

In a long weekend to Enlightenment

Content article:

- *general: critical analysis on the growing market of the Large Group Awareness Training (LGAT) in The Netherlands,*

Paragraphs:

- *mutual characteristics Landmark, CSA and Essence Training;*

- *content essence training and source training;*

- *a few worrisome trends;*

- *aggressive recruitment;*

- *background organisations and international perspective;*

- *higher awareness or infantilising?; conclusion.*

September 2007

Large Group Awareness Trainings, in short LGAT's, are organised on large scale in The Netherlands. A preliminary estimation shows at least 10.000 people annually attend these courses. The three big companies active in this market in Holland are: CSA, Essence Trainings and Landmark. The first has its head office in Den Bosch; the latter two have HQ's in Amsterdam. The concept of these trainings is that a group of 30 – 150 people are cut off from their normal environment, put in a hotel or training centre. Then in an intensive 'steam course' participants receive a reorientation on their lives. The education consists of exercises, confrontations and tiring out in order to create a psychological breakthrough, so that the people present will look upon themselves in a new manner, go functioning on a more effective way or experience a spiritual growth. Mental growth, which takes a life time for most mortals or even more life times for some, according to Hindu philosophy, is now established in one or a few weekends. At least that is what these organisations tell. The question is: do they do what they promise and what is really happening in these trainings? An analysis of their methods and background shows a worrying picture of what these three companies, operating in The Netherlands, really do.

Similarities in the design of the courses

All three agencies start with a course for beginners of around three days: price per participant: 500 – 700 euros. Although the content can differ between them, there are especially many similarities amongst these trainings. The most important are:

1) commitment to the rules of the organisation

People have to commit. In the beginning a contract is signed and/or the trainee has to confirm verbally that he/she agrees with a number of rules. Some of these rules are in conflict with the right to self-determination. People who do not agree (e.g. with that you are not allowed to leave the room, unless with permission of the trainer) will be removed from the training

setting, usually without money return. After that sometimes it happens that one is lured in again to make the person eventually still confirm with the set of rules;

2) isolation

The rooms in which the trainings are held are closed off from the outside world. There is no day light, windows are blinded;

3) authoritarian direction; no psychologically schooled trainers

The courses, in which the trainer usually is sitting and teaching in front of the group, are strictly guided; discussion is not an option. The trainer determines the whole process in an authoritarian way and is usually the one who speaks. In general these trainers are not academically (or at a polytechnic) schooled. They are amateurs and self-acclaimed specialists in the mental growth training field;

4) marathon sessions

The trainings go on for a long time, often till the early hours of the next day. The aim is to wear the trainees out, according to an ex-Landmark trainer: to set the conditions right to intervene deeper in the person, to be able to break her/him. Additional effect: the normal sleep and eat patterns and contacts with friends are largely taken away;

5) mental stripping off

Some participants will be invited to share their personal troubles with the trainer in front of the group. The impression is suggested that the person concerned is going through a reorientation on the personal problem. During the conversation the trainer is very arrogant and is very confronting about the problem. In reality this part of the course is just another setting in which the objective is to let people expose themselves more and more and in this way slowly get mentally 'undressed';

6) worked up atmosphere

By letting people taking part applaud when others express their inner feelings and get 'breakthroughs' and by orchestrated group exercises, as well as use of music, emotions are worked up to create an euphoric atmosphere. Voluntary assistants at the training setting will additionally help to wipe on the energy in order to facilitate the illusion that the world is at the feet of the course attendee. This same kind of manipulation is used e.g. at time sharing gatherings. It is a powerful technique of a wrong sort of commerce;

7) psychological pressure and intimidation

By intensively experiencing in an isolated group, the overbearing style of the trainer and a few cunning psycho games a strong mental pressure is created upon the people taking part. Most of them and even strong criticasters are in general unable to cope with this pressure. During the group games and the counselling in front of the group different intimidation techniques are used: denial, humiliation, shouting, cursing, ridiculing, tell the other very awful things about him/her, create vulnerability, experience death etc. Aim: to break the person and get control over him/her;

8) brainwashing

Additional effect of the breaking down of the person is a sort of unrestraintness in the trainee. After the person is broken a process of brainwashing can be set in motion. After that, with some exercises the consciousness will be rewired. Central theme is then the experiencing of the group. The person will be build up around the present group of participants. Contrary to the suggestions the new state has nothing to do with real psychological power;

9) pretending to conquer old fears and gaining self determination

It is suggested that during the training – on the principle of 'experimental learning' – the pupils have overcome their fears and can now dive into new challenges. In fact any healthy person can not live without forms of inhibitions, as long as they are not too dominating. Usually the paradigm of Believerism is propagated: 'you, yourself have created your own destiny; your fate is your choice; you can reach anything if you believe in yourself'. Of course

this is all not completely untrue, but every right-minded person can reason that it is nonsense that after a few days of training you suddenly have your fate completely in your own hands. So, something else is going on. Besides: in practice this illusion creates only discrepancies with day-to-day-reality. But in fact it is all worse: the whole philosophy is not important. It is secondary to the real goal to bring the person in a unrestrained psychological state, to get control over the trainee and to build him/her up around the group.

In general the courses propagate openness (read exalted unrestraintness) and honesty, while the candidates have to sign secrecy declarations (at Essence Trainings they do not give a copy), which shows again that the forwarded message is not really relevant;

10) creation of group euphoria at the end

The tone of the trainer, a sort of saint during the course, changes when approaching the end of the course: he/she becomes more friendly in order to finally still be evaluated as a good pall after all. In fact all behaviour of the trainer is instrumental.

At the closing session there should be a party: the new state of being must be celebrated emotionally. The euphoria at the end is deceptive. Unfortunately many of the exalted participants are not aware of the fact that they have been brainwashed (and are – metaphorically speaking – walking around without breaks) and in reality are not in an very healthy state. Once they have run into some new difficulties later the awareness might start that they have been brainwashed;

11) no real psychological help

It regularly happens that people present walk out of the training because they are fed up with the manipulation. It also happens that people go into psychosis. Sometimes participants are brought to a Psychiatric Emergency Unit. The trainer, who in general has not had any education in psychology and psychiatry, has then little more to offer than his own indoctrination scheme.

The only reason that people taking part have to sign a statement in advance that they are mentally healthy and have no psychiatric problems, is that these agencies can then cover themselves against possible claims afterwards. The answer to the question why psychologically healthy people should attend a training like that (there will be something going on when one inscribes) shows that this criterion is rather meaningless. But apart from that it is important to know in advance that these organisations, which pretend to understand human functioning so deeply, have nothing to offer in real psychological care to people who do not react positively to the training.

When you pretend to be a love prophet and do care about people, at least make a selection in advance, I would say. But these organisations do not do anything of that kind. This theme appears to be totally forgotten during the aggressive recruitment campaigns, in which the only objective is to get as much people in as possible.

They might say in advance that the training is so good that nothing can go wrong (that happened to me), the many internet forums show a completely different picture;

12) group urge

Often former trainees keep with them a longing for the group and the people with whom they have done the training. From a variety of talks with partners of the trainees a picture emerges of people mailing and calling each other very often on ‘how things are going’. This group craving stems from the way they have been built up after the regressive tearing down. This goes at the expense of family and friends; general complaint: they neglect their basis. After a few months one does not recognise the participants anymore;

13) no good; money back guarantee

Most LGAT agencies have a guarantee with which you can receive your money back when you are not content afterwards. In practice this does not work that way. One has to have attended all parts of the training, the return days included. Furthermore one has to ask for it

quickly after the last event. Due to the confusion, euphoria and social pressure many trainees who regret their participation eventually do not ask for their money back. The registration fee usually will not be returned;

14) psychological damage

Many people get damaged on the long term, often psychologically as well as financially. CSA has for instance a club of disappointed ex-participants. At the NVVP, the Dutch Union for Freely Settled Psychotherapists, the phenomenon is known. Regularly they get clients which have taken part in these trainings. According to different sources last year a participant in the Essence training committed suicide. She jumped for the train. Well known is the story of a participant of a Landmark training in Groningen, who got so psychotic that he killed his neighbour when this man tried to help him and stabbed two other ones down (national Dutch TV documentary of the weekly Tv-programme Zembla, February 18, 2007). Many people on Internet tell that they can not get their lives in the right order anymore after these trainings. It would be good to investigate how many people are walking around manically as a consequence of these courses and what these organisations cost in extra effort for the mental health care in Holland.

15) Scientology techniques

In a documentary of the French national television on Landmark, with a secret camera in a training session of Landmark (see www.stelling.nl), ex Scientology members comment that Landmark uses the same techniques as Scientology. Trainings of all three organisations look alike and are in some manner or another linked to Scientology (see the paragraph on background).

What happens exactly in de trainings?

The content of the trainings is secret and it is not allowed for any course follower to bring to the outside any information on what happens in the trainings. The participants have to sign a secrecy declaration. Not everyone sticks to that. With a little googling on the net the content of for instance the Essence and Source Training (Source comes after the initial Essence Training) can easily be retrieved. Hereafter follows a reproduction of the content of these trainings of one of the organisations (with a little commentary here and there), as being informed is better than not being informed.

The most important elements in the Essence training are:

- In the beginning everybody who does not agree on the rules has to stand up. He/She who stands up will be removed from the training. Sometimes an assistant will try to talk into you to make you still comply, because you will miss so much (do not go for that; better sent away, then mentally made ill);
- The trainer talks about 'mind fucking'; with that he means that you fool yourself. From the experience of different participators it becomes clear that he himself 'fucks' and indeed, with your mind. I have seen trainers doing things for which a normal person would have given back a blow for the head or lodge a complaint. In the closed setting the trainer can do what he wants. Most trainees in the training are already so overwhelmed and have become like tame sheep. Difficult cases get a special treatment: scolding the daylight out of them (too crazy for words that that all is possible);
- Very long formal lectures are held by the trainer with all sorts of mishmash on human behaviour. The idea is to give you insight in your own behaviour, things you really did not know!? Some have the idea that they receive great new insights, in reality this

happens due to the long sit, the inescapable, overbearing presence of the trainer, the group experience etc. Most things you already knew; worse even: there is a big chance you know more than the trainer. If you say that you miss a spiritual vision on humanity, the standard answer “cut the crap” will be given. In spite of all the promises before the start a real vision on human functioning on a higher mental/spiritual level is basically missing;

- When you are longer present in the training you will start to recognise the many standard answers to situations. One of them is “So what”, when the trainer has no real answer to a serious question.

And the following games:

- Beads game: make a figure with wooden parts;
- Closed Eyes Dancing: dancing and moving on suitable music with closed eyes for a long time (disorientation!);
- Tarzan and Maryloe: women play Tarzan and the men Maryloe. The men will be belittled: they have to learn quickly a children’s song and sing it as though they are a little girl (ridiculing!);
- Fools theatre: run as a fool from one side to the other in the room in so many possible ways (leave your normal mode);
- What do you want?: everyone is personally questioned by an assistant to tell them in heavy manner what they really want in life. The answer is pulled out of you by asking you many times ”what do want?” If the answer is wrong “bullshit” is shouted at you. When you eventually say “nothing”, you are released from the inquiry setting. The idea is suggested that when you really want nothing , when there is nothing, you can make the world around you again (more plausible is the idea that this is another step in the process where an attitude is crated where you do not want anything and give up your individual character);
- At certain times the trainees have to put all seats together in an orderly way. That has to be done quicker and quicker. The head trainer tells you proudly that ‘his course goers in Israel’ have the record. It is remarkable how much effort people present put in this exercise;
- During long lasting exercises you are not allowed to leave the room for instance for a pee, as that is regarded as disturbing. When you come back you are punished and you have to wait for a long time, maybe an hour, outside before you may enter the room;
- Problem cases are being ‘treated’ in front of the group (for instance someone has been raped by a parent). The intervention of the trainer is that he/she in a very authoritarian style tells you the problem is different than you think. A reorientation on the issue is forced upon you. When you go back to your seat, you basically have no clue what the trainer meant. The confusion is not surprising; the intervention has not anything to do with real psychological help. The reorientation is fake, but this vague notion gets lost in the exalted atmosphere;
- Also here a lot of attention goes out to the recruitment of new candidates from the circle of acquaintances;
- When the closing sessions comes in sight most of the people taking part have lost something of their soul and are bewildered. Due to the euphoria and the group experience they do not recognise this (yet).

Elements from the Source training are:

- You get a name tag adhered on you clothing with a not flattering indication, e.g.: ‘insecure’ or ‘liar’ (in the defence!);

- You can tell who you like and not like. You get a buddy; the trainers connect you to someone you did not like (so-called good for the ‘learning process’, in fact it is another step in isolating you mentally);
- The trainers are sitting in front of the group and keep silent for an hour or so, so that sooner or later you get frustrated or go silencing too;
- At a special exercise a number of participants have to shout loudly negative feedback in your face; everyone is only allowed to show gratitude for that;
- The lifeboat dilemma: All trainees are sitting on an imaginary boat that is sinking. Everyone now has to tell the others why he/she should life on. Everyone gets four sticks and under the fanatic guiding of an assistant everyone has to tell all others why they should die or may live on. The four sticks are for the survivors (what a deep disappointment that this participant which you liked so much did not choose for you!?). The four people with most sticks can go into the life boat. That is less than 10 percent of the trainees; the rest must die;
- ‘Be someone else’: walk around in a completely other outfit than usual;
- Japanese fighting’: in a Japanese setting fighting against another trainee (without physical touching). The trainers assess who has won. When you have lost you have to lie down as being dead;
- Hit the floor aggressively with a belt.;
- Secrets exercise: sharing of your deepest secret with the rest (a relieve or further mental undressing?);
- The sex feedback parade: as little as possible dressed and then together with other participants do a meat inspection. Moral: “you are not your body, but that what is inside.” Hidden aim: take away all ways of protection. After this session the bond between each other is of course strengthened, as you have seen each other (nearly) naked and hey, don’t tell at home where your naked clothing was meant for!?
- Give and take exercise: the trainers and the other people taking part assess who is a giver and who is taker (into the defence, emotional hurting);
- The direction selects a song for you and then you have to playback it (of course there should be a laugh!?)
- De Source-walk: you leave the building and go in the city. The assignment is to tell a complete stranger your biggest secret. Moral: if you open up, the other will do that too (all nonsense; probably the objective is to further break down your borders?!)
- The closing party: family and friends may come the last day. The effect of being ‘reborn’ needs a finishing touch. Your name tag can go off (what a liberation!?). You call your loved ones to come to the training location (recruitment?). The friends lay a hand on your shoulder; a bit of music added; hugging session (crying!?). You get a drawing the trainers made for you (mind, you keep it well);
- At home you have to call your partner, preferably in the middle of the night and tell him/her you love him/her;
- You have to give everybody from your environment a stiff dose of truth about him/her (so that you’ll certainly get in troubles);
- Furthermore there is the ever returning planning of recruitment of new candidates;
- There is return evening for the after care, where the goals of the exercises are explained (all nonsense, the real objective of this return evening is further recruitment).

After having followed the Essence and Source one has spent – according to the most recent norm – 1675 Euros; a nice amount of which you can buy quite a bit of real counselling. The head trainer writes on the website of Essence that he has given his ‘mental growth’ method to

more than 40.000 people, most of them Dutch. With quite a few trainers in their staff the number of trained people through Essence could be more than 100.000 in The Netherlands; given the discussions on internet amongst them quite a few angry people who want to share their negative experiences, who want to warn others and who urgently advise not to attend the trainings.

A few worrisome points:

The later euphoria is deceptive: It is easy to create once the resistance is broken. It is very difficult to get round this breaking of the resistance (jargon: breakthrough) due to the exceptional situation one is pulled in. **The obtained new psychological insight is a decoy.** It is based on nothing authentic (I have some experience).

They say they your well-being is their focus, but that is not true. **Their earnings or possible other interests are central.** When you look through the amateur psychological lessons, the hidden method is clearly visible: to humiliate the person more and more, undress mentally and make them kneadable and sensitive for the group. An assistant trainer once told me that that participants would get ethereal attacks. Implicitly he showed that the result was not new wisdom, but spiritual vulnerability. You are manipulated to a hyper group experience: happy, happy, happy (not good for you at all, you are better of as authentic individual, with or without problems).

They will try to convince you that it is of great importance that your partner will also do the training, "otherwise he/she will not understand you." An often returning complaint of former trainees is that - in spite of 'the lessons in love' - polarisation in relations is the end result. Many people get in **conflict with their surroundings**, lose relations and come to stand alone. For many former participants a while after the training depression seems inevitable. This might even be more regarded as a healthy response to an unhealthy educational scheme than a sign of mental instability, as some of these organisations want you to believe.

If you have not been whistled back by family and friends, or had a bit of realism in your guts and did not fall for the pressure of the organisation, still the euphoria will eventually not last and you will have to find a new answer on your brainwashed state of being. Maybe in the beginning you did not note this but the organisation has little to offer in this stage.

It is alarming to see that the Essence organisation has developed a **special training for children** ("Zegjezegje"; Eng.: say-your-thing). Via Primary Schools teachers are recruited and allured to come to the Essence building in Western Amsterdam.

The final objective of all this brainwashing is probably to create candidates who can be manipulated and used for the organisation. It is remarkable to see how active participants go recruiting new victims without any form of incentive and become an instrument of the organisation. Further on the path you might get some courses for nothing. They don't tell you at first what are your recruitment requirements, for instance you have to ask at least two persons a day about attending Essence. You will get a special training, so that you do not give a compelling impression.

In the follow up tracks you can do a variety of other trainings, e.g. Dialogika, Duet, Challenge and Beyond Doubt. Before you know it **you are up to your neck in the organisation.**

Aggressive recruitment

All three organisations recruit more or less in the same way:

- No direct mail or advertisement is done. All recruitment proceeds through mouth upon mouth. This process starts already during the training, where there is a lot of attention

given to build up a strategy for recruitment of future participants. Sometimes a special booklet is kept for that purpose. During the information meetings, often at someone's home, a facilitator comes to explain the training. At the end a lot of pressure is laid on potential candidates to sign in;

- They will tell you that the course will have an enormous effect; something that is probably true, but not in a positive sense, as the people in the organisation believe. Typical presentation on internet: "In the Landmark Forum (their basic) you come directly in contact with the Source. The source of joy, self expression and fulfilment. Due to that it becomes possible to determine yourself how you want to act, how you want to behave and what you want to attain. As though you take over the steering wheel. You determine in which field you want to be active, where and how you want to put your creativity in. You experience how it is to live." (he, who would not be pleased? Essence and CSA have comparable recruitment sloganising; don't get fooled!);
- Secretiveness: you are not supposed to know anything in advance, otherwise the training so-called 'does not work.' After finishing the course you are not allowed to tell others anything. The average participant steps in credulous. When you book a trip you want to know where it is going. With this trip you do not know anything in advance. Many people have somewhere a need to function better, want more success and become curious. This is where the organisations take advantage of. Real information on the training is not given. The 'information' you will get in the beginning consists mainly of the enthusiasm of the often freshly indoctrinated recruiters. Many potential candidates think they will miss a chance if they do not take part. Together with the psychological pressure this explains why so many people fall for them;
- As with Scientology one can develop oneself farther step-by-step in the 'mastering of success' and involve oneself deeper in the organisation. With the Essence it begins with Essence training, after that come Source, Challenge and Training for Success etc. By this approach to enlightenment one gets gradually more intensely involved in the organisation. The way out isn't that easy;
- The overhead costs are low. The organisations are run by a small staff of paid personnel, but in fact these agencies function on the effort of voluntary work of former trainees. This work can also be the cleaning of toilets. People without money can earn credits for courses by recruiting extra candidates. The big profit goes to people behind the organisation.

Background organisations; abroad organisations are under pressure

Essence en Source are trainings of Humanication Holding BV. This BV (a sort Ltd) is a Dutch company which is part of the education branch of Avenant Holding BV, which has as main activities asbestos sanitation and demolition (accidental?). Essence Trainings has locations in Amsterdam and Nijmegen. According to their website there are also offices in Germany, Greece and Israel. The head trainer of Humanication is Yiftach Sagiv. All lines in the organisation come together in this man. He is from Israel, where he has built an enormous villa. According to his own words, he was already busy with communication methods when he was an officer in the Israeli army. "I made clear to my soldiers that it is not about survival, but about winning," he claims at his presentation on the Essence website. I have experienced Yiftach and can without any doubt state that he is very authoritarian and basically drills. This macho talks continuously for hours and when you do not do what he has planned, he becomes

verbally aggressive. On the website of The Rick A. Ross Institute for the Study of Destructive Cults, Controversial Groups and Movements (www.rickross.com) is mentioned that Yiftach has developed his ideas after having been trained by Pat Grove. Also is mentioned there that this South-African with strong Scientology bonds, gave Quest trainings; with Lifespring and alike all derived from EST (see further on in the Landmark section).

When you are critical about Essence, better watch it, as becomes clear from a witness on Kleintje Muurkrant (a Dutch website): *"...I have done the Essence training two years ago and developed after that a heavy psychosis, which caused a lot of problems privately and in my work. I found the trainings absolutely not fitting for people who are sensitive for developing a mania or psychosis. The organisation gives too limited information about this and is not equipped to tackle this. After a very disappointing contact with the female trainer and the director of Essence Trainings (frustration, intimidation and even serious threats) in the first half of this year ..."*

The Founder of the Landmark courses is the man who was born in 1935 as Jack Rosenberg. Once he was second hand car trader, married, father of four children and living in Philadelphia. In 1959 that changed, as Rosenberg left for San Francisco. Browsing through an article about Germany John's eye was caught by three persons: Physicist Werner Heisenberg; Bishop Hans Lilje and the Minister of Economy Ludwig Erhard. A new identity was born: 'Werner Hans Erhard'. In the San Francisco-period Erhard got heavily interested in different eastern religions and psychological self help theories. He came in contact with the Scientology church, went through five stages and went to India, a/o to Sai Baba, the master cheater from India (see e.g. www.exbaba.com or www.robertfavour.com). In march 1971 Erhard started EST (Erhard Seminar Training), his own successful course in transformation. EST grew fast to a big enterprise. In 1985 half a million Americans had followed a course of EST, it had 530 employees, 20.000 volunteers and a year turnover of about 35 million dollar. Already in the seventies different psychiatrists warned against the psychiatric effects of these trainings. Researchers and biographers give a very negative image of these courses. In 1984 EST was reformed into Landmark Education which gave courses under the name 'Forum.' These courses are less severe than EST and are significantly more expensive (Landmark Forum had a annual turnover in 1988 of 39 million dollar). The objectives are the same: to let the psyche explode in order to transform it into a 'higher' awareness. Besides Landmark Education this organisation has another branch: 'Transformation Technologies Inc.,' specialising in leadership and management courses. On the site of Rick Ross more than 200 critical articles can be found on Landmark Education.

In France and Austria Landmark has been enlisted as a sect and has nowadays disappeared in these countries after negative publicity in the media. That has also happened in a/o Sweden. Landmark knew a growing popularity in the nineties in Holland, but this has recently gone down. A few years ago the company was active in 21 countries, but this declined till 15 at the moment. The organisation possesses 45 offices of which more than half of that is located in the US.

In the office in Amsterdam Landmark gives the de three days lasting beginner course. Every month these courses are fully occupied by at least hundred usually well educated, well earning participants. After Forum there is a follow up course, the Landmark Advances Course. Many trainees think in the beginning that the training has resulted in a more effective life. If you do not agree on that and express openly criticism, as Kleintje Muurkrant did, there is a severe chance of receiving a continuous stream of insignificant threatening letters from barristers. That has also happened to TV Noord (Regional Television North), when they could

demonstrate a clear relation between the psychosis of the Groningen murderer and his attending to a Landmark training.

According to their own estimation more than 10.000 people have received a training from CSA. The advertising brochure mentions 'a careful integration between Eastern and Western philosophies.' In fact the same hotchpotch of wisdoms is educated as in the trainings of the other companies. Participants are again often people with good positions in society, mayors included. After the initial training follows another one etc. The Basic cost 495 euros, the next level, The Advanced 895 euros. Trouw (a national newspaper) wrote on 6th of June, 2006 about the worrying sides of CSA Nederland.

The background of CSA Nederland (full name Centre for Self Awareness and Personal Development) is that it has bonds with the firm AsiaWorks, which operates amongst others in Singapore and Hongkong. Five years ago John Schrederhof – he attended AsiaWorks trainings – brought the concept to The Netherlands. The firm has also initiated a branch office in Cologne, Germany. The other owner of CSA is Jeff Cosby, an American who has given CSA trainings in Argentina, Japan and the US. In the latter country this firm got talked about after a trainee committed suicide. In Germany this has probably happened as well (a thorough analysis of CSA can be found on the German www.kultinformation.de). In Argentina Colby worked with Argentina Works (AW). A TV channel there, Telenoche Investiga, did a thorough investigation into these trainings and concluded that they were a threat to mental health and consequently did everything possible to get satisfaction for the victims. AW has disappeared there. CSA has furthermore two charity organisations (?) for (inter-)national help to traumatised children, Dreamfoundation en Dream4kids.

In the documentary of the programme Zembla (www.zembla.tv) different ex course trainees of CSA who flipped on the organisations explain their story. Since April 20, 2007 there is a club for people who feel themselves victim of CSA Nederland. Francisca Johnson – not her real name, as she is very afraid for repercussions – has a typical story: she saw her boy friend, working for big company in Holland, changing radically after The Basic: "*... while he was always sober-minded, both feet on the ground. I was the high flyer of the two.*" Johnson originally did not understand anything. "*He was not allowed to tell anything about what had happened. The course goes have a secretiveness obligation. He started to dismiss me, as well as his work, his family. He did not want to go to old friends anymore. There was no discussion possible with him. His standard answer: that is your opinion, you may think so. When he also attended The Advanced, he started to talk about 'my second family'. The people from thy small group did not leave him alone for a second; they called the whole day. Then I thought it looks as though he has entered a sect; he is brainwashed.*" Four months after her friend did the first CSA course, they split up. Their relationship had then lasted 10 years.

Higher awareness or infantilising?

Let's check the biographer of Erhard, William Bartley, again: "the objective of EST is to blow up the mind in order to reach a higher awareness. It is not about teaching a new believe, the aim is to destroy the existing threats of the psyche and to lead the person in the trap to distance from the psyche and to blow it up. These techniques create the conditions where a mutant of higher consciousness can be born." The American psychologist Dr. Sheridan Fenwick saw it in 1976 maybe even sharper: "the training is a precise orchestrated series of manipulations which are very carefully designed to create the desired effect. One of these

effects is dependency, a dependency which establishes infantilising. The trainer decides when you have to talk, when you have to applaud, when to drink and when to stand up". In the mean time Landmark has developed a less severe regime, but the principle behind the modern trainings of all three organisations is the same, as has been shown in this analysis.

The criticism on LGAT trainings is not new. From the middle of the seventies scientists have continuously warned for the danger of this kind of education for the mental health. With a little googling a lot of negative personal experiences can be found on internet forums of people who have become mentally ill of these trainings or people who did not want to be manipulated and stepped out. The problem of mental damage by LGAT's is probably much larger than it looks to be at first glance. Many unfaithful former trainees are still isolated with their experiences and/or maybe feel ashamed to come out. According to a preliminary estimation more than 1% of the Dutch population has been trained by these clubs; most people taking part are higher educated. And it does not stop. Trusting people keep on falling for the refined recruitment techniques, let themselves being brainwashed, might develop a strange hypiness, might go into psychosis and come to stand under an unclear, binding influence.

It is an alarming development that in this country unrestrained zombies are created. Quite some people who have undergone these trainings think that they have become enlightened, while they do not comprehend that what has happened with them. Trivialise the influence or a too tolerant attitude in relation towards these trainings will not help to find a solution for this serious problem in society. The Dutch Health Insurers should try to find out what the costs are of the overall psychological damage. There might be quite a deprogramming need in Holland. Finally it is time that the politics and Mental Health Care in The Netherlands, as in other some foreign countries, do research into the range of the phenomenon, chart the practices of these firms and if possible forbid them.

With thanks to www.stelling.nl

Later toegevoegd:

Beste Lezers, zoals jullie weten hebben wij de afgelopen jaren zeer regelmatig en overvloedig gepubliceerd over verschillende "awareness-trainingen" zoals deze onder andere worden verzorgd door Landmark, CSA en Essence. Essence Trainingen Amsterdam B.V. en Essence Trainingen Nijmegen B.V. alsmede een van haar bestuurders en trainers Yiftach Sagiv hebben ons naar aanleiding van de artikelen "Samen op weg naar verlichting", "Een Source traininkje", "In een lang weekend naar verlichting" (engelse versie "in a long week-end to enlightenment") en "tools for life" waarvan de laatste drie eveneens zijn gepubliceerd in Kleintje Muurkrant respectievelijk in nummer 429, 431 en 432 gesommeerd deze publicaties te verwijderen en te rectificeren op straffe van dwangsommen. De publicaties zouden een omvangrijke stroom laster, leugens en verdachtmakingen omvatten en zouden onrechtmatig zijn jegens Essence en Sagiv. Wij zijn helaas weer in Kort Geding gedagvaard, er wordt zelfs gedreigd met gijzeling van de bestuursleden van De Stelling. Naar onze stellige overtuiging laten wij simpelweg getuigen aan het woord die negatieve en ook positieve ervaringen (zie de reacties onder de artikelen) hebben opgedaan tijdens en na die Essence-trainingen, zoals we dat al jaren doen met vergelijkbare organisaties zoals Landmark en CSA.

Wij hebben Essence en Sagiv ter voorkoming van een kort geding de mogelijkheid geboden om schriftelijk te reageren op de door ons gepubliceerde artikelen waarbij is aangegeven dat de schriftelijke reacties zonodig in een ander lettertype, in een grijs kader en in de directe nabijheid van onze artikelen gepubliceerd zullen worden zonder redactioneel commentaar van

onze zijde. Helaas willen Essence en Sagiv dit niet, wij betreuren dat.
Volgende week vrijdag 17 oktober 2008 om 09.30 uur dient in DenBosch het Kort Geding van Essence BV Amsterdam en Essence Nijmegen BV en Sagiv tegen De Stelling / Kleintje Muurkrant. Als je wilt komen kijken dan ben je welkom in het Paleis van Justitie te 's-Hertogenbosch, vlakbij het NS-station. Tot ziens en stay tuned...