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## *Fred Newman, 76, Writer and Postmodern Marxist*

By DOUGLAS MARTIN

Fred Newman's influential role in New York life and politics defied easy description.

He founded a Marxist-Leninist party, fostered a sexually charged brand of psychotherapy, wrote controversial plays about race and managed the presidential campaign of Lenora Fulani, who was both the first woman and the first black candidate to get on the ballot in all 50 states.

He helped the Rev. Al Sharpton get on his feet as a public figure and gave Michael R. Bloomberg the support of his Independence Party in three mayoral elections, arguably providing Mr. Bloomberg's margin of victory in 2001 and 2009.

Mr. Newman, who died at 76 in his Manhattan home on July 3, eschewed conventionality. He insisted, for instance, that there was nothing wrong with psychotherapists having sex with patients. He created an empire of nonprofit and for-profit enterprises, including arts groups and a public relations firm. He wrote books on psychology and philosophy as well as plays. One play, about the 1991 riots between blacks and Jews in the Crown Heights section of Brooklyn, was condemned as anti-Semitic by the Anti-Defamation League.

His greatest impact came through mobilizing his followers, sometimes called "Newmanites," to build alliances with third parties, including that of the Texas independent H. Ross Perot. "If it weren't for the Independence Party, Mike Bloomberg might not have become mayor," said Douglas Muzzio, a professor of public affairs at Baruch College.

In turn, Mr. Bloomberg supported the Independence Party's goal of nonpartisan municipal elections and gave the party more than \$650,000 of his own money. His administration arranged millions of dollars in bond financing in 2002 and 2006 for a building for Mr. Newman's nonprofit All Stars Project, which uses the performing arts to help low-income children.

Mr. Newman began his climb to influence in New York in the 1960s, when, from his apartment on the Upper West Side of Manhattan, he formed a Marxist collective called "If ... Then." Its members, many of them self-professed anarchists, collected money on the streets for the group. Most participated in Mr. Newman's newly articulated "social therapy," which encouraged patients to change themselves by seeking to change society. He encouraged collective members to sleep with one another, an activity he called "friendosexuality." The collective published newspapers and started a dental clinic.

"It's probably fair to say I was the dominant leader," Mr. Newman said in an interview with *The New York Observer* in 1999. "I hope I wasn't an authoritarian oppressor, but I think that's probably accurate to say that."

His detractors, however, said his "collective" amounted to a cult. Chip Berlet, a senior analyst with Political Research Associates, which studies unorthodox political groups, called Mr. Newman "a master at creating a myth of importance." "He was a brilliant charlatan," Mr. Berlet said.

Frederick Delano Newman was born in the Bronx on June 17, 1935, and grew up there. His mother chose the same middle name as that of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, a hero of hers. After his father died when young Fred was 9, his mother raised her five children alone, supported by welfare checks, the rent from rooms in her house, near Yankee Stadium, and the fees she earned running poker games.

Mr. Newman hated school but tested well enough to be admitted to Stuyvesant High School in Manhattan. He worked as a toolmaker to help support his family. At 19, he joined the Army and served in Korea. He graduated from the City College of New York and earned a Ph.D. in philosophy from Stanford in 1962.

He was twice married and divorced. He is survived by his son, Donald; his daughter, Elizabeth Newman; and by Gabrielle L. Kurlander and Jacqueline Salit, his life partners in what Ms. Salit described as an "unconventional family of choice." He died of renal failure, his spokeswoman, Christina DiChiara, said.

Mr. Newman taught at City College but was fired after giving male students A's to help them avoid being drafted and sent to Vietnam. Other colleges hired him but fired him for the same reason. A job as a drug counselor led to his therapy career.

After forming his Upper West Side collective, Mr. Newman, in 1974, allied his group with Lyndon H. LaRouche Jr., originally a leftist leader who veered to right-wing conspiracy theories and ran for president eight times from the political fringe. Tensions between the two prompted Mr. Newman to break the alliance after less than a year, however. He then formed the International Workers Party from what he called his core collective, with a mission to advance minority rights and a leftist agenda.

The party was dissolved at the end of the 1970s. Mr. Newman then founded the New Alliance Party as a vehicle for moving beyond a narrow leftist spectrum. Around the same time, he met Ms. Fulani, a graduate student who attended one of his clinics and joined the collective. Mr. Newman helped mold her into a political professional who for many years was the face of his political ventures.

"She is one of my life's proudest accomplishments," he told *New York Newsday* in 1992.

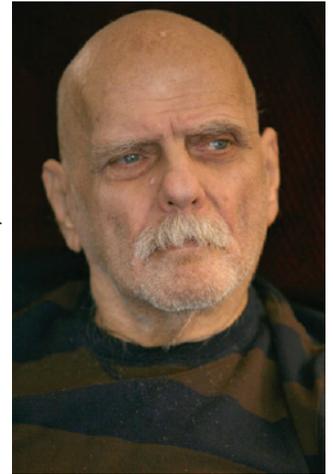
In 1988, as her campaign manager, he helped Ms. Fulani get on the presidential ballot in all 50 states, something no black candidate or woman had done. She received more than 200,000 votes. In 1992, Ms. Fulani ran again, and raised more than \$2 million from private donors.

In 1991, the New Alliance Party gave strong support to Mr. Sharpton, then a community advocate, at a time when he was struggling for broader political recognition. It provided Mr. Sharpton with income, public relations help and up to half the participants in his demonstrations, often protesting attacks against blacks.

In the early 1990s, Mr. Newman began a campaign to encourage more independent voices in politics, almost regardless of ideology. These included Mr. Perot, Ralph Nader and even the conservative stalwart Patrick J. Buchanan. Mr. Newman supported a succession of reform parties, ultimately capturing control of the New York City branch of the Independence Party.

As late as 2005, Mr. Newman wrote that he remained a Marxist, albeit what he called a postmodern one. His final cause was to end the two-party system, which he believed stifled real choice. He wanted primary elections to be open to all parties, and to have all candidates run against one another. The top two would vie in a general election.

That proposal prompted a question from Mr. Bloomberg one day in 2001 when the future mayor was seeking Mr. Newman's support, Ms. Salit recalled. Mr. Bloomberg asked him if he would be putting himself out of business if he were to give up the ballot line he had used so effectively. "We're an anti-party party," Mr. Newman answered. "We want to be put out of business."



Fred Newman in 2009.