

We had to take a principled stand

by Laurence Hecht

These comments are excerpted from an interview with Laurence Hecht that appears in the Fall 1993 issue of 21st Century Science & Technology magazine. Hecht, an associate editor of 21st Century, discussed both the background of the Virginia political vendetta and the scientific work of Lyndon LaRouche and his associates.

We were succeeding. We were doing something that we weren't supposed to do. We were succeeding as an independent political movement in the United States, challenging the sorts of policies associated with Henry Kissinger and others in influential positions both inside and outside the U.S. government. . . .

It was not accidental or coincidental that only five or six months before the first round of arrests—the big raid in October 1986—we had won a spectacular victory in the state of Illinois primary, where supporters of LaRouche won positions in the Democratic primary for Lieutenant Governor and

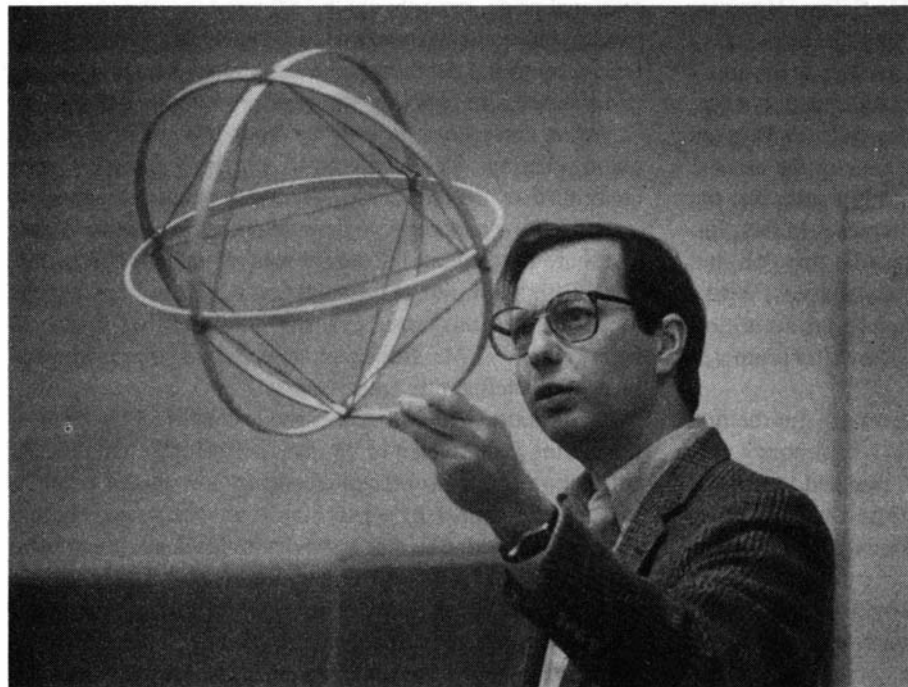
Secretary of State—in the process greatly upsetting the son of a famous presidential candidate, Adlai Stevenson III. . . . So that represented the kinds of victories we were having, particularly in Democratic Party primaries, around the country. . . .

Once you have a climate of prejudice created, it is difficult to get a fair trial. Of course, the advantage of the jury system is that it only takes one person to stand up to oppose it. But it is an unfortunate fact of our political system here, of the way that things have been going over the past 20, 30, even 40 years—it connects in with problems in our education system and elsewhere—that people put popularity, acceptance by their peers, often above truth. . . .

I would say to readers that the most important thing is that they not compromise on basic questions. Both in this case and in the sort of situation which we are all facing—I only face it in a more extreme form than most of your readers probably face it—the road to Hell is paved with the small compromises.

We were offered deals. All that we had to do was to admit to a “small crime,” that perhaps we did something small, and they would have arranged short jail sentences, in some cases none, or fairly limited terms. This was an agonizing decision, since at the time the deals were offered to me, three people had already been sentenced to terms up to 77 years.

But it is wrong to say you committed a crime when you didn't. Usually it is the small compromises that lead up to the big ones, and there are things that most people in our nation face, that scientists face, every day in their life. People must take a principled position on these questions, or each compromise leads, step by step, to something worse.



Laurence Hecht teaches a geometry class, using wooden hoops to demonstrate the construction of the Platonic solids. A leading political fundraiser for the LaRouche movement, Hecht is also associate editor of 21st Century Science & Technology magazine, conducting original research in geometry and physics.