

RECONNECTION

ISSUE 23

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EUROPEAN CONVENTION FOR APPLIED PHILOSOPHY
Oct 18th and 19th 1986
Held at Hotel Glogghuis Melchsee-Frutt
Switzerland

The second European Convention of Independents was held high in the Swiss Alps. The Hotel Glogghuis was taken over for the exclusive use of the Convention and its location is so high that delegates had to make the last part of their journey by cable-car. At this time of year lowland Switzerland is swathed in mists and rain so it was very exciting to arrive at the Convention in warm sunshine.

One hundred and forty four delegates attended the Convention. The countries represented were Austria, Belgium, Denmark, England, France, Germany, Italy, Scotland, Spain, South Africa, Switzerland and the United States.

Among the delegates were David Mayo and Sarge Gerbode from the Institute for Research in Metapsychology in California, and such famous names as Hanna Eltringham Whitfield, Joe Van Staden, Scott Leland and Otto Roos. There were many old timers there, including two who first encountered Dianetics in 1951. Reflecting up-to-date progress, there were representatives of over twenty centres currently delivering auditing and training, seven of them located in Western Germany.

MAIN EVENTS

The Convention started with lunch after which Hans Wiesner welcomed delegates on behalf of the Swiss OT Committee. The first speaker was DON C. MAIER. He was first audited on Dianetics by Ron Hubbard in 1951! As he has seen 35 years progress in our subject, he agreed to speak on the theme of "The next 35 years".

He said that our subject naturally leads to varying opinions of how things should be done. In the past there has been much emphasis on right and wrong, standard and non-standard, and seeing exclusively to what is the current view of the only right way to do things. The result is that all differences are seen as heresy and must be purged from the group. 'They are different from us. Kill them!' Not only must we become more tolerant of diversity within our group but we must build a bridge to that much larger group, the rest of our fellow men. We must make positive steps to become a 'Bright and Acceptable Group' that can link up with the reality level of the rest of the world.

Don is an electronics expert and now that he is retiring he will be offering a world-wide support service for E-meters. This includes a series of courses with checksheets on Meter Technology to help you test, maintain and even overhaul your meter. Details from: M-TECH, c/o D.C.Maier, PO BOX 1436 220 Omega Circle, Enterprise, AL. 36330-1423 U.S.A.

The next speaker was DAVID MAYO. As he gave a long talk the following are paraphrased notes which for ease of reading are in the first person singular:

There is a lot of talk about what is after AA7 and a widespread desire to achieve the OT powers we have been told about. But somehow they always seem to be just a bit further ahead! At first it was Clear as defined in DMSMH. This was reduced later and various categories of Clear (Dianetic, Natural, Past Life, etc.) were introduced and the original expectations were moved further and further up the Bridge.

In my opinion there was a lot of overstatement of the gains to be achieved at various levels and these false promises were made largely to aid 'regging'. If people had been told what they might realistically expect from each level as they took it, then they would have been happy with the result. If we can learn one thing for the future it is that honesty in promotion is vital.

The consequence of not being honest with people is not just that they are disappointed at being short-changed but they also invalidate themselves and the gains they have made. PC's almost never blame auditing or the technology for their dissatisfaction, they think that any failure is their fault. This was of course reinforced by the way the C of S handled any upset on auditing failure as if it were the PC's fault.

There has been a lot of loose talk about OT abilities. The result is that individuals invalidate themselves and their own gains because they haven't achieved those abilities. So if you haven't gone exterior with full perceptions, you are not the only one!

We must be a lot more honest about what can realistically be expected. We are aware of a potential for OT powers in ourselves and we have had occasional O.T. experiences. But these phenomena are not stable nor can we do these things at will yet. What I experienced is arriving at a state of confidence that all these things probably could be achieved in due course, but it didn't matter to me how long it took to achieve them. I no longer needed to be in a hurry to achieve them and thus invalidate the many and various gains that I was making in ability, intuition and breadth of viewpoint.

At Santa Barbara a lot of people asked me when would AA8 be available. Well, I C/Sed Ron on 8 and saw the notes he made on the next four levels. I also saw the effect these levels had on Ron. As C/S International it was my job to write up the notes on these upper levels and pilot them on others. The result of all this is that I felt this approach to the next level was not as effective as it should be and I did not feel able to release it as AA8.

Others are now developing new approaches to these upper levels. We no longer have to maintain an authoritarian structure based on a single source so we can accept that a workable next step can come from any direction. The Research Institute has been set up so that an independent body can assess the workability and verify results of new processes, regardless of who invents them. As an independent verification body it would not make sense for us also to be a delivery centre. We aim to be an unprejudiced and objective clearing house for new ideas, as well as looking again at old ones to make them more workable. There is no 'have to' authority to enforce this. This is a service I feel I should offer and I see this as the best contribution I can make to the future.

Actually my greater interest is in looking again at the lower levels. I am very interested in finding ways to make our technology more acceptable and get it more widely disseminated. We have to confront the fact that the troubles of recent years, and the repeating patterns in C of S internal management before that, must indicate some failures in the technology.

What started as a bridge to self-improvement, increased awareness and causativeness was perverted into a means of gaining power over others. Instead of increasing everybody's freedom it became a means of influencing others by your will. Thus its best products were considered to be those who were willing to use their enhanced abilities to promote fanatically the activities of the organisation, often by unethical means. The question I ask is what were we doing wrong to make people substitute the human virtues in favour of seeking ways of influencing and dominating others?

This is best summed up in a cartoon I saw in one of the independent journals. Someone is lying on the floor injured and calling for help. Two fellows are running past with clipboards and one says 'Not now - we've got to get the Stats up'. We would have expected that personal enhancement would have predictably resulted in our being more compassionate, more understanding and more virtuous. Somehow Policy and Command Intention replaced the human consideration and love!

As a guide for our future we should respect the injunction to Grant Beingness. We should recognise for ourselves that it is not Off-Policy to be Reasonable. Our forward direction should be to increase The Virtues.

The next speaker was SARGE GERBODE who was formerly Director of the AAC Palo Alto and who is now Director of the INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH IN METAPSYCHOLOGY, also located in Palo Alto. His talk has also been paraphrased in the first person singular for simplicity:

The C of S continues but its Mission network in Europe has gone and its Orgs manage on only a trickle of people through their hands. The main reason for this decline in my opinion is that the C of S has stayed on the fringe of society and never moved into the mainstream.

Instead of applying the Non-Existence formula on itself in relation to society, it has attacked its institutions. This is not just the continuing feud with the Psychiatric profession but also Education, Medicine, Government, Opinion Leaders and finally the Middle Class. The result is that the C of S is and remains a Cult operating on the fringe of society.

The choice we have is to move further out, as the C of S inevitably moves out, or to try to get back into mainstream society. Most of mainstream society is conservative. There are others already on the outside in other fringe groups. They are easier to convince on the merits of our case than those in the mainstream. The further out we go however the fewer numbers there are to draw on. In a recent study on Communes it was found that those who stayed in touch with the society around them survived better than those who cut themselves off. We will be able to say we are in the mainstream when we can discuss our ideas with others without embarrassment and when we are able to grant beingness to others and their ideas. The requirements for a subject that would be able to achieve this harmony with mainstream society would be as follows:

1. A name and identity of which its adherents can be proud.

2. It would need a comprehensible vocabulary and basic statements of its purpose and philosophies which would enable its members to understand and feel comfortable with the subject.

3. It should offer something to society which is genuinely needed, wanted and of value.

4. It should be honest in its claims and these should be verified through controlled research and piloting.

5. It should be a real subject to study and not just a dogma. It should be elastic enough to contain diversity of views and discussion of those views.

6. It must be freely and easily available for study.

These are the goals we have set out for the Institute and to which we will be devoting our efforts in the coming months and years.

More information from: INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH IN METAPSYCHOLOGY, 950 GUINDA STREET, PALO ALTO, CALIFORNIA 94301 USA Tel (415 325 0388).

The next two speakers were PER SCHIOTTZ from Denmark and ARNOLD HERMANN from Germany. They both stated in different ways that they were not happy with dropping the name Scientology or making changes that indicated criticism of Ron Hubbard as developer of our technology. There followed a lively and at times acrimonious discussion about changing names, different views about the way to handle AA7, and the need for guidance versus freedom to experiment in tech developments. By the end of this there appeared to be several distinct and opposing viewpoints about the best formula for our future progne

During Saturday evening and night much discussion took place and many people expressed the urgent need to arrive at some formula for unity. The alternative was to see us split into different sects who would waste their energies in conflict.

By Sunday morning a new spirit had emerged. There was general agreement that our philosophy must be elastic enough to contain varying views. This could even extend to different methodologies, provided they were obviously contributing to the same goal of greater freedom and causativeness for the individual. The reports from the Sunday morning Workshops reflected the new spirit of unity.

NEW TECHNOLOGY

There was no disagreement on the broad workability of the current Bridge up to AA6. For the part beyond there, the analogy was used of reaching a mountain peak. Different routes are emerging and the particular characteristics of each route would be more or less suited to the character of each climber. We would have to recognise that we no longer had a single authority who would give us the one path that is right for all. It was suggested that it was time for us to become big boys and girls and decide for ourselves, on the available data, which was the right path for us.

C/S CORNER

It was agreed that we are all coming from the same direction and are aiming towards the same goal. There is room for different routes, each better suited to different types of people and their particular needs. The most important thing is to stay in communication. A Technical newsletter will be set up. In it anyone may express any viewpoint they wish. There should also be more frequent technical meetings for C/Ses, at least once every six months because of the rapid rate of technical development. The first of these meetings will be organised by AAC Langenthal. More information from Andreas Suter, AAC Langenthal, Feldstrasse 1, Butzberg, CH-4922, SWITZERLAND.

DISSEMINATION

This workshop felt there were no new answers and we should apply the simple three point formula:

1. Don't try to sell the whole subject but find out what the person in front of you needs and wants.

LETTERS

2. Then do something which helps them towards achieving that want.

3. Keep delivering that until they get a win.

Only after they have a win will you be able to discuss the broader subject with them. At that point even using the name Scientology will not cause a ridge, they will not care what it is called.

NEW PUBLICATIONS

It was generally felt that people who are well into the subject did not need any new publications. There are plenty of technical books and packs around for our libraries. There is a need for lower gradient publications for people new to the subject. It is hoped that the Institute will produce some slightly academic books for those needing an intellectual introduction to our subject.

In the meantime we have the Get Ready for Life series which gives practical ways to use the tech, in everyday life, without much theory. The first of these is How to Get More Out of Life, about personal goals and purposes. This is about to be published in a German language version. A Danish translation is in progress and there are plans for French and Arabic editions.

Also in the series are How to Have More Time (SCS and cycles of action) and How to Communicate Better (including updated TR's). All have a checksheet of practical steps so it is possible to work through the booklet with somebody to help them to get into better control of their lives. In preparation are booklets on Money and PTSness. More information from Anima Publishing, PO Box 10, Bramhall, Stockport, Ches., SK7 2QF, ENGLAND.

INDEPENDENTS AND THE THIRD DYNAMIC

The subject for this workshop was how we should bring together the thinly spread independents around the world to create an effective Third Dynamic group. Unless we do there is a grave danger of varying opinions on certain technical matters dividing us into sects that will become isolated from each other.

It was agreed that we need to break free of fixed point thinking and expecting a single authority to tell us what we should accept. There will be problems with such a liberal approach but the universal solvent is communication.

Among the ideas for remaining in effective communication is an international newspaper for independents. However cost and slowness of translation and production makes this unworkable at this time. Instead a communication network will be set up with a terminal in each country. Each terminal will have a two-way flow of up-to-minute news with all the other terminals in the network. It will be up to each terminal how they pass on news in their country. They may rely on local Delivery Centre journals or they may produce their own photocopied newsletter. The priority is speed of dissemination as 'power equals speed of particle flow'.

A list of the terminals is available from Anthony Phillips, Jerbanevej 3F 4th, DK-2800 LYNDDY, DENMARK.

At the end of the Convention there was a speech of thanks and presentation to Hans Weisner for his excellent planning and organisation of the Convention. Per Schiottz of the Association for Applied Philosophy, Denmark, announced that next year the Convention would not be European but International and he would be pleased to host it at a location near Copenhagen.

Dear Reconnection,

In issue 21 the proposed direction for the Independents seems a bit confused. Where in one article there is expressed a need to exclude "philosophy, metaphysics, ethics" (and I wonder what kind of science might this be?), the other article speaks of the need to explore the "areas of God or the Eighth Dynamic". The choice between religion and science seems to have been the dilemma, coming down in favour of the old logic of adapting to what is perceived as socially acceptable and therefore - survival.

Of course, if those who wish to pursue a scholarly course and to do so is wonderful, but it would be rather narrow if philosophy, ethics and even metaphysics were excluded from it.

If you think that I disagree with these propositions you'd be partially correct. I'm more in favour of following the example of est, (mentioned in your article; I did est training a few years ago) than a medico one. But it might be hard for some "to let all that training go to waste" i.e. those with College and Auditor training, and try a different method. Workshops and seminars are successfully applied by a large number of groups, reaching even larger amounts of people who are not necessarily into any -ism or -ology.

Also, I wonder if it is a scientific fact that those with college educations are less susceptible to fanaticism? That's certainly not my experience! The more I consider these articles the more dubious they become, although the one by Frank Gerbode is more sensitive and humane. But Actualism sounds unfeeling, dry and a bit of old hat, in fact, an anachronism. Better with something like Cognatism (not to be confused with the word cognition, although that might do as well), but I think any name would find someone in disagreement with it.

Yours sincerely

Ivor Clulow

TR'S AND INVALIDATION

Recently there has been some concern and interest in TRs, particularly with their being invalidative.

It may be that a lot of the trouble caused by TRs is due to their being coached in an invalidative manner. After all, invalidation is contagious and if a student is coached invalidatively he is quite likely to carry this over into his auditing.

The current bulletin for TRs coaching is "Training Drills Remodernized" of 16 Aug 71, Issue II, Revised 15 July 78. The coaching method described in that bulletin (i.e. flunking) can easily lead to invalidation whatever may be said about giving the student wins, etc.

A solution to this is to use non-invalidative coaching as described in the "cancelled" bulletin, "Modernised Training Drills Using Permissive Coaching" of 29 April 1963, Tech. Vol. 5 page 266. In this, flunking is not used and the details of each TR are described and coached much more thoroughly than in the 16 August 71 bulletin.

Also to be taken into account is the correct purpose of TRs as given in HCOB of 21 April 1971, under the heading TRs and using them to achieve their purpose.

I trust that the information given above may help to resolve some of the difficulties of TRS training and use and I would be very interested to hear of results obtained from using it.

Peter Davis

Dear Reconnection,

My September debrief to Jon Attack has been called "natter".

Looking through Management Series Vol 1, page 205, Esto Series 14, ETHICS HCOPL 4 April 1972, one reads: HONESTY is the road to SANITY - you can prove that and also prove it every time you make somebody well by "pulling his withholds". The insane are just one seething mass of overt acts and withholds. And they are very physically sick people. (End of quote.)

My debrief ultimately stated exactly this existing condition. Is applying this policy to another, even if called LRH, natter, or merely not Q and Aing with the INTEGRITY of auditing tech?

Love

Otto

THE OLD ARE WISE

The old are wise, this is true but only if they have been wise enough in the first place to learn from life as they travel its journey.

The letters from our Septuagenarian Scientologist have been much liked by a lot of readers, not least of which is me. So, why is this? I think it is because so many of us have been too busy doing Scientology that we have been unable to find time to sit back and put it totally in relation to the wholeness of the world we live in and compare it with other religions, beliefs, therapies etc.

Leonard Dunn has obviously from his articles been able to do this and we can therefore learn a lot from what he writes. I particularly liked his article on "thought" (Reconnection 22). Didn't think anyone could teach a Scientologist about "thought"!! but there in the midst of this article is the whole key to where the Church went wrong and where all of us have sometime gone wrong and some of us still are! I will quote: "One thing must be emphasised most emphatically. NEVER use thought force, emotionalism or anything similar to try and coerce another to do what you want them to do. Not even "for their own good". (My emphasis)

One of the biggest problems I had in life and in particular on the 2nd dynamic was due to not understanding this. It was only after I had left the Church and become more open to looking at different things that I realised that this was the biggest mistake I had been making in my life. I now am able to sit back and let people make mistakes (and learn from them). Others do not have to know what I know, they can find out themselves in this life or the next or the next. It doesn't stop me from giving of my knowledge when it is genuinely needed and wanted and it does make me much more approachable.

For those of you who have not really found this out yet work on it, particularly the "thought force" part as we are very strong beings in this direction

On the wholeness of life and becoming wise, it is good to read books and occasionally try something different, but on the latter I would caution against trying everything and recommend following one's intuition as discussed in Thoughts on Thought by our Septuagenarian Scientologist.

John Breakwell

BOOK REVIEW

ALTERED STATES - a novel by Paddy Chayefsky
Harper and Row; New York, London 184 Pages

Paddy Chayefsky is one of America's major dramatic writers, well known to those who love the best that the stage and screen has to offer. He has also written many successful radio and TV productions. Altered States is Chayefsky's first novel. He should write more of them.

This is a story of a young scientist's search for the origins of consciousness. During this search he explores other states of beingness and discovers some fascinating aspects of how a basic thought or postulate may be able to create changes in the physical world of his body and the things around him. His tool is the tools of the Scientific Establishment: isolation tanks, hallucinogenic drugs, expertise in bio-chemistry and human anatomy. But in the end he makes a new beginning - without them.

The reader is treated to a fascinating view of how a professional scientist goes about a Research Project - and of what can happen when, in his enthusiasm, he violates the accepted notions of ethics and dares to venture a bit too far beyond what others agree to be reality.

We also discover, if we didn't already know, to what extent the use of bio-chemical substances and "street drugs" during the 60's and 70's had infiltrated even into the professional ranks of those responsible for teaching our young people. Their casual acceptance - on the same order as hamburgers or a serene view of the sunset - is an unwitting indictment of a Way of Life in the process of spiralling downward. And yet the novel offers hope. Hope, that is, for a better future, if you happen to know the direction to go.

Mr. Chayefsky has done his research well. In the process of writing the book he acquired a "crash course" in many aspects of present-day Science, and he was helped by, in his words:

"...dozens of scientists, who without exception gave of their time and knowledge with a generosity that can only be called extraordinary. I was also struck by the interest of those scientists in matters outside their disciplines -- the humanities, for example. I confess I know few artists and writers who have an equivalent interest in the sciences."

This tells us two things. First, if we are to approach those people and interest them in what we have to offer, we would do well to show a sincere interest in learning at least the basics of what they have studied for so long. And second, it seems evident that a vast majority of that group is ready and eager to apply what our group, in its own way, has found out about the energy of Life.

Don C. Maier

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ATAK TALKS !



THE MAYO CASE

The injunction against certain named Independents' use of AA5 was lifted in August. In October, David Mayo's attorneys set about having the whole CofS case dismissed or given Summary Judgment. The motion they have submitted to the court is a tour de force of legal argument, citing many previous CofS cases, supporting Mayo's position from the CofS's own earlier arguments! The judge who originally gave the injunction is still presiding over the case, and allowed the CofS to amend their case yet again. They are now charging violation of copyright, rather than Racketeering and Conspiracy. They have requested a new injunction prohibiting the use of AA5, but the judge has so far decided not to hear their request.

The copyright charge may be interesting. In America it is necessary to register copyright in published works. The NOTs materials have not been so registered, and, according to my source, there is a limitation upon the time allowed for registering copyright, and time ran out for the NOTs materials on 20th November this year.

The CofS probably won't win their case in court, but, remember the policy they're working from: "if you discovered that some group ... had set up and established a series of meetings in your area, you would do all you could to make things interesting for them ... the least that could be done to such an area

the placement of a suit against them for using materials of Scientology without authority ... The purpose of the suit is to harass and discourage rather than to win. The law can be used very easily to harass, and enough harassment on somebody who is simply on the thin edge anyway, well knowing that he is not authorized, will generally be sufficient to cause his professional decease. If possible, of course, ruin him utterly."

Unfortunately, they can claim LRH authority to do this. He wrote the above quoted piece, and it isn't hidden in a confidential issue, it's in Tech volume 2, on page 157, and was written in 1955 as part of 'The Scientologist. A Manual on the Dissemination of Material'. Consequently, although the CofS may lose the case against Mayo et al, it has proved to be a tremendously successful piece of harassment, costing in excess of \$200,000 so far. It is very, very difficult to reconcile such actions with the notion of 'religion'.

ATAK'S ADVENTURES IN AMERICA

Knowing that most of our readers are cultured cosmopolitans, I admit with reticence that until September I had never been to America (pause for horrified silence). My ramblings on the subject may hold interest only to those few who haven't travelled to the land of mom, apple-pie and blueberry muffins.

We know everything about it anyway. We've seen the movies. We've seen Kojak and Dallas. So, what's new? For starters, the light switches are all upside down. As if that isn't disorienting enough, the apples and cucumbers in the supermarkets are waxed!

I travelled with my wife, Noella, and our then 17-month-old son, Benjamin. Ten hours on a jumbo jet was interesting, to put it very mildly. Even so, I can recommend British Airways (fly the flag, and all that) in preference to Pan Am, with whom we returned. The state of the plane, the friendliness of the service, the food and the ambience were vastly superior. And I intend to buy shares when they go public, so that I can benefit from the foregoing promotion.

We flew the so-called polar route. I love flying, and spent a fair amount of time cramped against the window. Over Scotland and across the Irish sea, and then blue ocean to the inlets of Greenland, which emerged beneath hovering puffs of cannon smoke cloud. Orange lights glittered on the islands of the Hudson Bay, in broad daylight. Over the immense Rocky mountains, the brilliant deep blue of lake Tahoe, and then Sacramento, a grid city in the desert.

We arrived at San Francisco airport two hours after we left Heathrow, which was disconcerting in itself. Having spent so much time studying the foibles of a certain paramilitary religion, there was a chance I'd be body-searched following an anonymous tip-off to Customs that I was a spiritual terrorist or a salesman of opium (to the masses). I breathed a sigh of relief when the official waved us on, having asked if we were carrying any illicit fruit or vegetables. I knew I was in America when I realised I'd have to pay a dollar to hire a luggage trolley.

Sarge Gerbode met us, so beginning an epic of hospitality on the Gerbodes' part. We drove in Sarge's pale metallic blue Rolls through the blazing sunshine to his home. I hadn't slept on the plane, and north California shocked my drowsy eyes. The long summer had burned the blue out of the greenery, so it all reflected the same orange tinge. The roadside grass (and ivy) was kept alive by miles of sprinklers.

Sarge, and his wife, Gail, gave us our own suite of rooms, no less. They were wonderful to us. Wonderful, wonderful, wonderful. Their daughter, Sharon, was also wonderful, and made us feel welcome.

I thought she was about nine years old, because of her many and several talents, and her stunning vocabulary, so I was surprised to find that she isn't yet seven years old. Gail Gerbode still C/Ses at the AAC, but is working more and more for the Institute of Metapsychology. She leads a busy life, and I was impressed by the amount of time she managed to devote to Sharon's education (while keeping the Attack family well-fed).

The day after our arrival we went to Palo Alto for the first time. The town is about halfway between San Francisco and San Jose, on the Bay. The City, the local name for San Francisco, is about thirty minutes away by car. Palo Alto is next door to Stanford University (a town in its own right). It is an affluent and very tidy town, with an amazing number of good restaurants and bookshops. I particularly recommend Le Normandie on University Avenue, and Kepler's bookshop.

The Institute of Metapsychology occupies the same building as the AAC Palo Alto. There is still plenty of space in this erstwhile Mormon church. Inside, the building is plush, and might easily house a highly successful legal or medical practice. Not the sort of crumbling ruin we were used to in the mother church.

In a huge office beyond the gymnasium (!), David and Julie Mayo plot the creation of Metapsychology on their computers. Julie has already run a project to check how effective Dianetics was on people straight off the street, without the lengthy indoctrination given to Scientology preclears. She achieved better results than she had in the CofS. A very interesting point.

David seemed to want to retire from both the attacks and the adulation directed towards him. He was obviously uneasy in the presence of doting admirers. David and Julie don't actually work in the AAC. The lead auditor there is Paulette Mahurin (perhaps better known as either Ausley or Cohen). Paulette audited LRH at La Quinta in the late seventies. Even one jaded ex-Scientologist who feels that Scientology is largely brainwashing recommended a session with Paulette as a remarkable experience.

While the Institute sets about the reordering of the Tech, the AAC are still delivering the Bridge. Gerry French, who used to be ED of the AAC, has moved over into the Institute. During my first stay, he was busy working on the brochure which should be with this Reconnection. He still took the time to take Noella, Ben and I to the City, and to invade us with his enthusiasm for the place. I am not a fan of cities, but San Francisco has a magic all of its own. It also has the advantage of being considerably smaller than the cities I'm used to, having a population of just over half a million. I fell for every sticky tourist trap, from the wonderful fresh tuna on Pier 39, to the pastel Hispano-Victorian

Gothic of the old timber houses (brick is rarely used for construction in these sunny climes). Later we saw the unique City fog, which gushes in from the sea in huge white fronds, breaking like waves over the hills.

I first met Greg Schilling two years ago in East Grinstead. We took to one another immediately, both being irreverent by nature (okay, jokers and degraders, I know). It was a real pleasure to see Greg again, and he and his wife, Marcia, took us under their collective wing. I also fell head over heels in love with their daughter, Vanessa. Marcia kept us entertained for much of our stay. This is an appropriate moment to correct my mis-statement about Greg in Reconnection 21: he is actually a Class IV.

Greg demonstrated his true character by taking us to a gay restaurant called Hamburger Mary's for a dreadful lunch. Our waiter was tall, had a dark beard and wore a lumberjack shirt, and his high-pitched voice and matching mannerisms were difficult to reconcile. At one point he climbed onto a table and started hopping daintily in an attempt to reach an air-conditioning fan. Very strange. I'm still scheming my response for Greg's next trip to England. Send your suggestions to Reconnection on a post-card. Greg also took us to Fort Kronkite, a concrete mausoleum built in fear of a Japanese invasion, which overlooks the Golden Gate. Greg ignored the barriers and the huge warning signs, and led me down a short and too-steep path of crumbled clay, fortunately bounded by a mesh fence, which gave me something to cling desperately to while my heart turned somersaults and tried to drag me back to safety. The view was exquisite, over the red-leaded bridge to Alcatraz and beyond, and in the other direction out over the muddy blue Pacific. I perched nervously and photographed.

We spent as much time as possible with the author of 'Whither the Tech?', Lew Randall, and his wife Martha. They proved to be urbane and exciting company, with a depth of wit almost as excruciating as my own. Lew claims that Martha was the hidden suppressive behind the article. To test this point, we'll be printing one of her own essays. Martha fed us on marvellous roast beef and spoon bread, in place of Yorkshire pudding. Greg and Lew have another written affront to Scientological decency on the way.

I gave an overlong lecture to twenty or thirty people, belabouring them with the necessity to avoid polarisation, if a rational point of view is to be retained. In essence I was saying that the CofS reverence for their God, and Nibs' Devil view are mutually exclusive, and factually erroneous. Wow. Speaking of God, in her first public appearance for many a year last March, Annie Broeker, while announcing Ron's latest LP, suggested very powerfully that Ron invented music "just after the first tick of time", so the deification has started. Only Ron will

be seen as the father of God, not the son.

We stayed in the north for a fortnight before flying down to Los Angeles. Fred Stansfield met us at the airport. Having read his forceful Free Spirit articles it was almost surprising to meet such an amiable and charming man. He took us to his home, where we met his legendary wife, Valerie. They have two houses on their plot, one of which was transported there, a strange American custom. The second house contains the Stansfield's centre. Valerie has largely shifted into other therapies herself, combining many ideas into a technique of her own. Nonetheless, Scientology courses are still taught there. Valerie also has an impressive collection of LRH tapes. She also seems to be one of the few people in LA who are not fervently pro or anti LRH.

LA was a stark contrast to the north. I hadn't n warned that it is basically an outpost in the desert, casually spread between the mountains. It was also hot (though not to its denizens, who couldn't understand my complaints about temperatures in the eighties and nineties). I was told that the heat is comfortable because it is dry heat. You can't believe everything you hear. To go anywhere, it was often necessary to drive for thirty minutes, over the network of freeways which tie the great sprawl together. The changes of altitude while driving were sufficient to affect the sinuses.

We stayed on the edge of the city (it's more a small country really!), looking out on the great crumpled splendour of the San Gabriel mountains, through date palms and cedars. After a few days it started to look like a post-card, and the neon sunsets did nothing to dismiss the idea.

The cheap (and nasty) restaurants are called Coffee-shops. Eating in Denny's or Norm's or the Big is a daunting process, from the constant supply of iced water, to the battery of questions attending an order. "Soup or salad?", comes immediately. If you opt for salad, your next quiz is, "Italian, thousand or blue?". Which is to say, "vinaigrette, thousand island or blue cheese dressing?". Further, they really do call mayonaise 'mayo'. After that you have to work out that a 'patti melt' is a hamburger with cheese.

I was generally unimpressed with the supermarkets. Ralph's, and Hughes, and Safeway were all rather frayed, with piped music and worn linoleum. I'd heard that America was an affluent culture. I wasn't warned about the class differences, with the poor living in a squallor worse than any I've seen in England. Something to do with the Welfare State, I suppose. On the other hand, you can live on next to nothing in California. The heating bills must be minimal.

I was also offended at the poor quality of supermarket fruit. I've already mentioned the

bizarre habit of varnishing apples (which the French are also prone to), but the apples themselves were gaudy, overblown, watery and tasteless. I'm used to apple-time in England, seeing the varieties issuing forth from the early Discoveries, through the Spartans and the glorious Egremont Russets to the first fine Orange Pippins. Not to mention the imported Starkings, Dunn's Seedlings and Granny Smiths. My outrage is really because the peaches finished a week before we arrived, and they didn't save me one. And we left just before the oranges were ready. Fruit is more seasonal in California, simply because they grow so much of it.

Then there is the smog, or sea haze as it is euphemistically known. There are Smog Testing Centers throughout California. I heard that cars have been turned back at the Oregon border before now, because of their high pollution factor. So now the exhausts have to be tested. North California is dominated by Volvo and Mercedes, LA has more American brands, with a lot of imitations of Japanese 'compacts', as they term small cars.

During our stay in LA we met many people. Unfortunately, I was taken up with searching out documents, so I didn't meet everyone I would have liked, and usually meetings were too short. I must apologise to Thea Greenburg, for not getting to see her. She was unable to put us up, because her house is overrun with students and pcs. However, I did meet many of the mainstays of the Independent movement. Mark and Ellen Jones wined and dined us, and Ellen and I chattered about 12th century England. Ellen has just finished a mammoth research project culminating in an historical novel. I was thankful for an escape from the incessant talk about Scn. Mark was as charming as ever.

Jon Zegel took us for lunch, and proved to be even more intelligent and articulate than I'd feared. I'm conceited about my part in the creation of the Independents, but Jon had a much greater influence. He no longer runs the Clear Center, and has moved away from Scientology itself, though he supports the Metapsychologists in their attempt to bring scientific method to bear on the subject. Meeting Jon's girlfriend, the artist Susan Rios, was also a pleasure.

I talked all too briefly with Mary Maren and Frankie Freedman. The construction of the FAIR suit is going very well, and the financial support has been very good. Mary and I talked about our mutual interest in the new mysticism - which is to say the attempt to reconcile philosophy with contemporary opinions in nuclear physics and the sciences.

Terry Whitfield confessed that he is tired of being called 'Mr Eltringham', because his wife, Hana, is such a celebrity. She was one of the first Sea Org members, and captained part of the Mission into Time, or Whole Track Mission. Now she is on the steering

committee of FAIR. When we met, she'd just returned from the Swiss Independent Convention, and gave a diplomatic account of the events there. The gentleness I'd observed in her letters to me was confirmed by her presence.

I was delighted to meet Frank Notaro, who leapt to fame by picketing the LA complex and the LA courthouse with various upfront signs about OT3 ('Ron is Xenu' for example). Before these escapades he edited the Free Spirit. Frank has a remarkable vocabulary (not only of invective), and a wonderful sense of humour.

Bent Corydon drove up from Riverside. Since he decided to write a book about LRH and all his works, the CofS have left him be. Bent's Center has celebrated its fourth anniversary, maintaining its position as the oldest Independent of the most recent schism. Bent is Danish by birth, so was a prime mover not only in the movement in California, but also in Denmark. He was also one of the first to raise a voice for the re-examination of the Tech. His book will be out next year, and it should prove to be fascinating. I manfully avoided his efforts to tempt me with Japanese raw fish (sushi).

We also met the correspondent known to many people the world over as 'Debra'. Her role in the creation of the Independent movement is not usually appreciated. She has provided a news service about events in the US for some time.

I made the obligatory visit to the holy places. The brown-shirted guards, marching around the perimeter of the blue buildings, and carrying Mace gas, were still a shock, even though I've seen photos. The complex still seemed to have a fair trade, though most of the people I saw were wearing uniforms. The sign announcing the Cadet Org bothered me. I also heard that there are plans to ship the little cadets out. It will save their parents the distraction of having to spend half-an-hour a day with them. ASI has offices in a broad skyscraper, topped ironically with a huge sign reading 'Trans World Entertainment'. Fifield Manor, once the home of the US GO, is now turned over to staff accommodation. It is a large mock gothic building, which would do well in a Hammer horror movie.

We drove to Santa Barbara, and spent two days there. The Habers, not long returned from an expedition to the Himalayas, kindly put us up. I met Virginia Downsborough at the Foundation for Advanced Abilities, which she directs. This proved to be the busiest Center we saw in America. As with the Palo Alto AAC, the building was aesthetically decorated and furnished, and the atmosphere easy. No hard sell, nor heavy pressure. Strictly laid back. Virginia was with LRH in Las Palmas early in 1967, and was the first person to see OT3. She left the Sea Project (as it originally was) when the excesses of Heavy Ethics began to bite. She has a long record

as a successful businesswoman, and the Foundation is a continuation of that record.

We had lunch with Maude Castillo, who was the C/S at the AAC Santa Barbara, and had been LRH's personal photographer on the ship. She is now taken up with co-ordinating the defence to the CofS's suit against the AAC and its former members and associates. Her wry humour, and sense of enjoyment were very welcome.

We took a double-decker train from Santa Barbara to San Jose, and thence back to Palo Alto. The train travelled along the coast as far as San Luis Obispo, and the view was breath-taking.

Back in Palo Alto we attempted a holiday. At least we saw Muir Woods, a redwood forest just beyond the Golden Gate. The tallest tree was nearly three hundred feet high (ironically a pine not a sequoia). The redwoods exude an entrancing fragrance. They have all the magical stillness of a pine forest.

California wine was variable and expensive. I tend to prefer good German white wines - the Rhein is most especially - but the white Zinfandel (made from skinned red grapes) and the Santa Barbara Sauvignon Blanc were very good. The bottles are sensibly labelled with the grape type. The most common white is a Chardonnay, which was unexciting but drinkable.

Talking at length with Sarge, I felt that Independents have not generally understood what the Institute of Metapsychology is about. This comes partly from a failure to comprehend the concepts expressed so far by the Institute, and partly from the vagueness out of which their endeavour is emerging. I came away confident that the Institute, and other similar groups, are a necessity if valid aspects of Scientology are to become accepted principles for living rather than the doctrines of an elitist cult. Which aspects are valid is another matter, but I'll rail about that elsewhere.

I am obviously prejudiced in Sarge's favour, because of his fine treatment of me, even so, I do genuinely support his endeavour. He is currently working on a straightforward textbook of techniques and concepts. A very necessary project. The sooner we escape the hyperbole of LRH's written work the better.

We'd been in America for six weeks when we arrived drowsily back at Heathrow. Unfortunately events had conspired against a proposed visit to Boston, to see Mike Flynn and Gerry Armstrong. Mike was in LA when we planned to go, and when the time came, we were so exhausted that we simply wanted to come home. Aside from this one major disappointment, the trip to America was very successful, and my principle memory will be of the friendliness and hospitality of many of her people.

Don