

# EDITOR'S FOREWORD:

## THE "COUNTER-INITIATION" DOCUMENTED —A TRADITIONALIST PERSPECTIVE

LEE PENN, A TRADITIONAL EASTERN CHRISTIAN, is a rare workman of difficult and necessary information. Both his background in Marxist political activism, and his heartfelt and intelligently reasoned repentance of that ideology, have uniquely fitted him to be a first-rank religious investigative reporter of the latter days, a sort of religious Noam Chomsky. He retains the ability to gaze at the monstrous distortion and destruction of the human spirit in these times, without descending into "paranoia"—i.e., simplistic explanations for the purpose of allaying anxiety.

I hold to the doctrines of the Traditionalist School, as found in the writings of René Guénon and Ananda Coomaraswamy (often called the "founders" of the School), Frithjof Schuon, Titus Burckhardt, Martin Lings, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Rama Coomaraswamy, James Cutsinger, et. al. The Traditionalists are "esoterists" who understand that esoterism cannot be a religion in itself; consequently, they emphasize the need for affiliation with one of the great world religions—in particular, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, or Buddhism. The Traditionalists are "universalists" in the sense that they believe that God has established more than one path (under the diverse forms of these religions) by which the human soul may return to Him. However, the Traditionalists are enemies of syncretism. The reason is this: since each world religion possesses all that the soul requires, mixing elements from different traditions denies the sufficiency of each, and creates a Frankenstein monster sewn together out of organically unrelated elements which God has not willed to unite. Traditionalists say that the unity of religions is present in the transcendent mystery and Oneness of the Divine Nature, and is not to be made manifest by human attempts to unite religions on Earth.

Lee Penn is not a Traditionalist in the sense that I have described, though in the years I have known him he has shown no tendency to proselytize me to Christianity (I am a Muslim), beyond making one formal invitation as is required of him by Christ's Great Commission. He also has shown a real understanding that, just as the ideologies of both "left" and "right" are equally bankrupt and equally likely to contribute, from their polarized perspectives, to the worst cultural, political and technological developments, so also the stance of the "promiscuous ecumenist" and that of the "rabid religious exclusivist" are destined to be equally of baleful use to the rulers of the darkness of this world.

So, I believe it is fitting that this book appear on the list of Sophia Perennis publications, a list that includes the twenty-three titles of the Collected Works of René Guénon in a new English translation. Of all the Traditionalists, Guénon was most able to unite pure metaphysics and comparative religion with social criticism—and even with investigative reporting, insofar as it related to the subversive pseudo-esoteric societies of his day. Two of his earliest books, *The Spiritist Fallacy* and *Theosophy: History of a Pseudo-Religion* (both available from Sophia Perennis), are exposés of the occult underworld of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Guénon saw the occultists, Theosophists and spiritualists of that era as expressions of the "Anti-Tradition," those forces working in our time to destroy all valid religious expression so as to prepare the way for the regime of Antichrist. He believed that most of them were *unconscious* of the role they were playing (seeing that "the road to Hell is paved with good intentions"), but that a small number of them formed a conscious elite who knew very well what they were

up to. Members of this elite acted as agents of the “Counter-Tradition;” their activities have been destined to lead to the “Counter-Initiation”—the satanic perversion not simply of religious doctrine and morality, but also of contemplative spirituality itself. Guénon’s prophetic masterpiece, *The Reign of Quantity and the Signs of the Times*, draws the ultimate eschatological conclusions relative to the “Anti-Tradition,” the “Counter-Initiation,” and the mass breakthrough of malign “infra-psychic forces” that these spiritual movements have unleashed into the human world.

My own book, *The System of Antichrist: Truth and Falsehood in Postmodernism and the New Age* (Sophia Perennis, 2001), was a conscious attempt to update *The Reign of Quantity*. If Lee’s book had been available to me when I wrote it, I would have quoted from it at length, since it provides, in so many areas, documented support for my own findings.

In *False Dawn*, with the help of over 3,000 footnotes, we finally have the “Counter-Tradition” documented—at least in terms of its visible religious and political expression. Lee Penn’s research into the United Religions Initiative and allied movements demonstrates with the blinding clarity of “mere facts” that the pseudo-esoteric underworld of Guénon’s time has mushroomed, and is now poised to make itself of great and terrible use to the global power elite. He also demonstrates how, as the influence of the New Age movement wanes on a popular level, it is progressively being adopted as a “contingency ideology” by elements of that same worldwide elite.

In our time, the political and economic ideologies of left and right, the doctrines of traditional religion, and even the dogmas of materialist science are losing cultural force. As the old belief systems wither, their fading power leaves a vast void of meaning in the mind of the human race. Nature, however, abhors a vacuum. So, we had better be very clear—if we can stand to look—about the nature and the intentions of those groups and forces that are poised to leap into this mental and spiritual void while claiming to fill it. In making this leap, the forces of the “Anti-Tradition” and the “Counter-Initiation” would (if God were to allow it) usher in a *post-human* age.

CHARLES UPTON