

THE OCCULT ELITE

“Michael Barker's meticulously researched and referenced history and analysis shows us in detail how conspiratorial fantasies of an ‘occult elite’ operate as the diametric opposite of revolutionary Marxism, and as a deadly ideological threat to the working class.”

Ian Parker, academic and anti-capitalist activist, author of *Revolution in Psychology: Alienation to Emancipation* (Pluto Press, 2007)

“As conspiracy culture continues to bleed from the fringes of rightwing politics into their center, Michael Barker's fascinating historical analysis of the elite and often reactionary origins of the occult is both urgent and surprisingly contemporary. A vital contribution to understanding the antecedents and future of the post-QAnon world.”

Alexander Zaitchik, author of *Common Nonsense: Glenn Beck and the Triumph of Ignorance* (John Wiley & Sons, 2010)

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The Occult Elite
Anti-Communist Paranoia and Other
Ruling-Class Delusions

Michael Barker

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For the struggle

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Introduction

Billions of people live on Earth, nearly all of whom are united in trying to make good of the utterly bankrupt political system that dominates their lives. So, in a world where the economic demands of a tiny elite regularly trump the living needs of the majority, ordinary people will always yearn for ideas to help them make sense of daily injustices that take place: this much is obvious. Nevertheless, all too often people have become isolated from the type of mass-based political organizations that might act to promote democratic solutions to their serious concerns. Under such circumstances, it makes sense that some people will grasp at the ideological comfort provided by conspiracy theories (no matter how irrational) to understand the world around them; with some individuals gravitating towards the type of explanatory frameworks that are able to point the finger at the evil plots hatched by “all-powerful” nefarious elites.

Conspiracies, as-a-rule of thumb, tend to ignore or diminish the political significance of the millions of acts of collective resistance that have and continue to be made by ordinary people in the fight for a better world. This omission is important in contributing towards the maintenance of an unjust status quo. Moreover, conspiracies tend to be welcomed by ruling elites, who prefer a populous that is misinformed about (1) the overstated power of certain evil individuals to carry through their heinous deeds, and (2) the alleged powerlessness of ordinary people.¹ By contrast, socialist ideas provide

¹ Kathryn Olmsted provides one of the best introductions to the politics of conspiracy theories in her book *Real Enemies: Conspiracy Theories and American Democracy, World War I to 9/11* (Oxford University Press, 2009). She points out that intelligence agencies (whether they be the CIA or the FBI) not only repressed dissident groups (usually those on the Left of the political spectrum), but they also boasted of creating a climate of paranoia among the public. Hence during the cold

the most suitable way of firstly comprehending why inequality and exploitation remain so rife, and secondly, figuring out how our class (the working-class) can collectively respond to the ruling-classes daily intrigues. This explains why proponents of socialist ideas within trade unions and workplaces are so maligned by capitalist politicians and their willing cronies.

It is true that Donald Trump's presidency is over... for now, but the world remains resting on a precipice with the forces of the far-right growing in confidence by the day.² In the face of the continued resistance of ordinary people, in recent decades global elites have forced through many regressive counter-reforms upon society, which have served to undermine the ability of our class to collectively fight back. These losses have more to do with the failures of leadership shown by organizations of the working-class than they do with any clever planning on behalf of elites. Yet in lieu of the existence of mass democratic working-class organizations in most of the world, problematic and conspiratorial, but ostensibly anti-establishment, ideas have been able to temporarily supplant class-based analyses about how and why social change happens. With a focus on America and Russia, this book therefore seeks to examine aspects of how the ruling-classes have sought to normalize their own irrational and conspiratorial theories of social change throughout popular consciousness.

To the eternal consternation of those elites who would prefer to deny us our basic class solidarity, and knowledge of our class's

war, "the FBI started its domestic covert action programs, known by the acronym COINTELPRO, in which agents infiltrated dissident groups and eventually tried to 'expose, disrupt, misdirect, discredit, or otherwise neutralize' them." Olmsted goes on to add: "One purpose of COINTELPRO, according to an official memo, was to 'enhance the paranoia endemic in [dissident] circles' and convince activists that 'there is an FBI agent behind every mailbox.'... In other words, the FBI conspired to create fear of conspiracy." (p.10)

² Dave Renton, *The New Authoritarians: Convergence on The Right* (Pluto Press, 2019). As Renton puts it: "The question of how long this epoch of right-wing success lasts will be shaped in part by how their opponents respond and whether the left takes the opportunities available to us. The point of this book is to encourage readers to see our enemies clearly, without fear, and to focus on where they are now in the hope that by understanding them better, we can more effectively challenge them." (p.12)

victories, revolutions are a mainstay of humanity's emancipatory history. Indeed, popular mass-based uprisings occur all the time, and can take place where they are least expected – as demonstrated by the two successful revolutions that took place one hundred years ago in the poor and materially deprived country that was Russia. But despite the unanticipated nature of the two Russian revolutions of 1917, the democratic and socialist advances made in Russia did much to boost working-class confidence in the rest of the world too; think for example of the momentous Seattle General Strike of 1919, or moreover, how close a mass working-class movement came to organizing a successful revolution in Germany.³

Nevertheless, making a revolution is not the solution for all ills, as one prominent historian of the Russian revolution put it: “To overthrow the old power is one thing; to take the power in one’s own hands is another.” And ultimately for revolutions to truly serve the needs of the working-class they must succeed in wresting power from the ruling class. Hence although it is true that over the past century many revolutions have taken place, most of these uprisings have only succeeded in transferring power from one segment of the ruling elite to another. The ruling-class “may win the power in a revolution not because it is revolutionary,” but because it “has in its possession property, education, the press, a network of strategic positions”. By way of contrast: “Deprived in the nature of things of all social advantages,” an insurrectionary movement of the working-class “can count only on its numbers, its solidarity,” and the degree to which it is organized and ready to assume power during a revolutionary struggle.⁴

The fact that many previous revolutions have failed to deliver democratic control of our lives – with power all too often falling back into the hands of the super-rich – does not mean that such failures were somehow pre-ordained. And it certainly does not imply political collusion between revolutionary leaders and the forces of reaction. But this does not stop sections of the ruling class from leaping on these failures to suit their own nefarious ends. Indeed, now that many

³ Jeremy Brecher, *Strike!* (Straight Arrow Books, 1972); Pierre Broué, *The German Revolution, 1917-1923* (Haymarket Books, 2006).

⁴ Leon Trotsky, *The History of the Russian Revolution* (Pluto Press, 1997), p.1018.

people are looking for alternatives to the current corrupt political establishment, a resurgent coalition of neo-fascists and other assorted critics of Western imperialism are striving to take full advantage of the ongoing global economic crisis. They do this by identifying themselves as the genuine critics of the global ruling-class and by misidentifying socialists and revolutionaries as the enemy of the working-class. In such opportunist and reactionary historical narratives, genuine revolutionary leaders are portrayed as unwitting tools of the ruling class elites. So now, as ever, we should be conscious of what our class enemies are doing in plain sight, as the stakes have never been higher.

Working-Class Power in the Russian Revolution

When democratically organized bodies of the working-class are unable to provide a fighting leadership within any given popular uprising, leadership still exists, but it falls elsewhere, that is, outside of the democratic control of ordinary workers. This is precisely what happened during the initial February revolution in Russia 1917. Thus the initial Revolution did oust the despotic Tsar, but only to allow another unrepresentative and undemocratic elite caste to take over the reins of the country. But with the new Provisional Government that came to power proved unwilling to cede genuine power to the majority of Russians, the subsequent October Revolution succeeded where the former failed by enabling a mass movement of the working-class to assume control of society. Revolutionary working-class leadership was provided by the democratic forces of the Bolshevik Party, a force which in later years was tragically misled and debased by Stalin and his admirers.

The ruling-class, wherever they may lie, have never been disinterested with the outcomes of revolutionary struggles. In February 1917, elites across the world welcomed the new trusted rulers of Russia with open arms. This can be contrasted with their subsequent dismay in October, when the same international elites felt compelled to mobilize their armies to back the displaced Russian ruling class in their long and bloody civil war against socialism. It was this protracted crisis and the failure of similar revolutions to spread elsewhere that helped pave the way for Stalin's eventual seizure of power. Moreover, it was Stalin's undemocratic reign as the leader of

the Communist Party that served to mislead the global forces of the working-class and ultimately undermine people’s faith in the power of socialist ideas to change society for the better. This is not to say that socialists and workers did not continue to fight for a genuine workers democracy and the removal of Stalinist toxin that dominated communist politics. And here some of the most notable individuals in organizing against the Stalinist counter-revolution were those forces organized around Leon Trotsky – one of the principal leaders of the October Revolution.

Although at present no large and influential revolutionary party is based in Russia, germinal forms of such organizations do exist and their members, like other independent trade unionists, continue to suffer repression at the hands of Vladimir Putin’s capitalist state.⁵ Putin’s elite, just like other ruling cliques elsewhere, like to portray those seeking revolutionary change as dangerous enemies of the people, whose democratic activities must be ruthlessly crushed. Following the template of earlier years, ruling elites and their supporters do their best to smear socialist activists as dupes or willing agents of foreign imperial powers. This was the strategy deployed against the members of the Bolshevik Party both prior to and after the October Revolution, and fittingly enough it is the same ridiculous lie that is told about the historic leaders of the Russian Revolution to this day.

Wall Street’s Bolshevik Conspiracy?

Today the main proponents of the fabrication that the Bolsheviks were merely tools of Western imperialists are right-wing conspiracy theorists, many of whom like to refer to themselves as either libertarians or apolitical. One of the most famous texts expounding this timeless deceit is Antony Sutton’s *Wall Street and the Bolshevik Revolution* (Arlington House, 1974), a book whose “research” has now been given a new breath of life by Professor Richard Spence’s more sophisticated but equally conspiratorial book *Wall Street and the Russian Revolution: 1905-1925* (TrineDay, 2017). But despite

⁵ Sotsialisticheskaya Alternativa reporters, “Russian socialist led away in handcuffs,” *International Socialist Alternative*, October 1, 2021.

being an apparent specialist in modern espionage and the occult, Spence, like many more run-of-the-mill conspiracy theorists, has an unhealthy propensity for treating declassified files released by ill-informed intelligence agencies at face-value. Spence however is no marginal scholar as in 2010 he worked as a research fellow at the neoconservative Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, and has been interviewed the Russian television channel *NTV* as a so-called specialist on “Trotsky’s American connections” for a recent documentary on the Russian Revolution. In addition, he remains a regular contributor to the popular pro-Putin conspiracy magazine, *New Dawn*.

For those who simply don’t have the time to keep up with *New Dawn*’s latest extraterrestrial elite machinations and the New World Order’s ongoing genocidal plots, you should know that the conspiracy magazine is a big-hitter in the field, with bimonthly issues overbrimming with ‘adverts’ for alternative medicine boosted by all manner of quasi-fascist nonsense.⁶ The latest issue of this magazine leads with the article “Manufacturing enemies: the slide toward war with China” (November/December 2021), with the author of this piece being former *InfoWars* editor, Patrick Henningsen. Another notable contributor to this issue of *New Dawn* is the well-known occult popularizer Gary Lachman, who, while holding limited criticisms of far-right mystics, remains equally scathing in his rejection of Marxist ideas; hence Lachman propounds the false hope that a global spiritual awakening will change the world for the better.⁷ Ironically, although

⁶ For details on the connections between fascists and the new age movement see, Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, *Black Sun: Aryan Cults, Esoteric Nazism and the Politics of Identity* (New York University Press, 2002), p.292. I have written about this issue in my series of articles that critically scrutinized the reactionary spiritual conspiracies woven by David Icke; see for example, “Ruling-class aliens” (*Swans Commentary*, July 28, 2014) which reviews the details of Icke’s promotion of anti-Semitic conspiracy theories in relation to his discussion of the origins of the Russian Revolution.

⁷ Gary Lachman has been writing full-time about occult matters for well over two decades and is presently an adjunct professor at the California Institute of Integral Studies. His anti-Marxist and uncritical belief in the transformative power of a loving spiritual revival mean that although two of his more recent books cover similar subject matter to the content of *The Occult Elite*, he outlines only a superficial and largely uncritical look at the subject matter and provides no concrete solutions (other than

Lachman distances himself from the neo-fascist politics of Russian mystics like Alexander Dugin, Dugin is in fact the only political operative listed on *New Dawn*'s roll-call of endorsers for their verbose tosh. As Dugin's endorsement explains:

New Dawn magazine is one of the best sources of realistic information on the state of things in our world as it nears its inevitable and predicted end... *New Dawn* magazine helps us to persist. And gives us hope for the better world that is coming...

Elsewhere in their sprawling content, *New Dawn* recognize that a "noted predecessor on the European continent [to popularize such alternative publishing] was the French review *Planète* ('Planet')." This magazine was published by Louis Pauwels and Jacques Bergier as a "follow-up to the sensational success" of their 1959 book *Morning of the Magicians* (first published in English as *The Dawn of the Magicians* in 1962). This muddled and mystical book should be best remembered as having helped launch a new occult revival across the Western world, while Pauwels himself continued in his efforts to misrepresent history by going on to help popularize extreme right-wing and later neo-fascist ideas in the 1970s. In keeping with this type of politics, *New Dawn* emphasize with apparent delight that "*Planète* was the magazine that first brought the Argentinian author Jorge Luis Borges to a wide public."⁸

Borges is famous for not just being a talented writer but for also being a hateful elitist who truly despised genuine mass movements of the working-class.⁹ *New Dawn* may well explain that "diverse ideas and creative thought is presented for our reader's consideration, inspiration and empowerment." But a more accurate descriptor would note that *New Dawn* merely rehashes debunked occult theories

spiritual ones) to the epic problems facing humanity. Gary Lachman, *Dark Star Rising: Magick and Power in the Age of Trump* (TarcherPerigee, 2018); and Lachman, *The Return of Holy Russia: Apocalyptic History, Mystical Awakening, and the Struggle for the Soul of the World* (Inner Traditions, 2020).

⁸ Richard Smoley, "New Dawn & the tradition of alternative publishing," *New Dawn*, 126, May/June 2011.

⁹ Clive James, "Jorge Luis Borges: can a great writer be blind to the world around him?," *Slate*, February 7, 2007.

with a neo-fascist patina for their reader's bewilderment, enhanced paranoia, and disempowerment in the face of the occult machinations of an evil omnipotent elite!

Here the connection between the delusions promoted by *New Dawn* and the mystifying work of people like Professor Spence is the utility of their ideas to the powerful, and in helping to undermine the legitimacy of revolutionary socialism. Certainly, the liberal (globalist) elites that *New Dawn* and their writers obsess about do engage in anti-democratic activities.¹⁰ But *New Dawn's* paranoid ramblings about the actions of these allegedly all-powerful elites is far removed from the sober Marxist class-analysis that is necessary to understand how such elites profit from capitalism (and sometimes from fascism). But what else would you expect from a magazine that includes well-known fascists upon its roster of regular writers.

The New World Order and Bigotry in the Service of Tsardom

An intriguing and related example of reactionary thinking *vis-a-vis* the dynamics of social change is provided in the work of F. William Engdahl, who in 2004 republished his 1992 book *A Century of War: Anglo-American Oil Politics and the New World Order* with Pluto Press. Prior to Pluto's not so inspired decision to rerelease this book, Engdahl had spent decades working as an editor for Lyndon LaRouche's conspiracy network (at least until 1997), and his book merely recycled many LaRouchite narratives including that the 1960s counterculture New Age movement was a manufactured CIA-backed "project." To be more specific, according to Engdahl the creation of the hippie movement had been overseen by the "Anglo-American liberal establishment" to be used in conjunction with another "weapon" of the elite, the creation of a "manipulated 'race war'." As part of this fictional elite-orchestrated process of social change Engdahl went on to add more details to his heady conspiracy, noting that: "The May 1968 student riots in France, were the result of the

¹⁰ Far-right groups worldwide concoct all sort of conspiracies revolving around the social engineering that is undertaken by liberal elites (most notably centring on the activities of the Rockefeller Foundation). This is a subject that I have taken-up in dozens of online articles and in my two previous books *Under The Mask of Philanthropy* (Hextall Press, 2017) and *The Givers That Take* (Hextall Press, 2021).

vested London and New York financial interests in the one G-10 nation which continued to defy their mandate.”¹¹ In a brief comment he then explained his idiotic belief that...

...modern Anglo-American liberalism bore a curious similarity to the Leninist concept of a ‘vanguard party,’ which imposed a ‘dictatorship of the proletariat’ in the name of some future ideal of society. Both models were based on deception of the broader populace.¹²

Since publishing his first book Engdahl has continued his prolific publishing record by writing for New Age magazines like *New Dawn*. Building upon his credentials as an oil historian he has written about his conversion to the right-wing conspiracy that asserts that oil is limitless and not actually a fossil fuel (in this Engdahl consciously drew upon Stalinist research carried out by Russian and Ukrainian scientists in the 1950s).¹³ Engdahl’s ability to read conspiracies into any subject are truly second to none: by way of another example, in 2012 he chose to misinterpret medical research that actually highlighted progress in the struggle to fight cancer in order to write an article asserting that scientific evidence proved that chemotherapy, not cancer, is the real killer!¹⁴

Engdahl it seems is a man with a special mission, and in recent years he has served on the advisory boards of two neo-fascist journals published in Italy (*Geopolitica* which was edited by a leading member of Dugin’s International Eurasian Movement, and *Eurasia, Rivista di Studi Geopolitici* which is published and edited by Italian Nazi-Maoist Claudio Mutti). Engdahl has also been a regular contributor to the neo-fascist Russian think tank *Katehon* – a group whose work is

¹¹ Engdahl, *A Century of War*, p.118, p.126.

¹² Engdahl, *A Century of War*, pp.178-9.

¹³ F. William Engdahl, “Needless wars over oil,” *New Eastern Outlook*, March 5, 2016. In 2005 longstanding right-wing conspiracy theorist Jerome Corsi authored the book *Black Gold Stranglehold: The Myth of Scarcity and the Politics of Oil*, which promotes the alternative fact that oil is not a fossil fuel. In 2017 Corsi became the Washington Bureau Chief for Alex Jones’ *InfoWars*, but has since fallen out with Jones.

¹⁴ Engdahl, “Why didn’t my doctor tell me chemo kills?,” *New Eastern Outlook*, June 3, 2015.

overseen by the close Dugin-ally and homegrown Ukrainian fascist, Leonid Savin, and whose activities are funded by billionaire philanthropist Konstantin Malofeev.¹⁵

Much like the Octopus-like reach of the Koch Brothers in America, Konstantin Malofeev, as a devout extremist philanthropist, not only acts the president of his own reactionary think tank but has also founded his own his own Russian Orthodox TV channel (Tsargrad TV), with none other than Dugin sitting at its editorial helm. Another of Malofeev's explicitly elitist pet ambitions is to ensure that a new patriotic cadre is ready to rule Russia when (as he hopes) the Eurasian movement comes to complete domination of the state apparatus. To undertake this task Malofeev created St Basil the Great School, which as he explained "is meant to function as 'an Orthodox Eton', which will prepare the new elite for a future Russian monarchy."¹⁶

¹⁵ In line with this political orientation, F. William Engdahl writes and acts as an advisor for *Veterans Today*, an organization that, in the name of opposing warmongering, does yeoman's service to popularizing anti-Semitic conspiracy theories.

To read more about how Lyndon LaRouche and Engdahl's conspiracies have been popularized on mainstream TV, see Michael Wolraich's *Blowing Smoke: Why the Right Keeps Serving Up Whack-Job Fantasies about the Plot to Euthanize Grandma, Outlaw Christmas, and Turn Junior into a Raging Homosexual* (Da Capo Press, 2010). In recent years Engdahl's books have been published by the so-called "Progress Press" which excitedly republished LaRouche's "underground classic" *Dope Inc.: Britain's Opium War against the United States*. Furthermore, Engdahl's 2009 book *Gods of Money: Wall Street and the Death of the American Century* directly draws up the conspiracies of Antony Sutton, refers to the "remarkable work of the 19th and early 20th Century German writer, Oswald Spengler, *The Decline of the West*" (a book popular in fascist circles), and uncritically cites the "research" of famed fascist anti-Semite Eustace Mullins. At present Engdahl is counted as a regular contributor to the online journal "New Eastern Outlook" which is published by the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Other well-known conspiracy theorists who write for this publication include Tony Cartalucci and Andre Vltchek.

¹⁶ Shaun Walker, "Russia's soul is monarchic': tsarist school wants to reverse 100 years of history," *The Guardian (UK)*, March 6, 2017. Konstantin Malofeev and Alexander Dugin's TV channel is used as a platform for figures like American conspiracy theorist Alex Jones (of *InfoWars* infamy). In a recent interview Malofeev paid homage to the positive influence of *Fox News*, and boasted about how he had chosen to hire Jack Hanick, one of *Fox News's* founding producers, to help launch

The fond memories that Russian oligarchs maintain for the alleged glory days of the pre-1917 reign of the Tsar are reactionary in the extreme, which, when combined with the mainstream media's demonization of revolutionary social movements, has troubling consequences for the potential future growth of working-class struggle. Indeed, the level of misunderstanding of Russia's most significant political historical event is perplexing to anyone who has studied Russian history. One such liberal Bolshevik expert is Professor Alexander Rabinowitch, who, reflecting upon his recent visits to Russia explained how he...

...was struck by the absolutely crazy questions I was being asked: Was there a February Revolution? Is it true that everything was great in Russia in February, and it was the Generals or the Masons or the intelligentsia that caused the Revolution? And this to some extent is being encouraged, the idea that the Empire - that Imperial Russia was strong and that is where Russia's future lies - I think that is being encouraged by the [Putin] regime, which really cannot just ignore the Revolution, and so it is helping fund serious scholarly conferences [which Rabinowitch attends], but at a popular level that's not what is happening, and crazy things are being published and crazy things are being said, and these lead to crazy questions.... I certainly get that as I read about popular thought in newspapers.¹⁷

Again, one popularizer of such nonsense is F. William Engdahl who

his new television station.

"Malofeev gained further notoriety during the Ukraine conflict in 2014, after he emerged as one of the key figures linking pro-Russia forces in east Ukraine with the Moscow political establishment. One of his former employees, Alexander Borodai, was at one point the self-declared Donetsk People's Republic prime minister; another, Igor Girkin, briefly served as the pro-Russian rebels' chief military commander. The connections landed Malofeev under EU and US sanctions last year. Ukraine's interior ministry has accused him of financing 'illegal armed groups' and branded him a 'sponsor of terrorists'. Malofeev has denied the allegations, which have played well for him domestically. According to Sergei Markov, a well-connected pro-Kremlin analyst, the claims have actually boosted his standing as a successful lobbyist and ideologue..." Courtney Weaver, "God's TV, Russian Style," *Financial Times*, October 16, 2015.

¹⁷ Alexander Rabinowitch, "A life with the Russian Revolution," *Sean's Russia Blog*, May 17, 2017.

wrote in 2015 that:

Contrary to the mythology that passes for history at western universities such as Cambridge, Oxford, Princeton or Harvard, Russia in the years leading to outbreak of World War I was on the path to become a towering prosperous economic nation, something especially not welcome in London.¹⁸

This gobbledygook leads Engdahl to the conspiratorial revelation that: “Wall Street and the City of London financed Leon Trotsky, Lenin, and the Bolshevik Revolution essentially as they did Boris Yeltsin after 1990, to open up Russia for looting and balkanization by favored western companies.”

Propagating Conspiracies and New Eurasianism

Contemplating the nature of the Russian media’s relentless misrepresentation of the colored revolutions as simply being “organized and paid for by the Americans,” one mainstream commentator writing for *The Atlantic* observed: “Now, we see the same kinds of theories pop up in state media portrayals of the Revolutions of 1917.”¹⁹ But strictly speaking this is not really a new development as evidenced by the putrid outpouring of the likes of Engdahl and Spence. But such false flag right-wing propaganda is not limited to journalists and academics, as Putin’s former key advisor, Gleb Pavlovsky, played a decisive role in spreading such misinformation. Pavlovsky was aided in this task through his role as the host of a news show (between 2005 and 2008) that was aired on *RTV* - a Russian television channel that has been owned by natural gas giant Gazprom since 2001.

Corporate networking events like the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum similarly play an important role in laundering the latest conspiracy theories amongst the Russian power elite. In 2016, for example, Engdahl was featured on an all-star panel

¹⁸ Engdahl, “Russia’s awesome responsibility,” *New Eastern Outlook*, October 18, 2015.

¹⁹ Mikhail Zygar, “Putin likes to pretend 1917 never happened,” *The Atlantic*, April 1, 2017.

sponsored by energy giant Rusal that was titled “The Russian Economic Growth Agenda.” Speaking alongside Engdahl on this prestigious line-up was one of Putin’s then primary economic advisors, Sergey Glaziev, who also sits on the advisory board of the right-wing think tank, Katehon. Glaziev likewise maintains his own close connections to Engdahl’s former boss, Lyndon LaRouche, whose shadowy conspiracy network published the English translation of Glaziev’s book in 1999 as *Genocide: Russia and the New World Order*.²⁰

These ominous links between LaRouche’s reactionary conspiracy network and Russian elites have been well-documented elsewhere, but needless to say LaRouchites often feature as “experts” on Russian television, particularly on *Russia Today*. LaRouche and his co-conspirators are even counted as close allies of one of Dugin’s key ideological supporters, Natalya Vitrenko, who is the leader of the misnamed Progressive Socialist Party of Ukraine. Following in Stalin’s footsteps Vitrenko, with no hint of irony, regularly refers to her democratic opponents as fascists, just as LaRouche himself does. (Note: LaRouche has good form in supporting authoritarian leaders; a good example being the ideological aid his network bestowed upon the dictatorship in the Philippines during the people’s revolution of 1986.)²¹

But while LaRouche with his endless supply of “alternative facts” has certainly provided further fuel for the explosion of conspiracy theories in Russia, the proselytizing of other homegrown intellectuals should be considered more important. This is especially the case with the reactionary neo-Eurasian ideas that have taken root

²⁰ Anton Shekhovtsov “Sergey Glazyev and the American fascist cult,” *Blog*, June 7, 2015.

²¹ Alexey Kovalev, “Where foreign “experts” and “political scientists” on Russian television come,” *Sean’s Russia Blog*, January 5, 2016; Shekhovtsov, “How Alexander Dugin’s neo-Eurasianists geared up for the Russian-Ukrainian War in 2005-2013,” *The Interpreter*, January 26, 2016.

For a useful introduction to Lyndon LaRouche’s international movement, see Hylozoic Hedgehog, *How It All Began: The Origins and History of the National Caucus of Labor Committees in New York and Philadelphia (1966-1971)* (Last updated June 2016); and Dennis King, *Lyndon LaRouche and the New American Fascism* (Doubleday, 1989).

within Putin's increasingly authoritarian regime; a dark influence that reared its head during Putin's annual address to the federal assembly in December 2012 when the president reminded his disciples of the contemporary relevance of the ideas of the late Lev Gumilyov's (1912-1992).²² Gumilyov was a vehemently anti-Marxist theorist of the fledgling Eurasian movement who, amongst his other bizarre beliefs, was incensed that the Bolshevik Revolution had embodied "alien" western and Jewish values.²³ It was Gumilyov's intellectual legacy that has been rehashed and updated by both Dugin (who describes Gumilyov as his most important Russian mentor) and by a once-prominent professor at Moscow State University's Faculty of Philosophy, Aleksandr Panarin (1940-2003). Although Dugin is best-known as the intellectual guru for the Eurasian movement, Panarin's primary contribution to this developing paradigm was to insert the esoteric and fascist ideas of the philosophical leader of the French New Right, Alain de Benoist.

The French New Right as it turns out first began their rise to

²² For more on this problematic history see Raphael Schlembach, "Alain de Benoist's anti-political philosophy beyond Left and Right: non-emancipatory responses to globalisation and crisis," Centre for the Study of Social and Global Justice, University of Nottingham, Working Paper No. 22., 2013. Furthermore, as Mark Bassin explained in his article "Lev Gumilev and the European New Right" (*Nationalities Papers*, 46(6), 2015): "Indeed, the resonances between Russian and European radical conservatism are no longer limited to purely ideological cross-fertilization. One of the more fascinating side effects of Russia's actions in Ukraine in 2014 has been to reveal the political connections that are developing between the Putin regime and radical-conservative tendencies in the West. The Russian government has recently underwritten the activities of the Front National in France in the non-trivial form of a nine million Euro loan, battalions of young New Right enthusiasts from France and elsewhere travel to eastern Ukraine to fight in the ranks of the Russian-supported separatist army, and Putin has given public indications of his solidarity with the extremist Jobbik party in Hungary and Ataka in Bulgaria. The leader of the UK Independence Party Nigel Farage praises the Russian leader's 'brilliant' political manoeuvring, and no less a stalwart of America's conservative establishment than Pat Buchanan has begun - sensationally - to wonder if Vladimir Putin might not actually be 'one of us'; 'UK far-right leader Farage calls for alliance with Russia' 2014)." (pp.840-1)

²³ Charles Clover, *Black Wind, White Snow: The Rise of Russia's New Nationalism* (Yale University Press, 2016); Catherine Danks, *Politics Russia* (Routledge, 2009), p.98.

influence around the activism of Alain de Benoist in the wake of the revolutionary uprising of May 1968, with their new collective organizational form being the Research and Study Group for European Civilization (GRECE). Realizing that old-style fascism was discredited amongst the broader public, GRECE sought to promote themselves as anti-elitist but neither Left nor Right (neither socialism or capitalism), and they quickly went about popularizing their conspiratorial mishmash of fascist and occult ideas.

A useful book that provides details about the origins and influences exerted by GRECE and their global followers is Tamir Bar-On's *Where Have All The Fascists Gone?* (Routledge, 2007), in which the author emphasizes that 1978 stood out as a "breakthrough year for GRECE in terms of receiving larger access to the mainstream public." This was because a "number of important GRECE figures, including Alain de Benoist, began to write regular articles that year in the right-wing *Le Figaro Magazine*." This however was no accident as the editor of the popular *Le Figaro Magazine*, Louis Pauwels, had previously "written in the revolutionary right's *Cahiers universitaires* in the 1960s." Moreover, although overlooked by Bar-On, in 1960 Pauwels had coauthored the irrationalist, Romantic treatise known as *Les matin des magiciens*, which later made its debut in America as *Morning of the Magicians*. And given the long-standing cross-over between neo-fascist and occult/new age theories it is very pertinent that Pauwels book had been credited with "the distinction of launching a revival of interest in the occult in the 1960s and 1970s..."²⁴ Of course,

²⁴ Jason Colavito, *The Cult of Alien Gods: H.P. Lovecraft and Extraterrestrial Pop Culture* (Prometheus Books, 2005), p.133. H.P. Lovecraft's fictional work has served to fortify, and provide sustenance to, all manner of ridiculous beliefs, including not least the French theorists of postmodernism (like Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari). Indeed, Lovecraft's stories presented the perfect foil for postmodern ideas, which found a comfortable home in his fictional "world where ignorance and superstition were welcome respites from unsatisfying truths." Here, credit for the influence on Lovecraft's ideas in France should be given to Louis Pauwles and Jacques Bergier, who in 1965 founded one of the "most successful of the French science fiction magazines," *Planete*. Pauwles and Bergier held Lovecraft as "their prophet," and with much of his work having recently been translated into French between 1954 and 1961, they acted to further popularize his work, republishing many of his short stories in their journal, *Planete*. Colavito, *The Cult of Alien Gods*, p.131, p.130,

it is evident that other objective historical conditions played a major role in driving people away from class-based analyses of society, but the historical role played by ultra-right-wing occultists like Pauwels should not be overlooked. After all it is by examining the lives of people like Pauwels and his co-thinkers that we might begin to understand why both mystical and neo-fascist ideas have been able to make something of a resurgence in recent decades.

In *The Threat to Reason: How the Enlightenment was Hijacked and How We Can Reclaim It* (Verso, 2007), Dan Hind states that it is entirely counterproductive to obsess about the public's interest in conspiracies and occult knowledge (as the mainstream media do). Instead, as he correctly puts it, for those seeking to create a more rational society, the real target must be on those members of the ruling-class whose actions promote such popular beliefs amongst wide layers of ordinary people in the first place.²⁵

Ever ignorant to good advice that would benefit the mass of humanity, the rulers of the state apparatus continue to castigate ordinary people for losing faith in the very elites that continue to oppress them. Hence, they refuse to take any blame for the public's willingness to turn to conspiracies to understand the world. Rather it is the irrational day-to-day intrigues of anti-democratic ruling elites (whether capitalist or Stalinist) that has served to create the fertile terrain upon which public confusion flourishes. But what else should we expect given the kingpins of the American state machinery "long and murky history of collaboration with cults and religious fanatics"; or the ongoing activities of their intelligence agencies which "encourage and manipulate, almost as a matter of routine, popular interest in astrology, conspiracy theories, and UFOs."²⁶ Under these circumstances, the public's decision to embrace limited aspects of conspiratorial thinking can easily be interpreted as a rational response to an unjust status quo.

p.136. For a useful critique of postmodernism, see Terry Eagleton, *The Illusions of Postmodernism* (Blackwell, 1996).

²⁵ Hind, *The Threat to Reason*, p.75.

²⁶ Hind, *The Threat to Reason*, p.152.

It offers us that very old consolation that there is more to the world than meets the eye; that great mysteries remain. But there is little evidence to support the idea that the growth of interest in the New Age has coincided with a widespread rejection of the scientific method, or that it is more significant than previous vogues for spiritualism, theosophy, and ‘magick’. There is nothing particularly new about the New Age and we no more live in an ‘age of unreason’ than did our parents or grandparents. At the margins the challenge to conventional medicine, and extravagant claims about the benefits of various therapies, should be treated with caution and where necessary challenged vigorously. But in recent years the major pharmaceutical corporations have repeatedly misled clinicians and the general public when it has suited their marketing plans to do so. In the process they have done far more to undermine our capacity to make rational judgements than crystal healers and homeopaths. To ignore or downplay their activities constitutes a flight from reality that many would-be enlightened commentators claim to find abhorrent.²⁷

Moreover, as I will illustrate in the pages of this book: the irrational intrigues concerning occult and New Age phenomena are far more entwined with the interests of conservative and reactionary leaders (political, religious, and corporate) than previously emphasized by most commentators.

By way of a brief introduction to the esoteric narrative recounted in *The Occult Elite*, it should be highlighted that the keen concerns of the upper classes in popularizing new religious belief systems like Theosophy during the nineteenth century was intimately wedded to the ongoing struggle for democracy being waged by the working-classes against all forms of unaccountable hierarchies (religious or otherwise).²⁸ And predictably, as the power of socialist movements for

²⁷ Hind, *The Threat to Reason*, p.150. Wouter Hanegraaff provides an exhaustive documentary overview (albeit largely uncritical) of the evolution of New Age thinking in his important text *New Age Religion and Western Culture: Esotericism in the Mirror of Secular Thought* (Brill, 1996).

²⁸ Mark Lause, *Free Spirits: Spiritualism, Republicanism, and Radicalism in the Civil War Era* (University of Illinois Press, 2016). For details about working-class organization, see Lause, *The Great Cowboy Strike: Bullets, Ballots and Class Conflicts in the American West* (Verso, 2017), and Kim Moody, *Tramps and Trade*

progressive change ebbed and flowed, the new religious movements favoured by the ruling-classes were often able to capitalize (in a parasitic way) on periods of retreat in popular struggle.

New spiritual enterprises like, for instance, Spiritualism (which was linked to the table-rapping of the Fox sisters) sought to explore new ways of yoking science to conventional religiosity. Yet it was the occult entrepreneurship of the Russian aristocrat known as Helena Blavatsky (1831-91) who, from her home in New York, paved the way for all sorts of mystical nonsense for many decades to come when she founded her very own religious tradition called Theosophy in 1875.²⁹

In undertaking the mammoth task of creating a new spiritual tradition, Madame Blavatsky was not averse to taking expedient shortcuts, and many of her otherworldly beliefs were remarkably similar in content to the popular occult romances penned by the English novelist Edward Bulwer Lytton.³⁰ Opposition to socialism was another

Union Travelers: Internal Migration and Organized Labor in Gilded Age America, 1870-1900 (Haymarket Books, 2019).

²⁹ Despite the self-serving interests of the ruling-classes it remains the case, as it does today, that during historic periods of mass working-class struggle, new religious beliefs were seized upon by the oppressed to help coordinate their resistance to an unjust status quo. The manner by which Spiritualism and Theosophy were adapted to serve some of the needs of mass struggles is discussed in Charles Postel's *The Populist Vision* (Oxford University Press, 2007), see Chapter 8 ("Shrine of science: innovation in populist faith").

³⁰ Famously, Edward Bulwer Lytton was the author of occult romances which popularized Rosicrucianism in books including *Zanoni* (1842) and *A Strange Story* (1862), and it "would not be unjust to say" that Theosophy was "virtually manufactured" from the pages of his novels. Peter Washington, *Madame Blavatsky's Baboon: A History of the Mystics, Mediums, and Misfits Who Brought Spiritualism to America* (Schocken, 1995), p.36. "Bulwer Lytton was no mere novelist. He also had a successful career in politics, entering Parliament in 1831 and becoming Colonial Secretary in 1858 (for which he was rewarded with a peerage as Lord Lytton in 1866)." Lytton had been friends with "the unfrocked French priest Eliphaz Levi (1810-75). Levi -- whose real name was Alphonse-Louis Constant -- had inaugurated an occult revival in France." (p.37)

"*Zanoni* begins with a reference to the Rosicrucians, almost certainly the main eastern source in modern times of Hidden Master mythology. The irony of Madame Blavatsky's debt to Bulwer Lytton is doubled by the fact that this secret brotherhood is itself a fiction, created in early-seventeenth-century Germany by a series of pamphlets reporting the existence of a mysterious brotherhood (*fraternitatis*) of the

defining characteristic of her theosophical worldview. As first and foremost hers was a religion that catered to the spiritual needs of the world's oppressors. Indeed, as Maria Carlson explains in her book *'No Religion Higher Than Truth': A History of the Theosophical Movement in Russia, 1875-1922* (Princeton University Press, 1993):

Theosophy did not appear at the end of the [nineteenth] century by accident; it was called into being by the frustration and dissatisfaction of a growing number of thinking people [of the upper classes or the "God-seeking intelligentsia"] who felt intellectually and spiritually cut adrift, unwilling or unable to choose between the sterility of scientific positivism and the impotence of a diminished church. They sought the eternal verities and the dignity of man, and they found dirty factories, alienated workers, Philistinism, and decadence. Theosophy offered these bereft modern seekers a resolution to their quandary, together with a highly structured Weltanschauung and a strong moral ethic.³¹

On a related note, another elitist whose otherworldly guidance touched the lives of the ruling-classes was Rudolf Steiner, the founder of Anthroposophy. In 1912 Steiner had been the general secretary of the German branch of the Theosophical Society when he parted ways to form his own new occult group which aligned itself with Christian rather than 'oriental' spiritualism (which had been a central feature of Theosophy).³² Anthroposophy, like Theosophy, rather unsurprisingly

Rosy Cross, named in honour of the fourteenth-century knight Christian Rosenkreutz." Washington, *Madame Blavatsky's Baboon*, p.38.

³¹ Carlson, *'No Religion Higher Than Truth'*, pp.5-6. "Like their French predecessors, the Russian Symbolist writers, artists, and God-seekers who dominated Silver Age culture preferred" the world of the occult than the "bright, rational, scientific world of Karl Marx and historical materialism". "The physical landscape of the first world consisted of expanding industry, strikes, social unrest, and vulgarity and mediocrity of a growing middle class. The Russian educated elite feared that it heralded the imminent collapse of culture and civilization. They chose instead to escape from the noisomeness of physical reality into an alternative reality of mind and art where absolute aesthetic and spiritual values still held." (p.7, p.6, p.7)

³² The rise of such esoteric movements like Anthroposophy were part of a broader occult revival that mobilized the rhetoric of science to justify occult doctrine. "Indeed the modern occult revival itself can be seen as a product of 'the secularization of esotericism' in the post-Enlightenment era and a product of the hybridization of

defined itself in opposition to the popular socialist and Marxist ideas of the day. This led Steiner to intuit a spiritual approach to economics and politics known as “social threefolding” which was presented...

...as an alternative to the various proposals for collectivization and socialization that abounded in the early stages of the fledgling Weimar democracy. Positioning his own proposals as a 'third way' between capitalism and Communism, Steiner devoted much of 1919 to promoting social threefolding to industrialists and business leaders, as well as to proletarian audiences in the newly formed workers councils. Even while courting mass support from workers, Steiner rejected democratization of the factories, and maintained that the economy was not to be run by the “hand-workers,” but rather by “the spiritual workers, who direct production.” At the same time, the social threefolding movement claimed to represent the harmonization of workers' interests and owners' interests.³³

esoteric cosmologies and modern scientific cosmologies.” Peter Staudenmaier, *Between Occultism and Fascism: Anthroposophy and the Politics of Race and Nation in Germany and Italy, 1900-1945*, Ph.D. Thesis, Cornell University, August 2010, p.8.

³³ Staudenmaier, *Between Occultism and Fascism*, p.127. That Rudolf Steiner's pre-war and post-war outlook should have resonated in “nationalist oriented circles” is hardly surprising given that in 1914 he had declared that the “war is a conspiracy against German spiritual life.” Moreover, in the aftermath of the war, scapegoats in the form of Freemasons and Jews were rapidly incorporated into the anthroposophical lexicon, playing a central part in the imagined anti-German conspiracy. In this manner, it is obvious why “thematic overlap between anthroposophy and the *völkisch* milieu gave rise at times to a situation of competition and rivalry, both organizational and ideological.” (p.116, p.117, p.121)

A worrying feature of anthroposophy's later relations to Nazism meant that the “theory and practice” of the two groups “were at odds as often as they were in accord.” Anthroposophy's enemies therefore only began organizing in earnest in 1934, gaining limited successes in “dismantling anthroposophist organizations” between 1935 and 1941. But despite this dedicated opposition from within some parts of the Nazi party, “German anthroposophy nonetheless saw remarkable achievements in cooperation with various Nazi sponsors.” One anthroposophist initiative that positively “flourished between 1933 and 1941” was biodynamic agriculture. “Even after its official suppression in 1941,” its “representatives continued to work with the SS, taking part in 'settlement' activities in the occupied lands of Eastern Europe and overseeing a network of biodynamic plantations at various concentration camps.” Staudenmaier, *Between Occultism and Fascism*, p.303, p.187, p.188, p.226, p.227.

For other useful introductions to the history of Anthroposophy, see Heiner

For ordinary people at least, this type of counterproductive approach to politics – an approach that ignores the existence of the class struggle – remains a common feature of the religious dogmas that have been propagated by spiritual seers over the twentieth century.

Bearing this history in mind, *The Occult Elite: Anti-Communist Paranoia and Other Ruling-Class Delusions*, examines the evolution of a wide variety of occult practices over the past century that have been invested in and promoted by the rich and powerful. The book maintains a particular focus on the uptake of mystical practices in relation to the life and death struggle between the scientific ideas of Marxism and the deluded doctrines of capitalism. And while this text by no means provides an exhaustive survey of this field of supernatural anti-scientific inquiry, it illustrates how the individuals most invested in the promotion of occult phenomena are one and the same as those elites who defend and profit from an irrational and exploitative capitalist system.

Tens of thousands of books have of course already been written about the supernatural, most of which serve to inculcate mystical beliefs in their readers. So, while the opening chapter of *The Occult Elite* does document the lineage of supernatural intrigues in American history, its primary focus is on the politics of the leaders and funders involved with popularizing such spiritual developments during the Cold War through to the present. This history takes as its starting point the bourgeois salon that was hosted by the New York socialite Mabel Dodge and the chapter concludes by scrutinizing QAnon's fascist roots in the minds of former agents of the US government's surveillance apparatus. Here we find that mystical beliefs are umbilically connected with the struggle against communist ideas. And a few of the key characters who feature in this opening chapter are the psychic explorer Dr. Andrija Puharich (and his many millionaire

Ullrich, *Rudolf Steiner* (Continuum, 2008); and for German speakers see Helmut Zander's two volume study *Anthroposophie in Deutschland: Theosophische Weltanschauung und gesellschaftliche Praxis 1884-1945* (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007). For Staudenmaier's review of this second book, see *Aries: The Journal for the Study of Western Esotericism*, 10, 2010.

boosters), the far-right leader of the Unification Church, Rev. Sun Myung Moon, and the psychic investigations funded by real estate mogul, Robert Bigelow.

Chapter 2 turns to the heartland of Communism to shed light on the development of esoteric knowledge in the Russian state over the last century. This chapter begins by highlighting the role that the Bolshevik Revolution of October 1917 played in uniting ordinary people against a ruling-class that was more obsessed with mysticism than it was with improving the lives of Russia's working-class and peasant populations. After waging a long civil war against the new democratic regime, the reactionary often theosophically inspired conspiratorial views of Russian elites developed fresh roots for their occult ideas in the white émigré community. Hence the creation of a new anti-Semitic myth revolving around *The Book of Veles*, which became something of a founding text for the neo-pagan Rodnoverie movement. And while it remains true that paranormal research has, at times, been positively encouraged by the Soviet state, at other times it has been harshly repressed. This is a theme that is taken up in the concluding part of this chapter, which illustrates how in the post-Soviet period, mystical ideas have aided the development of the neo-fascist ideologies that have exerted varying degrees of influence over Vladimir Putin's unstable authoritarian state.

Bringing together elite obsessions from both American and Russia, Chapter 3 provides a novel study of the Californian New Age hub known as Esalen and outlines the organizing role they fulfilled in facilitating networking events for occult activists from across the Cold War divide. In this unusual task billionaire financiers like Lawrence Rockefeller played an integral role in sustaining Esalen's work; while aristocratic occultists like Gerald Heard and Aldous Huxley provided essential intellectual guidance that informed Esalen's spiritual mission. This chapter therefore explores Esalen's involvement in pioneering a Soviet-American exchange program that was undertaken in close cooperation with the Reagan Administration; and exposes how leading figures from Esalen facilitated the process of privatization in the former Soviet state; while in America, we see how Esalen gurus contributed towards the growing backlash against feminism. The chapter then closes by examining the conspiratorial politics of a

number of wealthy libertarian activists from American shores who played a significant role in post-Soviet politics.

Connected to the international networking of spiritual elites associated with Esalen, Chapter 4 takes as its starting point the little-discussed, but still highly influential, spiritual activism of elite powerbroker Ervin Laszlo. Laszlo's life-long commitment to opposing communism made him the perfect bedfellow of a variety of technocratic elites seeking to manage global affairs like, for instance, the Club of Rome, and theosophical tinged groups like Planetary Citizens. Again, early adopters at Esalen were intimately wrapped up in such "new" initiatives which eventually led to the creation of the libertarian consultancy outfit called the Global Business Network - a group which incorporated and expanded upon the type of Gurdjieff-inspired corporate mysticism that had germinated within the corporate world in the 1970s. This chapter also interrogates the politics of the millionaire consciousness guru Barbara Marx Hubbard who rose to fame in the 1970s - a mystical figure who for all her talk about love and global unity has always allied herself with influential members of the far-right. Related to Hubbard's dubious spiritual activism, the chapter ends by problematizing the legacy of conservative philanthropists like John Fetzer, Laurance Rockefeller, and Sir John Templeton, who have sought out manifold ways to envelop science into religion - a troubling project that was replicated by the relentless activism of the Rev. Sun Myung Moon.

In the wake of World War Two, supernatural politics came of age within UFO communities worldwide. Chapter 5 consequently explores how occult ideas, especially those that were previously expressed in far-right milieu, were able to play a central (if largely unseen) role in defining the UFO narratives from the 1950s to the current day. Conservative publishing houses like Regnery fulfilled a unique role in carrying forth this occult enlightenment, as did many Nazi activists.

Books like the best-selling *The Morning of the Magicians* also fuelled this occult revival, a book which in turn popularized myths surrounding the occult powers that were ostensibly harnessed by Hitler's Nazi Party. This had led to the ever-closing melding of fascist ideologies within the more conservative (and apolitical) parts of the

New Age circuit, a process that has oftentimes occurred with the active support of leading members of the Anthroposophical movement. Chapter 5 is then rounded off with a discussion of the recent controversies that have rocked the US-based Mutual UFO Network (MUFON), including not least their promotion of Nazi UFOlogy and nonsense about reptilian overlords.

The final chapter of *The Occult Elite* focuses on how magical alternatives to medicine have grown in popularity with the active support of those same elite forces that oppose taxpayer funded public healthcare. With an initial focus on the ruling-class health sanatoriums run by the likes of John Harvey Kellogg and Bernarr Macfadden, this chapter demonstrates how such “natural” health institutions were often closely related to elite sanctioned movements concerned with the promotion of white supremacy.

Just like the far-right’s interest in exploiting UFO tales in the post-war period, the right to “good health” became a central rung of the political program of reactionary political groups like American Rally and the John Birch Society. The latter of whom peddled their mystical remedies through a spin-off group called the National Health Federation, a group who - with the aid of vitamin giants like Amway - promoted the myth that vitamin supplements can cure cancer. This rejection of medicine and projection of a mood of anti-scientific reaction was aided and abetted by the systematic misreporting of health-related matters in the corporate media. Considered in relation to these democratic setbacks, this concluding chapter looks at how the advance of positive thinking and other non-scientific so-called health treatments has been assisted by the conservative philanthropy of the billionaire-class, whether that be from Home Depot founder Bernie Marcus or from the ultra-right-wing Adolph Coors Foundation.

I would be the first to admit that this is an unusual book for a politically active Marxist to write, and I have struggled to come to come to some meaningful closure with this subject matter for the last decade of my life. This is because although I felt compelled to understand the means by which ruling elites have attempted to

manipulate popular consciousness through their active promotion of all manner of occult intrigues, I would much rather have spent the little time that I allocate to writing focusing on the positive in life, that is, by celebrating the organizing efforts of ordinary workers.³⁴ I say this because at times it feels like researching the occult fixations of the rich and powerful is just a distraction to helping organize amongst workers. But with the continued popularity of Donald Trump and with the conspiracies spinning out wildly from the Covid-19 pandemic, it seemed that occult history matters... if not as much as organizing does - which in part explains the eventual materialization of this book!

³⁴ The type of book that I would have preferred to write would be like Joe Burns' *Class Struggle Unionism* (Haymarket Books, Forthcoming); or earlier books like John Newsinger, *Fighting Back: The American Working Class in the 1930s* (Bookmarks, 2012); Sharon Smith, *Subterranean Fire: A History of Working-Class Radicalism in the United States* (Haymarket Books, 2006); or Cédric G r me, *The People Want to Overthrow the System: Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Tunisia, 2010-2013* (ISA, 2021).

ONE

The American Occult

A good launching point for a discussion of occult intrigues at the turn of last century might bring an inquisitive searcher to the New York socialite Mabel Dodge, who, between 1912 and 1914, “played hostess to the most famous and no doubt the most interesting salon in American history.”¹ For Mabel money was no matter, and in an attempt to escape from the squalor and turmoil of the period, she created an intellectual salon that was soon to form the centerpiece of the social life in the newly bohemian Greenwich Village. Late into the evenings, leading artists, journalists and change agents from Manhattan’s cultural and political circles mingled in the intimacy of her salon to debate the need for social reform. “Subjects of discussion covered the full range of fashionable artistic and intellectual interests,” from liberalism to Marxism, and from abstract art to the realm of the new psychology of Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung;² no topic of discussion was ruled out. In this unique milieu, anarchists like Emma Goldman and Bill Haywood of the Industrial Workers of the World were as likely to be in attendance as were up-and-coming liberals like

¹ Robert Rosenstone, “The salon of Mabel Dodge,” in: Peter Quennell, (ed.), *Affairs of the Mind: The Salon in Europe and America from the Eighteenth to Twentieth Century* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1980).

² The problematic nature of Carl Jung’s far-right politics is outlined in Stanley Grossman’s 1979 essay “C G Jung and National Socialism,” in Paul Bishop (ed.) *Jung in Contexts: A Reader* (Routledge, 1999); also see Farhad Dalal, “The racism of Jung,” *Race and Class*, 29(1), 1988.

Carl Jung (1875-1961) following other aristocratic gurus like Madame Blavatsky, demanded cult-like respect from his disciples. Yet despite Jung’s attempts to shroud his esoteric work beneath a faux cloak of science his influential ideas were not all that dissimilar to proudly occult practitioners; see Richard Noll, *The Jung Cult: Origins of a Charismatic Movement* (Princeton University Press, 1994).

Walter Lippmann. Mabel's own personal quest for fulfilment was however of a more mystical bent than that shared by many of her more down-to-earth guests, and one of her most famous lovers during this time (who didn't share her magical ambitions) was the crusading journalist and man of action, John Reed. However, as strong as their love may have been, Mabel and Reed's lives were already running in opposite directions.

Reed preferred to draw inspiration from working-class bars rather than bourgeois salons, and soon embraced life as a Marxist revolutionary. In setting the scene for his breath-taking account of the Russian Revolution of October 1917, *Ten Days That Shook the World*, Reed noted how "the petty conventional life of the city went on, ignoring the [February] Revolution as much as possible." "It was a particularly active season for Theosophists," Reed added. The irony being that at the very time that great masses of people were becoming more radical, seeking real material changes to their lives, large swathes of the ruling intelligentsia responded by turning inwards and intensifying their search for spiritual certitudes.³

At the same time, back on American shores Mabel's own mystic explorations were ratcheted up a gear when, in 1917, she relocated to New Mexico to "escape to reality." After hearing second-hand tales of Indian magic, Mabel had chosen to set her heart on living in Taos to satiate her "desire to know How." Making positive reference to Ingatius Donnelly's populist conspiracies as recounted in his *Story of Atlantis*, Mabel affectionately equates her journey to the mysterious Southwest of New Mexico as her own inner voyage.⁴

Whether it was to Atlantis I went or not I do not know, nor have I ever been interested in conjecturing about it. I suppose when one gets to heaven one does not speculate about it any more. And the same must be true of hell. Anyway, I was through with reading books about Atlantis, Rosicrucianism, the Seven Worlds of Theosophy, or about any other mythical things. I entered into a new life... and I was done

³ John Reed, *Ten Days That Shook the World* (Boni & Liveright, 1919).

⁴ For a detailed examination of the origins of the Atlantis myth, see Kenneth Feder, *Frauds, Myths, and Mysteries: Science and Pseudoscience in Archaeology* (Mayfield Publishing Company, 1990), pp.115-134.

with reading any books for a long time.⁵

Mabel thus remained in Taos for the rest of her long life, and in doing so she created a utopian art colony which brought her into intimate proximity with all manner of bourgeois intellectuals like Aldous Huxley and D.H. Lawrence to name just two. She also continued to expand her spiritual horizons, and in 1925 while visiting New York, Mabel became enthralled by the teachings of George Gurdjieff and his disciples.⁶ This new obsession saw her lend Gurdjieff \$14,000 in a failed effort to entice him to Taos. Although by the end of the decade her ardor for his mystic pull had long peaked and was now to be satiated by other new and more exciting mysteries.⁷

⁵ Mabel Dodge Luhan, *Edge of Taos Desert: An Escape to Reality* (Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1937), p.6.

⁶ Lois Palken Rudnick, *Mabel Dodge Luhan: New Woman, New Worlds* (University of New Mexico Press, 1984). "Mabel first heard the handsome disciple of [George] Gurdjieff lecture in November 1925, in New York, where he offered her a spiritual medicine that promised to cure her of her continuing psychic ailments. Gurdjieff's system appeal to Mabel because it combined a critique of Western civilization with a course of self-study that presumably led to a total psychic harmony through mastery of the universal laws of 'cosmic consciousness.'" (Rudnick, *Mabel Dodge Luhan*, p.226) It is interesting to note that while Mabel was in New York, her good friend Jaime de Angulo managed to convince Carl Jung (the conservative psychoanalyst) to stay at her ranch in Taos. On this trip Jung was accompanied by Fowler McCormick, the son of the Harvester machinery magnate and grandson of John D. Rockefeller, Sr. As it happens Fowler's mother, Edith Rockefeller McCormick (1872-1932), was already Jung's primary American benefactor, and after returning to America in 1921 -- after serving a long apprenticeship with Jung in Switzerland -- she claimed that Jung's psychoanalytical insights "would allow her to cure tuberculosis and other diseases." Later she "then gravitated to astrology and reincarnation, claiming once that she was the reappearance of Akn-es-en-pa-Aten, child bride of a pharaoh." Peter Collier and David Horowitz, *The Rockefellers: An American Dynasty* (Jonathan Cape, 1976), p.73. For details of Edith's work with Jung, see Richard Noll, *The Aryan Christ: The Secret Life of Carl Jung* (Random House, 1997), pp.200-35.

⁷ George Gurdjieff had bountiful supporters all over the world, having already set up his Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man in 1922 just outside of Paris at Fontainebleau with the financial backing of Lady Rothermere, whose husband was the English publisher Viscount Rothermere, the owner of the *Daily Mail* --the British paper that choose to support the forces of fascism during the 1930s. For an overview of the wide assortment elites that dabbled in Gurdjieff's ideas, see James Webb, *The Harmonious Circle: The Lives and Work of G.I. Gurdjieff, P.D. Ouspensky and*

Notably during Mabel's briefly lived, but nonetheless politically significant salon days, she was brought into contact with the popular socialist muckraker Upton Sinclair, who discussed Mabel's support for radical causes in his memoir *Money Writes!* (1927).⁸ In the 1920s Sinclair had then moved to California with his wife, and while in he continued to write left-leaning commentary, he also went on to write what would become a lodestone for American mysticism, *Mental Radio: Does it Work, and How?* (1930).

Mental Radio, as Martin Gardner put it in 1952, "is the best known and most impressive record of clairvoyance in recent psychic literature."⁹ Yet precisely because the German edition of the book could boast of a preface authored by Albert Einstein, Sinclair's naïve exploration of ethereal matters is still dredged up today to support the apparent reality of telepathy. However, what is often overlooked is that in 1946 Einstein had explained in another less-often cited observation -- in a letter addressed to parapsychology researcher Dr. Jan Ehrenwald (author of the 1946 book *Telepathy and Medical Psychology*) -- that:

I prepared the introduction to Upton Sinclair's book because of my personal friendship with the author, and I did it without revealing my lack of conviction, but also without being dishonest. I admit frankly my scepticism in respect to all such beliefs and theories, a scepticism that is not the result of adequate acquaintance with the relevant experimental facts, but rather a lifelong work in physics. Moreover, I should like to admit, that, in my own life, I have not had any experiences which would throw light on the possibility of communication between human beings that was not based on normal mental processes.¹⁰

Their Followers (G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1980).

⁸ Upton Sinclair in contrast to John Reed, while further radicalized by the Ludlow Massacre of 1914 -- that both he and Reed reported on (and that Mabel helped publicize) -- later went on to support the First World War and oppose the Bolshevik Revolution. John Reed, "Letter to Upton Sinclair," in: Eric Homberger, John Biggart, and Platon Monokroussos (eds.), *John Reed and the Russian Revolution: Uncollected Articles Letters and Speeches on Russia 1917-1920* (Palgrave Macmillan, 1992), pp.199-203.

⁹ Martin Gardner, *Fads & Fallacies: In the Name of Science* (Dover, 1952), p.309.

¹⁰ Cited in Martin Gardner, "Einstein and ESP," in: *Science: Good, Bad, and*

Nonetheless *Mental Radio* was not Sinclair's first, nor was it his last, exploration into psi-babble. As Sinclair's first article on the occult was published in a theosophical magazine in 1898; while his later novel *O Shepherd Speak!* Which was published in 1949 "is filled with eulogies" of America's pioneering psychic researcher Dr. Joseph Banks "J.B." Rhine.¹¹

Parapsychology Takes Off

Perhaps most famously, in 1935 Dr. J. B. Rhine (1895-1980) had founded a pioneering parapsychology laboratory at Duke University, a base from which he soon become known as the father of modern American ESP experiments. Parapsychology represented a relatively new field of research that focused upon the investigation of paranormal and psychic phenomena: a career pathway that Rhine had first started travelling down in 1922 after attending a lecture by one of Britain's leading theosophists, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Thus, by the time Rhine had set up his own laboratory, he had been undertaking psychic research for some years, and the results of his early explorations had already been published as *Extra-Sensory Perception* (1934). Critically the introduction to this astonishing book was penned by Rhine's mentor in paranormal affairs, Professor William McDougall (1871-1938), a well-known psychologist who not coincidentally written the introduction for Upton Sinclair's *Mental Radio*. McDougall, although not now as well-known as Rhine, remains the true founding father of parapsychology.¹²

Bogus (Oxford University Press, 1983), p.153.

¹¹ Gardner, *Fads & Fallacies*, p.310.

¹² Earlier in his career Professor William McDougall had published the influential textbook, *An Introduction to Social Psychology* (1908). Then in 1920, in response to revolutionary tide sweeping the world, the Oxbridge-trained psychologist (who had been a leading member of the Society for Psychical Research) had helped mystify the underlying reasons for socialist mass movements with the publication of his book, *The Group Mind*. This latter text popularized the reactionary interpretation of crowds that had been made by Gustave Le Bon at the turn of the century, and posited "emotional contagion" as an underlying principle of crowd behaviour.

In 1921 Freud would expand upon the ideas of both Le Bon and McDougall in his own book *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*. For a useful overview

McDougall had emigrated to America in 1920 to teach at Harvard University, and the following year he was elected president of the American Society for Psychical Research.¹³ Demonstrating his ruling-class sensibilities, in 1921 he delivered a series of racist and eugenic lectures which were published in book form as *Is America Safe for Democracy?* (1921).¹⁴ Owing to his scientifically motivated opposition to spiritualism and occultism, in 1922 McDougall then launched a broadside against the open mysticism of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, starting a controversy which soon led to his own ouster from the leadership of the American Society for Psychical Research. McDougall subsequently set up the rival Boston Society for Psychical Research which sought to lay the groundwork for a scientifically orientated professionalization of paranormal research.

Yet despite the scientific (albeit anti-democratic) patina of his writings, McDougall soon incorporated the then-popular vitalism of Henri Bergson into his developing worldview. In 1927 he was then invited to become the head of the psychology department at the newly established Duke University. With funding provided by the tobacco industrialist James Buchanan Duke, the young university “had a distinctly conservative outlook,” and it is most likely the case that Duke’s president “had headhunted McDougall, mainly because of his strong and clear opposition against materialistic and mechanistic

of how psychology has “proved itself to be a faithful ally of the ruling-class,” see Ian Parker, *Revolution in Psychology: Alienation to Emancipation* (Pluto Press, 2007). Parker adds that while scientific knowledge derived from advances in psychology have proven to be extremely useful to elites “romantic and irrational ideas linger on, and they have often been attractive to those who always believed in deep inherited qualities and differences between classes and racial groups; at times of economic crisis mystical fantasies about blood-ties, spirituality and suchlike erupt to the surface.” (p.112)

¹³ Psychical research was first institutionalized in Britain with the founding of the Society for Psychical Research in 1882, and the American branch of this Society was subsequently established in 1885. Early ESP research undertaken at Stanford University by John Edgar Coover (between 1912 and 1917) had determined that there was no scientific basis for belief in the paranormal. Gardner Murphy also came to the same conclusions about the future of parapsychology after he had conducted a series of experiments at Harvard University between 1922 and 1925.

¹⁴Egil Asprem, “A nice arrangement of heterodoxies: William McDougall and the professionalization of psychical research,” *Journal of the History of Behavioral Sciences*, 46(2), 2010, p.135.

philosophy in general, and American behaviorism specifically”.¹⁵ It was from this institutional base that McDougall supervised the ESP research of his up-and-coming neo-vitalist disciples J. B. Rhine and his wife Louisa Rhine.

Although the Rhine duo would both play a critical role in promoting the professionalization of ESP research, it is usually the former, by virtue of the sexist world we live in, who is credited with having done the most “to give scientific respectability to the investigation of psychic forces.”¹⁶ However, this is not to say that the J.B. and Louisa’s research actually provided any scientific evidence for psychic capacities, but it is certainly true that their hopeful analyses have served to befuddle many, including it seems, themselves. Martin Gardner elegantly outlined how such confusion institutes itself.

[L]et us imagine that one hundred professors of psychology throughout the country read of Rhine’s work and decide to test a subject. The fifty who fail to find ESP in their first preliminary test are likely to be discouraged and quiet, but the other fifty will be encouraged to continue. Of this fifty, more will stop work after the second test, while some will continue because they obtained good results. Eventually, one experimenter remains whose subject has made high [psychic] scores for six or seven successive sessions. Neither experimenter nor subject is aware of the ninety-nine projects, and so have a strong delusion that ESP is operating. ... [T]he experimenter writes an enthusiastic paper, sends it to Rhine who publishes it in his magazine, and the readers are greatly impressed.

Yet even when ESP is proven to have no validity, sensational and plain stupid reporting can serve to invert the truth. This happened in 1934 when the Nobel Prize winning chemist Irving Langmuir read about the Rhines’ research and then paid a visit to their laboratory. Langmuir was subsequently amazed to discover that the Rhine’s had left out the results of people who they suspected of deliberately guessing wrongly during card guessing experiments. This proved to be a significant omission as the only way the experimenters had of making such a judgement was from the subjects low scores: thus, in much the same

¹⁵ Asprem, “A nice arrangement of heterodoxies,” p.139.

¹⁶ Gardner, *Fads & Fallacies*, p.299.

way that it was felt that extremely good scores demonstrated positive psi skills, the researchers had interpreted extremely low scores as evidence that the subject had used their apparent psi ability to deliberately sabotage the entire experiment. By making such adjustments to their data set the results would of course show an above average chance of his subjects guessing the correct cards than one would expect from chance alone. When Langmuir explained his astounding but simple explanation for the lack of evidence for supporting the existence of ESP, the reporter who wrote up the story could not follow this simple statistical argument and simply wrote a story about how a Nobel laureate had deemed ESP so important that he had felt compelled to visit the Rhine's laboratory to investigate its significance. So tragically the only result of Langmuir's important discovery was to ensure even greater public confusion and a greater popularity for the Rhines' research.¹⁷

Undeterred by such matters of scientific accuracy, the Rhine's ploughed ahead with their psi-research, and their work continued to attract the interest of the rich and powerful. For example, in 1952 the Army decided to hire the Rhine's to embark upon a secret program to investigate the potential of using dogs to locate land mines buried under water. Initial results subsequently led the Army's own researchers to the amazing conclusion that: "There is [presently] no known way in which the dogs could have located the under-water mines except by extrasensory perception." But later results clearly demonstrated that the dogs did no better than chance in locating the mines; but despite this negative finding the initial inconclusive data apparently proved tempting enough for the Rhine's to be hired for other military projects.¹⁸

¹⁷ Robert Park, *Voodoo Science: The Road from Foolishness to Fraud* (Oxford University Press, 2000), p.42.

¹⁸ Annie Jacobsen, *Phenomena: The Secret History of the U.S. Government's Investigations into Extrasensory Perception and Psychokinesis* (Little, Brown and Company, 2017), p.42, p.43. Although Jacobsen provides some useful historical background relating to early paranormal research, her belief in the paranormal means she remains unable to make scientific sense of her findings. The same was true for her earlier book, *Area 51: An Uncensored History of America's Top-Secret Military Base* (Back Bay Books, 2012) whose final chapter recounts a lurid Roswell story that combines the existence of a soviet UFO ("with its Russian writing stamped, or

Getting the Truth Serum

Around the same time that the Rhine's were testing animals for ESP, other parts of the soon to be christened military-industrial-complex were involved in their own mystical explorations. Guided by the age-old quest for a truth serum, in 1950 the newly formed Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) had launched a classified research program called **PROJECT BLUEBIRD**. The purpose of this secret project was to "provide for the immediate establishment of interrogation teams" who would "utilize the polygraph, drugs, and hypnotism to attain the greatest results in interrogation techniques."¹⁹ In later years this covert program became known as **ARTICHOKE** and then as **MKULTRA**.

To enhance the CIA's power to extract information from untalkative suspects the agencies researchers soon set their heart on locating a type of hallucinogenic mushroom known as God's Flesh. Reportedly used in the ceremonies of some Indian tribes in Mexico, the CIA had first tried looking for this magic mushroom in early 1953, but to no avail. And it was this ongoing search for mind altering drugs that brings us to another now famous ESP researcher, a medical doctor known as Dr. Andrija Puharich, who would soon publish *The Sacred Mushroom: Key to the Door of Eternity* (Doubleday, 1959).

Puharich's success in the mystical field was a classic tale of rags

embossed, in a ring around the inside of the craft") that had been manned by children who were deformed with the assistance of the Nazi scientist, Dr. Josef Mengele!

¹⁹ "Project Bluebird," CIA Memorandum, April 5, 1950 - Document Number (FOIA) /ESDN (CREST): CIA-RDP83-01042R000800010003-1

Not long after the end of World War II the leading elements of the US military establishment began to worry that Hitler may have harnessed some form of occult powers during the war, and so to help undermine such paranoid and self-defeating suspicions the CIA recruited a well-known magician to help them understand how psychics could fool people so easily. The individual recruited to undertake this work was John Mullholland, a professional magician who in 1924 had been employed by Houdini "to design a course of lectures that would help to dispel the public's growing belief in the paranormal, and spiritualism in particular." Part of Mullholland's work for the intelligence agency also saw him produce a document entitled *Some Operational Applications of the Art of Deception* (1954). The CIA has only made half of this document publicly available, but based upon Mullholland's own notes it would appear that the "greatest number of deletions" are in the parts of the report "that dealt with how to [covertly] deploy a drug". Ben Robinson, *The Magician: John Mullholland's Secret Life* (Lybrary, 2008), p.62, p.154.

to riches, one that was made possible by sheer determination and the good will of his plutocratic friends. His parents had immigrated from Yugoslavia and raised Puharich in Chicago's slums. Determined to raise himself up by his brain power alone Puharich had obtained a scholarship to study at Northwestern University College where he obtained his medical degree in 1947. Luck would have it that he was then excused from a mandatory two-year tour in the Army when he obtained a medical discharge "due to a chronic middle ear infection." Now at a loose end, Puharich's life took on a mystical bent when he met up with the Yugoslavian-born violinist and aristocrat Zlatko Balokovic (an old acquaintance of Puharich's father) and his powerful and spiritually-inclined wife Joyce Balokovic. And it was upon receiving Joyce's help that Puharich decided to try to set-up his own research base in their locality, that is, within the ruling-class coastal retreat of Camden, Maine.

The initial research that was undertaken by Puharich's fledgling organization, which he named the Round Table Foundation, revolved around pursuing his interests in animal physiology: hence, he soon initiated "a nerve-research program on animals." But "in order to make a living," Puharich "had to go back to the practice of medicine by making housecalls."²⁰ During these early years the ever-charismatic doctor was, with Joyce's backing, able to form healthy symbiotic relations with other millionaires living in his new neighborhood. Thus, after initially facing a period of McCarthy-inspired redbaiting (which owed much to the fact that Joyce's husband had flirted with communism during the war), Puharich was soon able to get on with

²⁰ Throughout his career Puharich combined his interests in science and mysticism, often carrying out legitimate scientific physiological enquiries alongside his own more esoteric intrigues into the world of parapsychology. In fact, as Puharich's former wife, H.G.M. Hermans, recounts in her book *Memories of a Maverick: Andrija Puharich* (Pi, 1998): "the first research Andrija [Puharich] did was with Dr. Samuel Rosen, a New York hearing specialist. The transdermal device (hearing aid) which Andrija developed later with Dr. Lawrence led, as we shall see further on, to one of his last projects when he became suspicious that the transdermal/neurophone technology was being used for adverse purposes." Hermans continued: "What Dr. Rosen wanted to test on animals was his theory on the cause of conductive deafness. A few years later he got world acclaim for his Stapes Mobilization Surgery, making it possible for millions of people to hear again."

his scientific research, and towards the tail end of 1950, with the aid of the patrician publisher Walter Cabot Paine, he relocated his research base to the Warrenton Estate.

Here his new headquarters was nothing short of palatial, with the main building boasting forty-five rooms and a dozen bathrooms.²¹ Now that he had a secure and inviting premises to undertake his work, Puharich's "second break came in November of 1949 when he met the late Eileen Garrett." Garrett by this stage in her long career was already a world-famous and wealthy trance medium with many well-connected supporters among the ruling-class. Unlike most other successful mediums, Garrett had even been able to parlay her psychic powers to allow her to become an important gatekeeping figure who was able to groom other up-and-coming mystics on the psi-scene. This is because since 1941 she had been publishing *Tomorrow*, which was an American magazine specializing in para-psychological and mystical subjects; and to supplement this work she also ran a thriving publishing house called Creative Age Press which she was later to sell to Farrar, Straus and Young in 1951.

Although it was true that Garrett had been turned on to mystical matters in the 1920s by the utopian socialist Edward Carpenter (1844-1929), socialism was certainly not one of Garrett's lasting concerns. Indeed in the midst of the anti-communist witch-hunts that swept across America in the post-war period Garrett couldn't believe that she too had been deemed worthy of investigation by the FBI simply because she had worked with Puharich on his telepathy experiments in the early 1950s.²² Garrett would have been particularly shocked by

²¹ Hermans, *Memories of a Maverick*, p.50.

²² Right-wing writers have always been happy to overplay the fact that some of Puharich's funders were liberals who initially came under suspicion during the initial redbaiting of the newly launched Cold War. A good example is provided by the FBI's harassment of Zlatko Balokovic, see Lorraine Lees, *Yugoslav-Americans and National Security During World War II* (University of Illinois Press, 2007), p.193. On a related note, Eileen Garrett noted in *Many Voices: Autobiography of a Medium* (Putnam, 1968) how she developed a temporary interest in the ideas of Fabian socialism through her contact with Edward Carpenter. However, Garrett notes that the FBI's investigations into her own alleged communism had been connected to the fact that the Round Table Foundation had received early support from Henry Wallace. For an introduction to Carpenter's background, see Linda Dahrymple

the state's paranoid investigations because she counted a vehement anti-communist as one of her most powerful benefactors, whose almost inexhaustible financial support enabled Garrett's psychic magazine to get off the ground despite it not turning a profit. As a 1946 report in *Time* magazine made clear, in *Tomorrow's* first five years of existence...

The 35¢ monthly (circ. 25,000) had gone into the red on every issue, was still eating up about \$15,000 a month. What kept it going, besides Eileen Garrett's own money and implacable will, was a silent partner, Representative Frances Bolton (R.) of Ohio.²³

In addition to her conservative views Congresswoman Bolton had been a lifelong supporter of both Buddhism and parapsychology, and while serving as the chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee Bolton had authored *The Strategy and Tactics of World Communism* (1947) - a publication which provides a suitable example of her staunch anti-communist credentials. Just a couple of years later she also went on to author a redbaiting report for the government entitled *Communism: Its Plans and Tactics*, which the American Legion magazine reviewed in the following terms: "The best and most readable account of the Communist conspiracy ever published."

On top of helping Garrett to establish her Parapsychology Foundation in New York in 1951, in earlier years Bolton had "been responsible for setting up the McDougall Research Fund at Duke University"; and during the 1930s she had financed the work of Dr.

Henderson, "Mysticism as the 'tie that binds': the case of Edward Carpenter and modernism," *Art Journal*, 46, Spring 1987; while John Culver observes in *American Dreamer: The Life and Times of Henry A. Wallace* (W. W. Norton & Company, 2001), that as early as 1919 Wallace had "entered the world of mysticism through the door of Theosophy... He [then] remained actively interested in Theosophy at least until 1934 and embraced several of its key tenets for the remainder of his life."

²³ Annon, "The press: psychic tomorrow," *Time* magazine, September 16, 1946. This article did however note that Creative Age Press was "profitable". Garrett famously published the influential work of Robert Graves, most notably his book *The White Goddess: A Historical Grammar of Poetic Myth* (Creative Age Press, 1948). She also published the anti-Marxist economic work of social credit theorists like Gorham Munson's *Aladdin's Lamp, The Wealth of the American People* (Creative Age Press, 1945).

J.B. Rhine, “helping him during the early days – and indeed, throughout his career – assisting with funds for the upkeep of his famous Parapsychology Laboratory.”²⁴ So, when Puharich first met Garrett in late 1949 he soon came to realize that his career was in good hands. Garrett likewise recognized Puharich’s potential ability to progress her own interests and quickly introduced him to another immensely wealthy psi-practitioner, the “father of radio control” John Hays Hammond, Jr., who in addition to being a one-time friend of Nikola Tesla was well-known for having invented the first radio-controlled underwater missile for the US Navy.²⁵

However, it was only in March 1951 that Puharich and his newfound co-worker and patron John Hammond Jr. (who Puharich referred to as his “mentor”) were able to spend three entire months testing Garrett’s ethereal powers at Warrenton – a program of intensive study that was later published by Puharich as *Beyond Telepathy* (Doubleday, 1962). By the time he got around to studying Garrett, Puharich’s mystical research had been able to progress onto a more stable financial footing as he had managed to attract the support of Alice Astor Bouverie (1902-1956) – a scion of the Astor family who believed she was the reincarnation of an Egyptian princess.²⁶ Around this time other ESP-aficionados who became

²⁴ “Parapsychology Foundation: our history,” Accessed September 6, 2021. In 1953 Bolton and Garrett would sponsor an influential international conference on parapsychology, that was held in Utrecht, Holland. “It was attended by more than 60 scholars, psychologists, physicists, mathematicians, biologists, ethnographers, and philosophers.” For more on Bolton and her patriotic friends, see Mary Brennan, *Wives, Mothers and the Red Menace: Conservative Women and the Crusade Against Communism* (University Press of Colorado, 2008); and David Loth, *A Long Way Forward: The Biography of Congresswoman Frances Payne Bolton* (Longmans, Green, 1957).

²⁵ John Hays Hammond Jr.’s (1888-1965) wife was also a “devout spiritualist” and the couple explored their occult interests from an opulent castle in Gloucester, Massachusetts. Among Hammond Castle’s many eccentric features, it contained “a round room with a ceiling Hammond designed to amplify... his guests’ conversations. Standing in the middle of the room, one could speak in a way that reverberates, as if from a microphone... Hammond used it to eavesdrop easily on guests seated around after dinner.” Nell Porter Brown. “A man and his castle: the eclectic legacy of inventor John Hays Hammond Jr.,” *Harvard* magazine, November-December 2020.

²⁶ Alice Astor’s first husband was a Russian Prince – who was educated at Oxford University and had been a member of the Bullingdon Club and had fought with the

members of Puharich's prestigious circle of supporters included Marcella Miller du Pont, whose personal riches were partially derived from the largest gunpowder manufacturer and munitions maker in America;²⁷ Ruth Forbes Young, a member of the Forbes banking dynasty, and her husband, Arthur M. Young, a mathematician-turned mystic cosmologist who most famously designed Bell Corporation's first helicopter; and successful Christian businessmen, Henry Belk, of the Belk department store fortune, a business which had steadfastly maintained and profited from the Belk families commitment to upholding apartheid in America.²⁸

Now Puharich was on something of a psychic roll, and in December 1951 he attended a party in New York that was held in honor of Eileen Garrett where he was introduced to a Hindu mystic known as Dr. D.G. Vinod who seemed able to channel an ethereal

"white armies" in the Russian civil war. He recalled in his autobiography how Alice "was convinced that she was the reincarnation of an Egyptian princess, the daughter of the High Priest of Heliopolis. He was the High Priest of Amon of the darkness and violently opposed to the short-lived reformation under Ikhmaton, whose approach was too close to Christianity. She herself had run away and become a convert to Ikhmaton's worship of Aten, the god of life-giving sun. When Ikhmaton died, she was recaptured and taken back to the dark imprisonment of her father." She told him this story on the night they became engaged. *One Man In His Time: The Memoirs of Serge Obolensky* (Lucknow Books, 2015).

²⁷ The DuPont family like other leading members of the American business community were willing supporters of fascism in the United States, which they envisaged as a suitable tool for repressing the organized working-class, especially their trade unions, see Gerard Colby, *Du Pont Dynasty: Behind the Nylon Curtain* (Lyle Stuart, 1984). Also see Gian Giacomo Migone, *The United States and Fascist Italy: The Rise of American Finance in Europe* (Cambridge University Press, 2015); for earlier criticisms of the fascist inclinations of the American ruling-class, see George Seldes, *Facts and Fascism* (In Fact, Inc., 1943) and Seldes, *One Thousand Americans* (Boni & Gear, 1947).

²⁸ Henry Belk had grown up in the same town as the Rev. Billy Graham, although his brother, Henderson Belk, was the more famous evangelist having converted at Rev. Graham's second Charlotte crusade in 1958, soon becoming an arch Fundamentalist for the cause. Belk's interest in parapsychology dated back to 1938 when he had first worked with J.B. Rhine at Duke University. And soon after this Belk embarked upon his lifelong effort to support the type of research that might provide a scientific rationale for biblical miracles; a research area that in recent decades has been heavily promoted by the right-wing Templeton Foundation.

body that called itself “the Nine Principles and Forces.”²⁹ A year later Puharich then flew Dr. Vinod to Maine so he could investigate his psychic powers over New Year’s Eve. And on that eventful night Dr. Vinod proceeded to channel “the Nine” for some ninety minutes during which “the Nine” said to Puharich:

I deeply appreciate your dedicatedness (sic) to the great cause of peace which is a fulfillment of finitesimal existences. Peace is no warlessness. Peace is the integral fruition of personality. We have designed to utilize you and thus to fulfill you. Peace is a process and will be revealed only progressively. You have it in plenty, I mean the patience which is so deeply needed in this magnificent adventure. But today, at the moment of our advent, the most eventful and spectacular phase of your work begins.³⁰

Puharich was now convinced that the psi forces that he had sought to understand since establishing his Round Table Foundation was of truly extra-terrestrial dimensions, and he was ready to embark upon his magnificent adventure towards the cause of peace. This adventure – which involved studying Dr. Vinod – was, as Puharich recalled, rudely “interrupted in February 1953 when I had to serve as a captain in the U.S. Army during the Korean War.”³¹

The following month Puharich relocated to the Army Chemical Center in Edgewood, Maryland, where he utilized his medical training to run the post dispensary for the next two years. This however did not mean that his studies on Dr. Vinod were completely discontinued, and just a few months later (on June 27, 1953), he brought together all the illustrious benefactors of his Round Table Foundation whereupon the Nine made clear: “Tonight we want to create Brahmins in this world.” Yet even before this call for the establishment of a new religious elite it appears Puharich had already attempted to interest his

²⁹ The concept of the "Nine Unknown Men" was further popularized by Louis Pauwels and Jacques Bergier in their 1960 occult classic *The Morning of the Magicians*.

³⁰ Dr. Vinod cited in Andrija Puharich, *Uri: The Original and Authorized Biography of Uri Geller* (Futura, 1974), pp.14-5.

³¹ Puharich, *Uri*, p.16.

new military employers in his ongoing ESP research.³²

But while it is true that Puharich may have been unconventional in his pursuit of psi-enlightenment, when it came to matter of national security he had always been keen to offer his aid. That said, it seems that his assistance was not always welcome, and even at this early stage in his career the CIA had already been forewarned about working with Puharich. Indeed, John Mullholland – a professional magician in the employ of the CIA – had met with Puharich and had concluded that he exhibited all the tendencies of an untrustworthy sycophant. “Mullholland wisely counsel[led] his Washington contacts” in the intelligence agency that the parapsychologist’s behavior “was based on ambition so strong that it would lead to trickery.”³³ But while it remains true that the CIA had been involved with all manner of “mind control”

³² Puharich loved to overstate his early influence in military circles and as a result of such storytelling it is widely reported that while serving at the Chemical and Biological Warfare Center in Maryland Puharich gave briefings on his ESP research to Pentagon gatherings and to members of the medical research lab in Maryland. The first person to report on this was John Wilhelm in his book *The Search for Super-Man* (1976); while other writers commonly refer to Kenneth Kress’ now declassified article “Parapsychology in Intelligence: A personal review and conclusions,” *Studies in Intelligence*, 21 (Winter 1977). However, on the matter of Puharich’s military connections, even this latter CIA report only refers (for its proof) to an article that Wilhelm published in the *Washington Post* (“Psychic spying,” August 7, 1977). It is therefore hard to know to what extent Puharich was taken seriously by the military establishment (in the 1950s anyway); but as Wilhelm explains in the aforementioned article: “Wading through all the dubious claims, conflicting reports and deliberate disinformation is mushy business at best.”

³³ Robinson, *The Magician*, p.179, p.180. The talk that Puharich gave in this instance was titled “Physical techniquè for increasing telepathy” (December 4, 1953). Puharich’s distance from official “mind control” research in the 1950s is highlighted by the fact that in 1957 he wrote about such matters in Eileen Garrett’s *Tomorrow* magazine (the article in question was titled “Can telepathy penetrate the *Iron Curtain*?”). It is unsurprising that *Tomorrow* would also contribute to rising fears about occult Nazism (discussed later); for example, in 1956 *Tomorrow* published “Hitler’s black magicians” which was penned by Gerda Walther – a one-time anthroposophist who had been persecuted by the Nazi regime. For a discussion of how Walther’s accounts tend to be recycled into longstanding myths revolving around Nazi occult power, see Uwe Schellinger, Andreas Anton, and Michael Schetsche, “Pragmatic occultism in the military history of the Third Reich,” in: Monica Black and Eric Kurlander (eds.) *Revisiting the “Nazi Occult”. Histories, Realities, Legacies* (Camden House, 2015).

experiments during the 1950s – including at the Army Chemical Center in Edgewood – there remains no convincing evidence that Puharich had any involvement in their anti-democratic research.³⁴

Compared to the rollicking psi lifestyle that Puharich had recently become accustomed, the magical doctor didn't particularly enjoy the paranoid conformity of the Army base. So, on April 1, 1955, when Puharich was finally released from his military service, he eagerly returned to Warrenton to continue his occult explorations. This time Puharich's research took place with the assistance of hallucinogenic mushrooms which he had collected by "scouring the woods all summer in Maine and Massachusetts."³⁵ And one newcomer to Puharich's merry circle over that glorious summer was Aldous Huxley, who had recently documented his own mescaline fueled inner journey as *The Doors of Perception* (Harper & Row, 1954).³⁶ In a

³⁴ As part of "Operation Paperclip" the US military controversially recruited leading Nazi scientists to work at the Army Chemical Center in Edgewood. For example, one Nazi scientist named Fritz Hoffmann "went to Edgewood in 1947 and was initially assigned to work on organophosphate insecticides, but the next year the Chemical Corps allowed him to start a classified research program on nerve agents." For a full discussion of the nature of these anti-democratic "mind control" experiments, see Jonathan Tucker's *War of Nerves: Chemical Warfare from World War I to Al-Qaeda* (Knopf, 2007), and Linda Hunt's *Secret Agenda: The United States Government, Nazi Scientists, and Project Paperclip, 1945 to 1990* (St Martin's Press, 1991). As Hunt observed: "By 1951, in the midst of the Korean War, the Paperclip scientists' primary job was to locate plants and poisons that could be turned into new hallucinogenic mind-control drugs."

In an ironic twist of fate, the primary Edgewood researcher who would defend the legitimacy of the grotesque experiment on soldiers that took place was Dr. James S. Ketchum, whose "father was the right-hand man of Norman Vincent Peale, the pastor of Manhattan's Marble Collegiate Church and the author of 'The Power of Positive Thinking.'" Ketchum's system-supporting distortions are discussed in Raffi Khatchadouria's article "Operation delirium," *The New Yorker*, December 17, 2012. For a related examination of how unethical experiments on Americans took place beyond the confines of military institutions, see Allen Hornblum's *Acres of Skin: Human Experiments at Holmesburg Prison* (Routledge, 1999), and for an early critique of the recruitment of Nazi scientists to work the private sector, see Josiah E. Dubois, Jr.'s *The Devil's Chemists* (Beacon Press, 1952).

³⁵ Hermans, *Memories of a Maverick*.

³⁶ In this popular book, Aldous Huxley had "elaborated on Henri Bergson's theory that the brain and the nervous system are not the source of the cognitive process but rather a screening mechanism or 'reducing valve' that transmits but a tiny fraction of 'the

letter Huxley subsequently wrote to Eileen Garrett (dated August 27, 1955) the inquiring author recounted his experiences.

...I spent some days, earlier this month, at Glen Cove, in the Strange household assembled by Puharich—Alice [Bouverie] and Mrs. P[uharich], behaving to one another in a conspicuously friendly way; Elinor Bond, doing telepathic guessing remarkably well, but not producing anything of interest or value in the mediumistic sitting she gave me; Frances Farrelly, with her diagnostic machine—which Puharich's tests have shown to be merely an instrument, like a crystal ball, for concentrating ESP faculties; Harry, the Dutch sculptor, who goes into trances in the Faraday cages and produces automatic scripts in Egyptian hieroglyphics; Narodny, the cockroach man, who is preparing experiments to test the effects of human telepathy on insects. It was all very lively and amusing—and, I really think, promising; for whatever may be said against Puharich, he is certainly very intelligent, extremely well-read and highly enterprising. His aim is to reproduce by modern pharmacological, electronic and physical methods the conditions used by the shamans for getting into a state of travelling clairvoyance and then, if he succeeds, to send people to explore systematically “the Other World.” This seems to be as good a new approach to the survival problem (along with a lot of other problems) as any of the rest, and may yield some interesting results. Meanwhile, to everyone's immense delight, they have found specimens of *Amanita muscaria* actually growing on the estate—having received instructions where to find them via the ouija board, while trying to contact Mr. [Gordon] Wasson's curandera, who was under mushroom trance at the moment, in Mexico. This is all the more remarkable as the literature of the mycological society of New England records only one previous instance of the discovery of an *Amanita* in Maine. At Glen Cove they have now found eight fine specimens on the same spot. The effects, when a piece as big as a pin's head, is rubbed for a few seconds into the skin of the scalp are quite alarmingly powerful, and it will obviously take a lot of very cautious

Mind-at-Large,' yielding only the kind of information necessary for everyday matters of survival.” Martin Lee and Bruce Shlain, *Acid Dreams: The Complete Social History of LSD: the CIA, the Sixties, and Beyond* (Grove Press, 2000), p.47. An influential and useful critique of *The Doors of Perception* was published by a fellow conservative writer R.C. Zaehner as *Mysticism, Sacred and Profane: An Inquiry into Some Varieties of Praeternatural Experience* (Oxford University Press, 1957).

experimentation to determine the right psienhancing dose of the mushroom.³⁷

The following year, upon the recommendation of Henry Belk, Puharich's Round Table Foundation welcomed to their political residence a new psychic from Europe named Peter Hurkos (later of Boston Strangler fame... Hurkos it turned out had managed to identify an innocent person who was not arrested for the murders), who arrived to give his first performance at the Warrenton estate in late 1956.³⁸ Although for the next few years Puharich and Belk remained awe-struck by Hurkos' alleged psychic powers, other scientists were less impressed. Nevertheless, Hurkos had now found a lucrative and receptive audience for his cold readings, a career that was given

³⁷ Letter from Aldous Huxley cited in Michael Horowitz and Cynthia Palmer (eds.), *Moksha: Aldous Huxley's Classic Writings on Psychedelics and the Visionary Experience* (Park Street Press, 1999). Gordon Wasson, the vice president of the J.P. Morgan & Company bank, was an amateur researcher who - with the assistance of Robert Graves - had rediscovered the whereabouts of the so-called magic mushrooms in the mountains outside Oaxaca, Mexico. The CIA had then obtained access to these mushrooms whose properties they investigated as part of their MKULTRA program. (The CIA did this without Wasson's knowledge and they had even secretly paid for one of his later trips to Oaxaca in mid-1956.) Aldous Huxley had visited Wasson in 1957 to learn more about the psychedelic mushrooms, and while talking about his explorations over lunch at the Century Club, Wasson had been asked by an editor at *Time-Life* to write an article about this story this was eventually published in the July 1957 issue of *Life* magazine. Greenfield, *Leary*, p.111, p.112.

For more about Graves' mutually beneficial ties to Wasson, see Michel Pharand, "The mythophile and the mycophile: Robert Graves and R. Gordon Wasson," *Gravesiana: The Journal of the Robert Graves Society*, 1(2), 1996; and for a nonconspiratorial take on Wasson's links to MKULTRA, see Stephen Kinzer, *Poisoner in Chief: Sidney Gottlieb and the CIA Search for Mind Control* (Henry Holt and Co., 2019); and Christopher Partridge, *High Culture: Drugs, Mysticism, and the Pursuit of Transcendence in the Modern World* (Oxford University Press, 2018) - a book which briefly discusses Puharich's connections to both Wasson and Huxley.

³⁸ At around this time, while Puharich's wife was recovering from her depression, Puharich himself had embarked upon an affair with a twenty-two-year-old au pair who had been caring for his children. "American retail tycoon William Henry Belk contributed generously to Puharich's Round Table Foundation; he thought that Hurkos's psychic skill could be put to effective use in the service of the Belk department stores." Milbourne Christopher, *Mediums, Mystics and the Occult* (Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1975), p.69

another boost in 1960 when his life story was dramatized in two television episodes of *Alcoa Presents: One Step Beyond*.

Hurkos would eventually settle in Los Angeles where local powerbrokers readily accepted his paranormal powers; and where Hollywood columnist Norma Lee Browning would further canonize his illusions with the publication of her book, *The Psychic World of Peter Hurkos* (Doubleday, 1970).³⁹ It is also noteworthy that before undertaking her research for this boosterism, Browning had teamed up with the conservative Christian insurance magnate W. Clement Stone to write *The Other Side of the Mind* (Prentice-Hall, 1964) which, in addition to dealing with various aspects of conventional religious miracle-making (like that occurring at Lourdes) seemed to help popularize the “startling... research into mental telepathy” that was being undertaken by Soviet scientists.⁴⁰

The potential threat of psi-spying proved to be of much interest

³⁹ The foreword to this incredulous book was penned by Cornelius Vanderbilt Wood, a personal friend of Hurkos, who was a cofounder of the Mind Science Foundation (established in 1958) and a subsequent governor of the American Stock Exchange.

The main money behind the Mind Science Foundation was provided by the millionaire Texan oil man, Tom Slick, Jr. (1916-1962), an eccentric Republican who moved seamlessly between the worlds of cryptozoology, genuine scientific philanthropy, parapsychology, and the intelligence community. Financial support for Edgar Mitchell’s paranormal investigations that led to the publication of his book *Psychic Exploration: A Challenge for Science* (1972) were provided by the Mind Science Foundation. In the acknowledgements of this book Mitchell thanks Dr. Jean Houston for editorial assistance. Mitchell notes he had previously spent two years on the board of directors of Dr. Rhine’s Foundation for Research on the Nature of Man (which was established in 1962 as the successor to the Duke University Parapsychology Laboratory). For an intriguing discussion of Tom Slick’s life, see Brian Regal, *Searching for Sasquatch: Crackpots, Eggheads, and Cryptozoology* (Palgrave, 2011).

⁴⁰ A staunch and conservative Christian, W. Clement Stone had been deeply inspired by Napoleon Hill’s early motivational book *Think and Grow Rich*, and in 1960 had teamed up with Hill to author *Success Through a Positive Mental Attitude*. Stone “once donated \$200,000 to grand-old-man-of-psi J. B. Rhine’s Foundation for Research on the Nature of Man,” while later giving much financial aid to Richard Nixon. Michael Rogers, “Funding the intangible: the stuff dreams are really made of,” *Rolling Stone* magazine, August 29, 1974.

Success Unlimited was a company that was founded by W. Clement Stone which published all sorts of elitist positive thinking materials, including an audiobook

to the American intelligence agencies, whose conspiratorial machinations now fitted increasingly well with paranormal mumbo jumbo promoted by Rhine and Puharich. Speaking on this theme to the Mind Science Foundation in 1960, Rhine observed that “the most gifted extrasensory minds could be trained and the ability developed to spy on the nation’s enemies while the spy sat safely in the United States”.⁴¹ So with the increasing revelations breaking about the scale of the telepathic research being undertaken in Russia, one individual who happily fueled such unfounded fears of success was the former KGB captain, Nikolai Khokhlov, who had defected from his Soviet masters when he was meant to be on a special assignment to assassinate one of the leaders of an underground neo-fascist group known as the National Alliance of Russian Solidarists.⁴² But before going on to become a so-called psi-specialist Khokhlov had transferred his ideological allegiances to the ultranationalist White émigré movement he was meant to be infiltrating; a movement that enjoyed, until at least the 1960s, intimate relations with Western intelligence agencies, most notably the CIA. From his new base in this right-wing milieu Khokhlov then worked in South Vietnam (in 1958) to help set up an anti-communist guerrilla movement. But with Soviet infiltration of the Russian Solidarists growing deeper by the day, in the sixties even the

cassette for Amway which was a recording of Russell H. Conwell’s famous 1915 speech “Acres of Diamonds.” which inspired millions of people to emulate the truly “honest” folk, that is the rich and powerful! As Conwell put it: “I say that you ought to get rich, and it is your duty to get rich.... The men who get rich may be the most honest men you find in the community. Let me say here clearly ... ninety-eight out of one hundred of the rich men of America are honest. That is why they are rich. That is why they are trusted with money. That is why they carry on great enterprises and find plenty of people to work with them. It is because they are honest men.” For more on Conwell, see Kate Bowler, *Blessed: A History of the American Prosperity Gospel* (Oxford University Press, 2013), pp.31-2.

⁴¹ Paula Allen, “Oilman explored the fringes of science,” *San Antonio Express*, July 26, 2015.

⁴² On the neo-fascist roots of the Russian Solidarists and their longstanding relationship with the CIA, see Eric Thomas Chester, *Covert Network: Progressives, the International Rescue Committee and the CIA* (Routledge, 1995), Chapter 5 (“Soviet exiles”); David C. S. Albanese, “‘It takes a Russian to beat a Russian’: the National Union of Labor Solidarists, nationalism, and human intelligence operations in the Cold War,” *Intelligence and National Security*, 32(6), 2017.

American intelligence community became wary of working with the Solidarists. At this stage in his career Khokhlov therefore “gave up his hope of the Americans ever allowing him to actively resist communism” so in frustration he returned to America where in 1968 he earned a Ph.D. in parapsychology from Duke University.⁴³

Thinking Positive

Around this time Puharich and Henry Belk were in the midst of popularizing another mystic star named Arigó, who was a psychic surgeon operating in Brazil, who, during his magical operations, was said to have relied upon the spiritual guidance of a deceased German doctor.⁴⁴ In this instance, Puharich’s latest pursuit of spiritual healing had begun not long after he had starred alongside Professor Jeffrey Smith (from Stanford University) in an episode of *One Step Beyond* titled “The sacred mushrooms of Mexico” (1961). During this episode the show’s incredulous host evidently believed that he was developed ESP powers after consuming magic mushrooms. Summarizing the details of this mushroom adventure along with his research on Garrett and Hurkos, Puharich then published his results as *Beyond Telepathy* (Doubleday, 1962).

Shortly thereafter, in the summer of 1963, Puharich along with

⁴³ Vladislav Krasnov, *Soviet Defectors: The KGB Wanted List* (Hoover Institution Press, 1986), p.30. “Khokhlov’s interest in parapsychology is not accidental, for he fears that the free world is unable to counter Soviet moves for the control of the hearts and minds of free people. He puts his trust in the ‘eternal laws’ as they are expressed ‘in the tablets of Moses, the precepts of Christ, the lines of the Koran, and the sayings of Buddha.’ Says Khokhlov: ‘The world is built upon them. The Soviet power has attempted to subvert them to its own use. But this is against the laws of the cosmos, and that is why the Soviet power is bound to go to its doom. For men are the children of God, and not of the party or the state.’” (p.30) His Ph.D. title was “Dimensional preference and discriminability in judgments of multidimensional stimuli.”

⁴⁴ Arigó’s trickery was discussed in detail in Milbourne Christopher’s book, *Mediums, Mystics and the Occult: New Revelations About the Psychics and Their Secrets* (Thomas Y. Browell Co., 1975). As Christopher concludes: “A drowning man grasps at a straw, and so do those with incurable illnesses. But a straw has more substance than the claims of the unscrupulous who pretend to cut deep into human bodies with bare hands or rusty knives and remove diseased tissue without anaesthetics or sutures and without causing pain. The instance healing of severed flesh is, as I have shown, a trick, nothing more.” (p.65).

Belk then undertook an expedition into the jungles of Brazil which literally blew his mind, and until Arigó's tragic death in 1971, Puharich and his psi-friends undertook regular research trips to Brazil to document the psychics spiritual miracles. In recalling his memories of Arigó, Puharich said "my experience with him, was if there was ever a Christ-like figure on Earth, he was it."

Puharich and Arigó's exploits were immortalized in John Fuller's *Arigó: Surgeon of the Rusty Knife* (Crowell, 1974) which included an afterword written by Puharich.⁴⁵ But Arigó wasn't the only spiritual healer making the headlines, and with the financial assistance of Belk another paranormal researcher named Harold Sherman was enticed to undertake the 'research' that led to the publication of *Wonder Healers of the Philippines* (DeVorss, 1967).⁴⁶ Like so many psi-writers, such ideas popularity benefited from the publication of books like *Into the Strange Unknown* (Esoteric Foundation, 1959) – authored by Ron Ormond and Ormond McGill – which had proved to be the first popular book to document the existence of psychic

⁴⁵ John Fuller had previously authored the now infamous book, *The Interrupted Journey: Two Lost Hours "Aboard a Flying Saucer"* (Dial Press, 1966). This book helped launch the abduction phase of the UFO movement by telling the story of Betty and Barney Hill, see Corinne Purtill, "A stressed, sleep-deprived couple accidentally invented the modern alien abduction phenomenon," *Quartz*, July 2, 2017.

⁴⁶ Considering the multiple connections that existed between psi-popularizers and the conservative movement, it is appropriate that Regnery, the Conservative Christian publishers sought to publicize the miracles in the Philippines which they did through their publication of Tom Valentine's book *Psychic Surgery* (1973). A book which was graced with a foreword by Sherman. These books, as one might have expected, paid no heed to international politics, ignoring the fact that in 1964 a brutal US-backed dictatorship forced its way to power in Brazil, or that by 1972 the Philippines was likewise being run by another US-backed dictator. For more on this see, Daniel Schirmer, "U.S. support for Philippine dictatorship: threat to peace and security in Asia," *UCLA: Center for Southeast Asian Studies*, Position paper prepared for the 1973 World Peace Congress.

Valentine had previously published *The Great Pyramid: Man's Monument to Man* (Pinnacle, 1975), which argued that Egyptian civilization was not advanced enough to have created the Pyramids; while his other subsequent books focused on food fads and alternative medicine (like the chiropractic pseudoscience known as applied kinesiology). For a critical review of pyramid revisionism more generally, see Jason Colavito, *The Legends of the Pyramids: Myths and Misconceptions about Ancient Egypt* (Red Lightning Books, 2021).

surgery in the Philippines. Ron Ormond, who was a film director in his own right, was at the time of writing this book more famous for making lurid exploitation classics like *Mesa of Lost Women* (1953) and later *The Monster and the Stripper* (1968). But in subsequent years Ormond's Christian beliefs took an extreme right-wing turn, and in the 1970s he teamed up with the firebrand preacher Estus Pirkle to produce anti-communist horror flicks that would have ticked all the right boxes with the John Birch Society.⁴⁷

Like Puharich, Harold Sherman was a longstanding associate of Henry Belk, having officially joined the advisory board of his Belk Psychic Research Foundation in late 1958. So, when Sherman finally got around to founding his own think-tank in 1964, which he called ESP Research Associates, Belk was honored to serve as one of their many prestigious directors. The secretary of this group was Al Pollard, a powerful advertising executive who in 1967 was named the Arkansas Democrats' Man of the Year, before going on to receive Presidential Commendations and awards from President Nixon and Reagan. Working with Sherman, Pollard served as co-author of *Extra Success Potential: The Art of Out-thinking and Out-sensing Others in Business and Everyday Life* (Prentice Hall, 1981) - an early insider account which illustrated the central role that magical thinking fulfilled within the business world.

Like many of his psychic friends in the corporate world, Sherman had never been overly concerned by little matters like racism, especially institutionalized racism. This is demonstrated by his willingness to dedicate five years of his life (between 1942 and 1947) to studying the channeled text that came to form the so-called *Urantia Book* - a mysterious and deeply racist volume which exhibited an unhealthy obsession with the type of negative eugenics that so enamored Adolf Hitler.⁴⁸ Indeed, a commitment to personal

⁴⁷ For two recent introductions to the politics of the John Birch Society, see Carmen Celestini *God's Angry Men* (University Press of Kansas, forthcoming); and Edward Miller, *A Conspiratorial Life: Robert Welch, the John Birch Society, and the Revolution of American Conservatism* (University of Chicago Press, forthcoming). And for an intriguing insider account of the secret life of Birchers, see Claire Conner, *Wrapped in the Flag: What I Learned Growing Up in America's Radical Right: How I Escaped, and Why My Story Matters Today* (Beacon Press, 2014).

⁴⁸ Martin Gardner, *Urantia: The Great Cult Mystery* (Prometheus Books, 2008).

profiteering via the publishing of best-selling self-help seems to be a guiding foundation for many conservatives, and William Sadler, the individual who authored the *Urantia Book* and had already written vile eugenic tracts like *Race Decadence: An Examination of the Causes of Racial Degeneracy in the United States* (A.C. McClurg & Co., 1922) while also publishing the self-help classic, *The Road to Attainment: The Elements of Pep* (Thomas S. Rockwell Company, 1930). Likewise, Sherman's own initial spiritual contribution to this troubling self-help literature was *Your Key to Happiness* (G.P. Putnam's & Sons, 1935).

Another positive-thinking evangelist, who in later years would rank among Sherman's close friends, was the Rev. Norman Vincent Peale whose first book *The Art of Living* (Abingdon, 1937) explained how "applied Christianity helps people to tap reservoirs of power within themselves." Peale's most famous book however was his 1952 classic *The Power of Positive Thinking*, which sank deep roots in the minds of other conservative revivalists. And it is not for nothing that the magical thinking of Peale, who has been aptly described as a "stout Cold War reactionary," would prove so influential over Donald Trump, who from childhood had worshipped in Peale's Manhattan's Marble Collegiate Church.⁴⁹

In keeping with such reactionary devotees, throughout his life Peale had worked closely with all manner of far-right organizations including a brief stint during the 1950s with H. L. Hunt's Facts Forum - Hunt, at the time, being one of America's most powerful land owners who soon carry forth his patriot predilections by serving as an ardent supporter of the John Birch Society of which his son Nelson Bunker Hunt played a leading role. (Later in his life H.L. Hunt noted that people referred to him as the "Billionaire health crank"; while his son recalled that Hunt had relied upon the astrological oil-locating

The Urantia cult also heavily influenced the founders of the Celestial Seasonings herbal tea company, most particularly by Morris (Mo) Siegel who is the president of the Urantia Foundation.

⁴⁹ Chris Lehmann, "The self-help guru who shaped Trump's worldview," *In These Times*, December 13, 2017; Lehmann is author of *The Money Cult: Capitalism, Christianity, and the Unmaking of the American Dream* (Melville House, 2016); for more on Peale, see Christopher Lane, *Surge of Piety: Norman Vincent Peale and the Remaking of American Religious Life* (Yale University Press, 2016).

services provided by Jeane Dixon -- a famous anti-communist psychic to the rich and famous.)⁵⁰

Stanford Research Institute to the Rescue

With ruling-class paranoia spiraling out of control, it was only a matter of time before the U.S. intelligence services began funding psychic research at the esteemed Stanford Research Institute (SRI) in Palo Alto, California. SRI had been spun off from its original base at Stanford University in 1970, but this august militaristic research body had a longstanding relationship with the developing field of parapsychology, as this was the university from which Professor Jeffrey Smith had pursued his psychedelic ESP research throughout the sixties. In 1965 Smith had formed the Parapsychology Research Group, Inc. with the participation of psychologist Charles Tart, the up-and-coming psi-researcher, Russell Targ, and Arthur Hastings, the dean of the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology.⁵¹

Both Tart and Smith had been the only university-bound parapsychologists to subject Peter Hurkos to independent testing and lo and behold they had found no evidence of psychic powers. Although that is not to say they were not true believers in the mystical realm as Charles Tart for one had been heavily inspired by George Gurdjieff's own spiritual guidance. Moreover, Russell Targ, who served as the president of the Parapsychology Research Group, was

⁵⁰ For a discussion of H.L. Hunt's activism for the John Birch Society and his relationship with white supremacist Dan Smoot, see Heather Hendershot, *What's Fair on the Air?: Cold War Right-Wing Broadcasting And The Public Interest* (University of Chicago Press, 2011). Smoot had served on the board of a private domestic intelligence agency known as the Western Goals Foundation which had been founded by John Birch Society chairman Larry McDonald. Notably Roy Cohn, who had been a mentor to Donald Trump, had joined Western Goals national advisory board in May 1982.

In addition to being a devout Roman Catholic, Jeane Dixon (1904-1997) was arguably one of the best-known American psychics of the twentieth century, and so it is fitting that her politics were decidedly conspiratorial and right-wing - see Porter Barron Jr., "Strom and the prophetic: how celebrity soothsayer Jeane Dixon held sway over SC's iconic senator and other GOP heavyweights," *The Post and Courier*, November 6, 2013.

⁵¹ Russell Targ, *Do You See What I See? Lasers and Love, ESP and the CIA, and the Meaning of Life* (Hampton Roads, 2010), p.97.

himself a long-time devotee of the ESP-scene.⁵² As fate would have it, Targ shared his mystical beliefs with his father who had been the editor-in-chief at Putnam, and who had been personally responsible for publishing Erich von Däniken's *Chariots of the Gods*, Eileen Garrett's 1968 autobiography (*Many Voices*), and "a raft of books about psychic phenomena, such as Susy Smith's *Book of James* in which she reports on channeled messages from the spirit of William James."⁵³

While studying physics at Columbia University Russell Targ recalled being introduced to the orgasmic delights of kundalini meditation and the wonders of the New York Theosophical Society. Targ subsequently joined the Theosophical Society and was gifted an original copy of the 1908 book, *Occult Chemistry*, by the society's president Dora Kunz. Then in May 1956, not long after conducting ESP experiments on Kunz, Targ had set sail for England for his first ever overseas vacation. There in rainy England he extended his apprenticeship in theosophy by having a brief fling with Deidre Bendit, the daughter of "the most famous psychic in England, Phoebe Bendit, who also happened to be the head of the [London Theosophical] Society."⁵⁴

Then in 1958 Targ took up a new job to work on building the world's first laser. And at this precise time in his life Targ recalls that he was "deeply engrossed in the mid-Manhattan salon of the Russian-born novelist and libertarian philosopher Ayn Rand, which was held in her luxurious apartment." Rubbing shoulders with her glamorous

⁵² Russell Targ had come into contact with Eileen Garrett in the late 1950s when she had asked him to construct some laboratory apparatus to allow her to undertake her psychic research.

⁵³ Such far-out beliefs were then passed on to Russell's late daughter, Elisabeth Targ, who believed that psi power can be used to heal distant people just from a photograph and their name. The experiment was supported by the Institute of Noetic Sciences and published in 1998 as "A Randomized Double-Blind Study of the Effects of Distant Healing in a Population with Advanced AIDS." in the prestigious *Western Journal of Medicine*. Until her unforeseen death in 2002 Elisabeth Targ was the acting director of the Complementary Medicine Research Institute based at the California Pacific Medical Center at the University of California School of Medicine. For more background on this see, Martin Gardner, "Notes of a fringe-watcher: distant healing and Elisabeth Targ," *Skeptical Inquirer*, 25(2), March/April 2001.

⁵⁴ Targ, *Do You See What I See?*, p.57, p.58, p.72.

clique of disciples, which included the likes of Alan Greenspan (who went on to chair the Federal Reserve), Targ says he eventually parted ways with Rand owing to their quarrels over physics. This was because, as Targ put it: “As an ‘objectivist’ she felt that she could not accept Einstein’s theory of general relativity!”⁵⁵

In the 1960s, Targ, who was now a trained microwave engineer, moved to Palo Alto to commence work at what would soon become the largest laser lab on the West Coast. In this new setting Targ’s mystic interests flourished, a blossoming that was marked by his involvement with the founding of Stanford’s Parapsychology Research Group. During this period of his life, Targ worked with Charles Tart on the creation of an ESP teaching machine. A project that, not coincidentally, became the basis for Targ’s (and Hal Puthoff’s) first NASA contract to establish a remote viewing program at Stanford Research Institute.⁵⁶ Support for this psychical program also arrived courtesy of the CIA, and as Targ tells it:

From the beginning, the bargain we struck with the devil was that half our effort would be directed toward such applications and tasks as finding kidnapped agents, downed airplanes, etc., and the other half we could apply to research questions such as, how does ESP actually work.

Targ however recalled that the remote viewing part of their psi-work was apparently so successful that the research part “fell to almost nothing.” But as Targ had apparently never wanted to be a psychic spy

⁵⁵ Targ, *Do You See What I See?*, p.82, p.83, p.85.

⁵⁶ After delivering a presentation on Russian parapsychology and for necessity for his ESP machine to a hundred futurists at a NASA conference on Speculative Technology (in April 1972) Russell Targ made a successful sales pitch to Edgar Mitchell, rocket pioneer Wernher von Braun, science fiction writer Arthur C. Clarke, NASA’s New-Projects Administrator George Pezdirtz, and NASA Director James Fletcher. This resulted in NASA providing the initial funding for a program on remote reviewing at the Stanford Research Institute. Targ, *Do You See What I See?*, p.100, p.107. For background on Wernher von Braun’s past work for the Nazis, see Michael Neufeld, *Von Braun: Dreamer of Space, Engineer of War* (Random House, 2007); and for a related discussion of “Operation Paperclip” – the American government program that recruited Nazi scientists, see Christopher Simpson, *Blowback: America’s Recruitment of Nazis and Its Effects on the Cold War* (Crowell-Collier, 1989).

for the CIA (so he says) he eventually left SRI in 1982 (many years after the CIA funding had ended), as did Puthoff a further two years later.⁵⁷

Germinating Psychic Stars

Much like celebrity fame, the longevity of psychic notoriety comes and

⁵⁷ By 1985 Russell Targ had returned to his roots in laser research by obtaining work at Lockheed Missiles and Space Company, and with the aid of his former acupuncturist turned-spiritual teacher Gangaji he learned how to cope with the bullying corporate culture at Lockheed; although (as he recalls) it was perhaps helpful that he got along with his program manager. However, despite Gangaji's positive influence on Targ's working life it took Targ ten years before she "lovingly helped [him] to realize that it is mentally incoherent to be on a spiritual path while working at a weapons factory." Targ, *Do You See What I See?*, p.165, p.177, p.214.

Here it is interesting to dwell upon Targ's contact with the world of medicine, as in 1984 he discovered he had colon cancer which was remedied through the traditional means of surgery, but in 1992 when he was obtained a preliminary diagnosis that he might have metastatic cancer of the liver, Targ decided to forgo mainstream medicine. Instead, he contacted his friend and spiritual healer, Jane Katra, who "told the doctors" that he was not sick and informed Targ that he should not *believe* he is sick or had cancer. Along with denial, Katra recommended he join a spiritual group (he chose a group committed to *A Course in Miracles*), and to change his clothes, glasses, hair style and mannerisms in order to "*change the host*, physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually," so that "the disease would not recognize" Targ and would leave his body alone. A change in diet was also necessary as part of the self-healing along with the consumption of megavitamins and fresh food. Adoption of activities that were less stressful were mandatory as well, and given that he was "living with a stressful and difficult marriage," Targ left his wife. And as Targ puts it: "As a reward for saving me, Jane got to keep me"; such that they "lived together and loved one another deeply for almost a decade." During their blossoming relationship the two lovers then went on to write a number of books together. That Targ had a stressful marriage is not really surprising given that he fell in love with another women in 1977 while overseas on a business trip. This led "to almost a decade of passion and deception"; all of which evidently caused him no guilt and merely reminded him of a story that "a standing penis has no conscience." Targ, *Do You See What I See?*, p.70, p.184, p.185, p.189, p.190, p.207, p.208.

Russell met his current wife Patricia at a Unity Church in Palo Alto at a talk being given by Marc Allen on his latest book *Visionary Business*. It was after this talk that Russell convinced Marc, who was the president of the New World Library, to read over his latest book manuscript *Miracles of Mind* with he had co-authored with Jane Katra. The new happy couple then developed their friendship through weekly meetings at the *Course in Miracles* study group (held at Russell's home) and five years later (in 2003) he was married to Patricia by his "long-time friend" Joan Halifax Roshi,

goes depending very much on the whims of the mainstream media and the fancies of elite financiers, and of course relies upon the physical longevity of the mediums themselves. Celebrity psychic Eileen Garrett thus passed away in 1970 at the age of 77, while the following year Arthur Ford, the world-famous clairvoyant departed from this mortal realm aged 75. Both individuals had served as critical boosters of psi phenomena, with Garrett receiving the early imprimatur of J.B. Rhine after being tested at his laboratory in the thirties,⁵⁸ having thereafter found a right-wing sustainer in the form of Senator Bolton. As for Ford – who had enjoyed an extremely long career dating back to the 1920s – when asked how he had been able to make ends meet by acting as a medium to individuals who had lost their loved ones, he replied:

I am not dependent on this work. ... The fact that I am financially independent is due to the fact that my future's secured to me by money given to me by Sir Basil Zaharoff, the great munitions king – a good friend of mine. He fixed it so that I would never have to worry about money so long as I live.⁵⁹

Ford's official biographer – who had canonized Ford as the world's greatest medium – however couldn't vouch for the veracity of even this straightforward statement and explained that it could have been “another example of Ford's surrealistic approach to facts”. They do nevertheless acknowledge that Zaharoff was “eternally grateful” to Ford for allowing him to communicate with his dead wife (as noted in Ford's first book *Nothing So Strange*); and they point out that Ford's apparent angel funder, Zaharoff, was “usually painted as a sinister character, a pitiless profiteer from other men's blood”.⁶⁰ This part of

a Zen priest and abbot of the Upaya Zen Center in the hills outside Santa Fe. Although he had separated from his other wife Joan, he remained married to her till her death in 1998. Targ, *Do You See What I See?*, p.76, p.77.

⁵⁸ Just a few years later Eileen Garrett went on to serve as a witness at Arthur Ford's second marriage.

⁵⁹ Allen Spraggett, *Arthur Ford: The Man Who Talk With the Dead* (New American Library, 1973), p.110.

⁶⁰ Spraggett, *Arthur Ford*, p.110. Arthur Ford had originally been catapulted into the public limelight in 1929 after duping the world into thinking he had made spiritual

the story was certainly true. And Zarahoff, like so many funders of psi-intrigues, was not a pleasant individual. Although there can be no doubting that the bloodbaths that saw Zarahoff's fortunes rise so much did lead to a rise in spiritual seekers hoping to contact their loved ones.

Connections to unsavory characters is not of course unusual when it comes to the lives of spiritual guides. But one particularly significant historic event took place in May 1964 when, Ford, who was at the time America's most famous medium, undertook a controversial sitting with the disciples of the far-right religious leader from South Korea, Rev. Sun Myung Moon. As the well-known story goes, Ford, while in a trance state, stated that "[Moon] is a child of the new age - the Aquarian Age. He has tremendous spiritual power and also psychic power. ... He is a prophet." Following this initial publicity coup for the violently anti-communist prophet, in March 1965 Ford then gave an in-person sitting with the Rev. Moon, during which he observed (again, while in trance) that the guru's power could be used to...

"...lift the pall of spiritual darkness. It is no accident that Mr. Moon was chosen because he was born into a part of the world, where at this particular moment, the battle is raging most fiercely. He will be able, through his influence and the people whom he reaches with the message to turn the Battle of Armageddon into victory in the East. I can only repeat the vision of John, that when the New Age comes, the Eastern Gate will open, and not only man - but Revelation - will flow

communion with Harry Houdini (1874-1926) - the very same magician who had committed his life to debunking the trickery of people like Ford and his many predecessors. And as Houdini would no doubt have loved to point out, in Ford's case, his alleged psychic powers were supplemented by his preference for travelling the country with a suitcase packed full of personal information and newspaper clippings about those who were going to attend his seances. Christopher, *Mediums, Mystics and the Occult*, p.144. Arthur Ford got his big break in September 1967 when Bishop James Pike helped him show millions of Canadian viewers a live séance on their television screens. As it happens the key facts that Ford apparently extracted from the netherworld were most likely drawn from a *New York Times* obituary published in 1958. This came as no surprise because, as even his sympathetic biographer notes: "Arthur Ford's private files revealed that he had a marked propensity for clipping obituaries..." Spraggett, *Arthur Ford*, p.246, p.248.

out of that gate.”

Parts of this trance was then reproduced in Ford’s bestselling 1969 autobiography, which served as a “powerful weapon in the Korean religionist’s propaganda campaign.” Indeed, Ford’s official biographer goes on to acknowledge that the trance mediums actions meant that he played “a substantial, though largely unwitting, part in promoting Mr. Moon’s aspirations to Christlike status.”⁶¹ In Ford’s partial defense it might be said that these events occurred before the Rev. Moon’s emigration to America, but even in the mid-1960s it was hardly a secret that his Unification Church was entwined with all manner of ultra-right political causes. And it was no mere accident of fate that for the three months from March 1965 onwards the Rev. Moon had employed the PR services of Richard Viguerie, who himself was an up-and-coming political organizer of the American far-right.⁶²

Seemingly undamaged by the psychic assistance that Ford have

⁶¹ Spraggett, *Arthur Ford*, p.273, p.269. One key international New Age networker who introduced the Rev. Sun Myung Moon to ruling-class spiritualists in both America and England was the former White Rajah of Sarawak, Sir Anthony Brooke, who was ever in pursuit of the dream of “limitless love”. The former Rajah’s aristocratic friendship circles were global in scope and included the likes of UFO enthusiasts/mysticists Air Marshal Sir Victor Goddard, Gerald Heard, and Lady Eve Balfour (who was a member of Brooke’s spiritual group, the Universal Foundation). In the late 1960s Brooke also maintained a home at the Findhorn community in Scotland where he was able to indulge in his occult intrigues with bourgeois elites from around the world.

In his book *Towards Human Unity* (Mitre Press, 1976), Brooke discussed his earlier joy at discovering the connections between the Rev. Moon’s mission and that of those Americans who had previously contacted the so-called Ashtar Command. Here it is important to note that the most famous person to talk to the Ashtar space people was the far-right UFO preacher George Van Tassel (see later).

⁶² Richard Viguerie’s “politics were shaped by his early career working for Oklahoma radio evangelist Billy James Hargis, an enthusiastic supporter of the John Birch Society.” In 1964 Viguerie had then worked on Barry Goldwater’s presidential campaign, and in 1981 in famous established the secretive far-right Christian group known as the Council for National Policy. For more on this background, see Anne Nelson’s *Shadow Network: Media, Money, and the Secret Hub of the Radical Right* (Bloomsbury, 2019).

From his early work for the Korean Cultural and Freedom Foundation (which was one of the Rev. Moon’s many front-groups), Viguerie continued to work closely with the Unification Church over the coming decades. And one of the many radicals

given to Rev. Moon's fascist-inspired political meddling, the trance mediums legacy lived on beyond his years in other ways too. Thus in 1956 Ford had already helped a group of Christian clergy and laypersons to indulge their paranormal beliefs by forming the Spiritual Frontiers Fellowship. And in May 1972, just a year after Ford's death, nearly two thousand people attended the annual conference of the Spiritual Frontiers Fellowship, with one notable attendee including the up-and-coming psychic organizer and real-life spaceman, Edgar Mitchell, who had been encouraged to explore the world of consciousness by his contact with the Fellowship.⁶³

Other paranormal networks also served to help inaugurate a new era of psychic exploration in the 1960s, with one of the most pertinent of these being the longstanding American Society for Psychical Research whose activities had been backed by the world-famous anthropologist, Margaret Mead (1901-1978). Mead had a long but often overlooked interest in ethereal matters having first been elected a trustee of the Society in 1942.⁶⁴ And it was a direct consequence of her lobbying efforts within the American Association for the Advancement of Science that led, in 1969, to parapsychology becoming (controversially) accepted as a legitimate branch of this esteemed Association.⁶⁵ And like Mead, many of the people involved

Viguerie helped elect to governmental office during those years was Orrin Hatch, a politician whose career was likewise closely linked to the Rev. Moon's own reactionary spiritual agenda. For a useful introduction to the connections between the Christian Right and the Rev. Moon, see John Gorenfeld, *Bad Moon Rising: How Reverend Moon Created the Washington Times, Seduced the Religious Right, and Built an American Kingdom* (Polipoint Press, 2008).

⁶³ Spraggett, *Arthur Ford*, p.218, p.273. In addition to the influence that the Spiritual Frontiers Fellowship had on Edgar Mitchell's spiritual mission, one of his close friends recalls: "Mitchell was a many-faceted adventurer in bringing outer space and inner space together. His interest in UFOs, for example, was very strong because, having been a teenager living in Roswell, New Mexico, he heard stories from neighbors about the strange things recovered from a flying saucer crash site there. He stated publicly that he was convinced that UFOs are real and that there is a multinational government coverup about it." John White, "Book review: Edgar D. Mitchell: The Man with the Cosmic Mind," *Institute of Noetic Sciences*, December 11, 2019.

⁶⁴ Martin Gardner, *The New Age: Notes of a Fringe Watcher* (Prometheus Books, 1991), p.19.

⁶⁵ Not long after achieving this relativist leap forward for postmodernism, Margaret

with the American Society for Psychical Research, would go on to play important roles in pushing forward all manner of ill-thought-out ideas within the burgeoning New Age movement.

Millionaire benefactors always played a critical role in funding the work of the American Society for Psychical Research, with one famous example being provided by Xerox Corporation's founder Chester Carlson.⁶⁶ Elite salons likewise continued to play an important role in sustaining the avant-garde social lives of psi-participants. And leading psi-society member, actress Lucille Kahn -- whose main claim to fame lay in the publicity that she and her late husband provided to the famous "sleeping prophet" Edgar Cayce -- had, for many decades, ran such glamorous salons. In fact, in the late 1950s Kahn had played host to paranormal luminaries like Gerald Heard and Aldous Huxley at pioneering evenings of psychic experimentation that were fueled by LSD.⁶⁷ Another participant at such drug-addled trials of human

Mead was invited to speak at one of the counterculture extravaganzas held at the Tarrytown House Executive Conference Center in the rolling hills just north of New York. This Center had been established in 1963 by Robert Schwartz, a former *Time* magazine bureau chief, whose friendship with Mead eventually led to the launch of the Tarrytown Group which served as a forum for "members of the creative minority" involved with the promotion of New Age phenomena. Mead was open about her belief in dowsing and UFOs, and when she knew she was dying of cancer, Mead began seeing a Chilean psychic healer in New York, having been introduced to the Rev. Carmen diBarazza by her good friends Jean Houston and Robert Schwartz. Gardner, *The New Age*, p.24.

⁶⁶ During the 1960s Chester Carlson gave money away to conventional liberal causes like the Maynard Hutchins Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, but he "also made substantial contributions to spiritual and parapsychological groups" primarily because of his wife's belief that she possessed psychic and other paranormal powers. Groups that benefited from the wealth of Carlson, who was one of the world's richest men, included spiritual groups like the San Francisco Zen Center, and psi groups like the Rhine Center and the American Society for Psychical Research. David Owen, *Copies in Seconds: Chester Carlson and the Birth of the Xerox Machine* (Simon & Schuster, 2005), pp.260-8.

⁶⁷ As Dieter Hagenbach and Lucius Werthmüller note in *Mystic Chemist: The Life of Albert Hofmann and His Discovery of LSD* (Synergetic Press, 2013), Albert Hofmann maintained friendships with anyone who shared his desire to explore the outer limits of consciousness. In the post-war period this led Hofmann to count the notorious Ernst Jünger as one of his closest friends. While it is true that this dubious and intimate friendship is highlighted in *Mystic Chemist*, the authors do their best to make it appear that Jünger's flirtation with far-right politics was well and truly over by

endurance was the religion editor for Harper's and Row, Eugene Exman, who had been "a key organizer of the Heard-inspired" libertarian seekers in New York from the 1940s onwards.

Exman published Heard's writings, but through Trabuco [College, Heard's training ground for spiritual elites that] he also made connections with other writers drawn to Heard and Huxley, including, most important, Huston Smith and Jiddhu Krishnamurti, who would lead him and Harper's deeper and deeper into the emerging seeker culture.⁶⁸

In his early days as a seeker, Exman had joined other lay Protestant

the time of his friendship with Hofmann: this however was not the case. In fact, between 1949 and 1953 Jünger's private secretary was the famed far-right intellectual, Armin Mohler. And in the post-war period "it is no exaggeration to say that Jünger, the spiritual aristocrat, was crucial in the creation of a kind of twentieth-century counter-Enlightenment 'republic of letters' – a long-distance intellectual community that mixed public writings with privately circulated texts, thousands of letters, and formal and informal gatherings. Jünger's circle would make up an important part of a scattered right-wing community linked by diverse ideological and cultural ties. Like the Enlightenment-era Republic of Letters, Jünger's connections were both international in scope and formed in opposition to the prevailing system of power, uniting under a banner of friendship radical conservatives, fellow travelers, and assorted cultural mandarins from across Europe and the Americas." Eliah Matthew Bures, *Fantasies of Friendship: Ernst Jünger and the German Right's Search for Community in Modernity*, Ph.D. Thesis, University of California, Berkeley, Spring 2014, pp.147-8.

Hofmann's friendly biographers observe in passing that Ernst Jünger had edited a journal called *Antaios* with Mircea Eliade (although they neglect to mention Eliade's own far right politics). This was no fleeting acquaintance as Jünger and Eliade both edited the periodical between the years 1959 and 1971 and were evidently happy to publish articles authored by the aristocratic fascist Julius Evola. These connections to Evola are discussed in Horst Junginger's "From Buddha to Adolf Hitler: Walther Wüst and the Aryan tradition," in: Horst Junginger (ed.), *The Study of Religion Under the Impact of Fascism* (Brill, 2008), p.138.

⁶⁸ Matthew Hedstrom, *The Rise of Liberal Religion: Book Culture and American Spirituality in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford University Press, 2015), p.110. For a useful discussion of Huston Smith's conservative politics see Richard Payne, "Traditionalist representations of Buddhism," *Pacific World: Journal of the Institute of Buddhist Studies*, 10, 2008. Payne introduces Smith like this: "While Mircea Eliade may have introduced Traditionalist ideas to the academic study of religion, Huston Smith is perhaps most responsible for introducing Traditionalist ideas into American

leaders like Dwight D. Eisenhower and John D. Rockefeller Jr. by becoming a member of the Layman's Movement for a Christian World – an organization which sought “to bring Christian values into the affairs of business and politics.” One of the Layman's most significant ventures in this regard was to establish Wainwright House in Rye, New York, as a study and retreat center.⁶⁹ Support for the creation of Wainwright House in 1951 as the “first nonsectarian, holistic, spiritual educational center” in the United States was also said to have been provided by positive thinking guru Rev. Norman Vincent Peale.⁷⁰ This put the House in a unique position of sitting at the center of New York's small but growing alternative healing and parapsychology movement, and so it is no surprise that local theosophical leader Dora Kunz, who lived just up the road in Port Chester, was a regular visitor to the house.⁷¹

Spaced Out

One of the most famous psi-converts who propelled Ford and Garrett's psychic legacies forward beyond their deaths was Edgar Mitchell, the NASA astronaut who in February 1971 became the sixth person to walk on the moon. Maintaining a sort of spirituality continuity between spiritual epochs, in the years immediately prior to his spaceflight, Mitchell had participated in a number of séances with

popular religious culture. Like Eliade, Smith—at least for most of his career—acted as a soft Traditionalist, and one will not find overt reference to figures such as [René] Guénon or [Frithjof] Schuon in his most widely read works. Their ideas are certainly central to his work, however, including his representations of Buddhism.” (p.200)

⁶⁹ “Part of Wainwright House's special mission was to serve as a religious retreat center for the United Nations, and as such it advocated a mystical rather than a creedal approach to religious enlightenment as a cornerstone of emerging internationalism. Exman eventually served as chairman of the board of trustees of Wainwright House.” Hedstrom, *The Rise of Liberal Religion*, p.111.

⁷⁰ Lynne Ames, “Wainwright House marks anniversary,” *The New York Times*, October 14, 2001.

⁷¹ Kirsten van Gelder, Frank Chelsey, *A Most Unusual Life: Dora van Gelder Kunz: Clairvoyant, Theosophist, Healer* (Quest Books, 2015), Chapter 7. Dora Kunz popped down to the initial series of spiritual healing seminar that had been organized at Wainwright House across 1954 and 1955 by Dr. Robert Laidlaw, who himself was a board member of the American Society for Psychical Research and chairman of the department of psychiatry at the Rockefeller University Hospital.

Arthur Ford. Moreover, Mitchell had been so amazed by the medium's powers that he had invited Ford to be his guest at the launch of the Apollo 14 mission (although as fate would have it, Ford died before take-off).⁷²

Like so many other seekers of this era, Mitchell's ruling-class hob-knobbing facilitated his transition to ethereal fame. And his all-consuming commitment to spiritual change was aided by his strict religious upbringing, which, when combined with his scientific career at NASA, led to him finding spiritual comfort in devoting his life to an exploration of the science of the unknown.⁷³ Mitchell's first major foray into his lifelong efforts to quantify the mystic realm had occurred during his journey to the moon, when he had secretly conducted an experiment to determine the effectiveness of the transmission and reception of telepathic communications. Upon his return to earth, Dr. Rhine and Dr. Karlis Osis (who was the head of research for the American Society for Psychological Research)⁷⁴ then analyzed the data that Mitchell had collected from this unique orbital ESP session; whereby, in the manner all too typical of psi-researchers, they fudged the analysis (consciously or not) and determined that they now had proof that telepathy was possible from space.

Recollecting the powerful feelings that had coursed through every fibre of his body while in space, Mitchell described how he had felt "an overwhelming sense of universal *connectedness*." Now, he says, he "perceived the universe as in some way conscious" and Mitchell soon came to the realization that his "life's purpose" had

⁷² On December 6, 1969, Arthur Ford provided his first sitting for Edgar Mitchell, and several others followed. Mitchell recalled that "he was truly amazing". Spraggett, *Arthur Ford*, p.275, p.276.

⁷³ Edgar Mitchell, *The Way of the Explorer: An Apollo Astronaut's Journey Through the Material and Mystical Worlds* (Richter Artes Graficas, 2001 [1996]), p.81.

⁷⁴ Dr. Karlis Osis (1917-1997) was one of the first psychologists to have obtained a doctorate degree with a thesis that dealt with ESP (which he obtained from the University of Munich). After completing his doctoral studies in 1950 Osis had emigrated to America where he became a colleague of Dr. J. B. Rhine before moving on to become the director of research at Eileen Garrett's Parapsychology Foundation in New York City. This unusual career trajectory then landed Osis a job at the American Society for Psychological Research, where from 1962 until 1975 he was kept busy directing the Society's paranormal research.

“been to discover, to reveal and interpret information, first in outer space, and now in inner space.” Mere scientific explorations of phenomena in the outer world could now only “take on a deadening redundancy,” he observed. So, it is hardly surprising that he felt his “attention was drawn down and in, deep into that vast realm of infinitely small spaces.” That is to the inner world of consciousness studies, and especially to those neglected areas examining “the mysterious states of mind that allow for epiphany and the psychic event.”⁷⁵

Upon returning to earth, Mitchell now threw himself into his new vocation with abandon, and the more psychics that he met, the more he felt he “was on the precipice of resolving a grand mystery.” His hobby now “moved toward an obsession,” and in the fall of 1972 a philanthropic couple pledged an annual sum of \$600,000 to support his ideas of creating “an organization that wasn't so much a place as a state of mind.” This organization would come to be known as the Institute of Noetic Sciences.⁷⁶

Around this time Mitchell took a short break from his busy schedule to travel to Little Rock, Arkansas to speak at a psi convention. Killing two birds with one stone, here, he took some time out to meet up with his mother (who was a fundamentalist Christian) and persuaded her to allow Norbu Chen -- the self-identified reincarnated Tibetan lama and all-round quack to the stars -- to magically heal her failing eyesight.⁷⁷ After receiving Norbu’s magical

⁷⁵ Mitchell, *The Way of the Explorer*, p.3, p.4, p.6, p.65.

⁷⁶ Mitchell, *The Way of the Explorer*, p.67, p.68, p.72. One book that Mitchell read that he highlights as “set[ting] the tone” for his own inquiries into the spontaneous expansive experience he went through in space was Dr. R.M. Bucke's classic study *Cosmic Consciousness* (Innes and Sons, 1901). His hobby now “moved toward an obsession” and by the end of 1971 it led to his separation from his wife. This is not to say that others were not interested in supporting his submersion in mysticism, and shortly after leaving his wife he met his future wife Anita Rettig, a publicist for Walt Disney World who shared his passion for mumbo jumbo. Mitchell, *The Way of the Explorer*, p.67, p.68.

⁷⁷ Mitchell, *The Way of the Explorer*, p.81. During the 1970s one of America’s richest women, the tobacco heiress Doris Duke often invoked the ‘healing’ services of Norbu Chen. Duke saw herself as something of a healer herself and was known to provide acupressure healing upon her good friend Ferdinand Marcus, the then dictator of the Philippines. In the early 1960s Duke had also famously funded the

touch his mum apparently praised the Lord for the miraculous restoration of her sight. But the miracle proved short-lived. This was because as soon as she found out the cure was not the work of the Lord, she came to believe that the healing must have been the work of Satan. Upon making this alarming discovery Mitchell stated that the miracle faded, and her vision deteriorated again.⁷⁸

With one short-lived ‘miracle’ under his belt, 1972 was the year Mitchell was first introduced to Uri Geller by his recently acquired friend Dr. Andrija Puharich (who he had met at the annual meeting of the Spiritual Frontiers Fellowship). As Mitchell tells the story:

After our first meeting, which lasted several days, I was adequately convinced (in fact overwhelmed) that his abilities were real and not simply showmanship or a magician's tricks, that I promptly began to arrange for financial sponsorship through Judith Skutch and Henry Rolfs who would later serve on the board of directors of the institute [of Noetic Sciences], and to arrange for laboratory tests to be conducted. Geller agreed and came to the Stanford Research Institute near San Francisco in the late fall to participate in several experiments that would demonstrate his parapsychological abilities under our auspices.⁷⁹

Mitchell interprets his exposure to these so-called miracles, as not merely serendipitous, but rather as “events governed by the mysterious cadence of synchronicity.”⁸⁰ A more accurate descriptor of these events

construction of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's ashram in India. Dinitia Smith, “The death and delirious life of Doris Duke,” *New York* magazine, December 6, 1993, p.46.

Doris Duke like many members of the ruling-class was a ardent pill-popper, and in a review of a biography about Duke's life the *New York Times* surmised her life like this: “An exquisitely paranoid inheritrix who surrounds herself with swamis, shamans and guard dogs, the 79-year-old Doris Duke who appears in ‘The Richest Girl in the World’ by Stephanie Mansfield is a kind of camp antiheroine who might have been invented by the editors of *The National Enquirer* (a publication that she is said to devour). Worth an estimated \$1 billion, the reclusive daughter of the tobacco baron James Buchanan (Buck) Duke buys \$4,000 bottles of wine but deducts the cost of broken glassware from her maids' modest paychecks.” Michelle Green, “Buck Duke's daughter,” *New York Times*, June 14, 1992.

⁷⁸ Mitchell, *The Way of the Explorer*, p.82, p.83.

⁷⁹ Mitchell, *The Way of the Explorer*, pp.84-5.

⁸⁰ Mitchell, *The Way of the Explorer*, p.81. Financial support for the completion

would locate them as representing the lifelong delusions of Puharich and his dim-witted ruling-class brethren. Geller's influence on bourgeois believers remains the primary reason why this skilled illusionist rose to global fame. But we should note that as a former paratrooper for the Israeli Army, Geller already had friends in powerful places, as during the late 1960s he said he used his so-called magical dowsing powers to enable Israel's warmongering Chief of Staff General Moshe Dayan to build up his collection of illegally acquired archaeological artefacts.⁸¹ At the time, however, Geller says he was unaware that the magic he was working was known as dowsing. So it was only in 1973 - at a celebrity packed party in London - that Sir Val Duncan, the CEO of the mining giant Rio Tinto-Zinc Corporation, informed Geller that his previously little-used skill was dowsing - a quack-power that Sir Duncan was a keen advocate of at the time.⁸² This

of Mitchell's first edited book *Psychic Exploration: A Challenge for Science* (G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1974) was provided by the Mind Science Foundation of Los Angeles (see earlier).

⁸¹ Uri Geller's connections to the American intelligence community meant that in 1987 he had been asked to try to telepathically influence the Soviets during ongoing arms negotiations. As Jonathan Margolis recounts in his book *The Secret Life of Uri Geller: CIA Masterspy* (Osprey Publishing, 2013): Geller "had been invited by Senator Claiborne Pell, then the powerful chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, in the hope that he could use telepathy to influence the Soviet negotiating team, especially its head, Yuli Vorontsov, into making some serious concessions to the West, preferably, as a first step, reducing Russian missiles in Europe."

Margolis adds that: "Pell had been introduced to Geller, who now lived in Britain, by Princess Michael of Kent, who is a good friend of Uri's, as is her husband. So impressed was Pell, that he arranged a three-way meeting in London's Cavendish Hotel with Geller, himself and Max Kampelman, the chief US negotiator. The day after the reception, according to a full-page report in Newsweek, the Russian leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, made an unexpected new offer - the removal within five years of all medium-range nuclear missiles based in Europe. Geller was quoted as saying he was convinced Vorontsov had called Gorbachev straight after the reception, having received his ESP message."

⁸² Guy Lyon Playfair and Uri Geller, *The Geller Effect* (Cape, 1986), Chapter 4. Sir Val Duncan was just one of many British elites obsessed with the paranormal world and another wealthy individual who is name-checked in Andrija Puharich's Geller biography as a "close friend" of the author is Tony Bloomfield (p.191) who had helped him promote Geller to the British scientific community in late 1972. Importantly in 1980 Bloomfield would join forces with Arthur Koestler and Brian Inglis (both influential psi-popularizers in their own right) to establish a paranormally

being the same mining magnate who, just two years later, would be conspiring with various retired generals with making plans for a coup d'état against his own government in Britain, which at the time was being led by the Labour Party.⁸³

True Believers

1973 marked the eventual formation of Mitchell's Institute of Noetic Sciences, an institute's whose launch benefited from his powerful friends like, for instance, Wernher von Braun who had headlined an early fund-raising dinner which had netted the Institute a whopping \$20,000.⁸⁴ Other early financial backers of the Institute of Noetic Sciences included conservative millionaires like John Fetzer (the

inclined philanthropy that was christened the K.I.B. Foundation which aimed to support research into "unconventional science and alternative therapies." After Koestler and his much younger partner took their own lives in 1983, the couple had left a bequest worth nearly £0.5million to any university in the UK that would be willing to break new ground by creating a university chair in parapsychology. In 1985 this legacy resulted in the eventual creation of the so-called Koestler Parapsychology Unit at the University of Edinburgh.

It is worth noting that Arthur Koestler (1905-1983) famously made a political transition from the far-left, as an influential (if politically naïve) member of the Communist Party, to being a determined anti-Communist. This transition and Koestler's betrayal of his left roots was arguably informed by his "unending quest for a new source of euphoric self-realisation," see Ashley Lavelle, *The Politics of Betrayal: Renegades and Ex-Radicals from Mussolini to Christopher Hitchens* (Manchester University Press, 2013), p.197. In addition to discussing Christopher Hitchens own eventual embrace of neoconservative politics, Lavelle points out that Hitchens - in an article published in late 2009 - "correctly regards Koestler as someone gullible enough to embrace enthusiastically whichever scheme was put in front of him"; Hitchens, "Living life at an odd angle," *The Australian Financial Review*, December 18, 2009.

⁸³ Francis Wheen, *Strange Days Indeed* (Fourth Estate, 2009), pp.301-3; Jon Moran, "Conspiracy and contemporary history: revisiting MI5 and the Wilson plot[s]," *Journal of Intelligence History*, 13(2), 2004.

⁸⁴ Mitchell, *The Way of the Explorer*, p.72, p.73. With much drama the Institute of Noetic Sciences founder recalled that the generous philanthropic couple who had initially offered to fund his fledgling project caught everyone by surprise when they were declared bankrupt. Such perplexing material concerns were of no matter to Mitchell, as with his solid ruling class connections funding soon found its ways into his pockets. Ever the romantic, Mitchell adds that his Institute "seemed to be touched by an occasional miracle"; like when a rich heiress stopped by to chat for a few hours and then handed them a check for \$25,000. "Such synchronicities allowed us to keep going."

owner of the Detroit Tigers), and Paul Temple – an influential oil powerbroker who soon became their Institute’s chairman. Temple’s generous and longstanding association with the Institute is particularly significant as his other pet spiritual interest revolved around the support he gave to the shadowy fundamentalist Christian organization known as “The Family.”⁸⁵ This secretive group, which is known interchangeably as both The Fellowship and The Family, played a central role in linking Christian libertarianism with the increasingly conservative activism of the Rev. Billy Graham and the National Association of Evangelicals.⁸⁶

Acting upon the advice of Brendan O’Regan, a biochemist who was working at Stanford Research Institute, the Institute of Noetic Sciences initially chose to focus their intellectual resources on the mystic dimensions of health, starting with examinations of the effectiveness of meditation and acupuncture.⁸⁷ And given current spiritual trends in integrative health care, it is significant that the first researcher that obtained funding from the Institute was Dr. Carl Simonton, a radiation oncologist who, Mitchell recounted, thought that “individual attitudes and thought processes influence those afflicted with illness, particularly cancer.”⁸⁸ It was this still unproven research that helped popularize the mind-body connection in fighting

⁸⁵ “Paul Temple, a Standard Oil executive, explained how the Fellowship had won him access to key men in General Francisco Franco’s government in Spain.” Jeff Sharlet, *The Family: Power, Politics and Fundamentalism’s Shadow Elite* (HarperCollins, 2008), p.227.; Also see Cecil Bothwell, *The Prince of War: Billy Graham’s Crusade for a Wholly Christian Empire* (Brave Ulysses Books, 2007).

⁸⁶ As one historian noted, The Family “fought its own Cold War by building ties with anti-communist dictators in Indonesia, Chile, South Vietnam, Ethiopia, and Cambodia.” Its leader from 1969 onwards, Douglas Coe, was particularly fascinated by totalitarianism as a model for Christian leadership and was “given to comparing a covenant with Jesus to the Mafia or the Third Reich.” Sarah Ruth Hammond, “God’s BusinessMen”: Entrepreneurial Evangelicals in Depression and War (Yale University Ph.D., 2010), p.284. For more background, see Kevin Kruse, *One Nation Under God: How Corporate America Invented Christian America* (Basic Books, 2015); and Axel Schäfer, *Piety and Public Funding: Evangelicals and the State in Modern America* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012).

⁸⁷ Mitchell, *The Way of the Explorer*, p.74. In 1975 Brendan O’Regan was then promoted to become the Institute’s first director of research, a position he held until his death in 1992.

⁸⁸ Mitchell, *The Way of the Explorer*, p.74.

cancer, a "will-to-live" philosophy of cancer care that was outlined in Simonton's book *Getting Well Again: A Step-By-Step Self-Help Guide to Overcoming Cancer for Patients and Their Families* (J.P. Tarcher, 1978).⁸⁹

For the Institute of Noetic Sciences first few years Paul Temple's wife, Diane, was charged with managing the administrative details of the paranormal research organization, until Winston Franklin, an executive formerly with the Kettering Foundation, was, as Mitchell recalls, "induced to join us."⁹⁰ Dr. Willis Harman, of SRI fame, would subsequently go on to become the Institute's president in the late 1970s; but perhaps the most important relationship that developed between the SRI and the founder of the Institute of Noetic Sciences came about through the early research that undertaken on Uri Geller.

As Mitchell recalled, the funding to enable the SRI's world famous experiments on Geller were provided by the wealthy property developer Henry Rolfs and millionaire Judith Skutch (who herself was already an active member of both the American Society for Psychological Research and Edgar Cayce's Association for Research and Enlightenment).⁹¹ Skutch, who funded a large chunk of the paranormal scene blossoming in America during the 1970s, remembers how her entry into the new field of psi-research came (in the late sixties) after discovering that her "three-year-old daughter was displaying unique abilities one could call parapsychological." This research on her daughter was undertaken at the Dream Lab at Maimonides Hospital in New York by the up-and-coming psi-stars Stanley Krippner, Montague Ullman, and Charles Honorton.⁹²

⁸⁹ For detailed criticisms of Dr. Carl Simonton's methodology, see Tomasz Witkowski, *Psychology Led Astray: Cargo Cult in Science and Therapy* (Brown Walker Press, 2016).

⁹⁰ Mitchell, *The Way of the Explorer*, p.74. Winston Franklin was a founding trustee of the Fetzer Institute, and one of his documentaries, "The Heart of Healing," released in 1993 on the Turner Broadcasting System Inc., was seen around the world.

⁹¹ The now departed multimillionaire Dr. Joseph Schor was a stalwart supporter of Cayce's A.R.E. who made his fortune at a pharmaceutical corporation selling vitamins.

⁹² James Bolen, "A New Realities interview with Judith R. Skutch," *New Realities*, 1977. In 1984 Skutch would remarry but this time to someone who had spent their

Like the paranormal soirees for the well-to-do that had been

entire life serving his country in the military, a man called William W. Whitson. In the sixties after his retirement from serving as a Systems Analyst with the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense Whitson worked for the RAND Corporation and the Stanford Research Institute. He was the author of *The Military and Political Power in China in the 1970s* (Praeger, 1972).

Dr. Stanley Krippner's own psychedelic (LSD and poltergeist-inspired) work – with Jungian parapsychologist Montague Ullman and Alan Vaughan on the connection of dreams to the collective unconscious – was undertaken at the Maimonides Medical Center. With funding provided by the Parapsychology Foundation, their decade of somnolent research was eventually brought together in their co-authored book *Dream Telepathy: Experiments in Nocturnal ESP* (Macmillan, 1974). Yet despite apparently being psychic, such folk don't tend to be very informed about the reactionary trends manifesting themselves (quite openly) in the world around them. Thus, more recently Dr. Krippner's excitable blurb featured on the cover of a book authored by shamanic counselor and dream teacher Robert Moss which was titled *The Secret History of Dreaming* (New World Library, 2009). This is the same Moss, who at the same time that Dr. Krippner was hanging out with his mystical counterculture friends in the 1970s, was spouting forth the most vicious lies and hatred in the right-wing press owned by Sir James Goldsmith. Moss was a protege of well-known warmonger Brian Crozier, but Moss himself proved more than capable of amalgamating all manner of paranoid anti-communist conspiracy theories when he published an international best-selling novel titled *The Spike* (1980). His co-author on this propaganda tract was the *Newsweek* journalist, Arnaud de Borchgrave, who since 1985 has spent all his time editing newspapers and magazines belonging to Rev. Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church.

Ironically, the father of the modern dreamwork movement and director of the Edgar Cayce Institute of Intuitive Studies, Dr. Henry Reed, actually considers Robert Moss's toxic past to be a virtue, writing that his “extraordinary dreamwork” – in his latest book *Active Dreaming: Journeying Beyond Self-Limitation to a Life of Wild Freedom* (New World Library, 2011) – owes a lot to “his background in journalism [which] has opened his mind as a storyteller.” This commitment to journalism continues to this day and Moss has hosted a regular show on Linda Mackenzie's HealthyLife.Net Radio Network; a radio network which touts itself as a positive news network which is dedicated to evangelizing about global consciousness, consuming vitamin supplements, and promoting assorted projects of the health-freedom movement. On the issue of breast cancer, Mackenzie informs her fans that natural health care treatments include nutritional supplement therapies, shark cartilage therapies, and Dr. Burzynski infamously quackish antineoplaston therapy which she says “uses amino acid derivatives to inhibit the growth of cancer.” Mackenzie's God-based strictly positive psychic abilities have failed her in any ability to be sceptical about alternative medicines, non-skills which she showcased in a documentary titled *Many Faces of Psychic Ability* (2009); but her special powers have apparently allowed her to help the Los Angeles Police Department.

arranged by actress Lucille Kahn, Skutch played something of a host for the New York psychic pack, which neatly complemented her other pastime which involved her teaching extension courses in psychic research at New York University. Money was no problem for Skutch whose paranormal interests were shared with her husband Bob, who was “a stockbroker and an officer in a couple of well-known mutual funds” who spent his evenings practicing “his real calling - faith healing.” Therefore, it was through this couple’s wealth and networking skills that Geller’s entry into New York’s psi-cuity was secured through the aid he received from the Skutch’s Foundation for Parasensory Investigation. The latter foundation being a philanthropic body that received the generous backing of the likes of the construction mogul John Tishman (who at the time was overseeing the erection of the World Trade Center), the paranormal pianist Byron Janis, and the General Motors heir, Stewart Mott.⁹³

Enter the Scientologists

Two other well-heeled women who ran New York psi-salons during the seventies were Zelda Suplee, who would soon become one of the leaders of the past-life regression movement (and whose regular paranormal gathering took place in her apartment on Fifth Avenue and Eleventh Street near Greenwich Village);⁹⁴ and Buell Mullen, the famous mural artist whose etched-steel panels adorned the buildings of America’s ruling-class. Both women would play a central role in pushing forward the paranormal research that was now being undertaken in collaboration between the Institute of Noetic Sciences and the better-known SRI. For instance, it was through their social

⁹³ John Wilhelm, *The Search for Super-Man* (Pocket Book, 1976), p.67, p.70.

⁹⁴ Zelda Suplee’s day-work was as the director of the Erickson Educational Foundation. Her employer, the famous millionaire Reed Erickson was a keen funder of paranormal research, and provided \$60,000 to publish the first hardcover edition of Judith Skutch’s spiritual text, *A Course in Miracles*. “Erickson’s money also funded many other prominent researchers in this area, including Robert Masters and Jean Houston’s research into non-drug-induced altered states of consciousness, Stanley Krippner’s dream research, and John Lilly’s early research into dolphin and computer communications systems.” Aaron Devor and Nicholas Matte, “Building a better world for transpeople: Reed Erickson and the Erickson Educational Foundation,” *International Journal of Transgenderism*, 10(1), 2007, p.47, p.48.

circles that a psychic entrepreneur named Ingo Swann would be first introduced to two already Geller-obsessed physicists based at the SRI's Radio Physics Laboratory, the aforementioned Russell Targ and his supervisor, Harold Puthoff. Swann, at the time of his lucky introduction was already a convert to L. Ron Hubbard's psychic band of Scientologists, and prided himself on using his artistic capabilities to elevate his viewers towards the cosmic consciousness.

In his autobiography, Swann recounted a particularly memorable story about his attendance at a Virgo horoscope party that was held in September 1971 and was hosted by fellow Virgo, Zelda Suplee. His good friend, Mullen (a Virgo) was in attendance too, but, as Swann went on to explain, "a lot of people who weren't Virgos" joined the party, "and among there were two who had recently become luminaries, Robert Monroe and Cleve Backster." Monroe had just published his first book which was entitled *Journeys Out of the Body* (Doubleday, 1971), and Swann recalled that "among other more substantive" out-of-body matters, Monroe had "said that sexual desire was very strong in the out-of-body state. In that state he could invisibly reach back into the physical and pinch delicious female asses. Sales of the book immediately went into the stratosphere – bringing to him instant fame."⁹⁵ As Swann continues:

Cleve Backster was also famous, notorious in fact, and had been since about 1968 when he first claimed that plants have primary perceptions which can sense human thoughts and respond to them. This was the same as saying that PLANTS have sentient consciousness, are telepathic, and can process non-physical information. This, of course, absolutely shocked, angered and horrified scientists of all kinds, and Backster was pilloried in the media – much to the enjoyment of hard-core parapsychologists who, back then, had nothing good to say about him.

Swann soon befriended Backster, making regular visits to his laboratory and to his lie-detection school just off Broadway near Times Square. And it was through his connection to Backster that Swann was apparently recruited onto Puthoff's magical remote

⁹⁵ Ingo Swann, *Remote Viewing: The Real Story* (Self-published, Date unknown).

reviewing program at SRI.⁹⁶

Here it is truly synchronous that when Harold Puthoff had first joined SRI in 1971 he was already a high-ranking Scientologist (a Class-III Operational Thetan). It is also significant that before embarking on his more famous remote reviewing projects, Puthoff's first research project at SRI had involved his examination of the so-called Backster Effect.⁹⁷ Puthoff's belief in Scientology is especially relevant as almost a decade prior to Backster having allegedly succeeded in communicating with plants with the exact same polygraph equipment he had formerly used while working for the CIA, Scientology's founding father L. Ron Hubbard had modelled his own crude E-meter devices after lie detectors, and had stated that he had used them to communicate with plants.⁹⁸ But the remote viewing connections to Scientology were more than fleeting, and Swann is reported to have said there were fourteen Scientologist Clears working at SRI during his time there. For example, another key Hubbard-inspired remote reviewer who worked at SRI alongside Swann was Pat Price (who a Class-IV Operational Thetan). Similarly, even Edgar

⁹⁶ The initial remote viewing research began in 1972 at the SRI in Menlo Park, California, and was conducted by Russell Targ and Harold Puthoff. Ingo Swann had been brought to SRI in the summer of 1972 "to assist in those first Backster Effect experiments." Ingo Swann, *Penetration: The Question of Extraterrestrial and Human Telepathy* (Ingo Swann Books, 1998). SRI's links to Scientology are discussed in Hugh Urban's *The Church of Scientology: A History of a New Religion* (Princeton University Press, 2013).

⁹⁷ Funding for this unorthodox research had been derived from the Science Unlimited Research Foundation, a philanthropy which was run by George W. (Bill) Church, Jr. – a San Antonio fried chicken franchiser known as 'the Colonel Sanders of the Southwest'.

⁹⁸ Earlier in his career Cleve Backster had served as the CIA's leading interrogation specialist which he achieved by founding the agency's polygraph program. Like so many paranormal intrigues, contrary to popular mythology, there is no scientific evidence that polygraphs work. "The lie detector," Ken Alder notes, "cannot be killed by science, because it is not born of science." Ken Alder, *The Lie Detectors: The History of an American Obsession* (Free Press, 2007), p.251; also see Geoffrey Bunn, *The Truth Machine: A Social History of the Lie Detector* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012). For details about Hubbard's E-Meter and other quackery, see Russell Miller, *Bare-Faced Messiah: The True Story of L. Ron Hubbard* (Henry Holt and Company, 1987). Backster now claims to have a D.Sc. in Complementary Medicine from Medicina Alternativa (1996).

Mitchell himself had “tinkered” with Scientology, which is fitting as Hubbard’s Palo Alto Church was literally “right across the street” from Mitchell’s Institute of Noetic Sciences.⁹⁹

When Intelligence is Not Enough

Needless to say, the capitalist media has always popularized psychic mumbo jumbo: something it achieves whilst simultaneously undermining progressive socialist movements for change and failing in its duty to educate the public about science.¹⁰⁰ This commitment to misinforming the public helps explain why so many key parts of the corporate media have proven happy to work in alliance with the Central Intelligence Agency to protect the interests of the US ruling-class. As Carl Bernstein famously revealed in his *Rolling Stone* essay (that was published in 1977):

American publishers, like so many other corporate and institutional leaders at the time, were willing to commit the resources of their companies to the struggle against “global Communism.” Accordingly, the traditional line separating the American press corps and government was often indistinguishable: rarely was a news agency used to provide cover for CIA operatives abroad without the knowledge and consent of either its principal owner, publisher or senior editor. Thus, contrary to the notion that the CIA insidiously infiltrated the journalistic community, there is ample evidence that America’s leading publishers and news executives allowed themselves and their organizations to become handmaidens to the intelligence services.¹⁰¹

Likewise, it follows that many of the CIA’s former employees would end up writing for the corporate media promoting all manner of fanciful delusions. Two former special agents in fact famously teamed-up to write one of the classic psychic best-sellers of the period, *The*

⁹⁹ Wilhelm, *The Search for Super-Man*, p.232, p.233. Bizarrely Wilhelm writes: “The real question is: Does Puthoff’s Scientology involvement in any way jeopardize his scientific objectivity?” (p.236)

¹⁰⁰ For context on media manipulations, see Curtis MacDougall, *Superstition and the Press* (Prometheus Books, 1983); Ruth Brandon, *The Spiritualists: The Passion for the Occult in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Knopf, 1983).

¹⁰¹ Carl Bernstein, “The CIA and the media,” *Rolling Stone*, October 20, 1977.

Secret Life of Plants: A Fascinating Account of the Physical, Emotional, and Spiritual Relations Between Plants and Man (Harper & Row, 1973). This was the widely talked about book authored by Peter Tompkins and Christopher Bird that had first introduced Cleve Backster and his floral telepathy to the world.¹⁰² Yet unlike the CIA's more sinister covert efforts to influence media institutions worldwide, the two former intelligence agents actually boasted about their establishment credentials, all the better to gain some form of creditability in the eyes of the media establishment.¹⁰³ However, the

¹⁰² In relation to Soviet affairs, one story of note that is recounted by the occult authors of *The Secret Life of Plants* saw them write: "magic and mystery of the world of plants lying behind these scientific doings have also recently become the subject of a new book entitled *Grass* by a popular writer, Vladimir Soloukhin, which appeared in four issues of the three million circulation magazine *Nauka I Zhizni* (Science and Life) at the end of 1972." This text proved to be an example of the type of deep green mysticism that was commonly found within the nationalist writers who formed part of the village prose movement. In fact, Soloukhin himself was regularly producing literary works that railed against industrialism, celebrated the Russian Orthodox church, and sought a purer organic future for the Soviet Union. An early critic of this new and growing potential outlet for a nationalist movement was the exiled intellectual, Alexander Yanov, who warned of this growing threat in his book *The Russian New Right: Right-wing Ideologies in the Contemporary USSR* (Institute of International Studies, 1978). Also see his more recent contribution, Alexander Yanov, "Hope or menace? An old-time dispute about Russian nationalism," *Institute of Modern Russia*, November 11, 2011.

For background on the history of Russian nationalism, see Simon Anthony Cosgrove, *Nash sovremennik 1981-1991: A case study in the politics of Soviet literature with special reference to Russian nationalism*, Ph.D. Thesis, University of London, 1998; Kathleen Parthe, *The Radiant Past: Russian Village Prose from Ovechkin to Rasputin* (Princeton University Press, 1992); and Sheelagh Duffin Graham (ed.), *New Directions in Soviet Literature: Selected Papers from the Fourth World Congress for Soviet and East European Studies, Harrogate 1990* (Palgrave Macmillan, 1992).

¹⁰³ Peter Tompkins was perhaps the better known of the two authors and already had derived notable success from earlier attacks on conventional history by publishing *Secrets of the Great Pyramid* (Harper & Row, 1971). Thereafter he maintained a life-long commitment to popularizing mumbo jumbo and developed something of an obsession with Edgar Cayce's prophecies about the lost world of Atlantis, which led Tompkins to pen the introduction to the translation of Otto Muck's 1956 book, *Atlantis: Die Welt von die Sintflut* which was published in America in 1978 as *The Secret of Atlantis* (Times Books, 1978).

Christopher Bird would later publish *The Divining Hand: The 500 Year-Old*

full extent of their previous intelligence work was never revealed to the public. All most people knew was that during World War II Peter Tompkins had worked for the U.S. Office of Strategic Services, the forerunner of the CIA; while Christopher Bird had worked for the CIA in Vietnam during the 1950s and then became head of the Washington, DC office of the Rand Corporation, before becoming a foreign correspondent for *Time* magazine. Tompkins' life however would have proved the most interesting of the two to the public – although the corporate media never seemed interested in reminding their readers about his real backstory. This is because, born to a life of privilege, Tompkins had launched his writing career by regaling the public with stories about his war-time exploits in Italy, where, it turns out, the main thrust of his covert activities lay in infiltrating the very socialist movements which were fighting fascism; not in order to fight fascism but so as to enable the allies to be in a better position to undermine the rise of genuine working-class organizations in the wake of the war.¹⁰⁴

It is also appropriate that Tompkins had acted as deputy to the chief of psychological warfare during the British-American invasion of North Africa in November 1942. In this work he played his own part in Operation Torch, which was a covert operation that was headed by Carleton Coon – an individual who went to become a professor of anthropology and infamous author of the racist classic, *The Origin of Races* (1962). Professor Coon likewise shared Tompkins strange

Mystery of Dowsing: The Art of Searching for Water, Oil, Mineral (Dutton, 1979), and until his death in 1996 maintained a life-long commitment to extolling the mystical virtues of biodynamic gardening. In fact, in his later years Bird reunited Tompkins to publish *Secrets of the Soil: New Solutions for Restoring Our Planet* (Harper & Row, 1990). In 1998 *Secrets of the Soil* was republished by Earth Pulse Press, the imprint of the popular right-wing conspiracy theorist Dr. Nick Begich who with no hint of irony remains completely obsessed by the CIA's alleged "mind control" apparatus.

¹⁰⁴ This strategy was in keeping with the covert anti-democratic policy that was pursued more widely by the CIA with the aid of vast resources of the Marshall Plan into the early 1960s. Philip Agee and Louis Wolf (eds.), *Dirty Work: The CIA in Western Europe* (Dorset Press, 1978); for a detailed overview of Tompkins' OSS work, see Richard Harris Smith, *OSS: The Secret History of America's First Central Intelligence Agency* (University of California Press, 1972), pp.85-102.

obsession with paranormal affairs and was “one of the first anthropologists to suggest that the Abominable Snowman existed.”¹⁰⁵

On the important matter of right-wing extremism, in one section of *The Secret Life of Plants* readers are introduced to the apparently magical work of Georges Lakhovsky – a French engineer who, during the 1920s, promoted the false belief that his multi-wave oscillator could cure cancer. Although uncritical of his cancer cure, the authors choose to emphasize how in 1941 Lakhovsky was forced to leave Paris to settle in New York because he “was a prominent anti-Nazi.”¹⁰⁶ But in the same way that they refuse to debunk his cancer cure, what remained unmentioned was that Lakhovsky was no typical opponent of Nazism. This is because in 1934 Lakhovsky had published his own critique of the Nazis as *Le Racisme et l’Orchestre Universel*, which “bases its opposition to German race theories on the strange hypothesis that the quality of the soil affects the type of ionization, which in turn determines the cellular vibrations in the organism, and in that way, the physical characteristics of the various races.”¹⁰⁷

Yet rather than an interest in occult publishing being interpreted as some form of untoward conspiracy on the part of Tompkins, Bird and their former employer the CIA, it seems that the primary force driving forward the paranormal writings of the authors of *The Secret Life of Plants* was most likely paranoia. As one

¹⁰⁵ Joshua Blu Buh, *Bigfoot: The Life and Times of a Legend* (University of Chicago Press, 2009), p.42; Brian Regal, *Searching for Sasquatch: Crackpots, Eggheads, and Cryptozoology* (Palgrave-Macmillan, 2011). For autobiographical information on Tompkins and Coon’s intelligence work, see Peter Tompkins, *A Spy in Rome* (Simon and Schuster, 1962); Carleton Coon, *A North Africa Story: Story of an Anthropologist as OSS Agent* (Gambit Publications, 1980). For an examination of Coon’s contribution to segregationist science, see John P. Jackson Jr., “In ways unacademic: the reception of Carleton S. Coon’s *The Origin of Races*,” *Journal of the History of Biology*, 34, 2001, pp.247-85.

¹⁰⁶ Tompkins and Bird, *The Secret Life of Plants*, p.167.

¹⁰⁷ Otto Klineberg, “Review of Arthur Ruppin, *The Jews in the Modern World*,” Lewis Brown, *How Odd of God*; Georges Lakhovsky, *Le Racisme et l’Orchestre Universel*,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 177, 1935, p.290. The reviewer of Georges Lakhovsky’s book concludes that “It is unfortunate that the author has attacked of the standpoint of the German racial theorists with arguments at least as unscientific as their own.”

commentator accurately observed: when Tompkins “took to writing, the spy’s mentality stayed with him, causing him to suspect that the experts in every field, from ancient history to modern medicine, conspired to conceal from the general public the essential and shocking truths behind their various subjects.”¹⁰⁸ Either way what we do know is that Tompkins and Bird were able to profit handsomely from the deep distrust that ordinary people rightly had in the established powers-that-be. But here we should be clear that their counterfactual writings were merely one part of what was now an ever-snowballing psi-scene.¹⁰⁹

Powerful Contacts

Paranoia has always coursed through the veins of all intelligence agencies, and so with the desire to believe in paranormal phenomena being particularly common amongst the capitalist class it didn’t take long for the CIA to join the developing psi-circus. This first step was taken in June 1973 when Puthoff and Targ – both from the SRI – visited Langley to brief two senior CIA officials about the potential applications of psychic spying. Following this first formal meeting the CIA were evidently sufficiently impressed to investigate this phenomenon further, and in doing so they were building upon research that had been undertaken the previous year (In July 1972) by the Defense Intelligence Agency which had examined parapsychological studies being undertaken in Soviet bloc.¹¹⁰ So,

¹⁰⁸ John Michell, “My old man was a handful,” *The Spectator*, January 10, 1998. This is a review of a biography of Peter Tompkins that was written by his son, Ptolemy Tompkins.

¹⁰⁹ The phenomenal growth of this occult circus was perhaps most evident when Christopher Bird was invited to Czechoslovakia to give a lecture at the First International Conference on Psychotronics in the summer of 1973. Here at this ground-breaking conference hundreds of paranormal-obsessed individuals gave presentations, with three notable individuals being Cleve Backster, Dr Stanley Krippner, and Ingo Swann, who as it happens gave a talk entitled “Scientological techniques: a modern paradigm for the exploration of consciousness and psychic integration.”

¹¹⁰ Jeffrey Richelson, *The Wizards of Langley: Inside the CIA’s Directorate of Science and Technology* (Westview Press, 2001), p.178. “Just as was the case with the MKULTRA experiments, part of the interest was in determining what result the

working in collaboration with the small SRI team, the CIA cautiously started funding research to examine the psychic powers of initially just two subjects, Ingo Swann and Pat Price.

Contrary to misconceptions in the paranormal literature, the CIA's interest in psi-research proved quite short-lived and when Price died of a heart attack in July 1975 the agency decided it was time to terminate their efforts to harness parapsychology for intelligence purposes. That said, other government agencies continued to participate in such futile projects and the CIA itself continued their own paper-based studies of ongoing Soviet efforts to employ psi-powers.¹¹¹ But while the CIA had discontinued their own psi-research by 1976, the same type of work continued to receive support from the Army Intelligence and the Defense Intelligence Agency in the decades to come. And amazingly such military investigations of mind powers, or what Puthoff and Targ referred to as "remote viewing," were only wound down in 1995. By then the government officially determined that the \$20 million that they had spent had resulted in no actionable intelligence information, i.e., it had been a colossal waste of time.

That no legitimate scientific evidence has ever proven that "remote viewing" or any form of psychic powers exists never stopped further investigations into such phenomena, or stopped quacks from making careers out of such non-existence powers.¹¹² And bringing such ideas full-circle, we might consider the mystical life of Dr. Elizabeth Rauscher, who at the tender age of eleven was first introduced to the ideas of Tesla - best-known in conspiratorial circles for his creation of a so-called free-energy machine - an introduction which had inspired her to become a scientist. In later years Rauscher would obtain a Ph.D. in astrophysics before going on to form the International Tesla Society. But most significantly, during her doctorate studies (which she had completed in 1978), she had been employed as a researcher at

Soviets might be achieving in their work and how those results might be used in operations against the CIA and the United States."

¹¹¹ Richelson, *The Wizards of Langley*, p.187.

¹¹² David Marks, *The Psychology of the Psychic* (Prometheus Books, 2000) demonstrates the nonsense of the SRI experiments; while for earlier debunkings of similar phenomena, see C.E.M. Hansel, *ESP: A Scientific Evaluation* (Scribner's, 1966).

the SRI's Radio Physics Laboratory working alongside Puthoff and Targ, and had then cofounded the Fundamental Fysiks Group in 1974 - chairing the explorations of a new research group which played a pioneering role in facilitating the melding of New Age mysticism with physics.¹¹³

In later years Dr. Rauscher and her husband William van Bise, would end up living with Dr. Puharich (albeit briefly) at a North Carolina estate owned by tobacco heir Richard J. Reynolds III (Puharich having resided there since 1980). But when Reynolds passed away in 1994, the extrasensory trio were caught unawares and apparently did not even have the most basic foresight to get written consent from Reynold's to continue to live on his land; thus they were soon forced to move on to less lucrative pastures.¹¹⁴ Unperturbed by this incident, Dr. Rauscher has continued making contributions to parapsychological research, and in 2001 she once again linked-up with Russell Targ to co-author an ambitious article which set-out to explain the theoretical basis for all psychic phenomena. But some things never change, and the happy-go-lucky psi-authors continue to ignore all the evidence debunking paranormal theories, writing:

Now in the twenty-first century, the evidence has become overwhelming that our thoughts and bodies can be directly affected and influenced by the thoughts of another person, or by events and activities at a distant location blocked from ordinary perception.¹¹⁵

Rauscher and Targ even drop so low as to cite Upton Sinclair's book *Mental Radio* as evidence for such success; moreover, they can't help themselves to gloat that Sinclair's book had even included a "favorable

¹¹³ David Kaiser, *How the Hippies Saved Physics: Science, Counterculture, and the Quantum Revival* (MIT Press, 2011).

¹¹⁴ Annon, "Scientists sue for compensation after getting booted from estate", *The Robesonian*, November 7, 1994; "The millionaire and the mad scientists", *The Charlotte Observer*, January 15, 1995. At the time of Reynold's death the three psi-tists had been looking into the ability of electromagnetic fields to alleviate pain and were looking to control irregular heartbeats by examining the effects of electromagnetic fields on brain waves.

¹¹⁵ Elizabeth Rauscher and Russell Targ, "The speed of thought; investigation of a complex space-time metric to describe psychic phenomena," *Journal of Scientific Exploration*, 15(3), 2001, pp.331-54. p.331.

preface by Albert Einstein,” which it did not! More revealing still is the fact that Rauscher and Targ thank Mike Coyle in their article’s acknowledgements section “for his diligence in locating difficult to find references for our research.” This is significant given the previous discussion of CIA conspiracies, because Coyle’s deluded dystopian diatribes against the US government’s allegedly all-powerful mind control experiments are longstanding, and during the 1990s he had served as the editor of the *MindNet Journal*, a conspiratorial magazine which was dedicated to educating the public about the threats posed by mind control.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁶ This now defunct magazine/journal, *MindNet Journal*, was published in cooperation with Walter Bowart’s Freedom of Thought Foundation, with Bowart acting as another intriguing character who had rose to fame as the founder of the New York counterculture magazine *The East Village Other* (which he left in 1968). This inserted Bowart in a special position in the growing LSD scene and his second of four wives, was millionairess Peggy Hitchcock, and he is most famous for his book *Operation Mind Control* (Dell, 1978). With his mind full of the heady nonsense of successful psychics Bowart made a life out of his misplaced paranoia. Yes, the government were capable of great evil, as the revelations about the Counter Intelligence Program or their involvement in overthrowing democratically elected governments clearly reveal, and yes the CIA would have loved to be able to control people’s minds, but on the latter front of omnipotent government power they were sadly disappointed. Not that this failure stopped Bowart and his cohort’s paranoid rantings, which saw at one time during the 1990s Bowart serving alongside Alex Constantine (whose books chart his fixation on the fascism of the CIA’s global mind control operations) as the *MindNet Journal’s* contributing editors. For a thorough debunking of the concept of mind control or brainwashing, see Charles Steuart Young, *Name, Rank, and Serial Number: Exploiting Korean War POWs at Home and Abroad* (Oxford University Press, 2014); and Ryan Mitchell, “China and the political myth of ‘brainwashing’,” *Made in China Journal*, July-September 2019. For a discussion of the actual anti-democratic conspiracies that were engaged in by the CIA on American soil, see Angus Mackenzie, *Secrets: The CIA’s War at Home* (University of California Press, 1997).

On a related note, extremely popular late-night radio host Long John Nebel – who famously popularized all manner of libertarian conspiracy theories from the 1950s through to his death in 1978 – also contributed to the evolution a popular mind control conspiracy in his later years. Thus after getting married to the patriotic fashion model Candy Jones, she revealed to him that she had formerly acted as a secret agent for the FBI, and subsequently the married couple developed a new story in which she had been the unwitting pawn of the CIA’s MKULTRA mind control program. For a useful introduction to Nebel, see Ron Rosenbaum, “Voices in our head: where is good old American weirdness?,” *Observer*, August 15, 2005.

Remote Reviewing Returns

Following on from the CIA's early removal of themselves from psi-research in the mid-seventies, throughout the early 1980s one of the central characters in overseeing the US military's excitable remote reviewing experiments was the late Brigadier General Albert Stubblebine III (1930-2017) - a man who was the commanding general of the United States Army Intelligence and Security Command from 1981 to 1984. Although he retired from active service in 1984, Stubblebine achieved global notoriety after the release of George Clooney's Hollywood blockbuster *The Men Who Stared at Goats* (2009) in which he starred as the General who tried, but ultimately failed, to manifest the ability to walk through walls.¹¹⁷ In addition to promoting 9/11 conspiracy theories, delusional thinking always defined General Stubblebine's life, and so it makes sense that his wife, Dr. Rima Laibow, remains a keen promoter of the health freedom movement's nonsense concerning the allegedly sinister globalist agenda revolving around Codex Alimentarius.¹¹⁸ Such darkly

¹¹⁷ The opening scene of *The Men Who Stared at Goats* recreated General Stubblebine's painful and likely brain-damaging failure to dematerialize. More recently, Stubblebine has busied himself with promoting 9/11 conspiracies which have been further popularized by the most widely cited of 9/11 conspiracy theorists, the postmodern theologian David Ray Griffin. Griffith is less well-known for his contributions to the field of parapsychology, work in which he has received financial aid from Laurance Rockefeller. For details of the funding connection, see David Ray Griffin, *Parapsychology, Philosophy, and Spirituality: A Postmodern Exploration* (SUNY Press, 1997), p.ix.

¹¹⁸ Codex Alimentarius is a collection of internationally recognized standards, codes of practice, guidelines and other recommendations relating to foods, food production and food safety.

In 2004, Dr. Laibow and General Stubblebine formed the Natural Solution Foundation, which was ostensibly "devoted to protecting and promoting health freedom for all Americans"; and worked with the Australian based Ayurvedic supplement company, Cybele, to market their NaturWell holistic programme in the United States. During his lifetime, other than the General and his wife, the only other trustee of Natural Solution Foundation was Ralph Fucetola, a homeopathic lawyer who had spent over four decades fighting the corner for the vitamin supplement industry. In 1979, Fucetola (whose web site is called *Vitamin Lawyer*) received a citation of merit from the National Health Federation for his exceptional services to the health freedom movement. The trio all also worked together managing the Foundation for Magnetic Science, which promotes the age-old quackery of the healing properties of magnetics. Their board of trustees also includes anti-fluoridation warrior

paranoid views echo those of the president of the decidedly right-wing National Health Federation, whose president, Scott Tips, edited the movement's now keystone text *Codex Alimentarius - Global Food Imperialism* (2007). For the record, Tips' forerunner at the head of the National Health Federation was the late Maureen Salaman, whose longstanding activism with the John Birch Society was rounded off when she helped found the Populist Party with Holocaust denier Willis Carto and then stood as their vice-presidential candidate for the 1984 elections.¹¹⁹

In 1990, General Stubblebine became chairman of the civilian remote viewing company Psi Tech, which had been set up the year before by Major Ed Dames. Major Dames being one of the four initial US Army Officers to be trained in psychic travel by Ingo Swann in the 1980s.¹²⁰ One other trainee of the Armies fledgling program, whose work will be discussed later, was Captain Paul Smith, who went on to work as a consultant for Psi Tech, as did many other former and current remote viewers from the government's psi scheme. With this work now in the private sector the dubious wonders of remote viewing were now on the free market for those who can afford to waste money. Thus, one of Psi Tech's early missions involved locating Iraq's hidden biological warfare stockpiles for the United Nations. Such lucrative and pointless contracts, which included investigating the crop circle phenomena, proved too much to resist for those seeking to cash in on their so-called magical powers, and in 1992 Swann was finally persuaded to join the company as a consultant, while Colonel John Alexander also joined Psi Tech's board room around this time.

A long-time friend of Cecil B. Scott Jones (introduced later) and

Dr. Thomas Levy, and John McGinnis, a former president of the International Tesla Society and former host of the globally distributed radio show the "Extraordinary Science Radio Hour."

¹¹⁹ Maureen Salaman was the National Health Federation's president for most of the time between 1982 and 2006. Frank Mintz, *The Liberty Lobby and the American Right: Race, Conspiracy, and Culture* (Greenwood Press, 1985). In the following presidential election, the Populist Party's presidential candidate was white supremacist David Duke, a former Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan.

¹²⁰ Swann had initially trained four US Army officers and one female civilian: CPT. Tom McNear, CPT. Edward Dames, CPT. Paul Smith, CPT. Bill Ray, and Charlene Cavanaugh.

companion of the paranormal world more generally, Psi-Tech's latest board member Colonel Alexander had remained active in the military despite officially retiring in 1998, and in 2003 he served as a mentor to senior officials in the Afghan Ministry of Defense. Like Stubblebine, Alexander has played a critical role in integrating New Age holistic therapies into the war machine. Having served as a Green Beret during the Vietnam War, Alexander had entered the Command General Staff College where he wrote an article which was published in the college's journal, *Military Review*, which examined the potential use of remote viewing and psychokinesis in military operations. The piece entitled "The new mental battlefield" – complete with pictures taken courtesy of Kirlian photography -- ran as the cover story of the December 1980 issue of the journal.¹²¹ In his article Alexander warned, "there are [psychotronic] weapon systems that operate on the power of the mind and whose lethal capacity has already been demonstrated." This was heady stuff. "Certainly, with development," he wrote, "these weapons would be able to induce illness or death at little or no risk to the operator." Moreover, he added: "The psychotronic weapon would be silent, difficult to detect and would require only a human operator as a power source." But if that wasn't enough, he speculated that: "The use of telepathic hypnosis also holds great potential."¹²²

At this stage Alexander was simultaneously working in Task Force Delta – a 'blue sky' think-tank that specialized in investigating the military relevance of subjects that had hitherto been considered outside the domain of normal warfare. The point being to determine how the military machine might be revamped to better deal with future combat situations. Out of this Task Force's earlier work had previously arisen Lieutenant Colonel Jim Channon's *First Earth Battalion* – "a notional unit" that Alexander says promoted "concepts easily three decades ahead of their time."¹²³ These concepts were derived from

¹²¹ In the same issue "the editor of the magazine had previously had a near-death experience in which he found himself out of his body." John Alexander, *UFOs: Myths, Conspiracies, and Realities* (St. Martin's Press, 2011), p.8.

¹²² John Alexander, "The new mental battlefield: 'beam me up, Spock,'" *Military Review*, December 1980, p.47, p.55.

¹²³ Alexander, *UFOs*, p.9. Jeff Bridges played a character based upon Colonel Jim

Channon's deep forays into the mystical realm of the counterculture and were then retooled to ostensibly help create a battalion of warriors able to help the US government spread 'peace' and 'goodwill' across the planet. General Stubblebine was counted among the keen supporters of Task Force Delta, and he subsequently guided and enabled Alexander to pursue his own interests in the paranormal under the remit of the US Army Intelligence and Security Command, whether that be his interests in UFO phenomena, psychokinesis or orgone weather modification.¹²⁴

Psychotronic Warfare

Despite his firm belief in UFOS – but apparent skepticism of unsubstantiated claims (?!) – Alexander's military career only went from strength-to-strength as his psi-interests evolved and he soon positioned himself as a leading expert on the military application of

Channon in the 2009 movie, *The Men Who Stare at Goats*. In 1979 Channon published the *First Earth Battalion Manual*, and it is notable that among those individuals who received a "special thanks" in the manual acknowledgements was the New Thought guru Barbara Marx Hubbard (discussed later).

¹²⁴ The full extent of Colonel Alexander's mystical experiments was outlined in his book *The Warrior's Edge* (William Morrow & Co., 1990) which he co-authored with Janet Morris.

With regard to weather modification, it is important to highlight that: "In March 1971, nationally syndicated columnist Jack Anderson broke the story about Air Force rainmakers in Southeast Asia in *The Washington Post*, a story confirmed several months later with the leaking of the Pentagon Papers and splashed on the front page of *The New York Times* in 1972 by Seymour Hersh. By 1973, despite stonewalling by Nixon administration officials, the U.S. Senate had adopted a resolution calling for an international treaty 'prohibiting the use of any environmental or geophysical modification activity as a weapon of war.' The following year, Senator Claiborne Pell (D-R.I.), referring to the field as a 'Pandora's box,' published the transcript of a formerly top-secret briefing by the Defense Department on the topic of weather warfare. Eventually, it was revealed that the CIA had tried rainmaking in South Vietnam as early as 1963 in an attempt to break up the protests of Buddhist monks, and that cloud seeding had been probably used in Cuba to disrupt the sugarcane harvest. Similar technology had been employed, yet proved ineffective, in drought relief efforts in India and Pakistan, the Philippines, Panama, Portugal, and Okinawa. All of the programs were conducted under military sponsorship and had the direct involvement of the White House." James R. Fleming, "The climate engineers," *The Wilson Quarterly*, Spring 2007.

non-lethal weapons in warfare.¹²⁵ But even though his chilling and largely conventional book on this subject, *Future War: Non-lethal Weapons in the Twenty-First-Century Warfare* (St. Martin's Press, 1999), was received with much admiration within academic circles, he still managed to squeeze in some of his bizarre beliefs. Thus, in the conclusion to his discussion of conventional electromagnetic (EM) hardware, he writes, "it is possible that a unique EM weapon that can prevent guns from firing may already have been discovered." Here he relates a story told by one of his friends that just such a weapon may have been created in the 1970s by a "garage inventor" called Sid Hurwich. The reason he then gives for arguing that this fictional weapon should not be "relegated to folklore" was because "news sources" apparently confirmed that it was successfully used during the 3 July 1976 Israeli rescue operation at Entebbe, Uganda.¹²⁶ Alexander adds:

We cannot be certain that it was Hurwich's device that allowed the

¹²⁵ After helping to usher the New Age into the military, in 1984 John Alexander bolstered his credentials outside the Army when he became the president of the International Association for Near-Death Studies (which had been formerly incorporated in 1981). During the late 1970s Alexander had worked on a doctoral thesis on this subject under the supervision of the world-famous Dr. Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, author of the 1969 book *On Death and Dying*. Prior to taking up these studies, Alexander had indulged his mystical interests that he had developed during the Vietnam War by exploring the so-called remnants of Atlantis (the Bimini wall), becoming a state representative for the Silva Mind Control movement, and researching telepathy in dolphins (also called interspecies communication). It is perhaps interesting to note that while Alexander was conducting his near-death doctoral research with his esteemed supervisor, Dr. Kübler-Ross herself was entwined in the necrophilic sexual scandal whose sordid story broke in 1980, the same year that Alexander was awarded his Ph.D. It seems that at her Shanti Nilaya retreat in Escondido, California, she had invited a medium to channel the dead so that he could have sex with grieving widows. Ron Rosenbaum, "Dead like her: how Elisabeth Kübler-Ross went around the bend," *Slate*, September 23, 2004. One of the founding members of the International Association for Near-Death Studies was Dr. Raymond Moody, who served as an Adjunct Faculty member of Wisdom University (now Ubiquity University) - a university whose significance is discussed later. (In 1978 Dr. Kübler-Ross had been a founding member of the American Holistic Medical Association, whose founding president was Dr. Norm Shealey.)

¹²⁶ Alexander, *Future Warfare*, p.68. The only news story Alexander cites is David Jones, "Israel's secret weapon?," *Weekend magazine*, Toronto, 17 December 1977.

success of the raid. However, we do know that shortly following the incident, at Toronto's Beth Tzedec synagogue, Sid Hurwich was presented with the prestigious Protectors of the State of Israel award for his contributions to the raid.

This is clearly ridiculous conjecture, but one could imagine that Alexander must have shown some restraint in his retelling of this story, as he would have been aware of the role that his friend Uri Geller had claimed to have also played in the same mission's success. This is because he leaves his readers guessing about the identity of the person responsible for another thing that "amazed all observers" of the heroic rescue mission, that is that "the Israeli airplanes had flown the entire distance without being detected..." He doesn't mention Geller's involvement, but this is something that Geller regularly claims credit for. As Geller loves to boast about the time that he used his spoon-bending brain power to interfere with all the African radar tracking systems that might have otherwise spotted the planes!¹²⁷

Later, however, in *Future War's* discussion of acoustic weapons, Alexander does spin another Geller-like story which he states provides verification for ancient Tibetan stories about the levitation of heavy objects. On this documented magic he writes: "A famed Swedish aircraft designer, Henry Kjeillson, observed and recorded heavy stones, each about 1.5-meter cube, being lifted to a position 400 meters above them by monks using musical instruments." Although Alexander considers this story likely true, he then suggests that although "poorly documented, stories have suggested that a similar procedure may have been used to move stones at the pyramids in Egypt."¹²⁸

Finally, considering Alexander's own far-out beliefs in the

¹²⁷ Uri Geller kindly wrote the foreword for Alexander's most recent book, *Reality Denied: Firsthand Experiences with Things that Can't Happen - But Did* (Anomalist Books, 2017). For more on Geller's antics, see Michael Barker, "Spoon-bending: in the service of the CIA," *Thoughts of a Leicester Socialist*, July 22, 2013.

¹²⁸ Alexander, *Future Warfare*, p.101. No references are provided for these examples, and his reference for the Tibetan examples is simply, Henry Kjellson, *Forsvunden Teknik*, Copenhagen, Nihil, 1974. After making these points Alexander concludes "On a more scientific note, recent advances in ultrasounds have been used to levitate lightweight items close to the source."

power of remote viewing, and his early article about the unrecognized power of psychotronic weapons, it is ironic that he rails against conspiracy theories. Indeed, he says “Paranoia is running rampant in the United States” with many conspiracy theorists believing that the government may be using such non-lethal psychotronic weapons for the purpose of mind control “to enslave them for some unstated nefarious purpose.”¹²⁹ But is it really any wonder that Alexander, the man who has worked in the upper echelons of the intelligence community, and who is connected with the infamous Cold Warrior, General Jack Singlaub,¹³⁰ continues to be the focus of many conspiracy theorists’ nonsensical rantings. Either way, laughably Alexander then turns his anger against certified UFO skeptics, observing: “Nor is it likely that any amount of evidence would persuade them to change their minds.” Indeed, Alexander begins the prologue of his own UFO book by stating: “UFO are real! With no prevarication or qualifications of terms, there are physical objects of unknown origins that do transit our universe.” This statement having been preceded by a succinct quote from Albert Einstein: “Imagination is more important than knowledge.”¹³¹

Of UFO Research Wars and Intergalactic Travel

Alexander's own personal mission to reveal the truth about UFOs was given a useful leg-up by the activities of real estate mogul, Robert Bigelow, who in 1995 established the National Institute for Discovery Science (NIDS) in Las Vegas, Nevada. This group was formed because Bigelow had become frustrated that he did not have enough control over the political orientation of the Fund for UFO Research.¹³²

¹²⁹ Alexander, *Future Warfare*, p.184.

¹³⁰ Colonel Alexander writes that “After returning from Vietnam, I had worked for Jack Singlaub...” Alexander, *Future Warfare*, p.150. During the Korean War General Singlaub was the deputy CIA chief in South Korea. When he retired from the military, General Singlaub then went on to launch the US chapter of the World Anti-Communist League (discussed later) and in 1979 helped found the Western Goals Foundation.

¹³¹ Alexander, *UFOs*, p.224, p.1

¹³² In the early 1990s the Fund for UFO was primarily financed by Las Vegas builder Robert Bigelow, but in 1994 Bigelow pulled the rug from underneath the Fund when he felt he couldn't exert enough personal control over their trajectory; it

And the new Institute that Bigelow set-up in his effort to supplant the work of the Fund for UFO Research now focused on investigating both UFO phenomena and the continuation of consciousness beyond physical death. Alexander was thus quickly recruited to serve on NIDS scientific advisory board alongside the likes of Dr. Harrison “Jack” Schmidt and Dr. Edgar Mitchell.¹³³ While another notable adviser included Harold Puthoff, who served as the chairman of the board. But high-profile believers rarely equate with high-quality research, and...

The best-known and most controversial project undertaken by NIDS was its purchase of a supposedly “haunted” ranch in Utah (reported in this column back in May/June 1998), which some describe as a “Hyperdimensional Portal Area” or “Stargate.” The ranch is said to be infested by an alien or paranormal shape-shifting creature known as “Skinwalker,” taking its name from Native American legends similar to European legends about werewolves. NIDS researchers investigated the ranch starting in 1996. They compiled an impressive collection of what might be termed “ghost stories” but, in spite of having access to sophisticated electronic equipment, failed to obtain any actual proof that anything unexplainable was going on.¹³⁴

During Alexander's engagement with NIDS research, he also played a key role in setting up the International Remote Viewing Association

was at this stage that Laurance Rockefeller stepped up to the mark, acting through his intermediary Marie Gailbraith. (Marie was the wife of the influential Morgan Stanley banker, Evan Gailbraith, who had been the former chairman of William F. Buckley's conservative magazine *National Review*.)

In recent decades, a prominent political supporter of Robert Bigelow's UFO obsession was the Mormon Democratic politician Harry Reid who served as a Senator from Nevada from 1987 to 2017. Reid recalls how he first came into Bigelow's orbit in 1996 through his friend, the UFO-obsessed mainstream journalist George Knapp. Harry Reid, “What we believe about U.F.O.s,” *New York Times*, May 21, 2021; David Wallace-Wells *et al.*, “Reasons to believe: how seriously should you take those recent reports of UFOs? Ask the Pentagon. Or read this primer for the SETI-curious,” *New York* magazine, March 19, 2018.

¹³³ Alexander, *UFOs*, p.138.

¹³⁴ Robert Sheaffer, “Bigelow's aerospace and saucer emporium,” *Skeptical Inquirer* 33(4), July/August 2009. Puthoff currently serves as an advisor to the newly launched Bigelow Institute for Consciousness Studies.

with the aid of Harold Puthoff, Paul H. Smith, Captain F. Holmes Atwater,¹³⁵ Angela Thompson Smith (the former research coordinator for Robert Bigelow's philanthropic foundation), and the short-lived paranormal skeptic, Dr. Marcello Truzzi.¹³⁶ Old-timer Russell Targ served as the Association's founding president, and he remains a loyal adviser to the group. A more recent addition to the International Remote Viewing Association's operations is the psi detective and former star of the Discovery Channel's popular television series, *Sensing Murder*, Pam Coronado, who between 2013 and 2015 served as the president of the Association. The other self-proclaimed medium featuring in Coronado's popular television show was Lauri Campbell; whose inability to demonstrate any psychic powers at all in ill-conceived experiments that were run by Dr. Gary Schwartz, and misreported in his 2003 book *The Afterlife Experiments: Breakthrough Scientific Evidence of Life After Death*, didn't stop Schwartz from grasping at straws to assert his having found "evidence" of magic powers (hence the book's title).¹³⁷ But step back from Schwartz's breathless mis-conclusions for a moment, and just imagine how different the world would really be if it really were true that psychic detectives existed.

That said, personally I would rather not imagine the dire consequences if such an uber-Orwellian scenario would ever eventuate. But thankfully this will not happen as there is no such thing as magic, only the illusion of magic. However, for many others, particularly libertarian conspiracy theorists, it seems that they already believe that such a totalitarian moment is upon us. For example, recall

¹³⁵ The cofounder and former president of the International Remote Viewing Association is F. Holmes Atwater is the author of *Captain of My Ship, Master of My Soul: Living with Guidance*. "In this book, he... looks at the 'coincidences' that led him from childhood out-of-body explorations to army counter-intelligence operations to sessions with consciousness pioneer Robert A. Monroe."

¹³⁶ Born into a family of circus performers, and trained as a magician, Dr. Truzzi had been a founding co-chair of the Committee for Skeptical Inquiry (in 1976) but was forced out after a year because of his interest in bringing pro-paranormal people into the organization. In later years he went on to help found the Society for Scientific Exploration, and brought his twisted sense of balance to play in books on both psychic detectives and UFOs.

¹³⁷ Ray Hyman, "How not to test mediums: critiquing the afterlife experiments", *Skeptical Inquirer*, 27(1), January/February 2003.

Walter Bowart's influential book *Operation Mind Control* (Dell, 1978), which laid the foundational groundwork for deluded copy-cat rants. Unfortunately, such conspiracists are happy to accept the word of remote viewers as face value, which leads them to the 'logical' conclusion that the US government has been using occult powers against their own citizens for years. After-all, the conspiracists say, the government has proven its anti-democratic nature too many times before, so we should be very fearful about them having access to such a sophisticated array of mind-melting psychotronic weapons.

Of course, the ruling-class is manipulative, but paranoia only serves to cloud the public's understanding of the roots of their own exploitation. We are after all talking about a motley crew of conspiracists who believe that they regularly travel to distant planets from the comfort of their own homes. Take for example the much-decorated retired Army officer, Joe McMoneagle, who formerly worked at SRI, and is now the head of Intuitive Intelligence Applications, in Nellysford, Virginia – where he sells remote viewing services to the public. McMoneagle is the author of *Mind Trek: Exploring Consciousness, Time, and Space Through Remote Viewing* (Hampton Roads, 1993), which amongst other things documents his time spent on Mars.¹³⁸ Or take the story of Dr. Courtney Brown, a political scientist whose own remote experiences, as reported in his book, *Cosmic Voyages: A Scientific Discovery of Extraterrestrials Visiting Earth* (Dutton, 1996), “corroborates many of McMoneagle's observations regarding this ancient Martian civilization.” Some might prefer to call this confirmation by its more likely name... not intergalactic travel, but plagiarism. But maybe this is being too harsh,

¹³⁸ Joe McMoneagle married Bob Monroe's daughter and lives and teaches at the Monroe Institute. In his next book *The Ultimate Time Machine* (Hampton Roads, 1998) McMoneagle predicts: “By the year 2030, there will be three major parties – the Democrats, the Republicans, and the American Freedom Party.” (p.230) McMoneagle also projects his own conservative Malthusian concerns into the future noting: “Within this book are some very scary issues, such as runaway growth in world population.” He however says his readers need not worry too much because although he says he has seen that there are “eight billion fewer people in the year 3000” this does not “guarantee a devastating plague of mythic proportions. The answer might be found in the discovery of a new form of transportation that will allow us to resettle on Earth-type worlds hundreds of light years away.” (pp.14-5)

as it seems that Dr. Brown's familiar-sounding knowledge of Mars was most likely picked up from his Martian-loving psychic trainer, Ed Dames.¹³⁹

Here, you might well ask how does a member of the public become a proficient remote viewer? Well, Dr. Brown traces his first explorations into human consciousness to his learning an “advanced version” of Transcendental Meditation called the Sidhis, which he evidently mastered after only a couple of years practice while holding down a full-time job at university. He recalls that he chose to begin with this casual form of training in 1991 because he had been intrigued by the so-called Maharishi Effect; although from his own documentation it seems more likely that his interest in yogic flying stemmed from the fact that his wife was a Sidhia and a teacher of Transcendental Meditation. Dr. Brown notes that the second “stage of training” for extraterrestrial travel consisted of a week-long course called the Gateway Voyage Program which took place at the Monroe Institute in Faber, Virginia, where much to his surprise, he first met his alien friends. However, it was only after he had completed the final stage of his training under the guidance of Ed Dames that he became the proficient remote viewer that he is today. And so it was, in September 1993, that Dr. Brown, while sitting in Psi Tech’s offices in Beverly Hills, California, made his first controlled visit to Mars.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁹ Brown, *Cosmic Voyages*, p.14. Dr. Brown was just one of the few lucky individuals invited to study under Ed Dames on what was Psi Tech’s first ever one-week long training program undertaken in 1993.

¹⁴⁰ Brown, *Cosmic Voyages*, p.37, p.38, p.47, p.37. Robert Baker, “A skeptic’s notebook: scientific remote viewing,” *Skeptical Inquirer*, 6(2), June 1996. Even a hardened skeptic like Martin Gardner was shocked by the extremity of Dr. Brown’s intergalactic revelations, and suggested that the only book on UFOs “nuttier than” *Cosmic Voyages* was George Adamski’s *Inside the Space Ships* (1955). Martin Gardner, *Did Adam and Eve have Navels? Debunking Pseudoscience* (W.W. Norton & Company, 2001), p.190. But while Dr. Brown had only arrived at his own cosmic enlightenment just prior to setting out on his daring space mission, Adamski, when he wrote his book, had already maintained a long interest in the occult having founded the theosophically orientated Royal Order of Tibet in 1936; moreover, as critics have demonstrated, the “fundamental thesis” of Adamski’s earlier book *Flying Saucers Have Landed* (1953), was “little more than a modified version of popular theosophical teachings that stress spiritual evolution and the role of masters/aliens in that process.” Andy Roberts and Dave Clarke, *Flying Saucers: A Social History of*

Tuning in to Apocalyptic Nightmares

Ed Dames has now moved on to fresh libertarian pastures and still maintains an income living off the fearmongering he generated when he produced a unique DVD titled *Killshot: Approaching the Moment* (2011) – a DVD which describes the apocalyptic future as foretold by remote viewing. This film is very much in keeping with Dames' previous (“I promise they are 100% correct”) failed predictions of immanent catastrophe, and as the advertising blurb packaging for his film puts it, the DVD bravely “reveals what top-secret military Remote Viewers have known for years... how the world will end!” To cut a long story short, to save yourself from the solar flares that will destroy most of life as we know it Dames predicts that learning remote viewing will be vital for your survival. Dames warns in the DVD's trailer, that “Knowing where to go with your last tank of gas, is so important...”¹⁴¹

Like many of his evangelical remote viewing friends, Dames hawks his wares and ominous predictions on late night libertarian radio shows, which are well-known breeding grounds for all manner

UFology (Alternative Albion, 2007), p.90. Religious themes were also of concern to Dr. Brown. Therefore, on the second occasion that he remotely invaded Jesus' personal space, he thought he should ask whether humans should view Martians with compassion; to which Jesus said yes. “At this point,” Dr. Brown recalls, “I thanked Jesus and ended the session.” (*Cosmic Voyages*, p.127) Then a couple of years later, safe in the knowledge that Christian's should show compassion for their alien brethren, he set up his own remote viewing company called the Farsight Institute. Although it is anyone's guess what Jesus would have said about Dr. Brown's latest project, which resulted in the production of a DVD titled *Atlantis: The True Story* (2013).

¹⁴¹ For those he has scared to death, the doomsday DVD was initially, at least, being distributed for free, although in more recent years he charges \$69.95. And if you do buy into his crackpot ideas and feel like you would like to learn how to apply remote viewing to improve your life you must purchase his four training DVD's which retail at \$199.95. Preying on people's economic helplessness, Dames assures his targets – in an online “letter” addressed to the “financially worried” – how: “With this ONE secret, you can immediately... become financially secure *without* needing to clock in a day's work,” so you can “protect yourself and your loved ones from the struggling economy, global recession, and job losses.” Just buy his DVD's, and tell your friends! Of course, what he doesn't explain is why the DVD's are so expensive if had already made his fortune by mastering the wealth-making lessons from his own tutorials. Ed Dames' Predictions: <http://www.eddamespredictions.com/products>

of noxious conspiracy theories.¹⁴² One such radio DJ who had always maintained a soft spot for Dames was the late Art Bell (1945-2018).¹⁴³ Here it is noteworthy that Bell's radio career got off the ground in 1992 with the financial backing of the real estate magnate Robert Bigelow, with Bell's original paranormal show "Area 2000" eventually morphing into the hugely popular Coast to Coast AM. Regular contributors to this dirge of fantasy include George Knapp (a close associate of Bigelow's extraterrestrial ventures via his work at Bigelow's National Institute for Discovery Science) and Linda Moulton Howe (who first brought the issue of alien cattle mutilations to the public eye in 1980 with her film *A Strange Harvest* - a phenomena that was also documented at Bigelow's ghost-busting hangout, the Skinwalker Ranch).¹⁴⁴ In 1999 Bell even managed to team up with former Gurdjieff devotee Whitley Strieber to coauthor the millennialist book *The Coming Global Superstorm* (Atria Books, 1999). Strieber having risen to fame in the late 1980s with his first book *Communion* (Avon Books, 1987), which provided a boon to alien abduction researchers when it ended up reaching number one on the *New York Times* best seller list.

When Art Bell finally went into semi-retirement in 2003, he handed over his insanely popular paranormal-themed radio show,

¹⁴² Robert Hilliard and Michael Keith, *Waves of Rancor: Tuning in the Radical Right* (Sharpe, 1999).

¹⁴³ Although Art Bell retired from hosting radio talk shows in 2015, one of his last productions (called "Art Bell's Dark Matter") was broadcast on SiriusXM satellite radio. This radio station provides an intriguing connection to the rightwing dominated integrative health movement, as SiriusXM board member, Eddy Hartenstein, was not only the publisher of Los Angeles Times Media Group, but since 2008 had been a board member of Dr. Henry Samuelli's Broadcom Corporation. Dr. Samuelli is a major sponsor of integrative medicine, that perennial topic of nonsense-mongering for libertarian chat show hosts, whose airwaves are of course saturated with adverts for all manner of supplements and other assorted snake-oil products.

¹⁴⁴ Funding details are outlined in Paul Smith, *Reading the Enemy's Mind: Inside Star Gate: America's Psychic Espionage Program* (Forge Books, 2005); also see Linda Moulton Howe, *An Alien Harvest: Further Evidence Linking Animal Mutilations and Human Abductions to Alien Life Forms* (Linda Moulton Howe, 1989) - foreword by Jacques Vallee; Colin Kelleher and George Knapp, *Hunt for the Skinwalker: Science Confronts the Unexplained at a Remote Ranch in Utah* (Paraview Pocket Books, 2006).

Coast to Coast AM, to George Noory – a show which at its peak claimed 15 million listeners nightly. Bell's protégée, George Noory, can now also be found via online streaming services as since December 2012 he has hosted *Beyond Belief*, an inane show that explores the mysteries of the world. This showcase of paranoia is produced by leading lifestyle media company, Gaia TV (formerly Gaiam TV) – a company that states they are committed to “streaming titles that challenge modern paradigms and allow you to manifest the reality that defines your being.”¹⁴⁵ A rare article investigating Gaia and the dangerous fare they serve up to their viewers, provides a more accurate summary of their streaming services:

Instead of the Hollywood fare offered by the big players, Gaia's catalog is a kaleidoscopic array of wild claims, conspiracy theories, and new-age mysticism loosely classified as "conscious media." Claims of a "shadow government" secretly behind the 9/11 terrorist attacks jostle with yoga instructional videos; the forbidden truths about President Dwight D. Eisenhower's secret summits with aliens in Palm Springs are presented alongside meditation techniques. The video content blends together into a hallucinatory slurry of time-traveling psychic CIA spies, purported dangers of vaccines, Bigfoot sightings, alchemists' secrets for transmuting gold, and the founder of JPMorgan's clandestine plot to sink the Titanic.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁵ Who we are: <https://www.gaia.com/lp/about?render=pg-ab-v1>

¹⁴⁶ Rob Price, “Gaia was a wildly popular yoga brand. Now it's a publicly traded Netflix rival pushing conspiracy theories while employees fear the CEO is invading their dreams,” *Business Insider*, February 14, 2021. Gaia TV was founded by Jirka Rysavy in Boulder, Colorado in 1988. Rysavy was a health foods entrepreneur who had created Crystal Market which he eventually sold in 1987 so it could become the first Wild Oats Markets store – a chain who's key power-broker would turn out to be the ubiquitous Anthroposophist Mark Retzliff. Early board members of Gaia included Retzliff's long-standing organic colleague, Barney Feinblum, and polling specialist Paul H. Ray, who is the author of the influential study that was sponsored by the Institute of Noetic Sciences and the Fetzer Institute, *The Integral Culture Survey: A Study of the Emergence of Transformational Values in America* (1996). Indeed, it is hardly surprising that it was Gaia who actually coined the acronym LOHAS, which stands for Lifestyles of Health and Sustainability, and thus Gaia play a central role in profiting from the \$500-billion LOHAS market that they helped bring into existence. Mr Ray was formerly the chair of “Emerging Wisdom Culture” at Wisdom University (and is now an advisor to its successor organization the Ubiquity

As far out as Gaia TV's New Age drivel is concerned, it is not that different in content from mainstream media narratives that continue to advance so many irrational conspiracy theorists. Nevertheless, Gaia can certainly boast of doing its part in contributing to the ongoing war on rational thinking. For example, another long running and popular Gaia show that popularized all manner of occult garbage was *Wisdom Teachings*, which was a weekly show hosted by right-wing mystic David Wilcock, a man who has claimed to be the reincarnation of Edgar

University), and a member of the Club of Budapest (both groups are discussed later). Current board members of Gaia include Paul Sutherland (author of *Zenvesting: The Art of Abundance & Managing Money*), Kristin Frank (the former chief operating officer of MTV), and Keyur Patel (the former chief strategy officer of KPMG Consulting Worldwide). Now as the latest part of their expansionist empire promoting alternative realities, Gaia acquired Food Matters TV, a media outlet that was launched following the successes of his health food conspiracy documentaries *Food Matters* (2008) and *Hungry for Change* (2012); the latter being a documentary that features leading health food talking heads of a right-wing persuasion like Mike Adams and Joseph Mercola (see Kelly Weill, "The new *Infowars* is a vitamin site predicting the apocalypse," *The Daily Beast*, August 6, 2019; and Anna Merlan's 2019 book *Republic of Lies: American Conspiracy Theorists and Their Surprising Rise to Power*.)

The overlap between the wellness industry and far-right health conspiracies goes back decades; and for an article that discusses this problem in relation to David Icke's conspiracy mongering, see Matthew Kalman and John Murray, "From green messiah to new age nazi," *Left Green Perspectives*, 1996. This troubling history however eludes the corporate media, who in an otherwise useful article argue that this damaging trend is just a recent one, see Sophie Aubrey, "Playing with fire': The curious marriage of QAnon and wellness," *Sydney Morning Herald*, September 27, 2020. Thus, in recent years the newly coined term "conspirituality" has gained in popularity with the mainstream media as an attempt to understand the cojoining of conspiracy theorists and New Age spirituality. Yet contrary to the surprise expressed by the initial academic proponents of conspirituality (Charlotte Ward and David Voas), whose work focused on the rise of conspirituality through the likes of charismatic gurus like David Icke, conservative conspiracies have always flowed through occult and New Age circles. This point is well made in Egil Asprem and Asbjørn Dyrendal's 2015 article "Conspirituality reconsidered: how surprising and how new is the confluence of spirituality and conspiracy theory?" To take just one example, the responding authors explain: "Transnational occult networks have also been important for the dissemination of central conspiratorial motifs across Europe. The basic text of what was later to become the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* appears to have been brought from France to Russia by Yuliana Glinka, who, besides being an unsuccessful agent of the Russian secret police, was also a Theosophist with connections to Blavatsky's circle." (p.376)

Cayce no less.¹⁴⁷ In all Wilcock starred in 263 episodes between 2013 and 2018 before parting company with Gaia – in an acrimonious split which is a bizarre story in itself. But Wilcock continues to preach his deep state conspiracies, his belief in QAnon -- a conspiracy that would

¹⁴⁷ David Wilcock and Wynn Free, *The Reincarnation of Edgar Cayce*? (2004). Wilcock features in other very popular TV shows and his online biography notes that he “is a consulting producer for and appears regularly on the History Channel’s hit show *Ancient Aliens*, and has been in over 600 television episodes in total.” In his 2020 book *Awakening in the Dream: Contact with the Divine* -- which was published by Dutton (which is an imprint of Penguin) – Wilcock observes how in 1996 he had learnt how to practice remote viewing “from reading Dr. Courtney Brown’s book *Cosmic Voyage*”. It also seems that the key New Age text that inspires Wilcock’s spiritual beliefs is a theosophically inspired channelled book titled *The Ra Contact: Teaching the Law of One*, whose key author was UFO fanatic Don Elkins. Given this bizarre content it is fitting that in Elkin’s previous book, *Secrets of the UFO*, the author remains particularly focused on the otherworldly channelling that was previously undertaken by George Hunt Williamson and George Van Tassel, both being alien seekers who had far-right politics. And like many others on the far-right, Wilcock himself remains enthralled by conspiracies about the Illuminati controlled Federal Reserve, and on making this point Wilcock refers his readers to G. Edward Griffin’s Bircher propaganda, *The Creature from Jekyll Island*, which he says the “one classic reference work for this discussion”. Wilcock later writes that the William T. Still’s *New World Order: The Ancient Plan of Secret Societies* (Huntington House, 1990) which is another far-right classic had a “tremendous effect” on his knowledge about the Illuminati.

On other matters Wilcock asserts that AIDS was artificially created by the Illuminati; and the evidence he marshals to support this nonsense was a section from the 2019 documentary *Cold Case Hammar skjöld* which, as Wilcock puts it, “featured Alexander Jones, an insider who testified to his personal involvement in spreading AIDS.” The irony here is that neither the documentary nor Jones ever suggested that AIDS had been artificially created; but it was true that Jones did testify in the film that he was working for far-right military forces in South Africa who (during the 1980s) were trying to eradicate the black population by using various methods including by trying to spread AIDS covertly. Wilcock’s right-wing politics were also apparent in *The Ascension Mysteries: Revealing the Cosmic Battle Between Good and Evil* (Dutton, 2016) where he discussed the Nazis use of “anti-gravity” engines which they apparently used “to power UFO-type discs”; in this book he also promoted John Coleman’s anti-Semitic classic the “Committee of 300”.

For a useful discussion about Jones’s testimony and for details about the covert far-right group he was employed by, see Emily Buder, “Why this filmmaker ‘trusts no one and questions everything,’” *No Film School*, September 20, 2019; Susan Williams, *Who Killed Hammar skjöld? The UN, the Cold War and White Supremacy in Africa* (Oxford University Press, 2014).

have you believe that the world is run by a tiny elite of Satanic pedophiles – and his accompanying aim to ensure that humanity can all be truly inspired and filled with love.¹⁴⁸

Another rising star of both Gaia TV and of the patriotic QAnon scene is the former Navy Seal and psychic traveler Michael Jaco. Jaco – a remote viewing guru, bodybuilder and vitamin supplement salesman – appears to have been in tune with the spiritual realm for some time having previously self-published the 2011 book *The Intuitive Warrior: Lessons From a Navy SEAL on Unleashing Your Hidden Potential*.¹⁴⁹ Only in recent years has Jaco revealed that he was trained on the planet Mars as part of the so-called Secret Space Program. In July 2021 Gaia TV thus chose to promote Jaco’s new

¹⁴⁸ In a YouTube sermon that Wilcock gave in January 2021 (titled “Prophecy, peril and peace”) hundreds of thousands of people have watched his nearly four-hour monologue. Fifty-one minutes into the paranoid lecture Wilcock states: “There are weapons that we [our government] that will do 64,000 people a second with a laser through the medulla. And those are run by the NRO. The National Reconnaissance Office has these satellites that are looking at you all the time. Every time you go outside it looks at your face; it has facial recognition; it knows where you are. It is doing this for everyone on Earth, and when you go inside the house it is tracking you by infrared.... They know where you are at all times, and they can dial in 64,000 kills a second. I want you to be aware of the capabilities that I have been briefed on that are classified but that do exist, because, if you remember, that whole system, that weapons platform was very prominently displayed [in the film] *Captain America: The Winter Soldier*. That’s the whole point, these flying aircraft carriers in the movie, look exactly like the real thing.” Finally, it is worth pointing out here that another rising star promoting a reactionary form of New Age libertarianism is Sacha Stone (discussed later).

¹⁴⁹ Magic runs in the family, and Michael Jaco is married to a Reiki practitioner. Also, in his second self-published book *The Awakening of a Warrior: Past Lives of a Navy SEAL Remembered* (2014), Jaco opens the acknowledgements section of the text by highlighting “the contributions of Kevin Ryerson and his tireless efforts to enlighten humanity” through his work as a trance channel. Ryerson is a longstanding member of the psi-community and according his online biography “has served as faculty at the Association for Research and Enlightenment (A.R.E.), the Center for Applied Intuition, Findhorn Foundation, Interface, Intuition Network Mystery School, Learning Annex, Lily Dale Assembly, Omega Institute, Philosophical Research Society, Science and Consciousness Conference and the Whole Life Expos.”

revelations like this:

Retired SEAL Team-6 Chief Petty Officer Michael Jaco has over 35 years of extensive combat experience including 11 years as a CIA security officer. Appearing for the first time on *Cosmic Disclosure*, Jaco uncovers his repressed memories through the help of hypnotherapist Barbara Lamb. These memories suggest he may have been involved with a secret space program, beginning with his training at an early age. As he untangles this web of hidden memories through the regression, Gaia viewers are privy to the past experiences he was never fully conscious of.¹⁵⁰

Although the idea of alien contact is nothing new, it has only been in the last few years that people have begun to come forward to claim they have been part of a secret military program based on distant planets. For example, Laura Eisenhower, the great-granddaughter of former United States president Dwight Eisenhower, has contributed to constructing such paranoid dreamscapes; but it was in 2015 that such tall tales really started to take a firm hold in New Age circles. This new development coincided with an interview that David Wilcock undertook on Gaia TV with a so-called “space program” whistleblower named Corey Goode. Since then, further details and juicy revelations have been pushed hard by all manner of figures, most notably through the work of the one-time peace studies researcher turned right-wing conspiracist, Professor Michael Salla, who first incorporated Goode’s delusions into his 2015 book *Insiders Reveal Secret Space Programs & Extraterrestrial Alliances*.¹⁵¹

As Salla explained, part of Goode’s groundbreaking testimony

¹⁵⁰ Prior to Michael Jaco’s revelations, the one individual who has courted most global fame for revealing his involvement in this Secret Space Program has been David Wilcock’s long-time partner Corey Goode. Goode’s delusions are discussed later in this book; but a more detailed summary of his paranoid nightmares is covered in Anna Merlan’s *Republic of Lies: American Conspiracy Theorists and Their Surprising Rise to Power* (Metropolitan Books, 2019), Chapter 9 (“The politics of UFOs”).

¹⁵¹ For details about Laura Eisenhower, see “Aliens in our midst – to thin our population,” *Mail & Guardian (South Africa)*, November 25, 2011. Michael Salla had previously written about President Dwight Eisenhower’s alleged meetings with aliens, and in doing so had drawn heavily upon the writings of conspiratorial militia theorist

on Gaia TV asserted that “a galactic human slave trade exists where millions of captured humans are taken off planet to distant colonies on other worlds to be bartered or abused.”¹⁵² Although this story might have remained on the fringe of the UFO community, it then exploded somewhat in June 2017 when the former CIA spy, Robert David Steele, was interviewed by Alex Jones on *InfoWars*. Both Jones and Steele had just played key roles in pushing the toxic Pizzagate pedophilia conspiracy, and now in their latest interview Steele stated:

This may strike your listeners as way out but we actually believe that there is a colony on Mars that is populated by children who were kidnapped and sent into space on a 20 year ride. So that once they get to Mars they have no alternative but to be slaves on the Mars colony.

QAnon’s Fascist Roots

Rather unsurprisingly Robert David Steele would go on to become one of the world’s leading peddlers of QAnon lies,¹⁵³ and the following April he would act as the “Chief Counsel” of the cultlike “Judicial Commission Inquiry into Human Trafficking and Child Sex Abuse” that had been convened by the wealthy New Age conspiracist Sacha Stone. In his plenary speech to this “Commission” Steele talked

William Cooper, see his article “Eisenhower’s 1954 meeting with extraterrestrials: the fiftieth anniversary of first contact?,” *Exopolitics Research Study #8*, Revised February 12, 2004, first published January 28, 2004.

¹⁵² Michael Salla, “Galactic human slave trade & AI threat to end with full disclosure of ET life,” *Exopolitics*, May 31, 2015.

¹⁵³ In exploring the recent roots of the QAnon phenomena, Mia Bloom and Sophia Moskalenko in their book *Pastels and Pedophiles: Inside the Mind of QAnon* (Stanford University Press, 2021) explain: “Another identity floated for Q is Robert David Steele, an alleged CIA analyst with years of intelligence experience: ‘alleged’ because when we had CIA colleagues look him up, they found nothing. Because of the secrecy around someone in the CIA in either the DO (Directorate of Operations like Valerie Plame) or the DA (Directorate of Analysis like the fictional character Jack Ryan) there is no way for anyone to check if someone had a 20-year career in the agency or was in Langley for a few weeks as a low-level analyst. Steele claims to have been a high-level operative and told *Vice News* that QAnon was ‘the most sophisticated intelligence operation in history.’ ...Steele went on YouTube in February 2017, before the first Q-drop, and discussed many of the hallmark tropes associated with QAnon including adrenochrome, pedophilia, and warnings about the deep state. His videos aired three months before Q began posting on 4chan.”

nonchalantly about Pizzagate and observed that “in the United States of America the acknowledged number” of children who are illegally trafficked each year by pedophiles and their consorts, “not counting the children being bred without birth certificates and not counting the children being imported without documentation, is between 600,000 and 800,000 a year.”¹⁵⁴ Since then Steele was involved in the publication of the 2020 book *Pedophiles and Empire: Satan and Sodomy in the Deep State*. In the foreword to this hate-filled diatribe Steele writes that he now understands how...

...every aspect of our government, economy, and society is controlled by a Satanic elite [that “begins with the Rothschild family”] using a Deep State construct to manage all people, all corporations, all property, all land, and even all social conventions including the legalization of homosexuality and (had Hilary [Clinton] been elected) the legalization of bestiality and pedophilia.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁴ Robert David Steele at 44min, “Judicial Commission Inquiry into Human Trafficking and Child Sex Abuse,” April 2018. The Commission was established by Sacha Stone’s so-called International Tribunal for Natural Justice (ITNJ) and was supported by ITNJ Commissioner Cynthia McKinney.

¹⁵⁵ In David Wilcock’s and Corey Goode’s documentary *The Cosmic Secret* (2019) Robert David Steele repeats his far-right conspiracies about the global domination maintained by the Rothschild family and other elites (at 51min). Later in the film Sacha Stone introduces himself noting: “I am popularly known for having founded the New Earth Nation, which is a sovereign movement of conscious people, living men and women of the living soil, so to speak.” Stone continued that his project aims “to restore the organic and the living from the death cult, the blood economy, the fiction of what we’ve known for the last 8,000 years.” (1hr46min)

Sacha Stone also gets a cameo role to talk about his 5G conspiracies in *Thrive II: This is What it Takes* (2020), a documentary directed by the Rothschild-obsessed libertarian conspiracy theorist Foster Gamble (discussed later). Other notable talking heads utilized in *Thrive II* include the prolific alt-right commentator Stefan Molyneux, and the right-wing naturopath Dr. Robert O. Young who had most famously received “medical” training under the supervision of one-time leading laetrile activist Dr. Robert W. Bradford (the founder of the Committee for Freedom of Choice in Cancer Therapy). In 1995 Dr Bradford would found the Capital University of Integrative Medicine in Washington, D.C., an institution that included Dr. Young upon their board of trustees. Not incidentally Sacha Stone has made documentaries about non-medicine quack remedies, and recently starred in a film dedicated to the millionaire

Here it is important to reflect upon the historical predecessors for many of the dangerous ideas that are still being promoted by QAnon devotees worldwide. Thus, the Rothschild obsession makes sense when we understand that the primary political inspiration for many contemporary conservative conspiracists has been the work of Nesta Webster (1876-1960) -- one of the twentieth century's most famous anti-Semitic conspiracy theorists. Writing in Britain in the wake of the 1917 Russian Revolution, Webster, who was a dyed-in-the-wool fascist whose reactionary ideas had inspired Winston Churchill's own anti-Semitism -- saw her own occult super-conspiracies as a fitting way to defend Christian civilization from the threat of socialism. With the help of her many aristocratic friends, Webster's writing brought about a new renaissance in anti-Semitic theories that revolved around the hidden hand of the Illuminati. These ideas then gained a new breath of life on American shores shortly after her death, when in the mid-sixties the John Birch Society rediscovered and subsequently popularized her back catalogue of anti-communist tracts.¹⁵⁶ To this day Webster's delusions continue to inspire Christian patriots and militia activists in America, while conspiracists like David Icke have upcycled

"inventor" of Miracle Mineral Solution (which is really just bleach); see Thomas Buckley, "The family behind the Covid bleach cure was making a fortune," *Bloomberg*, June 29, 2021. Also of note, in mid-2019 Stone's so-called NewEarth University (which is based in the neoliberal haven that is Bali, Indonesia) linked-up with the Red Pill University to host a three-day World Health Sovereignty Summit whose headline speakers included Del Bigtree and G. Edward Griffin.

¹⁵⁶ Writing in 1978 Richard Thurlow surmised that: "Nesta Webster was an important influence who provided much of the occult knowledge which was used in the development of both English and American conspiracy theories. In England, with the exception of Major-General J. F. C. Fuller, she was the root source of practically all occult knowledge in reactionary right and neo-fascist movements. Her anti-secret society ideas were widely used by individuals as diverse as Henry Beamish, Arnold Leese, J. F. C. Fuller, A. K. Chesterton, Colin Jordan and John Tyndall. In the United States the John Birch Society and Alpine Publications have used her work to reinforce the occult sources of a conspiracy theory, which had been based on a native tradition which had combined Populist-Progressive anti-monopoly economic theories with Robison's *Proofs of a Conspiracy*. Although she did not cover all the themes of the conspiracy in her work, she had fair claims to be regarded as the most important contributor to the Anglo-American tradition and represented the most significant modern connecting link in the Atlantic conspiracy underworld." Thurlow, "Conspiracy belief and political strategy," *Patterns of Prejudice*, 12(6), 1978, p.12.

her toxic texts into their own variant of New Age fascism.¹⁵⁷

Following in Nesta Webster's footsteps, far-right activists, including those leading the QAnon movement, luxuriate upon the lowliest plots of the hidden controllers, and continue to place child abuse at the center of their deeply disturbing delusions. In her influential 1924 book *Secret Societies and Subversive Movements*, Webster describes the activities of one apparently Satanic individual, Gilles de Rais (1405–1440) whose evil, she asserts, was driven by Jewish spiritual traditions. She explains that after Gilles had “offered himself to the powers of darkness” he became involved in “perverted vice in every form” which included “holocausts of little boys and girls collected by his agents in the surrounding country and put to death with the most inhuman tortures.” These “strange perverted rites which we associate with the dark ages” were, Webster assured her readers, still “going on around us today. Illuminism, Cabalism, and even Satanism are still realities.”

In this way we can understand that QAnon's quest to help lead a world movement against baby-gobbling elites did not just materialize out of thin air. Such elite-fixated witch hunts can in fact be traced back even further in time to the first century BCE and the manufactured demonization of the pre-Christian pagan cults – a troubling history that is recalled in Norman Cohn's 1977 book *Europe's Inner Demons: An Enquiry Inspired by the Great Witch-Hunt*. As Cohn summarizes:

In each case, the murder and the cannibalistic feast form part of a ritual by which a group of conspirators affirms its solidarity; and in each case the group's aim is to overthrow an existing ruler or regime and to seize power. There is no evidence that such murders and feasts took place. ... But even if it could be shown that groups of conspirators

¹⁵⁷ For an introduction to Nesta Webster's historical influences, see Martha Lee, *Conspiracy Rising: Conspiracy Thinking and American Public Life* (Praeger, 2011); and for a discussion of Webster's influence on well-known conspiracy theorist David Icke, see Steven Woodbridge, “The world-view of Nesta Webster: a case study in conspiracy theory,” *History@Kingston Blog*, April 16, 2020; and Woodbridge, “Plots against the world: the role of the right in conspiracy theory,” *Magonia* magazine, No. 67, June, 1999. For an earlier essay that documents the inspirations for David Icke's New Age fascism, see Michael Barker, “Alice Walker's dangerous liaisons with David Icke,” *Thoughts of a Leicester Socialist*, December 28, 2018.

really did sometimes indulge in such practices, that would not affect [the] argument. Ritual murder and cannibalistic feasts belonged to one particular, traditional stereotype ...of the conspiratorial organization or secret society engaged in a ruthless drive for political power.

More relevant contemporary precursors to QAnon's ever-evolving obsession with the pedophilia of the powerful include the satanic moral panics that swept across America in the 1980s. As we know now, this specific panic, or witch hunt, was in large part fueled by the overzealous interrogation of infants through the misuse of leading questioning and the misplaced reliance upon hypnosis induced Regression Therapy. Together these ill-suited and high-pressure techniques led to deeply disturbing (albeit fictitious) revelations of satanic childhood abuse apparently being perpetuated on an industrial scale. This tragic story of such wrongful accusations of satanic torture is best exemplified by the McMartin preschool trial; and one far-right conspiracy theorist who built bridges between this trial and his ongoing obsessions with the Illuminati was a man named Ted Gunderson (1928-2011). A stalwart supporter of J. Edgar Hoover, Gunderson was a truly deluded individual, who until the late 1970s had acted as the Los Angeles Bureau Chief for the FBI.¹⁵⁸

The Occult in Militia Country

Ted Gunderson never relented with his obsession with occult sacrifice, and in the nineties he went so far as to assert that there were more than 4 million practicing Satanists in America who were carrying out between 50-60,000 human sacrifices every year.¹⁵⁹ Among the far-

¹⁵⁸ Maura Casey, "How the daycare child abuse hysteria of the 1980s became a witch hunt," *Washington Post*, June 31, 2015. Ted Gunderson personally managed to keep the McMartin hysteria going by organizing an archaeological dig beneath the McMartin preschool building to 'prove' the existence of a secret torture chamber. See Richard Beck, *We Believe the Children: A Moral Panic in the 1980s* (PublicAffairs, 2015). The forerunner for the McMartin satanic scare occurred just a few years earlier with the publication of the 1980 bestselling book *Michelle Remembers*. This book's links to QAnon are discussed in Jen Gerson's article "Michelle Remembers: The destructive conspiracy theory that Victoria unleashed upon the world," *Capital Daily*, August 29, 2020.

¹⁵⁹ For early investigations in the way by which far-right Christian groups in the US have systematically sought to colonize the anti-sex trafficking movement - a movement

right milieux, of which he was a central part of, Gunderson had already become famous for exposing the existence of an alleged group called “The Finders” which, as he explained, was a “covert CIA operation” whose only purpose was to kidnap tens of thousands of children a year. These children were then allegedly sold for up to \$50,000 each to wealthy pedophiles. But Gunderson was adamant that “to really understand this you have to go back 235 years or so when the Illuminati was established in 1773” with the central involvement of the Rothschild family who, according to Gunderson, aimed to take control of the world through the control of satanic cults. For those interested in learning more about the specifics of this dastardly mission Gunderson refers his followers to William Guy Carr’s “great book” *Pawns in the Game* (1958).

Again, there is a lot of continuity between various conspiracists on the far-right, and we can see that William Guy Carr’s work was greatly inspired by the work of Nesta Webster. However, although Carr certainly incorporated all manner of anti-Semitic tropes into the body of his writings, he did so in a way that enabled him to distance himself from direct accusations of discrimination. Carr tried to do this by saying that the leading role that powerful Jews had played in the satanic conspiracy (like the Rothschilds) was a clever trick hatched by the Illuminati that aimed to encourage antisemitic interpretations of history that “play[ed] right into the hands of the Illuminati.” So, while Carr believed in the legitimacy of the anti-Semitic forgery known as *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* he asserted that it had originally been written by the Illuminati. This deceptive argument is one that has been deployed by many other Rothschild-obsessed conspiracists, most famously by Bill Cooper, David Icke, and John Coleman.¹⁶⁰

which from its start was based on a serious distortion of the true extent of this problem, see Elizabeth Bernstein, “The sexual politics of the ‘new abolitionism’,” *Differences*, 18(3), 2007; “Militarized humanitarianism meets carceral feminism: the politics of sex, rights, and freedom in contemporary antitrafficking campaigns,” *Signs*, 36(1), 2010; Laura Agustin, *Sex at the Margins: Migration, Labour Markets and the Rescue Industry* (Zed Books, 2007); Anne Elizabeth Moore, “Money and lies in anti-human trafficking NGOs,” *TruthOut*, January 27, 2015; and for a good recent overview, see Nathan Allebach, “The moral panic and myths of human trafficking,” *Medium*, September 25, 2020.

¹⁶⁰ John Coleman’s deeply paranoid book *Conspirators’ Hierarchy: The Story of*

Gunderson like many other enraged right-wing conspiracists became enthralled by the burgeoning militia movement during the 1990s, and speaking to a meeting of The Granada Forum (in 1996)¹⁶¹ Gunderson launched into his speech by recommending that his rapt audience read Carr's *Pawns in the Game*. Later, during his wide-ranging talk, Gunderson reminded his fellow patriots that he had formerly teamed up with the one-time Nebraskan senator John DeCamp in what proved to be an ultimately failed attempt to expose a huge pedophilia ring - a story later recounted in DeCamp's 1992 book *The Franklin Cover-up: Child Abuse, Satanism, and Murder in Nebraska*.¹⁶² DeCamp after publishing this book went on to serve as a

the Committee of 300 (1991) was first published by a notorious anti-Semitic publishing company called America West. Although Coleman's text takes care to avoid referring to Jews as the lynchpin of the Illuminati hierarchy, his personal views on such matters were clear as he regularly referred to the Jewish problem within the pamphlets he wrote for the Christian Defence League. This Jewish obsession makes sense when we understand that the primary political inspiration for Coleman's book was the hugely influential anti-Semitic conspiracy theorist, Nesta Webster.

¹⁶¹ Deborah Noel Kaplan, "Shadow republic: the concept of place in patriot movement discourse," in: Sudeep Dasgupta and Esther Peeren (eds.), *Constellations of the Transnational: Modernity, Culture, Critique* (Brill, 2007), p.83. "The Granada Forum began as a local campaign headquarters for James 'Bo' Gritz, the former Green Beret who reputedly was the model for the movie character Rambo, when he ran for president on the 1992 Populist Party ticket together with David Duke. The forum grew to become one of the movement's larger and more public groups, drawing 100 to 250 people from all over the metropolitan area to its weekly meetings in the Los Angeles suburb of Tarzana." (p.88)

¹⁶² The so-called Franklin coverup was popularized more recently in Nick Bryant's *Franklin Scandal: A Story of Powerbrokers, Child Abuse & Betrayal* which was published in 2009 by the conspiracy publisher TrineDay. This small and independent publishing body was launched in 2002 to publish the back-catalogue of one of the godfathers of the right-wing conspiracy theory movement, Antony Sutton. Of more relevance to this essay though, TrineDay recently published a book written by Oliver Stone's eldest son, Sean Stone, which, recycled various conspiracy theories from the likes of Sutton and Lyndon LaRouche, and was published in 2016 as *New World Order: A Strategy of Imperialism*. Marrs, like Sutton and Sean Stone, holds firmly to the reactionary belief that social change is so manipulated by ruling-class elites that even the Russian Revolution of 1917 was orchestrated by Wall Street financiers! Although TrineDay's founder has said he does not personally buy into QAnon conspiracies, he is still in the process of publishing a book that aims to popularize such nonsense; this book is Michael Cat's *QAnon & the #Pizzagates of Hell: Unreal Tales of Occult Child Abuse by the CIA* (2022).

lawyer for the Militia of Montana – a group which played a leading role in organizing The Granada Forum.

Another Christian patriot who, in 1996, gave a now-famous talk to The Granada Forum was Cathy O'Brien - who during her speech bore personal witness to the abuse she said she received while being forced to serve as a personal sex slave to the leaders of the Illuminati. It turns out that in the same year O'Brien had published a book which detailed her own Satanic experiences (as *Trance-Formation of America*). David Icke rapidly assimilated this story into his own best-selling conspiracy tome, *I Am Me, I Am Free* (1996). In his own derivative book, Icke rehashed the sordid details of O'Brien's sexual abuse for some 24 long drawn-out pages, abuse which was apparently meted out by the staff at a NASA facility, numerous world leaders who were attending Satanic-inspired meetings at the Bohemian Grove, and by leading American politicians (Clinton, Reagan and Bush) who she says all raped her at the "covert mind-control slave camp" at the military base in Mount Shasta (California). Furthermore, flowing from O'Brien's detailed descriptions of her abuse, Icke famously introduced his readers to the proposition that some members of the Illuminati were reptiles. He arrived at this bizarre conclusion because O'Brien had suggested that "holographic projections were used to give the appearance to her of people turning into 'lizard-like' aliens." But Icke was not wholly convinced by O'Brien's recollections, and asks: "What if it was not a hologram that Cathy saw?" It would seem that the truth is out there; although it is safe to say that is probably won't be found within the pages of Icke or O'Brien's books.¹⁶³

¹⁶³ In more recent years such paranoid fantasies were famously embraced by Sherry Shriner, a far-right Christian conspiracist whose dangerous delusions are discussed in Tony Russo's *Dragged Into the Light: Truthers, Reptilians, Super Soldiers, and Death Inside an Online Cult* (Secant Publishing, 2021).

TWO

Occult Knowledge in Russia

As the birthplace of Communism, Russia is a land of contradictions. In October 1917, Russian society broke from its feudal yoke to embrace the democratic ideals of socialism. But after this short-lived victory, events soon took a deeply undemocratic turn under Joseph Stalin's authoritarian hand. But Stalin's toxic legacy lingered well past his death and beyond Communism's official collapse in 1989. The official end of the Communist state thus only ushered in further attacks on the living standards of ordinary Russians, whose lives imploded because of another more amorphous dictator, that of the so-called free market. Then in 1999, riding a tide of anti-Western nationalism, Vladimir Putin seized control of the state, and in doing so he rehabilitated Stalin as a hero. He also sought to erase memory of Russia's genuine revolutionary legacy as embodied by the leadership that was provided to the working-class by Vladimir Lenin and Leon Trotsky amongst many other Bolshevik leaders. In a strange way Russia has now gone full circle, with a leader who openly states his desire to embrace the conservative values of the days of reaction before the Revolution of 1917.

At the turn of twentieth century, Russia was certainly a world removed from the world's most powerful industrial nations, like Britain, Germany, and the United States. Russia was a backward feudal state ruled with an iron fist by a brutal out-of-touch monarchy, representing a society whose citizens were largely peasants. Socialists were the first to admit that Russia was one of the last places on Earth that they expected the global socialist revolution to be launched. Nevertheless, because of a lot of hard work and perspiration, both in a physical and intellectual sense, in October 1917 Russia was rocked by a successful revolution that shook the world.

As a result of this democratic transfer of power from the hands of feudal overlords to the working-class majority, a tidal wave of creativity was unleashed within the Soviet Union. Spiritually speaking the revolution was also a harbinger of genuine religious freedom, as workers for the first time in history had the opportunity to discover themselves in the truest sense of the word. Thus, while the Marxist leaders of the Revolution for the most part subscribed to atheist beliefs, they remained adamant that every individual should have the right to choose their own religious doctrine free from State inference (neither affirmation nor discrimination). The ambition of socialist revolutionaries was not to dictate spiritual beliefs to workers, but first and foremost to unite the working-class irrespective of their religious creed. Under Communism, religious groups would thereafter be free to seek the voluntary support and cooperation of all workers without the financial incumbency of the State's selective largesse – support that historically, has always favored one group over another, and acted to create artificial and often violent divisions within the working-class.

Religious groups that sought to organize amongst the people to violently overthrow the Communist government were understandably not deemed to deserve much democratic tolerance in this fledgling socialist state. This especially applied to the many displaced beneficiaries of Russian feudalism whose White Armies united with foreign imperial powers to wage a long and brutal civil war that helped lay the groundwork for Stalin's eventual (but never inevitable) assumption of power. Chief among those first spiritual reactionaries that took up arms against the Bolsheviks were the forces known as the Black Hundreds, a group of disparate elites whose foundation can be traced to the turn of the century and to countless crimes against ordinary people. Indeed, patronized by the Tzarist regime, the anti-Semitic paramilitary cadres of the Black Hundreds had already proven their service to church and motherland by responding to the failed Russian Revolution of 1905 with pogroms which took the lives of thousands.¹

¹ Paul Hanebrink, *A Specter Haunting Europe: The Myth of Judeo-Bolshevism* (Belknap Press, 2018).

Esoteric Fascism

One influential member of the Black Hundreds who died the year before the 1917 Revolution was Aleksandr Shmakov, who handed on his anti-democratic obsessions to his son, Vladimir, who conjured forth his own noxious blend of occultism and anti-Semitism.² In the immediate wake of the Revolution, however, contrary to the anti-democratic machinations of certain occultists, spiritual freedom was opened-up in ways previously unforeseen. Moreover, the upsurge in interest in esoteric doctrines that had flourished in the preceding decades did not simply evaporate into the ether (and why should it). The same can be said for the other cultural norms of the Tzarist era, such as sexism and homophobia; and while the fledgling Soviet State moved mountains to promote the rights of both women and homosexuals, they understood that old habits die hard. Indeed, the remnants of the old backward society could never be immediately vanquished as some might have proposed: instead, the Bolsheviks aimed to remove barriers to oppression and win people over to progressive ideals via the emancipatory gains made through struggle itself. The fact that other more developed countries like Germany, where Marxist ideas already had a firm footing, failed in their historic task to implement their own socialist revolutions only further limited the chances of Communism establishing longstanding democratic roots in Russia. Furthermore, during the bloody civil war that was

² “Already after the collapse of the Soviet Union yet another, probably more important work of [Vladimir] Shmakov that had survived in Samizdat was published: *The Law of Synarchy and the Teaching about the Dual Hierarchy of Monads and Multitudes (Zakon sinarkhii i uchenie o dvoistvennoi iearkhii monad i mnozhestv, Kiev: Sofiia, 1994).*” *The New Age of Russia*, p.67. Anthroposophists who worked alongside Shmakov in the early 1920s included M.I. Sizov.

One might add that in the period between 1905 and 1917, the famous Symbolist anthroposophist Andrei Bely wrote many novels that reflected his own occult-induced paranoia. Bernice Glatzer Rosenthal observes how: “His understanding of Anthroposophy led Bely to believe that the Bolshevik Revolution was a negative apocalypse and that a positive apocalypse, a ‘revolution of the spirit,’ would follow and complete the political and social revolution.” Rosenthal, “Political implications of the early twentieth century occult revival,” in: Rosenthal (ed.), *The Occult in Russian and Soviet Culture* (Cornell University Press, 1997), p.392. Bely’s decadent literature was subject to withering scorn in Leon Trotsky’s *Literature and Revolution* (1924), Chapter 1.

waged by twenty-one capitalist nations upon the Russian Revolution, esoteric ideas also took on anti-democratic hues under the direct influence of groups that had grown out of the break-up of the Black Hundreds.

The Black Hundreds (which were formally dissolved in 1917) can be seen as having acted as the natural incubator of a rising tide of fascist politics.

Like the *Action Françoise*, it was a halfway house between the old-fashioned reactionary movements of the nineteenth century and the right-wing populist (fascist) parties of the twentieth. With their strong ties to monarchy and church they largely belonged to the past, but unlike the earlier conservative groups they were no longer elitist. Having understood the crucial importance of mobilizing the masses, they were the harbingers of political parties of a new type. One of the most influential leaders of the movement wrote years later that in spirit this Russian movement was most similar to national socialism.³

The influential leader referred to here was Nikolai Markov II, who had first been a member of the tsarist Duma before turning his hand to working for the Nazis after Hitler's rise to power. Throughout the early 1920s Markov had led the pro-monarchical "Union of the Faithful," while previously he had been a leader of a faction of the far-right known as the "Union of the Russian People."⁴ With the eventual

³ Walter Laqueur, *Black Hundred: The Rise of the Extreme Right in Russia* (HarperCollins, 1993), pp.16-7. For an overview of Russian émigré collaboration with the evolution of right-wing politics in Germany, see Michael Kellogg, *The Russian Roots of Nazism: White Russians and the Making of National Socialism, 1917-1945* (Cambridge University Press, 2005). (A critical review of this book, undertaken by Annemarie Sammartino, points out some of the limitations of Kellogg's sometimes overdetermined analysis.) For early examinations of the cooperation between the Russian émigré community and Nazis in Germany, see Robert Williams, *Culture in Exile: Russian Emigres in Germany, 1881-1941* (Cornell University Press, 1972), and for a similar study based upon the actions of Russian émigrés in France, see Robert Johnston, *New Mecca, New Babylon: Paris and the Russian Exiles, 1920-1945* (McGill-Queen's Press, 1988).

⁴ Michael Kellogg, *The Russian Roots of Nazism*, p.143. During the Russian civil war, interventionist armies led by Nikolai Markov were influenced his pro-French proclivities which put fuelled internecine struggles with Germanic-influenced white emigres.

collapse of the Soviet Union, the latter group benefited from newfound political freedoms, and in August 1990 this reactionary group was eventually re-established in a meeting at the House of the Soviet Army in Moscow. At this time, one particularly “highbrow spokesman for the extreme right” who publicly supported the refounding of the “Union of Russian People” was Vadim Kozhinov, a disciple of the reactionary anti-Semite Lev Gumilyov. During the 1990s, Kozhinov was then able to successfully leverage his nationalistic credentials to support the rise of a younger breed of neo-fascists, the most famous example being provided by Alexander Dugin.⁵ Like many of his far-right predecessors (e.g., Julius Evola) Dugin intimates a direct lineage to the most reviled leaders of the White Armies like, for example, Baron Ungern-Sternberg - a sadistic anti-Semitic Buddhist mystic whose life was documented in James Palmer’s book *The Bloody White Baron* (Faber and Faber, 2008). Dugin, famously celebrated Ungern’s life on national television (in January 2017), referring to him as an archetypal spiritual warrior of the aristocratic right, with Dugin fondly referring to the bloodthirsty baron as “a wonderful man”.⁶

⁵ Laqueur, *Black Hundred*, p.17. Dmitry Shlapentokh, “Implementation of an ideological paradigm: early Duginian Eurasianism and Russia’s post-Crimean discourse,” *Contemporary Security Policy*, 35 (3), 2014. The most significant group on the extreme right arising during the 1990s was Alexander Barkashov’s Russian National Unity. This neo-Nazi paramilitary group was formed by Barkashov in 1990 as a split from the far-right anti-Semitic nationalist movement Pamyat (the National-Patriotic Front ‘Memory’). Pamyat was the first political movement that Alexander Dugin joined (in 1987) although he was viewed as an ideological competitor by a faction led by Barkashov who succeeded in having Dugin expelled from Pamyat. For further details, see Anton Shekhovtsov, *Russia and the Western Far Right: Tango Noir* (Routledge, 2018). Despite Pamyat’s rising political influence from 1987 onwards, it is noteworthy that the “attitude of the [Communist] party’s central organs during this period was ambiguous.” This is probably because “Pamyat was regarded as an important (if somewhat misguided) counterweight to the liberals, and above all to the radical dissidents, whose activities became more bothersome at precisely this time.” Laqueur, *Black Hundred*, p.207.

⁶ Alexander Dugin, “Dugin’s guideline - The birthday of Baron Ungern-Sternberg,” *The Forth Revolutionary War*, January 9, 2017.

Policing Dissent

Baron Ungern's reign of terror was ended in late 1921 when he was executed by the Red Army after even his own soldiers had turned against him. But revelations of Ungern's supposed occult powers went from strength-to-strength with the American publication of the New Age best-seller *Beasts, Men, and Gods* (Dutton, 1922). This was a popular book that had been authored by the former Polish intelligence officer, Anton Ferdynand Ossendowski, who had insider knowledge to draw upon as he had been one of Ungern's spiritual comrades-in-arms during the civil war.⁷ In keeping with Ungern's own deep mysticism, Ossendowski's well-read writings would go on to popularize hollow earth conspiracy theories that concerned themselves with the whereabouts of the secret subterranean city of Agartha (found beneath Tibet) -- an esoteric idea that held by Theosophists and which was further elaborated upon another man of the Right, René Guénon (1886-1951).⁸

In his seminal work of pessimism, *The Crisis of the Modern World*

⁷ In working to popularize Baron Ungern's mysticism, Anton Ferdynand Ossendowski falsely presented Ungern as a mystic whose vision was not clouded by anti-Semitism. James Webb makes this point in *The Occult Establishment* (Open Court, 1976). Webb notes that Ossendowski "doubtless mythical account of Ingern takes pains to make the point that the baron, after all, had 'many Jewish agents' -- in other words, that the accusations against him are not true. Yet Ossendowski undoubtedly believed in the myth that there was a conspiracy against right order; and it is quite probable that he agreed with the baron's definition of who was responsible." (p.203)

⁸ "Ideas of Shambhala were common among the Russian occultist intelligentsia. Theosophy drew heavily from second- or third-hand notions of Tibetan theology, especially the mystical Kalachakra scriptures, so the Shambhala legend featured heavily in Blavatsky's writings as one of the Hidden Masters' bases of operation. Importantly, Shambhala was traditionally associated with the north, and so with Russia. The Russians were aware of this, and in the 1900s the Russian secret agent Agvan Dorjiev, a Buriat monk with strong political links to Tibet, attempted to spread the belief among Tibetans and Mongols that the Romanovs were the descendants of the rulers of Shambhala. Dorjiev claimed that the 'White Tsar' Nicolas II was a reincarnation of Tsongkapa, the founder of the dominant Tibetan Gelugpa tradition, pointing to the tsarist patronage of Buddhism among the Buriats and Kalmyks as evidence. He managed to get a Kalachakra temple opened in St Petersburg in 1913, which was inaugurated with a celebration of the Romanovs' 300th anniversary." Palmer, *The Bloody White Baron*, p.65.

(1927), Guénon showed how the West had, since the end of the Middle Ages, succumbed to a spiritual decline. A process of materialization embraced all life; art and culture pursued mere externalities, while thought and science lost themselves in endless analysis, division and multiplicity. Western life was completely absorbed in “becoming,” with its attendant focus on rational means, speed and technical efficiency. The “humanistic” concern with man’s importance and consciousness, his social and political emancipation had displaced all transcendent references in an aberrant cult of individualism. Guénon regarded this decline as the fulfillment of the Hindu Puranic divisions of time.⁹

Another mystical seeker who was obsessed about discovering Agartha in the early Soviet era was Aleksandr Barchenko (1881–1938), who in 1920 was invited by the neurologist and “Father of Objective Psychology” Vladimir Bekhterev (1857–1927) to join his Reflexological Institute for the Study of the Brain, of which a side project involved researching the material basis to paranormal phenomena.¹⁰ Upon receiving a visit from the Bolshevik secret police

⁹ Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, *Black Sun: Aryan Cults, Esoteric Nazism and the Politics of Identity* (New York University Press, 2001), p.57. Fascist theorist Julius Evola “felt a deep affinity with Guénon’s esoteric pessimism. Here, in sparse outline, he found all the reasons for the decay of a primordial heroic world based on sacred authority and metaphysical absolutes. He applauded Guénon’s scathing attack on the vacuous relativism and chaotic liberalism of the modern world. Forthwith he began work on his own anti-modernist text, *Rivolta contro il mondo moderno* [Revolt against the Modern World] (1934), which remains his best-known and most important book.” (p.57)

¹⁰ Vladimir Bekhterev “was one of the leading figures in the Russian human, medical, and behavioral sciences at the turn of the twentieth century”; who “was not only an authoritative and innovative neurologist and psychiatrist, but also a charismatic public figure, tireless organizer, and successful fundraiser, both before and after 1917.” But despite his commitment to objectivity, Bekhterev, in his diverse research efforts – which ranged over many research institutions and fields of enquiry – also developed what he thought was a scientific basis for comprehending telepathy. He was in fact the “most prominent scientist to investigate occult aspects of mental activity,” although this paranormal research was subsequently banned after 1930. Andy Byford, “V. M. Bekhterev in Russian child science, 1900s-1920s: ‘objective psychology’ / ‘refexology’ as a scientific movement,” *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences*, 52(2), 2016, p.99. As Byford explains, for most of the twentieth century Bekhterev’s scientific contributions were overshadowed by his “arch rival” Ivan

in the early 1920s the police turned out to be “rather sympathetic to Barchenko’s [occult] tales about his research in the field of paranormal phenomena and the possibility of applying his discovery to enhance the Soviet Union’s defence capability”. This then led Barchenko into a powerful friendship with the former head of the Petrograd Cheka, Gleb Bokii, who he then mentored in the occult sphere through the activities of his United Workers’ Brotherhood (a mystical group that had been largely inspired by George Gurdjieff). By the 1930s “Barchenko and his work were still a state secret”; and in “1935 he transferred from the laboratory of the Energy Institute to another institution created by Stalin and [Maxim] Gorky, which was just as mysterious—the All-Union Institute for Experimental Medicine.”¹¹ However, as a result of Stalin’s reforms to the secret police, just a few years later all the members of the United Workers’ Brotherhood had been shot on Stalin’s orders.¹²

Pavlov, whose theories were apparently considered more useful in maintaining Stalin’s undemocratic regime. For more on this, see Daniel Todes, *Ivan Pavlov: A Russian Life in Science* (Oxford University Press, 2014), pp.319-36. And for a useful introduction to the advance of science after 1917, at least until Stalin’s reign of terror was consolidated, see James Andrews, *Science for the Masses: The Bolshevik State, Public Science, and the Popular Imagination in Soviet Russia, 1917-1934* (Texas A&M University Press, 2003).

¹¹ Oleg Shishkin, “The occultist Aleksandr Barchenko and the Soviet secret police (1923-1938),” in: Menzel *et al.* (eds.), *The New Age of Russia*, p.89, p.95, p.96. For a contextual overview of Barchenko’s interests in Shamanism and its relevance to antimodern sentiments that rose to a fore after the 1960s, see Andrei Znamenski, *The Beauty of the Primitive: Shamanism and Western Imagination* (Oxford University Press, 2007), pp.329-61.

Also of note, in the “early 1930s, Bekhterev’s disciple Leonid Vasil’ev (1891-1966) founded a five-person commission for the ‘Study of secret phenomena of the human psyche’ by order of Leningrad party officials”. Leonid Vasil’ev evidently pursued such esoteric interests as a devout spiritual seeker – much like “some of the authors and editors” contributing to the journal *Nauka i Religia* (*Science and Religion*) were able to do in the 1970s. Menzel, “Occult and esoteric movements in Russia from the 1960s to the 1980s,” p.170. (Not everyone on the five-person commission wished to promote occult interests, with one significant example being provided by Mikhail Shakhnovich (1911-1992).)

¹² When the theosophically-inclined Maxim Gorky returned from exile in 1932 he ensured that Bekhterev’s occult contributions played “an integral role in the creation of the theory of Socialist Realism,” which was then utilised by Stalin to force artists and writers into a cultural straitjacket. Birgit Menzel, “Occult and esoteric

For the record Ossendowski's anti-Bolshevik fantasies still impact on history today, as it was his detailed forgeries of 1917 (obligingly furnished for an American propagandist named Edgard Sissons) that furnished the lie that the revolutionary activism of Lenin and the Bolsheviks had been funded by German elites.¹³ Ossendowski's role in supporting the Provisional Government's initial fairy tale investigations into the alleged German funding for the Bolshevik's and in then manufacturing the Sisson documents was however widely exposed in Russia. Moreover, this was not the first-time time that Ossendowski had run successful smear campaigns against his political enemies.¹⁴

movements in Russia from the 1960s to the 1980s," in: Menzel *et al.* (eds.), *The New Age of Russia*, p.169. For more details, see Mihhail Agursky, "The occult source of socialist realism: Gorky and early twentieth-century theories of thought transference," in: Bernice Rosenthal (ed.), *The Occult in Russian and Soviet Culture* (Cornell University Press, 1997), pp.247-72. In sharp contrast to revolutionary socialists who believe that a truly democratic society is premised upon the self-activity and action of the working class: "As one of the major formulators of Socialist Realism, Gorky taught that writers and artists must cultivate optimism among the people, who he thought had a natural inclination to passivity. He believed that optimism (and pessimism) can be transmitted not only on the cogitative level but also, and more important, unconsciously, through its direct influence on the human mind and with no involvement of will on the part of the recipient." In summary: "Gorky's version of Socialist Realism can be considered a quasi-occult and politicized application of ideas of thought transference and hypnotic suggestion pioneered by Bekhterev and other early twentieth-century Russian scientists." Agursky, "The occult source of socialist realism," pp.249-50, p.263.

¹³ Edgard Sissons arrived in Russia on the day of the October Revolution as a part of his duties for the US government's main wartime propaganda agency, the Committee on Public Information.

¹⁴ For instance, when Russian historian George F. Kennan presented a thorough case against Anton Ferdynand Ossendowski and his falsification of the Sisson documents in the *Journal of Modern History* in 1956 he concluded: "It is doubtful whether the history of journalism could produce another instance of such a violent and prolonged personal vendetta" than that campaign that Ossendowski had waged against the owners of the company, Kunst & Albers. Ossendowski's lies were unmasked at the time in a variety of publications (including Sven Hedin's 1925 book *Ossendowski and the Truth*) but such writings seem to have had little effect upon belief in his scurrilous attacks upon his class enemies; and in 1931 Dutton published Ossendowski's last book which was titled *Lenin: God of the Godless*. Lothar Deeg, *Kunst and Albers Vladivostok: The History of a German Trading Company in the*

A Nationalist Hoax

Another nationalist myth that owed its popularity to the White émigré community revolves around the literary forgery known as *The Book of Veles* (*Vlesova kniga*), which is “arguably the most successful hoax invented in Russia since the publication of the notorious *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.”¹⁵ It is worth bearing in mind that:

No serious scholar regards the Veles Book as anything other than an obvious forgery that was created in the nineteenth or twentieth centuries. Its provenance can be reliably traced only as far as [Yuriy] Miroljubov himself; one scholar has noted that Miroljubov seems not only to have forged the script, but also to have borrowed the plot of the story of how he came across his archaeological treasure from the classic Jack London story *Tri serdtsa* (*Hearts of Three*), which was very popular in the Soviet era.¹⁶

It appears that the existence of this allegedly historical artefact first became known during the 1950s when the San Francisco-based émigré journal *Zhar-Ptitsa* (*Firebird*) published a series of articles authored by “New Thought” mystic Alexander Kurenkov, himself a former veteran of the White Armies who had emigrated to America in 1923.¹⁷ As the story goes, Kurenkov had first obtained knowledge of the mysterious book from another Russian émigré and “eccentric

Russian Far-East, 1864-1925 (Druck and Verlag, 2013), p.333. In 1925 Ossendowski was accompanied on an expedition to West Africa by Count Jerzy Skarbek (the secretary of the Polish Legation in Washington) who during his colourful younger years had been a chauffeur for John D. Rockefeller, and whose daughter became one of Britain’s most famous spies.

¹⁵ Konstantin Sheiko and Stephen Brown, *History as Therapy: Alternative History and Nationalist Imaginings in Russia, 1991-2014* (ibidem-Verlag, 2014), p.83.

¹⁶ Sheiko and Brown, *History as Therapy*, p.84. Also see Marlene Laruelle, “Conspiracy and alternate history in Russia: a nationalist equation for success?,” *Russian Review*, 71 (4), 2012. Notably one of the most pervasive alternative historians in Russia, Anatolii Fomenko, “received a massive boost in the late 1990s” from Garry Kasparov, who apparently now distances himself from Fomenko’s popular nonsense. Sheiko and Brown, *History as Therapy*, pp.23-4.

¹⁷ Alexander Kurenkov was a committed monarchist (promoted to the rank of major general by Grand Duke Vladimir Kirillovich in 1937) who obtained a ‘doctorate’ from an Indianapolis-based “New Thought” correspondence school known as the College of Divine Metaphysics – an organization which still exists today.

folklorist” named Yuriy Miroljubov, who came into ownership of the *Book of Veles* when details of its existence had been bequeathed to him by a White officer who had stumbled across the book during the Russian Civil War. Considering the reactionary roots of this alternative history it is appropriate that mythical efforts by Soviet exiles to “deny the conventional place of Orthodoxy as the key element of ‘Russian soul’” eventually gave birth to a form of neo-paganism that is often couched in nationalism.¹⁸

The *Book of Vles* told the story of pastoral ancestors who travelled extensively across the Eurasian steppes through the centuries, maintained their spiritual heritage, and defended their values in an endless struggle against treacherous enemies. Within this mythology an image of Slavic ancestors merged with the earliest Indo-Europeans, and the latter were called Aryans. The term that had been so discredited by the Nazis was thus restored. Furthermore, as the 1990s began, the myth in question was enriched with a new theme, that of the [mythical] northern (Arctic) homeland, and the racial arguments acquired a seemingly sound [albeit fictitious] footing.¹⁹

Thus, the one neo-Nazi author who famously spread the word about the *Book of Veles* was Valeri Skurlatov – a writer who was keen to “demonstrate that the Russian were the Aryan people par excellence”.²⁰ Although Skurlatov had never been able to foist his mythical wares upon historians of his day, in subsequent years the ecological novelist Vladimir Chivilikhin took these fascist ideas straight to the public, most notably through the publication of his novel-essay *Pamyat* (“Memory”). Word of this novel spread like wildfire during the 1970s and early 1980s with millions of copies flooding Russia’s streets

¹⁸ Laruelle, *The Rodnoverie Movement*, p.294.

¹⁹ Victor Shnirelman, “Russian response: archaeology, Russian nationalism, and the ‘Arctic homeland,’” in: Philip Kohl, Mara Kozelsky, Nachman Ben-Yehuda (eds.), *Selective Remembrances: Archaeology in the Construction, Commemoration, and Consecration of Distant Pasts* (University of Chicago Press, 2007), p.36. For another important contribution to this field of study, see Philip Kohl and Clare Fawcett (eds.), *Nationalism, Politics, and the Practice of Archaeology* (Cambridge University Press, 1995).

²⁰ Laqueur, *Black Hundred*, p.114.

which helped stimulate the evolution of a new reactionary spiritual revival.²¹ Seeking solace in a form pre-Christian Slavic spirituality which draws strength from the *Book of Veles*, the neo-pagan movement that grew out of these developments is collectively referred to as Rodnoverie (ethnic faith).

However, in contrast with Western New Age movements, in which female participation is dominant, Rodnoverie in Russia is not marked by feminine symbols. Despite the cult of ‘Mother Earth’ and of fertility rituals, the Russian movements are mostly made up of men. Virility and masculine symbols are particularly visible, and some currents exalt warrior values. In addition, the narrative of Rodnoverie is very conservative in terms of its mores: its calls for heterosexuality, fidelity, and procreation. The sexual liberation dimension of the Western New Age is totally absent from it, and even disparaged.²²

Other writers suggest that “nationalism is the most pervasive and prominent feature of Rodnoverie politics, despite the fact that the movement encompasses both extreme left-wing [Stalinist] and extreme right-wing groups.” Here the “biggest Rodnoverie group” is Kontsepsiya Obshchestvennoi Bezopasnosti (KOB), which “propagates a far-leftist, anti-Semitic and socially conservative ideology, celebrating Stalin as its main hero.”²³

Following the increasing popularity of the *Book of Veles*,

²¹ Vladimir Chivilikhin did much to promote ecological concerns within nationalist circles with his 1963 essay “The bright eye of Siberia.” Skurlatov’s ideas were also taken up with “some success among writers of science fiction”. Laqueur, *Black Hundred*, p.114. Skurlatov’s toxic background is discussed in Boris Kagarlitsky’s *Farewell Perestroika: A Soviet Chronicle* (Verso, 1990), p.102; while another notable pagan proponent of eco-fascism was Aleksei Dobroslav (1938-2013), see Kaarina Aitamurto, *Paganism, Traditionalism, Nationalism: Narratives of Russian Rodnoverie* (Routledge, 2016), p.35. For a related discussion, see Janet Biehl and Peter Staudenmaier, *Ecofascism: Lessons from the German Experience* (AK Press 1995); and Murray Bookchin, *Re-Enchanting Humanity: A Defense of the Human Spirit Against Antihumanism, Misanthropy, Mysticism and Primitivism* (Cassell, 1995).

²² Laruelle, *The Rodnoverie Movement*, p.308.

²³ Kaarina Aitamurto, “More Russian than orthodox Christianity: Russian paganism as nationalist politics,” in: *Nations under God: The Geopolitics of Faith in the Twenty-First Century* (E-international relations, 2015), pp.126-32. Religious scholar Mircea Eliade also played a critical role in developing the relationship between

during the 1970s urban elites within the “underground ultranationalist opposition” developed a keen interest in an anti-Semitic variety of paganism, with the first pagan book *Desionizatsiya* (1979) being authored by Valerii Emelyanov who (like Valeri Skurlatov) became a founding member of the notorious Russian nationalist organization, Pamyat.²⁴ Other pagan authors who rose to fame in the 1990s included Aleksander Asov, who published a popular version of the *Book of Veles*, and Aleksander Belov, and whose warrior-paganism rejected anti-Semitism for the “ultraconservative elitism” associated with “traditionalists such as Julius Evola or René Guénon”.²⁵ (Notably, Alexander Dugin wrote the preface for a translation of Evola’s *Pagan Empire*.)

Other radical nationalist narratives that were grounded in the pseudohistory of the *Book of Veles* include the dangerous (albeit popular) idea that Russian identity can be traced back to a mythic ‘Arctic homeland’ inhabited by Aryans (in Blavatsky’s parlance the Hyperboreans). During the late 1970s, academics like Natalia Guseva joined the nationalist fray as a leading advocate of just such a northern homeland. In the post-Soviet period Guseva “went even further and

paganism and radical nationalism.

²⁴ With reference to political direction of *Desionizatsiya* (1979): “Building on the earlier sub-genre of racist and anti-Semitic literature, Emelyanov constructed a theory of a plot of Jews and Freemasons, covering in its extent the entire world and ranging back to the times of King Solomon, the initiator of the conspiracy.” Kaarina Aitamurto, *Paganism, Traditionalism, Nationalism*, p.28. Valerii Emelyanov is credited as being the author of a 1973 article published in the patriotic newspaper *Veche* that served as a manifesto for Russian neo-paganism.

²⁵ Kaarina Aitamurto, “Modern pagan warriors: violence and justice in the Rodnoverie,” in: James Lewis (ed.), *Violence and New Religious Movements* (Oxford University Press, 2011), p.233. Aitamurto writes that Valerii Emelyanov sent copies of *Desionizatsiya* (1979) “to all of the members of the central committee of the Soviet Communist Party. There is even some evidence that the KGB engineered or at least supported Paganism as a plot to break up the Orthodox nationalistic opposition. Emelyanov apparently also enjoyed some protection.” (p.245) Here the author cites Laqueur, *Black Hundred*, pp.112-6, pp.210-11. For a discussion of the ultranationalist pagan legacy of émigré Volodymyr Shaian (1908–1974) – the father of Rodnoverie in Ukraine – see Mariya Lesiv, *The Return of Ancestral Gods: Modern Ukrainian Paganism as an Alternative for a Nation* (McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2013).

expressed affinity for the occult ideas” of Madame Blavatsky without mentioning her name. The same cannot be said with regards the prestigious occult output of the late Moscow philosopher Valery Demin (whose specialist area was Russian cosmism) who further consolidated the Arctic myth: “Unlike Guseva, Demin openly recognized Blavatsky’s great contribution to the development of the ‘Hyperborean idea’ and emphasized proudly that a triumph of the latter was associated with the works of such traditionalists as Herman Wirth, René Guénon, and Julius Evola.”²⁶

The suggestion that Hyperborea was a utopia whose descendants degenerated as they moved farther away from their Russian motherland has energized alternative historians, and an army of like-minded occultists and mystics, to locate more precisely this ancient homeland. Due credit for the popularity of Hyperborea should be given to Helena Blavatskaya (1831-91), the Russian-born giant of late nineteenth-century mysticism, occultism and a founder of the Theosophical Society. Blavatskaya’s account of humankind’s seven ‘root races’ included the Hyperboreans of the Arctic north. This idea of primordial and superior races existing in the distant past has provided inspiration for racial thinking across Europe. Hyperborea’s northern location is especially attractive to Russian nationalists.²⁷

Spiritualism as a Bourgeois Obsession

Unfortunately, these are not problems that remain isolated to the political fringes, as the Aryan myth that has been so assiduously promoted by Valery Demin and others has “carv[ed] its way into the midst of the highest Russian authorities and parliamentarians.”²⁸ The

²⁶ Shnirelman, “Russian response,” p.38, p.55. For the geopolitical implications of the mythical ‘Arctic homeland’ see Marlene Laruelle, *Russia’s Arctic Strategies and the Future of the Far North* (Routledge, 2015). A discussion of how far-right iterations of cosmism went on to impregnate the Russian security apparatus, is provided in Juliette Faure’s ‘Russian Cosmism: a national mythology against transhumanism,’ *The Conversation*, January 11, 2021. A useful introduction to the reactionary ideas of Traditionalism is provided in Mark Sedgwick’s *Against the Modern World: Traditionalism and the Secret Intellectual History of the Twentieth Century* (Oxford University Press, 2004).

²⁷ Sheiko and Brown, *History as Therapy*, p.80.

²⁸ Shnirelman, “Russian response,” p.56. To make this point the author draws

degree to which such ideas influence Putin's regime (as currently constituted) remains in question, but what cannot be in doubt is that both prior to and after the Russian Revolution of 1917 (as in the wake of the Soviet Union's eventual collapse) people from all walks of life were searching and experimenting with new ideas in a frantic bid to bring order to the world around them.

Yet genuine Marxists (not Stalinists), had always been forthright in their condemnation of the spiritual turns that always seemed to obsess so many bourgeois scientists. These longstanding criticisms were clearly outlined in Friedrich Engels' important essay "Natural science and the spirit world" which was belatedly published in 1898. Moreover, in the same year this essay was first published, a young revolutionary by the name of Leon Trotsky had just been imprisoned because of his involvement in revolutionary politics. And it was during his confinement that Trotsky was first able to concretely grapple with a materialist conception of history. This led him to author his first major study which concerned itself with a critical history of the elitist prelections of freemasonry (although unfortunately this book remains unpublished because the manuscript was lost). After his release from prison Trotsky would go on to lead the 1905 Revolution as the head of the St Petersburg Soviet and then of course would eventually go on to lead the October Revolution of 1917, and from the 1920s onwards he sat at the head of the socialist opposition to the new Stalinist regime.²⁹

attention to a 1999 article published within the elite magazine *President Parliament Government* by the influential founder of "Aryan astrology" Pavel Globa. In 1991, leading Russian film-maker Nikita Mikhalkov (a former friend of Lev Gumilyov and now a devout supporter of Putin) released the critically acclaimed film *Urga* (released in North America as *Close to Eden*) which drew heavily on Eurasianist themes.

During the 1920s neo-pagan religion known as Tassi "fused supposedly ancient beliefs with a nationalist, right-wing agenda. Tassi never attracted more than a few thousand believers and was crushed as counter-revolutionary in Soviet times, but it is, nevertheless, a fine example of the way nationalism and esoteric beliefs sometimes crossed." Palmer, *The Bloody White Baron*, p.14.

²⁹ Trotsky, *My Life* (1930). This focus for this historical text was however not of his own choosing and his study was largely inspired by the limited nature of the prison library, which Trotsky recalled "was made up mostly of conservative historical and religious magazines". Moreover, in later years right-wing conspiracy theorists would attempt to turn history upon its head by propagating the lie that Trotsky and his

Marxists like Engels and Trotsky always had some sympathy for the religious yearnings among the masses and saw such expressions as an understandable response to capitalist alienation, a means by which ordinary people could make sense and protest against the injustice of the world around them. “Religious suffering is, at one and the same time, the expression of real suffering and a protest against real suffering,” Marx memorably explained. “Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people.” Conversely the anti-Christian nature of modern spiritualism proved all too alluring for many bourgeois socialists, and it is fitting that new religious sects maintained overlapping relationships with many leading social democrats – whether they be in Britain or Russia.³⁰

Ordinary members of the working-class across the world therefore became involved in all manner of religious and psychic explorations, particularly when mass movements to democratize society stumbled in their efforts to dismantle capitalism. But it should be highlighted that those elites who maintained the institutional structures of many of the new occult organizations that swelled at the turn of the century had little interest in democracy, let alone socialism.

Irish poet William Butler Yeats was one such individual who before becoming an influential proponent of fascism had felt drawn to the innate elitism of the Theosophical Society and towards the mysteries of the occult realm more generally. Reflecting upon the connection between Yeats’ fascist politics and his abiding occult interests, George Orwell observed: “It is not clear at first glance why hatred of democracy and a tendency to believe in crystal-gazing should go together.” Yet, as Orwell goes on to explain, “the very concept of

revolutionary comrades were part of a Jewish cabal of freemasons, see Hanebrink, *A Specter Haunting Europe*.

³⁰ For example, Annie Besant, once a leading member of the British Social Democratic Federation, after losing faith in democratic processes became the president of the Theosophical Society. In Russia it is notable that Maxim Gorky was deeply influenced by Theosophy, see Mikhail Agursky, “Maksim Gorky and the decline of Bolshevik Theomachy,” in: Nicolai Petro (ed.), *Christianity and Russian Culture in Soviet Society* (Westview Press, 1990), pp.69-101; also of relevance is Julian Strube’s essay “Occultist identity formations between theosophy and socialism in fin-de-siècle France,” *Numen*, 64(5-6), 2017.

occultism carries with it the idea that knowledge must be a secret thing, limited to a small circle of initiates." This concept of secret knowledge being "the same idea" that is so "integral to Fascism," he continued. "Those who dread the prospect of universal suffrage, popular education, freedom of thought, emancipation of women, will start off with a predilection towards secret cults."³¹

Belief in mysticism therefore came easily to the Russian aristocratic elites who for decades had served as the enforcers of the Tzar's authoritarianism. Hence prior to the 1917 Revolution, during Russia's Silver Age (1890-1914), bourgeois obsessions with idealist philosophies flourished as they had never done so before. This spiritual renaissance developed a particularly strong head of steam in the wake of the first Revolution of 1905; as in addition to workers' gaining the first real sense of their collective power to affect change, the well-to-do benefited from the ensuing relaxation of censorship laws, which amongst other things gave birth to a new Golden Age of Russian occultism.³² A contemporary scholar of the Russian theosophical movement put it this way:

A period of cultural schizophrenia, the Silver Age simultaneously experienced two antithetical worlds. One was the bright, rational, scientific world of Karl Marx and historical materialism, Max Planck and quantum mechanics, and Albert Einstein and the theory of relativity (1905); modern science reigned here. The opposite world was the dark, mysterious realm of Friedrich Nietzsche and eternal

³¹ George Orwell, "W. B. Yeats," *Horizon*, January 1943; Roy Foster, *W.B. Yeats: A Life. Vol. I: The Apprentice Mage* (Oxford University Press, 1997).

³² Maria Carlson, *'No Religion Higher Than Truth': A History of the Theosophical Movement in Russia, 1875-1922* (Princeton University Press, 1993), p.22. "Most important, church censorship was considerably curtailed, thus at last allowing the widespread publication of occult material in Russia. Spreading doctrines contrary or inimical to the Orthodox church was no longer punishable by exile to Siberia." (p.22)

One famous anti-spiritualist play that satirized the superstitious predilections of the ruling-class was Lev Tolstoy's *The Fruits of Enlightenment (Plody prosveshcheniia)*. Although the play premiered in 1890 it "remained prominent on the programmes of Russian theatres after the revolution." Julia Mannherz, *The occult and popular entertainment in late imperial Russia*, in: Menzel *et al.* (eds.), *The New Age of Russia*, p.42.

return, Richard Wagner and the modern mystery drama, the French *poetes maudits*, the haunting canvases of Jean Delville, Odilon Redon, and Gustave Moreau; this was the other world of Mme Blavatsky and the occult.

Like their French predecessors, the Russian Symbolist writers, artists, and God-seekers who dominated Silver Age culture preferred the second world to the first. The physical landscape of the first world consisted of expanding industry, strikes, social unrest, and the vulgarity and mediocrity of a growing middle class. The Russian educated elite feared that it heralded the imminent collapse of culture and civilization. They chose instead to escape from the noisomeness of physical reality into an alternative reality of mind and art where absolute aesthetic and spiritual values still held.³³

According to this historian, perhaps the “most important and visible” Theosophical thinker in Russia during this period was the philosopher Petr Ouspensky. Like many of his privileged colleagues, Ouspensky was dismayed by the democratic uprisings of 1917, and writing in 1919 he concluded that Bolshevism was “a catastrophe, a shipwreck”. And although by 1914 Ouspensky had already departed philosophical ways with the Theosophical Society he remained influenced by the society’s powerful ideas, thus upon fleeing Russia in the early twenties he worked to promote the neo-Sufism of George Gurdjieff in the West which inspired all manner ruling-class intellectuals (most notably Aldous Huxley).³⁴

Mysticism Lives On

After the 1917 Revolution other theosophical leaders in Russia soldiered on under conditions that were no longer favorable to the open promotion of bourgeois mysticism. And coinciding with the failure of the White Armies to oust the Bolsheviks, many Theosophical leaders took this moment to take flight of leave from

³³ Carlson, *No Religion Higher Than Truth*, pp.6-7.

³⁴ Caroline Maclean, *The Vogue for Russia: Modernism and the Unseen in Britain 1900-1930* (Edinburgh University Press, 2015); James Webb, *The Harmonious Circle. The Lives and Work of G.I. Gurdjieff, P.D. Ouspensky, and their Followers* (Thames and Hudson, 1980), p.401.

Russia. For example, in June 1921, Anna Kamenskaia fled from St. Petersburg, where she had served as the president of the Russian Theosophical Society; while the following year Elena Pisareva, who oversaw the proselytizing of the Theosophical Society's second most influential Lodge in Kaluga (about a hundred miles southwest of Moscow) chose to live in exile in Italy. By 1923 Moscow's Free Academy of Spiritual Culture was closed, which brought an end to the Bolshevik's relative tolerance of various mystical and occult groups. And around this time many idealist philosophers whose interests clashed with the working-class objectives of the Bolsheviks were exiled to Western Europe. Nevertheless, despite the official clampdown on occult philosophers and their organizations, their mystical ideas lived on in the Soviet state. For example, Anthroposophical activism was informally and briefly relocated to the warm confines of the experimental Second Studio of the Moscow Art Theatre (MKhAT), until the late twenties when their mystical actor-director Mikhail Chekhov was forced to emigrate.³⁵

Working-class cosmic philosopher Konstantin Tsiolkovskii (1857-1935), who is known as the father of Soviet space travel, is a highly visible reminder of the ethereal remnants of Madame Blavatsky's spiritual imprint upon Kaluga. Tsiolkovskii is now Russia's most famous proponent of a quasi-occult doctrine that dwells on the borders of science, and his pre-Revolutionary contributions towards developing the physical science of space travel meant that on his 75th birthday he was finally elevated from "poverty and obscurity" when he received the Order of the Red Banner of Labor. His star further rose with the eventual development of rocket travel; but most people first became aware of his occult fixations in the 1970s with the unfolding of a new sphere of research known as Russian cosmism. This is because the occult flavor to Tsiolkovskii's multi-faceted life had now become the focus for an annual series of lectures (the Tsiolkovskii Lectures, *Tsiolkovskie Chteniia*) that took place in Kaluga from 1966 onwards and "served as a meeting point and platform for non-

³⁵ Maria Carlson, "Armchair anarchists and salon supermen: Russian occultists read Nietzsche," in: Bernice Rosenthal (ed.), *Nietzsche and Soviet Culture: Ally and Adversary* (Cambridge University Press, 1994), p.121.

conforming thinkers and mystics.³⁶

Therefore, we can see that esoteric ideas did not just simply disappear with the consolidation of the Bolshevik Revolution but instead metamorphized to assume other less obviously spiritual patinas. Some spiritual seekers attempted to parlay their ideas onto various communist projects with little success (whereupon exile became one alternative), while “the most serious occult groups” merely took their “strongly hierarchical” and inherently elitist organizations underground.³⁷ Publicly espoused esoteric ideas also took form in the most unlikely of places and even exerted a limited degree of influence within objective sciences, like within Vladimir Bekhterev’s Reflexological Institute for the Study of the Brain (or Brain Institute for short) which had been established in 1918 (discussed earlier).

³⁶ Michael Hegemeister, “Konstantin Tsiolkovskii and the occult roots of Soviet space travel,” in: Menzel *et al.* (eds.), *The New Age of Russia*, p.136, p.137. “One of the first who pointed to Tsiolkovskii’s ‘cosmic philosophy’ in a broad public way was the always trend-conscious Evgenii Evtushenko in his novel *Wild Berries*.” (p.137) Influential American space scientist John Whiteside Parsons (1914-1952), who was based in Los Angeles also maintained deep occult interests, see George Pendle, *Strange Angel: The Otherworldly Life of Rocket Scientist John Whiteside Parsons* (Harcourt, 2005).

“While Tsiolkovskii’s views most heavily reflected a Theosophical influence, his ideas on nonterrestrial life may also have developed from his reading of the esoterically minded French astronomer Camille Flammarion (1842-1925) and the cosmic-spiritualist philosopher and natural scientist Carl du Prel (1839-1899), whose works were wide-spread in Russian translation around the turn of the 20th century. In his *Philosophy of Mysticism* (1885) the Bavarian private scholar outlined a peculiar synthesis of Darwinism and occultism in an attempt to determine the “status of humans in the universe” and their cosmic tasks. Expecting the end of the Earth, he forecasted a “cosmic expansion” of the history of mankind.” (Hegemeister, “Konstantin Tsiolkovskii and the occult roots of Soviet space travel,” p.144.) For more on this history, see Thomas Weber, “Carl du Prel (1839-1899): Explorer of dreams, the soul, and the cosmos,” *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science*, 38, 2007, pp.593-604.

³⁷ Konstantin Burmistrov, “The history of esotericism in Soviet Russia in the 1920s-1930s,” in: Menzel *et al.* (eds.), *The New Age of Russia*, p.53. Historian Andrei Leonidovich Nikitin (1935-2005) undertook a study of the secret esoteric societies in Soviet Russia that existed during the 1920s-1930s that spans five volumes. His work is published in Russian as *Misticheskie obshchestva i ordena v sovetskoï Rossii* (“Mystical Societies and Orders in Soviet Russia”).

Of course, scientific, and religious research never did fair well under the hammer of Stalin's authoritarian regime, but not too long after Stalin's death religious investigations were opened-up somewhat, and in the late 1950s, Bekhterev's disciple Leonid Vasil'ev (1891-1966) "was officially allowed to resume his research."³⁸

Spiritual Vistas Beyond Stalin

Occult practitioners were keen to exploit the political tensions that manifested themselves after Stalin's passing, and their otherworldly attempts to chart new spiritual directions benefited from other official Soviet positions. One important change which encouraged such occult tendencies was the launch of "a harsh antireligious campaign during the period 1959-1964, which resulted in the forced closing of over half of the churches opened by Stalin during and after the war".³⁹ In addition, following the successful launch of the *Sputnik* satellite in 1957, the Soviet's conquest of outer space was also used to justify the need for this spiritual repression.⁴⁰

As part of these dramatic changes, Ivan Efremov's utopian fantasy *Andromeda: A Space-Age Tale* (*Tumannost' Andromedy*, 1957) was released which that took inspiration from Tsiolkovskii's cosmism and Blavatsky's Theosophy, and its publication "marked the beginning of the flowering of science fiction, which [only] slowed down after 1968."⁴¹ It is also notable that prior to the thaw period under Khrushchev, "One of the most prominent, if not the most central,

³⁸ Menzel, "Occult and esoteric movements in Russia from the 1960s to the 1980s," p.171. Louis Pauwels and Jacques Bergier's *Morning of the Magicians* was translated and published in Moscow in 1964, while excerpts from the text also appeared in the journal *Nauka i religii* during the sixties.

³⁹ John Dunlop, *The Faces of Contemporary Russian Nationalism* (Princeton University Press, 1983), p.32. In December 1922 Lenin had criticized Stalin and his pro-nationalist orientation (see "The question of nationalities or autonomisation"). For a longer discussion of the historic nature of nationalism, see Dave Crouch, "The crisis in Russia and the rise of the right," *International Socialism*, 66, Spring 1995.

⁴⁰ Hegemeister, "Konstantin Tsiolkovskii and the occult roots of Soviet space travel," p.145. Asif Siddiqi, "Imagining the cosmos: utopians, mystics, and the popular culture of spaceflight in revolutionary Russia," *Osiris*, 23, 2008, pp.260-88.

⁴¹ Leonid Heller, "Away from the globe: occultism, esotericism and literature in Russia during the 1960s-1980s," in: Menzel *et al.* (eds.), *The New Age of Russia*, p.190, p.191.

‘medium’ for occult belief systems in the Stalin period was the fictional engagement with extraterrestrial life forms and energies” through scientific fantasy (*nauchnaia fantastika*).

It can be assumed that this fictionalization of occult knowledge was, at least to some extent, the result of targeted cultural policymaking. It offered alternative models for the creation of meaning, which satisfied certain religious needs while following the party line set by the Soviet regime regarding technical and scientific issues. At the same time this phenomenon worked distinctly against the Russian Orthodox belief system.⁴²

Here one of the pioneers of such Soviet UFOlogy was Alexander Kazantsev (1906-2002), and in 1961 one of his space-themed novels was made into the famous film *Planeta Bur* (*The Planet of the Storms*).

Kazantsev not only remained the most prominent representative of the spaceship thesis of the Tunguska meteorite, which now appeared in almost all of his novels, but also, similar to Erich von Däniken in Western Europe, in his texts he propagated the possibility that the human notions of the gods were actually stories about the visits of extraterrestrials to earth...

In the context of the Cold War period, the personalized ‘guests from outer space’ were, at the same time, aimed against the popular myths of the West: The extraterrestrials were conceived as friends and not as hostile invaders, not as colonizers intending to remain on the earth, but rather as temporary visitors, who possibly had a positive influence on human history and always signaled hope for the future.⁴³

⁴² Matthias Schwartz, “Guests from outer space: occult aspects of Soviet science fiction,” in: Menzel *et al.* (eds.), *The New Age of Russia*, p.235.

⁴³ Schwartz, “Guests from outer space,” p.231, p.235. For more on this see Menzel, “Russian science fiction and fantasy literature,” in: Stephen Lovell and Birgit Menzel (eds.), *Reading for Entertainment in Contemporary Russia: Post-Soviet Popular Literature in Historical Perspective* (O. Sagner, 2005). Inspiring the likes of Erich von Däniken n, in 1958 Alexander Kazantsev published “Did ancients meet spacemen?” in the *Australian Flying Saucer Review*.

During this complicated period, paranormal researchers simultaneously acted to manipulate military concerns vis-à-vis the Cold War to open-up new vistas of ‘scientific’ explorations of the spirit world. Here the research activities of long-time occultist, Leonid Vasil’ev, as a member of the Soviet Academy of Science and Order of Lenin Professor of Physiology at the University of Leningrad, now had the chance to rise to the fore to help inaugurate a new era of State-backed research into the paranormal.

A critical year for occult researchers in Russia (and for the rest of the world too) turned out to be 1959. This was partly because the French media had started reporting that American paranormal researchers had carried out a successful demonstration of psychic communication onboard the world’s first nuclear-powered submarine, the Nautilus. However, it was only when the author of this piece, Jacques Bergier, had convinced an editor at France’s top science magazine *Science et Vie* to further legitimate his initial magazine story that Soviet elites began to pay real attention. Vasil’ev thus happily seized upon this rare opportunity and persuaded the ever-paranoid Soviet officials to throw their support behind a new series of scientific investigations into the validity of telepathy.⁴⁴ It is of course significant that in 1960 Bergier had co-authored *Le Matin des magiciens (The Morning of the Magicians)*, a book that helped popularize all manner of conspiracy theories, most particularly in the West. Bergier’s co-author on this occult classic being Louis Pauwels, a former student of

⁴⁴ The first story published on this matter was Jacques Bergier’s “Thought transfer, weapon of war,” December 1959. Unfortunately, to this day historians fail to investigate the origins of the Nautilus story and ignore the occult background of its author. This shortcoming is evident in Anthony Enns’ article “Psychic spies: cold war science and the military-occult complex,” in: Daniel Barber and Ehler Voss (eds.), *Mediality on Trial: Testing and Contesting Trance and other Media Techniques* (De Gruyter, 2020), p.374. By contrast, a now declassified report that was prepared for the US military in 1975 provides an objective review of the state of Soviet psi research. With regard the Nautilus “experiments” the report suggests they “probably were mythical, but the claims had one tangible consequence: the Soviet authorities permitted Vasilev... to publish his own earlier work in which decades previously he had proven to his own satisfaction that radio-type brain waves did not mediate telepathy.” Louis F. Maire II and J.D. LaMothe, “Soviet and Czechoslovakian parapsychology research,” DIA Task PE-1810-12-75, Published September 1975. p.4.

George Gurdjieff, and then recent supporter of the far-right monarchist weekly, *La Nation française* (which had been founded in 1955). The conservative connections of Bergier's co-author were however more than ephemeral, and as the 1960s progressed Pauwels went on to become an important propagandist for French neo-fascism.⁴⁵

Following in the wake of the Nautilus story the psi bug was now taking hold in Russia, and with the official support from the Soviet regime, in 1962 Vasil'ev published *Ekspperimental'nie Issledovanija Myslennogo Vnushenija* (*Experimental Research on Mental Suggestion*). This book summarized the history of occult research in the Soviet Union, which had the effect of opening the academic floodgates to all variety of occult intrigues. From 1962 onwards, Soviet

⁴⁵ Jacques Bergier persuaded the editor of *Science et Vie* to publish "The secret of the Nautilus" in the February 1960 issue of the scientific magazine.

La Nation française which was "founded in 1955 by Pierre Boutang, a former Action française militant, made the retention of North Africa an explicit concern from its first issue"; see Steven Harris, "The Gaulish and the feudal as *lieux de memoire* in post-war French abstraction," *Journal of European Studies*, 35(2), 2005, p.203. For a further confirmation of Louis Pauwels ties to this monarchist milieu, see Harris, p.217. In Tamir Bar-On's *Where Have All The Fascists Gone?* (Routledge, 2016 [2007]) we learn that Pauwels had "written in the revolutionary right's *Cahiers universitaires* in the 1960s" (p.40) before going on to become an early member of the Alain de Benoist's ethnonationalist/neopagan think-tank, the *Groupement de recherche et d'études pour la civilisation européenne* ("Research and Study Group for European Civilization" or GRECE) which had been founded in 1968 (p.51). Bar-On unfortunately overlooks the significance of Pauwels' publication of *Morning of the Magicians*. "*Nouvelle Ecole*, a principal GRECE journal, has featured among its major writers and influences several towering intellectual figures of this century: the neo-Gnostic writer Raymond Abellio (a former French collaborator), Mircea Eliade (who flirted with the fascism of the Romanian Iron Guard), the psychologist Hans Eysenck, the former communist Arthur Koestler and the ethnologist and Nobel Prize winner Konrad Lorenz (who expressed regret for his pro-war Nazi writings, yet used pro-Nazi language to commend the Nazi regime for advocating policies to preserve racial purity)." Bar-On, *Where Have All The Fascists Gone?*, p.7. For a related discussion of GRECE's connections to leading mystic conservative reactionaries housed within the Green movement, see my earlier article "Gambling with our planet," *Theory In Action*, 7(1), January 2014. For an early reference to Louis Pauwels far-right politics through his involvement in *La Nation française*, see Douglas Johnson's "A cultural platform for the new right," *The Guardian*, February 4, 1997, p.16.

paranormal researchers were now able to work closely with their American counterparts, most famously with Dr. J. Gaither Pratt who had been based at J.B. Rhine's Parapsychology Laboratory at Duke University. In the 1960s, Dr. Pratt also worked alongside Czechoslovakia's most famous paranormal researcher, Dr. Milan Ryzl (1928-2011), in providing 'proof' for Pavel Stepanek's so-called psychic abilities. However, in 1967 Dr. Ryzl was forced to leave Czechoslovakia for political reasons, and he settled in the United States where he continued his paranormal intrigues.⁴⁶

The Occult Underground

After Stalin's death the writings of Madame Blavatsky and Petr Ouspensky increased in popularity amongst the Russian public – helped along by the fact that many exiled occultists were allowed to return to Moscow and Leningrad – while the late George Gurdjieff was soon heralded as one of the “leading authorities” whose work informed the new esoteric intelligentsia.⁴⁷ Two “charismatic authorities

⁴⁶ In 1966, Dr. Milan Ryzl had featured alongside J.B. Rhine in a paranormal-boosting American documentary titled “The baffling world of ESP.” For a thorough examination of such scientifically illiterate but well-publicized pseudoscientific escapades, see Martin Gardner, *How Not to Test a Psychic: Ten Years of Remarkable Experiments with renowned Clairvoyant, Pavel Stepanek* (Prometheus Books, 1989). And for an early debunking of paranormal research in Russia, see Milbourne Christopher, *Mediums, Mystics and the Occult* (New York, 1975), pp.84-8.

One uncritical book that helped fuelled the psi-arms race in America was Sheila Ostrander and Lynn Schroeder's *Psychic Discoveries: Behind the Iron Curtain* (Prentice-Hall, 1970); while Martin Ebon's book *Psychic Warfare: Threat or Illusion* (McGraw-Hill, 1983) served much the same purpose in later years. Martin Ebon, a one-time high-ranking official of the US Information Agency and then publicist for Hill & Knowlton, had graduated from these jobs to help lead the work of the US-based Parapsychology Foundation between 1953 and 1965.

Finally, two recent books that serve as a PR-boosters to the psi-community are Annie Jacobsen's book *Phenomena: The Secret History of the U.S. Government's Investigations into Extrasensory Perception* (Little, Brown, 2017), and Stacy Horn's *Unbelievable: Investigations into Ghosts, Poltergeists, Telepathy, and Other Unseen Phenomena, from the Duke Parapsychology Laboratory* (Ecco [an imprint of HarperCollins], 2009).

⁴⁷ Menzel, “Occult and esoteric movements in Russia from the 1960s to the 1980s,” p.156. “Since the late 1950s some of Gurdjieff's disciples, Fedor Verevin (1901-1968 for example) were either released from the GULag or returned to the

of the occult underground” who gained much influence during this new period of relative openness to paranormal phenomena were the poet and translator Evgenii Golovin and the writer Iurii Mamleev, both of whom “incorporated Gurdjieff’s teachings in their ideas and behavior, in particular the elements of shock, provocation, and denigration.” Golovin and Mamleev simultaneously introduced the traditionalist teachings of René Guénon (1886–1951) to their newfound Russian audience, along with their own enduring “fascination with Julius Evola and other philosophers of fascism, [who] also served as inspirations for political occultism.”⁴⁸

In the sixties Mamleev consolidated his influence within Moscow’s bohemian underground by forming a salon/reading group which became known as the Iuzhinskii Circle – a disturbing esoteric group which “drew upon traditionalist ideas to chart a middle course between the Westernizing liberals and Russian nationalists whose struggle constituted the dominant ideological contest within the dissident milieu.”⁴⁹ The Soviet states receptiveness to occult ideas was

capitals from remote hiding places. They attracted young followers, such as Vladimir Stepanov and Boris Kerdimun, who became individual practitioners of the Fourth Way and instructed other young followers, like the writer Arkadii Rovner (b. 1940), the philologist Mikhail Meilakh (b. 1944) and the jazz-musician Boris Grebenshchikov (b. 1953), who spread Gurdjieff’s influence further.” (p.157) For more on this, see Webb, *The Harmonious Circle*. For a useful introduction to Gurdjieff, see “Gurdjieff and Blavatsky: Western esoteric teachers in parallel,” *Literature & Aesthetics*, 21(1), 2011.

⁴⁸ Menzel, “Occult and esoteric movements in Russia from the 1960s to the 1980s,” p.157. Links to Western countries were further invigorated when Arkadii Rovner went to New York to teach Gurdjieffian mysticism at various colleges; and then reinforced in the other direction when he returned to Moscow in 1994 where he founded the Institute for Cultivation of Inner States. (p.158)

⁴⁹ Marlene Laruelle, “The Iuzhinskii circle: far-right metaphysics in the Soviet underground and its legacy today,” *The Russian Review*, 74, 2015, p.564. Iurii Mamleev’s cult samizdat novel *Shatuny* (1966) was first translated and published in English as *The Sublimes* in 2015 by Haute Culture Books, a publisher run by post-modern theorist Luis de Miranda. Laruelle explains that one way in which members of the Iuzhinskii Circle got hold of rare traditionalist and esoteric texts was through Western diplomats working in Moscow. Infamous contemporary neo-fascist Alexander Dugin (b.1962) seems to have been introduced to the Circle in 1980, and the following year translated Evola’s *Pagan Imperialism* and published it in *samizdat*. (p.574) In the early 1990s Dugin promoted the Nazi “Ahnenerbe narrative with a

soon to reverse, and...

At the start of the 1970s the political atmosphere in Soviet Union become more constrained and the crackdown on dissident circles intensified. Mamleev decided to emigrate after the Soviet Union passed a law in 1973 that made sending any samizdat manuscript abroad punishable with several years in prison. He managed to leave the country the following year, during the first large wave of emigration authorized by Moscow thanks to détente... He then settled in Paris in 1983 and became an important figure among Russian émigré circles and anti-Soviet political groups. He emerged as one of the principal representatives of Russian postmodernism and developed a theory of ‘metaphysical realism.’⁵⁰

In many ways, such occult intrigues (which were often combined with post-modern politics) thrived in response to the tangible democratic deficit that marked political life throughout the Cold War, whether that be within the Soviet Union or America. Both countries’ ruling cliques were united out by their willingness to maintain control of the

‘Secrets of the Century’ series of documentary films hosted by the conservative journalist Iurii Vorob’evskii on Channels One and Four in 1992. The first episodes were devoted to the mysticism of the Third Reich.” (p.576) Also of interest, Evgenii Golovin “published under the pseudonym Aleksandr Shternberg, probably a reference to Baron von Ungern-Sternberg”. (p.572)

“The belief in divination is widespread on the Russian right. Half of the December 1991 issue of *Russkoye voskresenye*, the organ of the Russian national-liberation movement, was devoted to translations from Nostradamus, according to whose prophecies the Satanists will be finally destroyed in the year 1999.” “There is no unanimity among the Russian right with regard to the various occult schools. One might have assumed that the doctrines of Madame Blavatsky should have appealed to the Russian right; she was Russian by origin and at one time volunteered to act as an agent of the Russian political police. She prominently referred in her works to India’s wisdom, to the Swastika, and to the Aryan race. Her works, above all *The Secret Doctrine* (1888), were widely published in Russia under *glasnost*. But the right kept its distance from Blavatsky, partly because she presented a syncretic religion colliding with the teachings of the Orthodox church. They are even less sympathetic toward the Rudolf Steiner school of Theosophy – largely, no doubt, because of the Jewish origin of its founder – and they have emphatically rejected the Rosicrucians and Swedenborg, the eighteenth-century Swedish engineer who was a pioneer of the primacy of extrasensory perception.” Laqueur, *Black Hundred*, p.150, p.152.

⁵⁰ Laruelle, “The luzhinskii Circle,” p.567.

levers of political power at the expense of plain folk; in the Soviet Union at the behest of massive state violence, which was largely directly inwards, and in America through the external projection of such power on foreign states. The Soviet Union had *Pravda* to legitimate its show trials and murderous purges, while America had the capitalist 'free press' to collude in the legitimization of its imperial bloodbaths. For both superpowers, the main concerns of the 'rulers that be' were the suppression and subversion of every democratic movement of the working-class, be it Leon Trotsky's Left Opposition, or those of militant rank-and-file trade union movements wherever they developed. As such it was the anti-democratic ideologies of both superpowers that were directly responsible for creating the social conditions that allowed all manner of far-right forces to violently repress and temporarily hold back the struggle of working-class movements across the world.⁵¹

⁵¹ In the Soviet Union, the democratic aspirations of the Bolshevik Revolution were subject to a ruthless and prolonged civil war, with American and British armies (amongst other imperial powers) providing vital support to the reactionary forces of the White Army. Simultaneously, Western elites worked overtime in their continuing attempts to weaken thriving working-class movements in their own countries. When Stalin's anti-democratic forces eventually triumphed over the influence of democratically-orientated Marxists in the early 1920s, the global organizations of the working-class paid a mighty price.

Although we should not neglect the repellent role fulfilled by capitalist elites in helping give birth to Hitler's Nazi state, ultimately it was the criminal political misdirection provided by the Soviet Union's Communist Party to their German comrades that allowed Hitler to seize power in 1933. Likewise, the authoritarian and decidedly unsocialist leadership that Stalin provided to many aspiring internationalists, meant that Communist organizations around the world unwittingly allowed the reactionary forces of the ruling-class (sometimes in the form of fascism) to wrest power from the working-class. These tragic failures in communist leadership were vehemently organized against at every turn by Trotskyist groups around the world. Yet the global esteem with which the Russian Revolution was held by workers, when combined with the lies that were told about Trotskyists in both the communist and capitalist press, meant that all too often working-class fighters were sold out by Stalin's faux internationalism. Furthermore, the leadership of America's ruling-class (albeit conflicted) have always been conscious of where their class interests lie. It is not for no reason that the American state spent the best part of the twentieth century overseeing the overthrow of countless social democratic governments, while openly supporting authoritarian and sometimes fascist governments.

In turn, capitalist support for authoritarian regimes worldwide provided a handy

Writing from the vantage point of the late 1990s, but primarily concerning herself with the evolution of mystical ideas in Russia over the twentieth century, Bernice Rosenthal warned of the anti-democratic tendencies that align around occultism.

In prerevolutionary Russia, [occultism] fostered escapism, extremism, and demonization, thereby helping to ensure that the political, social, economic, and cultural problems to which it was a response remained unsolved. The belief that All are One had a chilling effect on the fragile idea of the rights of the individual vis-à-vis society and the state. Attempts to destroy or transcend existing political and social hierarchies and structures cleared the ground for even more oppressive ones. In the Soviet period, occultism nourished utopian expectations that no ordinary government could realize, inadvertently making people receptive to the extraordinary measures of Stalin's time. The meshing of technology and the occult facilitated the ultimately dehumanizing view of people as machines. Occultism provided grist for concocted fantasies that attributed shortages and mishaps to a network of conspirators intent on "spoiling" the plan, "harming" the toiling masses, and (later on) destroying the Soviet Union. The occult paranoia that Stalinist conspiracy theory generated

incubating ground for far-right bourgeois intellectuals seeking intellectual refuge from what they saw as a bankrupt materialist world. Under right-wing government's reactionary mystics often found toleration for their ideas, particularly when their occult theories brought them into direct conflict with the open democratic organizations of the working-class. Moreover, the inherently elitist initiation ceremonies accompanying occult practices had an obvious appeal to members of ruling-class holding forth to idealist and hierarchal interpretations of reality; this applies as much whether they be corporate leaders, former aristocrats, or paranoid members of intelligence agencies. Religiosity for such elites, whether mainstream or occult, is just another way in which they might attack socialism and manipulate faith in ongoing attempts to placate the masses. For as far as the ruling-class are concerned anything was preferable to allowing the majority of the working-class to become actively engaged in politics.

For details of how Stalin's foreign policy objectives undermined socialist struggles and brought the forces of reaction to power, see Leon Trotsky, *The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany* (Pathfinder, 1971); Pierre Broué and Emile Témime, *The Revolution and the Civil War in Spain, 1934-1939* (Haymarket, 2008); and for a detailed examination of the history of Left Opposition that was written in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union, see Vadim Rogovin's 7-volume series *Was There An Alternative?*

took on a life of its own. In present-day Russia, the anti-empirical, antirational mentality that occultism encourages can once again help ensure that political and economic problems remain unsolved. Indeed, as the year 2000 looms ever closer, the occult threatens to fuse with apocalyptic fears in extremist political ideologies. Politically, the occult is dangerous.⁵²

⁵² Rosenthal, "Political implications of the early twentieth century occult revival," in: Rosenthal (ed.), *The Occult in Russian and Soviet Culture* (Cornell University Press, 1997), p.418. Likewise, a useful history of French occultism and its connections to far-right political movements is provided by David Allen Harvey's *Beyond Enlightenment: Occultism and Politics in Modern France* (Northern Illinois University Press, 2005). Rather unsurprisingly such political conclusions have been opposed by postmodern theorists of this period. Thus, Julia Mannherz in her book *Modern Occultism in Late Imperial Russia* (Northern Illinois University Press, 2012) directly contradicts Rosenthal's conclusions (p.97) and goes on to conclude (that at least in the period before World War I) that "in Russia, the emergence of occult ideas and practices in mainstream culture was closely related to the blossoming of a pluralist culture." (p.193)

THREE

A New Age Cold War

Compared to its ready acceptance within the bourgeois milieu, occult and idealist means of comprehending reality only tend to exert a decisive influence over the working-class when other more material theories have been tested and have failed. Hence the failures of the Left to make adequate socialist advances in the West, led to significant periods of public disillusionment with both democratic and socialist ideals. Thus, it is a widely held view that in the wake of the political upheavals that rocked America during the 1960s, the 1970s were a time when many people embraced the type of counterculture New Age ideas that focused on self-sufficiency and on personal spiritual development. But this turn away from class politics from some segments of the population was never the full story, and such narratives tend to sideline the militant working-class struggles that, in a rational and truly democratic world, should feature more prominently in our memories of this period.¹

It also remains critical that historians of ongoing battles for democracy should not fall into the trap of attempting to draw an imaginary line between what are often seen to be progressive New Age phenomena and the ideologies of their conservative counterparts. False dichotomies like this do nothing to improve our understanding of these turbulent years and elide the strongly anti-communist, anti-working-class politics held by many New Age pioneers. This causes us, the working-class, problems when historical analyses ignore the important role played by far-right-wing groups – like the John Birch Society – in preparing the ground for the public's assimilation of

¹ Aaron Brenner, Robert Brenner, and Cal Winslow (eds.), *Rebel Rank and File: Labor Militancy and Revolt from Below During the Long 1970s* (Verso, 2010).

various New Age modalities, whether that be a propensity to believe in anti-government conspiracy theories, or the acceptance of anti-scientific theories as a substitute for effective medical treatments.

Nevertheless, it remains true that the elite forces who were opposed to socialist politics from both the far-right, and from a more liberal position, served to fulfil significant roles in encouraging the public to turn away from rational thinking and collective action. And while the mystifying role of the far-right will be taken up more fully in later chapters, this chapter will foreground the activities of the bourgeois mystics associated with developing the counterculture mission of the Californian New Age hub that was the Esalen Institute. In doing so this chapter, rather than blame ordinary people for adopting spiritual beliefs, will instead highlight the activities of “an intellectual and cultural elite” of bohemians who served as a corrosive “incubator of all things new age.”²

Esalen’s Arrival

Money, of course, had never proved a limited problem for the Esalen’s wealthy cofounders, Michael Murphy and Richard Price. And after setting up their New Age base in 1962 Murphy had become a close friend and spiritual advisor for his kindred spirit, Laurance Rockefeller, the billionaire philanthropist who in subsequent decades “supplied vital resources” (literally millions of dollars) to Esalen through his Fund for the Enhancement of Human Spirit.³ Other

² Bernice Rosenthal, “Occultism as a response to a spiritual crisis,” p.413.

³ Marion Goldman, *The American Soul Rush: Esalen and the Rise of Spiritual Privilege* (New York University Press, 2012), p.143; for a general overview of the individualizing tendencies of Esalen-type products, see Micki McGee, *Self-Help, Inc.: Makeover Culture in American Life* (Oxford University Press, 2005).

The American ruling-classes interests in exploring mystical beliefs in distant countries was partly encouraged by the hope that by developing a new understanding of Eastern religions they could use these new ideas to undermine communist ideologies. This interesting theory was vocalized by Walter Huston Clark in his 1964 Presidential Address to the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion. As he put it: “Thus I have argued that the understanding of the mystical consciousness will play an important part in the process of the cultural approach between the Eastern and the Western peoples of the world. Indeed it may be an important weapon in the struggle against Communism, in that Communism represents an over-emphasis and perversion of that materialism and rationalism of which the West already has too

aristocratic intellectuals who played a central role in Esalen's establishment were the conservative parapsychologist/ UFOologist Gerald Heard, and his good friend and fellow perennial philosopher, Aldous Huxley.

Both Heard and Huxley had previously been initiated into the religious rites of the Vedanta Society of Southern California, and between 1942 and 1947 the mystical pair had run a monastic enclave in the mountains southeast of Los Angeles known as the Trabuco College of Prayer. It was this spiritual enclave which had provided the direct inspiration for Esalen's creation. "Heard believed that an entire 'new race' of spiritual leaders could be created through disciplined religious immersion, and that the new race could lead humankind in a wonderfully constructive direction, in contrast to the destruction of war then so evident."¹ Here it is notable that the elitism undergirding Trabuco's revitalizing mission meshed well with Heard's less well-known work with libertarian corporate elites, and his involvement in launching an elitist spiritual organization called The Wayfarers -

much. If we are to assist Asians to be true to their heritage, we must understand and support that in which they are most different from the Communists, whose power politics imposed on Eastern people, has already done so much violence to Eastern religious ideals." Clark, "The mystical consciousness and world understanding, Presidential Address, Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, 1964," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 4, 1965, pp.160-1.

¹ Timothy Miller, "Notes on the prehistory of the Human Potential Movement: the Vedanta Society and Gerald Heard's Trabuco College," in: Jeffrey Kripal and Glenn Shuck (eds.), *On the Edge of the Future: Esalen and the Evolution of American Culture* (Indiana University Press, 2005), pp.87-8; also see Kevin Starr, *Golden Dreams: California in an Age of Abundance, 1950-1963* (Oxford University Press, 2009), pp.314-51; and for background on Trabuco, see Laurence Veysey, *The Communal Experience: Anarchist and Mystical Communities in Twentieth Century America* (Harper & Row, 1973). In many ways the Trabuco College was inspired by the famous spiritual irrationalism of Count Hermann Keyserling, an aristocrat who would later give his own "public endorsement of the Third Reich"; see Walter Struve's *Elites Against Democracy: Leadership Ideas in Bourgeois Political Thought in Germany, 1890-1933* (Princeton University Press, 1973), p.314. The earlier esoteric "School of Wisdom" which had opened in 1920 "was to be the vehicle through which Keyserling trained his metaphysically superior elite to lead the spiritual reawakening of the world." Richard Noll, *The Jung Cult: Origins of a Charismatic Movement* (Princeton University Press, 1994), p.94.

whose founding conference was held in August 1956.⁵ Around this time Heard also proved influential in assisting the ideological work of an ultraconservative group called the Mobilization for Spiritual Ideals (better known as Spiritual Mobilization) which, in addition to taking inspiration from Heard, had embraced the positive thinking ideologies that had been popularized by Rev. Norman Vincent Peale (an individual who had been recruited to serve on Spiritual Mobilization's advisory board).⁶

⁵ In founding The Wayfarers, which itself an offshoot of Spiritual Mobilization, Gerald Heard had worked closely with Edmund Opitz and James Ingebretsen. As part of his work as a guru to the powerful Heard gave spiritual guidance to a wide array of prominent conservatives some of which included William Mullendore (chair of Southern California Edison Company), Henry and Clare Booth Luce and Robert Greenleaf of AT&T.

⁶ Ample funding for Spiritual Mobilization was provided by J. Howard Pew who at the time was attempting to push a variety of religious groups towards the right. However, by the end of fifties Spiritual Mobilization's organizational impetus was fading, and in the fall of 1959, James Fifield resigned from the organization where "he had served as actual and symbolic leader for twenty-five years, and became a sponsor of the first attempt by Robert W. Welch to organize the John Birch Society in California". Eckard V. Toy, Jr., "Spiritual Mobilization: the failure of an ultraconservative ideal in the 1950s," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, 61, April 1970, p.78.

Another influential libertarian who was part of this spiritual movement was Leonard Read who "in many ways a spiritual leader in the psychological-mystical trends" developing on the political right and exemplified in his Anthroposophical tinged text *Elements of Libertarian Leadership* (1962). "Read was not unique in this among his libertarian friends. [R.C.] Hoiles was fascinated with Krishnamurtri, and other [Foundation for Economic Education] board members along with Read found theosophists and metaphysicians from Rudolf Steiner to Alfred DeNouy to Stewart Edward White and Franz Winkler endlessly worth delving into and contemplating. Mullendore was Read's special spiritualist buddy. They shared their opinions and enthusiasms in the field in their correspondence for years. But the libertarian businessman/intellectual circle found their personal guru in Gerald Heard." Brian Doherty, *Radicals for Capitalism: A Freewheeling History of the Modern American Libertarian Movement* (PublicAffairs, 2008), p.76, p.77.

Heard's embrace of increasingly conservative political positions from the late 1940s onwards is discussed in Alison Falby, *Between the Pigeonholes: Gerald Heard, 1889-1971* (Cambridge Scholars, 2008); Toy, "The conservative connection: the chairman of the board took LSD before Timothy Leary," *American Studies*, 21, 1980, p.65, p.73; Kim Philips-Fein, *Invisible Hands: The Making of the Conservative Movement from the New Deal to Reagan* (WW Norton, 2008), pp.75-7.

Last but not least, another individual who played a key part in establishing Esalen's spiritual orientation was the best-selling Zen author, Alan Watts; and related to this, in 1951 Watts had helped cofound the American Academy of Asian Studies. Based in San Francisco and largely inspired by the integral yoga of Sri Aurobindo (1872-1950), this Academy's goal, in Watts's words, was nothing less than "the practical transformation of human consciousness."⁷ Yet obtaining stable funding for this ambitious project initially presented a major problem, as by late 1952 their "angel" financier could no longer afford to finance their work.⁸ Nevertheless, despite these teething problems, the American Academy of Asian Studies struggled on, all the while Watts gained in personal influence, such that at end of the decade Watts was invited to Zurich to lecture at the C.G. Jung Institute.⁹ This connection to Jung was no doubt connected to the

⁷ Monica Furlong, *Zen Effects: The Life of Alan Watts* (Houghton Mifflin Company, 1986), p.132. A more critical summary of Aurobindo's ambitions were provided in John Bramble's *Modernism and the Occult* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015): "Aurobindo's fantasy is the same as turn-of-the-century Europe's: if decadence is the necessary outcome of civilization, then the only hope for regeneration is a return to the vital and sacred. Though its immediate basis was later nineteenth-century neo-Romanticism, the new counter-modern, revivificatory style can ultimately be traced to the 'symbols of the old noble way of life' synthesized by Liebersohn's aristocrats, as they fled the 'exterminating logic of democracy' and the urban-industrial ravages of the modern world." (p.24)

In 1968 some of Sri Aurobindo's other disciples had founded Auroville in India, which served as an experimental spiritual center that has been well-supported by many influential members of the American ruling-class. The current international advisory board of the Auroville Foundation which governs Auroville's affairs includes Asia Society president Vishakha Desai (whose husband is Rockefeller Brothers Fund trustee, Robert Oxnam), and former advisors include the likes of Esalen Institute founder Michael Murphy, Ervin Laszlo (see next chapter), and elite power-broker Maurice Strong.

⁸ This early angel was Louis Gainsborough, a wealthy businessman who was most famous for funding a documentary that popularized Gandhi's pacifist ideologies in America.

⁹ In 1962 Alan Watts then received a two-year fellowship from Harvard University's Department of Social Relations, which meant he began to see more of Timothy Leary, whom he was already acquainted with. Leary recalled the evenings in his kitchen when "the wizard held court, drinking heavily, spinning out tales of fabled consciousness expanders of the past. [Watts talked of Madame Blavatsky, Annie Besant, Krishnamurti, and Gurdjieff.]" However, unlike Leary, but much like Aldous

intellectual interests of the Academy's other cofounder, a professor of comparative religions named Frederic Spiegelberg (1897-1994), who in the post-war period had acted as "one of the principal transmitters of integral yoga, Chan Buddhism, Heideggerian existentialism, and Jungian psychology to the West."¹⁰ The mystical influence of such

Huxley, Watts was opposed to the widespread consumption of LSD. Instead, during the turbulent 1960s Watts "did not involve himself with civil rights or with the peace movement" but in the early 1970s he led a course at Esalen "to work with Army officers on the drug problem in the U.S. Army." Furlong, *Zen Effects*, p.139, p.146, p.162, p.168, p.200, pp.204-5.

In 1937 Watts started dating and soon married Eleanor Everett, whose mother, Ruth Fuller Everett "knew more about Zen than Watts." Ruth herself had discovered Zen Buddhism at Pierre Bernard's ashram in Nyack on the Hudson River and had then travelled to Japan where she met D.T. Suzuki, who introduced her to the famous Roshi Nanshinken under whom she studied, becoming the first Western woman to be allowed to sit *zazen* at his monastery. Watts had thus married into a powerful family and was a kept man who could continue to satisfy his autodidactic religious inclinations. He did however begin teaching at the Jungian Analytical Psychology Club, turning his popular Jungian lectures into a book, *The Meaning of Happiness* (Harper, 1940). Later, while remaining a Buddhist, Watts became a Christian priest in order to earn his own living independently of his wife or perhaps also to avoid being drafted into the military. However, eventually he was forced to resign from his religious post when it became evident that his affair with a woman living within his own home was fast becoming public knowledge. His ensuing divorce and subsequent marriage to Dorothy De Witt in 1950 left him financially speaking in a fairly desperate position relative to his former life of luxury. Furlong, *Zen Effects*, p.62, p.80, p.88, p.122.

When the American Academy of Asian Studies collapsed in the mid-1960s it was subsequently relaunched in 1968 by Haridas Chaudhuri as the California Institute of Asian Studies (which eventually became the California Institute of Integral Studies). During the 1990's, under the presidency of Robert McDermott (the author of books on Aurobindo and Rudolf Steiner), CIIS significantly expanded its programs after receiving a \$5 million grant from Laurance Rockefeller. Julie Nicklin, "Laurance Rockefeller awards \$5-million to California Institute of Integral Studies," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, March 6, 1991. The recent chairwomen of the California Institute of Integral Studies, Elizabeth McCormack, serves as an advisor to Rockefeller Family and Associates.

For a useful related overview of how Buddhist religious rites have been distorted and misappropriated by mystics and New Age practitioners, see Donald Lopez, *Prisoners of Shangri-La: Tibetan Buddhism and the West* (University of Chicago Press, 2018 [1998]).

¹⁰ Ahmed Kabil, "The new myth: Frederic Spiegelberg and the rise of a whole earth, 1914-1968," *Integral Review*, 8(1), 2012, p.44. "The two outlooks of Jung and

philosophies on Esalen's subsequent development cannot be overstated, all the more so as two of the many well-heeled students who studied at the Academy had been Michael Murphy and Richard Price.¹¹ The two individuals who would soon to go on to form the Esalen Institute to explore the boundaries of "human potential."

Esalen's Soviet Connection

Although Esalen is most famous for the influence it exerted over the developing New Age movement in America, from 1971 onwards Michael Murphy's own paranormal interests had brought him to the Soviet Union to undertake experiments with Russian psychics. This newfound obsession with Soviet occultism was a hobby that was shared

Heidegger informed Spiegelberg's seminal intellectual contribution, the *Religion of No Religion* (Spiegelberg, 1948), first published as a lecture in 1938 at the London Buddhist lodge. Spiegelberg was a refugee at the time, having fled Nazi Germany in 1937 after being dismissed from Dresden for going to a conference banned by the Nazis." (p.47) In 1949, however, just prior to founding the American Academy of Asian Studies the professor had studied at Sri Aurobindo's ashram in India with the aid of a research grant from the Rockefeller Foundation.

¹¹ Michael Murphy had come under the influence of Vedanta teachings having spent 16 months at Sri Aurobindo's ashram in India, while on the other hand, Richard Price's first spiritual preference was Zen Buddhism. It is worth noting that 1965 saw the passing of the Immigration and Nationality Act which enabled many spiritual gurus from India (particularly from the brahminic Indian upper class) to settle in the United States; see Sanjoy Chakravorty, Devesh Kapur, and Nirvikar Singh, *The Other One Percent: Indians in America* (Oxford University Press, 2019). For a discussion of earlier influences of Indian spiritual elites upon the West, see Stephen Hay, *Asian Ideas of East and West: Tagore and His Critics* (Harvard University Press, 1970), and Michael Barker, "An education fit for the elite," *Swans Commentary*, March 10, 2014.

Similarly the import of the conservative ideology of Zen Buddhism from Japan to America (most significantly via the spiritual practice of D.T. Suzuki) owed much to its compatibility with capitalist ideology, see Inken Prohl, "California 'Zen': Buddhist spirituality made in America," *Amerikastudien / American Studies*, 59(2), 2014. In the 1930s one of the most important critics of Zen Buddhism was the Japanese Marxist writer Tosaka Jun (1900–1945), see for example, Kenn Nakata Steffensen, "Translation of Tosaka Jun's 'The Philosophy of the Kyoto School,'" *Comparative and Continental Philosophy*, 8(1), 2016. For an intriguing examination of elite intrigues revolving around leading Zen disciple Paul Hawken, see Michael Downing, *Shoes Outside the Door: Desire, Devotion, and Excess at San Francisco Zen Center* (Counterpoint, 2001).

by many otherworldly minded Americans,¹² having been catalyzed by the publication of Sheila Ostrander and Lynn Schroeder's popular text *Psychic Discoveries Behind the Iron Curtain* (Prentice-Hall, 1970) - a book which only boosted the innate paranoia of psi-minded analysts in the American war machine.¹³ Either way Murphy's talents were evidently in demand, and following his first visit to the Soviet Union, he returned the following year. He then returned in 1979, which was followed by another visit in July 1980 where "he came by invitation, indirectly, of the KGB," with his trip being "officially hosted by the faculty of American Studies at Moscow University."¹⁴ These and other similar "encounters between Russian and American members

¹² Another researcher who made the same journey in 1971 was Dr. Stanley Krippner of the Saybrook Institute who visited Moscow at the invitation of the Russian Academy of Pedagogical Sciences to investigate paranormal research. Like Michael Murphy, Krippner made repeat visits to the Soviet Union and wrote about his experiences in his book *Human Possibilities: Mind Exploration in the USSR and Eastern Europe* (Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1980). He would later serve as a prime organizer of two conferences on humanistic and transpersonal psychology that were held in the former Soviet Union.

¹³ During the late 1970s and early 1980s within parts of the Soviet scientific literature "mysticism became an 'ideological target' and a very convenient object of criticism". "Their titles speak for themselves: 'Mysticism and Occultism in the Service of the "Neoconservative Wave" ideologues', (Kononov 1985); 'Mysticism in the Service of Anti-Communism', (Belov and Karpov 1978); 'Neomysticism and the Difficulties of Ideological Warfare', (Rotovsky 1989); 'Mysticism in the Service of Modern Orthodoxy', (Gordienko 1981), etc." Tatiana Malevich, "Studies in mysticism and mystical experience in the Soviet and Post-Soviet Russia," *European Journal for Philosophy of Religion*, 7(2), 2015, p.183. Malevich also draws her readers attention to a Ph.D published in 1977 by Soviet researcher Vladimir Khrshanovsky which sought "to explain the genesis of mystical experiences and ideas in terms of Leon Festinger's cognitive dissonance theory. Khrshanovsky held that people in modern Western societies were constantly suffering from the state of cognitive dissonance. This dissonance was due to the fact that people in Western societies were not being able to meet their religious needs by means of traditional religiosity, which runs counter to the spirit of scientific knowledge. This inability to meet their religious needs was caused by the social and economic oppression of the capitalist system. In such a situation, 'irrational mysticism' could 'escape the rationalist criticism and, at the same time, satisfy the religious needs' of the individual, thus resolving the dissonance. Unfortunately, Khrshanovsky's attempt received no further development." (p.186-7)

¹⁴ Birgit Menzel, "Occult and esoteric movements in Russia from the 1960s to the 1980s," p.180 This trip "took place in spite of frozen US-Soviet relations after the invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979." (p.181)

of the New Age were facilitated by the US diplomat Arthur Hartmann, who, thanks to some personal contacts, was sympathetic to Esalen.”¹⁵

Murphy, upon returning to America in 1980, now quickly moved to convene a meeting at Esalen “to discuss the worrisome state of the US-Soviet relationship”; whereupon, with funding provided by Laurance Rockefeller, the Esalen Soviet-American Exchange Program was born. (This program was chaired by Joseph Montville and headed by Murphy’s colleague, Jim Hickman, whose problematic political legacy is discussed later.)¹⁶ The newly minted Soviet-American Exchange Program set itself the aim of realizing global change by

¹⁵ Menzel, “Occult and esoteric movements in Russia from the 1960s to the 1980s,” p.181. When Arthur Hartmann “became Ambassador in Moscow under President Reagan, he opened his house for numerous events and meetings with Russian Rock-musicians as well as psychic healers.” (p.181)

¹⁶ During the early eighties Jim Hickman played a leading role in establishing the Association of Space Explorers which built upon an idea first proposed by astronaut Edgar Mitchell. Indeed, in October 1973, Mitchell had first “mentioned the idea of an astronaut-cosmonaut group in a letter to the State Department, suggesting that the group work as ‘goodwill ambassadors for peace and unity on a global scale.’” Andrew Jenks, “U.S.-Soviet handshakes in space and the cold war imaginary,” *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 23(2), Spring 2021.

The original Esalen Soviet-American Exchange Program evolved into the Russian-American Center and eventually became an independent non-profit organization called TRACK TWO: An Institute for Citizen Diplomacy. In 1989 Esalen hosted Boris Yeltsin’s “nine-day trip” to America which was partially funded by Jorge Mas Canosa, the millionaire spokesperson for the right-wing Cuban American Foundation. Indeed it is noteworthy that “Yeltsin’s close working relationship with key figures in the U.S. right wing [like Paul Weyrich] has been ignored by the mainstream media.” In 1988, Esalen then “Hosted a second delegation of eminent Soviet writers including Vladimir Karpov, First Secretary of the USSR Union of Writers, satirist Mikhail Zhvanetsky, playwright Viktor Rozov and short-story writer Tatiana Tolstoy who toured the United States and met with Susan Sontag, Norman Mailer, Kurt Vonnegut, and other American writers to facilitate the entry of the Soviet Writers’ Union into the International Pen Club, which monitors government censorship and freedom of expression around the world. The Writer’s Union did indeed join the Pen Club as a central event of Soviet glasnost. Esalen and TRACK TWO consider this to be one of their most important contributions to the Soviet Union’s opening to free speech and democracy.” In 1989 Esalen then “Organized a delegation of Americans to participate in the inaugural conference of the USSR Association of Peace Through Culture, formed in honor of Nicholas Konstantin Roerich, 1874-1947, one of the most highly revered Russian artists in the Soviet Union.”

engaging in “Track Two Diplomacy,” a form of citizen diplomacy that sought to parallel government diplomacy in bringing an end to the Cold War.¹⁷ Keen to bring spiritual peace to the world at any cost, Murphy and his supporters at Esalen were now directly involved in carrying through the foreign policy objectives of the Reagan administration -- a President, who like Murphy, was equally intrigued by occult phenomena.

On the Soviet side, consciousness guru Joseph Goldin, served as a vital node of communication for Murphy’s citizen diplomats – with Goldin even spending time on Esalen’s board of trustees.¹⁸ Questioning capitalism had never been a concern for most of Esalen’s powerbrokers, and the same remained true for Goldin, who owing to the contacts that he had gained access through Esalen went on to become a multi-millionaire. Another US entrepreneur who linked up with Goldin in the early 1980s was Joel Schatz, and together they pioneered the digital transfer of slow-scan image links between the two superpowers. In subsequent years, Schatz, with the help of billionaire

¹⁷ For example, in 1984, while living in Moscow, Michael Murphy had introduced Norman Mailer to the Soviet Writers’ Union, which with his help was soon to join the International Pen Club. The Soviet Writers’ Union, however, was no ordinary union, and was a powerful company union whose leaders, since the late 1960s, had been dominated by conservative Russian nationalists. For more details, see John Garrard and Carol Garrard, *Inside the Soviet Writers’ Union* (I.B.Tauris, 1990); John Dunlop, *The Rise of Russia and the Fall of the Soviet Empire* (Princeton University Press, 1993), pp.128-9; Kevin O’Connor, *Intellectuals and Apparatchiks: Russian Nationalism and the Gorbachev Revolution* (Lexington Books, 2006), p.92.

¹⁸ During these years it is worthwhile recalling that decision-making at Esalen was guided by spirits from outer space. As Jeffrey Kripal recalls: “In January and February of 1979, [Esalen cofounder Richard Price] also began using nine immaterial beings channeled through the automatic writing of a British psychic named Jenny O’Connor. This rather unusual administrative strategy, which went on for years... Jenny and the Nine, as they came to be called, were also quite controversial within the Esalen community, not because of O’Connor’s alleged psychic powers or because the Nine happened to be from the star Sirius (that was all normal fare), but because Dick decided to ask Jenny and the Nine to help him make tough administrative decisions, which included firing and hiring individuals. In Erickson’s memory, around Esalen at least ‘the Nine were much better known for performing the role of extraterrestrial hatchet men than for giving psychic insight into how Esalen might actually improve its operations.’” Jeffrey Kripal, *Esalen: America and the Religion of No Religion* (University of Chicago Press, 2008), pp.365-6.

philanthropist George Soros, would go on to set up a Moscow-based telecommunications company that transformed Schatz into a “telecom mogul”.¹⁹

During the 1980s, the similarly minded Institute for Soviet and American Relations – which was founded in 1983 by Jungian psychologist Harriett Crosby – liaised closely with Esalen’s own exchange program. Crosby herself in fact played a critical role in solidifying Esalen’s Soviet connections as she was “a close friend of Donna Hartman,” the wife of Reagan’s newly appointed ambassador to the Soviet Union, as she had “lived in the Hartmans’ home in Washington, D.C., while Arthur was the ambassador to France.”²⁰ After the collapse of the Soviet Union Crosby then pursued her own eco-mystical commitments through the Institute for Deep Ecology, and it is here where we meet Fran Macy, who served as the head of the Institute for Deep Ecology in the 1990s. This link to Macy is important because he proved to be the real pioneer of Soviet-American exchange programs: as many years earlier, in 1961, Macy had been tasked by the US government to organize the third American National Exhibition in Moscow – a project which had been conceived as a vital part of the US Information Agency’s cultural Cold War.²¹ Macy then went on to other related occupations like coordinating Peace Corps projects in India and Nigeria; but by 1983 Macy had returned to America, and while he was serving as the director of the Association for Humanistic Psychology Macy had launched his Association’s very own Soviet Exchange Program that brought delegations of educators and psychologists to Russia for professional exchanges and trainings.²²

¹⁹ Julia Barton, “Videochatting with communists,” *The Atlantic*, November 3, 2014. This Moscow-based telecommunications company was established in 1990.

²⁰ Kripal, *Esalen: America and the Religion of No Religion*. Kripal adds: “When [Harriett] Crosby found herself calling on psychic healers for interviews, she found it necessary to walk the streets of Moscow and make her calls from public pay phones so that the calls would not be coming from the U.S. embassy. She quickly discovered that there were two quasi-magical phrases that opened almost every Russian door for her: ‘Esalen’ and ‘Jim Hickman.’”

²¹ Michael Krenn, *Fall-Out Shelters for the Human Spirit: American Art and the Cold War* (University of North Carolina Press, 2005), pp.155-78.

²² Fran Macy’s (1927-2009) affinity for “deep ecology” remains in keeping with his

Before turning to other government programs dedicated to managing Soviet-US relations, it is important to introduce one last non-profit, the San Francisco-based Center for US-USSR Initiatives (now known as the Center for Citizen Initiatives) – a group which was founded and funded by the multi-millionaire anthroposophist Henry Dakin.²³ Less spiritually-minded than the aforementioned groups, this

elitist background, see Murray Bookchin, “Social ecology versus deep ecology: a challenge for the ecology movement,” *Green Perspectives*, Summer 1987. Bookchin believed that “no other ‘radical’ ecology philosophy could be more congenial to the ruling elites of our time.” Dave Foreman and Murray Bookchin, *Defending the Earth* (South End Press, 1991), p.129. Fran Macy’s longstanding wife Joanna Macy also happens to be a leading theorist of deep ecology. Born to great wealth – her father had opened his own stock brokerage firm in the late 1920s – in the aftermath of World War II Joanne relocated to France where she researched the French Communist Party to undermine its effectiveness; soon thereafter she was recruited to the CIA (where she remained employed for just over two years). Later in her life Joanne went back to university to study for a Ph.D. which combined her interest in Ervin Laszlo’s general systems theories with her love of Buddhism. Subsequently this led her to become a devout supporter of a pacifist self-help movement called the Sarvodaya Shramadana Sangamaya which was the “largest nongovernmental organization in Sri Lanka.” She recalls that her first postdoctoral studies on this group were partly funded with “a modest grant from the Ford Foundation”. To this day the Sarvodaya movement receives massive support from imperialist funders like USAID. Joanna Macy, *Widening Circles: A Memoir* (New Society Publishers, 2000), p.7, p.58, p.142, p.184, p.185.

²³ The primary funder of the Center for US-USSR Initiatives the San Francisco-based multimillionaire anthroposophist Henry Dakin, who 23promoted scores of Esalen-related ventures during the 1980s and beyond (including those relating to deep ecology). During its early years (1986-9), notable green capitalist mystic, Paul Hawken, served on the advisory board of the Center for US-USSR Initiatives; while between 1998 and 2000 another important New Age connector, Amy Vossbrinck, served as the organizations Chief Operating Officer, arriving at this position after having cofounded Mikhail Gorbachev’s State of the World Forum. Prior to this she recalls how she “coordinated the logistics for and traveled with President Boris Yeltsin, President Eduard Shevardnadze and President Mikhail Gorbachev during their individual speaking tours of the United States in 1989, 1991 and 1992 respectively.” And adds that, around this period, she: “Performed due diligence and managed troubleshooting for a joint venture between an American minerals company and a Russian technology company which resulted in the discovery of two exploration stage gold properties in Alaska.” (LinkedIn profile, viewed April 6, 2018.)

With a family fortune derived from the stuffed animal toy company, Dakin Inc., during the 1960s Henry Dakin had designed a pocket radiation detector while based at the Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory, and in subsequent years melded these more

Center recalled how their less explicit mission, that is to export the interests of Western capitalism, “became further defined” in 1989 with the creation of their “Economic Development Program” which provided “the first-in-existence business-management training program for Soviet entrepreneurs.” To this day the founder of the Center for Citizen Initiatives, Sharon Tennison, remains at the head of her organization; and always keen to put the needs of capital before citizens, Tennison remains a loyal and vocal apologist for Vladimir Putin’s crony capitalism.²¹

Doing Business Under Communism

That American elites actively promoted corporate profiting in the former Soviet Union should come as no surprise, as they were doing this throughout most of the twentieth century. Indeed, the hypocrisy of the ruling-class knows no bounds, and shortly after helping finance a vicious civil war to crush the Bolshevik’s inspiring workers’ movement, corporate elites soon saw new potential investment opportunities that were linked to Stalin’s rise to power. Thereafter America’s largest corporations including Ford, General Electric and Dupont were quick to profit from Stalin’s murderous regime and proved to be eager participants in his first five-year plan. Here Fred Koch provides a particularly intriguing example of an American businessman who (from 1928 onwards) helped Stalin to build oil refineries in the Soviet Union even though Koch was an avid fan of

material interests with his own parapsychological obsessions. For example, in 1979, Dakin effectively adopted the quantum mystic Saul-Paul Sirag when he brought him into the Washington Research Institute, which served as Dakin’s personal New Age salon in San Francisco. Before this move Sirag had been based at Arthur M. Young’s Institute for the Study of Consciousness and had gone on to become a leading member of the Fundamental Fysiks Group. Birgit Menzel, “New age diplomacy: the role of the Esalen Institute in ending the Cold War,” Presented at the 51st ASEEEES Annual Convention held in San Francisco, California, on November 23, 2019.

²¹ Ironically, but not totally unsurprisingly, Sharon Tennison despite her support of Putin was persecuted by his conspiratorial Russian regime when she stood accused of promoting Western business interests in Russia. Carl Schreck, “Defender of Putin, detained in Russia: American activist deemed U.S. ‘agent’,” *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, February 17, 2016.

fascism.²⁵

Presumably it was this opportunist corporate profiteering from communism by the likes of General Electric that would later allow far-right groups like the John Birch Society (which counted Fred Koch amongst its cofounders) to selectively ‘expose’ these shenanigans to an angry and confused American population.²⁶ Here was the so-called definitive proof that liberal elites were one and the same as the communists. And a related example of such selective historic distortions was provided by the attacks that were later directed at President Dwight Eisenhower who was portrayed as “a dedicated, conscious agent of the Communist conspiracy.”

Nevertheless, the heating-up of the Cold War soon meant that American business interests were thwarted from active and open participation in Soviet society. Yet this limit upon American Capital’s ability to profit from the Communist state only lasted until Stalin’s death in 1953, whereupon the relationship between the two super-powers began to thaw once again. That said, renewed economic relations only formerly recommenced in the 1970s,²⁷ as seen by the formation of the US-USSR Trade and Economic Council in October 1973 – an organization which had built upon the international networking that had previously been undertaken by the conservative National Association of Manufacturers.²⁸

²⁵ Nikolai Sivachev and Nikolai Yakovlev *Russia and the United States: U.S.-Soviet Relations From the Soviet Point of View* (University of Chicago Press, 1980); Jane Mayer, *Dark Money: The Hidden History of the Billionaires Behind the Rise of the Radical Right* (Random House, 2016).

²⁶ Darren Mulloy, *Enemies of the State: The Radical Right in America from FDR to Trump* (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2018), p.48. Fred Koch was “the father of Charles and David Koch, who would become two of the key financial backers of the twenty-first-century Tea Party movement and a host of other right-wing groups.” (p.48)

²⁷ Sean Wilentz, “Confounding fathers: the Tea Party’s cold war roots,” *The New Yorker*, October 18, 2010; Yale Richmond, *Cultural Exchange and the Cold War: Raising the Iron Curtain* (Penn State University Press, 2004).

²⁸ Some months prior to the formation of the US-USSR Trade and Economic Council, one of its founding members on the US-side, Armand Hammer and his Occidental Oil Corporation, “signed the largest commercial agreement in the history of Soviet-American trade today—a 20-year, multibillion-dollar chemical-fertilizer barter arrangement with the Soviet Government.” Hedrick Smith, “Soviet and

But by no means did the formalization of *detente* and the establishment of the US-USSR Trade and Economic Council mean that the American ruling-class had turned soft on communism, far from it. In fact, the initial American chair for this pioneering trade council was PepsiCo chairman, Don Kendall, who had already successfully concluded a trade mission to Moscow in 1971 to ensure that his soft drinks became the first American consumer goods to be sold in the Soviet Union. And Kendall was certainly no soft touch when it came to politics, as in 1973 he was an integral supporter/facilitator of the CIA-backed coup against Salvador Allende's popular Social Democrat government. A coup which succeeded in bringing a far-right neoliberal dictatorship to power in Chile.²⁹

Occidental Oil in multibillion-dollar deal," *New York Times*, April 13, 1973.

²⁹ Don Kendall played a leading role in David Rockefeller's Business Group for Latin America (founded in 1963), which led to his close friendship with Agustín Edwards, the conservative Chilean media magnate who served as the "principal contact in Chile for the CIA". Gregory Palast, "A Marxist threat to cola sales? Pepsi demands a US coup. Goodbye Allende. Hello Pinochet," *The Guardian (UK)*, November 8, 1998; Seymour Hersh, "The price of power: Kissinger, Nixon, and Chile," *The Atlantic*, December 1982. For a parallel discussion of Coca Cola's early and destructive profiteering in China, see Susan Greenhalgh, "Making China safe for Coke: how Coca-Cola shaped obesity science and policy in China," *British Medical Journal (podcast)*, January 9, 2019.

In later years conservative steel industrialist, William Verity Jr., would go on to act as America's chair for the US-USSR Trade and Economic Council (1979-84) before going on to serve as President Reagan's Secretary of Commerce (1987-9). Yet despite the stellar business credentials of the participants of the Council's meetings, hardened Cold Warriors within the Reagan Administration were never happy about establishing trading relationships with their mortal enemies. But despite such opposition the meetings continued because of the immense profits at stake. And when international politics moved in a more progressive direction within parts of global institutions like the United Nations, US disengagement always rose to the fore. For example, when UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) moved to endorse policies that sought to democratize global media communications, this led to outrage on the part of the American government. Thus in 1984 the US government cut-off their funding for the very UN body whose express purpose was to coordinate international cooperation in education, science, culture and communication. William Preston Jr., Edward Herman & Herbert Schiller, *Hope and Folly: The United States and UNESCO, 1945-1985* (University of Minnesota Press, 1989).

Little ever really changed regarding the conservative orientation of evolving super-power trade relations, and in 1984, Dwayne Andreas, the head of food giant Archer Daniels Midland, became the new American chair of the US-USSR Trade and Economic Council. The following year Mikhail Gorbachev then became the leader of the Soviet Union, and once in power he pushed forward his program of “*perestroika*” (“restructuring”) and “*glasnost*” (“openness”), which brought his capitalist friends ever closer to seizing the reins of power across the Soviet states.³⁰ In November 1984 Gorbachev and President

³⁰ One significant liberal intellectual who counted Mikhail Gorbachev as one of his close friends was Stephen F. Cohen (1938-2020), whose first book, *Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution: A Political Biography 1888-1938* (Vintage, 1971), concerned itself with distorting revolutionary history in order to rehabilitate Nikolai Bukharin as the true communist hero. Critical (Trotskyist) reviews of Cohen’s otherwise much lauded book pointed out how the author had deliberately ignored Bukharin’s anti-democratic legacy in order to promote the ideas of market socialism – the misleading “idea that Bukharinism is the underlying ideology of ‘socialism with a human face’ in Eastern Europe.” Thus: “Despite the rare scholarship and historical excitement of Stephen Cohen’s biography, its political line actually acclaims Bukharin’s weaknesses and errors as magnificent virtues. It is just because Bukharin ceased to be a fighter for the socialist class-struggle and became a charming liberal, an ornament to a repressive and anti-proletarian regime, capable of dialogue with other liberals in the academic field but incapable of common action with revolutionary socialists, that he can now be offered as a model Bolshevik for liberal and non-socialist readers.” Ken Tarbuck, “Review: Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution,” *International*, 3(4), Summer 1977; Peter Sedgwick, “The return of Bukharin,” *International Socialism*, 75, February 1975 (an important editorial note accompanies Sedgwick’s review which corrects some of the reviews shortcomings).

In 1974 Professor Cohen would join forces with PepsiCo chairman, Don Kendall, and other assorted *pro-detente* elites to cofound the American Committee for East-West Accord; and in the years leading up to the collapse of the Soviet Union, Cohen would continue to promote Bukharin as a suitable ideological role model for the promotion of market socialism, ideas which helped inspire the pro-capitalist reforms that were pushed forward by Gorbachev. After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the disbanding of the American Committee for East-West Accord (in 1992) Cohen became increasingly frustrated at the anti-democratic way capitalist ‘reforms’ were forced upon the former communist states. In later years this led him to embrace the anti-America posturing of President Putin, and in 2015 Cohen relaunched the American Committee for East-West Accord where he became the group’s main spokesperson and main public apologist for Putin’s own anti-democratic regime. Other notable Russophile board members of this Committee included citizen diplomat Sharon Tennison (discussed earlier) and the longstanding professional

Reagan had also met for the first time at the Geneva Summit. And even here occult forces reared their head as Nancy Reagan had consulted a San Franciscan astrologer to plan the dates for the diplomatic event. The President even managed to bring a little alien humor to the Summit when he gave an “awkward toast at dinner” saying “that if aliens astride Halley's Comet were coming to attack Earth, ‘that knowledge would unite all peoples of the world’.”³¹ Such

Russia watcher, Gilbert Doctorow, whose muddle-headed political priorities were laid bare when he lauded a former member of Poland's fascist Association for Tradition and Culture (“Niklot”) as “an outstanding spokesman of the minority view and founder of the Zmiana (or Change) party.” (Doctorow's article in question was published by the conspiracy outlet *Consortium News* as “Poland's ‘Cold War II’ repression” (June 3, 2016); and the individual that Doctorow was making positive reference to was Mateusz Piskorski, a fascist who works closely with Alexander Dugin's Eurasian movement.) None of this is to imply that Doctorow, Temison, or Cohen are members of the far-right; in fact they are far from it, but their ongoing attempts to bring together leaders of all elitist political persuasions (from social democrats to the far-right) smacks of the naïve rejection of class politics that defines so many spokespeople for the New Age movement.

³¹ William Taubman, *Gorbachev: His Life and Times* (Simon & Schuster, 2017), p.286. Evgeny Velikhov, who was Gorbachev's key science advisor at this time, was a keen human potential enthusiast who had maintained a strong desire to promote “full spiritual unity” between the two superpowers. Scott Malcomson, “War games,” *Carnegie Reporter*, December 8, 2017. Malcomson also discusses VNIIPAS, the All Union Scientific Research Institute for Applied Computerized Systems, and their role in establishing internet connections with America in the early 1980s. One important scientist who claims to have been the first person to become involved in this pioneering internet program was the industrial biochemist professor Anatole Klyosov, who at the time was employed by the USSR Academy of Sciences. Having established connections with the spiritual elites of the West, in 1989 Klyosov became a member of the World Academy of Art and Science which had been founded in California (in 1960) as “an informal WORLD UNIVERSITY” – a body whose activities are presently closely entwined with those of the Club of Rome and one of the Academy's official international centers, Sri Aurobindo's “The Mother's Service Society” (based in Pondicherry, South India). In addition to recently serving as the chief scientist for biotechnology company Galectin Therapeutics (where board members include the former Apple CEO Gilbert Amelio), professor Klyosov is an active proponent of far-right pseudoscience, with a special interest in the “Book of Veles” and the Russian Aryan roots of global civilization.

As one historian observes: “A few genetic historians, like the Russian internet pioneer Anatole Klyosov, unashamedly revive the harsh, nationalistic polemics of 1930s raciology. He attacks the ‘founding fathers’ of international genetic history for

alien jokes aside, Reagan like many other members of the American ruling-class was becoming increasingly pre-occupied with encouraging a widespread belief among the public in irrational intrigues. Likewise, on the Soviet side, paranormal nonsense was in the process of becoming integrated into even the so-called scientific and rational organs of the state. Thus...

Beginning in 1989, the magazine *Science and Religion*, once the official organ of ‘atheist enlightenment,’ gave astrology its first and most serious treatment in the press. After decades with only the occasional “debunking” articles, the editors began dedicating ample space to astrology’s informed discussion and, in time, to horoscopes and prognoses printed without commentary. By the end of 1990, more columns discussed astrology than any other single topic. It was a remarkable transition for a magazine that, only a few years prior, had been the communist party’s soap box for atheist and rationalist agitation (though the magazine was nuanced and sophisticated all along). Although some long-time readers bemoaned the magazine’s apparent about-face, the public rewarded it with vastly increased readership and heightened engagement between readers and the editors.³²

uncritical interpretations, ‘erroneous’, ‘invented’ datings and ‘superficial conclusions’, reached without ‘justification’, ‘supporting facts’ or ‘serious scientific scrutiny’, to support their ‘historical convictions’. Klyosov promotes idiosyncratic theories in the Russian mass-media, insisting that haplogroup R1a, including up to 63 % of Russians, ‘has the same DNA’ as the chariot-riding ‘legendary Aryans’. He contrasts this peaceful haplogroup with the genocidal Rb1, or Arbins, who ‘comprise about 60 % of modern Western and Central Europeans. Based on obscure items of evidence, such as their supposed preference for base-20 number systems, he links these to Sumerians, Turks and the north Caucasus.” Richard McMahon, *The Races of Europe: Construction of National Identities in the Social Sciences, 1839-1939* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), p.382. This book provides a useful examination of the influence of Western eugenicists (like Madison Grant) on the growth of racist ideas. Klyosov’s recent genetic turn is briefly discussed by Maria Antonova, “Putin’s great patriotic pseudoscience,” *Foreign Policy*, November 29, 2016.

³² This change occurred with the “magazine’s shift from debunking astrology to its de facto promotion, without significant changes in leadership or editorial staff”. Joseph Kellner, “The End of History: Radical Responses to the Soviet Collapse,” Ph.D. in History, University of California, Berkeley, Spring 2018, p.27. “September of 1987 marked a significant break for the magazine, if an unintended one. The issue was dedicated to mysticism and the occult”. (p.46) In the late 1980s Gorbachev and some

Either way, in 1985 one of the direct outcomes of the successful Geneva Summit was the creation of the President's US-Soviet Exchange Initiative, which was coordinated by Ambassador Stephen Rhinesmith; whose first port of call after this initiative's establishment was to visit Esalen to learn from their exchange programs.³³ Although at the time the mainstream press tended to celebrate such public shifts as a sign that pragmatists were "now more influential on Presidential thinking" than the anti-communist hard-liners,³⁴ there were few signs that Reagan's commitment to imperial violence showed any signs of relenting. Indeed, in October 1985 Reagan, speaking at the UN General Assembly, maintained his government's support for fomenting right-wing insurgencies worldwide, which of course included their sponsorship of the contras in Central America. As one historian observed:

By 1986, the United States was sponsoring an estimated 210,000 "contras" in at least four countries: 150,000 in Afghanistan, 25,000 in Angola, 20,000 in Kampuchea, and 15,000 in Nicaragua, with an estimated budget of over \$600 million. As one official put it, the United States is "engaged in a third world war through proxy armies."³⁵

With US-backed wars continuing to rage across the world, Esalen remained at peace with the Reagan administration, happily ignoring such outer manifestations of exploitation so they could quietly pursue their ongoing exploration of the inner consciousness. After all to look too closely at Reagan's violent foreign policy could only serve to focus

of his most high-profile advisors also proved happy (within certain circles anyway) to talk in mystical terms about the need for the "formation of an integrated universal consciousness". This is discussed in Steven Kull's text *Burying Lenin: The Revolution In Soviet Ideology and Foreign Policy* (Routledge, 1992), pp.26-7.

³³ According to current Esalen trustee Jeffrey Kripal: "President Reagan knew about Esalen and was supportive of their track-two initiatives, often over the loud objections of some of his own more hawkish cabinet members." Kripal, *Esalen: America and the Religion of No Religion*, p.338.

³⁴ Clyde Farnsworth, "New focus on Soviet trade ties," *New York Times*, March 24, 1986.

³⁵ William Robinson and Kent Nosworthy, *David and Goliath: Washington's War Against Nicaragua* (Zed Books, 1987), pp.337-8.

on the negative which wouldn't do at all.

Esalen's focus on the inner self however did not stop their leading lights from personally profiting from their superpower networking. Thus in 1989, Jim Hickman, who during the early eighties served as the head of the Esalen Soviet-American Exchange Program, became the CEO of AJ Ventures, Inc., a US company that established commercial enterprises in the Soviet Union and post-Soviet Russia.³⁶ Hickman then co-founded the Russian long-distance telecommunications company, Rustel, serving as its president from 1992 until 1997, all the time maintaining a close relationship with Mikhail Gorbachev - which he did from 1993 onwards by serving as the vice president of the Gorbachev Foundation's international programs. In 2000 Hickman then became the director of programs and business affairs for Gorbachev's State of the World Forum. Moreover, another critical political ally of Hickman's during these ventures was James Garrison who had taken over as director of the Esalen Soviet-American program in 1985 and had organized the launch of the Gorbachev Foundation in 1992. And although little academic research has focused on these philanthropic activities, one early critic of the Gorbachev Foundation observed how it had been "built on a bedrock of elitism," adding:

No one embodies this faith more than [James] Garrison. Although the Christian theologian began his career as an anti-establishment lefty -- helping found the Christic Institute and staging massive anti-nuke demonstrations with the Sunbelt Alliance in the 1970s -- Garrison quickly found himself in more rarified company once he started working with the Esalen Institute's Soviet-American exchange program. His connections with Soviet engineers, scientists and Politburo members, whom he brought over for "hot tub diplomacy" at the Institute's Big Sur facility in the mid-'80s, quickly helped him leverage contacts in the U.S. foreign policy hierarchy: George Schultz

³⁶ It turns out that Dr. Stanley Krippner "was an old friend and mentor of Hickman's. Indeed, in 1968, at the age of twenty-one, Hickman was working with Krippner as his research assistant. He had also been part of Krippner's storied telepathic dream research at Maimonides Dream Laboratory in Brooklyn." Kripal, *Esalen*.

and Henry Kissinger, to name two.³⁷

And like Hickman, Garrison was well positioned to cash-in on the expanding roster of elites that he drew into the orbit of the Gorbachev Foundation: Garrison did this by running “an extremely lucrative consulting and investment firm called Diomedes Inc” which served as “a conduit for American entrepreneurs in the fallen Communist states.”³⁸

Finally, it is worth emphasizing that although Esalen notables certainly played their own unique role in imposing capitalism upon the Soviet Union, by no means should they be considered leading functionaries of this process. Instead, if one wants to understand this process of societal destruction then one needs to turn to the vampire-like privatization of the former communist states that was overseen by well-connected Harvard elites like Jonathan Hay and Jeffrey Sachs and their associated friends amongst the American ruling-class.³⁹

A School for Capitalist Wisdom

In 2005 James Garrison consolidated his New Age capitalist credentials by becoming the president of the Wisdom University, a project which was the successor organization to University of Creation

³⁷ “While the doctrine of Gorbyism is superficially attractive -- no nukes, clean environment, human rights -- it is built on a bedrock of elitism.” This is why this critic concludes: “But maybe challenging the powers-that-be isn’t Gorbachev’s main objective. Rather than disrupting the hide-bound elites that run the world, the former Soviet president seems more intent on rejoining their exclusive club.” George Cothran, “Global chic: Gorby’s bash by the Bay,” *The Washington Post*, September 24, 1995. In a longer article, Cothran notes that Garrison counts Dwayne Andreas (the CEO of Archer Daniels Midland) as a “personal friend”; and quotes Philip Muller, who served as Garrison’s campaign manager for his 1988 congressional campaign saying: “He’s tied into this club of heirs and heiresses called Donuts... It stands for do-nothings. People who are tied into major fortunes in American like Foster Gamble. They all got behind him in 1988.” Cothran, “One world, under Gorby,” *SF Weekly*, May 31, 1995.

³⁸ Cothran, “One world, under Gorby.”

³⁹ For more on the role played by American elites and NGOs in facilitating these destructive activities in Russia, see Janine Wedel, *Shadow Elite: How the World’s New Power Brokers Undermine Democracy, Government, and the Free Market* (Basic Books, 2010), particularly Chapter 5 (“The Privatizers”).

Spirituality which had been founded in the late seventies by the theologian, Matthew Fox.⁴⁰ Past faculty chairs of the Wisdom University have included Stanislav Grof, Jean Houston, Rupert Sheldrake, Caroline Myss, Paul H. Ray, and Barbara Marx Hubbard, the latter of whom described the University's purpose as being to "offer wisdom teachings with an evolutionary perspective." Yet a more mundane and accurate way of describing the purpose of the Wisdom University would highlight its ambitions to provide spiritual guidance for corporate and political elites who have lost their way (and inner peace) in the harsh capitalist, individualistic, secular world. A world that these very same capitalist elites continue to promote as the panacea for the world's problems.⁴¹ Such an elitist mission was confirmed by a statement from the University itself which observed:

The average student enrolled at Wisdom University is a professional, with an established career and one or more advanced degrees. They have come to the conclusion that they need deeper spiritual challenges in order to maintain momentum and meaning in their lives. Our students soon discover that they can continue to grow spiritually and

⁴⁰ In 1977, Matthew Fox established the Institute for Culture and Creation Spirituality (ICCS) based at Mundelein College, a small Catholic women's college in Chicago. Fox would go on to become the consummate popularizer of mysticism, and in 1981 he founded his own New Age publishing business, Bear & Company -- which in 2000 was acquired by another longstanding occult publisher, Inner Traditions. Through such unrelenting activities Fox played an important role in facilitating the institutionalization of New Age thought in America, and in this service to the cosmos he worked closely with spiritual philanthropist Jean Lanier who at one stage served as a member of the ICCS faculty. For an overview of Matthew Fox's theological contributions, see Barbara Newman's "Romancing the past: a critical look at Matthew Fox & the medieval 'creation mystics'," *Touchstone*, Summer 1992.

⁴¹ In his book *The New Age Movement* (Blackwell Publishers, 1996), Paul Heelas observes how "material from a variety of sources (including interviews, magazine articles and TV programmes) strongly suggests that the New Age is -- in measure -- drawn upon to restore the self of the [capitalist] go-getting individualist." (p. 147) This is what Jeremy Carrette and Richard King refer to in their book *Selling Spirituality: The Silent Takeover of Religion* (Routledge, 2005) as "capitalist spirituality," which they argue is "utilised to 'smooth out' resistance to the growing power of corporate capitalism and consumerism." (p.69) For another critique of New Age spirituality, see Michael Parenti, *Land of Idols: Political Mythology in America* (St. Martin's Press, 1994), especially Chapter 2 ("The New Age Mythology").

professionally at Wisdom University, thus combining spiritual nourishment with enhanced professional qualifications.⁴²

Always seemingly evolving but never really changing, in 2012 Wisdom University was transformed into the Ubiquity University, which still offers Masters' and Doctoral degrees in wisdom studies and is still run by Garrison and Hickman. Ubiquity continues to work hand-in-hand with other elite institutions like Ervin Lazlo's Club of Budapest (the politics of which is discussed in the next chapter), which explains why Lazlo's former executive assistant, Gyorgyi Szabo, is employed as Ubiquity's dean of doctoral studies.⁴³ Garrison likewise works closely at Ubiquity with lifestyle profiteer and former Gaia TV board member, Paul H. Ray (also a member of the Club of Budapest); while Ubiquity's inaugural chancellor is conscious capital pioneer, Ken Wilber, who is a keen booster of the not-so-wholesome libertarian business practices of John Mackey, the owner of Whole Foods Market. This is the same Mackey who courted international notoriety when he openly referred to the Democrat's as being akin to fascists; nevertheless, Mackey remains a religious man and refreshes his spirituality by being a regular practitioner of *A Course in Miracles*.⁴⁴

Ubiquity University are always keen to promote their

⁴² <http://www.wisdomuniversity.org/home.html> - accessed online in December 2008.

⁴³ Gyorgyi Szabo formerly worked in close association with Barbara Marx Hubbard through their work at UniverSoul, which calls itself "a Hub for Conscious Evolution."

⁴⁴ Emma Keller, "Whole Foods CEO John Mackey calling Obamacare fascist is tip of the iceberg," *The Guardian (UK)*, January 18, 2013. For an insightful examination of Ken Wilber and Paul H. Ray's commodification of spirituality, see Joseph Gelfer, "LOHAS and the Indigo dollar: growing the spiritual economy," *New Proposals: Journal of Marxism and Interdisciplinary Inquiry*, 4 (1), 2010; for more on Whole Foods Market, see the book co-authored by their CEO, John Mackey, with the assistance of Rajendra Sisodia, *Conscious Capitalism: Liberating the Heroic Spirit of Business* (Harvard Business Review Press, 2014). These two authors work with Michael Strong as the lead members of the Conscious Capitalism Institute. As James Dennis LoRusso concludes in his book *Spirituality, Corporate Culture, and American Business*: "Conscious Capitalism, like workplace spirituality, mystifies processes like globalization and economic liberalization, laments the invasive power of the welfare state, and exalts the rugged entrepreneur as the most heroic figure of contemporary

consciousness-raising practices overseas, and their vice president for Russia and Commonwealth of Independent States is Vladimir Maykov, who was one of the first Soviet teachers of transpersonal psychology (TP), having cofounded the Russian Association of Humanistic Psychology in 1990.

In the summer of 1990, Maikov went to the United States and visited the major centers of TP there. The close cooperation between Americans and Russians resulted in two conferences in 1991 and 1992. The American side was represented by the well known Saybrook Graduate School and Research Center in San Francisco. It was at this time that Maikov began to take holotropic breathwork lessons under the guidance of Stanislav and Christina Grof and became a certified instructor of this transpersonal discipline.⁴⁵

Stanislav Grof's role here is significant because in 1978 he had teamed up with Esalen's two founders (Michael Murphy and Richard Price) to launch the International Transpersonal Association.⁴⁶ Yet most

society. Thus, Conscious Capitalism, both in its relationship with the private spiritual beliefs of its advocates and in its broader social formation, is simultaneously a business reform movement as well as a neoliberal political project to advance the structural position of business." (p.99)

Michael Strong also serves alongside Esalen's Michael Murphy on the advisory board of a relatively new and ominous media project calling itself *The Transpartisan Review*, whose two executive editors are A. Lawrence Chickering (a leading libertarian and former member of the far-right Global Strategy Council) and James S. Turner (another libertarian who through his position as a principal in the firm Swankin Turner is a vigorous promoter of alternative medicine, and who in 1994 worked with Senator Orrin Hatch to pass the Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act (discussed later). In 1993 Chickering wrote *Beyond Left and Right: Breaking the Political Stalemate*, and later teamed up with Turner to publish *Voice of the People: The Transpartisan Imperative in American Life* (Da Vinci Press, 2008).

⁴⁵ Boris Falikov, "On the way from border conflicts: transpersonal psychology in Russia," in: Menzel *et al.* (eds.), *The New Age of Russia*, p.374. Vladimir Maykov has been very influenced by the Shamanic practices of Esalen megastar Michael Harner (1929-2018). Harner most famously popularized the fake shamanism of Carlos Castaneda, and so it is fitting that in 2019 Mavkov would produce a documentary titled *The Secret of Carlos Castaneda*. For criticisms of Carlos' mysticism, see Robert Marshall, "The dark legacy of Carlos Castaneda," *The Salon*, April 12, 2007.

⁴⁶ Stanislav Grof, *Beyond the Brain: Birth, Death and Transcendence in Psychotherapy* (State University of New York Press, 1985), p.xvii. Grof spent most of

importantly transpersonal psychology (TP) lent a scientific patina (albeit one that is unwarranted) towards the occult revival taking place in Russia during the 1990s whereby “numerous psychic healers and magicians of all kinds freely used TP literature and practices to make themselves look more ‘scientific’ and respectable.” Moreover, as in America, some right-wing forces in Russia, particularly those representing religious groups, have been quick to falsely overegg TP’s relationship to liberal politics so they can blame it for all the world’s ills.

For fundamentalists, TP is an outrageous Devil’s attack on Russian culture, which they identify with the Orthodox tradition. It is a vanguard of dark forces, coming from the West, an enemy of all things good and should be eliminated without any delay by the Russian state and its glorious special forces.¹⁷

This of course is not the case at all. And in 2015 Maykov, who now holds the chair of Transpersonal Psychology at the Moscow Institute of Psychoanalyses, released a documentary titled *Dance of Infinity: The Quest for Perfection*. This film, in addition to featuring many of the aforementioned conservative American members of the New Age circle of initiates, included an interview with Eduard Sagalaev, one of Russia’s leading mystically-inclined capitalists (having been the former chairman of All-Russia State Television and Radio Broadcasting Company). In the trailer for the documentary Sagalaev warned:

But there’s never been such an attack! There’s never been such an attack on human consciousness! For thousands of years humans have existed and gotten education, in a way. And all of a sudden all of that gets under attack, gets reconsidered, and a whole new means of spiritual existence emerges.

What remained unmentioned in the film is that Sagalaev was a former

his life working at Esalen and in 1973 he had become a scholar-in-residence at the Institute. For a scathing review of Grof’s commitment to paranormal nonsense, see Paul Edwards, *Reincarnation: A Critical Examination* (Prometheus Books, 1996).

¹⁷ Falikov, “On the way from border conflicts,” p.375, p.383.

member of the supreme council of Alexander Dugin's International Eurasian Movement.⁸⁸ Such extreme connections to fascism, in many ways flows from the New Age community's vehement dismissal of class politics and willingness to work hand-in-hand with far-right wing conspiracy theorists and leading members of the ruling-class. This provides another good reason why the contribution of spiritual gurus (like Mircea Eliade) to the growth of nationalistic movements that are grounded in the search on an authentic spiritual movement, like shamanism, should be both recognized and problematized.⁸⁹ Here a

⁸⁸ Andreas Umland, "Fascist tendencies in Russia's political establishment: the rise of the international Eurasian Movement," *Russian Analytical Digest*, 60, 2009, p.14; Marina Peunova, "An Eastern incarnation of the European New Right: Aleksandr Panarin and New Eurasianist discourse in contemporary Russia," *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, 16(3), 2008, p.411.

⁸⁹ While Dr. Andrija Puharich's 1960 television appearances had introduced millions of prime-time viewers to a shamanic ritual filmed in Mexico - complete with the enthralling sight of the onscreen ingestion of halogenic mushrooms - it appears that, in America at least, the turn to Shamanism had been most significantly catalyzed in 1964 by the Bollingen book series' decision to translate Mircea Eliade's *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. This book is "undoubtedly one of the most influential publications about shamanism ever"; so, with this in mind Eliade's longstanding commitment to fascist politics should be seen as highly problematic. Indeed, from the 1930s onwards Eliade maintained contact with the reactionary French occultist René Guénon and the equally repugnant Italian philosopher Julius Evola whose work Eliade went on to publish in the journal *Antaios* that he had founded in 1959. These toxic connections were not openly talked about. Hence:

"Eliade became one of the foremost scholars among the traditionalists. Yet he rarely cited other traditionalists and did not openly acknowledge their influence, much to the chagrin of Evola. Eliade, however, never made a great effort to advance his position as a traditionalist per se. He aimed at an academic career and he knew that most prominent scholars in the academic world were not taken in by traditionalist views and even less by their speculative approach. In his defence, Eliade declared to Evola that he wrote for a general public and that overtly traditionalist publications would lose him readers. Furthermore, he argued that in this way he could be a 'Trojan horse' that would introduce traditionalist views on the perennial philosophy into the academic milieu. In other words, Eliade translated and rearranged traditionalist views so that these would be accepted in the academic field." Jeroen Boekhoven, *Genealogies of Shamanism: Struggles for Power, Charisma and Authority* (Barkhuis Publishing, 2011), p.130, p.151, p.136.

From his "influential academic position, Eliade was able to create his own academic field, structured by his own rules... He set up the German journal *Antaios* in cooperation with Ernst Jünger (1895-1998), a controversial German writer with whom

further worrying correlation can be drawn between the demonization of women within the ultra-conservative Rodnoverie movement in Russia, and the evolution of the similar types of men's rights movements that were germinated in the American context by various spiritual seekers associated with Esalen.

What About the Men?

"Faces of the Enemy" was the name of an early Esalen conference, held in 1983, that helped to meld the developing men's rights movement in America with Esalen's Soviet obsessions; thus they invited the Soviet diplomat, Valentin Berezhev, to the conference as a guest. Other attendees however included two now-famous men's rights activists, Robert Bly and Sam Keen (both of whom were regulars at Esalen) – the latter soon publishing a spin-off book from the conference which counselled people to ignore class-politics so they could just think their way to world peace.⁵⁰ Not long after, in 1988, Laurance Rockefeller funded the first of three conferences on "The Body and Spirituality," with a notable participant in these events being Shepherd Bliss, who had previously drawn the public's attention to the "Faces of the Enemy" conference within the pages of the *Yoga Journal*.⁵¹

Shepherd Bliss would soon become one of main spokesmen for the emerging Jungian-based mythopoetic men's movement, along with spiritual poet Robert Bly, whose own best-selling book, *Iron John: A Book About Men* (Addison-Wesley, 1990), quickly sparked a media frenzy and contributed towards the growing corporate-sanctioned backlash against feminist politics.⁵² While Sam Keen's less

he had come into contact via their mutual friend Carl Schmitt. The journal lasted from 1960 until 1971 and contained texts by, *inter alia*, Evola and Keyserling." (p.156)

⁵⁰ Sam Keen's book, *Faces of the Enemy: Reflections of the Hostile Imagination* (Harper & Row, 1986), was released alongside a PBS documentary of the same name.

⁵¹ Shepherd Bliss, "Faces of the enemy," *Yoga Journal*, July 1983. For a useful introduction to the ruling-classes fixation on Yoga, see Robert Love, *The Great Oom: The Improbable Birth of Yoga in America* (Viking, 2010).

⁵² Susan Faludi, *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women* (Crown Publishing Group, 1991). For related criticisms of mythopoetic and spiritual themes within parts of the feminist movement, see Janet Biehl, *Rethinking Ecofeminist Politics* (South End Press, 1991). However, it is significant that not all

vitriolic contribution to this ballooning field of reaction was *Fire in the Belly: On Being a Man* (Bantam Books, 1992). So, at the very moment that Esalen's citizen diplomats were busy celebrating the collapse of communism and the dawning of a new day of spiritual awakening in the Soviet Union, back home, Esalen could boast of fueling a movement that (whether it intended to or not) contributed towards the undermining of women's rights in America.

With the corporate establishment leading the backlash against feminism in the media, it is not too surprising that one the main reasons for the stunning best-selling success of Keen's *Fire in the Belly* and Bly's *Iron John* hinged upon...

...the very fact that they leave women out of the emerging pictures of "now and future manhood" that are crystalizing men's heads... On the one hand, Keen and Bly do represent a sincere effort on the part of men to change themselves and their relationships with men and women. Yet, on the other hand, the silencing of women's voices and the slighting of feminist theory and practice speak of and reinforce gender separatism and male supremacy.³³

spiritually-inclined feminist writers remained uncritical of the conservative and patriarchal elements that characterized much of the New Age movement, and Monica Sjoö's book *New Age and Armageddon: The Goddess or the Gurus? Towards a Feminist Vision of the Future* (The Women's Press, 1992), while still clinging to Sjoö's own mystical beliefs, represents a damning (albeit flawed) critique of the popular New Age movement.

³³ Don Sabo, "Gazing into men's middles: Fire in the Belly and the Men's Movement," in: Michael Kimmel (ed.), *The Politics of Manhood: Profeminist Men Respond to the Mythopoetic Men's Movement (and the Mythopoetic Leaders Answer)* (Temple University Press, 1995), p.67. Sabo admits that Keen is less problematic than Bly but explains that his "commentary on feminism is the weakest part of the book." (p.68)

An early, although limited, criticism of this men's movement was made by Barbara Ehrenreich in her book *The Hearts of Men: American Dreams and the Flight from Commitment* (Anchor Books, 1984). She explains: "It helped that the Human Potential Movement, with its emphasis on spontaneity and the goodness of impulses, echoed the hedonistic message of the consumer culture. What was no less important to its success, the new psychology offered its own critique of the consumer culture: It was right to want 'something more out of life,' and that 'something more' could itself be purchased as one of many commoditized therapeutic experiences..." (pp.90-1)

Another feminist writer adds another layer to these criticisms, pointing out how Bly's...

...perspective is racist. Here I don't particularly have in mind Bly's explicit appeal to "the Indo-European race" and its warrior heritage (p.150); nor his astonishing stuff about the glory of golden hair, and gold symbolising genius and spirituality (p.39, etc) while black stands for evil, death and crude matter (p.201). I am more concerned with something central to the whole "mythopoetic men's movement," the invocation of a contrast between primitive and civilized people.⁵⁴

This critic thus concludes that *Iron John* and the mythopoetic men's movement are "selling fantasy solutions to real problems"; and "What's worrying is that this evasion opens space for far-right politics." Considering Barbara Marx Hubbard's own happy dalliances with those on the far-right (as discussed in the next chapter) it is fitting that a close associate of hers played an important role in building the men's movement, that individual being Sanford Anderson, who helped establish the New Warrior Training Adventure (currently called "The ManKind Project") in the San Francisco Bay area. Anderson happens to be married to one of Hubbard's closest friends, Carolyn Anderson, who first became involved with Hubbard during the 1980s when they were acting as facilitators during various Soviet-American exchanges.⁵⁵

But perhaps more crucially we should be looking at the ongoing

⁵⁴ Bob Connell, "Men at bay: the 'men's movement' and its newest best-sellers," in Kimmel (ed.), *The Politics of Manhood*, p.85. Michael Kimmel, author of *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (Free Press, 1996) succinctly argues that the mythopoetic men's movement "displace men's grown-up problems of economic contraction, political competition, social isolation, and interpersonal incompetence (the result of a definition of masculinity that is inseparably tied to performance in the marketplace, the bedroom, or the athletic field) onto overdominant motherhood and absent fatherhood." (pp.317-8)

⁵⁵ In 1986, Barbara Marx Hubbard formed a group called Global Family with Carolyn Anderson and her twin sister, Marion Culhane, and Marian Head. Thereafter members of this group acted as facilitators at international conferences, including the Global Forum of Spiritual and Parliamentary Leaders in Oxford, England; the Soviet-American Citizen Summits in Washington D.C. and Moscow; the Seeking the True Meaning of Peace Conference with the Dalai Lama; and the Earth

activism of the longstanding darling of the misogynistic men's rights movement, Warren Farrell, author of many bestselling books, the most famous being *Myth of Male Power: Why Men are the Disposable Sex* (Simon and Schuster, 1993).⁵⁶ Farrell, in addition to still leading workshops at Esalen, is a vice president at Marc Gafni and Ken Wilber's Center for Integral Wisdom (notably the late Barbara Marx Hubbard had succeeded John Mackey as the Center's co-chair in 2016). The Center for Integral Wisdom (which was founded in 2011) states that it is "committed to articulating and sharing a 'new meaning story' for our civilization whose vision and values have the

Summit in Rio de Janeiro. Subsequent to these activities Marion Culhane went on to launch a "multi-million dollar business in the field of Wellness and Social Entrepreneurship"; and, perhaps not unrelated, she became a leading salesperson for the supplement industry, working for seventeen years in the employ of a company that promoted multi-level marketing (a pyramid scheme).

The company in question is Mannatech, and it is not insignificant that another founding member of Global Family, Marian Head, went on to become the chair of Mannatech associates international advisory council (they have over half a million associates in ten countries) at the same time as helping Hubbard to produce a series of DVD's that showcased the guru's spiritual growth plans for humanity. Again it was not coincidental that Mannatech was founded in 1993, just as Congress prepared to pass the Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act of 1994; moreover, the company and its salespeople have a long history of making false claims of anti-disease benefits for Mannatech's products. On the religious marketing front, Mannatech have been strongly supported by the Harvest International Ministry, and Mannatech have even founded their own MannaRelief Ministries to boost their evangelical sales. As one critical report observed: "Faith leads many to Mannatech, and that faith, combined with desperation and lack of tools to judge the claims of the company and its associates, can be a powerful basis for glyconutrient sales." And what is more it seems that the public is purchasing Mannatech's pseudoscientific 'glyconutrients' "at a rate of >\$400 million per year from Mannatech alone." Ronald Schnaar and Hudson Freeze, "A 'glyconutrient sham'," *Glycobiology*, 18(9), 2008.

⁵⁶ Warren Farrell's latest book, which he co-authored with John Gray, is *The Boy Crisis: Why Our Boys Are Struggling and What We Can Do About It* (BenBella Books, 2018). Although popular with conservative reviewers and conservative chat shows (like *Fox News*), Farrell's most recent iteration of the "boy crisis" has already been shown to be a gross distortion of the truth. For an overview of such criticisms from some years back, see Michael Kimmel, "Boys and school: a background paper on the 'boy crisis'," Swedish Government Official Report, Ministry of Education and Research, 2010. For a useful discussion of more recent right-wing trends within the men's rights movement, see Hanna Bergman, "White men's fear of women: anti-feminism and the rise of the Alt-Right," *The Examined Life Lab*, March 31, 2018.

power to liberate us from the global action paralysis which defines so much of our politics and culture.” They go on to explain that part of this means that “We need to bow deeply to business” because if capitalism can apparently become more conscious the center believes it will be able to “create more community, more mutuality, and paradoxically, more profit, by engaging everyone in the system.”⁵⁷

Owing to internal wrangling’s, for many years the main force behind the Center for Integral Wisdom has been the self-styled “Unique Self Enlightenment” philosopher Marc Gafni. However, Gafni despite being accused (in January 2016) of sexually abusing a young girl, continued to wear his conservative anti-feminist politics with pride. This was evidenced by a blog post he wrote titled “#MeToo, mob mentality, & the real reason for our crisis,” which was inspired by a screed that had been published by Laura Ingraham’s far-right website *LifeZette*.⁵⁸ This cool embrace of conspiratorial rhetoric is par for the course for those in Gafni’s inner circle, and a prime illustration of this tendency can be seen by Gafni’s decision to recruit the well-known neoconservative culture warrior, Adam Bellow, to his Center’s board of directors in 2015.⁵⁹ It is also significant that during the time that Bellow was working alongside Gafni he had been the editorial director of HarperCollins’ far-right imprint, Broadside Books; although since then Bellow has launched a new imprint at St. Martin’s Press called All Points Books whose alleged aim is to “foster transpartisan debate” (i.e., debate between those on the narrow political spectrum existing between conservative Democrats and the extreme far-right). As ‘fate’ would have it, the first book chosen for publication at All Points Books was Laura Ingraham’s *Billionaire at the Barricades: The Populist Revolution from Reagan to Trump* (2017), and with regards future publications, Bellow made it clear “that he was open to editing books by members of the newly invigorated

⁵⁷ <https://centerforintegralwisdom.org/about/mission/> Accessed July 2018.

⁵⁸ <http://www.whoismarcgafni.com/2018/03/metoo-mob-mentality-marc-gafni/> blog post published on March 19, 2018; for more on Gafni’s background, see Michael Schulson, “The sex scandal following Whole Foods’ guru,” *Religion Dispatches*, January 5, 2016.

⁵⁹ Adam Bellow is the son of the conservative novelist Saul Bellow who was an avid reader of the anthroposophical works of Rudolf Steiner.

nationalist and populist wing of the Republican Party”.⁶⁰

Adam Bellow lived up to these promises and more, and in November 2019 he joined another far-right publishing house which had only just brought to fruition the latest reactionary rant from Todd Starnes which was titled *Culture Jihad: How to Stop the Left from Killing a Nation* (Post Hill Press, 2019). Starnes – an influential shock jock on the radio – had, not coincidentally, just been fired from a prominent position on *Fox News* for agreeing with one of his regular guests that the Democrats worship the Old Testament god “Moloch, who talks about child sacrifice.”⁶¹ Yet Starnes remained unrepentant, and in his book he commented:

...I caused a bit of an uproar when I said on *Fox News @ Night* that there was an evil in the Democratic Party. After what I saw in the House chamber, I absolutely stand by those words. There is something demonic happening within the ranks of the Democrats. There is something demonic happening within the ranks of Leftists. And maybe they should consider swapping their white dresses and cloaks for sackcloth and ashes.

To the Spiritual Right

On the pertinent issue of the integration of far-right politics into counterculture spiritual movements, another prime example is delivered up by the heir to the Proctor & Gamble fortune, Foster Gamble – who is a longstanding spiritual collaborator of Barbara Marx Hubbard.⁶² In his popular feel-good (albeit anti-Semitic) documentary

⁶⁰ Alexandra Alter, “A partisan books editor places a bet on balance,” *New York Times*, April 9, 2017. This article begins: “During his 30 years in editing, Adam Bellow has handled some of the most controversial and notorious right-wing books of our era, including ‘The Bell Curve’ by Charles Murray and Richard J. Herrnstein, Dinesh D’Souza’s ‘Illiberal Education’ and David Brock’s ‘The Real Anita Hill.’”

⁶¹ John Fea, “Todd Starnes, the *Fox News* radio host who gave a platform to the court evangelicals, is out,” *Current*, October 3, 2019.

⁶² By way of a contrast to Foster Gamble, one of Barbara Marx Hubbard’s more liberal collaborators in recent years has been Joe Martino, who in 2009 formed an online media enterprise called *Collective Evolution* which runs a video streaming site called CETV which promotes all manner of right-wing conspiracy films like *Plandemic: The Hidden Agenda Behind Covid-19* and its sequel *Plandemic II: Indoctrination*. Also worth noting here is that another important funder of far-right

*Thrive: What on Earth Will it Take?*² (2011). this millionaire filmmaker brought together all manner of paranoid right-wing conspiracists including David Icke and G. Edward Griffin, the latter being a leading theoretician of the John Birch Society.⁶³ But while Hubbard herself was pleased to feature in Gamble's film, nine of the other people who were interviewed in the film saw the errors of their

conspiracy theories is the fugitive Chinese billionaire Guo Wengui, see "How Steve Bannon and a Chinese billionaire created a right-wing coronavirus media sensation," *New York Times*, November 20, 2020.

⁶³ Eric Johnson, "The dangers behind the cult film 'Thrive'," *The San Jose Metro*, May 16, 2012. For further detailed criticisms of all the far-right and fictitious views presented in *Thrive*, see Georgia Kelly (ed.), "Deconstructing libertarianism: a critique prompted by the film *Thrive*," *Praxis Peace Institute*, February 2012; and <https://thrivedebunked.wordpress.com>

With the assistance of New Thought guru Rev. Michael Bernard Beckwith, in recent years *Thrive's* creators have partnered with another multi-millionaire from America (Gerard Powell) to promote a New Age retreat for the superrich in Costa Rica which was founded in 2014 and is known as the Rythmia Life Advancement Center. This Centre specializes in psychedelic therapies making use of Ayahuasca. World famous pseudoscientist Graham Hancock refers to Rythmia as a "miracle" centre, and this five-star retreat is featured in Gamble's 2020 film *Thrive II: This is What it Takes*. But in earlier years (that is before Gamble's involvement) the centre courted some controversy because of its promotion of a powerful psychedelic known as ibogaine which it used to treat drug addiction. As it turns out Gerald Powell had previously ingested ibogaine at the nearby Iboga House retreat, and when he went on to establish Rythmia (in 2014) Iboga House's operations had quickly become subsumed within the new centre's operations, although ibogaine (most likely because of a recent related death) was soon dropped from their treatment schedule. Part of the background for this brain-altering story is recounted in the documentary *The Reality of Truth* (2016) which also happens to feature a cameo appearance from Foster Gamble.

On a related note, another American who established an Iboga practice in Costa Rica shortly after the founding of Iboga House was Dimitri "Mobengo" Mugianis who set up his own IbogaLife rehab centre in 2011. Yet because of his anarchist politics Mugianis represents an important critic of the ongoing corporatization of psychedelic therapies, a principled position which stands in sharp contrast to the high-profile activism of the Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies (MAPS); see Jonathan Dickinson and Dimitri Mugianis, "Why mental health researchers are studying psychedelics all wrong," *Salon*, March 6, 2021. For related discussions, see Olivia Goldhill, "Psychedelic therapy has a sexual abuse problem," *Quartz*, March 3, 2020; and Tehseen Noorani's useful article "Digital psychedelia: hidden experience and the challenge of paranoia," *Somatosphere*, September 15, 2021.

ways and soon signed a letter repudiating *Thrive* and their unwitting involvement in it.⁶⁴ The politics of these nine spiritual leaders are of course not beyond criticism, but *Thrive*'s celebratory attitude towards so many of the world's most reactionary writers proved too much for even these New Agers to endure.

One of the nine talking-heads to denounce *Thrive* was healthy living guru John Robbins, who upon complaining to the filmmaker was told (by Gamble) that he should read the work of Eustace Mullins "in order to better understand *Thrive*".⁶⁵ Robbins was outraged by this suggestion because he knew full-well that Mullins (1923-2010), in his younger years, had been a leading member of the fascist National Renaissance Party. As a vocal Holocaust denier, Mullins' in his later years had then been a member of the editorial staff at the American Free Press and the *Barnes Review*, two anti-Semitic publications that were produced by Willis Carto's Liberty Lobby; while by the mid-1990s Mullins had become a prominent spokesperson for the burgeoning militia movement.⁶⁶ That such an open fascist can provide intellectual inspiration to Gamble, and that Barbara Marx Hubbard can see no wrong in being associated with such ideas, once again demonstrates the extreme limitations of maintaining such an otherworldly orientation towards politics.⁶⁷ This meshes well with a

⁶⁴ The nine people to distance themselves from *Thrive* were John Robbins, Amy Goodman, Deepak Chopra, Paul Hawken, Edgar Mitchell, Vandana Shiva, John Perkins, Elisabet Sahtouris, Duane Elgin and Adam Trombly.

⁶⁵ John Robbins, "Humanity and sanity: standing for a thriving world (and challenging the movie *Thrive*)," Letter published online in 2012. Robbins explained: "Two of the other sources that Foster Gamble recommended to me so that I might better understand the philosophical underpinnings of *Thrive* are Stanley Monteith and G. Edward Griffin. Monteith, who happens to be a neighbor of mine, has long been involved with Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition, and professes that the environmental movement is a pretext for the effort to create a global police state. The author of two books on AIDS, he says 'the vast majority of AIDS information available to the American public has only one purpose - and that purpose is to deceive the people of our nation.' Monteith's answer? He calls for schools to "abandon all comprehensive sex education" in favor of "abstinence only sex instruction."

⁶⁶ Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, *Black Sun: Aryan Cults, Esoteric Nazism, and the Politics of Identity* (New York University Press, 2003), p.83.

⁶⁷ The misleading idea that politics should be a matter that is "beyond left and right" is something that is commonly upheld by New Age practitioners. The same is

true with the related idea that class politics is divisive and that conflict should be avoided whenever possible, a popular argument that is firmly rebutted by Ugo Mattei and Laura Nader in their book, *Plunder: When the Rule of Law is Illegal* (Blackwell Publishing, 2008) – a text that demonstrates how “harmony ideologies” “may be used to suppress people’s resistance, by socializing them toward conformity by means of consensus, cooperation, passivity, and docility, and by silencing people who speak out angrily”. And while the “beyond left and right” arguments have historically proven popular within more conservative parts of the environmental movement, such dead-end mottos are similarly promoted by well-intentioned liberals with a good example being provided by Laura Nader’s more famous brother, Ralph Nader, author of *Unstoppable: The Emerging Left-Right Alliance to Dismantle the Corporate State* (Nation Books, 2014). Adopting such a transpartisan approach is highly problematic, and while it is true that Ralph Nader has moved leftwards over recent decades and has done much good work to popularize the need for a new political party that represents ordinary people, his ongoing belief that the right and left should coordinate their activism is wrongheaded to say the least.

Ralph Nader’s commitment to building cross-class coalitions however is no flash in the pan, and in large part can be explained by his legalistic and consumer orientated approach to politics which saw one left-leaning critic describe Nader’s “public interest” approach to legal reforms as “working toward a new definition of a governmental system in which lawyers are a commanding elite.” (James Ridgeway, *The Politics of Ecology* (Dutton, 1970), p.199; for a related critique see Edgar Cahn and Jean Camper Cahn, “Power to the people or the profession? The public interest in Public Interest Law,” *Yale Law Journal*, 79, 1970.) None of this is news to most activists, as in the midst of the mass popular uprising of the late 1960s Nader’s legal advocacy quickly gained support from ruling-class funders (most notable at the Carnegie Corporation) who saw his reformist and elitist approach to managing social change as something they could work with. Thus, it is perhaps unsurprising that Nader continues to maintain the naïve hope that the so-called more liberal members of the ruling-class will help build the types of political movements to help ordinary people, hence the title of his 2009 novel *Only the Super-Rich Can Save Us!* Indeed, throughout his career Ralph Nader has worked alongside far-right figures in an attempt to try to find common ground, for example, in September 2008 he spoke alongside Ron Paul (who had organized the event) at a press conference publicizing the need for unity on certain key issues like opposition to war. In that instance his only ally on the left (speaking from the platform anyway) was the Green Party’s presidential candidate Cynthia McKinney who was already moving firmly into the embrace of 9/11 conspiracy theories after previously serving in Congress with the Democrats. In 2009 McKinney then literally sat alongside Barbara Marx Hubbard (with Ron Paul and Ralph Nader participating by video call) at the Transpartisan Alliance’s Citizens’ Summit held in Denver, Colorado, which had been organized by the up-and-coming one-time far-right activist turned transpartisan Joseph McCormick; notably, early funding for this work came through the Fetzer Institute. It was here at this Summit that McKinney first met with the far-right conspiracy theorist Robert David Steele, which in 2017 would

rare critical review of Hubbard's 1993 book, *The Revelation*, that was undertaken by a well-known theatre critic from New York who concluded: "With her self-indulgent, deliberate stupidity, Hubbard is playing into the hands of Fascists, if unwittingly."⁶⁸

Thrive is however just one of many documentaries that combines utopian New Age thought with far-right conspiracy theories, and another popular example is the hugely popular *Zeitgeist* series of documentaries that were released online between 2007 and 2011. Controversial sources for this series of films included G. Edward Griffin, David Icke, Jim Marrs, Anthony Sutton, Webster Tarpley (a high-profile conspiracist who spent years working for Lyndon LaRouche), and right-wing esotericist Jordan Maxwell.⁶⁹ But in this instance it was the Birchite author G. Edward Griffin who felt "deeply disturbed" by *Zeitgeist's* message, especially the film's questioning of the profit motive. Here Griffin was particularly infuriated by the way that the *Zeitgeist* series had counterpoised the technological utopianism of Jacque Fresco as an alternative to the elite-shadow world

eventually lead to the two to reconnect in a project called #UNRIG in a collaborative effort to bring down the "deep state". Both would go on to be influential covid-conspiracists although when Steele contracted the deadly virus in 2021 it would take his life.

Here it needs to be emphasized that protecting our planet from capitalist-wrought destruction remains one of the most pressing concerns facing us all, a subject matter that is taken up within George Martin Fell Brown's useful article "A contested legacy: Ralph Nader's challenge to the two-party system," *Socialist Alternative*, November 3, 2016. Nevertheless, it remains critical that environmental activists understand the dangers posed by both capitalism and from the far-rights green and racially charged obsessions: for more on this see Peter Staudenmaier, "Understanding right-wing ecology: historical and contemporary reflections," *Ideology Theory Practice*, July 26, 2021; and my own article "Gambling with our planet," *Theory In Action*, 7(1), January 2014. Also of relevance is Janet Biehl's "The fallacy of 'neither Left nor Right': militia fever," *Green Perspectives*, 37, April 1995.

⁶⁸ Steve Capra, "Review of Barbara Marx Hubbard's *The Revelation*," *The New York Critic: Book Reviews*, Undated.

⁶⁹ For a broader discussion of the political context surrounding films like *Zeitgeist*, see Ulrike Hess-Meining, "Right-wing esotericism in Europe," in: Uwe Backes and Patrick Moreau (eds.), *The Extreme Right in Europe: Current Trends and Perspectives* (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011), pp.384-408. On April 27, 2017, the web site libcomm.org took up some of these problems within The Zeitgeist Movement, see "Anarchist critique of TZM".

that had been described in the documentary by various reactionary conspiracy theorists (including himself). Seeing reds under the bed everywhere, Griffin accused Fresco of promoting Marxism,⁷⁰ when in fact Fresco himself has explicitly rejected class struggle as means of creating a fairer society. In reality, Fresco's approach to social change is thoroughly technocratic and elitist, and it is not for nothing that his 1995 book *The Venus Project: The Redesign of a Culture* was lauded as a World Future Society best-seller.⁷¹

From Waco to Russia

The way people get sucked-up into far-right politics can be beautifully illustrated by examining the documentary career of William Gazecki, the director of *Future by Design* (2006), another film that celebrated Fresco's futurism. After blazing a multiple Emmy Award career in post-production sound mixing for film and television, in 1993 Gazecki directed his first documentary for PBS, "The Natural Solutions: Freedom of Choice and the FDA" which helped direct public opinion in favor of the vitamin-supplement industry and assisted the safe passage of the right-wings much-beloved Dietary Supplement Health Education Act (of 1994).⁷² But it was Gazecki's next production that remains his most notorious, as he quickly moved from vitamins to directing the militia classic, *Waco: The Rules of Engagement* (1997) – a misleading film that helped radicalize and misdirect a new generation of angry white men and women. In an enlightening chapter of her book *Stiffed: The Betrayal of Modern Man* (Vintage, 2000), Susan

⁷⁰ G. Edward Griffin, "Zeitgeist Addendum: a critical review," *Alex Jones Show podcast (InfoWars)*, October 16, 2008.

⁷¹ Jacque Fresco also mixed in similar circles, because like Barbara Marx Hubbard he served (loosely speaking) on the "faculty" of the "Great Mystery" – a group, which as their website states, was formed to bring "together some of the world's foremost thought leaders through conferences, online programs and tours to ancient sites bridging science and mystical phenomena, fostering the ability to shape reality through the expansion of consciousness." <http://greatmystery.org> Great Mystery was founded by Robin Johnson, an Esalen regular who boasts of having first been initiated into shamanic journeying by Michael Harner which apparently "enhanced her ability to commune with the spirit world directly."

⁷² John Swann, "The history of efforts to regulate dietary supplements in the USA," *Drug Testing and Analysis*, 8(3-4), 2016.

Faludi was able to interview the three leading men involved in producing *Waco*, with Gazecki's own liberal background turning out to be something of an anomaly. Much like the main star of the film (Michael McNulty), the right-wing financier of the *Waco* project, Dan Gifford, was deeply immersed in paranoid delusions. During one interview with Gifford, Faludi recalled:

The government might have been "testing classified weapons" on the Davidians, he speculated. He couldn't disclose his sources, but "that stuff that was being fired back there, maybe it wasn't a firearm as we know it." He alluded darkly to "microwave energies. It cooks your insides, causes people to have bowel movements, hemorrhages." From there, Gifford moved on to rumors he had heard about government "thought control," like a claim forwarded by a Church of Scientology magazine that government documents "show that the Jonestown mass suicide was really a cover-up by the CIA to hide its mind-control experiments." If I wanted to investigate federal shenanigans at Waco further, he said, he had found "very, very accurate" information on the government's clandestine operations in a *Soldier of Fortune* magazine and the John Birch Society's newsletter. He noted in particular a *Soldier of Fortune* report that claimed the White House didn't want David Koresh taken alive. "This starts to sound like Vietnam," Gifford said.⁷³

The political repercussions of such disturbing ramblings only poured petrol on the already burning fury of those individuals unfortunate enough to be drawn into this far-right milieu.⁷⁴ Gazecki, the supposed apolitical liberal, may not have appeared to be as outwardly invested

⁷³ Faludi, *Stified*, p.438.

⁷⁴ "In the final decade of the twentieth century, thousands of men would take up arms against metastasizing and morphing enemies. Suspicion pulled their gun sights in a thousand directions: towards the 'jackbooted thugs' of the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, bankers conniving in a 'New Work Order conspiracy' hatched by the Federal Reserve, the Freemasons, and the Bavarian Illuminati, gang-bangers secretly deputized by the UN, Rhodes scholars mobilized by the Rothschilds and the British crown to restore America as an English colony, a techno-geek plot to end the world via a year-2000 computer glitch, or even a total population surveillance scheme embedded in the Universal Product Code bars stamped on grocery items. The more the Angry White Males looked, the more blurred the enemy's face became." Faludi, *Stified*, p.409.

in the militia movement as his two compatriots, but since directing *Waco* he seems to have worked miracles in his efforts to popularize far-right ideologies within the New Age scene. Thus, immediately after completing *Waco*, Gazecki worked with former Major Ed Dames to produce the 5-part *Lessons in Technical Remote Viewing* (1998); then in 2002 he served as the director of *Crop Circles: Quest for Truth*; and in 2004 was the director for G. Edward Griffin's *Invisible Ballots*.⁷⁵

Gazecki, however, despite professing to come from a normal background, has always considered himself to a spiritual intuitive, at least since his youth. And if we follow his more recent ventures, we truly disappear into a rabbit hole of fearmongering, anti-Semitic fantasies, and Russian delusions. Thus after he served as a film editor for *RiseUP: The Movie* (2016) – a film whose inception was inspired by a conference hosted by Marc Gafni and had starred many of the mystic thought leaders discussed in this book (including Hubbard) – Gazecki popped his head above the parapet to defend Gafni from charges of sexual abuse and from the predations of the “politically correct progressive world”.⁷⁶ Around this time Gazecki, then became converted to the mystical intrigues revolving around the Sovereign Magistral Order of the Temple of Solomon. In conversation with Michael Henry Dunn, a former thespian turned “Grand Commander” of the Order, Gazecki observed how he was now in the process of making a documentary about the unexpected restoration of the Order of the Knights Templar.⁷⁷ While Dunnard himself, in

⁷⁵ Other noteworthy projects completed by William Gazecki include working with LeVar Burton on a documentary series for PBS entitled *The Science of Peace* (2007) which received funding from the Institute of Noetic Sciences. While in 2002 he helped libertarian conspiracy theorist Aaron Russo in his aborted bid to be elected Governor of Nevada and acted as the cameraman for the 12-part series “Energy from the Vacuum” (2004-2005) which promoted the free energy conspiracies of Tom Bearden.

⁷⁶ William Gazecki, “Sneak attack: false accusations, smear campaigns, and the hidden motives behind the attempted take down of Marc Gafni,” *Medium*, May 26, 2017.

⁷⁷ “The Knightly News: William Gazecki” (hosted by Michael Henry Dunn), *Project Camelot TV YouTube Channel*, streamed live on March 31, 2016. The same conspiracy YouTube Channel “Project Camelot” clocked up over a million views of their two-hour long interview with David Icke; and the channel’s founder, Kerry Cassidy, had the misfortune to invest £100,000 of her inheritance with another (now

addition to claiming to be a Knight of the direct continuation of the original Knights Templar from 1118 AD, hence his preferred title of Viscount, also ran a now discontinued blog which promoted what he called “anti-globalist geopolitics”. By this Dunnard meant that his so-called ‘Alliance Journal’ published pro-Putin propaganda “in defense of human rights and individual freedoms.”

To gain a flavor of the *Alliance Journal's* politics it is noteworthy that among the seven “news sites” they recommend is the far-right American website *WorldNetDaily* (which is run by Joseph Farah), and the anti-Semitic conspiracy website *Veterans Today*. Longstanding contributors to the latter hate-site include Holocaust Revisionist Ingrid Zundel, whose online biography noted that she was “proudly married to one of the world's most politically correct human rights activists, Ernst Zundel, [who was] kidnapped by America's Zionist-beholden government goons on American soil in 2003 for having spoken Truth to Power about the so-called 'Holocaust.'” Both of these famous openly Nazi writers passed away in 2017, but *Veterans Today* have plenty more haters on their books.⁷⁸ In the same vein,

jailed) conspiracy scammer named Sean David Morton (who claims to have been trained as a remote viewer at SRI).

Reflecting upon his own spiritual awakening, Gazecki explains: “Complete, open and free knowledge of divinity, the sharing of mind, knowledge and experience, coexistence, you know the Essene lifestyle in its day was quite evolved and unique considering its surrounding cultures. My involvement with the Essenes began when I was quite young, I was in my twenties, and I was introduced to an Essene - it was a woman, I will call her a master, an Essene master, she was a clairvoyant. She developed a system of healing using color, meditation and projection, and reflection of color. It was a very sophisticated system, it was her life's work, and she taught it. Apparently, she was also involved with esoteric translation of ancient texts, though she was schooled in Sanskrit and perhaps other ancient languages. A very interesting person. I only met her physically once although I was around her work, her students, quite a bit. One of her students was my mother-in-law. I married her daughter, and it was a very, very profound environment to be around, especially at my young age.” (from 50min onwards) Note that the current leader of the Modern Essenes is Rabbi Gabriel Cousens.

⁷⁸ Ernst Zundel's Nazi conspiracy theories are discussed in Chapter 5. A former board member of *Veterans Today* is James H. Fetzer, an emeritus professor who in 2013 published a vile article titled “Did Mossad death squads slaughter American children at Sandy Hook?” He also co-founded “Scholars for 9/11 truth” and prior to publishing an unrelenting string of conspiracy books it is worth pointing out that his

Dunnard's 'Journal' refers to Lyndon LaRouche's Political Action Committee and the far-right OathKeepers (which are closely associated with the US militia movement) as "interesting groups." This political orientation is very much in keeping with Dunnard's Order of the Knights Templar, which propagate the idea of their being a "satanic... globalist evil agenda"; and for proof of such an agenda Dunnard points towards his belief that *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* is a real document.⁷⁹

Overburdened with so much negative intellectual baggage, little wonder that Dunnard -- or "Adjunct Professor Viscount Dunnard" as he likes to be known -- is keen to invoke authority by boasting of his academic credentials to help him make his arguments. In this respect Dunnard even claims to have gained a Ph.D. from the Crown Institute of Geopolitics and Diplomacy at the Ignita Veritas University, an

1991 book *Philosophy and Cognitive Science* was published by Paragon House, which is a publishing imprint of the Rev. Moon's Unification Church.

⁷⁹ Order of the Knights Templar, "The real enemies of the Templar Order," accessed July 2018. Like many other conspiracy theorists, Dunnard refers to *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* as the *Protocols of the Illuminati*. With no hint of irony, Dunnard writes: "Fortunately, modern Templars also know how to read, and have made extensive scholarly studies and expert strategic analysis of the documented evil agenda methods, to do their homework on the enemies of humanity who all Knights and Dames were always sworn to oppose." After drawing upon Victor Marsden's 1922 translation of the *Protocols*, the article ends by citing Winston Churchill's "Zionism versus Bolshevism" essay (*Illustrated Sunday Herald*, February 1920). The Order write: "Winston Churchill published a statement in 1920, identifying the evil agenda of the Bavarian *Protocols of the Illuminati* as a 'world-wide conspiracy for the *overthrow of civilization* and for the reconstitution of society on the basis of arrested development, of *envious malevolence* [evil]', perpetrated by 'this band of extraordinary personalities from the underworld' of such secret societies." Order of the Temple of Solomon, "Secret societies rejected by Templarism: exposing & countering the historical anti-humanitarian agenda of deception," accessed July 2018.

Dunn now appears to have ditched the *Alliance Journal* so he could relocate to Crestone, Colorado, where he has created "a teaching and research institution dedicated to Sacred Activism training and global healing." Here Dunn passes his time writing about the "authentic patriotism" that can be found in the QAnon Movement, pointing out that the "evidence is overwhelming" "that there is indeed (as QAnon claims) a dark faction of elite Luciferian pedophile rings which ensnares and controls politicians worldwide". Dunn, "The coming Constitutional crisis - and how the idea of America survives," October 19, 2020.

institution which he claims is “a licensed geopolitically-oriented university dedicated to developing and promoting factual bases for empirical, historical, academic and practical truth, as the necessary fabric of civilization.”⁸⁰ Imaginary might be a better word to describe this university, as despite the institution being proud of the support they lend to monarchies, they maintain their international headquarters at a lowly airport in Florida (with office space in three other countries including Egypt), and they certainly don’t like visitors turning-up unannounced: in fact, they are clear that “Visitors by ‘walk-in; without invitation or official credentials will *not* be permitted, and may be detained for security investigation.”⁸¹ This secrecy does seem strange when you consider that just a few years ago the university counted William Gazecki (now Sir William) as their “Director of Documentary Film.”⁸²

Another leader of this institution with far-right connections is the so-called “Secretary of Sovereign Affairs” for Ignita Veritas University, His Highness (H.H.) Deric N. Bircham - Prince of Bircham, who first obtained an MBA by correspondence from a now-collapsed organization in San Francisco, and then brought a degree from the Sri Lankan-based Open International University for Complementary Medicines, and another from the unaccredited European Academy of Informatization (which was based in Belgium

⁸⁰ “LinkedIn profile: Michael Henry Dunn”, accessed July 21, 2018.

⁸¹ “Decentralized Office Locations Network” <http://www.iv-university.org/office-locations/> The Ignita Veritas University seems to be a relatively new body and one that evolved out the Institute for Sovereign International Security (ISIS), which “developed through Russian and American government contractors working on active projects” and boasts of having “evolved from decades of development and networking by numerous organizations of military veterans and national security veterans.”

⁸² William Gazecki is no longer featured on the web site of the Ignita Veritas University. However, Gazecki is still helping produce New Age films as he served as an editor for *The Miracle Morning* (2020). This is a self-help documentary based upon the life of the best-selling efficiency guru Hal Elrod, a film which partly charts Elrod’s recovery from cancer. Unlike some alternative health practitioners, we can be grateful that Elrod at least undertook chemotherapy, but he is sure that the only reason he was able to survive owed to his simultaneous embrace of non-scientific treatments. Here Elrod’s alternative cancer treatments were largely inspired by the anti-scientific advice given in Dr. Servan-Schreiber’s (1961-2011) book *Anticancer: A New Way of Life* (Viking, 2009).

when it existed). Finally, Bircham purchased yet another degree from the International University of Fundamental Studies (which is based in Saint Petersburg, Russia). Befitting his commitment to distant learning, Bircham founded a similar institution and had it named after himself. Formerly operated from the Bahamas, but now registered in Spain and Delaware, the Bircham International University is a right-wing Christian organization that promotes pseudoscience in the form of alternative medicine. Distinguished alumni from the Open International University for Complementary Medicines who have Russian backgrounds include the former President of Russia, Boris Yeltsin, and Roland Yakoubov, a US-based healer whose aunt was perhaps the most famous Russian faith healer ever, a woman named Djuna Davitashvili (1949-2015).⁸³

Finally, Ignita Veritas University say they are under “Sovereign Patronage” of the Order of the Temple of Solomon, hence the “Grand Master” of the Order, His Most Eminent Highness (M.E.H.) Prince Judge Matthew, is counted as one of the University’s organizational leaders. Matthew had previously obtained a “Ph.D.” from their Crown Institute of Geopolitics and Diplomacy, and during these studies, Matthew studied by externship at the self-styled Russian Academy of Natural Sciences (RAEN), which happens to be one of Russia’s leading mystical institutions that, like Ignita Veritas, is well-versed in far-right politics.

A Russian Alternative to Science

The Russian Academy of Natural Sciences (RAEN), which was founded in 1990, should be sharply distinguished from the better-known Russian Academy of Sciences,⁸⁴ as for many years RAEN has

⁸³ Roland Yakoubov’s online biography observes that he is “working with Beverly Rubik, Ph.D, the President and Founder of the Institute of Frontier Science in Oakland, California. She is documenting Roland’s abilities.” Rubik’s Institute of Frontier Science was launched in 1996 with the personal support of Lawrence Rockefeller; and Rubik remains quite a mover-and-shaker within the alternative health movement, having served as a lead advisor to the organization that was the precursor group which led to the creation of the US-Government funded National Centre for Complementary and Alternative Medicine.

⁸⁴ With the collapse of the Soviet Union, science –which was closely associated with Marxism – entered something of a crisis of legitimacy. As Loren Graham and

been home to all manner of climate sceptics,⁸⁵ transpersonal psychologists, mystics,⁸⁶ xenophobes and extreme nationalists. For example, the former chairman of the nationalist Rodina party is a longstanding RAEN member.

Connections to Soviet militarism has also been played out through the work of RAEN's previously influential section on Geopolitics and Security (which was headed by Rear Admiral Vladimir S. Pirumov, an expert in radio electronic warfare) – a section that “was established for all practical purposes by the Russian General Staff on 22 November 1991, its membership composed of senior Russian officers associated with the General Staff.”⁸⁷ It is significant that the Russian General Staff were also “instrumental in establishing another 'think-tank', the Institute for Defense Research” (INOBIS) which began to show the influences of Alexander Dugin's own work on geopolitics “as early as October 1995”.⁸⁸

Irina Dezhina explain in *Science in the New Russia: Crisis, Aid, Reform* (Indiana University Press, 2008): “Following the disintegration of the USSR, a rapid decrease in the status of science and the prestige of research work occurred, both among policy-makers and among the general public. The effects of this decrease on the scientific establishment were profound and widespread.” (p.18) Western philanthropic foundations then intervened to restructure the scientific establishment. This represented an openly imperialist intervention that was then demonized in later years by the Putin regime.

⁸⁵ Between 1993 and 2006 the president of the US branch of the Russian Academy of Natural Sciences was an influential climate change sceptic named George Chilingarian, who holds similar views to Michael Economides who has received numerous awards from RAEN and is the coauthor of *Energy and Climate Wars: How Naive Politicians, Green Ideologues, and Media Elites are Undermining the Truth About Energy and Climate* (Bloomsbury Continuum, 2010). The preface for Economides's book was written by the Italian libertarian, Carlo Stagnaro, who himself is the author of the 2001 book *Waco: strage di stato americana* (Waco: A State Massacre in the US).

⁸⁶ Evgueny Faydysh, author of *The Mystic Cosmos* (2000), is a longstanding RAEN member, and he is the current president of the Russian Foundation of Transpersonal Psychology where he works alongside Ubiquity University's Vladimir Maykov (see earlier).

⁸⁷ John Erickson, "We have plenty to defend ourselves with...": Russian, rhetoric, Russia Realism," in Stephen Cimbala (ed.), *The Russian Military into the 21st Century* (Routledge, 2013), p.25.

⁸⁸ Stefan Forss, Lauri Kiianlinna, Pertti Inkinen, and Heikki Hult, The Development of Russian Military Policy and Finland (*Helsinki, Finland: National*

Another former member of the military elite who remains a RAEN member is Lt. General Alexey Yu. Savin who in 1989 was placed in charge of establishing the “Military Unit 10003” whose state-sanctioned operations were dedicated to exploring paranormal research and whose activities followed much in the vein of the remote viewing projects that were still being undertaken in the United States.⁸⁹

More recently (in 2008) RAEN affiliated academic, professor Sergei Komkov – who at the time was the president of the all-Russian Education Foundation – promoted his belief that the so-called “Dulles Plan” conspiracy was informing the West’s deliberate effort to destroy Russia’s education system as part of the West’s ongoing efforts to undermine Russian morality.⁹⁰ The “Dulles Plan” being a deeply

Defense University, Department of Strategic and Defence Studies, 2013), p.73. The early work of Alexander Dugin’s close political ally, Sergey Glaziev, meant that in 1995 he received the Gold Kondratieff Medal from RAEN and the International N. D. Kondratieff Foundation.

⁸⁹ During the early 1990s Lt. General Alexey Yu. Savin had established a working relationship with American remote viewers like Edwin May, who would later write about their friendship in his co-authored book *ESP Wars: East and West – An Account of the Military Use of Psychic Espionage as Narrated by the Key Russian and American Players* (Laboratories for Fundamental Research, 2014). Edwin May’s first trip to Moscow took place in 1992 and his host was the parapsychologist Edward Naumov, who in early 1988 (after recently making contact with Edgar Mitchell) was courting public fame on Soviet television while lecturing “to an audience of 1,000 on bioenergy fields, unconventional medicine, reading auras and moving matter by mind power.” Gerald Nadler, “Soviet parapsychology guru is back under glasnost,” *UPI*, April 17, 1988.

As in America, ESP obsessions run high in Russia, and Major General Nikolai Sham, who was appointed to the position of deputy director of the KGB in September 1991, played a key role in supporting such attempts at directing spiritual warfare (he also wrote the foreword to *ESP Wars*). Another individual who features heavily within *ESP Wars* was Alexander Korzhakov, a former KGB general who served as head of the presidential security service from 1993 to 1996, who had a deputy named Georgy Rogozin who claimed to have “raised the souls of the dead, penetrated people’s subconscious through photographs and made up horoscopes for Boris Yeltsin.” Oleg Kashin, “How the hallucinations of an eccentric KGB psychic influence Russia today,” *The Guardian*, July 15, 2015.

⁹⁰ Serghei Golunov and Vera Smirnova, “Proliferation of conspiracy narratives in Post-Soviet Russia: the “Dulles’ Plan” in social and political discourses,” *Acta Slavica Iaponica*, 37, 2016, p.39. For their useful discussions of conspiracies in Russia, see Peter Deutschmann, Jens Herlth and Alois Woldan (eds.), “*Truth*” and *Fiction*

paranoid conspiracy that was first spread following the collapse of the Soviet Union, which connected the nefarious plan to the anti-Semitic fiction that was the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.⁹¹

To this day the “Dulles Plan” remains one of Russia’s most widely spread conspiracy theories. But when it comes to individual conspiracists, the most influential pseudo-historian in Russia today is the renowned mathematician and RAEN member, Anatolii Fomenko. This popular conspiracist is famous for his *New Chronology* publications which “draw inspiration from the Aryanist theories and from the *Book of Veles*”.⁹²

With his seductive emphasis on Russia’s past greatness and foreign plots which concealed the truth, Fomenko can be looked upon as an ideal type when it comes to the nationalist paradigm of pseudo history. He is not by training a historian; but he does have academic credibility and a capacity to use science, or at least scientific jargon, to push conventional historians out of their comfort zones. He has conjured into existence not just a good story, but also a story that is in tune with the zeitgeist, at least from a Russian nationalist perspective. It is a story about a magical Russian past and a paradise lost. The villains are Western academics and their local accomplices in the Western-

Conspiracy Theories in Eastern European Culture and Literature (Verlag, 2020), and Eliot Borenstein, *Plots Against Russia: Conspiracy And Fantasy After Socialism* (Cornell University Press, 2019). Also of interest is Ilya Yablokov’s *Building Fortress Russia: Conspiracy Theories in the Post-Soviet World* (Polity Press, 2018) and Edmund Griffiths, *Aleksandr Prokhanov and Post-Soviet Esotericism* (ibidem Press, 2021).

⁹¹ The Russian state continues to play a critical role in promoting conspiracies to prop up Putin’s authoritarian regime. Nevertheless, under extreme circumstances even Putin is forced to act to reign in some conspiracists, thus in December 2020, Father Sergii, who remains just one of Russia’s many ultraconservative religious leaders was arrested because he had begun to extend the focus of his conspiracies to attack Putin instead of using them to defend him, see Eugene Clay, “Folklore and conspiracy theories of a COVID dissenter: the life and sermons of Father Sergii (Romanov),” *Folklorica*, 24, 2020.

⁹² Marlene Laruelle, “Conspiracy and alternate history in Russia: a nationalist equation for success?,” *The Russian Review*, 71, 2012, p.577. For a discussion of Fomenko’s import to the West, see Jason Colavito, “A debunking of Fomenko’s theories: who Lost the Middle Ages?,” *Skeptical*, 11(2), 2004.

oriented Russian elite.⁹³

As if all this were not bad enough the Russian Academy of Natural Sciences' contributions to the institutionalization of pseudoscientific ideas is more problematic still because they count among their members many legitimate scientists too. This has had the devastating effect of confusing the boundaries between anti-scientific theories and genuine science, and in many ways serves a similar purpose to the bringing together of scientific and religious theories, which of course only serves to degrade the legitimacy of the former.⁹⁴ Considering this

⁹³ Greg Melleuish, Konstantin Sheiko and Stephen Brown, "Pseudo history/weird history: nationalism and the internet," *History Compass*, 7(6), 2009, p.1488. Two influential individuals who have popularized Anatolii Fomenko's conspiracies have been the libertarian chess grandmaster, Garry Kasparov, and the exiled dissident Alexander Zinoviev. This important subject matter is discussed in James Billington's *Russia in Search of Itself* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004).

Demonstrating the elitist nature of patronage politics, the L.N.Gumilyov Eurasian National University has bestowed the title of honorary professor upon not only their neo-fascist darling, Alexander Dugin (in 2004), but has given the same honour to RAEN's president Oleg Kuznetsov (in 2005), and to Hillary Clinton (in 2010).

⁹⁴ Russia's most famous UFologist, Vladimir Azhazhi, is a member of RAEN; and demonstrating the bizarre cross-over between science and anti-scientific theories it is significant that RAEN was able to recruit Sergei Kapitsa (1928-2012) to serve as one of their vice presidents. This is important as Kapitsa was a scientist of international repute who regularly took to the media to debunk the rise of conspiracy theories (for example, see his article "Science and pseudoscience in Russia," *Skeptical Inquirer*, January/February 1999). Even major historians of Russian science became RAEN members, like for instance the Harvard academic Loren Graham, who had been a former trustee of George Soros's International Science Foundation (which supported Russian scientists after the collapse of the Soviet Union).

Edward Kruglyakov in his report "Pseudoscience: how does it threaten science and the public?" (*Report at a RAN Presidium meeting of 27 May 2003*) draws attention to the way that legitimate scientists are used to help bolster the mystical research being promoted by RAEN. The critic points out: "The Russian Academy of Sciences publishes several popular science journals. There are many outstanding scientists on the editorial councils and editorial boards. However an impression is being formed that they are being used as famous names and do not set the journals' policy in any manner. How can it be explained otherwise that from time to time in these journals there appear articles extolling blatant pseudoscience?" In addition to right-wing ideologues like Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn (who in 1983 received the Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion), the then current secretary-general of the United Nations, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, was accepted as an honorary RAEN member

confusing heritage it is relevant that RAEN has always maintained an intimate relationship with all things theosophical, which has brought the Academy into direct conflict with the conservative traditions of the Russian Orthodox Church. Nevertheless, RAEN president, Oleg Kuznetsov, does not shy from such mystical connections as he presently serves on the board of directors of the International Centre of the Roerichs.⁹⁵ He also sits alongside longstanding Roerich devotee, Mikhail Gorbachev, on the board of trustees of the Centre's famous and oft-persecuted Museum,⁹⁶ a connection that still remains controversial today as it was under Gorbachev's own initiative that Russia's theosophical legacy was revived in 1987.⁹⁷

(April 1994); while even George Soros (who boasts of doing so much to promote genuine science in Russia) apparently allowed his name to be used to promote RAEN's work. For a longer discussion of the political reasons why RAEN came into existence, see Mikhail Akhmanov, "Tempting title," *Saint Petersburg Branch of the Russian Humanist Society*, Undated.

⁹⁵ Concerns regarding the support that RAEN's intellectuals lend to xenophobia were raised by Valentin Vydrin, see Maria Akhmetova *et al.*, "Forum 8: Nationalism and xenophobia as research topics," *Forum for Anthropology and Culture*, 5, 2009, pp.142-4.

⁹⁶ Isabel Gorst, "Mystic's art collection at front line of Russian culture wars," *The Irish Times*, March 8, 2017.

⁹⁷ Mikhail Gorbachev "wished to use the 'Roerich idea' to revitalize a Soviet ideology" and "appears to have calculated that Roerichite thinking, properly packaged, would infuse the Soviet worldview with a potent combination of aesthetically-appealing and exotic imagery; a pride in Russia that was neither chauvinistic nor at odds with the multiethnic nature of the Soviet state; an associative link between the USSR and respect for the ideals of peace, culture, and beauty; and the possibility of spiritual enrichment without the need for conventional religious faith." John McCannon, "Competing legacies, competing visions of Russia: the Roerich movement(s) in post-Soviet Russia," in *The New Age of Russia*, p.350, p.351. "On a related note, neo-Eurasianists such as Alexander Dugin have encouraged a free-floating association between Roerichite thought and their own quasi-millenarian vision of a Russia rising to glory over the 'Atlantic' West, although this is not an association sought by the MTsR or Agni Yogists in general." (p.366)

Another individual who famously promoted the esoteric ideas of Theosophy from within Bulgaria's Stalinist regime in the 1970s was Lyudmila Zhivkova (1942-1981): a leader whose political/spiritual work contained "a problematic universalism and a commitment to national and patriotic ideals that bear an uneasy relationship to the ethno-nationalist politics of the period." Zhivka Valiavicharska, "Post-Stalinism's uncanny symbioses: ethno-nationalism and the global orientations of Bulgarian socialism during the 1960s and 1970s," special issue, *dVersia*, 2019, p.92.

Here one of the most important ventures undertaken by the International Centre of the Roerichs has been their enduring efforts to meld mysticism and science. As part of these activities, in 2004 they founded the United Scientific Center of Cosmic Thinking. Such work makes the Centre a natural ally of RAEN, and during the 1990s the “most active Russian physicists participating in the Roerich movement are (or were) those investigating so-called 'torsion fields,' Anatoliy Akimov (1938-2007) and Genadiy Shipov”.⁹⁸ Both Akimov and Shipov conducted their pseudoscientific research at RAEN, and it is not surprising that their torsion field nonsense is used to lend an aura of academic creditability to the bogus theories relating to Zero Point Energy by consciousness talking-heads like Ervin Lazlo.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Anita Stasulane, “The Theosophy of the Roerichs: Agni Yoga or living ethics,” in Olav Hammer and Mikael Rothstein (eds.), *Handbook of the Theosophical Current* (Brill, 2013), p.211. Stasulane points out that: “The most active Russian physicists participating in the Roerich movement are (or were) those investigating so-called 'torsion fields,' Anatoliy Akimov (1938-2007) and Genadiy Shipov b. 1938, who in the 1990s made lecture tours in the collapsing USSR. To oppose their theory, the 'Commission for Combating Pseudoscience and the Falsification of Scientific Research' (*Komissia po bor'be s lzhenaukoi i falsifikatsiei nauchnykh issledovaniy*) was founded by the Russian Academy of Science in 1998, headed by the Nobel Prize winner in physics, Vitaliy Ginzburg.” Stasulane explains how during the Soviet era the Roerichs' teachings “grew more and more popular in the USSR where their doctrine of Theosophy functioned as a spiritual alternative to the dialectical materialism imposed by the Communist regime.” (p.207) She adds:

“In the 1980s, the Roerichs' youngest son Svyatoslav (1904-1993) played a decisive role in the development of the movement. In 1987 he met with the General Secretary of the Communist Party, Michail Gorbachev and his wife Raisa, who took part in the Moscow group of the Roerichs' followers, a visit repeated in 1989 after Gorbachev had taken office. The collapse of the Soviet ideological system opened up much wider opportunities for the spread of Living Ethics, and a number of Roerich societies were formed in the territories of the former USSR. The Moscow group was the most successful; among other things it founded the Roerich Museum in Moscow and the Soviet Foundation of the Roerichs (1989), later renamed the International Center of the Roerichs (ICR) (1991).” (p.207)

⁹⁹ Anatoliy Akimov's work is cited in Ervin Lazlo's book *The Whispering Pond: A Personal Guide to the Emerging Vision of Science* (Element Books, 1999), p.196, p.238.

Democracy in Ruins

What cannot be doubted is that in the post-Soviet period most ordinary Russians have suffered immense deprivation and faced mammoth betrayals from intellectual elites, whether they be fascists or liberals, and sometimes by so-called socialists too. Writing during this tumultuous period of history that oversaw the consolidation of gangster capitalism by first Gorbachev and then by Yeltsin, Boris Kagarlitsky noted that the one thing that the newly empowered liberal intelligentsia feared most of all was the growing signs of left radicalism as workers sought to use their newfound democratic rights to struggle collectively for a better future. He recalled how the “news-stands” were “packed with publications telling us of the evil deeds of the Bolsheviks... and criticism of Trotsky and Trotskyism is reaching a scale not seen since Stalin’s time.” The liberal elites therefore did the far-right’s bidding by propagating a critique of Bolshevism that was “conducted exclusively from the positions of the White movement.” This battle by Russian liberals against a potentially radicalized public was simultaneously carried out in the American press, and Kagarlitsky refers to an article published in the *New York Review of Books* (August 19, 1990) by Gavriil Popov that was titled “The dangers of democracy.” As Kagarlitsky surmised, this article...

...explained that the participation of the masses in political life, and democratic liberties in general served to hinder the implementation of the reforms which the country needed. The implications of this were obvious: if the policies of market capitalism were to succeed, democracy had to be done away with.¹⁰⁰

Gavriil Popov, who served first as the chair and then the Mayor of Moscow between 1990 and 1992, relied heavily upon US advisors in his attempts to save his city from democracy. Thus shortly after he became the chairman of the Moscow City Council, one integral way that Popov acquired such elite connections was by becoming the

¹⁰⁰ Boris Kagarlitsky, *The Disintegration of Monolith* (Verso, 1992), p.37, p.38, p.101. For a more recent insider account of the continuing deprivations of Russia’s media and cultural elite, see Michael Idov, *Dressed Up for a Riot: Misadventures in Putin’s Moscow* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2018).

president of the Russian division of the World League for Freedom and Democracy (which was previously known as the World Anti-Communist League), which he did after meeting with other members of the League in South Korea.¹⁰¹

In October 1991 Popov would then preside over the opening of an organization called Russia House, which acted as a “go-between for Russian and U.S. businesses” and had been established by the Washington-based lobbyist for far-right intrigues, Edward Lozansky. Lozansky still remains a committed far-right warrior and as such is presently considered to be one of Putin’s most influential cronies. In addition to running the World Russia Forum, Lozansky is widely considered to be “the key man who introduced the Republican Party’s conservative movement to Russia.”¹⁰² In keeping with these political connections, funding for Russia House was provided by the American businessman Robert Kriebel – a powerful ultra-conservative who is associated with the shadowy Council for National Policy.¹⁰³ And a key far-right activist from America who was present at the launch of Russia House was Paul Weyrich, who was reported as saying, “When we first went to the Soviet Union we were considered foolish. But democracy is real. The change is real.”¹⁰⁴ Yet Weyrich’s conception of democracy

¹⁰¹ David Speedie, “Interview with Gavriil Popov, first democratically elected mayor of Moscow,” *Carnegie Council*, February 11, 2011; and for a less evasive interview covering much the same questions, see Speedie, “Arkady Murashev on the fall of the USSR,” *Carnegie Council*, February 8, 2011.

¹⁰² Patrick Simpson, “The GOP’s favorite Russian professor spent decades building conservative ties to Moscow,” *The Stern Facts*, May 26, 2017.

¹⁰³ Robert Kriebel was a founding board member of the Heritage Foundation, and in 1989, working under the remit of the Free Congress Foundation (a conservative think tank founded by Paul Weyrich and the Colorado beer magnate Joseph Coors) he had formed the Kriebel Institute to promote ‘democracy’ and economic freedom in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

¹⁰⁴ Sarah Booth Conroy, “Russia House, trading in its name,” *The Washington Post*, October 27, 1991. Conroy adds that after the opening of Russia House: “That night in the gold-and-white pilastered reception room of the Soviet Embassy, Ambassador Viktor Komplektov entertained a remarkably diverse group: American businessmen hoping to prospect for gold in Russia; Sens. Claiborne Pell and Richard Lugar; a few ambassadors from neighboring countries, including Norway’s Kjeld Vibe; Allen Weinstein, president of the Center for Democracy; and of course Popov and

is about as far from the real thing as possible.

Finally, one of Popov's other lesser-known claims to fame relates to his invitation of the authoritarian est-guru Werner Erhard to come to Moscow to deliver "intensive training" for more than a 100 CEOs. This training extravaganza was arranged through Popov's own Center for Management Consulting. But Popov was not alone in courting Erhard's corporate consciousness sessions, and Erhard lectured hundreds of other business leaders at the Academy of the National Economy, the Academy of Social Sciences, the Soviet Philosophical Society, and at the International Business School of the Moscow Institute of Foreign Relations.¹⁰⁵ This brings us back to Esalen's influence, as while Erhard was making his largely untaxed millions during the 1970s, one of the groups that he sustained financially, and who in turn supported him against his many critics, was Esalen and their cofounder, Michael Murphy.¹⁰⁶ Yet not

the Lozanskys."

Another leading officer of Russia House's board was Paul Craig Roberts of the Center for Strategic and International Studies – a former treasury assistant secretary for President Reagan who is now a conspiracy theorist.

¹⁰⁵ For a devastating critique of Werner Erhard, see Steven Pressman's *Outrageous Betrayal: The Dark Journey of Werner Erhard From Est to Exile* (St Martin's Press, 1993). In 1979 an educational exchange program known as the US/USSR Project was launched by the Werner Erhard Foundation, which, in 1984, led to Erhard conducting the first of many courses and lectures in Moscow under the auspices of the Znaniye (All Union Knowledge) Society. "William Gaylin, a psychiatrist and the president of the Hastings Center, a nonprofit research group that studies ethical issues in medicine, says Mr. Erhard is offering 'a quick fix – simple solutions to agonizing problems.' The Erhard nostrums appeal to 'a vulnerable population ready for magic,' he says." Indeed, it appears that the Kremlin thought "that Mr. Erhard's brand of instant self-help could motivate the sluggish Soviet bureaucracy." Thus, in June 1986 "Mr. Erhard gave a five-day course to about 60 Soviet managers in the workers' state, his first seminar under a three-year contract that also will allow Soviet officials to study his teaching methods in the U.S." Robert Greenberger, "East meets Est: the Soviets discover Werner Erhard," *The Wall Street Journal*, December 3, 1986.

¹⁰⁶ Walter Truett Anderson, *The Upstart Spring: Esalen and the Human Potential Movement: The First Twenty Years* (Addison-Wesley, 2004), p.276, p.277. In private Michael Murphy and others at Esalen were critical of the personality cult around Erhard, yet when asked in public "Murphy would say he thought est was a valuable contribution to the movement." (p.273) Therefore, on the issue of est, "Esalen was never really able to take an active role as the conscience of the human potential movement. Murphy and [George] Leonard were concerned about the issues involved,

everyone's politics were as bad or as opportunist as Murphy's, and an early critic of est accurately wrote that Erhard's therapeutic training embraces a "retreat from the complexities of the world" which leads to a "kind of soft fascism: the denial, the name of higher truth, of the claims of others upon the self." As the critic continued:

Clearly Erhard has a genius - not only for the efficiency with which his program is organized and sold, but also for the accuracy with which he tells his audience what it wants to hear. It is the latter which binds them to him. The world is perfect, each of us is all-powerful, shame and guilt are merely arbitrary notions, truth is identical to belief, suffering is merely the result of imperfect consciousness - how like manna all of this must seem to hungry souls. For if we are each totally responsible for our fate, then all the others in the world are responsible for their fates, and, if that is so, why should we worry about them?¹⁰⁷

but not concerned enough to take a public stand about them. Some of the vast riches earned by est were then channelled into a foundation, which in-turn funded "some of Murphy's own most cherished subjects." This included a grant called "Evolutionary Transformations in the Human Body," which funded a project undertaken by Murphy and his associate James Hickman.

¹⁰⁷ Peter Marin, "The new narcissism" (originally published in *Harper's*, October 1975) anthologised in *Freedom and Its Discontents: Reflections on Four Decades of American Moral Experience* (Steerforth Press, 1995), p.37, p.34. As Marin surmised: "The self replaces community, relation, neighbour, chance, or God. Looming larger every moment, it obliterates everything around it that might have offered a way out of its pain." (p.36)

FOUR

Corporate Clairvoyance?

Despite all that has been written about occult powers, no one has the power to predict the future or to read people's minds. So, saying this, you would be forgiven for not knowing who Ervin Laszlo is, as he certainly doesn't make the headlines of the mainstream media very often, even if he has served as an influential systems theorist and all-round powerbroker for the ruling-class for the last sixty years. This is why we can be thankful that Laszlo went to the trouble of publishing his autobiography which is titled *Simply Genius! And Other Tales from My Life* (Hay House, 2011). New Age salesman and guru to the rich, Deepak Chopra, calls Laszlo "a one-man human-potential movement" and notes that: "In a skeptical age when doubters sit by the side of the road saying no to every new idea, Ervin Laszlo said yes."¹

But what exactly does Laszlo say yes to... yes to magic... yes to capitalism... yes to macrobiotics... yes to socialism?² On the first three

¹ Deepak Chopra, "Foreword," for Ervin Laszlo, *Simply Genius! And Other Tales from My Life* (Hay House, 2011), p.ix. Unless otherwise indicated all quotes and background regarding Laszlo's life in the following discussion are based upon this autobiography.

² Macrobiotics is a dietary fad and way of life largely based upon Taoist conceptions of the infinite cosmos that involves selecting food on its alleged metaphysical properties of yin or yang. Claimed by its practitioners to be over 5,000 years old, the term macrobiotic itself is of more recent historical pedigree and can be traced back to an illustrious German physician and popular writer named Christoph Wilhelm Hufeland (1762-1836), best known for his widely-translated book, *Makrobiotik: Die Kunst das Mensliche Leben zu Verlängern* ("Macrobiotics: The Art of Prolonging Human Life"), which was first published in the 1790s. After writing this book Hufeland's fame continued to soar and he went to serve as a physician to the King of Prussia, and he was privileged enough to count Johann Wolfgang Goethe

counts Laszlo answers with a resounding yes; on the last, well I think it is safe to say the answer is no. So why should we care about Ervin Laszlo? Well, if his opposition to socialism was not enough, another good reason would be that he has set his life goal as undermining materialism, no less.

Born in 1932 in Budapest, Austria, Ervin Laszlo was something of a musical savant from an early age. His mum started teaching him the piano at the age of four, and while he learnt by ear, rather than by score, Laszlo writes that this learning process didn't simply involve "mimicking my mother. Rather," he adds, it was about "absorbing the music through my whole being." The magic evidently started early. And shortly after his tenth birthday, when he had finished playing a personal recital before Arnold Szekely -- a renowned professor at the Franz Liszt Academy of Music -- the "venerable professor stood, threw up his hands, and declared: '*Egyzeruen zseni!*' ('Simply genius!')."

Laszlo's musical talents proved to be his passage to international fame; and while playing piano all over Europe Laszlo began mingling with the rich and famous. For example, while in Paris in 1947, he practiced on the grand piano belonging to the Baroness Alix de Rothschild, the wife of Baron Guy de Rothschild. Soon after this he made his debut recital in the United States after being invited to America by the daughter-in-law of Baron Manfred Weiss, "the largest industrialist in Hungary." But sadly, not long after his first stateside performance -- at the tender age of fifteen -- he lost his special touch. Or as Laszlo puts it: "The magic was gone -- I couldn't live myself into the music."

Such problems however did not stop Laszlo playing in America, albeit without the magic. And when he turned eighteen, like everyone else, he was called up to join the US Army; but it's here that his elite connections paid off, as his mother ran to see the Baroness Erzsebet (a successful psychoanalyst) who arranged for him to see a "renowned shrink." The shrink confirmed that Laszlo's illness (remember he had

among his many famous patients. For a detailed exposition on the relationship between the history of the ancient art of devising the means to prolong human life from Taoist traditions right through to Hufeland, see the modern classic of gerontology, Gerald Gruman's, *History of Ideas About the Prolongation of Life: The Evolution of Prolongevity Hypotheses to 1800* (Springer, 2003 [1965]).

lost his magical touch on the piano) was related to traumatic wartime experiences, and kindly wrote him a note that excused him from the military draft. Laszlo, however, was found fit enough to join the Army's entertainment corps, and owing to his musical talent he obtained the comfortable job of “foster[ing] good relations with civilian populations in countries that hosted U.S. troops overseas.” Thereafter in the early 1950s he became a Goodwill Ambassador for the US Information Agency and was dispatched to Israel and the Arab countries to give concerts and speak about cultural life in America.

Anti-Materialist Anti-Communism

By 1960 Laszlo decided to branch away from his musical vocation and alter his “life path” – although he proudly notes, it “wasn't a rational” decision as he chose to follow his intuition so that he could discover more about his role in the greater cosmos. So, while continuing to earn a living as a concert pianist he started a new life as a philosophical seeker. Although Laszlo had bypassed any sort of formal training in philosophy, in the summer of 1961 he met the chief philosophy editor of Martinus Nijhoff (the Dutch publishing house) who then offered him a publishing contract. One year later Laszlo was the proud author of *Essential Society: An Ontological Reconstruction*, which was to be the first of the more than eighty books he would publish in the coming decades. As Laszlo recalls:

The premise of my book was that there is wholeness and meaning in the natural world, as well as in the world of society. I linked the great processes of evolution in the cosmos, living nature, and the human world, and showed that together they constitute an integral, dynamic, and harmonious whole.

In 1962, based at the University of Fribourg, Laszlo joined Joseph Boschenski's newly founded and devoutly anti-communist Institute of Eastern European Studies as a research associate, and it was from this position that he set about researching contemporary philosophy in Hungary and the Soviet Union.³ Still continuing to work as a musician,

³ The Institute of Eastern European Studies had been founded in 1958 with “decisive” support coming from the Rockefeller Foundation, who signed up to

Laszlo soon traded in his aging Volkswagen Beetle for a Porsche 356 Super B, and in “a matter of months” he had written another book titled *Individualism, Collectivism, and Political Power*, which focused on “the basic difference between the dominant worldview of the West and the Marxist ideology of Eastern Europe.” The next book he published was called *Beyond Scepticism and Realism: An Exploration of Husserlian and Whiteheadian Methods of Inquiry* (1966).

In the fall of 1966 Laszlo then took up residence at Yale University in the United States, where he read up on the work of the Austrian general systems theorist, Ludwig von Bertalanffy (becoming “close friends and collaborators” with this influential theorist). In 1970 he published his doctoral thesis on Whitehead’s metaphysics, and two years later released what he considered to be his “principal work” of this period, *Introduction to Systems Philosophy: Toward a New Paradigm of Contemporary Thought*.⁴

Technocratic Goals

By the fall of 1972 Laszlo was a professor at the State University of New York (SUNY) at Geneseo. And it was around this time that the president of the Club of Rome, Aurelio Peccei, asked him to write a book relating his systems theories to the “limits to growth that are innate to people and societies”; and literally within minutes of accepting the proposal, Peccei organized for him to be appointed as a special fellow at the UN Institute for Training and Research

support the Institute for its first three years with a \$20,000 grant “on the condition that [Joseph] Boschenski was in charge of directing the work.” Matthieu Gillibert, “The Sovietology of Józef M. Bocheński: transnational activism in Catholic Switzerland, 1955–65,” in: Luc van Dongen, Stéphanie Roulin and Giles Scott-Smith (eds.), *Transnational Anti-Communism and the Cold War: Agents, Activities, and Networks* (Palgrave, 2014).

⁴ In the 1900s Alfred North Whitehead (1861-1947) worked with his former pupil, Bertrand Russell, on the first edition of *Principia Mathematica*. In later years Whitehead drifted towards magical thinking and became a proponent of panpsychism, influenced by Henri Bergson’s (1859-1941) cosmic metaphysics – an influence that was felt on the mystic Pierre Teilhard de Chardin and postmodern guru Gilles Deleuze. For criticisms of Bergson, see Bertrand Russell, “The philosophy of Bergson,” *The Monist*, 1912; and Max Horkheimer’s recently translated article that was first published in German in 1934, “On Bergson’s metaphysics of time,” *Radical Philosophy*, 2005.

(UNITAR). Subsequently Laszlo spent the next few years organizing a team to undertake this major international project but, owing to other commitments, he was only able to join the endeavor full-time in fall 1977, and in that year the project published their findings as *Goals for Mankind: A Report to the Club of Rome on the New Horizons of Global Community*. Shortly thereafter Laszlo jetted off to Tokyo to represent UNITAR at the founding of the United Nations University, and then became the director of UNITAR's new program on the New International Economic Order. Here Laszlo recalls that the vicious anti-union media tycoon, Robert Maxwell, was actually "a thoroughly likeable man" whose publishing company, Pergamon Press, kindly published all Laszlo's reports.⁵ However, despite obtaining such reactionary help, the larger necessary support needed for the New International Economic Order was not forthcoming at the UN General Assembly from either the US, the UK, or the Federal Republic of Germany, and so the project was stopped dead in its tracks.

So far Ervin Laszlo's and Aurelio Peccei's efforts to manage the world had ignored the participation of the mass of humanity, and so, as Laszlo tells it, at this stage they realized that changes would not come about unless the elite "were pushed by a critical mass." Therefore, to prompt the masses to demand their changes, Laszlo suggested that the Club of Rome needed to include artists among their fold. This apparently was not feasible, so instead Peccei proposed that Laszlo

⁵ Robert Maxwell was a notoriously crooked anti-union businessman who played an important role in helping disconnect the British Labour Party from its working-class roots. For a short discussion of Maxwell's attacks on the left-wing of the Labour Party during the 1980s, see Peter Taaffe, *Liverpool: A City That Dared to Fight* (Fortress, 1988), Chapter 17 ("The months of the great slander").

Maxwell was a good friend of the right-wing Japanese mogul Ryoichi Sasakawa, and in 1981 Maxwell wrote a glowing foreword for an uncritical biography of Sasakawa that was published courtesy of Pergamon Press. On this connection, in 1989 "at the request of Ryoichi Sasakawa, Robert Maxwell ordered the shredding of the whole inventory of the English edition" of David Kaplan and Alec Dubro's useful book *Yakuza: Japan's Criminal Underworld* – a book which correctly portrayed Sasakawa "as a war criminal with ties to the underworld and the ultranationalist movement." Karoline Postel-Vinay with Mark Selden, "History on trial: French Nippon Foundation sues scholar for libel to protect the honor of Sasakawa Ryōichi," *Japan Focus*, 8(17), 2010.

should gather a group of artists, writers, singers, and spiritual leaders to advise the Club. According to Laszlo such a group would be more intuitive and holistically orientated, but things never quite got off the ground. And so, in 1993 Laszlo eventually brought together this global cultural group as the Club of Budapest, whose aim was “to achieve timely and fundamental change in the world through timely and fundamental change in people’s consciousness.”⁶

Just as one might expect, the Club of Budapest’s “Manifesto for Planetary Consciousness” was written (in 1995) by just one person,

⁶ What Ervin Laszlo means by creating a higher consciousness is best explained by his own magical work. He recalls how his first published text exploring his conception of the mystical akashic field was published (in Italian) in 1987. In that same year, Federico Mayor Zaragoza, his “old friend and Club of Rome colleague” was elected director general of UNESCO and Laszlo joined him as his science advisor. Thereafter, between 1993 and 2003, Laszlo published four books on psi-fields, these being: *The Creative Cosmos*, *The Interconnected Universe*, *The Whispering Pond*, and *The Connectivity Hypothesis*.

Notably a key person who helped Laszlo establish the Club of Budapest was Maria Sagi, who like Laszlo was a classical pianist with a Ph.D. Sagi as it happened, was a macrobiotic convert in the possession of “remote healing abilities.” And as far-fetched as Sagi’s combined dietary and psychic abilities may seem, Laszlo acknowledges that: “For the typical modern person remote healing seems like magic. But” he continues, “Maria showed that it worked.” Sagi had previously taken an “in-depth course” with the founder of macrobiotics, Michio Kushi, and in 1995 “had edited the Hungarian version of Kushi’s principal work,” *The Cancer Prevention Diet*. She thus had no problems converting Laszlo to a macrobiotic diet.

From January 1960 onwards the world’s most famous proponent of macrobiotics, George Ohsawa, presented a series of lectures on macrobiotics at the Buddhist Academy in New York City, the notes of which became the first mimeographed edition of *Zen Macrobiotics: The Art of Rejuvenation and Longevity*. The book was eventually published by the Oshawa Foundation in 1965, and the following year Oshawa died. In his famous book Ohsawa says: “No illness is more simple to cure than cancer.” Unquestioning faith – beyond all reason – is mandatory for such cures to work, so of course influenza is likewise treated lightly, as Ohsawa assures his readers that no “truly” macrobiotic practitioner “can be attacked by this disease.” The same is apparently true for AIDS, with Ohsawa’s primary macrobiotic successor, Michio Kushi, arguing that AIDS is simply caused by excessive consumption of drugs, simple sugars, and fatty foods. In fact, on this subject Kushi was the co-author of *AIDS, Macrobiotics, and Natural Immunity* (Japan Publications, 1990), which was preceded by the publication of another dangerous book that promoted such nonsense, Tom Monte’s *The Way of Hope: Michio Kushi’s Anti-AIDS Program* (Grand Central Publishing, 1989).

Ervin Laszlo – with absolutely no democratic accountability to the mass of humanity whose lives he was attempting to irrevocably alter. Although to be fair, Laszlo did involve one other person, as he spent three hours in consultation with the Dalai Lama in making final revisions to his final six-page manifesto.⁷ Since then, the Club of Budapest has acquired a membership of the world's cultural elite. Well-known members of Laszlo's unique consciousness-raising-cadre include the Dalai Lama, Peter Gabriel, Oscar Arias, Bianca Jagger, Mikhail Gorbachev, Jane Goodall, Mohammad Yunus, and Desmond Tutu. Equally represented among the Club's ranks are less-well-known, yet still influential members of what I like to refer to as the “mumbo jumbo elite,” which for many years included the human potential guru Jean Houston, UN International Temple of Understanding chairman Karan Singh, Institute of Noetic Sciences founder the late Edgar Mitchell (1930-2016), and the consciousness mega-star the late Barbara Marx Hubbard (1929-2019). This of course is but a small sample of the powerbrokers collected together by Laszlo.

Planetary Leadership

Returning to the mid-1970s, Laszlo played a leading role in incorporating New Age doctrines within the upper echelons of polite society through his participation in a little-known group called Planetary Citizens. Formed in 1974, Planetary Citizens' founder, Donald Keys, had already made quite a political name for himself, as he had previously served as the executive director of the establishment-orientated National Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy (SANE).⁸ Norman Cousins, who had acted as SANE's founding co-chair, and who at the time was the honorary president of the United World Federalists, likewise played a central role in the creation of the theosophically inspired Planetary Citizens.⁹ Another important early

⁷ At the time Ervin Laszlo was also the chair of the Auroville Foundation in India.

⁸ For a critical overview of SANE's politics, see Frances McCrea and Gerald Markle's *Minutes to Midnight: Nuclear Weapons Protest in America* (Sage, 1989) – a text that I reviewed in my 2017 book *Under the Mask of Philanthropy*.

⁹ In May 1970, the United Nations had organized a ‘Conference on Human Survival’ and Norman Cousins had then penned the now famous ‘Human Manifesto.’ Donald Keys recalled that: “To this I tagged on a ‘Pledge of Planetary Citizenship.’”

contributor to Planetary Citizens was the spiritual visionary and all-round New Age guru, David Spangler, who had recently served as the co-director of the Scottish-based Findhorn Foundation,¹⁰ and had just

With U Thant and Norman Cousins as honorary chairmen, and with some funds left over from the Conference on Human Survival, we began Planetary Citizens.” Donald Keys, *Earth at Omega: Passage to Planetization* (Branden Books [in association with the Findhorn Foundation], 1982), pp.95-6.

¹⁰ Now famous for being a leading green capitalist, Paul Hawken published an early history of the Findhorn Foundation in 1975 as *The Magic of Findhorn*. In this mystical book Hawken explored the role that angels can fulfil in revising humankind’s destructive relationship with planet earth which he did by eulogizing the early history of the Scottish-based Findhorn Community – a group that presently describes itself as “a spiritual community, ecovillage and an international centre for holistic education, helping to unfold a new human consciousness and create a positive and sustainable future.” Hawken recalls how he first came across Findhorn (which had been established in 1962) when he read an article in *Harper’s* by occult author Peter Tompkins.

In 1965, the authoritarian and patriarchal founder of Findhorn had begun to convince magically minded members of the British ruling-class to back his venture and soon Sir George Trevelyan was a convinced supporter of Findhorn’s magical garden which grew food biodynamically, that is, according to the spiritual guidance that had been outlined by Rudolf Steiner’s esoteric religion, Anthroposophy. Wealthy well-connected visitors poured in from all over the world and one individual, William Irwin Thompson, was apparently so transformed by his stay at Findhorn that in 1972 – with the assistance of Laurance Rockefeller – he founded a sister center in America called Lindisfame. In June 1970, this regular influx of visitors drew David Spangler into their intimate environ (which is where he stayed for the next three years), whereupon he brought additional spiritual guidance to Findhornians by channeling messages from a presence called “Limitless Love and Truth.” David and his wife Myrtle Glines had already spent years together working the New Age circuit in California – Myrtle counseling, and David “giving hundreds of lectures.” Together they had made the decision to come to Scotland after being reading a copy of the 1970 book *The Findhorn Garden*, which they had been given by Findhorn bungalow owner Sir Anthony Brooke (the former White Rajah of Sarawak). In Spangler’s autobiography, *Apprenticed to Spirit: The Education of a Soul* (Riverhead Books, 2001), he recalls how after his initial contact with Brooke he had visited Findhorn with the financial aid provided by one of his students, a plutocratic spiritual seeker called May Hanna, who happened to be the widowed wife of Richard W. Hanna – a former director and vice president of the Standard Oil Company of California.

For an examination of how Anthroposophical gardening practises were taken-up by far right-wing activists in the post-war period, see Michael Barker, “The environmental flight from reason,” *Theory in Action*, 8(4), October 2015. One of Peter Caddy’s spiritual mentors was Alice Bailey.

formed the Lorian Association for Incarnational Spirituality (in the United States). While at least four other founding board members of Planetary Citizens were practitioners of Robert Assagioli's Jungian-inspired Psychosynthesis: a form of mystical therapy that provides a direct link between Theosophy and the human potential movement.¹¹

¹¹ The creator of Psychosynthesis, Robert Assagioli, had been the Italian representative of Alice Bailey's Arcane School, and had gone on to found the Meditation Group for the New Age, which has its headquarters at Meditation Mount in Ojai, California. Psychosynthesis practitioners serving on Planetary Citizens board of directors in the 1970s included Betsie Carter-Haar, Mark Horowitz, Fred Rosenzweig, and Martha Crampton (the then director of the Canadian Institute of Psychosynthesis).

Alice Bailey (1880-1949) was a one-time leading Theosophist who in 1923 went on to found a movement known as the Arcane School. In 1930 Bailey would briefly join forces with Olga Froebe-Kapteyn – who, in 1928, had created a purpose-built spiritual sanctuary near Ascona, Switzerland – and the two had then organized a short-lived project known as the School of Spiritual Research. Early lecturers included the Grand Duke Alexander of Russia, and the founder of the psychosynthesis movement, Roberto Assagioli, who at the time was the Italian representative of Bailey's Arcane School. However, by 1932 Olga and Bailey parted way acrimoniously, and Olga, having first met Jung in 1930 at Count Keyserling's School of Wisdom, now put all her spiritual energies into organizing what would become known as the Eranos Conferences. These conferences have been held annually from 1933 onwards, and Jung quickly became known as Eranos' "dominant figure" with hundreds of thousands of dollars being provided courtesy of the immense wealth of Mary and Paul Mellon (the son of Andrew W. Mellon, the US Secretary of the Treasury from 1921 to 1932).

In his autobiography Paul Mellon recalled that when his wife, Mary, first "encountered Jung, she became one his most ardent and confirmed disciples. Jungian thought became her inner, deep philosophy, her religion." After hearing Jung lecture in New York in 1937, the Mellons uprooted for a psychological soiree in Ascona, which is where the power couple first met both Olga and Jung. On meeting Jung, Mary reported "that her first words were: 'Dr. Jung, we have too much money. What can we do with it?'" As to be expected this marked the beginning of a long-lasting and fervent relationship between the Mellons and their spiritual saviours. Paul Mellon, *Reflections in a Silver Spoon: A Memoir* (John Murray, 1992), p.222; William McGuire, *Bollingen: An Adventure in Collecting the Past* (Princeton University Press, 1989), p.22, p.23, p.20.

The Eranos Conferences continue to this day. A recent president of the Eranos Conference was the popular psychic James Van Praagh, a best-selling author who has helped produce numerous programs for the CBS network. Indeed, in the year he took up the Eranos presidency he had just finished acting as co-executive producer for the CBS primetime series *Ghost Whisperer*, which starred Jennifer Love Hewitt.

For a useful introduction to Alice Bailey's influence upon the New Age, see Olav

Despite what initial appearances may suggest, that Planetary Citizens was just a marginal home for deluded spiritual elites, this is far from the case, and influential members of the global bourgeois lined up to endorse their goals. A few recognizable “early endorsers” include Maurice Strong, Peter Ustinov, Konrad Lorenz,¹² Gunnar Myrdal, the Dalai Lama, and the former Ford Foundation president, Paul Hoffman. That said Planetary Citizens’ 53 person-strong advisory council was home to a veritable smorgasbord of New Age hucksters and World Federalists. In the latter category we have secular types like Isaac Asimov (an early member of the American Movement for World Government), and Martin Ennals (the founder of Amnesty International); and in the nonsense category we have Edgar Mitchell, Peter Caddy (of Findhorn fame), spiritual guide Sri Chinmoy (who underwent his spiritual training at Sri Aurobindo’s Ashram in Pondicherry),¹³ William Irwin Thompson (founder of the Lindisfarne Association),¹⁴ and of course, Ervin Laszlo. Laszlo’s dedicated input to

Hammer, *Claiming Knowledge: Strategies of Epistemology from Theosophy to the New Age* (Brill, 2003). Martha Crampton remains committed to New Age spirituality, and more recently has taught at the Omega Institute and the New York Open Center. At the latter Center she taught a course in Integrative Therapy, and one of her more influential students was Ida Urso, who went on to serve as the director of World Goodwill (which was founded by Alice Bailey) and as the founder and president of the Aquarian Age Community. Another of Crampton’s students who has gone on to become extremely influential in both New Age and corporate management circles is Jack Canfield, the bestselling author and founder of the Californian-based Foundation for Self Esteem. Canfield counts Crampton as being one of the three biggest influences on his own work; the other two being, the conservative insurance salesman W. Clement Stone and Gestalt therapist Robert Resnick. Canfield served on the advisory board of Renaissance Weekend (a very exclusive elite retreat founded by PR-guru Philip Lader) and was on the welcoming committee of Barbara Marx Hubbard’s mystical consciousness-raising outfit, Birth2012.

¹² For details of Konrad Lorenz’s reactionary politics, see Michael Barker, “On Konrad Lorenz,” *Swans Commentary*, January 30, 2012.

¹³ For a critical introduction to Sri Chinmoy, see Jayanti Tamm, *Cartwheels in a Sari: A Memoir of Growing Up Cult* (Crown/Harmony, 2009).

¹⁴ In discussing his intellectual reliance upon elite networks like those of the Italian Renaissance, William Irwin Thompson explains: “Lindisfarne was my Florentine Academy and Laurance Rockefeller was my patron. In fact, Laurance Rockefeller was the patron for almost the entire alternative movement, from New Alchemy on Cape Cod to Zen Center and the California Institute of Integral Studies in San Francisco.”

the work of Planetary Citizens meant that in 1981 he co-authored a UN report with Keys that was titled *Disarmament, the Human Factor*. But it is to Keys' subsequent book, *Earth at Omega: Passage to Planetization*, that we now turn our attention.

In many ways this book could be seen as Planetary Citizens' manifesto for change, or as the book's blurb puts it "a tool for

William Irwin Thompson, *The Time Falling Bodies Take to Light: Mythology, Sexuality and the Origins of Culture* (St Martin's Press, 1996), p.xiii. Founded in 1972, Lindisfame, whose work is closely related to that of Findhorn, refers to itself as "an association of scientists, artists, scholars, and contemplatives devoted to the study and realization of a new planetary culture." Elite powerbrokers have been involved in Lindisfame from its not so humble beginnings, with their founding advisory board including the then-editor of *The New York Times* (Harrison Salisbury); while when Lindisfame moved to Colorado (in 1979) it was Canadian businessman Maurice Strong who stepped up to the mark to help finance the move.

Here it is important to introduce Nancy Wilson Ross, a woman whose keen interest in Asian spirituality and art led her to write numerous books that played a critical role in introducing Buddhism to Western readers, her two earliest contributions being *The World of Zen: An East-West Anthology* (Random House, 1960) and *Three Ways of Asian Wisdom* (Simon & Schuster, 1966). Ross was a bona fide member of the ruling class and served as a founding board member of John D. Rockefeller III's world-famous Asia Society (a position she maintained from 1956 until 1985). Moreover, it was through her connections to the Rockefeller clan that initially brought the writings of Lindisfame founder William Irwin Thompson to the attention of Laurance Rockefeller – who then proceeded to help Thompson launch Lindisfame. Ross, who was a member of the Zen Center in San Francisco, also ensured that the Zen Center worked in close association with Lindisfame, a Zen Center that counts Paul Hawken among its long-serving members and major benefactors.

For a scathing critique of Lindisfame, see Sally Helgesen, "Visions of futures past," *Harper's*, March 1977. In this essay Sally Helgesen reflects upon William Irwin Thompson's problematic spiritual ideology noting: "Now, were I of a cynical cast of mind, I might have questioned how far such an attempt at astral projection had taken Thompson beyond his sterile mule days at MIT, but my exposure to the free-flowing mode of thought which prevails at Lindisfame had alerted me to the futility of expressing skepticism. I had already been impressed by how the Lindisfamians, following the method employed by Thompson in his books, often substitute an impressive form of intellectual name-dropping for our more conventional logic, thus rendering obsolete the tiresome necessity for showing connections between ideas. The new way of reasoning uses arbitrary juxtapositions to carry the weight of the argument: the ideas tossed together must be obscure, however, and leave the reader somewhat baffled, afraid he has missed the connection, and yet impressed by the author's erudition."

transition.” Within *Earth at Omega’s* pages magical thinking is seamlessly merged with demands for global governance. For instance, we are introduced to the wonders of Kirlian photography as a metaphorical means of describing how a new world order will be organized.¹⁵ To clarify where his spiritual inspiration lies, Keys dedicates his book to his “mentors”: Max Heindel (who was the founder of the Rosicrucian Fellowship), Djwhal Khul (who was one of Madame Blavatsky’s invisible spiritual masters, and was the source of inspiration for much of Alice Bailey’s work with the Arcane School), Geshe Wangyal (a Buddhist guru closely associated with the Dalai Lama), Morya (another of Madame Blavatsky’s invisible friends), Erling (an individual who through her spiritual union with Archangel Mikael in later years formed the Angelic Temple of Illumined Faith and Protection), and last but not least, the celebrity-obsessed cult guru himself, Sri Chinmoy. Therefore, it should not be too surprising to find that in Keys’ mystic future:

Neither capitalism, communism, socialism, democratic socialism, nor other partial ideologies as we have experienced them can possibly be adequate to a new global-level organism. The new world has its own needs, its own new requirements, which can be met only out of responses to that which the new world intrinsically is. Imposing something from the past cannot, will not meet these needs. The planetary design must and will be the collective emergence of something utterly new. It will be discovered – not theorized. It will be implemented not rationalized, as an intuitive recognition of an emerging necessity.¹⁶

Luckily for his eager devotees, some of the worthwhile values that need to be “translated to the global level” have, according to Keys, already been identified in the Club of Rome’s 1976 report, *RIO – Reshaping the International Order*. In addition, work towards allowing the development of an “organismic humanity” was already growing in strength owing to the “scholarly and prophetic” activities of those applying General Systems Theory to everything and anything; with one

¹⁵ Keys, *Earth at Omega*, p.4.

¹⁶ Keys, *Earth at Omega*, p.12.

highlight being those theories “pioneered” by Ervin Laszlo in his book *A Strategy for the Future: A Systems Approach to World Order* (George Braziller, 1974). As Keys puts it: “New mythic awarenesses such as these anchor themselves in human consciousness through experiences which bring them home in demonstrable ways.”¹⁷

Transmaterial Planetatization

In Donald Keys’ mind, it was hoped that the United Nations would play a key role in bringing about the necessary transition to planetatization, and in his book he highlights three “unsung heroes” who “are unconsciously representing the energies of human unification.” The first is Dag Hammarskjöld... although Keys states that the “intensity of his inner life became apparent only after the publication of his spiritual diary, *Markings*, following his death in a plane crash in the Congo.” The next spiritual guru cited by Keys is U Thant, who “writes as did Dag Hammarskjöld that he was greatly influenced by the writings of Albert Schweitzer and his ethic of ‘reverence for life,’ and by the writings of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin.” (Chardin as Keys is keen to observe, “foresaw an organismic union of humankind based on the sharing of one consciousness.”) The final figure “who represents the subjective side of life in the UN” is Sri Chinmoy, who had “led twice-weekly meditations there for more than ten years...” An individual who “comes from the lineage of the saints and sages of the Hindu East, in the line of and in the tradition of Ramakrishna and Aurobindo.”¹⁸

For Keys, cutting edge studies undertaken at SRI (formerly the Stanford Research Institute) examining the specifics of human consciousness promoted by his New Age spiritual gurus will soon allow such previously unquantifiable factors to be incorporated into Ervin Laszlo’s systems theories for global management. Here Keys informs his readers of Russell Targ and Harold Puthoff’s “stunning research” into “remote viewing” (formerly known as clairvoyance); of how astral projection has been revamped with a new scientifically

¹⁷ Keys, *Earth at Omega*, p.13, p.14, p.71. For my own summary of Marxist critiques of the United Nations, see my earlier books *Under the Mask of Philanthropy* (2017) and *The Givers That Take* (2021).

¹⁸ Keys, *Earth at Omega*, p.58, p.59, p.63, p.66, p.69, p.66, pp.66-7.

validated title, “out-of-body experiences,” of which Robert Monroe is cited as being its “best-known practitioner”; and that psychokinesis, “the capacity to move objects without touching them, retains its old name, and continues to fascinate.” “The existence of psi phenomena is not in question, only their mechanisms.” Keys continues: “These fledgling steps are regarded with some amusement, of course, by Asian practitioners of these arts, long versed in practicing the psi abilities mentioned above, and many more.”¹⁹

Keys is in joyous rapture about the rapid spread of the intentional communities documented in Marilyn Ferguson’s *The Aquarian Conspiracy* (J.P. Tarcher, 1980), and by the countercultures adoption of what Mark Satin referred to as “a transmaterial world view.” Keys writes: “Planetary Citizens has found a strong response to its interne program from graduates of spiritual intentional communities, such as the Findhorn Foundation in Scotland. These internes seek training for involvement in societal change without sacrificing their more profound values and their inner growth orientation.” On a further triumphant note, he suggests that the “political impact of the new consciousness” will “ultimately spell the end of the materialistic, inadequate and dead-end interpretations which characterize latter-day marxism and neo-marxism.” As Keys believes, an irrational intuitive future is apparently in good hands, with ruling class members of Planetary Citizens working in collaboration with intentional spiritual communities like “The Farm,” whom

¹⁹ Keys, *Earth at Omega*, p.74. One collaborative project mentioned in the closing pages of Keys’ book that Planetary Citizens helped to launch is ‘The Planetary Initiative for the World We Choose’. Keys writes: “The original inviters of the Planetary Initiative were the leaders of the Association for Humanistic Psychology, the Club of Rome, Global Education Associates, the United Nations Association of New South Wales, and of course, Planetary Citizens.” (p.103) Although here is not the place to go into an analysis of this Initiative, it is fitting that Victor James Zammit (a former board member of the United Nations Association of New South Wales’ Human Rights Commission) now dedicates his life to proving the existence of magic and is the author of *A Lawyer Presents the Case for The Afterlife: Irrefutable Objective Evidence* (Gannell Pty, 2002). Zammit has resided on the advisory board of the Association for Evaluation and Communication of Evidence for Survival, serving alongside leading members of the mumbo-jumbo community such as Rhine Center advisors (Vernon Neppe and Julie Beische), and Jane Katra, who has co-authored two books with the “remote viewing” fanatic Russell Targ.

Planetary Citizens came to the aid of by helping them distribute their surplus soybeans “directly to the needy of the world.” This international soybean-aid-program (PLENTY International) was apparently “so successful that it has won the backing of both the World Bank and the Canadian aid organization.” How nice. On a more “political” note, Keys draws attention to the transformative work of Edmund G. “Jerry” Brown, Jr., Governor of California, whose politics are “neither ‘right’ nor ‘left,’” and whose “administration is animated by a non-material, humane world view...”²⁰

The Business of Spirituality

Here one might point out that former Apollo astronaut Russell Schweickart, who served as California Governor Jerry Brown’s assistant for science and technology, resided on Planetary Citizens advisory council before going on to become a fellow of the Lindisfarne Association. Later Schweickart would become a member of the Gurdjieff-inspired corporate offshoot project known as the Global Business Network - a highly influential hive of well-remunerated futurists (including Esalen founder Michael Murphy) which had been set up in 1987 to advise clients such as IBM, AT&T and the Pentagon.²¹ Three of the principal founders of this libertarian consultancy outfit included counterculture guru Stewart Brand, and two former SRI senior staffers, Peter Schwartz and Jay “Dr. Consciousness” Ogilvy, who together ensured that the now defunct Global Business Network’s debt to Esalen-styled mysticism was always foregrounded in their work.²² As one critic accurately surmised:

What’s most clearly in evidence [in the operations of the Global

²⁰ Keys, *Earth at Omega*, p.84, p.88, p.89, p.91. For more on Jerry Brown’s strange rise to power, see Tom Hayden, “Jerry Brown: the mystic and the machine,” *Rolling Stone*, December 19, 1974.

²¹ Two early critical examinations of the Global Business Network were provided by Joel Garreau’s “Conspiracy of heretics,” *Wired* magazine, January 1, 1994; and Frank Rose, “A new age for business?,” *Fortune* magazine, October 8, 1990.

²² Together with Findhorn-booster Paul Hawken, Jay Ogilvy wrote *Seven Tomorrows: Toward a Voluntary History* (Bantam, 1981) and only retired from Esalen’s board of trustees in 2018 after working with them for more than a quarter of a century.

Business Network] is the humanistic conception of people as gods, Esalen's obsession with authenticity and 'openness', the self-esteem movement's roiling narcissism and the neoliberalist's will to see competitive free markets turning the human world into a game. They began pushing the view that a new age of wired technology was going to knock down the old systems and unleash an era of unprecedented freedom and individuality. The hierarchies of government and the corporation – so collective, so coercive – would be levelled and a new civilization would emerge in which every human was their own independent hub of ingenuity and profit-making.²³

Particularly in the early 1990s, key members of the growing group of counterculture gurus that surrounded Stewart Brand would play a pivotal role in “legitimate[ing] the rising forces of technology and New Right politics as signs of the coming of a countercultural revolution.”²⁴ This pro-capitalist mission was perfectly in keeping with the previous intellectual commitments of the founders of the Global Business Network. Indeed, Peter Schwartz had arrived at the Network after being employed as a scenario planner for the Royal Dutch/Shell Group of Companies in London; having learnt much from the

²³ Will Storr, *Selfie: How We Became So Self-Obsessed and What It's Doing to Us* (Picador, 2017). Storr adds: “On paper, many members of GBN were libertarians, which is the political ideology most often associated with Ayn Rand and her followers. In practice, libertarianism and neoliberalism have a huge amount in common, not least in their core belief in the benevolence of free markets, and their hatred of central planning and the state. Alan Greenspan called himself a libertarian, as did many of Stewart Brand's associates. *Wired Magazine*, which would do perhaps more than any other title to promote his worldview to the public, was partly funded by the GBN and co-founded by libertarian Louis Rosetto. (A 1994 edition covered the GBN itself, depicting the people in its network visually as a series of interconnected hubs – the member with the most connections of all was Esalen's Michael Murphy.)”

In addition to highlighting the problems associated with New Age libertarianism, Storr provides a useful debunking of the “self-esteem movement” – a movement which was originally pushed forward in the 1980s with the political support of both Democrats and Republicans, along with the intellectual assistance of self-esteem guru Jack Canfield (discussed earlier), but not with any real concrete evidence of its usefulness. Another author who provides a useful critique of this movement as it presented itself within the education system is Alfie Kohn and his essay, “The truth about self-esteem,” *Phi Delta Kappan*, December 1994.

²⁴ Fred Turner, *From Counterculture to Cyberculture: Stewart Brand, the Whole Earth Network* (University of Chicago Press, 2006), p.223.

Gurdjieff-inspired corporate mystic, Pierre Wack, who had served as his predecessor at Shell. While in 1979 Jay Ogilvy had sat alongside Donald Keys on the initial governing council of a group calling itself the New World Alliance, which, much like Planetary Citizens, consisted of a mishmash of theosophists, futurists, and do-gooders apparently committed to “global peace”.²⁵

With relentless neoliberal economic attacks literally destroying ordinary people’s lives on a global scale, mystical management practices were now all the rage. And another related pair of spiritual capitalist elites – who were both founding governors of the New World Alliance – were the husband-and-wife duo Corinne McLaughlin and Gordon Davidson, who co-authored a book titled *Spiritual Politics: Changing the World from the Inside Out* (Ballantine, 1994).²⁶ Within the pages of this book the highly mystical couple reminisce about the importance of a bipartisan approach to politics noting:

The New World Alliance [founded by Mark Satin] was one of the first groups to articulate aspects of the new transformational politics, especially the idea of creating a new synthesis of left and right, which later was reflected in mainstream institutions, such as the Progressive Policy Institute and Heritage Foundation’s joint conference called

²⁵ Thomas Chermack, *Foundations of Scenario Planning: The Story of Pierre Wack* (Routledge, 2017). In another famous case of corporate mysticism, during the late 1980s the Gurdjieff-based management mumbo jumbo of Charles Krone was brought to a controversial end at Pacific Bell Corporation where it was being used to allegedly enhance the performance of 70,000 employees! But tragically this epic failure did not spell the death knell of such ideas, and “the indecipherable management speak of which Charles Krone was an early proponent has only gone from strength to strength” in the corporate world. Andre Spicer, *Business Bullshit* (Routledge, 2018), p.3, p.4. For an early examination of how pro-capitalist spiritual modalities were promoted in India, see Lise McKean, *Divine Enterprise: Gurus and the Hindu Nationalist Movement* (University of Chicago Press, 1996).

²⁶ Both Corinne McLaughlin and Gordon Davidson were influential, but if we just focus on Davidson’s background we can see that after graduating from anthroposophical enlightenment at Findhorn, he had then spent four years working at Alice Bailey’s spiritual home (the Lucis Trust in New York) before going on to serve as the Executive Director of the Social Investment Forum and The Center for Environmentally Responsible Economies (CERES).

‘Left and Right: A New Politics for the 90s?’²⁷

Beyond the problems inherent in such an approach to politics, we can see that despite their professed intuitive sense of justice the duo exhibit exceedingly poor judgement in other political matters. Thus elsewhere in *Spiritual Politics* they prove happy to celebrate the ecological commitments of the fascist-loving corporate raider, Sir James Goldsmith; and in their introduction they refer uncritically to Michael Baigent’s book, *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*, a conspiracy best-seller that rehabilitates the nonsense of the Priory of Sion which was “the invention, in the 1950s, of a man named Pierre Plantard who had a history of fraud, embezzlement and membership in ultra-conservative, quasi-mystical and virulently anti-Semitic Catholic groups”. For a couple who profess to be beyond politics it is also concerning that they defer to the opinion of Fletcher Prouty on the issue of the assassination of J.F. Kennedy – a writer who was happy to promote his own right-wing conspiracies that connected so-called “deep state” covert operations with his own virulent anti-Semitism.²⁸

How Corporate Gurus Evolved

To gain a deeper understanding of how spiritual gurus became firmly embedded within the American establishment, it is worth backtracking a few years, to 1954, when Willis Harman (1918-1997) – a gifted engineer teaching at Stanford University – was invited to attend an off-campus seminar run by a law professor named Harry Rathbun. This however was no normal discussion group and Harman “found himself in a sort of secular church. Its members studied scripture and spoke of Jesus Christ as a teacher, but they also studied Jungian psychology and mysticism.” Subsequently Harman signed up to what was called a “Sequoia Seminar,” which involved spending two-weeks at a retreat center in the Santa Cruz Mountains, which Harmon recalled had proved to be an “upending experience,” and after many more

²⁷ McLaughlin and Davidson, *Spiritual Politics*, p.72.

²⁸ McLaughlin and Davidson, *Spiritual Politics*, p.263, p.6, p.427, p.38. Laura Miller, “The Da Vinci crock,” *Salon*, December 29, 2004; and for a critical discussion of Fletcher Prouty’s anti-Semitism, see Chip Berlet, “Right woos Left,” *Political Research Associates*, February 27, 1999.

seminars and investigations into mysticism he went on to become a member of the group's inner circle. In one particularly memorable event in 1956, Harman attended a seminar which featured the conservative British-born mystic Gerald Heard, who spoke of his experiences of taking mescaline and LSD. And by the following year Heard had put Harman into contact with his drug supplier, a shadowy "arch-conservative" named Captain Alfred M. Hubbard, who was pushing the idea of LSD as therapy.²⁹ These psychedelic experiences consolidated Harman's newfound interest with exploring the nonrational world.³⁰

Harman was soon offered a position studying in a brand-new systems engineering department at Stanford, and with the support of a Ford Foundation grant for interdisciplinary studies, Harman began teaching a course on human potentiality. Apparently:

Because he was an engineering professor, Stanford's administrators assumed that his course wouldn't be too flaky. It would have practical relevance. But Harman focused it on Eastern religious traditions, 'which we Westerners have neglected through the supreme arrogance of our belief system.' He used material on indigenous North Americans, some Greek philosophy and European poetry, encounter group sessions modelled after the Sequoia Seminars (but without the psychedelics), and books by the two psychologists who had been so important to National Training Laboratories: Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow. They were now becoming known as the founders

²⁹ Brad Holden, *Seattle Mystic Alfred M. Hubbard: Inventor, Bootlegger and Psychedelic Pioneer* (The History Press, 2021), p.103. As Don Lattin summarizes in this book's introduction: "It remains a mystery as to exactly what role Hubbard played - if any - in the efforts by various U.S. intelligence agencies to use LSD as a chemical warfare agent or instrument of 'mind control.' The Captain appears to have been a bit of a loose cannon as a government agent. But he was more enamored with J. Edgar Hoover than Timothy Leary and did some consulting work in the late 1960s and early 1970s 'probing the relationship between drugs and radical politics.'" (pp.10-11)

³⁰ Art Kleiner, *The Age of Heretics: A History of the Radical Thinkers Who Reinvented Corporate Management* (Jossey-Bass, 2008), p.159, p.165. In the 1960s, Willis Harman would go on to serve as founding board member and consultant (in a voluntary capacity) to a newly founded non-profit known as the Institute for Advanced Study (at Menlo Park) which conducted research into the mind-altering uses of LSD.

of humanistic psychology.³¹

By 1968 Harman then made the transition to the Stanford Research Institute (SRI), a think tank that had been selling its wares to the burgeoning military-industrial complex since its doors opened for business in 1947. Future forecasting was a specialty of SRI, and with the aid of former RAND Corporation scenario planner, Herman Kahn, and plentiful amounts of money (including from the US Office of Education), Harman helped inaugurate a new era of research with the SRI futures group.³² It was through this ongoing research that Harman “came to view business, rather than the state, as the domain of society best equipped to lead humanity into the transindustrial age.”³³

Another historically important person involved in corporate planning around this time was Aurelio Peccei, who was pushing the then novel idea that computer-based forecasting techniques, which combined the latest methods of systems analysis and cybernetics, should be applied to geopolitical planning. Peccei of course had not been acting in a political void, and since the 1940s he had been in contact with pioneering futurists like Bertrand de Jouvenel – fondly

³¹ Kleiner, *The Age of Heretics*, p.165.

³² By 1971 the endless flows of money from the US Education Department dried-up as the era of the Great Society ended abruptly: but soon SRI had moved onto other speculative work that was funded by both NASA and ongoing military efforts to examine the utility of remote reviewing. Kleiner, *The Age of Heretics*, pp.171-2. In the late 1970s and early 1980s SRI also played an important role in turning Abraham Maslow’s “hierarchy of needs into psychographic categories of American consumers, applicable to marketing.” Douglas Rushkoff, *Life Inc.: How the World Became a Corporation and How to Take It Back* (Vintage, 2010), p.140. During the 1980s Jay Ogilvy served as the director of research for the Values and Lifestyles (VALS) Program at SRI.

³³ James Dennis LoRusso, *Spirituality, Corporate Culture, and American Business: The Neoliberal Ethic and the Spirit of Global Capital* (Bloomsbury, 2017), p.56. While serving as the Director for the Institute of Noetic Sciences (a position he held from 1975 until his death in 1997) Willis Harman “cofounded the World Business Academy (WBA) in 1987, an organization through which he aspired to bring ‘humanistic capitalism’ to a broader audience, more explicitly to bring ‘humanistic capitalism’ out of the theoretical and into the mingled spirituality and business.” (p.57)

referring to de Jouvenel as his “intellectual mentor.”³⁴ Moreover, it is significant that during the time that Peccei had first worked alongside de Jouvenel, the latter now famous neoliberal futurist had fully embraced the politics of fascism. Indeed, de Jouvenel’s rejection of his earlier liberal social democratic politics was matched by fellow *Cahiers Bleus* writers, many of whom would join with de Jouvenel in putting their intellectual weight behind the growing French fascist movement during the 1930s and 40s. Yet by 1947, perhaps sensing the public disavowal of openly fascist politics, de Jouvenel joined forces with Friedrich Hayek and Milton Friedman to cofound the libertarian Mont Pelerin Society, while simultaneously maintaining less well-publicized associations “with extreme-rightist and even royalist newspapers and journals.”³⁵

The essential characteristics of Jouvenel’s brand of neoliberalism can be summarised as freedom of the enlightened individual, an emphasis on the natural leadership of a small aristocratic elite, a fundamental distrust of democracy and mass society, a strongly hierarchical view of society and pessimism about the future of Western civilisation.³⁶

³⁴ Christian Albrecht, “‘The Atlantic community in a global context’: global crisis and Atlanticism within the context of the Club of Rome, 1960s to 1970s,” *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute*, Supplement 10, 2014, p.172.

³⁵ Zeev Sternhell, *Neither Right Nor Left: Fascist Ideology in France* (Princeton University Press, 1995); Robert Wohl, “French fascism, both right and left: reflections on the Sternhell controversy,” *The Journal of Modern History*, 63, 1991; Daniel Knegt, *Fascism, Liberalism and Europeanism in the Political Thought of Bertrand de Jouvenel and Alfred Fabre-Luce* (University of Chicago Press, 2018), p.42. In 1936 Bertrand de Jouvenel had joined a French fascist party (*Parti Populaire Français*) where he played a leading role as the editor in chief of its journal *L’Émancipation nationale* (National Emancipation). For perhaps the most useful discussion of how elitist social democratic intellectuals like de Jouvenel came to embrace fascism, see Robert Soucy, *French Fascism: The First Wave, 1924-1933* (Yale University Press, 1986). Soucy refutes Zeev Sternhell’s misleading claims that fascism owed its intellectual roots to socialism.

³⁶ Knegt, *Fascism, Liberalism and Europeanism in the Political Thought of Bertrand de Jouvenel and Alfred Fabre-Luce*, p.256.

Cold War Illusions

With the Cold War in full-swing, Western elites felt compelled (in some instances) to promote left-sounding alternatives that could at least offer a realistic pretense at improving peaceful global relations. And it was onto this battleground that future forecasting came to dominate intellectual endeavors, with forecasting acting as a form of modernization theory to combat Marxist theories of social change. In America such ideas came to fruition within think-tanks like the RAND Corporation which led to the newfound prominence of nuclear strategists like Herman Kahn.

At this time of immense political upheavals, France was a critical theatre in this ongoing ideological war. Hence in 1960 the Ford Foundation helped de Jouvenel establish the Association International Futuribles, which allowed him to become a dominant figure in the blossoming internationalist movement of elite-centric futurists.³⁷

This explains the emergence of American forecasting through a network of key actors linking the Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF), the Ford Foundation, and the State Department. The CCF brought together European intellectuals who wanted to protect the arts and sciences from the influences of Marxism. Its connections with the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, particularly through Michael Josselson, were disclosed in 1967. The idea of forecasting as a tool that could be used in an effort to control the world order was born in the CCF seminars on the social sciences in Milan in 1955, and the

³⁷ When the Ford Foundation grant to the Futuribles project expired in 1967 it was not renewed. "By this point, however, de Jouvenel was well connected in American social science, in close contact with Gene Rostow, Edward Shils, and Daniel Bell, who were all members of the Futuribles board. Through Bell, de Jouvenel had been put in contact with the forecasters at RAND, and he thus became the middleman between American forecasters and an emerging European field." Another influential French futurist was Gaston Berger (1896-1960) whose forecasting ideas "coincided with the creation," in 1947, of the so-called *Sixième Section* of the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes in Paris, "in whose founding he played an instrumental role, and which was dominated by the new economic and social history presided over by his friend Fernand Braudel." Finally, it is significant that in 1973 Futuribles hosted an international conference in Paris that led to the formation of the World Futures Studies Federation. Jenny Andersson, "The great future debate and the struggle for the world," *American Historical Review*, 5(117), 2012, p.1419, p.1418.

subsequent seminar on the problems of economic growth in Rhodes in 1956.³⁸

A key forecasting guru who, in 1968, became the founding president of the Club of Rome was the Scottish scientist and mystic water diviner, Alexander King.³⁹ King was an unusual if powerful character, and in the wake of destruction wrought upon Europe by World War II, King had moved to Paris to work within the upper ranks of the Marshall Plan. This employment then led on to his overseeing scientific programs for the European Productivity Agency, and by 1957 he had become the co-director of the Agency.⁴⁰ When the

³⁸ Andersson, "The great future debate and the struggle for the world," p.1417. In 1964, Daniel Bell "was tasked by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences with the creation of a 'working group for the next twenty-five years' of American society, which would explore the uses of forecasting for policymaking. The members included Margaret Mead, Stanley Hoffman, Daniel Moynihan, Eugene Rostow, Zbigniew Brzezinski, Samuel Huntington, and Herman Kahn." (p.1416)

³⁹ Alexander King, *Let the Cat Turn Around: One Man's Traverse of the Twentieth Century* (CPTM, 2006), p.260.

⁴⁰ As a leading light of the European Productivity Agency, Alexander King was involved in training business and trade union leaders on management education, and with the support of the Ford Foundation his work helped lead to the founding of the now famous INSEAD business school. Notably, the initial head of the Agency was Roger Gregoire and his deputy for the first two years was Ted Fletcher of the British TUC. Some of the prominent industrialists and conservative trade unionists who served on the Agency's advisory council included FIAT director Vittorio Valletta, Clarence Francis, the president of General Foods Corporation, and Jack Tanner from the British trade unions. When King retired from his work with the OECD in 1974 he joined INSEAD's board of directors. King, *Let the Cat Turn Around*, p.225, p.228, p.231.

The principal person who helped establish INSEAD was Harvard Business School's General George Doriot, a powerful man who could boast of founding the first publicly owned venture capital firm and had also been a Ford Foundation trustee. The Ford Foundation's European management reform program only came to Italy in 1953, but the previous year the Italian industrialist Adriano Olivetti and FIAT director Vittorio Valletta had pre-empted such work by establishing IPSOA. Giuliana Gemelli, "American influence on European management education - the role of the Ford Foundation," in: Rolv Petter Amdam (ed.), *Management, Education and Competitiveness: Europe, Japan and the United States* (Routledge, 1996), p.43, p.50. (Note, the Ford Foundation carried out related futures planning activities by funding the work of Resources for the Future, see Barker, *Under the Mask of Philanthropy*.) For more details about this history of the European Productivity Agency, see Bent

Agency was finally wound down in 1961, its activities were then incorporated within the newly formed OECD, whose unofficial intellectual leader was now King. But discontent among the corporate go-getters at the OECD with what they perceived to be the slow response times of governments (who are forced to proceed in a nominally democratic fashion) led to a search for alternative means of long-range system planning. This led King and his associates to the offices of Aurelio Peccei, who at that time was an executive of FIAT and the managing director of both Olivetti and Italconsult,⁴¹ and to the eventual founding of a tight-knit scenario planning group called the Club of Rome (whose work was largely organized by King and Peccei).

Thus, they built a transnational network to advance their view of planetary crisis both through the OECD (thus targeting key economists and ministers from member countries) and through the Club of Rome, whose reports forcefully shaped public debates. This network blurred the lines between the “official” OECD and the “private” Club, not only in terms of overlapping membership but also in terms of discourses.⁴²

Boel, *The European Productivity Agency and Transatlantic Relations 1953-1961* (University of Chicago Press, 2003); and Anthony Carew, *Labour Under the Marshall Plan: The Politics of Productivity and the Marketing of Management Science* (Wayne State University Press, 1987).

⁴¹ The president of FIAT, Giovanni Agnelli, had not only been a member of the Bilderberg steering committee, but from 1973 onwards served on the executive committee of the Trilateral Commission. It was his Giovanni Agnelli Foundation that provided the initial funding for the work of the Club of Rome. Holly Sklar, *Trilateralism*, p.115.

⁴² Matthias Schmelzer, “The OECD as the cradle of the Club of Rome,” *OECD Insights*, February 22, 2017. “The personal overlap between the OECD and the Club of Rome in its initial phase is remarkable. Not only were three of the four persons that founded the Club working in or with the OECD (King, the Austrian systems analyst, astrophysicist, and OECD expert; Erich Jantsch; and the Swiss director of the Geneva branch of the Battelle Memorial Institute and Vice-Chairman of the OECD’s science committee Hugo Thiemann). Besides the Italian industrialist Peccei and the German industrial designer Eduard Pestel, who secured the funding from the Volkswagen Foundation for the first report, all the crucial personalities in the formative period of the Club of Rome were closely connected to the OECD. Almost the entire core group of the Club of Rome, its ‘executive committee’ – which has been characterised as the true ‘motor’ of the Club of Rome, and who signed *Limits to growth* – also had positions within the OECD.”

Cross Borders Networks

A successful and international corporate powerbroker in his own right, Aurelio Peccei, prior to establishing the Club of Rome, had already worked with America's leading capitalists in creating ADELA, the Atlantic Community Development Group for Latin America. This multinational investment syndicate had been conceived in the early 1960s to complement the more philanthropic, although nevertheless still imperialist, activities of President Kennedy's Alliance for Progress. At that time Peccei was still working for FIAT and Olivetti Corporation, and during his globe-trotting ventures he famously oversaw the construction of an automobile factory in Moscow and provided the Soviet Union with their first computers.⁴³ These connections evidently made him a sought-after point man for re-establishing US-Soviet diplomatic relations.

Peccei was well acquainted with the technological forecasting methods that had been institutionalized by the military at the RAND Corporation. And so, in 1966, with the support US President Lyndon Johnson, he set out organizing a meeting to increase East-West dialogue which eventually gave rise to the launch of the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) some six years later.⁴⁴ As part of the first steps involved in developing this global initiative, in

⁴³ David Howard Davis, *Ignoring the Apocalypse: Why Planning to Prevent Environmental Catastrophe Goes Astray* (Praeger Press, 2007), pp.27-30. Aurelio Peccei had an early insight into the nature of state planning as his doctoral dissertation focused on the Soviet Union under its first five-year plan. Living under fascist rule, Peccei had however rejected Marxism as a viable political alternative, and instead became involved with more elitist social democrat organizations, before that is, going on to become a powerful capitalist powerbroker.

⁴⁴ Giuliana Gemelli, "Building bridges in science and societies during the Cold War: The origins of the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA)," in: Giuliana Gemelli (ed.), *American Foundations and Large-Scale Research: Construction and Transfer of Knowledge* (CLUEB, 2001), pp.159-98; on the history of IIASA, see Eglė Rindzevičiūtė, *The Power of Systems: How Policy Sciences Opened Up the Cold War World* (Cornell University Press, 2016); IIASA was established in Austria in 1972 as "the first international think-tank that facilitated East-West collaboration in data collection about the common problems of humankind." Jenny Andersson and Eglė Rindzevičiūtė (eds.), *The Struggle for the Long-Term in Transnational Science and Politics: Forging the Future* (Routledge, 2015), p.10.

1968 both Peccei and Alexander King had formed the aforementioned Club of Rome.⁴⁵

Such global connections were not limited to the capitalist world, and the Soviet planner who fulfilled the most significant role in coordinating such evolving international networks was Djerman Gvishiani -- the Soviet Premier's son-in-law, and then vice-chair of the USSR's State Committee on Science and Technology. Gvishiani had already served as Peccei's point of contact when the latter had organized to produce the first FIAT-designed cars in Moscow, and the two would go on to work closely together for many years. Thus in 1972 Gvishiani was anointed as the founding chairman of Peccei's International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis. By this stage Gvishiani was already a member of the Club of Rome, and later went on to help organize the activities of the US-USSR Trade and Economic Council. And the one thing that united all these assorted groups was their technocratic top-down approach to agenda-setting and policymaking.

Although the Club of Rome still exists today, it remains most famous for its 1972 book, *The Limits to Growth* - a widely publicized and criticized neo-Malthusian text that helped consolidate neoliberal forms of environmentalism.⁴⁶ Writing in the late 1970s, Robert Golub

⁴⁵ Many of the elites associated with Aurelio Peccei were already well acquainted with his international work, as he had just accepted an invitation to serve on the founding editorial board of an influential business magazine. The magazine in question, *Interplay*, was launched in 1967 by Gerald Smith, an American diplomat who in 1972 acted as the founding chair of the Trilateral Commission. "Originally conceived as a magazine of European-American affairs, [*Interplay*] soon broadened to cover Japan and East Asia. Apart from Smith, founder members of its international advisory board included many individuals important in setting up the Trilateral Commission." Stephen Gill, *American Hegemony and the Trilateral Commission* (Cambridge University Press, 1990), p.138, p.260.

The US chapter of the Club of Rome was created in 1976 and its "main protagonists included diverse characters such as Claiborne Pell, senator for the state of Rhode Island; Carroll Wilson, professor for electronics at MIT and a member of the executive committee of the Club of Rome; and John A. Harris IV, an industrialist and environmental activist." Albrecht, "The Atlantic community in a global context," p.180.

⁴⁶ In 1989, Djerman Gvishiani acted as the founding president of the Russian Association for the Club of Rome. In later years the Association was chaired by

and Joe Townsend summarized both the faults and the technocratic orientation of the Club of Rome and the Club's famous report. They explained:

Our argument is that, during the decade of the sixties, the international economic (and many national financial) systems became increasingly unstable and the systems by which the advanced countries control and dominate the underdeveloped countries were growing more fragile..., at the same time as (and in some cases as a result of) the multinational firms were becoming more significant in the international and national economies. These increasing instabilities and uncertainties made the economic environment more threatening to the multinational firms themselves... As a result of this, [*The Limits to Growth*] 'scientific' studies were commissioned as 'tools of communication and control' to operate the 'transmission pulley' of public opinion in order to force the governments of the industrialized societies to institute a 'new world moderator' (with 'stern rules about voting') which would have sufficient power to stabilize the international economic situation and ensure a constant supply of raw materials.⁴⁷

But such valid criticisms were completely ignored by elite policymakers. All the same, similar arguments were made the following decade by urban planner John Friedmann, who after publishing his influential book *Planning in the Public Domain* (Princeton University Press, 1987), observed that “it had become clear that Pececi's dream was well on the way to being realized. For the most

Russian energy czar Sergei Kamionsky, who is the former CEO of EuroSibEnergO (a company owned by EN+). For background on neoliberal environmental groups linked to the activities of the Club of Rome, see Michael Barker, *Under The Mask of Philanthropy* (2017). As Johan Galtung observed: *The Limits to Growth* report “is the kind of study one might expect from an elite's technological elite. It is a *dangerous* study because it might be interpreted as the latter-day version of the old ‘first growth, then distribution’: ‘first zero growth, then distribution’. It is dangerous because the authors, and many others, seem to believe that they have discovered the three evils mentioned. The fact is that these evils are very well known and have been mentioned in social protest and struggle for centuries. What is new is only that the protest is now being articulated higher up in society.” Galtung, “‘The Limits to Growth’ and class politics,” *Journal of Peace Research*, 10(1-2), 1973, p.112.

⁴⁷ Robert Golub and Joe Townsend, “Malthus, multinationals and the Club of Rome,” *Social Studies of Science*, 7, 1977, p.216.

part, critical voices had been silenced, and global re-capitalization was in full swing.” Moreover, as Friedmann pointed out:

The ultimate corporate manager, Peccei made no attempt to make the future planners of the world accountable to anyone other than themselves. His transnational dream of a benevolent world dictatorship – imagined as the corporate model with which he was familiar – was geared to perpetual capital accumulation. All it required was “mature people” who would vote their support of this project in a sort of global plebiscite. And because national sovereignty would stand in the way of this grand project, it would have to be restrained – always, of course, in the name of high-sounding ideals, such as [Jan] Tinbergen’s “common heritage of mankind” principle.⁴⁸

Like at so many other elite institutions introduced so far, a spiritual mission played a central part in the Club of Rome’s attempts, as Peccei puts it, to create a “universal vision for mankind and its world”.⁴⁹ Indeed, during an interview recorded shortly after the publication of *Limits to Growth*, Peccei and King were joined by a ruling-class mystic named Idries Shah (1924-1996) who was a fellow member of their exclusive Club.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ John Friedmann, *Insurgencies: Essays in Planning Theory* (Routledge, 2011), p.6. During the early part of his career Friedmann had played an important role in carrying through the foreign policy objectives of the American ruling-class in Latin America, and between 1965 and 1969 he had worked on planning issues for the Ford Foundation in Chile. In a recently published autobiographical note he observed: “What I did not know at the time was that this was a policy move on part of the U.S. government to counter the growing civil unrest and sense of disaffection among working class Chileans at a time when the then current government of Jorge Alessandri—scion of one of Chile’s most prominent political families and an arch-conservative—was drawing to an end.” Friedmann, *Towards an Intellectual Autobiography* (UBC, School of Community and Regional Planning, 2015), p.10.

⁴⁹ This is how Aurelio Peccei described the ambitions undergirding the Club of Rome’s *Limits to Growth* study.

⁵⁰ At the time Idries Shah was already courting fame for his role in popularizing the ecstatic and intuitive knowledge associated with the Sufi tradition. Mark Sedgwick, *Western Sufism: From the Abbasids to the New Age* (Oxford University Press, 2017). Shah is widely credited as helping bring neo-Sufism to a mass audience in the West, particularly because of close familiarity with the pioneers of the human potential movement, with his gaining quick influence with the publication of his instant

Funding the Future

In addition to the likes of Willis Harman, Aurelio Peccei, and Alexander King, another futurist who first ascended to notable heights of influence during the 1960s was the multi-millionaire consciousness guru Barbara Marx Hubbard. Born to immense wealth, Hubbard had dabbled in existentialism during her college years in Paris, 1948, and after giving birth to five children and settling down to the idle of ruling-class life, she was finally awoken to her New Age vocation after reading Abraham Maslow's *Toward a Psychology of Being*. "He's the one," Hubbard recalled, "who suggested to me that mystical experiences and experiences of the divine, of the sacred, of the supernatural, were not necessarily remnants of irrationality and superstition, but were experiences had by the great achievers and creative people of our culture."⁵¹

Ever the corporate networker, Hubbard leveraged her financial

bestseller, *The Sufis* (Doubleday, 1964). Earlier in his life Shah had fortified his journey to guru status (in 1959) when he first met Britain's leading pagan Gerald Gardner (the "father of modern Wicca") which led him to ghost-his mentor's official biography, *Gerald Gardner: Witch* (Octagon Press, 1960).

Although Shah was based in the UK, his ideas were soon to permeate the American counterculture through the work of Stanford University psychologist Robert Ornstein, who in 1969 promoted Shah's work by founding the Institute for the Study of Human Knowledge, and his ongoing commitment to reconcile the wisdom traditions of the east and science led to Ornstein's subsequent publication *The Psychology of Consciousness* (W.H. Freeman & Co., 1972).

⁵¹ With Jeffrey Mishlove in *Thinking Allowed, Conversations on the Leading Edge of Knowledge and Discovery* "The planetary birth part I: what is the meaning of our power?" Shortly after realizing her new spiritual vocation, Barbara Marx Hubbard became enthralled by the writings of the controversial Catholic priest Teilhard de Chardin, before arranging to meet up with the famous scientist (of polio fame), Dr Jonas Salk – a dedicated philander with whom she would soon embark upon an affair. As it happened, Salk's ever-turbulent life followed a trajectory that was similar in many ways to that of Linus Pauling: at first, Salk experimented with left-wing politics (which led to his persecution by the FBI), and in later years he would shun political allegiances, and from the sixties onwards he turned inwards to embrace all manner of mystical pursuits. Angela Matysiak, "The myth of Jonas Salk: it was Albert Sabin's vaccine, not Salk's, that truly defeated polio," *MIT Technology Review*, July 1, 2005.

Despite Abraham Maslow's fame, his elitist approach to politics meant that he often found himself at odds with the radical social movements of the 1960s, many of whom had been inspired by his promotion of humanistic psychology. This was not the case with fellow elitist Barbara Marx Hubbard. Moreover, rather than helping free

resources to quickly charm her way into the lives of America's leading thinkers of the day -- a process that was aided when Maslow handed her the contact details of the 300-odd members of his utopian "Eupsychian Network." And although Maslow's life was brought to an abrupt end by a heart attack in June 1970, it is important to remember that, as the sixties wore on, Hubbard's mentor had become increasingly alienated from the mass movements of the day. This led him to speak out against...

...Vietnam War protesters for being insufficiently patriotic. If any culture was the one to make self-actualization possible, he asserted, it was the United States, "the best ruling society there has ever been." The United States came closer than any other society to embodying his ideal of the "Taoistic, pluralistic, idiosyncratic, humanness-fulfilling democracy." He faulted the antiwar protesters for focusing on the failings of the American government and military and not enough on those of the North Vietnamese and the Soviets, which he thought far worse. Refusing to condemn US involvement in Vietnam, Maslow attacked the protesters for their hypocrisy: they made not one word of criticism against the "official" North Vietnamese policy of "authorizing assassination, murder, and torture." It was not that Maslow believed that the United States could never be criticized or that war was good— on the contrary, he saw his scientific contribution as "a psychology for the peace-table." But in his view the protesters were too one-sided in their opposition.³²

For someone who had always opposed equality between the sexes, Maslow's rightward drift became ever more extreme as ordinary

people from the burdens of capitalist subjugation Maslow's work may have done the opposite. Instead of democratizing religion it turns out that his work encouraged his subjects to turn inwards to embrace a new form of privatized spirituality whereby "spirituality" became a product, like a drug, to change consciousness and lifestyle and provide happiness amidst the economic boom of North American life." Jeremy Carrette and Richard King, *Selling Spirituality: The Silent Takeover of Religion* (Routledge, 2005), p.75.

³² Nadine Weidman, "Between the counterculture and the corporation: Abraham Maslow and the Humanistic Psychology in the 1960s," in: David Kaiser and W. Patrick McCray (eds.), *Groovy Science: Knowledge, Innovation, and American Counterculture* (University of Chicago Press, 2016), p.129.

people in their thousands fought for genuine democracy and moved ever leftwards. If that wasn't bad enough...

Toward the end of his life, he began to toy with the notion that self-actualizers were actually biologically or genetically superior to everyone else, an idea that sat uneasily with his long-standing democratic claim that all people should be free to fulfill their inner selves. Now he wondered whether the “fully evolved” should be considered a “biological elite” or a “biologically privileged class,” setting the standard that the rest of humanity should have to reach... He even had “the lurking thought that wars and famines are after all doing nature’s work.”⁵³

Informed by her own apocalyptic fears of nuclear annihilation and of the so-called threat posed by the “population bomb,” Maslow’s new protégé, Barbara Marx Hubbard, had by this time already become an early member and central financier of a group known as the World Future Society. Formed in October 1966, this Society pursued a similar line of technocratic work as the Club of Rome, and by 1974 their membership had soared past fifteen thousand.⁵⁴

With her spiritual sights now set beyond the noosphere, in June 1970 Hubbard went on to help establish the Committee for the Future (CFF), which represented the “formal beginnings of the modern ‘pro-space movement’.”⁵⁵ One notable confidence trickster who acted as a

⁵³ Weidman, “Between the counterculture and the corporation,” p.131. Abraham Maslow, “Humanistic biology: elitist implications of ‘full humanness’”, March 28, 1968.

⁵⁴ W. Patrick McCray, *The Visioneers: How a Group of Elite Scientists Pursued Space Colonies, Nanotechnologies and a Limitless Future* (Princeton University Press, 2013), p.15. The close relationship between the World Future Society and the Club of Rome continues to this day, and a recent board member of the World Future Society is the Italian futurist Eleonora Barbieri Masini, who recently served as a board member of the Club of Rome, and is the vice-president of the Fondazione Aurelio Peccei. In addition, between 1975 and 1980 Masini served as the secretary-general of the World Futures Studies Federation. Recent members of the global advisory board for the World Future Society included Hugues de Jouvenel, Maurice Strong, Barbara Marx Hubbard, Alvin Toffler, and leading military analyst, John L. Petersen.

⁵⁵ The Committee for the Future was headed by Barbara Marx Hubbard’s new husband, Colonel John Whiteside, who had recently retired from his position as a public information officer for the Air Force. And when Ira Einhorn published his only

cofounder of this group was Ira Einhorn, who “had gone from a media guru who promoted LSD and organized Be-Ins, to an Establishment-approved self-described ‘planetary enzyme,’ a New Age pioneer who circulated information through the bloodstream of the body politic.” Einhorn, as it happened, very much saw Dr. Andrija Puharich as his spiritual guide, and as such Einhorn used his contacts in the publishing world to republish Puharich’s *Beyond Telepathy* (Anchor Books, 1973) with a new introduction penned by himself.

mind-melting book, which was titled *78-187880* (Anchor Books, 1972), his friend Hubbard provided him with rave reviews touting his guru status. Just a few years later Einhorn would murder his girlfriend and as a consequence he spent the rest of his life in prison. However, before his conviction Einhorn had been extremely well-connected to elite circles and one of the key people to become entwined in Einhorn’s informational network, was Bell Telephone Company president, William Cashel (1970-77) who financed the mailing costs of Einhorn’s New Age network. This is important because “By the mid-1970s Ira Einhorn’s network was a certified phenomenon in and of itself. Names appearing on the cover letters of recipients might include economist Hazel Henderson; Lehmann Brothers managing director Shel Gordon; Seagram heir Charles Bronfman; futurist Alvin Toffler; science adviser to the British Commonwealth Christian de Lait; corporate presidents John Haas and George Bartol; Whole Earth Catalogue publisher Stewart Brand; physicists Freeman Dyson, David Bohm, Frijtof Capra, and Heinz Pagels; Esalen cofounder Mike Murphy; journalists Alex Cockburn and Jack Anderson; authors Colin Wilson, Robert Theobald, and Thomas Kuhn. ‘Adam Smith’ (himself a recipient of certain network mailings under his real name Gerry Goodman) wrote a column about it in *New York magazine*, calling it the ‘Far-Out Physics Underground’; Smith described an afternoon discussing various mailings with fellow network recipient Arthur Koestler.”

In 1977, Einhorn worked with Puharich to organize a conference in Iceland to tout the paranormal, especially of the work undertaken at SRI; the proceedings of which were published a few years later with contributions from the likes of Puthoff and Targ (on remote viewing), and SRI employee Elizabeth Rauscher (who was a cofounder of the Fundamental Fysiks Group), with a foreword provided by telepathy believer and Nobel laureate Brian Josephson, a professor of physics then based at the University of Cambridge. Funding for the conference was provided courtesy of the London-based Orb Foundation, which was then headed by Diana Adkins, who had been working to get her organization off the ground with corporate lawyer John Hunt, who in the same year introduced *A Course in Miracles* to England. Steven Levy, *The Unicorn’s Secret: Murder in the Age of Aquarius* (Prentice Hall, 1988), p.2, p.131, p.134, p.160, p.196; Puharich (ed.), *The Iceland Papers: Select Papers on Experimental and Theoretical Research on the Physics of Consciousness* (Essentia Research Associates, 1977).

Especially given Einhorn's presence, Hubbard's Committee for the Future always tended to operate at the fringes of respectable opinion, and when their activities were wound down Hubbard took the decision to establish a new orbitally inclined group. Launched in 1975 as the L5 Society this new project apparently "prompted a collective swoon from those attracted by the CFF but repelled by its zaniness."⁵⁶ And once again Hubbard would play a leading role in this new organization where she served on L5's board of directors with all manner of space enthusiasts. With a world apparently beyond politics in their sights, it is perhaps not surprising that "the citizens' pro-space movement presaged the odd political alliances that emerged two decades later when left- and right-wing writers and political leaders united in their enthusiasm for the Internet and the opening of the new 'electronic frontier.'"

L5 attracted people from across the political spectrum. In its first few years, the group received endorsements from presidential candidates Morris Udall and Lyndon LaRouche, conservative Arizona senator Barry Goldwater, libertarian sci-fi writer Robert Heinlein, Norie Huddle (L5's 'token environmentalist,' the group claimed), and New Age futurist Barbara Marx Hubbard. Although celebrities like Heinlein and Goldwater didn't play a major role in running the L5

⁵⁶ Roger Launius, "Responding to Apollo: America's divergent reactions to the Moon landings," in: Alexander Geppert (ed.), *Limiting Outer Space: Astroculture After Apollo* (Palgrave, 2018), p.63, p.65. Marilyn Ferguson highlighted the outcome of Hubbard's early networking achievements in the new age classic, *The Aquarian Conspiracy: Personal and Social Transformation in the 1980s* (Paladin Books, 1982). Ferguson explained: "In 1967, Barbara Marx Hubbard, a futurist moved by [Pierre] Teilhard's vision of evolving consciousness, invited a thousand people around the world, including [Abraham] Maslow's network, to form a 'human front' of those who shared a belief in the possibility of transcendent consciousness. Hundreds responded, including Lewis Mumford and Thomas Merton. Out of this grew a newsletter and later a loose-knit organization, the [pro-space exploration group] Committee for the Future." (p.59) Although not organized by Hubbard, Ferguson notes how in 1970 Lockheed Aircraft underwrote a meeting held at De Anza College in Cupertino, California, "that was the first group of scientists and physicians – friends – gathered in a public forum to assert their interest in spiritual realities and alternative approaches to health." She adds that within a few years similar meetings were taking place all over America, and the "Rockefeller, Ford, and Kellogg foundations funded programmes exploring the interface of mind and health." (p.285)

Society, they helped promote the group's agenda through promotional pieces and endorsements.⁵⁷

Not everyone involved in L5 agreed on how the colonization of space should proceed, but Hubbard certainly had no concerns with cooperating with warmongering Cold Warriors when it suited her own otherworldly ends. For example, other than Hubbard, one of the key early financiers of L5's early activities was William B. O'Boyle, the head of an oil and gas exploration company based in New York. His right-wing politics were hardly a secret, and in the late 1980s O'Boyle was exposed for his role in funding the far-right contra terrorist armies operating in Nicaragua.⁵⁸ In a similar vein, not long before standing for

⁵⁷ W. Patrick McCray, *The Visioneers: How a Group of Elite Scientists Pursued Space Colonies, Nanotechnologies and a Limitless Future* (Princeton University Press, 2013), p.97. In the December 1978 issue of *L5 News* there is an article titled "Mining the moon" which concludes: "The more you look at the Moon, the better it looks from the industrial point of view. There are abundant stores of aluminium and titanium ores in an already finely subdivided state. There are implanted volatiles and carbon from the solar wind in the soil and a host of glass making components. But Moon metal is probably the most accessible space structural resource of them all." (p.11) On a related note, interest in future expeditions to terraform Mars owed much to the popular work of Princeton physicist Gerald K. O'Neill, whose 1976 book *The High Frontier*, made realistic the proposal of setting up gigantic space colonies for mankind. The main idea was that such colonies would enable humanity to surpass the Malthusian problems of the day that had falsely suggested there were simply too many people inhabiting the planet. With NASA funding O'Neill expanded his ideas on "Island One" which in turn spawned a band of dedicated, somewhat cultlike supporters, who formed a group called the L5 Society, who were tireless in their lobbying efforts to make their colonizing dreams a reality. Robert Park, *Voodoo Science: The Road from Foolishness to Fraud* (Oxford University Press, 2000), pp.82-4.

In 1987 L5 would merge with the National Space Institute to form the National Space Society. However, more recently Hubbard provided the "inspiration" that (in 2005) helped launch the Council for the Future -- a joint project of three leading space advocacy groups: the Space Frontier Foundation, the National Space Society, and the Mars Society. According to their web site: "The Council [for the Future] is shaping an Earth/Space/Human Development Agenda. The Council is also shaping a new social meme or world view that is consistent with that Agenda. As part of the meme, there is full agreement as to the imperative of extending human civilization into space, and that logical coherent steps must be taken in the very near term to facilitate that accomplishment."

⁵⁸ David Rosenbaum, "3 Contra donors cite North's role," *New York Times*, May

the vice presidential nomination for the Democrat's (in 1984) Hubbard served on the "Citizens Advisory Council on National Space Policy" which was led by libertarian science-fiction writer Jerry Pournelle, who in addition to serving as a member of L5's board of directors was the director of international studies at the conservative Hoover Institution.⁵⁹ This informal study group soon gained widespread notoriety when they produced a report which advocated entrepreneurial activities in space and the development of space-based weapons systems, i.e., President Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative or Star Wars program.

Hubbard's intimate involvement with such conservative activists was however hardly anomalous, and in another feat of ruling-class synchronicity, when Hubbard's "first major spiritual encounter" eventuated in 1966, the person she first confided in was a leading figurehead of the American far-right.⁶⁰ Her close friend in this instance

22, 1987.

⁵⁹ Peter Westwick, "From the Club of Rome to Star Wars: The era of limits, space colonization and the origins of SDI," in: Geppert, *Limiting Outer Space*, p.292. Standing in opposition to the pessimistic scenarios painted in the Club of Rome's *Limits to Growth*, Jerry Pournelle highlighted how the colonization of space had the potential to counter the Club's doom mongering in his book *A Step Farther Out* (1979). Pournelle, prior to his involvement in L5 had already co-authored another militarist report in 1968 with hardened Cold Warrior Stefan Possony (*The Strategy of Technology*). Possony was the author of two conservative classics, *A Century of Conflict: Communist Techniques of World Revolution* (Regnery, 1953) and *A Forward Strategy for America*, which he co-authored with Robert Strausz-Hupe and William Kintner (Regnery, 1961). New Right figures such as Possony also found their way into the warmongering Coalition of Peace Through Strength, a lobbying group which was formed in August 1978 and would soon include amongst their reactionary ranks all manner of Nazi apologists. Russ Bellant, *Old Nazis, the New Right, and the Republican Party* (South End Press, 1988), pp.39-46.

⁶⁰ Neale Donald Walsch, *The Mother of Invention: The Legacy of Barbara Marx Hubbard and the Future of YOU* (Hay House, 2011), p.195. In 1966, Barbara "found herself talking about this one day with her friend Natalie—Lady Malcolm Douglas-Hamilton, a widow who had organized Bundles for Britain during World War II and was now setting up the Center for American Living, an effort to affirm cultural excellence in the United States. Barbara told Natalie that she felt a deep urge to wake people up to the immense significance of humanity's ventures off the earth, and the remarkable potential of the space program to catapult the human race to a new level in its own evolution." (p.196) We might note that on November 17, 1970, Anthony Harrigan, a leading ultraconservative writer who spouted forth his sermons throughout

was Lady Malcolm Douglas-Hamilton, an individual who had already worked alongside other conservative elites like Clare Booth Luce and Max Eastman to found an extremist anti-communist organization known as Common Cause Inc. Formed in 1947 this group had worked closely with the National Alliance of Russian Solidarists (NTS) -- a group of White Russian emigres whom took inspiration from Italian fascists and had supported a tactical alliance with the Nazis during World War II.⁶¹

In 1970 Lady Douglas-Hamilton - Hubbard's good friend -- would go on to establish the Committee to Unite America with the assistance of ardent Cold Warriors like General Albert C. Wedemeyer.⁶² And throughout the 1970s Lady Douglas-Hamilton would serve as a board member of the far-right American Security

the 1950s and 1960s delivered an address to the Leadership Conference of the Center of American Living Inc., in New York City titled "Our National Spirit".

⁶¹ Alden Hatch, *Clare Boothe Luce: Ambassador Extraordinary* (William Heinemann, 1956), p.85; Marlene Laruelle, "Dangerous liaisons: Eurasianism, the European far right, and Putin's Russia," in Marlene Laruelle (ed.), *Eurasianism and the European Far Right: Reshaping the Europe-Russia Relationship* (Lexington Books, 2015), p.5.

In 1951, Barbara Marx Hubbard's friend had moved to London where with the assistance of her soon-to-be third husband, Lord Malcolm Douglas-Hamilton (the Conservative MP for Inverness), she had founded the British version of Common Cause. To allow their work to continue, this new branch of Common Cause professed their opposition to fascism. However, this was rightly seen by the UK government to be a smokescreen, partly because the London base for Common Cause was provided to them by a known Nazi collaborator. We now also know from recently released MI5 documents that "Lord Douglas-Hamilton secretly flew aircraft to assist Franco in the Spanish Civil War." Mark Pitchford, *The Conservative Party and the Extreme Right 1945-1975* (Manchester University Press, 2011), p.54. Common Cause worked closely with the anti-Communist bureaucrats of the trade union movement, see Malcolm Warner and J. David Edelstein, "Factions in British and American trade-union organizations: a comparative structural approach," *Relations Industrielles*, 28(1), pp.187-8. "It was reported in May 1969 that Common Cause was acting as the channel by which money from industrial sources was passed to the Industrial Research Information Services, an anti-Communist body organized by former trade unionists with Jack Tanner, former leader of the then A.E.U., as President." (p.188)

⁶² During a brief period in the late fifties General Albert C. Wedemeyer had served on the board of governors of America's leading UFO organization (the National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena).

Council Foundation.⁶³

Here on a slight side bar, in 1978 the American Security Council Foundation had created an affiliate group called the Coalition of Peace Through Strength that included pro-Nazi groups like Roger Pearson's Council on American Affairs among their leading members.⁶⁴ Alongside Pearson and presidential hopeful, Ronald Reagan, the leaders of America's military-industrial complex were well represented amongst the Coalition, with their leaders including Lt. Gen. Gordon M. Graham (US Air Force retired), who was the vice-president of the Washington office of McDonnell-Douglas (now Boeing) between 1978 and 1983.⁶⁵ Reactionary ideologies have always run deep through the anti-democratic veins of America's most powerful elites, but so too has magical thinking, and so it is fitting that the founder of McDonnell-Douglas, James S. McDonnell (who passed away in 1980 while serving as the corporation's chairman), had spent his life in awe of paranormal phenomena.

In a touching obituary, his son drew particular attention to a prayer that James had "created and painstakingly improved throughout his lifetime" that expressed his fathers "philosophy and

⁶³ For example, in January 1976 Lady Douglas-Hamilton sat on the board of the American Security Council Foundation (which was originally established in 1958 as the Institute for American Strategy) with the likes of Clare Booth Luce and Henry Regnery (the chair of the Henry Regnery Company).

⁶⁴ Roger Pearson had initially relocated to America to edit a magazine operated by Willis Carto's anti-Semitic Liberty Lobby, and it is noteworthy that at the same time that Barbara Marx Hubbard was having her own spiritual epiphany (and intimate chat with her friend Lady Malcolm Douglas-Hamilton) Pearson had concluded his latest hate tract, *Eugenics and Race* (1966), by observing: "If a nation with a more advanced, more specialized, or in any way superior set of genes mingles with, instead of exterminating, an inferior tribe, then it commits racial suicide..." Then in the year prior to setting up the Council on American Affairs, bedecked with a large swastika Pearson published *White Power: The Revolutionary Voice of National Socialism* (1974). In 1978 Pearson's Council on American Affairs had then played host to the World Anti-Communist League conference, bringing together the far right of the Republican Party with Nazi networks from across the world including the American followers of the Rev. Sun Myung Moon. Bellant, *Old Nazis, the New Right, and the Republican Party*, p.61; William Tucker, *The Funding of Scientific Racism: Wickliffe Draper and the Pioneer Fund* (University of Illinois Press, 2002), p.169.

⁶⁵ Jerry Wayne Sanders, *Peddlers of Crisis: The Committee on the Present Danger and the Politics of Containment* (South End Press, 1983), p.226.

approach to life most succinctly and elegantly”. And sounding very much like Barbara Marx Hubbard, James’ prayer went like this:

Universal Creative Spirit - We thank you for the gift of conscious life on Earth with the opportunity to explore, create, develop, and grow in spirit and the opportunity to nurture all living things and take charge of the creative evolution of same. Hallelujah!⁶⁶

Self-Help Miracles

One particularly famous psi-project that James McDonnell had financed during his lifetime was run by fellow aerospace engineer, professor Robert Jahn. As one of the world’s foremost experts on jet propulsion, in 1979 Jahn had established the Princeton Engineering Anomalies Research (PEAR) laboratory to largely focus on investigating so-called “remote viewing” phenomena.⁶⁷ And in

⁶⁶ In a “Tribute to James S. McDonnell” authored by John F. McDonnell (April 8, 1999) John recalled of his father’s early mystical inclinations: “While living in Chicago and working for Western Electric during the summer after his sophomore year, he spent every spare moment in the library reading the works of William James and Frederic W.H. Myers’ book, *Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death*. He became convinced that all mental and physical activity, including the so-called paranormal phenomena, had their basis in the performance of the underlying neuronal systems.” (Myers was one of the cofounders of the Society for Psychical Research.) In 1961 Aldous Huxley republished *Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death* (1903), thereby including his own foreword with this new edition. The book has now been published online by the Esalen Institute.

In 1979 James S. McDonnell donated \$0.5 million to Washington University to establish the McDonnell Laboratory for Psychical Research. For a discussion of how even a well-funded psi-lab categorically failed to demonstrate psychical powers, see Jonathan Smith, *Pseudoscience and Extraordinary Claims of the Paranormal: A Critical Thinker’s Toolkit* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2010).

⁶⁷ The PEAR laboratory closed down in 2007 and Brenda Dunne who had served as their Laboratory Manager since its inception in 1979 went on to serve as the president of the International Remote Viewing Association. Dr. Roger Nelson, who had served as the coordinator of experimental work PEAR laboratory from 1980 until his retirement in 2002, went on to direct the Global Consciousness Project based at the Institute of Noetic Sciences, a project that was completed in 2020 that was inspired by the debunked Maharishi Effect (as popularized by quantum physicist Dr John Hagelin). Robert Jahn and Brenda Dunne, *Consciousness and the Source of Reality: The PEAR Odyssey* (ICRL Press, 2011). Dr. Nelson also serves on the scientific advisory board of the Global Coherence Initiative, as does *Journal of Scientific*

pursuing this mystical work Jahn remained well-supported by other conservative elites including Laurance Rockefeller, Ben Webster (who was one of Canada's most successful high-tech venture capitalists),⁶⁸ and New York private equity pioneer Gerry Ohrstrom.⁶⁹ Amazingly

Exploration editorial board member Dr. Dean Radin, who formerly worked for SRI and has served three separate terms as a president of the Parapsychological Association, and is now a senior scientist at the Institute of Noetic Sciences. (Dr. Radin's mentor was Jahn. Park, *Voodoo Science*, p.198)

Funding for psi projects has always relied upon the wealthy, and the same was true at PEAR which benefited immensely from the aid provided to it by the CEO of the real estate investment firm Higgins Group LLC in New Jersey, William Higgins, who earlier in life had been a special agent with the FBI and a Naval Reserve officer. His generous funding of paranormal research also stretched to the Rhine Research Center (where he is a vice president), which in 2011 honoured him with their first J.B. and Louisa Rhine Distinguished Service Award. Higgins' is not one to take a rest from extraordinary service to the unknown, and he is now the treasurer of the International Remote Viewing Association.

Another important international funder of parapsychological research (at least since the early 1990s) has been the BIAL Foundation which until recently was headed by Luis Portela, the former CEO and chairman of BIAL, which is one of the largest pharmaceutical companies in Portugal. In 2021 Portela published *The Science of Spirit: Parapsychology, Enlightenment and Evolution*, and in the same year he stepped down as BIAL's chairman to be replaced by the world-famous banker, António Horta-Osório, who in 2021 also became the chairman of Credit Suisse. A recent article in *Newsweek* notes that Edwin May, the former research director of the Pentagon's remote viewing program (1985-95), "has been a frequent Bial recipient, collecting about \$400,000 in research funds for nine ESP-related projects." Jim Popkin, "Meet the former Pentagon scientist who says psychics can help American spies," *Newsweek*, November 20, 2015.

⁶⁸ Ben Webster (1930-1997) was the scion of the Webster family (whose original money was made in coal) and was the founder of the Toronto Society of Psychical Research. In 1970 he set-up his own psi-group, the New Horizons Research Foundation, which he used to pursue further parapsychological research. Webster's corporate office apparently contained a Stonehenge room, and he was a keen supporter of orthomolecular medicine (discussed later). Moreover, Webster's wife, Margaret Wendt, used her so-called psychic powers to advise Webster on his corporate decision-making; and more recently she has served as a co-host for a right-wing racist spiritual radio podcast (e.g., "Vanishing Christians and too many Mosques" November 17, 2014).

⁶⁹ Gerry Ohrstrom (1927-2005) had founded the arch conservative Ohrstrom Foundation in 1955, and in 1972 had helped create the Piedmont Environmental Council. Gerry's son, Mark, is their current deputy chair, and Mark is also the treasurer of the Costa Rican-based EARTH University. Gerry is also counted as a

well-connected in psi-circles, the Fetzer Institute played a significant role in funding professor Jahn's otherworldly research, but it did much, much, more too.

Established by occult enthusiast and radio/baseball mogul John Fetzer (1901-1991), his self-named Fetzer Institute has played a central role over the past half-century in attempting to reconcile science with religious phenomena.⁷⁰ Again, like so many other conservatives in this ethereal field, Fetzer had embraced an "unabashed patriotism...that never quite lost its Christian millennialist tinge,"⁷¹ which he maintained

former board member of the Metanexus Institute which aims to promote "scientifically rigorous and philosophically open-ended explorations of foundational questions". The founder and Executive Director of Metanexus is Dr. William Grassie who previously acted as the founder of the Philadelphia Center for Religion and Science and Metanexus' work is carried out in close alliance with that of the Templeton Foundation. Another Metanexus board member is professor of biology Ursula Goodenough, who is the past president of the Institute on Religion in an Age of Science and, like James Lovelock (of Gaia fame), she is an honorary advisor to the World Pantheist Movement.

⁷⁰ Winston Franklin, a previous trustee of the Fetzer Institute in Kalamazoo, served as a vice president of the Charles Kettering Foundation, and as a venture capitalist before becoming the president of the Institute of Noetic Sciences in the late 1990s. In 1973, he organized a gathering of cultural leaders, including Joseph Campbell and Margaret Mead, for a Stanford Research Institute project on transformational social change. Most of the money dispensed during his tenure at the Institute of Noetic Sciences however went to grants for holistic health care pioneers, to individuals like Deepak Chopra and Dr. Dean Ornish.

Other spiritual elites who worked closely with the Fetzer Institute include Maurice Strong (a former trustee of the Institute), Arthur Zajonc (who served as a senior program director at the Institute between 1995 and 1997 and who also served as the general secretary of the Anthroposophical Society in America between 1994 and 2002), and Lynne Twist (a current trustee of the Institute and original and long-serving member of Werner Erhard's Hunger Project).

⁷¹ Brian Wilson, *John E. Fetzer and the Quest for the New Age* (Wayne State University Press, 2018). p.xiii. John Fetzer apparently "remained fascinated by the idea of the Last Judgement during the 1970s, and Bruce Fetzer [his son] remembers reading apocalyptic New Age books by Tuella and Benjamin Creme with his great-uncle during the 1980s." (p.220)

"For John Fetzer, trained as a radio engineer but steeped as a young man in the fundamentalist dogmas of Seventh-day Adventism, figuring out how to effect this reconciliation [between science and religion] became a burning question that led him to embrace metaphysical monism as the surest way forward to a coherent worldview that was both deeply spiritual and scientifically defensible." (p.xi) While acting as a

alongside his commitment to all matters occult. Thus, combining his conservative political inclinations with his psychic ones, it remains appropriate that Fetzer's "earliest introduction to Theosophy" occurred in the 1930s through his expose to the ultra-conservative iterations propounded by the founders of the "I AM" Religious Activity.⁷² And given the conservative pedigree of many of the founders of the Institute of Noetic Sciences (which was created in late 1973), it is fitting that Fetzer was quickly co-opted onto its board of directors where he sat alongside paranormal connector extraordinaire, Judith Skutch Whitson. This personal connection between Fetzer and Whitson proved historically important as:

The 1970s were also important for Fetzer's personal practice because it was during this decade that he discovered *A Course in Miracles*. During the 1960s, Dr. Helen Schucman, a professor of medical psychology at the College of Physicians and Surgeons at the Columbia- Presbyterian Medical Center in New York City, began spontaneously to channel an "inner voice." In October 1965, the voice announced to her, "This is a course in miracles. Please take notes." This she did, reluctantly, for over seven years, producing a manuscript of over fifteen hundred pages. Despite her years as scribe, Schucman contended that she never believed in the channelings, although she and her colleague Bill Thetford approached Judy Skutch Whitson about possible dissemination of the Course. Whitson, who at the time was involved in parapsychological research through her New York- based Foundation for Parapsychological Investigation, secured funding to publish the Course as a three- volume set, which she did in 1975 through a new organization, the Foundation for Inner Peace, located in New York City. This brought the Course to a wide

"radio censor in Washington, DC, during World War II, Fetzer said he was in 'contact with the Russians constantly concerning sensitive military matters' and was made 'aware at that time the use the Soviet were making of ESP in their determination of clandestine matters'... Thus, from the early 1940s, Fetzer was interested in psychic phenomena not only for its own sake but also for its national security implications." (p.104)

⁷² Wilson, *John E. Fetzer and the Quest for the New Age*, p.74. "Of all the documents channeled from space aliens, however, the one that had the most impact on Fetzer was the *Urantia Book* (1955)." (p.101) This channelled book is discussed later.

audience. Its popularity proved phenomenal, becoming, in the words of one scholar, “the most obvious choice” if one had to choose the “‘sacred scripture’ of the New Age movement.” By 2016, nearly three million copies were said to be in circulation around the globe.⁷³

Deeply informed by the power of positive thinking that was a bedrock of the New Thought movement,⁷⁴ Schucman’s bible gave new spiritual

⁷³ Wilson, *John E. Fetzer and the Quest for the New Age*, p.143. “After Judy Skutch Whitson introduced Fetzer to the *Course*, she became an important advisor to him and a close personal friend. (Characteristically, Fetzer once told her that they had been married in a previous life; Whitson, for her part, told Fetzer that she thought he was a Lamed Vovnik, one of the thirty- six hidden Masters that Jewish lore maintains are always present on earth, but Fetzer demurred). By 1976, Whitson had become a member of the Fetzer Foundation’s board, on which she served for the next twenty years.” (p.145)

The Fetzer Institute played an integral role in popularizing alternative medicine and in 1988 the Institute sponsored “Helping Heal the Whole Person and the Whole World,” a conference with attendees from 38 countries which included Norman Cousins, Bernie Siegal, Laurance Rockefeller, and John Fetzer himself. Shortly after Fetzer’s death the Institute was responsible for funding the ground-breaking and Emmy Award winning PBS series “Healing and the Mind with Bill Moyers” (a 1993 documentary which featured two alternative health practitioners, Jon Kabat-Zinn and David Spiegel). Jim Gordon helped develop and write the educational materials to supplement the public television series and went on to serve as the chair of the White House Commission on Complementary and Alternative Medicine Policy (which was established by President Bill Clinton in March 2000). One critic has observed that “While he was directing this presidentially commissioned study, Gordon was a supporter of the movement of the Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, the authoritarian Indian guru who was deported from the United States in 1986 after being accused of poisoning local townspeople who opposed his commune in Antelope, Oregon.” In addition, it is noteworthy that in 1998 Gordon had “interjected himself into the Oklahoma Bombing case” when he “sent a statement to the court in the trial of Terry Nichols, claiming that based on his reading of Nichol’s letters that Nichols was not violent and should not receive a long prison term.” E. Patrick Curry, “Notes on James S. Gordon, MD, chair of the White House Commission on Complementary and Alternative Medicine Policy,” Updated article based upon an article public by the *Scientific Review of Alternative Medicine* in Fall 2001.

⁷⁴ An early critical examination of the New Thought movement is provided in Alfred Whitney Griswold’s article “New Thought: a cult of success,” *American Journal of Sociology*, 40(3), 1934; also of interest is Beryl Satter’s *Each Mind a Kingdom: American Women, Sexual Purity, and the New Thought Movement, 1875-1920* (University of California Press, 1999), and Annabelle Mooney’s “Extremist capitalism: the discourse of get rich books,” *Critical Approaches to Discourse Analysis*

legs to the prosperity sermons that were already being widely popularized by the Rev. Norman Vincent Peale from his pulpit in New York. Yet rather than doing anything concrete to help address the root causes of the problems facing the oppressed, it remains clear that such self-help doctrines like those propounded within *A Course in Miracles* merely serve a palliative function for those suffering at the sharp end of capitalist exploitation. This in fact is the premise behind the entire New Thought movement, which itself was only able to rise in popularity at the end of the nineteenth century because capitalist institutions were unwilling to cater to the health needs of ordinary people.⁷⁵ In this way spiritual beliefs were offered as a stand-in for

across Disciplines, 9(2), 2017. New Thought movements have always been highly compatible with far-right ideologies and the *Deutsche Neugeistbewegung*, which was a German offshoot of the New Thought movement, “began as a split-off from the Theosophical Society and exemplified the conjunction of occult and Lebensreform themes. Although the group was emphatically pro-Nazi and its leadership made up largely of party members, it was spurned not only by the SD but even by the official Nazi Lebensreform organizations.” Peter Staudenmaier, *Between Occultism and Fascism: Anthroposophy and the Politics of Race and Nation in Germany and Italy, 1900-1945*, Ph.D. Thesis, Cornell University, August 2010, p.380. For a more contemporary discussion of the troubling connections that exist between far-right politicians and the New Age movement, see Peter Kratz, *Die Götter des New Age: Im Schnittpunkt von 'Neuem Denken', Paschismus und Romantik [The Gods of the New Age: At the Intersection of "New Thinking", Fascism and Romanticism]* (Elefanten Press, 1994); also of interest is Joachim Häberlen, “Spiritual politics: New Age and New Left in West Germany around 1980,” *European History Quarterly*, 51(2), 2021.

In his popular book, *Occult America: White House Seances, Ouija Circles, Masons, and the Secret Mystic History of Our Nation* (Bantam Books, 2009), the theosophist author Mitch Horowitz downplays the conservative associations of the New Thought movement. One way he does this is by pointing out that one of the most influential New Thought authors, Wallace Wattles, was a Christian Socialist; but although Horowitz can quote two short passages that highlight Wattles collectivist inclinations, the overall thrust of Wattles work remains individualistic and pro-capitalist. So, while Horowitz describes Wattles work by stating that “It was as though Karl Marx has imbibed the mother’s milk of American metaphysics” (p.90), we should remember that Marxists have always stood opposed to the debilitating doctrines promoted by Christian Socialism. As Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels explained in *The Communist Manifesto* (1845): “Christian Socialism is but the holy water with which the priest consecrates the heart-burnings of the aristocrat.”

⁷⁵ A useful critical examination of the self-help movement is provided in Micki

genuine medical treatments that could improve people's lives.

Here is where Phineas Parkhurst Quimby, usually considered the founder of the New Thought movement and hence grandfather of today's positive thinking, comes in. He had no use for the medical profession, considering it a source of more sickness than health. Having dabbled for some time in mesmerism—along with metaphysics and watchmaking—he went into practice as a healer himself in 1859. A fearless thinker, though by no means irreligious, he quickly identified Calvinism as the source of many of his patients' ills. As he saw it, according to historian Roy M. Anker, "old-style Calvinism depressed people, its morality constricted their lives and bestowed on them large burdens of debilitating, disease-producing, guilt." Quimby gained a minor reputation with a kind of "talking cure," through which he endeavoured to convince his patients that the universe was fundamentally benevolent, that they were one with the "Mind" out of which it was constituted, and that they could leverage their own powers of mind to cure or "correct" their ills.⁷⁶

McGee's *Self-Help, Inc.: Makeover Culture in American Life* (Oxford University Press, 2005). As McGee surmises: "The less predictable and controllable the life course has become, the more individuals have been urged to chart their own courses, to 'master' their destinies, and to make themselves over. In addition to actual hours spent on the job—which have increased dramatically—Americans are compelled to constantly work on themselves to remain competitive in the labor market. Such additional toil includes, but is not limited to, retraining and reschooling for new types of work, maintaining one's appearance as youthful and vigorous, and searching for one's 'true calling.' Thus it comes as no surprise that one finds a marked increase in the number of self-help titles in this period of declining economic security. In the place of a social safety net, Americans have been offered row upon row of self-help books to boost their spirits and keep them afloat in uncharted economic and social waters." (p.12)

McGee's book then highlights many of the reasons why the self-help movement is incapable of resolving problems for those who need the most help. Instead, "As with much of American culture that finds its roots in Christian traditions, self-help culture suggests that inequitable distributions of wealth ought to be remedied through charity rather than through any process of distributive justice." (p.183)

⁷⁶ Barabara Ehrenreich, *Smile or Die: How Positive Thinking Fooled America and the World* (Granta, 2009), p.85. As Kate Bowler observes in her book, *Blessed: A History of the American Prosperity Gospel* (Oxford University Press, 2013): "We might envision the prosperity gospel as composed of three distinct though intersecting streams: pentecostalism; New Thought (an amalgam of metaphysics and Protestantism discussed later in this chapter); and an American gospel of pragmatism,

It was these spiritual ideas that now came to exert a strong influence over Hubbard's future. So soon after studying *A Course in Miracles* and then reading the Christian Science bible *Science and Health*, Hubbard came to the mystical realization that she too needed to channel her own inner Christ and publish her own bible.⁷⁷ This she did, and her own weighty text was first published in 1980 as *The Book of Co-Creation: An Evolutionary Interpretation of the New Testament*. Hubbard was now transitioning from her former life as a well-connected futurist to becoming an emergent spiritual guru to the capitalist class.⁷⁸ Commenting on such debilitating trends in futurism, the anarchist theorist Murray Bookchin put it this way:

The radical thrust of utopian thinking, as exemplified by [Charles] Fourier, has been transmuted by academics, statisticians, and "game theorists" into a thoroughly technocratic, economic, and aggressive series of futuramas that can be appropriately designated as "futurism." However widely at odds utopias were in their values, institutional conceptions, and visions (whether ascetic or hedonistic, authoritarian or libertarian, privatistic or communistic, utilitarian or ethical), they at least had come to mean a revolutionary change in the

individualism, and upward mobility." (p.11)

⁷⁷ Edgar Mitchell, who was another of Judith Skutch Whitson's close acquaintances, even "taught a class on *A Course in Miracles* for four years at Unity of the Palm Beaches. He admires the course because, he says, 'it says we create our reality by the way we think, believe and choose. People start taking responsibility for themselves.'" James Davis, "Life is but a dream there is no problem a little 'spiritual awakening' can't solve, say proponents of a new age philosophy called *A Course in Miracles*," *South Florida Sun-Sentinel*, March 7, 1993.

⁷⁸ In 1984 Barbara Marx Hubbard attempted to become the vice-presidential candidate for the Democratic Party, and so it perhaps fitting that another New Age star who channels the hope of *A Course in Miracles*, Marianne Williamson, attempted to become the presidential candidate for the Democrats in 2020. For a useful discussion of the two positive-thinking candidates in that election, Williamson and Donald Trump, see Tara Isabella Burton, "For Marianne Williamson and Donald Trump, religion is all about themselves," *Washington Post*, August 1, 2019. In the 1980s Marianne Williamson's "co-founder of the AIDS charity known as the Los Angeles Center for Living, the late Louise Hay, was much more explicit in her claim that faith can cure disease. Hay claimed to have cured her own cervical cancer by alternative healing with no help from medical science."

status quo and a radical critique of its abuses. Futurism, at its core, holds no such promise at all. In the writings of such people as Herman Kahn, Buckminster Fuller, Alvin Toffler, John O'Neill, and the various seers in Stanford University's "think tanks," futurism is essentially an extrapolation of the present into the century ahead, of "prophesy" denatured to mere projection. It does not challenge existing social relationships and institutions, but seeks to adapt them to seemingly new technological imperatives and possibilities -- thereby redeeming rather than critiquing them. The present does not disappear; it persists and acquires eternity at the expense of the future. Futurism, in effect, does not enlarge the future but annihilates it by absorbing it into the present. What makes this trend so insidious is that it also annihilates the imagination itself by constraining it to the present, thereby reducing our vision -- even our prophetic abilities -- to mere extrapolation.⁷⁹

The Rockefeller Connection

It appears that the totality of Hubbard's life work, despite all her talk about spiritual evolution, remained geared towards accommodating human consciousness to capitalism's exploitative dictates for economic growth. This elitist trajectory thus soon brought Hubbard into the close vicinity of Laurance Rockefeller (1910-2004), when, in the late 1980s, she became romantically involved with Rockefeller's friend, the one-time priest Sidney Lanier (1923-2013). Lanier had most famously founded the experimental New York-based American Place Theater,⁸⁰ and like Rockefeller he had been an early supporter of Esalen. Lanier had however controversially opted to leave America in the early 1970s to live under General Francisco Franco's dictatorship in Spain where he helped establish the first residential human potential center in Europe, *Finca La Follenca*, in Estepona. In the 1980s he then relocated to San Francisco to unite leaders in the human potential and transpersonal psychology movements through his work for Laurance S. Rockefeller's Fund for the Enhancement of the Human Spirit.

So, it was during Sidney Lanier's time working for Rockefeller -- the billionaire who had maintained a lifelong obsession with both

⁷⁹ Murray Bookchin, *The Ecology of Freedom* (Cheshire Books, 1982), p.333.

⁸⁰ For more on this background, see Donn Russell, *Avant-Guardian: 1965-1990: A Theater Foundation Director's 25 Years Off Broadway* (Dorrance, 1996).

environmental and spiritual causes – that Lanier made the decision to leave his wife of thirty years to begin a new relationship with Barbara Marx Hubbard.⁸¹ And one of the first projects that Hubbard and her new spiritual partner embarked upon (with Rockefeller support), was the creation (in 1990) of the Foundation for Conscious Evolution. This Foundation becoming Hubbard’s new launchpad for promoting the ostensible harmonizing mission of the New Thought movement.

Here, it is relevant to acknowledge that Laurance Rockefeller’s support of spiritual causes continues to provide fertile grounds for ultraconservative (often Christian) conspiracy theorists. So, it is with some irony that Laurance was, for many years, directly involved in funding all manner of extraterrestrial research that advocated for the legitimacy of psi-phenomena of the type commonly popularized by rightwing conspiracy theorists. For example, Laurance has done much to promote UFOlogy and the magical belief in crop circles, and he supported the research of the late professor of psychiatry John Mack (formerly based at Harvard Medical School) who published *Abduction: Human Encounters with Aliens* (Charles Scribner, 1994). Thus, the very family considered to be at the heart of the one-world-government conspiracies (the Rockefellers) is involved in promoting research that encourages the public to believe in conspiracies.

In 1989 Laurance famously provided the start-up funding for the Human Potential Foundation, a group which was cofounded by two highly influential psi-popularizers, Cecil B. Scott Jones and Senator Claiborne Pell, whose backgrounds will now be examined. After retiring as a Commander in the US Navy in the early 1970s, Cecil B. Scott Jones had become an influential convert to the spiritual realm and recalled that his first channeling experience resulted in him

⁸¹ Sidney Lanier’s former wife, Jean Lanier, was likewise a lifelong friend and close consort of Laurance Rockefeller. In fact, in the 1950s Jean had made her first contribution to pseudo-scientific endeavours when she helped Rockefeller and Anne Morrow Lindbergh set up the Institute of Direct Analysis at Temple University. The controversial work at this Institute was led by Dr. John Rosen, a personal psychotherapist to the elites (including Rockefeller and Lindbergh), whose fraudulent and tyrannical “therapeutic” practices have been debunked in Jeffrey Masson’s *Against Therapy: Emotional Tyranny and the Myth of Psychological Healing* (Atheneum, 1988) and within Edward Dolnick’s *Madness on the Couch: Blaming the Victim in the Heyday of Psychoanalysis* (Simon & Schuster, 1998).

giving a voice to an innocent man whose family he had bombed during the Korean War. Jones once counted Dick Cheney as a good friend (and helped Cheney on his rise within the Republican Party in Wyoming), but subsequently Jones transferred his political services to the Democrats when he served as Senator Claiborne Pell's special assistant (between 1985 and 1991) while simultaneously acting as a trustee of the American Society for Psychical Research.

During Jones' time working with Senator Claiborne Pell (Democrat-Rhode Island) - a fellow UFO-devotee - Jones was sent on exploratory missions all over the world to divine the latest evidence for paranormal activity. Not long after this, Jones was forced to retire from political office (owing to the now famous Cheney affair),⁸² and around this time he became the president of the American Society for Psychical Research.⁸³ Jones however took advantage of his newfound freedom and threw himself full-time into the work of the Human Potential Foundation. In the short-term this led to him embarking on a massive lobbying exercise to pressure the White House to reconsider its policy concerning the disclosure of information about extraterrestrial and UFO phenomena.

With funding provided by Laurance, Jones' lobbying culminated in the Human Potential Foundation running the historic "disclosure conference" in Washington D.C. in May 1995. Titled "When cosmic cultures meet," the conference's speakers-list featured

⁸² The Cheney Affair: interestingly it was Cecil B. Scott Jones' connection to Dick Cheney that would spell the end of his public office career with Senator Pell. This is because in October 1990 when he had attempted to warn secretary of defence Dick Cheney that his mystical friend David Oates (of Reverse Speech fame - the technique of playing speeches backwards to reveal their unconscious message) was about to go public with a secret code word revealed in Cheney and his colleagues ongoing Gulf War propaganda (revealed that is by playing speeches backwards), Cheney's office went public with the memo sent from Jones. However, ironically the release of this memo did not undermine Pell's ongoing election campaign against Congresswoman Claudine Schneider, as she couldn't capitalize on the goof as she too was a believer in the paranormal. C. Eugene Emery, Jr., "Pell aide hears code word in backwards speech," *Skeptical Inquirer*, Summer 1991; for a portion of the letter, see C.B. Scott Jones, "...And Paul is dead," *Harper's*, January 1991.

⁸³ Related to this paranormal appointment, Cecil B. Scott is a former board member of Edgar Cayce's Atlantic University, and a former board member of the Fund for UFO Research - a group that was first incorporated in 1980.

many of America's leading UFO and parapsychology enthusiasts, some of which were J.J. Hurtak, Charles Tart, John Mack and Zecharia Sitchin - the man who had written numerous best-selling books promoting the lie that Nibiru aliens (the Anunnaki) had genetically engineered humanity. Sitchin's nonsense was the so-called ancient-astronaut theory, which is not dissimilar to the rubbish included in Hurtak's own work.⁸⁴

Finally, another billionaire financier who has maintained a close working interest in the paranormal intrigues that have been propagated by Jones, Pell, Rockefeller, and many others beside is the libertarian billionaire Prince Hans-Adam of Liechtenstein. As the well-known UFOlogist Jacques Vallee observed in his published diaries: in early 1989 the monarchal head of state had "sponsored" a meeting on alien abductions that had been organized by General Stubblebine's equally deluded wife Dr. Rima Laibo (both of whose backgrounds were discussed earlier).⁸⁵ Later in the year Vallée recalled that when he and his wife (Janine) had visited the Prince's castle:

Prince Hans-Adam told Janine he had become interested in the subject of UFOs following a sighting by one of his aunts near Munich in the fifties. A few months later a cousin also observed an unusual object. The most interesting part of the discussion with Prince Hans-Adam had to do with history, specifically the history of secret knowledge. He spoke simply, with a smart grasp of the subject: "It is as if Mankind, periodically, rose towards a peak of enlightenment and wisdom and then fell again into bloody wars and anarchy," he said.

⁸⁴ In recent years Cecil B. Scott Jones has teamed up with a "trained" remote viewer to chat to aliens. The transcripts of many of these conversations are contained in Jones and Angela Smith, *Voices From The Cosmos* (Headline Books, 2014), for example the authors asked the Anunnaki "Do the Anunnaki feel any responsibility for their genetic manipulation of humanity and if so are they waiting for humans to reach a point in their development before official contact is reestablished?" The Anunnaki responded: "Anunnaki take full responsibility for the genetic alteration of Humanity. Contact has been ongoing for as long as Humans have been on the Earth. Contact with off-Earth Anunnaki has been sporadic but could be strengthened if needed."

⁸⁵ Jacques Vallee, *Forbidden Science 3: On the Trail of Hidden Truths - The Journals of 1980-1989* (Anomalist Books, 2017 [2012]).

Although it is not clear how much money the Prince of Liechtenstein might be spending on pursuing his interests in the paranormal sphere, there is a high probability that is more than the “few tens of thousands of dollars” that Vallée says the Prince admits to spending on “validating experiments in free energy that, he claims, are generating more watts than are put in.”⁸⁶

Science or Religion?

Laurance Rockefeller may of course have had all sorts of personal reasons for financing ventures dedicated to exploring alternative forms of spirituality, but it remains true that:

Throughout his life, Rockefeller supported endeavors that he believed could reconcile science with the supernatural and demonstrate that God is an ephemeral, albeit powerful essence that permeates all human existence.⁸⁷

With great money comes great influence, and Laurance Rockefeller’s lifelong efforts to fold science into religion was a pursuit that was shared by the right-wing billionaire philanthropist Sir John Templeton (1912-2008). Moreover, the overlap between such ruling-class activism was always considerable as demonstrated by the fact that Rockefeller had served on the Templeton Foundation’s advisory board. The latter foundation having been launched in 1987 “to bridge science and spirituality” while promoting free enterprise – a task that it achieves with some success by dispensing around \$140 million a year to suitable causes. Sir Templeton’s own beliefs needless to say fulfilled a critical role in setting the goals of his foundation and encompassed “an eclectic union of Presbyterianism, New Thought,

⁸⁶ This work to develop the magic of “free energy” was undertaken by the Prince Hans-Adam’s assistant George Hathaway, who had worked with groups like the Planetary Association for Clean Energy which counts mystics like Dr. Andrija Puharich (who was the group’s former vice president) and Dr. Elizabeth Rauscher among their most “notable and integral network members”.

⁸⁷ Marion Goldman, *The American Soul Rush: Esalen and the Rise of Spiritual Privilege* (New York University Press, 2012), p.143. Barbara Marx Hubbard and Laurance Rockefeller were both longstanding funders of the spiritual practices promoted at Esalen. (p.19)

and Eastern influences.” It is said that he had also been particularly focused on those spiritual traditions which “emphasize spiritual exploration, ‘mind over matter’ ideology, and positive thinking.”⁸⁸

It is perfectly understandable, but nevertheless unfortunate, that billionaires seeking to promote spiritual enlightenment tend to look towards the scientific realm for confirmation of their otherworldly concerns. And in keeping with this trend, in the 1970s and beyond, it is significant that the New Age self-help guru and early member of the Club of Rome, Werner Erhard, diverted millions from his highly profitable and controversial est program to assist a variety of spiritual and ‘scientific’ pursuits like, most famously, the Fundamental Fysiks Group.⁸⁹ Likewise another mystically-inclined multi-millionaire who

⁸⁸ Barbara Ehrenreich, “John Templeton's universe,” *The Nation*, October 10, 2007; John Weaver, “Big questions about Templeton: how the philanthropic giant legitimizes faith healing,” *The Public Eye* magazine, August 12, 2015. For examples of projects that have been funded by the Templeton Foundation, “There’s the eight-year, \$9.8 million grant given to Duke University’s Center for Spirituality, Theology and Health, as well as a nearly \$2.2 million grant awarded to the University of Pennsylvania for the establishment of a Positive Psychology Center, which afforded the Foundation the opportunity to exercise important influence over this emerging school of psychology.” Also see, John Weaver, *The Failure of Evangelical Mental Health Care: Treatments That Harm Women, LGBT Persons and the Mentally Ill* (McFarland & Co, 2014). Another group that has been well supported by the Templeton Foundation is the Mind & Life Institute which is headed by the influential anthroposophist Arthur Zajonc.

⁸⁹ Werner Erhard was “nominated to membership in the Club of Rome”. William Bartley III, *Werner Erhard: The Transformation of a Man - The Founding of Est* (Clarkson N. Potter Inc, 1978), p.256.

The Fundamental Fysiks Group had been founded in San Francisco in May 1975 by two physicists, Elizabeth Rauscher and George Weissmann (the former parapsychologist simultaneously serving as a researcher at SRI). In the 1990s Elizabeth Rauscher would end up living and working on the estate of tobacco heir Richard J. Reynolds III alongside fellow parapsychologist Dr. Andrija Puharich. For details about the history of the Fundamental Fysiks Group, see Kaiser, *How the Hippies Saved Physics*. One of the other leading members of the Fundamental Fysiks Group was Fritjof Capra; for criticisms of his first book, see Stephen Jay Gould, “Utopia (Limited),” *New York Times Book Review*, March 3, 1983.

Werner Erhard similarly backed more straightforward, albeit still controversial, endeavours like The Hunger Project which helped him build the brand profile of est, see Suzanne Gordon, “Let them eat EST” - *Mother Jones*, December 1978. For further criticisms, see Steven Pressman, *Outrageous Betrayal: The Dark Journey of*

played a critical role in helping Erhard export his individualist self-help credos to the world was the Swiss investment banker Wolfgang Somary.⁹⁰ And around this time Somary maintained his own connections to far-right spiritual preachers, as in 1983 he was counted among the founding members of the Moonie-backed Global Economic Action Institute.⁹¹ Founding elites associated with this free-market institute included libertarian economist Friedrich Hayek, Andrew Brimmer (who was the first African American to have served as a governor of the Federal Reserve System), and Koei Narusawa (a powerful Japanese banker who in 1987 coauthored an important report for the Trilateral Commission). In later years the Moonie front

Werner Erhard From est to Exile (St. Martin's Press, 1993). Stewart Emery who was the first CEO of est (now Landmark Education) is now well-known as a pioneer in the corporate self-help industry and serves as the vice president of the Transformational Leadership Council, a group comprised of more than one hundred top transformational leaders that serves well over ten million people in the personal growth market. The Council was established in July of 2004 by "America's #1 Success Coach," Jack Canfield.

One of the cofounders of Erhard's Hunger Project was the Princeton physicist Robert W. Fuller, who has recently self-published a book titled *Religion and Science: A Beautiful Friendship*.⁹² (2012). During the 1980s, Fuller travelled frequently to the USSR with the Werner Erhard Foundation as a citizen-scientist. Another individual who served on the board of directors of the Erhard Foundation in the early 1980s was the Harvard psychiatrist John Mack, who with the support of Laurance Rockefeller, would soon start publicizing his contact with aliens.

⁹⁰ Richard Behar and Ralph King Jr., "The winds of Werner," *Forbes*, November 18, 1985. "Described by associates as ethereal, otherworldly and dedicated to humanitarian causes, Somary, 53, apparently became so enamored of Erhard's messianic notions about transforming the world that in 1981 he authorized a low-interest \$15 million loan to help him spread his message. That money is now a key prop in Erhard's empire, which stretches across 20 countries and a bewildering array of foundations, trusts and tax-haven shells."

Wolfgang Somary's father, Felix Somary, was a clairvoyant economist who is famous for being a radical free-market banker associated with the likes of Friedrich Hayek. Wolfgang like his father maintains his own mystical interests and is now a poet, astrologist, and author of the German book *Kosmologie des Geldes* (Cosmology of Money) (Novalis, 2008).

⁹¹ It is entirely fitting that just prior to establishing Est, Werner Erhard had been employed as an instructor at a related self-help scheme known as Mind Dynamics - which had been financed by a far-right theocratic and pyramid-scheme huckster named William Penn Patrick.

group's work would be overseen by New Zealand's former right-wing leader Sir Robert Muldoon, and in September 1990 Muldoon chaired a GEAI conference, 'Paving the Way to the Market Economy' which was held at the Academy of National Economy in Moscow. This latter event was no small bit affair as "Some seven hundred Soviet politicians, officials and economists and eighty participants from foreign countries took part in the conference."⁹²

Intriguingly Werner Erhard's official biographer, William Bartley III, was connected to the Rev. Sun Myung Moon's various attempts to harness the global scientific community to provide cover for his far-right spiritual mission. Bartley's connection came when he secured a prestigious Moonie award (in 1986) for Friedrich Hayek with whom Bartley was now employed (as Bartley was now acting as the economist's official biographer). In this case, Hayek's award came courtesy of a Unification Church front group that had been founded in 1972 as the International Conference on the Unity of the Sciences (ICUS) - a project that aimed to demonstrate the unity of science and

⁹² For more background on this conference see Chapter 25 ("The Global Economic Action Institute and the 1990 Election") of Barry Gustafson's book *His Way: A Biography of Robert Muldoon* (Auckland University Press, 2000). The GEAI is also discussed in Howard Wiarda, *Think Tanks and Foreign Policy: The Foreign Policy Research Institute and Presidential Politics* (Lexington Books, 2010), pp.88-9. Wiarda recalled how during the mid-1980s he had been headhunted by the Global Economic Action Institute "to edit a book on development successes and democracy in the third world" although he did not initially realize this was a Moonie front group. He adds: "In the course of doing this project, I got invited to several Moonie events in the Washington area. One was a large, annual Moonie reception for all its friends and hangers-on at the luxurious Marriott Hotel in downtown Washington. Iêda and I were amazed to find over 2,000 people present, the cream of Washington society and politics. We were also invited to other Washington Institute (another front for the Unification Church) sponsored seminars and policy forums; there I was surprised to find such luminaries as intellectual Richard Rubenstein, former Kissinger aide Hal Sommenfeldt, philosopher and editor Morton Kaplan, and political boy wonder, then head of the Republican Young Americans for Freedom, Ralph Reed. All of these were friends or acquaintances of mine from Washington policy circles; I was as surprised to find them at a Moonie event as they were to find me. Rev. Moon had certainly bought himself access and influence in Washington; I assumed that, like me, they were all on the Unification Church payroll." (p.228)

religion.⁹³

This brings us neatly back to Alexander King, the cofounder of the Club of Rome, who attended many of the early events organized by the International Conference on the Unity of the Sciences, even acting as the vice chair of the 1986 event. King is on the record as stating, with much excitement, that “ICUS is the only world occasion where scholars from diverse disciplines can come together and discuss mutual interactions in their work as a multidisciplinary attack on global

⁹³ “Of Reverend Moon, the highly respected journal *Science* wrote: ‘[p]erhaps if any of the scientists took him seriously, they would not be so quick to lend him the prestige of their presence.’” This point is true, and the presence of Nobel prize winners in Rev. Moon’s company certainly did allow his to “purchase legitimacy”. “However, the [Unification] church has a much broader reason for sponsoring ICUS: its millennial quest to provide guidance to science and scientists.” Benjamin Zeller, *Prophets and Protons: New Religious Movements and Science in Late Twentieth-Century America* (New York University Press, 2010), p.64. Zeller makes these points but seems totally unbothered by the far-right politics being promoted by the Moonies. He overlooks these serious problems even though Zeller observes how in 1978 “outside the Sheraton Boston Hotel demonstrators protested against the Unification Church as a dangerous cult and the conference as a publicity stunt and scientific sham. ‘These cultists must be destroyed, imprisoned—anything to STOP their mind control of society,’ read the protestors’ leaflet. Responding to the ICUS conference, a former member of the Unification Church now affiliated with the anti-cult movement released a statement comparing the Unificationists to Nazis. The scientists, he warned, were ‘legitimizing a demagogue and are lending credence to a movement whose goals and methods find their parallel in the National Socialist Movement in Germany under Hitler.’” (p.22)

It is important to note that the organization that was behind setting up the International Conference on the Unity of the Sciences was the International Cultural Foundation. And the former secretary of this Moonie-led Foundation in the late 1970s was Michael Warder, a man who by 1980 was serving as the director of administration for the right-wing think tank, the Heritage Foundation. Warder was a longstanding consort of the Rev. Moon and “Perhaps the key indicator of Moon’s trust of [Michael] Warder was the fact that in the 1970’s Warder was the largest American stockholder in Tong II Enterprises, the U.S. branch of the Korean-based Moon business empire. Tong II manufactures M-16’s and other weapons, heavy machinery, and parts for the auto and truck industry.” Bellant, *The Coors Connection*, p.6.

For an early critique of the International Conference on the Unity of the Sciences and the activities of the Rev. Moon more generally, see Irving Louis Horowitz (ed.), *Science, Sin and Scholarship: The Politics of Reverend Moon and the Unification Church* (MIT Press, 1978).

problems.” Indeed, King’s own 2006 autobiography is revealing for its lack of critical engagement with fanatical right-wing activists like the Rev. Moon. And in a chapter titled “Two controversial Asians” King discusses his dreamy relationships with both the Rev. Moon and with one of Japan’s most powerful men, Ryoichi Sasakawa. Forget for a moment that in 1967 Sasakawa was anointed the leader of a Moon-sponsored organization called Shokyo Rengo (Victory Over Communism) – a proud branch of the World Anti-Communist League which supported right-wing regimes and death squads all over the world.⁹⁴

King thus recalled in his autobiography that he had received \$2.8 million from Sasakawa to finance his own futurist work; and although he remembers Sasakawa’s office as being “monstrously large, easily outstripping Mussolini’s”; he then goes on to portray the well-known fascist as a pleasant humanitarian philanthropist who liked to do nothing more than expound “his life philosophy of universal brotherhood and sisterhood.” King’s commentary on the Rev. Moon is much the same, recalling that he “had, of course, read about the suspicion in which Moon and the Unification movement was held,” but he found them all “pleasant, straightforward and co-operative” with the Rev. Moon himself having “a friendly approach.” The founder of the Club of Rome concluded: “I hold them in great respect,

⁹⁴ Bertil Lintner, *Blood Brothers: The Criminal Underworld in Asia* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), pp.165-70; also see Robert Boettcher and Gordon Freedman, *Gifts of Deceit: Sun Myung Moon, Tongsun Park, and the Korean Scandal* (Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1980); and Scott Anderson and Jon Lee Anderson, *Inside the League: The Shocking Expose of How Terrorists, Nazis, and Latin American Death Squads Have Infiltrated the World Anti-Communist League* (Dodd, Mead, 1986). As Bertil Lintner noted: “In 1967, Sasakawa arranged a secret meeting in a house he owned on a lake in Yamanashi prefecture in the mountainous interior of the main Japanese island of Honshu. Among the attendants were Moon, Osami Kuboki—a well-known rightist who headed both the Unification Church in Japan and the Japanese chapter of the WACL—and Shirai Tameo—an underworld lieutenant of Kodama and secretary of an obscure organisation called ‘Japan Youth Lectures’, which trained young members of *yakuza* gangs. The outcome of the meeting was the creation of a new respectable façade for the *yakuza*: the Kokusai Shokyo Rengo, or the ‘International Federation for the Victory over Communism’. Sasakawa was the overall chairman, with Kodama as his chief adviser, but it effectively became the political wing of the Unification Church.” (p.168)

but I still wonder what it is all about.”⁹⁵

-ENDNOTE-

Moon and the Politics of the World Anti-Communist League

The World Anti-Communist League (WACL) was founded with American funding “in 1966 by two dictatorships, South Korea and Taiwan, and the anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations (ABN), which united East European fascists who were valued for their anti-communism and resettled in the West with the aid of the Vatican and the U.S. and British intelligence.” The WACL itself was “an outgrowth of the Asian Peoples Anti-Communist League, formed in 1954, also with U.S. government support, by the South Korean Intelligence Agency (KCIA) and Chiang Kai-Shek's Kuomintang (KMT).” “WACL provided a strong base for the Reverend Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church, which is closely tied to the KCIA.”

“The Unification Church supposedly left WACL in 1975 when Moon denounced it as fascist after a frustrated takeover attempt. But Moon continued to be represented by the powerful Japanese Unification Church through its front group, *Shokyo Rengo* (Victory Over Communism), founded by such men as the late Yoshio Kodama, leader of the Japanese organized crime syndicate, the *Yakuza*, and Ryoichi Sasakawa, who has described himself as the 'world's wealthiest fascist.’” Moonie affiliate group “CAUSA (Confederation of Associations for the Unity [originally Unification] of the Societies of America) was founded in 1980 by Colonel Bo Hi Pak, the former KCIA operative who is Moon's top deputy, and Kim Sang In, former KCIA station chief in Mexico City. CAUSA's first executive director was Warren Richardson, formerly general counsel to the Liberty Lobby.”⁹⁶

⁹⁵ King, *Let the Cat Turn Round*, p.370, p.368, p.374, p.375.

⁹⁶ Holly Sklar, *Washington's War on Nicaragua* (South End Press, 1988), p.78, p.79, p.80

FIVE

Unidentified Flying Nazis

Far-right media outlets like *Breitbart* and *InfoWars* have gained some level of notoriety in recent years for helping to spread all manner of wild and toxic conspiracy theories. But lest we forget, the mainstream media itself should take the lion's share of the credit for laying the ideological groundwork that allowed such reactionary ideas to flourish in the first place. Take for instance the Rupert Murdoch-owned publishing giant HarperCollins, who in 2011 kindly brought to their readers' attention their latest ode to anxiety, *Red Army: The Radical Network That Must Be Defeated to Save America* – a prolonged rant disguised in book form that “proved” the existence of a powerful “Marxist-socialist” bloc in Congress!⁹ Or how about HarperCollins' equally bizarre *Silent Revolution: How the Left Rose to Political Power and Cultural Dominance* (2014); a paranoid gem which boasts of exposing the dark depths of radicalism – by which the authors mean Marxism – that now masquerades as liberalism within the Democratic establishment.¹

¹ Hysterical fears about the so-called mind control techniques propounded by “cultural Marxists” abound on the far-right with a particularly horrifying example being provided by Anders Breivik. But belief in such paranoid conspiracies are not limited to those on the far-right as demonstrated by the anti-democratic comments that were made in 2010 by the late Fidel Castro (1926-2016) with respect to the analysis of cultural Marxism. Richard Seymour, “2083: Breivik’s 21st-century fascist manifesto,” in: Elizabeth Humphrys, Guy Rundle and Tad Tietze (eds.), *On Utøya: Anders Breivik, Right Terror, Racism and Europe* (Elguta Press, 2011); Martin Jay, “Dialectic of counter-enlightenment: the Frankfurt School as scapegoat of the lunatic fringe,” *Salmagundi* magazine, No.168/169, Fall 2010/Winter 2011. For a critical discussion of the limitations of the Cuban Revolution from a revolutionary socialist perspective, see Tony Saunois, *Che Guevara: Symbol of Struggle* (1997).

With fearmongering being the order of the day, the hostile takeover of American politics by aliens has been another staple of the HarperCollins publishing empire, a focus exemplified by the literary pollution pumped out by so-called investigative journalist Jim Marrs who cut his teeth on exposing the intrigues surrounding the JFK assassination. Marrs' first major release for HarperCollins' on the conspiracy front was the *New York Times* bestseller *Alien Agenda: Investigating the Extraterrestrial Presence Among Us* (2000). Keen to profit from such inflammatory right-wing diatribes his publisher happily went about releasing more of Marrs' high-octane nonfiction including not least *Population Control* (2015). This latter book, which ran with the subtitle *How Corporate Owners Are Killing Us*, ostensibly railed against a vast genocidal plot that was being carried forth in open sight by nefarious liberal elites. A further HarperCollins' contribution to this always shocking genre was Marrs' 2013 bestseller *Our Occulted History: Do the Global Elite Conceal Ancient Aliens?*² This was a page-turner of awe-inspiring horror which melded Marrs' relentless anti-government hysterics with the idea that life on Earth was merely the creative genius of malevolent aliens. Like many conspiracy theorists, Marrs, in his efforts to fill out his pages of his evolving oeuvre (and bank account), sucks up every far right-wing talking point to

² More recently HarperCollins published their latest (more liberal) ode to conspiracism as Ross Coulthart's *In Plain Sight: An Investigation into UFOs and Impossible Science* (HarperCollins, 2021). Rupert Murdoch's publishing empire also publishes conservative critiques of spiritually-inclined self-help books like Mark Manson's, *The Subtle Art of Not Giving a F**k* (HarperOne, 2016); and even conservative critiques of conspiracists, see Jonathan Kay, *Among the Truthers: A Journey into the Grow Conspiracist Underground of 9/11 Truthers, Birthers, Armageddonites, Vaccine Hysterics, Hollywood Know-Nothings, and Internet Addicts* (HarperCollins, 2011). A rare example of a conspiracy-related book that was published by HarperCollins that manages to shed light on the far-rights manipulation and profit from political confusion was Jesse Walker's useful libertarian contribution *The United States of Paranoia: A Conspiracy Theory* (HarperCollins, 2013).

Also see David McKnight and Mitchell Hobbs, "You're all a bunch of pinkos': Rupert Murdoch and the politics of HarperCollins," *Media, Culture & Society*, 33(6), 2011. This is not to say HarperCollins do not promote occasional critical books written by liberals, with a good example being provided by William Sommer's *Trust the Plan: The Rise of QAnon and the Conspiracy That Reshaped America* (HarperCollins, Forthcoming).

regurgitate them within his own super-conspiracies.³

Now the popular market for anti-government conspiracy theories appears to be on the rise all over the world, a worrying phenomenon that has been fed by the failure of mainstream political parties of all persuasions to meet the needs of ordinary people. This turn towards the irrational for some, however, does not mean that such an apocalyptic fever could not be quickly remedied given the right democratic medicine: a point that is demonstrated by the massive public support that has been generated for new progressive political formations that are giving leadership to a genuine fightback against capitalist exploitation worldwide. Nevertheless, one thing we can be sure of is that conservative and extremist publishers will continue to

³ In another of Jim Marrs' early HarperCollins' book, *Rule By Secrecy* (2000), the author draws upon anti-Semitic far-right conspiracists (including Nesta Webster and John Coleman) to make his own arguments, but bizarrely Marrs is quick to debunk accusations that conspiracies are common currency amongst the far-right. Marrs even quotes from George Johnson's useful book *Architects of Fear: Conspiracy Theories and Paranoia in American Politics* (JP Tarcher, 1984). Marrs writes that Johnson "wrote [in *Architects of Fear*] that the notion of conspiracies has been 'pushed by right-wing extremists since the beginning of the century'" and then goes on to assert that this is wrong. *Rule By Secrecy*, p.6.

Jim Marrs, like many popular conspiracy theorists, did not limit himself to writing books, and in 2014 Marrs wrote and starred in a hyper-paranoid "documentary" called *Ancient Aliens and the New World Order*. This film's Director, J. Michael Long, is himself a prolific spreader of conspiracies who in the intervening period has been involved in the production of 15 extra-terrestrial "documentaries." But the real prize for popularizing right-wing demonic narratives goes to Warren Croyle who acted as the executive producer of Marrs' 2014 documentary and has since produced over 100 films, many with the aid of the British director/mystic Philip Gardiner, whose most recent film is *A Conspiracy to Rule: The Illuminati* (2017). Croyle (aka "Mr Reality") started his career in the music industry as a member of the anti-establishment industrial band *Braindead Soundmachine* and has since amassed a sizable income from his fearmongering as he is the CEO of the Californian-based multi-media conglomerate, Reality Entertainment. In a bizarre way Croyle is a man on a mission to wake-up the world to the threat posed by an impending global apocalypse with his latest "documentary" being called *3rd Reich: Hitler's UFOs and the Nazi's Most Powerful Weapon* (2017). Other notable films listed in Reality Entertainment's current back-catalogue include *The Conspiracy to Rule the World: From 911 to the Illuminati* (2009) which features right-wing conspiracy theorist Brian Gerrish, and two documentaries about the so-called *Montauk Project* -- a conspiracy that now forms a key part of Jan Van Helsing's anti-Semitic rants.

churn out endless conspiracies to muddy the waters of change. Germany, for example, has its own culprit in this regard in the form of Kopp Verlag a small but still very dangerous publishing company.⁴

Not being content to let a good propaganda opportunity fly on by, in 2015 Kopp Verlag pulled out all the stops to organize an enormous eightieth birthday bash for one of their most famous and popular conspirators. The star in question was the dyed-in-the-wool racist, Erich von Däniken,⁵ whose first runaway international bestseller was *Chariots of the Gods?* (1968), which, according his uncritical up-cycler, Jim Marrs, should only be remembered for having first brought the concept of “ancient astronauts” to “a global audience.” This much is true, but what is also known is that Von Däniken, the vehement anti-communist, was plagiarizing earlier bestselling texts like *The Morning of the Magicians*. This earlier book having been first published in 1960 by the French writers Louis Pauwels (a supporter of the far right and

⁴ Sabine Peschel, “New strategies for far-right publishers in Germany,” Deutsche Welle, July 24, 2017; Marc Brost, Daniel Erk and Tina Hildebrandt, “There’s something behind that,” *Zeit Online*, August 8, 2015. Well-known German-born conspiracy theorist F. William Engdahl (who is a former editor for Lyndon LaRouche’s conspiracy network) is cashing in with Kopp Verlag as they have kindly republished his entire bloated back-catalogue. Others to profit from Kopp Verlag’s commitment to right-wing doom-mongering are Putin enthusiast and all-round conspiracy-weaver Webster Tarpley, far-right Bircher G. Edward Griffin, and Nazi apologist Axel Stoll. More recent Kopp Verlag publications include Joseph Mercola and Ronnie Cummins’ *The Truth About COVID-19: Exposing the Great Reset, Lockdowns, Vaccine Passports, and the New Normal* (2021), and a 2021 reissue of Frank Joseph’s 2004 book *Survivors of Atlantis: Their Impact on World Culture*.

⁵ Zecharia Sitchin’s numerous books have provided a direct inspiration for Erich von Däniken such that he “borrowed liberally from the work of Sitchin, citing him time and again as his source for important revelations in his later books.” Here one might observe that Erich von Däniken’s book *Gods from Outer Space* “quotes extensively from the *Book of Dzyan*, praising its tremendous antediluvian grasp of Earth’s primal heritage. He is blissfully unaware that said book, as we have seen, originated in the mind of Helena Blavatsky and is known only from her book, *The Secret Doctrine*. It was possibly one of the inspirations for H.P. Lovecraft’s *Necronomicon*.” Jason Colavito, *The Cult of Alien Gods: H. P. Lovecraft and Extraterrestrial Pop Culture* (Prometheus Books, 2005), p.269, p.154. For more on the history of conspiracies in relation to ancient astronauts, see Ronald Fritze, *Invented Knowledge: False History, Fake Science and Pseudo-religions* (Reaktion Books, 2011).

former student of the divine mystic George Gurdjieff) and Jacques Bergier as *Le Matin des magiciens*.⁶

Pauwels and Bergier's book was similarly multivariate in its diverse and ill-informed inspirations and had specifically drawn upon the mystical Soviet research of Matej Agrest to argue that aliens had colonized Earth eons ago. Yet as discussed earlier, such communist influences on Western research were ended around 1966 when "socialist realist forms of ancient astronaut theories" were decreed to be out of official favor by the Stalinist regime, which meant that occult books like *Morning of the Magicians* were thereon proscribed. This

⁶ For a useful contextual analysis of Erich Von Däniken's massive body of writings with special reference to influences from Madame Blavatsky and Charles Fort, see Andreas Grün Schloss, "'Ancient astronaut' narrations: a popular discourse on our religious past," *Fabula*, 48(3/4), 2007. Or as Jason Colavito explains: "All was fair, [Von Däniken] said, when fighting 'a war we have to win' to overturn modern science. He saw his ancient astronaut theory as a way of promoting traditional moral values and combating socialism and communism. Specifically, he told Pres. Gerald Ford that socialism was the greatest danger facing the world and conservatives needed to embrace UFO believers to win elections, and he later wrote that the aliens would punish the sexually unchaste as well as uppity feminists when they returned in 2012. (They didn't.)" Colavito, "Review of Ancient Aliens S05E10: 'The Von Däniken legacy'," *Blog Post*, April 6, 2013.

The initial English language publishers of *Chariots of the Gods* (1968) was the small independent publisher, Souvenir Press. This publisher is still run by its founder Ernst Hecht, whose online biography at least provides an honest description of Von Däniken's book as "a study in New Age quackery". Therefore, considering this critical turn of phrase it is appropriate that in 2007 Souvenir Press published a book authored by leading liberal skeptic Michael Shermer as *Why People Believe Weird Things: Pseudoscience, Superstition and Other Confusions of our Time*. But a closer look at Souvenir's publishing record actually shows that their engagement with Shermer is something of an anomaly, and like many other mainstream publishers they continue to make a tidy sum out of printing all manner of New Age nonsense: a few examples include *The Philadelphia Experiment* (1993), *Realms of the Human Unconscious: Observations from LSD Research* (1996), *A Guide to Homeopathic Remedies* (2000), *Communion: A True Story* (2016), alongside occult Nazi classics like *Morning of the Magicians* (2007) and *The Secret of the Spear* (2004). In 1973 Souvenir Press also cashed in on the ancient alien's quackery by publishing the English translation of Robert Charroux's best-seller *Lost Worlds: Scientific Secrets of the Ancients*. Souvenir likewise boast of being a leading publisher of the main texts of the humanistic psychology, a movement whose commitment to mumbo jumbo is revealed in Jeffrey Masson's *Against Therapy* (Fontana, 1990).

of course did not stop such illicit texts from being consumed by esoterically minded conspiracy theorists. And here the underground activities of the now famous neo-fascist Alexander Dugin -- who in the 1970s had been part of a secretive group of Gurdjieff disciples -- provides an excellent example of how once covert occultists were able to move from out of the shadows following the collapse of Communism.

Most of all, other than helping crystalize and commodify the occult zeitgeist subsuming the Western world, Pauwels and Bergier should be credited as being the first writers who “inserted ancient astronauts (via [H.P.] Lovecraft, Charles Fort, and Helena Blavatsky) into Esoteric Nazism...”⁷ Here this French pair were merely the best-remembered and most famous propagators of such nonsense, as another French author whose work they liberally borrowed from was

⁷ Jason Colavito, “Morning of the Magicians’ and the beginnings of esoteric Nazi ufology,” August 6, 2014. For more on the early roots of this occult intrigue, see Hans Thomas Hakl, *Unknown Sources: National Socialism and the Occult* (Holmes, 2000). An appendix to Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke’s *The Occult Roots of Nazism: Secret Aryan Cults and their Influence on Nazi Ideology* (Tauris, 2004) which is titled “The modern mythology of Nazi occultism” provides a useful overview of how the two influential crypto-historians, Louis Pauwels and Jacques Bergier, popularized the spurious ideas concerning esoteric Nazism.

Following hot on the heels of the publication of Pauwels and Bergier’s *Morning of the Magicians*, Goodrick-Clarke points to another mystifying book published by a far-right crypto-historian of German origin, that is, Dietrich Bronder’s banned *Bevor Hitler kam* (1964) -- an anti-Semitic book which is still referenced today by right-wing conspiracists like Michael Salla and Joseph Farrell. But the publication of *The Occult Roots of Nazism* was not without its own attendant problems. As Peter Staudenmaier has observed: “The achievements of this text are impressive; it almost single-handedly wrested the topic of modern German occultism from the hands of occult aficionados and showed that a serious historical appraisal was both possible and productive. Like [George] Mosse’s early article [The mystical origins of National Socialism], however, Goodrick-Clarke’s book had several other less salutary consequences; its focus on Viennese Ariosophy and its German offshoots gave the work a coherent structure, but detracted attention from Ariosophy’s somewhat anomalous position within the occult revival as a whole. In addition, positing the volume’s meticulous investigation into Ariosophy’s history as a search for the ‘roots of Nazism’ served to reinforce existing preconceptions about the relationship between occultism and the rise of the Nazi movement.” Staudenmaier, “Occultism, race and politics in German-speaking Europe, 1880–1940: a survey of the historical literature,” *European History Quarterly*, 39(1), 2009, p.53.

Denis Saurat's 1954 book *L'Atlantide et le règne des géants (Atlantis and the Giants, 1957)*. Pauwels and Bergier simply replaced Saurat's giants with aliens – while in turn Saurat himself was only reviving old German tales revolving around the Nazi's infamous World Ice Theories.⁸ Not ones to miss an esoteric trick when it came to selling books, Pauwels and Bergier “popularized the imaginary Vril Society, and it is from their work that the anti-Semitic writer Jan Van Helsing [whose reactionary work is now published by Kopp Verlag] drew his claims for the Vril Society and its role in channeling the plans for flying saucers from outer space.”⁹ Other important research on this issue

⁸ One popular author who helped inspire Denis Saurat's mystical work was the England-based writer Hans Schindler Bellamy, author of such Nazi revisionist classics as *The Atlantis Myth* (Faber & Faber, 1948) which itself took direct inspiration from catastrophist World Ice theorists of leading Ahnenerbe member, Edmund Kiss. In more recent years Kiss' crackpot theories relating to the sun gate of Tiwanaku in Bolivia have made it into the work of Graham Hancock's 1995 book *Fingerprints of the Gods* – a book which sold more than three million copies. See Heather Pringle, *The Master Plan: Himmler's Scholars and the Holocaust* (Hyperion, 2006), p.310.

Likewise it is important to consider the closing reflections made by Christopher Hale in his book *Himmler's Crusade: The True Story of the 1938 Nazi Expedition into Tibet* (Bantam Press, 2003) where he writes: “The ideas of Austrian hotelier Erich Von Däniken appeared at first sight foolish rather than sinister, but Von Däniken too had links to the far right and his money-spinning notion that ancient civilizations flourished as a result of the mating of human races and superior aliens (read Aryans) was dangerously xenophobic. It is noteworthy that some of Von Däniken's favourite evidence came from the ancient site of Tiwanaku in Bolivia, where he had discovered after reading long-forgotten books on ancient America by an Austrian adventurer called Arthur Posnansky. Posnansky, of course, had collaborated with Edmund Kiss, the SS ‘scientist’ Ernst Schaefer had refused to include in his expedition.” (p.380).

Another leading Ahnenerbe Nazi was Dr. Herbert Jankuhn who, when he died in 1990, was “honoured, respected, and eulogized as one of the deans of German archaeology.” Little known to many was his continued support of far-right politics, as Jankuhn had been an important sponsor of GRECE's magazine, the *Nouvelle Ecole*. Pringle, *The Master Plan*, p.313; Maurice Olender, *Race and Erudition* (Harvard University Press, 2009), p.63. For further research on the growth of the Nazis diaspora in the aftermath of World War II, see Gerald Steinacher, *Nazis on the Run: How Hitler's Henchmen Fleed Justice* (Oxford University Press, 2012), and Guy Walters, *Hunting Evil: How the Nazi War Criminals Escaped and the Hunt to Bring Them to Justice* (Bantam, 2009).

⁹ Jason Colavito, “‘Morning of the Magicians’ and the beginnings of esoteric Nazi ufology,” August 6, 2014.

makes clear that:

Although Pauwels and Bergier were the most influential creators of the myth of a Nazi-Tibetan connection, they were not the first to do so; they used and expanded a story mentioned earlier in this article, one from a French spy novel of 1933, *Les sept têtes du dragon vert*, in which connections between the Tibetans and Hitler were fabricated. Its author was allegedly a French secret agent writing under the pseudonym Teddy Legrand who was later said to have died under mysterious circumstances. The novel, which describes a powerful secret organization responsible for the rise of National Socialism and Communism, adroitly interweaves fact and fiction.¹⁰

Nazi Obsessions

One conspiracy begets another; and a further author whose writings were enlightened by *Morning of the Magicians* was the openly Nazi mythologist, Miguel Serrano. After being dismissed from Chile's diplomatic service shortly after the commencement of the short-lived presidency of the socialist leader Salvador Allende, Serrano responded to his forced retirement by writing about his interests in Nazism. Thus, drawing upon his familiarity (and previous acquaintance) with the right-wing mysticism of Carl Jung, which Serrano set about uniting his Jungian knowledge with the metaphysical anti-Semitism of leading fascists like Julius Evola and Savitri Devi. This

¹⁰ Istrun Engelhardt, "Nazis of Tibet: a twentieth century myth," in: Monica Esposito (ed.), *Images of Tibet in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, Paris: École française d'Extrême-Orient (EFEO), coll. Études thématiques 22, vol. I, 2008. Writing in 1934, French Christian esotericist Rene Kopp is thought to be the first author to have spoken about the occult Nazism and his strange belief that Bonaparte, Mussolini and Hitler were "masters" sent to Earth by higher powers. Just a few years later, conservative British-based Christian mystic Dion Fortune (1890-1946), who was once a Theosophist, then published *The Magical Battle of Britain* (1939) in response to her fear of the growing power of Nazi occultists, while the following year leading British theosophist Leon Spence published his own version of this nonsense as *The Occult Causes of the Present War*. (Dion Fortune was the founder of the Society of Inner Light, and one particularly well-known initiate this Society was the late Kathleen Raine (1908-2003), the Jungian poet who went on to found a new "school of wisdom" known as the Temenos Academy of Integral Studies. Notably, Prince Charles provided Raine with vital support for this enterprise by acting as a patron of her Temenos Academy.)

enabled the former diplomat to create his own cosmic conspiracy which centered around a secret fleet of Nazi UFOs. His first effort in this twisted literary endeavour was published in 1978 as *El Cordón Dorado: Hitlerismo Esotérico (The Golden Thread: Esoteric Hitlerism)*. But Serrano was not alone in popularizing such occult intrigues, and partial inspiration for these otherworldly tales is traceable to reports produced just a few years earlier by the Toronto-based neo-Nazi, Ernst Zundel -- author of the adoring text, *The Hitler We Loved and Why*.¹¹ Serrano was no doubt also influenced by the writings of the former French Waffen-SS veteran, Marc Augier (*alias* Sain Loup) who penned numerous novels about the so-called “Nazi mysteries”. Augier had been a key organizer of *Europe-Action*, an anti-Christian far-right organization that experimented with the neo-Pagan ideas that would soon become common currency in the *Nouvelle Droite* and within Alain De Benoist’s GRECE.¹²

The far-right literati have laid their feral roots across the world, and the one writer who has done most to normalize esoteric Nazism in South America was Jacques de Mahieu. Until his death in 1990, Mahieu being the head of the Argentine chapter of the Spanish neo-Nazi group (CEDADE) and he had published many books touching upon many of the same themes that were covered in *Morning of the Magicians*.¹³ While one final influential conspiracy text that recycled the occult nonsense of Pauwels and Bergier was published in 1976 by anthroposophist author Johannes Tautz as *Der Eingriff des*

¹¹ Michael Barkun, *A Culture of Conspiracy: Apocalyptic Visions in Contemporary America* (University of California Press, 2013), p.100.

¹² For further details on the evolution of the far-right in France, see James Shields, *The Extreme Right in France: From Pétain to Le Pen* (Routledge, 2007); and Andrea Mammone, *Transnational Neofascism in France and Italy* (Cambridge University Press, 2015). Alain De Benoist began editing GRECE’s theoretical journal *Nouvelle Ecole* in 1968 and recruited Mircea Eliade “as a member of the journal’s board of patrons, along with other figures associated with far-right tendencies, including Hans Eysenck, Konrad Lorenz and Armin Moehler.” Mark Weitzman, “One knows the tree by the fruit that it bears”: Mircea Eliade’s influence on current far-right ideology,” *Religions*, 11(5), February 2020.

¹³ Jacques de Mahieu’s case is discussed in Jean-Yves Camus, “Neo-Nazism in Europe” in: Uwe Backes and Patrick Moreau (eds.), *The Extreme Right in Europe: Current Trends and Perspectives* (Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2011).

Widersachers: Fragen zum okkulten Aspekt des Nationalsozialismus. This booklet has recently been translated into English by the anthroposophist press Temple Lodge Publishing as *Attack of the Enemy: The Occult Inspiration behind Adolf Hitler and the Nazis* (2014). And so, here it is worth pointing out that Temple Lodge is upholding a long tradition of promoting reactionary conspiracies, with just one other pertinent example being provided by Thomas Meyer's *Reality, Truth and Evil: Facts, Questions and Perspectives on September 11, 2001* (2005).¹⁴

Given this problematic history it is not too surprising that some leading debunkers of the proliferating field of ancient alien baloney have pointed out “that the connections between fringe history, esoteric Nazism, and ufology were present from the beginning and sometimes used explicitly as cover for promoting neo-Nazi activities in a more palatable guise.”¹⁵ Author of *Gods of the Blood: The Pagan Revival*

¹⁴ In 1990 Thomas Meyer founded the German publisher Perseus Verlag which publishes the work of Rudolf Steiner alongside conservative conspiracy theorists like Anthony Sutton. Meyer is the editor of the monthly anthroposophist journal *Der Europäer*, which is co-edited by British conspiracy theorist Terry Boardman and fellow US-based conspiracist Andreas Bracher. Also, on the far-right of the political spectrum is the Swiss Holocaust denier and anthroposophist, Bernhard Schaub, who is the head of a group that had been cofounded by Ernst Zündel that was known as Der Verein zur Rehabilitierung der wegen Bestreitens des Holocaust Verfolgten (VRBHV) – the Organization for the Rehabilitation of People Persecuted for Denying the Holocaust.

As Julian Strube explains, since the 1950s far-right and neo-Nazi authors have “attempted to rationalize the crimes committed by the National Socialists by placing their actions in the revisionist context of a dualistic battle of good against evil. According to their writings, an ‘esoteric SS’ took up the ancient tradition of defending ‘light and truth.’ After the war had been lost, those esoteric troops retreated to secret bases and have continued their fight until today, giving hope and confidence to the admirers of the lost ‘Third Reich.’ Such ideas have been widely disseminated since the 1970s, gaining considerable importance since the 1990s.” Julian Strube, “Nazism and the occult,” in: Christopher Partridge (ed.), *The Occult World* (Routledge, 2014), p.336.

¹⁵ Colavito, “‘Morning of the Magicians’ and the beginnings of esoteric Nazi ufology”. Jan Van Helsing’s popularity in Germany and Austria is discussed in Edvard Gugenberger, Franko Petri and Roman Schweidlenka, *Weltverschwoerungstheorien: Die neue Gefahr von rechts* (1998). Ramon Glazov, “Ancient astronaut Aryans: on the far right obsession with Indo-Europeans,” *Overland*, April 28, 2017.

and *White Separatism* (Duke University Press, 2003), Mattias Gardell surmises:

I think that part of the reason why Aryan revolutionaries are so receptive to these theories is related to the fact that both UFO theologians and white National Socialist racists hold as valid knowledge what is rejected or ridiculed by mainstream society. A believer in one kind of stigmatized knowledge – the fact that it is not accepted as true by the universities and mainstream media is interpreted to mean that it must be something to it. This might – in part – explain why white racists tend to be open to all kinds of alternative medicine, ideas of lost worlds, parapsychology, alternative religions and alternative science, including UFO theology.

Similarly, Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke provides a simple explanation for why the zeitgeist of Nazi occultism has proved so useful to far-right propagandists.

Serrano's mystical neo-Nazism and reference to Savitri Devi have a distinct appeal to the younger generation. Here Nazism becomes pop mythology, severed from the historic context of the Third Reich. The Gnostic Cathars, Rosicrucian mysteries, Hindu avatars, and extraterrestrial gods add a sensational and occult appeal to powerful myths of elitism, planetary destiny, and the cosmic conspiracy of the Jews that culminate in a global, racist ideology of white supremacy.¹⁶

Likewise, another far less reactionary writer who, in the final years of his life, did much to help promote occult Nazi myths was the best-selling American novelist Norman Mailer (1923-2007). An interest in such obscure themes that first showed itself when Mailer penned the ecstatic foreword to the reissue of Peter Levenda's conspiratorial book *Unholy Alliance: A History of Nazi Involvement with the Occult* (Continuum, 2002 [1994]).¹⁷

¹⁶ Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, *Hitler's Priestess: Savitri Devi, the Hindu-Aryan Myth, and Neo-Nazism* (New York University Press, 1998), pp.221-2.

¹⁷ Norman Mailer's final occult-themed novel *The Castle in the Forest* (Random House, 2007) is discussed in Heather Wollfram's essay "The Nazi occult and *The Castle in the Forest*: raw history and fictional transformation," in John Whalen-Bridge

Occult Inspiration for American Nazism

As good a place as any to continue this dystopian narrative of Nazi obsessions with the spirit world is with the paramilitarist millennialism of William Dudley Pelley (1890-1965), whose life provides a compelling example of the compatibility of extremist politics and alien life forms. After achieving global infamy for leading the fascist Silver Shirts during the Depression, Pelley was later barred from undertaking organizing activities and so seized upon this opportunity to refocus on his longstanding occult interests.¹⁸ This eventually led to the

(ed.), *Norman Mailer's Later Fictions: Ancient Evenings through Castle in the Forest* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010). Peter Levenda remains a widely cited and highly prolific conspiracy theorist who in recent years has teamed up with Tom DeLonge, the punk musician who cofounded an influential UFO group with psi-star Harold Puthoff with the aid of ex-CIA boss Jim Semivan.

In the 1970s Norman Mailer briefly dabbled in helping to expose real conspiracies when he lent his support to a group of disillusioned former CIA agents who produced a hard-hitting magazine known as *Counterspy*. At the same time, it is important to note that Mailer also did his own bit to promote conspiracy theories including those of Wilhelm Reich; while in 1989 Mailer came together with a group of writers who called themselves the Dynamite Club to study "various conspiracy speculations about the assassinations of the 1960s, Watergate, and other mysteries." As Michael Lennon adds in his biography *Norman Mailer: A Double Life* (Simon & Schuster, 2013): "The [Dynamite] group met in Washington and New York, often at Mailer's apartment. It included Jim Hougan, a writer and magazine editor; Dick Russell, a freelance investigative writer; and Edward Jay Epstein, author of a shelf full of books about the JFK assassination, Oswald, and the CIA." For a useful examination of Mailer's encounters with *Counterspy*, see David Shamus McCarthy, "The CIA and the Cult of Secrecy," PhD. Dissertation, College of William and Mary, May 2008. Also see David Greenberg's *Nixon's Shadow: The History of an Image* (W. W. Norton & Company, 2003) for a useful discussion of how Jim Hougan's (liberal) conspiratorial writings about the CIA helped to revive President Nixon's image - a process which enabled the disgraced president to be "welcomed back to the fold, especially in fraternities of Republican die-hards."

¹⁸ Leo Ribuffo, *The Old Christian Right: The Protestant Far Right from the Great Depression to the Cold War* (Temple University Press, 1983). "By 1930, Pelley claimed that his clairaudient communications went 'far beyond' the established mystical canon. More accurately, fellow psychic investigators introduced him to spiritualist notions which he shaped to fit his own personality. Moving to New York City in 1929, he began to meet weekly with Mary Derieux's spiritualist group, encountered mediums who 'confirmed' his visit to the cosmic portico, and contacted an unspecified deceased author who helped him to complete a fourth novel, *Golden Rubbish*. Publication of 'My Seven Minutes in Eternity' elicited more than 20,000

publication of his 1950 book *Star Guests*, which documented the messages he had channeled from outer space. Apparently, Pelley had been informed by alien sources that sentient life on Earth had originated from various planets near Sirius, with due emphasis placed on the “fact” that only members of the “white race” could trace their lineage to the planet Sirius. Pelley was certainly no fan of Madame Blavatsky’s theosophical movement, but on the other hand there is no doubting the impetus her ideas gave to his own mystic philosophies. Even Pelley reluctantly acknowledged this debt when he observed that “the Theosophists are the nearest to the true facts about the forces operating behind life of any of the so-called theological creeds or sects.”¹⁹

letters describing comparable experiences. In January 1930, the *Journal of the American Society for Psychological Research* published a favourable article on Pelley’s conversion experience. Thus, prodded by associates and anonymous admirers, he surmised that he had been reincarnated to assist a ‘vast new departure.’” (p.51) “In short, metaphysics grew on Pelley partly because it offered at a critical moment a career as well as a creed. Shortly after moving to New York, he made his clairaudient receptions available as ‘quasireligious’ programs. Within a year, he asserted, these pamphlets soothed 90,000 ‘spiritually distressed’ recipients. In May 1930, he began to publish the *New Liberator*, a journal of ‘higher verities’ printed in an art nouveau format reminiscent of Elbert Hubbard’s *Philistine*. Under this title, or as *Liberation* or *New Liberator Weekly*, the periodical appeared intermittently for three years.” (p.52)

“Whether or not Pelley sought to create a cult, he threw himself into organizational work with his customary chaotic energy. Once again success eluded him, partly because he still could not focus his efforts, and partly because his followers were similarly afflicted. When embezzlement by an associate doomed *Liberation*, Pelley incorporated Galahad Press in February 1931, and sold sufficient stock to resume publication under the title *New Liberator*. The League for the Liberation encompassed groups organized to discuss his clairaudient scripts. In 1932, favored with a large donation, he incorporated the Foundation for Christian Economics in Asheville, North Carolina, and opened Galahad College, a short-lived metaphysical school under the deanship of James Edgerton, president of the New Thought Alliance.” (p.56) “In 1953, Pelley made his ‘climactic’ otherworldly contact-with Mary Baker Eddy. His belief that she had chosen him to disseminate theological advances beyond Christian Science brought solace to Pelley’s old age; Christian mysticism had been, after all, his ‘life’s true brevet.’” (p.229)

¹⁹ Scott Beekman, *William Dudley Pelley: A Life in Right-Wing Extremism and the Occult* (Syracuse University Press, 2005), p.75. Beekman writes that: “Among Pelley’s favourite metaphysical authorities were medium Bertie Lily Candler (with

Pelley's *Star Guests* in turn gave inspiration to the openly anti-Semitic activist George Hunt Williamson (1926-1986). Williamson had first rose to UFOlogical fame as he been one of a handful of witnesses to have accompanied the more famous George Adamski in his desert encounter with a Nordic-looking man from outer space. This other-worldly "encounter" had taken place in November 1952 and was documented in the international bestseller *Flying Saucers Have Landed* (1953) - a book which is widely acknowledged to be one of the most important publications of the UFO movement. In the same year Williamson had been employed by Pelley, and in 1954 was still writing regular UFO-related columns for Pelley's *Valor* magazine. Shortly thereafter, for reasons that remain unknown, Williamson cut himself loose from Pelley's fascist orbit and thereafter charted his own voyage of racist discovery that was filled with his own foaming blend of occult intrigue and derivative anti-Semitism.²⁰

Competition for loyal followers on the right has always been a cutthroat affair, and another theosophically-inclined ultra-conservative who is often said to have poached members from Pelley's Silver Shirts was Guy Ballard - a person who, in the early 1930s, had founded the immensely popular and profitable "I AM Activity" movement and could lay claim to being the first Theosophist to have met space men. Irrespective of his meeting with twelve Tall Masters from Venus, I AM served a useful vehicle for expounding Ballard's explicitly politicized incarnation of Theosophy. Or as one critical commentator put it: "Blending Ascended Master teachings with a high level of patriotic fervor, Ballard's movement expressed a belief in America's 'cosmic destiny,' an idea synthesizing elements of Theosophy and American

whom he had prewar ties), English psychic Geraldine Cummins, and the work of Meade Layne's Borderlands Sciences Research Associates (BSRA). Pelley was particularly enamoured with BSRA medium Mark Probert..." (p.229) In later years the "Borderland Sciences Research Foundation" would be headed by an alternative scientist called Thomas J. Brown who would not only publish work relating to the UFO-related research of Trevor James Constable but would go on to act as a faculty member of the NewEarth University (an institution formed by the spiritual libertarian and QAnon devotee Sacha Stone).

²⁰ Beekman, *William Dudley Pelley*, p.154. In the 1930s Pelley "advised his followers to start by reading Nesta Webster's anti-Semitic diatribe *World Revolution* and Albert Wiggam's eugenics classic *The Fruits of the Family Tree*." (p.80)

nationalism.” When, in 1939, the group’s charismatic leader eventually passed on to the spiritual plane, the I AM movement – which comprised tens of thousands of devotees – entered a period of protracted crises. By the 1950s the group had thus dissolved into several splinter groups – with one successful breakaway, which was led by Mark Prophet, being the Church Universal and Triumphant. Right-wing politics was again a predominating theme in Prophet’s new spiritual orientation, and in his “worldview, the agents of darkness at work in the world were most clearly apparent in their guises as left-wing political groups, elite power brokers in global society, and the forces of world communism.”²¹

²¹ Bradley Whitsel, *The Church Universal and Triumphant: Elizabeth Clare Prophet’s Apocalyptic Movement* (Syracuse University Press, 2003), p.23, p.8. An abiding commitment to positive thinking was an important part of Guy Ballard’s spiritual worldview. “Through prayers and other devotional activities, [I AM’s] race of ‘Lightbearers’ in Maerica was to turn back the tide of negative karma thought to be preventing humankind from attaining its destined state of godly existence.” (p.8)

As Carole Cusack notes in her book chapter “Apocalypse in early UFO and alien-based religions: Christian and Theosophical themes,” in: Erik Tonning, Matthew Feldman and David Addyman (eds.), *Modernism, Christianity and Apocalypse* (Brill, 2014): “Guy Ballard blended the teachings of the Great White Brotherhood with patriotic fervour and belief in the cosmic destiny of America. Critics have argued that his wife Edna was a follower of William Dudley Pelley, the American anti-Semite, spiritualist, and founder of the fascist organisation the Silver Legion (or ‘Silver Shirts’). I AM had allegedly recruited members for the Silver Legion for political ends. Ballard and his wife Edna were politically conservative and a central I AM activity was an occult banishing ritual aimed at Franklin D. Roosevelt. Using such rituals, Ballard claimed to have annihilated nearly half a million people in Philadelphia, over three hundred thousand in New York, and about a million in the remainder of the United States within a period of twenty-four hours. I AM and its successors the Summit Lighthouse (founded by Mark Prophet in 1958) and the Church Universal and Triumphant (founded by Mark’s widow Elizabeth Clare Prophet, née Wulf, in 1974) were anti-New Deal, anti-Communist, pro-White, anti-civil rights; furthermore, survivalism and the acquisition of weapons were major foci. Mark Prophet preached against Communism, social degeneracy and left-wing ideals as forces bringing America into darkness, away from the light of the Ascended Masters.” (pp.347-8)

Another influential individual of the period who became fixated on the occult realm was Seward Collins, who was “one of the leading proponents of American fascism.” He was married to Dorothea Brande, who “worked alongside her husband on his right-wing political journal *The American Review*; regularly contributing articles as she developed her self-help theories.” Of such self-help books she “is now best

Inspired but not silenced by the demise of the Nazi state, other more forthright national socialists chose to imbue their reactionary projects with mysticism. The first off the mark in this regard was the National Renaissance Party which was set-up in 1949 by James Madole (1927-1979), a power-hungry man who promoted a theosophical fascism that ensured that he was well-placed to take advantage of the “occult explosion of the late 1960s”.²² Another one-time leading member of the National Renaissance Party was Eustace Mullins whose best-known book was *The Secrets of The Federal Reserve* (Kasper and Horton, 1952). When Mullins passed away in 2010, Alex Jones’ *InfoWars* conspiracy outlet commiserated his death by noting that he that he been “the greatest political historian of the 20th century”.

Running in parallel, but in sectarian competition for leadership of the far-right, George Lincoln Rockwell (1918-1967) -- the founder of the American Nazi Party (established in 1960) -- similarly served as “a major catalyst in the fusing of Nazi ideology and mysticism”. Indeed, “Rockwell, under the tutelage of Bruno Ludtke, recognized the political value of a spiritual dimension to his propaganda arsenal and was in the process of incorporating his own unique theological twist into the neo-Nazi cosmology when he was murdered in 1967.” Ludtke had been first introduced to Rockwell in 1960 by the French mystic fascist Savitri Devi, with all three uniting for the first time in

remembered for her 1934 book *Becoming a Writer*, a briskly pragmatic guide to literary success”. Joanna Scutts, “Fascist sympathies: on Dorothea Brande,” *The Nation*, August 13, 2013.

²²Jeffrey Kaplan, “The post-war paths of occult national socialism: from Rockwell and Madole to Manson,” *Patterns of Prejudice*, 35(3), 2001, p.50. For a useful biographical examination of the leading Nazis of this period, see Alex Marsh, *John Kasper and Ezra Pound: Saving the Republic* (Bloomsbury, 2015). James Madole’s theosophical influences were always present in his leadership of the fascist National Renaissance Party from its formation in 1949. “This influence was no more clear than in a series that ran in the paper beginning in 1973 and that Madole titled “The New Atlantis”: A Blueprint for an Aryan Garden of Eden.” “At the conclusion of this first article in the ‘New Atlantis’ series, Madole described the NRP’s goal as the creation of an earthly paradise that will emerge in America from the party’s racial nationalist philosophy: ‘A rebellion of Aryan Man upon the North American continent will save the New Race from destruction and bring about the glorious fulfilment of Madame Blavatsky’s prophecy.’” Damon Berry, *Blood and Faith: Christianity in American White Nationalism* (Syracuse University Press, 2017), p.137, p.142.

England in July 1962 at a clandestine event that led to the founding of the World Union of National Socialists (WUNS).²³

Of Theosophy and UFOs

Bearing all this in mind, it is surely significant that George Adamski, before writing his magical “true” story about his own contact with aliens, had maintained a long interest in the occult; having founded the theosophically orientated Royal Order of Tibet in 1934. Moreover, in relation to these otherworldly interests, prior to his extraterrestrial experiences he had been the author of several texts with titles like *Wisdom Master of the Far East* which was published in 1936, and other works such as *Telepathy: The Cosmic or Universal Language* and *The Science of Life Study Course*.²⁴ Predating his alien encounter by some years, in 1949 Adamski had also published a science fiction novel titled, *Pioneers of Space: A Trip to the Moon, Mars and Venus*, a book “that contained many of the elements he would discuss four years later in *Flying Saucers Have Landed*.” Unsurprisingly, the “fundamental thesis” of Adamski’s subsequent book *Flying Saucers Have Landed* (1953) is “little more than a modified version of popular theosophical teachings that stress spiritual evolution and the role of masters/aliens in that process.”²⁵

²³ Frederick Simonelli, “Thriving in a cultic milieu: the World Union of National Socialists, 1962-1992,” in: Jeffrey Kaplan and Heléne Lööv (eds.), *The Cultic Milieu: Oppositional Subcultures in an Age of Globalization* (AltaMira Press, 2002), p.156, p.161. For background on Bruno Ludtke, the person who went on to lead the German section of WUNS, see Simonelli, “The World Union of National Socialists and postwar transatlantic Nazi revival,” in: Jeffrey Kaplan and Tore Bjørgo (eds.), *Nation and Race: The Developing Euro-American Racist Subculture* (Northeastern University Press, 1998); also see Simonelli, *American Fuehrer: George Lincoln Rockwell and the American Nazi Party* (University of Illinois Press 1999).

²⁴ Gregory Reece, *UFO Religion: Inside Flying Saucer Cults and Culture* (I.B.Tauris, 2007), p.110; for a useful discussion of the white supremacist views that guided the otherworldly journey of the contactees throughout the 1950s, see Christopher Roth, “Ufology as anthropology: race, extraterrestrials, and the occult,” in Debbara Battaglia (ed.), *E.T. Culture: Anthropology in Outerspaces* (Duke University Press, 2006).

²⁵ Christopher Partridge, “Channeling extraterrestrials: theosophical discourse in the space age,” in: Cathy Gutierrez (ed.), *Handbook of Spiritualism and Channeling* (Brill, 2015), p.407; Clarke and Roberts, *Flying Saucers*, p.90.

But Adamski was not the only conservative occultist to palm off science fiction as reality when he published *Flying Saucers Have Landed*, as it is relevant that his coauthor on this far-reaching book was the British Theosophist, Lord Desmond Leslie (whose father was a first cousin of Sir Winston Churchill).²⁶ Another well-connected person who quickly saw the potential for profits to be made from Adamski and Lord Leslie's book was their British editor, Waveney Girvan, who had been a pro-Nazi political activist both before and after the War. In fact, following his early success with UFO's, Girvan cofounded Britain's most famous UFO journal, *Flying Saucer Review*, which counted a good few right-wing anthroposophist's amongst its leading writers. Girvan's prior publishing record is significant here as he had formerly worked at Carroll and Nicholson, a publisher which, in 1948, took the controversial decision to print two books authored by Anthony Ludovici, a Nazi fellow-traveler who soon became one of Britain's best-known theorists of fascism. Two years after helping popularize Ludovici's bile, Girvan then took the liberty of commissioning the influential historian-cum-mystic Gerald Heard

²⁶ In Robert Horstemeier's otherwise useful article, "Flying saucers are real! The US Navy, unidentified flying objects, and the national security state" (*Socialism and Democracy*, 20,3, 2006), the author makes the mistake of conflating the fact that the FBI believed that George Adamski may have had Communist sympathies to mean this suspicion was true, when in reality Adamski actually held conservative political beliefs. Nevertheless, Horstemeier acknowledges that the "typical New Age metaphysics of the late 1940s appealed to the extreme right". And he illustrates this point by adding that the aliens who contacted Orfeo Angelucci (another prominent contactee) were anti-Communist which explained why fellow anti-Communist Carl Jung, "paid close attention to him in his study, *Flying Saucers: A Myth of the Modern Age*." (p.204)

In Adamski's final book *Flying Saucers Farewell* (Abelard-Schuman, 1961) the author's paranoid anti-Semitism comes to a fore when he discusses the sinister machinations of the so-called "Silent Group" who are apparently intent on besmirching his good name. Adamski makes what he says is an "allegorical" comparison when he asks "what happened to the money-changers Christ drove out of the temple? It seems as though they have gathered over the centuries in Zurich." Thus, he continues: "Zurich, financial centre of the world, is the international headquarters for the "Silence Group"! The invisible reins of financial influence extend from Zurich to puppet organizations in every nation!" "Geneva is a gigantic chessboard where nations of the world are played one against the other, according to the dictates of what the Swiss themselves term "The Colossal Financiers.'" (p.168)

(whose politics were increasingly moving towards the far-right) to write *The Riddle of the Flying Saucers*, which was then republished in America the following year by Harper and Brothers to popular acclaim.²⁷ It was not long after this that Girvan began work as an editor at T. Werner Laurie where he oversaw the production of Desmond Leslie and George Adamski's highly profitable ode to UFOs.²⁸

²⁷ Gerald Heard's UFO book shows little indication of his evolving politics, but in the same year that *The Riddle of the Flying Saucers* was published Heard's growing "conservatism became especially pronounced in a mainstream work" *Morals Since 1900* (Harper and Brothers, 1950), and in later years Heard ended up supporting Barry Goldwater's presidential bid in 1964. Alison Falby, *Between the Pigeonholes: Gerald Heard, 1889-1971* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008), p.125.

²⁸ Steve Holland and Roger Perry, *The Men Behind The Flying Saucer Review* (Bear Alley Books, 2017). Another important cofounder and editor of the *Flying Saucer Review* was the 8th Lord Clancarty, Brinsley le Poer Trench (1911-1995), a man with more money than sense who believed that space people had been visiting earth for millions of years. In 1968 Trench had founded Contact International UFO Research and remained well networked to elite UFOlogists like Timothy Good, who is famous for having previously worked (in 1979) alongside Trench and fellow Christian fundamentalist Paul Inglesby (author of the 1978 book *UFOs and the Christian*) to initiate a landmark discussion in the House of Lords on UFOs.

Counter to other (more) liberal Christian evangelists, like Rev. Billy Graham, who chose to interpret UFOs as angels sent to help mankind, Inglesby's conservative and paranoid politics led him to settle upon a demonic theory of UFOs. These ideas then resurfaced in 1996 when Inglesby authored a document called the UFO Concern Report (which was endorsed by the former chairman of the military committee of NATO, Lord Hill-Norton) and was aimed at warning the ruling class about the dangers posed by UFOs and abductions. It is worth adding that Lord Hill-Norton happily penned the forewords for many of Good's books including his debut bestseller *Above Top Secret: The Worldwide UFO Cover-Up* (1987). It is finally of more than passing interest that Good's book, *Unearthly Disclosure: Conflicting Interests in the Control of Extraterrestrial Intelligence* (2000) was serialized in the Tory tabloid, *The Daily Mail*.

In related UFO matters concerning Britain, in the 1960s a pressure group led by Air Marshal Sir Victor Goddard was formed at Sir George Trevelyan's new age centre at Attingham Park to lobby George – who "was only mildly interested in saucers" – to create a UFO study group at Attingham. "Other new age aficionados who hovered on the fringes of Goddard's would-be Attingham Group included Michael Parker, a key member of Prince Philip's staff, former MoD scientist Frank Houghton-Bentley, and Brinsley le Poer Trench (later Lord Clancarty). Dutch UFO enthusiast Johann Quanjer was also heavily involved. One of Quanjer's establishment friends, Lady Cynthia Sandys, a psychic medium, exemplified the often-ludicrous results of mixing new age beliefs." Although the UFO lobbyists was unsuccessful in forming its

Yet like many of his reactionary comrades-in-arms, Girvan's unrelenting commitment to bigotry never really subsided despite his new obsession with aliens. And by way of an example, the 1959 issue of *Flying Saucer Review* (September-October) carried a conspiratorial article authored by George Hunt Williamson which explained...

... there are certain very powerful interests (interests that really control the world, its people, and what they think and do) in the world that know that extraterrestrial recognition means extraterrestrial allegiance ... They feel that to officially recognise UFOs means the end of their power and control over people, wars to aid the economic situation, [sic] and the loss of industry (vital to their continuance). In short is keeping you from knowing the TRUTH. This is the conspiracy, and it is the plot of International Banking to keep you ignorant, a plot that is not new to our times, but is as old as Earth and has existed in all ages and civilisations.²⁹

proposed study group, there was one individual who met Sir George at Attingham Park in 1965 whose "place in the new age saucer nexus is crucial" and his name was Peter Caddy, the founder of the Findhorn community. Caddy is important because: "Central to Findhorn's origins is a secret that the current leaders of the community would very much like to play down -- flying saucers. One of the core beliefs held by Findhorn's founders was that flying saucers existed, and their occupants were in psychic contact with them. It was also an article of faith that physical contact with the saucers was not only possible, it was certain." Caddy, as it happened, had been in telepathic contact with the "space brothers," an experience that led him to receive "an 'inner promoting' to compile a report on the nature of these messages, called *An Introduction to the Nature and Purpose of Unidentified Flying Objects...*" The report was then distributed to twenty-six people, some of whom included Lord Dowding and Prince Philip. In the latter instance Caddy forwarded Prince Philip the report through his "old friend" Squadron Leader Peter Horsely (who at the time was serving as Prince Philip's equerry), who saw to it that fellow saucer enthusiast Commander Michael Parker (the Prince's naval equerry) passed the report onto Prince Philip. Friends of UFOs clearly existed in high places. However, such beliefs at Findhorn were quietly ditched when Caddy left them in the 1970s: thereafter channeled messages from spacemen were demoted with a greater emphasis on "work with the nature spirits and more direction from God." David Clarke and Andy Roberts, *Flying Saucerers: A Social History of UFOlogy* (Alternative Albion, 2007), p.107, p.108, p.109, p.111, p.112, p.116.

²⁹ Roger Sandell, "From conspiracy to contactees -- Part 2, The UFO connection," *Magonia*, 7, 1981.

This was no slip of the tongue for the UFO community, as Williamson, the anti-Semite, had elaborated on the existence of these so-called nefarious plotters at length in his book *UFOs Confidential!* (Essene Press, 1958). His book had approvingly cited for further proof of this nefarious plot a far-right pamphlet titled “Our Secret Government.” This pamphlet having been published by the Cinema Educational Guild in 1956 under the authorship of Myron Fagan; while unknown to most readers the Educational Guild itself was in reality a Hollywood-based hate organization that had been cofounded by former Silver Shirt fascist Gerald L.K. Smith.³⁰

³⁰ Glen Jeansonne, *Gerald L.K. Smith: Minister of Hate* (Yale University Press, 1988). One of Smith’s influential disciples was Kenneth Goff who became a leading member of the Christian Identity movement and had maintained a lifelong commitment to exposing Soviet brainwashing. Goff’s conversion to the anti-Communist cause arose during his hearing before the Dies Committee (the House Committee on Un-American Activities) whereupon he renounced his three-year long membership of the Communist Party. The following year he then published *Brainwashed Into Slavery* (1940), which proved to be the first of many such conspiratorial rants in the service of the far-right.

The House Committee on Un-American Activities which was chaired by the conservative Texas Democrat Martin Dies, was ostensibly set up to focus on the threat posed by fascists in America, but “these inquiries actually took up a relatively small amount of the committee’s time, with fully three-quarters of its activities being aimed at uncovering communist conspiracies against the United States. To an extent this was justifiable, since to most Americans the threat posed by communism and fascism was equally serious. Indeed, especially after the Nazi-Soviet pact of 1939, the Soviet Union and Germany were widely regarded as indistinguishable totalitarian regimes: a combined and equally contemptible ‘Red fascism.’ But it was also political subterfuge. Reflecting both the resilience, as well as the resourcefulness, of conservatives in Congress, more often than not the real target of the committee’s investigations was President Roosevelt and the New Deal.” Darren Mulloy, *Enemies of the State: The Radical Right in America from FDR to Trump* (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2018), p.19.

Myron Fagan’s paranoid ramblings later took on a musical life of their own when they were recorded for the spoken-word LP “The Illuminati and the Council on Foreign Relations” (1967), a production which followed on the heels of the release of Barry Goldwater’s vinyl conspiracy “The Man and the Issues” (1964). In both instances the aural architect behind these angry propaganda tunes was surf music producer Antony Hilder, who, to this day, is still industriously promoting far right-wing causes through his production of films like *illumiNAZI 911* (2001).

In the 1970s Barry Goldwater served as a board member of the famous UFO group, the National Investigations Committee On Aerial Phenomena (NICAP), a

group that was founded in 1956 by the racist and paranoid writer Major Donald Keyhoe who had published the earlier classic *The Flying Saucers Are Real* (Fawcett, 1950). Keyhoe's position of military authority proved crucial in helping the UFO cause gain mass popularity, and the Major, who had already proved capable of spinning thrilling yarns for pulp magazine audiences with his popular tales revolving around a blind fighter pilot who navigated by ESP. While Keyhoe's own militantly conservative paranoia or fright mongering was showcased in an October 1940 article he published in *Cosmopolitan* magazine that was titled "Inside the Trojan Horse" which served to stoke popular fears about the enemy within, the so-called 'fifth column' of foreign aliens. (See Saul Friedman, *No Haven for the Oppressed: United States Policy Toward Jewish Refugees, 1938-1945* (Wayne State University Press, 1973).) In the post-war period Keyhoe's illusions and commitment to military rivalries got the better of his imagination when he helped craft a pro-UFO narrative that played a critical role in fuelling tensions between the leadership of the US Navy and the newly established US Air Force who were accused of not being able to keep American safe from these new foreign flying aircraft. As Robert Horstemeier recounts in his 2006 article "Flying saucers are real! The US Navy, unidentified flying objects, and the national security state" (*Socialism and Democracy*, 20,3): "The inability of the Air Force to identify the reported anomalous aerial wonders became one of many criticisms leveled at the Air Force by its opponents within the Navy in the wake of acrimonious hearings before the House Armed Services Committee during the fall of 1949, dubbed by the newspapers the Revolt of the Admirals. Several Naval advocates of the provocative idea that flying saucers were real had roles in a Naval struggle against the air atomic policy of the Strategic Air Command." (pp.193-4)

Keyhoe's role in this dogged fight for military prestige and governmental resources was vital as he "ghost-wrote for Admiral Arthur Radford, one of the leaders of the Naval insurrection and soon to be the Chief of the Joint Chiefs of Staff." (p.199) In 1952 Admiral Radford then became one of the most powerful militarists to publicize his belief in the existence of UFOs, and owing to his hard-right political credentials it was fitting that after his retirement from the military (in 1957) Radford would go on to work closely with blacklisting ultras at the American Security Council. (A useful report on the American Security Council which discusses Arthur Radford's involvement was the 1962 pamphlet *The American Ultras: The Extreme Right and the Military Industrial Complex* which was produced by the Socialist Party-Social Democratic Federation.) It is also important to point out that NICAP served to attract those paranoid members of the ruling-class with the most reactionary politics, and other notable leading members of NICAP included the first Director of the CIA, Roscoe Hillenkoetter, who was a long-time friend of NICAP's head, Donald Keyhoe. NICAP was always intimately connected to such anti-democratic characters and in the organization's final years (in 1978) the head of the American Security Council, John Fisher, would join NICAP's board of directors; this change followed the ouster of the one-time NICAP president Jack Acuff who was said to have gone a step too far when he had "sold the organization's outdated mailing list to Samisdat, a fanatical neo-Nazi group in Canada" that was run by Ernst Zundel. Gordon Lore, *Connections: A*

As one might expect, Williamson's voluminous books on occult intrigues provided helpful inspiration to Von Däniken's own pop culture sensation *Chariots of the Gods*. Furthermore, Williamson's apparent contact with a racist alien going by the name Hatonn (from the extragalactic realm, Pleiades) was then popularized in the 1990s by the explosive anti-Semitism contained within the *Phoenix publications*. Williamson also established close personal connections with all manner of occult anti-Semites during the 1950s, two of the most influential of which were George Van Tassel (who was the first of many psychic channelers to communicate with an extra-terrestrial entity called Ashtar) and fellow Hatonn contactee George Green, who later set up his own anti-Semitic publishing company (America West) which famously published John Coleman's deeply paranoid *Conspirators' Hierarchy: The Story of the Committee of 300* (1991).³¹ In a trick common to more recent iterations of hate literature,

Lifetime Journey Through the World of Celebrity (BearManor Media, 2017). For more on NICAP, see Richard H. Hall, "The quest for the truth about UFOs: a personal perspective on the role of NICAP," NICAP, 1994.

³¹ George Hunt Williamson first met Dr. Charles Laughhead in late 1954 and there "followed a long friendship and uncountable sessions of channeling" (see Michel Zirger and Maurizio Martinelli, *The Incredible Life of George Hunt Williamson: Mystical Journey - Itinerary of a Privileged UFO Witness* (Verdechiario Edizioni, 2015).) Just months before Williamson and Dr. Laughhead temporarily relocated to Peru to "attain even greater communion with these exalted souls (that is, the Ascended Masters and the Great White Brotherhood)" Dr. Laughhead had met with Dr. Andrija Puharich (in July 1956) with the latter being shocked at the similarity of the messages channelled by his own medium, [the Indian mystic] Doctor Vinod with those produced by Williamson. Michael Barkun, "The occultist and the spaceman: the metamorphosis of Dorothy Martin," in: Cathy Gutierrez (ed.), *Handbook of Spiritualism and Channeling* (Brill, 2015), p.467.

Dr. Vinod proved to be the first mystic to channel the otherworldly spirits calling themselves "The Nine." Uri Geller later channelled The Nine, although the primary individuals involved with The Nine during the 1970s were Puharich, Phyllis Schlemmer and her partner Israel Carmel, J.J. Hurtak, and soon-to-be corporate coaching guru Sir John Whitmore. By divine intervention, The Nine would later guide the management of Esalen during the 1980s, while Hurtak went on to coauthor *Face on Mars: Evidence of a Lost Martian Civilization* (Sun Books, 1986) with Brian Crowley. Evidence for Hurtak's new alien claims were bolstered by interviews with Zulu shaman Credo Mutwa, who evidently explained to Hurtak that his tribes oral tradition includes an ancient story that pregnant Martians from Mars arriving on our planet to save their threatened gene pool. Since then, Mutwa has played an influential

this latter book carefully avoids referring to Jews as the lynchpin of his so-called conspirators hierarchy, although Coleman was happy to refer directly to the Jewish problem in the mass-produced pamphlets that he wrote for the far right-wing Christian Defense League. Coleman also worked alongside fellow anti-Semite Eustace Mullins and was a contributing editor to his now defunct magazine *World Economic Review*.

Religious Mysteries at Giant Rock

Having briefly touched upon the dirty legacy of George Green, we might now return to Williamson's other good friend, George Van Tassel, who was something of an occult superstar, as until his death in 1978 he had played host to the massively popular annual Giant Rock Spacecraft Conventions. The inaugural UFO convention at Giant Rock was held in early 1953 in the Mojave desert, that is, not long after this former aircraft engineer had formed the pseudoscientific Ministry of Universal Wisdom and begun his telepathic communications with Ashtar. The results of Van Tassel's space séances were duly

role in elite conservation circles in South Africa and has worked closely with the World Wilderness Congress. And it was while working with these deep ecologists in South Africa that Mutwa first met New Age conspiracy theorist David Icke, which eventually resulted in a series of interviews that were released as a three-part DVD of the untold story of Martian visitation.

None of this talk of aliens from Mars is received with scepticism by the leading lights of the psi-community, as just a few years later J.J. Hurtak teamed up with Russell Targ to release *The End of Suffering: Fearless Living in Troubled Times... or, How to Get Out of Hell Free* (Hampton Roads Publishing, 2006). "The combined genius of the two authors," Barbara Hubbard glowed, "gives a most valuable guide through the dark night into the light that is our true birthright." While the foreword to this ode to nonsense was penned by professor of philosophy Ashok Gangadean, who is the cofounding director of the *Journal of Ecumenical Studies'* Global Dialogue Institute. This Institute was set up in 1995 in order to "to spark a revolution within individuals around the world—to see beyond our limited scope of Reality and move into a ((Unified Vision)))." Among the New Age pioneers of the misnomer that is socially responsible capitalism who reside on the board room of the Global Dialogue Institute one might also highlight their evident desire to communicate with vicious neoconservative propagandists like Daniel Pipes who is a recent board member of the Institute. (Note that Pipes who founded the warmongering Islam Watch, and is head of the Middle East Forum, had the dubious distinction of having his work cited throughout Anders Breivik's anti-Islamic terror manifesto.)

documented in his 1952 book *I Rode a Flying Saucer!: The Mystery of the Flying Saucers Revealed*. In this book the channeled messages from space provide friendly guidance on how to avoid impending disasters linked to warfare and environmental destruction. But as the years passed by, Van Tassel's apocalyptic warnings grew ever more religious, such that...

Van Tassel's unique form of biblical interpretation foreshadowed the efforts of authors like Erich von Däniken and Zecharia Sitchin. Van Tassel argued that the Bible is a record of extraterrestrial activity on Earth and that the true history of humanity is hidden within its pages. In the work titled *Into This World and Out Again* (1956), Van Tassel shares his reinterpretation of human history based upon truths revealed in scripture. This text is Van Tassel's revision of biblical narrative and is presented as a conversation between the extraterrestrial Bor and a young student named Abon. Van Tassel writes, "We live fractured lives, divided into countries, many languages and creeds, all subject to misinterpretation. There is a separation of science and religion that should be fixed." The question then becomes, why is this the state of things? Why has humanity fallen from a more pure, or perfect, state of being?³²

In the closing pages of his book, Van Tassel states that the American government is committing treason against the public by withholding the secrets that he is revealing. As Van Tassel concludes: "It should be evident by now, that those who deny that the spacecraft and space people are in our skies, are agents of the Anti-Christ."³³

Another regular attendee at Van Tassel's immensely popular meditation sessions with the ethereal representatives of the "Adamic race" was the local clairvoyant, Franklin Thomas, who founded the Los Angeles based New Age Publishers. This was an outlet that was

³² Paul Brian Thomas, "Revisionism in ET-inspired religions," *Nova Religio: The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions*, 14(2), 2010, p.67.

³³ George Van Tassel, *Into This World and Out Again: A modern proof of the origin of humanity and its retrogression from the original creation of man. Verified by the Holy Bible ... received through thought communication* (1956), p.88, p.94. For a deeper look into George Van Tassel's racist worldview, see Donna Kossy, *Strange Creations: Aberrant Ideas of Human Origins from Ancient Astronauts to Aquatic Apes* (Feral House, 2001).

responsible for the publication of Van Tassel's initial book *I Rode a Flying Saucer!* (1952) and many others too, like for instance George Hunt Williamson's *The Saucers Speak* (1954), and Trevor James Constable's *They Live in the Sky! – Invisible Incredible UFO Around Us* (1958). The latter writer also maintained a parallel writing career as an aviation historian of the fighter pilots of World War II and had achieved his greatest success with his bestselling biography, *The Blond Knight of Germany*, while in 1975 he published *The Cosmic Pulse of Life: The Revolutionary Biological Power Behind UFOs*, a book which paid tribute to the influence of Rudolf Steiner's mysticism upon the authors life's work – ideas which had first been introduced to Constable by his early occult mentor, Franklin Thomas.³⁴ Steiner's

³⁴ Constable, *The Cosmic Pulse of Life*, p.xii. Trevor James Constable's mystical attack upon science was first published in 1975 by Merlin Press, but a revised and updated version of *The Cosmic Pulse of Life* was released in 2008 with the authors cooperation by The Book Tree. This San Diego based shop describes itself as “a bookseller that provides controversial and educational products to help awaken the public to new ideas and information” and is run by Paul Tice, who himself credits his own spiritual awakening to the right-wing esoteric writer Jordan Maxwell (see Tice's book *Shadow of Darkness, Dawning of Light: The Awakening of Human Consciousness in the 21st Century and Beyond*).

To awaken their readers The Book Tree publish all manner of theosophical and anthroposophical texts, alongside anti-Semitic nonsense like the *Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*. More recently The Book Tree worked with Constable to release a book summarizing his lifelong obsession with orgone energy and “etheric rain engineering,” i.e., weather modification (his 2015 book is titled *Hidden History, Rain Engineering and UFO Reality*). Such conspiracies surrounding weather modification are a staple on the far-right, with another Steiner disciple who herself drew upon the earlier work of Constable is Elana Freeland, who is the author of *Chemtrails, HAARP, and the Full Spectrum Dominance of Planet Earth* (Feral House, 2014). For a useful exploration of the true history of weather modification, see Clark Spence, *The Rainmakers: American "Phiviculture" in World War II* (University of Nebraska Press, 1980); James Rodger Fleming, *Fixing the Sky: The Checkered History of Weather and Climate Control* (Columbia University Press, 2012); and Robert Greene's documentary *Owning the Weather* (2009).

Anti-semitism has never been limited to neo-Nazi publishers, and state-sponsored Stalinist propaganda ostensibly targeting Zionism did much to scapegoat the Jewish community during the twentieth century. Books published under the authority of the official Soviet press referred to the *Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion* as legitimate source material. In addition, “the newspaper of the Communist Youth League, lifted anti-Semitic passages from a neo-Nazi pamphlet entitled *America – A*

otherworldly intrigues therefore thoroughly impregnate the pages of *The Cosmic Pulse of Life*, and Constable was more than happy to recommend other Anthroposophical classics to his readers, like Trevor Ravenscroft's so-called "historical masterpiece" *The Spear of Destiny: The Occult Power Behind the Spear Which Pierced the Side of Christ* (1972).³⁵

Here it is important to point out that the publishing house that commissioned and published *The Spear of Destiny* – a text which has been accurately described as "probably the single most influential 'Nazi Mysteries' book in the English speaking world" – was the British-based Neville Spearman Publishers.³⁶ Formed in 1955 Neville Spearman had taken an immediate interest in all matters occult and in the coming decades the publisher proved to be prolific contributors to a growing esoteric tradition. Early publications included their release of George Hunt Williamson's two books *Secret Places of the Lion* (1958), and his *Road in the Sky* (1959).³⁷ While around the same time Neville Spearman published Major Rudolf Luser's so-called

Zionist Colony (published in Cairo), which was co-authored by Goebbel's protégé Johann von Leers." Martin Lee, *The Beast Reawakens: The Chilling Story of the Rise of the Neo-Nazi Movement* (Warner Books, 1997), p.168.

³⁵ Constable, *The Cosmic Pulse of Life*, p.381.

³⁶ Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, *Black Sun: Aryan Cults, Esoteric Nazism and the Politics of Identity* (New York University Press, 2001), p.118. *The Spear of Destiny* was authored by the anthroposophist writer Trevor Ravenscroft – a former journalist for the Beaverbrook Press – whose content was plagiarized fiction masquerading as nonfiction. Goodrick-Clarke contextualizes the publication of Ravenscroft's book in a chapter of the *Black Sun* that is titled "The Nazi Mysteries."

The naïve spiritual orientation of Anthroposophical practitioners means they tend to have an extremely limited appreciation of their own religion's positive engagement with Nazi politics and they prefer to ignore reality by emphasizing that Steiner's supporters were persecuted by the Nazi regime. Contrary to this view, in 1935 Ernst Bloch wrote that "Obviously only the international affiliation of the anthroposophical movement prevents it from unanimously going over to Hitler." Bloch, *Heritage of Our Times* (Polity Press, 1991 [1935]), p.170. I summarize some of these related points in my review essay "Fascism and Anthroposophy (Part II of II)" (*Swans Commentary*, October 22, 2012).

³⁷ In 1963 Neville Spearman would reissue George Hunt Williamson's *The Saucers Speak*. To date very little has been written about Neville Spearman or their wealthy founder, see Ian Miller, "Obituary: Neville Armstrong," *The Guardian*, September 26, 2008.,

insider account of occult weaponry and UFOs which was titled *German Secret Weapons of the Second World War* (1960).³⁸ On the same Nazi-orientated theme, Neville Spearman was responsible for the 1972 English translation of Robert Charroux's *The Mysterious Unknown*, an individual whose ramblings were duplicated by Von Däniken and whose content provided much of the mystical Aryan source material that has been recycled into Miguel Serrano's toxic Nazi narratives.

The Ahnenerbe Grows Green Shoots

In addition to Ravenscroft's failed (but nonetheless popular) attempts at "non-fiction," neo-Nazi political activists threw their own filth into the fictional realm. Wilhelm Landig's trilogy of Thule novels – released between 1971 and 1991 – with their exotic blend of SS heroes and German UFO bases, therefore did much to contribute towards "the revival of occult-nationalist themes among a younger general of neo-Nazis in the 1990s."³⁹ Landig's first novel incorporated the twisted thoughts of both Julius Evola and those of Nazi archaeologist who had famously propounded theories about an ancient Ice Age civilization of Aryans, Dr. Herman Wirth. Wirth had been a founding member of Ahnenerbe, Heinrich Himmler's very own Nazi think-tank, and he remained committed to the Nazi project until his death in 1981. After his passing, the work that Wirth had carried out for his Nazi masters at the Ahnenerbe gained a new lease of life when it was reincarnated in Alexander Dugin's 1993 book *Giperboreiskaia teoriia: Opytariosofskogo issledovaniia* [Hyperboreal Theory: An experiment in Ariosophic Investigation].

Bernard Mees in his book *The Science of the Swastika* (Central European University Press, 2008) adds further details which help us map Wirth's problematic Nazi legacy, writing:

³⁸ For a scientific overview of actual secret weapons use by the Nazis (not imaginary ones), see Brian Ford, *Secret Weapons: Technology, Science and the Race to Win World War II* (Osprey Publishing, 2011).

³⁹ Goodrick-Clarke, *Black Sun*, p.137. To understand some of the political reasons why esoteric Nazism has proved so durable, see Donald McKale, *Hitler: The Survival Myth* (1981) and Ken Anderson, *Hitler and the Occult* (1995). For a useful discussion of the evolution of "esoteric Nazism" see Strube, "Nazism and the occult."

Some other figures associated with Wirth and the *völkisch* antiquarian project lived long enough to get involved in rightist environmentalist circles. A leading example is Werner Haverbeck, the former leader of the Reich League for National Tradition and Homeland, who had received a doctorate in *Sinnbildforschung* in 1936. After disappearing for a time into the priesthood of a radical protestant group and then returning to academic life at the newly established Bielefeld University of Applied Sciences, Haverbeck renewed his association with the *völkisch* project, joining up again with Wirth in the 1960s, and was still active as late as the early 1990s in radical environmental circles. A holocaust denier, Haverbeck has even fulfilled one prewar theologian's suspicion that Wirth's *Emergence* was a sort of paleo-anthroposophy by becoming a leading figure in the revival of the racist anthroposophy of the prewar years. His former followers still advertise conferences and publish monographs and journals today where anthroposophy, neo-paganism and Neo-Nazism meet in a whirl of anti-Semitism, anti-capitalism, anti-Americanism and outright *völkisch* fantasy.⁴⁰

Between 1974 and 1982 Haverbeck had served as the president of the far-right anthroposophically-inspired World Union for Protection of Life, a group which had right-wing fellow traveler Linus Pauling serving as the head of their scientific committee. Moreover, shortly before his departure from the Green Party in the early 80s, Haverbeck had been counted amongst the fifteen signatories to the notorious Heidelberg Manifesto which "is considered to be the most important writing of the German New Right on the theme of ecology."⁴¹

⁴⁰ Mees, *The Science of the Swastika*, p.262.

⁴¹ Janet Biehl, "Ecology' and the modernization of fascism in the German ultra-right," in: Janet Biehl and Peter Staudenmaier (eds.), *Ecofascism: Lessons from the German Experience* (AK Press 1995); Damir Skenderovic, *The Radical Right in Switzerland: Continuity and Change, 1945-2000* (Berghahn, 2009), p.210.

Another leading member of the Ahnenerbe had been Dr. Ernst Schaefer who went on to become a world famous naturalist who was later commissioned by the Belgium King Leopold III to make the spiritual film *The Masters of the Congo Jungle* (*Les Seigneurs de la Foret*, 1958) - a documentary that was directed by another, arguably more famous conservationist, Heinz Sielmann.

A further leading Nazi who had worked closely with members of the Ahnenerbe was the Austrian museum director Eduard Tratz, who after the war spent two years in

Returning to Wilhelm Landig, the Nazi story-teller, what is clear is that he took his political responsibilities extremely seriously, and at the time of publishing his aforementioned Aryan novels (in the 1970s) he had become the Austrian representative of the ultra-rightwing World Anti-Communist League.⁴² Notably the British affiliate of this League was the notorious Western Goals Foundation – a group that had counted Major Sir Patrick Wall as their parliamentary consultant – a well-placed individual who, in the 1990s, went on to serve as the president of the British UFO Research Association. With all these bizarre connections it is intriguing to note that in the mid-1990s the former leading British Nazi, Tim Hepple, who had become a police informer, then changed his name to Tim Matthews whereupon he strived to give Nazi UFOs a fresh lease of life with the publication of his book *UFO Revelation: The Secret Technology Exposed* (1999).⁴³

internment before being allowed to resume his duties as the head of the Haus der Natur (Salzburg's Natural History Museum). "As late as the 1990s, the Haus der Natur exhibited racial casts of the supposed Nordic and Jewish races." Pringle, *The Master Plan*, p.311.

⁴² Pierre Abramovici, "The World Anti-Communist League: origins, structures and activities," in: Luc van Dongen, Stéphanie Roulin and Giles Scott-Smith (eds.), *Transnational Anti-Communism and the Cold War: Agents, Activities, and Networks* (Palgrave, 2014).

⁴³ For an example of how UFO mythology is presently being represented within the neo-Nazi movement, see Chapter 8 ("Unidentified flying Aryans") of Michael Moynihan and Didrik Söderlind's book *Lords of Chaos: The Bloody Rise of the Satanic Metal Underground* (Feral House, 1998). In 2002 Moynihan edited the first English language translation of Julius Evola's 1953 book *Men Among the Ruins* which was published by Inner Traditions. Moynihan is also a keen promoter of the work of the Eton-educated radical Traditionalist John Michell, a once leading figure in the British New Age movement who first popularized a mystical Jungian interpretation of UFO phenomena in the 1960s, while in the 1970s he acted as one of the founders of the world-famous Glastonbury festival. Michell's primary contribution to UFOlogy was to map the ideas of French mystic Aime Michel onto the magical notion of ley-lines (propounded by Alfred Watkins) in order to ostensibly describe how UFOs navigated across the British landscape. Aime had published his own book about UFOs in 1958 developing his own orthotemies concept in collaboration with Jacques Bergier. Working together they helped to launch a Fortean renaissance in France which revelled in the fantastic realism that was soon laid out in the pages of *Planete*, that drew inspiration from American writer Charles Fort (whose books had first popularized the idea of space alien interventions on Earth) and Andre Breton's surrealism. *Planete* was also used to introduce readers to the reactionary traditionalist

Fascist Internationalism

One other important neo-Nazi writer who first rose to the fore during the 1970s was Ernst Zundel, who set up *Samisdat Publishers*, a highly profitable publishing group that succeeded in flooding the globe with Nazi literature. Zundel arrived at some infamy in the 1980s because of his forceful commitment to holocaust denial which culminated in several highly publicized entanglements with the legal system. But as far as the issue of UFOs is concerned, what is most significant was *Samisdat's* decision to publish (in 1974) the first exposition on the existence of Hitler's secret UFO bases in Antarctica as *UFOs: Unbekanntes Flugobjekt? Letzte Geheimwaffe Dritten Reiches* (published in English the following year as *UFO's – Nazi Secret Weapon? Last secret weapon of the Third Reich*). This book had been written by Willibald Mattern, a German émigré living in Santiago de Chile, and his publication was followed by Zundel's own two well-received contributions, *Secret Nazi Polar Expeditions* (1978) and *Hitler at the South Pole?* (1979).⁴⁴

At the time Zundel was part of a growing neo-Nazi International which, as early as 1961, had first brought him into personal correspondence with Savitri Devi. This led on to his holding a series of personal meetings with Devi in France which provided the inspiration for Zundel's ensuing holocaust denialism.⁴⁵ In honor of his

beliefs of René Guénon.

To understand how Michell's aristocratic mysticism is now being adopted by the neo-fascists like Michael Moynihan, see Amy Hale's useful essay "John Michell, radical traditionalism, and the emerging politics of the pagan New Right," *The Pomegranate*, 13 (1), 2011. We might note that in the acknowledgements to his 1969 book, *The View Over Atlantis*, Michell thanks just a handful of people, one of which was the Scottish esotericist R. Ogilvie Crombie, a man provided the major inspiration for the founding of the Findhorn Foundation. Michell later dedicated his next attack on modernity, *The Old Stones of Land's End* (Gamstone Press, 1974) to none other than the Prince Charles, who in later years established the anti-modernist Temenos Academy and returned the favor by including Michell as a founding fellow.

⁴⁴ Partly written in response to the revival of interest in occult fascism, James Webb wrote *The Occult Establishment* (Open Court, 1976).

⁴⁵ Goodrick-Clarke, *Hitler's Priestess*, p.206. Savitri Devi's writings were popularized in America in the late 1960s through William Pierce's *Nationalist Society World*. (p.214) William Pierce (1933-2002) was perhaps America's most influential white supremacist during his lifetime. Yet as Damon Berry observes in his

spiritual mentor, in 1979 Zundel republished Devi's *The Lightning and the Sun*.

Not wanting to miss the wood for the trees, the fascist anti-Enlightenment diatribes of Julius Evola did much to bring esoteric spirituality into the gangrenous heart of far-right politics, exerting a particularly critical influence over the evolution of Miguel Serrano's own Nazi mysticism. Evola's authority however extended broadly across the swelling neo-Nazis movement, an influence that is most evident in the writings of French New Right leader Alain de Benoist. In fact, this influence was so profound that GRECE's publishing house was responsible for printing the first French translations of Evola's writings. It is also important to observe that the influential Italian anthroposophist, Massimo Scaligero (1906-1980), fully embraced Evola's commitment to fascism. And astonishing as it may seem, to this day the Steiner movement remains uncritical in its adoption of Scaligero's thought and is still busy making his work available to English speakers thanks to the ongoing publishing efforts of Lindisfarne Books.⁴⁶

Similarly in Germany the first translation of Evola's fascist classic *Menschen inmitten von Ruinen* [*Men Among the Ruins*] was set upon the world in 1991 by the notorious far-right publisher Hohenrain-Verlag - a subsidiary of Grabert-Verlag which was founded

authoritative history *Blood and Faith: Christianity in American White Nationalism* (Syracuse University Press, 2017): "Though he is known as the founder and leader of National Alliance as a political organization, what is less appreciated is that at the heart of this project was the creation of a new religion that Pierce called 'Cosmotheism.'" Berry continues: "Through Cosmotheism, Pierce articulated a specific program of racial survival and a religious alternative to Christianity. He presented Cosmotheism as a transcendent ideology that would support a sustained program for white racial survival." (p.45)

⁴⁶ For background on Julius Evola, see Andrea Mammone, *Transnational Neofascism in France and Italy* (Cambridge University Press, 2015); Elisabetta Cassina Wolff, "Apolitia and tradition in Julius Evola as reaction to nihilism," *European Review*, 22, 2014; and Elisabetta Cassina Wolff, "Evola's interpretation of fascism and moral responsibility," *Patterns of Prejudice*, 50, 2016. Notable anthroposophists to follow in Massimo Scaligero's fascist footsteps include Ettore Martinoli (1895-1958), Aniceto del Massa (1898-1975), Pio Filippini-Ronconi (1920-2010), and Enzo Erra (1926-2011).

in 1953 by the Nazi Herbert Grabert.⁴⁷ Grabert-Verlag is most famous for its prodigious commitment to hate speech; for example in 1961 they published David Hoggan's *The Forced War*, which played a seminal role in the evolution of Holocaust denialism in both the United States and Germany. Grabert-Verlag is also committed to the promotion of Jürgen Spanuth's *The Atlanteans* (first published in 1976), which comprises the type of racist alternative archaeology that has been so assiduously popularized by Erich Von Däniken and Jan Van Helsing.⁴⁸ Spanuth as a former Nazi researcher had his first book published on this mythology in 1953 as *Das enträtselte Atlantis* which was then published in English as *Atlantis - The Mystery Unravelled* (Arco, 1956).⁴⁹

The Right's Atlantis

Nazi obsessions with Atlantis are not of course new, and the former leader of the National Socialist Party of America (a group that formed as a split from the American Nazi Party after Rockwell's death) has now reinvented himself – after a brief stint in prison after being found guilty of pedophilia – as a leading expert on ancient civilizations and

⁴⁷ For an important discussion of the ongoing efforts of Hans Thomas Hakl to “venerate [Evola] a notorious antisemite and irreconcilable enemy of the Western democratic system” see Horst Junginger, “From Buddha to Adolf Hitler: Walther Wuest and the Aryan Tradition,” in Horst Junginger (ed.), *The Study of Religion Under the Impact of Fascism* (Brill, 2008) pp.167-70.

⁴⁸ André Kramer, “Jan van Helsing und die Neue Rechte in der Grenzwissenschaft,” *Mysteria3000: Alternative Archäologie und PaläoSETI-Forschung*.

⁴⁹ Another influential Nazi archaeologist who worked alongside Jürgen Spanuth was Peter Paulsen who was a member of the Himmler's esoteric brains trust the SS-Ahnenerbe (ancestral heritage); for details read Heather Pringle's *The Master Plan: Himmler's Scholars and the Holocaust* (Forth Estate, 2006). For an intriguing discussion of the links that developed between Julius Evola and leading members of the SS-Ahnenerbe in the late 1930s, see Frank Usbeck, *Fellow Tribesmen: The Image of Native Americans, National Identity, and Nazi Ideology in Germany* (Berghahn, 2015). Another former Nazi researcher is Otto Muck, author of *The Secret of Atlantis* (first published as *Über Alles Atlantis*). The enduring influence of Nazi scientists on fellow pseudoscientists is discussed in Graham Holton's undated essay “Archaeological racism: Hans Hörbiger, Arthur Posnansky, Edmund Kiss and the Ahnenerbe expedition to Tiwanaku, Bolivia.”

lost worlds. Frank Joseph's first of many books on this subject, *The Destruction of Atlantis*, was self-published in 1987. Then in 1995 he released *Atlantis in Wisconsin* which was published via a fairly new imprint that had been set up by Phyllis Galde, the longstanding editor of *Fate* magazine. Worryingly with no disclosure of his Nazi past in any of the outlets that publish his work, Joseph is still committed to popularizing fascist history and even published an ostensibly objective book titled *Mussolini's War* (2009).

Joseph's influence in the New Age community has been considerable and he served as the editor-in-chief of the Mormon-run *Ancient American* magazine from its inception in 1993 until 2007, and he is now a regular contributor to *Atlantis Rising*. Furthermore, his commitment to far-right politics never waned as his interest in alternative archaeology grew, and in 2011 some might say that he outed himself when he published the lead article for Willis Carto's *Barnes Review: A Journal of Nationalist Thought and History*.⁵⁰

In 2004, leading US-based occult publisher, Inner Traditions, re-released Joseph's *The Destruction of Atlantis*.⁵¹ But while no mention was made about Joseph's murky past, Inner Traditions themselves have no qualms about publishing far-right authors to help expand the consciousness of their esoterically minded customers. Thus in 2002 they re-published Julius Evola's *Men Among the Ruins* having already translated and published much of his odious back-catalogue. Inner Traditions can boast of being the American publisher of Von Däniken's *tour de force* of baloney, *Astronaut Gods of the Maya* (2017), alternative medicine crap like *Freedom from Constipation* (2016), and Ervin Laszlo's *The Intelligence of the Cosmos* (2017). Inner Traditions have also re-released the anti-Semitic nonsense contained within George Hunt Williamson's 1958

⁵⁰ *Barnes Review* is run by far-right anti-Semite Willis Carto. It is notable that in the same July/August 2011 issue of the journal that features Joseph's article we can read an article by the former Marxist writer James Petras, who is now best-known for his unhealthy obsession with the question of Jewish power. For further discussion of Joseph's past see the critical pamphlet produced by E.P. Grondine (an ardent disciple of alternative archaeology) *He Walked Among Us* (2014); and R. D. Flavin, "The Many Faces of Frank Collin", *The Greenwich Village Gazette*, Feb. 21, 1997.

⁵¹ Frank Joseph's latest book is *Ancient High Tech: The Astonishing Scientific Achievements of Early Civilizations* (Inner Traditions, 2020).

classic *Secret Places of the Lion*. And in the same vein they published Len Kasten's *Alien World Order: The Reptilian Plan to Divide and Conquer the Human Race* (2017), a racist (not racy) superconspiracy that outlines how America is already being secretly run by reptilian Nazis. Kasten, a former Theosophist, and former member (now friend) of the Mutual UFO Network remains a longstanding writer for popular New Age magazines like *Atlantis Rising* and *New Dawn*.

Regnery's Reactionary Record

Here provides a perfect opportunity to introduce another conservative publishing firm whose commitment to spreading the occult gospel far and wide pre-dates outfits like Inner Traditions (whose origins only date to Von Däniken's glory days in the 1970s). The American company I am referring to is Regnery Publishing, and while it usually better known for its commitment to having released the classics of the postwar conservative movement; what is less established is the generous support that the Regnery's publishing empire has extended to extreme right-wing writers and UFOlogists more generally.

Thus, during its early years in the 1940, Regnery's founder, Henry Regnery, had gleefully funded the activism of his fascist friend Lawrence Dennis;⁵² which is very much in keeping with Regnery's later publication of *Sea Devils* (1954) -- the wartime memoir of the Italian fascist Junio Valerio Borghese. Regnery also released two of Robert W. Welch's virulently anti-communist and conspiratorial books *May God Forgive Us* (1952) and *The Life of John Birch* (1954);⁵³ and in

⁵² Gerald Home, *The Color of Fascism: Lawrence Dennis, Racial Passing, and the Rise of Right-Wing Extremism in the United States* (New York University Press, 2006), p.142.

⁵³ Robert W. Welch founded the John Birch Society in late 1958 and "adapted ideas from Oswald Spengler's *Decline of the West* to tell his listeners that 'civilizations die of the cause of collectivism by destroying the usefulness of the individual to society.'" Jonathan Schoenwald, *A Time for Choosing: The Rise of Modern American Conservatism* (Oxford University Press, 2001), p.63 -- for a detailed history of the John Birch Society see Chapter 3 of Schoenwald's book.

In 1958 three influential conservative books that were published by Regnery were J. Edgar Hoover's *Masters of Deceit*, Rosalie Gordon's *Nine Men against America: The Supreme Court and its Attack on American Liberties* and W. Cleon Skousen's *The Naked Communist*.

1972 Regnery published the 6th edition of Nesta Webster's famous anti-Semitic conspiracy theory, *World Revolution: The Plot Against Civilization*. On the UFO front, Regnery took their first openly mystical turn in 1966 with the printing of Jacques Vallee's *Challenge to Science: The UFO Enigma* (which was then published the following year in Britain by Neville Spearman). This release was shortly followed by Regnery's publication of the work of Vallee's mentor, the longstanding occultist J. Allen Hynek, who wrote *The UFO Experience: A Scientific Inquiry* (1972). Hynek's own esoteric obsessions were commented upon by Vallee, who recalled that his colleagues "favourite bedtime book" was Rudolf Steiner's *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds*.⁵⁴

In a similar vein Regnery published Vallee's *Passport to Magonia: From Folklore to Flying Saucers* (1969); and Allen Hynek and Vallee's *The Edge of Reality: A Progress Report on Unidentified Flying Objects* (Regnery, 1975). Both authors providing the key inspiration for Steven Spielberg's 1977 film *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*. Around the same time Regnery chose to print two books by the prolific paranormal investigator Hans Holzer, these being *Beyond Medicine: The Facts about Unorthodox and Psychic Healing* (1973) and *The Directory of the Occult* (1974). And to this day conservative publishers like Regnery continue to attack science as a discipline with the release of books like Austin Ruse's *Fake Science: Exposing the Left's Skewed Statistics, Fuzzy Facts, and Dodgy Data* (2017) and Alex Berenson's *Pandemia: How Coronavirus Hysteria Took Over Our Government, Rights, and Lives* (2021).

In early 2014 the Regnery imprint was acquired by far-right Christian activist Stuart Epperson and his media group, Salem Communications Corporation... so not much of a change really.

⁵⁴ John Franch, "The secret life of J. Allen Hynek," *Skeptical Inquirer*, 37(1), January/February 2013. A friendly biography of Hynek has just been published by fellow mystic Mark O'Connell as *The Close Encounters Man: How One Man Made the World Believe in UFOs* (HarperCollins, 2017). Yet for those who are more interested in exposing UFOlogical lies, Hynek's 1972 book was dealt a devastating critique by Philip Klass's *UFO's Explained* (Vintage, 1974).

Jacques Vallee's comments on Allen's love of Steiner were made in the third volume of his diaries *Forbidden Science: On the Trail of the Hidden Truths* (2012), p.271.

Moreover, the Regnery's family's personal commitment to white supremacy lives on as Henry's son and heir to his publishing empire, William Regnery II, prides himself as being a dedicated proponent of white nationalism.

In 2001 William Regnery first took a serious step forward with organizing his supporters when he formed a right-wing working group called the Charles Martel Society (named after a French right-wing terrorist organization). This Society publishes its hate speech within *The Occidental Quarterly*, which is presently edited by professor of psychology Kevin McDonald, who is a recent fellow of the neo-fascist Academy of Social and Political Research.⁵⁵ Following his early successes in uniting parts of the far-right scene, in 2005 William Regnery then established his very own white nationalist think-tank which he called the National Policy Institute, and when their founding president died in 2011, he was replaced by the now famous Alt-Right golden boy Richard Spencer who quickly set about assisting in the publication of the writings of Russian neo-fascist Alexander Dugin.

Four days before Donald Trump assumed his office in the White House, Spencer and his friends sought to capitalize on the apparent right-ward shift in politics by launching a new shiny web site promoting the Alt-right Corporation, which set itself the task of uniting far-right forces across the world. With key directors of their activities including Spencer and William Regnery, another individual who played a guiding role in this organizations launch was the Nazi-inspired occultist Jason Reza Jorjani, an Iranian-American academic who in late 2016 was caught boasting that once his hoped-for global fascist revolution takes place – which he says should *only* cost the lives of around *100 million people* – Hitler, he explained, will no longer be seen “like some weird monster” but instead he will on our bank notes and “is just going to be seen as a great European leader.”

Jorjani's first exploration of the paranormal fringe was based upon his PhD and was published as *Prometheus and Atlas* (Arktos, 2016) – a book which was first and foremost an assault on science and

⁵⁵ One of the key activists behind the work of the Academy of Social and Political Research was neo-Nazi author Kerry Bolton – a regular pro-Putin contributor for the widely read conspiracy magazine, *New Dawn*.

the Enlightenment, drawing upon familiar anti-Semite tropes, rehearsing the Atlantean days of old, and topped off by the UFOlogy of writers like Jacques Vallee.⁵⁶ Yet contrary to his other Aryan-obsessed buddies, Jorjani placed Iran at the world center of his future Aryan utopia, which predictably led to his parting of ways with the Alt-right Corporation.⁵⁷

MUFON Revealed

But one need not turn to the alt-right or Nazi milieu to encounter all manner of occult racists, as for many years such individuals have made themselves a comfortable home within the heart of the mainstream UFO community. A good example is provided courtesy of the Mutual UFO Network which, having been founded in 1969, bills itself as the

⁵⁶ Jason Colavito, "Alt-right supporter uses Atlantis and ESP to defend 'Aryan heritage,' blames Muslims for 'white genocide,'" *Blog Post*, December 18, 2016; Harrison Fluss and Landon Frim, "Aliens, antisemitism, and academia", *Jacobin*, March 11, 2017. Amazingly in 2016 Jorjani's book received an award from the Parapsychological Association. The Association's misplaced review began: "*Prometheus and Atlas* is an incredibly ambitious synthesis of western thought – actually, global thought – with a central place devoted to understanding the significance of what author Jason R. Jorjani calls *The Spectral* outlaw phenomena that are not only poorly understood but positively suppressed throughout history for reasons that become less mysterious as one follows the author's analysis."

⁵⁷ Jason Reza Jorjani departure from the Alt-right Corporation came shortly after the publication of his second book *World State of Emergency* (Arktos, 2017) which he had dedicated to Shahin Nezhad – the leader of the Iranian Renaissance. At the same time as leaving the Alt-right he simultaneously cut ties with Arktos Media, where he had served as their editor-in-chief. Arktos having acted as the primary English-language publisher of the writings of the European "New Right" school of political thought; where "New Right" refers to occult neo-fascists and Traditionalists like Evola, Dugin, and Alain de Benoist.

For details on the sordid pre-history of Arktos Media, see Henrik Bogdan and Olav Hammer (eds.), *Western Esotericism in Scandinavia* (Brill, 2016); and Louie Dean Valencia-García (ed.), *Far-Right Revisionism and the End of History: Alt/History* (Routledge, 2020). Generous funding for Arktos' work was derived from a former coal mining company CEO named Daniel Friberg (the mining company was Wiking Mineral, although it now called Svenska Bergsbruk). For a useful discussion of how the mystic fascism of people like Mircea Eliade and Carl Jung inspire the leading lights of the alt-right, see Pankaj Mishra's essay "The lure of fascist mysticism: on Jordan Peterson," in *Bland Fanatics: Liberals, Race, and Empire* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2020).

“world’s oldest and largest UFO phenomenon investigative body.” MUFON’s latest racist PR disaster occurred when their state director for Pennsylvania, John Ventre, who had served in that position since 2007 and was famous for being the star of H2’s *Hangar 1: The UFO Files* show, was outed for engaging in a white supremacist rant on Facebook. Ventre being a businessman who served as the former state security director for UPS, who openly recalls how he “started out in 1996 researching End Time Prophecy and then segwayed into UFOs in 1998 and then Demonology in 2014.” Moreover, his UFOlogical views meld well with his belief in intelligent design, support for Donald Trump, and his understanding that there “is a global conspiracy of disinformation and consensus science.”³⁸

An early indication of Ventre’s far-right sensibilities were revealed some years ago in his book, *UFOs over Pennsylvania* (2012), which he begins with two quotes: one from Vedic creationist Michael Cremo, and another from William Cooper’s book *Beyond a Pale Horse* – which is arguably one of most significant anti-government conspiracy texts, acting as something of a bible to the patriot/militia movement.³⁹ Not one to hide his right-wing politics, elsewhere Ventre

³⁸ John Ventre, *The UFOLOGIST: The Haunting of John Ventre* (Lang Publication, 2016); Ventre, *An Alternative History of Mankind* (Lang Publication, 2014); Paul Peirce, “Hempfield resident John Ventre announces bid for Pa. governor,” *TRIBLive*, June 30, 2021.

³⁹ MUFON’s commitment to using hypnosis induced Regression Therapy to reveal how individuals have contact with aliens (which may include the apparent recall of violent rape scenarios) flies in the face of best practice, as this technique itself (not alien contact) has been proven to be the root source of alien encounters. The current editor of the *Journal of Abduction-Encounter Research*, John Carpenter, served as MUFON’s director of abduction research from 1991-2000; while another member of the journal’s editorial board, Barbara Lamb, previously co-authored a book on the magic of crop circles with Pleadian mystic Judith Moore – a book that was published by Light Technology Publishing (this is the same outlet that published William Cooper’s superconspiracy). The most significant book to steer the UFO world towards stories of alien abduction obtained via regression therapy was Budd Hopkins’ immensely popular book *Missing Time: A Documented Study of UFO Abductions* (Richard Marek Pubs, 1981).

“Not surprisingly, abduction reports began multiplying just when, in the 1980s, false memories of ‘repressed’ or ‘dissociated’ incest trauma became a national epidemic. Abduction memories and memories of ‘forgotten’ childhood sexual abuse are conjured in exactly the same way, by applying an unsubstantiated psychodynamic

had promoted the popular right-wing talking point that “Barack Hussein Obama... used his office to promote... his left wing Marxist ideas” – ideas that Obama had apparently “learned” from community leaders like Saul Alinsky (who in reality was actually a proud anti-communist).⁶⁰ And although the end result of Ventre’s racist rant on Facebook about the supposed genetic inferiority of blacks meant that he was forced to resign from his services rendered for MUFON, somewhat controversially he remained a member of MUFON’s thirteen-person strong advisory board (or Inner Circle).

But that was not the end of Ventre’s story, and another well-established racist who served on MUFON’s advisory board was the multi-millionaire New Age teacher/profiteer JZ Knight who is most famous for channeling Ramtha – an anti-Semitic but otherwise all-loving spiritual entity who fought the Atlanteans over 35,000 years ago and seems to have read the conspiratorial books produced by the John Birch Society. Ramtha’s channeled messages, as published in the *Last Waltz of the Tyrants*, are thoroughly anti-Semitic, and sadly Ramtha repeats common tropes about the role of graymen (Jews) in fomenting global wars and carrying out their evil plans for world domination. In the introduction to Ramtha’s channeled book, *Last Waltz of the Tyrants: The Prophecy Revisited* (JZK Publishing, 2009 [1987]), JZ Knight recalls that she first became acquainted with “Ramtha the Enlightened One” in her kitchen in 1977. Knight then explains how later that year Ramtha had suggested she might need to do some basic background reading on occult history, with Ramtha apparently directing her to familiarize herself with the six volumes of Baird

theory to the images unearthed by hypnotherapy, dream analysis, and assorted techniques for stimulating and guiding fantasy.” Frederick Crews expands upon this analysis in his excellent essay “The Mind Snatchers” which draws the links between such nonsense and that of utilitarian postmodern theorists like Jodi Dean (author of *Aliens in America*); for more on this and related subject see his book *Follies of the Wise: Dissenting Essays* (Avalon, 2006), p.210. For more critical background on this subject, see Richard Ofshe and Ethan Watters, *Making Monsters: False Memories, Psychotherapy, and Sexual Hysteria* (Charles Scribner, 1994); and Paul Edwards, *Reincarnation: A Critical Examination* (Prometheus Books, 1996), Chapter 6 (“More hypnotic regressions and ‘progressions’”).

⁶⁰ John Ventre, *APOPHIS 202: The Coming Mass Extinction...* (Lang Publication, 2012).

Spalding's *Life and Teachings of the Masters of the Far East* (1924). (Note: Spalding had been a prolific occult author whose work had a large influence upon Guy Ballard's far-rightwing I AM movement and on the related patriotic cult that was the Church Universal and Triumphant.)

Like many other New Age preachers, JZ Knight is proud to combine her right-wing politics with a bizarre assortment of all and any ideas that will help her portray Ramtha as a force for good in this world; thus, in the new introduction to *Last Waltz of the Tyrants* Knight refers to Al Gore's "brilliant book" *An Inconvenient Truth*. At the time of writing these words Ramtha was perhaps influenced by her longstanding support (as a donor) for the Democrat's, but in recent years Ramtha decided to throw her ethereal voice behind Donald Trump's presidency.⁶¹ Moreover, it is disturbing that following hot on

⁶¹ Jim Brunner, "Guess who's a big Trump fan? Ramtha, as channeled by Democratic donor JZ Knight," *The Seattle Times*, April 4, 2017). Ramtha disciple, Michael Knight, brings us up-to-date with JZ Knight's toxic paranoia in his book, *President Trump and The New World Order* (North Star Publishing, 2017), which boasts of walking readers "through the veil behind which families such as the Rothschilds and Rockefellers have spent generations, both publicly and behind the scenes, manipulating governments, politicians, and ordinary people alike in order to build their New World Order." Trump apparently is the hero who has the power to bring the pyramid of paranoia crumbling down once and for all!

It is worth recalling that JZ Knight's followers created the hit film *What the Bleep Do We Know!?* (2004) - a tale of nonsense that was supplemented by a study guide which was produced by the Institute of Noetic Sciences.

Another leading MUFON activist who has been highly active in right-wing politics is their director of communications, Roger Walsh, who previously co-edited the 2008 book *Ron Paul Speaks*. And with reference to the dangerous politics of Ron Paul, David Neiwert, the author of *Alt-America: The Rise of the Radical Right in the Age of Trump* (Verso, 2017) points out that: "Right-wing populism began surging to the fore in 2008 with Paul's insurgent Republican campaign." Neiwert continued: "Paul's appeal to the extreme right was a natural outgrowth of his identity. Much of his popular image was predicated on the idea that he was a libertarian Republican—he was the 1988 presidential candidate of the Libertarian Party. The libertarian political label was understood to revolve around the promotion of individual liberties in the mold of Ayn Rand and other philosophers. But a closer examination of Paul's brand of politics showed that he had a closer affinity to the John Birch Society than any genuinely libertarian entity. His declared goals of fighting the New World Order; eliminating the Federal Reserve, the IRS, and most other federal agencies; getting us out of the UN; ending all gun controls; reinstating the gold standard—all were classic

the heels of Ventre's abhorrent Facebook revelations, MUFON's newly appointed director of research (Robert Powell) felt forced to announce his resignation in disgust at the lunacy of the topics broached at the 2017 MUFON Symposium (in Las Vegas).⁶² The theme for this extra-paranoid symposium was "The case for a Secret Space Program" which promoted speakers with a deep belief in the nonsense that is Nazi UFOlogy, with one good example being provided by the so-called "intuitive empath" Corey Goode. This deluded individual it seems truly believes that he was recruited into the US militaries secret space program at the tender age of six whereupon he was indoctrinated and trained to carry out military black op's programs. As the MUFON blurb for his talk announced:

Did the Nazi's beat the US to the Moon and Mars? Did the US unwittingly accept a "Trojan Horse" in the form of Operation Paperclip at the end of WWII to infiltrate the Military Industrial Complex? Did the US Navy build advanced space carriers and then put them into service in the 1980's? The answers to these questions and many more will be covered in a presentation by Corey Goode who spent 20 years serving in these programs. Learn the true history of multiple secret space programs that are active to this very day.⁶³

elements of far-right populism. Even though Paul's candidacy received no institutional support from within the GOP, it reflected not just a resurgence of right-wing populism but a dramatic weaving of extremist beliefs into the national conversation. Paul's multiple appearances on Alex Jones's radio programs were the best evidence of his close relationship with the conspiracist right."

⁶² After Robert Powell resigned from MUFON he was replaced in January 2018 by Chris Cogswell who soon resigned within a matter of months when it came to his attention that John Ventre remained an active MUFON member. To this day Ventre remains a leading member of MUFON and was the organizer for MUFON's Erie UFO Conference that was held in October 2021 in Pennsylvania.

⁶³ MUFON's biographical notes observes: "In 2015 Corey Goode was featured on a ground breaking new series on Gaia TV called 'Cosmic Disclosure'." Corey was interviewed by Sean Stone in January 2017 for RT's *Buzzsaw*. Stone asked Corey if people were being distracted by the elite by matters such as "the various Hillary versus Trump rhetoric and the Black Lives Matter versus police force... Does this all play a role for the elite agenda of trying to basically keep our consciousness down"? To which Corey answered: "Yeah, I agree. And they don't want us to realize that we're free-range slaves. But at the same time, they are doing... they are creating these wars and all the craziness right now to keep us confused and at each other's throats." When

Another speaker at the Las Vegas shindig who had been trying to push similar ideas for some years is William Tompkins. He dates his own involvement in the UFO mystery to 1942 when he claims he was the Naval courier for reports on German covert activities. As Tompkins stated in his blurb for the MUFON symposium: these reports “were telling us about the incredible things” that Nazi Germany was doing with high technology vehicles with the assistance of “an extraterrestrial race of Draco Reptilians, who gave them some completed craft.” He continued by explaining that these covert documents “reported the use of secret caverns in Antarctica that housed the German SS, which planned to control the planets and star systems with the help of the Reptilians.” Bob Wood, who has been a MUFON board member since 1993, was evidently fully onboard with such nonsense, and in addition to speaking at the 2017 symposium with a talk titled “How do they keep it secret?” he wrote the foreword for Michael Salla’s conspiratorial book which is titled *US Navy’s Secret Space Programs and Nordic Extraterrestrial Alliance* (Exopolitics Consultants, 2017).⁶⁴

Corey talks about slaves, he is referring to the so-called “intergalactic slave trade” whereby humans “are used as food, unfortunately, as sex slaves...” For an introduction to RT’s conspiratorial politics, see Ilya Yablokov and Precious Chatterje-Doody, *Russia Today and Conspiracy Theories: People, Power and Politics on RT* (Routledge, 2021).

⁶⁴ In 2020 Michael Salla published *Rise of the Red Dragon: Origins and Threat of China’s Secret Space Program*, a book which openly embraces QAnon as a “military intelligence group” and attacks China from the conspiratorial vantage point that the Chinese state has harnessed occult Nazi technologies. Needless to say, there is much to be critical of when it comes to China’s authoritarian capitalist regime, which urgently needs to be replaced with a democratic and socialist alternative (see Per-Åke Westerlund, “China’s state capitalist imperialism,” *Socialist Alternative*, May 9, 2021), but Salla is not concerned with such worldly matters. Salla’s conspiracy hinges on one of the tragic legacies of McCarthyism which saw one of America’s leading rocket scientists Tsien Hsue-shen (also translated as “Qian Xuesen”) being deported back to China in 1955 for the apparent crime of being a communist (for a useful introduction to this tragic story, see Dwayne Day, “A dragon in winter,” *The Space Review*, January 14, 2008). Salla’s historic distortions include all manner of occult nonsense, but he correctly notes that in the 1980s Tsien became an influential proponent of paranormal phenomena and contributed to the “qigong boom” that gained massive popularity among ordinary people throughout the 1980s and early 1990s – a mystical renaissance that occurred with the active support of the Chinese state. It was this qigong boom that in 1992 led to the creation of the Falun Gong, a religious sect whose beliefs are

In the foreword to Salla's book, Bob Wood explains that he was particularly stimulated by the authors "willingness to speculate" about how Trump's elections would affect the secret space program. Wood writes how Salla "makes it clear that in his judgement there is evidence that would support the contention that the CIA has been infiltrated by the Nazis and Reptillians," and that it now remains to be seen whether these "bad guys" (here he includes the USAF, NSA and "the Cabal") can beat the "good guys" which includes Trump, the US Navy, the FBI and "the Nordics."

Salla, to this misfortune of the world, unfortunately commands quite some influence on the current Nazi-fixated UFO scene, as he was the chief editor of *Exopolitics Journal* (which was published online between 2006 and 2012).⁶⁵ This *Journal's* editorial board included Paola Harris, who spent six years during the 1980s assisting J. Allen

"populated by shapeshifting aliens and numerous other-Earthly dimensions linked with socially conservative views around sexuality and interracial relationships". Helen Farley, "Evil cult or persecuted minority? Conspiracy theories surrounding Falun Gong and the government of the People's Republic of China," in: Asbjørn Dyrendal, David Robertson, Egil Aspren (eds.), *Handbook of Conspiracy Theory and Contemporary Religion* (Brill, 2019), p.491.

Particularly since 1999, the authoritarian Chinese regime has brutally repressed all Falun Gong practitioners in China. Yet in recent years the religious group's already conservative belief system have seen their related global media outlets (including *Epoch Times*) become increasingly involved in promoting far-right conspiracy theories. An important exposition on the early development of the Falun Gong movement is provided in David Ownby's book *Falun Gong and the Future of China* (Oxford University Press, 2008); while a short introduction to this group's political evolution is outlined in Jason Wilson's article "Falun Gong-aligned media push fake news about Democrats and Chinese communists," *The Guardian*, April 30, 2021.

⁶⁵ Another of the four members of the *Exopolitics Journal's* editorial board is Manuel Lamiroy, who serves on the editorial board of the *Journal of Abduction-Encounter Research*. On a related matter, in their book *Making Monsters: False Memories, Psychotherapy, and Sexual Hysteria* (Charles Scribner, 1994), Richard Ofshe and Ethan Watters draw attention to the wild conspiracies of Dr. Colin Ross, who believes that many of his patients had been raped by evil top-secret agents of the CIA. Popularizing ideas that would be later adopted by anti-government conspiracists like David Icke, Ross explained that once the CIA turns such children into "Manchurian candidates" they are then "used by the intelligence community on an ongoing basis for espionage and surveillance purposes and possibly for assassinations." (pp.223-4) Of course anyone who criticizes Ross's abuse of regression therapy is quickly accused as being part of the CIA cover-up!

Hynek with his UFO investigations, and Harris remains proud of her commitment to developing superconspiracies which she capably did by publishing *Connecting the Dots... Making Sense of the UFO Phenomenon* (AuthorHouse, 2008) - a text which brought together a series of interviews with all manner of UFOlogists ranging from Hynek to Zecharia Sitchin to Russell Targ to David Icke!⁶⁶

⁶⁶ Paola Harris also serves as the international director of Salla's Exopolitics Institute, which in the not-so-distant past included the late Jim Marrs amongst their many spaced-out advisors. In 2021 Harris teamed up with Jacques Vallee to self-publish a book titled *Trinity: The Best-Kept Secret*.

SIX

The Right's Mystical Medicine

Every human would like to live a long, healthy, and enjoyable life, but this is not possible under the dictates of capitalism. Instead, we are forced to languish under ill-equipped medical systems whose shortcomings enforce unnecessary death upon tens of thousands of people, especially those who can't afford health insurance.¹ Little wonder that many people don't always turn towards the scientific establishment for answers to their complex medical needs. Writing in 1845, Karl Marx's political associate, Friedrich Engels, expertly denounced the "social murder" imposed upon ordinary people in his shocking expose, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*. As he put it, social murder occurs when government policies place "workers under conditions in which they can neither retain health nor live long; [such] that it undermines the vital force of these workers gradually, little by little, and so hurries them to the grave before their time."

Much like the conditions facing Americans and Russians today, ordinary folk in Engels's era simply couldn't afford the "high fees" charged by English doctors, so they did "nothing" or were "compelled to call in cheap charlatans, and use quack remedies, which do more harm than good." Engels went on to explain how alongside the multitude of quacks who "thrive in every English town" "vast quantities of patent medicines are sold" for "great profit" which on the positive side "rarely contain actually injurious substances" but on the negative side hardly acted to improve health outcomes for the poor. Thus,

¹ Andrew Wilper *et al.*, "Health insurance and mortality in US adults," *American Journal of Public Health*, 99(2), December 2009.

throughout the nineteenth century, many working-class campaigners, but particularly women who were doubly oppressed by capitalism and sexism, ended up bypassing medical orthodoxy by creating their own health clinics and promoting their own so-called nature cures.²

By the turn of the century, scientific advancements in the field of heroic medicine were consuming an ever-increasing market share in America's pluralistic medical mainstream. At the same time, the working-class were making their own advances, with socialist ideas and organizations rapidly spreading across the continent, striking fear into the hearts of the governing class. In Europe these same trends were at a more advanced stage, such that in 1883 German chancellor Otto von Bismarck was forced to establish the Sickness Insurance Act "to help stem the growing support for socialism among the German working class."³

America's ascendant capitalist class however was keen not to make such class compromises. This led to more farsighted members of this elite to provide the medical backbone for creating a different type of technical and "preventive" project to allow industrial capitalism "to survive and grow." The powerful philanthropies of America's recently anointed robber barons, most particularly those endowed by John D. Rockefeller and Andrew Carnegie, were harnessed to this project which was initially codified within the Flexner report of 1910 and quickly put into practice with the support of the American Medical Association and other assorted professionals. Much like the rising popularity of "scientific management" of labor, "scientific medicine" was compatible with capitalist growth priorities, as it "analyzed the body into its parts, subjected the parts to the control of scientific doctors, and thereby kept the bodies healthier and more

² For details of this early Popular Health Movement, see Barbara Ehrenreich and Deidre English, *For Her Own Good: 150 Years of the Experts' Advice for Women* (Pluto Press, 1979), pp.42-61.

³ E. Richard Brown, *Rockefeller Medicine Men: Medicine and Capitalism in America* (University of California Press, 1979), p.201. "Since Bismarck's introduction of health insurance for German workers in 1883, governments have used health care to ameliorate the conditions of working class life, responding to popular demands and forestalling more radical ones." David Himmelstein and Steffie Woolhandler, "The corporate compromise: a Marxist view of Health Maintenance Organizations and prospective payment," *Annals of Internal Medicine*, September 1988, p.495.

efficient.” At the same time, it should come as no surprise that capitalist monies were not used “support medical research that investigated the relationship of social factors to health and disease.”⁴

Alternative health practitioners of all sorts were now consciously repressed by the government and their reforming ideologues. Health projects pioneered by America’s emergent socialist politicians were simultaneously crushed to ensure that genuinely democratic, affordable, and effective health planning for the masses was effectively outlawed. An early example of this happening was provided by the public health planning experiment embarked upon by the first socialist mayor of Milwaukee, Emil Seidel, who held office from 1910 to 1912.⁵ Under Seidel’s leadership, which in turn was backed-up by working-class pressure from below, in Spring 1911 a successful public health reformer from New York city named Wilbur Phillips had set about creating a series of health centers across Milwaukee: a positive development that was quickly shut-down by the elite establishment (both Democrats and Republicans) and then totally dismantled by Seidel’s conservative successor who “was a firm believer in streamlined government and budget cutting”.⁶

⁴ Brown, *Rockefeller Medicine Men*, p.129.

⁵ Emil Seidel’s vote share increased over time but he was nevertheless ousted when the Democrats and Republicans united so they could stand just one corporate candidate against him.

⁶ Undeterred from his socialist convictions Wilbur Phillips pressed on by taking his ideas elsewhere, but in the “supercharged patriotic atmosphere” at the end of the First World War funding for such social democrat projects quickly dried-up. This is not to say that the American working-class were not continually struggling for control of society, it is just that they were not sufficiently well organized to bring a revolution to America’s shore at that point in history, something that was not helped by the pro-war elements within the Socialist Party. Patricia Mooney Melvin, *The Organic City: Urban Definition and Neighborhood Organization 1880-1920* (University Press of Kentucky, 1987), p.53, p.191; George Rosen, “The first Neighbourhood Health Center Movement - its rise and fall,” in: Judith Leavitt and Ronald Numbers (eds), *Sickness and Health in America: Readings in the History of Medicine and Public Health* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1978). For more context, see Tula Connell, *Conservative Counterrevolution: Challenging Liberalism in 1950s Milwaukee* (University of Illinois Press, 2016).

Socialists and Sanatoriums

In retrospect it would seem that (electorally-speaking at least) the highpoint for the socialist movement in America was the presidential election of 1912 whereupon the Socialist Party's candidate Eugene Debs obtained the backing of just short of one million Americans (obtaining 6% of the popular vote).⁷ Later Debs would be incarcerated for opposing the First World War, but his popularity never diminished, and in 1920, while still in prison, he ran for president again and still managed to secure a colossal vote. As one might expect Debs' health suffered under the harsh regime of prison life, and after his release in 1921 he spent a good part of his final years taking periodic respite in a well-known naturopathic sanatorium run by Henry Lindlahr, where Debs eventually died while undergoing a so-called fasting cure – a fallacious form of treatment that contributed towards his untimely death.⁸

Here Debs' tragic decision to put his trust in the hands of Henry Lindlahr's anti-scientific nature cures was perhaps understandable given the then ongoing ideological battles that were pitting an elitist medical establishment against a populist movement of alternative health practitioners. Indeed, Upton Sinclair, who was one of the most eloquent socialist writers of the era, had owing to his own personal struggles with ill-health, already done much to sow the seeds of such health confusion. This is because he had quickly progressed from writing the muckraking classic, *The Jungle* (1906) to publishing two more dubious works of non-fiction, the first being *Good Health and How We Won It: With an Account of New Hygiene* (1909) and the second being titled *The Fasting Cure* (1911).⁹ Around the time that

⁷ Harking from the right-wing of the Socialist Party, Emil Seidel served as the Party's vice-presidential candidate in this election.

⁸ Martin Gardner, *Fads and Fallacies in the Name of Science* (Dover Publications, 1957), p.197.

⁹ Despite his commitment to his new health interests, Upton Sinclair continued his prolific propagandizing for socialism for the next few decades, except that is for a period during World War I when he vigorously supported the allies war effort: a mistake that was made by many other confused socialists to the overall detriment of a blossoming working-class movement.

Eugene Debs was not himself without fault on the issue of war. In a review of the documentary, *American Socialist: The Life and Times of Eugene Victor Debs* (2017),

Sinclair had wrote these two books that he had become a vegetarian; a dietary change that had occurred shortly after Sinclair had visited John Harvey Kellogg's famous Battle Creek Sanatorium and had subsequently attended Bernarr Macfadden's huge sanatorium in Battle Creek – where Sinclair established a firm friendship with this physical health guru, Mr. Macfadden.¹⁰ Yet despite the elitist politics of his new 'friends', Sinclair's intentions with regard his health writings were always concerned with promoting the health of the working-class. As he explained in *The Fasting Cure*:

I look about me in the world, and nearly everybody I know is sick. I could name one after another a hundred men and women, who are doing vital work for progress and carrying a cruel handicap of physical suffering. For instance, I am working for social justice, and I have comrades whose help is needed every hour, and they are ill! In one single week's newspapers last spring I read that one was dying of kidney trouble, that another was in hospital from nervous break-down, and that a third was ill with ptomaine poisoning. And in my correspondence I am told that another of my dearest friends has only a year to live; that another heroic man is a nervous wreck, craving for death; and that a third is tortured by bilious headaches. And there is not one of these people whom I could not cure if I had him alone for a couple of weeks; not one of them who would not in the end be walking down the street "as if it were such fun!"

The same socialist good intentions were most assuredly not held by many of the alternative health practitioners whose work had so inspired Sinclair. Take for instance the toxic legacy of the still-influential naturopath, John Harvey Kellogg (1852-1943), who was "a crusading medical reformer, dictatorial employer, unrepentant racist,

Justin Kennedy points to one of his shortcomings noting: "While Debs was very vocal about his opposition to the war, he refused to take a leadership role in confronting those supporting the war, and so he withdrew from party disputes. Debs could have used his influence, as the most popular person in the party, to fight for his ideas, but he believed an all-inclusive party was more important than fighting for his positions and ideas." (*Socialist Alternative*, August 1, 2018).

¹⁰ Upton Sinclair joined the editorial board of Bernarr Macfadden's immensely popular *Physical Culture* magazine (serving on it from 1909 to 1914) and dedicated his book on fasting to Macfadden.

and active member of the proto-Nazi American eugenics movement".¹¹ Sinclair, however...

...was unlike the caricatures of humourless health-food reformers: he enjoyed poking fun at himself and joked about the "picketing diet" he developed at Ludlow. He told his readers to find themselves a simple diet of natural foods "then learn as quickly as possible to forget your diet and all the rest of your physical problems and interest yourself in something worthwhile in life - somebody or some cause outside of yourself".¹²

In stark contrast, John Harvey Kellogg was something of a pathbreaker with regard the ruling-classes popularization of eugenic propaganda, as in 1906 he had established his very own Race Betterment Foundation; while in 1922 Kellogg became a founding advisor to the Eugenics Committee of the United States of America - a group which had been formed by the ardent racist Madison Grant.¹³ Kellogg also didn't take too kindly to Sinclair's mockery of some of his most whacky sanatorium practices, leading to a falling out between the two, which probably helped push Sinclair closer into the orbit of Macfadden.¹⁴ But Macfadden's racial politics were highly problematic too, as was his longstanding commitment to beauty as an indicator of

¹¹ Adam DePollo, "Flakes of wrath: on Howard Markel's 'The Kelloggs: The Battling Brothers of Battle Creek'," *Michigan Quarterly Review*, August 22, 2018.

¹² Lauren Coodley, *Upton Sinclair: California Socialist, Celebrity Intellectual* (University of Nebraska Press, 2013), p.86.

¹³ Jonathan Spiro, *Defending the Master Race: Conservation, Eugenics, and the Legacy of Madison Grant* (University of Vermont Press, 2008), p.251, p.181. Among the many elites who frequented John Harvey Kellogg's sanatorium was John D. Rockefeller, Jr. who declared himself Kellogg's "ardent apostle". Ever the socialist campaigner, Upton Sinclair satirized the activism of the white supremacists who typified Madison Grant's milieu in his 1920 novel *100%: The Story of a Patriot*.

¹⁴ The anti-Kellogg satire is featured in Ruth Clifford Engs' edited collection, *Unseen Upton Sinclair: Nine Unpublished Stories, Essays and Other Works by Upton Sinclair* (McFarland & Co., 2009); while Sinclair's health faddism is discussed in Kevin Starr's *Endangered Dreams: The Great Depression in California* (Oxford University Press, 1995). In an interview, Engs said Sinclair's: "*The Health Hunters* sketch might be offensive to some people today because it's too close to home, satirizing the lucrative business of health and religious gurus who fleece the rich and famous."

eugenic health. As a historian of the Christian health movement put it, for Macfadden:

Fasting and whiteness, then, conveniently merged into a larger logic of bodily domination and superiority, for some fasting masters more explicitly than others. While Macfadden's language concerning the advancement of the white "superman" was somewhat more strident than that of other fasting writers, the general fixation on dirt displayed by his counterparts, not to mention the insistence that starving was the best way to cure the body, resonated deeply with other anxieties and strategies regarding the so-called polluted influences of racialized others in American society. Moreover, the vocabulary of health that these writers employed was used to racialized ends by more virulent ideologies of racial hierarchy and eugenic science, such as the physician William S. Sadler (1875-1969) [who in 1922 would author a book titled *Race Decadence*].¹⁵

Against the Follies of Monopoly Medicine

In the run-up to the implementation of the racist immigration restriction law of 1924, Macfadden's *Physical Culture* magazine had promoted the conservative eugenic views of Albert Edward Wiggam, who was one of Madison's Grant's many racist disciples.¹⁶ But the magazine still held a special place for Sinclair (who had left Macfadden's editorial board in 1914): thus the November 1924 issue featured a cover story by Upton Sinclair titled "My life and diet."¹⁷ The

¹⁵ R. Marie Griffith, *Born Again Bodies: Flesh and Spirit in American Christianity* (University of California Press, 2004), pp.129-30. For a useful discussion of the role that personal fitness "plays in radicalisation among the far right online," see Ben Elley, "The rebirth of the West begins with you!"—self-improvement as radicalisation on Achan," *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 8, 2021. For Bernarr Macfadden's eugenic propaganda, see Aaron Gillette, *Eugenics and the Nature-Nurture Debate in the Twentieth Century* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp.71-4.

¹⁶ Albert Edward Wiggam, "Proving and measuring 'hereditary' - with twins," *Physical Culture*, November 1921.

¹⁷ One of the most significant dietary-obsessed groups that has been peddling food-related conspiracy theories over the past several decades has been the Weston Price Foundation, a group which happens to count the one-time Nader-raider and now influential libertarian food supplement warrior, James S. Turner, as their foundation's acting general counsel. Formed in 1999 by Sally Fallon, a one-time liberal vegetarian turned white nationalist (whose millionaire father was an aerospace executive turned

wine merchant) her foundation is named after a kooky dentist named Weston Price (1870-1948) who is best remembered for his 1939 book *Nutrition and Physical Degeneration* -- a misinformed screed that rails against the toxins of civilization (and sugar). One dietary theme that has remained popular with far-right health gurus associated with the Foundation has been the need to eat meat, and lots of it, with a good example being the libertarian health conspiracist, Joseph Mercola, who until recently was a honorary member of the foundation's advisory board.

In her book *Diet and the Disease of Civilization* (Rutgers University Press, 2017), Adrienne Rose Bitar draws attention to Walter Voegtlin's self-published 1975 book *The Stone Age Diet*, which, she says was basically "a long manifesto about the dangers of civilization and the true way to primitive health" a reactionary text that was informed by Voegtlin's own Nazi-inflected concerns to limit human "reproduction to superior types of individuals." Far-right views of yesterday thus live-on through the web site of the Weston Price Foundation, most notably through the work of their founder Sally Fallon (Morell), the author of the 1999 book *Nourishing Traditions: The Cookbook that Challenges Politically Correct Nutrition and the Diet Dictocrats*. Another key individual who has been involved with the Foundation from its start is Thomas Cowan, an anthroposophist doctor who rails against modern medicine and 5G, who is a true believer in Gerson therapy, and is the author (with Morell) of *The Contagion Myth Why Viruses (including "Coronavirus") Are Not the Cause of Disease* (2020) -- a conspiracy book that was published by Skyhorse and is being distributed by the major publishing house, Simon & Schuster. Finally, one of latest low-carb diets to be promoted by the Weston Price Foundation is the Keto diet which advocates only the consumption of meat and meat alone, and one of the key individuals pushing this latest fad, which remains highly popular in far-right circles, is Gary Taubes who is the author of *The Case for Keto: The Truth About Low-Carb, High-Fat Eating* (Granta, 2021). Taubes also happens to be a man who fallen for the alt-right psychobabble of alt-right darling Jordan Peterson, who surprise, surprise, remains a prominent Keto-booster.

For an introduction to Weston Price's opposition to civilization, see William Jarvis, "The myth of the healthy savage," *Nutrition Today*, March/April 1981; and for a related discussion of Thomas Cowan's own reactionary ideas, see Jordan Frith, "Fearing the invisible: the long history behind the 5G COVID-19 conspiracy theory," *Slate*, April 7, 2020. For a more general lambasting of Paleo and Keto diets (including a discussion of Jordan Peterson), see Anthony Warner, "Thermidor - Part 2," *The Angry Chef*, June 23, 2018; and Warner, *The Angry Chef's Guide to Spotting Bullsh*t in the World of Food: Bad Science and the Truth About Healthy Eating* (2018). For a useful rebuttal to Gary Taube's history of corporate sugar, see David Merritt Johns and Gerald M. Oppenheimer, "The made-up story about how big sugar shifted the blame to fat," *Slate*, March 16, 2018; and for an informative take-down of Taube's current obsession with obesity, see Ragen Chastain, "That tragically flawed Gary Taubes article," *Dances With Fat*, September 18, 2021; and for a critique of Taube's new Keto obsession, see Lisa Elaine Held, "The problem with Keto," *Mother Jones*, January 18, 2021. An introduction to the far-rights ongoing

formation of such ephemeral (albeit significant) alliances between libertarians and socialists can be explained by both groups opposition to the monopolist practices of the American Medical Association (AMA).¹⁸ Illustrating this point, when the AMA's chief medical propagandist, Morris Fishbein, attacked Macfadden in his book *The Medical Follies* (1925), *Physical Culture* responded by running a series of essays authored by the popular left-wing writer, John Spivak, that righteously attacked the AMA and its threat to public welfare.¹⁹ These articles would later be pulled together in Spivak's first book *The Medical Trust Unmasked* (1929),²⁰ although thereafter it is notable that Spivak would become best known for his political articles and books that crusaded against the far-right.

In fact, one of the main outlets for Spivak's socialist writings was the widely read leftist magazine, the *New Masses*. And it was within this magazine that we can find one of the most useful analyses of Macfadden's devolution towards fascism, which as John Stuart pointed out, famously saw the health czar train soldiers for Mussolini. But, as ever, there were material reasons for the popularity of Macfadden's alternative health cures among ordinary people. Hence Stuart observes that Macfadden's...

...rise as a physical culturist can be accounted for by the fact that working people could not afford expert medical advice. For fifteen

weaponization of dietary regimes is provided in Eamon Whalen's "How red meat became the red pill for the alt-right," *The Nation*, June 15, 2020; and by Kelly Weill's "Why right wingers are going crazy about meat," *The Daily Beast*, August 24, 2018.

¹⁸ The American Medical Association was enamored by the Social Darwinism of the eugenicists and implacably opposed to the types of socialist reforms that would bring good health to the masses.

¹⁹ In 1929 John Spivak had helped found Bemarr Macfadden's *True Strange Stories*, a populist tabloid which was only published from March to November 1929. Macfadden was in many ways a pioneer in the popularization of fake news, most particularly through his sensationalistic tabloid the *New York Evening Graphic*. In his own unique contribution towards mysticism, in June 1926 Macfadden launched a monthly title called *Ghost Stories*.

²⁰ John Spivak's first article was published in the January 1927 issue of *Physical Health* as "The medical trust has you by the throat." This was followed by "Tricky ways by which the medical lobby controls your health and life" (April 1927), and finally by "Do doctors barter human lives for dollars?" (May 1927).

cents an overworked and underpaid wage slave could find assorted remedies and treatments for his ills. If you had eye trouble or an intestinal disease Macfadden could furnish a cheap cure. It was only natural that the circulation of Macfadden's health literature would increase by leaps and bounds. Undoubtedly much of Macfadden's success is due to the same medical profession which has so persistently fought him. The profession has called him names within the confines of its professional literature. If physicians had exposed Macfadden by taking their analyses of his methods directly to the people who read *Physical Culture*, Macfadden's story would have been considerably different. Instead the medical profession attacked him because essentially he was cutting in on their business. And, after all, the American Medical Association is opposed to socialized medicine which would have made Macfadden and many like him an impossibility.²¹

This again explains why many of the downtrodden poor continued to embrace alternatives to medicine while simultaneously striving for a socialist future. But the embrace of far-right politics by the elitist leaders of the naturopathic community was another matter, and in many ways can be seen as a *natural* corollary of the ruling-classes ongoing attacks on the organizing efforts of the working-class. Indeed, America already had a long history of libertarian health activism, and so it was from within this political community that alternative medicine (or more accurately non-medicine)²² strove to resist the growing regulatory apparatus of the state.

²¹ John Stuart, "Bernarr Macfadden: from pornography to politics," *New Masses*, May 19, 1936.

²² Founded in New York City, John Pitcairn Jr.'s two sons would help form the Citizens Medical Reference Bureau in 1918 with both serving as directors from the 1920s through to the 1940s while acting as "major financial backers of Sentinels of the Republic, a right-wing political organization founded in 1922 and devoted to opposing the concentration of government power, counteracting radicalism and Bolshevism, and 'checking the growth of Federal paternalism.'" Jesse Mercer Gehman, "a doctor of naturopathy who worked as an associate editor of Macfadden's *Physical Culture* magazine, became the secretary of the Citizens Medical Reference Bureau in the 1930s." Lewis Grossman, "The origins of American health libertarianism," *Yale Journal of Health Policy, Law, and Ethics*, 13(1), 2013. For more on this history, see Lewis Grossman, *Choose Your Medicine: Freedom of Therapeutic Choice in America* (Oxford University Press, 2021).

A Popularist Reaction Against Science

One leading medical libertarian and well-known vaccination critic was Lora Little, who in 1906 published her book *Crimes of the Cowpox Ring: Some Moving Pictures Thrown on the Dead Wall of Official Silence*. And her relentless activism soon brought her into the orbit of the Anti-Vaccination League of America, a national group that Bernarr Macfadden had helped launch in 1908 with the support of the wealthy industrialist, John Pitcairn Jr. (whose two sons would go on to escalate their fathers right-wing legacy by founding the Citizens Medical Reference Bureau in 1918).²³

Right-wing politicians were now reviving a longstanding populist cause against the liberal establishment, and reactionary conspiracists like Morris Bealle would contribute towards this war by publishing hate tracts like *Medical Mussolini* (1939) and much more beside.²⁴ At the same time, ultraconservative billionaires like J. Howard Pew financed the anti-socialist campaigning of the notorious American Liberty League and the activities of the Sentinels of the Republic (which included John Pitcairn Jr.'s two sons as board members, a duo who were already committed to "health freedom"). In later years Pew would go on to help fund the conspiratorial activities of the John Birch Society and would push his own conservative Christian agenda upon the working-class by funding the Rev. Billy Graham's evangelical

²³ James Colgrove, "Science in a democracy: the contested status of vaccination in the Progressive Era and the 1920s," *Isis*, 96(2), 2005, p.177, p.182.

²⁴ By way of a contrast, critical left-leaning books that inaugurated the consumer movement in the 1930s included Arthur Kallett and Frederick Schlink's *100,000,000 Guinea Pigs* (1933), and Schlink's *Eat, Drink, and Be Wary* (1935). Yet despite their best efforts, Kallett and Schlink's consumer campaigns never really took off, as not only were the two authors engineers, not scientists, but the mainstream media was not receptive to their critical message, which in part may have something to do with the fact that by the mid-1930s the food industries had become the medias major advertisers. Another reason why books like *100,000,000 Guinea Pigs* were not well-received in officialdom was because the authors turned their criticisms against not just quacks and crooks selling false treatments but also against a "cold-blooded Government regime". "FDA administrators were dull, unimaginative, and smug," Kallett and Schlink "charged, but their major failings lay in bending the law to favour not the consumer but the manufacturer." James Harvey Young, *The Medical Messiahs: A Social History of Health Quackery in Twentieth-Century America* (Princeton University Press, 1967), p.156.

mission.²⁵

Although Macfadden eventually died from a urinary tract infection in 1955, his prolific publishing legacy has been kept alive by Jerome I. Rodale, who popularized many of Macfadden's teachings in his two widely read magazines, *Prevention* and *Organic Gardening and Farming*. Yet for all Rodale's repeated assurances that he would live to be a hundred, the multimillionaire health guru passed away in June 1971 during the filming of *The Dick Cavett Show*, suffering a fatal heart-attack at 72 years of age. But by then J.I. Rodale's personal publishing empire was already massive, and his *Organic Gardening and Farming* magazine had almost one million subscribers, as did his *Prevention* magazine whose sales were benefiting from the counterculture resurgence that was sweeping across America.²⁶

Vitaly, J.I. Rodale's wealth and his widespread popularity had apparently bought him immunity from serious criticism in the mainstream media. And there was much to criticize him for, like for example in 1970 when he published *Happy People Rarely Get Cancer*, which had rehearsed his romantic and reactionary view of the alleged health benefits of racial segregation. As Rodale confidently asserted:

Negroes get less cancer than whites, for the Negro is a happy race. True, there is their problem of segregation, but the Negro race being what it is, I think a Negro sings just the same, and is not going to let segregation dampen his spirits as much as a similar problem would do to the white person.²⁷

²⁵ Carmen Celestini, "God, Country, and Christian Conservatives: The National Association of Manufacturers, the John Birch Society, and the Rise of the Christian Right," Ph.D Thesis, University of Waterloo, 2018, p.59, p.73; for a general overview of the financing of the far-right, see Jonathan Herzog, *The Spiritual-Industrial Complex: America's Religious Battle Against Communism in the Early Cold War* (Oxford University Press, 2011).

²⁶ J.I. Rodale founded *Organic Farming and Gardening* in 1942 with Sir Albert Howard serving a long-distance associate editor of the magazine. With rising interest in chemical-free farming in the 1960s, Rodale's magazine saw its circulation leap from 60,000 in 1958 to 650,000 in 1970.

²⁷ Cited in Maria McGrath, "The bizarre life (and death) of 'Mr. Organic,'" *The New Republic*, August 8, 2014.

It seems that the *New York Times* had not a bad word to say about such racist opinions, and the day before Rodale died, the newspaper explained that he remained “a walking testimonial to his health theories. He is vigorous, articulate and... shows little sign of slowing down.” The journalist observed that Rodale’s health routine entailed him taking 70 food-supplement tablets a day,²⁸ a habit that was very much in vogue among other conservative believers in magic; and so here it is critical to reflect on how Rodale’s nature-loving activism was intimately entwined with furthering the careers of other far-right politicians. Thus, as early as August 1935, when Rodale had launched his first magazine, *Health Digest*, the man of nature chose to reprint “excerpts from the fiery speeches” of Senator Huey Long -- a well-known anti-Semite and white supremacist! Rodale was thereby continuing “the tradition started by organic farming enthusiasts in Britain and Europe of mixing populist and often far-right politics with farming and health.”²⁹

Although Senator Long was assassinated in September 1935, just months after featuring in Rodale’s magazine, his incendiary speeches had already heaped fuel on the fire of agrarian populist outrage, as Long had “headed what was potentially the first mass fascist organization with a membership of over four and a half million.” And around the time of his murder Long’s primary righthand men in the leadership of his so-called “Share Our Wealth” movement had been the popular proto-fascist radio host Father Coughlin,³⁰ and Gerald

²⁸ The journalist added that J.I. Rodale used to sit in a machine to boost his body’s supply of electricity for ten to twenty minutes daily.

²⁹ Gregory Barton, *The Global History of Organic Farming* (Oxford University Press, 2018), p.170. In the late 1960s J.I. Rodale became a cause-celebre in the far-right health freedom movement when, in 1968, after spending fourteen years in the courts, the Federal Trade Commission were finally forced to concede a landmark case against him when they had accused him of promoting false and deceptive advertising for quack medicine. His legal representation during these years was provided by “one of the giants of civil law” Thurman Arnold. Rodale and Arnold “had hoped to win on a constitutional point, but a final Circuit Court of Appeals decision in their favor came on a technicality.” Wade Green, “Guru of the organic food cult,” *New York Times Sunday* magazine, June 6, 1971.

³⁰ Lance Hill, “Huey P. Long: Bayou fascism?,” *Sojourner Truth*, No date available; Alan Brinkley, *Voices of Protest: Huey Long, Father Coughlin, and the Great Depression* (Knopf, 1982).

L.K. Smith, a man who in later years became a member of William Dudley Pelley's pro-Nazi occult-loving Silver Shirts. And Smith, like many other Protestant fundamentalists on the far-right, of course maintained an active distrust of mainstream medicine, preferring the snake-oil therapies offered by anti-Semitic cancer quacks like Dr. William Koch.

The Health Warriors Who Loved Hitler

Here one influential Kansas-based doctor who was part of this growing and increasingly fanatical health freedom movement was John R. Brinkley, who made his millions by combining his pioneering work as a radio host with his efforts to restore male virility by transplanting sliced goat gonads into the scrotum of his desperate patients.

It was not so important that Brinkley's final product did not live up to the pitch. His advertisements, speeches, and broadcasts had their own therapeutic value: they tapped into an enduring tradition of antitrust sentiment, conspiratorial imagery, and rural angst shared by thousands of Americans of the day... Clutching a Bible in one hand and pitchfork in the other, he condemned greedy doctors, corrupt politicians, and conniving Jews.³¹

Brinkley's popularism proved irresistible for large swathes of the public, and in 1930, shortly after he had been stripped of his medical license, Brinkley stood in the Kansas gubernatorial election as an independent and received a phenomenal 183,273 votes, receiving just 40,000 less votes than the winner. He however remained undeterred by the medical establishments ongoing attacks on his profitable livelihood, and throughout the 1930s (and until his death in 1942) Brinkley continued to rail against the AMA, while blaming "Jewish agitators" for orchestrating a "campaign of hate against Hitler." Brinkley happily donated five thousand dollars to William Dudley Pelley and his Silver Shirt's, and had even travelled to Asheville, North Carolina, "to meet Pelley in person and receive 'lessons in fascism.'"³²

³¹ Eric Juhnke, *Quacks and Crusaders: The Fabulous Careers of John Brinkley, Norman Baker, and Harry Hoxsey* (University Press of Kansas, 2002), pp.2-3.

³² Juhnke, *Quacks and Crusaders*, p.30, p.31. John Brinkley "developed a

Another famous medical charlatan whose success overlapped and then succeeded Brinkley's was that of the naturopath Harry Hoxsey (1901-1974), who had founded his first Hoxsey Cancer Clinic in 1924 and enjoyed amazing fame for more than three decades. In 1956 Hoxsey published his autobiography, *You Don't Have to Die*, and in 1974 he then died of pancreatic cancer! In his lengthy war of attrition against the medical establishment Hoxsey concluded that "Hitler, Mussolini, and Stalin - all put together - never had as much dictatorial power as is possessed by the licensed medical men of these free United States."³³ Such overblown rhetoric made him a perfect bed fellow of the far-right and in the same year (1955) Hoxsey was accepted as the vice-presidential candidate for the isolationist organization, American Rally.

One of Hoxsey's key publicists and allies during the fifties with respect to his work within American Rally was the anti-communist hate

friendship with the evangelical publisher and rabid anti-Semite Gerald B. Winrod."

Alternative medical treatments it seems attained something of a revival in Germany with the rise in the fortunes of the Nazis. Thus, in 1925 against the backdrop of a decrease in homeopathy's popularity, a paper published by an eminent German surgeon called August Bier led to a new-found love for water. This revival was closely related to a resurgent interest in Volkish nationalism among the German ruling class, which celebrated attacks on modernity and allowed the Nazis to propagandise about a treatment that they were pleased to note had been first invented in Germany. This renewed obsession with homeopathy was quickly incorporated into the Third Reich's *Neue Deutsche Heilkunde* (New German Medicine), which sought to "combine the best of both modern and traditional medicine," developments which had the active support of homeopathic booster Rudolf Hess, who recognised the utility of the traditional approach as providing a "low-cost solution to meeting the needs of German healthcare." In later years, with the Nazis' propaganda machine keen to supply the definitive proof of homeopathy's effectiveness, a massive research program (launched in 1937) was then funded to the tune of hundreds of millions of Reichsmarks. However, the results of the study, which were to be announced in 1939, were never published. Only one researcher from this project has written about this mammoth experiment, and he concluded that: "Nothing positive emerged from these tests... except the fact that it was indisputably established that the views [of homeopaths] were based on wishful thinking." Simon Singh and Edzard Ernst, *Trick or Treatment? Alternative Medicine on Trial* (Corgi, 2009), p.141, p.142, p.143. Quoting Dr Fritz Donner, whose conclusions were published posthumously in 1995.

³³ Juhnke, *Quacks and Crusaders*, p.82.

preacher Gerald B. Winrod.³⁴ During World War II, Winrod had been a passionate supporter of Hitler, but after the war he dropped his open support of Hitler and...

...Winrod's personal [publicity] organ, the *Defender*, brought to a hundred thousand subscribers a mixture of fervent fundamentalism in religion and morals, right-wing political extremism, violent antagonism toward Jews and Negroes, hostility to fluoridation and mental health programs. The *Defender* also accepted flying saucers and championed unorthodox healers.³⁵

It should come as little surprise that American Rally likewise opposed fluoridation, polio vaccinations, and shared Winrod's belief in flying saucers. While another significant group that defended Hoxsey's crusade from the Rockefeller's so-called medical mafia was the National Health Federation, a group of largely far-right health activists that had been formed in 1954 with the financial support of an increasingly powerful vitamin supplement industry.³⁶ The political tide however was now turning against Hoxsey, as successful legal action (taken by the federal government) meant that by 1957 Hoxsey's quack treatments were outlawed. Hoxsey subsequently quietly retired,³⁷

³⁴ Gerald Winrod was a fundamentalist who had not only helped publicize the quack remedies of William Koch, but accepted payments totalling in excess of \$80,000 from Hoxsey to boost his hugely profitable cancer treatment clinics. James Harvey Young, *The Medical Messiahs: A Social History of Health Quackery in Twentieth-Century America* (Princeton University Press, 1967), p.381.

³⁵ Young, *The Medical Messiahs*, p.381.

³⁶ Young, *The Medical Messiahs*, p.383. "At membership rallies [of the National Health Federation] in California, [Fred] Hart pleaded for funds to help Hoxsey carry on his fight, and Hoxsey asserted that he was giving the royalties from his autobiography to help finance the Federation." (p.383) Another 'health' campaign that was a central concern of the National Health Federation involved their opposition to the fluoridation of water. A key figure in pushing forward this agenda was John Yiamouyiannis, who served as the Federation's 'science' director between 1974 and 1980.

³⁷ Although legal injunctions stymied the continuation of Hoxsey's renegade treatments, his troubling health legacy was maintained by relocating Hoxsey's main clinic to Tijuana, Mexico. After his death in 1972, a steady stream of patients continued to make the trek to Tijuana to be treated by Hoxsey's successors, but his outlaw status in the minds of his far-right supporters probably made it inevitable that

making room for other popular preachers of fictitious cancer cure-alls, with one of his most famous successors being the two-time Nobel Prize winner Linus Pauling who popularized megadoses of Vitamin C as a cure for cancer.³⁸

Celebrity Fads

There can be no doubting that the relentless activism of the National Health Federation can take some credit for recruiting the Nobel prize winner to the growing supplement juggernaut that was gaining momentum during the turbulent sixties. Throughout the decade the Federation had, in the name of health freedom, been mobilizing people to oppose the FDA's efforts to regulate supplement manufacturers, and in 1966 had persuaded tens of thousands of

one day his name and practices would be revived in the public mind. On the issue of such a revival, the film-making activism of Kenny Ausubel has been critical, and in 1989 he released the documentary *Hoxsey: Quacks Who Cure Cancer?*² – a film which utilized sitcom star Max Gail as its narrator and featured Peter Barry Chowka (introduced as a science journalist) and Dr. Bernie Siegel as a so-called scientific supporter of Hoxsey's treatments.

After making this film Ausubel went on to become a key networker in the New Age community maintaining a close friendship with Henry Dakin, the paranormally obsessed Anthroposophical businessman (see earlier). In his book *Dreaming the Future: Reimagining Civilization in the Age of Nature* (Chelsea Green, 2012), Ausubel recalls the chain of events that led him to Hoxsey with the first incident taking place around 1970, when at age nineteen he suffered a serious illness which led to him falling through “the rabbit hole into the world of natural medicine”. Ausubel subsequently joined a commune that was committed to organic gardening, but when cancer suddenly took his fathers life, this provided the trigger for making the Hoxsey film “about the corrosive medical politics that have obstructed or suppressed promising unconventional cancer treatments, almost all of them loosely within the realm of natural medicine.”

More recently, Ausubel served a key advisor in the production of Leonardo DiCaprio's eco-spiritual documentary *The 11th Hour* (2007), starring alongside the likes of talking heads like Mikhail Gorbachev and integrative medical practitioner Dr. Andrew Weil. While Ausubel's latest documentary project, *Changing of the Gods: Planetary and Human Revolution* (2021), is a more explicitly Esalen-inspired affair which, according to Ausubel, attempts to marry “on the ground social change with the cosmic consciousness”. The film being based on Richard Tarnas's Jungian-inspired book *Cosmos and Psyche: Intimations of a New World View* (Plume, 2006).

³⁸ Thomas Hager, *Force of Nature: The Life of Linus Pauling* (Simon & Schuster, 1995), p.13.

people to participate in a mass letter writing campaign. In the same year J.I. Rodale had published *The Complete Book of Vitamins* (1966) and this happened to be the year that Pauling was first won over to the therapeutic power of vitamin C. That said, Pauling only openly espoused his conversion to the magical power of supplements some years later, a change that was publicly christened by his publication of *Vitamin C, the Common Cold and the Flu* (W.H. Freeman and Company, 1970) – a book for which Pauling obtained his first award from the National Health Federation. His acceptance of this award from the far-right Federation was now in keeping with the dubious company Pauling was keeping. For example, with the aid of a libertarian scientist named Art Robinson,³⁹ in 1973 Pauling co-founded the Linus Pauling Institute, and under Linus' direction this Institute obtained the backing of various far-right financiers of distinction with two notable supporters being the fascistic billionaire

³⁹ Linus Pauling Institute's cofounder, Art Robinson, would – after an acrimonious split with Pauling in 1978 – subsequently found the misleadingly-named Oregon Institute of Science and Medicine. After co-authoring a book with a far-right Christian fundamentalist named Gary North (a Christian Reconstructionist to be precise), Robinson has become best-known for the role that his Institute played in circulating the well-promoted and well and truly debunked climate-denying “Oregon Petition.” Connections like this are emblematic of the longstanding love-affair that the radical right maintains for both climate change denial and alternative medicine, with reactionary groups like the ultra-conservative John Birch Society regularly presenting such “anti-establishment” campaigns against environmentalists and the medical establishment as cause célèbres of the embattled common man fighting off the unwanted intrusions of regulatory agencies into the proper workings of the free-market. Paul Rosenberg, “Secrets of the extreme religious right: Inside the frightening world of Christian Reconstructionism,” *Salon*, July 31, 2015; George Monbiot, “The denial industry,” *The Guardian*, September 19, 2006; Fried, *Vitamin Politics*, p.19.

With so many clear associations between the supplement industry and right-wing political operatives, it is not too surprising that in 1976 Pauling had co-founded the Orthomolecular Medical Society with Dr. Richard Kumin, a man who had served as a longstanding leading light of the National Health Federation (while his son Gregory is the Federation's current vice-chair). It is worth acknowledging that the Linus Pauling Institute was one of the first two Centers of Excellence for Research on Complementary and Alternative Medicine officially designated as such by the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine. Also, in 1991 a former student of Linus' named Dr. Jeffrey Bland founded the Institute for Functional Medicine having previously served as the director of nutritional supplement research at the Linus Pauling Institute.

Ryoichi Sasakawa and the powerful global oil magnate Armand Hammer.⁴⁰

Around this time another major health celebrity who worked hand-in-glove with the National Health Federation was the best-selling nutritionist Adelle Davis, who featured in the Federation's documentary *Action for Survival* (1971). Combining her immensely popular books with her prominent position on the mainstream talk-show circuit:

Davis exhorted individuals to take responsibility for their own health and blamed mothers for the poor health of their families. Because she believed that most health problems could be solved by careful attention to nutrition, she had little sympathy for the sick and the disabled, and her books often used the language of "fitness" in ways remarkably similar to that of interwar eugenicists. She also placed a strong emphasis on the importance of physical beauty, often conflating beauty with good health. Although she took the food processors and agribusiness to task, her vision was, in many ways, a conservative, nationalist one that increased people's anxieties about food and health...⁴¹

After Davis passed away in 1974, her close relationship with the

⁴⁰ Hager, *Force of Nature*, p.615. During the Second World War Ryoichi Sasakawa had founded a Japanese political group devoted to the cause of fascism (the National Essence Mass Party), and in 1959 Sasakawa served with Kodama Yoshio as advisors for the right-wing All-Japan Council of Patriotic Organizations -- a federation "that included hybrid yakuza and right-wing groups..." Around this time Sasakawa took up philanthropy with a vengeance, "and contributed substantial funds to the United Nations and to the World Health Organization in particular..." During the 1970s Sasakawa worked closely with Jimmy Carter, was a well-known supporter of the Rev. Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church, created the United States-Japan Foundation in 1989, and in 1986, at the ripe old age of 87 had founded the Sasakawa Peace Foundation. As late as 1974 *Time* magazine reported on Sasakawa's open espousal of fascism, so it is a little concerning to say the least that Sasakawa has received the Martin Luther King Peace Prize and the UN Peace Prize. Eiko Maruko Simiawer, *Ruffians, Yakuza, Nationalists: The Violent Politics of Modern Japan, 1860-1960* (Cornell University Press, 2008), p.160, p.156; David Kaplan and Alec Dubro, *Yakuza: Japan's Criminal Underworld* (University of California Press, 2003), pp.64-5.

⁴¹ Catherine Carstairs, "'Our sickness record is a national disgrace': Adelle Davis, nutritional determinism, and the anxious 1970s," *Journal of the History of Medicine*

National Health Federation was solidified when the philanthropic foundation that was established in her name ended-up being headed by Howard Long - a man who between 1962 and 1972 had been employed as the Federation's vice president in charge of membership, promotion, education, public relations, and conventions.⁴²

Following on the coattails of many food faddists before them, Davis and Pauling were convinced that improved nutrition could not just improve health but could prevent the growth of all cancers. This was a false idea that was first widely propagated by a white supremacist named Frederick Hoffman, whose book *Cancer and Diet* (1937) had promoted the mistaken conclusion that "overabundant food consumption unquestionably is the underlying cause of the root condition of cancer in modern life."⁴³ Either way, by working in

and Allied Sciences, 69(3), 2014, p.465. Davis, who cited scientific literature to support her combination of common-sense and nonsense in best-selling books like *Let's Eat Right to Keep Fit* (1954) became something of a darling of the mainstream media during the 1960s. "The panel on deception and misinformation at the 1969 White House Conference called [Davis] probably the damaging single source of false nutrition information in the land..." Adelle Davis also maintained in a keen interest in the type of Jungian metaphysics that obsessed so many other members of the elite class, and in writing pseudonymously in 1961 she published a book on this subject (*Exploring Inner Space*) which outlined her exploration with psychedelics to get to what she referred to as a "chemical Christianity".

For more on the health problems caused by food faddists, see Harvey Levenstein, *Paradox of Plenty: A Social History of Eating in Modern America* (Oxford University Press, 1993).

⁴² Stephen Barrett and Victor Herbert, *The Vitamin Pushers: How the 'Health Food' Industry is Selling America a Bill of Goods* (Prometheus Books, 1994), p.105.

⁴³ For a discussion of the relation of Frederick Hoffman's white supremacist background in relations to his scientific interests, see Robert Proctor, *The Nazi War on Cancer* (Princeton University Press, 1999).

After his initial interest in curing the common cold, Linus Pauling would famously publish *Cancer and Vitamin C: A Discussion of the Nature, Causes, Prevention, and Treatment of Cancer With Special Reference to the Value of Vitamin C* (Norton, 1979). Pauling had already helped develop the equally ludicrous idea that vitamin C could cure schizophrenia, co-editing a book on the subject with Dr. David Hawkins titled *Orthomolecular Psychiatry: Treatment of Schizophrenia* (W.H. Freeman, 1973). This magical cure for schizophrenia had been proposed by Dr. Abram Hoffer in the 1950s, an individual who would later work closely with his new-found Nobel laureate ally, Linus Pauling, leading to the cross-fertilization of nonsense in their posthumously co-authored book *Vitamin C and Cancer: Discovery, Recovery,*

alliance with the National Health Federation in the early 1970s, Davis and Pauling helped propel forward another campaign for health freedom which led to the “supplement companies and their supporters delug[ing] Congress with more than two million letters—more mail than was later generated by Watergate—protesting” the government’s plans to more tightly regulate the use of dietary supplements.⁴⁴

Jumping on this surging libertarian bandwagon -- whose popularity was fueled by countless exposes of the government’s ongoing repression of working-class civil liberties -- Democratic politicians became willing bedfellows of the more conservative vitamin crusaders. One key example was provided by Senator William Proxmire (Democrat-Wisconsin), a fitness-fanatic, who following the publication of his book, *You Can Do It!: Senator Proxmire’s Exercise, Diet and Relaxation Plan* (Simon & Schuster, 1973), had worked with Senator Richard Schweiker (Republican-Pennsylvania) to sponsor their very “own provitamin, anti-FDA bill”. In this case the National Health Federation may not have been the direct author of Senator Proxmire’s anti-vitamin Bill (or rather Amendment), but when it passed the Senate on September 24, 1974 (by a vote of 81 to 10) the Federation got “exactly what it had wanted: a ban on the FDA’s ability to limit vitamin doses.”⁴⁵ Thus when the Bill subsequently became law

Controversy (Quarry Press, 1999). Putting the nail in the coffin of such hopeful beliefs, Pauling died of prostate cancer in 1994, seven months after his wife had died of stomach cancer. (For a detailed review of Dr. Abram Hoffer’s early “discoveries,” see Fried, *Vitamin Politics*, Chapter 4, “From Saskatchewan: an answer for Schizophrenia.”)

⁴⁴ Marion Nestle, *Food Politics: How the Food Industry Influences Nutrition, and Health* (University of California Press, 2007), p.237.

⁴⁵ Fried, *Vitamin Politics*, p.27; Dan Hurley, *Natural Causes*, p.48; Thomas Jukes, “Fleeing the public,” Letter published in *The New Scientist*, March 1989.

Howard E. Shuman, who had served as an administrative assistant to Senator William Proxmire after previously working with Senator Paul H. Douglas of Illinois (who was “one of the critics of the FDA bureaucracy in the 1950s and 1960s”), proved to be “a pivotal player” in passing the vitamin bill. “While in Douglas’s office, Shuman had met Clinton Miller and Dr. Miles Robinson, both of the National Health Federation. In 1972, Miller visited Shuman in Proxmire’s office to alert them to the FDA attempts to control vitamin products and to urge Proxmire to introduce a bill to prohibit the FDA’s regulations. Miller also introduced Shuman to Milton Bass, legal

in 1976 it...

...changed the landscape of food supplements and the FDA's place in it in a manner that historian James Harvey Young characterized as taking "the first retrogressive step in federal legislation respecting self-treatment wares since enactment of the initial Food and Drugs Act in 1906".⁴⁶

Pushing Laetrile

Another alleged cancer-cure that assumed huge popularity during the 1970s was Laetrile (also known as Vitamin B-17), a cyanide-based extract derived from the seeds of apricots.⁴⁷ Laetrile's founding father, Ernst T. Krebs, Jr., himself had a long history of working as a snake oil salesman of sham health treatments, but Krebs had obtained his lucky break when he brokered a Laetrile-related business partnership with Andrew McNaughton - a multimillionaire Canadian high-flier who was an international arms trader who profited from working both sides of the Cold War. McNaughton, who would soon become the world's leading manufacturer of Laetrile, also had a personal fixation upon parapsychology and in leading efforts to push at the "outer limits of scientific knowledge". But most importantly, as far as his magical Laetrile was concerned, in order to create public demand for his ineffectual product McNaughton first set about manufacturing some

representative of the vitamin-supplementation industry." Rima Apple, *Vitamina: Vitamins in American Culture* (Rutgers University Press, 1996), p.166. In his wrangles with the FDA, Senator Douglas, in addition to being a firm supporter of the Vietnam War played a significant role in popularizing the use of Krebiozen as a cancer cure.

With the aid of the right-wing think tank, the American Enterprise Institute, in 1974 Senator Proxmire had also published a report titled *Can Congress Control Spending?*

⁴⁶ Swann, "The history of efforts to regulate dietary supplements in the USA." Senator Proxmire's provitamin Bill gave the National Health Federation "exactly what it had wanted: a ban on the FDA's ability to limit vitamin doses." Other co-sponsors of Proxmire's Bill included Bob Dole, J. William Fulbright, Barry Goldwater, Hubert H. Humphrey, George McGovern, and Sam Nunn. Dan Hurley, *Natural Causes*, p.48.

⁴⁷ Although Laetrile was marketed as a vitamin it was not a vitamin, and it had no proven ability to cure cancer. But for the promoters of Laetrile, therapeutic effectiveness mattered less than profitability.

media hype, which he did by recruiting a journalist to place a couple of articles in the Hearst press. These sensational medicinal briefs, which appeared in the Sunday supplement of *American Weekly* under the authorship of Glenn Kittler, were then turned into widely distributed book, *Laetrile: Control for Cancer* (Astor-Honor, 1963),⁴⁸ a text which benefited from a generous initial print-run of 500,000 copies. (Astor-Honor was a short-lived publisher that was cofounded by Prince Ivan Obolensky, a Wall Street financier who was also treasurer of the Russian Nobility Association in America.)

Perhaps illustrating the level of desperation and confusion about the potential for any and all ostensible cancer remedies, the Socialist Workers Party gave Kittler's book a glowing review some four years after it was first published, and berated the anti-socialist American Medical Association for ignoring "what may be the most

⁴⁸ In the immediate period before Laetrile rose to fame as a cure-all for cancer it had been preceded by another sham treatment known as Krebiozen. The leading proponent of this unproven anti-cancer treatment from 1951 onwards was the former president of the American Physiological Society, Dr. Andrew C. Ivy (1893-1978). Krebiozen was also pushed by right-wing publishers who released Ivy's co-authored book *Observations on Krebiozen in the Management of Cancer* (Regnery, 1956); while in 1964 Bernarr Macfadden's publishing group would republish Herbert Bailey's *A Matter of Life Or Death: The Incredible Story of Krebiozen* which had been first printed in 1958 by G.P.Putnam's & Sons. (Herbert Bailey also published another earlier book promoting Krebiozen that was released by the scientologist publisher, Hermitage House.)

Krebiozen had been created by a Yugoslavian refugee doctor named Stevan Durovic, and like Hoxsey's Cancer Cure, such unproven treatments differentiated themselves from previous quack treatments in specifically marketing themselves as being able to treat serious diseases and tumours. For a useful discussion of how Dr. Ivy posed as hero of the common man against the medical establishment, see Keith Wailoo, *How Cancer Crossed the Color Line* (Oxford University Press, 2011), pp.122-9. On an important related side note, even before Dr. Ivy's legitimacy fell into disrepute, he had become involved in controversies surrounding his famous testimony at the Nuremberg trials that, only upon closer analysis, led one researcher to refer to him as the "master of the white lie." Although unknown to most Americans, Dr. Ivy's academic contributions during the 1940s helped legitimize medical research on American prisoners to such a degree that his work "proclaimed prison research as ethically ideal." Larry Bernard, "Historian examines U.S. ethics in Nuremberg Medical Trial tactics," *Cornell Chronicle*, December 5, 1996. For an introduction to Ivy's false cure-all, see Ron Grossman, "Krebiozen: the cancer 'cure' that was a fraud," *Chicago Tribune*, September 25, 2018.

important medical discovery to date.”⁴⁹ Here there can be no doubting that the regressive politics of the AMA were second to none, but that is no excuse for a group of revolutionary socialists to place their trust in quack remedies like Laetrile.⁵⁰

Yet in the case of Laetrile, although they didn’t realize it at the time, the Socialist Workers Party had accidentally picked a cause that had already hitched its future to the far-right; and this controversy soon lit up the nation within the pages of *Life* magazine when (in late 1967, just after the socialist review had been published) it was revealed that McNaughton’s lucrative Laetrile pipeline was being backed by the mafia.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Sheavy Geldman, “Laetrile and cancer,” *International Socialist Review*, 28(4), July-August 1967.

⁵⁰ It is notable that in many ways the elitist manipulations that were undertaken by the AMA to oppose universal healthcare were not that dissimilar from the propaganda campaign used to promote Laetrile. Reflecting upon this anti-democratic history, one feminist historian explained how: “Under cover of a militant anticommunism, the AMA was able to defeat the last important attempt to legislate for a compulsory health insurance program. The physicians’ group viewed the plan as an unwelcome intrusion into the private world of medical practice. Put forward by the Truman administration, the proposal precipitated what was, at the time, the most expensive lobbying effort ever mounted. The AMA hired a public relations firm that orchestrated a massive campaign involving local and national organizations of every stripe (chambers of commerce, Lions and Rotary clubs, public libraries, dentists and pharmacists, and many others). Propaganda emphasized the potential domino effect of any public involvement in health care. “Would socialized medicine lead to socialization of other phases of American life?” a widely circulated campaign pamphlet asked rhetorically. “Lenin thought so,” the pamphlet replied. “He declared: ‘Socialized medicine is the keystone to the arch of the Socialist State.’” Ellen Leopold, *Under the Radar: Cancer and the Cold War* (Rutgers University Press, 2008), p.121.

⁵¹ The main target of *Life’s* expose was however not Laetrile, as one might have expected, but instead the story focused on the alleged collusion of Congressman Cornelius Gallagher (Democrat-New Jersey) with the Laetrile racket, including his apparent support of mafia kingpin, Bayonne Joe. Although the story did shed further light on the politics of evolving Laetrile movement, the *Life* special had been intended as a smear on Gallagher, a respected Congressman who had crossed swords with the dark lord of McCarthyism, the infamous Roy Cohn. In this instance, Gallagher had been set-up by Cohn and company precisely because he was overseeing a Subcommittee on Privacy that had shone light upon the anti-democratic activities of the FBI. Gallagher had further angered Cohn when he refused to follow suggestions that he hold hearings on the FBI’s illegal surveillance of Martin Luther King. Cohn (with J. Edgar Hoover’s support) had pushed this particular angle of enquiry in order

Despite this regrettable mistake on the part of the socialists, the most crucial point to draw from this period in history is that a large, restive, and combative segment of the population were growing increasingly confident in challenging the powers-that-be from both the far-right and the far-left. Activists from the John Birch Society exemplified those well-organized forces on the Right, and in time-honored fashion they railed against the liberal corporate establishment and the AMA. On the other side of the coin were the trade unionists and socialists, who in the wake of the unrelenting McCarthyite attacks of the fifties, were growing in strength having first found fertile grounds for organizing against capitalist oppression within the civil rights movement. The sixties were also a time for liberal introspection, as feeling threatened from revolutionary forces from both sides, journalists and academics alike pulled rank and published a deluge of articles and books that ultimately sought to encourage the capitalist system to reform itself before it was forcibly decommissioned by an enraged working-class.

One of the most memorable of the new batch of liberal writing on matters pertaining to healthcare was Morton Mintz's book *The Therapeutic Nightmare* (Houghton Mifflin, 1965), a feat of inspired investigative journalism that revealed the deep corruption within the pharmaceutical industry, the Food and Drug Administration, and the AMA.⁵² Another influential tome from this period was James S. Turner's *The Chemical Feast: Ralph Nader's Study Group Report on the Food and Drug Administration* (Grossman Publishers, 1970).⁵³

to embarrass former Attorney General Robert Kennedy who had been the individual who signed off on the King wiretaps. (The *Life* scoop even included highlights of what turned out to be a fictitious transcript of wire-tapped conversations between Gallagher and Bayonne.) This unfounded smear is discussed in Anthony Summers, *Official and Confidential: The Secret Life of J. Edgar Hoover* (Victor Gollancz, 1993), pp.209-13.

⁵² Jean Weston, "The Therapeutic Nightmare," *JAMA Network*, March 21, 1966.

⁵³ *The Chemical Feast* made important criticisms of the FDA, but as one critical reviewer of the book observed: "Like many other of today's young, these authors seem beguiled by 'Scientology,' [Wilhelm] Reich's orgone therapy, and food faddism. To argue that the FDA should divert resources from dubious ventures with health overtones to purely pocketbook ventures like fair packaging and labelling seems a strange way indeed to enhance the quality of American life." James Harvey Young made this point in *JAMA: The Journal of the American Medical Association*, 217(12),

Barbara Seaman's *The Doctors' Case Against the Pill* (P. H. Wyden, 1969) similarly fed into the narrative of a capitalist establishment that was out of control, which, of course, had always been the case.⁵⁴

Cancer Wars

Distrust of corporate profiteering by ordinary people has always been a sensible reaction when it comes to maintaining their own longevity; and this explains why alternative cancer treatment like Laetrile managed to assert a firm hold on the public imagination. And while the so-called health and lifestyle magazines promoted by the powerful Rodale stable had done much to undermine public understanding of effective medical interventions, the role of the mainstream (corporate) media in facilitating such confusion should never be underestimated.⁵⁵

1971, p.1708. For a useful overview of Wilhelm Reich's life, see Christopher Turner, *Adventures in the Orgasmatrix: How the Sexual Revolution Came to America* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011).

⁵⁴ For useful reviews of the relation between capitalist exploitation and poor public health, see Robert Albritton, *Let Them Eat Junk How Capitalism Creates Hunger and Obesity* (Pluto Press, 2009); and Anne-Emanuelle Birn, Timothy Holtz, and Yogan Pillay, *Textbook of Global Health* (Oxford University Press, 2017).

With powerful liberal organizations like Planned Parenthood siding with the corporate establishment against muckraking exposes like *The Doctors' Case Against the Pill* it is little wonder that women fought determinedly to take back control of their lives by creating a network of women's health clinics that prioritized human needs before corporate greed. Indeed, Barbara Seaman had written her book as a reformist but subsequently embraced a more radical feminist politics that saw her act as a cofounder of the National Women's Health Network. For more on this see, Elizabeth Siegel Watkins, *On the Pill: A Social History of Oral Contraceptives, 1950-1970* (John Hopkins University Press, 2001); Jennifer Nelson, *More Than Medicine: A History of the Feminist Women's Health Movement* (New York University Press, 2015).

⁵⁵ Curtis MacDougall, *Superstition and the Press* (Prometheus Books, 1983). On the issue of media misreporting, one scientific study examined 2,337 terminal cancer patients in palliative care and determined that, while most died after 5 months, one percent survived beyond five years. But somehow the *Independent* newspaper reported in January 2006, in an article titled "Miracle' cures shown to work", that the reason for survival owed to alternative medicine, when nothing of the sort was shown. Instead, the scientists had merely shown that a small number of people recover for no known reason even without any additional form of medical intervention. By way of a contrast, when a 2007 article from the *British Medical Journal* showed that a cheap practical parenting program could significantly improve children's behaviour, the story

For example, shortly after President Nixon launched his “war on cancer” in 1971, he reopened diplomatic talks with China, and lo and behold, one of the first things that the mainstream media fixated upon was the so-called magic of alternative medicine. One writer who helped catalyze this strange mystical obsession was James Reston, a popular reporter who had accompanied Henry Kissinger on a preparatory visit to China in July 1971. Reston had apparently been taken ill with appendicitis and had allegedly been operated on with only acupuncture for anesthetic – a tall-tale that he wrote about at length in the *New York Times*. Irrespective of the truth of the matter this misreporting set-in motion much popular intrigue among ruling-elites, and soon all manner of authoritative medical practitioners were travelling to China to witness such miracles first-hand; and one over-awed journalist even reported having watched an acupuncture-assisted heart operation!

The Chinese operations were all cleverly devised fakes, but nevertheless their uncritical reception in the American corporate media led to a resurgent belief in the efficacy of acupuncture.⁵⁶ India likewise managed to achieve a similar miracle with homoeopathy, which it re-exported back to the West in the 1970s. Such alternative medical therapies were promoted in the mainstream media as being “an exotic, natural, holistic and individualized form of medicine, and an antidote to the corporate medicine being peddled by giant pharmaceutical corporations in Europe and America.”⁵⁷

was “unanimously ignored” by the British news media. The article in question is titled “Parenting in Sure Start services for children at risk of developing conduct disorder: pragmatic randomised trial.”. Goldacre, *Bad Science*.

⁵⁶ In China acupuncture dropped in popularity at the onset of the First and Second Opium Wars, and its use was only revived in 1949, precisely because it served as a cheap alternative to mainstream medicine in a poverty-stricken country. In line with this practical reasoning, Chairman Mao’s personal physician confirms that Mao did not personally believe in the use of Chinese medicine, but Mao thought it useful as it allowed him to appear to be caring for his populous by creating an extensive network of traditional healers (‘barefoot doctors’). For further details about the invention of “Traditional Chinese Medicine,” see Kim Taylor, *Chinese Medicine in Early Communist China, 1945-1963: A Medicine of Revolution* (Routledge Curzon, 2005).

⁵⁷ Singh and Ernst, *Trick or Treatment?*, p.144, p.145. When homeopathy was first introduced to India in 1829, the primary reason for its quick uptake owed much to the fact that it was “perceived as being in opposition to the imperialist medicine

A “War on Cancer” may well have been declared by the American government, but the methods by which it was launched and developed continued to be scrutinized by a suspicious citizenry. In an environment of growing skepticism and hostility towards professional expertise, President Nixon’s official promise of finding a scientific solution to cancer, combined with the very real fear that millions of people had of dying of cancer, led many people to search for their own health solutions.

Related to such public anger at the stark limitations of medicine under capitalism, socialists like the Black Panthers had already pioneered a political approach to running health clinics to cater for the needs of the poor,⁸ and feminists like Barbara Seaman and countless others set about experimenting with more democratic forms of health provision. Other socialist groups that formed part of this resistance to capitalist health priorities included the Medical Committee for

practised by the British invaders.” (p.144)

In June 1988, homeopathy received a welcome boost from the scientific community when the prestigious scientific journal *Nature* published an article by a French scientist named Jacques Benveniste that supported homeopathic claims about the efficacy of their regime of water dilutions. Yet given the magical claims being made in the article, John Maddox, the editor of *Nature*, added a disclaimer saying that *Nature* was rerunning the experiment to confirm its legitimacy. The only other time that Maddox had made such a statement was when *Nature* had published a paper (in 1974) by Uri Geller about his mystical spoon-bending powers. When Benveniste’s experiment was eventually repeated with external supervision by a team from *Nature*, they determined that the results of the study showed no evidence to support homeopathy.

⁸ For a useful critical overview of the development of health clinics, see the January 1972 issue of *Science for the People* (pp.22-6). Indeed, Neighborhood Health Centers (NHCs) “were not without their critics. Some black rural and urban physicians worried that the NHCs would compete for Medicaid patients. A 1971 exchange between Dr. Jack Geiger and Dr. Howard Levy of the Medical Committee for Human Rights (MCHR) and Health-PAC, a New York-based New Left think tank devoted to medical issues, also revealed a negative view of NHCs from a progressive point of view. This exchange revealed that not all members of the movement to transform health care in the United States were happy with the NHCs. Levy critically assessed the NHCs as tools of a medical establishment bent on collecting Office of Economic Opportunity federal dollars without delivering any real transformation of health care or empowerment of the poor.” Nelson, *More Than Medicine*, p.87.

Human Rights (formed in 1964) and a loose alliance of concerned researchers who established an organization called *Science for the People* in early 1969. Over the next two decades, this latter group published a magazine with the same name, and they played an important role in arguing that, politically speaking, biology and medicine cannot remain neutral. Illustrating this point, in the July 1971 issue of *Science for the People's* magazine, an article highlighted how the Bionetics Lab, a Maryland subsidiary of Litton Industries, was "receiving a large chunk of money from President Nixon's highly publicized 'War on Cancer'." The writer explained:

What credentials do these organizations have which qualify them to look after the public health? Litton is a conglomerate which has gotten rich primarily on contracts with various governments. Its Minnesota subsidiary has performed studies of delivery of biological weapons, and its Mississippi subsidiary produces nuclear submarines. Litton holds an \$800 million contract with the Greek military junta for economic development of Western Peloponnesus and Crete.

Under a National Institute of Health contract, the Bionetics Lab recently performed a study of the hazards of several hundred agricultural chemicals. Some chemicals in heavy use were found to be quite dangerous, but the Bionetics Lab managed to keep this information hidden from the public. Low doses of 2,4,5-T were shown to produce deformed fetuses in rats. 2,4,5-T is a defoliant widely used in Viet Nam, and recent reports from Viet Nam have indicated a huge increase in the number of malformed babies born. Bionetics said nothing of its findings, and the report might still be secret if a group of 'Nader's Raiders' had not stumbled across it during the summer of 1969. Subsequent attempts by various scientists to obtain a copy of the report met with evasions, 'no comments', and being told it was classified.

With considerable effort a Harvard biologist obtained a bootlegged copy. In December, 1970, after much furor from a few scientists, and two years after the original results were in, President Nixon said he would "phase out" the use of 2,4,5-T in Viet Nam. It is also worth

noting that some of the other chemicals in the Bionetics study, pesticides used primarily in the U.S., were found to *produce cancer*.⁵⁹

Such detailed criticisms of the medical establishment were a common feature within the magazine and in July 1972 *Science for the People* lambasted the so-called “ethical drug industry” highlighting how:

The prescription drug industry, with the complicity of protecting and supporting institutions of its corporate capitalist complex; the government and the FDA, the doctors and the AMA, the advertising media, has made the technology of drugs and health care a destructive one, a technology designed to promote the best interests of a small elite in lieu of, and at the expense of, the majority of people.⁶⁰

Simultaneously, the far-right attacked the “monopoly” of the AMA, government regulators, and drug companies, and pushed “freedom of choice” in all medical treatments. But as the seventies progressed, precisely because the socialist left had been unable to provide a convincing lead to the diverse mass social movements of the day – which wasn’t helped by massive government repression of their

⁵⁹ Joel Schwartz, “Cancer: we cause it, we cure it!,” *Science for the People*, July 1971, p.12. Writers affiliated to *Science for the People* who travelled to China, were, like their counterparts in the American mainstream, unfortunately overwhelmed by the alleged curative powers of acupuncture. In fact, the first article that *Science for the People* carried on this issue was written by the same American biologists who had been featured in a *New York Times* article earlier in the year that had emphasized the wonders of China’s alternative treatments. Ethan Signer, “Biological science in China,” *Science for the People*, September 1971, p.5; Seymour Topping, “U.S. biologists in China tell of scientific gains,” *New York Times*, May 24, 1971.

⁶⁰ Jon Feltheimer, “The U.S. ethical drug industry,” *Science for the People*, July 1972, p.12. Feltheimer correctly explained that the “Food and Drug Administration has caused further deterioration to an already sick situation, by making the public believe that the drug industry is heavily and scientifically regulated.” (p.32) In another excellent article contained within the same issue titled “What do health maintenance organizations maintain?” Britta Fischer highlights two particularly important critical texts: the first was the Medical Committee for Human Rights’ booklet *Politics of Health Care* (1972) which was edited by Ken Rosenberg and Gordon Schiff; and the second was Barbara and John Ehrenreich’s *The American Health Empire: Power, Profits and Politics* (Vintage Books, 1971) which they say “is the best radical analysis available.” (p.25)

activities - too many disorientated progressives found themselves “duped” by the libertarians “‘freedom of choice’ dogma” particularly when it came to the contentious issue of Laetrile.⁶¹ Tragically this led to the situation where the ultraconservative leaders of the health freedom movement even managed to weaponize the 1973 legal precedent set by *Roe v. Wade* to argue that medical patients had the right to choose any treatment they wished.⁶² Laetrile thus became something of a cause celebre in the 1970s.

Derived from the pits of apricots, it could be taken orally but was usually given by injection. It did not attract widespread attention until the early 1960s, when a combination of circumstances-the closing of Hoxsey's clinic in Dallas, promotion of laetrile by an aggressive manufacturer in Canada, timely publicity in *The American Weekly*-part of the conservative Heart press] made it better known. When California prosecuted a physician who was prescribing it, the Committee for Freedom of Choice aggressively took up his cause.

For all these reasons laetrile emerged by the mid-1970s as the unorthodox cancer remedy *extraordinaire*. One contemporary opponent of the substance called it “the greatest episode of quackery

⁶¹ Joshua Dressier, “Free to choose your own destruction: laetrile, helmets and libertarians,” *In These Times*, October 5, 1977; Ron Rosenbaum, “Tales from the cancer cure underground,” *Harper's*, November 1980. Right-wing health freedom activists had first formed the International Association of Cancer Victims and Friends in 1963, while in 1973 another group that was spun off from this association was the related Cancer Control Society. The latter group counted Lorraine Rosenthal among their cofounders, the individual who was responsible for the production of the National Health Federation documentary, *Action for Survival*, that had starred Ralph Nader and Adelle Davis. Another significant Laetrile lobby group was Dr. Robert W. Bradford's Committee for Freedom of Choice in Cancer Therapy (later known as the Committee for Freedom of Choice in Medicine). This group had been formed in 1972 around a nucleus of diehard members of the ultraconservative John Birch Society.

⁶² An informative review of this aspect of the Laetrile wars is provided in Mary Ziegler's book *Beyond Abortion: Roe v. Wade and the Battle for Privacy* (Harvard University Press, 2018), pp.121-62. “Arguments based on the right to choose allowed the Laetrile movement to convince politicians who agreed on little else, from feminists and populist Democrats to small-government conservatives. While the medical establishment convincingly insisted that Laetrile had never helped anyone, almost half the states in the nation embraced what many saw as a patient's right to choose.” (p.143)

in our history.” So great was popular interest in the substance during its most heralded years-in 1977 and 1978-that *Newsweek* carried a cover story on it and “60 Minutes,” the television series, devoted a program to it. Polls suggested that a majority of people favored legalization of laetrile in interstate commerce. It was estimated that 70,000 Americans took the substance in 1978, roughly one-fifth of the number of Americans who died of cancer in that year.⁶³

The key authors who pushed forward the Laetrile agenda were the numerous conspiracy theorists associated with the John Birch Society, the most famous being G. Edward Griffin, who published *War Without Cancer* in 1975.⁶⁴ But the far-right drew other apparently non-affiliated writers into their orbit too, commentators whose work enabled medical libertarians to appeal to a much wider political audience than they might otherwise have been able to reach. Three notable journalists who acted in this vein were Ralph Moss, who would publish *The Cancer Syndrome* (Grove Press, 1980),⁶⁵ Gary Null who

⁶³ James Patterson, *The Dread Disease: Cancer and Modern American Culture* (Harvard University Press, 1987), p.273.

⁶⁴ The John Birch Society’s toxic legacy lives on through the activities of an influential group called the Association of American Physicians and Surgeons, see Olga Khazan, “The opposite of socialized medicine,” *The Atlantic*, February 25, 2020. Furthermore, to this day Laetrile quack treatments continue to be administered in Tijuana; and until his death in 2004, National Health Federation activist Michael Culbert, the author of the early conservative classic *Vitamin B-17-Forbidden Weapon Against Cancer: The Fight for Laetrile* (Arlington Press, 1974), had served as the information officer for the Tijuana-based Bio-Medical Center. Although Culbert earned a BA from the University of Wichita, his medical degree was obtained from the Sri-Lankan based Medicina Alternativa – the very same institute which, in 1984, delivered a “doctor of biochemistry degree” to Robert W. Bradford (another leading Laetrile activist).

⁶⁵ Ralph Moss still promotes Laetrile and starred in the conspiracy documentary *Second Opinion: Laetrile at Sloan-Kettering* (2014) which was directed by Eric Merola – a director who has produced a number of documentaries promoting the related quackery of Stanislaw Burzynski, the most recent one being *Burzynski: The Cancer Cure Cover-Up* (2016). In the film *Second Opinion* Moss recalled how he had initially tried to promote his advocacy of Laetrile within the New York Chapter of *Science for the People*. However, Moss noted that most members were not interested in a cancer treatment so closely associated with the John Birch Society so Moss and a few others “broke away” to form their own group called “Second Opinion” which printed the first leaflet/publication December 1976 (discussed in

in 1979 wrote a series of influential cancer-related articles for *Penthouse* magazine,⁶⁶ and Peter Barry Chowka, who wrote about Laetrile for a variety of New Age publications in the late 1970s.⁶⁷

documentary from 39 min). Moss' employer, New York's Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, was featured in the September/October 1976 issue of *Science for the People*, but it is important to highlight that at no time in the magazine's history did *Science for the People* cover the issue of Laetrile.

⁶⁶ Gary Null rose to health fame after publishing a series of articles in *Penthouse* magazine in 1979. "The great cancer fraud," was the title of the first explosive piece in Null's series exposing the alleged "suppression of independent thought," an article which named-check many of America's most notorious cancer fraudsters, including Harry Hoxsey, William Koch, Max Gerson, Linus Pauling, and Ralph Moss and other boosters for Laetrile which Null states had by then "become the central target of American Cancer Society door-slammings." Null's series of articles somehow manages to contain no mention of the central importance of right-wing politics to the health freedom movement.

The first article in the *Penthouse* series was published in September 1979. The second Null article was then published the following month as "The suppression of cancer cures" (which focused on the work of Stanislaw Burzynski); and the final part, which was co-authored with Anne Pitrone in November, was titled "Alternative cancer therapies." In this final instalment Null introduced his readers to the controversial views of Dr. Dean Burk. After retiring in 1974 from a senior position at the National Cancer Institute, Dr. Burk had promoted Laetrile and led campaigns against water fluoridation (which he referred to as "a form of public mass murder"). Finally, it is relevant that in later years that Null, who in his earlier years had been highly influenced by the magical beliefs of Rudolf Steiner, went on to promote dangerous conspiracies about AIDS and became a leading opponent of vaccinations. For a useful examination of the anti-vax movement, see Jennifer Reich, *Calling the Shots: Why Parents Reject Vaccines* (New York University Press 2016); and for a discussion of the many problems caused by Null's popular legacy, see Andrew Leslie Phillips, "Alarming Pacifica developments", *The Unrepentant Marxist*, January 14, 2014.

It is perhaps fitting that the founder of *Penthouse*, Bob Guccione, himself played a critical role in promoting paranormal beliefs which were an integral feature of his other publishing outlet, *Omni* magazine. (*Omni* was cofounded in 1978 by Bob Guccione's long-serving business partner and later wife, Kathy Keeton, who also maintained a lifelong commitment to alternative healing modalities. In 1989 Keeton also founded to her founded *Longevity* magazine which has counted leading health conspiracy-theorist Patrick Holford among their regular columnists.)

⁶⁷ In the late 1970s Peter Barry Chowka published a number of articles about fictitious cancer treatments for the *East West Journal* (which was the official organ of the macrobiotic community). Within the pages of this, and other New Age publications, Chowka revived the mythology of Hoxsey and other persecuted treatments like Laetrile. Chowka currently acts as a regular commentator and host on

Initially at least it would have been difficult for the public to identify the political approach of these authors, as they all made a concerted habit of side-lining or ignoring the central involvement of far-right health organizations in the ongoing Laetrile wars. Yet it is now clear that the politics of all three widely-read commentators did nothing to stop them promoting all manner of right-wing conspiracies throughout their writing careers. Thus, these authors popularized their own Laetrile journalism by couching their arguments within convincing (non-libertarian) criticisms of Nixon's official "War on Cancer," taking advantage of the fact that ordinary people were desperate for any relief from the death toll inflicted upon their communities by this dreaded disease.

To be clear, the threat to public health caused by the "Cancer Establishment" inaugurated by President Nixon's "War" remains very real now just as it did in the 1970s. And one of the best-known writers to document such threats from a left-leaning perspective has been Samuel Epstein, who recently surmised that:

Apart from well-documented evidence on control and manipulation of health and environmental information, industry has used various strategies to con the public into complacency and divert attention from industry's own recklessness and responsibility for the cancer epidemic. Key among these is the "blame the victim" theory of cancer causation, developed by industry scientists and consultants and a group of pro-industry academics, and tacitly supported by the "cancer establishment." This theory emphasizes faulty lifestyle, smoking and fatty diet, sunbathing, or genetic susceptibility as the major causes of preventable cancer, while trivializing the role of involuntary exposures to occupational and environmental carcinogens. Another misleading diversion is the claim that there is no evidence of recently increasing cancer rates other than lung cancer, for which smoking is given the exclusive credit. While the role of lifestyle is obviously important, the scientific basis of this theory is as unsound as it is self-serving. Certainly, smoking is a major, but not sole, cause of lung cancer. But a wealth of evidence clearly incriminates the additional role of other

far-right talk shows like the Haggmann Report which is a close ally in the war on truth with Alex Jones' more famous *Info Wars*.

causes of lung cancer, particularly exposure to occupational carcinogens and carcinogenic community-air pollutants.⁶⁸

Yet by 1982 the once powerful Laetrile movement, which arguably peaked in the late 1970s, was now in decline. This dwindling of interest in Laetrile was partly a result of scientific research that had been published in January 1982: research that had shown that the alleged treatment did nothing to prevent cancer. This proved to be one of the final nails in the coffin of the movement and it built on the positive results of the Supreme Court's *Rutherford* decision (made in June 1979) which had unanimously upheld the Federal Government's authority to ban distribution of Laetrile.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ Samuel Epstein, *Cancer-gate: How to Win the Losing Cancer War* (Routledge, 2005), p.7. Epstein's pioneering cancer research featured prominently in the pages of *Science for the People* during the 1970s, although their magazines writers remained critical of the liberal orientation of his work. In *Science for the People's* 1980 review of Epstein's classic *The Politics of Cancer* (Anchor Press, 1979) Bob Ginsburg points out how "Epstein evidently denies that the basic problem is the nature and priorities of capitalism." (Ginsburg, "Why there is no cancer prevention," *Science for the People*, May-June 1980, p.20.)

Other noteworthy books/articles that successfully draw attention to how a focus on prevention and capitalist exploitation would best address the environmental causes of cancer include Robert Van den Bosch, *The Pesticide Conspiracy* (University of California Press, 1978); Jack McCulloch, *Asbestos Blues: Labour, Capital, Physicians and the State in South Africa* (James Currey, 2002); Dan Fagin, *Toxic Deception: How the Chemical Industry Manipulates Science, Bends the Law and Endangers Your Health* (Common Courage Press, 2002); Shamon Brownlee, *Overtreated: Why Too Much Medicine Is Making Us Sicker and Poorer* (Bloomsbury, 2008); John Bellamy Foster and Brett Clark, "Rachel Carson's ecological critique," *Monthly Review*, February 1, 2008; Alexey Yablokov *et al.* (eds.), *Chernobyl: Consequences of the Catastrophe for People and the Environment* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2010); Mahiben Maruthappu *et al.* "Economic downturns, universal health coverage, and cancer mortality in high- income and middle- income countries, 1990- 2010: A longitudinal analysis," *Lancet*, 388(10045), 2016; and Vinayak Prasad, *Malignant: How Bad Policy and Bad Evidence Harm People with Cancer* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2020). As Mike Marqusee concludes in *The Price of Experience: Writings on Living with Cancer* (OR Books, 2014), "What we need is not a 'war on cancer' but a recognition that cancer is a social and environmental issue, and can only be fully addressed through far-reaching economic and political change." (p.35)

⁶⁹ One famous right-wing powerbroker who cut his legislative teeth in the Laetrile wars was Dan Burton, who served as the Republican Congressman for Indiana from

1983 until 2013 and thereafter became a lobbyist for the Church of Scientology. In 1977 while serving as a state representative in Indiana, Burton had led a successful fight to approve the use of Laetrile, although during his later years in Congress he was more famous for the support he led to the misconception that vaccines cause autism. On a related matter Burton's first wife died from cancer in 2002 and in 2006 he married Dr. Samia Tawil, the woman who had helped care for his dying wife. Dr. Samia Burton is currently a board member of the Wongu University of Oriental Medicine, an institution which was founded in 2012 (in Nevada) by the Rev. Sun Myung Moon. Considering the leading role that Dan Burton played in building the anti-vaccine movement it is significant that right-wing health freedom advocates (whose ideas were popularized by the mainstream media) were at the forefront of undermining public trust in vaccine safety.

Here the one documentary that arguably did most to promote vaccine distrust was *DTP: Vaccine Roulette* (WRY-TV, 1982) which prominently featured the fearmongering of the then president of the National Health Federation, Dr. Robert Mendelsohn (this controversial affiliation however was not mentioned in the documentary). In the wake of the release of this documentary, worried parents came together to form a group "called Dissatisfied Parents Together (DPT), and this group would eventually go on to become the National Vaccine Information Center, which is now the largest organization in America that is committed to eliminating vaccine mandates." Today this group attempts to maintain a nonpartisan approach to politics - eliciting sizable support from both liberals and the far-right - with major funders of their work including the Albert and Claire Dvoskin Family Foundation (the Dvoskins' being major Democratic Party donors) and leading Republican Party donors, particularly individuals who are "supporters of libertarian candidate Ron Paul."

"As befits a movement leader trying to gather together a big tent of supporters, [Barbara Loe Fisher] invokes lefty-sounding environmental terms alongside right-wing libertarian values." Thus, the single most famous right-wing multimillionaire who continues to donate the most money to Fisher's National Vaccine Information Centre is the osteopathic physician/vitamin supplement salesman' and Covid-19 conspiracist, Joseph Mercola. Another important libertarian funder of the anti-vaccine movement is the hedge fund manager and New York-based philanthropist Bernard Selz, whose wife, Lisa, happens to be the president of a vaccine misinformation group known as the Informed Consent Action Network. This latter group was founded by Del Bigtree, a vocal libertarian who now promotes countless conspiracies through his own widely watched internet talk show, but who first courted fame when, with the assistance of Andrew Wakefield, he produced the controversial documentary *Vaxxed: From Cover-Up To Catastrophe* (2016).

Emily Willingham, "Former U.S. Rep. Dan Burton, vaccine foe, now lobbying for Scientology outfit," *Forbes*, October 21, 2015; Reich, *Calling the Shots*, p.59; Anna Kirkland, "The legitimacy of vaccine critics: what is left after the autism hypothesis?," *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law*, 37(1), 2011, p.80; Kirkland, *Vaccine Court: The Law and Politics of Injury* (NYU Press, 2016); Neena Satija and

However, the war on science was by no means over, and medicinal treatments like Laetrile were simply replaced by other new non-scientific remedies. These succeeding New Age treatments had the novel selling-point that they were “anti-medicines, emphasizing purification through dietary regimens, detoxification and internal cleansing, or mind control” and so involved “no agents that require FDA approval”. This was the considered view of the up-and-coming integrative health megastar Dr. Barrie Cassileth who at the time had recently published her first book, *The Cancer Patient: Social and Medical Aspects of Care* (Lea & Febiger, 1979) – a book that helped lay the groundwork for the institutionalization of alternative treatments within the cancer establishment.⁷⁰ Cassileth would go on to serve as a

Lena Sun “A major funder of the anti-vaccine movement has made millions selling natural health products,” *Washington Post*, December 20, 2019; Bryan Smith, “Dr. Mercola: visionary or quack?,” *Chicago* magazine, January 31, 2012; for a useful debunking Andrew Wakefield’s anti-vaccine propaganda, including a critical review of *Vaxxed*, see Jonathan Berman, *Anti-vaxxers: How to Challenge a Misinformed Movement* (MIT Press, 2020), pp.69-96; and Brian Deer, *The Doctor Who Fooled the World: Andrew Wakefield’s War on Vaccines* (Scribe, 2020).

Another highly influential individual who continues to spread anti-vax propaganda across the world is Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. whose most recent toxic addition to the world has been his release of the documentary *Medical Racism: The New Apartheid* (2021) which “mixes real examples of racism in healthcare and vaccine misinformation to push an anti-vaccine agenda on marginalized communities of colour.” Jonathan Jarry, “The anti-vaccine propaganda of Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.,” *McGill Office for Science and Society*, April 16, 2021. Tragically Kennedy tricked progressive and even socialist activists (including a leading member of the Black Lives Matter movement) into participating in this film without letting them know the true purpose of the documentary (an issue which is discussed in Will Stone’s article “An anti-vaccine film targeted to black Americans spreads false information,” *NPR*, June 8, 2021).

For a progressive alternative to Kennedy’s manipulations, in 2022 PBS will be airing Stanley Nelson’s documentary, *Medical Racism*, “will take a hard look at the evidence for medical racism in America, connecting today’s stories to a long and reprehensible history that includes the Tuskegee syphilis study, the eugenics movement and slavery in the Americas.”

⁷⁰ Barrie Cassileth, “After Laetrile, what?,” *New England Journal of Medicine*, 306, 1982, p.1482, p.1483. In response to Cassileth’s article, James Harvey Young comments within his book *The Medical Messiahs: A Social History of Health Quackery in Twentieth-Century America* (Princeton University Press, 1992): “The new mode owed much to New Age philosophies and religions from the Far East, as

founding member of the advisory council to the National Institutes of Health's (NIH) Office of Alternative Medicine, and in 1999 she was recruited by Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York to create an "Integrative Medicine" program, which led to her holding the Laurance S. Rockefeller Chair in Integrative Medicine.

Another influential supernatural doctor who charted a similar course to Dr. Cassileth has been the best-selling author Dr. Norm Shealy, one of whose first books was *Occult Medicine Can Save Your Life* (Bantam Books, 1977).⁷¹ Here it is of more than passing interest that the publisher of this text, Bantam Books, was owned by the Italian company IFI, which was run by the immensely powerful and conservative Agnelli family.⁷² So, it is not too surprising that in the same year the conservative publisher also printed the work of Dr. John Richardson, a leading John Birch Society member who was the first physician to be prosecuted for treating cancer patients with Laetrile.⁷³

well as to earlier unorthodox traditions that once had great vogue in an earlier America: homeopathic and naturopathic concepts, and the belief that intestinal putrefaction lay at the root of disease." (p.460)

A well-publicized example of the growing promotion of such mind-cures in the mainstream media came about when Norman Cousins published his autobiographical book *Anatomy of an Illness* (W. W. Norton & Company, 1979), which was made into a television movie in 1984. For criticisms of this influential book, see Florence Ruderman, "A placebo for the doctor," *Commentary*, May 1980; and Sidney Kahn, "The anatomy of Norman Cousins' illness," *The Mount Sinai Journal of Medicine*, 48, 1981.

⁷¹ For a review of similar occult literature, see E. Patrick Curry, "Carl Jung, Stanislav Grof, and new age medical mysticism," *SRAM*, 6(2), March 2002.

⁷² In 1953 Giovanni "Gianni" Agnelli (who was introduced earlier in this book) married Marella, whose father, at the time, was working as secretary-general to the Council of Europe." (*The Times obituary*, February 26, 2019) "The obituary notes: "For the second half of the 20th century Marella and Gianni Agnelli were, in effect, Italy's royal family. At their peak, his businesses, which encompassed hundreds of companies including FIAT, Juventus football club and the newspaper La Stampa, constituted a quarter of the value of the country's stock market." David Rockefeller appointed Agnelli to the international advisory committee of Chase Manhattan Bank. For two detailed examinations of Giovanni Agnelli's reactionary politics, see Alan Friedman, *Agnelli and the Network of Italian Power* (Mandarin, 1989); and Jennifer Clark, *Mondo Agnelli: Fiat, Chrysler, and the Power of a Dynasty* (Wiley, 2011).

⁷³ Dr. John Richardson and Patricia Griffin (the wife of G. Edward Griffin), *Laetrile Case Histories: The Richardson Cancer Clinic Experience* (Bantam Books, 1977); Gerald Markle, James Petersen, and Morton Wagenfeld, "Notes from the cancer

Dr. Shealy himself however, in contrast to these libertarians, traced his medical inspiration to the New Thought movement,⁷⁴ and was most famous for having acted as the first president of the American Holistic Medical Association which had been founded in 1975.

Dr. Shealy, as it turns out, continues to preach occult medicine to this day, but with the advent of blogging his ultraconservative politics are now open for all the world to see. As early as 2013 Dr. Shealy therefore wrote on his blog about his belief in aliens (following the work of Zechariah Sitchin), adding:

Undeniably our media are owned by the insiders of this Secret force that may best be called *The Committee of 300* [citing John Coleman's anti-Semitic text]. Thus the pap we get from all media and their failure to cover the TITANIC evidence that this is going on leaves most people in the dark or hypnotized and drugged out of reality This is coupled with the Committee's control of food, energy, drugs, Congress, etc. Unless there is significant Awakening, the future is indeed One World Government By the Elite, For the Elite and Of the Elite!! And remember, those who believe that there is conspiracy are much more likely to be sane!⁷⁵

The Magic of Supplement Power

But leaving Dr. Shealy's depraved ravings aside for a moment, with Laetrile's fall from grace the growth of the medical freedom

underground: participation in the Laetrile movement," *Social Science and Medicine*, 12, January 1978.

⁷⁴ In the early 1970s Dr. Norm Shealy cofounded the Science of Mind Church of Chicago, an institution which eventually evolved to become Holos University. Notably Dr. Shealy trained the "medical intuitive" Caroline Myss. Myss has co-authored many books with Shealy and maintains her own Russian connections through the leading role she played at the helm of Mikhail Gorbachev's State of the World Forum and in leading the work of the Wisdom University (now Ubiquity University, whose founding was discussed earlier).

⁷⁵ Dr. Norm Shealy, "Who runs the world?," *Shealy-Sorin Wellness Center*, August 13, 2013. In the same article Dr. Shealy expresses his debt of faith to the work of conspiracy theorist David Icke; while in a later blog post he writes that he had first been inspired by the John Birch Society classic *None Dare Call It Conspiracy* when he had first read it in the 1970s (see "The perception deception," *Shealy-Sorin Wellness Center*, July 30, 2014).

movement was nowhere near from over. Thus Republican Senator Orrin Hatch, a Mormon representing the State of Utah (from 1977 until 2019), who maintained close links to a prominent John Birch Society supporter named Cleon Skousen (who himself was a close friend of the Rev. Sun Myung Moon),⁷⁶ had already jumped into

⁷⁶ Orrin Hatch's political orientation is closely connected to the activism of Utah-based health freedom warrior Clinton Miller whose experience of the FDA in the 1950s led him to equate their surveillance of supplement manufacturers as being akin to Hitler's regime of terror. He therefore soon joined the National Health Federation and played a leading role in opposing the fluoridation of water in Utah. Although in later years Miller played a part in supporting DSHEA, throughout the sixties and seventies he excelled himself as one of the NHF's most effective spokespersons and lobbyists in helping push through the Proxmire Vitamin Bill. Riding the revivalist tide of right-wing politics, in 1976 Miller then sought the Republican nomination to stand in Utah, and amongst the four other prospective candidates was Orrin Hatch, whose lack of prior involvement in politics allowed Hatch to stand as the "nonpolitician." To improve his chances of victory, Hatch "ran to the right of his four competitors, seeking the support of the most conservative factions in the state" with one of his "most prominent backers" being Cleon Skousen - the bestselling Mormon writer for the John Birch Society, who helpfully provided finances and volunteers for Hatch's successful campaign. Matt Canham, "The political birth of Orrin Hatch," *The Salt Lake Tribune*, January 31, 2012; for more general context, see Matthew Harris (ed.), *Thunder from the Right: Ezra Taft Benson in Mormonism and Politics* (University of Illinois Press, 2019); Jay Logan Rogers, Utah's right turn: Republican ascendancy and the 1976 U.S. Senate race, M.A. Thesis, University of Utah, 2008; and Michael Tomasky, "The sad trajectory of Orrin Hatch," *New York Times*, January 3, 2018.

Once elected in 1977, Senator Hatch embarked upon a long political exploration in conspiratorialism that only ended in 2019, making him the longest serving Republican Senator in history. Hatch thus played a critical role in pressing forward a coalition between the Old Right and the emerging New Right, a coalition that echoed Skousen's own positive reception among the Reagan administration and the ultraconservative evangelical community centered around Rev. Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority. Critically, the Christian Right "formalized its acceptance of the Mormon Church in 1982 by appointing Skousen to the board of the Council for National Policy." Skousen's Freeman Institute (which had been formed in 1971) was subsequently renamed the National Center for Constitutional Studies upon Reagan's election, and Skousen's reactionary ideas were now "being taken up by Idaho-based militias and white supremacist groups"; while Reagan remained a fan and praised Skousen's Center as "doing fine public service in educating Americans." Alexander Zaitchik, *Common Nonsense: Glenn Beck and the Triumph of Ignorance* (John Wiley & Sons, 2010), p.226, p.229.

"Crucial to the growth of his [Freeman] institute was Skousen's unlikely friendship with the Korean mogul and self-declared prophet Sun Myung Moon. When Skousen

action, and along with Senator Samuel Hayakawa (Republican-California) they had sponsored the Voluntary Vitamin Act of 1981 which, if it had passed, “would have eviscerated all FDA attempts to control the unfettered use of vitamins.” This “Vitamin Act,” however, never came to fruition because after President Reagan appointed a new Food and Drug administrator “momentum for the Hatch bill petered out.” This owed to the fact that as far as the supplement industry was concerned the FDA had now been effectively defanged by Reagan’s new appointment.⁷⁷

As a part of the vitamin lobbies ensuing celebrations, in 1981 the National Health Federation gave Linus Pauling another award in recognition of the extraordinary services he had rendered on behalf of health freedom. And the following year Maureen Salaman, an activist who had penned a health column in America’s leading anti-Semitic publication, the Liberty Lobby’s *Spotlight* newspaper, was then elected president of the National Health Federation. From this position of authority, Salaman quickly built upon her vile political legacy by founding the Populist Party with Holocaust denier Willis

arrived in D.C. at the dawn of the Reagan era, Moon was energetically showering the nascent Christian Right with cash. Skousen made sure that the Freemen Institute benefited from Moon’s largesse, and before long the humble Mormon had established a close working friendship with the billionaire cult leader and tax felon, whose claims of a direct line to God mirrored those of Mormon founding prophet Joseph Smith.” Zaitchik continues: “This odd couple became an even more bizarre trio with the addition of former Black Panther Eldridge Cleaver, who was baptized a Mormon in 1983 and soon became friendly with both Skousen and Moon. Cleaver, one of Mormonism’s most famous midlife converts prior to Glenn Beck, gave lectures under the Freemen Institute banner until 1986.” Zaitchik, *Common Nonsense*, p.271.

⁷⁷ One commentator concluded that: “In their own way, vitamins are at the centre of a cult that is as powerful as any religious movement that has swept across the nation.” Fried, *Vitamin Politics*, p.28, p.45. “Incredibly, no government agency is presently responsible for testing dietary supplements to assure their purity and potency. One hundred years after Congress passed the Pure Food and Drug Act of 1906, supplement manufacturers continue to enjoy a free pass to operate outside the bedrock principle that all drugs should be, at the very least, pure and of reliable potency.” Dan Hurley, *Natural Causes*, p.159.

Carto, which she followed up by standing as their vice-presidential candidate for the 1984 elections.⁷⁸

1984 also marked the release of a significant government report that summarized a four-year investigation that had been overseen by Congressman Claude Pepper (Democrat-Florida) through his chairmanship of the House Select Committee on Aging. This report represented a scathing attack on the highly profitable industry revolving around the sale of quack remedies. Moreover, the investigation highlighted the massive political shortcoming of both the FDA and Federal Trade Commission (FTC), in the latter instance observing that their “efforts to control misleading advertising” were “almost nonexistent.”⁷⁹ Pepper then “introduced three bills [that were] intended to strengthen the government's authority to control health fraud,” but health freedom advocates were not backing down for a moment.

The National Health Federation, with the support of more than a hundred local chapters and 25,000 members, lobbied aggressively against each bill, referring to the proposals as 'lysenkoism.' NHF President Maureen Salaman reportedly went so far as to buy a plane ticket on a flight with Congressman Pepper, arranging to have [a] seat next to him so that she could 'bend his ear' all the way to his destination. After failing to pass the bills during the ninety-eighth Congress, Pepper decided not to reintroduce them.⁸⁰

Another significant moment for Reagan's inaugural anti-regulatory presidency arose when the Kellogg cereal company teamed up with

⁷⁸ Frank Mintz, *The Liberty Lobby and the American Right: Race, Conspiracy, and Culture* (Greenwood Press, 1985). In the following presidential election, the Populist Party's presidential candidate was the white supremacist David Duke, a former Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan. While by the late eighties Maureen Salaman was playing host to her own popular television show “Accent on Health,” which was broadcast on a new right-wing evangelical network called Family Christian Broadcasting Network. Sara Diamond, *Spiritual Warfare: The Politics of the Christian Right* (Black Rose Books, 1990), p.27.

⁷⁹ Robert Pear, “Health frauds said to prey on elderly,” *New York Times*, May 31, 1984.

⁸⁰ Eric Boyle, *Quack Medicine: A History of Combating Health Fraud in Twentieth-Century America* (Praeger, 2013), p.158.

the National Cancer Institute to argue that food companies should be allowed to place misleading health advice on their products. Tragically the so-called regulatory bodies once again sided with the powers that be and “the FDA did everything but outright endorse the Kellogg advertisements” implying that their cereals might help prevent cancer, while the “FTC also enthusiastically endorsed the Kellogg advertisements and recommended that other companies follow suit.”⁸¹

Having given the green light to food manufacturers to embark on a new advertising extravaganza, the supplement industry however remained furious that they were being excluded from this lucrative marketing opportunity. Lawsuits were soon threatened by the supplement industries trade body, the Council for Responsible Nutrition (an organization that had initially been established in 1973 to help oppose the Proxmire Amendment). This corporate lobbying had the desired effect, and the FDA were consequently blocked by the government from taking any form of meaningful action against the bogus health claims of supplement manufacturers.⁸² Nevertheless, the neutering of the government’s regulatory organizations never meant that the FDA’s own staff gave up on trying to hold food and supplement manufacturers to account.

All hell finally broke loose in mid-1992 when a front-page story in the *New York Times* reported that armed FDA agents had apparently raided an alternative medicine clinic as “part of the agency’s increased efforts to stop manufacturers of nutritional supplements from making unproven claims for their products,” with newspaper editorials referring to the “Gestapo-like tactics” of the FDA. But within just a single week it turned out that this news story was wrong in just about every way. Yet the *Times*’ subsequent retraction was too little too late. Thus, the lies told within the initially shocking articles now set in chain a series of events that played right into the hands of the

⁸¹ Nestle, *Food Politics*, p.241.

⁸² “It is a tribute to the effectiveness of supplement industry lobbying efforts that suggestions made by its leaders in 1985 and again in 1987 were eventually incorporated as elements of the 1994 DSHEA. In 1987, however, the CRN [Council for Responsible Nutrition] proposals merely encouraged the White House to continue to delay publication of regulations until the FDA could guarantee that they ‘would not be too restrictive on industry.’” Nestle, *Food Politics*, p.244.

supplement industry. Moreover Senator Orrin Hatch once again leaped to the defense of his friends and helped encourage an already supplicant Congress to pass the Dietary Supplement Act of 1992, which effectively acted to block “the FDA from applying its forthcoming labeling rules for conventional foods to dietary supplements for another year—until the end of 1993.”⁸³

It remains not at all coincidental that the owner of the ‘raided’ clinic that made the headlines was Dr. Jonathan Wright, who himself was a longstanding health freedom activist, and author of the best-selling *Book of Nutritional Therapy: Real-Life Lessons in Medicine Without Drugs* (Rodale Press, 1979). In addition to having formerly served as the chair of the National Health Federation’s board of governors,⁸⁴ Wright had popularized his libertarian health advice while acting as the nutritional editor for *Prevention* magazine between 1976 and 1986. This meant that when the raid on Wright’s property eventuated, he was perfectly positioned to become a cause-celebre for the supplement industry, especially when he circulated a video of the law enforcement incident which soon became known as the “Vitamin-B Bust.” Film-star Mel Gibson famously recreated the scene of this bust (with exaggeration and comedic affect) for a one-minute advert that was made by the supplement industry and aired across the country in August 1993.⁸⁵ These scare tactics proved highly effective, and tens of thousands of people took to the streets to ward off the FDA’s alleged attempts to stop them obtaining supplements.

⁸³ Nestle, *Food Politics*, p.255.

⁸⁴ Shortly after the raid, Dr. Jonathan Wright temporarily replaced Maureen Salaman as the president of the National Health Federation.

⁸⁵ Hurley, *Natural Causes*, pp.84-6, p.94. Other celebrities who supported the public service announcements promoted by the supplement industries newly form Health Freedom Task Force included Whoopi Goldberg and Randy Travis; while Victoria Principal starred in her own advert that was produced by the Nutritional Health Alliance.

From Waco to Natural Solutions

The wealthy far-right activists who were steering this health campaign were of course aided by the horrifying fact that in the month preceding the FDA's vitamin bust, another federal law enforcement agency had participated in an armed raid at the Waco compound of the Branch Davidians. A raid which caused the death of 78 people, including 20 children. By the time the vitamin bust therefore came to pass, the Waco bloodbath had already become a rallying point for right-wing activists across the nation; although it was only in later years that the conspiratorial interpretation of the sieges event would become immortalized in the militia classic, *Waco: The Rules of Engagement* (1997).

Here, illustrating the close relationship between the two raids, the producer of this film on the Waco siege, William Gazecki (whose occult connections were introduced earlier), had, at the time of the vitamin bust just directed a PBS documentary in support of the supplement industry which was titled "The Natural Solutions: Freedom of Choice and the FDA" (1993).⁸⁶ This earlier documentary began with the following blunt statement from Steven Fowkes, a

⁸⁶ Reflecting upon his own spiritual awakening, William Gazecki, talking on a conspiracy channel on YouTube (in 2016), explained that: "Complete, open and free knowledge of divinity, the sharing of mind, knowledge and experience, coexistence, you know the Essene lifestyle in its day was quite evolved and unique considering its surrounding cultures. My involvement with the Essenes began when I was quite young, I was in my twenties, and I was introduced to an Essene - it was a woman, I will call her a master, an Essene master, she was a clairvoyant. She developed a system of healing using color, meditation and projection, and reflection of color. It was a very sophisticated system, it was her life's work, and she taught it. Apparently, she was also involved with esoteric translation of ancient texts, though she was schooled in Sanskrit and perhaps other ancient languages. A very interesting person. I only met her physically once although I was around her work, her students, quite a bit. One of her students was my mother-in-law. I married her daughter, and it was a very, very profound environment to be around, especially at my young age." (from 50min onwards) "The Knightly News: William Gazecki" (hosted by Michael Henry Dunn), *Project Camelot TV YouTube Channel*, streamed live on March 31, 2016. (The current leader of the Modern Essenes is holistic health practitioner, Rabbi Gabriel Cousens.)

vitamin enthusiastic who was the recent co-editor of *Stop the FDA: Save Your Health Freedom* (Health Freedom Publications, 1992).⁸⁷

The reason why I am spending all this time on it is that I think that people are going to die as a result of what the FDA is doing, and to me that is a travesty that an organization that is supposed to protecting the health of Americans is actually endangering our health. That upsets my sense of justice in the world.⁸⁸

The former *Wheel of Fortune* letter-turner Susan Stafford who had served as the executive producer and host of Gazecki's PBS documentary had, it bears mentioning, recently trained as a nutritionist and produced a long-running health talk-show (called *Alive*) for Pat Robertson's far-right Christian Broadcasting Network. The connection here to Robertson, the evangelist and hugely popular conspiracy theorist – who was the bestselling author of the 1991 book *New World Order*-- is perhaps fitting as Robertson has been referred to as “the most famous figure to mix religion and supplements”.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ At the time Steven Fowkes was the president of Direct Action for Treatment Access, a San Francisco based advocacy group which campaigned for rapid drug approvals for treatments relating to diseases like AIDS. For a useful discussion of how drug companies were able to use such campaign groups to push forward their own deregulatory agendas, see Courtney Davis and John Abraham, “Desperately seeking cancer drugs: explaining the emergence and outcomes of accelerated pharmaceutical regulation,” *Sociology of Health & Illness*, 33(5), 2011.

⁸⁸ The main medical advocate promoting “alternative medicine” in the PBS documentary was Dr. Russell Jaffe, a person who, in 1990, had established the Health Studies Collegium, which he did after converting to the cause of alternative medicine following a long career as a science-driven medical practitioner. Other recent integrative researchers based at Dr. Jaffe's institute included Artemis Simopoulos and Michael Lerner (a cofounder of Ken Wilber's Integral Institute).

⁸⁹ Dan Hurley, *Natural Causes*, pp.226-7. Michael Barkun argues that “No work on the Illuminati published in recent decades – whether secular or religious – has matched the influence of Pat Robertson's *The New World Order*, which first appeared in 1991.” Barkun adds: “Oddly enough, Robertson's views passed nearly unnoticed by the mainstream press for four years, until they became the subject of two lengthy and critical articles in *The New York Review of Books* in 1995. The articles' authors, Michael Lind and Jacob Heilbrun, pointed out that Robertson had drawn heavily on the work of both” Nesta Webster and Eustace Mullins “and that in fact he was recycling their anti-Semitic theory of history.” Barkun, *A Culture of Conspiracy*, p.53.

Stafford's association with the Christian Right was however not a passing phase in her career and in later years she went on to work as an advisor to a group that in their own words aimed "to educate the public of the need to fulfill our civic responsibilities according to traditional biblical moral absolutes and to bridge cultural barriers." This group had been headed by Tony Nassif, a Christian businessman who was obsessed with fighting and massively exaggerating the modern evils of child abduction and sexual slavery.⁹⁰ Not insignificantly, Nassif had for many years acted as a leading light in Robertson's theocratic lobbying enterprise, the Christian Coalition.

But returning our focus to the supplement lobby once again: one immediate result of all the frenetic activity in the early 1990s on the part of the 'alternative' pill-popping industry was that hundreds of thousands of letters poured into Congress and the FDA giving the illusion of "what appeared to be a large and spontaneous consumer movement". In reality, the campaign "had been orchestrated by supplement trade organizations, using 'scare tactics to give cover to lobbyists and lawmakers in Congress trying to free the industry of government controls.'"⁹¹ Yet the effect of the campaign was very real

⁹⁰ In Susan Stafford's autobiography, *Stop the Wheel, I Want to Get Off!* (Xlibris, 2010) she recalls how privileged she felt to be on the advisory council of Tony Nassif's Cedars Cultural and Educational Foundation – a group which Stafford points out focused on the problem of keeping the traditional family intact to protect against sex trafficking. (p.18) Later Stafford adds to her story the bizarre claim that "Nearly 800,000 children a year are reported missing in America." (p.17) For a useful review of the far-rights obsessions with satanic panics and more recently with QAnon, see Ryan Milner, *You Are Here: A Field Guide for Navigating Polarized Speech, Conspiracy Theories, and Our Polluted Media Landscape* (MIT Press, 2021).

⁹¹ Nestle, *Food Politics*, p.259. Another 'health freedom' program that attacked the FDA was Kevin Miller's 1994 documentary "Let Truth Be the Bias" a film which was narrated by Earl Ray Jones. Following on from this documentary Miller had gone on to make a series of health-related films that bolstered similar far-right conspiracies, which includes the 2005 documentary "We Become Silent: The Last Days of Health Freedom" which was narrated by another celebrity, Dame Judi Dench. This latter documentary features all manner of conservative authors like Carolyn Dean (author of *Death By Medicine*) who apparently believes that 784,000 American die prematurely every year "due to modern medicine intervention"; with Dean following this statement by adding that she had "also found studies that said we are only capturing 5 to 20 percent of the actual deaths." (4.22min onwards). Another talking head of note who features in "We Become Silent" is John Hammell, who is a member

and the lobbying paid huge dividends. With Senator Hatch at the forefront of proceedings, who now had the support of Tom Harkin (Democrat-Iowa), Congress soon passed their Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act (DSHEA), which President Clinton signed into law on October 25, 1994. With this Act, the supplement industry had effectively created a law that gave them a license to print money, and in “the five years after its enactment, supplement sales in the United States grew from \$4 billion to nearly \$15 billion” with the latest estimates suggesting that the market is now worth around \$56 billion.⁹² As one astounded critic put it:

Breathtaking in its dimensions, DSHEA would end forever the simple legal dichotomy between “food” and “drug” to create a third, hermaphroditic category that was both yet neither: the dietary supplement. And beyond the usual suspects – vitamins, minerals, herbs, and amino acids – the law would permit manufacturers to define a product as a “dietary supplement” merely by saying so, no matter how artificially derived. For this special, magical category of products, DSHEA would specifically exclude all their ingredients from the stringent laws used to guarantee the safety of food additives.

... With a stroke of a pen, nearly ninety years’ worth of laws dating back to Dr. Wiley’s Pure Food and Drug Act of 1906 had been gutted for a huge category of products, and all because enough people had become absolutely convinced that nothing deemed ‘natural’ could be unsafe.⁹³

of Freedom Force International – a group that describes itself as “a network of men and women from all parts of the world who are concerned over loss of personal liberty and expansion of government power.” The founder of Freedom Force is the influential member of the John Birch Society, G. Edward Griffin (see Sean Easter, “Who is G. Edward Griffin, Beck’s expert on the Federal Reserve?,” *Media Matters*, March 26, 2011).

⁹² Nestle, *Food Politics*, p.273; Jonathan Berman, *Anti-vaxxers: How to Challenge a Misinformed Movement* (MIT Press, 2020), p.169. Latest estimates suggest that globally the supplement sector could be worth around \$278 billion a year by 2024.

⁹³ Hurley, *Natural Causes*, pp.102-3. The romanticization of natural ways of living extends far beyond medicinal remedies, and particularly since the early 1990s we can

Institutionalizing Alternatives

Unfortunately the passing of DSHEA was not the only victory for what as in effect the occult anti-science lobby. This is because elite lobbying efforts to institutionalize nonsense within the state apparatus had received a boost a few years earlier (in 1991) when the Senate Appropriations Committee – which is responsible for funding the National Institutes of Health (NIH) – set in motion a chain of events that led to the formation of the Office of Alternative Medicine. The prime mover behind this momentous turn of events was Appropriations Committee chair, Tom Harkin, who apparently had been encouraged to take this legislative step by two of his constituents, the first being his predecessor, the former six-term Democratic Congressman Berkley Bedell and the second, a former recording artist turned alternative health activist named Frank Wiewel. All three individuals however had personally witnessed the alleged curative power of alternative medicine and were now keen to use their political clout to advance their personal beliefs in the efficacy of non-medicines.⁹⁴

see a similar trend with conservative Christian activists like Dr. Sears sermonizing about the need for mothers to return to natural (and allegedly healthier) methods of childbirth and care provision. For more on this see Omella Moscucci, “Holistic obstetrics: the origins of ‘natural childbirth’ in Britain,” *BMJ Postgraduate Medical Journal*, 79, 2003; Chris Bobel, *The Paradox of Natural Mothering* (Temple University Press, 2001); Emily Matchar, *Homeward Bound: Why Women Are Embracing the New Domesticity* (Simon & Schuster, 2013); and Alison Phipps, *The Politics of the Body: Gender in a Neoliberal and Neoconservative Age* (Wiley, 2014).

Oftentimes opposition to the medical establishment is linked to a rejection of mainstream education, both being topics that were popularized in the 1970s by the anti-establishment writings of Ivan Illich, author of *Deschooling Society* (1971) and *Medical Nemeses* (1975). Yet Illich’s radical critiques can just as easily serve the needs of the capitalist free-market as can be seen in the following socialist critiques of his work: Herbert Gintis, “Towards a political economy of education: A radical critique of Ivan Illich’s *Deschooling Society*,” *Harvard Educational Review*, 42(1), 1972; and Vicente Navarro, “The industrialization of fetishism or the fetishism of industrialization: A critique of Ivan Illich,” *Social Science & Medicine*, 9(7), 1975. For a related discussion of the politics of homeschooling, see Heath Brown, “Steve Bannon hopes homeschooling moms will be his new shock troops,” *The Daily Beast*, September 14, 2021; and Brown’s book *Homeschooling the Right: How Conservative Education Activism Erodes the State* (Columbia University Press, 2021).

⁹⁴ James Harvey Young, “The development of the Office of Alternative Medicine

Since then, the Office of Alternative Medicine has gone from strength-to-strength, and in 1999 it was re-established as a full NIH center known as the National Center for Complementary and

in the National Institutes of Health, 1991-1996," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 72 (2), 1998, p.280. "Growing up poor in rural Iowa during the 1940s, Tom Harkin, a coal miner's son, found little reason to put much faith in mainstream medicine. His mother, a Slovenian immigrant, died when Harkin was ten. His brother Frank became deaf at the age of nine. During the 1970s, while Harkin was serving as proudly liberal Democrat in the U.S. House of Representatives, two of his sisters died from breast cancer. So, in 1991, during his second term in the Senate, it shouldn't have surprised anyone that when he was offered an unconventional treatment for his hay fever allergies, Harkin was willing to give it a try." Hurley, *Natural Causes*, p.241.

Initial members of the Office of Alternative Medicine's advisory panel included best-selling New Age authors Deepak Chopra and Bernie Siegel (who in 1986 was the author of the HarperCollins' bestseller *Love, Medicine & Miracles*), not to mention Bedell and Wiewel. Harkin's key lobbying role paid off when he was able to appoint four of the initial 18 members of the board overseeing the Office of Alternative Medicine, these being Berkley Bendell, Frank Wiewel ("the leader of a group called People Against Cancer, which arranged trips outside the United States for people seeking remedies, such a laetrile"), Ralph Moss ("who published People Against Cancer's newsletter"), and Gar Hildenbrand (the executive director of the Gerson Institute, "which recommended, among other things, coffee enemas as a way to prevent and treat cancer"). Hurley, *Natural Causes*, p.243.

Max Gerson (1881-1959) was a Jewish, German-born American physician who developed the Gerson Therapy, a dietary-based alternative cancer treatment that he claimed could cure cancer and most chronic, degenerative diseases. As the fifth edition of the *Gerson Therapy Handbook* (Gerson Institute, 2013) noted, Max "considered that degenerative diseases were brought on by toxic, degraded food, water and air." In the same paragraph the book makes the ridiculous statement that it "is rare to find cancer, arthritis, or other degenerative diseases in cultures considered 'primitive' by Western civilization." (p.11)

Gerson therapy has received much positive publicity in recent years as a result of the film-making efforts of Steve Kroschel who has produced and directed four films about the treatment. These four documentaries are *The Gerson Miracle* (2004), *Dying to have Known* (2006), *The Beautiful Truth* (2008), and *Heal for Free* (2014), with the latter featuring all manner of other proponents of alternative medicine including Edgar Mitchell and Dr. Joseph Mercola. Another right-wing proponent of Gerson therapy is South African right-wing Christian evangelist, Peet Louw, who in 2004 established Christian Resource Network, a one-stop Christian DVD resource distribution and marketing company. Louw in addition to providing "godly", "anti-Darwinian" onboard entertainment to the passengers of the long-haul bus operator Intercap, is the head of the South African branch of the National Health Federation. Craig McKune, "Bus company offers only 'godly' shows," *IOL News*, July 24, 2009.

Alternative Medicine (NCCAM). The only real lasting benefit of their having burned through more than \$2 billion enquiring into the utility of alternative (non-medical) therapies is that they have now concretely demonstrated that such treatments don't work. Nevertheless, NCCAM's work is never seemingly done, and they remain well-funded, such that in 2021 they had a generous annual budget of \$138.2 million.⁹⁵

With so much at stake and so much still to prove, alternative medicine activists never rested on their unproven laurels. So, in 1998 Berkley Bedell founded the Foundation for Alternative and Integrative Medicine to examine the miracles undertaken by 'marginalized' health practitioners. One integral person associated with Bendell's Foundation was their board member George Zabrecky, a chiropractor who purports to treat cancer and is also a scientific advisor to Bernie Marcus, the notorious right-wing founder of Home Depot. Billionaire Marcus, who has the dubious honor of having been the second biggest donor to Donald Trump's 2016 presidential campaign, evidently has plenty of money to burn when it comes to pursuing medical libertarianism, and in 2017 Marcus pledged \$20 million to Thomas Jefferson University, Philadelphia, to allow it to set up what Zabrecky said was the "first department of integrative medicine at a conventional medical school in the world."⁹⁶

Yet the real precursor for splicing integrative medicine into the heart of a university's medical programming occurred in 1994 when

⁹⁵ A founding member of the advisory panel of the Office of Alternative Medicine, Barrie Cassileth, has since been highly critical of the Office, saying: "The degree to which nonsense has trickled down to every aspect of this office is astonishing... It's the only place where opinions are counted as equal to data." Young, "The development of the Office of Alternative Medicine in the National Institutes of Health, 1991-1996," p.282. Eugenie Mielczarek and Brian Engler, "Measuring mythology: startling concepts in NCCAM grants," *Skeptical Inquirer*, 36(1), January/February 2012; for an abridged version of this study see "Culling non-science from scarce medical resources."

⁹⁶ George Zabrecky and Daniel Monti, "Thomas Jefferson University adds Department of Integrative Medicine and Nutritional Sciences," *Foundation for Alternative and Integrative Medicine*, 2017. In the same year Bernie Marcus distributed a gift of \$38 million (over five years) to the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus in Aurora to enable them to establish an Institute for Brain Health that will integrate alternative medical approaches with genuine medical treatments.

the University of Arizona authorized Dr. Andrew Weil to establish a Program in Integrative Medicine within their College of Medicine. Weil, who is perhaps one of America's most famous health gurus and a millionaire to boot,⁹⁷ has, over the years, been able to provide substantial personal financial support to his Arizona Center for Integrative Medicine. But conservative philanthropists have joined Weil's integrative challenge, most notably the notorious ultrarightwing Adolph Coors Foundation.⁹⁸ This interest on Coors' part has meant that they have additionally funded integrative research at the aforementioned Thomas Jefferson University and at the Susan Samueli Center for Integrative Medicine. The latter center having been founded in 2001 at the University of California, Irvine's School of Medicine, with most of the financial assistance coming from the head of Broadcom, Henry Samueli (who happens to be another Republican billionaire); while the Center for Integrative Medicine's

⁹⁷ For a useful critique of Andrew Weil, see Hans A. Baer, "The work of Andrew Weil and Deepak Chopra - two holistic health/New Age Gurus: a critique of the holistic health/New Age movements," *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, 17(2), June 2003. Baer writes: "Like the larger holistic health movement, both Weil and Chopra engage in a rather limited holism in that they both focus largely on the individual rather than society and its institutions. Rather than encouraging people to become part of social movements that attempt to either reform or revolutionize society, they take the larger society as a given to which one must adjust" (p.240) For other criticisms of Weil, see Arnold Relman, "A trip to Stonesville: Some notes on Andrew Weil," *The New Republic*, December 14, 1998. It is noteworthy that his Weil Foundation, which was set up in 2005 to promote "integrative medicine," includes on their board of trustees liberal members of the ruling-class like Adele Smith Simmons, the former president of the MacArthur Foundation. For another interesting discussion about philanthropy, see Orac, "Andrew Weil, the Coors Foundation, and Americans for Prosperity, or: "integrative medicine" isn't just for hippy dippy lefties anymore," *Respectful Insolence blog*, November 13, 2015.

⁹⁸ Other whacky funders of the Arizona Center for Integrative Medicine include Lynda Resnick, a lucrative purveyor of pomegranate juice (which she says cures cancer), and manufacturer of the less tasty pomegranate supplement pills. Until recently Resnick sat alongside David Koch on the board of directors of the Prostate Cancer Foundation, which had founded by the famous corporate criminal Michael Milken who, since his release from prison, has gone on to be the co-author of *The Taste for Living Cookbook: Mike Milken's Favorite Recipes for Fighting Cancer* (1998). For more on Resnick and Milken's anti-cancer activism, see Michael Barker, "Juicy cancer revelations: the POM queen's secrets," *Swans Commentary*, October 7, 2013.

operations were overseen by Henry's wife, Susan, who is software engineer turned homeopath/ nutritionist.⁹⁹ Likewise another alternative project based in California that has been helpfully financed by a right-wing billionaire is Dr. Dean Ornish's Preventive Medicine Research Institute in Sausalito. The donor and former board member of this Institute was the late Theodore Forstmann, who is credited for creating the ultra-predatory business model that is now known as the private equity industry.¹⁰⁰

Conservative billionaires evidently see a handsome market in non-scientifically tested remedies, and another billionaire who is more intimately involved in the dispensing of alternative medicine is the investment banker Richard Stephenson. In this instance, Stephenson was quick to recognize the profits to be made from those suffering from cancer,¹⁰¹ and in 1988 he formed a chain of for-profit hospitals called the Cancer Treatment Centers of America - Centers which integrate non-scientific therapies like homeopathy with real medicine. *Forbes* magazine, not the type of media outlet that usually criticizes capitalist entrepreneurship, made an exception when it came to documenting Stephenson's callous profiteering. Writing in 2012, a *Forbes* health correspondent explained that Stephenson's entire premise for business "sounds like a crazy conspiracy theory," and it is!

⁹⁹ In 2017 Henry and Susan Samuelli pledged a further \$200 million to allow the construction of a new College of Health Sciences focused on the delivery of "interdisciplinary integrative health."

¹⁰⁰ Dr. Dean Ornish has been celebrated by *Forbes* magazine as being "one of the seven most powerful teachers in the world," and has been a physician consultant to Bill Clinton since 1993, serving alongside the former President on the advisory board of the exclusive elite retreat known as Renaissance Weekend. Dr. Ornish, who is the medical editor at the *Huffington Post*, which is an online outlet run by Arianna Huffington (a close friend of Lynda Resnick), whose content provides its very own microcosm of a snake oil salesman's carnival wagon, a haven of quackery no less. Just a handful of the many well-known purveyors of nonsense (other than Dr. Ornish) whose new age wonders work grace *Huffington Post's* digital netherworld include Ervin Laszlo (discussed earlier), Sandra Ingerman (author of such gems as *Shamanic Journeying: A Beginner's Guide*), Dana Ullman (who is one of America's leading advocates for homeopathy), and last but not least Deepak Chopra.

¹⁰¹ "Greedy Tea Party millionaire owns company that turns away cancer patients," *Teamster Nation Blog*, March 6, 2013. In recent years Richard Stephenson divorced his longstanding wife and married a chiropractor (Dr. Stacie Stephenson).

But, as we have already seen, corporate elites have a long history of cashing in on the concept of health freedom to “support [their] favorite right-wing causes.”¹⁰² One of these causes in Stephenson’s case is FreedomWorks – a conservative lobbying group that played a central role in building the Tea Party Movement. Stephenson’s interests in such dark electioneering however remains longstanding as he was “an early supporter” of FreedomWorks predecessor organization, Citizens for a Sound Economy – a well-oiled lobbying group that was founded in 1984 by the fossil fuel billionaires Charles and David Koch.¹⁰³

Either way, Richard Stephenson’s lucrative cancer enterprise proved too exciting an opportunity to overlook for one of America’s most famous naturopaths, and in 2001 Joseph Pizzorno Jr. joined the Cancer Treatment Centers of America as one of their most illustrious advisors.¹⁰⁴ I say this because prior to taking up this post Pizzorno had

¹⁰² Steven Salzgberg, “Making a profit from offering ineffective therapies to cancer patients,” *Forbes*, December 31, 2012. For a scathing criticism of Richard Stephenson’s business practices from one of his former employees, see “CTCA: The Cancer Treatment Charade of America? Profiting on alternative medicine,” *Naturopathic Diaries*, July 21, 2015.

¹⁰³ Amy Gardner, “FreedomWorks tea party group nearly falls apart in fight between old and new guard,” *Washington Post*, December 25, 2012.

¹⁰⁴ Bastyr University alumni Dr. Lise Alschuler actually served as the department head of naturopathic medicine at Midwestern Regional Medical Center – Cancer Treatment Centers of America; although she is presently employed at the Arizona Center for Integrative Medicine. It is significant that the far-right spiritual movement headed by Rev. Sun Myung Moon also played an important role in building legitimacy for naturopathy. After bailing out the nearly bankrupt University of Bridgeport in 1992, Moon built upon Bridgeport’s already stellar commitment to pseudo-medicine, which in 1991 meant they had become the first US university to officially create a College of Chiropractic, by ensuring that his university established its very own school of Naturopathy (which was opened in 1996). Perry DeAngelis, “The cultiversity of Bridgeport,” *The New England Skeptical Society*, January 1997.

The comfortable alliance between right-wing activism and alternative medicine has historically speaking always been bolstered when mainstream medical organizations have been overzealous in their attacks on alternative practitioners. A suitable illustration here is provided in the instance of chiropractors, who received welcome publicity during the 1970s and 1980s when the juicy details of the American Medical Association’s (AMA) campaign against them were exposed in the media. This case arose when leaked internal documents from the AMA encouraged chiropractor Chester Wilk to file an anti-trust lawsuit against the AMA as early as 1976.

served for more than twenty years as the founding president of Bastyr University: a naturopathic university which was established in 1978 that refers to itself as “America’s largest and most successful accredited institution of natural medicine.” The high esteem in which this institution is held was demonstrated in 1994 when they were awarded a grant by the Office of Alternative Medicine, making history by becoming the first ever natural medicine institution to receive an NIH grant.

Another founding board member of Bastyr University who has proven quite able to turn a profit from his mystical preoccupation with all things natural is Jeffrey Bland, who in addition to having previously

Unfortunately, the lawsuit was only resolved in 1987 when the presiding judge ruled in Wilk’s favour, giving further fuel to the alternative medicine movements nearly completely fictitious claims to be oppressed by the establishment. Simon Singh and Edzard Ernst, *Trick or Treatment? Alternative Medicine on Trial* (Corgi, 2009), p.202, p.206. Singh and Ernst provide a critical overview of the mystical origins of chiropractic therapy, but conclude that the scientific evidence suggests that chiropractors are only worth seeing if you have a back problem: even then they offer sage advice on how to consult with a chiropractor, the most important advice being to make sure you are not treated by a fundamentalist chiropractor, that is those who believe every word of the mystical founder of chiropractic therapy, B.J. Palmer.

In Holly Folk’s book, *The Religion of Chiropractic: Populist Healing from the American Heartland* (University of North Carolina Press, 2017), the author provides a short but succinct overview of the politics of chiropractic practitioners. She surmises that: “The participation of chiropractors in radical groups seems to outstrip their natural distribution in the population. Chiropractors form a sizeable contingent of the Tea Party, and also of the Sovereignty and Tax Protest movements. And while the vast majority of chiropractors are not racists, a number of leaders of racist movements have been members of the profession. By far, the best-known chiropractor in the hate movement is Edward Reed Fields, co-founder and past president of the National States Rights Party, who studied at Palmer in the early 1950s. It is not clear whether Fields earned his diploma, unlike James Malcolm Edwards, who graduated from Palmer in 1951. In 1966 Edwards was named Grand Dragon of the United Klans of America for the State of Louisiana. Beyond the KKK, chiropractors have led other controversial movements. The notorious public-access television show *Race and Reason* was hosted by Florida chiropractor Herbert W. Poinsett. In the 1990s, Scott Anthony Stedeford studied chiropractic as he rose in the ranks of the Aryan Republican Army. More recently, South Carolina-based chiropractor William Carter, an associate of David Duke, has been a leader in the Populist Party and the Council of Concerned Citizens, and was one of the founders of the America First Party.” (p.263)

been the head of nutritional supplement research at the Linus Pauling Institute, recently retired from his role as the president and chief scientific officer of the gargantuan nutritional supplement manufacturer, Metagenics.¹⁰⁵ But despite the hard done-by public image of the ever-growing supplement juggernaut, a lie which has been assiduously cultivated by a massive propaganda campaign, it is safe to say “there is essentially no difference between the vitamin industry and the pharmaceutical and biotech industries...”¹⁰⁶

Key players include companies like Roche and Aventis; BioCare, the vitamin pill company that media nutritionist Patrick Holford works for, is part-owned by Elder Pharmaceuticals, and so on. The vitamin industry is also- amusingly -- legendary in the world of economics as the setting of the most outrageous price-fixing cartel ever documented. During the 1990s the main offenders were forced to pay *the largest criminal fines ever levied in legal history* -- \$1.5 billion in total -- after entering guilty pleas with the US Department of Justice and regulators in Canada, Australia, and the European Union.¹⁰⁷

Scamming the People

Senator Tom Harkin himself, the man who helped the supplement industry get it wings in America, likewise maintains direct and seriously intimate connections to the nutritional establishment through the indomitable support he has given to Herbalife - a company which is “perhaps the nation’s leading marketer of nostrums covered by

¹⁰⁵ Like other pharmaceutical companies, Metagenics doesn't leave their financial fate to vagaries of the magical free-market, and they boost their bulging profits by employing skilled lobbyists to peddle their placebo treatments. One such lobbying outfit fronting for companies like Metagenics and Bristol-Myers Squibb is Walker Martin & Hatch, whose most significant founder and political operative is Scott Hatch, the son of Senator Orrin Hatch. Sheldon Rampton and John Stauber, "Swallowing anything: The hype behind alternative remedies," *PR Watch*, 4(3), 1997. For a useful overview of the longstanding relationship between profiteering and science, see Clifford Conner, *The Tragedy of American Science: From Truman to Trump* (Haymarket Books, 2020).

¹⁰⁶ Ben Goldacre, *Bad Science: Quacks, Hacks, and Big Pharma Flacks* (Faber and Faber, 2010), pp.108-9.

¹⁰⁷ Goldacre, *Bad Science*, p.109.

DSHEA”.¹⁰⁸ In fact, it is a point of record that Herbalife’s employees and PACs were Senator Harkin’s largest contributors between 1989 and 2016; and Amway-style multilevel marketing is the extremely exploitative game played at Herbalife. In this way...

...the company sells products to large district distributors, who turn around and sell them for piece of the action to smaller district distributors, who so the same to even smaller distributors, and so on down the line until everybody’s Aunt Tilly is selling it to her friends on the block. [Multilevel marketing] has been a boon to supplement companies [“and no supplement company has done better than Herbalife”] because individual distributors can make dramatic personal claims about their products to customers while talking in their living rooms or on the telephone. Best of all from the companies’ point of view, the FDA and FTC are none the wiser if Aunt Tilly steps over the line to essentially practice medicine without a license by pitching the products as cures for illnesses – not that the companies (big money) would ever officially condone such practices (big money) in their official literature or training (big money).¹⁰⁹

Fittingly, given the regressive nature of this business model (for pretty much everyone involved except those at the company’s very pinnacle), in 2009 Donald Trump chose to lend his name to a similar multilevel marketing enterprise that was reanointed as The Trump Network. This allowed Trump to rake in millions through the sale of vitamins and other health related products. Furthermore, Amway’s toxic legacy would live on during Trump’s presidency, as his secretary of

¹⁰⁸ Michael Hiltzik, “Orrin Hatch is leaving the Senate, but his deadliest law will live on,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 5, 2018. Jerry Rubin (1938-1994), the counterculture icon who helped lead the Yippies, ended-up ditching his radical ambitions and spent his final years working as a supplement distributor for a pyramid scheme known as Omnitrition, which itself was founded by three former Herbalife distributors, see Daniel Akst, “Freedom is still Rubin’s motto,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 21, 1992.

¹⁰⁹ Hurley, *Natural Causes*, pp.210-1. Amway, the firm which pioneered Herbalife’s marketing strategy, maintains close links to the supplement industry as Michelle Stout, who serves as Amway’s current regulatory policy director (with a strong focus on the dietary/food supplement sector) is presently the chair of the International Alliance of Dietary Supplement Food Associations.

education, Betsy DeVos, was the wife of former Amway CEO, Dick DeVos Jr. – a man whose fortune was made from the marketing of “the world’s No. 1 selling vitamin and dietary supplement brand” Nutrilite which has been sold across America since the 1930s.

For those who don’t follow the twists and turns of the vitamin supplement industry, Amway itself had been formed as a multilevel marketing company in 1949, and their Christian fundamentalist cofounders, Jay Van Andel and Richard DeVos, soon became leading distributors of Nutrilite. Federal regulatory authorities including the FDA and FTC attempted to clamp down on the dietary scaremongering that accompanied Amway’s sales patter, but ultimately “legal action against isolated vendors did not hamper Nutrilite’s growth.”

In fact, five years after the 1951 injunction, when the FTC had first “looked into Nutrilite’s sales practices, the force had expanded by a third and totaled 20,000 doorbell-ringing women and men,” such that sales in 1956 amounted to \$26,000,000.¹¹⁰ And owing to their interest in selling supplements Amway soon formed a long-lasting working relationship with the leadership of the National Health Federation.¹¹¹ Yet the founders of Amway maintained their own separate political agenda to that of the National Health Federation, which led Amway to support a variety of hard-right and Christian reconstructionist causes, not to mention their ongoing attempts to transform their tens of thousands of “distributors” into relentless and

¹¹⁰ Young, *Medical Messiahs*, p.340. For a useful review of Nutrilite’s exploits, see Swann, “The history of efforts to regulate dietary supplements in the USA.”

¹¹¹ In 1960, a thirty-nine-year-old activist for the National Health Federation named Charles Creelius joined Amway and quickly rose through their ranks to serve on the company’s prestigious National Distributors Association Board. By 1965, Creelius had then become the president of the National Health Federation and remained in leadership roles within the Federation well into the 1980s. Nevertheless, the relationship between Amway and the NHF were mutually reinforcing and when Creelius was set the task of instigating a mass letter writing campaign to lobby the FDA, it was critical that he could draw upon the hundreds of thousands of struggling “distributors” involved in the type of multilevel supplement marketing schemes that were overseen by Amway. This point is well made in Charles Marshall’s, *Vitamins and Minerals: Help or Harm?* (George F. Stickley Company, 1983), p.17. Also see, Katherine Carroll, “Leadership lessons from a freedom pioneer,” *National Health Federation*, September 2015.

individualistic automatons for capitalism.

As one former Amway salesman put it, once you scratch below the outward veneer that presented Amway to the world as a simple purveyor of vitamins and cosmetics, you soon find that what Amway really sells. It “is a marketing and motivational system, a cause, a way of life, in a fervid emotional atmosphere of rallies and political-religious revivalism.”¹¹² In recruiting new distributors to Amway’s way of life:

A speech that might have been used in other times to bring workers into a union, or a socialist political organization, is applied here to sell the idea of “free enterprise.” The imagery of one effort has leaked into the other – the insecurity and monotony of depending on bosses for a living, the poverty of retirement, the contrasting lifestyles of rich and poor. But the assumptions have been reversed. The labor movement organizer would blame poverty on the greed and power of employers; the Amway organizer, by implication, using himself as an example, blames the ignorance and inertia of workers for staying in their Rut. From the labor movement perspective, the way out is through mass collective action. According to the [Amway] Plan, the way out is through individual initiative, directed towards personal goals.¹¹³

Amway sold their salespeople a dream, the American Dream, and in doing so they built a mass movement that took America by storm – peddling a mythical and empty dream that thrived on the fabled tale of rags to riches and the lie that a compassionate form of capitalism could ever exist.¹¹⁴ Yet despite all their smooth propaganda, the house of cards that is capitalism, however, has never been more unstable than now. And this truism is demonstrated by the recent working-class victory in Seattle which succeeded in stopping the billionaire-classes

¹¹² Stephen Butterfield, *Amway: The Cult of Free Enterprise* (South End Press, 1985), p.2; also see Kathryn Jones, *Amway Forever: The Amazing Story of a Global Business Phenomenon* (John Wiley & Sons, 2011); and Kerry Lauerman and Rachel Burstein, “She did it Amway,” *Mother Jones*, September/October 1996.

¹¹³ Butterfield, *Amway*, p.13.

¹¹⁴ Davor Mondom, “Compassionate capitalism: Amway and the role of small-business conservatives in the New Right,” *Modern American History*, 1(3), 2018.

anti-democratic “recall campaign” against Marxist council member Kshama Sawant.¹¹⁵ What is clear is that the working-class is fully capable of organizing to defend their own class interests, after all *we have nothing to lose but our chains*.

¹¹⁵ Kshama Sawant, “The wealthy took their best shot at us, and we beat them. Again,” *Socialist Alternative*, December 10, 2021.

Epilogue

As this book has gone some ways towards illustrating, the ruling-classes ever present fear of both democracy and socialism means that they remain trapped within a world that ultimately makes no sense: a feverish world dominated by their perpetual fear that the unruly masses will make do on their apparently devilish aspirations to create a better life for all. In lieu of offering the working-class a full share in the profits they create through their hard work, the ruling-class only seems willing to placate us with their warped occult conspiracies and metaphysical illusions, and then they have the cheek to say we are stupid for following their lead?! We can do better than put up with this nonsense: enough is enough!

It has been just over a hundred years since the Russian Revolution of October 1917, and it remains one of the most remarkable events in human history and should provide inspiration and hope to billions of people that capitalist misery can be ended. As it has in the past, the world and its inhabitants stand at a critical juncture, and socialist change is just as necessary now as it has been at any point in capitalism's blood-soaked history.

Capitalism remains unwilling and unable to provide for the needs of the majority of people, and as every day passes, our inhumane system is driving ever more people into poverty and to an early grave. Yet despite all the relentless lies of those supporting the status quo, it remains true that building a socialist alternative to capitalism remains close within our reach: and technological advances can now be harnessed, not to oppress and surveil us, but to free us all from the daily grind of working life.

The eventual deformation of the Russian Revolution should be

considered one of history's major tragedies, and the Revolution's gross distortion under the anti-democratic influence of Stalin and his apparatchiks must never be repeated. This is why Leon Trotsky and his supporters dedicated their lives to exposing all the dangerous betrayals of the working-class that took place under the misleadership of the Stalinist Communist Party, while committing themselves to the ongoing struggle for a socialist future where ordinary people have full democratic control over workplaces and their lives. For undertaking such a battle for justice, socialists and particularly Trotskyists have been relentlessly demonized by all capitalist institutions, by Stalin's heirs, and by conspiracy theorists and their neo-fascists friends.

That the Russian Revolution was a genuine democratic uprising of the masses against their rulers is precisely why it has always been so maligned by its ideological enemies. To repeat a point made in the introduction, the Revolution was not orchestrated by Wall Street elites - in the same way that other popular revolutions that shake the world today are not the pet projects of Wall Street either.¹¹⁶ Nevertheless, it is true that when revolutions are deprived of a democratic leadership that is willing and ready to build a mass movement to overthrow capitalism and bring about a socialist transformation of society, such historic events will most likely only succeed in exchanging one set of undemocratic elites with another. This change may give some form of respite to ordinary people in the short-term, but at the end of the day under the continued domination of capitalism, profits will always trump human need: hence the urgent need to end capitalism to end this problem.

Of course, there are many real reasons why people become disillusioned with the tiring fight for a fairer society, and it doesn't help when the working-class are repeatedly let down or betrayed by the promises of their so-called political leaders. But it has never really been any different, which is why democracy remains such a prized possession for socialists. Yet the time for dithering is over, as while we fumble around looking for the right time to act, we should be aware that all sorts of fascists and right-wing populists are ready to take

¹¹⁶ A useful critique of such a conspiratorial discourse is taken up in "Is the US promoting a 'colour revolution' in Hong Kong?," *China Worker*, October 16, 2014.

advantage of popular discontent if we fail to organize our class. Socialists must therefore continue to lead by example and fight for every reform we can possibly wring from the ruling-class, while simultaneously making the case for why it will be necessary to ditch capitalism once and for all. A socialist revolution is possible, as the centenary of the events in 1917 should have reminded us. Now we just need to organize to make it happen.

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