

Post-industrial society and the cults

Fiorella Operto tells the Catholic anti-cult organization how the Anglo-American elites imposed their "Brave New World."

The following speech was given before the Group for Research and Information on Sects, GRIS, the official anti-cult association linked to the Roman Catholic Church in Italy, at its conference entitled "The Cults between Personal Crisis and Social Change: Reflections after the Extraordinary Meeting about the Challenge of the Cults," which took place in Bergamo, Italy, on Sept. 13-15, 1991. The author is the president of the Schiller Institute in Italy and a close collaborator of Lyndon LaRouche for many years.

As reported in our April 27, 1990 issue (Vol. 17 No. 18), at an earlier GRIS conference, held in Foggia, Italy, Attorney Massimo Introvigne charged that the typical use of sociological or psychological analysis by the secular anti-cult movement leads to bias. He suggested that because of this methodology, the American anti-cult movement seems to have become an instrument which threatens freedom of thought and of religion, and cited articles published by the American Family Foundation, which equated the religious experience of the Hare Krishna with the nuns of a Carmelite convent.

Fiorella Operto's speech follows in translation:

We should like, in this brief presentation, to offer you some hypotheses, and the pertinent documentation, on the close relationship that exists between the spread of malthusian theories in the West, the birth of the so-called "post-industrial society," the establishment of a service economy, and the spread of Alternative Religious Movements (ARM). When we look at the various factors which have fostered the large-scale spread of irrationalist movements in the last 20 years, it is very useful to look at the influence of the evolution of the economic structure upon the formation of the social character of the individual.

That the large economic and financial Anglo-American groups do lean toward a malthusian society, is documented by a report dated 1974 issued by the U.S. National Security Council. This study, which we can make available, explicitly affirms that the demographic and economic growth of the developing countries is considered by the American administration to be "a threat to national security." Those directives were handed down during 1974-75.

There is a book that is particularly rich in observations, which might help us in our task and which at the same time

has had great influence in forging the American ideology. It is David Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd*, published at the end of the 1940s.

In particular, Riesman focused upon the way in which the same mechanisms which contribute to determining rates of population growth can also contribute to forming individual social character.

He states that in a traditional peasant society, characterized by a relatively fixed technology and a corresponding lack of social mobility, a society with high potential growth rates in which high fertility is accompanied by high mortality rates, the typical member's character is shaped by the tendency to follow a tradition which dictates the accepted norms of behavior.

On the other hand, in a society characterized by high rates of demographic growth, in which mortality rates have been lowered thanks to the benefits of industrial technology, the individual can no longer, because of the continuous changes in the socio-economic structure imposed by technological progress, base his or her entire life on a fixed array of social behaviors. They must be directed and motivated by moral standards and values which are learned during infancy and which are then rigidly respected their entire lives. Riesman observes that this system of values acts as an internal compass which allows the individuals to orient themselves even when external circumstances conflict with their desires. Such individuals possess an inner-directedness which allows them to adapt to the social and job mobility of a developing society.

But now the sun is setting on these types of individuals; they are going out of style. Riesman observes that in their place, individuals are emerging who are greatly influenced by the outlook and preferences of others. These are the other-directed people. This process occurs while demographic rates of growth are again approaching zero, as the productive structure of society is being transformed into the post-industrial era, with a gradual prevailing of the service-sector, and the predominance of bureaucratic professions in which the criterion of individual success is popularity with one's superiors, and no longer the conscious grasp, needed for an advanced industrial society, of the laws of nature.

Norms of acceptable social behavior are no longer transmitted as before—by traditional customs, or by internal con-

science shaped in infancy—but principally by the mass media. The very outlook on life of the individual is almost completely dominated by the influence of others. In this context the parents, out of their own pervasive sense of insecurity and anxiety, which they communicate, can no longer command obedience from their children, who are trying to orient themselves to the opinions and rules dominant in their peer group, which become more important than the traditional figures of educators.

Let us observe that when Riesman's book was published, the United States was still very far from that stage of post-industrial decadence which today has become so obvious.

It is in this context that we witness a parallel effort to introduce a change in fundamental social values—a process which is certainly favored by the social changes outlined above.

Back at the beginning of the 1950s, Aldous Huxley, the famous English novelist who emigrated to the United States, who had written among other things, *Brave New World*, wrote *The Doors of Perception*, which signaled the emergence of a group of intellectuals committed to developing the kernel of what in the 1960s would become the counterculture, the culture of drugs and irrationalism. It is interesting to read a few short passages from this writing to understand that this terrible “brave new world,” characterized by a rigid caste division in which social control is obtained by the diffusion of great quantities of a drug, “soma,” is merely the fictionalized transposition of the counterculture elite. We read:

That humanity at large will ever be able to dispense with Artificial Paradises seems very unlikely. . . . What is needed is a new drug which will relieve and console our suffering species without doing more harm in the long run than it does good in the short. Such a drug must be potent in minute doses and synthesizable. . . . It must be less toxic than opium or cocaine, less likely to produce undesirable social consequences than alcohol or the barbiturates. . . . To most people, mescaline is almost completely innocuous. . . . Although obviously superior to cocaine, opium, alcohol and tobacco, mescaline is not yet the ideal drug. . . . But chemistry and physiology are capable nowadays of practically anything.

The project is only too clear. It is not possible to re-trace, even in broad brushstrokes, the course of events which turned the culture of this group into a mass phenomenon. But the drug hoped for by Huxley was in fact synthesized: It was LSD and was the door through which millions of young people were turned inside out by psychedelic culture. Moreover, we must remind you that the production of lysergic acid diethylamide received a great stimulus when the U.S. ruling establishment decided that the CIA should set up an experimental program, called MK-Ultra, which included the

distribution of hundreds of millions of doses of LSD to unwitting subjects.

We must, however, cast at least a cursory glance at the importance of music in the eyes of this elite, in forging the conscience of the individual, if we wish to understand what instruments have been used by them to popularize their theories. Let us read a brief passage from the appendix to *The Devils of Loudon* by Huxley:

In primitive religions prolonged rhythmic movement is very commonly resorted to for the purpose of inducing a state of infra-personal and sub-human ecstasy. . . . Intimately associated with [this] is the ecstasy-producing rite of rhythmic sound. . . . No man, however highly civilized, can listen for very long to an African drum, or Indian chanting, or Welsh hymn-singing, and retain intact his critical and self-conscious personality. It would be interesting to take a group of the most eminent philosophers from the best universities, shut them in a hot room with Moroccan dervishes or Haitian voodooists, and measure, with a stop watch, the strength of their psychological resistance to the effects of rhythmic sound. . . . Every one of our philosophers would end up by capering and howling with the savages.

If we remind ourselves of the ties developed by this group to the principal rock groups of the 1960s, for example, psychedelic culture to the Beatles as mediated by Timothy Leary, we will get a clear picture of how it has been possible to spread on a mass level, this cultural climate of confused mysticism, oriental religiosity, a smattering of satanism, and a flaunted irreverence toward traditional values.

This cultural project was not in any way the fruit of the labors of some wild-eyed and isolated individual. In 1974 a project was set up at the Stanford Research Institute, which was called nothing less than “Changing the Image of Man,” whose aim was to subvert the values of society:

Despite the pessimism implied by a lagging dominant image, there are numerous indications that a new, anticipatory image of humankind may be emerging: . . .

- Women's liberation movement. . . .
- Youth rebellion against societal wrongs. . . .
- The anti-technological bias of many young people.
- Experimentation with new family structures. . . .
- The emergence of the conservation/ecology movement. . . .
- An increasing interest in meditation and other spiritual disciplines.

In the spring of 1980, *The Aquarian Conspiracy* by Marilyn Ferguson was published, which described how the movement which had inspired the counterculture project was created, and which was now prophesying the advent of a new era,



Members of the artificial religion, Hare Khrishna, outside the Democratic Party Convention in New York in 1976, when "post-industrial" Jimmy Carter was nominated for President. Huxley predicted that monotonous rhythmic sound could turn educated professors into savages—and set up an experiment through Hollywood and the CIA's MK-Ultra to make the prediction come true on a mass scale.

the Age of Aquarius or New Age, which would replace the obsolete values with which Christianity had put consciousness to sleep.

Promoting this "conspiracy" was at the core of the activity of innumerable institutions all over the United States, which spent hundreds of millions of dollars every year.

This ranges from the Stanford Research Institute, founded in 1946 in California, which by 1979 employed 3,300 researchers, and which spent 90% of its hefty budget studying futurology; to the Center for Advanced Study in Behavioral Sciences, founded in 1954; the National Training Laboratory, which came into being in 1947 and experimented with T-group techniques on industrial managers and government employees, subjecting the participants to situations of artificial stress; and the Institute for Social Research, founded in Michigan in 1946. One of the principal collaborators of the CIA in the MK-Ultra project was the RAND Corp. of Santa Monica in California, founded in 1948, which conducted experiments using peyote, LSD, and marijuana.

The Big Sur Esalen Institute, again in California, was founded in 1962. It specialized in various techniques of group therapy, mind-expansion—with or without the aid of psychedelic drugs and pseudo-religious experience. Among Esalen clients—about 2.5 million in 20 years!—we wish to recall Charles Manson, who had been at Big Sur only a few days before the carnage at Sharon Tate's villa.

In these centers there mushroomed the research which led to an upheaval in U.S. social life and customs over the

last 40 years, and which was later exported to the entire world. The mental life of young Americans became what the Tavistock Institute psychologists would define as "a controlled environment."

Perhaps people will not be surprised that these same psychiatrists who had contributed to the creation of countless cults, later set up those associations which today "fight against" the spread of these same cults. In 1956 the *American Journal of Psychiatry* published an article by Dr. Louis Jolyon West entitled "Brainwashing." West was part of a U.S. Air Force group conducting LSD research as part of the MK-Ultra project, and Aldous Huxley was among his collaborators. This same Dr. West today, is a director of the American Family Foundation.

This countercultural project was given flanking support by significant political decisions of the American government. In every way, they favored a U.S. transition from an agro-industrial power to a post-industrial society. Precisely at the height of the Apollo project, the funds for space research were cut. The motive for this choice, apparently inexplicable, perhaps can be found in the conclusions of the "Rapaport Report," which observed with great dismay that the space program favored the spread of a spirit of optimism among young people, who looked to science for solving the problems of the world. This spirit was in conflict with New Age religiosity.

The idea of development became criminalized; and zero growth became official U.S. policy.