 Newman gathered together a tiny collective, which shared a communal apartment on Manhattan’s Upper West Side. This was a moment when the left was searching for a road forward after the collapse of the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and the New Left generally, while a cultural revolution was in full swing. Newman’s collective, much like Harvey Jackins’ reevaluation counseling (see chapter 6), combined the radical politics of the sixties with the New Age therapy of the seventies. The result was a potent mixture of cultic consequences.

They named their collective “If . . . Then.”³ While Jackins stressed techniques of cocounseling in which therapist and patient exchange places, Newman developed a group version of radical therapy led by a therapist, which he called “social therapy” or “crisis normalization.”⁴ All members underwent therapy while they, at the same time, carried out political activity. By 1973 the group was called Centers for Change (CFC). “CFC is,” Newman explained, “a Marxist-Leninist-Maoist organization.”⁴

The origins of the group in a communal setting gave it a cultlike character from the very beginning. This aspect of Newman’s operation did not change. Its core members have lived in shared facilities or are closely linked to such communes. Core members are expected to quit their jobs, sell their private possessions, and earn a meager living through such activities as soliciting funds on street corners.

In Bed with Lyndon LaRouche

For approximately one year, from the middle of 1973 until the end of August in 1974, Newman’s group was under the influence of Lyndon LaRouche (see chapter 5). The “United Front,” was formed, consisting of LaRouche’s National Caucus of Labor Committees (NCLC), Newman’s Center for Change, and a third group led by Eugenio Perente-Ramos (this later became another cult, the Communist Party U.S.A. (Provisional) (CPUSA [P])—see chapter 12).⁵ Joint forums were held and activities coordinated. On June 1, 1974, Newman wrote, “We have traveled from a community based store-

front, to a health service collective, to a cadre socialist organization. We have traveled from non-existence to existence and finally back to non-existence at a higher level. For CFC is disbanded. We move, not as a collective, but as self-conscious human beings into the National Caucus of Labor Committees.”⁶

Fred Newman’s comment about moving into the NCLC “not as a collective” proved to be a bit disingenuous. Then again, a cultist like LaRouche should have been sharp enough to spot another cultist. The group had been formed around the personality of Fred Newman, they all underwent continuous group therapy under his guidance, and they shared common living quarters. The Newman group continued to operate in lockstep while within the NCLC. It should therefore come as no shock that the fusion did not work out. The two gurus inevitably clashed. In late August 1974 Newman and thirty-eight followers walked out of the NCLC to form the International Workers Party (IWP). Newman announced that his tiny group had “now become the vanguard of the working class.” Newman declared: “The organization of the vanguard party is, as Marx makes clear, the organization of the class. The formation of the IWP had grown from our attempt to organize the [NCLC] from within that it might move from a position of left hegemony to a position of leadership of the class.”⁷

Newman’s period of association with LaRouche was to have a major impact on his thinking and future development. It is significant that he joined up with LaRouche precisely at the moment when the NCLC was moving from left to right and engaging in some rather bizarre conduct. Newman contacted LaRouche within weeks of the conclusion of his “Operation Mop-Up,” involving physical attacks on the left.

Newman declared in 1974 that “the former workers of CFC will organize in the spirit outlined by Marcus [Lyndon LaRouche].”⁸ He wrote a book that contained extensive quotations from LaRouche. He echoed LaRouche’s catastrophism, seeing the United States as facing “the grim reality of cannibalization and encroaching fascism.”⁹ He agreed with LaRouche that a “massive fascist brainwashing” was taking place. Like LaRouche, he dismissed most of the left: “Black nationalism, community control, feminism, the petty bourgeois movement, gay pride, worker participation programs, trade union parochialism, and so on, are concepts devised by the fascists to locate a group’s identity in something other than the working class.”¹⁰

In 1974 Newman declared that “Liberalism is fascism. . . . The liberal do-gooders are the fascists.”¹¹ And, “‘The Left Movement’ or ‘The Radical Movement’ or ‘The Movement’ . . . is the CIA-developed deterrent to the development of a vanguard party. . . . Fortunately there are some around working to destroy the CIA controlled left movement. Lyn Marcus and the NCLC are such a group.”¹²

While Newman never again publicly referred to the left in such terms, he was never really *part* of the left. His relationship was more that of a predator: from time to time running in Democratic primaries, moving into existing leftist organizations with the aim of taking them over, and utilizing prominent black leaders to advance his own aims.

Just as important, there was a concurrence between LaRouche and Newman on the critical questions of the role of leadership, cadre formation, and the mental manipulation of the membership. LaRouche brought to the “United Front” a far more developed distortion of Marxism than anything Newman had been able to extract from Mao Tse-Tung. Crucial was the linking of an apocalyptic crisis theory with the necessity of creating an elite cadre.

Newman contributed his knowledge of psychotherapy and experience gained in transforming his followers through these techniques into political operators. We suspect that LaRouche’s rantings about impotency and his ego-stripping sessions were at least partially inspired by Newman, who claimed that “all psychic problems are correctly diagnosed as impotency.”¹³

After parting, the political evolution of the two gurus was, on the surface, quite different. LaRouche transformed his hostility toward the left and its constituents into a new rightist ideology with links to fascism. Newman continued to function politically on the left until 1994, when he began to move into the right-centrist Perot movement. Yet both leaders shared a common disdain for ordinary citizens, who were to be manipulated; for their members, who were transformed into robots to be used to do the manipulation; and for the democratic norms of a pluralistic society.

The Theory of Proletarian Psychotherapy

Fred Newman developed, in his 1974 book *Power and Authority*, a theory of the mind and its relation to society that has served him well as a justification for the existence of his cult and has aided him in controlling his followers. Newman saw revolution as a two-level process: the external overthrow of the bourgeoisie and its state and the internal overthrow of the “Bourgeois ego.”

We must learn, he insisted, to see “in both directions—inside and outside.”¹⁴ “Proletarian or revolutionary psychotherapy is . . . the overthrow of the rulers of the mind by the workers of the mind.”¹⁵ “Revolutionary therapy,” he stated, “involves an act of insurrection; of overthrow.”¹⁶ Through this act the “bourgeois ego” is replaced by the “proletarian ego.” “The proletarian or revolutionary therapist is . . . a leader.”¹⁷ This internal revolution is followed by “a long period of the withering away of the proletarian ego.”¹⁸

Newman viewed the “bourgeois ego” as the automatic product of the capitalist system. Drawing from Marx via Lenin and LaRouche, he concluded

issues was dictated to me by NAP—independent thought was discouraged. We were all part of something bigger than ourselves and were of one mind. I felt personally threatened, like I was being absorbed into something and was losing myself. . . . I was completely exhausted, so tired I was unable to work well. Being unable to work I had no income, as I was expected to raise my salary myself in addition to raising money for the campaign. . . . I was very frightened. I was in a strange city, I knew no one really except my lover, who couldn't help me: I had no job, no home and no money. At this point I was feeling very suicidal.

It's been four months since I left the campaign and I am putting my life back together piece by piece.³⁸

This report is interesting in a number of respects. First, it documents one method of recruitment to the Newmanite cult: a person is attracted to one of the political projects sponsored by Newman, in this case the NAP, and is then urged to take group therapy. Only those who combine political activism with therapy are considered solid core members of the group.

Second, we are given a picture of the intensity and time-consuming nature of the group's political activity. Loren Redwood felt "an incredible sense of urgency which overrode any personal needs." This in turn has a disorienting and numbing effect upon the recruit. Her feelings and experience is identical to that reported to us by members of such groups as the Workers Revolutionary Party, the Militant Group, the Democratic Workers Party, and the LaRoucheites. It helps explain how a politically oriented cult can produce the same degree of total control over members as religious cults.

Third, the Newmanites carry out a practice that is common among religious cults but not used as extensively by political cults. This is having members quit their jobs, move into common quarters with other members, and solicit funds from the public to support the organization as well as themselves. This increases the recruit's isolation from civil society as well as his or her dependence upon the group for survival. We have found this practice among the LaRoucheites (chapter 5), NATLFED (chapter 12), and Synanon (chapter 8).

Not all recruits have joined the cult through political activity and been steered toward social therapy. Many seek out therapy because of emotional disturbances, only to find themselves sucked into Newmanite political groups. Berlet reported this experience of an East Coast Latina activist:

I first came into contact with the Social Therapy Institutes through a friend who . . . said there was a group that offered therapy for people with progressive views so I went to see what they offered. . . .

Before and after the therapy session, they would say "why not sell the newspaper" or "maybe you could do us a favor and hand out those leaflets." The therapy offices were full of their political propaganda. In the group therapy sometimes we discussed politics and their political party.

Some people get involved because they think the political work will help them get better emotionally. They told us societal problems are making people ill and the New Alliance Party is going to change things so people get better.³⁹

Marina Ortiz, a single mother living in the Bronx, became involved in social therapy in 1985 in a similar fashion.

The trouble wasn't "in our head," but "in the world," we learned. . . . Through Social Therapy, I was conditioned to relate to my personal history in exclusively political terms. My family's problems and subsequent poverty—and all my suffering—were all the result of the government's imperialist invasion of Puerto Rico. . . . But consciousness-raising in itself was not enough. Our individual development and growth, we were told, was dependent upon the group's. . . . Only by embracing this psycho-therapeutic doctrine could I hope to change what it meant to be a "poor, working-class Puerto-Rican woman. . . ." [T]he "cure" for my depression and anxiety was ultimately conditional upon my becoming a serious political activist.

When I finally left the cult in July of 1990—after finally becoming disgusted with the totalitarian internal structure which, in my opinion, basically relies on slave labor for profit in the name of justice and empowerment—I had to literally rebuild my life.⁴⁰

Individual distress is manipulated to transform the patient into a political activist under the total control of the therapist or the revolutionary leader. The new "family" of fellow cultists replaces the traditional family and friends. The followers become completely dependent upon Newman for their sense of self-esteem. "When Newman was happy, everyone was happy," commented one former member. "When he was angry, everyone was terrified."⁴¹

Organic Leaders: Jackson, Farrakahn, Sharpton

Antonio Gramsci originated the concept of the "organic intellectual." In contrast to "traditional intellectuals," such as clerics, teachers, and other professionals, Gramsci believed each social class created *organically* out of its own members a stratum capable of generalizing that class's historic mission and projecting its hegemony over society as a whole. Since he believed that the capability of being an intellectual is in all human beings, he was convinced that the working class could and would develop its own organic intellectuals. This aspect of his thinking could be interpreted as more democratic than Lenin's approach.

Lenin—particularly in *What Is to Be Done?*—advocated building a party composed exclusively of full-time professional revolutionaries drawn from the traditional intellectuals. This vanguard would bring socialism from "outside" the working class into the proletarian milieu. It matters little the degree

to which Lenin may or may not have modified this view in a later period. What is critical is that so many on the left, including virtually all cultists, have been influenced by this vanguardist "from the outside" theory. Newman learned his Lenin from LaRouche.⁴²

Fred Newman operated on the basis of both concepts of leadership. He viewed his core group as a vanguard formation, made up overwhelmingly of white, middle-class, traditional intellectuals. His elite members were professionals in two ways: They largely worked full time for Newmanite fronts, and, in many cases, they were professional therapists.

Newman's concept of "organic leaders," borrowed from Gramsci, was given a decidedly undemocratic twist. For Newman the term "organic" became a code word meaning "people of color." Organic leaders were therefore prominent black spokespersons with real bases of support in the black community and wide media recognition. He embraced these "organic leaders" uncritically, but they were just so much window dressing to be used as a way of advancing the interests of the secretive vanguard made up of white traditional intellectuals. The result was a manipulative and undemocratic relationship.

The Newmanites' first major foray into organizing around an "organic leader" involved support of Jesse Jackson's Rainbow Coalition and his 1984 and 1988 Democratic Party presidential bids. Declaring "Two Roads Are Better Than One," Lenora Fulani announced support of Jackson while at the same time fielding her own independent candidacy under the New Alliance Party banner.⁴³ Then, in an interesting and self-serving twist, the Newmanites organized the Rainbow Lobby. The group, headed by Nancy Ross, had almost the same name as Jackson's organization and an identical program. However, it was not authorized by Jackson, was totally controlled by Newman, and raised its own independent funds to the tune of more than \$1 million a year.⁴⁴ In 1992 the Lobby was closed down and the lobbying firm Ross and Green was formed. The "Ross" of Ross and Green is the very same Nancy Ross, former school board member from the Upper West Side and head of the Rainbow Lobby.⁴⁵ The "Green" was Ann Green, whom we met earlier working with the FBI.

The next "Organic Leader" to catch Newman and Fulani's attention was Louis Farrakhan of the Nation of Islam, noted for his anti-Semitic rantings. This is particularly interesting because, in the LaRouche cohabitation period, Newman shared NCLC's extremely hostile (bordering on racist) attitude toward black nationalists. The NAP moved its national headquarters to Chicago in order to be closer to Farrakhan. In 1995, *after* Newman's dissolution of the NAP and turn toward Perot, he ran a full page advertisement in the *Village Voice* entitled "Never Again! A New Pledge for the Jewish Com-

munity," saluting the Million Man March. It featured a photo of Newman, Farrakhan, and Fulani, and was signed "Dr. Fred Newman, Convenor, Jews for Farrakhan."⁴⁶

Soon Newman added the Reverend Al Sharpton to the organic roster. Sharpton developed a particularly close relationship to the Newmanites during the period he was conducting confrontational marches through Howard Beach and promoting Tawana Brawley, whose tale of rape by white assailants has been proved to be a fabrication. Sharpton has developed a reputation as an antiwhite demagogue and has clashed with New York City's Jewish community. The Newmanites even rented office space to Sharpton and put him on their payroll as a \$12,000 a year consultant.⁴⁷

Noting the connections with Farrakhan and Sharpton, Dennis King wrote in 1992 that the NAP has "unsevered ties to anti-Semitism." Newman is Jewish but this did not prevent him from saying that "Jews 'as a people' have made a pact with 'the devil' to serve as the 'stormtroopers of decadent capitalism against people of color the world over.'"⁴⁸

Overall the Newmanites gained a high profile and significant membership growth in the decade between 1982 and 1992. Newman expanded his base beyond the Upper West Side with therapy centers throughout New York City, as well as in Boston; Chicago; Los Angeles; San Francisco; Pennsylvania; New Jersey; Washington, D.C.; Jackson, Mississippi; and elsewhere. During its first ten years of operations Newman's core group numbered between thirty and forty people. By the end of the next decade, Newman had several hundred core followers and significant political influence. In 1992 NAP-related businesses employed fifty-six people and brought in at least \$3.5 million a year. The East Side Institute for Social Therapy alone reported sales in excess of \$400,000 a year.⁴⁹

Lenora Fulani was a popular, media-savvy spokesperson who received considerable, and largely favorable, press attention. The potent combination of the NAP election campaigns with high-profile identification with Jackson, Farrakhan, and Sharpton made Lenora Fulani a well-known public figure. However, the political winds were shifting to the right. Discontent in America was finding a new path for expression: Ross Perot. Was this tiny white billionaire with his folksy manners and Texan twang a new "organic leader"? If so, of what class?

A Pact with Ross Perot

Beginning in 1992 Ross Perot developed a movement around his quixotic personality. He drew almost exclusively from whites, was particularly popular with small businessmen and people who lived in smaller cities and towns,

He called his formation the Liberation Army Revolutionary Group Organization (LARGO). It had no special relationship with Cuba. He issued a bold challenge to the U.S. government. One statement read:

We do hereby declare, the existence and intent of a National Liberation Front fighting force within the continental confines of the United States of America to be actively engaged in a people's War of Revolution against the aforementioned nation. . . . We hereby file public notice of our intent to conduct a controlled punitive action against United States Federal Forces and municipal forces on a limited scale, from the city of San Francisco on the south, to the Oregon border on the north, other confines being marked by the State of California boundaries.⁷

LARGO's one known action took place in early 1971:

On an island in the Feather River, about thirteen people are busy with shovels and picks digging a deep hole. The purpose of the endeavor is to enable them all to have a place to hide in case of a feared upcoming police dragnet. Soon the hole becomes so huge that the diggers need to be pulled up from the bottom before they can climb out. Suddenly a motorboat is heard approaching the island. In the boat are two game wardens. Everyone scrambles and hides in the hole—except one man left standing near the island's shore clutching an M-1 rifle in his hand. Attempting a ruse, he waves to the game wardens and shouts: "Sure hope I get a big buck!"

"You'd better not, son," yells back one of the game wardens as they putt-putt on down the river. "It isn't deer season yet."⁸

In late 1971 Gerald William Doeden left California and emerged as Eugenio Perente-Ramos in New York City. Perhaps he feared FBI persecution or just wanted to avoid another jail term for failure to pay child support. He went to work in the New York office of Cesar Chavez's United Farm Workers (UFW), which was then conducting a grape boycott. Delores Huerta remembers Perente as a "colorful biker type who played a small role in the boycott for about nine months or a year. . . . He created a lot of problems for the union, attacking us in the press. Then he went off and formed his own group."⁹ The organization Perente created was called the Eastern Farm Workers Association (EFWA). He set up an office in Bellport on the eastern, agricultural end of Long Island.

In December 1972 Perente's group led a strike against a potato processing firm. He claimed to have thirty full-time and seventy part-time "associates." The *New York Times* described Perente as "a flamboyant Mexican-American with flashing eyes and a big mane of black hair."¹⁰ The *East Hampton Star* spoke of Perente's "deep, dark eyes that pierced across the room as he talked about the passion and death of the seasonal farmworker in Long Island."¹¹

Perente had failed to register the EFWA as a labor organization and was hit with a cease-and-desist order. This would be his first and last strike raid on his Bellport office by the Suffolk police uncovered two illegal handguns. These experiences led him to purchase the Carroll Street brownstone in Brooklyn and move himself, together with key supporters, to the new location. He ran his nationwide operation from the "Cave" over the next twenty years, communicating with members by phone and audio tape, rarely leaving the building even for a breath of fresh air.¹²

Learning from Lyndon

During 1973 and 1974 Perente joined with Lyndon LaRouche's National Caucus of Labor Committees (NCLC) (see chapter 5), which in turn was in alliance with Fred Newman and his supporters (see chapter 7). Whether Perente and his followers actually became members of NCLC is unclear. It is known that Perente was active in LaRouche's National Unemployed Welfare Rights Organization (NUWRO) in 1973.

In 1974 Perente was elected president of the Nationwide Unemployed League (NUL) while still remaining the leader of the EFWA. The NUL was a front group organized by Fred Newman's International Workers Party (IWP) which had recently split from LaRouche.¹³ On May 2, 1975, Perente delivered a speech at the headquarters of Fred Newman's International Workers Party (IWP).¹⁴ Dennis King has suggested that the relationship between Perente and Newman "went on at least through 1977. . . . In 1976 further talks were held between NATLFED and IWP."¹⁵

The most likely scenario is that Perente was attracted to the NCLC in the same time period as Newman. He dropped away from LaRouche when Newman left and continued to collaborate with the IWP. It is not known when or why Perente broke off relations with Newman. Of course, the underlying reason for the various splits was clear enough: The three gurus could not be expected to stay together for long.

There was an important strategic reason as well. The three groups came together at a time when LaRouche was actively involved, through NUWRO, in the organization of the poor. By 1974, in his flight to the right, LaRouche had abandoned NUWRO. Newman persisted in local organization, running bucket collections on the West Side in much the same manner that Perente would perfect into a science. We suspect that the remnants of NUWRO became a basis for the growth of Perente's NATLFED.

Of the three gurus, LaRouche was by far the most theoretically developed. We have documented elsewhere Newman's considerable political and theoretical debt to LaRouche. Perente learned much as well, either directly

from LaRouche or indirectly through Newman. This was expressed most clearly in three areas: (1) attitude toward the left, (2) “strata” organizing, and (3) catastrophism.

1. *Attitude toward the left:* Perente joined LaRouche right at the point when he was moving swiftly to the right, breaking all relations with the rest of the left. He had launched his “Operation Mop-Up,” which consisted of a series of hooligan attacks on members of the Communist Party and the Socialist Workers Party. Perente, like Newman, shared LaRouche’s disdain for the left. He and his group avoided any contact with established leftist groups over the next twenty-five years. This proved to be quite helpful to the preservation of the group as a cult. It isolated NATLFED members from any challenge to their views from other leftists.

2. *“Strata” organizing:* Basing himself on certain themes in the writings of Marx, Lenin, and Trotsky, LaRouche had developed his own conception of “strata” organizing. He denounced existing social service organizations as agents of the ruling “liberal” elite, black nationalists as divisive, and trade unions as expressing a narrow “class-in-itself” ideology. He sought to organize the poor into a classwide formation that he would lead with his “class-for-itself” perspective. It was on this basis that he launched a bitter struggle against the black-led National Welfare Rights Organization (NWRO) in favor of his own front group. The net result was the disintegration of the former and his abandonment of the latter.¹⁶ Perente followed a similar model organizing his “entities” that purportedly represented the poor but were actually controlled by his secret “class-for-itself” elite party.

3. *Catastrophism:* LaRouche perfected a theory of capitalist crisis, borrowed from Marxism, and preached an end-game view whereby civilization would collapse unless he was listened to. This perspective, similar to that developed by Gerry Healy (see chapter 10), was used to drive his followers into frenetic levels of activity. Perente, as we will see, topped both Healy and LaRouche by actually setting the date for the insurrection.

The Politics of Perente

Perente combined what he learned from LaRouche with a study of the Communist Party during its most Stalinist “Third Period” from 1929 to 1933. It was the time of the “united front from below” when other tendencies on the left, particularly the Socialist Party, were denounced as “social fascists,” immediate revolution was preached, work in the existing trade unions ignored, and great efforts placed in organizing the unorganized and unemployed into formations controlled directly by the party.¹⁷

Throughout his career Perente spoke warmly of Stalin. He denounced the

rest of the left as “social fascists” and modeled his “entities” on Communist Party unemployment leagues. As we have noted, he had developed these Stalinist views, at least in a nascent form, during his Little Red Bookstore days in San Francisco.

Soon after leaving the UFW Perente rejected working within the traditional trade unions in favor of “loose-knit organizations,” essentially groups controlled by his Communist cadre. The manifesto of the National Labor Federation, issued in 1974, proposed to “organize all those who at present time have no independent organization of economic origin.”¹⁸ A document entitled *Provisional Thought* declared that “the tendency of political thought characterized by the CPUSA (P) finds itself at theoretical and practical odds with most of the de facto Western European movement.” The document endorsed Fidel Castro’s *focoismo*, took a neutral stance on the Sino-Soviet dispute, and denounced Maoism and the rest of the left. “The Party recently separated itself theoretically from the entire body of the existential left within the United States of America by announcing its considered position that fascism exists today in the United States of America.” It called for a “new leadership and new issues to arise from the masses’ struggle: led by the clandestine Formation of the Party.”¹⁹

At one point, early on, the CPUSA (P) had an official membership dues book. This document included the “Mandate,” stating that “clearly a Provisional Party is needed to consolidate the gains of the working class of the United States of America.” It defined the “Provisional Party” as “a closed, or narrow party as befits the current situation. The actual name of the organization will appear on no documents, no propaganda—the title ‘Provisional Party’ will act as designate for inner-Party documents and communications. All other organizations attached to the Party will bear their own designation only.”²⁰

Ideology, however, was never Gino’s strong suit. He needed a rationale to exist (the communist goal), a reason for clandestine functioning (the existence of fascism), and a history (largely mythic) to inspire his followers. His main preoccupation was, as we will see, with tactics. He developed a sophisticated and effective system for party building and for extending his political influence in a document called *The Essential Organizer*, sometimes referred to as *Systems ’73*.²¹

The Military Fraction

The 1995 raid on NATLFED’s Brooklyn headquarters was not the first government action against the group. On February 17, 1984, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) broke down the door of 1107 Carroll Street, in search of weapons that the government believed were about to be used in an insur-

only in a far less intense fashion, through sleep deprivation and, sometimes, collective events like rallies, congresses, and demonstrations.

Special mention needs to be made of radical therapy cults in this context. The therapist achieves enormous influence over the patient in the course of therapy. As we explore in chapter 7, a transference often occurs during this process, wherein the patient becomes deeply dependent on the therapist. It is particularly reprehensible when a cult leader takes advantage of this psychological power to control the patient and transform him or her into a political follower.

In Fred Newman's case this process permitted him to assemble a cadre of political automatons capable of supporting a right-wing extremist, like Pat Buchanan, while believing they are advancing a leftist agenda. Chuck Dederich manipulated former drug addicts through group therapy, transforming them into his dependents, rather than curing them of their drug dependency and preparing them for the real world. He then added a goodly dose of idealistic middle-class people and created a utopian commune ruled by his whims. Harvey Jackins, utilizing his own brand of group therapy, built a small international empire ruled in Leninist fashion.

In a religious cult the object of worship shifts from God to God's messenger: the guru or preacher. A similar process has been noted in political cults. A single individual dominates each of the groups studied in this book. Members are encouraged to take a worshipful attitude toward this leader. While the ostensible reason for the existence of a political cult is to destroy existing corrupt society and replace it with a utopia, be it the communist utopia of Marxism or the pure white Christian society of the right, in actual practice the group exists to advance the power and influence of its leader: Gerry Healy, Ted Grant, Peter Taaffe, Marlene Dixon, Chuck Dederich, Harvey Jackins, Fred Newman, Lyndon LaRouche, Bo Gritz, or Gino Perente.

Political cults, like religious cults, combine a self-sacrificing membership with a self-aggrandizing leader. Marlene Dixon lived in an alcoholic stupor in a house provided by the members, drove around in a fancy party car, and was waited on hand and foot. Gerry Healy, Harvey Jackins, and Gino Perente took sexual advantage of their followers on a grand scale. Others, such as Ted Grant, appear to revel simply in being acclaimed as the foremost theoretician of the era, and they combine acceptance of this elevated role with a lifestyle that is quite modest. Few are so abstemious. Chuck Dederich lived like a king, supplied with cars, motorcycles, planes, fine foods, and a majestic home in the Sierras. Lyndon LaRouche enjoys an estate in rural Virginia.

It is plainly difficult for the guru, surrounded by admiring acolytes, to maintain a sense of proportion on any front. An inflated ego convinces itself that it deserves more than its fair share of the world's earthly pleasures. If

hard-pressed followers have to work ever harder to provide such opulence, it comes to be seen as part of the natural order of things. Questions that are raised tend to be dismissed as an enemy inspired attack. The members quickly learn to conform or face expulsion—a fate that, to the deeply committed, seems a form of spiritual death, too terrifying to contemplate.

Political cults differ from religious cults in their vulnerability to the political climate of the times. Religious belief is more widely held today in the United States than at any other time in recent history. Religious cults are prospering alongside their established cousins. However, as mainstream politics has drifted toward the middle, left-oriented political cults have been isolated. Conservative times have represented a severe challenge to their belief systems. This contributed to the explosive demise of Marlene Dixon's Democratic Workers Party (DWP) and Gerry Healy's Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP), as well as to the splitting and marginalization of Ted Grant's Committee for a Workers International (CWI). We are aware of one small Marxist-Leninist cult in Minneapolis, known to its members as the "O," which became primarily a vehicle for the building of small businesses for the financial benefit of its leader. Politics was never discussed. Others, like LaRouche's National Caucus of Labor Committees (NCLC), and Fred Newman's New Alliance Party (NAP), have found new political homes on the right. Rightist political cults, on the other hand, have been encouraged by this sea change in politics. Once tiny and almost totally isolated, fascist groups are recruiting young people and working feverishly in the broader milieu provided by formations like the militias.

Religion as Politics

It can be useful to look briefly at religious cults that have taken up a political practice. We would like to make a general observation: *All cults are political in the sense that they construct miniature totalitarian societies.* The cult, by separating its members from civil society as a whole, cutting them off from friends and family, and constructing an authoritarian internal world, creates the conditions for a collision with state authorities.

Not every cult takes up arms against the state. Many are content to live in obscurity, chanting their mantras and eating brown rice. However, there are many specific reasons why religious cults as diverse as the Rajneesh, the Branch Davidians, the Aum, Scientology, the Unification Church, and People's Temple either have come into conflict with their respective governments or have been prosecuted for violations of the law. Many cults practice child abuse of one sort or another (e.g., Hare Krishna).² Cults can develop conflicts with their neighbors (MOVE in Philadelphia,³ Rajneesh).⁴ Cults

nonwhite populations and the Jews, to be followed by a new epoch of Christian white race rule.

"The first characteristic of Aum," Lifton comments, "was *totalized guruism*, which became *paranoid guruism* and *megalomaniac guruism*." He defines megalomaniac guruism as "the claim to possess and control immediate and distant reality."¹¹ When those who hold such views emerge into the real world, and are confronted by limitations on their vision, the sense of frustration is immense. They are impelled to explain away the various losses of control inherent in cult activity—losses that take place because of defections, child custody battles, conflicts with neighbors, and legal actions taken against the group. Rationalization transforms megalomania into paranoia. This megalomania/paranoia syndrome was particularly pronounced with Healy, Dederich, and LaRouche. All three were prone to exaggerated claims and paranoid theories. In Dederich's case this led to both the accumulation of arms and physical attacks on critics. Perente invented a personal history to feed his megalomania while accumulating arms to encourage paranoia among his followers. Aum joins an illustrious tradition.

The People's Temple: The Reverend Jim Jones founded his People's Temple in Indiana in 1956 as an ordinary Pentecostal church. From the beginning, however, it began to acquire distinctive features that nudged it in a cultic direction. Members practiced interracialism, preached a social gospel, and were encouraged to worship Jones. "I am the only God you've ever seen," Jones once said.¹² When Jones decided in 1965 to move his flock to Ukiah in northern California, most of his Indiana followers made the trek with him. Jones believed in the imminence of nuclear war and felt that northern California was more likely to survive the coming holocaust.

On the surface Jones's cult was far different from Aum. It functioned like a fundamentalist church, with rocking gospel music, revival meetings, and faith cures. Jones arranged for his assistants to gather animal intestines, added some human blood to the mess, and then convinced parishioners that they were coughing up "cancers" as a result of his laying on of the hands.¹³ However, his hold on his members was as intense as that of Asahara and led to even more catastrophic results.

Jim Jones was highly political. As he responded to the left political ferment in the 1960s, his politics became correspondingly more radical. "We believe in reincarnation," one of his followers told Deborah Layton. "Jim was Lenin in his last life. . . . He is trying to teach us that socialism is God. . . . Jim is trying to open the minds of the people. He can only reach them through religion. As he heals and teaches, they will grow to understand that religion is an opiate, used to keep the masses down. Only Jim can bring people into the light. Through him we can make it to the next plane."¹⁴

It is doubtful whether Jones began his career with such an understanding. He was brought up in a fundamentalist religious environment and began preaching even as a child. However, as time passed, his interests turned to politics and his megalomania produced a highly political religion that acted at times like a Marxist-Leninist cult. He preached socialism with an evangelist's cadences and combined the roles of God and Lenin in his singular, highly unstable, personality. His People's Temple is the best example of a social space where religion and politics have fused.

Jones's politics passed through two phases. Between 1975 and 1977, still using Ukiah as his base, he built the People's Temple in San Francisco. Jones recruited predominantly from the black community. Soon his church had a black majority. He then turned his attention to the city's politics. He was able to mobilize five hundred activists and in that fashion influence local elections. He threw his support behind the liberal George Moscone and contributed to his election as mayor.¹⁵ In return Jones was rewarded by being appointed chairman of the San Francisco Housing Authority. He received the 1977 Martin Luther Humanitarian of the Year award in San Francisco, was feted by Willie Brown (then a power in the California Legislature and more recently mayor of San Francisco), Governor Jerry Brown (more recently mayor of Oakland), and Rosalyn Carter (wife of then President Jimmy Carter).¹⁶

The publicity thus received further fed Jim Jones's growing megalomania and need for adulation. However, it also brought his group and its cultic ways more into the public spotlight. Adverse publicity resulted, which, in turn, further fueled Jones's paranoia. In 1975 he had launched Jonestown, a utopian communist community to be constructed deep in the jungles of Guyana. He chose Guyana because of its relatively left-leaning government as well as its physical location. No one, he figured, would bother to drop a nuclear bomb on Guyana. A convenient side effect was that it enabled him to isolate his followers from all outside influences. They were increasingly at his mercy, and were convinced that physical destruction awaited them should they step outside the fortified perimeters of Jonestown. During 1977 Jones stepped up his colonization efforts. He himself ran away from the bad press and possible prosecution to Guyana and took almost all his remaining followers in the United States with him. Only a token group was left behind to continue raising funds and spreading the message.

Jonestown, in its early days before the arrival of the guru, was certainly an exciting project. Young people worked hard, trying to transform an unyielding jungle into an agricultural project with much of the zeal of Israel's pioneer kibbutzim. All this changed, once Jones arrived on the scene. He had become increasingly unstable, addicted to painkillers, brutal in his treatment of his followers, and frighteningly paranoid. The colonizers were forced to

10. R. Ezekiel, *The Racist Mind: Portraits of American Neo-Nazis and Klansmen* (London: Penguin, 1995), p. 75.
11. Barkun, *Religion*, p. 110.
12. Dyer, *Harvest*, p. 107.
13. This and the following quotation are both taken from Barkun, *Religion*, p. 213.
14. W. Pierce, *The Turner Diaries* (Hillsboro, WV: National Vanguard Books, 1978).
15. Barkun, *Religion*, p. 229.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 107.
17. P. Adams, "Running on Empty," *Weekend Australian*, October 23, 1999, p. 32.
18. G. Moorhead and R. Griffin, *Organizational Behavior* (London: Houghton Mifflin, 1988).
19. G. Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice* (New York: Addison-Wesley, 1954), p. 29.
20. C. Berger, "Communicating Under Uncertainty," in *Interpersonal Processes: New Directions in Communication Research*, ed. M. Roloff and G. Miller (London: Sage, 1987).
21. J. Leyens, V. Yzerbyt, and G. Schadron, *Stereotypes and Social Cognition* (London: Sage, 1994).
22. M. Rothbart and M. Taylor, "Category Labels and Social Reality: Do We Know Social Categories as Natural Kinds?" in *Language, Interaction and Social Cognition*, ed. G. Semin and K. Fiedler (London: Sage, 1992).
23. Andrew Duncan interview with Jeremy Clarkson, *Radio Times*, August 15, 1998, p. 24.
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25. R. Dawes, *House of Cards: Psychology and Psychotherapy Built on Myth* (New York: Free Press, 1994).
26. E. Jones, *Interpersonal Perception* (New York: W.H. Freeman, 1990).
27. O. Hargie, D. Dickson, and D. Tourish, *Communication in Management* (Aldershot: Gower, 1999), p. 259.
28. S. Duncan, "Differential Social Perception and Attribution of Intergroup Violence: Testing the Lower Levels of Stereotyping about Blacks," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 34 (1976): 590–598.
29. T. Adorno, E. Frenkel-Brunswick, D. Levinson, and R. Sanford, *The Authoritarian Personality* (New York: Harper, 1950).
30. E. Young-Bruehl, *The Anatomy of Prejudices* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), p. 32.
31. R. Lifton, *The Protean Self: Human Resilience in an Age of Fragmentation* (New York: Basic Books, 1993).
32. These studies are discussed in detail by Young-Bruehl in *Anatomy*, p. 53.

Chapter 4

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2. "Hatred in High Places," *MSNBC News Release*, August 16, 1999.
3. Cited in B. Knickerbocker, *When the Hate Comes from "Churches"* (Boston: The Christian Science Publishing society, July 30, 1999).
4. J. Preston, "US Group Reports Sharp Rise in Web Hate Sites," *Reuters*, February 24, 1999.
5. K. Stern, *A Force upon the Plain: The American Militia Movement and the Politics of Hate* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996).

6. Stern, *Force*, p. 15.
7. R. Ezekiel, *The Racist Mind: Portraits of American Neo-Nazis and Klansmen* (New York: Penguin, 1995), p. 93.
8. G. Barret, "FBI Hate Crime Data Is Spotty," *Gannett News Service*, July 16, 1999.
9. *Ibid.*
10. Stern, *Force*, p. 244.
11. Preston, "Web Hate Sites."
12. M. Wolk, "Aryan Leader Says L.A. Shootings Part of Race War," *Reuters New Report*, August 20, 1999.
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16. P. Lewis, "Preventable Agricultural Deaths in Oklahoma 1983–1988: Self Inflicted or Suicides" (Agriculture Engineering Department, Oklahoma State University, unpublished paper, 1989).
17. Dyer, *Harvest*, pp. 40–44.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 62.
19. The rise of the Klan is discussed in detail by Stern, *Force*, at various points in his book.
20. This and the following two quotations are cited in Stern, *Force*, p. 50.
21. Wickstrom's colorful career is described in some detail at the following Website <http://www.hatewatch.org>.
22. Dyer, *Harvest*, p. 98.
23. Stern, *Force*, p. 136.
24. Wolk, "Aryan Leader."
25. Ezekiel, *Racist*, p. 138.
26. Dyer, *Harvest*, p. 250.
27. Ezekiel, *Racist*, p. 42.
28. G. Barrett, "FBI Hate Crime."
29. "Hatred In High Places," *MSNBC News Release*, August 16, 1999.
30. Dyer, *Harvest*, p. 88.
31. A. Jacob, "Murder Exposes the Rise of Sweden's Far Right," *Guardian Weekly* October 28, 1999, p. 29.
32. As quoted in Knickerbocker, *When Hate*, p. 2.

Chapter 5

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4. G. Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1968) pp. 204–205; M. Lowy, *Georg Lukács—From Romanticism to Bolshevism* (London: New Left Books, 1979).

5. T. Wohlforth, *The Prophet's Children* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities, 1994), pp. 130–135.
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7. Wohlforth, *Prophet's Children*, pp. 132–133.
8. *Campaigner* 3, no. 1 (New York).
9. *Campaigner* 2, no. 2 (New York).
10. Wohlforth, *Prophet's Children*, p. 134.
11. D. King, *Lyndon LaRouche and the New American Fascism* (New York: Doubleday, 1989), pp. 19–24.
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14. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
15. King, *LaRouche*, p. 26.
16. *Ibid.*
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18. Berlet and Bellman, *LaRouche*, p. 4.
19. King, *LaRouche*, pp. 25–31.
20. "Breaking the Silence: An Ex-LaRouche Follower Tells Her Story," *In These Times* (October 29–November 4, 1986).
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38. L.H. LaRouche, *In Defense of Common Sense* (Washington, DC: Schiller Institute, 1989).
39. C. Berlet, *Right Woos Left* (<http://www.publiceye.org>). See also chapter 7 for a discussion of Fred Newman and Lenora Fulani's bloc with Buchanan.
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Chapter 6

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2. M. Lyons, "Sex, Lies and Co-Counseling," *Activist Men's Journal* (August 1994) 1–11.
3. The Study Group on Psychotherapy Cults has produced two informative documents detailing the career of Harvey Jackins and the evolution of RC. These are *A Documentary History of the Career of Harvey Jackins and Re-Evaluation Counseling Belgium*: Study Group, 1992) and *A Documentary History of the Career of Harvey Jackins and Re-Evaluation Counseling: Final Supplement* (Belgium: Study Group, 1997). Unless otherwise indicated, quotations and facts pertaining to RC in this chapter can be found in one of these two books.
4. H. Jackins, *Logical Thinking About a Future Society* (Seattle: Rational Island, 1990), p. 78.
5. This version is reported at length in one of the earliest publications to pay attention to RC: R. Rosen, *Psychobabble* (New York: Atheneum, 1978), p. 78. A slightly different version is repeated by Harvey Jackins at length in what proved to be his last book: *The List*, 2d ed. (Seattle: Rational Island, 1997), pp. 1–5. In this, "Charlie" has become "Merle," and the nature of his difficulties has changed somewhat.
6. A simple exposition of basic RC theory, along these lines, is reproduced on the back page of each edition of the organization's quarterly journal, *Present Time*.
7. See note 3.
8. See note 3.
9. R. Evison, and R. Horobin, "Co-Counseling," in *Innovative Therapy in Britain*, ed. J. Rowan and W. Dryden (Milton Keynes, UK: Open University).
10. An excellent discussion of how such memories are often created, and then believed in, can be found in M. Pendergrast, *Victims of Memory: Incest Accusations and Shattered Lives* (London: Harper-Collins, 1995). This book includes some case-study material from a participant in RC.
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