

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WELCOME TO THE REVOLUTION...

Birth of a Psychedelic Culture, an extraordinary new book, shines a bright light on the emergence of the sixties culture and the experiments with mind-altering substances undertaken by Professors Timothy Leary, Richard Alpert (Ram Dass) and then-Harvard graduate student Ralph Metzner. Based on a series of conversations between Metzner and Ram Dass and recorded by psychiatrist and author Gary Bravo, this book describes their initial experiments at Harvard, the experiments after they were dismissed from Harvard, their journeys to India and their reflections on that transformative era.

Birth of a Psychedelic Culture is filled with never before published photographs. Luminaries who appear in this astonishing account include: Aldous Huxley, Allen Ginsberg, R.D. Laing, Charles Mingus, Maynard Ferguson and William Burroughs, as well as many lesser known personalities. These include convicts, graduate students and Vedantist monks! In addition to reviewing the experiments, the conversations offer vividly-recalled descriptions of particular "trips," with profound insights into the nature of hallucinogens and the role they can play in transcending social conditioning.

Included in *Birth of a Psychedelic Culture* are personal commentaries from some of the other players integral to the scene: Peggy Hitchcock, the Mellon family heiress; Dr. George Litwin, Harvard professor and author; Dr. Gunther Weil, psychologist and educator; Dr. Michael Kahn, clinical psychologist and Professor Emeritus at USC, Santa Cruz; poet Dr. Elsa von Eckartsberg; Dr. George Litwin, organizational behavior consultant; Dr. Paul Lee, professor of philosophy and religion, UC Santa Cruz; Dorothy Fadiman, award winning filmmaker; Lisa Ferguson, and many others.

No understanding of the history of the sixties could ever be complete without a grasp of the work of Leary, Alpert, and Metzner, the cultural resistance to their experiments, and the way in which psychoactive drug use became a part of contemporary society.

Ram Dass, (formerly Dr. Richard Alpert), is a world famous spiritual teacher and author of the best-seller *Be Here Now*. He is well known for his journeys to India and his association with the guru, Neem Karoli Baba. Alpert is the founder of several organizations dedicated to expanding consciousness and awareness. Including the Lama and SEVA Foundations.

Ralph Metzner, author of many books, practices psychotherapy and is Professor Emeritus at the California Institute of Integral Studies. Involved in consciousness research for over 40 years, including psychedelics, yoga, meditation, and shamanism, he is co-founder and president of the Green Earth Foundation, a non-profit educational organization devoted to healing and harmonizing the relationship between humans and the Earth.

Gary Bravo is the Chief Psychiatrist for Sonoma County Mental Health in Santa Rosa, CA. He has written numerous articles on psychedelics, psychiatry, and transpersonal psychology.

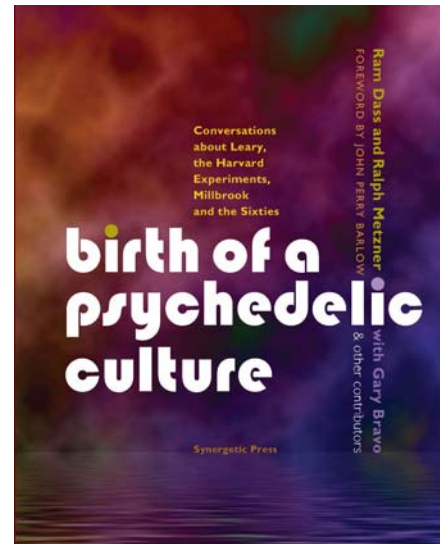
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PRAISE FOR *BIRTH OF A PSYCHEDELIC CULTURE* ...

"Gary Bravo's *Birth of a Psychedelic Culture* brings us the ruminations of two of the surviving principals of the Harvard group - the scholarly Ralph Metzner and the psychologist formerly known as Richard Alpert, who transmogrified into the spiritual teacher Ram Dass. Their recorded conversation has the flavor of a lively reunion as the two recall an astonishing young adulthood, generously illustrated with snapshots and brief statements from colleagues."

Craig K Comstock, *Huffington Post*, March 2010

"Science calls for experimentation, and when something new appears, scientific thinking can lead to a unique adventure. *Birth of a Psychedelic Culture: Conversations about Leary, the Harvard Experiments, Millbrook and the Sixties* looks into a six-year span where the psychedelic movement caught steam. Presented as a conversation between figures of the movement, the authors provide an enticing read into the era. *Birth of a Psychedelic Culture* is a piece of history well worth looking into, with its unique stories of a truly unique time."

James A. Cox, Editor-in-Chief, *The Midwest Book Review*,
March 2010

"[*Birth of a Psychedelic Culture*] dwells on the post-collegiate experimentation at Millbrook in upstate New York, where musicians Charles Mingus, poet Allen Ginsberg, and HIGH TIMES columnist Paul Krassner (among others) brought a great deal of personal color to the effort to attain 'mystical states of oneness.' This makes *Birth of a Psychedelic Culture*...a fun, evocative history of 20th-century psychedelic bohemia."

Michael Simmons, *HIGH TIMES magazine*, June 2010

"[*Birth of a Psychedelic Culture*] describes LSD 'trips' of the early practitioners filled with insights into the nature of hallucinogens and the role they can play in transcending social conditioning. In itself, it's mind expanding and fascinating."

Cindy Bellinger, *Enchantment Magazine*, April 2010

"It is deeply enriching to read the courageous story of Western civilization's first psychonauts as never before told. They charted unknown territory and battled with demons (both psychic and those of dark government agencies) in their mission to bring the benefits of Albert Hoffman's discovery to the culture. In *Birth of a Psychedelic Culture*, we learn of their successes and failures, understanding fully the debt of gratitude they are owed."

Gregory Sams, author of *Sun of God*

“Absolutely mesmerizing and difficult to put down, this exciting book expanded and enriched my understanding of how Harvard’s legendary psychedelic research team turned on the world, and beautifully preserves this largely-unknown information for future generations. *Birth of a Psychedelic Culture* fills an important niche in the documentation of psychedelic history, and it sparkles with precious insights and illuminating wisdom.”

David Jay Brown, coauthor of *Conversations on the Edge of the Apocalypse* and *Mavericks of Medicine*

“*Birth of a Psychedelic Culture* reads like a *Who’s Who* of arts and sciences in the sixties.”

Bart Brodsky, *Open Exchange Magazine*

“*Birth of a Psychedelic Culture* is the ultimate insiders’ guide to the genesis, flowering, devastation, and re-flowering of one of the most significant eras of consciousness expansion in U.S. history. Through a series of revealing interviews and first-hand accounts, academic outlaws Ram Dass, Timothy Leary, Ralph Metzner and company are revealed to be a thoroughly complex bunch—funny, poignant, angry, sincere, learned, naïve, and impatient for enlightenment. Much to our delighted edification, they broke on through to the other side and, at least most of them, lived to tell this unforgettable tale. Synergetic Press has created an attractively produced work worthy of its fascinating subject. It is both stunningly designed and brimming with a wealth of rare, candid photos capturing a daring crusade the grail of which continues to shape our perceptions of reality today.”

Scot D. Ryerson & Michael Orlando Yaccarino, co-authors of the international best-seller *Infinite Variety: The Life and Legend of the Marchesa Casati* and *The Marchesa Casati: Portraits of a Muse*

Excerpt from the Foreword by John Perry Barlow, former Wyoming rancher for the Grateful Dead, co-founder and vice-chair, Electronic Frontier Foundation:

The book you’re about to read – and I recommend that you actually do – is a saga of holy heroism. The people you’ll meet in it were like the Lewis and Clark of the Mind. But it is also a cautionary tale and contained within it is a lot of the real reason that America had such a visceral immune reaction to our sudden, terrifying and transforming “Otherness” in the middle of its consciousness ...

And here we all are. Now. Ready at last with the patience, forgiveness, contrition and self-amusement necessary to continue the work in earnest. It is a good time to go back to the beginnings of the revolution still underway and take stock. It is a good time to read this book. Now.

For information about Synergetic Press and our other Books for Comprehensive Minds, please visit our website: www.synergeticpress.com

Photos from the Launch at City Lights Bookstore, San Francisco

Ralph Metzner, accompanied by Peggy Hitchcock, John Perry Barlow, and Gary Bravo

December 15, 2009



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