

ish army. There is barely a mention of the Solar Temple killings in which traumatic defections and weakening charisma clearly played a role. Indeed, although continental Western Europe was somewhat traumatized by the Templar “transits,” the OTS seems to be more or less off the radar screen of American writers such as Lifton or Marc Galanter in his expanded 1999 edition of *Cults: Faith, Healing, and Coercion* (Oxford). Finally Lifton might have acknowledged more clearly that at least two components of the mass-murderous “World-Destroying Cult”—absolute charismatic leadership and an apocalyptic vision of world destruction—are combined in many non-violent sects.

Dr. Lifton has a slightly annoying afterword in which he identifies Asahara as “a caricature of present-day leaders of many countries . . . who deal with ultimate weaponry” (p. 342-43) The weapons projects of such national leaders possess merely “an illusion of sanity.” Lifton here recycles from earlier writings a reductive argument which implies that those of us who have rejected Ban-the-Bomb or accept some notion of nuclear “deterrence” as having kept the Cold War from exploding are enmeshed in totalistic “nuclearism” and stand just a rung or two below Aum on the ladder of madness. Crazy nuclearist I may be, but I don’t see Asahara in Henry Kissinger.

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*Hellbent for Enlightenment: Unmasking Sex, Power, and Death with a Notorious Master.* By Rosemary Hamilton. White Cloud Press, 1998. 211 pages. US\$15.95, Canada \$22.75 paper.

Probably because of the high educational levels of Rajneesh followers, current and former members of that group produced a number of first-hand experiential accounts about their guru and his organization. While all of these accounts provide insights into the mindsets of believers, some of them also have provided researchers with useful organizational information and insights. While Rosemary Hamilton’s account of her sixteen-year involvement with the Rajneesh organization provides some useful information to academics, other Rajneesh accounts will remain more helpful. I come to this conclusion primarily because Hamilton’s decision to keep this study almost exclusively an account of her experiences meant that she did not consult many outside sources or documents in attempts to verify either her claims or the claims of those with whom she interacted.

While each conversion has its own unique elements, Hamilton’s account of joining the Rajneeshees shares similarities with other baby-boomers who joined in the 1970s and 1980s. Educated, politically active in a high-profile Canadian government job, a divorced mother with an active sex life, Hamilton still felt unfulfilled. Her search for fulfillment

led her to test numerous groups, but her accidental encounter with a music-playing Rajneeshee doing his master's "dynamic meditation" became her initial hook into the movement. But after informing the reader about how she entered into Rajneesh's peculiar form of *sannyas* (renunciation), the author missed one of several golden opportunities to provide readers with reflective insight that could have aided their understanding of her actions: "I don't pretend to explain this irrational leap into the unknown" (p. 7). Alas, had she even pretended, then her account may have carved out a unique place among the half-dozen or so Rajneeshee accounts.

As her involvement continued, Hamilton accepted greater responsibilities with the group, which eventually led her inside Rajneesh's dwellings as his cook. Along the way, she recruited one son into the organization, only to betray him as she supported his lover's migration into the beds of others: "I was actually encouraging the beloved of my youngest son to follow her own feelings, knowing the terrible anguish it would cause [him]" (p. 58). Again, I wanted to understand how a mother comes to place ideologically-driven sexual freedom over the feelings of a son. Alas, Hamilton failed to examine another potentially revealing issue, only stating about her decision, "the sense of righteousness remained. Love without freedom is not love at all" (p. 60).

This kind of superficiality probably came out of the author's conclusion that the Rajneesh "ashram was, in fact, one gigantic encounter group" (p. 68). Whatever the reason, life in it transformed her, but other readers like me may not believe that all the changes were for the better. A sixth generation Quaker, Hamilton nevertheless felt "a fierce joy" over the Oregon ashram's weapons, which indicated "that we were not to turn tail and flee in the face of intimidation. The bigger show of arms, the better . . ." (p. 136). Rajneesh's possession of ninety-three Rolls Royces was merely a spoof on American consumerism (p. 137). In Poona, India, Hamilton witnesses a Rajneesh leader directing the beating of an alleged local rapist, who apparently had been caught assaulting a Rajneesh woman, and upon reflection on the incident she felt "freed from the nightmare belief in an absolute right and wrong. Beating the attacker now seemed the only intelligent action" (p. 77). Then, while in one of the ashrams, her former husband died, but she "felt no regret, no grief . . ." (p. 79). Again she asked the right question: "Was I becoming callous, to be so unmoved by death?" Yet as elsewhere her answer was unsatisfactory: "My daily life had acquired a certain detachment. . . . I saw that I had begun to look on death as a natural event" (p. 80). So, sadness, regrets, grief, and mourning are not natural? I wanted to know how her emotions likely had become calloused as the group transformed them, but I only received glimpses about the processes that had occurred.

Regrettably, moments of insight about this transformation within

Hamilton and others came from people whom she quoted and not from her own self-reflections or investigations. For example, after followers learned about the abuses and criminal actions taken by Rajneesh's close but acerbic assistant, Sheela, one member concluded, "people were compromising themselves" (p. 158). When reflecting back on how people could have followed Hitler, another member's voice trailed off when he realized: "'But when you've surrendered your own judgment, your own power . . .'" (p. 159). Still Hamilton maintained her faith, even after the leader's death and her involvement diminished.

While I wanted more insight and self-reflection, at the same time I wanted more external sources to verify dramatic claims that Hamilton quoted people (including herself) making. Was it really the case that Rajneesh fled the Oregon compound so that he would not be arrested in front of heavily armed members who might have initiated a bloodbath. (p. 169)? Show me some proof. When Hamilton reproduced Rajneesh's claim that "I have been poisoned by Ronald Reagan's American government" (p. 182), where is the independent evidence? Is it really true that American immigration officials "hardly ever prosecuted" offenses that they accused Rajneesh of committing—arranging marriages for immigration purposes and lying on his visa application about planning to stay rather than merely visit the United States (p. 180)? These and other dramatic statements require external verification. Taking everything into account, therefore, I will continue to utilize other first-hand Rajneesh accounts (especially ones with indexes) when looking for insights about the organization and the social psychology of its members.

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*The Way It Is: One Water . . . One Air . . . One Mother Earth. . .* By Corbin Harney. Blue Dolphin Publishing, 1995. 243 pages. \$16.00 paper.

*Now Is the Hour: Native American Prophecies and Guidance for Earth Changes.* By Elisabeth Dietz and Shirley Jonas. Blue Dolphin Publishing, 1998. 103 pages. \$10.00 paper.

Corbin Harney is identified as the "Spiritual Leader of the Western Shoshone Nation." His book, updated with references to events in 1999, offers the relatively rare opportunity to encounter authentic indigenous discourse addressed to contemporary readers. Harney has been driven by current circumstances to overcome his customary reluctance to raise his indigenous voice in the public arena of dominant-culture discourse. His message is an urgent attempt to alert readers to impending ecological disasters and to make them aware of how to respond according to indigenous wisdom about our common relatedness in this world. Environmentalist discourse has routinely and superficially appropriated



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