

Harry M. Johnson

Editor

Religious Change
and Continuity



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RELIGIOUS CHANGE AND CONTINUITY
Sociological Perspectives
by Harry M. Johnson

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countries in which inner-worldly asceticism on an explicitly religious basis had already taken hold.

Part Three, dealing with the immediate present and the future, is necessarily the most controversial section of the book. Marie Augusta Neal, in Chapter Nine, analyzes the sexism in Judeo-Christian religious symbolism and foresees even greater turmoil for the Catholic Church and for the rest of Christianity and Judaism unless and until the sexism in both symbolism and religious organization is eliminated. Neal's essay, I believe, raises profound questions about the future.

In Chapter Ten, William C. Shepherd suggests that many people in the United States have drifted into a polymorphous kind of religiosity, a congeries of eclectic orientations, and seem not to be greatly worried about any overall pattern integrity in their varying personal portfolios. This admittedly tentative essay is lively and provocative.

Whereas Shepherd emphasizes a drift toward what he calls "inclusivism," Daniel A. Foss and Ralph W. Larkin, in Chapter Eleven, say that in the 1970s we have exactly the opposite, a tendency toward a jealous exclusivism. They review studies of four different types of religious or quasi-religious movements and maintain that all four are expressions of disillusionment, reactions to the failure of the confrontation, protest, and wide-open pleasure seeking of the hippies and activists of the 1960s. Both Shepherd and Foss and Larkin suggest in passing that there are some wily types around exploiting anxieties.

In Chapter Twelve, Steven M. Tipton presents a sympathetic analysis of a small number of American Zen Buddhists. He suggests that their religious orientation may spread undramatically into American utilitarian-Christian society, gradually transforming it into something less hectic and at once less individualistic and less "oppressive."

In Chapter Thirteen, I attempt to connect the essays more explicitly with one another and offer a few judgments on controversies. An important unifying theme is religious evolution.

Urbana, Illinois
April 1979

Harry M. Johnson

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*Daniel A. Foss
Ralph W. Larkin*

The Roar of the Lemming: *Youth, Postmovement Groups, and the Life Construction Crisis*

Following the movement of the 1960s, youth culture in the early 1970s was characterized by mass psychic depression¹ and some extremely bizarre phenomena: youthful ex-acidheads shaving their heads, swearing off drugs, sex, and hedonism and donning the saffron robes of the Hari Krishnas; the trial of mass murderer Charley Manson and his family; the rise of various Marxist sectarian groups out of the ashes of the New Left, such as the National Caucus of Labor Committees, Weather Underground, New American Movement, Revolutionary Union, October League, Communist League, and, on the West Coast, the Symbionese Liberation Army; the emergence of fundamentalist Christian sects such as the Children of God, the Alamo Foundation, and the World Christian Liberation Front among ex-movement participants; the development of the Divine Light Mission, headed by the teen-age "Perfect Master and Lord of the Universe," Guru Maharaj Ji; and, more recently, the mass suicide of over 900 members of the socialist People's Temple in Guyana.

The sociology profession has treated these phenomena

under such rubrics as the "new religions" (Needleman, 1971); the "new morality" (Yankelovich, 1974); or "social movements," even though they are not engaged in overt conflict with dominant institutions (Foss and Larkin, 1976). More importantly, sociological researchers have not adequately explained the rise of these religious, communal, and political organizations and their phenomenal success in the early 1970s. Almost all researchers have noted that these religious groups received an influx of ex-movement participants in the period between 1969 and 1973. Hashimoto and McPherson (1976) and Oh (1973), in their studies of Nichiren Shoshu, indicate that it appealed to "hippies" and young, educated, and disaffected youth in the early 1970s. Jesus Freaks and Hari Krishnas were almost exclusively recruited from these ranks. Judah (1974, p. 183) demonstrates that the Krishna organization (ISKON) emerged out of the counterculture and experienced its major growth spurt between 1970 and the middle of 1972, stabilizing in 1973 and 1974. This corresponds quite closely with observations of the Jesus Freaks (Enroth, Ericson, and Peters, 1972; Simmonds, Richardson, and Harder, 1974; Balswick, 1974; Adams and Fox, 1972). Curiously, there is no sociological research on the rise and development of left sectarianism at the same time. The closest we have to an analysis of these groups is O'Brien (1978). However, O'Brien focuses mainly on doctrinal disputes between Leninist parties.

A serious problem of the research in this area is that, in attempting to explain the popularity of these organizations to ex-movement participants, the researchers either debunk or take the newly converted members' explanations at face value. Thus Enroth, Ericson, and Peters (1972), who are pleased and relieved to see unwashed hippies become responsible Christians, view the young as resurrecting the spirit of early Christianity. Balswick (1974) claims they synthesize countercultural ideals with religious fundamentalism. Adams and Fox (1972) and Kopkind (1973) view Jesus Freaking as a form of copping out and privatization, a critique that has been made of the various religious organizations in the early 1970s by the left. None of the approaches lead us to a sufficient explanation as to why the phenomenon has occurred in the first place.

The closest sociologists have come to explanations as to why these groups arose and attracted ex-movement participants are found in Robbins, Anthony, and Curtis (1975), Mauss and Petersen (1974), Petersen and Mauss (1973), and Gordon (1974). Robbins, Anthony, and Curtis and Mauss and Petersen agree that the Christian groups operate as way stations to conventional lives for ex-freaks and countercultural types by enforcing rigorous discipline on their members. Mauss and Petersen also suggest that Jesus Freaking is a response to psychic and social deprivation. Gordon, however, focuses on what he calls *identity synthesis*; that is, adopting a third identity that subsumes two earlier ones. While these hypotheses are true, they ignore the really difficult questions, such as why ex-movement participants needed a road back to conventionality, why they needed to assume new identities, why this occurred primarily among formerly dissident youth, and why it occurred in the early 1970s.

In an earlier paper, we characterized these new organizations as "postmovement groups" and demonstrated their relationship with the youth movement of the 1960s (Foss and Larkin, 1976). It is our purpose in this chapter to sketch the structure of such postmovement groups and analyze why they arose when they did, why they tended to manifest exotic forms and bizarre behaviors, and most importantly, why these groups appealed to former movement participants.

The research reported here is based on (1) a three-and-a-half year participant observation study of the Divine Light Mission; (2) observation and reading of the documents of the following Marxist organizations: the National Caucus of Labor Committees (NCLC, now the U.S. Labor Party), Revolutionary Union, Attica Brigade, October League, and Youth Against War and Fascism; (3) personal experiences with co-counseling, the Sullivanians, and the Hari Krishnas (International Society for KRSNA Consciousness [ISKON]); and (4) an examination of journalistic and sociological literature in the field. Some difficulty arose from the fact that some groups were overtly violent (for example, the Manson Family, the Lyman Family, and the Symbionese Liberation Army), thus precluding investigation; others were extremely circumspect about their internal workings and required infiltration (for example, the

Tony and Susan Alamo Foundation and Scientology); and most are extremely suspicious of sociological investigation. For example, even though the authors received the secret knowledge of Guru Maharaj Ji at their initiation into the Divine Light Mission and were active in it over a three-and-a-half year period, devotees regarded our sociological probing as a deviation from pursuit of the experience of the absolute and rebuked us accordingly. In their terms, we were too "mindy." However, one compensating factor was that most groups were highly media conscious, because they wanted to propagate the faith to the larger public.

Postmovement Groups

Postmovement groups are organizations that emerged in the wake of the youth movement of the 1960s. Each group attempted to reconcile the freak vision of an anarchist communitarian post-scarcity society² generated by the 1960s movement with the reascendance of dominant institutions and the attenuation of the movement. On some level, formerly dissident youth had to make peace with the dominant structure or die.³ Because of the contradiction between the movement "vision" and the declining possibilities of its fulfillment, youth who were highly committed to the movement were left in the difficult position of reconciling the irreconcilable. We call this the "life construction crisis," which the postmovement groups attempted to resolve and which we will explicate in detail later.

It is obvious that only a small percentage of activist youth actually joined postmovement groups. Nevertheless, their cultural importance far outstripped their numbers. Postmovement groups were "indicative minorities" (see Foss and Larkin, 1976) and as such tended to draw the trends in youth culture to their logical (and often absurd) conclusions. In the same way that hippies were an indicative minority during the period between 1965 and 1967, the postmovement groups occupied the same position between 1971 and 1975.⁴ Indeed, the variety observed among the postmovement groups and groups that share some postmovement characteristics serves to underscore the pervasiveness and depth of the cultural syndrome we are analyzing.

Postmovement groups can be classified according to their historical and cultural relationship to the white middle-class youth movement of the 1960s. Some groups evolved organically out of the decomposing youth culture at the end of the 1960s or later. In this category, we can place the Divine Light Mission of Guru Maharaj Ji, the Children of God, the Alamo Foundation, the More Houses, and many of the psychotherapies under the aegis of the "Human Potential Movement." Other groups were formed at least in part in order to repudiate some or all of the characteristic cultural manifestations of the 1960s either during the movement period or afterward. Such groups are the Hari Krishnas (see Judah, 1974), NCLC, and the Progressive Labor Party. Still other groups antedated the existence of the movement, sometimes by decades; did not appeal to freak youth during the movement period; and, after the movement's demise, received an influx of former movement participants and still younger people, all cast adrift as atomized individuals and demoralized by the prospects of the 1970s. These groups include Scientology, United Pentecostal Churches, various Trotskyist sects, and Nichiren Shoshu (Oh, 1973).

Postmovement groups took four forms: (1) Authoritarian communes such as the Metelica Aquarian Foundation ("Spirit in Flesh" Commune) in western Massachusetts, the Lyman Family in Boston, the Manson Family in California, and the More Houses in Oakland, California. Each of these communes was formed around a charismatic leader who was, more or less, deified by the followers and allowed to exercise almost absolute power over their lives (Foss, 1974; Feldon, 1972). (2) Mechanistic Marxist parties such as the October League, Revolutionary Union (which successively became the Attica Brigade and the Revolutionary Student Brigade), the National Caucus of Labor Committees (now known as the U.S. Labor Party), and the Symbionese Liberation Army (which combined the Marxist and commune forms). All these parties claim to be revolutionary vanguards, enforce on their members rigorous discipline, and demand strict obedience (O'Brien, 1978). (3) Oriental sects such as Nichiren Shoshu, the Hari Krishnas (ISKON), and the Divine Light Mission of the "Teen-age Perfect Master," Guru Maharaj Ji. All believed that, when the world learned of their mys-

tic experiences generated through meditation or chanting, the millennium would come about, and people would live together in peace, sharing a common level of elevated consciousness (Levine, 1974; Oh, 1973; Foss and Larkin, 1975). (4) Various Christian sects such as the Children of God, the Tony and Susan Alamo Foundation in Southern California, and various "Jesus Freak" collectives throughout the country. Their doctrine was similar to that of the Oriental sects, except that the central mystery was "allowing Jesus into your heart," which was the prerequisite for personal and world peace (Enroth, Ericson, and Peters, 1972; Gordon, 1974).

In our study of postmovement groups, we found that they cater to similar motivational syndromes and conform, more or less, to the following characteristics: (1) an authoritarian structure, (2) appropriation of a fragment of the vision articulated in the youth culture of the 1960s (peace, love, revolution, ego transcendence, and so on), (3) a nonconflictual stance toward society at large, (4) denigration of sensual indulgence, (5) minute regulation of the lives of their membership, (6) maintenance of a fierce exclusivity based on doctrines claiming a monopoly of the truth, and (7) the claim to be solutions to the meaninglessness of life.

1. Postmovement groups, regardless of whether their manifest goal was to transform the social order through the development of a revolutionary vanguard, as in the case of the Marxist sectarians, or through propagation of the faith, as in the case of the religious sects, developed an authoritarian structure, formally articulated with sharp boundary definition. Each of these groups developed a cult of personality around a single leader who served as an embodiment of the vision of the membership and whom they revered. In the religious groups, the leader became deified and was worshipped. Prabhupada, the spiritual master of the Hari Krishnas, Guru Maharaj Ji of the Divine Light Mission,⁵ and Moses David of the Children of God are all examples of such deified leaders. Even when postmovement groups were established on nonreligious grounds, such deification occurred. Mel Lyman, the founder of "The Family," a Boston-area freak⁶ commune, had proclaimed himself God by 1970. Victor Barranco, the originator of the More Houses in Oakland, California, became the spiritual father of the "marks" (his term) he exploits in a profit-making

scheme to rebuild old houses (Feldon, 1972). According to Feldon, Barranco induced young ex-freaks to rebuild houses without compensation and, when they were finished, charged them \$200 a month to live in them. He also ran the Institute of Human Abilities, which amounted to having his devotees pay up to \$65 for an hour in his presence. As for the Marxist sectarians, Lyndon Marcus (now La Rouche) of the National Caucus of Labor Committees (NCLC) has been credited with the ability to foretell the precise development of world capitalism for the next five years, down to a worldwide depression, culminating in the mass strike, in the midst of which the Labor Committee, knowing exactly what to do, will seize power (Foss, 1974).

Each of these groups was pyramidal in structure with line of authority highly articulated from the top down. The NCLC, directed by ex-efficiency expert Marcus, operated a tightly knit bureaucracy that measured its progress *by the hour* (Foss, 1974). The Divine Light Mission was rampant with "titleism" and had developed a centralized bureaucratic structure that spent most of its effort printing, filling out, filing, and data-processing forms that monitor organizational activity. Maharaj Ji himself held the title of "Supreme Chief Executive of the Mission" in addition to that of "Perfect Master and Lord of the Universe" (Foss and Larkin, 1975). Other, perhaps smaller, groups did not manifest bureaucratic structures. In these cases, as in the Lyman Family or the Alamo Foundation, the authority was patriarchal and came directly from the leader (Feldon, 1972; Cahill, 1973; Enroth, Ericson, and Peters, 1972).

2. Each group appropriated a fragment of the freak vision, often using it as the basis of legitimation of the authoritarian structure. The servility of the members was used as evidence of spirituality, ego transcendence, or manifestations of peace and love (Levine, 1974; Foss and Larkin, 1975). When members allowed themselves to be subject to hierarchical authority, such personal subjugation was *prima facie* evidence of commitment to the propagation of love and peace or the historical necessity of the revolution.⁷

3. Postmovement groups developed nonconflictual stances toward society at large. Like their predecessors, youth of the 1970s believed in the inevitability of radical change; however, unlike

youth of the 1960s, they believed that social transformation could not be achieved by immediate action on and conflict with objective social reality but must be brought about by the attainment of spiritual perfection by the members and the diffusion of spiritual perfection to the population.⁸ Where conflict did occur, it was not with the larger society but among postmovement groups competing with each other for constituencies or contending over minute differences in doctrine. For example, in mid 1973, the NCLC began "Operation Mop-Up," a campaign to destroy the Communist Party by beating up its members. At Millennium '73, a Divine Light Mission festival, thirty Hari Krishnas were arrested while protesting Guru Maharaj Ji's claim to Perfect Mastership.

4. All postmovement groups broke sharply with the notion, widely disseminated in the late 1960s among white middle-class youth, that removal of limitations on immediate gratification and rediscovery of the body was a necessary aspect of the transformation of the entire social order. Instead, they stood for an earlier cultural syndrome: They advocated self-discipline, self-sacrifice, hard work, systematic and orderly living, and renunciation of the pleasures of the flesh. All or nearly all of these groups discouraged uninhibited sexuality, and many encouraged sexual abstinence. Among the Jesus Freaks and the Eastern sects, renunciation of sexuality tended to show that one had attained spiritual perfection and that one was relying on the source of ultimate satisfaction, which lies within: on the holy spirit; Krishna, the Reservoir of Pleasure; Theta waves (in Scientology); the universal energy source (Divine Light Mission) (see Robbins and Anthony, 1972; Judah, 1974; Adams and Fox, 1972; Malko, 1970; Cameron, 1973; Levine, 1974). Among the Marxist sects, sexual restraint seemed to be taken as a sign that one is "serious." A member of the NCLC once boasted to one of the authors, "I've got no time for girls. I'm too busy doing class organizing." O'Brien (1978) has also noted the cultural conservatism of Marxist-Leninist parties, which often led them to take reactionary positions on women's and gay rights issues. Some groups, such as the Children of God and the Hari Krishnas, have not discouraged marriage but have insisted that marital sex be intended exclusively for procreation.

5. These groups minutely regulate the everyday lives of

their membership. Short hair, conventional dress for men, and modest dress for women have been the norms in several groups. Most prohibited the use of substances defined by the conventional culture as drugs, and many banned alcohol as well.

In our study of the Divine Light Mission (DLM), we found they maintained a rule book called "The Ashram Manual," which listed page after page of rules, regulations, and injunctions concerning the behavior and demeanor of the *premies* (a Hindi word meaning "lover"), as devotees of Guru Maharaj Ji call themselves. It contained dress codes for male and female *premies*, daily schedules, and even advice on how to act toward parents; and it advised against hitchhiking—one of the main sources of mobility for many *premies* a few years before (Foss and Larkin, 1975).

6. All postmovement groups maintain a fierce exclusivity based on the claims of their doctrines and leaders to embody a monopoly of the truth. The fragmentation of the youth culture was most dramatically demonstrated in such claims of exclusivity. During the 1960s, as the vision developed, it was able to incorporate greater varieties of orientations and, because of its subjectivist and existentialist core, became more or less universally accepted, because it raised personal experience as the ultimate criterion of validity (Foss, 1972). Although postmovement groups gave lip service to the criterion of personal experience, those experiences that were the exclusive domain of the group became the basis of the arbitration of truth. For example, devotees of Guru Maharaj Ji could not seem to complete a sentence without including the word *experience*. However, to them "experience" meant experience *in the knowledge*, which those who had not been initiated into the secret meditative techniques of the Divine Light Mission could not possibly comprehend unless they too become devotees. Because the sole purpose of the organization was the propagation of the one and only truth, the organization became the embodiment of that truth, and membership in the organization was the only means by which one could have access to the truth.

7. In line with the freaks' characterization of conventional society as meaningless, postmovement groups offer themselves as remedies for the meaninglessness endured by average middle-class citizens and drug-soaked hedonistic hippies alike (and those that

did not make overt promises also seemed to attract members who joined at least in part out of a desire for a more "meaningful existence"). Whereas freaks of the 1960s found meaning in maintaining a position of defiance and opposition to the "plastic world," postmovement groups found meaning in escape from the complexities and incongruities of the material world (or the world of the mind) into a more transcendent, simplified view of the cosmos independent of material reality. Jesus Freaks recruited among "long-hairs" by denouncing the pointlessness of conflict or the hedonistic life and by claiming that the true Christian can stay permanently high on Jesus and obtain greater joy than can be derived from drugs or sex: "Try Jesus—God's eternal Trip!" (Adams and Fox, 1972; Cahill, 1973; Petersen and Mauss, 1973; Enroth, Ericson, and Peters, 1972). They promised the end of all earthly mental anguish, which was said to be derived from being caught up in the toils of a society dominated by Satan. The Eastern cults promised the same thing, using different words: The material world is illusion, and a life committed solely to activity in the material world was bound to be meaningless and incapable of sustaining true happiness (Petersen and Mauss, 1973; Judah, 1974). Marxist sectarians promised a meaningful life by indicating that the individual could choose to swim either with the inexorable tides of history or against them (Foss, 1974).

Postmovement Groups and the Life Construction Crisis

The "life construction crisis" is not a part of the "identity crisis" that neo-Freudians such as Erikson (1950) state is necessary for adolescents to survive if they are to be autonomous adults. The focus of such "identity crises" is the paternalistic family, which is diminishing rapidly in contemporary society (see Kenniston, 1968; Friedenberg, 1959; Gillis, 1974; Kohn, 1969). Nor is it the kind of "cognitive dissonance" that occurs as a result of the failure of prophecy (Festinger, Reichen, and Schacter, 1956). Although closer to Kenniston's notion of the problem of the integration of the individual self into the social order experienced by youth (Kenniston, 1970), the life construction crisis is, on the one hand, more

historically determined, and on the other, much more acute in terms of the contradictions experienced.

Postmovement groups emerged in the early and mid 1970s to help youth resolve the contradictions and alleviate the psychic pain⁹ resulting from the clash of two incompatible interpretations of social reality: one derived from the dominant ideology of bureaucratic rationality (as they perceive it) that pervaded the society of their formative years and the other derived from experiences of the 1960s that had given rise to the subjectivist "movement" ideology. The ideology of bureaucratic rationality gave heavy emphasis to the maintenance of the reality principle, centering on the importance of getting ahead, future orientation, cognition, deferred gratification, deference to authority, sexual inhibition, punctuality, blandness, and getting along and going along (Freud [1931], 1962). The "movement" attacked all such notions and, although it never had a really coherent ideology, gave greater emphasis to the pleasure principle relative to the reality principle. The "movement" ideology centered around joy, immediate gratification of impulses, creativity, open sexuality, sensuality, love, living in the present, ego transcendence, mysticism, and suspicion of *all* hierarchy.

With the ebbing of the movement in the early 1970s, the prospects for social transformation were visibly diminished, and formerly dissident youth were forced to accommodate themselves to the newly emerging reality and the reassertion of the authority of dominant institutions. There was no returning to the *status quo ante*. The vision of the 1960s had generated aspirations that were impossible to fulfill.¹⁰ Caught between lives they despised and lives they could not possibly live, youthful dissidents of the 1960s experienced acute personal crises in the wake of the movement in the early 1970s.¹¹ The life construction crisis was subjectively experienced as a crisis in meaning. Activities previously experienced as revolutionary, antiestablishment, or intrinsically satisfying—such as the taking of psychedelic drugs, marching in protests, or participating in sex—were drained of their meaning as the movement subsided, leaving the movement participant with a feeling of senselessness and emptiness. What was previously pregnant with mean-

ing and purpose had become mechanical, disembodied, and a source of acute despair. Judah (1974, p. 164; emphasis in original) quotes a devotee on her reasons for joining the Krishnas:

I was getting crazier and crazier each year, and more and more frustrated . . . *so what brought me to Krishna Consciousness was complete, overwhelming, undeniable, and irrevocable distress.* There was nothing I could do. I was even considering going through psychotherapy . . . I can't begin to describe how empty I was feeling. I had no association; I was seventy or eighty pounds overweight. I had no money. I considered myself completely mad. I had no education, no skills, no friends—I had nothing.

Members both of Christian sects and the Divine Light Mission made the claim that their saviors "filled them up." No longer were they empty containers.

Our research indicates that postmovement groups offered themselves as alternatives to the meaningless participation in a dying movement and to the meaninglessness of middle-class existence. In the first phase of their development, from about 1971 until early 1974, they tended to attract ex-movement participants who were forced to reconcile themselves to the end of the movement. This was a period of rapid expansion, and postmovement groups proliferated (see Note 4). However, beginning in about 1973, postmovement groups began to attract younger members who had not been participants in the youth movement but who tended to come from more traditional bourgeois culture and who, when faced with the more "liberated" youth of the 1970s, dropped out of the highly competitive sexual marketplace where they felt they had low exchange value. For the older members, the life construction crisis was more historically generated, while for the younger, more inhibited members, it was more developmental, arising more from the problems of the life cycle.¹² Following the postmovement period, which ended in 1975, groups that have been able to survive into the latter half of the decade cater primarily to

this stratum of youth, with the Unification Church of Sun Myung Moon being the prime example.

Because the life construction crisis was generated by the collision of two incompatible realities, the postmovement groups resolved the contradiction through the determination of a fixed absolute point of reference that stood apart from, repudiated, or subsumed both of the rival interpretations of social reality.¹³ The Marxist vanguard parties tended to adopt ideologies that repudiated both the dominant and movement interpretations of reality by imposing defiantly obsolete interpretations of reality based on Marx's description of mid-nineteenth-century capitalist society (O'Brien, 1978). Some fundamentalist Christian sects did the same thing, using a literal interpretation of the Bible (Enroth, Ericson, and Peters, 1972; Petersen and Mauss, 1973). The more gnostic Christian sects and the Oriental sects subsumed rival interpretations by focusing on more "ultimate" questions than those dealt with by either bureaucratic rationality or the subjectivist ideology of the youth culture. That is, the phenomenal world and sense data became merely illusory and changeable surface phenomena, which only lead to idle speculation about a reality that by virtue of its mutability was manifestly false. Behind and beyond these illusions of the mind was the "true and absolute" reality of God realization, which transcended mere mental speculation, was infinite, eternal, and unchanging (Judah, 1974; Levine, 1974; Foss and Larkin, 1975). This truth was represented as entirely external to the individual, as was the case with the Marxist sects that taught different versions of the comprehensive theory of dialectical and historical materialism and simultaneously offered a "vanguard" organization whose ultimate mission was to accomplish the consummation of the historical process (Foss, 1974). More commonly, however, the absolute truth was located partly "inside" and partly "outside" the individual. The group promised the individual a subjective experience more "fulfilling," "transcendental," "pure," or "divine" than may be derived from either the chemical and sexual indulgences of the youth culture or the pursuit of a conventional middle-class life pattern. ("Guru Maharaj Ji gives you the knowledge you can't get in college!" was a common aphorism in the Divine Light Mission—Foss and Larkin, 1975.) At the same time, the truth was manifested

in the leader or spiritual master who revealed it and in the hierarchy he had established and to which he had delegated the task of propagating it.

The ideologies and subcultures of postmovement groups as a rule scrambled elements of both conventional and freak interpretations of social reality. But people attracted to these groups were in search of a reality so ultimate that contradictory interpretations of *social* reality could be shrugged off as minor quibbles. They therefore compulsively searched for some form of the ultimate. The postmovement group accordingly obliged by doing the following: First, it furnished an interpretation of reality centered around absolute truth. Second, it systematically manipulated fears and anxieties about straying from concentration on the ultimate (Richardson, Harder, and Simmonds, 1972) and furnished a system of rewards, punishments, and peer-group pressures to ensure that the individual at least try to appear to other members to be firmly concentrated on the goal. Third, it relieved the believer of the necessity of becoming an individual by condemning the rival ideals of middle-class individualism, "doing your own thing" in pointless revolt, and pecuniary accumulation in the corrupt outside world (Judah, 1974; Enroth, Ericson, and Peters, 1972). Fourth, it systematically attacked the concepts and assumptions about social causality, social organization, and the legitimacy of hierarchy that the individual had derived from the "outside world" and did so most rigorously when such concepts and assumptions were applied to the organizational structure (or patriarchal hierarchy) itself (Foss and Larkin, 1978).

Concepts and assumptions about social behavior and social relations were most commonly attacked by dissociating from all unauthorized mentations. Especially for lower-ranking members, the group norms prescribed that all verbal expression be accompanied by evidence of concern with the ultimate. There was a consistent tendency for these groups to prohibit "thinking" as spiritually dangerous, conducive to animalistic behavior, or symptomatic of mental illness (Cahill, 1973; Feldon, 1972; Adams and Fox, 1972; Levine, 1974). The struggle against the ego made possible the perfect subordination of the believer to the leader and the proper performance of one's duties in the leader's scheme of things. The

simultaneous liquidation of both ego and thinking was therefore closely linked in postmovement ideology.

The Hari Krishnas were strictly enjoined against "mental speculation" and were taught that vain "philosophies" were part and parcel of the decline of civilization. Levine (1974, p. 98) cited one of Prabhupada's maxims: "If you begin a sentence with 'I think,' you better end it in the closet." Hari Krishnas spoke of "the tongue" in exactly the same way that DLM *premies* spoke of "the mind": as uncontrollable, treacherous, endowed with a malicious life of its own (Foss and Larkin, 1975). Levine (1974, p. 163) quoted a devotee: "The tongue is an uncontrollable clown, a juggler, a spy in the house of God." To avert subversion by the tongue, it was best to keep it occupied by chanting the names of God.

To DLM *premies*, the "mind" was a tormentor that "keeps jumping around from place to place." The knowledge "stills the mind" and brings it to a "center point." To "the mind" was attributed a malevolent will of its own; "the mind" sought to preserve its own existence against the threat represented by the knowledge. DLM attitudes toward "the mind" were partially revealed in a skit performed at Guru Maharaj Ji's birthday party on December 10, 1973, where it was portrayed in Devil costume. The *premies* took seriously Guru Maharaj Ji's Third Commandment, "Leave no room in your mind for doubt." They gave *satsang* (literally, "company of truth," applied to testimonials given by *premies*) to each other as much as possible in the course of conversation such that only a few standard themes could be expressed (stories of the holy family and mahatmas—Mission "Holy Men"; praise of the holy family and Guru Maharaj Ji in particular; the knowledge—mystical teachings of Guru Maharaj Ji; how I received knowledge; love; peace; how soon it will be before everyone has this knowledge; and so on). An individual who failed to give sufficient *satsang* in the course of conversation, using the proper inflections and gushes, even if he or she had received knowledge, was not to be trusted (Foss and Larkin, 1975). Researchers of the Jesus Freaks found similar syndromes that included fearing and loathing of the mind. Adams and F6x (1972) found that Jesus Freaks used gnostic experiences to avoid thinking about problems. Richardson, Harder, and Simmonds (1972) claim that the Jesus Freaks learn a language of "nonthought."

The pain generated by the life construction crisis could be characterized by postmovement groups as *needless* pain self-inflicted by deviation from the absolute truth. Yet the path to the realization of the infinite was also fraught with difficulty and pain, as many initiates of postmovement groups who were originally promised instant enlightenment found out. Yet the pain generated by the quest for the absolute was legitimated in postmovement groups as the pain of *growth* as opposed to the pain of nothingness and despair (Judah, 1974). Thus, members of postmovement groups would undergo what an outsider might consider suffering without admitting it except as a process leading to greater joy. NCLC members claim they have transcended the bourgeois ego and have become true beings. Among the religious sects, there was a celebration of surrender and a fierce pride in having overcome the difficulties of the spiritual path. A Hari Krishna devotee said, "The personal battle is the story, the defeat of *maya* [a Hindi word that, roughly translated, means "illusion" and refers to the world of sense data], the vanquishment of *maya's* ego. And the death of sex, daughter of *maya's* ego, is only a subplot" (Levine, 1974, p. 163).

Whether the goal is to be a true revolutionary or a seeker of God, within the crucible of the postmovement group, former definitions of selfhood and former notions of social reality are burned away as the "new person" is forged with his or her eyes focused only on the "ultimate goal." Lapses that create pain are in turn lessons for future behavior, in which the postmovement member attempts to purify him- or herself in preparation for the apocalypse (Enroth, Ericson, and Peters, 1972; Richardson, Harder, and Simmonds, 1972). This state of continual preparedness and vigilance for deviations in oneself and one's fellows not only allows the postmovement group member to negate both conventional and movement interpretations of reality but also helps him or her to shut them out of the mind, because *any* considerations of alternate interpretations of reality are *prima facie* evidence that the individual has lost sight of the ultimate goal and is needlessly causing him- or herself grievous pain.

Thus the pain of the life construction crisis was alleviated through circumvention. The world that generated it was trivialized: The vision of the 1960s was simultaneously effaced and trans-

formed into a "new consciousness" in which various fragments of the vision were incorporated into more "ultimate" concerns, competitive struggles that created much fear and anguish were avoided, and, because postmovement groups maintained ideological opposition to conventional existence and some mode of "alternative life-styles," their members were able to support the belief that they were building a new society that fulfilled the (revised) vision of the 1960s.

Notes

1. The psychic depression was noted by *Newsweek Magazine* in June 1970. They stated that college students saw Kent State not only as the expression of a corrupt system but also as a defeat for dissident youth. Since *Woodstock in August of 1969*, the "counterculture" was showing unmistakable signs of degeneration: the defeat of People's Park in September, the Altamont fiasco in December, the uncovering of the Manson Family in early 1970, and, finally, the Kent and Jackson State killings. To top it off, there was no end in sight of the Vietnam War. Other commentators on the onset of psychic depression among youth in 1970 are Mehnert (1976) and Hendin (1975).

2. Probably Abbie Hoffman (1968, 1969) was the best formulator of the freak vision of the 1960s. He emphasizes the anarchist-communard postscarcity view in his writings. More academic views of the 1960s vision exist in Roszak (1969) and Foss (1972). The postscarcity argument is made by Bookchin (1971) from a "serious" left perspective.

3. We are quite serious about this. Two close activist friends of one of the authors committed suicide within six months of each other in 1973. Judah (1974) notes that many seekers claim that if they hadn't found Krishna Consciousness they would have died. Our own research indicates a similar level of desperation among devotees of Guru Maharaj Ji. Judah also cites a case of a young man who was in and out of the Hari Krishnas and finally committed suicide. During our study of the Divine Light Mission, there were three suicides among ashram residents. The *Statistical Abstract of the United States* (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1975) shows that between 1970 and 1973 the suicide rate for males between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four rose from 13.5 to 17 per 100,000 and that

the rate of increase was double that of the previous decade. Between 1960 and 1970 young male suicides increased at the rate of .49 per year, from 8.6 per 100,000 in 1960 to 13.5 in 1970. The average rate of increase between 1970 and 1973 was 1.2 per year.

4. There is a rare unanimity on this point. All researchers cited in this work adhere to the notion that the groups they studied began in the late 1960s or early 1970s. Those who studied their groups over periods of several years note that the groups they studied stabilized between 1972 and 1973. For observations of Marxist sectarians, see O'Brien (1978) and Foss (1974); for Jesus Freaks, see Mauss and Petersen (1974) and Simmonds, Richardson, and Harder (1974); and for Hari Krishnas, see Judah (1974, p. 183).

5. All observations of the Divine Light Mission, Guru Maharaj Ji, and his devotees come from Foss and Larkin (1975).

6. The freaks evolved during the most radical phase of the white middle-class youth movement in 1968 and 1969. Also called freak radicals and "prairie people" within the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), they combined a radical critique of American society with cultural dissidence. A synthesis of the New Left and the hippies, they tended to live in communes, use psychedelic drugs, avoid work, and experiment with a wide variety of sexual indulgences while concurrently reading the writings of Mao Tse-tung, glorifying the heroics of Ché Guevara, and rooting for the National Liberation Front in Vietnam.

7. Judah (1974, p. 125) notes that most Krishna devotees acknowledge they were against all authority in the late 1960s. Later on, he quotes a devotee as saying (1974, p. 171)—in response to the question, "You have no difficulty at all accepting the fact that (Prabhupada) is the supreme authority? And that he can tell you exactly what to do with your life?"—"No! No question at all! When you accept the spiritual master, it is understood that you will follow perfectly the dictates of the scripture." Judah interprets the willingness of the Krishna devotees to subject themselves to authority as indicative of the possibility that rebellious youth "were actually seeking an authority by which they might live" (Judah, 1974, p. 127). Although he hedges his bets by advising against overgeneralizing, Judah is at pains to explain this particular inversion of 1960s culture. Judah's problem is that he accepts the devotees' redefinitions of their past at face value without analyzing the devotees' purposes in the redefinitions. As was the case in the *premies* of

the DLM, old sins were exaggerated and cultural inversions justified on the basis of new means to old goals; for example, changing the world. Such self-serving redefinitions were, in themselves, attempts to bridge the life construction crisis described here, which Judah overlooked.

8. From this, we do not in the least exclude the Marxist sectarians, for, while the latter claimed to be "materialistic" and "scientific," to use the "dialectical method," to be opposed to "anti-intellectualism," and to be striving for a proletarian class revolution on the material plane, they were faced with the undeniable fact that the working class resolutely ignored them. The proletarian revolution would therefore come about through the inevitable working out of the contradictions of capitalism, which for at least the immediate future are outside control of the sect members but which, when they should ripen, will make the working class properly class conscious. For this reason, the Marxist sectarians' proletarian revolution had precisely the same subcultural function as the Jesus Freaks' Second Coming of Christ—since the apocalypse could not be advanced through immediate action in the material world, it was best to preoccupy oneself with the attainment of the Marxist version of spiritual perfection—that is, true consciousness—through thorough assimilation of the sect's version of Marxism, study of the sect newspaper and pamphlets, and rote learning of the writings of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, Mao, Enver Hoxha, and Kim II Sung. True consciousness divorced from practice and thus became an end in itself.

We might add that the attenuation of conflict has been thoroughly documented in the literature. See Richardson, Harder, and Simmonds (1972), Kopkind (1973), Robbins, Anthony, and Curtis (1975), Adams and Fox (1972), and Howard (1974).

9. Although many sociologists seem to shrink from such a term as *psychic pain*, the term describes quite accurately the subjective experience of ex-movement participants in the early 1970s. The testimony in Judah (1974), Petersen and Mauss (1973), Enroth, Ericson, and Peters (1972), Adams and Fox (1972), and our own work (Foss and Larkin, 1975; Foss, 1974) all attest to the psychic difficulties of youth in the early 1970s. See also Note 3.

10. This is an unavoidable consequence of all social movements, successful or not. For an elaboration, see Foss and Larkin (1978)

11. Evidence for this assertion will be found in Gordon (1974), Petersen and Mauss (1973), Judah (1974), Robbins, Anthony, and Curtis (1975), and Foss and Larkin (1975).

12. Our research indicates that the newer arrivals in post-movement groups tended to be more from working-class backgrounds, have a more rigid and doctrinaire approach to their beliefs, and had little knowledge and awareness of the revolt of the 1960s.

13. Gordon (1974) notes that alternative identities are subsumed (or consolidated) within the newly taken Christian identity. Our position concerns alternative and contradictory *reality systems*, of which personal identity is but a part.

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businesses are in operation, some of them vertically integrated. Bureaucratic and professional work in the larger society has been left behind. Ascetic labor has been divorced from the ethic of individual success and consumption. The consequences of downward occupational mobility have apparently been accepted by many youths from upper-middle-class backgrounds. The Zen community sees itself as giving rise to a more satisfying kind of awareness, work, and love than its members found in the larger society and as doing so in a way that may become ecologically necessary for the entire society in the future. Moral ideals and social arrangements compatible with the 1960s counterculture have developed within the doctrinal tradition and monastic structure of Zen Buddhism to enable 1960s youth to live with American society in the 1970s even as they seek to live out an alternative to it.

Cultural Change in a Modernized Society

Zen's ethic of antinomian rules relies on the collectively disciplined practice of meditation for the experience of nonattachment and compassion that leads to appropriate action. Zen's moral example comes across in face-to-face relationships among students and between student and master. The regimen of a monastic community generates rules to order the whole of everyday life, rites to establish its attitudinal texture, and social boundaries to exclude deviant behavior. The monastic regimen underwrites Zen's ethical assumption that humans continually face obligatory moral choices and responsibilities for others that reflect their objective needs, not their subjective wants. Negative liberty from restraint on attempts to satisfy individual wants turns into positive liberty to do the right act through the experience of meditating and living according to set rules. The monastery's housekeeping interdependence and its diffuse relationships allow for situational-expressive resolution of disagreements.

In these various respects, the full impact of American Zen's ethic requires a monastic organization built around daily meditation and relationship to a master. As such, it is likely to remain the province of relatively small numbers of monks, now little more than a thousand nationwide. But larger numbers meditate regu-

larly in nonresidential groups or by themselves. They may meet with a master or hear a lecture on occasion, and they are usually familiar with Zen literature in English. The institutional location of these persons (in the arts, education, ecology, psychotherapy and the human potential movement, government, liberal denominations and the Catholic religious orders) will continue to give them a part in spreading Zen's ethic. To whom? To a larger and looser third circle of upper-middle-class urbanites for whom Zen's ethic stands as a personal ideal more thought about than ritually practiced and so is more situational and less regular in effect than it is for the monastic. For meditation-based religious movements such as Zen Buddhism, the greater the influence of monastic core groups on their wider circle of lay members, the greater ethical emphasis orthopractical rules will receive in relation to antinomian intuition.

Similar concentric circles of influence characterize other neo-Oriental religious groups, oriented either to meditation (for example, Tibetan Buddhism) or to devotion to a guru (for example, Meher Baba). Many of these other groups rely less on monastic organization and seem more suited to developing a mass lay membership than does Zen (Anthony and Robbins, 1977). How effectively they do develop as lay religions will be a key factor in the spread of neo-Oriental ethics.

A second factor in spreading neo-Oriental ethics lies with movements like Transcendental Meditation (TM) that teach meditation or "train" human potential without direct reference to Oriental religion. They usually imply a monist view of the world that may carry over into intentions toward harmonious cooperation with others and service to them. But it may also be subsumed into a consequential ethic that makes cooperation with others and compliance with rules into means to satisfy one's own wants. This is particularly the case for the clientele (versus the staff) of such movements who respond to explicit advertising or implicit promises that the training or meditation will enable them to control stress and tension symptoms, and to increase ego performance in bureaucratic work, education, and interpersonal settings.

As long as the structure of American society continues to revolve around technological production, bureaucratic organiza-