

Conference Report

Aquarians brainwash U.S. businessmen

by Helen Tiefmann

How do the backers of America's decline into the "post-industrial society" intend to organize the panoply of environmentalist sects, consciousness-raising societies, and liberal peacenik grouplets that have appeared on the landscape in recent years into a mass-based movement unified behind their objectives? Since attending a June 26-27 weekend seminar series at Tarrytown House on the former Mary Biddle Duke estate in Westchester County, New York, I am convinced that the Tarrytown Group, which frequently organizes such events, and the regional counterparts of this "Esalen East" training center for counterculture kookery, are playing a critical but little-publicized role in the creation of a new fascist movement aimed at replacing America's governing political and economic institutions.

Tarrytown House and the Tarrytown Group which runs its activities were founded formally in 1963 as the Executive Conference Center by Robert L. Schwartz, a former *Time* magazine editor with ties to military intelligence and the Scientology cult, with huge loans from IBM and AT&T. During the course of the 1960s and 1970s, the Center dabbled in everything from transcendental meditation to transactional analysis, Jungian analysis, rebirthing, biofeedback, Zen Buddhism, yoga, "polarity massage," LSD research, and Erhardt Sensitivity Training (the EST cult). Schwartz himself devoted these years to joint projects with the Stanford Research Institute, the base of operations of futurologist Willis Harmon, and the southern California Esalen Institute brainwashing center, as well as to collaboration with the engineers of the MK-Ultra drug dissemination project, including Aldous Huxley, Gregory Bateson, and his wife, the late anthropologist Margaret Mead.

Schwartz's Executive Conference Center was in fact the first fulltime center for corporate meeting and seminars in the United States, and it had, by the early 1970s,

processed through its programs hundreds of executives and managers of the nation's Fortune 500 companies. To this day, such firms as AT&T, Citibank, CBS, Mathew Bender, IBM, Chase Manhattan, General Foods, and American Machinist, run their employees through the center's brainwashing programs—at fees of up to \$750 a head for weekend seminars, in the process financing the center's activities.

Subversion of the military

The session I attended late in June convinced me that the controllers of the kook counterculture movement in the United States have achieved an advanced degree of success in insinuating their ideas into the highest levels of American business, the nation's military, and even the highest levels of our federal government bureaucracy. Five hundred people came to Tarrytown or the meeting, which—in between juggling lessons, magic shows, tarot card readings, jazz workshops, and disco concerts—presented a lineup of speakers on behalf of a new anti-science, anti-technology movement that will replace what one conference speaker characterized as "the old answers which are not working, and the old institutions, which are breaking apart."

The most celebrated of the conference participants was Marilyn Ferguson, author of *The Aquarian Conspiracy*, the 1979 bestselling book which charts a path away from a modern, reasonably ordered society into the new Age of Aquarius, a post-industrial society dominated by political pluralism. Ferguson keynoted the conference with a report on the dissemination of *The Aquarian Conspiracy's* perspective, which she said is circulating widely in the German Sociological Association, in the leadership of Poland's Solidarity movement, and among "chief executive officers of top corporations." She added "the response from politicians like Jerry Brown has been enthusiastic."

Most telling however, was Ferguson's account of the penetration of the U.S. military leadership by the ideas in her book:

"I was the keynote speaker at an Army think tank, 'Taskforce Delta,' at the Army War College on the topic of 'What would a transformed military look like?' I advanced the idea of the 'First Earth Battalion,' an ecotopian, holistic grouping that would be concerned with the planet and with futuristic scenarios. This battalion would win wars through non-violent conflict resolution. The idea really caught on. When I proposed that the generals take the leadership of the peace movement, they gave me a standing ovation."

If Ferguson and her associates have made as great an impression on the U.S. military as she did on one conference participant, who argued all during lunch that nuclear war is impossible because the United States and the U.S.S.R. have developed "telsa machines" capable of destroying nuclear warheads, it is no exag-

geration to say that our nation's defense forces have been destroyed by this rash of insanity.

An afternoon "rap session" for conference attendees with John Nesbitt, publisher of the pricey intelligence weekly *The Trend Report* from Washington, D.C. betrayed the wider subversive scope of the conference organizers: to destroy what basis is left in the American economy and the nation's political institutions for mounting a competent defense of the United States and its allies. Nesbitt presented the thesis that the United States is "moving toward a monarchy, like in Britain," and a governing system in which "the Congress, the White House, and the courts,"—in fact all of America's constitutionally mandated institutions—"will become merely symbolic and ritualistic." This, Nesbitt said, will constitute true "participatory democracy." Referring repeatedly to President Reagan as "Bonzo's keeper," Nesbitt asserted that the American people "do not care who is President, half of them don't vote anyway."

America's economic future, said Nesbitt, is suggested by growing motion "away from the nation-state" and toward the break-up of the United States into "smaller and smaller power centers," possibly into multiple nations. We must substitute for "the nation-state a geographical, ecological state of mind," he said. Nesbitt not only endorsed the end of nation-states, but the end of industrial development as the goal of national entities. The United States, in particular, he said, will move away from a concentration on heavy industrial activity: "Auto, steel, and housing will never revive again. . . . Buffalo, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, and Detroit—the old industrial centers—will die. . . . We are moving toward the information society. There is—and there will continue to be—a lot of pain. . . . But on the whole, this economy is in much better shape than it was a decade ago."

For the nations of the developing sector which pin all hopes of rescuing their populations from mass starvation and backwardness on the capital goods manufacturing capacity and agricultural export capability of the United States, Nesbitt had this proposal: "Third and Fourth World countries will leap over the industrial stage altogether and go directly to the post-industrial informational society."

The perfect brainwashing environment

By and large, conference participants sat through Ferguson's kookery and Nesbitt's prescriptions for industrial collapse and genocide with nary a whimper. And why not? Preconditioned by their daily newspaper and television news campaigns marketing the same insanity, these victims found no hint of political or economic reality within the environment created by Schwartz and his friends that might lead them to suspect that they were being brainwashed.

Most sat quietly while Frijof Capra, author of the

Eastern mysticism-peddling *Tao of Physics* and *The Turning Point*, attacked the Space Shuttle as an attempt to further America's military ambitions by putting deadly weapons into space. Capra, a Vienna-born quantum physicist with the Lawrence Berkeley Institute, also told the audience that "undifferentiated economic growth . . . is leading us to social breakdown and nuclear war. In Chinese terminology, the *yin* has been neglected in favor of the *yang*." Capra praised the recent years' growth of religious cult movements in the U.S. and Western Europe as a return to "a feminist *yin* perspective," and asserted that the breakdown of broadscale social and religious institutions confirms British historian Arnold Toynbee's theory of the cyclical collapse and renewal of civilizations. As Western civilization collapses, said Capra, its members should give up their pretension to literate language and literature. "The Hopi language is much simpler than English, and I think that should be our model," he said.

The audience also put up with Robert Sheldrake, an Oxford-trained biochemist who now resides at a Buddhist monastery in India and lectures with his shoes off. Sheldrake's thesis is that people can "tune into other peoples' memories and this results in telepathy." They sat through an address of Dr. Sandra McLanahan, who was introduced by center founder Robert Schwartz himself. McLanahan runs a holistic health center in Putham, Connecticut. She had this to say: "Our whole planet is like a brain floating in space: 'doingness' is like the left side of the brain, and 'beingness' is like the right side of the brain. . . . It has been shown that if you feed people with biscuits that contain meat, their health will not be as good as those who eat meatless biscuits."

The only thing ordinary about lunch was the roast beef. One person at my table turned to me and confided: "You know, I can teach you to bend metal with your mind like Uri Geller in less than an hour." I took out my keys and replied, "Okay, here's metal, bend it." He exclaimed: "I wouldn't even try to do it while you're thinking the kind of thoughts that you're thinking now." Someone else at the table added: "Don't you know anything? Don't you know that a negative thought cancels out a positive thought? No one can bend metal if there is someone thinking negative thoughts in the room."

I left the seminar at the end of the first day's session, but not before I had heard John Nesbitt's frightening synopsis of the "new paradigm" that he and his fellow Aquarian conspirators intend to establish through such events; including the change "From industrial to informational; economies of scale to appropriateness of scale; left versus right, to the radical center; conquerors of nature to partners of nature; capitalism to entrepreneurialism; from the myth of the melting pot to the celebration of diversity; and from machismo to an androgynous society."