
In Memoriam

Eugene McCarthy: He Acted To Restore Our Nation's Purpose

by Nina Ogden

On Dec. 10, Sen. Eugene J. McCarthy, the dear friend of Lyndon LaRouche and his movement, died peacefully in his sleep at the age of 89. In 2002, when he began to struggle with Parkinson's disease, McCarthy had reluctantly moved to a retirement home in the Georgetown neighborhood of Washington, D.C., which he typically referred to as a "cruise ship on the River Styx."

It is truly poetic justice that Gene McCarthy's death has unleashed the image of the power of a youth movement challenging the legitimacy of an administration's unjust war.

On Nov. 30, 1967, expressing his concern that "the Administration seems to have set no limits on the price that it will pay for military victory," the Senator from Minnesota announced that he would challenge President Lyndon Johnson for the nomination of their own Democratic Party. He said in his announcement: "The issue of the war in Vietnam is not a separate issue, but is one which must be dealt with in the configuration of problems in which it occurs. It is within this context that I intend to take the case to the people of the United States." He emphasized, "I am hopeful that a challenge may alleviate the sense of political helplessness and restore to many people a belief in the processes of American politics and of American government." He once told this writer, "I was trying to avoid the debacle of a French Revolution."

McCarthy and LaRouche

In the last decade of his life, Gene McCarthy enjoyed a fruitful association with Lyndon LaRouche and his associates. When asked to sign an open letter calling for LaRouche's exoneration, after his unjust imprisonment in 1989, McCarthy said, "How could I not add my name in defense of a man who



EIRNS/Stewart Lewis

McCarthy at the "Ad Hoc Democratic Party Platform Hearings" of LaRouche's Committee for a New Bretton Woods, June 22, 2000.

has brought Plato and Schiller back into politics—and was sent to jail for it."

He was a distinguished panelist in the June 2000 Ad Hoc Democratic Party Platform Hearings sponsored by LaRouche's Committee for a New Bretton Woods. From 2001 to 2004, McCarthy contributed a column to LaRouche's *New Federalist* newspaper titled, "The American Bestiary," which characterized the utterings of political spin doctors with examples of common and rare animals from medieval manuscripts. In 2003, *EIR* published this writer's three-part interview with Senator McCarthy.

McCarthy and LaRouche enjoyed numerous in-depth discussions. One meeting between the two irreverent wits occurred when LaRouche visited his friend in the hospital. Visitors and nurses poked their noses in the door wondering at the rollicking laughter echoing from that hospital room.

But it was the LaRouche Youth Movement, whose progress he followed with intense interest, that really sparked a hope in the future for Gene McCarthy. After hearing about the latest breakthroughs and adventures of the LYM, he would say, "Those kids are trying to overthrow my fine Irish pessimism."

The Boston Convention

Therefore, it seems appropriate to honor his passing by quoting from the statement he gave to the LaRouche Youth Movement to be read at that turning point in history, the LYM Press Conference at the Boston Convention on July 25, 2004, following their exclusion by the Democratic Party.

"When I heard that the discredited Homeland Security Agency excluded the LaRouche Youth Movement from the

Convention premises, I was amazed. When I heard that the DNC [Democratic National Committee] did not act to protest the exclusion, I was, unfortunately, not surprised.

“Until today, I thought that the worst that could be done to a youth movement had been done to our own, in Chicago, at the 1968 Convention. . . .

“Now, we have been living through the tragic results of the demoralization of the Baby-Boomer generation. Shouldn’t the DNC understand that the future of a country, let alone a party, depends on the development of the youth movement of today?”

“In Bill Clinton’s book, he says that when he was a student, and didn’t have the proper shoes to wear to a meeting of some sort, I lent him my shoes. Let me give the youth at this press conference something less material, and perhaps more useful—my outrage at their exclusion and my support for their mission. Let me be a part of their mission.”

Interview: Sen. Eugene McCarthy

Back to the Bestiary

Right after the 2004 Presidential election, when George W. Bush was declared the winner and most of the Democratic Party was lying on the floor in a pool of tears, Nina Ogden interviewed Sen. Eugene McCarthy on Nov. 5, whose hilarious characterization of George Bush, Karl Rove, and their “supporters” is even more true now than it was then.

McCarthy: Well, Bush has his mandate. The Karl Rove Republican specialists dragged it in for him and when he went out and wiped his feet on the doormat in front of the White House on Election Day there it was, under the doormat—his mandate.

EIR: What did they bring him?

McCarthy: The slough-pumpers.

EIR: Who slew what?

McCarthy: The slough-pumpers. In a time like this, we have to go back to the Bestiary.

EIR: Okay—I see. What kind of creature is a slough-pumper? Is it fish or fowl?

McCarthy: Fowl. Definitely very foul.

EIR: Okay. I looked it up. It says it’s the *botaurus lentiginosus*, the American bittern.

McCarthy: *Botaurus*. . . . Oh, the Latin name. Well, the slough-pumper doesn’t speak Latin, but Karl Rove hoped

they’d listen to it in their peculiar habitat.

EIR: What is their habitat and what do they sound like?

McCarthy: Well, they don’t sound like anything else you’ve ever heard. Rove told Bush their call was “man-date, man-date.” Maybe they’re speaking in tongues.

EIR: It really says here in the literature, “The male’s resounding breeding call sounds more mechanical than biological. Owing to their strange calls and penchant for living in desolate wetlands, they were considered evil omens. . . .”

McCarthy: Wetlands! They live in sloughs, swamps, marshes, places where the farmland is reverting to the primordial ooze! They have very short legs and underdeveloped brains, but since they are bad at catching fish, they are very good buggers.

EIR: It says here in the literature, “When frightened, the bittern points its bill skyward, relying on its striped breast to hide. It sways with the wind and looks forward to danger.”

McCarthy: Sure, that’s why Karl Rove’s Republican hunting and gathering specialists brought them in for the mandate. But, you know, they hide in the short grass, so the Democratic specialists didn’t know they were there.

EIR: Yeah, it says that in Minnesota, they lure males into live traps using mirrors and recordings. That’s what it really says in the bird literature.

McCarthy: Sure, you can always rely on metaphor in a crisis, and we’re really on a roll here.

EIR: No kidding! It says that John James Audubon reported, “When I have suddenly come upon them, they have stood still from mere terror, until I have knocked them down with an oar or a stick. Their movements were so sluggish as to give opportunities of easily shooting them.”

McCarthy: I’m sure he found out how worthless they are. They taste terrible. If you’re really hungry, you can eat a mud hen, which tastes really horrible. If you are absolutely desperate, you can eat a slough-pumper, but it won’t really help you.

EIR: What are they good for?

McCarthy: Nothing really—Maybe in honor of his faith-based initiatives, Bush should replace the eagle in the Great Seal with the slough-pumper. There he would be, in the center of the Seal—paralyzed with fear, hidden in the swamp grass, his scrawny neck pointed up to the heavens, hoping for a plague of locusts and grasshoppers to fall into his open beak.

EIR: It says that other folk names for the American bittern are: Hell driver, fool fowl, water belcher, pile driver, thunder pumper, shiti-poke. . . .

McCarthy: Isn’t metaphor wonderful?