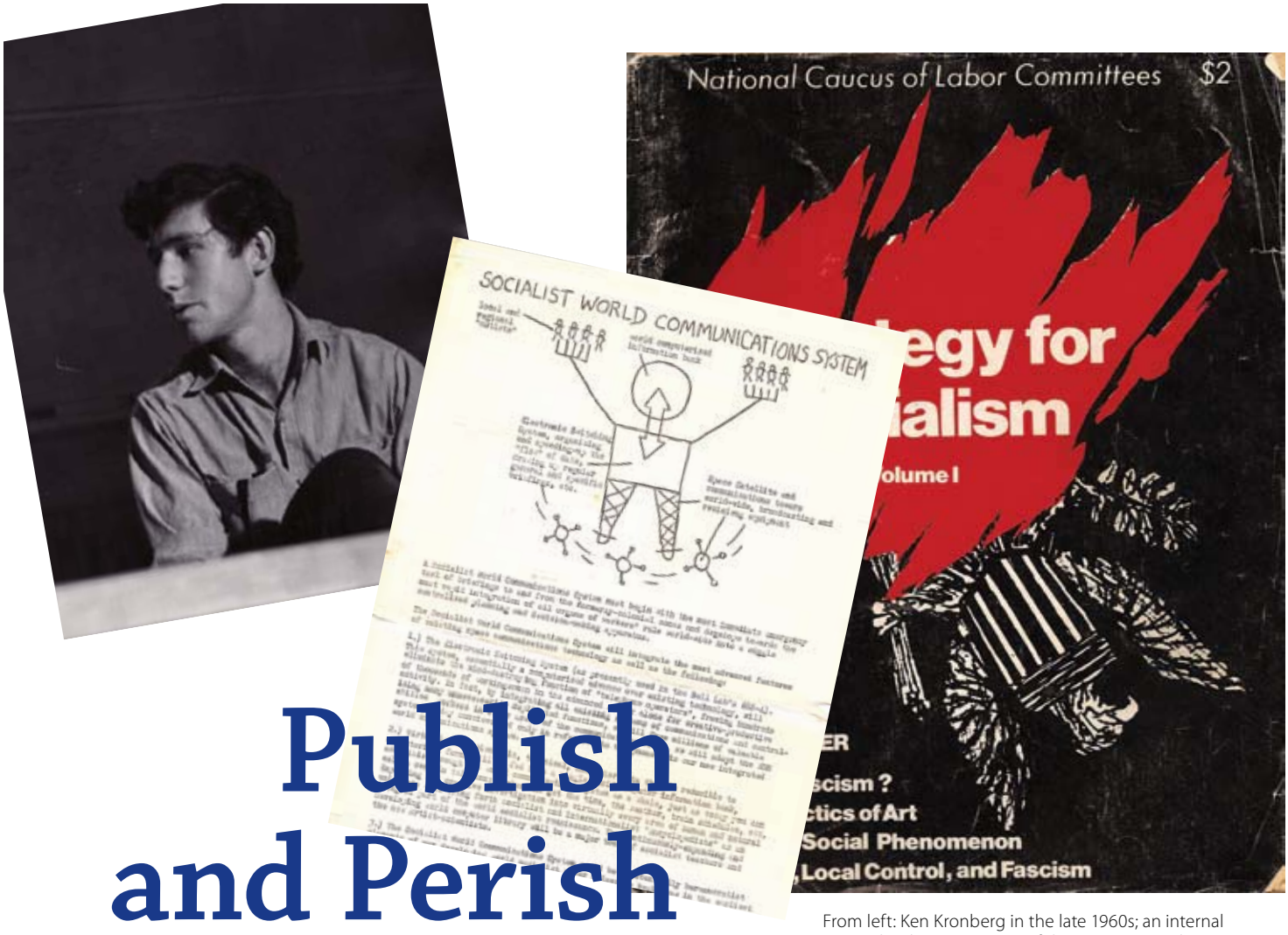

From left: Ken Kronberg in the late 1960s; an internal LaRouche document; one of the many LaRouche publications

Courtesy of the author

Publish and Perish

The mysterious death of Lyndon LaRouche's printer

By Avi Klein

For forty years, the Lyndon LaRouche movement has been a ubiquitous, if diminishing, presence in the political landscape of America, and of Washington. LaRouche has made eight runs for the presidency, including one campaign from prison. At D.C. press conferences and think tank events, a reporter for a LaRouche publication called *Executive Intelligence Review* can often be heard asking strange questions about the grain cartel. Young, malnourished LaRouche acolytes frequently stop Hill staffers on their way home from work and hand them pamphlets with titillating titles like "Children of Satan" or "The Gore of Babylon." A peek inside offers details on LaRouche's many enemies, such as the "Conrad Black–backed McCain–Lieberman–Donna Brazile cabal."

One of the LaRouche movement's longest-serving loyalists was Ken Kronberg. A handsome classics scholar and drama teacher, Kronberg owned and managed PMR Printing, the outfit that has generated the idiosyncratic propaganda that sustains LaRouche's entire enterprise. Last year, the LaRouche organization spent more than $2.5 million—at least 60 percent of its publicly reported expenditures—on printing and distributing pamphlets. Most of this money went to PMR. LaRouche's output was so prolific, in fact, that PMR ranked among the country's top 400 printers by sales. Despite this, the company's finances were in perilous shape. Various LaRouche organizations owed Kronberg hundreds of thousands of dollars. When the IRS and Virginia tax authorities came calling over withholding payments, Ken knew he was in serious trouble.

On April 11, 2007, Ken sat in PMR's offices in Sterling, Virginia, forty-five miles northwest of Washington, to read the "morning briefing," a daily compendium of political statements that reflect the outcome of the executive committee meetings held at LaRouche's house in the nearby town of Round Hill. This particular briefing struck unnervingly close to home. Written by a close associate of LaRouche's and addressed to the movement's younger followers, the brief bitterly attacked what it called the "baby boomers" in the organization—members like Kronberg who had joined

LaRouche in the late 1960s and early '70s. The brief named "the print shop"—Kronberg's operation—as a special target. "The Boomers will be scared into becoming human, because you're in the real world, and they're not," the brief read. "Unless," the writer added, the boomers "want to commit suicide."

This note may have had an effect. At 10:17 a.m., Kronberg sent an e-mail to his accountant instructing him to transfer $235,000 held in an escrow account to the IRS. He got in his blue-green Toyota Corolla and drove east. He mailed some family bills at the post office, then turned around onto the Waxpool Road overpass. Just before 10:30 a.m., Kronberg parked his car on the side of the overpass, turned on his emergency lights, and flung himself over the railing to his death. (Although LaRouche's home is only thirty-five miles from the St. James Episcopal Church in Warrentown, Virginia, where Kronberg's funeral was held, LaRouche didn't show up for the service.)

True to form, LaRouche's current and former followers immediately burst forth with conspiracy theories. Had Kronberg been deliberately goaded to commit suicide by the movement's leaders? Had this private and modest man killed himself in a public fashion in order to draw attention to LaRouche's murky finances? Much of this speculation took place on FactNet, an Internet discussion board for former cult members. Users soon posted leaked internal memoranda from the LaRouche leadership showing that it, too, was blindsided and uncertain.

Whatever the answers to these questions, Kronberg's life and death perhaps tell an even more interesting tale. From the very beginning, the LaRouche movement has been a thoroughly paper-based cult. Its strange propaganda, disposable to most people who encounter it, has been central to both the movement's proselytizing activities and its finances. Although most of PMR's problems stemmed from LaRouche's own impecuniousness and his insatiable demand for printed materials, Kronberg's financial and legal troubles infuriated LaRouche. LaRouche was furious because he was frightened. Ink is the lifeblood of the LaRouche organization, and in PMR's impending demise, he could see the likely death of the organization itself.

The LaRouche movement has been called many things: Marxist, fascist, a political cult, a personality cult, a criminal enterprise, and, in the words of the Heritage Foundation, "one of the strangest political groups in American history." More than anything else, however, what it resembles is a vast and bizarre vanity press.

Lyndon Hermyle LaRouche was born in 1922 and raised in rural New Hampshire and in Massachusetts. Bullied at school, but forbidden by his Quaker parents to fight back, he turned to philosophy as his weapon, dismissing his schoolyard persecutors as the "unwitting followers of David Hume." His father, a shoe executive who edited a right-wing newspaper and carried on two simultaneous feuds with rival Quaker groups, was a dominating influence during his childhood.

LaRouche served a brief stint as a noncombatant in World War II, and claimed to have worked as a medic in the China-Burma-India theater. By one account, he distinguished himself as a polyglot capable of playing multiple games of chess at once. Exposed to Marxism while overseas, he joined up with the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) in Boston upon his return. Like socialist movements of every era, the SWP put a high premium on agitprop pamphlets, newspapers, and denunciatory internal memoranda. LaRouche had found his medium.

Staying up sometimes for forty hours straight, discarded drafts piling up around his typewriter, LaRouche cultivated the multidisciplinary stream-of-consciousness style that would distinguish his output for years to come, writing under the nom de plume Lyn Marcus. For instance, here is LaRouche expounding on the nature of the Marxist dialectic in a 1969 essay, "The Philosophy of Socialist Education (From an Advanced Standpoint)":

> *In sum, on this particular point, pre-conscious or dialectical processes of mentation may be contrasted with formal logic, etc., as a "domain" of process conceptions of whole processes in which the particularity, including the particular conception introduced to consciousness, is a determined feature of a* determining *holistic process.*

What really distinguished LaRouche's writings from those of other abstruse revolutionary theorists was the all-encompassing quality of his erudition. A discourse on local Marxist politics might veer into a discussion of the proper pitch to be used in bel canto singing, before touching on Plato and Aristotle, the German philosopher Friedrich Schiller, and concluding with a riff on the grain trade.

Despite LaRouche's productivity, it was not a happy time for him. He was awkward in social settings, and his only political activities outside his writing were, he later recalled, "limited to occasional meetings and instructions to my (former) wife to attend to dues and pledge payments." Moreover, very little of his writing was deemed to be suitable for publication. (One SWP member characterized LaRouche's oeuvre as "thick, dull, [and] endless.") LaRouche resolved to start over, deciding that "no revolutionary movement was going to be brought into being in the USA unless I brought it into being."

In 1967, LaRouche began holding training seminars for "revolutionary leadership cadres" at New York's Free School. Sometimes sporting a wild beard and a floppy bow tie, and

always glaring out from behind Woody Allen glasses, the forty-five-year-old LaRouche mesmerized his much younger students with what appeared to be a deep understanding of how the world really worked. During the 1960s and early '70s, followers flocked to his side. Unlike the young members who distribute LaRouche literature today, these recruits were not what we tend to think of as cult material. Intelligent and idealistic, they were educated in the classics, mathematics, and psychology. Most were seeking an intellectual Marxism without the free love and druggie ethos that dominated other left-wing groups of the time. When LaRouche explained that classical literature and science experiments alone could save the world, many were hooked.

Ken Kronberg belonged to this first wave of converts. He grew up in New York in a Jewish immigrant family. In 1970, after graduating from St. John's College in New Mexico with a philosophy degree, he returned to New York, hoping to join a Marxist group. Kronberg soon found work at the publisher John Wylie & Sons, editing science books. But when he picked up a LaRouche newspaper at a friend's house, his literary and political ambitions were subsumed. "He was sold on the guy from the beginning," a friend of his from college told me.

It was a perfect fit for Kronberg, because production of political literature was driving the growth of LaRouche's movement, now formally known as the National Caucus of Labor Committees. Street teams holding signs with arresting slogans—for example, "Feed Jane Fonda to the Whales"—would hand pamphlets to passersby, followed by invitations to a lesson or meeting. LaRouche believed fervently in the mystical power of the written word, reasoning that if he distributed his ideas widely enough, they would permeate the public consciousness even if his movement's membership remained small. To that end, he urged his followers to publish lengthy discourses of their own. "Success in organizing the working class," explained one memo from the time, requires "the intellectual self-development of cadres through the sort of writing we are now demanding for *The Campaigner* and *New Solidarity*." LaRouche was not the first cult leader to use the technique of saturating potential converts with his message, but he was adept at making founding members feel important, both by exaggerating the intellectual significance of their work and by rewarding loyalists with authority.

Kronberg quickly proved himself a skilled and popular editor and typesetter for the group's twice-weekly political newspaper, *New Solidarity*. Two years later, he was named to the organization's national committee—making him a rising star in a core of approximately twenty-five organizers supposedly responsible for policy and operations. In truth, LaRouche made all the decisions.

Some of those decisions tested Kronberg's loyalty, but he passed the trials with distinction. In 1971, Kronberg had met Molly Hackett, an energetic and sharp-tongued twenty-three-year-old. In 1973, Hackett joined the movement so that she could marry Kronberg; soon afterward, she became pregnant. However, LaRouche had impressed upon his followers that the fate of humanity lay in their hands; families were a dangerous distraction. Responding to that sentiment, Kronberg persuaded her to have an abortion. (The couple later had a son, Max, in defiance of LaRouche.)

Events took an even darker turn in 1972, when LaRouche became convinced that Chris White, his ex-wife's new boyfriend, had been brainwashed by the British to assassinate LaRouche. He undertook a two-week "deprogramming" of White, a process that started in Kronberg's apartment on West Seventy-third Street. According to a tape recording later obtained by the *New York Times,* these sessions were marked by "sounds of weeping and vomiting." At one point, according to the *Times*, a voice could be heard saying, "Raise the voltage."

The so-called Chris White Affair horrified Kronberg, according to several of his friends from that era. So did a technique known as "ego-stripping" that LaRouche began to practice on senior cadres. (In one such session, a former member told me, a disgusted Kronberg threw a soda bottle across the room and stormed out.) Still, convinced that LaRouche was a genius destined for the White House, and gratified to play an integral part in his rise, Kronberg rationalized his leader's seemingly crackpot ideas. Ken "would construct reasonable and coherent backgrounds for the ludicrous statements being given," said a family member. "What's the motive, what's the plan behind this, he doesn't believe this, he's using it to get something."

What LaRouche wanted was to become president of the United States. In 1976, he ran on his own U.S. Labor Party platform, winning 40,000 votes, or .05 percent of the national total. By 1980, the LaRouche organization had swerved dramatically to the right, working closely with such groups as Willis Carto's Liberty Lobby and promoting conservative causes like the strategic defense initiative. Predicting that Ronald Reagan would win the election, and eager to gain his favor, LaRouche joined the Democratic Party in order to launch more effective attacks on Reagan's Democratic opponents. LaRouche would run on the Democratic ticket for his next seven campaigns.

During the 1980s, LaRouche reached the apex of his influence. The organization had a steady income stream from its aggressive telephone fund-raising teams and remarkable political contacts in Washington. Within the Beltway, it sold itself as a private intelligence agency, and many people fell for its pitch, including senior staffers on Reagan's National Security Council such as Richard Morris, a top aide to National Security Adviser William Clarke. Throughout Reagan's first term, LaRouche acolytes were invited to provide NSC staffers with frequent briefings. During this time LaRouche also purchased large blocks of television airtime, which he used to expand on his views about national politics (such as his conviction that Walter Mondale was a Soviet agent). In 1986, the group possessed sufficient organizational ability to win the Democratic primaries in Illinois for lieutenant governor

and secretary of state, although both of its candidates were handily defeated in the general election.

LaRouche's increased visibility came with a price. By vaulting himself onto the national stage, he was attempting to convert a small-time, somewhat manageable propaganda production outfit into a national political machine that required substantial infusions of money. As always, LaRouche looked toward the printing operation to underwrite his aspirations.

By this point, the group had already established a number of publications, including a newspaper, a wire service, an arts magazine, a news magazine, numerous science magazines, and a theoretical journal. (As a general rule, the less each publication contained of LaRouche's writing, the better it sold.) The movement also traded on LaRouche's supposed cachet in the intelligence world to peddle "special reports" that could be bought for up to $250 per copy. These were typically popular only in Third World embassies, where officials—under the impression that LaRouche was still a Marxist—were convinced that he possessed secret knowledge about international politics. By 1980, the group was clearing almost $200,000 a week from campaign contributions and donations to various LaRouche-connected nonprofits and magazine subscriptions, all of which were treated as belonging to a single account. (This marked the beginning of the group's problems with the FEC, which penalized the organization after discovering that it had illegally reported numerous magazine subscriptions as political contributions in order to qualify for more matching funds.)

Convinced that the British had brainwashed his ex-wife's boyfriend to assassinate him, LaRouche ordered the boyfriend to be put through "deprogramming" sessions. On a tape of the sessions, a voice can be heard saying, "Raise the voltage."

It is nearly impossible to make sense of the LaRouche movement's convoluted finances. However, one fact is clear: although the print shop generated crucial short-term cash flow from subscriptions and report sales, this income never came close to covering the group's payroll, rent, and advertising costs. The organization also had sizable legal expenses, because it was constantly on the run from its creditors. Partly this was due to its refusal to abide by established accounting techniques. Mostly, though, the problem was that some of the leading cadres seemed to believe they didn't have to pay bills, because they were performing heroic revolutionary deeds. Lawsuits from landlords, vendors, and former employees clogged the New York City docket. By the early 1980s, the committee had outstanding accounts with most of the large printing shops in New York.

In response, LaRouche encouraged members to set up private editorial and printing companies. The idea was that in-house printers could produce the publications that the organization used to raise money at a far lower cost than private vendors. With financial help from his wife's family, Kronberg created World Composition Services (WorldComp), a typesetting company that he operated out of LaRouche's offices. At the time, WorldComp was a cutting-edge venture, the first company of its kind to use computer typesetting in New York. Kronberg came to control PMR as well, which printed most of the group's pamphlets, books, and newspapers. (Because LaRouche's idea of "low-cost printing" often meant, in reality, "free printing," the two companies took on other regular clients, including the United Nations and the Ford Foundation.)

Kronberg's foray into capitalism wasn't unique. "Unlike the average flower-selling Moonie, many of LaRouche's devotees had advanced degrees and highly marketable skills," writes Dennis King, author of *Lyndon LaRouche and the New American Fascism*. Yet these enterprises seldom ran smoothly. Cadres found it impossible to resist LaRouche's constant demands for cash and services performed on credit. In one case, bankruptcy proceedings revealed that Computron, a well-respected software company owned and managed by high-ranking cadres, was spending $5,000 to $10,000 a week to cover 20 percent of the organization's budget. LaRouche poured most of this money into his 1980 presidential campaign. In New Hampshire, for instance, he spent $1 million to paper the state with pamphlets, which he believed would allow him to capture 15 percent of the Democratic primary vote. He received a mere 2 percent.

Hoping to achieve a better result in subsequent elections, LaRouche became more grandiose in his operations, and the fund-raising methods employed by his printing shop became correspondingly more dubious. In one favored approach, his representatives would contact a donor known to be a soft touch with an offer to invest in a large project, such as delivering copies of LaRouche's latest report on the strategic defense initiative to every congressional office. The potential donor would be quoted a price in the tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars, reflecting the supposed market price of the report, even though the information it contained was generally worthless, not to mention unreadable.

Molly Kronberg was often involved with deceptions practiced by members of the organization. In 1978, she had helped to open the New Benjamin Franklin Publishing House in order to serve as the publisher of *Dope Inc.*, a massive project that famously named the Queen of England as the head of the international drug trade. It was first serialized in *Executive Intelligence Review* and later published as a book. Under pressure to pay PMR for printing

the books, Molly took out modest loans. They weren't enough. She began traveling around the country and pressuring LaRouche supporters to sign promissory notes to the movement on wildly generous terms. She was eventually arrested for her role in another creative hoax, in which a Wall Street economist loaned the company more than $75,000 to republish what he thought would be the works of various nineteenth-century economists he admired. However, as Dennis King reports, "the only books that were published were by or about LaRouche."

In 1989, Molly was put on trial in New York state court with a number of other cadres. She tried to prevent LaRouche from testifying in her defense, believing that he would not make a good impression on the jury. To LaRouche, this was a grave betrayal. Eager for any public platform he could get, he insisted on speaking on her behalf. Molly was eventually sentenced to five years of probation for defrauding lenders.

LaRouche himself was in prison by then, having been convicted in 1988 for mail and tax crimes by a Virginia federal court and sentenced to fifteen years. PMR was a direct beneficiary of these schemes, but because Kronberg had never been involved in soliciting loans and did not play an active role in the group's finances, he managed to escape indictment.

By the 1990s, most LaRouche members had relocated from New York to Leesburg, Virginia, a bucolic town forty-five minutes northwest of D.C. known for its antique shops and horse farms. LaRouche had moved to the area in the mid-1980s, wanting to be closer to Washington. (Former associates explained that he also wanted plenty of land on which to hide from would-be assassins.) He settled on a 171-acre estate called Ibykus Farms, where he was waited on by cadres; an internal budget from 1995 shows that he ran a weekly tab of $4,500 for security guards. He and his followers, however, didn't really fit into their new locale. Leesburg's citizens rebelled when the group deployed its aggressive organizing techniques on the town's picturesque streets. Later, the local small business association almost shut down after LaRouche cadres flooded its membership rolls and usurped its agenda. LaRouche added the townspeople to his list of enemies, describing Leesburg's garden club as a "nest" of Soviet agents.

For many members, the period of LaRouche's imprisonment in the early 1990s offered a rare time of sanity. Some followers drifted away; others stayed and tried to clean up the organization's finances. The first thing they turned to was PMR, which was in deep trouble. LaRouche owed it money for numerous printing orders, and in 1992 he ran for president from jail, burdening the company with yet more unpaid bills. In desperation, Kronberg had started to skim FICA payments, and the IRS had noticed. Anxious that the print shop not go under, the organization borrowed heavily against Ibykus Farms. (It lost the property the next year after failing to make payments on the loan.) The millions of dollars these loans brought in covered PMR's debts and "saved the organization," recalls a former member of the finance office. It saved Kronberg too, at least temporarily.

When LaRouche emerged from jail in 1994, he perceived that his influence among his founding followers was waning. For one thing, his activist power had declined, as his aging members no longer wanted to do menial organizing work. The organization's finances were deteriorating as a result of his notoriety and parole conditions, which stipulated that ethical lapses in any LaRouche entity would cause his parole to be revoked.

To LaRouche, however, the group's gravest problem was that it no longer distributed his literature very effectively. In 1999, when the conditions on his parole were lifted, he devised a bold plan: a new youth movement that would fan out to major cities and college campuses around the country, pushing LaRouche publications and reestablishing him as a major player on the national scene.

The remaining senior members enthusiastically supported the initiative. This was a big mistake. Experts who

study political cults have observed that such groups thrive on an imagined enemy in opposition to which the group constructs it own collective identity. LaRouche had always encouraged members to believe they were the victims of mass conspiracies (usually perpetrated, according to LaRouche, by John Train, a New York investment advisor and cofounder of the *Paris Review*). While LaRouche maintained his belief in these plots, he concocted a sinister new nemesis: the baby boomer.

This perceived enemy was a very useful device to LaRouche as he formed his new group, the LaRouche Youth Movement. This group attracted very different people from those who had joined the movement with Kronberg. The later recruits were mostly college dropouts, many of them mentally unstable, whom LaRouche pressured to leave school and live in organization group homes. In order to seal their allegiance, LaRouche latched on to the boomers as a perfect indoctrination device, a way to channel the rage new acolytes felt

toward their parents at a nearby, internal enemy: the founding generation of his own followers.

Things quickly took a nasty turn. Death, LaRouche warned repeatedly, was the best choice for the boomers, whom he called a "mass of maddened lemmings" and a "leaf of poison ivy." In a speech in Los Angeles, he directed the Youth Movement to take a hard line with the organization's older members. "They will stubbornly, angrily, furiously, cling to their mores. And you simply have to push, as I do. Ride roughshod," he said. "Because, they'll do everything they can to sabotage you, by using peer group pressures among themselves. They'll conspire—they actually will form little conspiracies, and they'll go behind your back."

As his finances became more precarious, LaRouche grew obsessed with the adversary he had created. He became convinced that the older members who ran his printing operation were engaged in a conspiracy to destroy him. In speech after speech, in internal memos and published literature, he accused the boomers of "sabotage" and "censorship" when fund-raisers failed to bring in enough money to pay for printing costs. He also believed that Kronberg was the head of a cabal that had plotted to have *Executive Intelligence Review*'s second-class mailing privileges revoked—a development that pushed the magazine's distribution costs even higher at a time when fund-raising was lagging.

What was really killing LaRouche's enterprise (in addition, of course, to its peculiar philosophies and inability to keep a simple balance sheet) was that its leader was clinging to a dying medium. Enamored by print, he had failed to exploit the Internet. The Web could have solved many of his problems. Compared to printed material, online propaganda is virtually free to produce, and the Internet offers limitless space for disquisitions on esoteric subjects. (If anyone was made for blogging, it was surely Lyndon LaRouche.)

But LaRouche's politics had always focused on physical infrastructure—in recent years, for instance, he had championed massive maglev construction and giant waterworks projects. The rise of the information and services industry held little interest for him, and so, having failed to predict the Internet, he proceeded to ignore it. Moreover, Computron and other similar fiascos had forced out the talent that made the group an early adopter of technology in the late 1970s. Although the group's fund-raising had improved in the '80s, it had failed to attract new classes of committed, educated senior cadres. This generational gap left the organization painfully unaware of the Internet's value as an organizing tool.

When the group's older leaders eventually ventured online, they often stumbled. They were slow to grasp that although the Internet allowed the free dissemination of ideas, it also made criticism equally accessible. Around 2003, the organization set up a discussion board and then a Yahoo group, but both were discovered by a former member who delighted in asking inconvenient questions about Jeremiah Duggan, a young Briton who died in 2003 under mysterious circumstances at a LaRouche conference in Germany. Organization members shut the boards down and tried a more proactive approach, popping up on anti-LaRouche sites to defend the organization. That tactic only inspired more criticism, and confirmed to posters that the LaRouche organization was worried about what they were saying. Eventually, Youth Movement members were ordered to stay off social networking sites like MySpace, which LaRouche deemed an "Orwellian brain-washing operation."

Instead, the organization persisted in its print habit. This dependence weighed heavily on Ken Kronberg, because PMR was once again in trouble. For at least five years, Kronberg had been billing the committee at or below cost, and to cover the shortfall he was forced to cut back salaries for national committee members on the payroll, including his own. Molly went back to work as an editor in the private sector to help make ends meet. By this time, however, the IRS was asking questions, and PMR and WorldComp were facing tax liens totaling hundreds of thousands of dollars. The LaRouche organization tried to keep PMR going by feeding money into an escrow fund dedicated to PMR's tax bill, but it was an inadequate solution. Some of the donated money was transferred from LaRouche's political action committee (LPAC) to PMR under the guise of advance payment for printing—a serious FEC violation.

Two weeks before Kronberg's death, LPAC informed him that they were cutting him off. Seeing little point in paying bills to a company poised on the brink of insolvency, LPAC also demanded the return of a recent $100,000 advance, which PMR had already spent. Kronberg worried that the organization would try to raid the escrow account, which then held $235,000 earmarked for the IRS.

As long as Ken controlled the printing operation, he believed that he played too important a role in the movement for LaRouche to risk launching personal attacks against his family. As it became clear that PMR was about to fold, Ken realized that he was no longer protected. Four days before he died, he told Molly that he was going to have to shut down the companies. "I will be vilified. You and I will be vilified like nothing you've seen yet. It will be ugly; it will be brutal," he told her. "This is going to be the worst week of my life." The morning briefing confirmed that Ken and his family were now vulnerable to the relentless psychological abuse LaRouche directed at members who had displeased him. When Ken committed suicide, he didn't leave a note, but Molly and other members are convinced that his death was an attempt to draw attention to the organization's troubled finances, and as such was the bravest political act of his life.

Ken Kronberg's death threw the LaRouche movement into chaos. Molly was still on the national committee, and at first senior members reached out to her. But her colleagues soon started to suspect that she was leaking internal information on the Internet, and one morning she woke up to find that her organization e-mail accounts had been blocked. LaRouche drafted an attack on her, saying that donations of $1,025 she had made to Republican causes

in 2004 and 2005 foreshadowed her treachery to the movement. Defying LaRouche, other members delayed publication of his screed for a day. LaRouche was forced to acknowledge that internal unhappiness was widespread: "It is not [the members'] fault," he said, "if some things for which they have worked so hard, and sacrificed so much, did not produce the results they had the right to achieve."

For LaRouche, this admission was startlingly candid. In the almost forty years since its inception, despite spending hundreds of thousands of dollars a week in operations and annually printing millions of books and magazines, the LaRouche operation has had no significant effect on American politics. It is remarkable in its impotence.

Despite the unrelenting loyalty of his followers, LaRouche has never come remotely close to being elected president. In fact, no LaRouche cadre has been elected to office at any level higher than school board. Nor have his economic theories attained any kind of recognition. The LaRouche-Riemann Method, an economic model that LaRouche calls "the most accurate method of economic forecasting in existence," has gone unnoticed by the social science indexes. Many former members admit to not understanding it.

In one perverse way, of course, the movement *did* work. For thirty years, Ken Kronberg printed, and all the other members edited and distributed, everything that LaRouche wrote, whether anybody understood it or not. If, in the late hours of the night, LaRouche determined that 50,000 copies of his latest essay on the Treaty of Westphalia needed to be distributed around the country, his followers did their best to oblige. That model, however, couldn't be sustained forever.

Two weeks after Ken died, PMR finally ran out of ink and paper. The IRS took action to collect LaRouche's 2004 campaign debts to the company. Fund-raisers were ordered not to sell any more subscriptions to LaRouche publications, while current subscribers have been directed to unappealing electronic versions. With no ability to get credit and with its publications shuttered, the group now copies one-pagers at Kinko's. Most humiliating of all, it has been forced to operate on the Internet. On its Web site, LPAC now urges readers to print out and distribute its fliers themselves.

Meanwhile, membership at the Washington, D.C., branch of the LaRouche Youth Movement is said to be disintegrating, and its pamphleteers are seen far less frequently than in previous months. The 2008 election will be the first in thirty-two years in which LaRouche has not sought the presidency. Recently, a senior member published an article that dared to speculate on a topic that once would have been unthinkable: a post-LaRouche world. "What was so upsetting," said one longtime member and friend of Kronberg's who is no longer with the group, "was to realize how pointless it all was. How we had no effect at all." WM

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