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How and why a student of Uspenskii's caliber broke with his teacher, his slow descent, and ultimate breakthrough, offers a deep and profound study for students of all spiritual paths. The material here, much of it new and drawn from original sources, along with the author's insights and original readings of documents, provides a new and revolutionary dimension to the understanding of Gurdjieff, Uspenskii, and Fourth Way work.

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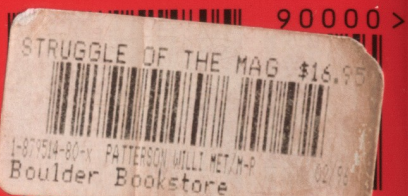
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— Charles T. Tart, Ph.D., author, *Waking Up*

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—Robert S. Ellwood  
Chairman, School of Religion  
University of Southern California

William Patrick Patterson is a longtime student of John Pentland, the man Gurdjieff chose to lead the Work in America. Patterson has actively practiced the principles of self-transformation for over twenty-five years. He speaks on transformational themes and is the author of *Eating The "I"*



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STRUGGLE OF THE MAGICIANS  
WHY USPENSKII LEFT GURDJIEFF

WILLIAM PATRICK PATTERSON

ARETE

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THE TEACHER-STUDENT  
RELATIONSHIP

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A REAL CONTRIBUTION  
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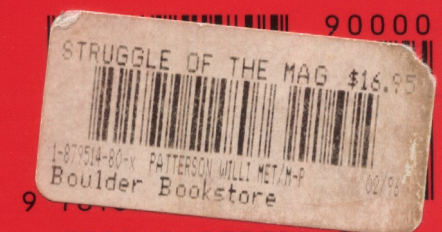
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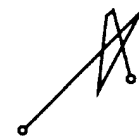
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*Exploring The Teacher-Student Relationship*

# STRUGGLE OF THE MAGICIANS

*Why Uspenskii Left Gurdjieff*

William Patrick Patterson



Edited by Barbara C. Allen

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The Magus is the highest that man  
can approach to God.

— *G. I. Gurdjieff*

Toast to Gurdjieff:

God give you the strength  
and the manhood  
to endure your lofty solitude.

— *Rachmilievitch*

Gurdjieff is a kind of walking  
God—a planetary or even solar God.

— *A. R. Orage*

For my mother,  
Mabel Scott Patterson,  
whose sustaining love  
and sacrifice  
gave courage  
in the face of myself.

## CONTENTS

Acknowledgments	vii
Preface	ix
Introduction	xv

### Part I

A New or Forgotten Road	1
-------------------------	---

Uspenskii's search. Anna Butkovsky. "A teaching of a more rational kind." "The world will be destroyed." Sacred mission. The strangest eyes. "I have found the Miracle!" Concept of different 'I's. St. Petersburg group. Fears and sacrifices. Uspenskii's nickname. Humiliation. Postures and movements. Hearing thoughts. "I knew he would not believe me." Gurdjieff's ill health. Awkward 'play.' Revolution. Essentuki. Origin of Work. "I no longer understood." Capacity to see others. Way of Golgotha. "She is—intelligent." Strange confidence. The little Prince and Bennett. *The Struggle of the Magicians*, the ballet. Song of the Dervish. Stupid dirty jokes! Lady Rothermere. Uspenskii's 'two' Gurdjieff's.

### Part II

Magicians at War	71
------------------	----

Orage the novice, Uspenskii the master. "Everything more vivid." Public humiliation. The Institute. "I am going to find God." Depths of despair. Destructive elements. The greatest secret. Division into seven groups. Political games. St. Petersburg Conditions. Theory and Knowledge. Breaking with Gurdjieff. America, Orage, and the Sunwise Turn. Chailly, July 8, 1924. "The Institute is closed. I died." It happened in the 223rd year after the creation of the World.... Orage, in love.... Boiling oil. Bennett teaches. "Whims." Ambassador from Hell. Needed: new initiation. Uspenskii expands Work. The oath. Joshua Gurdjieff! New Muddle of the Universe. The Rope. Noticeable coincidences. "I loved Orage as a brother."

## Part III

### The Great Bequeathing 147

"I thank God...." Stale mana. Real cunning. "I am now twelve-year-old boy."  
"Mr. Uspenskii is one of the greatest men alive." Zoubrovka. Historico-Psychological Society. Messengers and Bibles. Six dimensions of time. "I cannot remember." Bennett's questions. Charlatan and thief. "My task in life is coming to an end." Kidneys. Emotional center. Luxury. Return to England. Five meetings. "What do you want?" "I never was humble myself." Memory. Eternal recurrence. "You must make a new beginning." Mr. Gurdjieff is not mad. First commandment of God to man. Jesse Dwight and "a man who knew everything but lacked simple understanding." Lord Pentland. Distinction between sensing and feeling. *Fragments of an Unknown Teaching*. "Very exact is. Good memory. Truth, was so." Judas and Paul. "Gurdjieff: The Making of a New World." "Either the old world make me Tchik, or I will make the old world Tchik." Electric lights fail in Paris. "Madame de Salzmänn will carry on his work as best she can, and I suppose we will all help her. We have so pledged...."

### Of Uspenskii, Orage, and Bennett 199

### Notes 213

### Bibliography 225

### References 229

### Index 243

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# PREFACE

From the first time I read Pyotr Demianovich Uspenskii's *Fragments of an Unknown Teaching*, or as it was retitled after his death, *In Search of the Miraculous*, I wondered why he had left Gurdjieff. What could it be that would cause a seeker as gifted and hungry for the miraculous as Uspenskii to turn away from the one man who was leading him to it?

The teaching which Gurdjieff brought, and which Uspenskii so faithfully records in *Search*, was for me miraculous in itself. In all my life I had never come across ideas of such scale and dimension and such practicality. I found myself reading the book murmuring "yes-yes-yes." And so coming to that last scene at the Prieuré where Gurdjieff is leaving for his first voyage to America and Uspenskii is telling himself, "My work in the future would proceed quite independently"—was a shock that left a strange disjointed feeling.

Something had gone wrong, but what? Uspenskii's reasons seemed to hide more than they revealed. But it was all quite beyond me. The question of what caused the rupture was quickly submerged in the richness and originality of the teaching. Soon thereafter I entered the Work. Years went by without the question resurfacing. Yet it must have stayed with me, for now and then I would find myself wondering—*Yes, why did Uspenskii leave Gurdjieff?*

As I worked with the teaching, and over the years learned of its historical permutations, the question opened again demanding an answer. Just as we need to know the story of our lives to make sense of where we have been, are, and are likely going, so too does the 'story' of the teaching. Otherwise, force deflects, ideas disconnect, interpretations personalize. To move into the future, we first need to align the past. The octave of the Work is coming to a crossroads in its evolution. To continue to ascend, it seems to me, a clarity about the past is demanded.

I would like to say everything was this clear for me when I decided to write this book and that I began with the definite intention of answering

the question. But the reality was just the reverse. I had assumed, without actually pondering the matter, that the question could not be answered. Or, at least, not by me. And so while the question 'pinched' sometimes, I was not active towards it. This changed when I read Reynier's biography of Uspenskii, *The Unsung Genius*, and upon finishing it, found I had a *new feeling* about the man and his life. In that moment, there came an awareness of an unusual sense of space, one of deep silence and an abiding wholeness—one in which I felt a living presence other than my own. I felt I should write about Uspenskii and how he came to leave Gurdjieff. Though this was felt with a consummate clarity, even so, it largely left me. A few weeks later, in rereading the part in *Search* where Gurdjieff and Uspenskii are together in Essentuki, I found a shift to a new level of understanding. Connections came not made before. For example, I saw how Uspenskii's reaction to Gurdjieff's use of the word *seclusion* in 1915 directly connects to Uspenskii's distrust of where he believes Gurdjieff is leading him three years later. I remembered, too, some original documents I had read some years earlier. Now I saw the possibility of coming to a real answer based on research of the actual written material.

Early on, I decided I wanted Gurdjieff, Uspenskii, and everyone involved from that period to speak for themselves. I would base my research on the written record alone. The reference then, for writer and readers alike, would be one and the same. Interpretations might differ, but the material would be sourced in a common record open to and verifiable by everyone. The words of Gurdjieff, Uspenskii, as well as those of A. R. Orage, J. G. Bennett, Thomas and Olga de Hartmann, C. S. Nott, Rodney Collin, Solita Solano, and others represent their perspective, their feelings. If our reading is sensitive enough, then the words can be used to step through the words.

Of course, words don't exist alone. When and where they were uttered is important and gives their meaning particular shading. Accordingly, the written record has been set in a time line of dates and places, thus creating a kind of fourth dimension. Included in the time line are past historical events, such as the Russian Revolution and the rise of Fascism, for these represent the historical background and atmosphere in which the teaching was presented and practiced. As such, they often had a direct influence on Gurdjieff's and Uspenskii's actions. For example, had Lenin-Trotsky *not* succeeded in seizing power, Gurdjieff's Institute would have been established in Russia and Uspenskii's rupture with Gurdjieff would have played out quite differently. As Uspenskii once wrote, "All things were connected with one another, and not accidentally, but by incomprehensible chains of causes and effects. All things were dependent on one another, and all things lived in one another."

In my first book, *Eating The "I"*, the major theme was relationship as it concerned my family, my wife, and my spiritual teacher, John Pentland. Because of its narrative style and the personal nature of the material, the book's presentation necessarily appeared as subjective. While the theme of *Struggle of the Magicians* is the same, here the relationship is not personal (for me) and it is between extraordinary and, I believe, archetypal figures. As the text makes clear, there was a struggle going on between Uspenskii and Gurdjieff, as there is, and must be, between any spiritual teacher and student. But their struggle was titanic and far reaching in that both men were magicians,<sup>1</sup> and Gurdjieff, of course, a great deal more.

The relationship between a teacher and student does not easily lend itself to rational understanding, so deep are its modalities, so multiordinal its meanings. What is attempted here is to carry out a rational inquiry in the spiritual sense of such inquiries—rationally ordering events, presenting insights and interpretations of these events, and taking the inquiry right up to the point where value and meaning depend on additional suprarational factors. Guiding our inquiry by the time line of the Gurdjieff-Uspenskii relationship, allowing the available material to build up sequentially, hopefully allowing it to be pondered in a wider context. Perhaps, then, the moment at which intellectual intuition must enter is rightly approached, increasing the opportunity for a result that shifts understanding toward a higher level. Hopefully, too, by attempting to objectify, to the degree possible, the relationship between Gurdjieff and Uspenskii, a means is developed to begin to appreciate the true significance of what took place while the interworkings of the teacher-student relationship are set in high relief. For this reason, no other, are these old dog bones unearthed.

Without question the place of Pyotr Demianovich Uspenskii in the Gurdjieffian pantheon is unique. He is unrivaled as the chief interpreter of what has become known as the Gurdjieff Work, or the Fourth Way. In fact, far more people are familiar with Uspenskii than Gurdjieff. So it was during their lifetimes and so it has largely remained. Without the clarity and accessibility of Uspenskii's books, the Work would have been much smaller numerically. They provide the needed stepping stones. The body of work Uspenskii left is notable in its intuitive feel for, and faithfulness to, a teaching whose complexity and subtlety extends

1. The word *magician* is used in the sense given both in Skeat's *The Concise Etymological Dictionary of the English Language* (G. P. Putnam, 1980) as: "Magi, priest of the Persians, enchanter, properly a wise man who interpreted dreams;" and also in Brewer's *Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*, edited by Ivor H. Evans (Harper & Row, 1981): "Among the ancient Medes and Persians, the Magi were members of a priestly caste credited with great occult powers. Ammianus Marcellinus says the Persian magi derived their knowledge from the Brahmins of India and Arianus expressly called the Brahmins 'magi.'"

through many dimensions. That Uspenskii had only his memory and notes to work with in assembling the account of the teaching he portrayed in *Search* makes his achievement even more remarkable. Gurdjieff himself acknowledged this. When Madame Uspenskii sent a draft of a chapter of her deceased husband's book and asked if it should be published, Gurdjieff said unequivocally—"Very good is. Good memory. Truth, was so."

In following Gurdjieff's and Uspenskii's lifeline together, the lives of A. R. Orage and J. G. Bennett necessarily came into view. Both were pupils of Gurdjieff and, like Uspenskii, were intellectually of a very high order. Each could have been of inestimable help in 'stepping down' and establishing the teaching. Both did so to a degree, but, like Uspenskii, they could follow their teacher only so far. In researching the book, I came to see that these two men played significant parts not only in Gurdjieff's struggle with Uspenskii, but also in his struggle to establish the teaching. I considered using the title "Struggle of the Magicians: Why Uspenskii, Orage and Bennett Left Gurdjieff," but this would have been cumbersome. (May I add that this book should not be confused in any way with Gurdjieff's ballet scenario *The Struggle of the Magicians*, which remains an original work in its own right.)

The question will likely arise as to why the spelling of 'Uspenskii' is used rather than the more familiar 'Ouspensky.' Two reasons. First, 'Uspenskii' is much closer to how the name sounds in Russian. Second, and more importantly, the new spelling will hopefully suggest a reconsideration as to how we see the man and the part he played, and refused to play, in the dissemination of the teaching. And, more significantly for Uspenskii and the teaching, the intention with which he died.

As to dates in *Search*, Uspenskii makes no direct mention of whether he uses the Julian or Gregorian calendars in giving dates. He does say, however, that he left St. Petersburg "on the 15th of October, a week before the Bolshevik revolution." This indicates he is following the Julian calendar. Had Uspenskii used the Gregorian calendar, the date of the revolution would be November 7th. This is because in the twentieth century the Gregorian calendar (established in 1592 by Pope Gregory XIII) is thirteen days ahead of the Julian. Therefore, while Uspenskii is in Russia, all dates pertaining to his and Gurdjieff's whereabouts correspond to the Julian calendar. For all subsequent dates after February 1918, when the Bolsheviks adopted the Gregorian calendar, the Gregorian is used.

Though the events related here began more than eighty years ago, the material is presented mainly in the present tense. I do so because that is how I think, feel, and intuit it when I really engage the material. Their story is immediate. The revelations, resistances, the heroic perseverance against momentous obstacles of Gurdjieff, and later Uspenskii, are all of

this moment—of, and for, this time. So, in my view, it is not with the past we deal but the present. To keep the body of the main text as free as possible from interpretation, I have confined my remarks to the footnotes.

Lastly, I am well aware that the book treads against one of the fundamental commandments of Gurdjieff's much esteemed Mullah Nassr Eddin who advised: "Never poke your stick into a hornets' nest." Accordingly, let me say that this author has also not only taken to heart, but put into practice, the sage and sly advice of that precious jewel, Mr. Gurdjieff's Karapet of Tiflis.

—William Patrick Patterson  
San Anselmo, California

# INTRODUCTION

*Of all the meetings between human beings, that between teacher and student is archetypal.* Its form is ancient, its manifestation ever new. So it was with Socrates and Plato, with Shams al-Din and Rumi, with Marpa and Milarepa...and so it is in our own time with Gurdjieff and Uspenskii.

It was some eighty years ago in a noisy Moscow café that Gurdjieff and Uspenskii first met. Gurdjieff was no ordinary teacher; Uspenskii, no ordinary student. Gurdjieff had a mission. He had come to the West to introduce and establish a new teaching, one that would keep the world from destroying itself. He was in search of students to help him achieve his aim. When they met, Uspenskii was already something of a magician. He had made extensive studies of the tarot, magic, and the esoteric teachings of the past, and had conducted a number of experiments. An 'old soul,' he had the power to capture and direct the attention of others and had already published *Tertium Organum* before he met Gurdjieff. He was held in high regard in theosophical circles in Moscow and St. Petersburg where his lectures drew thousands. Nevertheless, as he came to realize, he could still not find his way through "the thin film of false reality" that separated him from the miraculous. Uspenskii needed help and he was actively in search of it.

Gurdjieff had what Uspenskii wanted—a way out, a way of understanding, a way of using ordinary life with all its shocks, suffering, and negativity to come to real life. And Uspenskii had what Gurdjieff needed—a powerful intellect that could quickly comprehend the teaching and the oral and written abilities to communicate it; that is, to 'step down' the teaching and make it accessible to larger numbers of people. As Gurdjieff would later write, "The first great commandment of God to man is hand wash hand." Gurdjieff offered his hand and expected Uspenskii's in return. In that lay the problem. Uspenskii wanted the teaching, but, like all students, he was wary of 'the payment.' There was only so much he was willing to pay. Beyond that he would not go. Three times he would break with Gurdjieff in the eight-odd years they were together.

What happened with Uspenskii happened as well with two others who Gurdjieff hoped would help disseminate the teaching, A. R. Orage and J. G. Bennett. Like Uspenskii, both were men of exceptional gifts with a strong grounding in the esoteric. Each was capable of capturing, holding and directing the attention of others. And for all their imagination, each had the capacity to bend the will of others to his own. They, too, in their own right, were magicians. Like Uspenskii, they made incredible efforts, sacrificed, and developed. Yet eventually they too came up against that selfsame demand—the complete dedication to teacher and teaching.

The struggle between Gurdjieff and Uspenskii-Orage-Bennett took place on a very high level. For Gurdjieff was struggling with ‘giants,’ or as he would say, “power-possessing-beings.” Their failure is understandable and in no way is it seen here from any notions of superiority. Anyone who has worked on themselves even a little has some sense of what these men ultimately faced. And yet, given the world-scale of Gurdjieff’s mission, the fact that they did not meet the moment, fill the interval, is an incompleteness with whose consequences we must all live and work.

To what can their lack be attributed? This is an important question that needs exploring. For, at the very least, in their attitudes, confusions, and behavior, we see our own. Any approach to the question of their leaving Gurdjieff must examine how Uspenskii-Orage-Bennett saw their relationship to the teaching, to Gurdjieff. That’s one point of the arrow. The other point is how Gurdjieff perceived matters. Is it possible for us to see, even a little, with Gurdjieff’s eyes? That is, can we perceive how Gurdjieff saw himself and his mission?

Certainly Gurdjieff was no one’s ideal of a Messenger from Above. As he himself writes in the *Second Series*, he was born into a class of people known as *kaphirs*. A *kaphir*, Gurdjieff says, is “the name given to people (and this included, in general, all Europeans) who live like animals, without principles and without anything holy in them.” A member of the Sarmoung Brotherhood tells Bogga-Eddin to tell Gurdjieff that he would be glad to see him, “a man who—though by origin a *kaphir*—has succeeded, thanks to his impartial attitude towards all people, in acquiring a soul similar to ours.”

Undoubtedly, in Gurdjieff we have no ethereal holy man only tenuously on the planet. No, Gurdjieff was here with both feet planted. He enjoyed life and had a strong earthy side. He had his ‘wolf’ and his ‘sheep.’ Man, he often pointed out, is a battleground of two warring natures, the spiritual and the earthy. In perhaps no man in history, with the exception of Padme Sambhava who brought Buddhism to Tibet, have these two natures existed in such polarity. Here was a being whose spiritual character was so inspired as to be imprinted with the mission of

establishing a new teaching for our time on earth and who, within the same incarnation, had an earthy nature perhaps equally as desirous. As he himself admitted, at a certain period of his life he could be beset with vindictiveness, self-love, vanity, pride, jealousy and other passions.

What must it have been like to spend a lifetime reconciling these two natures while, at the same time, fulfilling a mission so colossal, so difficult? Not only were his twin-natures at war, Gurdjieff had to contend with and integrate the disparity between his physical and spiritual bodies. His first ‘death’ came as a boy lying in a large shell crater on an artillery range. With cannons roaring one hundred yards away, shells flying and bursting over his head, Gurdjieff had the “clear realization... of almost certain annihilation.” His emotional center awakened, “The intensity of feeling which flooded through me, and the force of logical confrontation of my thought increased to such an extent that, at each moment, I thought and experienced more than during an entire twelve-month.” The instinctive fear that arose in him brought “an unconquerable living terror.” His young body trembled so intensely that “it was as if each tissue vibrated independently.” But there was also an awareness for the first time of a “*whole sensation of myself; which grew stronger and stronger.*” [Author’s italics]

In his later journeys with the Seekers After Truth,<sup>1</sup> he was shot three times, “each time almost mortally and each time by a stray bullet.” The first in Crete in 1896 when he was nineteen years old. The second in Tibet in 1897. The third in Transcaucasia in 1904. In addition, he also contracted many, what he calls, “specific ‘delicacies’ of local character” such as scurvy, dysentery, influenza, malaria, hydropsy, and bedinka. As a result of these travels, he reports that, “implanted in my organism for the rest of my life some ‘chronically manifesting’ factors of evil influence upon my health.” And so while his Kesdjan body was coated and anointed, his physical body was ravaged by the effects of bullets and disease. Most likely these were a constant source of pain to him which he dulled by ingesting great quantities of caffeine, nicotine, and alcohol.

However this may be, the indisputable fact is Gurdjieff never betrayed or doubted his mission. From the moment he first met Uspenskii in Moscow in 1915 to his death in Paris in 1949—neither in his words or actions is there ever a contradiction. He knew what he came to do and never wavered. Again and again, he tried to establish his Institute of the Harmonious Development of Man. First in Moscow-St. Petersburg, then Tiflis, then Constantinople, then Germany, then London. Finally after ten years of living with constant pressure and uncertainty he was able in 1922 to establish his Institute in France.

1. This is the name used in the Institute’s prospectus issued in 1922.

Within less than two years time, however, Gurdjieff suffered a serious car crash and concussion. It brought home to him the recognition that his aim could not be realized through the Institute. He had no idea of what way to go, but he knew this way was not working, so he formally disbanded the Institute. Months later the idea arose in him that if he couldn't pass the teaching on to his generation—then he had to go into the future. For this he must create a *legominism*.<sup>2</sup> A man of action, he must do what he most abhorred: *write*. The result is his great gift to all who will pay the attention to read it, *All and Everything*. And so, in a way he never expected, Gurdjieff fulfilled his mission.

Few have wanted to take Gurdjieff and the teaching he brought at the level of seriousness he demands. We keep him, like a crazy old uncle, somewhat embarrassing, perhaps not thoroughly respectable, locked away in the attic. To take him seriously would mean we must take ourselves and our relation to the teaching seriously. Placed at, say, the level of a teacher, guru, or crazy wisdom master, Gurdjieff makes no problem for us. He is simply one among many. And so we, likewise, can remain 'one among many.' But to begin to see as Gurdjieff saw, to look through his eyes, demands a new orientation outside the usual categories of mind. The question of Gurdjieff's identity is central to an understanding of the teaching he brought. No doubt the teaching can be practiced and one can begin to evolve without coming to the question. But the day will come when that question demands its answer. As will be seen in the lives of Uspenskii, Orage, and Bennett, the answer determines one's limit. For example, if the New Testament were seriously read and its teachings attempted to be lived, one would begin moving in a beneficial direction. But the time would come when if it was not believed that Jesus Christ was the only son of God, who was sacrificed for our sins and on the third day arose from the dead...one would not be a Christian, and so to continue would be without real result. As the teaching is centered in conscience, understanding and redemption, not belief or devotion, what might be called 'the time of decision' may be years in the arising, but come it must. It may come by revelation, intuition, or hard work and pondering, but the question must have its answer.

The seemingly radical but straight forward fact is this: Gurdjieff saw himself as a Messenger from Above. As he writes in *All and Everything*,<sup>3</sup> "our Lord Sovereign sent from time to time His Messengers to the plan-

2. A means of transmitting information from initiates to conscious beings over time through the Law of Sevenfoldness.

3. The First Series of Gurdjieff's writings is commonly referred to as *All and Everything*, and is called so here. However, *All and Everything* is actually the over-arching title he gave to his three books.

ets of this system, to regulate, more or less, the being-existence of the three-brained beings [human beings] arising on them." The purpose of the Messengers was to aid three brained beings "in destroying in their presences the crystallized consequences" of self-love and vanity. These Messengers, the ones who are known, have all been 'idealized' through the passage of *Heropass*, or time. It is to such figures that all subsequent Messengers must stand in comparison. That all fail such comparison is hardly surprising.

"...*my Being*," he wrote in italics in the *Third Series*, "*is necessary not only for my personal egoism but also for the common welfare of all humanity.*"

The incontrovertible fact is that Gurdjieff saw himself as a herald of coming good, a Messenger from Above, come to the world at a time which he sees as "an empty and aborted interval," bringing an ancient and scientific 'chemistry' calibrated to achieving self-transformation in our contemporary technologized world.

Gurdjieff was quite clear about what he called "the terror of the situation." He saw that the lack of conscience and growth of self-will and automatism—"Contemporary culture requires automatons," he said—together with the development of the means of planetary destruction would put mankind's very survival in question.

Unequivocally, Gurdjieff declared: *Unless the 'wisdom' of the East and the 'energy' of the West could be harnessed and used harmoniously, the world would be destroyed.*

All leaders, messiahs, messengers from the gods, he said, have one fundamental and very important purpose: to find some means by which the two sides of man, and, therefore, East and West, can live together in peace and harmony. Philosophies, religions, and other such movements had all failed to accomplish this aim, and the only possible way to accomplish it was through the individual development of man. Time was short and it was necessary to achieve this harmony as soon as possible to avoid complete disaster.

He predicted, too, that a day would come when the eastern world would again rise to a position of world importance and become a threat to the momentarily all-powerful, all-influential new culture of the western world, which was dominated, according to him, by America—a country that was very strong, to be sure, but also very young.

Gurdjieff was saying all this, and more, in the mid-1920s. Strange and radical as it seemed then, it's now part of the contemporary psycho-babble. Skimming off psychological parts of the teaching, spiritual homogenizers make believe they understand the whole of the teaching. Time has passed Gurdjieff and his teaching by, they claim. Yet as all who have really worked on themselves well know, we in fact have yet to

catch up with Gurdjieff, have yet to actually work on ourselves in the cosmological way he described.

Gurdjieff, the man, embodied the teaching. They were one and the same. The selflessness and sacrifice, the will and fierce love of the Truth his life so convincingly demonstrates, are a beacon for us all to truly work to be in life. To begin to look through Gurdjieff's eyes, Gurdjieff must be taken seriously. Only by opening to the possibility that he and his mission are what he says they are can we begin to enter into the life of George Ivanovitch Gurdjieff and relive with him his valiant struggle with the magicians of his day.

## PART I

# A NEW OR FORGOTTEN ROAD

NOVEMBER 13, 1914. MOSCOW. *In the offices of a Moscow newspaper, a thirty-seven-year-old nearsighted Russian journalist edits material for a forthcoming issue. Only weeks before, he had returned from a journey to the East in search of what he calls "The Miraculous." This he sees as "a new or forgotten road," one that would allow him to escape the lies and absurdities of ordinary life, so that he might penetrate its "thin film of false reality" to the hidden reality beyond.*

Though he had glimpses of this hidden reality, he understood that his knowledge and efforts were not sufficient. "One thing I see clearly," he says, "that alone, by myself, I can do nothing." He needed to find a school and though there were many such "schools" in Russia as well as in the East, these he found either lacking in real knowledge or personally unsuitable. He was looking for a school of a special type, a school of "a more rational kind." But despite his extensive search in the East—this, his second such journey—he had found nothing. He had come home empty-handed.

So, once again, he finds himself back in Moscow. Though deflated, he has not given up his search. In fact, already his thoughts are of returning to India. Suddenly, a notice in the *Golos Moskvi*, a rival newspaper he is half-reading, makes a connection with these thoughts of the East. The notice heralds the opening of a new ballet scenario written by a Hindu. His attention, formerly diffuse and thin, now fully focuses on the notice. On the screen of his mind imprints the words... *The Struggle of the Magicians.*

At once his attention is caught and aroused. The ballet's title calls forth associations of good and evil, images of black and white magicians warring for souls—all of which mirrors the inner picture he has of life. Reading on, he finds the notice promising that the ballet will give a complete picture of Oriental magic, including fakir miracles, sacred dances and so forth. All interesting, and yet... yet something about the way it uses language puts him off. He finds the notice's "excessively jaunty tone" irritating. He sees now that it gives a kind of two-sided or 'double' impression. It comes to him: *This notice is not what it appears to be.* The facts say one thing, the tone another. It's as if behind these words someone is laughing. But at whom? And why? Despite these misgivings, he decides to include the notice of the ballet in the coming events section of his newspaper. He does so only after inserting a warning alerting readers that "everything in the ballet that one cannot be found in real India but which travelers go there to see."

Though this journalist could hardly know it, this seemingly innocuous notice with its annoying double language is, in effect, the calling card of just that teacher and school for which he has so actively searched these many years. Unlike so many seekers, Pyotr Demianovich Uspenskii is destined to find exactly what he has been searching for—what he calls the "*new or forgotten road.*"



In a sense all of Uspenskii's life had been a search. He was born in Moscow on March 5, 1878. Both of his parents were part of Russia's intelligentsia, the educated elite. His mother, a painter with an interest in Russian and French literature; his father, a Survey Service officer, was fond of music and painting. A good mathematician, he had a lifelong interest in the question of time's fourth dimension. Early on, Pyotr showed an exceptional quality of intellect. As an adult he recalled having "quite clear mental pictures of events" before he was two years old. From the age of three he began to read and says he remembered himself "quite clearly."

When less than four years old, Pyotr received a severe shock—his father died. Thereafter Pyotr and his younger sister lived with their maternal grandparents in their house on Pimenovskaia Street. They were not there long before Pyotr, now four years old, received still another shock. His grandfather, a painter of religious subjects, died. The successive deaths of primal male figures in his life must have had a great impact. Many years later, most likely referring to these deaths, Uspenskii said of his childhood: "I was under less imagination and I saw what life was like at a very early stage." No wonder as a child he did not play with toys. From an early age, then, he had the sense that life in itself was

meaningless. "It is only when you realize life is taking you nowhere," he said, "that it begins to have meaning."

At only six years of age, Pyotr was already reading on an adult level. He buried himself in books. Two made an enormous impression on him: Lermontov's *A Hero of Our Time*<sup>1</sup> and Turgenev's *A Sportsman's Notebook*. Lermontov's book is especially noteworthy because the ideas it expresses—the plasticity of time and questions of predestination, fate, and recurrence—are those which will occupy Uspenskii throughout his life. That at a mere six years of age such ideas could not only be of interest but be comprehended gives an indication of the rare quality of intellect that was Uspenskii's.

He became interested, too, in poetry and painting, growing especially fond of engravings and prints. Uspenskii mentions, as well, a certain psychic ability that developed. He and his younger sister often sat peering out the window onto the street below predicting to one another what would happen. Later, when his mother took Pyotr to enroll at his first school, she lost her way. Although he had never been in the building before, Pyotr led her to the right passageway. At the end of the passageway, he told her, they would come to two steps and a nearby window. And from the window, he said, they would be able to see the headmaster's garden with lilies growing and close by the headmaster's study. All he described proved to be correct.

When he was about eight years of age, natural science and mathematics captured his attention. Within several years he lost interest. "There was a dead wall everywhere," he would say later. "Professors were killing science in the same way as priests were killing religion." At thirteen, dreams attracted him. This led to psychology which, in its esoteric evolutionary sense, became a lifelong interest. Like many gifted children, Pyotr disliked school. "Work at school was dull," Uspenskii once commented on this period in his life. "I was lazy; I hated Greek and school routine in general." He had moments when he sensed the unity of all things and was overcome with its sensation. Instead of studying his physics book, he read a borrowed book on levers. He experienced that "All round me walls are crumbling, and horizons infinitely remote and incredibly beautiful stand revealed. It is as though threads, previously unknown and unsuspected, begin to reach out and bind things together. *For the first time in my life my world emerges from chaos.* Everything becomes connected, forming an orderly and harmonious whole." [Author's italics] He then asked, "Why am I made to learn a thousand useless things and am not told about 'this?'"

1. See Notes.

Always sensitive to *time*, he no doubt felt school wasted it. An image in his autobiographical novel, *The Strange Life of Ivan Osokin*, is evoked concerning this period where, as punishment for an infraction, the housemaster orders Ivan Osokin to stand under a clock. In a sense, like a card from a tarot pack, this image could represent Uspenskii's lifelong posture toward, and dilemma in, life. It would not be until the end of his life when, finally cornered, unable to go forward or back, that he would come to the final "miracle," that is, galvanize the clarity and will to step through ordinary time.

At sixteen he left school. Nietzsche entered his life, and with Nietzsche, the idea of eternal recurrence. It was a seminal idea for Uspenskii, one that he would develop later in his "period of dimensions" and continue to work with throughout his life. About this time, he became "very anarchistically inclined." A year after leaving school at sixteen, he experienced another shock—his mother died. By seventeen, he had already lost his father, grandfather, and mother.<sup>2</sup> It was then he began to travel.

Uspenskii was born into a time rife with extremism and revolutionary ferment. In 1879, one year after his birth, *Narodnaia Volia*, the People's Will, was formed. A secret organization, it espoused terrorism as the way to bring down the three-hundred-year-old tsarist regime of the Romanovs. Structured hierarchically and operating in a quasi-military manner, its members pledged to totally dedicate themselves to the revolutionary cause, sacrificing property and life. *Narodnaia Volia's* mission was to assassinate government officials. Four days before Uspenskii's third birthday on March 1, 1881, a *Narodnaia Volia* bomb killed Tsar Alexander II. Six years later, Alexander Ulianov was arrested carrying a bomb in an attempt to assassinate Tsar Alexander III. Ulianov and his co-conspirators believed in an eclectic political brew of *Narodnaia Volia*, Marxism and German Social Democracy. All were executed.

The execution imprinted Ulianov's younger brother, Vladimir Ilich, later known as Lenin, with a lasting hatred. That same year, Lenin enrolled at the university to study law. Within a short time he joined *Narodnaia Volia* and within months was arrested and expelled. Exiled to Siberia and then deported, Lenin was living in Switzerland when on Sunday, January 9, 1905, thousands of workers led by a priest peacefully marched to St. Petersburg's Winter Palace to present Tsar Nicholas II with a petition of economic grievances. Unable to halt the surging workers, the soldiers fired point blank into the crowd, killing 100 people and wounding several hundred more.

The immediate threat of what was known as "Bloody Sunday" was quelled. Strikes among workers and university students then broke out

2. See Notes.

throughout the country. Succumbing to the pressure, the Tsar allowed the legalization of political parties and trade unions and set up a nationally elected *Duma*, or parliament. But the Tsar's image of divine rule had been irreparably damaged, and thus began the slow but inexorable erosion of autocratic rule.

Among the workers arrested for revolutionary activity on "Bloody Sunday" was Uspenskii's beloved sister. She died in prison in 1908. With this loss, all of Uspenskii's immediate family were now dead. Thus, at thirty years of age, Pyotr Demianovich found himself alone in the world. The meaning of life and the mystery of death now became living questions. Soon he was drawn to theosophical literature, which he read voraciously.

Theosophical literature had been banned in Russia, but after Bloody Sunday controls loosened. In 1908 the Russian Theosophical Society was created and registered with authorities. And at some point Uspenskii began to attend its meetings. In his readings he said he came to realize that there is an "unbroken line of thought and knowledge which passes from century to century, from age to age, from country to country, from one race to another; a line deeply hidden beneath layers of religions and philosophies which are, in fact, only distortions and perversions of the ideas belonging to this line." The idea came that there existed schools that had this knowledge. And so he said, "I decide to start on a long journey with the idea of searching for those schools or for the people who may show me the way to them."

In 1908 he and his good friend, Sherbakov, planned his first journey to the East to make contact with "schools of the distant past, with schools of Pythagoras, with schools of Egypt or with the schools of those who had built Nôtre Dame, and so on." Shortly before they were to embark, Sherbakov died. The feeling that death stalked his heels must have been strong in Uspenskii. Others might have postponed the journey, but, with characteristic resolve, he set out alone.

Traveling to Constantinople, Smyrna, Greece, and Egypt, he had many evocative experiences, some transcendent, yet none substantial. He returned to Moscow and in early 1909 left to live in St. Petersburg. Not finding a school, he began experiments in altering consciousness through hashish and nitrous oxide. Drugs, he soon concluded, were a dead-end. During this time, too, he began writing *Tertium Organum*, which he self-published in 1912. The book's impressive clarity and sweep of thought attracted an erudite readership, especially among theosophical circles. Many doors now opened for him. Through one stepped a beautiful young woman who would be of great influence.

1912. ST. PETERSBURG. Soon after the publication of *Tertium Organum* a beautiful young aristocrat, the daughter of the counsel in the Ministry of Justice and an accomplished pianist, one day came upon the book at a local library. Recently divorced, this twenty-seven-year-old woman was herself filled with a thirst to explore life's meaning. Reading the book she felt an immediate rapport with the author. "Here was a book," Anna Ilinishna Butkovsky told herself, "which seemed to set out to answer the questions I kept asking."

Since the age of seventeen, Anna Ilinishna had read theosophical literature. It evoked in her a strong desire to explore the esoteric worlds she read about. When she attended a lecture at Petersburg's Theosophical Society,<sup>3</sup> it was likely that the author of *Tertium Organum* was still on her mind. Following the lecture, there were questions and at one point the lecturer called into the audience—"Pyotr Demianovich Uspenskii, please be so kind as to give us your opinion on this matter."

A squarely-built gentleman of medium height with close-cropped hair and imposing face rose from a chair. His forehead was high and broad and gave an impression of great intellect. Stubbornness, too, was reflected in his face by a nose that jutted forth and was clipped with a pince-nez. The eyes which peered through the thick lenses were near-sighted yet reflected a keen sensitivity and uncommon visionary quality.

Though his books, articles and lectures, Uspenskii had become the darling of Russia's theosophical movement. Anna Alekseevna Kamenskaia, the energetic forty-five-year-old General Secretary and co-founder in 1908 of the Russian Section of Theosophy and head of its powerful St. Petersburg branch, spoke of him highly, as did the idealist philosopher Nikolai Berdiaev who called Uspenskii "the most independent and talented theosophical writer in Russia."

For Anna Ilinishna, hearing the sound of the name "Uspenskii" must have been a shock that seemed like a call of fate. At the lecture's close, Anna Ilinishna introduced herself to the author. What the thirty-four-year-old Uspenskii saw through his pince-nez no doubt pleased him, for he sought to make an impression on the vibrant young woman. He confided to her that while, yes, he had attended the lecture, he was also withdrawing from the Society.

Nodding toward the people in the hall, he told her scornfully—"These ordinary members are sheep..." He then looked toward the lectern and declared—"But I feel there are even bigger sheep in the 'inner circle.'"

Proud and self-confident, the young woman stood her ground.

"You sound as though you are sorry there are no wolves," she challenged.

3. See Notes.

"Exactly!," cried Uspenskii. "At least wolves display strength. Sheep are simply sheep, and it is hopeless for them to pretend to aspire to be the image of God, and to develop the hidden, higher faculties."<sup>4</sup>

By conversation's end, Uspenskii asked Anna Ilinishna to join him for coffee the following morning at Phillipoff's, a café in Petersburg's bohemian section. The café was on the corner of Trotsky Street and Nevsky Prospekt, the city's main boulevard. As it happened, Phillipoff's was close to both their homes. Uspenskii's apartment was at the corner of the Nevsky Prospekt and Liteiny Street, while Anna Ilinishna lived with her father on another corner of the Nevsky at Nikolaevski Street.

Arriving at Phillipoff's the next morning, Anna Ilinishna found Uspenskii awaiting her, three empty coffee cups in front of him. They spoke together of the ideas in *Tertium Organum*, such as the development of super consciousness and his conclusion, for example, that "Self-consciousness during sensation, feeling or thinking is a very rare phenomenon in man, usually that which is called self-consciousness is simply thought and it goes *post factum*. True self-consciousness exists in man only potentially, and, if it manifests itself, it does so only by moments."

After discussing more of the ideas, Uspenskii told her of his search for a school "of a more rational kind."

She asked if he would write another book.

He had already started a book he replied. Its working title was *The Wisdom of the Gods*. He was uncertain about finishing it. He estimated it would take him twenty years to complete.

"Even if it would take so long," asked Anna Ilinishna, "why is it not worth writing?"

"Because what I want to say in that book is so difficult and elusive that I do not feel equal to it," declared Uspenskii, and posturing a bit, he added, "And I must always feel equal to anything that I tackle."

Anna Ilinishna made no reply.

An arrogant smile formed on Uspenskii's face and he feigned an admission: "Although the realization hurt my pride very deeply, I know I lack something necessary to do it."

The following day the two met again at Phillipoff's. After a few coffees, Uspenskii, obviously smitten by Anna's beauty and independence of mind, came right to the point: "You are attracted by the purpose of our quest—by the road that we want to travel. And a little by me, too perhaps?... I don't think that among your other friends you have anyone as *interesting* as I am."

4. Implicit in his words was the declaration that he, Uspenskii, of course, was not a sheep. But the words, too, conveyed the intellectual seduction that she was speaking with someone with the ability to develop such faculties.

Seeing that these words made no impression, he declared outright: "I came across your orbit like a comet."

Finally, he tried another tack with Anna, saying: "Now, suppose you tell me of any curious experiences you have had?"

"Have you ever heard of Nicholas Evreinoff, the theatrical producer and writer," asked Anna Ilinishna.

Yes, he told her, he had seen his portrait in the papers. "Romantic face," he said, "like a Florentine poet of the sixteenth century."

Anna Ilinishna admitted she had an affair with Evreinoff.

Unable to control himself, Uspenskii shouted: "How can you do such things!"

Seeing her face, he quickly caught himself and added: "But I am glad—it shows you are not *'a lady.'*"

Anna protested, indignant.

"I don't mean in that sense," said Uspenskii, foot-in-mouth, backtracking quickly. He meant, he said, that she was a human being *before* she was a lady, "because you aren't afraid of things that Society would disapprove of, or what people may think of you."<sup>5</sup>

However arrogant Uspenskii appeared to Anna, she was attracted by what she saw as his "almost boyish enthusiasm and gentle, poetic radiance." The two continued to meet at Phillipoff's every day at noon and later on, in the evening as well. One day, as the two were walking along Nevsky Prospekt, they came to the Liteiny and were to pass by Uspenskii's apartment. He invited Anna inside. She hesitated.

"I thought it might give you pleasure to see some of my books," he said. "I went to your house to hear you play, now you should come to mine to look at books!"

True, Anna had invited him to her home to hear her play. She had studied piano under the St. Petersburg Conservatoire's two best professors, one of them the celebrated woman pianist Barinova. Anna Ilinishna had a keen feeling for the essence of music and enjoyed sharing it.

5. Like many men, Uspenskii seems a bit awkward with women. But he was quite taken with them, as evidenced in his autobiographical novel *The Strange Life of Ivan Osokin*. As many of the events in the novel parallel Uspenskii's, it is fair to suppose that Osokin's views reflected his own. For example, in the novel Osokin believed that women were for the most part more interesting than men and belonged to a higher caste. It held that an educated woman like Anna, living in more or less civilized society, would have occupied a privileged position because "for thousands of years," said Osokin, "women have taken no active part in wars, and have rarely had anything to do with politics or Government service. In this way they have avoided the most fraudulent and criminal sides of life. This alone makes women more free than men. Of course, there are different kinds of women: and undoubtedly the modern woman does everything she can to lose her caste."

She knew Uspenskii's invitation wasn't at all the same thing. Moreover, it was risky socially, as young unmarried women did not frequent men's apartments. Still, she agreed.

Uspenskii's "apartment," she found, was one very small room. Its furniture consisted of a bed, chair and table, and a large bookshelf crammed with books in Russian, French, and English. On the table was the final draft of a novel, *Kinemadrama* (later to be retitled *The Strange Life Of Ivan Osokin*). There was also the unfinished manuscript of another of his books, *The Devil*.

Their relationship deepening, Uspenskii and Anna sat hour after hour in coffeehouses, like Phillipoff's, or at bohemian clubs like the Stray Dog, situated nearby in a dark cellar. They were often joined by others of the Petersburg intelligentsia. The well-known writer Volinsky was often present, as was Charkovsky, a bridge engineer, who rivaled Uspenskii in his knowledge of mystic literature. The two could talk for hours on the meaning of the various Tarot cards or Charkovsky's current passion, a circular device created by Raymond Lully, a thirteenth-century Catalan mystic and teacher, which organized and related forms of knowledge. They all sat drinking cup after cup of *à la Varsoivienne*, a very strong coffee. Or, because of the prohibition, teacups full of bootleg vodka cut with pineapple juice.

As often as not, Uspenskii usually held court, the words pouring forth like an avalanche, as he talked about ancient texts such as the *Vedas* and the *Zend Avesta*, or perhaps compared, say, the different esoteric schools, relating a historical survey before asking a series of rhetorical questions that he would answer himself.

When the small hours of the morning arrived, the group wandered along the canals such as the Moika, where, at number 12, the poet Pushkin once lived. They ambled along the quays and past the smart hotels like the Europe or the recently built Astoria, past the massive granite pillars of St. Isaac's Cathedral with its golden dome, past the Maryinski and Alexandrinski theaters, and along the old streets of St. Petersburg. With the coming of Spring, Petersburg's lustrous "white nights" began to appear. It was a time when darkness never fell, and the group ambled amid shimmering images of Petersburg's pale yellow buildings, its palaces and bridges and famous sphinxes, all the while discussing, talking, arguing, the words still pouring from Uspenskii. With the approach of dawn the group, ever-shrinking, went on to have buns and tea, perhaps more coffee, at the Nikolaevski Station on Znamenski Square.

With Anna, Uspenskii felt like he was about eighteen. In her he saw what he admired in himself—"a driving force and a will to seek and find." For Anna, he came to have two faces. One was the outer face char-

acterized by what she called his "arrogance of erudition." Behind this face was another, she said, one "more radiant, countenance filled with a youthful happiness which perhaps no one but myself ever witnessed."

Often their conversations focused on Uspenskii's search and travels. He told her about the esoteric Schools of Builders evidenced by the Cathedral of Nôtre Dame; of the pyramids of Egypt where he said he felt everything "as extraordinarily real, as though I was suddenly transferred into another world, which to my own astonishment I seemed to know very well... [where this distant past] ceased to be past, appeared in everything, surrounded me, became the present." He spoke of standing before the glance of the Sphinx, that which saw life in terms of centuries and millenniums, and feeling all at once, in that moment, "that I did not exist, that there was no I." He told her about Ceylon and the Buddha with the sapphire eyes which, like the Sphinx, spoke "of another life, of another consciousness, which is higher than man's consciousness" and about the Taj Mahal, where he said he had "the sensation of being in two worlds at once... and came to feel that here "before me and all around me was the soul of the Empress Mumtaz-i-Mahal," the divine feminine for whom the immense mausoleum had been built. But of all the subjects, it was always to Uspenskii's chief interest, time's fourth dimension, that the discussion returned. For Uspenskii, it was the Idea of ideas; so much so that his friends called him, "Uspenskii Fourth Dimension." At the age of twenty he had even published a book, *The Fourth Dimension*.

The fourth dimension for him was not simply an intellectual idea, however. He had had many experiences of it, most notably perhaps in 1908. He was on a ship in the Sea of Marmara on a rainy winter day standing by the railing watching the waves. The sky was grey and the sea the color of lead, touched with a glint of silver. The waves would crest, their white foam running up to the ship from afar, rear up as though hurling their crests on the deck, and then with a roar throw themselves under the ship.

"I was watching the play of waves with the ship," he said, "and feeling the waves drawing me to themselves. It was not the desire to jump down which one feels in the mountains, but something infinitely more subtle. The waves were drawing my soul to themselves. Suddenly I felt it going to them. It was only a moment, maybe less than a moment. But I entered the waves and, with them, with a roar, attacked the ship. And at that moment *I became all*. The waves—they were myself. The violet mountains in the distance—they were myself. The wind—it was myself. The clouds, hurrying from the north, the rain—were myself. The huge ship, rolling indomitably forward—was myself. I felt that huge iron body as *my body*, all its movements, waverings, rollings and shudders, the fire, the pressure of steam, the engine—all this was *inside me*."

WINTER 1913. ST. PETERSBURG. Within a year or so of his meeting Anna Ilinishna, Uspenskii began thinking of a second journey to the East. Perhaps this time to Australia. Unable to conceive of finding his teacher there, he told Anna he had dropped the idea.

"But why don't you go to India, then?" she prompted, adding, "And when you come back you can tell me all about what you find there."

Perhaps fearing Evreinoff had returned to Anna's thoughts or she had become bored with him, Uspenskii wondered why she seemed to want him to go.

Her final examination at the Conservatoire, Anna explained, was in the spring. "If I spend all my time at Phillipoff's like this," she said, "I shall never get on with my work."

Uspenskii finally came to a decision "to start on a long journey with the idea of searching for those schools or for the people who may show me the way."

Since 1905, Uspenskii had made his living as a translator and journalist, and had no trouble convincing three newspapers for whom he freelanced to finance his trip in return for articles. Drawing on his theosophical contacts, in London he met A.R. Orage, the much respected editor of the *New Age*, a literary and political weekly magazine. Besides theosophy, the two men may have talked about another mutual interest, Nietzsche and his concept of the superman.

After London, Uspenskii slowly made his way to Ceylon and later to Madras, India, where he spent six weeks at Adyar, the Theosophical Society's headquarters. He traveled about India visiting places such as Benares, Bombay, Agra, and Delhi. He made contact with a number of schools, but they were, he said, "either of a frankly religious nature, or of a half-religious character, but definitely devotional in tone." The sentimental moral philosophy, the shades of asceticism and spiritualism which permeated such schools, had no appeal for him. Others promised a great deal but demanded, from the beginning, a complete surrender. These interested him somewhat. However...

"Speaking sincerely with myself," admitted Uspenskii, "I could not say that I was able to do this [surrender]. The price seemed too high. As I put it to myself: If I paid with my own self for what I might learn, I should have lost the object for the sake of which I wished to know."

NOVEMBER 1914. ST. PETERSBURG. Anna Kamenskaia, editor of the Russian Theosophical Society's journal *Vestnik Teosofii*, or Theosophical Herald, urges readers to regard the war as cosmic event of great occult importance which would produce a cleansing that would forge a new spiritual union between the religious East and the scientific West which would be mediated by Russian spirituality.

NOVEMBER 1914. MOSCOW. Returning from his long journey, thirty-seven-year-old Pyotr Demianovich Uspenskii once again finds himself in the offices of a Moscow newspaper editing material for a forthcoming issue. A notice in a rival newspaper he is half-reading suddenly connects with his thoughts of the East. His attention, formerly diffuse and thin, now fully focused on the notice, on the screen of his mind are imprinted the words—*The Struggle of the Magicians* ...



DECEMBER 1914. ST. PETERSBURG-PETROGRAD.<sup>6</sup> Once again Uspenskii now finds himself back at Phillipoff's talking with Anna.

"Why on earth did I ever go to India?" he asks Anna. "I found nothing there that I have not read before in books, or heard rumored in some way...nothing new, *nothing*."

Traveling in India a growing conviction arose in him. Perhaps the teacher for whom he is searching will be found not in the East but in Russia, perhaps even St. Petersburg.

"I have a feeling in my bones," he says. "This is not an exotic city but there must be *someone* here of the kind I am seeking."

FEBRUARY AND MARCH 1915. PETROGRAD. Uspenskii prepares his novel *Kinemadrama* for publication and also gives two public lectures—*In Search of the Miraculous* and *The Problems of Death*—at Alexandroski Hall of the Town Duma, or Parliament. The lectures arouse considerable interest with each attended by more than a thousand people.

The Theosophical Society's journal *Vestnik Teosofii* reports:

P. D. Uspenskii's lectures attracted a huge audience, but they evoked perplexity. The lecturer promised in the program to talk about India. In fact he talked only about disillusionment in seeking the miraculous and about his understanding of occultism at variance with its understanding by Theosophists and the Theosophical Society. With indignation he said that the Theosophists selected ethics and philosophy, not occultism, as their field of effort, and that ethics and philosophy are unnecessary to the Society and unrelated to occultism. Mr. Uspenskii also accused the Theosophical Society of arrogance and sectarianism.

APRIL 1915. MOSCOW. Uspenskii's Petersburg lectures a success, he now brings his lecture series to Moscow. After one lecture, he meets Vladimir Pohl, a composer, and Sergei Dmitrievich Mercourov, a sculptor. Very

6. When Germany declared war on Russia in August 1914, the name St. Petersburg, German in origin, was changed to the Russian Petrograd; Uspenskii, Gurdjieff, and others continued to use the older name.

soon they tell him about a group to which they belong which engages in various occult investigations and experiments. It is led by a Caucasian Greek, they say. It turns out this very same Greek is the "Hindu" who has written *The Struggle of the Magicians*.

Uspenskii shows no interest, believing occult phenomena to be "a mixture of superstition, self-suggestion, and defective thinking." About meeting this Greek who poses as a Hindu, he is, at best, dubious. Only persistent efforts by Mercourov finally cause him to relent.

The meeting is quickly arranged.<sup>7</sup>

The meeting's venue certainly does nothing to allay Uspenskii's doubts. He is directed neither to a meeting place of the intelligentsia nor to a café of the rich and powerful. Instead, he finds himself opening the door to a small and noisy businessmen's café on a busy Moscow side street. Entering the crowded café and seeing the man awaiting him, Uspenskii's concern could only have increased.

No two men could be more opposite in appearance. Uspenskii's skin is light, almost albino in coloring. Of medium height and squarely built, he sees through a thick pince-nez and speaks and acts in the manner of the intelligentsia. Admirers describe him as having the face of an emperor. In look and action "Uspenskii" gives no doubt as to who he is.

The Caucasian Greek awaiting him at the small café table stares at Uspenskii as he approaches. The man's eyes are dark, intense, piercing. Uspenskii has the dual impression of the eyes having a quality of both emptiness and presence. The impression he creates is "strange" in some way Uspenskii cannot define. The man is swarthy, short, and very powerfully built. Beneath the long nose is a heavy black mustache. He appears to be of an oriental type. In his mind's eye, Uspenskii sees the man in a white burnoose or a gilded turban. The words "Indian raja" or "Arab sheik" enter his mind. Yet the man is dressed like a common merchant. He wears a black overcoat with a velvet collar and black bowler hat.

Greetings are exchanged. *Georgi Ivanovitch Gurdjieff* is the name given. Uspenskii, who speaks in the faultless Russian of the intelligentsia, finds the Russian this Gurdjieff speaks not only incorrect but, given its strong Caucasian accent, coarse. Such an accent is hardly associated with philosophical and spiritual discussions.

7. Having given public lectures on his search and preparing the publication of his autobiographical novel is, in effect, for Uspenskii to complete his past and, in so doing he prepares for his future. It also signals that a new octave began for Uspenskii in 1913 when he made his second journey to the East. Traveling in India and then assimilating his experiences through his lectures has moved him through two more notes of the octave, re and mi. His meeting now with the Caucasian Greek is in reality his meeting with the magician. It is the octave's shock point....

Still, always a polite and considerate man, Uspenskii draws up a chair. He almost immediately experiences an uneasy feeling. This Gurdjieff fellow seems "disguised" in some way, and poorly at that. Uspenskii finds himself embarrassed. This man is not what he pretends to be, yet Uspenskii has the odd feeling he has to speak and act as though he is not aware of it.

As with the ballet notice in the newspaper, Gurdjieff has created for Uspenskii a kind of 'double-impression,' one that interests but also irritates and alarms him. No doubt Uspenskii tries not to show his true inner state ... and so, unwittingly, he receives a second double-impression, consisting of both his outward expression and his inner feeling.

And so from the outset, with only the giving of his name and perhaps a few words, Gurdjieff begins to act on Uspenskii. That is, Uspenskii is put in the position of seeing one thing yet having to appear as if he does not see it. The contradiction divides Uspenskii. It jams his mind, stops his thoughts, takes him out of his "Uspenskii," and throws him into uncertainty. For a man who prides himself on the power of his intellect, his control and command over himself and others, Uspenskii's position is not only unfamiliar but decidedly uncomfortable.

Though Uspenskii could not know it, Gurdjieff has followed his newspaper accounts of his journey and its aims. He had also directed his pupils to read Uspenskii's books. In this way, he had told his pupils, Uspenskii's level of understanding could be determined and thus it could be known what he would be able to discover.

Although he had found nothing, Uspenskii was no ordinary seeker. He knows a secret: that most people live only to die, that ordinary life is a meaningless charade. This, together with his gift of intellect and thirst for the truth, had enabled him to see through and free himself from the hypnotisms of conventional society. He had entered into subtle domains of esoteric knowledge, and he was capable not only of capturing, holding, and directing the attention of others, but of bending the will of others to his own. He has experienced the change in the sensation of "I," of time and the "long body" of man, he has been tested by "voices." He has experienced the terror and joy of life's infinity, its unity. He knows of the need to become self-conscious, to expand the space-sense. It is true that many of these experiences came from his experiments with drugs but of this he will say, "Narcotics cannot *give* a man anything he has not already got.... All they can do, in certain cases, is to *reveal* that which is already in a man's soul." He has had the personal power and self-confidence to lecture in Russia's most cosmopolitan cities, St. Petersburg and Moscow, and hold the attention of thousands of people. Compared to the average man, Uspenskii is, in his own right, a magician.

This meeting in a noisy Moscow merchant's café then is no ordinary meeting. Rather, it is a meeting between two magicians. And as with all such meetings the issue is: *whose magic is greater?*

Uspenskii is so put off balance by his initial contact with Gurdjieff, he admits he does not remember how their talk began. If Gurdjieff conducts this meeting as he does others, then he will have begun with questions such as: "Why do you come to me?" "What is your secret intolerance?" "Is your life so unbearable?"

If so, Uspenskii's reply would likely be how he later expressed what he felt at this period of his life. "Ordinary life forces one to swallow customary forms of lying and living in lying," he had said. "I am looking for a way to escape, a new or forgotten road. And it cannot in character be devotional. It must be more rational."

What Uspenskii does remember is that Gurdjieff speaks to him of his work. Uspenskii's interest is psychology and Gurdjieff explains that while the character of his work is chiefly psychological, *chemistry* plays a large role. What Gurdjieff means by 'chemistry' Uspenskii is not certain so he associates, telling Gurdjieff about a school in India that studied the chemistry of the human body, altering a man's moral or psychological nature by the introduction or removal of substances.

But this 'chemistry' is not Gurdjieff's.

Uspenskii's material on the subject is slight. Instead of exposing his ignorance, he introduces into the discussion the subject of magic and narcotics.

Gurdjieff answers his questions but doesn't let Uspenskii off the hook. He brings him back to the idea of chemistry saying, "To do this [to know possibilities in advance], a great knowledge of the human machine and of this special chemistry is necessary."

Which of the two has the greatest understanding, which is the magician and which the adept, quickly becomes clear.

Despite the heavy, coarse accent, Uspenskii is impressed with Gurdjieff's manner of speaking. In his answers, Gurdjieff is careful, precise, economical. More important: Uspenskii finds some of Gurdjieff's points of view not only new—but unlike any he's ever before heard.

At the end of their talk, Gurdjieff invites him to come back to his house to meet some of his pupils. They take a carriage toward the outlying district of Sokolniki. On the way Gurdjieff gives him to understand he lives in an expensive apartment and that among his pupils are a number of well-known professors and artists. When the carriage draws up in front of a municipal school, and Gurdjieff motions him to get out, Uspenskii must have been surprised. Where is the expensive apartment? Gurdjieff leads him up to the top floor of the school. The 'apartment'

turns out to be a large empty flat that costs perhaps no more than ten pounds a month. As for his pupils, Uspenskii finds them nice and decent, but they belong to a layer of Moscow society known as the "poor intelligentsia." Uspenskii cannot understand: why is Gurdjieff so obviously creating in him such doubts about who he, Gurdjieff, is?

A student begins to read aloud a story called "Glimpses of Truth." At the outset the story mentions the newspaper notice for the ballet scenario, *The Struggle of the Magicians*. For the third time, like a leitmotif of what their relationship will be, the ballet's title is introduced to Uspenskii.

All the while the piece is read, Gurdjieff sits on the sofa, one leg crossed beneath him, smoking, and drinking black coffee from a tumbler. Now and then he looks at Uspenskii. His movements, Uspenskii notices, have a kind of "feline grace and assurance." The impression slowly forms in him of Gurdjieff being someone quite rare. Uspenskii finds the literary quality of "Glimpses of Truth" unexceptional but still it makes an impression on him.

At the evening's end he goes to leave but suddenly the thought flashes into his mind that he must arrange to see Gurdjieff "at once, without delay." Otherwise, he might lose all contact with him.

And so the next day and every day thereafter for the entire week, Uspenskii and Gurdjieff meet and talk at the same noisy Moscow café. What Uspenskii finds especially impressive is Gurdjieff's command of psychology, an area Uspenskii takes to be his specialty. "I saw without hesitation," says Uspenskii, "that in the domain which I knew better than any other and in which I was really able to distinguish the old from the new, the known from the unknown, Gurdjieff knew more than all European science taken as a whole."

At one point, Uspenskii introduces the subject of esoteric schools. There are no general schools, only special ones, Gurdjieff tells him. Every teacher has his specialty and all the students must study it. Uspenskii wants to know in what way Gurdjieff studied. He is told of the Seekers After Truth.

Uspenskii asks about their whereabouts.

Some are dead, some are working and "some," declares Gurdjieff, "have gone into seclusion."

*Seclusion.* The word's inner ring has monastic reverberations. Uspenskii reacts. He experiences "a strange and uncomfortable feeling."<sup>8</sup>

During one of their talks, Gurdjieff tells Uspenskii that he might learn a great deal if he knew how to read. For Uspenskii, journalist, translator and author, the remark must have been a shock to the quick.

8. Gurdjieff sees Uspenskii's chief feature. He knows the effect, the reverberations, this word will set off. The magician in Gurdjieff is already at work.

"If you understood everything you have written in your own book, what is it called?"—Gurdjieff makes something altogether impossible out of the words *Tertium Organum*—"I should come and bow down to you and beg you to teach me."<sup>9</sup>

During one of their talks Gurdjieff tells him that the starting point is that "man does not know himself, that he is *not*,...that is, he is not what he can and what he should be." Man, he says, is a machine to which everything happens and as it is not possible to stop being a machine it is imperative that he first know his machine. What needs to be studied is the workings of the machine, its mechanics. In this way, one begins to become responsible for one's actions.

"A *man* is responsible. A *machine* is not responsible," says Gurdjieff. The chief delusion of man is that he is convinced he can do but, in fact, everything happens to him. "To do," says Gurdjieff, "it is necessary to be." Everything is connected, Gurdjieff tells him. The planets and moon are living beings. The Universe is expanding, not contracting, and the moon is a planet in birth. War is the result not of economics, injustice and the like, but of planetary influences. "Everything that happens on a big scale is governed from outside, and governed either by accidental combinations of influences or by general cosmic laws," Gurdjieff continues. Man has a certain possibility of deciding the influences under which he will work.

Having spent the entire week with Gurdjieff, Uspenskii must return to Petersburg. He is preparing new editions of *Tertium Organum* and *Symbolism of the Tarot*, and also, as he had these previous books, he will self-publish his autobiographical novel, *Kinemadrama*, first written in 1905 at the age of twenty-seven.

*Kinemadrama* concerns a romantic young maverick Ivan Osokin, who has little control over his impulses, is willful, resents authority and resists responsibility. He always sees life as too dull and boring. Through his stubbornness and rebellion, Osokin has thrown away all his chances in life. In desperation he has a magician send him back into his past so he can repair his mistakes. But, being who he is, he can only repeat them. Such knowledge in itself, he learns, can change nothing. To change, one must have the *will* to change.

"You must realize," says the magician, "that you yourself can change nothing and that you must seek help. And it must be a very deep realiza-

9. The implication is—though Uspenskii misses it—that Gurdjieff does understand what is in *Tertium Organum*. Yet Uspenskii, not understanding what he has written, is refusing to bow to Gurdjieff and beg to be taught. Uspenskii misses this subtlety entirely. See *Search*, p. 20.

tion, because to realize to-day and forget to-morrow is not sufficient. One must live with this realization.”

The magician tells him he must sacrifice something big to gain the power and knowledge to change, and one must go on making sacrifices. “In order to know, one must learn; and in order to learn, one must make sacrifices. Nothing can be acquired without sacrifice.”

Osokin maintains he has nothing to sacrifice.

The magician tells him: “You can sacrifice your life...give me your life and I will see what can be made of you...Twenty, even fifteen years will be sufficient. But during these years you must belong to me—I mean, you must do everything I tell you without evasions and excuses.”



Gurdjieff had not come to Russia by chance. Some four years earlier, on September 14, 1911, he had taken a special oath binding him for twenty-one years. It bound him “in my conscience to lead in some ways an artificial life, modelled upon a programme which had been previously planned in accordance with certain definite principles.” The purpose of the oath was to help him accomplish what he terms a *sacred task*—to build a new world.

The present period of culture Gurdjieff saw, in terms of the perfecting of humanity, had come to an “empty and aborted interval” in which “the people of our civilization cannot transmit by inheritance anything of value to their descendants.” A new teaching was needed, especially for the West. The impetus for his mission was his stark recognition that “Unless the ‘wisdom’ of the East and the ‘energy’ of the West could be harnessed and used harmoniously, the world would be destroyed.” While such prophecy is common enough today—though still not clearly understood—the idea at that time was revolutionary.

Gurdjieff first appeared in Moscow in 1912. He arrived with about one million rubles and two invaluable collections, one of Chinese cloisonné and the other of old and rare carpets. He brought such an enormous sum because he said he felt it “necessary to be independent, at least in the material sense; the more so, since experience had already shown me that wealthy people never become seriously enough interested in these questions to support a work of this kind, and that others, even with great interest and desire, cannot do much in this respect...”

His plan was to establish an Institute to train students to become “helper-instructors” so they could help in disseminating the teaching. While he will experiment, he knows exactly what he wants to create. The basis of the Institute would be to create conditions, he says, in which “a man would be continually reminded of the sense and aim of his existence

by an unavoidable friction between his conscience and the automatic manifestations of his nature.”

In the winter of 1913 in St. Petersburg, it seems likely that Gurdjieff—disguised as ‘Prince Ozay’<sup>10</sup>—meets Paul Dukes, a twenty-four year old Englishman and music student. Dukes is a friend of Lev Lvovitch, a professional hypnotist and healer, who apparently learned his craft while on military service in Central Asia. There he had fallen ill with an obscure malady. He spoke of his “having died” and “come back” through the efforts of a shaman of a nomadic tribe. Perhaps it was then that he met Gurdjieff. Whatever the case, Lvovitch speaks to Dukes of Prince Ozay as being a man whom “there are but few in the world.”

Dukes is led to a house at the bottom of a small street near Nikolaeovski station. Lvovitch leads him through a very plain apartment to a flat beyond that is larger and more sumptuous. It is decorated in an Oriental manner with the windows heavily curtained, carpets adorning walls, and wrought-iron lamps with colored glass hanging from the ceiling. The Prince is playing chess with another man. He is dressed in a patterned silk dressing gown and a turban. A man of medium height and sturdily built, the Prince at once notices the hole in Dukes’ sock and jokes—“You believe in ventilation! Good thing—nothing like fresh air!” He holds out two closed fists with pawns in them, asking Dukes to choose which hand holds the white pawn. Dukes’ guess is correct but then he notices that both the pawns in the Prince’s hands are white. The Prince quickly beats Dukes.

Over the course of this and many other nights, the Prince Ozay tells Dukes many interesting occult facts. The Prince says, for example, that the Lord’s Prayer was originally designed as a devotional breathing exercise, the entire prayer to be chanted on a single even breath. “You are a musical instrument, as a piano is,” says the Prince, “and you need to be kept in tune. That’s where fasting and other exercises come in; you can’t possibly reflect finer vibrations when your body—or soul if you prefer—is loaded with a lot of food gurgling in the stomach, or while the blood makes a din chasing about the veins and arteries.” He tells Dukes, too, that “God is achieved not through activity but through cessation of activity. Cessation to the utmost limit of diet, breath and sex. These are the three pillars on which prayer is built. Each has to be trained and disciplined by restraint—there is no other way because they are all runaway

10. From Dukes’ description of the Prince’s presence, depth of occult knowledge and behavior, it does appear that ‘Prince Ozay’ is Gurdjieff in disguise. Biographer James Webb in his *The Harmonious Circle* (G. P. Putnam, 1980) believes so, but lacking evidence keeps the question open. Biographer James Moore in his *Gurdjieff: An Anatomy of a Myth* (Element Books Ltd., 1991) has no doubt that Gurdjieff is Prince Ozay, but cites no sources. See Notes.

horses. Only when the ground is cleared can true building commence. Only from that point can you begin to act consciously.”

One evening the Prince asks Dukes: “Are you afraid of risks? Understand this clearly. No man can acquire this kind of knowledge without risking death. God, misapplied, is the Devil. There is only one force in creation. Good and evil lie merely in its application.”

In the rising turmoil of the times, Dukes loses contact with both Lvovitch and the Prince.

Gurdjieff left St. Petersburg for Moscow where he established a group. Among his students were the sculptor, Sergei Dmitrievich Mercourov, Gurdjieff’s cousin; the composer, Vladimir Pohl; the lawyer Alexei Yakovlevich Rachmilievitch; Alexander Nikanorovich; and Alina Fedorovna, and Alexander Nikorovich Petrov.<sup>11</sup> They met at the apartment of Rachmilievitch. Gurdjieff was likely looking for a special student of the necessary quality to groom as his assistant to step down the teaching.

None of these students, as well as those in another group he formed, he found suitable. It must have been at this time when Uspenskii’s newspaper articles of his journey caught Gurdjieff’s eye. Recognizing Uspenskii’s potential, he began to put pieces in play that would bring about a meeting. He most likely was responsible for planting the idea of return in Uspenskii’s mind. For while in India, Uspenskii received a letter from a woman friend, possibly Anna Butkovsky, suggesting to him that he would find the teacher he was looking for in Russia. (Uspenskii later learned that the woman friend also had a friend who was in one of Gurdjieff’s groups.) However it came about, there is no doubt Gurdjieff had the notice for *The Struggle of the Magicians* placed in the *Golos Moskvi*, the Voice of Moscow, and later sent Mercourov and Pohl to Uspenskii’s Moscow lectures, all with the intent of arranging a meeting.

For Gurdjieff, then, much had been riding on the meeting with Uspenskii, the dimensions of which only Gurdjieff, and not Uspenskii, could have surmised.

PETROGRAD. Built in 1703 by Peter the Great on a marshland only a few feet above sea level, St. Petersburg lies on the sixtieth parallel at a level with southern Alaska and is noted for extreme changes of weather. The cultural capital of Russia, it is home to composers Stravinsky, Rachmaninov, and Prokofiev; painters Marc Chagall and Vasily Kandinsky; the writer Maxim Gorky and the poet, Alexander Blok; and Diaghilev and his Ballet Russe. Its palaces and grand homes are all aglitter with

11. James Moore’s book states that soon after Gurdjieff came to Moscow and visited St. Petersburg he met Julia Ostrowska, the twenty-two-year-old Polish countess, whom he married. But he gives no reference for this. The first time she appears in the written record is in Thomas and Olga de Hartmann’s *Our Life With Mr. Gurdjieff*.

gold and silver. Cabarets, opera and the ballet thrive, and the literacy rate is growing. The liberal newspaper *Russkoe Selo* has a circulation of 2.5 million copies.

Yet beneath Petersburg’s sparkling surface, signs of discord and disintegration are everywhere. With nearly three-quarters of its population born elsewhere, the city is losing its social cohesion. One out of six of the new arrivals is from Poland or from the Baltic states, but there are also Persians, Chinese and Koreans. Few Russians come from nearby provinces, but from the central and northwest, bringing their peasant clothes and habits in tow. Because of the resulting housing shortage, rents have tripled and are among the highest in Europe. On average, more than three people share a room, twice that of Berlin or Paris. Less than half the city’s dwellings have running water and sewage.

Necklacing the city, the Neva river, once beautiful, is now seriously polluted by human and industrial waste. The Neva, only forty-five miles long, flows from Lake Ladoga, the largest lake in Europe, to the Gulf of Finland which opens onto the Baltic Sea. On the river’s right bank is the working-class Vyborg district, where infant mortality reaches 25 percent. In industry, women’s wages are a tenth to a third that of men’s; to supplement their incomes, one woman in thirty, it is estimated, is a prostitute. Though Petersburg’s population is young, nearly half the deaths are the result of infectious diseases and epidemics, typhoid and intestinal disease being spread through the city’s water supply.

Everywhere people dabble in the occult and hold séances. Everywhere the talk is of living a life of *ogarochnyi*, which meant to burn the candle at both ends with no thought for the consequences. *Sanin*, a popular novel which glorifies vulgar self-gratification, and sexual excess and experimentation, has captured the imagination of the young, many of whom live a life of “Saninism.” The novelist Leo Tolstoi speaks of Petersburg as “seething and satiated...its people tormented by sleepless nights, stupefied and deadened by wine, wealth, and lovemaking without love. The spirit of destruction pervaded everywhere. Destruction was thought to be in good taste and neurasthenia to be a sign of refinement.” At The Stray Dog, a cellar cabaret on Mikhail Louskaia Square perpetually smelling of sweating bodies, stale smoke and urine, the twenty-two year old Futurist poet Vladmir Maiakovskii declaimed to the crowd:

To you who live only from orgy to orgy...

To you who love only women and food...

Why should I give my life for your convenience?!

I’d be better off serving pineapple water

To whores at the bar!

Everywhere, too, rumors abound of the “holy devil,” the man the Tsarina reverently refers to as “Our Friend,” the hypnotic monk, Gre-

gory Rasputin, who increasingly meddles in affairs of state with what the Tsarina describes as his "wonderful, God-sent wisdom." She and the Tsar overlook his whoring and drinking, his blackened teeth, his long, matted hair and his beard which he uses as a napkin when wolfing down food with his fingers. He is thought to be aiding Tsarevich Alexis, the Tsarina's hemophiliac son, and that to the Tsarina is all that matters.

Exacerbating these conditions is the war with Germany. The war is costing Russia 40 million rubles a day, a sum financed through borrowing and the printing of rubles, which has caused the money in circulation to triple. In 1914, 2.4 billion rubles were in circulation. Due to its current rapid rise the amount is estimated to reach 8 billion by 1916. The price of meat has almost tripled, flour more than doubled.

Meanwhile, the war is going badly, the atmosphere darkening. Early losses have caused the war to be fought on Russian territory. "Everything was beginning to totter," remembered Uspenskii. "The hidden suicidal activity which has determined so much in Russian life was becoming more and more apparent." Indeed, the city's suicide rate triples, with two-thirds of those taking their life under the age of twenty-eight.

OCTOBER 1915. PETROGRAD. *Vestnik Teosofii*, or Theosophical Herald, prints a statement by Annie Besant, president of the International Theosophical Society, saying that Universal Brotherhood, war, God, and the Brotherhood of Adepts are facts and therefore out of this period of carnage and misery that good would come. Mrs. Besant urges followers to accept what happens and adopt a neutral position.

AUTUMN 1915. PETROGRAD. Gurdjieff arrives from Moscow for a few days visit. He telephones Uspenskii who goes to see him at once. Gurdjieff tells him he is thinking of starting group work here. He wants to organize his work in Petersburg on a large scale, give public lectures and demonstrations and attract a wide variety of people of different levels of preparation. Uspenskii, always cherishing what he sees as his independence, has no interest in group work himself. However, he wants to maintain contact with Gurdjieff, and so agrees to help gather candidates.

Following his meeting with Gurdjieff, Uspenskii goes directly to Phillipoff's. He bursts into the café, going directly to Anna Ilinishna's table. For over an hour she has been awaiting him. He does not greet her or even sit down. Instead, he exclaims—"I have found the miracle!"

The man they have been searching for, he tells Anna, the one who can help them find "the mystic threshold," has been found. (He of course had "found" him months earlier but had said nothing.)

"This man's knowledge goes beyond mere theory," declares Uspenskii, nearly breathless. "He can teach, and give the answers to what we and so

many others in different lands and times have sought. But he's very sparing—mean, almost—in communication."

This man, he says, has told him two things which he has never found in any book or any esoteric society. One of the ideas he tells her now:

"He says that man, because he is passive, does not actually do things personally, but that everything in him is done, mechanically. A man will say, 'I do such-an-such,' but this is not the genuine 'I,' for he might have twenty-two 'I's'.... What I am trying to say is, there is not one 'I' but many..."

With this as an introduction Uspenskii takes Anna Ilinishna to the second of Phillipoff's two cafés, just across the boulevard, to meet Gurdjieff. Entering the café, Anna Ilinishna sees a man at a table in the far corner; he's wearing an ordinary black coat and a high astrakhan cap. Introduced to Gurdjieff, she at once notices his "fine, virile features and a look that pierces right through you (though not in an unpleasant way).... His manner is very calm and relaxed, and he speaks without any gesticulation. Even to be sitting with him was very agreeable."

She finds Gurdjieff speaks Russian fluently, though in an exact and very picturesque way. He has "the gift," she says, "of assembling words expressively." Like Russian peasants he is spare with words, "often constructing phrases," she says, "as if for that time only." He uses his voice like an instrument, speaking in many tones—one lazy, another subdued, one having a glint of humor, another passionate with a kind of noble wrath. At last she feels she is "in the presence of a Guru."

FEBRUARY 1916. PETROGRAD. Gurdjieff now begins to make the 350-mile train trip from Moscow to Petersburg on a regular basis, coming every fortnight. He takes an apartment at Nevsky Prospekt and Pushkin Street. The Nevsky is a boulevard eight miles long and some forty yards across. It seems more than coincidental that Gurdjieff's apartment is at one corner of the Nevsky, Uspenskii's apartment at the second, Anna Ilinishna's at the third, and Phillipoff's at the fourth.

Gurdjieff and Uspenskii, and often Anna Ilinishna, meet every day at Phillipoff's at noon. They talk until five or six in the evening, parting to have dinner, then meeting again for more discussions that often go late into the night. In these discussions, Gurdjieff constantly demands brevity, especially of Uspenskii, who tends to talk on and on, displaying his knowledge.

Gurdjieff soon asks Uspenskii to organize groups for him in Petersburg. Uspenskii agrees but makes a condition.

"Listen, Georgi Ivanovitch," he says, "I will organize these groups for you, but only on the condition that I myself do not enter them. I shall remain *aside*."

"Why?" asks Gurdjieff. He looks at him sideways with one of his characteristic glances.

Uspenskii says, "I could not explain [it] to him. Somehow I disliked the thought that it should be said of me that I belonged to any such groups. I had always been by myself, never belonged even to any literary groups."

Gurdjieff says nothing, only shakes his head.

Uspenskii interprets it "As if he did not understand me, or as if he were pitying me."

Following this discussion, Uspenskii finds Gurdjieff suddenly begins acting indifferently toward him. Worse, Gurdjieff refuses to answer any serious questions. Ordinarily Uspenskii might react, becoming irritable or sulking, as that is his tendency when he doesn't get what he wants. But Gurdjieff's message is clear.

Uspenskii begins inviting a great number of people to meet Gurdjieff. Most, if not all, are part of the intelligentsia, Petersburg's educated elite. Uspenskii is amazed when Gurdjieff asks 1,000 rubles of those interested in working with him.

Uspenskii tells him that only people with private means could afford this amount. Gurdjieff gives a detailed answer as to why he asks for such a payment and ends by telling him—"People do not value a thing if they do not pay for it."

Eventually a preparatory group is established. It consists of six people: Dr. Leonid Stjoernval, a fifty-five-year-old medical doctor; Anthony Charkovsky, a fifty-year-old engineer and bridge builder; Andrey Zacharov, a thirty-seven-year-old railway engineer; Nicholas, a sixty-eight-year-old widower and member of the Senate; Anna Ilinishna Butkovsky, thirty-one years old; and of course Pyotr Uspenskii himself, thirty-eight years old. Later, the Petersburg group will grow to as many as thirty.

During these early group meetings, Uspenskii is fond of parading his knowledge, speaks too much and doesn't keep to the point. Anna Ilinishna begins to see that her friend is "all outward manifestation." She says that when he got going in front of the group "Gurdjieff [would] look at him with a curious enigmatic smile and sometimes would stop him in full flood," sometimes even rebuking him, because "behind the quasi-scientific phrases there was no real significance or deep meaning."

Two huge trucks, their height extending to the first floor of the surrounding houses, drive along the Liteiny. Uspenskii notices they are loaded down with unpainted wooden crutches. He imagines similar trucks moving in the streets of Vienna, Berlin, London, Paris, Rome, and Constantinople. All these cities he had visited, knew well and prized for their contrasts. Now they were all separated "by new walls of hatred and

crime." He tells Gurdjieff of his impressions on the Liteiny. Says Gurdjieff, "What do you expect? People are machines.... Everything happens."

At a lecture on knowing oneself, or self-study, Gurdjieff introduces the idea that before all else the structure, functions, and laws of one's organism must be studied. The chief method, he says, for such self-study is the practice of self-observation in which one does *not* analyze but impartially registers what is observed at the moment. This observation of oneself must be related to its given function and center, that is, thinking, emotional, moving, and instinctive centers.

At another meeting Gurdjieff asks the group what is the most important thing they have noticed during self-observation? None of the replies satisfies him. Finally he tells them that "not one of you has noticed that *you do not remember yourselves*.... You do not feel *yourselves*; you are not conscious of *yourselves*."

Walking along the Liteiny in the direction of Nevsky Prospekt, Uspenskii attempts to remember himself. He finds he cannot keep his attention on himself. The incessant noises, the continual movement of people and cars along the street, continually distract him. Irritated with himself, he redoubles his effort and turns onto a quieter street. He reaches the following street and coming to the Nadejdinskaya realizes that his attention has wandered only for short moments. Reasoning that self-remembering is easier on less noisy streets, he decides to experiment. On the Nevsky there is a tobacconist's shop that makes his cigarettes. He will go there, all the while remembering himself, and order cigarettes. Two hours later, taking an *izvostchik* to his printers, he finds himself in the Tavricheskaya when he suddenly wakes up! "And suddenly," Uspenskii says, "I remembered that I had forgotten to remember myself."

JANUARY 1916. PETROGRAD. Boris Stümer, a vain man known for his falsity, is appointed premier and foreign minister. He is a protégé of Rasputin, who has pushed the appointment. This move signals the growing power of Rasputin over the Tsarina and, through her, the Tsar. Of Rasputin, a ballerina of the day remembers, he had "eyes of strange lightness, set close, inconceivable in a peasant face, the eyes of a maniac."

1916. PETROGRAD. Organized in 1908, the Russian Theosophical Society had focused on theosophy's belief that Russia would play a major role in bringing the East and West together. In that light, amid the deprivations of war, Anna Kamenskaia writes in *Vestnik Teosofii*:

We are undoubtedly moving on to a higher level of world life. Not without purpose have all the veils been torn away and previous illusions are burning in the fire of difficult, and, at the same time, profoundly meaningful experiences; not without purpose are we passing

through so many shocks; not without purpose are all minds and hearts opening to new ideas and inspirations. But what kind of world view will be capable of expressing this higher level of consciousness? Only that world view which can unify all the complex needs of human life and provide the strength to build a life on earth on the basis of brotherhood, love, and mutual assistance. Theosophy provides such a view.

FEBRUARY 1916. PETROGRAD. The group becoming stronger and more serious, Gurdjieff begins to come every two weeks. He spends the whole day in cafés speaking with people who wish to see him. Then, and only at the last minute, he tells Uspenskii to let others know there will be a meeting that evening. Such short notice makes it difficult for many to come. Puzzled, Uspenskii inquires why. People could only value the ideas, he is told, if they have to overcome obstacles.

Among the ideas Gurdjieff introduces at these early meetings is reincarnation, immortality and the four bodies of man—the physical, astral, mental and divine. He contrasts the functioning of an automaton with one who has attained his individuality. He speaks of the absence of unity in man, that man thinks he has only one mind when, in fact, he has three minds: the intellectual, emotional and moving-instinctive. “Man has no permanent and unchangeable I,” says Gurdjieff. To come to a real permanent I there must be a fusion of substances. For this fire is required. A fire is built from friction which is the result of an inner struggle between ‘yes’ and ‘no.’ Something significant must be sacrificed in the moment, if this struggle is to be evoked. The higher bodies thus formed possess qualities not found in the physical body, such as a certain electrical conductivity. It also may be possible to magnetize them, make them radioactive, and so forth.

Gurdjieff speaks of the three ways to attain immortality: through work on the body, the emotions, or the mind. These ways are ordinarily referred to as the way of the fakir, monk, or yogi. Each demands that a man begin by doing that which is most difficult—dying to the world. There is another traditional way, as well, though not commonly known. It is the fourth way that Gurdjieff introduces. The fourth way differs from the other ways in many important and substantial respects, not all of which lend themselves to words. The fourth way does not separately work, for example, on body, emotions and mind, but works on them simultaneously. Furthermore, the pupil is not required to give up anything. He must not withdraw from life but, on the contrary, stay in life and learn to use it for his own development. “A man’s life and its conditions,” says Gurdjieff, “correspond to what he is.” The conditions of his life, its uncertainties, shocks and suffering are used to come to real life. The principal demand of the fourth way is for understanding. For, the

greater a man’s understanding of what he does, the greater the results. It is practical, immediate, and works with and through ordinary life. Therefore, in contrast to the traditional three ways, the work of the fourth way can be more effective, more efficient. (Later he will make a further distinction saying that unlike the three ways, the fourth way is not permanent, it appears and disappears and has a definite aim.)

Later in speaking about real knowledge, associated with the transformation of energies in man and the cosmos, Gurdjieff says that humanity comes into periods when the masses of men lose their reason and mindlessly destroy everything built up over time, and that these periods generally correspond to the beginning of the fall of a culture or civilization. Released at such a time is “a very great quantity of the matter of knowledge. This, in its turn, necessitates the work of collecting this matter of knowledge which would otherwise be lost.”

The teaching of the fourth way is unusual in that it gives nothing ready-made. Though he can be totally lucid and coherent, Gurdjieff often speaks in ways that seem either to obfuscate or confuse. Gurdjieff teaches using declarations without examples, apparent contradictions, hints, and nuances of all kinds which keep the group on edge and create friction. Teaching in this way makes a demand on the group to become active, to inquire, explore, to think and act independently, to take nothing and no one for granted.

In time, Uspenskii comes to understand something about how Gurdjieff expresses himself: “Our ordinary European logical method of thinking makes us inclined to accept everything literally, that is, if we trust the author, we suppose that with every word, he says exactly what he meant. Eastern thought, however, often uses methods of exposition totally different from ours. Eastern authors often do not define their subject as a whole. They are apt to give only one instance of the possible meaning of the given subject or phenomena without saying that it is merely an instance so that readers are left to understand their words as they like or as they can. Gurdjieff very often did the same thing.”

What Uspenskii also sees and likes is the fact that Gurdjieff “appreciated and understood all the good things of life possibly better than anyone. But one felt that he was not attached to them and could at any moment give up everything without losing an atom of his energy and calm.” Gurdjieff not only had a total indifference to making things easy or agreeable for himself but never shirks any kind of work. Though he sometimes likes to give large dinners, he often eats and drinks very little. He is totally without any kind of affectation and shows no desire to produce an impression on others. He never pretends to any sanctity or occult powers. He enjoys a joke and has a robust sense of humor. Occa-

sionally, he might "act" or "play" with people's impressions regarding himself, but rather than falseness, says Uspenskii, it "produced an impression of strength." But he adds, "Sometimes there was too much of it."

In forming a group, Gurdjieff tells Uspenskii and the others that its members must agree to engage in self-study, exchange observations, and make a common struggle against their false personalities. In doing so, they must attempt to tell the whole truth to the teacher, sincerity in the group being an absolute demand. Further, members must remember why they came to a group. If they begin to express mistrust toward the teacher, lack of respect and so forth, then they can no longer work with the teacher and must leave.

As the meetings continue, Uspenskii becomes irritated. He is not getting the respect he is due. Gurdjieff, he says, "did not see me, would not give himself the trouble to understand me, that he did not wish to see that in reality I had gone much further from the ordinary outlook than he thought, that many of his ideas were much nearer and much more comprehensible to me than he would admit." Worse, Uspenskii finds Gurdjieff insisting that he give up all his knowledge and start from scratch. But many of the ideas that Gurdjieff speaks about, says Uspenskii, he has already come to himself.<sup>12</sup>

SPRING 1916. PETROGRAD. Gurdjieff gives his first lectures on the seven cosmoses. He points out that the Cabala and other systems speak of two cosmoses but these are "incomplete" and, as such, they are inexact. Such teachings, he says, are "merely a fragment split off from another, much fuller, ancient esoteric teaching...the *full* teaching on cosmoses speaks not of two, but of seven cosmoses, included one within another."

Listening to Gurdjieff lecture, Uspenskii realizes the seven cosmoses correspond to the period of dimensions and problems of space and time and higher dimensions which he has been working on for several years, the basis of the book *Wisdom of the Gods*. Declares Uspenskii: "It is not merely a coincidence of details—it is absolutely identical. I do not know how it has come about; I have never heard of seven cosmoses related to one another in the ratio of zero to infinity. Nevertheless my 'period of dimensions' coincides with this absolutely exactly."

Bewildered, Uspenskii points out to Gurdjieff passages in his own books and manuscripts where the same ideas are discussed. But Gurdjieff displays no interest. Instead, turning up the heat still more, Gurdjieff

12. That Gurdjieff, in fact, is working with his emotional center, that Gurdjieff, intentionally, is calling up this state in him with all its self-love and false pride so he can observe it—Uspenskii must not see, for he makes no mention of it. As with many students, it is easier for Uspenskii to comprehend the intellectual aspects of the teaching. The practical aspects, especially when applied to ourselves tend to escape us.

quotes verbatim to the group whole pages of Uspenskii's books> He does so, of course, without attribution.

At one point Gurdjieff asks him to say what he can from his point of view, "taking everything just as I said it."

Uspenskii begins by examining the idea of the ratio of zero to infinity and proceeds to work through the dimensions in a manner both comprehensive and insightful.

"There is a great deal of material in what you have just said," comments Gurdjieff, "but this material must be elaborated." He tells him to ponder that time is different in different cosmoses and ends by saying: "Time is breath—try to understand this."

Gurdjieff, like a skilled matador, knows exactly where to stick his sword. Gurdjieff, having showed no interest in Uspenskii's ideas—only to then openly plagiarize them—now insists that Uspenskii give up what is for Uspenskii the *idea* of ideas—the fourth dimension. Gurdjieff tells him he must accept a universe of not four but only three dimensions.

For Uspenskii this is tantamount to giving up his first born and, predictably, he rebels. First probing here, then there, Gurdjieff has masterfully forced him into an intellectual corner.

When he speaks to Gurdjieff about this, no doubt hoping for some relief or an explanation, he is told instead that he must put all his knowledge in the fire.

*All his knowledge!*

Gurdjieff insists. What Uspenskii takes to be knowledge, Gurdjieff says, is a mixture of both truth and falsehood. How can one who is asleep discern one from the other? Therefore, all had to be burnt. What is genuine, Gurdjieff tells him, would not be burnt.

The force of Gurdjieff's logic drives Uspenskii's back to the wall. Gurdjieff is merciless, he gives him no out, no way to save face. Like a chess master, Gurdjieff's every move has applied just the right amount of pressure at precisely the right time and place.<sup>13</sup>

Finally, after a great struggle, Uspenskii stabilizes and agrees to sacrifice his knowledge. But the cost, in personal terms, is not small. "Naturally," explains Uspenskii, "such submission could not be achieved without great struggle with oneself, and the first results of this was that I entirely lost the power to write."<sup>14</sup>

During this period, Uspenskii says fear is his dominant emotion. Having sacrificed what he most cherishes—his knowledge—Uspenskii

13. Stripped of all defence, Uspenskii intellectually must agree. But, emotionally, he must find himself caught in a maelstrom of suffering, his powerful mind now unhinged and tossed back and forth between its 'yes' and its 'no!'

feels unprotected, vulnerable, reduced to what he knows not. Speaking of the terror this state, Uspenskii says he has this "fear of losing myself, of disappearing in something unknown."

At the time, Uspenskii wrote a letter to someone abroad. "I am writing this letter to you," he recounts, "but who will write the next letter signing it with my name and what he will say, I do not know."

This is the primary fear, but many other elements are in it as well. There is "the fear of taking a wrong way," he says, "the fear of making an irretrievable mistake, the fear of losing some other possibilities." But as he continues and gains confidence in himself and the teaching, he says, "all this left me."

At one meeting of the group Uspenskii pontificates about impressions. Finally Gurdjieff cuts him off—"Whatever is this rubbish you're talking?"

Turning to the others in the group, Gurdjieff speaks as if Uspenskii isn't present.

"I suppose he wants to show off his knowledge," Gurdjieff muses. "He's exactly like a cow going round and round a new gate without being able to find a way in. God preserve us from such people!"

Gurdjieff suggests that each of the six—in front of the others—tell the story of their lives.

Dr. Stjoernal, a private man always holding himself in tight control, begins to make such a confession. But to all, it is soon clear he is not telling the truth. He speaks of the event abstractly, in an impersonal fashion, as though he had no hand in it. Anna Ilinishna says one could "sense the struggle between his desire to whitewash the action and his knowledge that it was impossible to deceive Gurdjieff."

Finally, Gurdjieff shoots a piercing look at Stjoernal that stops him in mid-word....

"Another time, doctor, you will be sincere, and recall these matters accurately.... Think it over," declares Gurdjieff.

Later Gurdjieff gives his students nicknames. Stjoernal's is "Mean," in the sense that the doctor cannot easily part with anything he possesses, be it money, words or memories. Zacharov's is "Baba," which means in Russian "peasant woman." He is so shy and emotionally frozen that he

14. The idea of sacrifice was not foreign to Uspenskii. In fact, in his *Kinemadrama* it is a central idea. Near the end of the book the magician speaks to Osokin about sacrifice: that he cannot change himself without making sacrifices and that he must sacrifice something big, not only once, but to go on making sacrifices until he gets what he wants. Osokin protests that he has nothing to sacrifice. "Everyone has something to sacrifice," says the magician, "except those who cannot be helped." And later: "A man can be given only what he can use; and he can use only that for which he has sacrificed something. This is the law of human nature." In effect, then, *Kinemadrama* is a foreshadowing. What Uspenskii knows in theory, Gurdjieff leads him to explore firsthand in the reality of his own being.

cannot speak of his inner being. Nicholas's is "Jubilant Old Man." Anna's is "Wavering." To Uspenskii, Gurdjieff gives the nickname "Wraps Up The Thought."

At another meeting Gurdjieff introduces the ideas of knowledge and being. Uspenskii says that the group divided into two camps about this. "The first camp," he says, "thought that the whole thing was from the change of being, that with the change of being we would get more from the knowledge we already have. The second camp (to which I believe I alone belonged) said that even in our present state of being we can get much more knowledge than we have, that we are not so saturated with knowledge that we cannot absorb more. Later I understood that both are necessary."

Despite Gurdjieff's great being and knowledge, there are many things which, as Uspenskii puts it, give "rise to perplexity and doubt. The most unexpected was his eternal and continual playing. He was never simple or natural; one always felt in him some secret, hidden intent. Some people were attracted to him by this playing as one would be attracted by anything incomprehensible, strange and dangerous.... In connection with this play we saw perfectly clearly in him two men, and those who the one attracted did not doubt that the other was surely a mask or part adapted for some definite aim."

1916. PIATIGORSK. Either before or, perhaps after, a journey to Alexandropol to see his family—the last time Gurdjieff is to see his father alive—he meets Professor Skridlov, the archaeologist, in Piatigorsk, at the home of the Professor's daughter. With Prince Lubovedsky and Gurdjieff, Skridlov is one of the original members of the Seekers After Truth, first formed in 1892, walking between the Sphinx and the Pyramid of Cheops in Egypt.<sup>15</sup> Skridlov participated in all the group's major expeditions and he and Gurdjieff have grown quite close. The two have corresponded regularly but have not seen one another since their expedition, most likely in 1896, to the monastery of the World Brotherhood in Kafiristan.

Skridlov must now be in his sixties or seventies, for his hair was slightly graying when they first met at the Pyramid of Cheops twenty-four years before. He is entering upon the last stage of life whereas Gurdjieff, at forty-four,<sup>16</sup> has taken a vow and is embarked on a stupendous mission of bringing a new teaching to the West.<sup>17</sup>

Meeting now, in Piatigorsk, some twenty years since their six-month stay at the Monastery of the World Brotherhood, the two men decide to

15. In the expanded edition of *Our Life With Mr. Gurdjieff*, Olga de Hartmann records what Gurdjieff told the group in Essentuki in 1917 about the origins of the Seekers After Truth: "Twenty-five years ago in Egypt, near the pyramids, three tourists met...." Gurdjieff speaks of this meeting in chapter eight, "Prince Yuri Lubovedsky," in *Meetings With Remarkable Men*. The place of the group's origin is no doubt as symbolic as it is actual.

celebrate their meeting by climbing to the summit of Mount Bechow, a nearby mountain. They of course take the most difficult and daring route, ascending the rocks from the southern side of the mountain. Though not high, Mount Bechow affords a spectacular view of the surrounding countryside. Alone on the summit, the two friends look into the broad expanse and take in the vastness of its silence.

"We saw," says Gurdjieff, "spread out before our eyes an extensive panorama of really extraordinary beauty." To the south and far away the two seekers of truth see the majestic snow-capped peak of Elbrus, the long chain of Caucasian mountains rimming both its sides. Below them sit the toylike settlements, towns and villages of nearly the entire region of Mineralni Vodi, while to the north lay the town of Zheleznovodsk.

Taking in the grandeur of the immensity about them, Professor Skridlov's eyes begin to tear. He tells Gurdjieff that after their stay at the monastery he underwent "a revaluation of all values." He had been totally absorbed only in his own pleasures and interests and those of his children. All he did, all he said, had been vanity.

"The meeting with Father Giovanni killed all this," says Professor Skridlov, "and from then on there gradually arose in me that 'something' which has brought the whole of me to the unshakable conviction that, apart from the vanities of life, there exists a 'something else' which must be the aim and ideal of every more or less thinking man, and that it is only this something else which may make a man really happy and give him real values, instead of the illusory 'goods' with which in ordinary life he is always and in everything full."

This meeting will be the last time that the two essence friends will see one another. Gurdjieff must have spoken of his own feelings as well, but these he does not record.

1916. FINLAND. During a group meeting at the Finnish country home of one of the doctor's wealthy patients, Madame Maximovitch, the normally reserved alienist Dr. Leonid Stjoernal exclaims: "Yes! I believe that Georgi Ivanovitch is not less than Christ himself!"<sup>18</sup>

For some time before, he has been sitting quietly, calm and cool as usual, when suddenly, as if coming out of a trance, he explodes like a

16. Dates of Gurdjieff's birth have ranged from 1866 to 1877. Based on facts that Gurdjieff himself gives in *Meetings With Remarkable Men*, the most logical date is 1872. Louise Goepfert Marsh, a secretary of Gurdjieff's and his German translator for *All and Everything*, gives 1872 as his birth date in her essay, "Gurdjieff: An Indication of His Life and Work." See Notes.

17. For Skridlov what lies in the future is a summing up and a winding down, an enjoying of his life. For Gurdjieff the future spreads out into the unknown but he can be sure it will be filled with ordeals and challenges unlike anything he has yet met. This meeting then between these two great essence friends marks a portentous time for both.

bombshell, making nervous, excitable gestures, and shouting—"Yes!... not less than...!"

Acting at once, Gurdjieff forcefully cuts Stjoernal off.

Asked about the origin of the teaching, Gurdjieff tells the story of the sly man who in an unknown country and an unknown time was walking by a café when he met a devil who was in a very poor way. The sly man invited the devil into the café and ordered coffee for him. Asked why he was in such a poor state, the devil said, "There is no business. I used to buy souls and burn them on charcoal because they had very fat souls that I could take to hell. All my devil friends were pleased. But now all the fires are out in hell because people today have no souls."

The sly man said, "Teach me how to make souls, and I will give you a sign to show which people have souls made by me."

More coffee was ordered, after which the devil said, "Teach people to remember themselves, not to identify and imagine, and after a time they will grow souls."

So the sly man did just that, organizing groups and teaching people to remember themselves. Some students worked very seriously and did, in fact, grow souls.

When they died they came to the Gate of Paradise, where on one side stood St. Peter and the other the devil.

"Can I just ask one question?" the devil would say to each newly arrived soul. "Did you remember yourself?"

"Ahh, yes, certainly," answered the soul.

"Excuse me," the devil would smile and say to St. Peter, "that is mine."

This went on for a long time until word got back to earth of what was happening at the Gate of Paradise.

Angrily, the sly man's students said to him: "Why do you teach us self-remembering since, when we say we have remembered ourselves, the devil takes us?"

"Did I teach you to say you remembered yourselves?" answered the sly man. "I taught you not to talk."

"But it's St. Peter and the devil," protested the students.

18. Whereas Uspenskii's first impression of Gurdjieff was that of a person of power or knowledge, a raja or sheik, Dr. Stjoernal's is that of a loving and suffering Christ. Not surprisingly, Dr. Stjoernal alone of the six (despite protestations of his ever resistant wife, Elizabeta Grigorievna) will stay with Gurdjieff through all the tumult of the ensuing years until his own death twenty-three years later in Reims, France.

Uspenskii, given his feeling toward religion, must have recoiled at Stjoernal's outburst. He wants nothing to do with devotion. He wants to obtain knowledge. Gurdjieff has said that what must come first is self-study.

"But have you seen these people, the devil and St. Peter, at group meetings? Very well, don't talk. You see, I not only made an arrangement with the devil, I also made a plan to deceive him. But if you talk..."

Gurdjieff's unpredictable actions, some seemingly so irrational, continue to bother Uspenskii. Rather than suffer it, the idea gradually forms in him that there are two sides, or two personalities, to Gurdjieff. One is a serious, or positive, side; the other "plays." People around Gurdjieff are "sorted out" by these two sides. Some see his serious side which displays his knowledge, his disinterestedness, his work. In them, Gurdjieff's "play" produces a struggle of "yes" and "no." Others, seeing the negative or play side, view the positive side as a pretense for getting influence and power over people. Still others are attracted by the negative side. Uspenskii believes it keeps them close to Gurdjieff because it corresponds to their own desires and predilections.

However Uspenskii sees Gurdjieff, there remains the nagging question—*Who is Gurdjieff?* It is a question with which every member of the group wrestles. They only know about him what he chooses to tell them. And this is very little. He is undoubtedly a man of enormous power and knowledge, in the real sense of those words—of that the group has no doubt. But, all the same, the question remains.

Says Uspenskii: "What had he been born with and what had been given him by schools, if he had passed through a school—we often spoke of this, and some of us came to the conclusion that Gurdjieff was a genius in his own domain, that he had scarcely had to learn, that what he knew could not be learned and that none of us could expect or hope to become like him."

If his history remains unknown to them, then certainly they could judge him by his behavior. But try as they may, they can't see Gurdjieff. The images he presents, his actions from day to day, are unpredictable. One can never come to a conclusion about him.

"One could be sure of nothing in regard to him," declares Uspenskii. "He might say something today and tomorrow something altogether different, yet somehow one could not accuse him of contradiction. One had to understand and connect everything together."

JUNE 25, 1916. The Russian army begins major offensive against the Austro-Hungarian armies. Despite unexpected success, the depressed atmosphere in urban areas increases as shortages of consumer goods, particularly food stuffs, grows and inflation rises.

MID-SUMMER 1916. PETROGRAD. Gurdjieff is spending most of his time in Petersburg. Some thirty pupils form around him. Meetings are held almost every evening. Gurdjieff, at one point, introduces the idea of

chief fault, or chief feature. This is the psychological nucleus around which orbits a person's false personality. "Every man's personal work must consist in struggling against this chief fault," says Gurdjieff.

AUGUST 1916. FINLAND. The group meets again at Madame Maximovitch's country home in Finland, about an hour's train ride from Petersburg. Uspenskii is in "a state of unusual tension." In order to give a shock to his organism, he has been doing a number of short, very intensive fasts, breathing in certain ways, and doing mental exercises to concentrate his attention.<sup>19</sup> He is no longer so focused in his forehead. His center of gravity is beginning to switch to his chest. Sensation and feeling are beginning to function. He is becoming more sensitized to himself and the world. He is connected now more in his body. He is less dense, more open, transparent.

These shocks have produced a certain emotional state; a state, Uspenskii believes, which is "indispensable" to arriving at the facts of the hidden reality he wishes to penetrate. Recognizing the change in Uspenskii's vibration and knowing the work he had done on himself (though, of course, he would never acknowledge that to him), Gurdjieff begins to work with Uspenskii on a more subtle level. Earlier, in a meeting where the Last Supper was discussed, Gurdjieff had said that people who have developed a second, or "astral body" can communicate with one another at a distance. In other words, telepathy was possible.

First, he does the unthinkable.

In front of the five other students, Gurdjieff humiliates Uspenskii, repeating now openly what Uspenskii had told him "in absolute confidence" about Dr. Stjoernal.<sup>20</sup> (Given the doctor's vision of Gurdjieff-as-Christ, it's not hard to guess what that might be.) For an intellectual of Uspenskii's stripe, the exposure of an inferior "I" had to cut deep to the bone. But Uspenskii, always in 'control' of his feelings, reports this unmasking as merely "unpleasant."

Having created the necessary conditions, Gurdjieff now begins to show postures and physical movements. Uspenskii observes that Gurdjieff's muscles are relaxed and that he moves with "astonishing

19. From his manner of speaking about this, it seems probable that he did this on his own and not at Gurdjieff's direction.

20. Why does Gurdjieff intentionally break the trust that he has so carefully nurtured? He does so because he is preparing to introduce another level of work. A new level of work demands a new level of trust. Gurdjieff's psychological 'betrayal' emotionally divides Uspenskii who is already emotional but suppressing it. Thus Gurdjieff forces a direct confrontation with the 'yes' and 'no' of negative emotions. The strange impression which Gurdjieff made in that Moscow café the year before, all the little buried doubts about Gurdjieff and getting caught in a relationship, must have resurfaced now with a vengeance.

assurance and precision." A student, more knowledgeable about the body, at a later time gives this impression of Gurdjieff: "I saw this man in motion, a unit in motion. He was completely of one piece. From the crown of his head down the back of the head, down the neck, down the back and down the legs, there was a remarkable line. Shall I call it a gathered line? It suggested co-ordination, integration, knitness, power...I was fascinated by the way the man walked. As his feet touched the floor there seemed to be no weight on them at all—a glide, a stride, a weightless walk."

Following this wordless teaching of movement, control, and relaxation, Gurdjieff returns to the question of why the members of the group could not tell the story of their lives and the thing they had done of which they were most ashamed.

The tension in the room must have risen dramatically.

With Gurdjieff's question, says Uspenskii, "the miracle began."

Gurdjieff communicates with Uspenskii wordlessly. A voice, says Uspenskii, speaks to him inside his chest.<sup>21</sup>

Uspenskii says: "It all started with my beginning to *hear his thoughts* ... suddenly I noticed that among the words he was saying to us all there were 'thoughts' which were intended for me.... After a while I heard his voice inside me as it were in the chest near the heart."

Gurdjieff questions Uspenskii telepathically and Uspenskii replies audibly. Dr. Stjoernval and Zacharov are visibly astonished. The "conversation" between Gurdjieff and Uspenskii continues for a half an hour.

At one point, Gurdjieff tells Uspenskii there are certain conditions he has to accept or he has to leave the Work. Gurdjieff gives him a month's time to answer. Uspenskii refuses the time, so certain is he of his allegiance and ability to do. But Gurdjieff, seeing the dragons with which his student will have to contend, insists on the time limit.

Later, on the verandah with Uspenskii, Stjoernval, and Zacharov, Gurdjieff again speaks to Uspenskii telepathically.

"Something he said about me affected me very strongly," says Uspenskii, "and I sprang up from my chair and went into the garden." He wanders about in the forest for an hour or two, finally coming to realize that all Gurdjieff had said earlier, including his own position in the Work, is right.

"What I had considered to be firm and reliable in myself in reality did not exist," he says. That is, he sees the "I" that accepted the conditions was not real.

"But I had found something else. *I knew that he would not believe me<sup>22</sup> and that he would laugh at me if I showed him this other thing. But for*

21. It is not the first time. At the end of their first meeting in Gurdjieff's 'apartment' Uspenskii had a "flash of thought" that he must ask to see Gurdjieff again. But, as he assumed that all his thoughts were his own, he was shut off from this recognition.

*myself it was indubitable and what happened later showed that I was right.*"  
[Author's italics]

Uspenskii says later, in regard to his Finland experience: "There is something in phenomena of a higher order which requires a particular emotional state *for their observation and study.*" In the aftermath of the experience, he also realizes that "certain very definite changes began in my views on myself, on those around me, and particularly on 'methods of action.'" These changes beggar description but, he says: "I can only say that they were not in any way connected with what *was said* in Finland but that they had come as a result of the emotions which I had experienced there. The first thing I could record was the weakening in me of that *extreme individualism* which up to that time had been the fundamental feature in my attitude to life. I began to see people more, to feel my community with them more." [Author's italics]

SEPTEMBER 1916. PETROGRAD. Alexander Protopopov is made acting Minister of the Interior. He has no rank and bureaucratic experience but he is an amateur occultist and a friend of Rasputin's, who has urged the appointment on the Tsarina. Protopopov, a small neurotic man with bright, wild eyes that shift all the time, gives the impression of "resembling an excited seal." Rasputin has also successfully requested that the responsibility for the organization of food supplies be transferred to the Ministry of the Interior. So Protopopov controls not only the Okhrana (the Tsarist secret police) but also food distribution. He will later be

22. It is at this point that the real break with Gurdjieff begins, for here is unconsciously revealed what is characteristic of Uspenskii's personality; namely, a dividing and a hiding to preserve his "I." Despite the fact that Gurdjieff had stripped Uspenskii of some of his "I's," he thinks himself able to judge his teacher's understanding — "I knew that he would not believe me...." And decides that what he has found is the implacable truth — "for myself it was indubitable...."

Here then Uspenskii unwittingly breaks a primary rule of the Fourth Way, namely, that the student cannot keep anything secret from the teacher, that he must give up his lies, identifications and imagination. The student must continually keep questioning his motivations, perceptions, conclusions. Sincerity must be learned. As Gurdjieff said to the Petersburg group: "You do not understand what it means to be sincere. You are so used to lying both to yourselves and others that you can find neither words nor thoughts when you wish to speak the truth."

If the student is not forthcoming about all of his life, if he withholds something, then this "something" becomes the seat of his "I"-hood. He will be sincere about this but not about that, he thinks. But who is it that so decides? It is this "I" that has to be seen.

Not being totally sincere with his teacher, the student breaks the trust and bond between himself and the teacher. Communication thus contracts. The student is no longer open. Rapport ends. No rapport, no relationship. Without relationship, the separation of student and teacher only awaits a trigger event.

accused of deliberately creating food shortages in order to provoke riots as an excuse for repression.

It is in September, too, that Gurdjieff arrives from Moscow. He now takes quarters on the Liteiny nearer to Uspenskii. He has a severe chill and meets with people only in small groups. Uspenskii has not seen him since Finland. He is somewhat uncertain about his experience there. He asks if it is true that what Gurdjieff had said in Finland had frightened him. And, if so, why had he been frightened? Gurdjieff replies that if it's true that he was frightened, it only means he is not yet ready. Despite Uspenskii's questions, he will say nothing else.

Interestingly, on this visit Gurdjieff centers his talks around chief feature, or chief fault. He tells his pupils that they must find a way to struggle with it and to eliminate its involuntary manifestation. He points out his pupils' chief features, telling one that *he is never at home*; another that *he did not exist at all*; another had no *shame*; another, *no conscience*. In some people, he says, their chief feature is so well hidden behind their various formal manifestations that its discovery is difficult. In this case, the person himself is the chief feature and in this sense Gurdjieff refers to Uspenskii's as *Pyotr Demianovich*.

In a later meeting Gurdjieff tells people that they cannot go any further until they come to a definite decision about the Work and him, as "a half serious attitude could give no results whatsoever." Of the thirty or so people who have gathered around him only two leave. "It is difficult to climb the hill but very easy to slide down it," says Gurdjieff.

OCTOBER 1916. MOSCOW. Uspenskii visits Gurdjieff in his apartment on the Bolshaia Dmitrovka. The walls and floors are covered with carpets and silk shawls hang from the ceilings. Gurdjieff's Moscow pupils come and go. In comparison to the usual banal talking and roles people adopt when together, Uspenskii notices they are "not afraid to keep silent," some not uttering a word for hours. The silence is not heavy or psychological but supportive.

At one of the talks Gurdjieff asks Uspenskii what is the most important thing he has learned so far.

"The experiences, of course, which I had in August [the telepathy in Finland]," Uspenskii answers. If he could evoke such experiences at will, he believes he could discover everything else. But he sees that for this he would have to be able to create the necessary emotional state.

Gurdjieff explains that for this sacrifice is necessary. Not only must one sacrifice one's fantasies but also one's suffering. "A man will renounce any pleasures you like," Gurdjieff declares, "but he will not give up his suffering."

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 1916. MOSCOW. "Gurdjieff all the time suffered from ill-health, and in the winter of 1916 twice began to develop pneumonia," reports Uspenskii. He stopped coming to Petersburg and so some members of the group go to Moscow for meetings. Gurdjieff's teaching, Uspenskii says, "gave us a certain feeling of confidence and security. We often spoke at this time of how we should feel in the midst of all this chaos [the brewing revolution] if we had not got the system." At this period Gurdjieff, no doubt sensing the impending chaos that would soon engulf all of Russia, introduces the subject of Noah's Ark. Uspenskii had long thought this myth to be an allegory for the esoteric work. The teaching was an "ark" by which students could save themselves during the "flood."

"I felt myself growing in the understanding of abstract subjects," says Anna Ilinishna, "and I noticed that this development also occurred in the other members of the group."

She recounts how, much earlier, before they left Petersburg for the Caucasus, they had been what she calls "ordained" by Gurdjieff. They had all been sitting together, deep in thought, when something made them turn towards Gurdjieff. He spoke in a voice they had never before heard, one both solemn and abstract and with an element of love.

"You started the Quest. You are on the road. You must go on."

One of the group said: "I will go on, Georgi Ivanovitch, because you have put us on the right road."

Replied Gurdjieff: "I will try to hammer into your heads as much as I can of that special knowledge you are after, what Uspenskii calls 'seeking the Miracle.' There will be others coming to join our group, and they, too, will gradually progress. The only condition is that they must make the maximum effort to absorb what they hear, either from me or from one of you six."

Gurdjieff's 'play' continues to irritate Uspenskii—as he says his moods never led to depression but irritation, a characteristic Gurdjieff quickly noted. Unable to understand what Gurdjieff was doing, Uspenskii says he finally spoke to Gurdjieff about his awkward "play." Gurdjieff tells him "that 'play' is indispensable—that in receiving 'yes' a man must simultaneously receive 'no,' and that only the struggle of 'yes' and 'no' in him can create understanding." And he adds: "If there is not 'no,' if there is only 'yes,' faith appears. There must not be faith. I do not wish to infatuate people. Infatuation is always one sided. One side is infatuated while another side knows nothing about it. A serious moment arrives and then this comes out. A man proves incapable of effort, of sacrifice, of serious decision. Only if a man has passed through the struggle of 'yes and no' can he be relied upon, and the greater the struggle was the

better and the more steadfast and trustworthy will be from the point of view of the work. 'Play' is not necessary in itself. Men demand it. If they are not repelled, 'faith' appears in them at once, and above all things there must not be faith."

At some point during their meetings Gurdjieff speaks of being "born." Gurdjieff says that this new growth of essence, the appearance of I, means awakening to one's nothingness, the absolute recognition of one's mechanicality and helplessness. What prevents such awakening is that man is hypnotized. He then relates an Eastern story about a very rich magician who has a large number of sheep he keeps for their flesh and skins. Not wanting to hire shepherds or build a fence to keep the sheep from being troublesome and wandering off, the magician hypnotizes them, suggesting that they are immortal and that he, the magician, is a good master who loves them all very much. He suggests to them that if anything bad was to happen to them, it would certainly would not happen right then and so there is no need to think about it and, finally, he tells them that they are not sheep at all. To some he confides they are really eagles, to others, men; and to a third group... magicians, a code word for teacher.

DECEMBER 16, 1916. PETROGRAD. Thomas de Hartmann, a Guards officer, who lives in Tsarskoye Selo, the residence of the Tsar, meets Gurdjieff. The location is a seedy second floor cafe on Nevsky Prospekt frequented by prostitutes, pimps and the like. Had anyone seen de Hartmann there, he says, "I would have had to leave my regiment." The two speak and at one point Gurdjieff looks around the room and says, "There are usually more whores here." Finally, Gurdjieff accepts him and asks for a customary payment of a one thousand rubles. He asks him to contact Uspenskii who should inform him of all that had been said up to now. De Hartmann is impressed with Uspenskii.

"From the start he made a very strong impression on me," he says. "He was simple, courteous, approachable and intelligent... In an amazingly simple and clear way he knew how to explain the complicated scheme of worlds, planets, cosmoses, and so forth."

DECEMBER 16-17, 1916. PETROGRAD. Prince Felix Isupov, fearing the increasing influence over the Tsarina, murders Rasputin. First he poisons him and when that fails he shoots "the holy devil" three times. Rasputin's body is wrapped in a heavy linen sheet and driven to Petrov-sky Island where it is dumped from a bridge through a hole in the ice. Rasputin has prophesied that if he is murdered, it will bring down the whole country. It is in December, too, that Protopopov is now made full Minister of the Interior.

Before the year's end Gurdjieff introduces the subject of religion and prayer, and what might be called religious "techniques." He goes on to say that humanity is at a "standstill" in its development and risks "a straight path to downfall and degeneration." All around, one sees the growth of personality, the artificial, the unreal, and automatism. "Contemporary culture requires automatons," says Gurdjieff. He again speaks of the fourth way, saying that it has no definite forms and is never permanent in that it appears and disappears in accordance with its aim. It always has a definite work to accomplish.

JANUARY 1917. PETROGRAD. Heavy snowfalls and temperature at twenty-two degrees below zero. The city receives only thirty thousand pounds of flour a day instead of the normal two hundred thousand. Sugar becomes scarce, forcing working people, who suck their tea through a sugar cube, to drink it straight. A small helping of potatoes which cost 15 kopecks before the war, is now hard to find at 1.2 rubles. The Okhrana, the Tsarist secret police, reports to the Tsar, that "With every day the food question becomes more acute. Never before has there been so much swearing, argument, and scandal. That the population has not yet begun food riots does not mean that they will not in the nearest future."

FEBRUARY 9, 1917. PETROGRAD. Thomas de Hartmann brings his wife, Olga Arkadievna, to their first group meeting in Uspenskii's apartment. Both the de Hartmanns are thirty-one years old and accomplished—he as a composer and conductor, she as an opera singer. Here she meets Gurdjieff. She asks if her husband could somehow avoid going to the front. "No," he says, "when you live among wolves, you have to howl like a wolf; but you should not be taken over by the psychosis of war, and inside you should try to be far removed from all this."

At a later meeting, Gurdjieff introduces the subject of the intelligence or the consciousness of matter. He says that in nature there is nothing dead or inanimate. He relates the degree of denseness of vibration, or speed of vibration, to the degree of intelligence; while the denseness of matter corresponds to less intelligence. Later, he speaks of the Diagram of Everything Living which shows how the kind of creature and every degree of being is determined by what it eats and what eats it.

FEBRUARY 14, 1917. PETROGRAD. Ninety thousand strikers demonstrate on the Nevsky. They carry banners reading—"Down with the war! Down with the government."

FEBRUARY 18, 1917. PETROGRAD. Because of the severe weather, throughout the country 60,000 railway cars containing food, fodder and

fuel stand frozen on their tracks. Food and fuel grow scarce. Only ten days supply of flour remains in storehouses.

FEBRUARY 20, 1917. PETROGRAD. Rumors spread that the government plans to introduce bread rationing. Grocery shelves are quickly stripped of all available food. Having no fuel, factories begin to lay off workers and close. Worker strikes begin.

FEBRUARY 23, 1917. PETROGRAD. Weather conditions radically change, the winter temperature soaring to forty-six degrees with sunny skies. Masses of people stream outdoors to bask in the sun. With alcohol prohibited, many are drinking *khanzhn*, a homemade brew of fermented bread reinforced with cleaning fluids. Thousands of women from the Vyborg, the working class district across the Neva from the Winter Palace, march in a parade for the International Women's Day carrying signs such as "If a woman is a slave, there will be no freedom. Long live equal rights for women."

FEBRUARY 25, 1917. PETROGRAD. Thousands attend a meeting at Vicholayevsky Station. People call for an end to food shortages and the war. Cossack troops do not interfere and many even fraternize with the crowd. A mounted policeman is shot by a cossack and the police fire into the crowd. The Okhrana make many arrests.

FEBRUARY 26-27, 1917. PETROGRAD. Some 160,000 soldiers of the Petersburg garrison mutiny. Riots, looting, assaults on officers. Forty people are killed at Znamenski Square.

The smell of impending revolution hanging in the streets, Gurdjieff leaves by train for Moscow. Uspenskii and some of the group accompany him to Nikolaevski Station. After boarding the train, he comes to the window of his compartment. He is no longer the "Gurdjieff" they know. Now he looks to be, reports Uspenskii, "a ruling prince or a statesman of some unknown kingdom."

Amfiteatrov, a well-known journalist, is also on the train and a few days later he reports in an article of the strange Oriental he has met, a man he has taken to be an "oil king." Speaking of the war with Germany, the oil king notes that "everyone wants to be a millionaire."

Amfiteatrov asks, "And you?"

"We always make a profit. It [the war] does not refer to us. War or no war it is all the same to us. We always make a profit."

As Uspenskii notes, Gurdjieff is speaking of esoteric work, not oil or money.

MARCH 2, 1917. PETROGRAD. Tsar Nicholas II abdicates in favor of his brother, Grand Duke Michael, who is persuaded not to accept. The Provisional Government is thus formed with lawyer and firebrand Alexander Kerensky as its head.

MARCH 12, 1917. PETROGRAD. With the fall of the Tsar, all political prisoners are freed. From Siberia a small man, only five-feet-four-inches tall, with a pockmarked face and withered left arm, the result of childhood blood poisoning, arrives in the city. A Georgian Bolshevik, Dzhugashvili calls himself Stalin, "man of steel." He and another Bolshevik political prisoner take over *Pravda*, a local revolutionary newspaper. Much later the Bolsheviks will choose to be called "Communists."

MARCH 1917. PETROGRAD. Anna Kamenskaia, the leading Russian theosophist, lauds the revolution.

What a great and all-encompassing mission has been assigned our beloved Society!

A free Russia will now take her honored place among enlightened peoples and soon will probably be called upon to play a great role in world history, having voiced her particularly 'Russian word' on the questions of the reorganization of social, human, and international relations.

Political and social questions will naturally come to the fore and the heated work of building wisely on new lines will attract all hearts, devoted to the Motherland. The Theosophists will of course participate in this work.

MARCH 24, 1917. PETROGRAD. Uspenskii gathers the principal members of the Petersburg group at Dr. Stjoernal's home. He tells them that the short period of relative calm they are now experiencing is an illusion and everything will soon break up and collapse. As they can do nothing to help, and their own group work here would be impossible, Uspenskii declares that in his opinion, "there is no sense whatever in staying in Russia and we must go abroad." His words are taken to be exaggerated and not greeted with much approval. Most, he says, do not realize the true import of what the revolution brought and others, he says, are "in the grip of the customary illusion that everything that happens is for the best."

Soon after this meeting Uspenskii receives a postcard from Gurdjieff written in February just before the revolution, saying he is going to Alexandropol and asking Uspenskii to "continue the work of the groups until his arrival." He promises to return by Easter.

MARCH 27, 1917. SWITZERLAND. Lenin, the exiled Bolshevik leader, has been negotiating with Germany to allow his return to Russia. The Germans believe that Lenin's lust for power is so great that he will topple the

Provisional Government, take over, and withdraw Russia from the war. The German Foreign Ministry requests five million marks for "Russian work" and allows Lenin to cross its territory in a sealed train.

SPRING 1917. PETROGRAD. With still no word from Gurdjieff, Uspenskii begins to look through his notes of a year earlier. Again, he is struck by the similarity of Gurdjieff's presentation of the seven cosmoses to his own period of dimensions. He remembers Gurdjieff's words: *Time is breath*. With this idea as key, the whole idea of cosmoses of zero to infinity opens up for him in a new way. He comes to a completely unexpected confirmation of his own ideas through defining the *present* as the direct sensation of the inhalation and exhalation of breath. For a man, a complete breath is three seconds; for the earth, it is eighty years. He creates a table relating the cosmoses to the period of their breath.

APRIL 1917. RUSSIA. Eighty percent of Russians are peasants. Land seizures rise fivefold. Prices increase dramatically. A pair of shoes which cost 5–8 rubles before 1914, now costs 40 rubles. A bag of rye flour which cost 6 rubles now costs 40 rubles. A potato which cost 1 ruble then now costs 7 rubles.

APRIL 3, 1917. FINLAND STATION, PETROGRAD. The short, stocky forty-six-year-old Lenin—bald with a reddish beard, his slanted eyes and high cheekbones giving him a feral look—gets off the train from Switzerland. He mounts an armored car to speak to the people who await him. His manner of speaking is brusque and often punctuated with a high, sarcastic laugh. But he utters the words the people have waited to hear: "Peace, land, and bread." By "peace" Lenin means not only the withdrawal from the war with Germany but also the overthrow of capital. By "land" he means the confiscation of the estates of the wealthy. Later at Kshesinskaia, the Bolshevik headquarters, Lenin speaks again and insists that the transition from "bourgeois-democratic" to "socialist" revolution be accomplished in a matter of months.<sup>23</sup> A member of the audience remembers:

"I cannot forget that speech, like lightning, which shook up and astonished not only me, a heretic accidentally thrown into delirium, but also the true believers. No one had expected anything like it. It seemed as if all the elemental forces had risen from their lairs and the spirit of universal destruction, which knew no obstacles, no doubts, neither human difficulties nor human calculations, circled in Kshesinskaia's hall above the heads of the enchanted disciples."<sup>24</sup>

23. Lenin, to put himself in accord with Marxist thought, argues that Russia's economy is capitalist, not agrarian. Marx had said that economies pass through three stages: agrarianism, capitalism, then socialism. Lenin wants Russia to bypass capitalism (just as China's Mao did later in the century). So from the beginning the Bolsheviks lie.

APRIL 7, 1917. PETROGRAD. Lenin's "April Theses" is published in *Pravda*. Among the provisions it calls for: No backing of the war with Germany; immediate transition to the second phase of the revolution; refusal to support the Provisional Government; transfer of all power to the Soviets; confiscation of all landlord property and nationalization of all land; the creation of a single National Bank under Soviet supervision; and the Soviet control of production and distribution. A German agent in Stockholm cables Berlin: "Lenin's entry into Russia successful. He is working exactly as we wish."

EASTER 1917. PETROGRAD. Uspenskii still has heard no word from Gurdjieff. A week later, however, Uspenskii receives a telegram. Gurdjieff says he will return to Petrograd in May.

APRIL 21, 1917. PETROGRAD AND MOSCOW. The first Bolshevik demonstrations occur in Russia's two major cities.

MAY 1917. PETROGRAD. Uspenskii has been expecting Gurdjieff's arrival with every passing day. But to no avail....

JUNE 3, 1917. PETROGRAD. At the First All Russian Congress of the Soviets, Lenin declares "our party is ready to assume full power at anytime." He calls for the arrest of "fifty to one hundred of our richest millionaires."

EARLY JUNE 1917. PETROGRAD. Uspenskii receives a telegram from Gurdjieff in Alexandropol—*If you want to rest come here to me*.

Within two days, Uspenskii leaves Petersburg by train.

The Caucasus lies some thirteen hundred miles south of Petersburg. With the increasing turmoil, instead of the usual three days, it takes five days to reach Tiflis. Uspenskii had hardly slept throughout the journey. He finds the train station at Tiflis jammed with soldiers, many of them drunk. The influence of Bolshevik propaganda had caused many to leave the Caucasian front. Uspenskii slumbers in an armchair. A glass door separates the buffet from the railway platform outside. Suddenly, from the platform, there are several shots.

Soldiers rush into the buffet, shouting, "Comrades, do not worry. We have only shot a thief."

The thief is said to have stolen three rubles from someone's pocket.

An hour or so passes and Uspenskii hears more shots, more cries.

Another thief has been executed.

24. Eight years later, in writing *All and Everything*, Gurdjieff will speak of a certain Lentrohamsanin as one of the 313 Hasnamussian-Eternal individuals who, among their other endearing traits, have "the irresistible inclination to destroy the existence of other breathing creatures" and "the feeling of self-satisfaction from leading others astray." Some believe Gurdjieff took Lenin as a model for such an individual.

Towards daybreak, a third shot. Another thief is shot, but he turns out to be a policeman.

Through the glass door, Uspenskii sees three bloodstained bodies lying on the platform.

He observes that the soldiers are friendly toward the citizens. But, ever the realist, Uspenskii knows this is only the beginning.

"Everybody was still getting bread and shoes," he says. "But it is quite clear that as soon as there should be no bread and shoes, those with guns would get bread and shoes from those without guns."

Uspenskii has no illusions about Bolshevism. He sees it as a "catastrophe, a shipwreck" in which a people cannibalize themselves. "Bolshevism is not a political system at all," he says. "It is something very old, that at different times has borne different names." The Russian name *pougachevchina* describes the essence of Bolshevism, he thinks. In the eighteenth century a man named Pougachev, pretending to be the deceased Emperor Peter III, led an insurrection against Catherine II and for a time occupied nearly half of Russia, plundering the estates, hanging the estate owners and priests, and giving the land to the peasantry.

Societal madness mounting in Russia, Uspenskii believes he must convince Gurdjieff to leave. He thinks of England as a destination.

JUNE 1917. ALEXANDROPOL. Finally, the morning of the seventh day Uspenskii reaches Alexandropol. In the Greek quarter he finds Gurdjieff setting up a dynamo for his younger brother, Dimitri Ivanovitch. He meets Gurdjieff's family. They are Greek-Armenian from Asia Minor. They speak Armenian, and are people, Uspenskii says, of "a very old and very peculiar culture." Gurdjieff's relationship with his father impresses Uspenskii. They are obviously very close and loving. The father is a storyteller, an ashokh. An early photo of Gurdjieff hanging in the living room shows that Gurdjieff earned his living as a hypnotist at one time. Outside, standing amid a nearby ancient Armenian cemetery, Uspenskii sees in the distance the snowy peaks of Mount Ararat, the location where myth says Noah's Ark anchored during the Flood.

Uspenskii spends two weeks in Alexandropol. But he fails to persuade Gurdjieff to leave Russia. Uspenskii gives no reasons for Gurdjieff's refusal.<sup>25</sup>

25. Two important practical considerations may weigh in Gurdjieff's decision to stay put. One, though he speaks a number of languages, Gurdjieff speaks no European ones and, two, leaving Russia he will be virtually penniless, as the million rubles he had brought for his work in 1912 cannot be converted into gold (because of the governmental decree of July 27, 1914).

JULY 4, 1917. PETROGRAD. The Bolshevik *putsch* is quelled by release of information about Lenin's dealings with the Germans. Lenin goes into hiding and ends up in Finland.

JULY 1917. PETROGRAD. At Kerensky's bidding the Russian Army mounts offensive against Austro-Hungarian troops at Galacia. Declares Kerensky: "No army can remain in indefinite idleness... For the sake of her future, Russia had to perform this historic sacrifice." After initial successes, several hundred thousand men are lost.

The Army begins to disintegrate.

EARLY JULY 1917. ALEXANDROPOL. In the morning Gurdjieff and Uspenskii leave for Petersburg. During the journey, their train's departure is delayed a long time at one railway station. Taking advantage of the break, Uspenskii speaks to his teacher about the division of oneself into "I" and "Uspenskii" — and *how can one strengthen the feeling of "I" and strengthen the activity of "I"?*

Gurdjieff tells him that he can't do anything about that. "This should come as a result of *all* your efforts," he says. He tells him that by now he should have a different feeling of his "I".

Uspenskii says he did not have this feeling of "I."<sup>26</sup>

At Mozdok, on the third day of their trip from Tiflis, Gurdjieff appears to suddenly change plans. He will remain in the Caucasus, he says, and Uspenskii is to continue alone to Moscow and Petersburg. He is to give a message to Gurdjieff's students: "Tell them I am beginning new work here," says Gurdjieff. "Those who want to work with me can come."

Not only has Gurdjieff dashed his plans for escaping abroad, he now directs Uspenskii to return alone to the center of madness. He is not afraid of the physical danger but of "acting stupidly." The future of revolutionary Russia is plain to Uspenskii. It's illogical, stupid, not to leave. But Gurdjieff had made this decision for him. This must really grate on him but of this Uspenskii will only say:

"Now all responsibility towards myself seemed to have been taken from me."<sup>27</sup>

JULY 10, 1917. PETROGRAD. Kerensky asks forty-seven-year-old General Lavr Georgevich Kornilov, son of a Siberian Cossack, to assume command of the armed forces.

26. A student's questions, their subject matter, intent and the clarity with which they are formulated, are important because they show the level and direction at which the student is searching. They also give a forefeeling of the future. Here, with this question, it is seen that Uspenskii now approaches the feeling of his own "I." He will come to this in Essentuki in 1918.

MID-JULY 1917. ESSENTUKI. Despite the growing hazard of these days, Uspenskii, Anna Ilinishna, and eleven others make their way to the village of Essentuki nestled in a green valley in the foothills of the Caucasus near Mount Elbrus. On the outskirts, Gurdjieff has rented a country villa, the first of many that Gurdjieff will rent while in the Caucasus. Uspenskii and six others live here with Gurdjieff, while the rest will lodge elsewhere. Work at the villa begins early in the morning and continues late into the evening.

One day a surprise showing is made by Evreinoff, Anna Butkovsky's old lover. Meeting the group on the street, he goes up to Gurdjieff, saying: "I am a difficult, pretentious man. I am ambitious. But here, Georgi Ivanovitch, I bow to you..." Evreinoff stayed for a time and then leaves.

It is here in this country villa that for the next six weeks Gurdjieff opens all the doors to the teaching, for the first time allowing Uspenskii and the others to see, as Uspenskii says, "the plan of the whole work." Not only does Gurdjieff reveal the links, connections and directions of the teaching, but even the origins of its ideas. In effect, Gurdjieff entrusts them with the keys to the kingdom.<sup>28</sup>

For six weeks the work goes on, the group getting only four to five hours sleep a night, doing housework and chores and the rest of the time doing exercises and listening to lectures. Among the ideas Gurdjieff communicates:

*Schools are imperative. Man can never attain the necessary intensity by himself. Only super-efforts count. Another person's will is necessary. Union of centers is chief difficulty in working on oneself. Work on the moving center. Tension among group members is indispensable. Sole possibility of other centers working in a new way is to begin with moving center. Relaxing the muscles. Yoga postures. Circular sensation. Feeling the pulse throughout the body. Stop exercise. Voluntary silence. Voluntary suffering. Fasting. Breathing. Fourth way. Obyvatel. Only one thing is serious—freedom. Nothing worse than to begin to work on oneself and then to leave it and find oneself between two stools.*

27. For an intellectual and individual of Uspenskii's stripe, this had to have set up a real struggle between the "yes" and "no" in him. Emotion would have been very strong. It would thus serve to do exactly what Uspenskii asked: How to strengthen his feeling of "I." As Uspenskii would answer in a meeting many years afterward: "It is necessary to create a certain particular energy and that can be created only at a moment of very serious emotional stress. All work before that is only a preparation..."

28. Why *now*—the revolution raging, chaos and hazard everywhere, and even the most promising of his students still not mature in a spiritual sense—does Gurdjieff reveal the intellectual core of the teaching? Because in the growing mass psychosis, death at any time is a possibility. Gurdjieff has had enough experience with "stray bullets" in his life to know he might die at any time. If that happened, then one or more of his pupils, if sufficiently prepared, might be able to at least bring the teaching to the West.

For Uspenskii, who from the beginning secretly kept notes of the meetings, these six weeks in Essentuki were a time of unparalleled richness. Gurdjieff provides a detailed map, as well as exercises and postures, the "new or forgotten road to the miraculous" for which he had so long sought. Standing in the yard of the country villa in the silent early morning and looking out at the cloud-covered top of Mount Elbrus, at over 18,000 feet the highest of the Caucasus mountains, Uspenskii must have felt he stood at its top.

And yet....

And yet he says "I always have a very strange feeling when I remember this period."<sup>29</sup>

Whatever the case, he does report that all does not go well with the group. Hard feelings developed between certain members. Given the intensive nature of the work and the close quarters, this is not surprising. And as Gurdjieff has told them a "certain tension is indispensable" for chipping away attitudes. As a result of this friction, some event, which Uspenskii does not specify, has happened. Uspenskii sees it as "accidental," but Gurdjieff uses it to announce he is disbanding the group and ending all work. The announcement's apparent irrationality shocks Uspenskii to the bone.

At first he and the others do not think Gurdjieff is serious, they take it that he is only "playing" or "acting" as usual. Suddenly, Uspenskii cannot fathom Gurdjieff's actions. From this moment his confidence in Gurdjieff, he declares, "began to waver." Instead of "eating" the shock, enduring and absorbing the suffering, he calms himself by making a fatal separation. As he did a year earlier in Finland with the telepathic experience, when he decided to hide a part of his experience from his teacher—and creates, therefore, a split between what he will and will not tell Gurdjieff—Uspenskii now makes a further separation—he separates the teacher from the teaching.<sup>30</sup> With his mind, Uspenskii separates Gurdjieff, the man, from the ideas.<sup>31</sup>

29. In the midst of his elation, the idea now emerges that he must break with Gurdjieff. He gives a number of reasons for this but the feeling is that there is something more, something he either is not saying or does not himself know.

30. It is tantamount to Peter separating Jesus from the Sermon on the Mount and going on to teach his own version of Christianity as the true version.

31. The act is fatal. The teacher is a living embodiment of the teaching and by splitting the teacher from the teaching, the student, unconsciously creates an irreconcilable duality, one for which Uspenskii will sadly pay the rest of his life. Even many years later in writing and rewriting *Fragments of a Unknown Teaching*, Uspenskii appears not to see what happened for he writes, "What the matter was and what particularly provoked me is difficult for me to define even now."

AUGUST 1917. PETROGRAD. Lenin convinces thirty-eight-year-old Lev Davidovich Trotsky to join the Bolshevik Party. Trotsky, whose revolutionary credentials extend back to 1905's Bloody Sunday, is a brilliant firebrand, gifted orator and organizer. His real name was Lev Bronstein; he took "Trotsky" from his Siberian jailer (as Vladimir Ulyanov took "Lenin" from his exile near Siberia's River Lena).

EARLY SEPTEMBER 1917. PETROGRAD. Accused by Kerensky of being a traitor, General Lavr Kornilov sends troops to Petersburg to topple the Provisional government. But they desert and the right-wing *putsch* fails. Generals Kornilov, Anton Ivanovitch Denikin, and others are imprisoned in a converted monastery in the ancient town of Bykhov.

SEPTEMBER 1917. FINLAND. From his hideout, Lenin writes a series of letters to the Bolshevik Central Committee declaring the time is ripe for the seizure of power.

OCTOBER 15, 1917. PETROGRAD. Uspenskii has stayed longer than he expected and now leaves for Sochi. Of these last days in his beloved city he says: "Something disgusting and clammy was drawing near. A sickly tension and the expectation of something inevitable could be felt in everything. He saw the Bolsheviks for what they were, "agents of destruction." They destroyed not so much by their actions but "as by their very existence which corrupts and disintegrates everything around them. This special property of theirs explained their approaching victory and all that happened much later."

OCTOBER 24-25, 1917. PETROGRAD. The Bolsheviks seize power. (By the Gregorian calendar, it is November 7th.) Peasants seize land. The economy totters. The Army's generals are imprisoned.

AUTUMN 1917. SOCHI. Following the teaching in Essentuki, Uspenskii had left for Petersburg to collect his belongings. The rising famine and anarchy meant he could only pack essentials. He must leave behind his library, an intellectual's chief food. Returning to Sochi, he finds that Gurdjieff has taken another country house a little over fifteen miles from the town. Ten people live in the villa, its grounds full of roses. On one side it offers a view of the sea, and on the other a chain of mountains. Despite the beauty, Uspenskii finds the atmosphere greatly changed, not at all like Essentuki.

From Dr. Stjoernval he learns that Gurdjieff and Zacharov are not speaking. Worse, Zacharov is preparing to return to Petersburg. The reason is that Gurdjieff had "a very absurd quarrel" with some Lettish neighbors and Zacharov had manifested in some way so that, from then

on, Gurdjieff stopped speaking to him. Uspenskii thinks the situation "pure idiocy," and convinces a reluctant Zacharov to mend matters with Gurdjieff. Zacharov finally does so, but Gurdjieff maintains that Zacharov, having decided to return to Petersburg, should go. "I could not understand it. I would not have let a dog go to St. Petersburg at that time," declares an angry Uspenskii.<sup>32</sup>

NOVEMBER 1917. BYKHOV. Facing certain execution at the hands of the Red Guards, the imprisoned generals escape to South Russia. Says General Denikin of what he experienced en route: "I saw clearly unbounded hatred everywhere. Only one desire reigned supreme—to seize and destroy. Its aim seemed to be not to better itself, but to drag down to its level anything that in one way or another stood out or seemed different."

NOVEMBER 1917. TUAPSE. Gurdjieff, Uspenskii and four others live twenty-five miles north of Tuapse in a house on the Black Sea.

DECEMBER 1917. LENINGRAD. Anna Ilinishna Butkovsky marries the Englishman Charles Hewitt, forty-eight years old; he represents a British timber importer in Russia. She leaves Russia with her husband; in Paris she runs a fashionable dress salon and also deals in antiques.

LATE DECEMBER 1917. Generals Kornilov, Alekseev, and Denikin form the Volunteer Army, or the White Army, to fight the Bolsheviks. Kornilov takes command in South Russia.

JANUARY 1918. ESSENTUKI. After moving to several more villas, Gurdjieff finally returns to Essentuki in January and rents a house. It is unfinished, with all its rooms looking out onto a verandah but having no windows or doors.

32. Unwittingly, Uspenskii here, as elsewhere, puts himself on a level with Gurdjieff, taking himself to be awake enough to judge his teacher's actions. Zacharov perhaps did the same. Why Gurdjieff acted as he did will never be known, but, given the mounting chaos with which the group is surrounded, the bond of trust between student and teacher had to be unshakable. Hierarchy and discipline are essential if the group is to safely walk the fault line of the psychic earthquake that the Bolsheviks had prepared. With the Letts, perhaps, Gurdjieff had acted—"With a *svolotch* [lowest of the low] I am a *svolotch*. With a good man, I am a good man," Gurdjieff said during this time—and Zacharov took this "acting" as real. Whatever, the fact is that psychologically Uspenskii had elevated himself to the chair of the teacher. He believed he could judge Gurdjieff. It is true, however, that Gurdjieff has said to them, "By now you ought better to understand in what my aim consists and by now you ought to see whether you are on the same road as I am or not." Uspenskii may here be shoring up his decision to follow a different road by finding fault with Gurdjieff's actions, thus devaluing the road Gurdjieff is taking so he can devalue Gurdjieff's road. It is interesting to note that Gurdjieff uses the word "road" here, which of course corresponds to Uspenskii's seeking what he calls "a new or forgotten road."

FEBRUARY 1918. ESSENTUKI. Over Uspenskii's signature, Gurdjieff has a circular letter sent out to his pupils in Moscow and Petersburg inviting them to come to him. Showing Uspenskii around the house he has rented, Gurdjieff reminds Uspenskii of his concern of several years before, when Gurdjieff asked group members to pay 1,000 rubles. Only "one-and-a-half persons" had paid that amount, Gurdjieff tells him, and declares, "I have now already spent more than was collected then."

FEBRUARY 1918. PETROGRAD. Anna Kamenskaia has urged readers of the theosophical journal *Vestnik Teosofii* to give their support. "At this critical moment in Russian life the voice of *Vestnik* should not be silenced, the hearthfire should not go out. The Editorial Board hopes that those who warmed themselves at this hearthfire will not leave it in this difficult moment and will help to carry forward the light of Eternity into the world." In 1916 its subscription price had been seven rubles; now it is twenty-one rubles. Suffering from the paper shortage and rising printing costs, each issue is smaller than the preceding, until the journal ceases publication.

By the year's end, the Bolsheviks order all religious, occult, mystical groups to cease activities. Kamenskaia and her followers go into the countryside to meet but by spring "the Red Wave had flooded the countryside" and they returned to the city.<sup>33</sup>

MARCH 3, 1918. BREST-LITOVSK. As the Germans had predicted, the Communists sign a treaty with Germany withdrawing Russia from the war.

MARCH 1918. ESSENTUKI. Some forty pupils from Moscow and St. Petersburg arrive. From the Petersburg group besides Uspenskii, also present is Uspenskii's wife, Sophia,<sup>34</sup> and her daughter by a previous marriage, Lenchka Savitsky; Dr. Stjoernal, his wife, Elizabeta; Charkovsky; Nicholas, the government official; Madame Bashmakova; the de Hartmanns, Thomas and Olga; and Zacharov, still weak from an illness. From the Moscow group, there is, besides Gurdjieff's wife, the beautiful and finely formed Julia Osipovna Ostrowska, Alexander Nikanotovich Petrov, one of Gurdjieff's chief pupils and highly gifted in mathematics

33. In 1921, at the behest of Mrs. Besant, Kamenskaia would leave Russia for England. In 1922 the Bolsheviks would open their "antireligious front" in which they closed presses, confiscated literature, and published numerous articles castigating occult societies. This would be followed by the exile or arrest of the more prominent members.

34. Whether Sophia Grigorievna—"Madame Uspenskii" as she is always called—was in fact married to Uspenskii is not clear. The likelihood is that she was not. Born in 1874, and four years older than him, she had twice been married; first to a student when she was sixteen, then to a mining engineer with whom she traveled to remote areas of Russia. A son was killed early in his life and her daughter would be old enough to give birth to a step-grandchild in 1919. How Uspenskii and Sophia Grigorievna got together and how his relationship with Anna Butkovsky ended is not known.

and engineering; Alexei Yakovlevich Rachmilievitch, one of Gurdjieff's earliest pupils; Lina Fedorovna; Zhukov; and N. F. Grigoriev. One who comes on his own initiative is P. V. Shandarovsky, a well-educated lawyer who plays the violin, a Guarneri.

Strict rules are immediately established in the house. People are forbidden to leave the grounds by day and security is posted day and night. In time, Gurdjieff asks the group to give a name for their society. Uspenskii suggests, "The Society for Struggle against Sleep," but Gurdjieff feels it too obvious. Finally, "International Fellowship for Realization through Work" is selected. A sign is made. It features two symbols, the pentagram and the enneagram. Every day, notices appear on the bulletin board. One demands that each member break all ties with everyone. There must be no identification. Another notice says that all possessions are to be given up. Full members are named, the first three being Uspenskii, Petrov, and Dr. Stjoernal; later Thomas de Hartmann. One notice divides the day into hours with each hour devoted to inner exercises. Physical exercises are given that are much more complex and varied than at the first intensive in Essentuki. Movements and dances are given and various ways of breathing studied. Subjects of discussion during lectures are: Attention. Real confession. Chief feature. Conscience. Crystallization of the soul.

During the group's stay in Essentuki public lectures are given, first with Uspenskii reading a lecture and at another lecture Petrov reads from his paper about the Ray of Creation. Several days after the first lecture Gurdjieff calls the group together and says they must know how this Work originated. Following many years of separate work in places where initiation centers were still alive, three people—a man of science, a man of religions and their histories, and a 'man of being'—met by prearrangement at the foot of one of the Egyptian pyramids. They agreed to form groups of people in various places having the right conditions. The real purpose could only become clear when full attention was given to the idea of the crystallization of the soul.

Instead of Gurdjieff lecturing to the public, he has the group put up posters around Essentuki announcing a lecture by the notorious "Dr. Black," a fictional charlatan depicted in satirical poems of the time.

"Why always a suggestion of charlatanism for prospective pupils at the very first meeting?" asks Thomas de Hartmann, and then he explains: "Teachers usually surround themselves with an atmosphere of great seriousness and importance, to give newcomers a good impression. With Mr. Gurdjieff it was just the opposite: everything that could repel, even frighten, a new man was always produced. A newcomer had the opportunity to meet Mr. Gurdjieff and to talk with him, but at once there was put before him some obstacle to be surmounted. On the other

hand, Mr. Gurdjieff never let a newcomer go away empty-handed if he came with real questions and spoke about something that was of genuine importance to him."

But even with the older students Gurdjieff 'acts' or 'plays.' And now, as a means of increasing the pressure on the group, he "acts" with everyone. For Uspenskii, in particular, this must be hard to swallow. Considering himself a very decent man, the deceit and hypocrisy of ordinary life always rankle. So to find that his teacher employs the same as a means of teaching is more than ironic. Theoretically, of course, Uspenskii says he understands. But he doesn't find this 'playing' always practical.

"In practice," he says, "this 'play' drove away many useful people and kept by him others that were not suitable."

It seemed to Uspenskii that Gurdjieff was not always in full control of his manifestations, which was of great concern to him.

"What always amazed myself and others in his 'play'," he says, "was that sometimes it was too obvious not to be seen, as if he were not trying to hide the whole threads at all, or that sometimes he could not stop himself and 'played' by habit automatically, even when and where there was neither use nor meaning in it."<sup>35</sup>

Others, such as Thomas de Hartmann saw it differently: "As the basis of his Work," he explains, "was to create every kind of impression in a pupil for this transformation [to real I], he could accomplish it only through the playing of roles." He gives the example of a pupil needing the experience of injustice and so Gurdjieff plays the unjust man. "Then one had to hold back from reacting badly and not be resentful." If he simply suffered in the usual way, it was not intentional suffering and had no value. Gurdjieff became "our tempter," notes Thomas de Hartmann. "As tempter he provoked in us a strong inner experience of feeling and sensation, which in life expresses itself as what some call 'negative emotion', and then he strove to enable us to transform it by seeing it and reasoning about it."

Uspenskii speaks of the group disdainfully as having become a "colony." Gurdjieff, he believes, is leading the group "in fact towards the way of religion." Though he does not consider this way wrong, "*it is not my way*," he declares.

And so he moves Madame Uspenskii and her daughter into a separate house. For two years he has not been able to write. Now he returns to work-

35. Given Uspenskii's comments at the time, he never appears to have seen Gurdjieff's 'acting' in relation to himself. Like every student, he has difficulty in seeing things involving himself from any but a personal perspective. Yet, at the same time, he invariably distances himself, taking the supposedly impartial stance of the observer. His pet corn is his rejection of all which smacks of the irrational, deceit, the religious, or the cult, and Gurdjieff, of course, has acted accordingly.

ing on the book he began seven years before, *Wisdom of the Gods*. While he continues to speak with Gurdjieff, he refuses to go to the "Home."<sup>36</sup>

For Gurdjieff, the pressures he has to live under at this time are extreme. The million rubles he had brought to Russia, the villa and instruments he had purchased for his Institute, the great energy he had invested—are all now gone. Uncertainty and hazard are everywhere and people are acting, he says, like "infuriated beasts, ready to tear one another apart for the slightest booty." Of this period he says: "For me personally, of all that I went through in Russia, this was the period of most intense nervous strain. All the time I not only had to think and worry about obtaining the most immediate necessities of life, which had become almost unprocurable, but I was also constantly concerned about the lives of the hundred or so people who were in my care."

APRIL 13, 1918. EKATERINODAR. In an attempt to capture the town, General Kornilov, commander of the Volunteer Army, is killed by a stray shell. Forty-five-year-old General Denikin, former commander of Russia's Western Front assumes command.

MAY 15, 1918. ALEXANDROPOL. Turkish soldiers advance into Armenia. All in Gurdjieff's family flee except his eighty-five-year-old father who loads his rifle and sits in his doorway awaiting his fate. He is later buried near his home.

MID-SUMMER 1918. RUSSIA. Only a few months after Russia's withdrawal from the European War, a full-scale civil war breaks out.

MID-JULY, 1918. ESSENTUKI. Quite unexpectedly a cart pulls up in front of Gurdjieff's home. Inside are twenty-eight people, all relatives of his. There are his mother, his younger brother Dimitri Ivanovitch with his wife and a small child, one of his sisters Sophie Ivanovna and her fiancé, Georgi Leibovich Kapanadze, two more sisters, and a niece and nephew. Gurdjieff rents a house nearby where they can live.

JULY 16-17, 1918. EKATERINBURG. Tsar Nicholas II, family and servants are murdered.

AUGUST 1918. GERMANY. A regimental runner, receives the Iron Cross, First Class for bravery. The medal is rarely given to a common soldier. The runner's name is Adolf Hitler.

36. Since the previous August, Uspenskii has been caught between a 'yes' and a 'no,' caught between breaking with Gurdjieff and staying on. What he terms his "personal position" in the Work has been changing. He is looking for a way out....

AUGUST 6, 1918. ESSENTUKI. In the middle of a civil war, with Bolshevik and White Army soldiers on all sides, and everyone in the grip of a mounting mass psychosis with which he is very familiar, Gurdjieff decides he and his followers must do the impossible: *leave Russia*. Because of the danger that may be encountered, Gurdjieff leaves his family behind.

To get out, the Caucasus must be crossed. The main mountain range of the Caucasus is some 750 miles long and over 100 miles wide. The terrain is often rugged, the roads are poor, and, besides the civil war, there are bandits. The journey seems foolhardy enough, but how to persuade the power possessing beings of the time, infected by paranoia and hatred, to allow such a crossing...?

Only a mind like Gurdjieff's could have dreamed up the unlikely idea of organizing a scientific expedition to the region of Mount Induk in the Caucasus to search both for dolmens and gold. To put it into action, first he has Petrov, a master calligrapher, write a letter for Shandarovsky, a personable and persuasive lawyer, to deliver to the Essentuki Soviet's Council of Deputies. The impressive looking letter requests permission for the expedition. At the same time, as he had done earlier in placing the ballet notice with Uspenskii, Gurdjieff has a story planted about the expedition in the Piatigorsk newspapers. (It is the higher Soviet Council in Piatigorsk that had the authority to assist the expedition materially.) The story is entirely Gurdjieff's composition; he dictates all its questions and answers: *The expedition intends to go to a remote wilderness, inaccessible to military activities of the civil war. Therefore this scientific work and its discoveries cannot be hindered.*

Soon equipment begins to arrive from Piatigorsk. Having requisitioned and received the necessary supplies of coffee, tea, salt, potatoes, flour, tents and carpets, the group sets out on their journey. Besides Gurdjieff, it includes fourteen people: seven men, five women and two children—all of whom Gurdjieff says are "half-consciously or unconsciously devoted to me." They leave Essentuki with horses and two small carts in two baggage cars pulled by a slow-moving freight train.

Among the men are Petrov, Zacharov, Zhukov, Thomas de Hartmann, and Dr. Stjoernal. Among the women are Mesdames Ostrowska, de Hartmann, Stjoernal, and Bashmakova.

Notably absent is Uspenskii and his family, with his convenient excuse that Madame Uspenskii's daughter, Lenochka, is expecting her first child. Whatever his outward face, he has decided to break with Gurdjieff.

Not until the next day does Gurdjieff's group reach Armavir and only the following morning arrives in Maikop, which is surrounded by fighting cossacks and Red Army troops. They await the outcome on a farm

outside of town. The cossacks take the town and the group moves on by foot, picking their way between the opposing sides, heading into the mountains. No fewer than five times the group has to cross Bolshevik and White Army lines. All about them is what Gurdjieff says is an "epidemic of fanaticism and mutual hatred." The circumstances summoned all of Gurdjieff's capacities. During this period he says, "miracles were being performed for us...I and my companions moved under supernatural protection." After many trials and hardships, the group finally crosses the mountains and in October reaches Sochi on the Black Sea. After a few days Gurdjieff suddenly announces that the expedition is finished and advises everyone to make their own plans for the future. Only the de Hartmanns, Stjoernvals, and Zhukov remain with Gurdjieff.

Of this period Gurdjieff says—"In my opinion, we got out safely because in the common presences of these people—although in the grip of a psychic state in which the last grain of reasonableness vanishes—the instinct inherent in all human beings for distinguishing good from evil in the objective sense was not completely lacking. And therefore, instinctively sensing in my activities the living germ of that sacred impulse which alone is capable of bringing genuine happiness to humanity, they furthered in whatever way they could the process of accomplishment of that which I had undertaken long before the war."

AUGUST 30, 1918. Lenin is shot twice by a female assassin but recovers.

SEPTEMBER 5, 1918. MOSCOW. The Red Terror officially begins. Prisoners and hostages throughout Russia are massacred. "Kulaks," rich peasants, are hunted down and shot by the Cheka, Lenin's secret police.

NOVEMBER 1918. The First World War ends. The Russian civil war continues.

MID-JANUARY 1919. TIFLIS. Gurdjieff, his wife, the Stjoernvals, and the de Hartmanns leave Sochi by ship for Poti and then take a train to Tiflis. Through an old friend and composer, Tcherepnin, de Hartmann learns that a friend from his early days in Munich, the forty-four-year-old artist Alexander de Salzmann, is painting the scenery for the local opera house. De Salzmann invites the de Hartmanns to dinner. They meet de Salzmann's pregnant wife, Jeanne Matignon, who is twenty-two or twenty-three years of age. She had been one of the three principal dancers with Jacques Dalcroze, founder of a leading European school of dance. The de Hartmanns tell them about the teaching. Later, they meet Gurdjieff who says of them: "He is a very fine man, and she—is intelligent." So begins Gurdjieff's fruitful relationship with the de Salzmans.

That autumn, Gurdjieff decides to re-establish his Institute in Tiflis. He asks Dr. Stjoernal, the de Hartmanns and the de Salzmans to name it. He rejects every name until the five come up with The Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man. Rehearsals now begin for the staging of *The Struggle of the Magicians* at the State Theater. Stage sets are designed, music written, dances rehearsed, costumes made. One morning Olga enters the performance hall and sees Gurdjieff taking an axe to the decorations. She thinks he has gone mad. But he says, "Why are you so astonished? We have done it, so we don't need it anymore. Now it can go to the dump." Her husband recounts one of the principles of Gurdjieff's teaching: "Make the pupils do something that is terribly difficult and demands all their attention and diligence, and then destroy it, because, for them, only the effort is necessary and not the thing itself."

JANUARY 1919. ESSENTUKI. Cossacks capture the town. At some point Lenchka, Madame Uspenskii's daughter, has given birth to a son, Leonidas, or Lonya, Savitsky.

APRIL 1, 1919. SOUTH RUSSIA. Denikin's White Army is supplied with arms and advisors by England and France.

SUMMER 1919. ROSTOV-ON-THE-DON. Uspenskii moves his family from Essentuki to Rostov-on-the-Don. The English journalist Carl Bechhofer-Roberts finds Uspenskii in "rooms [that] were icily cold; draughts blew in every direction; and coal was practically unobtainable owing to the breakdown of the transport system." Uspenskii's sole possessions consist of a shabby overcoat and a ragged frock coat, an extra pair of boots, several extra shirts and pairs of socks, a blanket, towel, tin of coffee, razor, and a file and whetstone. Roberts says, "He assured me that he considered himself exceptionally fortunate to have so much left." Uspenskii has supported himself and his family over the past year by taking jobs as a porter, schoolmaster, and a librarian.

JUNE 1919. EKATERINODAR. Uspenskii moves his family to Ekaterinodar, the capital of the Kouban region, located on the bank of the Kouban River in the plain of the Northern Caucasus. One of Russia's richest towns and a center for grain and other raw products, this eighteenth century town is considered the cheapest place in Russia to live. But in other ways it is a virtual hell: Ekaterinodar is a foul smelling, filthy town, a soulless place without history, where the streets, littered now with large numbers of rotting animals, all run at right angles.

SUMMER 1919. CAUCASUS. General Denikin's White Army begins its advance towards Moscow.

JULY 25, 1919. EKATERINODAR. Uspenskii manages to send the first in a series of five letters to Alfred Richard Orage, the editor of the *New Age*, whom he met in London in 1914 as he returned to Russia from his second journey to the East. Uspenskii describes ordinary life amid a revolution. "The prices of all products and necessities have risen by twenty, fifty, a hundred, or six hundred times," he says. "Workmen's wages of workmen have risen twenty, fifty, or even a hundred times. But the salary of an ordinary brain-worker—a teacher, journalist or doctor—has risen in the best cases by no more than three times and, very often has not risen at all, but has actually decreased. If you earn 2,000 rubles a month," he says, "you are considered to be doing well; but often one meets with earnings of 1,000, 800, or 600 rubles. But the cheapest pair of boots cost 900 rubles, a pound of tea 150 rubles, a bottle of wine 60 rubles, and so on. On the whole, you may reckon a ruble now as worth a pre-war kopeck, i.e., its hundredth part."

Aware now of Uspenskii's plight, Orage contacts Major Frank Pinder, a friend serving in General Denikin's White Army. Pinder contacts Uspenskii and offers him a job on his staff, paying his salary out of his own pocket.

While in Ekaterinodar, Uspenskii receives a letter from Gurdjieff, who says he has reached Tiflis and has opened there the Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man. Gurdjieff encloses a prospectus for the Institute. Uspenskii sees that he is listed as one of the Institute's "specialist teachers." Gurdjieff says he is preparing his ballet, *The Struggle of the Magicians*, but nowhere in the letter does he mention their past difficulties.<sup>37</sup> Uspenskii sees this as "very characteristic." These difficulties he considers "very real." His decision to leave Gurdjieff had cost him dearly, he says, and he could "not give it up so easily, the more so because all his [Gurdjieff's] motives could be seen."<sup>38</sup>

Others around Uspenskii believe that when the revolution is over they will be able to return to "the old life." But Uspenskii has no such illusions. "In the face of the weakness of the intelligentsia," he says, "... It [Bolshevism] began openly to wage war on culture, to destroy all cultural values, and to annihilate the intelligentsia as the representative of culture."

37. Not seeing he is identified with what, for him, happened in Essentuki, Uspenskii believes his interpretation of his impressions is accurate. Any mention of "past difficulties" by Gurdjieff, whatever tack he may take, only legitimizes Uspenskii's identification, his 'dream.' By ignoring it, Gurdjieff forces Uspenskii to keep working with it, keep 'eating' it.

38. Uspenskii apparently forgets that Gurdjieff had said a pupil can never see the teacher. Or, and this perhaps approximates his attitude more closely, *Uspenskii no longer sees himself as a pupil*. In any case, Uspenskii does not go to Tiflis.

When he had left Petersburg in 1917, he says "the ground had fallen away behind me." He now recognizes what so many hide from themselves—there is "no way back."

"To no place that I had left," he says "was it possible to return."

All bridges to his past life are literally burnt behind him.

There is no possibility of return to anything. His whole life, as it were, is wiped out, erased.<sup>39</sup>

Years before, he had foreseen all this. As he had said of the Bolsheviks as early as 1905, "Some of them are very nice people, quite sincere and terribly unselfish. But those will perish. Only scoundrels will survive." He had attended some of their meetings. "They just talked and talked: how bad everything was, how miserable everybody was, and how beautiful everything would be if there were no police, no Cossacks and no General Governors.... But when it came to having tea, it transpired that the members of the committee had eaten all the cakes and oranges, and drunk all the tea! So there was nothing left for the rest of us."

Whatever their difficulties, Gurdjieff agrees with Uspenskii about the political situation. Gurdjieff believes "Marxism to be satanic."

Asked by a friend what practical results the Work had produced in him, Uspenskii says that because of it he had acquired a "strange confidence."

"This is not self-confidence in the ordinary sense," he says, "quite the contrary, rather is it a confidence in the unimportance and insignificance of *self*, that self which we usually know." This confidence stems from his realizing that "if something terrible happened to me... it would be *not* I who would meet it, not this ordinary I, but another I within me who would be equal to the occasion." He goes on to say that when Gurdjieff asked him two years before if he had felt a new I inside him, he said that he did not. "Now," declares Uspenskii, "I can speak otherwise."

With that, Uspenskii collects a small group around him and begins to teach the teaching that Gurdjieff had brought. In doing so, he makes a discovery: "Gurdjieff astonished us in St. Petersburg by his capacity to see in people their hidden fundamental features. The nexus was that the whole of one's character is already wound round one particular feature or round an axle or a reel. This capacity in him looked almost miraculous. And now I saw the same capacity in myself."<sup>40</sup>

39. For a man of rare sensitivity and intelligence, this enormous sense of loss and emptiness—the virtual "death" of his past—must have caused a great emotional wound. But Uspenskii, however great his pessimism about ordinary life, is too strong a man to ever totally give up.

40. In this way, he rationalizes his equality with Gurdjieff.

AUGUST 16, 1919. EKATERINODAR. Denikin captures the city. Against his orders, Denikin's men begin to rape and pillage. Jewish pogroms are mounted.

AUGUST 26, 1919. NOVOROSIYSK. Denikin captures the city.

SEPTEMBER 20, 1919. KURSK. Denikin captures the city. The White Army is now only 330 miles from Moscow.

SEPTEMBER 26, 1919. Denikin's White Army surrounds the forces of Nestor Ivanovich Makhno, a charismatic guerrilla leader. A semiliterate peasant and anarchist, he sides with neither the Whites nor the Bolsheviks. Makhno's guerrillas, flying the black anarchist flag, withstand the onslaught and inflict a defeat on Denikin's Whites.

AUTUMN 1919. NOVOROSIYSK. A second letter from Gurdjieff reaches Uspenskii who, apparently, makes no reply. Both Petrov and Zacharov show up in Ekaterinodar, both in a "negative frame of mind" about the Work. Uspenskii's advice: "it is imperative to make a distinction between the system and Gurdjieff."

OCTOBER 14, 1919. Denikin's army takes Orel. Moscow is now only 245 miles away. Tula is next, only 122 miles from Moscow. Meanwhile, in the Ukraine, Makhno's guerrillas attack Denikin from the rear, cutting supply lines and taking cities.

1919. TIFLIS. "A man of striking appearance. Short, dark and swarthy, with penetrating and clever eyes; no one could be in his company for many minutes without being impressed by the force of his personality. One did not need to believe him infallible, but there was no denying his extraordinary all-round intelligence." This is how the journalist Carl Bechhofer-Roberts describes the Gurdjieff he finds in Tiflis. Uspenskii has given him a letter of introduction, and Gurdjieff takes him to a number of obscure Georgian and Persian restaurants and then to a bathhouse.

In the evenings, Roberts visits the Institute and watches rehearsals for *The Struggle of the Magicians*. Gurdjieff tells him that the dances "were based on movements and gestures which had been handed down by traditions and paintings in Tibetan monasteries, where he had been. The music, also, was of mysterious tradition. He himself could not play a note, and knew nothing of composition; but the academician [Thomas de Hartmann] who interpreted his ideas assured me that he had learned more of the theory of music from Gurdjieff than in any of the schools. The decorations and costumes were also his work; he had even painted and sewn them himself."

For the third time now, Gurdjieff has tried to establish his Institute. But the promised building from the Tiflis government never materialized and the temporary quarters Gurdjieff was given were unsuitable.

"I finally gave up wasting my time and energy," he says, "in the struggle with the conditions round me."

He decides to leave for Constantinople.

OCTOBER 20, 1919. OREL. The Red Army recaptures Orel from Denikin, breaking the White advance on Moscow and sending it into full retreat. Makhno's guerilla forces continue to ravage Denikin's rear forces, depriving it of much needed supplies.

NOVEMBER 1, 1919. Forty-one-year-old Baron Pyotr Nikolaevich Wrangel, a Caucasian general, takes command of Denikin's remnants. Says Denikin of the struggle: "Not only did the experience cripple the body. It deformed the soul as well."

DECEMBER 1919. Denikin escapes to Europe. The Red Army pursues Makhno, destroying his forces.

EARLY JANUARY 1920. NOVOROSIYSK. Uspenskii and his family make their way to Odessa and from there to Constantinople.

JANUARY 1920. GERMANY. Hitler becomes chief of party propaganda for the German Workers' Party, which in a few months will change its name to National Socialist German Workers' Party. Party members will be known as Nazis.

LATE JANUARY 1920. CONSTANTINOPLE. Uspenskii, his wife Sophia, and her daughter Lenchka with her one-year-old son Lonya arrive. Twelve years earlier Uspenskii had been here. But that city no longer exists.

The Constantinople he finds is not only noisier but "rapidly acquiring a Western drabness and hideousness." Despite the new and teeming crowds which throng its streets—the repatriated Turkish soldiers, the penniless Russian refugees, the assorted flotsam of humanity—the city, a living museum of long gone Byzantium, seems to Uspenskii more empty.

He and his family live in one of the refugee camps on the island of Prinkipo. A half-hour ferry ride from city of Constantinople, Prinkipo lies about ten miles southeast in the Sea of Marmara. He visits Péra, the Russian and European quarter where he had previously stayed and where many of his friends lived. But none remain.

He earns money by teaching English to Russian exiles and giving mathematics lessons to children. He begins to give lectures in Péra at the White

Russian Club, the *Russky Mayak*. As he did in Rostov and Ekaterinodar, he connects the ideas of esotericism with those of psychology and philosophy.

He receives some good news. *Tertium Organum* has been translated into English and published in America by Nicholas Bessaraboff, an emigrant of the Russian Revolution, and Claude Bragdon.

SPRING 1920. CONSTANTINOPLE. Uspenskii, looking for additional places to hold lectures, meets an Englishwoman, forty-seven-year-old Mrs. Winifred Beaumont, who offers the drawing room of her apartment in Péra. There Uspenskii meets Mrs. Beaumont's lover, twenty-three-year-old John Godolphin Bennett, head of a section of British intelligence in Constantinople. Uspenskii must be surprised as Mrs. Beaumont is only six years younger than Bennett's mother, and Bennett, it turns out, is still married to his wife Evelyn, pregnant in England. Both Mrs. Beaumont and Bennett are personal friends of Prince Sabaheddin, a nephew of the reigning Sultan and son of a famous Turkish reformer. The Prince also begins to attend Uspenskii's meetings held every Wednesday afternoon. The diminutive Prince, slight and delicate, has an open mind and is well-versed in the subject of self-transformation. He has traveled to the capitals of Europe, and owns a house in Switzerland (where he first met Mrs. Beaumont). Among his many friends is Rudolph Steiner, the founder of Anthroposophy.

SPRING 1920. TIFLIS. Gurdjieff's Institute gradually dissolves. He decides to liquidate everything, break with everything that tied him to Russia and renounces "once and for all the idea of making Russia the permanent center of the activities of my Institute." Soon the group will leave for Constantinople.

SUMMER 1920. GERMANY. Hitler designs the Nazi flag. In the middle of its red background is a white disk with a black swastika, the *hakenkreuz*. The red, white, and black colors are ancient symbols of the three forces or *gunas*. It's likely he got the idea of using the swastika from *Ostara*, an anti-Semitic magazine which used the swastika symbol. *Ostara* is dedicated to racial purity and published by a defrocked monk.

JULY 7, 1920. Six months after Uspenskii's arrival, Gurdjieff and his party arrive in Constantinople on a ship from Batum. With him are the de Hartmanns, Thomas and Olga; the de Salzmans, Jeanne and Alexander; Major Frank Pinder, and assorted others. The group takes separate quarters in Péra.

On the first day Gurdjieff makes a poor man's stew from fat-failed sheep for everyone. On the second day the group learns that Uspenskii and his family are living in Prinkipo. Gurdjieff asks everyone to bring sheep's heads.<sup>41</sup> Thomas de Hartmann says they "could be bought

cheaply, already roasted in an oven and broken in pieces, brains and all, ready for eating. Mr. Gurdjieff was very fond of sheep's head." There is also a soup and, of course, *douziko*, a strong anise-flavored Greek vodka.

Gurdjieff soon sets-up his "office" at the Black Rose, the rather dubious café frequented by a cross-section of White Russians, officers, whores, alcoholics, drug addicts, and assorted denizens of the night.

Uspenskii had broken with Gurdjieff nearly two years before. They had not seen one another since Essentuki. Now the two meet again at the Black Rose.

"In truth," says Uspenskii, "I was expecting Gurdjieff to come to Constantinople."

He is glad to see Gurdjieff and soon decides that "in the interests of the work, all former difficulties could be set aside<sup>42</sup> and that I could work with him as in Petersburg."

Uspenskii turns over to Gurdjieff his thirty or so students, mostly from the Russky Mayak. Among them is Boris Ferapontoff, a devotee of Nietzsche. Absent are Mrs. Beaumont and young Bennett. Their interest is not strong enough to make a commitment. Uspenskii continues to lecture at Mrs. Beaumont's apartment, perhaps in his role, given Gurdjieff's Tiflis prospectus, as a "specialist teacher."

At some point during Uspenskii's early days in Constantinople, he meets Boris Mouravieff. An intellectual with a great love of books, Mouravieff has a keen, if conventionally disposed, mind and morality. He never trusted, much less understood, Gurdjieff. Given Mouravieff's attitude, his influence on Uspenskii had to be negative.

AUGUST 1920. Prince Sabaheddin telephones Bennett to ask if he might invite to Uspenskii's afternoon lectures a newly arrived friend. The Prince tells Bennett that though he had met this friend only three or four times, first in 1908 and the last in 1912. He says he regards him "as one of the very few men who had been able to penetrate into the hidden brotherhoods of Central Asia." The Prince tells Bennett, too, that he would be meeting "the most remarkable man he would ever know." Coming from the Prince, whom Bennett regards highly, this is high praise.

The Prince's friend arrives at about half-past nine in the evening, long after the lecture is over and Uspenskii has departed, but he shows not the least sign of embarrassment. Bennett observes that the man—his name of course was Gurdjieff— greets "the Prince in Turkish with an accent

41. Is there a connection between Gurdjieff hearing that Uspenskii is in Constantinople and his cooking sheep's heads for dinner?

42. Setting aside and not working through these "difficulties," Uspenskii keeps in place the conditions for a future break.

that was a strange mixture of cultured Osmanli and some uncouth Eastern dialect."

Introduced to the Prince's friend,<sup>43</sup> Bennett says:

"I met the strangest eyes I have ever seen. The two eyes were so different that I wondered if the light had played some trick on me."

The difference, Bennett realizes, is not because of any kind of cast or defect in either eye but, rather, in their expression.

Of Gurdjieff's general appearance, Bennett says: "He had long, black mustaches fiercely curled upwards. He wore a kalpack, that is, an astrakhan cap [and a shaved head beneath]." Gurdjieff tells Bennett, perhaps for effect, that he was born in 1866, thus making himself fifty-four years old, practically twice Bennett's age.

As both Bennett and the Prince have a keen interest in hypnotism, the conversation eventually turns there. The Prince asks Bennett to relate the experiments he has been making. Gurdjieff listens attentively.

"I felt," says Bennett, "that he was not so much following my words as participating in the experience. I have never before had the same feeling of being understood better than I understood myself."

As Gurdjieff speaks about levels of experience in relation to hypnotism, it is quickly evident to Bennett that "this man had specialized knowledge of a kind I had not met with before."

At one point, Bennett speaks of his discovery of the fifth dimension—he had had an out-of-body experience during the war—and his belief that it is the region of free will.

"Your guess is right," answers Gurdjieff. "There are higher dimensions or higher worlds where the higher faculties of man have free play."

He explains to Bennett that theoretical understanding is of no use, as one remains where they are. Even the crystallization of a finer body is not enough in that it, too, is under material laws. He tells him that he himself must change for "Within this sphere there is no freedom. Neither your knowledge nor all your activity will give you freedom. This is because you have no *varlik*, no real being."

At one point, Gurdjieff tells Bennett: "You have the possibility of changing, but I must warn you that it will not be easy. You are still full of the idea that you can do what you like."

When leaving, Gurdjieff invites Bennett and Mrs. Beaumont to a demonstration of Temple Dances the next Saturday evening. When Ben-

43. Is it to be taken as just a coincidence that Gurdjieff shows up at Mrs. Beaumont's apartment? The Prince's fortunes, financial and political, are at a low ebb and Uspenskii has turned over most of his pupils. So why is Gurdjieff there? A possibility may be that he has heard about Bennett, a brilliant, ambitious and clever young man, who has an interest in the occult—and has come to recruit him. It is interesting, as well, that Gurdjieff speaks to Bennett of his *idée fixe* of the moment, the fifth dimension. In Petersburg he had insisted Uspenskii abandon his notions of the fourth dimension.

nett and Mrs. Beaumont go to the demonstration they are surprised to see, of all people, Uspenskii. He had given no indication that he knew Gurdjieff. Though impressed with the dances, Bennett and Mrs. Beaumont do not become members of Gurdjieff's circle.

SEPTEMBER 1920. Gurdjieff opens his Institute on the ground floor of a large house in Péra. Here, as he did in Petersburg, Uspenskii devotes himself to helping Gurdjieff organize the work. The movements and sacred dances are practiced and self-remembering and self-observation are emphasized, as is work with the centers. Students are told by Gurdjieff that "effort influenced by necessity or desire is no effort. To remember oneself is effort because no external shock can force us. Effort is for the sake of consciousness. Struggle with habits gives a taste of effort. Self-remembering helps balance centers, changes chemical processes and improves nutrition." Students also study the science of numbers, the Cabala, magical arts and the traditions of Asian schools concerning religious myths.

Both Uspenskii and Gurdjieff work together on Gurdjieff's ballet *The Struggle of the Magicians*, which is becoming a leitmotif of their relationship. When they first met in April 1915, Gurdjieff had spoken to Uspenskii about his ballet. In the intervening years, however, he had said nothing more. Now he tells Uspenskii that the ballet is not a "mystery" but more of a beautiful spectacle with "a certain meaning hidden beneath the outward form." He says, too, that the ballet has "three ideas lying at the basis." Uspenskii comes to understand it is not so much a ballet, but more "a series of dramatic and mimic scenes held together by a common plot." The dances and movements are to convey certain laws of the universe and thus are "sacred dances." Of particular interest to Uspenskii is that Gurdjieff says the *same* performers will act and dance in both the scenes of the White Magician and also the Black Magician; the movements of the first being beautiful and harmonious, and in the second, ugly and disharmonious. Working with Gurdjieff on the ballet, Uspenskii comes to see sides of Gurdjieff previously hidden—the artistic and poetical.

*The Struggle of the Magicians* takes place in a large commercial town of the East. Gafar, a handsome rich Parsi, young and full of pride, falls in love with Zeinab, a twenty-one-year-old Indo-Persian beauty. Gafar tries to seduce her but fails, so he enlists the help of the Black Magician. Unwilling at first because Zeinab is a student of the White Magician, he finally puts her under a spell. When the White Magician realizes what has happened to Zeinab, he breaks the spell. Gafar, angry, goes to the White Magician who shows him two possible fates. In both he is old but

in one he is happy and cheerful and much loved; in the other he is evil and dissatisfied and regarded with aversion and disgust.

Seeing this creates a great inner struggle within Gafar.

The Magician tells him: "As you sow, so shall you reap. The deeds of the present determine the future, all that is good and all that is bad; both are the results of the past. It is the duty of every man in every moment of the present to prepare the future, improving on the past. Such is the law of fate. And 'May the source of all laws be blessed.'"

The Magician then raises his right hand and, looking upwards, his voice a whisper, says as if in prayer: "Lord Creator, and all you His assistants, help us to be able to remember ourselves at all times in order that we may avoid involuntary actions, as only through them can evil manifest itself."

NOVEMBER 12, 1920. Baron Wrangel's army is defeated by the Red Army at Perekop, 600 miles south of Moscow in the Crimea. He and what is left of his army sail for Constantinople. The Russian civil war is effectively over.

SPRING 1921. Gurdjieff invites Uspenskii to give lectures at his Institute once a week. Gurdjieff takes part, adding, when necessary, to Uspenskii's formulations. The relationship between them becomes more intimate. Gurdjieff visits Uspenskii and Madame Uspenskii in Prinkipo regularly for tea. He introduces Uspenskii to the cultural and dervish life of Constantinople. Work on the ballet moves at a furious pace as Gurdjieff rehearses the group in the subtle psychic and physical demands of his ballet. He has his students dance both the aggressive, inharmonious dances of the Black Magician as well as the reconciled and sophisticated harmonies of the White Magician.

Uspenskii notices that now Gurdjieff begins to dress in black and seems to go out of his way to provoke quarrels and misunderstandings.<sup>44</sup> This behavior alarms Uspenskii and, again, Uspenskii begins to see his teacher as he had in Petersburg—the old sore of Gurdjieff's "playing"<sup>45</sup> reopens.

44. He apparently sees no connection between Gurdjieff working on the ballet with his students and, with it as a 'ground,' working on their emotions through a change in his appearance and behavior. He is, in effect, "playing with the devil," which for Uspenskii is a trigger event.

45. "Gurdjieff had this lightly tinted whiteness. He never stopped playing with all the colors of life; that is why fools cry out against him. Uspenskii, who was a philosopher, tried to stay in the whiteness he had discovered; but if you are the disciple responsible for the kitchen, your duty is to prepare the food. If you refuse to do this, you will be sent away by the Master or you will leave of your own accord and your refusal will be a weight that will burden you for years and possibly even crush you." From Lizelle Reymond, *To Live Within* (Doubleday, 1971), p. 213.

Says Uspenskii, "... with Mr. Gurdjieff there are only two 'I's; one very good and one very bad. I believe that in the end the good 'I' will conquer. But meanwhile it is very dangerous to be near him."

Many years later in London, Uspenskii will recount this time in Constantinople with much emotion. He will remember how he and Gurdjieff worked together for "entire days and nights." One night in particular Uspenskii can never forget. The two are sitting in a cafe on Koumbaradji Street just below the former Russian consulate. Suddenly Gurdjieff begins to sing in Persian "The Song of the Dervish," afterward translating it into Russian for Uspenskii. After fifteen minutes or so of singing—when Uspenskii finds himself completely buried under forms and symbols—Gurdjieff commands:

"There, now make *one line* out of that."

Gurdjieff continues singing for another fifteen minutes or so before declaring—"That is another line."

So of all the ideas and feelings to which Gurdjieff alludes, Uspenskii is to sum it all up<sup>46</sup> in one line of poetry.

By dawn with the town just beginning to awaken, Uspenskii realizes that he had only written five verses and had stopped at the last line of the fifth verse. He is so tired that his brain would "not turn any more."

"It was some special knowledge, very sacred," says Uspenskii. "But we were both very tired."

They retire, agreeing to meet again the following night to resume the translation.

All of Uspenskii's doubts about Gurdjieff now vanish. "I felt sure I could work with him again." Uspenskii says, "That was again the real Gurdjieff."

But the next night Gurdjieff refuses to translate.

Instead Gurdjieff tells him dirty jokes.

"Nothing! Nothing but dirty jokes," cries Uspenskii. "Not even good jokes. Stupid dirty jokes!"<sup>47</sup>

For Uspenskii, there is the continuing problem of what he sees as the "two Gurdjieffs." The one who is serious and the other who plays. Says Uspenskii: "The problem of this 'play' or of the two personalities in

46. Gurdjieff is using one of Uspenskii's strengths—the ability to sum up, or wrap up, long elaborations of thought. The nickname he had given Uspenskii is "Wraps Up The Thought."

47. The teacher sees where the student is because he sees objectively. But the student interpreting everyone and everything subjectively, cannot see the teacher. Throughout their days together Gurdjieff plays Uspenskii like a violin, plucking his strings, playing cacophony or harmony, but Uspenskii, so focused is he, so identified with acquiring knowledge, never appears to see it in any but personal terms.

Gurdjieff... at times became more acute, at times seemed to disappear—we could never give a final answer to it. I am obliged to say that the majority of people who after a long period of work with Gurdjieff left him, went away because they had ceased to believe in the 'play,' and had begun to see 'reality' in many things which he did and which they could not accept as 'reality.'"

The two men continue their struggle on secondary and unusual ground. It is over the allegiance of Uspenskii's wife, Sophia Grigorievna. There may be a curious parallel here to the struggle of the black and white magicians for the soul of the beautiful and virginal Zeinab.<sup>48</sup> But for the worldly-wise Madame Uspenskii the situation is clear: Gurdjieff is the teacher; her husband the pupil.

Life in Constantinople and also with Gurdjieff is becoming more difficult and uncertain by the day. Uspenskii begins to think of a way out. "In former Russia," he says, "even in its distant outskirts, work had become impossible and we were gradually approaching the period [here] which I had foreseen in Petersburg, that is, of working in Europe."

Uspenskii expects the plague of Bolshevism to spread to Germany and from there to all of Europe. Should England align itself with the United States, it might avoid Bolshevism. Once again, Uspenskii begins thinking of going to England. But the question is how to get there.

MAY 14, 1921. A telegram from London arrives at Uspenskii's apartment in Prinkipo:

Deeply impressed by your book *Tertium Organum*. Wish to meet you New York or London. Will pay all expenses.

—Lady Rothermere

Inquiring of Bennett as to who this English woman might be, Uspenskii learns that she is the wife of one of London's wealthy newspaper moguls and has great influence with the Prime Minister, Lloyd George. Earlier Uspenskii had given Bennett three copies of *Tertium Organum*, which had been newly translated into English. And Uspenskii had received a 100 pound check for royalties from his publisher, funds he hoped to use to emigrate to England.

The telegram must have seemed like a very strong omen. With his relationship with Gurdjieff ending, his pupils gone, his wife, Sophia Grigorievna considering Gurdjieff to be her teacher, there is no reason

48. According to James Moore in *Gurdjieff: Anatomy of a Myth*, pp. 151-152, "there ensued a sharp tussle between Gurdjieff and Uspenskii for the allegiance of Madame Uspenskii." Moore supports his view with a letter Madame Uspenskii wrote three years later at the Prieuré in the autumn of 1924. The letter is quoted in *Struggle*, p.111. The reference is Bennett's book *Witness*, p. 158.

for Uspenskii to remain in Constantinople. Bennett convinces the British Consulate that Uspenskii is a highly desirable visitor and procures visas for him and his family. A new octave from the West beckons....

At the same time Gurdjieff receives an invitation from the dancing master Jacques Dalcroze to come to Germany. (The invitation has been initiated by Alexander de Salzmann who painted sets for Dalcroze at the Hellerau in Germany.)

MAY 1921. Conditions aren't right and Gurdjieff closes his Institute.

Uspenskii tells Gurdjieff of his idea to write a book giving Gurdjieff's Petersburg lectures and talks with commentaries of his own. Gurdjieff agrees and authorizes its publication. Uspenskii then begins to write *Fragments of an Unknown Teaching*. He will finish the book in the spring of 1925.

JULY 26, 1921. MOSCOW. With Russia experiencing famine in which five million starve to death, Lenin becomes ill. Any loud noise shocks him. The bells on his telephone are replaced with electric lights that flash for incoming calls.

AUGUST 13, 1921. CONSTANTINOPLE. Georgi Ivanovitch Gurdjieff embarks for Germany. Among his entourage most notably is Sophie Grigorievna, Uspenskii's wife, and her family. What exactly has happened between her and Uspenskii is not clear; her choice of teacher is beyond doubt.

AUGUST 1921. CONSTANTINOPLE. Pyotr Demianovich Uspenskii, a still solid, strong-jawed man of forty-two departs for London, alone.

## PART II

# MAGICIANS AT WAR

AUGUST 22, 1921. BERLIN. Attracted to Germany because of its central geographical location and cultural level, Gurdjieff and his students arrive. Forty-nine years old, he must have a sense that time is growing short and, if he is to accomplish his mission, he must move quickly. Though funds are always in question, Gurdjieff immediately rents a hall for movements in the expensive Schargendorf district. His café of choice becomes the Romanische Café, along the Kurfurstendamm.

The Stjoernvals have gone to Finland to sell property in order to help Gurdjieff with finances. Among those in his company in Berlin are the de Hartmanns, de Salzmanns, Madames Uspenskii, Zhukov, and Lavrona, Boris Ferapontoff, and two gifted dancers, Olga Hinzenberg (who will later marry the architect Frank Lloyd Wright) and Elizabeta Galumnian.

SEPTEMBER 1921. LONDON. Arriving from Constantinople, Uspenskii is feted and treated like visiting royalty by Lady Rothermere. She introduces him to the select of London's aristocratic, literary, and esoteric worlds. He also renews his friendship with A. R. Orage, whom he had last seen in 1914, and who, during his last days in Russia, published his "Letters From Russia" and had arranged for financial help. Though Uspenskii's command of English is far from perfect, his unique esoteric knowledge, his seriousness and intelligence make a powerful impression. A series of lectures is arranged at the Quest Society<sup>1</sup> in early November.

Orage, at forty-eight years of age, is five years Uspenskii's senior. Taller and more angular than the square-framed Uspenskii, Orage is a man of infinite charm and grace. He has established himself in British society as an influential editor and literary critic, and is a friend of people like T. S.

1. See Notes.

Elliot, George Bernard Shaw, and H. G. Wells. Like Uspenskii, he possesses a formidable intellect with a gift for quickly assimilating and articulating metaphysical complexities. Like Uspenskii, he developed an early interest in Nietzsche, is deeply versed in theosophy, the occult, and has experimented with pranayama. Like Uspenskii, Orage is also a magician of sorts, able to capture and sway people's attention and galvanize them into action. The Hindu classic *Mahabharata* is his favorite literary work and he is familiar with both hatha yoga and pranayama.

Having so brilliant an intellect, an influential position, and a large following, Orage expected to meet Uspenskii and this new teaching on equal ground. In terms of personal power, Orage is an imposing figure. A close friend speaks of him as "...not impressing by his features so much as by that which was outside and beyond his features. You were conscious of his aura; you felt his presence so much that you forgot details."

But during their first serious discussion, Orage finds himself no match for Uspenskii, who wastes no time in summarily dismissing all of Orage's views and theories as irrelevant. Remembers an intimate friend of Orage who was present at this meeting:

"Orage was shocked and hurt... [for] at every point where their views clashed, Orage had to realize that he was the novice and Uspenskii the master."

Being so easily outgunned by this Russian journalist, whom just seven years before he felt the equal of, if not the better, could not have been a pleasant experience for a dominating intellect like Orage. But Orage is also a man of great integrity with a genuine thirst for real knowledge. He introduces Uspenskii to members of his psychosynthesis group, which aimed to integrate psychoanalysis with religious perspectives. Among the members are doctors Maurice Nicoll and James Young, both associates of C. G. Jung; E. M. Eder, an intimate of Sigmund Freud; J. M. Alcock; Havelock Ellis; and Dimitri Mitrinović, a Serbian mystic and prophet, and attaché of the Serbian Legation in London.

NOVEMBER 1921. LONDON. Lecturing at Lady Rothermere's studio in Circus Road, St. John's Wood, Uspenskii speaks without gestures, and with no attempt to convince. His style is dry, authoritative. Paraphrasing Gurdjieff, he asserts that the morass of complacency into which mankind has strayed is the result of man being a machine. Worse, this machine's blind self-satisfaction, its ceaseless demand for self-gratification, has led modern civilization to the violence and crime that now breeds at every level of society. If man does not awaken to his true potentialities, and so fails to fulfill the purpose of his creation, he will become a thing of no account. Alluding to Christ, Uspenskii asserts that mankind will be the chaff that is cut down and cast into the fire.

Hard words. An even harder vision. Yet with World War I still hanging in the air like sulfur, no cosmetics are necessary. For a time, people can hear. Indicative of the general reaction is that of Dr. Maurice Nicoll, who rushes home and shakes his wife out of bed, telling her, "You must come and hear Uspenskii. He is the only man who has ever answered my questions."

Declares another, "His looks did not impress me. Nevertheless, when he smiled his eyes lit up with a warm twinkle which encouraged confidence and confidences. His nose made one think of a bird's strong beak; indeed, when sitting in reflection or repose he hunched himself together and looked like a dejected bird huddling up in a rainstorm. He was obviously a man of dominant if not domineering type of character, with determination—or obstinacy—written over his every feature."

Because of the interest generated, a house is put at Uspenskii's disposal for further lectures. Soon, an ardent audience of English intellectuals, professional people and aristocrats attend lectures three or four evenings a week at Earl's Court, 38 Warwick Gardens. About forty or fifty come on a regular basis, many becoming his pupils. The Work, the Uspenskiian version, has established itself in the West.

Bennett, having recently returned from Turkey, visits Uspenskii at his hotel on Russell Square. Uspenskii tells him of the success he is meeting with. Bennett says he has decided to return to Turkey and would like to hear some of his lectures. Uspenskii tells him: "Come if you like. But you cannot decide. If you get to Turkey, it is not because you decide. You have no power to choose. No one has power to choose." Bennett does return to Turkey but, as he recounts, "The memory of this talk remained with me, and eventually drew me back to London to study and work with him."

"I spent two hours with the man [Uspenskii]," says Rosamund Bland, a young lady interested in the Work, "and he certainly struck me as being a wonderful person. Incidentally, he has the sweetest smile in the world but that is his only attraction from an ordinary point of view, counting out the brains, of course."

NOVEMBER 24, 1921. BERLIN. Gurdjieff gives his first lecture. The theme is man's mechanicality as seen through his habitual postures. The de Hartmanns introduce him to influential friends such as Count Valvitz and Princess Gagarin, but nothing comes of it.

Gurdjieff tries to purchase the Hellerau in Dresden, the former center of Dalcroze's Eurhythmics Institute. Complications result. A legal battle ensues. Germany, despite its Teutonic spirit of self-sacrifice and cultivation of virtue—traits that seemed to make it a natural base for Gurdjieff's teaching—has strangely turned a cold shoulder. Could it

have been as simple a thing as Gurdjieff's dark complexion? Whatever, Germany was not to be.

DECEMBER 1, 1921. LONDON. "Uspenskii seemed rather depressed when I last saw him," says Rosamund Bland, "and talked of going away, back to Constantinople, because things were not going well here. As far as I can make out he thinks I am the only one who takes things really seriously and who can be of use to the work from his point of view, and it is not worth his while to spend so much energy in order to perhaps get one person into a condition where they can be useful. If he is going to spend so much force, he must have more result than that."

EARLY FEBRUARY 1922. LONDON. Six months after Gurdjieff's arrival in the West, his Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man remains only an idea. Hearing of Uspenskii's success, the fate of these two men ever entwined, Gurdjieff crosses the Channel. They meet and Uspenskii's attitude becomes, as he says, "much more definite." He sees again, so he believes, "all the former obstacles that had begun to appear in Essentuki." He doesn't believe it's possible to work with Gurdjieff. Yet, still he expects "a great deal more from Gurdjieff's work." And so he doesn't break entirely. In fact, Uspenskii decides to help Gurdjieff establish his Institute in London.

FEBRUARY 13, 1922. LONDON. Gurdjieff's first talk<sup>2</sup> in London at the Theosophical Hall at Warwick Gardens. Some sixty people attend. Many, including Orage, already think of themselves as Uspenskii's pupils. Gurdjieff and his translators Major Frank Pinder and Olga de Hartmann, along with Uspenskii, mount the platform. The audience, awed by Gurdjieff's presence, sits in petrified silence. Gurdjieff, as always, comes right to the point:

"When we speak of ourselves ordinarily we speak of 'I.' We say '*I did this... I think this... I want to do this*'—but this is a mistake. There is no such 'I' or rather there are hundreds, thousands of little 'I's in every one of us ... We are governed by external circumstances. All our actions follow the line of least resistance to the pressure of outside circumstances."

Gurdjieff is asked if it is possible to alter one's emotions through acts of judgment.

"One center of our machine cannot change another center," he answers. "For example: in London I am irritable, the weather and the climate dispirit me and make me bad-tempered whereas in India I am good-tempered. Therefore my judgment tells me to go to India and I shall drive out the emotion of irritability. But then, in London, I find I

2. The exact number of meetings in London, and the dates on which they were held remains uncertain given the references in the public sources from that period.

can work; in the tropics not as well. And so, there I should be irritable for another reason. You see, emotions exist independently of the judgment and you cannot alter one by means of another."

"Mr. Gurdjieff, what would it be like to be conscious in essence?"

"Everything more vivid," is Gurdjieff's memorable, rapier-like reply.

After this first talk, there is no question of who is teacher, who the student for one member of the audience. "I *knew* that Gurdjieff was the teacher," declares Orage. "Uspenskii for me represented knowledge—great knowledge; Gurdjieff, understanding—though of course Gurdjieff had all the knowledge, too."

MARCH 5, 1922. LONDON. Gurdjieff returns from Germany to give a second talk and takes questions. Frank Pinder is translating. At its close he chastises his audience:

"All the questions I have heard tonight are higher mathematics. Nobody knows elementary mathematics.<sup>3</sup> And so such questions are useless."

Later, in speaking privately with Uspenskii, he finally delivers an all-out assault.

Frank Pinder sums it up:

Despite Uspenskii's command of theory, the groups he had constituted in Ekaterinodar, Rostov, Constantinople, and now London were unauthorized and largely off the rails; he was free as air to propound his own theosophical or philosophical notions, but to transmit Gurdjieff's teaching in all its complementary modalities he was neither mandated nor qualified; he had enjoyed in total only three years of direct contact; he knew nothing of the music; he had had only a perfunctory fling at the Sacred Dances; and, not least, he lacked the essential human warmth to insulate his pupils from the bleak ideological climate of the 'System'. In addition there arose the separate matter of his own development. If Uspenskii still sincerely wished to assimilate Gurdjieff's work in his essence and not merely in personality, he must (like his wife Sophie) postpone any pretension to teach and re-dedicate himself as a pupil.

It is a scorching appraisal. How could Uspenskii not hear it? Not understand his identification? Believe that he was a spiritual equal, or near-equal, to Gurdjieff? Given that Uspenskii is a man of rare intellect, honest and uncompromising in his search for real knowledge, his blindness here and elsewhere shows the strength of buffers.<sup>4</sup>

3. This is a subtle criticism of Uspenskii who is a mathematician.

4. Psychological 'partitions' created to lessen shocks and contradictions so that "a man can always be in the right." See *Search*, pp. 154-155.

MARCH 15, 1922. LONDON. Failing to awaken his rebellious pupil privately, Gurdjieff plays one of his last cards. He gives still another talk at Warwick Gardens, this time on the theme of "Essence and Personality." Instead of Uspenskii, Gurdjieff has Frank Pinder translate.

"Normal human beings are the exception. Nearly everyone has only the essence of a child. It is not natural that in a grown-up man the essence should be a child. Because of this, he remains timid underneath and full of apprehensions. This is because he knows that he is not what he pretends to be, but he cannot understand why."

Uspenskii suddenly breaks in, saying that Pinder's translation is not accurate. "Pinder is interpreting for me — not you," answers Gurdjieff.

He then directly attacks Uspenskii, repeating in public now what had been said in private: *Uspenskii is neither mandated nor qualified to teach...*<sup>5</sup>

Later, Gurdjieff remarks to Pinder of the meeting: "Now they will *have* to choose a teacher." Presumably, Uspenskii will have to as well: either himself or Gurdjieff. But for all of Gurdjieff's words and the enormity of his presence, they are without effect. Uspenskii continues to believe in his conclusions. Yet, despite the anger and betrayal he must have felt, he still doesn't break completely with Gurdjieff. In fact, he helps to collect money for Gurdjieff's London Institute. But he does say unequivocally—"I had decided for myself that if the Institute opened in London I would go either to Paris or to America."

And so, as it has openly continued since Uspenskii first broke with Gurdjieff in Essentuki, the struggle between the two continues.<sup>6</sup> The Institute finally opens but Gurdjieff, though the Home Secretary agrees he is no Bolshevik, has a visa problem. Lady Rothermere says she will attempt to wield her influence. But to no avail. Gurdjieff's visa denied, the Institute closes.

Uspenskii's old love, Anna Ilinishna Butkovsky-Hewitt, and he meet in London. Anna is disturbed by the change in him. "He had developed a hard outer shell," she says "and I wondered then why he had crushed the gentle, poetic radiance of his Petersburg days. Possibly he thought of this side of himself as a weakness, yet it was in this happy mood that his inspiration and vision were strongest: the intellect had nothing to do with it."

5. It is a brutal disrobing. Uspenskii, the pupil Gurdjieff had staked his hopes upon to help him establish his teaching, takes himself to be awake. Uspenskii believes he is able to judge his teacher's motives, his character, and yet Uspenskii had still not worked out essence. His development is only partial. To continue to teach would crystallize him at a level that would make further development impossible. So though the verbal assault is brutal, it is necessary.

6. Though never mentioned by either, it seems reasonable to conclude the struggle given Uspenskii's Finland experience, occurs on both the physical and "astral" planes.

JULY 14, 1922. PARIS. With Germany inhospitable to Gurdjieff's Institute and the English door shut, France becomes the choice by default. Gurdjieff arrives from Germany accompanied by the de Hartmanns. They are met by the de Salzmanns.

Soon it is learned that a beautifully furnished chateau is available at Fontainebleau, forty-four miles from Paris. It is the property of the widow of Fernand Labori, the lawyer who successfully defended Captain Dreyfus who had been accused of spying. Called the Prieuré des Basses Loges, it has an interesting history, having once been a Carmelite Monastery and, earlier, the home of Louis XIV's famous mistress, Madame de Maintenon.

The chateau sits behind a high stone wall and heavy iron gates and has not been lived in since 1914. A small fountain lies within the gates of the two-story chateau, to the rear is a terrace with two more fountains and a long avenue of lime, maple, chestnut, and conifer trees. There is an enormous glass orangery, a small house in the gardens known as "Le Paradou," and other outbuildings. The chateau is set in a park of forty-five acres. An additional 200 acres, bounded by a stone wall, adjoin the Forest of Fontainebleau.

After some strong negotiating by Olga de Hartmann—Gurdjieff told her to remember herself at all times and never to forget her intention—the chateau is leased and then purchased for 700,000 francs.

AUGUST 30, 1922. LONDON. Orage tells his friend, the New Zealand short story writer Katherine Mansfield, near death from tuberculosis, about Uspenskii. She begins to attend Uspenskii's lectures. Her husband John Middleton Murray does as well, but he is not impressed. "I don't *feel* influenced by Uspenskii...I merely feel I've heard ideas like my ideas, but bigger ones, far more definite ones."

SEPTEMBER 30, 1922. PRIEURÉ. One year after his arrival in the West, Gurdjieff's Institute is established. It will be set up on the same basis as before, that is, "I wished to create around myself conditions in which man would be continually reminded of the sense and aim of his existence by an unavoidable friction between his conscience and the automatic manifestations of his nature." Funds for the Institute—"This child I had conceived," says Gurdjieff—are supplied by the English, notably Mary Lilian, Lady Rothermere, and Ralph Philipson, a Northumberland coal owner.

A prospectus for the Institute is written and circulated. It begins:

The Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man by means of the system of Gurdjieff is, as it were, the continuation of the society known as the Seekers After Truth....

The prospectus continues with a short history of the society and then begins its analysis of the conditions and situation which faces modern

man, who it says has become “an uprooted being, unable to adapt to his life, alien to all its present conditions.” It shows where the problems lie and tells how the Institute will help its students to correct them.

MID-OCTOBER 1922. PRIEURÉ. Though the Institute does not officially open until November, Katherine Mansfield arrives. She has become convinced that Gurdjieff could not only help her with her disease but with a spiritual regeneration as well. Though it is obvious she has not long to live, Gurdjieff allows her to stay.

Her letters<sup>7</sup> give a feeling for what is taking place:

It's a most wonderful old place in an amazingly lovely park. About forty people, chiefly Russians, are here working, at every possible kind of thing—I mean outdoor work, looking after animals, gardening, indoor work, music, dancing—it seems a bit of everything...A dancing hall is being built and the house is still being organized...Mr. Gurdjieff likes me to go into the kitchen in the late afternoon and ‘watch’. I have a chair in a corner. It's a large kitchen with six helpers—Madame Ostrovsky [Ostrowska], the head [Gurdjieff's wife], walks about like a queen exactly—she is extremely beautiful. Mr. Gurdjieff strides in, takes up a handful of shredded cabbage and eats it...there are at least twenty pots on the stove—and it's so full of life and humor and ease that one wouldn't be anywhere else...The cows are being bought today—Gurdjieff is going to build a high couch in the stable where I can sit and inhale their breath! I know later on I shall be put in charge of those cows—Everyone calls them already ‘Mrs. Murry's cows.’

OCTOBER 25, 1922. PRIEURÉ. Katherine Mansfield writes to her husband:

I want to learn something that no books can teach me, and I want to try & escape from my terrible illness,” “That again you can't be expected to understand. You think I am like other people— I mean—*normal*. I'm not. I don't know which is the ill me or the well me. I am simply one pretense after another—only now I recognize it. I believe Mr. Gurdjieff is the only person who can help me. It is great happiness to be here. Some people are stranger than ever but the strangers I am at last feeling near and they are my own people at last. So I feel. Such beautiful understanding and sympathy I have never known in the outside world.

NOVEMBER 1922. PRIEURÉ. Students arrive, ringing the bell by the heavy iron gate. Ushered into the courtyard, they pass the small fountain and

7. According to Gurdjieff, only the constant sensing and knowledge of the inevitability of one's own death, as well as the death of everyone around us, can destroy the egoism that has swallowed up our Essence. Katherine Mansfield's last letters stand as a testament to the working of this realization. They reflect the work she did on herself and the understanding she came to in so short a time.

enter a beautifully proportioned chateau with dormer windows set in a gray slate mansard roof. Inside they find oak paneled walls, ornate Empire mirrors, Oriental carpets, panther skins, Levantine pouffes, and other costly treasures. To the left of the entrance is a wide staircase leading to the top two floors, which have been christened by Gurdjieff as ‘The Ritz,’ and the ‘Monk's Corridor, and the attic, ‘Cow's Alley.’ To the right is a reception room and long hallway, hung with paintings, leading to an elegant formal dining room, a library which has no books, a large salon with fireplace and a Pleyel grand concert piano, and a study and a game room further on.

Among those assembling are Gurdjieff's oldest students: the Stjoernvals, de Hartmanns, de Salzmans, Uspenskii's wife Sophia, Elizabeta Galumnian, Olgivanna Hinzenberg, and, of course, Madame Ostrowska. Among those from London ringing the Prieuré's bell, marked “Sonnez fort” (Ring loudly), are some very strong and successful people, such as A. R. Orage, Rowland Kenney, Dr. James Young, Misses Merston, Gordon, and Crowdy, Dr. Alsop, Champion Jones, and later, at Uspenskii's direction, J. G. Bennett.

The prospective pupils no doubt have come expecting to be initiated into the esoteric world, but says Gurdjieff, “Everything is body.” Though none suspect it, none inhabit their bodies. The head and heart's relationship to the body is practically nil. Hard physical work helps to center and reconnect the pupils with their bodies, allowing their bodies to begin to breathe and eat normally. The pupils then learn what it is to actually inhabit a living, breathing body. Such work also allows pupils to struggle with reactions and attitudes of self-pity, sloth, superiority.

The pupils are put to work scrubbing latrines, felling trees, digging ditches, doing farm work, gardening, housework, laundry and the like. Everyone is up around four in the morning. Breakfast consists only of coffee, toast, bread and butter. For lunch there is stew with vegetables and perhaps a pudding. There follows a late afternoon break for tea, bread and butter. In the evening everyone bathes and dresses for dinner, which is often quite lavish. Generally, guests, older students and Gurdjieff eat in the spacious and well-furnished ‘English’ dining room, said to be where Madame de Maintenon entertained Louis XIV. There is a large table seating about twenty-five people, with two side tables seating twenty each. Gurdjieff sits in the middle of the large table facing the windows. Directly behind him on the mantelpiece rests a photo of his beloved father. In contrast, the ‘Russian’ dining room where the younger pupils eat is dark and bare except for a large table and benches. In good weather the pupils eat on the terrace.

After dinner Gurdjieff may give a talk, or Thomas de Hartmann play music, or perhaps there are movements. Generally, it is midnight before

people go to bed. Early Saturday evening the men take a communal Turkish bath; the women bathe earlier. After the men's bath there follows a patriarchal feast and ritual toasts to idiots. Except for such interludes, the physical, emotional and mental demands are great. This unrelenting pressure creates conditions in which students can see themselves—not as they imagine themselves to be—but as they really are.

Gurdjieff, of course, does his best to add to the pressure. Says one person, "He constantly manipulated people and situations so as to provoke friction, to create negative emotions between people and give them an opportunity of seeing something in themselves."

Gurdjieff's behavior at the Prieuré raises in his students the full spectrum of emotional reactions, everything "from reverent adoration to diabolical spasms of hatred."

NOVEMBER 4, 1922. PRIEURÉ. Dr. Maurice Nicoll gives up his lucrative Harley Street practice and he, along with his wife Catherine, their young baby, and a nurse, come to the Prieuré. Nicoll's first job, and one he will do for three months, is that of kitchen boy. The job is considered the most demanding at the Prieuré in that the work begins at 5 A.M. with lighting the boilers and lasts to 11 P.M. During that time hundreds of greasy plates, cups, glasses, and pots and pans must be washed with no soap and often no hot water. Meanwhile, his wife helps with the cooking and her sister Champion Jones cleans bathrooms. When anything went wrong, Gurdjieff would single out Nicoll as the scapegoat, calling, "Nicoll!" and making a gesture of despair.

A Turkish bath is constructed in the form of a grotto on a hillside. Later, Gurdjieff demands a theater be built in a fortnight. Noticing how it is being built, Nicoll asks Gurdjieff, "Why don't you build more solidly?"

"This is only temporary," answered Gurdjieff. "In a very short time everything will be different. Everyone will be elsewhere. Nothing can be built permanently at this moment."

Sometimes in the evenings after dinner and movements, Gurdjieff gives a talk. It would often go on until midnight or later. He pours out a torrent of words lasting for several minutes which Frank Pinder,<sup>8</sup> who is translating, condenses into a sentence or two. Gurdjieff looks at him, shrugs his shoulders, and smiles sardonically.

During the day when he is not in Paris, Gurdjieff can often be seen walking around the grounds urging people on—"Must be done in half the time," he implores.

8. Pinder, an engineer and major in the British army, had perfected his Russian while imprisoned by the Bolsheviks awaiting a death sentence. Upon his release after the war, the British government made him an Officer of the Order of the British Empire. Earlier, at Orage's request, Pinder had helped Uspenskii during his stay in Ekaterinodar.

He purposely places people in situations where they will experience a loss of face. Should false personality appear, he ruthlessly attacks it, forcing the students to see and rely upon that which is real in themselves.

"I cannot change your being," says Gurdjieff, "but I can create conditions, thanks to which you can change yourselves."

Uspenskii arrives at the Prieuré. He describes the students as "a very motley company." He feels "the atmosphere on the whole is very right." He speaks with Katherine Mansfield who seems to him "halfway to death." He is struck by her striving "to find the truth whose presence she clearly feels but which she is unable to touch."

Says Thomas de Hartmann of life at the Prieuré: "... the life of a person, like a ball, is thrown from one situation to another. Our prayer was the Work, which concentrated together all spiritual and physical forces. The variety and constant change of tasks continually reawakened us. We are given minimal hours of sleep, just enough to give strength for the following day. Instead of abstinence, there is spending of forces to the utmost, attentive work renewing energies as they are spent, in the manner of a rhythmic fly-wheel. There is no rejection of life within the Prieuré. On the contrary, life is expanded to the utmost intensity and spirituality."

Of all the newcomers to the Prieuré, the one who is to be the most help to Gurdjieff is A. R. Orage. Forty-nine-year-old Alfred Richard Orage has come to the devastating recognition that—"my intellectual life... was leading me nowhere."

For the seven years preceding his meeting Gurdjieff, the most influential figure in Orage's life was Serbian mystic Dimitri Mitrinović, who championed the idea of a Panhumanity based on a vision of a united Christian Europe. Had it not been for Mitrinović, Orage believes he could not have come to what he called "the best and hardest decision of his life—to follow Gurdjieff."

Resigning as editor of the *New Age*, and asked by his secretary why he was leaving he answered—"I am going to find God." The ever fastidious, now somewhat obese, Orage arrives at the Prieuré and finds himself relegated to a small room, more like a cell. He undergoes a harrowing experience of dawn-to-dusk labors, mostly mopping latrines and digging ditches until his hands bleed. Often Orage is awakened during the night and ordered to continue his digging. This he is to do until he receives permission to stop. Then, the trench dug, he is told to fill it in,<sup>9</sup> which he does with no outward complaint.

9. This is reminiscent of Milarepa's treatment by his teacher Marpa. See Lobsang P. Lhalungpa's, *The Life of Milarepa* (E. P. Dutton, 1977).

A Yorkshire country boy, Orage had grown up doing farm chores, but this is no help at the Prieuré. Too many years of soft living had taken its toll. Orage descends into the pit of despair:

"I had had no real exercise for years [and so] I suffered so much physically that I would go back to my room, a sort of cell, and literally cry with fatigue...I asked myself, 'Is this what I have given up my whole life for? At least I had something then. Now what have I?'"

Gurdjieff describes the Institute as "a hatching place for eggs. It supplies the heat. Chickens inside must try to break their shells then help and individual teaching is possible. Until then only collective method."

Fritz Peters gives an insight into what was going on. Years afterward, speaking about conscious labor and intentional suffering that newcomers to the Prieuré were confronted with, he says: "For the average person, it consisted largely in a preliminary period of joining in reasonably hard manual labor in a group.... After a while, one became conscious of being thrust into somewhat frustrating circumstances having to do with the work—such as being forced to work with someone whose temperament clashed with yours; being taken off a job as soon as you became too interested in it, etc. Most of the novice students seemed to be put through a period of purposeful frustration. Inevitably, given the reputation of the school and its stated aims, they began to wonder just exactly what was being accomplished by doing physical labour, and nothing else. The frustration would usually increase because no one, including Gurdjieff, would answer their questions—they were simply told that for the time being they were to do as they were told. When they reached some kind of breaking point, they would suddenly be given an exercise—usually being told that they should observe themselves consciously while they worked and learn about themselves. If they stayed long enough they were gradually taken into the inner circle where they attended readings or listened to lectures and participated in the exercises..."

Writing many years later, Orage's friend and biographer Philip Mairet says: "It was precisely the complete submission to a will not his own that was, for Orage, the novelty and the value of the experience. He had known before what it was to be greatly influenced by others, which is quite another matter...but this was an explicit surrender to the spiritual authority of another, in order to attain something which, by definition, one could not know at one's 'present state of development'. Such a submission opens up immense possibilities of psychic and spiritual change, either positive nor negative or both. The results doubtless depend upon the spirit in which such loyalty is given, much more than the way in

which it is accepted. And the spirit in which Orage gave his fealty was sincere and devout."

At one point Orage's resistance to physical work ends—"When I was in the very depths of despair, feeling that I could go on no longer, I vowed to make an extra effort, and just then something changed in me."

He finds he is able to work manually and at the same time keep his mind occupied with counting and other exercises. In doing so, his emotional being awakes and experiences of a serene and ecstatic order open to him.

At this point Gurdjieff comes to him, declaring—"Now, Orage, I think you dig enough. Let us go to café and drink coffee."

For friends who visit him at the Prieuré, they are amazed to see an Orage with better color, one who is thinner, harder and more virile-looking; one who sometimes even showed an almost childlike spontaneity.<sup>10</sup> In a space of months, the Prieuré has become for Orage "a house of devotion and Gurdjieff his spiritual preceptor."

Orage and Katherine Mansfield have talked nearly everyday. She had tried to write but had torn it up. One day Orage goes to her room and finds that "her face shone as if she had been on Sinai." Once Orage and she were lovers and she speaks to him of the "Katherine Mansfield" he had known. She has been a camera, she says, but a selective one. Her attitude has determined what observations she selects. She has been passive, not creative. The result, she says, "like everything unconscious," has been evil. The "slices of life" she has portrayed in her short stories have been "partial, misleading, and a little malicious." Not one of her stories would she dare show to God.

In the future, she tells Orage, she would widen the lens of her camera and use it for a "conscious purpose"—showing how life appeared to a "creative attitude." To illustrate what she means, she says: "Two people fall in love and marry. One, or perhaps both of them, has had previous affairs, the remains of which still linger like ghosts in the home. Both wish to forget, but the ghosts still walk. How can this situation be presented?"

She says "the late lamented Katherine Mansfield" would of course see it in terms of her "passive, selective and resentful attitude," and the result would be "one of her famous satiric sketches, reinforcing in her readers the attitude in herself."

But as she is now she would see the situation as "an opportunity for the exercise and employment of all the intelligence, invention, imagination, bravery, endurance, and in fact all the virtues of the most attractive hero and heroine." Such a story, she continues, need not have a happy

10. Because he had the courage to endure physical hardship and psychological despair, Orage had come to the experiencing of ecstasy—that is, he had been able to stand outside the body, knowing it and how it related to the universe.

ending as the problem might be too large, but the sympathy of the reader would be supported "by the continuity and variety of the effort of one or both of the characters, by their indomitable renewal of the struggle, with ever fresh invention." Her aim was to make human virtues, not human failings, interesting.

On a second visit Uspenskii and Katherine Mansfield sit in one of the salons and she tells him in a feeble voice that she has long looked upon people as those who "have suffered a shipwreck and have been cast upon an uninhabited island, but do not yet know of it. But these people here [at the Prieuré] know it....I am so glad that I can be here."

DECEMBER 24, 1922. PRIEURÉ. Writes Katherine Mansfield:

We are going to [celebrate Christmas] in tremendous style here. Every sort of lavish generous hospitable thing has been done by Mr. Gurdjieff. He wants a real old fashioned *English* Xmas—an extraordinary idea here!—& we shall sit down to table 60 persons to turkeys, geese, a whole sheep, a pig, puddings, heaven knows what in the way of dessert, & wines by the barrel. There's to be a tree, too & Father Xmas. I am doing all I can for the little children so that they will be roped in for once. I've just sent them over colored paper & asked them to help to make flowers. It's pathetic the interest they are taking. Our pudding was made in a baby's bath, stirred by everybody & Mr. Gurdjieff put in a coin. Who gets the coin gets our darling new born calf for a present. The calf —1 day old—was led into the salon to the beating of tambourines & to a special melody composed for it.

DECEMBER 26, 1922. PRIEURÉ. Katherine Mansfield writes to her husband:

You see, my love, the question is always *'Who am I?'* and until that is discovered I don't see how one can really direct anything in one's self. *'Is there a Me?'* One must be certain of that before one has a real unshakable leg to stand on. And I don't believe for one moment these questions can be settled by the head alone. It is this life of the *head*, this formative intellectual life at the expense of all the rest of us which has got us into this state. How can it get us out of it? I see no hope of escape except by learning to live in our emotional & instinctive being as well and to balance all three.

You see Bogey if I were allowed one single cry to God that cry would be *I want to be REAL*. Until I am that I don't see why I shouldn't be at the mercy of old Eve in her various manifestations forever.

But this place has taught me so far how unreal I am. It has taken from me one thing after another (the things never were mine) until at this present moment all I know really, really, is that I am not annihilated and that I hope—more than hope—believe. It is hard to explain....

Our cowshed has become enriched with 2 goats and two love birds. The goats are very lovely as they lie in the straw or so delicately

dance towards each other butting gently with their heads. When I was there yesterday Mr. Gurdjieff came in and showed Lola and Nina who were milking the cows the way to milk a goat. He sat down on a stool seized the goat & swung its hind legs across his knees. So there the goat was on its two front legs, helpless. This is the way Arabs milk. He looked very like one....

DECEMBER 31, 1922. PRIEURÉ. "I have been leading a very tame semi-existence here," writes Katherine Mansfield. "My heart, under this new treatment, which is one of graduated efforts and exercise, feels decidedly stronger, and my lungs in consequence feel quieter, too. It's a remarkable fact that since arriving here I have not had to spend one entire day in bed—an unprecedented record for me! I feel more and more confident that if I can give this treatment a fair trial—as I intend to do—and stay on for six months at least, I shall be infinitely stronger in every way. More I do not venture to say."

JANUARY 9, 1923. PRIEURÉ. John Middleton Murray comes for the celebration of the Russian New Year on the thirteenth. He finds his wife Katherine pale but more beautiful than anyone he had ever seen. He says she seemed "a being transfigured by love, absolutely secure in love." She shows him around the grounds. In the evening there is dancing. At ten o'clock she says good night and, climbing the staircase to her room, she hemorrhages. Within a half-hour, her eyes "wide with terror," she takes her last earthly breath. Three days later in the Protestant cemetery at Avon, Fontainebleau, in the presence of Gurdjieff, her husband, her lifelong friend Ida Baker, her sisters, and some of her friends from the Prieuré, Katherine Mansfield is buried. On the large slab of grey stone that is her grave stone is carved the words from Shakespeare:

But I tell you, my lord fool, out of this  
nettle, danger, we pluck this flower, safety.

Katherine Mansfield's death brings a storm of invective onto Gurdjieff whom many blame for her death. One such is the writer D. H. Lawrence who says: "I have heard enough about that place at the Fontainebleau where Katherine Mansfield died, to know it is a rotten, false, self-conscious place of people playing a sickly stunt."

1923. MUNICH. Fritz Thyssen, head of a steel trust, meets Hitler. Impressed, he donates \$25,000 to the obscure Nazi Party.

German newspapers print anti-Semitic tracts. The polluted atmosphere of extremism that Gurdjieff found in Russia with the rise of Bolshevism now arises in Europe with Fascism.

1923. PRIEURÉ. Uspenskii crosses the Channel "fairly often" to visit Gurdjieff. On several occasions, Gurdjieff invites him to live at the Prieuré. Indicative of his inner attitude, Uspenskii sees the invitation as a "temptation."

Though he still has an interest in Gurdjieff's work, he maintains:

"I could find no place for myself in this work nor did I understand its direction."

As he had in Essentuki, he says that he finds at the Prieuré, "many destructive elements in the organization of the affair itself and [I see] that it had to fall to pieces."

Later he will say that "from the very beginning, there came into the life of the Institute many strange currents, incompatible with its ideas, aims and plans and they very soon made further development of these ideas quite impossible. In my opinion the chief cause of this was the unfortunate choice of people who Gurdjieff admitted to the Institute."

MAY 1, 1923. PRIEURÉ. Nicoll's father is seriously ill. He leaves his wife and daughter at the Prieuré and returns to England.

JULY 1923. LONDON. Bennett, involved in a whirlwind of international business, speaks to Uspenskii about his feeling that he has lost touch with his spiritual aims. Bennett had been to the Prieuré for a weekend visit in January. Now, despite Uspenskii's ambivalence toward Gurdjieff, he advises Bennett to go for a long visit.<sup>11</sup>

AUGUST 1923. PRIEURÉ. Nicoll returns to the Prieuré. Gurdjieff tells him: "When you return to Institute [you are] two men—one happy to meet friends, old associates, and so forth. The other does not begin to be felt until you arrive. Suddenly you begin to fear. He thinks of all the difficulties to be faced. He thinks seriously."

The tempo and difficulty of the work is speeded up. And, of course, doubts surface. There is much friction. As always, Gurdjieff fuels the doubts. Wonders Nicoll "...whether the difficulties Gurdjieff knows he creates are equal in value for work with those he does not know he creates."

Uspenskii receives a telegram from Madame Uspenskii telling him to come to the Prieuré immediately. Though still wavering in regard to his relationship with Gurdjieff, he does go and almost immediately meets with Gurdjieff. After a long and painful silence, Gurdjieff confides to Uspenskii that he is "very dissatisfied with the work and the attitude of several people in the Institute and that the moment of the work was such that he could not control it in the same way."

Later, assembling all his students, Gurdjieff divides them into seven groups. In the first group he puts Dr. Stjoernal, Dr. James Young, A. R.

11. Given what will later happen between the two men, is Uspenskii sending him to Gurdjieff for Bennett's own good, or trying to get rid of him?

Orage and Frank Pinder; in the last group he puts Madame de Salzmänn, Madame Uspenskii and her daughter, Lenchka. Having prepared the conditions for the shock, Gurdjieff now declares that only the first group is to remain—all others must leave the Prieuré.

Letting that announcement set in, Gurdjieff follows it with another emotional bombshell: he is discontinuing all work with Uspenskii.

He adds that though he personally has nothing against some people in the last group, he is obliged to put some people there because of their connection with Uspenskii.

To the very last Gurdjieff tries to jar Uspenskii into seeing the spiritual trap of power and pride that ensnares him.

Before leaving the Prieuré, Uspenskii sees Gurdjieff alone.

Gurdjieff asks: "Did you understand what I said and did you understand what you must do?"<sup>12</sup>

Uspenskii replies: "I understand both."

"In that case," declares Gurdjieff, "we have no need of long talk."

Having previously publicly rebuked and humiliated Uspenskii in front of his students in London, Gurdjieff now has given the same "medicine" in front of the Work's senior students, Uspenskii's friends and wife. The moment had to cut deeply...and all the more so because Uspenskii believes Gurdjieff's actions are the result of a betrayal by some of his former pupils, principally Orage and Mrs. Page, a wealthy Englishwoman.

Apparently, for some time now, Uspenskii's behavior in London has been under strong attack at the Prieuré. Uspenskii is blamed for the closing of Gurdjieff's Institute in London. He did not obtain the necessary visa. But Uspenskii claims—and there is no reason to doubt his veracity—that Lady Rothermere said she would see the Home Secretary about the visa. Later, the visa denied, Orage asks her whether she had done so. Lady Rothermere makes the excuse that she has asked her cousin to do so. The reason she gives is that she was going on a vacation. It is Uspenskii's claim that she asked Orage if he would lie about this and Orage agreed.

Further, newspaper articles have appeared that seem to indicate Uspenskii thinks that the work belongs to both Gurdjieff and Uspenskii. The *London Daily News* quotes Uspenskii as saying "Gurdjieff and I have reached our present state of knowledge by long and hard work in many lands." The same interviewer writes: "... in Gurdjieff he [Uspenskii] found a kindred spirit who had gone farther on the same road." Uspenskii maintains he had not seen the articles before their publication and says he is misquoted.

After studying the articles, Orage reports to Gurdjieff that "it is evident to him" that Uspenskii saw the articles before publication.<sup>13</sup> It is

12. What Uspenskii must now do is not clear and Uspenskii makes no further comment. Later, Gurdjieff will invite Uspenskii to return to the Prieuré but he refuses.

also reported by Mrs. Page that during Uspenskii's lectures he had said that "Institute work was not necessary."

Uspenskii writes Mrs. Page a letter:

Dear Mrs. Page,

I am sending to you a copy of my letter to Orage and ask you very much to help him to find out who was the cause of all these stupid lies which come to me now from all quarters.

Yours sincerely,

P. D. Uspenskii

At the Prieuré a much irritated Uspenskii confronts Mrs. Page and calls her a "troublemaker."

"Why can't you tell the truth, and say that you lied?" he asks.

"How can I say that?" she answers. "I do not know."

Others, such as Dr. Young, are also spreading stories about Uspenskii. Understandably, Uspenskii is upset. Both Orage and Young belonged to his first group in London, and so Uspenskii realizes: "If they repeat these lies, or say they do not know they are lies, that shows by itself that there is nothing to be expected."

The experience must have been disillusioning, especially since he had done so much for these people, and also had obtained funding for the Prieuré. As J. G. Bennett notes, "Uspenskii was a brilliant and dedicated exponent of Gurdjieff's ideas, and also a man who inspired confidence by his obvious integrity and sincerity. No one else in Gurdjieff's entourage could have gained the confidence of so many wealthy and influential English people." And it was the English, not the French or Germans, who financed the purchase of the Prieuré.<sup>14</sup>

When Gurdjieff moved to the Caucasus, the Moscow and Petersburg groups merged. There were people, says Uspenskii, "[from] Moscow who did not know of 'Petersburg conditions,' and, more important, he had

13. Orage's appraisal may have not been wholly objective. He may have the "disciple's disease," i.e., the desire to be his teacher's favorite with the consequent spiritual poisons, jealousy, and rivalry. Much later when Uspenskii's *A New Model of the Universe* is published, Orage will dismiss it as "The New Muddle of the Universe."

14. Underneath this social poisoning, what must continue to grate on Uspenskii is Gurdjieff's irrational insistence that Uspenskii live up to what Uspenskii terms the St. Petersburg conditions. When Gurdjieff first met Uspenskii in Moscow, he told him that it would be his "duty" to form a group in Petersburg. With Moscow some 350 miles away, Gurdjieff would not be able to meet and approve people and so, says Uspenskii, "Nobody would be taken [into the group] without my consent, or remain in the work without my consent." When people asked Gurdjieff about bringing a friend or a wife or husband, his reply was always—"Has Mr. Uspenskii seen them?" In effect: Gurdjieff held Uspenskii responsible for the behavior of the Petersburg group.

not approved any of these people. Still, Gurdjieff continued to hold him responsible, blaming him for their various behaviors. The same happened in Constantinople, and again at the Prieuré (hence, perhaps, giving a new perspective to Uspenskii's comment that the Prieuré people were "a very motley company"). Uspenskii writes that even at the Prieuré Gurdjieff tells him: "You remember that I said to you several times that many wrong types came to the work. You are not careful enough in the choice of people."<sup>15</sup>

Gurdjieff had found Uspenskii's "corn" early on and continually kept it under heel. To Uspenskii, a consummate intellectual, the highest manifestation of man-number-three possible, it is not just unfair—but irrational! Absurd! Objectively, it is a master stroke. The use of irrational blaming is in fact Gurdjieff's Kurdish "red pepper,"<sup>16</sup> one he specially prepared for Uspenskii. Irrationality of any kind always irritated Uspenskii, and to be blamed so was unthinkable. So this is Gurdjieff's "Uspenskii pepper," one that would never fail to jam Uspenskii's "wraps-up-the-thought" intellect and open him to the vagaries of his emotional center.

For Uspenskii, listening to Gurdjieff lecture on the Table of Hydrogens, The Diagram of Every Living Thing, octaves and triads and inner considering and false personality and the like—this was "food" his intellectual center feasted upon, for that was his center of gravity. But with the emotional center, that part of himself so underfed and misunderstood—he drew a line. That, he put off limits.<sup>17</sup>

Gurdjieff's senior students take a hard view of Uspenskii and his breaking with Gurdjieff. For example, says Frank Pinder, "All that Uspenskii had of value, he got from Gurdjieff, and that only with his mind. He had a perfunctory fling at the movements; and even confessed to being lazy. Gurdjieff's main quarrel with him was that he, Uspenskii, thought he knew better, and was apt to kick over the traces... Uspenskii apparently thought that he understood Gurdjieff and his inner teach-

15. What Uspenskii makes of this is not known but since Essentuki, so he says, he "ceased to understand." He never states directly what that was. Presumably, it is the direction he believes Gurdjieff is taking the Work. Uspenskii wanted "a school of a more rational kind," and he believes Gurdjieff is moving in the direction of devotion. His impression of Gurdjieff, too, is a factor. In sum, because of Gurdjieff's 'acting' or 'play,' he can hold no single concrete impression of him. He is, then, of many minds, or many "I's," about Gurdjieff. Insisting perhaps on rationality, Uspenskii fails, or refuses, to see this ambiguity as part of the fourth way teaching.

16. In *All and Everything, First Series*, Gurdjieff writes of the uses of "the red pepper pods of the Transcaucasian Kurd," pp. 21-22. Many years later, in speaking of self-remembering, Uspenskii says, "It is necessary to create a certain particular energy or point (using it in the ordinary sense), and that can be created only at a moment of very serious emotional stress. All the work before that is only preparation of the method." *A Further Record*, p. 52.

ings—which he did not, and Gurdjieff had to make him choose whether to stay with him and submit to discipline, or break away.... Uspenskii knew the *theory*, better than anyone possibly—he had the knowledge, but he did not *understand*.”<sup>18</sup>

For his part, Uspenskii does not hold Pinder and Orage in high regard. He believes the Prieuré is bound to fail because the “principle of seniority” has not been followed. “People who did not belong to groups before,” he says, “like Pinder and Orage, they were given certain power over people who were much older in the Work; it did not work—it could not go on.”

After his fateful summons to the Prieuré, Uspenskii will see Gurdjieff several more times before taking what is effectively his final departure from the Prieuré and Gurdjieff’s work. Gurdjieff invites him to return for Russian Easter, holding out the carrot that he would tell him how the work can be continued, but Uspenskii has had enough.

AUGUST 1923. PRIEURÉ. Twenty-seven-year-old John Godolphin Bennett arrives. Highly intelligent, a visionary, a leader with natural gifts for commanding others’ attention, and a fledgling magician in his own right, Bennett is a promising candidate to fulfill the role in teaching which Gurdjieff had seen for Uspenskii.

17. Like many intellectuals, Uspenskii had a wish to control the world, model it, put it in some sort of rational, understandable shape. He also had a wish to teach others. And, of course, he had a wish for the miraculous. Gurdjieff’s mission was to bring a new teaching to the world and Uspenskii was his handpicked emissary, the man who would “step down” the teaching, make it comprehensible, and faithfully spread it. But no man, no affirming force, wants to be second-in-command—especially not a man of Uspenskii’s powers of comprehension, of verbal and written expression. He was a wonderful stallion but, if he was to be of any use, he had to be broken.

Hence, the deep strategy behind Gurdjieff’s plausible sounding suggestion to Uspenskii when the St. Petersburg group was just forming that, as Gurdjieff could only visit now and then, Uspenskii should interview and choose students and be responsible for their behavior. This which Uspenskii would characterize as “the St. Petersburg conditions.” The language is contractual and underlying it is an assumption of power and position. This latter word occurs a number of times in *Search* in particular ways as when Uspenskii writes of the Essentuki period, “... my personal position in G.’s work began to change.” Assuming any position in regard to the teacher or teaching is a desire for security, for stabilization. It’s delimiting and leveling. A high, gifted, and rare soul though he was, Uspenskii seems never to be able to surrender his knowing. Gurdjieff, true to his vow, acted without mercy towards his unwilling pupil’s weakness.

18. Pinder and Orage, and certainly Bennett, even Nott, are not to be taken as unbiased observers. As Uspenskii pointed out in *Tertium Organum*: “The reason why men understand one another so little is that they always live by *different* emotions. And they understand one another only when they happen simultaneously to experience identical emotions.” Also, there is the factor of jealousy and competition which breed special strains in any organization, particularly spiritual.

One day Gurdjieff takes Bennett aside and tells him, “Now only your mind is awake: your heart and body are asleep. If you continue like this, soon your mind also will go to sleep, and you will never be able to think any new thoughts. You cannot awaken your own feelings, but you can awaken your body. If you can learn to master your body, you will begin to acquire Being.... Remember yourself as two—you and your body. When you are master of your body, your feelings will obey you.”

During the coming weeks Bennett makes some breakthroughs. Gurdjieff, dressed in a smart French suit as is now his custom, invites Bennett to accompany him on a business trip to Melun. Upon their return Gurdjieff cuts off into a forest road. The two end up in a clearing overlooking the Prieuré some hundred feet below. Speaking Turkish—Bennett is the only student versed in that language—Gurdjieff confides that this view of the château is his favorite. He talks of the future, telling Bennett of his plans to buy more land. He will then build an observatory, there being many facts about planetary movements that astronomy has overlooked. The impression he creates is that there is much to do, much to learn, many opportunities.

A few days later, Gurdjieff again approaches Bennett declaring—“You have the possibility of learning to work.... You have seen that it is possible to be directly connected with the Great Accumulator of Energy that is the source of all miracles. If you could be permanently connected with this source, you could pass all barriers.” He goes on to relate that “Ever since I was a young boy, I have known of the existence of this power and the barriers that separate man from it, and I searched until I found the way of breaking through them. This is the greatest secret that man can discover about human nature. Many people are convinced that they wish to be free and to know reality, but they do not know the barrier that prevents them from reaching reality. They come to me for help, but they are unwilling or unable to pay the price.”

Speaking about being and knowledge (as he had to Uspenskii and others seven years before in Petersburg) Gurdjieff warns Bennett of the danger of losing everything, if he relies on knowledge alone. Thinking of Uspenskii perhaps, he warns Bennett with great seriousness: “With too much knowledge, the inner barrier may become insurmountable.”

To a man like Bennett, freedom—his notion of freedom—is everything. He is perhaps looking for a way out when he then asks how long would be needed, if he decides to stay.

Gurdjieff declares: “If you devote all your energies to the task, it may take two years before you can work alone.”

Two years...

The words must have singed Bennett’s brain. He had expected twenty years.

Mercurial, zesting after adventure, what Bennett most fears is being trapped. Raised in a family with a no-account father, he had been his mother's pride and joy, her "young king."

*You can work alone*, Gurdjieff tells him.

He tells him exactly what the young man wants to hear. Whether or not Gurdjieff meant it Bennett, rarely doubting himself at the right time, never questions.

A skilled agent of British intelligence, Bennett must sense the trap Gurdjieff has laid. He plays a last card. He has no money, Bennett says.

"I am not interested in your money," counters Gurdjieff, "but in your work. There are plenty of people who will give me money, but very few who will work. I will give you the money you need."

He then sweetens the pot. He offers to take Bennett with him to America to act as his interpreter. Bennett is no doubt seeing himself sitting next to Gurdjieff, just as Pinder had in London.

Gurdjieff dangles another lure. He tells Bennett that later on he will be able to give lectures himself.

Then Gurdjieff delivers the masterstroke—"At present you will have to take," he tells Bennett, "because you have nothing to give. Later you will be ready to give your last shirt to help the work—as I am ready to give mine."

The words have a great impact on the Bennett. But not so great that he stays on. Walking past the Prieuré's flowing fountain, Bennett opens the wrought iron gate to the street. He calms himself with the words, "I will go away and make money, and then I will return." Once closed it is a gate Bennett will never open again.

OCTOBER 1923. PRIEURÉ. Gurdjieff speaks of Orage going to America to teach the Work. He suggests to Maurice Nicoll that he should accompany Orage. Highly educated, intuitive and a natural communicator, Dr. Nicoll is another possible candidate to help Gurdjieff establish the teaching. Orage and Nicoll could help balance each other. But Nicoll, for all his intuition, is blind both to the need and the possibility. Always the aristocrat, he graciously bows out. And so Nicoll, wife, baby, and nurse, depart for London. This is the last of Gurdjieff they will ever see. From here on they will content themselves with Uspenskii's version of the teaching.

NOVEMBER 1923. LONDON. WARWICK GARDENS. Nicoll and his wife attend Uspenskii's meetings. Nicoll visits Uspenskii's flat. As they greet, Nicoll notes the scratches on Uspenskii's hands. Uspenskii explains they are the work of his eight-year-old cat, Vashka, whom Nicoll describes as "a big, brindled beast with brilliant eyes." Uspenskii is quite fond of

Vashka. It will only play with meat, not eat it. So Uspenskii feeds it lobster, asparagus, and olives.

On one of his visits, Nicoll finds Uspenskii working on a chapter, "Christianity and the New Testament," for his book *A New Model of the Universe*. About the room are a number of dictionaries as well as copies of the New Testament in Greek, German, French, Russian, and English. He writes with a pencil, of which he has many, all sharpened to very fine points. When he speaks of a biblical passage to Nicoll, Uspenskii first looks at the translation in each of the versions, then compares it with the Greek.

NOVEMBER 8, 1923. MUNICH. Hitler's beer hall putsch fails. He is imprisoned.

DECEMBER 13, 1923. PARIS. First public demonstration of the sacred dances at Paris's Théâtre des Champs Élysées draws mixed reactions; some experience their newness and sacred quality, others believe they have no aesthetic value. Afterward, Gurdjieff sends Dr. Stjoernal and Orage to New York to drum up interest in the teaching and prepare for the arrival of Gurdjieff and his dance troupe.

He has spoken with Orage about what he will find there. Americans, Gurdjieff believes, have more possibilities for good than any other nation, but they are so at the mercy of wrong ideals brought from Europe, and eventually distorted even further—they have come to power and money so easily, that their civilization may decay and rot long before it is ripe.

He has given Orage the tasks of generating interest in the teaching and raising enough money to support the stay in America. The first task Orage, by intellect and training, is well-equipped for, but to the second task he has a strong personal aversion. As a friend says, "...his family had suffered much from poverty when he was a boy and he hated it. Equally he hated having to slave for money and almost as much he disliked asking for money for any purposes—even one not his own."

JANUARY 4, 1924. Before Gurdjieff and his troupe sail to America three hundred thousand francs are "swallowed up" paying for the Paris demonstrations, steamship tickets, the most urgent bills at the Prieuré, making provisions for those who would stay behind, and so forth. And so, three days before he is to depart, Gurdjieff says, "I found myself at the last minute in a super-unique tragi-comic situation"—he had no cash reserve.

Only a few days earlier his mother and several members of his family had arrived from Russia. He says he was in his room "searching in my mind for a way out of the incredible situation that had arisen," when his mother came in and returned an expensive brooch to him that he had given her for safekeeping. Gurdjieff says of this event:

“What occurred was one of those interventions that people who are capable of thinking consciously—in our times and particularly in past epochs—have always considered a sign of the just providence of the Higher Powers. As for me, I would say that it was the law-conformable result of man’s unflinching perseverance in bringing all his manifestations into accordance with the principles he has consciously set himself in life for the attainment of a definite aim.”

Uspenskii is present at Gurdjieff’s departure. It reminds him, he says, of Gurdjieff’s leaving Essentuki and “all that was connected with it.” Once again, as he had in Essentuki in 1918 and Constantinople in 1921, Uspenskii decides to break with Gurdjieff.

Years later Uspenskii would say as to why he broke with Gurdjieff: “Gurdjieff had gone off the rails—become mad—and I wanted to save the System.”

JANUARY 1924. LONDON. “I have asked you to come because I must tell you that I have decided to break off all relations with Mr. Gurdjieff.”

So Uspenskii informs his key group at Ralph Philipson’s flat in Portland Place, London. “This means that you have to choose,” he declares. “Either you can go and work with him, or you can work with me: but if you remain with me, you must give an undertaking [understanding] that you will not communicate in any way with Mr. Gurdjieff.”

Philipson, who had made substantial contributions to the purchase of the Prieuré as well as helped to underwrite Uspenskii’s work in London, asks the reason behind this decision.

“Mr. Gurdjieff is a very extraordinary man. His possibilities are much greater than those of people like ourselves. But he also can go in the wrong way. I believe that he is now passing through a crisis, the outcome of which no one can foresee. Most people have many ‘I’s. If these ‘I’s are at war with one another it does not produce great harm, because they are all weak. But with Mr. Gurdjieff there are only two ‘I’s, one very good and one very bad.”

“I believe,” Uspenskii continues, “that in the end the good ‘I’ will conquer. But meanwhile it is very dangerous to be near him. We cannot be of any help to him, and in his present condition he cannot be of any help to us. Therefore, I have decided to break off all contact. But this does not mean I am against him, or that I consider what he is doing is bad.”<sup>19</sup>

19. This is sounding very much like an Uspenskiian version of *The Struggle of the Magicians*. In fact, it is Uspenskii, too, who is passing through a crisis, a crisis of sincerity: though such is his state he does not know it. His possibilities are much greater than other students. His voice is influential and for him to go the wrong way means many people will follow him.

Uspenskii’s difficulty, as Frank Pinder sees it, is: “Uspenskii could never forget Gurdjieff’s attacking him in front of his pupils.” Pinder feels Uspenskii projected himself “in a role in which he saw himself as a successful religious teacher—though he may not have been conscious of this.... Uspenskii, for all his great brain, was, for what was real, unintelligent; and it was inevitable that Uspenskii should cut himself and his pupils off from Gurdjieff. It is strange that there can be talk of ‘Uspenskii’s Teaching,’ and ‘Gurdjieff-Uspenskii System’: the Teaching is *Gurdjieff’s*.”

At the close of Uspenskii’s remarks at Philipson’s flat, Uspenskii is asked: “How will we exist? Will we continue on the same line as we have been going, or by some other new line or connection with Mr. Gurdjieff’s work?”

“We are connected with the inner meaning of the work,” answers Uspenskii, “but as an organization we are not connected.”

Kenneth Walker, a prominent Harley Street surgeon asks: “This work can be done effectively here as in Paris, can’t it.”

“Yes, practically,” says Uspenskii.

He speaks of the Petersburg conditions and then tells the group: “You must decide, do you want [a] separate organization or [to have] one with [the] Institute because later I will base my ideas on one decision or another.”

Says Kenneth Walker: “St. Petersburg conditions worked well in Petersburg so they should work well in London.”

“From my point of view,” says Uspenskii, “people [at the Institute] were taken without tests, without knowing who they were and many things went wrong.”

Later in the meeting Uspenskii says, “My opinion is that we must organize separately.”

Someone asks what would happen if the struggle went the wrong way.

Returning to what he had said earlier, Uspenskii says: “He could go mad. Or else he could attract to himself some disaster in which all those round him would be involved.”

Bennett is among those present. He agrees not to communicate with Gurdjieff. As does Nicoll, and many others.

The Uspenskiian work begins....

The die now cast, there will be not one work, but two.

And so, less than a year and a half after Gurdjieff founded his Institute at the Prieuré to establish the teaching in the West, the octave is deflected, the force of the teaching halved.

Curiously, though this break seems permanent, Uspenskii will be seen with Gurdjieff now and then through the years until their final meeting seven years hence on the terrace of the Café Henri IV at Fontainebleau-Avon.

Hearing of his former student's decision to break with him and teach his own line of the Work, Gurdjieff's thoughts might have returned to a time seven years earlier in St. Petersburg when he had spoken with Uspenskii and Anna Butkovsky.

Supposedly exasperated at the lack of seriousness of the young group, Gurdjieff had stormed out of the meeting, slamming the door behind him. Uspenskii had rushed after him and convinced him not to abandon the group.

The next day Gurdjieff had met with the group and explained that man had no genuine I. He was, rather, many "I's." Speaking of the teaching, he said:

"One must know how to act swiftly, grasp the object [teaching] and never let go... For will there ever be another opportunity? Probably never! And when it's been lost, a man will try to satisfy himself with some kind of imitation of what he's lost... 'Paradise lost!' According to his talent and intellect, sometimes it may work, sometimes not. But then he, too, will start trying to 'preach' about it to others. From preachers like that, Lord deliver us!"

JANUARY 1924. NEW YORK. Orage's first talk is at the Sunwise Turn Bookshop, a center for New York's avant-garde, located at East 31st Street just off Fifth Avenue in Manhattan. In attendance is a cross-section of New York intelligentsia.

Tall and easy of manner, quick and brilliant of mind and speech, Orage begins his presentation thus:

The Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man... which is based on the system of G. I. Gurdjieff, is really a continuation of the society called the 'Seekers After Truth.'

He goes on to sketch the preparations for the formation of the Institute in Russia through its founding at Fontainebleau-Avon in France. Then he states:

The life of our time has become so complex that man has deviated from his original type... Our civilization has taken away from the natural and essential qualities of his inherited type, but it has not given him what was needed for the harmonious development of a new type, so that civilization, instead of producing an individually whole man adapted to the nature and surroundings in which he finds himself and which really were responsible for his creation, has produced a being out of his element, incapable of living a full life, and at the same time a stranger to that inner life which should by rights be his... the world perception of man of our time and his way of living are not the conscious expression of himself as a complete whole; but, on the contrary, are the unconscious manifestation of only one of the three parts of him [intellectual, emotional, instinctive-moving]... Each truly conscious perception and expression of

man must be the result of simultaneous and co-ordinated working of all three centers, each of which must take its part in the whole task.

Orage's talk makes a strong impression. Many in the audience are New York literati, among whom are Margaret Anderson and Jane Heap, co-editors of the *Little Review*, a lively review of the arts.<sup>20</sup> Says Margaret Anderson after the talk:

"[Orage is] the most persuasive man I have ever known."

A fateful meeting occurs the following morning. Orage returns to the Sunwise Turn and spies a young, attractive blonde woman. Remembering that she had attended his talk but listened with a certain levity he inquires—his hazel eyes lively and challenging—"How did you enjoy the talk?"

Orage, who always liked an intellectual challenge, especially from women, finds the young woman does not disappoint.

"No, not at all," immediately answers tall, fair-haired Jesse Dwight. Hardly half Orage's age, she is not in the least overwhelmed by him.

Though having little interest in what he says, she is attracted to Orage and the two soon fall into chatting. He learns that her frankness and independence are bred from a long line of Connecticut clergymen and scholars. And not only is she beautiful and well-connected, but this young lady also happens to be a co-owner of the Sunwise Turn.<sup>21</sup>

Orage's great charm is animated by a blessing which Mairet, his friend and biographer, calls "a feminine element." As he points out:

"The acute sensibility and responsiveness of mind in which lay so much of Orage's personal magnetism was due to a feminine element in his character of which he was well aware, though he could never wholly accept it. He feared it, as men often do, and made matters more difficult by additional efforts to stiffen his character and harden his mental texture, which, as is usually the case with such efforts, especially if undertaken in mature years, were far from achieving their object but brought on tortured and precarious feelings. He became unable to miss a shot at golf without glancing round anxiously in fear that some stranger had noticed the blunder."

20. Founded in 1914 by Margaret Anderson, who defined it as "A Magazine of the Arts, Making No Compromise with the Public Taste," the *Little Review* published the avant-garde of its day, many of them steered to its pages by poet Ezra Pound, the magazine's "foreign correspondent." Among its writers: James Joyce, William Butler Yeats, T. S. Eliot, Jean Cocteau, and Gertrude Stein.

21. What a great help she could be to him in the task Gurdjieff gave him—establishing the teaching in America. What man, indeed a stranger in a strange land, facing such a monumental responsibility, would not feel with Orage that this enchanting young woman is heaven-sent? In fact, Jesse Dwight would prove his undoing. In her he is meeting the greatest challenge to his spiritual life that he has yet met, and he does not in the least surmise it.

Born January 22, 1873, Orage's early life was marked by poverty and promise. Orage's father died when he was only one-and-a-half years old. A schoolteacher, the father had gambled away his small inheritance. And so his unexpected death when he was hardly past forty left his family penniless. Young Orage mastered all his school subjects so easily that the schoolmaster provided special prizes for him. Taller than his peers and blessed with a vivid intelligence, a passion for reading, and the voice of a natural singer, Orage was also the star performer in the school's annual play.

His later life showed a pattern of mixing his working life with his love life. When only twenty-three, in 1896, he married Jean Walker, an ardent theosophist. Her family opposed the marriage as being premature; more likely, class and circumstance was the basis. Orage, for all his gifts, was a poor Yorkshire country boy, and Jean the daughter of a well-to-do Scottish family. Initially, the marriage blossomed. Orage and Jean shared theosophical and aesthetic interests and she helped him with the activities of the Leeds Arts Club, a club he and some friends had formed "to affirm the mutual dependence of art and ideas."

In 1906, the young couple moved to London. Lecturing on theosophy, he met Beatrice Hastings,<sup>22</sup> a vivacious and talented divorcée from South Africa formerly married to a professional boxer. Orage's wife, Jean, was no match for the irrepressible Beatrice, and Orage soon separated from her, taking Beatrice as a lover, and in 1907 founding the *New Age*, a political and literary weekly.

Beatrice soon came to share not only his bed but his office as well. She not only helped Orage edit the weekly, she became one of its principal contributors. Beatrice, gifted but unstable, had lively arguments with Orage over the Women's Suffrage movement, only then emerging. Orage, an ardent Nietzschean, strongly opposed it in his editorials, although he condemned the methods of those suppressing it.

During his affair with Beatrice, Orage had a liaison with a new young short story writer from New Zealand, Katherine Mansfield, whose stories he published in the *New Age*.<sup>23</sup> Though Orage preferred Katherine, the more forceful and domineering Beatrice pushed her aside. Beatrice, ever the free spirit, on a holiday with Orage and the painter Modigliani in France, danced nude on the tables of Parisian cafés. Though he enjoyed her fire and independence, Orage was unable to commit to her. In 1914 she left him, the affair finally ending acrimoniously in 1916.<sup>24</sup>

22. Just as theosophy had brought a significant woman, Anna Butkovsky, into Uspenskii's life, so it brings Beatrice Hastings into Orage's. Both seem to be classic shakti, i.e., a woman blessed with high energy, intelligence, daring, cunning, independence, and a warrior spirit.

23. Her first story, *The Child-Who-Was-Tired*, is about an overworked peasant mother who, to keep her baby quiet, smothers it. Orage ran it in the *New Age* on February 24, 1910.

While at the Sunwise Turn, Orage has another fateful meeting with a man who will become a lifelong spiritual friend. Noticing a young Englishman, an employee of the bookshop, who had also attended his talk, Orage asks what impression he got from it.

"None at all. I could not get the hang of it," replies C. S. Nott.

"Never mind," Orage says. "Gurdjieff is arriving in a week's time with forty pupils to give demonstrations of sacred dances and exercises. Why don't you come?"

Nott felt as if he had always known this man.

"It was as if I were meeting someone whom I had known intimately and had liked, and from whom I had been separated for a very long time."

JANUARY 23, 1924. NEW YORK. Gurdjieff's troupe makes its first appearance at Manhattan's Lesley Hall on West 83rd Street. Orage gives the introduction. In the audience is C. S. Nott, whom Orage had invited. He hears a low voice calling offstage— "Remember yourself, you idiot!" The voice is Gurdjieff's.

Nott is taken with the sacred dances and the music. The highlight for him is a series of movements called the "Big Seven" or "Big Group." The program said the movements were based on the Enneagram and had been taken from the Aisors, a Christian sect tinged with Sufism, located near Mount Ararat.

A few days later, Orage and Dr. Stjoernal come to Sunwise Turn. Nott is there. "At once I sensed that I was a mere youth," he says, "in the presence of these adult men. Very soon I made another and more striking comparison; Gurdjieff arrived, very impressive in a black coat with an astrakhan collar and wearing an astrakhan cap. With a twinkle in his eyes he began to joke with the others. Then he walked round, and I found him standing beside me. I looked up, and was struck by the expression of his eyes, with the depths of understanding and compassion in them. He radiated tremendous power and 'being' such as I had never in all my travels met in any man, and I sensed that, compared with him, both Dr. Stjoernal and Orage were as young men to an elder."

JANUARY 26, 1924. PETROGRAD-LENINGRAD. At the outbreak of the first world war St. Petersburg's name was changed to Petrograd; now it is changed yet again to Leningrad, "The city of Lenin." Uspenskii must not have rested well this night.

24. Orage's inability to make a lasting commitment, along with his mixing of his love and working lives—first with his wife, Jean, then Beatrice and Katherine, emerges as a pattern. The pattern will repeat in America with Jesse Dwight. This time Orage, perhaps believing he is breaking the pattern, commits.

FEBRUARY 2, 1924. NEW YORK. The troupe's second performance is given at the Neighborhood Playhouse on MacDougal Street in Greenwich Village. New York responds favorably to Gurdjieff's presentation of sacred dances. A large amount of money is collected. Among those present at the performance is the thirty-year-old writer Jean Toomer, a tall, magnetic figure, whose novel *Cane* had been an instant critical success the year before. Toomer, a lemon-skinned black writer whose ancestry includes Jewish, Indian, German, French, Dutch, and Welsh blood, has had, like Uspenskii, an oceanic experience of being:

"All I had formerly thought and felt about a larger being and a higher consciousness," says Toomer, "became for me a living reality of higher experience...[which became unbearable...but it left] an unforgettable taste." Toomer was familiar with German and Swedish gymnastics and had studied the Alexander Technique [a body work] and had a keen sense of the body. When he first saw Gurdjieff he says: "I saw this man in motion, a unit in motion. He was completely of one piece. From the crown of his head down the back of the head, down the neck, down the back and down the legs, there was a remarkable line. Shall I call it a gathered line? It suggested co-ordination, integration, knitness, power...I was fascinated by the way the man walked. As his feet touched the floor there seemed to be no weight on them at all—a glide, a stride, a weightless walk." Facially, he describes Gurdjieff: "his complexion is swarthy, his dark eyes wide-spread, his nose finely modelled and even delicate compared with the rugged four-square lower face, and he has a tigerish black moustache."

Of Gurdjieff himself, Toomer says: "He seemed to have everything that could be asked of a developed human being, a teacher and a master. Knowledge, integration, many-sidedness, power—in fact, he had a bit too much power for my comfort...I held back, Gurdjieff's power disturbed me. I was not sure of it, and I wanted to be sure before I placed myself wholly in his hands."

In his diary, Toomer comes closer to his impression of Gurdjieff. "Power<sup>25</sup>—something more than strength of body, something in addition and other than strength of mind. Though he contained it, it came out of him, this deep, pervasive, unfathomable power. I soon became sure that I had never seen any other man with power of this kind. But how was he using it? For good? For evil? How would he use it on me should I become one of his pupils? From this time on I had no peace until I had finally settled this question so far as I was concerned."

25. For Toomer, the difficulty is Gurdjieff's power. For Uspenskii, it is Gurdjieff's 'playing' and his use of devotional methods. For Bennett, it is commitment (his own). For Orage, the difficulty will be even closer to the bone.

FEBRUARY 15, 1924. NEW YORK. Gorham Munson, a literary disciple of Waldo Frank, the novelist and social critic, attends a demonstration by Gurdjieff and his troupe. He writes to Frank:

The sensation in New York for the past month has been the visit of Gurdjieff, Orage, and a troupe of pupils from Fontainebleau. They came unheralded, give out no addresses, assign no purpose for their visit, and put on quite suddenly demonstrations for invited audiences. It is the very devil to find out when and where they are demonstrating, and it is the very devil to get admitted. At last, however Lisa [Munson's wife] and I were placed on their list. I have seen two demonstrations and heard three lectures. The dancing is quite undreamed of. Ritual dances from the East, temple dances of esoteric cults, monastic experiences: I have never seen so much complexity, contradiction, and detailed variety held together in an unaccountable unity. It is a dance of design (of complicated geometry) rather than of motion. Strictly impersonal. Also there are demonstrations of tricks, semi-tricks, possibly thought-transference, and these have been concentration tests. Gurdjieff is the most powerful man I have ever seen: God or Satan himself—almost. Everyone is talking—literati, society, little girls—amazing rumours spread.

FEBRUARY 26, 1924. MUNICH. Correspondents from the world press and leading German newspapers cover Hitler's trial for treason. It lasts twenty-four days. In that short time Hitler's speaking ability and nationalistic spirit transform the defeat of his putsch into a triumph. All the world hears of this man who readily admits his desire to get rid of the Reich government. About his view of himself he minces no words. "The man who is born to be a dictator is not compelled," declares the thirty-four-year-old Hitler, "he wills it. He is not driven forward, but drives himself. There is nothing immodest about this. Is it immodest for a worker to drive himself toward heavy labor? Is it presumptuous of a man with the high forehead of a thinker to ponder through the nights till he gives the world an invention? The man who feels called upon to govern a people has no right to say, 'If you want me or summon me, I will cooperate.' No! It is his duty to step forward."

LONDON. 1924. Writers Aldous Huxley and Gerald Heard attend Uspenskii's lectures. The occult writer A. E. Waite also comes. Listening to Uspenskii discourse on the need for man to realize he is a machine, Waite walks out crying—"Mr. Uspenskii, there is no love in your system."

SPRING 1924. NEW YORK. Orage, the consummate lecturer, is attracting larger and larger audiences to his exposition of Gurdjieff's teaching. Besides Margaret Anderson, Jane Heap, and Jean Toomer, he draws into his orbit authors, poets, critics, actors, and budding psychologists.

Among them are: Waldo Frank, his wife Margaret Naumberg, Muriel Draper, Rebecca West, Gorham Munson, Carl Zigrosser, Schuyler Jackson, Edwin Wolfe, John O'Hara Cosgrave, and the philanthropist Mabel Dodge Luhan.

Says thirty-five-year-old Waldo Frank, the literary lion of the time: "Orage blights the claims of humanness. With valedictory sentiment, wipes sentiment off the slate. With logic swift as a machine, he discredits logic. With courteous manner, drops spiritual bombs into the laps of ladies who adore him."

For writer-editor Gorham Munson what stands out is Orage's intelligence. He and his wife are introduced to Orage by Jean Toomer and Margaret Naumberg. Says Munson: "I felt that this man's *note* was intelligence, and I have never met a man who struck it with as much clarity... He gave no sign of middle age. No hint of grey in the dark hair, and only a slight recession of the hairline near the part on the left. No sign of corpulence."

Munson's wife, Elizabeth, a former dancer, later recounted: "I felt his alertness and his relaxation," she later said. "I felt in Orage something always in motion but not hurried, not tense, not forced—an easy swiftness which could change its course deftly and resume the original direction with perfect sureness. Quick intelligence, quick feeling and understanding, and an extraordinary speed of perception—a sort of lightning functioning."

Orage's meetings are held first in the apartment of a psychoanalyst, then at 24 East 11th street, Jean Heap's apartment in the Village, and finally in Muriel Draper's more spacious Murray Hill apartment at 24 East 40th Street. Draper is the socialite architectural critic of *The New Yorker* who Gurdjieff delights in calling "Mrs. Trapper," much the same as he refers to the lesbian Jane Heap as "Mees Keep."

Soon an attractive, young blonde is seen sitting adoringly at the Englishman's feet. The temptation proves too much for Orage. Before long he succumbs to an affair with Jessie Dwight. He must have had his doubts, for Orage has long recognized his weakness for women. In England he had spoken of the need to free himself from the need for female companionship. As he wrote earlier in the *New Age*:

"Long after the liability to complete subjection to female illusion is over, men sometimes continue to experience perturbations of their equilibrium in the presence of women. In few instances are these perturbations violent enough to overthrow the mind entirely, but for the moment they undoubtedly do cause the judgment to reel and stagger and the resulting conversation and actions to become distorted. These residual phenomena, however, are to be distinguished from the similar phenomena

of adolescence by the fact that they no longer inspire hope but disgust or, at least, annoyance."<sup>26</sup>

Settling in Manhattan, Orage moves into a tiny apartment in Chelsea. He works steadfastly to build interest in Gurdjieff's teaching and to form groups. Some two hundred people, many drawn from New York's intelligentsia, will show interest in joining Orage's groups. Soon Jesse Dwight leaves Sunwise Turn to become his personal secretary. Far more stable than Beatrice Hastings or Katherine Mansfield, Jesse Dwight is a woman who knows what she wants and will sacrifice to get it, the "sacrifice" in this case being to align herself with Gurdjieff's teaching.<sup>27</sup> For his part, Orage seems to be at right angles to himself. Intellectually, he is opposed to granting women independence, but emotionally strong-willed, independent women are his great attraction.

Many in New York want to go to the Prieuré, among them the young Englishman, C. S. Nott. But there is a problem. Nott tells Orage that a young American woman he is seeing has "become resentful" of his interest in the Gurdjieff system. She has refused to go to any more meetings and blames Nott for a loss of interest in what they had both worked for—"social reform and the good of others." When he told her of his plans to go to the Prieuré, she declared—"You will have to choose between Gurdjieff and me."

Replies Orage, who soon will be no stranger to the problem, "You must remember that American women, more than any others, are spoilt. Of course, all women want their own way but one of the tragedies of American life is that women have succeeded in getting it to the extent of dominating men. The passive force has become the active. One of the consequences is the enormous number of divorces here compared with Europe. Gurdjieff blames men for the deterioration in the status of women in America. The strange thing is that Americans regard it as a sign of 'progress'... In a real civilization woman understands her function and has no wish to be other than a woman."

APRIL 1, 1924. GERMANY. Convicted of treason, Hitler enters Landsberg prison to serve a five-year sentence.

APRIL 8, 1924. NEW YORK. The day of the opening of the New York branch of the Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man. After dinner in honor of Mr. Gurdjieff at a Russian restaurant, he and friends

26. Like Uspenskii's Osokin, Orage sees his situation clearly enough but has not the requisite self-remembrance and will to change it.

27. It may be that a part of her is interested in the teaching. But, from her original comment to Orage and her battle with Gurdjieff, that part never substantially grew.

and several pupils of the French branch retire to the apartment of a Mrs. R. for coffee and liqueurs. Gurdjieff is asked about the finances of the Institute and its annual budget. He answers at great length.

Gurdjieff's first visit to New York is a success and Orage, whatever his inner resistance, has no trouble raising the money needed. He tells Nott: "Gurdjieff says that the attitude to finance is all part of the dream state that we live in. If men could wake up it would very soon be changed. Gurdjieff's attitude to money is different from that of anyone I have met....Gurdjieff may appear to be throwing money about, but he calculates and uses it for certain non-personal ends."

JUNE 1924. NEW YORK. Gurdjieff returns to France. Of the impact Gurdjieff and Orage make in their initial contact with America, Claude Bragdon, the architect and author who had translated *Tertium Organum*, best sums it up: "It was Orage, the perfect disciple, the Plato to this Socrates [Gurdjieff], who was responsible for most of the success which attended the movement in America. His charming manner and brilliant mind did much to counteract the bewilderment in which Gurdjieff so often left his auditors."

JUNE 1924. PRIEURÉ. Margaret Anderson and Jane Heap arrive with Georgette Leblanc, an actress and singer, and former mistress of Maurice Maeterlinck, the playwright. At dinner one evening they are surprised to see Uspenskii, since they heard he had left the Institute.

"Uspenskii," says Margaret Anderson, "sat at Gurdjieff's left and acted like a small boy, laughing more than he meant to, saying what he meant not to, flushing with the Armagnac forced upon him.... Though Uspenskii must have taken part in this ceremony a hundred times, I always felt that he had never discovered its significance; that he knew ideas but didn't know people."

Anderson speaks with Gurdjieff who tells her: "I cannot develop you. I create conditions; you develop yourself."

Both she, Georgette, and Jane Heap become residents of the Prieuré.

Georgette says to Margaret, "We have spent our lives walking about under parasols."

Thinks Margaret, always highly imaginative, "Yes, white parasols, like those used by Catholics in midnight Mass at New Year's."

Georgette's impression of Gurdjieff is that, "he resided on the earth as on a planet too limited for his own needs and function. Where did he manifest his real existence?... I was not astonished that he was little known, that he was not surrounded by thousands of followers. Neither money nor influence could open the doors of the Prieuré—Gurdjieff

created all possible obstacles to discourage any idler-spirits who might push their way into a world where they did not belong."

The women will live at intervals at the Prieuré for two years. Margaret and Georgette will encounter Gurdjieff more rarely thereafter until 1935.

SATURDAY AFTERNOON, JUNE 1924. PRIEURÉ. Eleven-year-old Fritz Peters is interviewed by Gurdjieff on the terrace. He and his brother, Tom, have been brought to the château by Margaret Anderson, his mother's sister. The boys' mother has been hospitalized for a year, and Anderson has taken responsibility for them.

Told that Gurdjieff is a prophet or someone very close to the second coming of Christ, the young boy dreads the meeting. He is relieved when he meets Gurdjieff.

"The actual meeting," says Peters, "did not measure up to my fears. 'Messiah' or not, he seemed to me a simple, straightforward man."

Among the questions Gurdjieff asks him is what he wants to know.

"I want to know everything," Peters replies.

"You cannot know everything. Everything about what?"

"Everything about man."

Gurdjieff sighs and tells him... "You can stay. But your answer makes life difficult for me. I am the only one who teaches what you ask. You make more work for me."

Jessie Dwight had come to the Prieuré at Orage's urging. Her attitude toward Gurdjieff ranges from detachment to passive-aggressive. She breaks the Prieuré's rules and avoids tasks she either does not like or considers beneath her. Gurdjieff discovers her reading letters from Orage and immediately delivers a shock, ordering that all mail must first be given to him. She resents Gurdjieff's influence over Orage and resists all Gurdjieff's efforts toward her. She apparently never questions herself and has not the least idea of Gurdjieff's mission and what is at stake.

Alexander de Salzmann, exasperated, bursts out—"If you'd only admit you're a squirming idiot,<sup>28</sup> what a marvelous initiate you'd be."

SUMMER 1924. GERMANY. Hitler begins to dictate *Mein Kampf* (My Struggle) from his cell at the old fortress of Landsberg high above the River Lech. Hitler's book gives his rationale for what has gone wrong with European civilization and his plans to change it.

JULY 8, 1924. CHAILLY. It is a hot day and Gurdjieff and Olga de Hartmann are in Paris. They are expected to return to the Prieuré. He tells her to have a mechanic check his car thoroughly, especially the steering wheel.

28. A squirming idiot is a person with a particularly unpleasant personality trait.

On this day, too, he signs papers giving her power of attorney should anything happen to him. Though it is customary for the two to return together, he tells her he will drive alone. She is instructed to take a train.

Leaving Paris, Gurdjieff drives his small black Citroën as he always does. On the open road he travels at 115 kilometers an hour [71 mph]; through towns he cuts the speed to 90 kilometers [56 mph]. Near the hamlet of Chailly, the Citroën approaches a crossroads where the road from Paris to Fontainebleau meets the N 168 road from Versailles to Choisy-le-Roi.<sup>29</sup> Suddenly, out from a side road appears a car. The Citroën swerves and shoots off the road, veering past a signpost, and heading into a grassy area between some trees and a stone embankment. The Citroën hits the embankment head on, snapping the steering-wheel, and comes to a dead stop against a tree. The immense force of the impact crumples the front axle and fenders, crushes the radiator, throws the engine off its seating, and smashes the windows and doors.

A passing policeman finds Gurdjieff, unconscious and bloody, his head laying on a car cushion. He has a severe concussion. He has either been thrown from the car or somehow has crawled out. He is taken to a hospital. Olga de Hartmann finds him and has him brought to the Prieuré on a stretcher, his head wreathed with bandages. He is still unconscious. He is carried up to his second floor bedroom and put to bed. For five days he lies in his corner room of the Prieuré unconscious. He is being kept alive on oxygen. Doctors come and go at intervals. Tanks of oxygen are delivered and removed. There is a hushed atmosphere everywhere as if everyone is involved in a silent prayer for his recovery. Finally, he awakes only to find himself, as he says, "a bit of live meat in a clean bed." Madame de Hartmann takes over the running of the château while Madame Ostrowska and Dr. Stjoernval nurse Gurdjieff.

Uspenskii believes he had foreseen some accident like this. He says, "Gurdjieff lost contact with the source after Essentuki. His behavior goes contrary to his teaching. He drives a car as if he were riding a horse." Later, Uspenskii would say that Gurdjieff had gone mad.

All the talk at the Prieuré is of the motor accident. But for Gurdjieff it is no accident at all. That, he says, is "their usual superficial understanding."

"As I supposed from the first when I recovered my senses," he says, "and as I am now quite convinced—it was the last chord of the manifestation toward me of that 'something' usually accumulating in the common life of people, which... was first noticed by the Great, really Great King of Judea, Solomon, and was called 'Tzvarnoharno.'"<sup>30</sup>

29. Secondary roads in France are dangerous even today where intersections are unmarked, driveways follow blind corners, and people drive very fast. Locals know where driveways or farm roads and intersections are and slow down when approaching.

LATE JULY 1924. PRIEURÉ. Jean Toomer arrives from America. His concern about Gurdjieff having so much power he had come to see was really "a deep-seated unwillingness to put my life under the direction of anyone other than myself, and a stubborn belief that I could make my own way, unaided by such help as I would receive in the course of ordinary life." Now ready to work with Gurdjieff, Toomer finds him incapacitated, with no one allowed to see him except those caring for him. A great gloom hangs over the Prieuré. Toomer finds there is little to no working going on, and what there is, done half-heartedly. In New York he has heard about the benefits of manual work from Orage, and so soon begins working in the vegetable garden and helping to uproot tree stumps, saw logs and make roads.

In time, Gurdjieff begins to be seen walking slowly along the paths with a cane, his head bandaged, his dark swollen eyes concealed behind dark glasses. He looks like a shell of his former vibrant self. With him are Madames Ostrowska and de Hartmann. Though it is the height of summer and the weather is quite warm, Gurdjieff is bundled in his thick black coat and astrakhan hat. Students approach him he does not recognize them, his sight is so impaired. He does not speak. Against doctors' warnings, he has made a tremendous effort to get out of bed. Slowly, only taking a few steps at a time before stopping, he has made his way down the staircase and out onto the terrace. After fifteen minutes or so, his wife and Madame de Hartmann take him back to bed. Each day Gurdjieff forces himself to stay outside a little longer. Despite his physical condition, as C. S. Nott observes, "One could still sense and feel the undiminished force of his being."

Recovering, Gurdjieff, from a bench or chair, soon takes a hand in directing the work. He seldom speaks and has not smiled since the accident. One day a fallen tree is being hoisted from a watery ditch. Thomas de Hartmann and C. S. Nott are up to their knees in water. The tree falls back into the ditch hitting Nott on a leg he has previously injured. Instantly, he cries out, "Damnation!" Everyone stops and stares at him. "It's all right," says Nott, "no harm done, just uncomfortable."

Gurdjieff, watching, begins to smile and everyone begins to laugh. Says Nott, "A new feeling, almost of joy, emanated from everyone," and from that day forward, Gurdjieff begins to talk a little. Toomer, who has taken to the physical work, finds that with Gurdjieff's return "Things begin to hum.... It is perfectly amazing what his presence does. Extra life, extra zest, extra power, extra will springs up in us. Everybody works hard all day long

30. *Tzvarnoharno* or not, the crash shocks Gurdjieff into seeing what perhaps he has known but has refused to allow himself to see: namely that, regardless of his pupils' gifts, it is impossible, given their self-love and vanity, to prepare and train the required "helper-instructors" needed to disseminate the teaching.

and sometimes into the night." The hard work, consciously done, redirecting the attention from the mind and giving attention to both the body and the work at hand, begins to have an effect on Toomer and soon puts him "in simply wonderful shape, feeling that I could continue on and on, wanting no other life than this. All other life seemed, by contrast, flat, undynamic, unstretching, ungrowing and, above all, unreal, a mere dream-life of vague surfaces and a stir of words." And Toomer learns the real value of manual work as a means of transformation:

Manual work is usually done for the sake of outward results, for the products, that is a farmer works to grow crops, a carpenter to build a house. Here at the Prieuré we were to work chiefly for the sake of purification, growth, increased ability and consciousness. Each job, to be sure, was to be done as well as we could do it. Work standards were anything but lax. Each of us was to improve as a workman, acquiring competence and skill. Tools and materials were to be cared for as real craftsmen care for them. But we were not to be attached to the fruits of our labor. The aim was the same as that expressed in the *Bhagavad Gita*, "Be free from attachment to results." People who became overly egotistical about their accomplishments were likely to find their pet projects mysteriously disrupted.

As Gurdjieff's physical strength returns, he takes more and more part in the Institute's activities and begins to answer questions and explain various aspects of the teaching. Says Toomer: "Each day was a full day. Indeed, more effort and more experience are packed into a day at the Institute than in an ordinary month. It gives you a measure of man's reserve power, a standard of human capacity."

AUGUST 26, 1924. PRIEURÉ. Gurdjieff calls everyone into the Prieuré's main salon. Earlier he had dictated to Olga de Hartmann the speech he wished to give. He begins:

"I was very ill. Now, thank God, I feel better and continue to be better..." Gurdjieff stops.

He hands the dictation to Olga, telling her to read:

"What happened to me, how it happened, I do not know. I remember nothing. I went to the place where it happened and imagined how it happened. There are not many people who could speak with you like this after such an accident. In principle, I had to die, but accidentally I stayed alive."

Gurdjieff then apologizes if he offended anyone in the weeks after the accident, as his memory was weak. He says only three or four days ago his memory came back to him and "I can live as before, not as an animal." His first thoughts were: "Did die or not? How will everything be now? And what about the Institute? I saw that I was alive ..." He has however decided to close the Institute.

"First of all," he says, "there are very few people who understand. I gave all my life for my Work, but the result from other people in general was not good and that is why I think it is not necessary for those few to sacrifice their lives here." People can leave immediately or stay on as guests for two weeks. He will sell the Prieuré but, he says, "All the same, I cannot throw away all my Work ... In two weeks I will begin a new work. The names of those who may stay will be posted. Others will have to leave."

Gurdjieff gives some organizational instructions and then returns to his main point:

"Again, I repeat that the Institute is closed. I died. The reason is that I was disenchanted with people after all that I have done for them and I have seen how 'well' they have paid me for it. Now, inside of me everything is empty."

Besides his "disenchantment" with his students, Gurdjieff says, "the second reason is that I wish to live for myself. I have to rest and use all the time for myself. I don't wish to continue as before, and my new principle is—everything for myself."

*Everything for myself.* These last words have a quality of uncharacteristic self-pity but they are also historically relevant.

Many years before, on September 11, 1911, Gurdjieff had taken a special oath binding himself for twenty-one years, he writes, "in his conscience to lead in some ways an artificial life, modeled upon a program which had been previously planned in accordance with certain definite principles."

So, nearly thirteen years later, Gurdjieff appears to end his oath. He no doubt took his mission to be a failure. To establish the teaching in the West, he needed to put someone in his place. He needed to find and prepare a student with a Western mentality who could step-down the teaching. Otherwise, it would never take root. He had failed with Uspenskii, with Bennett and, perhaps, at this juncture, he saw no great promise in Orage.<sup>31</sup>

31. Despite his understanding and being, he had been unable to make any of his students sufficiently aware of their identification with the properties of what he calls *Kind-abuffer*, the blind egoism that puts man-in-quotation marks, at the center of the universe. The car crash has opened him to what he probably had known but would not admit for sometime. Namely: none of his would-be students at the Prieuré could break through this identification either. In the summer of 1963, Bennett lectures, "He certainly was under some special kind of obligation, that in the particular work he had to do, he should not assume a position of being a great teacher, with a large number of pupils depending upon him. It was often very obvious that with the greatest of ease, if he had chosen to do so, he could have exercised the power he had to attract people. He could have had thousands of people round him..." Ten years later, Bennett, able to see the large picture, would add, "They (his old and intimate pupils) saw him as their teacher, concerned with the spiritual progress of his pupils, whereas, he was concerned with the impact which his work and ideas could have on the world over a long period of years. This is why he so frequently refers to the realization of his aims after his death."

Gurdjieff's sudden closure of the Institute is a thunderbolt whose reverberations are felt for many days. Wrote Toomer of this time some-time later:

Most of us were shot straight into the air, and stayed there, suspended, an uncomfortable length of time. Day after day you would see people, sometimes in twos and threes, sometimes alone, in conference with Gurdjieff, talking over their future course of life, where they would go, what they would do. I had such a conference. Gurdjieff said I might stay on, if I wished. I thought it over. Not much work would go on. But had I come here only to go away in a few months? Where would I go? What would I do? Finally, after quite a struggle, something clicked in me and I decided to return to New York.

For Jesse Dwight, Gurdjieff's words mean that he would have no more parasites. Many people leave the Prieuré but Gurdjieff allows Jesse C. S. Nott, and some half-dozen other recruits from America to stay.

AUGUST 1924. LONDON. Says Uspenskii: "Gurdjieff's work at the Prieuré," he says, "failed simply because the principle of seniority was not followed... People who did not belong to groups before, like Pinder and Orage, they were given certain power over people who were much older in the Work; it did not work—it could not go on."

AUTUMN 1924. PRIEURÉ. The car crash and Gurdjieff's later actions fueled the swirl of question and rumor around him as to who he is. For Madame Uspenskii it is not an issue: "I do not pretend to understand Georgi Ivanovitch," she declares. "For me he is X. All that I know is that he is my teacher and it is not right for me to judge him, nor is it necessary for me to understand him. No one knows who is the real Georgi Ivanovitch, for he hides himself from all of us. It is useless for us to try to know him, and I refuse to enter into any discussions about him."

AUTUMN 1924. NEW YORK. Through the door of the Sunwise Turn<sup>32</sup> steps C. Daly King. A Yale graduate living on private income, he has a keen interest in Egyptology and psychology. The bookshop is where twenty-nine-year-old King buys all his books. The previous January he and his wife had attended two performances of Gurdjieff's troupe and found the dances "totally unusual and impressive to a degree." In the ensuing months Jesse Dwight had often invited him to attend a meeting

32. The Sunwise Turn plays a prominent place in Orage's life. Not only is the bookstore the venue of his first American talk, but it is here that he meets Jesse Dwight, C. S. Nott, and now C. Daly King, all of whom become significant figures in his life. Gurdjieff even mentions the bookstore and Jesse Dwight in his *Third Series*.

of Orage's but he had always declined, picturing it as a group of "fanatics meeting privately to discuss strange notions."

Finally, bowing to Jesse Dwight's persistence and logic—*she* was not a fanatic, was she?—King reluctantly attends a meeting. Intellectual to a high degree, King expects "a proselytizing harangue." He goes armed with an incredulous attitude, ready to object to every point. But he finds that the tall slender Englishman in the inconspicuous dark business suit presents the teaching with "complete and utter *rationality*." Moreover, Orage makes clear that no starry-eyed believers or woolly thinkers are countenanced.

"My incredulity was not admitted," says King. "Instead, it was demanded that I adopt skepticism toward what I heard, that is, that I should neither believe nor disbelieve."

Upon his return to New York Jean Toomer, without authorization and unable to resist his desire to be a teacher, however premature, sets-up his own Gurdjieff study group, imitating Gurdjieff, affecting his mannerisms, even using Russian words. Says his friend Gorham Munson: "Jean had a lot of nerve to do that; he was really not qualified to do it." The group only lasts five or six meetings. He then returns to Orage's group.

DECEMBER 16, 1924. PRIEURÉ. *It happened in the 223rd year after the creation of the world through space flew the ship Karnak....*

Some four months after ending his formal teaching at the Prieuré, Gurdjieff begins to dictate to Olga de Hartmann. And with this Gurdjieff begins to bring into the world his magnum opus, *All and Everything: Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson*.

It is well known that Gurdjieff took a dim view of contemporary writing, science fiction in particular. But it was the only means open to him to complete his mission. He says:

"Since I had not, when in full strength and health, succeeded in introducing in practice into the life of people the beneficial truths elucidated for them by me, then I must at least, at any cost, succeed in doing this in theory, before my death."

To Orage has fallen the task to raise money in America to free Gurdjieff to write *All and Everything*. Though not a welcome order, he does this admirably.

During 1924, Uspenskii finishes the introduction to *Fragments of an Unknown Teaching*.<sup>33</sup> In a passage concerning evil, later deleted, he writes that he asked Gurdjieff if there can be conscious evil. Gurdjieff

33. In the original draft, he writes of her personal association with Gurdjieff in one section and of the teaching in a second. Only at a later time does he interweave the two sections into one, this blending giving a much more profound result.

says there certainly can be, though it is possible in only in a very elaborate way and very rare case.

"Anything that produces big phenomena can have mind and intelligence behind it," he says.

He pauses, then asks Uspenskii—"Why are you upset?"

"It means changing all I had thought before."

"It becomes even more interesting," says Gurdjieff. "It is one thing to have against you only mechanical forces and quite another to have intelligence; it is one thing to struggle with intelligence, and another to struggle with mechanical forces."

Gurdjieff, though pale, looking dreadful and walking with difficulty, wills himself to keep writing *All and Everything*, either dictating to Madame de Hartmann or scribbling in notebooks in Armenian.

Meanwhile, Orage is becoming ever more enamored of his young secretary. Says a close friend: "He wasted his substance in talk and falling in love." Gurdjieff sees her as a squirming idiot "spoiled out of all proportion to her position."

DECEMBER 20, 1924. GERMANY. Hitler is released from Landsberg prison.

1925. NEW YORK. Toomer has written to Orage that he "would like to learn from you, to work with you, more than formerly...Substances in me are turning to Gurdjieff, and, more immediately to you." Orage gives him permission to form a group in Harlem. This comes to nothing and Toomer leaves for Chicago.

1925. PRIEURÉ. Gurdjieff often sits on a bench in the garden while writing his book. Frequently his wife and aged mother would come and sit on either side of him. "One of them always adored by me was my old mother and the other, my uniquely and sincerely beloved wife." His mother has a chronic liver condition and his wife has cancer. Like his mother, his once tall and beautiful wife is now stooped and walks with the aid of a stick. Accompanying his mother on her walks to his bench are four animals. A cat walks in front of her, two peacocks at her side, and behind a dog. It is obvious from the conditions of these two women—"uniquely nearest to my inner life," says Gurdjieff—that both would soon die. To his mother's death he is reconciled, as this is "the normal destiny of every person of esteemed age." But the prospect of his wife's early death calls up a strong feeling of "implacable revolt" against the injustice of casual, self-willed destiny." Seeing them, he feels every kind of association of suffering and so as not to "experience this unpleasant process, [I] immediately buried myself in the question of writing."

MARCH 1925. NEW YORK. Orage receives some chapters of *All and Everything*. Orage sends it back.

"It is completely unintelligible. I've no idea what it is about," he says.

Not long after, a revised version arrives. "This is entirely different," says Orage. "Now I begin to smell something very interesting."

Receiving the chapter "The Holy Planet Purgatory," Orage says that "he has read thousands of books and nothing in philosophy, nor Plato nor Plotinus, compares in lucidity, concentration, subtlety, etc., with this chapter. It leaves all philosophy behind."

Later Orage declares of the book: "It is really an objective work of art, of literature of the highest kind; it is in the category of scripture...It is consciously designed to have a definite effect on everyone who feels drawn to reading it. Anyone who tried to rewrite it would distort it."

C. Daly King has continued to attend meetings. Orage sees his promise and the two men often have lunch together. Says King of his mentor: "I have never encountered any other mind of the shining clarity which Orage's achieved nor have I met any other teacher who so completely understood that no human being can ever be taught anything, that the true teacher's task is to assist another to learn."

MAY 1925. PRIEURÉ. Gurdjieff has nearly fully recovered from the car crash, though his eyes continue to trouble him. Because of his inactivity, he has begun to put on weight. But, says C. S. Nott, "He is also radiating more 'light'." Life at the Institute has returned to its usual course with movements in the Study House, meals in the 'English' dining room, and Turkish baths on Saturdays. Gurdjieff again is giving tasks in the forest and gardens but, reports Nott, he does "not take much active part himself." Another small black Citroën has been purchased and Gurdjieff has resumed his trips to Paris.

Wherever he goes, Gurdjieff carries with him a supply of cheap exercise books and pencils. No matter where he is he writes. Often, it is an effort and he must compel his organism to allow him to write through a variety of means. Once he asks C. S. Nott to meet him at the Café de la Paix at eleven o'clock in the morning. They drink a glass of Armagnac together. For the next two hours Gurdjieff writes, not saying a word, stopping only to order coffee or drinks.

"All the time I am sitting there," says Nott, "it is as if I am being charged with electricity, magnetized with energy from Gurdjieff; as if a force is passing between us. Although I have felt listless and tired when I arrived, and had sat for two hours apparently doing nothing, I am now charged to the brim with bubbling energy, like a battery."

At one o'clock Gurdjieff finally finishes and closes the exercise book.

"You see," he tells Nott, "what a lot I have done. Very good work this morning. Now take this back to the Prieuré and ask Madame de Hartmann to have it typed."

Gurdjieff writes in Armenian and then has it translated in Russian by Madame Galumnian, an Armenian pupil. It is then translated into English by Thomas de Hartmann and other English-speaking pupils, and sent to Orage in New York.

JUNE 1925. PRIEURÉ. Gurdjieff's mother dies. Gurdjieff's wife Madame Ostrowska cancer grows worse. As the summer goes on she takes to her room permanently.

SUMMER 1925. PRIEURÉ. Fritz Peters and his brother had left in October. They now return. He finds Gurdjieff, sitting on the terrace at one of the marble-topped tables shaded by a striped umbrella, writing *All and Everything*. Gurdjieff makes Peters his "caretaker." He is to clean his room, bring him food, and so forth.

Gurdjieff speaks to "Frets" (Fritz Peters) about the work he is doing with his wife. It is extremely difficult he says "because I try to do thing with her which almost not possible. If she alone, already she be long time dead. I keep alive, make stay alive, with my strength; very difficult things. But also very important—this most important moment in life for her. She live many lives, is very old soul; she now have possibility ascend to other world. But sickness come and make more difficult, make impossible for her do this thing alone. If can keep alive few months more will not have to come back and live this life again."<sup>34</sup>

JULY 1925. PRIEURÉ. Orage, with Jesse Dwight, returns. It is Orage's delicate job to edit *All and Everything* in a way that makes it clear and yet remains faithful to Gurdjieff's intention.

Besides writing the book in Armenian, Gurdjieff dictated it in Russian and a pidgin French, as he says that no single language could give him sufficient freedom of expression for his complicated ideas and theories. Thomas de Hartmann then translated it into a literal English. It was for Orage to work the words into appropriate English form, making literal what was to be taken literally, symbolic what is to be taken symboli-

34. Gurdjieff's statement "live this life again" directly refers to Uspenskii's idea of eternal recurrence. As Gurdjieff told Uspenskii in St. Petersburg, "This idea of repetition is not the full and absolute truth but it is the nearest possible approximation of the truth.... But what you say is very close to it. And if you understand why I do not speak of this, you will be still nearer to it. What is the use of a man knowing about recurrence if he is not conscious of it and does not change?" *Search*, p. 250.

cally. To be rightly assimilated, Gurdjieff's ideas had to enter the psyche in a form that forced the reader to have to work to extract substance.

By now Orage, in the full bloom of 'falling in love,' falls more and more under the influence of Jesse Dwight. Like Uspenskii and Bennett before him, he is blind to his identification and its significance. Gurdjieff, ever watchful over his "super idiot," notes Orage's growing infatuation with his tall blond secretary. Gurdjieff tries to make him see what is happening, what she represents.

One wet morning Orage and Nott are sitting in the dark, empty Russian dining room. The two men are having tea. Gurdjieff appears wearing a light grey suit and carrying a walking stick and, as Nott observes, "looking very handsome." He stops by their table, lights a cigarette and begins to talk about his accident. Nott does not understand the meaning behind his words but intuits that Gurdjieff is "speaking in parables [on more than one level], conveying something to Orage."

Gurdjieff tells them that it was his habit when driving from Paris to the Prieuré to put his hand out of the window to pick an apple off a row of trees that grew near the spot where his car crashed. He did so on this occasion and the wheel of his car must have bumped into something. He remembered nothing. He must have unconsciously taken a cushion from the Citroën and put his head on it.

Nott can make nothing of the rest of the story.

Gurdjieff pauses, lights another cigarette, and continues.

"You know, Orage, when you give something to a man, or do something for him, the first time he will kneel and kiss your hand; second time, he takes his hat off; third time, he bows; fourth time, he fawns; fifth time, he nods; sixth time, he insults you; and the seventh time, he sues you for not giving him enough."

Gurdjieff then glances at Nott but says—"You know, Orage, we must pay for everything."

After Gurdjieff leaves, Nott asks Orage what he had meant.

"He is probably getting at us for not knowing how to give," answers Orage. "Neither of us, it seems, has yet learnt. Perhaps Gurdjieff himself has had to learn how to give."<sup>35</sup>

After luncheon one day, Fritz Peters delivers a tray of coffee and brandy to Gurdjieff's room on the second floor. Opening the door, Peters finds Orage standing, impassive and very pale, by one of the windows. Gurdjieff stands by his bed raging. In order to put the tray on the table Peters must walk between them. Doing so, he feels "flayed by the fury in Gurdjieff's voice."

35. For an analysis of possible meanings behind this, See p. 205.

Says Peters: "Orage, a tall man, seemed withered and crumpled as he sagged in the window, and Gurdjieff, actually not very tall, looked immense—a complete embodiment of rage.... Suddenly in the space of an instant, Gurdjieff's voice stopped, his whole personality changed, he gave me a broad smile—looking incredibly peaceful and inwardly quiet—motioned me to leave, and then resumed his tirade with undiminished force."

Peters feels great pity and compassion for Orage. Yet upon leaving the room, he says, "my feelings were completely reversed. I was still appalled by the fury I had seen in Gurdjieff; terrified by it. In a sense, I was even more terrified when I left the room because I realized that it was not only *not* 'uncontrollable' but actually under great control and completely conscious on his part."

Peters does not say, if he indeed knew, the subject of Gurdjieff's anger, but it likely had to do with Jesse Dwight.

Gurdjieff has many talks with Orage on love. Though love is of seven kinds, Gurdjieff says, he will only speak of three: instinctive love, emotional love, and conscious love.

Instinctive love obeys the laws of chemistry or biology and proceeds by affinities.

Emotional love is an aberration. It is not rooted in biology but is often opposed to biology in its direction and character. Often it is a mutual attraction of biological incongruities.

Conscious love, rarely attained, is the only true form of loving.

A conscious lover works on oneself in order to help the loved one perfect themselves, its aim being to bring about rebirth.

The summer passes and, given Gurdjieff's accident and Orage's skill at attracting and teaching students, Orage is given a de facto mandate to teach the Work in America.<sup>36</sup>

WINTER 1925. PRIEURÉ. Madame Ostrowska's cancer becomes more acute.

JANUARY 5, 1926. NEW YORK. Letter from Orage to Jean Toomer: "I haven't plumbed the depths of G.'s thought and probably never shall; but at least certain meanings and interpretations of the colossal parable I now begin to understand."

APRIL 1926. NEW YORK. Jean Toomer, while awaiting a subway at the 66th street subway platform, has an out-of-body experience. "I was born above the body into a world of psychological reality.... In my private lan-

36. While at the Prieuré, based on what Gurdjieff has told him, Orage writes his essay, *On Love*. He appears not to make the connection between what Gurdjieff is telling him and his affair. Like Uspenskii and Bennett, Orage's identification is too strong, even for Gurdjieff.

guage I shall call this experience the Second Conception." Later in one of his autobiographies, *From Exile into Being*, he describes it as:

I was startled by an uncommon inward event. It was as though I had been touched from within in an extraordinary quiet way that stilled my functioning and momentarily suspended me between what had been and what was to come. My very life had been stopped, so it seemed, and yet I was about to live again, live anew, and strangely. Somehow I understood I was going to be moved, regardless of my wish or will, into a nameless experience.

JUNE 26, 1926. PRIEURÉ. Madame Ostrowska dies of cancer. Uspenskii attends the funeral. The two men do not speak. Gurdjieff goes to his room where he stays for two days. Within two years of his car crash, he has lost his wife, mother, and 'closed' his Institute.

SUMMER 1926. PRIEURÉ. Orage arrives from America and continues his translation of *All and Everything* into English. Orage generally comes for only a few months of the year, and Gurdjieff tries to spend as much time as possible with him.

Gurdjieff interacts with Orage in a way quite different from how he usually acts with pupils. The two often can be seen joking with one another and having a great deal of fun. Often, Gurdjieff uses this as a means of teaching. "Few knew better how to joke and have fun with him," says Nott, "without exceeding the bounds between master and pupil."

Every day Gurdjieff works as usual on his book, rewriting and revising. He works in cafés and at the Prieuré, and, when traveling, dictates in Russian to Madame de Hartmann who sits in the back seat of the Citroën furiously writing. In the evening after dinner chapters are read aloud in the salon. Gurdjieff watches the expressions on people's faces and other physiological signs.

He has begun to draft the chapter on "America." Says Nott: "If an American visitor turned up, he would have parts of the chapter read, and always he would begin to laugh during certain passages. We also would join in the laughter, although most of us are never sure what he is laughing at. I suspect that it is at ourselves."

C. Daly King is in Europe vacationing with his family and one day arrives at the Prieuré. He rings the bell at the gate marked "Sonnez fort." He is not admitted.

Of this King says, the words sounding rather laconic, "I found nobody of much authority about when I sought entrance and, not insisting, was turned away."

Doubtless he was of many minds about putting himself under Gurdjieff's eye. While he holds Orage in high regard, Gurdjieff remains a bewilderment. King is put off by what he takes to be Gurdjieff's bullying, his manner, the irrationality of his method of teaching. As he will later say:

No doubt for many years to come there will be discussion regarding the character and personality of Mr. Gurdjieff....I do not hesitate to say that in my opinion he is not a teacher, and I have seen him both privately and at the meetings conducted by him many times. He is evasive, and I have never yet heard him give a direct answer to any inquiry....When not evasive, he blusters; in these bullying moods there is more of contempt for his followers than of animosity, but in any case it is scarcely an attitude conducive either to loyalty or to successful instruction. It may well be that he does not wish to instruct—others besides myself have received the idea that he knows much but isn't telling—and my own view is that, insofar as he desires to assist anyone, his principle is that this cannot be done through intellectual information.

Unlike King, both Jean Toomer and Gorham Munson from the Orage group, arrive at the Prieuré and are admitted. Gurdjieff calls Toomer "Mr. Half-Hour-Late," presumably referring to his habit of speaking slowly.

FALL 1926. CHICAGO. Jean Toomer arrives and sets up a Gurdjieff study group. He again begins to imitate Gurdjieff, passing himself off as an Eastern mystic or mystery man. Of this Gorham Munson will later say:

...a good deal of Jean's life after he went to Chicago was the leading of a life of lying, lying, lying....Jean pretended to be more than he was. He assumed the development and psychology beyond the point that he had ever reached; he ascribed to himself powers and knowledge which he had not really attained. Some would say he had a fantasy which he truly believed about himself as a master of psychological teaching, psychological knowledge. It doesn't seem to me that he could have deceived himself to that extent. He play acts as a spiritual leader.

LATE DECEMBER 1926. PRIEURÉ. Orage leaves for America. "The Prieuré was in debt, Gurdjieff had not a penny and nothing had arrived," he says. Before leaving he gives Gurdjieff \$500 of his own money.

1927. PRIEURÉ. Hearing from her friends, Margaret Anderson and Jane Heap, that in Gurdjieff she "will see not one man, but a million men in one," Solita Solano arrives. A well-to-do Jewess, Solano is a writer and literary critic, and companion of the writer Janet Flanner, who writes for *The New Yorker*. She rejects Gurdjieff on all counts.

"I hoped for a demigod, a superman of saintly countenance, not this 'strange' écreu man about whom I could see nothing extraordinary except the size and power of his eyes."

She listened to the reading from his "vaunted book," she says and declares, "It bored me." And so she rejects him intellectually, "although with good humor." Later she hears the "famous music" played. "Almost from the first measures," that she also rejects.

A week or so later, she goes with Margaret and Jane to a restaurant to dine with Gurdjieff and twenty or so others. She is seated next to him. "For two hours [he] muttered in broken English. I rejected his language, the suit he was wearing and his table manners; I decided that I rather disliked him."

CHRISTMAS 1926. PRIEURÉ. Gurdjieff, in reflecting on his productivity in regard to writing, realizes that "in reality at all times strictly corresponded in its duration with the length and quality of the, so to say, 'degree of contact,' between my consciousness and the suffering proceeding in me on behalf of my mother and wife." He had written before with Olga de Hartmann, Dr. Stjoernal, and C. S. Nott sitting beside him, they acting as sort of a negative pole in the 'battery' set up. But with his wife and mother Gurdjieff suffered unconsciously. And so he elicits the use of unconscious suffering as well as conscious. While "watching the children around the Christmas tree and their unrestrained joy," Gurdjieff says he comes to the recognition "of the full possibility of attaining his aims "through the forces of the inner-world struggle."

SPRING 1927. PRIEURÉ. Gurdjieff is receiving now \$1,000 a month from the American groups. He keeps up the demand for money on Orage, who writes: "Gurdjieff is really quite extraordinary about money—but not, unfortunately, unique; we've known many people at college and in life equally extraordinary. However, I'm giving him still the benefit of the doubt, and I'm only sorry I cannot give him a million if only to see if he could be impecunious within a month or so of receiving it."

EARLY SUMMER 1927. CANADA. Jesse Dwight, fighting to hold Orage, has found an ally in C. Daly King, who believes his mentor is too much under Gurdjieff's thumb. The two men have now become quite close, frequently lunching and dining together during the week, with Orage often King's house guest on weekends. King has just published a book, *Beyond Behaviorism*, which seeks to show the relationship between scientific psychology and Gurdjieff's teaching. Like Uspenskii, King is enamored of the teaching but regards Gurdjieff as a "dubious messiah, even if an extremely sophisticated one."

Customarily, Orage spends his summers at the Prieuré but this summer, no doubt at the behest of King and Jesse, he asserts his independen-

dence. Orage does not go the Prieuré. Instead he vacations in Canada with Jesse and Daly King and his wife, the conversation of the three young people likely turning on the need for fifty-four-year-old Alfred Richard Orage to establish his independence.

SUMMER 1927. PRIEURÉ. Jean Toomer arrives at the Prieuré to spend the summer. As he will be the senior American pupil present, Orage has asked him to oversee the others.

Soon, Gorham Munson and his wife, Elizabeth, arrive and are given a simple room on the third floor, the 'Monks' Corridor. The writer Waldo Frank and his new wife, Alma, had arrived earlier. Frank is Munson's and Toomer's former literary mentor. Munson finds Toomer showing Frank around the property. The two men seem to be getting on, though Toomer is the lover of Frank's former wife, Margaret Naumberg. The group runs into Gurdjieff coming down the walk. He invites them to "the Russian bath" that evening. Munson notes that a few times he hears Gurdjieff speak perfect English and is of the opinion that he speaks broken English because, in making himself hard to understand, his listeners had to give their full attention.

The group has coffee on the terrace. Then Gurdjieff drives them in his Citroën to the Café Henri IV where he at once orders a round of Armagnac and proposes a toast: "Health—ordinary idiots." Then Gurdjieff took another table and began writing a chapter of *All and Everything* in Armenian in a cheap notebook. Frank, a self-important doyen of America letters who had expected red carpet treatment, is put off and says that Gurdjieff acts like a jovial headmaster.

"Health—candidates for idiots," Gurdjieff calls out, raising a glass to a second round of Armagnac.

Munson remembers that Thomas Carlyle had once criticized Jesus for his incompleteness, saying, "He had no Falstaff in him."

"On the biggest scale," thinks Munson, observing Gurdjieff write amid the café noises and passings to-and-fro of waiters and clientele, "he is all that a writer should be: indefatigable, living life to the fullest, inspired with the highest aim in literature—the writing of modern scripture."

Munson sees, too, that despite Gurdjieff's disclaimer that he no longer was teaching, he was teaching all the time. After dinner the men went to the bathhouse but Gurdjieff demanded no anecdotes, as these were for special occasions only.

Gurdjieff rushed the group back to the Prieuré for the evening meal.

Later that week on Saturday evening about sixty people assembled in the English dining room, Gurdjieff sitting in the center of a long table, everyone eating and toasting to the twenty-one different types of idiots.

"Health—squirming idiots," Gurdjieff calls out and everyone drains their glass.

"Health—compassionate idiots."

"Health—squared idiots."

The toasts go as high as eight or nine idiots. Sometimes Gurdjieff toasts with a glass of water: "Health—wise man."

Gurdjieff had seated Frank and his wife on his left and he plays the charming host with important personages.

After dinner Gurdjieff invites everyone into the drawing room to hear a chapter of *All and Everything* read. It becomes clear to Munson that Gurdjieff "is writing to produce intended effects upon an intended audience, and he is checking on the production of designed effects."

Munson says that Gurdjieff had once remarked, "to write my book for conscious men would be easy but to write it for donkeys—very hard."

At the close of the evening, around four o'clock in the morning, Gurdjieff invited Frank and his wife to have a crayfish dinner with him the following evening in Montmartre.

The Franks go but only to tell him—Gurdjieff has left early in the morning for Paris—that they could not join him. As they peered into the restaurant window from the street, Gurdjieff suddenly looked up and waved them inside.

During dinner, Gurdjieff steps on Frank's corns to the point where the author finally stands up and declares—"I think you are a Devil."

Before meeting Gurdjieff, Jean Toomer had already recognized in himself that there is an "I" and a "not-I." He had believed that writing was a means to unify himself. He had found that not to be true. Years later in writing one of his unpublished autobiographies he wrote: "Writing, real writing, it now seemed to me, presupposed the possession of the very thing I knew I lacked, namely, self-purity, self-unification, self-development. I wasn't fit to write. I felt and felt strongly that one ought to be something before one essayed to say something. I felt and felt deeply that a man ought to be a Man before he elected to write." Even so, after *Cane*, he wrote three novels, *Caromb*, *Gallonwerps* and *Transatlantic*.

*Cane* he had published in 1923 and did not complete *Caromb* until 1927. Perhaps part of the difficulty was that though Waldo Frank had written a highly complimentary introduction, he had also spoken of Toomer as being an "African-American." Toomer was physically white in appearance and manner, but was racially mixed. His ancestry included strains of Welsh, Jewish, Indian, German, French, and Dutch blood. He took himself to be neither black or white but what he called "American." He took this stand as early as 1914 and never wavered throughout his

life, though it was the source of continuing tension and criticism for him with both blacks and whites.

At the Prieuré there is no talk of race and color and, filled with energy and with ideas pouring through him, Toomer writes what he will consider his best novel, *Transatlantic*, or as he later retitled it, *Eight Days World*. The first draft he writes in seventeen days.

AUGUST 1927. PRIEURÉ. Now Orage arrives, notably alone, to continue work on *All and Everything*. He informs Gurdjieff he must return on September 1st, he has "promised Jesse," he says.

Gurdjieff—who set great importance on completing the translation—"naturally" suddenly can never find the time to work on the translation.

Ten days pass. No work.

Then, the very evening of Orage's departure, Gurdjieff announces translation work will begin the next day. Orage says he has given Jesse his essence-promise to return to New York.

Gurdjieff storms at Orage for leaving his work at the Prieuré "to return to nonentities in New York."

Orage leaves Gurdjieff and returns to Jesse Dwight. His explanation—"I ran out of my first marriage. I will never do so again."

This commitment, so innocent looking and noble sounding, would cost Orage dearly, as it would Gurdjieff.

SEPTEMBER 24, 1927. NEW YORK. Despite his teacher's disapproval, Orage marries Jesse Dwight. She had never had a real feeling for the work or Gurdjieff, and flaunted her 'independence' in hundreds of little ways.

But Orage is 'in love.'

He describes the situation this way:

"He [Gurdjieff] regarded me as someone who had, so to speak, come with him from another planet with a task to carry out. But I fell in love with a native, and this interfered with his aim."

Gurdjieff taught that one person can never give another his understanding. And as it is with Uspenskii and Bennett, so it is with Orage. Gurdjieff had a planetary aim. They had a particular aim.

NOVEMBER 6, 1927. PRIEURÉ. *The sole means now for the saving of the beings of the planet Earth would be to implant again into their presences a new organ... of such properties that every one of these unfortunates during the process of existence should constantly sense and be cognizant of the inevitability of his own death as well as of the death of everyone upon whom his eyes or attention rests....*

After three years of writing, Gurdjieff completes the first draft of *All and Everything*, only to then realize that for anyone not personally asso-

ciated with him, the book will be unintelligible. Before his mind's eye is likely to flash scenes from Moscow, Tiflis, Constantinople, Berlin, London, the Prieuré—all the places where he has tried and failed to establish the Institute. *All and Everything* is his legominism to be understood and actualized in a future time. It is his last means of completing his mission—and it is unreadable!

The shock of all the intentional effort he has made since his auto accident—the thought of now having to rewrite the whole book—suddenly strips him of the one thing that has never failed him—*self-remembering*.

Gurdjieff no longer has the full sensing of the whole of himself.

There is nothing to do but to begin again. But his health is bad. He has this foreboding that time is running out. He wrestles with the idea of suicide. Gurdjieff finds himself at what is conceivably the lowest point in his life.

Finally, freeing himself from these dark thoughts, he decides to begin the rewriting of *All and Everything*.

On this day also Gurdjieff writes Orage a letter.<sup>37</sup> The subject is suffering, and he explains the difference between "voluntary" and "intentional" suffering; a distinction that Orage is unclear about. He also speaks about "noticeable coincidences."

Some years later C. S. Nott, a student of Gurdjieff's, gives Uspenskii a copy of *All and Everything*. Uspenskii says that he has not read it.

"You haven't read it?" asks Nott. "Why?"

Answers Uspenskii—"It sticks in my throat."

MID-JANUARY 1928. PRIEURÉ. Orage and his new wife arrive. Gurdjieff kisses Orage's wife saying—"You are now half mine, whether you like it or not." At dinner one evening Gurdjieff makes sure the Armagnac is poured more liberally than usual. In time, Gurdjieff appears very drunk. But, at one moment, he snatches a small object, a watch or locket, from Orage's wife.

Gurdjieff plays with the object.

Orage, sitting next to him, waits, a tiger-like look on his face.

Suddenly Orage lunges.

But Gurdjieff yanks the object just beyond Orage's grasp.

Before the newlyweds leave the Prieuré, Gurdjieff transfixes Orage's wife with his gaze. He warns her—"If you keep my super-idiot from coming back to me, you burn in boiling oil."

SPRING 1928. PRIEURÉ. At a talk in the salon Gurdjieff is asked about the lack of understanding between oriental and occidental mentalities. He answers that this is caused in part by the lack of energy in the East and lack of wisdom in the West. He went on to predict that the importance

37. Given what is going on between the two men—the *struggle between magicians*—it is likely he mentions or alludes to Orage's new wife.

of the eastern world would grow to where it would "become a threat to the momentarily all-powerful, all-influential new culture of the western world." Among the purposes of all messengers from the gods, messiahs and leaders, there is one that is fundamental: "to find some means by which the two sides of man, and, therefore, the two sides of the earth, could live together in peace and harmony.... Time is short—it is necessary to achieve this harmony as soon as possible to avoid complete disaster." The only way this can be accomplished is through the individual development of man into a genuine, natural man. One even partially developed individual can influence many others. History, Gurdjieff said, had proven that politics, religion and any other organized movement which treated man in the mass—and not as individual beings—were failures. The separate, distinct growth of each individual in the world was the only possible solution.

SPRING 1928. ATHENS. Bennett is incarcerated in Athens' central jail, accused of bribing an official to fabricate title deeds relating to an Ottoman Imperial property in which he has a concessionary interest. Bennett receives a telegram:

Sympathy to Bennett under ninety-six laws.  
—P. D. Uspenskii

To get released, Bennett drinks iodine to fake appendicitis. He is removed to a municipal nursing home. Later defending himself in Greek, he is acquitted with costs awarded against the government. However, that autumn when Bennett returns to London, Uspenskii refuses all communication.

Later, Bennett learns why. Apparently when the Greek police searched his Athens flat they found several letters from Uspenskii. As his name was Russian, they thought he might be a Communist. This information was forwarded to the Home Office in London which questioned Uspenskii about political leanings.

Cut off from his teacher, Bennett, with less than five years in the Work, forms his own study group. He has reservations, not feeling it is "right for me to set myself up as an expositor of Gurdjieff's System without permission either from him or Uspenskii." He resolves the question by sending Uspenskii a full transcript of each meeting. Bennett says, "I wrote to say that if he disapproved he had only to tell me and I would stop."

MAY 5, 1928. PRIEURÉ. To stimulate his writing, Gurdjieff sends packing all who make his life too comfortable. He sends Madame Uspenskii to England and the de Salzmanns to Germany. During the late summer, he finishes *All and Everything* and begins writing *Meetings With Remarkable Men*.

LATE SUMMER 1928. PRIEURÉ. Gurdjieff works on the first of what will be three revisions of *All and Everything*. In writing the book, he says he

came to hate pencil and paper and the very idea of writing—that he has to force himself every day to begin. Nevertheless, he perseveres.

Of the book Orage says, "It is to be read from the real heart, that is, with emotional understanding." About the book's unusual use of language, he says, "Gurdjieff will not use the language of the intelligentsia—ideas in the book will not be presented in our habitual thought patterns. Our intellectual life is based on chance associations which have become more or less fixed. Only when these are broken up can we begin to think freely." Of values, he says, "The book destroys existing values; it compels the serious reader to re-value all values, and, to a sincere person, it is devastating.... For myself, I realize now that for two years I tried to use these ideas, tried to assimilate them into my own set of values, hoping to enrich the values without giving them up. I thought that the new ideas would widen the scope and extend the perspective of the old and give variety to the content. There comes a time to almost everyone in this work when he asks himself, 'Shall I lose the old values that gave incentive, and shall I then be able to go on to new ones, ones of a different order?'"

"There is," declares Orage, "in the book as a whole, a parallel with the Bible, in that it opens with a cosmology and a cosmogony, an account of how and why the world was created, and of the fall of man.... the anomalies that seem to us incongruous and absurd may be a text within a text, which, when rooted out, may compromise an alphabet of the doctrine."

LATE SUMMER. 1928. PRIEURÉ. *Only such a sensation and such a cognizance can now destroy the egoism completely crystallized in them [human beings], that has swallowed up the whole of their Essence and also that tendency to hate others which flows from it—the tendency, namely, which engenders all those mutual relationships existing there, which serve as the chief cause of all their abnormalities unbecoming to three-brained beings and maleficent for them themselves and for the whole of the Universe....*

With this Gurdjieff finishes his revision of *All and Everything*. He now begins to write the *Second Series* of *All and Everything*, or *Meetings With Remarkable Men*. Having written one book he has profited by the experience and says that now, "I had become more adroit in the art of concealing serious thoughts in an enticing, easily grasped outer form, and in making all those thoughts which I term 'discernible only with the lapse of time' ensue from others usual to the thinking of most contemporary people, I changed the principle I had been following and, instead of seeking to achieve the aim I had set myself in writing by quantity, I adopted the principle of attaining this by quality alone."

FALL 1928. NEW YORK. Orage gives C. Daly King permission to teach two groups, one in New York City, another in New Jersey.

JANUARY 23, 1929. NEW YORK. Earlier, Gurdjieff had asked Orage for a donation of \$10,000 from his groups. Not receiving it, he now arrives in person. He tells Orage he wants the money within three weeks. "Gurdjieff is more himself than ever," says Orage, "that is to say, he is more impossible than ever. But certainly New York needed a shaking up, and I too must have needed it..."

Orage's wife is now pregnant.

Around this time, and perhaps before, Orage felt he needed a new initiation from Gurdjieff.

"I told Gurdjieff that I'd come to the end of my patience," he says, "and that, without a new initiation, I was as good as dead about the Prieuré..."<sup>38</sup>

Orage would probably beg off responsibility for his action by siding with Uspenskii's Ivan Osokin who says to the magician: "The whole trouble is that we never know for certain what is coming. If we know definitely what would be the result of our actions, do you suppose we should do all that we do?"

"You always know," says the magician, looking at Osokin. "A man may not know what will happen as a result of other people's actions or as the result of unknown causes, but he always knows all possible results of his own actions."

Orage thinks he can have his wife and initiation, too. Submitting to his young wife's self-will and thereby accepting her values, perspective, and all that goes with it, Orage has entered a descending octave. He is now only a shadow of the man who spoke just a few years before at Sunwise Turn, as can be seen in a conversation Orage and Gurdjieff and a few others have about what Gurdjieff calls "a man's whim"<sup>39</sup>—his true desire in life.

Asked what his whim is, Gurdjieff answers—it is to live and teach so that there should be a new conception of God in the world, a change in the very meaning of the word.

Orage, when asked the same question, answers that his whim is to produce and edit the best weekly journal in England.

If Orage was joking, Gurdjieff didn't laugh.

38. Orage does not seem to understand that in disobeying his teacher and in marrying Jesse Dwight he has, in effect, divorced himself from Gurdjieff. Initiation can only take place when there is rapport, not a rupture, between student and teacher. Orage is standing under Ivan Osokin's clock and he does not know it.

39. Gurdjieff's use of the word "whim" is indicative of the care with which he uses words. Follow the line of the dictionary definition of the word as "a capricious or eccentric and often sudden idea or turn of mind," and we come to a deeper insight into the terms "I" and "real," and why, too, Gurdjieff's whim is to make a change in the very meaning of the word.

There is a conversation that goes very close to the bone of the matter between the two men.

"Gurdjieff once told me," recounts Orage, "that he knew my ambition. He said I wanted to be one of the 'elder brothers' of the human race, but that I had not the ability it required."

Then Gurdjieff adds: "You not know how to give. You only let others take. Let them take, you do no good: you lose and they get dependent. Not easy to give. Learn how to give, then you make other people free."<sup>40</sup>

APRIL 5, 1929. NEW YORK. Gurdjieff departs for France. Orage dances on the quay, crying, "Thank God I'm free again!"

Within a fortnight his wife delivers their first child, Richard.

JUNE 1929. PRIEURÉ. Louise Goepfert arrives from New York. German-born, this twenty-nine-year-old professor of art comes to put Orage's English translation of *All and Everything* into German. Gurdjieff introduces her to "Jeanna," his name for Madame Jeanne de Salzmann, who is translating the book into French. Then he tells Miss Goepfert, the woman he will come to call "Sausage," to take a bath.

"Take time," says Gurdjieff, "wash off American dirt, then see."

She chooses a room on the third floor of the château, the austere "Monks' Corridor." It is painted in ocher and oxblood red. There is a skull and crossbones painted above the door to her room, which is simply furnished with bed, table, and chair.

Later she meets Gurdjieff's pupils, and his family: his brother Dimitri Ivanovitch, his wife Astrig Gregorevna, and their three daughters Luba, Jenia, and Lyda. There is also his sister Sophie Ivanovna, and her husband Gyorgi Kapanadze, as well as Gurdjieff's orphaned teenaged nephew Valia.

Within a week of her arrival, Gurdjieff drives Louise Goepfert to Chailly. There, at the scene of his near-fatal auto accident, he reveals himself to her, as he had done to Dr. Stjoernal in Finland, in the image of the suffering Christ. Gurdjieff begs her "to help him, to translate him." She speaks of her state as: "I am overwhelmed—on my knees before Him who reveals his suffering to me."

She finds that Gurdjieff drives every morning to Paris to the Café de la Paix where he drinks Armagnac or coffee with lemon and revises *All and Everything*. One day she asks him why he doesn't stay at the Prieuré with its fresh air and beautiful surroundings.

40. Orage insisted on being loved by people. He 'gave,' so that by giving, letting people take, he would gain their love. Gurdjieff understood that there are circumstances in which only by *not giving* does one give. Those who are able to take, do so, and, in so doing, know and become strong and independent. Wanting to know without nurturing the will and courage can only lead to impotence.

Says Gurdjieff: "I always work in cafés, dance halls, places where I see people, how they are; where I see those most drunk, most abnormal. Seeing them I can produce impulse of love in me. From that I write my books."

EARLY SUMMER 1929. FRANCE. Madame Uspenskii, living in Asnières since 1924, only three miles from Paris, visited her husband the year before but had no taste for the English and returned. Now she crosses the Channel again. But again returns.

Gurdjieff convinces the de Hartmanns to leave the Prieuré and settle in Courbevoie.

AUGUST 3-4, 1929. NUREMBERG. Nazis mount an impressive Party Congress. Thirty trains bring two hundred thousand members and sympathizers. There is a grand parade in which sixty thousand S. A. (the Brownshirts) men in uniform parade before Hitler, their Führer (leader) for three and a half hours.

OCTOBER 1929. PRIEURÉ. Fritz Peters, now sixteen years old, leaves for America.

OCTOBER 1929. NEW YORK. Wall Street Crash.

1930. GERMANY. Hitler travels the country courting German businessmen. He meets with many of them at the mansion of a piano manufacturer, Carl Bechstein, whose wife is enamored of Hitler. Between now and his election to Chancellor in 1933, industrialists from companies like I. G. Farben, the giant chemical cartel, will contribute 2 million marks a year to the Nazi Party.

JANUARY 1930. CAFÉ DE LA PAIX. In answer to a question about sin, Gurdjieff answers: "If you acknowledge your sin and feel remorse of conscience for having done wrong, your sin is already forgiven. If you continue to do wrong, knowing it to be so, you commit a sin that is difficult to forgive."

FEBRUARY 1930. PARIS. It is the evening before Gurdjieff is to sail for America. He invites Olga de Hartmann to come to the new flat in the rue Marchand. He asks her to give him the key to his little chest of drawers that she keeps for him. Gurdjieff opens it and proceeds to burn all his personal papers, correspondence, certificates, passports—anything which might throw light on his past.

The next morning she returns to his flat and they have what she describes as a "wonderful talk...a talk that could occur only in exceptional moments. Then they go to the railway station and sit in a café where Gurdjieff tells her she is "the only person who never had done

what he demanded without wishing it" [for herself].<sup>41</sup> Gurdjieff then tells her he needs her and her husband, Thomas, in New York in a week's time. Her husband is much too sick and she refuses. The train whistle blows. Gurdjieff mounts the steps to the dining car. He stops on the car's platform. Olga looks up at him from the station's platform.

"Come in a week's time," Gurdjieff says, "or you will never see me again."

"Then...I will never see you again," says Olga Arkadievna.

She had served him loyally for twenty-four years. She, who as he would later say was "the first friend of his inner life," watches as the train disappears from sight.

"In my thoughts," she says, "I saw before me Prince Lubovedsky going away and leaving Mr. Gurdjieff alone. When he was dictating this chapter of *Meetings with Remarkable Men* to me I always wondered about this tragic moment in his life and dreaded that it might happen to me."

The 'death' that Gurdjieff experienced with the Prince, she now experiences. She goes home and goes to bed. Four days pass before she is able to get up and resume her life. Mr. Gurdjieff has set her free in his own inimitable way.

FEBRUARY 1930. NEW YORK. Orage receives a telegram:

If love not dissipated arrange bath and party.

— Grandson and Unique phenomenal Grandmother

A second telegram follows:

Bremen brings thousand kilos disillusion, hundred kilos momentary happiness and ten pounds retribution.

— Ambassador From Hell

FEBRUARY 15, 1930. NEW YORK. "Confess, Orage, that your heart sinks when you hear that I am coming!" Gurdjieff had once told him. There was always a good-natured banter between the two—only Orage and Alexander de Salzmann were capable of making Gurdjieff really laugh—and Orage likely riposted. But there was more than a kernel of truth in Gurdjieff's remark.

And so when the *Bremen* docks, Orage is not there to greet his teacher. Nor is he at Gurdjieff's hotel. His absence appears to be making a "statement." The issues: money, initiation, and independence. The first Gurdjieff demands, the second he withholds, and the third is premature.

In a letter to C. S. Nott, Orage writes that Gurdjieff is again in search of funds, saying that "... though I doubt whether this time he will get much. His coming has, of course, bust up my group meetings and left me desperately placed for income, but I must be 'clever,' I suppose and find a substitute."<sup>42</sup>

41. Given what will happen, Gurdjieff may be thinking about Orage here.

As Gurdjieff will tell Fritz Peters at the end of the Second World War. "You remember Prieuré and how many times I have struggle with money. I not make money like others make money, and when I have too much money, I spend. But I never need money for self, and I not *make* or earn money, I *ask* for money and people always give, and for this I give opportunity study my teachings, but even when they give money still almost always impossible for them learn anything. Already, they think of reward... now I owe them something because they give me money. When think of reward in this way, impossible learn anything from me."

Orage has interested Alfred Knopf, the publisher of Uspenskii's *Testium Organum*, in publishing *All and Everything*. Orage has managed to squirrel away enough money in a special fund in the bank subscribed to by American pupils to pay for the publication of Gurdjieff's book. However when Knopf approaches Gurdjieff about the matter, Gurdjieff tells him certain things are necessary.

"And what are your conditions, Mr. Gurdjieff? I'm sure we can meet your requirements. What would you wish us to do?"

"Not conditions," Gurdjieff replies. "One condition. One small thing."

"And that is?"

"First clean house, your house, then perhaps can have my book!"<sup>43</sup>

MARCH 20, 1930. NEW YORK. Orage writes to Toomer saying that Gurdjieff has given him a selection of chapters "to get published or to publish." Knopf, he says, has the typescript.

MARCH 28, 1930. NEW YORK. Writing to Toomer, Orage reports that Knopf has turned the book down. He next tries Doubleday but, again, the same result. "I share your opinion," Orage finally tells Toomer, "that no publisher will accept it."

Speaking of the general condition, Orage says, "The situation is anything but bright and I confess to a little fatigue with Gurdjieff and his ways. Perhaps that is because I've just had to find over two hundred dollars with which to discharge the debts he failed to remember!"

42. The Work works by pressure and Gurdjieff knew how to press the "corns" of people. If it wasn't hard manual labor, it was eccentric, even outrageous behavior, or the massive quantities of alcohol consumed during his "toasts to the idiots." And always there was the "material question"—the demand for money. Nothing stops the formatory mind in its tracks, creates projection and doubt like a ceaseless demand for money. American Gurdjieff said, was a "dollar growing country." And he came often to shear the sheep. Certainly he had need of money to keep the Prieuré afloat. But he never worshipped money. When he spent, he spent lavishly. Perhaps, from an ordinary perspective, foolishly. But it also—and this is missed by most of his critics—was a very direct way of teaching.

43. Perhaps Gurdjieff is alluding to Knopf having published Uspenskii's book. Otherwise, it is difficult to make sense out of his remark.

APRIL 1930. NEW YORK. Leaving for France, Gurdjieff returns a gift of an expensive harmonium to its original donor. After he is gone, he says, the world would take note of this event and the harmonium would by then have become...

He searches for the right English word.

Finally he asks a pupil who suggests, "Souvenir."

Not satisfied, Gurdjieff turns to Orage, asking what he would say.

"Sacred relic," answers Orage with a "sacred" intonation.

Gurdjieff breaks into a laughter that sounds like "a giant child's delight."

Says C. S. Nott, "Orage's mind is more nimble than Gurdjieff's and to be with these two is better than a play."

Gurdjieff made many voyages to America. Certainly without American dollars he would not have had the time to write *All and Everything* or be able to maintain the Prieuré. The English had given initially and enabled Gurdjieff to purchase the Prieuré. But that was long ago. The Institute had been established on French soil only because Germany and England proved untenable. As he sometimes gave animal names to people to indicate their chief feature, he did this as well with national character. The Russians he called "turkeys," the Germans "jackals," the English "sheep," and the French "donkeys." Too Cartesian and self-adoring, the French did not begin to take an interest in the teaching until the 1930s and were never a financial factor until long after the war.

Besides their generosity, Gurdjieff was interested in America because, as he told Fritz Peters, "Americans more receptive because not closed up inside yet; they naive, stupid, perhaps, but still real. Americans, particularly, have more chance grow properly as men because have not yet become—like you say—'phony' men." Gurdjieff will also tell him: "Impossible to do my work with all energy if also concerned with money. But all these things very difficult for your contemporaries. Not only cannot do. Cannot even understand why this question of money important. Such people will never understand real teaching or real possibility of learning anything."

What is to happen between Orage and Gurdjieff is foreshadowed in a cab ride Orage takes with C. Daly King. Orage suddenly tells him:

"It is necessary to make these things your own, so that you may never need to rely upon others for them. You must be prepared, for example, to hear Gurdjieff himself deny the validity of the Method."

MAY 13, 1930. NEW YORK. Orage calls the groups together and, as he has so often done in the past, says that the most fortunate event in his life was his meeting with Gurdjieff. He says he is leaving with his wife Jesse

and one-year old son Richard for Rye in Sussex, England. He plans to write essays and articles for a number of American magazines. If he returns, as he hopes, there would be a new kind of work. He then speaks about the difference between a group and a circle. "The latter meet for themselves individually, to help each other and to help a common cause 'to make the world safe for consciousness.'" He says that even after six years of attending groups very few of them have a sense of three conscious responsibilities. These three form a triangle which, when functioning, distinguish a circle from a group. The first part of the triangle—individual responsibility toward consciousness and development in one's own everyday life. The second is consciousness "toward our neighbors—the members of our tribe also striving for consciousness." The third center of gravity is consciousness toward some in the group as "elders." He speaks of returning in January and says "I shall have to be independent of the group financially—no one will have to pay anything again to attend a group of mine." He continues speaking about what he envisions when he returns, saying that to be a member of this new group [whose sole aim is to transform itself into a circle] people must work so hard that one comes to momentary experience of feeling "you are losing your body and your life.... You will have known the fact of death. This is the kind of evidence I shall require for membership in a group." He goes on to say that "I am too tender-hearted to force the pace as Gurdjieff and Uspenskii can so ruthlessly do. But unless you are serious, I cannot be serious—you can hold me back." He then speaks about the five points of objective morality [five-being-*obligolnian* strivings] and ends with "Now having perhaps unfortunately listened to this, you are capable of sin—of refusal to convert verbal form into formal understanding."<sup>44</sup>

MAY 14, 1930. NEW YORK. Orage writes to his friend, C. S. Nott, saying:

"We had a farewell group meeting last evening and it would have done your heart good to witness the scene. I *love* the group; and I couldn't bear the thought of being long out of touch with them."

JUNE 11, 1930. SUSSEX, ENGLAND. Orage writes to an American student:

I told Gurdjieff in New York that I'd come to the end of my patience and that, without a new initiation, I was as good as dead about the Prieuré; furthermore, that I proposed to try the effect of 'growing chungaree' by myself—his reply was so unsatisfying that I shall carry out my plan. In other words, I shall stay here in England doing my best to get a new understanding of the Book on my own resources,—in despair, frankly, of Gurdjieff doing anything more for me than he has done for Stjoernal, de Hartmann, etc., however faithfully they have given up all to follow him.... One thing remains unshakably true,—the ideas are all the world to me, and I shall

always be ready to cooperate in their spread provided I myself continue to increase in their understanding. What I cannot do any longer is to continue teaching without also learning,—and Gurdjieff has ceased to teach *me*.

OCTOBER 1930. WARWICK GARDENS, LONDON. Uspenskii decides to expand his work. It is now seven years since he left Gurdjieff. He has been working in strict secrecy with forty or fifty pupils. He will begin a new lecture series, "The Search for Objective Consciousness," at Warwick Hall. Bennett, who Uspenskii has refused to see since Bennett's jailing in Athens two years before, is invited back into the fold. Very soon, he is given the responsibility of reading the lectures aloud in Uspenskii's presence. Later, the two men talk and when the conversation comes to what has become for Uspenskii the perennial question and thorn in his side—Gurdjieff!—he tells Bennett:

"I waited for all these years [to expand the work] because I wanted to see what Mr. Gurdjieff would do. His work has not given the results he hoped for. I am still as certain as ever that there is a Great Source from which our System has come. Mr. Gurdjieff must have had a contact with that Source, but I do not believe that it was a complete contact. Something is missing, and he has not been able to find it. If we cannot find it through him, then our only hope is to have a direct contact with the

44. At the Prieuré, Orage had experienced the 'death' of which he speaks. During his time at the Prieuré, the physical exhaustion and the elimination of all his spiritual dreams and expectations had brought him to the depths of despair. In fact, he was being tested. He might have easily turned tail and run then, as so many did, but he persisted and had his first initiation. Such 'death,' however, is not undergone once, but many times. Now, though he does not appear to realize it, he is entering a time of a new testing. Having become prematurely independent of Gurdjieff through his marriage to Jesse Dwight, Orage now finds himself being drawn more and more into 'family' life. Marriage and raising a family, of course, seems natural enough. But it is merely biological and, given the mission Gurdjieff has entrusted him with, as a "messenger of my new ideas," as well as his own stated aim of "finding God," it is a 'temptation' to which Orage, given his chief weakness, has blithely and blindly succumbed. Now he comes to another crossroads in which, one, he finds himself psychologically worn down with Gurdjieff's incessant (and what look more and more to him as irrational) demands for money; and, two, having come to the end of what he is able to teach. He needs a new initiation—that recognition—that pulling him one way. Pulling him another is 'familism.' Once again, though he appears to have no presentiment of it, Orage is going to experience the octave of 'death.' Die he must. His choice is: *will he choose to die on an ascending or descending octave?* Will he die for being or die for 'love'? Orage is now capable of sinning; that is, he has sufficient knowledge and will to act as he wishes. Using his own words to his group, will he or will he not refuse "to convert verbal form into formal understanding"? Orage's choice will be difficult for he still looks at the world, as Gurdjieff says, "topsy-turvy." A careful reading of Philip Mairet's otherwise splendid biography, *A. R. Orage: A Memoir*, shows such a viewpoint. What he says seems so sensible, rational, understanding—until one realizes what is at issue.

Source...our only hope is that the Source will seek us out. That is why I am giving these lectures in London."

NOVEMBER 13, 1930. NEW YORK. For the fourth time Gurdjieff arrives in America. Significantly, once again, Orage is not at dockside to greet him—he is in England on a holiday with his family. The absence is not lost on Gurdjieff. Neither is the telltale look on the faces of those from Orage's group who are there to greet him. This particular look is what Gurdjieff calls that of a "candidate for the madhouse."<sup>45</sup>

"The charge against Mr. Orage's activities," says C. Daly King, "is that they were intellectually lop-sided, placed undue stress upon mental activities at the expense of emotional and practical activities; and that thus, far from being of objective benefit to the pupils who sat under Mr. Orage, it could be guaranteed to render them even more abnormal objectively, than they had been in the first instance."

King, who prides himself on his rationality, finds himself outraged. "It is difficult to speak of this charge in moderate and serious terms," he says, then declares it to be "brash and blatant nonsense."

Always striving to be fair, he does concede, however, there are a few in the group who think Gurdjieff's assessment correct.

NOVEMBER 28, 1930. NEW YORK. Between now and December 19th, Gurdjieff gives five talks to the Orage groups. In his first talk he speaks of *initiation*—Orage's question—and makes the distinction between three groups, or levels of understanding. The first group is exoteric, or outer; the second, mesoteric, or middle; and the third, esoteric, or inner. The exoteric group is for those who have newly entered the Work and do not yet merit belonging to the other two groups. The mesoteric group is for those initiated into a theoretical understanding of "all the questions not accessible to the average man." The esoteric group is to be initiated not only theoretically and practically into all relevant questions, but will be introduced to all means for a real possibility of self-perfecting.

Gurdjieff speaks about the exercise of self-observation which enables a person to cognize the "exaggerated importance given to his individuality" and the individual's "almost complete 'nullity.'" He speaks of his so-called "motor car accident," which he regards as the action of *Tzvarion barno*, and notes that though some of his students "decided to 'prophesize'" his ideas, they all belonged only to the exoteric group. He ends by noting that each nation has its own *idée fixe* regarding the teaching. For Americans, it is *self-observation*.

45. It can be the result of only one thing: a distorted understanding of the practice of self-observation. That distortion is the responsibility of one man, the man who is absent—A. R. Orage.

Having set the foundation with his first talk, Gurdjieff in his second talk launches a full-scale attack on the students' beloved teacher, Mister Orage. He speaks of Orage as being the consequence of "that abnormality at the basis of family life, crystallized in the life of contemporary people...which consists in the fact that the leading role in the household belongs to the woman." He says that at first Orage was "not yet completely under the influence of his 'left-shoulder Angel,'" a not too subtle reference to Jesse Dwight. But that his marriage to the "saleswoman of 'Sunwise Turn,' a young American pampered out of all proportion to her position," had resulted in the need to meet excessive expenditures. Once the knowledge which he had received at the Institute was used up, Orage had to "manipulate in every way" his very limited knowledge. This led to the practice of self-observation becoming "the center of gravity for the mentation of man," and so a dangerous distortion.

Gurdjieff then asks his secretary, Louise Goepfert, to read aloud a letter addressed to the absent Orage. Then he demands that the "Orage people" sign what he calls an "obligation," or oath, vowing not to have any further contact with Orage unless Gurdjieff so instructed.

A number of Orage's pupils balk, one telling Gurdjieff that Orage was not only his teacher and mentor but his "own loving father."

Blurts out Louise Welch: "If Orage made a mistake or did not know how to go on, it was your fault. He taught us what he learned from you, and you did not give him the additional material he needed."

To which Gurdjieff, pleased at the open expression of resistance, replies: "Bravo!"

The most adamant of the Oragean diehards is C. Daly King. Still, years later King had to admit:

While I have received no impression that Mr. Gurdjieff is by any means as outstanding intellectually, emotionally or practically as his faithful disciples suppose him to be, I am convinced by my personal experience of him that he possesses another quality that may be more important than any of the foregoing. This quality he possesses to a degree not merely superior to that of any other man whom I have ever encountered but to a degree greater than it would have ever occurred to me to exist, had I not met Mr. Gurdjieff. It is the quality, not of mind or feeling or of successful accomplishment, but simply of *being*. I have never failed to experience this in his presence; one (or I) cannot 'put one's finger on it' but it is most certainly there. It has always prevented the slightest show of impertinence toward him upon my part but, more than that, it has always prevented my (otherwise frequently demonstrated) ability to challenge him even upon those grounds to which he constantly lays himself open to the most obvious challenge. I cannot account to myself for this, in other ways, inexplicable respect in which I hold him than by my admiration of

the remarkable degree of being with which I am always impressed when in personal contact with him.

Gurdjieff's third talk<sup>46</sup> is a masterpiece. It reveals the rare level of understanding which he possesses. He speaks of the difficulty of liberation and the need for "the entire sensing of the whole of oneself" and speaks about the use of attention.

DECEMBER 1930. ENGLAND. Learning of the storm Gurdjieff has created Orage writes to a student:

It is obvious that my unwillingness to go to all lengths for G., with the group and with myself, indicates an insufficiency of what shall I say?—faith in him? trust? radical conviction that he can do no wrong? Well, to be explicit, that is the fact. I have not that absolute faith. If I were Nahom and G. commanded me to slay my first born, I wouldn't do it. I realize that this degree of faith is perhaps essential to full participation in G.'s teachings. I realize that any degree of belief, short of this makes all services to him ultimately conditional and therefore, except within limits, not to be counted upon.... 'Lord,' I can say, 'I believe;' but I have to add, 'Help thou my unbelief.' Because, in truth, my belief is not absolute.... I can see clearly that from his point of view, believing in himself so absolutely, my half or three-quarters belief in him is titillation, and results only in the titillation of others. He *cannot* but wish either that I shall be absolutely faithful, or cease to be regarded or to regard myself as his chief 'minister' in America. I accept this without reproach. But what I pray for is that my own friends, the best I have on earth, the New York group, may not only not suffer on my account, but that, through me, like another Moses, they may find themselves led to the Jordan and transported across by Joshua Gurdjieff!

DECEMBER 10, 1930. NEW YORK. Orage and family return from England. He at once asks to see Gurdjieff, who directs Miss Goepfert to ask Orage to sign the obligation proposed to Orage's groups. Orage, always deft intellectually, comes at once to Gurdjieff's apartment and signs the letter. His apology, from Gurdjieff's description is ornate, and what Gurdjieff terms "philosophizing." This gives Gurdjieff what he calls a "touchy emotion"... right in the center between the two hemispheres of the brain."

DECEMBER 12, 1930. NEW YORK. Orage attends the fourth general meeting. Gurdjieff describes Orage and several of his "first-rank" defenders.

46. The "Third Series" of *All and Everything, Life is Real only then when "I Am,"* works on so many different levels with such comprehensive understanding that summarizing it is impossible.

as those who sit with their "tails between their legs' and facial expressions of unchangeable 'plasto-oleaginous' traits."

As with Uspenskii eight years before—and in front of an audience which included Orage—Gurdjieff now attempts to wake Orage up to his situation by a shock technique. He openly humiliates him in front of his students, speaking of the group's "loving father," that is to say, Mr. Orage" and his "philosophizing." This tactic did not work with Uspenskii; neither does it work with Orage.<sup>47</sup> And as with Uspenskii, all the years of work with Orage appear to result in nothing. Unable to assimilate and learn from the shock, Uspenskii left to teach his own groups. Orage leaves to edit a magazine which will propagandize for the economic theory of Social Credit.

When Uspenskii left, Gurdjieff still had a number of promising students. With Orage's leaving, there is nobody. Orage wore many hats for Gurdjieff. He was editor, fund raiser, teacher and, yes, "John, the Baptist." Now all the weight will fall on the shoulders of Jean Toomer.

1931. NEW YORK. Jean Toomer privately publishes *Essentials*, a collection of nearly three hundred aphorisms and definitions largely influenced by Gurdjieff's teaching.<sup>48</sup>

MARCH 1, 1931. NEW YORK. Orage writes Nott: "G.'s going may or may not change things for the better, his effect here having been to kill the interest of at least three out of four of the old members. I don't know whether they will ever return, *even* if I should be disposed to try to reassemble them. G. talks as if he expects me to carry on as before; but in spite of my constant association with him, I'm not feeling even warm

47. It would seem that Gurdjieff expected Orage to absorb the shock to his chief feature, and continue. But the shock, for Orage as it was for Uspenskii, was too great. It was the moment of truth for each pupil. But neither could totally surrender. They did not wholly trust Gurdjieff and, therefore, reserved the right to judge him. In so doing, they judged themselves. Gurdjieff's action seems a desperate attempt to save both students. Not for themselves, not for him—but for his mission. Given their breaking with Gurdjieff, it seems fair to conclude that neither *really* understood his mission. Despite Gurdjieff's knowledge and being, despite the many experiences Uspenskii and Orage had through Gurdjieff and his teaching, in the end they could only follow their teacher part of the way. They could not do as Jesus's apostles did. They could not step out of the web of their lives and follow "Joshua Gurdjieff."

48. The aphorisms are linked together, such as in aphorism XI. "Each of us has in himself a fool who says I'm wise." "Most novices picture themselves as masters—and are content with the picture. This is why there are so few masters." "When I speak I am persuaded." "People mistake their limitations for high standards." "Ordinarily, each person is a cartoon of himself."

about group work." In fact, Orage will leave Gurdjieff, his decision, no doubt, not protested by his wife.

Gurdjieff, then, at fifty-nine years of age, finds himself utterly alone.

MARCH 14, 1931. NEW YORK. Orage to Nott: "Gurdjieff sailed last night, leaving behind him an almost hopelessly scattered and hostile group. He has given the impression, as never before, that he cares for money only and thinks of the N. Y. people in that light alone.... Of course it is not so; but I despair of pointing to any evidence in support, except evidence that he has alienated the rich members as well as the poor."<sup>49</sup>

SPRING 1931. CHICAGO. Jean Toomer meets Margery Latimer, a fellow writer and a student of Orage's. Initially, she is put off by Toomer. In a letter to a friend, she writes: "Toomer I couldn't bear to look at. He sat at the head of the table and I was next to him. I felt he was so tainted with his master, Gurdjieff. I felt he was consciously being G. and also unconsciously being him." But few women could withstand the magnetic personality of Jean Toomer and Latimer is soon captivated.

APRIL 1931. NEW YORK. Orage makes one hundred copies of *All and Everything* from his typescript (the only one besides Gurdjieff's). These are sold for ten dollars apiece. Fifty copies are quickly sold, the remainder taking nearly ten years to dispose of, the last going in 1940 for one hundred dollars.

MAY 1931. NEW YORK. Orage says good-bye to Gurdjieff who departs for France.

Years later J. G. Bennett, who was not present for Gurdjieff's talks to Orage's groups but who had plenty of contacts, said that during this time Gurdjieff introduced "new methods of work, of which most of his groups had previously no idea. Indeed, the new exercises that were being introduced in 1930 and in the early part of 1931 seem to have been different from the exercises which he had shown people individually at the Prieuré between 1924 and 1929."

49. As Gurdjieff worked with Uspenskii, pressing his corns over the "St. Petersburg Conditions," he works in like manner with Orage with money. He will also use money with Jean Toomer. And through Orage and Toomer, he of course works on his American students who form their groups. His continual pressing for more and more money evokes anger and doubt. He seems venal. It is for the student, not the teacher, to resolve and to reconcile the contradiction Gurdjieff's behavior creates; to impartially absorb "the heat." Many of Gurdjieff's imitators point to this in defending the heavy money demands they make on students. Let the student beware.

SUMMER 1931. PRIEURÉ. *A New Model of the Universe* is published in New York. Gurdjieff is shown the book—he turns his back, making a scornful remark.

Declares Dr. Stjoernal: "Mr. Gurdjieff has a very big plan, Uspenskii does not understand this. He does not know what Mr. Gurdjieff's aim is. We who are working with Mr. Gurdjieff have got beyond such books. It only adds to the sum of ordinary knowledge, of which there is already too much. Uspenskii ought to have got beyond it."

Orage, having read a copy, brands it—"A New Muddle of the Universe."

Some weeks later at the Café de la Paix, Nott finds Gurdjieff, who, he reports, is in a "worked-up state." Nott tells him that Orage had spoken of Gurdjieff bringing his pupils just so far and then seemingly leaving them up in the air.

With a sardonic grin, Gurdjieff tells him: "I needed rats for my experiments."

"What?" cries Nott.

"I needed rats for my experiments," repeats Gurdjieff.

Nott, who suffered from inferiority feelings, is crestfallen.

Easing the shock, Gurdjieff invites him to lunch at his apartment where they speak of many things. At the end with a look of compassion he tells Nott—"You're a good man."

"What is good?" Nott asks, still despondent. "It seems to me that goodness is often a name for weakness. Sometimes I see myself as what I really am—*merde de la merde*."

A slow smile spreads over Gurdjieff's face.

Meanwhile, in London, everything appears to be going well for Uspenskii. With every passing year, it appears that he made the right decision in leaving Gurdjieff.

Gurdjieff sits on the terrace of the Café Henri IV drinking coffee and cognac and working on a translation of *All and Everything* when the writer Thornton Wilder is introduced to him. Gurdjieff grunts and motions him to sit down and have a coffee and cognac. Asking Wilder a number of questions, he laughs inordinately at every reply.

Wilder is not put off. He sees in Gurdjieff's face someone who is "at once sly and jovial, arrogant and clownish." He looked, says Wilder, "like a very intelligent Armenian rug-dealer."

Gurdjieff orders more coffee and cognac and tells Wilder:

"In the world, everybody idiot. Twenty-one kinds of idiot: simple idiot, ambitious idiot, compassionate idiot, objective idiot, subjective idiot—everybody one kind of idiot."

Wilder tells him he thinks he is a subjective idiot.

"Non," answers Gurdjieff, laughing uproariously. "Il ne faut pas aller trop vite. Il faut chercher.—Mais vous êtes idiot type vingt: vous êtes idiot sans espoir!" (No. One mustn't go too fast. One must search.—But you are idiot type twenty: you are idiot without hope.)

Wilder is not offended and Gurdjieff asks him to come to dinner at the Prieuré. Says Wilder: "I had begun to like him, and his eyes rested on me affectionately."

Gurdjieff holds his glass toward Wilder and says—barely able to speak for laughter: "I idiot, too. Everybody idiot. I idiot vingt-et-un (twenty-one). I"—Gurdjieff holds his forefinger emphatically pointed skyward—"I the *unique* idiot." And he breaks into convulsions of laughter.

At the Prieuré Gurdjieff greets him with what Wilder describes as "buffoon joviality" and introduces him to an American lady.

"Smell him and see if he have money," Gurdjieff tells her, sniffing at Wilder. "Yes, I smell him. I think he have money."

Wilder sees this as "brilliant," for he suspects Gurdjieff of pressing people for money.

There are some twenty-five people at dinner, all served at one vast table. Before each place is a bottle of cognac. The principal dish is a sheep brought in on a large platter, its head still on, and lying in a bed of cooked fruits.

Gurdjieff is noisy, jovial and clowning and constantly toasting Wilder with cognac. The other guests are muted, meditative, and withdrawn.

"Gurdjieff and I," says Wilder, "were the only happy people at the table."

After dinner Gurdjieff offers to let him read Beelzebub, telling him that when it is published it will cost five thousand dollars.

"I give you five thousand dollars," Gurdjieff says.

After a question from Wilder, Gurdjieff tells him: "You no square idiot, you round idiot." He is given the English typescript of the first chapter of *All and Everything*, which fails to impress Wilder.

Before he leaves Gurdjieff tells him, "You come here and stay. You come three days, three months, or three years."

"I'd like to," replies Wilder, somewhat hesitantly. "But I can't come now. I can come in November."

Gurdjieff suddenly flies into a rage, lashing his arms and stamping his foot—"Not November, now! I no live November. I live *now*."

Wilder, a keen, if conventional, observer, says of the rage that "It was terrific and it passed as suddenly as it came. It was not a loss of control: it was a pedagogic emphasis."

MIDSUMMER 1931. FONTAINEBLEAU. Uspenskii unexpectedly arrives at the Prieuré. It has been some eleven years since last he openly rang the bell at the château's wrought iron gates. He does not gain admittance. The

venue of the magicians' last meeting is to be at the Café Henri IV in Fontainebleau. They meet on the terrace with its charming view of the historical Jardin de Prieuré with its roses, goldfish pond, and carefully trimmed plane trees.

Sixteen years have passed since the two first met in a noisy Moscow merchants' café. To any but the most knowledgeable eye, their situations have totally reversed.

For here on the quiet terrace of the café stands the former student, fifty-three years of age, fit and in excellent health, now an accepted teacher and magician in his own right, having a large cadre of pupils, many quite wealthy, and one who enjoys a stainless and growing worldwide reputation as a teacher, serious author and investigator of the Fourth Dimension.

And here facing him is his former teacher, fifty-nine years old, growing fat and in failing health, the once great teacher and magician, accused of being a charlatan, attacked as having contributed to the death of Katherine Mansfield, his reputation in ruins, heavily in debt, having now only a scattering of pupils, and the author of what is commonly seen to be a windy, exasperating, unpublished tome of spaceship fable and myth that strikes all but the initiated as virtually unreadable.

What passed between the two men is not known....

Whatever, it was their great octave's end, the final meeting of the magicians.<sup>50</sup>

Soon after, Sophia Grigorievna Uspenskii, perhaps sent by Gurdjieff, makes her peace with her husband and joins him.

LATE SUMMER 1931. PORTAGE, WISCONSIN. Toomer, Margery Latimer, and six other unmarried people from his Chicago groups experiment with communal living in a small cottage. On weekends, the number may rise into the thirties. Toomer tries to apply, in his own way, some of the principles practiced at the Prieuré. Toomer's aim is to see if artificial societal barriers can be transcended through living in close quarters and the sharing of work and play. By summer's end, Toomer feels the experiment is a success. "I am satisfied that it is entirely possible," he says, "to eradicate the false veneer of civilization, with its unnatural inhibitions, its selfishness, petty meanness and unnatural behavior, under proper conditions. Adults can be re-educated to become as natural as little children, before civilization stamps out their true or subconscious instincts."

50. Whatever contact they might have hereafter could only occur telepathically. It is likely Uspenskii shut himself down to what in Finland so many years before he regarded as a "miracle." Otherwise, how else might he have any peace of mind? Or as Gurdjieff would say, "self-calm" himself.

With Portage citizenry, Toomer's experiment causes a scandal. Rumors of Communism, nudity, and sexual license abound.

AUGUST 20, 1931. LONDON. Shortly after his last meeting with his former teacher, Uspenskii finds himself having to deal again with what must seem like a dog that will never die. In a group meeting, a student asks:

As I understand it, one of the principles of esotericism is that the teaching must be passed from one conscious being to another ... after the general principles of the work are received it is necessary to keep the line unbroken. I ask this because it seems to us as if the line was broken when you left Gurdjieff.

Uspenskii:

What has all this to do with Gurdjieff and me? I was working with Gurdjieff until I saw a difference in him. This has nothing to do with esotericism. When I found that I could not work with him any longer I left him. That is all... The idea is that one can have only such a teacher as one deserves. But only so long as he is teacher. If he ceases to be teacher — well— then why talk about it? I went to Gurdjieff in 1916, but in 1918 I found that I could not continue to work with him. In 1922 again I started to work with him, and again I came to the conclusion that it was impossible to continue, and in 1924 you remember that I spoke to you about this and said: 'I may be wrong but I had to part with him'....

Later, in the same meeting, Uspenskii says: "... How can I say what number man Gurdjieff is? I know only one thing; that he knows more than I of certain principles. He changed all these principles and I parted from him."

Still later he is asked:

Mr. M: "Was it because of the system that you left Gurdjieff?"

Uspenskii: "What do you mean by this? In a sense, yes."

Mr. M: "Then you must have believed something."

Uspenskii: "There is no question of belief; it is a question of fact. I saw. I saw that things had changed...."

At this point, an argument occurs which results in Uspenskii demanding that Mr. M. write down on a sheet of paper what he said. The two questions are: "Was it because of the system that you left Gurdjieff?" and "Was it in the system that I left Gurdjieff?" Uspenskii reads these aloud and says they are exactly the same question. Mr. M. does not agree. And the conversation goes nowhere.

SEPTEMBER 9, 1931. LONDON. Uspenskii tells Maurice Nicoll, his closest pupil and friend, "Nicoll, you had better go away..." He paused and completed his sentence with "...go away and teach the System." About this time he began to make use of his senior students, such as Dr. Francis

Roles and J. G. Bennett. He deputized them to answer basic questions and to do readings. He also began to speak more about his personal ideas, such as the role of the devil in preventing human evolution.

AUTUMN 1931. LONDON. Orage and his family take a house on Hampstead Heath. He lays plans to return to journalism either as a co-editor of the *New Age* or of a new paper. His days with Gurdjieff, he feels, are over but he says he still practices the teaching and says he still holds it in high regard.

OCTOBER 30, 1931. PORTAGE, WISCONSIN. Jean Toomer marries Margery Latimer, whose ancestry can be traced back to the Puritan Cotton Mather. A few days before their marriage Toomer writes: "There is a new race in America. I am a member of this new race. It is neither white nor black nor in-between. It is the American race, differing as much from white and black as black and white differ from each other. ...the old divisions into white, black, brown, red, are outworn in this country. They have had their day. Now is the time of the birth of a new order, a new vision, a new idea of man. I proclaim this new order. My marriage to Margery Latimer is the marriage of two Americans." Understanding perhaps that few are ready to accept such a new order, Toomer lists himself as white on the marriage certificate.

After the initial success of his 1923 novel *Cane*, Toomer has continued to write novel after novel but is unable to get any published. He turns to short stories and poems, and later to autobiography.

WINTER 1931. AMERICA. Gurdjieff arrives from France. Following last year's ouster of Orage, Gurdjieff now seems open and approachable. He collects money as usual, and then leaves on the *Bremen* on January 16th.

JANUARY 23, 1932. LONDON. Orage writes to an American student:

I'm disappointed that you and others found G.'s deprecation of self-observation discouraging, since his reason for his statement was familiar to you all. I never at any time said that there is, ready-made, an actual 'I' that can observe; but I always said—following Gurdjieff—that by feeding this conception I on self-observations (or, rather by its own feeding) it develops as an embryo develops. The whole point of the method lay in its being a means to self-development; not, of course, to self-conception, this latter having been done for us, so to speak, and evidenced by the fact that our planetary body becomes fully formed. The *method* was to be practiced by the conceived but not yet developed I; and it had to start from 'nothing,' since only self-developed individuals rank as individuals....

1932. PARIS. Alexander de Salzmänn, who left the Prieuré as things ran down and earned his living in Paris, first as an interior designer and then an antique dealer. As has become his custom, he sits in a café on the Boulevard St. Germain, drinking a concoction of beer and Calvados and smoking from a long cigarette holder. All the while his hands are occupied with a pencil which formed what looked like Oriental calligraphy. René Daumal, the poet and writer,<sup>51</sup> who at that time was, as he said “close to madness and death” is introduced to de Salzmänn. A group springs up around de Salzmänn which he and his wife, Jeanne, teach.<sup>52</sup>

Jane Heap, an ardent student and lesbian, begins to meet regularly with a group of women in her Montparnasse apartment. The group includes Margaret Anderson, Solita Solano, Georgette Leblanc, the American writer Kathryn Hulme, and her friend Wendy, a wealthy milliner.

FEBRUARY 1932. CAFÉ DE LA PAIX. Kathryn Hulme spots Gurdjieff at his table. “With one leg pulled up beneath him Oriental-fashion on the banquette, he looked from a distance like a broad-shouldered Buddha radiating such power that all the people between him and me seemed dead.”

APRIL 10, 1932. GERMANY. The runoff election for president: Hindenburg receives 19.5 million, or 53%, of the vote. Hitler places second with 13.5 million, or 37%, of the votes.

APRIL 21, 1932. LONDON. Backed by American friends with one thousand pounds, Orage publishes the first issue of the *New English Weekly*, the brainchild of Major C. H. Douglas. Its purpose is to champion Social Credit, a monetary system designed to replace money with a kind of barter and distribute taxes to the poor. That Orage now invests his energy and time in such an endeavor shows how far he has deviated from the octave he began ten years before in 1922, when he first arrived at the Prieuré.<sup>53</sup>

AUGUST 16, 1932. CHICAGO. During childbirth, complications ensue and Margery Toomer dies. The child is saved. It is given its mother's name. Toomer nicknames the baby daughter, Argie.

1932. ENGLAND. John Buchan's novel *The Gap in the Curtain* is published. Its main character is Professor August Moe, a powerful and

51. Daumal will later write an unfinished novel, *Mount Analogue* (Penguin, 1974) which gives his understanding of the Work. He dedicates the book to de Salzmänn who is believed to be the prototype for Pierre Sogol, the book's wisdom figure.

52. Whether Gurdjieff knew of the group at the time is a question.

53. It is interesting to recall in this connection Orage saying, “There comes a time: almost everyone in this work when he asks himself, ‘Shall I lose the old values that go incentive, and shall I then be able to go on to new ones, ones of a different order?’”

brooding man of Central European or perhaps Scandinavian extraction, whose *idée fixe* is time and who casts an intellectual spell over five people at a weekend house party. Professor Moe is the first of three fictionalized depictions of Uspenskii.

1932. LONDON. Orage, perhaps putting his best English face on his rift with Gurdjieff, speaks to Nott in glowing terms about Gurdjieff, saying: “We can never understand the being of man who is on a higher level than our own. Gurdjieff is a kind of walking god—a planetary or even solar god.”

EARLY 1930S. LONDON. Uspenskii begins to speak about evil and the devil. One cannot do evil consciously, he says. Some actions require people to be conscious but evil requires a man to be mechanical, asleep. To discover evil, one must aim to be conscious. Then whatever is an obstacle for that aim is evil. “You can only understand evil in relation to yourself.”

Uspenskii says the devil, for him, is “real, quite real. It is not the system; it is my opinion.” The devil works through imagination, negative emotions, inner considering and the like. What he wants is man's soul. The devil cannot exist on the level of the sun but “maybe [speaking of the lateral octave] the devil can have his roots in *si*. *Si* is bigger than *la*, *sol*, *fa*. Not all *si*. But maybe when man was invented, the devil was invented also,” he says. The devil of which he speaks is not the conception of medieval demonology, that of a concrete image or figure. His idea is that the devil is abstract and general in that the name “devil” can be applied to any who slander, tempt, and so forth. Given what has happened with Gurdjieff, it is to be wondered whether he is speaking about his former teacher.

## PART III

# THE GREAT BEQUEATHING

SUNDAY, MAY 1, 1932. CAFÉ DE LA PAIX. Unable to meet mortgage and coal payments, Gurdjieff orders the Prieuré's kitchen closed and the château boarded up within a week. On Tuesday Louise Goepfert goes to the Café de la Paix to say good-bye to Gurdjieff. When they see one another she says "a sharp electric spark passes between us."

She tells him why she is there.

"You are very kind," says Gurdjieff. "I know now there in the Prieuré some hate me. Make worst man of me, I do so and so. They not know how much they cost me, even their shit. To take away their shit, 5000 francs a year..."

Later she will ask him: "Can I do anything for you?"

"Now only money, money. One hundred thousand francs I need at once," is the reply.

MAY 11, 1932. PRIEURÉ. Short of funds, Gurdjieff closes the Prieuré and moves to Paris. The upkeep has been too much and the château has fallen into disrepair, its gardens neglected, the orangery in ruins, the Study house deserted and some of the precious carpets damaged by rats and mice. According to C. S. Nott, Gurdjieff is able to keep going because of the support of Orage's old New York group of about thirty, the small group of Americans in Paris, and several English students. Only one or two French show any interest.

AUGUST 1932. LONDON. Orage receives a letter from Gurdjieff asking him to come to Paris for a day, or at least to send his wife. Replies Orage:

"There was a time when I would have crossed oceans at your bidding. Now I would not even cross the Channel."

WINTER 1932. AMERICA. Gurdjieff arrives. He demands money and his followers react. Jean Toomer reports several are driven away "with disgust and anger and the conviction that he was using his power merely in order to obtain money, money and more money without cease." But Gurdjieff knows what they cannot know—he is in danger of losing the Institute's headquarters, the Prieuré.

1933. AMERICA. Jean Toomer completes the final draft of his novel *Transatlantic*. Leaving the rich lyrical style of *Cane* in which he seeks answers to human problems, Toomer becomes a social critic and spiritual reformer using the Gurdjieff's teaching as its basis. He cannot find a publisher for the book or any of the books that follow. Still, he continues to write, publishing an essay or poem here and there. He also writes a number of plays but, with the exception of one produced by a university, none of his plays are staged.

SPRING 1933. NEW YORK. Gurdjieff telegrams his followers declaring he is "absolutely destitute" and the Prieuré is about to be sold.

MAY 1933. PRIEURÉ. Unable to meet mortgage payments, the Prieuré, his home of ten years, is lost and its contents auctioned.

1933. GASDEN, KENT. The Uspenskii's are now situated in a Victorian mansion standing on some seven acres. Uspenskii has come to the habit of sitting up half the night drinking claret and reminiscing about his early days in Russia. To Bennett he appears as if he is "obsessed with the need to put himself back into the life he was living before he first met Gurdjieff in 1915." At one such drinking bout, Bennett suddenly finds himself "quite outside myself." He finds himself hearing his own voice and even watching his own thoughts, as if they were going on in someone else. "I saw myself as completely artificial," he relates, "neither my thoughts nor my words were my own. 'I'—whoever at that moment 'I' might be—was a completely indifferent spectator of the performance."

Bennett tells Uspenskii that he now knows what self-observation is.

Replies Uspenskii: "If only you can remember what you have just seen you will be able to work. But you must understand that no one can help you in this. If you do not see for yourself, it is impossible for anyone else to show you."

The conversation turns to Uspenskii's theory of Eternal Recurrence. Bennett is of two minds about it. He believes it contains an important element of truth but does not think it literally true.

Uspenskii tells him: "You are like Madame [Uspenskii]. Both of you have young souls. You have not the experience of living many times on this earth."

1933. PARIS. Alexander de Salzman dies of tuberculosis. His wife, Jeanne, continues to lead the group.

MIDSUMMER 1933. NEW YORK. Gurdjieff spends most of his time in America. For six months of this time he stays with Fred Leighton, a wealthy student who first learned about Gurdjieff through the Orage groups of the mid-1920s.

MARCH 7, 1933. PARIS. The previous year Gurdjieff has begun to write the controversial *Herald of Coming Good*. Now he writes a bizarre "Supplementary Announcement" to the book. Though written, the First and Second Series of Gurdjieff's *All and Everything* are yet to be published. But he does publish *Herald*. With the exception of C. S. Nott and some others, it strikes many as a very strange book. Some, like Uspenskii, think it shows he has lost his mind.

AUTUMN 1933. BERLIN. Hitler chooses Albert Speer as his architect. Speer, having heard Hitler speak, joined the Nazi Party in 1931. He says of that time: "After years of frustrated efforts I was wild to accomplish things—and twenty-eight years old. For the commission to do a great building, I would have sold my soul like Faust. Now I had found my Mephistopheles. He seemed no less engaging than Goethe's." Speer went on to design many buildings, as well as create the dramatic lighting effect—deemed "a cathedral of ice"—at the Nazi Party rally in Nuremberg. Speer would later rise to the position of Minister of Armaments and War Production, where his technical ability and organizational mastery excelled.

WINTER 1933. AMERICA. Gurdjieff arrives. The problems with Orage and the Prieuré appear to have taken their toll. His *Herald of Coming Good* is misunderstood. He looks horrible and has put on a great deal of weight.

EARLY 1934. NEW YORK. Gurdjieff normally arises at 6–7 A.M. and goes to Child's Restaurant in the Hecksher Building, what he called his "New York office." According to one witness, "He had grown fat. He looked untidy; time had turned his long, black ringmaster's moustache to grey; but he was unmistakably a personage, and the old, arrogant, undaunted look shone forth from his eyes."

Jean Toomer sees Gurdjieff about his impending marriage to Marjorie Content. Gurdjieff tells him he is leaving the next day. Knowing he was in need of money, Toomer gives him \$200, a large sum in those days.

Gurdjieff tries to get more. Toomer says:

What could be in the man's mind? Who and what was he? What were his purposes? What aims did he have for me, if any? What aims for the people of the world? Was I a mere tool? Was I not even that.

so nothing from his point of view that he need not even consider the way he used or misused me? Was he the supreme egotist? Was he, as some claimed, insane?... This is what is so awful about the situation with Gurdjieff. The situations themselves are always taxing—and you can arrive at no sure reconciliation or fixed understanding because for every fact there is a counter fact, for every reason a counter reason, for every bit of ‘bad’ behavior another bit of ‘good’ behavior, for every son-of-a-bitching thing a counter saintly thing.... Insane? He was in full possession of every one of his extraordinary faculties. Debauched and slovenly? Nothing of the sort. Afraid of the dark and being alone? It was ridiculous. Whatever he had gone through, the thing that showed plainly was a decided improvement in every respect.

Toomer asks Gurdjieff about his promise many years before that he would make him “ruler of Africa.”<sup>1</sup>

“Something went wrong,” replies Gurdjieff, smiling.

Toomer presses him to elaborate.

“You not as I counted,” Gurdjieff says.

“How do you mean?”

“In the beginning I counted you. You not as I counted.”

“How do you mean?”

“You manifest differently at different times, different from what I expected. You not as I counted and I get angry.”

“Angry? Why?”

“You not as I counted.”

Gurdjieff tells C. S. Nott: “The sign of a perfected man and his particularity in ordinary life must be that in regard to everything happening outside him, he is able to, and can in every action, perform to perfection externally the part corresponding to the given situation; but at the same time never blend or agree with it. In my youth, I too... worked on myself for the purpose of attaining such a blessing... and... I finally reached a state when nothing from outside could really touch me internally; and so far as acting was concerned, I brought myself to such perfection as was never dreamed of by the learned people of ancient Babylon for the actors on stage.”

Says Fritz Peters, who observed from the Prieuré days onward: “Gurdjieff had an unbelievable (unless you’ve seen it) *awareness* of other people. It was nothing so limited as mind-reading or thought-transference. He seemed to know so much about the human processes, about the underlying logic in man, that he was conscious of everything that took place within any human being he happened to observe. It is the

1. From this comment, it is clear that Gurdjieff takes Toomer to be black.

same kind of faculty that an occasional highly trained psychiatrist seems to have to a limited degree. Gurdjieff had it to an enormous degree.”

1934. LYNE PLACE. The Uspenskiis moves to a lightly wooded country estate some twenty miles from London. It is a large eighteenth-century mansion with the customary English garden, rhododendron walks, ancient trees, a small ornamental lake and boathouse. A short walk from the mansion is the farm with barns, outbuildings, greenhouses, stables, pigsties, chicken houses, and a walled vegetable garden. Beyond this lay the fields all enclosed by hedges.

And of course everywhere Uspenskii is, there are his cats as well. Cats fascinate him. He believes the cat knows and inhabits its body completely; it is aware of itself except when, say, a salmon appears. “Everything *outside itself* it takes for granted, as something given,” Uspenskii says. “To *correct* the outside world, to accommodate it to its own comfort, would never occur to a cat. Maybe this is so because a cat lives more in another world, the world of dreams and fantasies, than in this one.”

For exercise, Uspenskii rides his favorite horse, Jingles, around the property. A student had given him an expensive cossack saddle of which he is quite proud. The horse being a symbol of the emotional center, a wag might suggest Uspenskii had things well in hand.

From time to time targets are set up and he practices shooting. He is a crack shot but never shoots anything living. He is fond of Russian prints, and a connoisseur of tea and, of course, vodka.

At this time he writes a series of introductory lectures to the Work which are later published as *The Psychology of Man's Possible Evolution*.

Gurdjieff has copies of *Herald* sent to all of Uspenskii's pupils. Uspenskii has it read to a group of his closest pupils. The general opinion is that it is “almost paranoiac.” Uspenskii suggests that perhaps Gurdjieff had syphilis. He instructs his pupils to hand in their copies and has them destroyed.

Later, Gurdjieff repudiates *Herald*, calling in all copies.

Looking for a new home for his Institute, he makes another trip to America and asks the wealthy Mabel Dodge Luhan for the New Mexico ranch she had volunteered eight years before. She refuses.

SPRING 1934. NEW YORK. Fred Leighton, a Gurdjieffian, introduces Jean Toomer to his friend Marjorie Content. A friend of the painter Georgia O'Keefe, Content is a former partner in the Sunwise Turn bookshop. A photographer and actress, her father is a wealthy Wall Street speculator. She has been married thrice, her second husband being Harold A. Loeb, whom Ernest Hemingway had used as the infamous character Robert Cohn in his *The Sun Also Rises*. Content is familiar with

Toomer's writing but has no use for Gurdjieff or his teaching. Toomer apparently leads her to believe that he is no longer interested in Gurdjieff.

1934. PARIS. Madame de Salzmänn moves the group to Sèvres. In 1935 Philippe Lavastine, the Orientalist, joins the group. When she deems her pupils mature enough, she introduces them to Gurdjieff. Two years later the group begins to disintegrate and by 1939 it disbands.

JUNE 30, 1934. BERLIN. Consolidating his power, Hitler orders his chief rival, Ernst Röhm, head of the S. A. (the Brownshirts), and 150 of its leaders shot.

AUGUST 2, 1934. BERLIN. President von Hindenburg dies. Hitler, moving swiftly, abolishes the office of President and combines its power with his own as Chancellor.

SEPTEMBER 1, 1934. TAOS, NEW MEXICO. Jean Toomer and Marjorie Content marry and return to New York to live.

LATE 1934. DOYLESTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA. Jean Toomer, hoping to found another Prieuré, buys a farm in Bucks County, a center of Quaker-Amish activity. At first Toomer and his new wife go only for weekends but by the spring of 1935, they move in permanently to the main house which they call Mill House.

With their house guests and the flow of weekend guests, Toomer takes the role of the teacher. Often there are a dozen or so people sitting around the dinner table or in a circle around him. Remembers Gorham Munson, who was from time to time a houseguest, "Jean as the host at Doylestown was often embarrassing to me...he would actually go into broken English, too, you know, and he would tear loaves of bread apart. He would use bad, vulgar language at times. He would try to shock people by going into these seemingly rambling discourses. He was all imitative of Gurdjieff and bad, bad, bad imitation." Though Toomer attracts a small number of devotees, he never manages to establish an Institute or permanent commune at Mill House.

Always searching, Toomer, at some point, begins to attend meetings of the Religious Society of Friends, a Quaker group. He and his wife become much involved and in time he begins giving lectures and writing pamphlets. His stomach ailments, which he has suffered now and then throughout his life, increase and he has problems with his vision which at times necessitates his wearing a patch over one eye. He begins drinking. Toward the end of the decade, Toomer becomes interested in Eastern mysticism.

OCTOBER 1934. Nott has a strong feeling that something serious is about to happen to Orage. A week or so later the two are sauntering up Chancery Lane, as they often did, and are speaking of life at the Prieuré when Orage stops and declares in a tone of complete conviction—"You know, I thank God every day of my life that I met Gurdjieff."

NOVEMBER 5, 1934. LONDON. Orage gives a speech over the radio on Social Credit. At one point, he pauses for a very long time. Later he says that he had not known before how clearly the mind can work with severe pain under the breastbone. The next morning his wife, Jesse, finds him in his study. Orage is dead. He is buried in the churchyard of Old Hampstead Church. On the stone slab covering his grave is carved the enneagram and Krishna's words to Arjuna in the *Gita*, "You grieve for those for whom you should not grieve..."

NOVEMBER 6, 1934. CHILD'S RESTAURANT, NEW YORK. Gurdjieff is with a person who is helping to translate *All and Everything* into English. The word "voluntary" has been substituted for "intentional" in the translated text. Gurdjieff is explaining the difference in meaning between the two words. In an action of synchronicity or what Gurdjieff calls a "noticeable coincidence," he is called to the telephone. The operator has a telegram from C. S. Nott in London—*Orage has died*.

Gurdjieff recalls that this very night exactly seven years before he had dictated a letter to Orage that spoke about suffering and the difference between voluntary and intentional suffering, as well as about "noticeable coincidences."<sup>2</sup>

Orage at that time, says Gurdjieff, "was considered to be, and indeed was, the most important leader in the dissemination of my ideas in the whole northern part of North America." Gurdjieff advised him to regulate his health by means of intentional suffering "in a form corresponding to his individuality and the condition of his ordinary life." But this he would not do.

Gurdjieff wipes away tears from his eyes with his fist. He must be remembering that great thirst for the truth that was Orage's in the early days, that indomitable desire that was direly tested, as a fifty-year-old man with a nearly obese body forced it all those long days to dig ditch after ditch at the Prieuré. He must have remembered, too, his bright and electric mind, his great warmth and ease with people, and, yes, that sense of humor, that wonderful dry English sense of humor full of *metis*.

2. Perhaps Gurdjieff had spoken to Orage then of that fateful evening in January 1924 when Orage first spoke of the teaching at the Sunwise Turn and in the audience saw the manifestation of his chief feature—Jesse Dwight.

Tears still hot on his knuckles Gurdjieff whispers:  
 "I loved Orage as a brother."

1935. ENGLAND. Uspenskii now has over one thousand pupils. Maurice Nicoll has a group of over a hundred. The Gurdjieff group in London has perhaps twelve people. With Gurdjieff in Paris there are only a few Americans, English, and Russians. In New York no more than twenty.

EARLY SPRING 1935. LYNE PLACE. C. S. Nott visits. He finds Uspenskii not the forbidding philosopher he expected, but a sympathetic person— "warm, friendly and easy to talk to." Madame Uspenskii, he describes as being small in stature but acting the "Grand Duchess," always maintaining a distance. She does most of the talking. The subject of Orage comes up and Madame Uspenskii, with characteristic directness, says—"There were many things that Mr. Orage did not understand or understood wrongly. Mr. Orage was too formatory for one thing."

Rejoins Nott: "I'm sure Orage would have agreed with you but you had not seen him for ten years, and he had changed very much in that time. And you know, Gurdjieff himself once said that Mr. Uspenskii himself was too formatory."

Nott and Uspenskii would have many talks. Uspenskii would invite Nott into his study and open up a bottle of wine. Gradually, Nott developed a real affection for him, though they were at polar extremes about the never failing subject of discussion: Gurdjieff.

"Gurdjieff's mind never recovered from his accident," maintains Uspenskii.

"I can't accept that," answers Nott. "We cannot judge Gurdjieff from our level. He lives from essence and, in a great measure, according to objective reason, and a person who lives thus can sometimes appear to our minds spoiled by wrong education and conditioning, as not normal. For me Gurdjieff represents objective sanity....He lives the Teaching while we talk about it."

"No, he lost contact with the source after Essentuki. His behavior goes contrary to his teaching. Then the accident. He drives a car as if he were riding a horse."

Nott sees Uspenskii's viewpoint about Gurdjieff as inflexible and characteristic of the Russian mentality; one which only grew stronger with time.

Sometime after his first meeting Uspenskii, Nott is in Paris having lunch with Gurdjieff, who makes an unflattering remark about Uspenskii.

"Mr. Gurdjieff," says Nott, always loyal to his friends, "I like Uspenskii and I enjoy talking to him."

"Oh yes, Uspenskii very nice man to talk to and drink vodka with, but he is weak man,"<sup>3</sup> replies Gurdjieff.

Nott reflects on this and concludes that Uspenskii's weakness, as with most people, was his emotional center. It was undeveloped and therefore partial and subjective. "Emotionally," says Nott, "I never felt inferior to Uspenskii."

But he wonders whether his emotional center is too strong. He speaks about it to Gurdjieff who tells him—"A strong feeling center is a gift of God."

MAY 1935. Some, such as J. G. Bennett, believe that Gurdjieff returned to Central Asia between May and July of 1935. There is little evidence to support this. In the late summer of 1935 Gurdjieff is seen again in Paris, taking flats in the rue Marchand and then in the rue Labie.

SEPTEMBER 15, 1935. GERMANY. Nuremberg Laws deprive Jews of German citizenship.

1935. NEW YORK. Gurdjieff again returns. Having finished the Prologue to his Third Series *Life is real only then, when I am*, Gurdjieff travels to Washington, D.C., to meet with Senator Bronson Cutting. The senator is expected to give the financial support needed to repurchase the Prieuré. Cutting, however, dies in a plane crash. Gurdjieff had once told Bennett, "What started in Russia, finish in Russia."<sup>4</sup> Perhaps it isn't entirely surprising then that he now applies for a Russian visa. The Soviets tell him he will be allowed to return, but he cannot teach. With this, all the doors appear to be closing on Gurdjieff.

OCTOBER 19, 1935. PARIS. "I now am old idiot," Gurdjieff says. "Both feet in galosh, moreover old Jewish. I need some church mouse again."<sup>5</sup>

1935. LONDON. Though Uspenskii has managed to attract upwards of one thousand people to the teaching, for him, too, life in the mid-1930s now appears to be contracting.

3. Gurdjieff here is likely referring to Uspenskii's refusal to allow Gurdjieff to work on his emotional center. In ordinary terms, Uspenskii's life shows he was a man of great integrity, character, and strength.

4. In none of the historical record does Gurdjieff ever make reference to this again. He did not have a high opinion of theosophy or Rudolph Steiner, but perhaps he believed, along with them, as Steiner said, "the importance of the Slavic folk soul as a spiritual bridge between the passive Orient and the active Occident. The religious thought of the Orient belongs to the past; the philosophical-scientific thought of the Occident belongs to the present; the Slavic soul will bridge the two and create a pathway to a spiritual future (in the sixth post-Atlantean age)." From Maria Carlson's *No Religion Higher than Truth*, p. 102.

5. This apparently is Gurdjieff's way of saying that he needs to become more humble.

In the early days his lectures were full of inspiration. He became a sort of underground spiritual figure, "a mystery man," according to one follower, "who kept in the background and conducted very secret meetings somewhere in London."

With the passage of time, the energy that Uspenskii had built up from his contact with Gurdjieff began to run down. Says J. H. Reyner, a student and biographer: "The fact was that Uspenskii had lost his way and was living on stale manna." Says Nott: "The work was too theoretical, too one-centered, intellectual-centered; and often I would leave with a feeling of emptiness, of emotional hunger... I get more from inner work with one lunch with Mr. Gurdjieff than from a year of Mr. Uspenskii's groups."

1936. LONDON. Bennett says that between now and the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 his relations with Uspenskii changed. Though he went regularly to Lyne, he says "I was no longer in his confidence." No reasons are given as to why.

SPRING 1936. PARIS. Gurdjieff forms "The Rope," a group of seven lesbians among whom are Solita Solano,<sup>6</sup> Elizabeth Gordon, Kathryn Hulme, and her friend Wendy. Gurdjieff speaks to them about their inner animal. Each has a different creature, he says, that typifies their inner nature with which each had to contend, and make friends with, so this inner animal would help them in their work. Gurdjieff then nicknames Solita Solano, because she quivers with animation, "Kanari." Kathryn Hulme, because of her overflowing sentimentality, he calls a "Krokodeel." Margaret Anderson he calls "Yakina," saying her outer animal is a Tibetan yak, a cousin to the European cow. Later, Gurdjieff tells Anderson that her inner animal is a "tapeworm," a lazy animal that seeks a comfortable place and feeds on the labor and effort of others.<sup>7</sup>

1936. PARIS. Nott is having lunch with Gurdjieff at his apartment, speaking of idiots. Gurdjieff has told Nott he is a hopeless idiot.

"Which you wish to be, objective or subjective [hopeless idiot]?"

"Subjective, of course," Nott says. "I don't wish to perish like a dog."

"Every man thinks he is God but a subjective hopeless idiot sometimes knows that he is not God. Objective hopeless idiot is shit. Never can be anything, never can do anything. Subjective hopeless idiot has

6. She will later become Gurdjieff's secretary. Why he formed this group is not known, but it is clear that Gurdjieff always experimented with human types. These women were of a very high quality and proved to be among his most loyal students.

7. On the face of it, Gurdjieff's words may seem harsh. If it was words only, it might be. But Gurdjieff's emanation, that of pure impersonal love, provides the necessary background. That is, while the personality is shocked by the words, the essence is experiencing a sense of well-being. Thus, the student finds himself between a 'yes' and a 'no.'

possibility not to be shit. He has come to the place where he knows he is hopeless. He has realized his nothingness, that he is nonentity."

With that Gurdjieff hands Nott a red pepper and says, "Eat, then will remember."

Nott, like the Kurd in *All and Everything*, eats the pepper which sets his whole body on fire.

Says Gurdjieff, "Can be a reminding factor."

The conversation turns to *All and Everything* and Nott says: "What about people who have never met you, or will never meet you. How will they be able to understand *All and Everything*?"

Answers Gurdjieff, "Perhaps will understand better than many always around me. You, by the way, you see much of me and become identified with me. I not wish people identified with me. I wish them identified with my ideas. Many who never will meet me, simple people, will understand my book. Time come perhaps when they read *All and Everything* in churches."

Kanari finds Yakina—who the day before said, "I see I irritate you, Mr. Gurdjieff, so I will go"—sitting with Gurdjieff at a café. Her face is so distressed that Kanari waits until she leaves. Says Gurdjieff: "I nervous and your friend come talk empty to empty... She too light for this work, too American. In life she perhaps have something good. But not for our work. I thought when she first came that after she had contact with me, something would collect in her empty place, but now I see is not so. Such empty life leave empty place. In fact I could tell is piece of meat with emanations. Good formulation, eh?"

"I think the reason is the result of philosophizing for years with Orage's New York group," says Kanari.

"Yes," answers Gurdjieff, "she is a victim of self-observation."

"Perhaps it is not too late, Mr. Gurdjieff," says Kanari. "She has such a wish to work. She truly knows there is nothing else in life but your work. Don't send her away."

"Well. I will see what I can combine for her. She must all stop make, wait, begin another way. She has only automatic mind, she not understand that of mind is two kinds and she quite not have real mind mentation. You explain to her, but use my words."

JUNE 18, 1936. PARIS. Says Gurdjieff to Solita Solano and other members of the Rope: "The highest aim of man is to be cunning.<sup>8</sup> I speak of real cunning, not the dirty means of the world. The magus is cunning. The magus is the highest that man can approach to God, because only he can be impartial and fulfill obligation to God. In old times the magus was always made chief because he had cunning. Other magus could do

either white or black magic but the magus who had cunning and canning<sup>9</sup> could do both white and black and was chief of the initiates.”

During the meetings with the Rope, Gurdjieff drops many pearls. Asked whether man is the result of evolution from animals, he says “No—man is a different formula.” Did man once have a tail which was a continuation of his denying brain? “Yes,” he said. About making force “When you make the body do what it not wish to do, makes force. For making it do just one small thing which it hates doing, makes more force than a day of walking.” About intermarriage, “Mixed blood gives less chance of individuality.” Of himself, “I am sometimes God and sometimes I have 10,000 devils.” At another time, “I am a small man compared to those who sent me.” Gurdjieff recalls an old saying, “You can understand and love me only when you love—have passion for—my thorns. Then only I am your slave.”

JULY 7, 1936. PARIS. At the Park Café, what he calls his “summer office,” Gurdjieff speaks to Solita Solano and other members of the Rope about his auto accident at Chailly.

“Yes, all is different since accident,” Gurdjieff declares. “Then I die, in truth all die. Everything began then from new. I was born that year, 1924. I am now twelve-year-old boy, not yet responsible age. I can remember how I was then—all thought, feeling. I was heavy, too heavy. Now everything is mixed with light.”

Of Madame de Hartmann he says: “She is first friend of my inner life. Such thought she had for me.”

JULY 1936. PARIS. Gurdjieff is introduced to René Daumal by Madame de Salzman.

SEPTEMBER 28, 1936. Uspenskii visits Count Keyserling, author and world traveller. About their meeting, the count says: “Mr. Uspenskii controls himself until he is completely suffocated. Oh yes, I do believe in control, but not in complete canalization. I have never seen so rich a character so controlled and stifled.... Mr. Uspenskii is one of the greatest.”

8. For a discussion of the Greek meaning of cunning, or *metis*, taken from the goddess Metis, see *Cunning Intelligence in Greek Culture and Society* by Marcel Detienne and Jean-Paul Vernant, (University of Chicago Press, 1991). From the introduction: “There is no doubt that *metis* is a type of intelligence and of thought, a way of knowing; it implies a complex but very coherent body of mental attitudes and intellectual behavior which combine flair, wisdom, forethought, subtlety of mind, deception, resourcefulness, vigilance, opportunism, various skills, and experience acquired over the years. It is applied to situations which are transient, shifting, disconcerting and ambiguous, situations which do not lend themselves to precise measurement, exact calculation or rigorous logic.”

9. See *Third Series* for how Gurdjieff uses the word “canning.”

men alive; but I have never seen a man subject so much of himself to one part of himself. But he cannot succeed entirely, he is too great.”

OCTOBER 1936. PARIS. Gurdjieff sends Jane Heap to London to teach.

1936. WARWICK GARDENS. The biologist Robert de Ropp meets Uspenskii and is much impressed. He believes Uspenskii “was probably at the height of his power.... In appearance he was massive and moved with a ponderous intentionality that at times reminded me of an elephant.... The massive body was surmounted by a no less massive head crowned with short-cropped grey hair. The face had considerable strength — an emperor’s face, an emperor who was also a scholar and who could very easily become a tyrant.”

Uspenskii strikes de Ropp and others as being Russian to his very core. He so typifies that race’s strengths and weaknesses that the saying among his older followers is: “One must distinguish between what is the teaching and what is just Russian.” The Russian temperament is either to be a total slave or complete tyrant. “Uspenskii,” says de Ropp, “was authoritarian.” At the same time, he finds Uspenskii completely free of sentimentality and pretentiousness. He does not pontificate. Believe nothing, test everything are his watchwords.

At Warwick Gardens and in London there is lecture upon lecture, the material first being presented by an older student, often by Lord John Pentland, or J. G. Bennett, then questions answered by Uspenskii. On the drive back to Lyne Place, Uspenskii never speaks but, once home, he sits in the kitchen, sometimes all night, with male students (Madame Uspenskii<sup>10</sup> will allow no female students) drinking *zoubrovka*, a fiery Polish vodka, and eating lavish spreads of hors d’œuvres. He would often talk about his days in Russia and quote his favorite poet, Lermontov, the author of *A Hero of Our Time*. At such times his manner of cold intellectualism falls away and students see Uspenskii’s warmth, kindness, his sense of humour, his innate honesty and extreme modesty.

10. Adoration is a stage in the student-teacher relationship when it might be said that the student is most open to the teacher. When the student works on himself, attention is being freed from identifications and energy is being transformed; what is not absorbed is often projected onto the teacher and, in a male-female context, easily becomes sexual. This is likely the reason behind Madame Uspenskii’s decree. What exactly her relationship was with Uspenskii is difficult to factually determine. All reports are second-hand. It seems clear that their relationship underwent a major shift when Uspenskii left Constantinople alone in 1921, while his wife left with Gurdjieff and his pupils. The two did not live under one roof until 1931 when she rejoined him. Perhaps one remark goes to the quick of what was happening. Once the two sat in a Parisian café with a group of students and Uspenskii was particularly withdrawn. “Very hard to make a friend of Mr. Uspenskii,” remarked Madame Uspenskii.

"Nearly always," says de Ropp, "we were regaled with tales of Moscow and Petersburg. For this was one of Uspenskii's weaknesses. He could not leave Russia. Nostalgia chained him to that land to which he could never return."

Neither could he ever forget Gurdjieff. At one kitchen drinking party Uspenskii speaks of "the week of miracles," referring to the telepathic experience he had with Gurdjieff in August 1916.

"I was in another room," Uspenskii says. "I heard Gurdjieff's voice speaking inside me. He told me something, something very important."

Uspenskii's eyes glaze behind the thick-lensed pince-nez. His concentration in reliving that moment is so great that he seems to those with him to go into a trance.

De Ropp says that Gurdjieff must have been a very strange man.

"Strange! He was extraordinary!" Uspenskii declares. "You cannot possibly imagine how extraordinary Gurdjieff was."

As to why he broke with Gurdjieff, Uspenskii contends that the "real Gurdjieff" had vanished during the flight from Russia. The Gurdjieff of the Prieuré was no longer the real thing; he had either gone mad or switched to the left-hand path and become a black magician. He tells de Ropp and the others: "This new Gurdjieff broke the rules of the Work, took advantage of the weaknesses and credulity of his pupils, and claimed to be personally responsible for the system of knowledge he taught."

Remembering this night many years later, de Ropp still can not forget the tone in Uspenskii's voice when he spoke of Gurdjieff as being "extraordinary!"

De Ropp trenchantly comments, "So many emotional elements entered into that simple statement: wonder, admiration, regret, bewilderment. I had the feeling that in his relationship with Gurdjieff, Uspenskii had confronted a problem that was absolutely beyond his power to solve. He had played the great game with a master and had been checkmated, but he still could not figure out quite how it had happened."

Even so, in an attempt to increase the spread of the teaching, Uspenskii founds the Historico-Psychological Society. Membership is restricted to 300 people. Through it, he also hopes, according to Reyner "to organize expeditions to the East in search of the truths with which he felt that Gurdjieff had made only a partial contact."

The prospectus declares the Society's aims to be:

1. The study of man's true evolution, and the necessity for new systems of thought.
2. The study of esoteric schools in different historical periods and countries and their influences on the development of humanity.
3. The practical attainment of conscious living through the techniques of psycho-transformism.

Uspenskii reads this aloud during tea time at Lyne Place. He is seated at one end of a long tea table, his wife at the other, with students on both sides. As her husband adjusts his ever-present pince-nez and begins to read, Madame Uspenskii, well trained in Gurdjieff's provocative method of teaching and whose forte is working on a person's emotional center, breaks into gales of laughter, so much so that she begins weeping and dabbing her eyes with a tiny lace handkerchief. But if Gurdjieff could not wake Uspenskii up to his folly, how could his wife?

Talking with Uspenskii about the theory of eternal recurrence presented in his *New Model of the Universe*, De Ropp complained that it was not a very encouraging idea.

Uspenskii smiled enigmatically and insisted that "there was a way of escaping from the treadmill." De Ropp must realize, he said, that time is three dimensional as well as space and that the space-time continuum had not four dimensions but six. In four-dimensional time-space, at every moment only one possibility is realized. In five dimensions, time curves back on itself so the pattern of events is repeated. But in six dimensions all the possibilities inherent in a moment could be realized. So by moving into this other dimension one could, in fact, change one's fate.<sup>11</sup>

The essence of Uspenskii's teaching, de Ropp says, is to remember one's life.<sup>12</sup> "He himself seemed to go over his life again and again as if to impress on his memory all that had happened."

De Ropp convinces his two pacifist friends, the writers Aldous Huxley and Gerald Heard, to attend Uspenskii's lectures. Later Uspenskii invites them to Lyne Place. He enjoys meeting them, saying, "For the first time I meet what we in Russia called intelligentsia." For their part, the two writers speak to Uspenskii about the coming Dark Age and advise him to go to America. Neither is interested in joining the group.

De Ropp does not find this surprising. Huxley and Heard, he says, "were quite unpractical, could never have managed the physical work, and were too fond of their own opinions to work under the direction of someone else."<sup>13</sup>

11. Uspenskii's understanding of time's period of dimensions likely accounts for his actions in the last month's of his life.

12. The idea of linking self-remembering with the remembering, or recapitulating, of one's life, is a powerful practice.

13. The description fits Uspenskii as well, though de Ropp gives no indication that he sees this in his teacher. In the objective language Gurdjieff presents, the word man has seven definitions. What de Ropp says of Huxley and Heard seems to be a common obstacle for man number three, those in whom ordinary thinking predominates. See *Search*, p. 71.

Later, Huxley and Heard, as well as fellow writers W. H. Auden and Christopher Isherwood, emigrate to America.

De Ropp introduces Rodney Collin to Uspenskii. Collin, now twenty-seven years old, first read *New Model of the Universe* in 1930, the same year he met his future wife, Janet Buckley. He felt then that he was not ready for the Work, but that later it would be important for him. He and Janet, independently wealthy and eight years his senior, married in 1934. In 1935 they attended some lectures of Maurice Nicoll. Immediately, Collin recognized that he had found in Uspenskii and the four-way the teaching he had been searching for. Meeting Uspenskii, he found him to be vigorous, whimsical, and brilliant. He and his wife buy a house near Lyne Place so as to be near Uspenskii.

EASTER 1937. PARIS. At a café during lunch someone asks, "But before the fishermen, what happened to knowledge?"

"Nothing happened," says Gurdjieff.

"But where was it?"

"Was with initiate people, as always," Gurdjieff replies. "They always go in one stream, it still flows today. You ask question from one stream, I answer from other, then you back your stream with answer. Before there is nothing for man in ordinary stream, but fishermen who knew nothing, so nothing could tell but their wiseacrings. You remember the two streams I write about [in *All and Everything*]. Difference between two streams is the difference between interpretation of events on earth. One make elephant from fly, the other make fly from elephant. Events have two explanations—one for mankind, one for me. My stream is initiate-ism."

"But there have been messengers like you."

Answers Gurdjieff: "Many such there are, even you have in America. For English and Americans they are something, but for me they are shut [in the] objective sense.... You wish believe in your Bible. Your Bible is one thing but mine is quite another. Nobody now believe in Christian thing—not with inner world, especially young ones."

AUGUST 1937. PARIS. A trip Gurdjieff takes to Vichy with Kanari, his brother Dimitri, and others gives a graphic illustration of what Uspenskii, Orage, Bennett, and other pupils must work with. Kanari works the windshield wipers, finds the roads and lights Gurdjieff's cigarettes. Four times Gurdjieff stops on the road but they make Vichy in less than five hours, arriving before ten o'clock on Friday evening. They can find no rooms, so they park by a curb. Gloomily, Dimitri goes to look for rooms. After visiting 18 of Vichy's many hotels, he finds lodging and at eleven o'clock they have dinner. Gurdjieff says he's caught cold in his left arm

and at lunch says he is poisoned by the food. Saturday, Gurdjieff tells them where to meet him but they cannot find him. It turns out he has given the wrong place, the wrong hour, or his watch stopped—whatever. Sunday, he tells Kanari to meet him in the café by the river. For two hours she waits. Finally, someone comes for her and leads her to a café in the middle of the park where Gurdjieff is. Monday, they drive 70 kilometers to picnic. Dimitri is in the back seat with indigestion, muttering "Jamais un peu de repos" (Never a bit of rest). They have with them only watermelon and Armagnac, so they stop many times for provisions. At Clermont-Ferrand Gurdjieff stops to pick up a Russian nurse and her little boy. They sit on the laps of Dimitri and the other two men in the back seat. The heat is intense but Gurdjieff, because of his arm and his cough, insists all the windows be kept closed. For an hour they search for the ideal picnic spot. Passing many wonderful places, Gurdjieff finds the perfect spot, a steep hill, so steep that no one can keep their balance. They sit on sharp rocks, holding onto all the food to keep it from rolling down hill. There is only one glass for everyone. The men tear the chicken apart with their bare hands, wiping their hands on their trousers. Ten minutes later Gurdjieff declares the picnic is over and they leave. Says Dimitri—"Just think, to eat a piece of bread we must come 70 kilometers and spend a thousand francs."

Later this same month Dimitri dies of cancer.

SEPTEMBER 5, 1937. PARIS. Gurdjieff leaves his apartment at rue Labie and moves into his brother's apartment at 6 rue des Colonels Rénard, in the Russian quarter.

SEPTEMBER 22, 1937. LONDON. J. B. Priestly's play *I Have Been Here Before* opens, marking the first time Uspenskii's ideas on time and recurrence are popularly portrayed on the stage. The main character is the mysterious Dr. Gortler, who intervenes to halt a series of fated misfortunes (if the other characters behave as they have in the past). Priestly acknowledges his debt to Uspenskii's *A New Model of the Universe*.

OCTOBER 4, 1937. LONDON. Uspenskii is asked at a meeting about whether or not the passage of the ideas into general life would be beneficial to humanity and also might help the school, as well. He answers:

"It will happen by itself. There is no need for us to worry about it. Ideas will spread, maybe in our lifetime and maybe after us. Most of these ideas will enter into scientific or philosophic language, but they will enter in the wrong form. There will be no right distinction between doing and happening, and many thoughts of ordinary thinking will be mixed with these ideas; so they will not be ideas we know, only words will be similar. If you don't understand this, you will lose in this way."

AUTUMN 1937. PARIS. Gurdjieff's lesbian group, the Rope, breaks up. Solita Solano becomes Gurdjieff's secretary.

MARCH 11-12, 1938. AUSTRIA. Austrians "welcome" German troops into their country.

DECEMBER 18, 1938. GERMANY. Only the Army has the power to depose Hitler. An insight into why it does not is given in the diary of General Freiherr von Fritsch, commander-in-chief of the Army, who on this day writes: "This man—Hitler—is Germany's destiny for good and for evil. If he now goes over the abyss, he will drag us all down with him. There is nothing we can do."

1939. LONDON. Aldous Huxley's novel *After Many A Summer Dies The Swan* appears. Uspenskii's followers are upset that a main character, Mr. Propter, is thought to be modeled on Uspenskii. Certainly Huxley's Mr. Propter speaks of many Work ideas in the book, such as the liberation from personality, the successive levels of mechanical laws, as well as man's three levels of existence: sub-human, human, and spirit. The first two levels are completely determined and void of God:

It is in their power to pass from the level of the absence of God to that of God's presence. Each member of the psychological swarm is determined; and so is the conduct of the total swarm. But beyond the swarm, and yet containing and interpenetrating it, lies eternity, ready and waiting to experience itself...let eternity experience itself, let God be sufficiently often present in the absence of human desires and feelings and preoccupations; the result will be a transformation of that life which must be lived, in the intervals, upon the human level.

Most interesting, perhaps, is Huxley's agreement with Gurdjieff that there is no "soul" as such. He writes:

Madness consists, for example, of thinking of oneself as a soul, a coherent and enduring human entity. But, between the animal below and the spirit above, there is nothing on the human level except a swarm of constellated impulses and sentiments and notions; a swarm brought together by the accidents of heredity and language; a swarm of incongruous and often contradictory thoughts and desires. Memory and the slowly changing body constitute a kind of spatio-temporal cage, within which the swarm is enclosed. To talk of it as though it were a coherent and enduring 'soul' is madness. On the strictly human level there is no such thing as a soul.

JUNE 1939. DOYLESTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA. With a world war imminent, but long suffering from abdominal pains<sup>14</sup> and an unarticulated sense of personal and professional failure, Jean Toomer with his wife Marjorie and his daughter Argie leave for India. "He thought," his wife recounts

"that maybe through the mystics he could find the answers." The journey will take nine months, much of that time spent in travel to and from India, and will cost five thousand dollars.

Describing their journey, his wife says: "We went here, we went there. Usually I stayed in our lodgings with Argie, but sometimes, if I went, Jean would start talking with somebody inside while we were left sitting out in that God-awful heat. And he would stay as long as it pleased him. It became a very unhappy experience."

Says Toomer: "It took India to bring me to my senses.... What hopes I went there with! India did not destroy them; she simply did not fulfill them."

SUMMER 1939. Madame Uspenskii is stricken with Parkinson's<sup>15</sup> disease. Gurdjieff contemplates a trip to England to help. "If possible I will come," he says. "But she must also make effort." Uspenskii procrastinates. As much as he might reminisce about Gurdjieff during his late night drinking parties, he does not want him in his life.

AUTUMN 1939. COLET GARDENS. In an effort to reach more people, Uspenskii sets up a new London headquarters at 46 Colet Gardens. It has a large lecture hall seating five hundred people, and the lecture program of the fledgling Historico-Psychological Society attracts audiences as large as one thousand people. But war soon intervenes....

AUGUST 23, 1939. MOSCOW AND BERLIN. Hitler and Stalin sign a non-aggression pact.

NOVEMBER 9, 1939. BERLIN. The anniversary of Hitler's failed putsch of 1923. Soon 200 synagogues are burned, Jewish stores looted and Jews beaten and killed. Henceforth, this night will be known as *Kristallnacht*.

SEPTEMBER 1, 1940. The Second World War begins. German troops pour across the Polish frontier.

1940. 6 RUE DES COLONELS RÉNARD. PARIS. American followers try to persuade Gurdjieff to go to America but he insists on staying in Paris. And so he does, closing the blinds and shuttering the windows of his apartment, only a few blocks from the Arc de Triumphe where Hitler's *Wermacht* will soon parade.

14. As a child of ten, Toomer experienced stomach ailments so intense he was confined to bed. In one of his autobiographies he says the ailments were "largely psychosomatic." His condition will worsen to a point where he can only stand or lie down, but not sit.

15. Reyner, in his *Ouspensky the Unsung Genius*, p.101, says that Madame Uspenskii had multiple sclerosis.

JUNE 14, 1940. PARIS. Germans capture the city. A large swastika is hoisted onto the Eiffel Tower. Later Hitler will arrive in a Mercedes and dictate terms of an unconditional surrender.

SEPTEMBER 6, 1940. LYNE PLACE. Uspenskii stands on the roof of Lyne Place looking toward London some twenty miles distant. The vast sky of night is entirely crimson. Searchlights sweep in long arcs through the night skies while streams of tracer bullets rise heavenward and huge explosions rumble and shake the earth. Over four million pounds of bombs fall onto the docks of London, starting fires that only time will put out. Hitler's night bombing of England had begun.

Uspenskii, obsessed with the idea that he must have lived this before, shakes his head, saying, "This I cannot remember, this I cannot remember."

It soon becomes clear that the demands of the war effort make large scale implementation of the Work impossible. Uspenskii also fears the success of Fascism and Communism, both of which he considers to be "criminal" parties dominated by Sudras.<sup>16</sup>

AUTUMN 1940. LYNE PLACE. Rodney Collin, his wife, Janet, and their three-year-old daughter, Chloe, move in. Uspenskii speaks of his decision to leave for America in January. Shortly after the Collins' arrival, Janet leaves for America with her daughter to prepare for Uspenskii's arrival.

OCTOBER 1940. PARIS. Madame de Salzmann formally presents her French group to Gurdjieff. Among the group are René Daumal, Philippe Lavastine, Henri and Henriette Tracol, and Pauline de Dampier. With the Germans patrolling the streets, readings of *All and Everything* and movements begin.

JANUARY 4, 1941. LYNE PLACE. Madame Uspenskii embarks for America. Uspenskii is soon to follow. He believes it will soon be impossible to continue the Work in England, as he believes Germany will win the war and this will be a prelude to Communism sweeping over Europe.

Learning of Uspenskii's plan to follow his wife, Bennett sees Uspenskii and asks three questions:

"Is my lack of progress due to lack of effort, or wrong effort, or is it due in part to there being some method or technique we do not know and have yet to find?"

16. In the Hindu caste system derived from the ancient Laws of Manu, Uspenskii says the Sudras, laborers, "are people without initiative or with wrong initiative, who must obey the will of others." Others are the three other castes: Brahmins, priests; Kshatriyas, warriors; and Vaisyas, merchants. See *New Model of the Universe*, p. 506. A further analysis of the caste system is given in Frithjof Schuon's *Castes and Races*, (Perennial Books, Ltd., 1959).

Replies Uspenskii: "It has nothing to do with methods. Your trouble is that you always make false starts. All your work consists of false starts. And if you keep returning to the starting point, how can you hope to make progress?"

Bennett then asks: "How do I stand in relation to your group here?"

"I can only consider the work at Lyne. The rest, so far as I am concerned, is dissolved. I have given my instructions for continuing the work at Lyne as long as possible. You and your wife can, of course, remain in contact with the work there."

"Have you any objection," inquires Bennett, "to my trying to write out the System as far as I can remember it?"

Answers Uspenskii: "In my opinion, writing is not useful. Mental recapitulation is better. In any case, the System cannot be written in ordinary form. If you do write, it can only be to convince yourself that it is impossible."

JANUARY 29, 1941. LIVERPOOL. Uspenskii embarks for America aboard the SS *Georgic*, the same ship that Madame had taken. Even in leaving Europe, symbolically, he cannot get away from the reminder of Georgi Gurdjieff.

Also aboard the ship is Rodney Collin.

For Bennett, Uspenskii's leaving was more than a physical separation.

"It is not a sharp break, or any diminution in my respect and deep gratitude towards him," he says. "He has taught me everything, and the contact with his work has had the supreme advantage for me of teaching me my own weakness and foolishness."

Nevertheless, Bennett resolves that he must in the future work independently and sets himself the task of writing all that he can remember of Gurdjieff's system.

SPRING 1941. MENDHAM. Nott arrives and finds Madame Uspenskii quite different from what he had experienced in England. "Here, by herself, away from Lyne Place, a refugee like ourselves," he says, "she has no need to surround herself with a protective facade. She is warm, sympathetic and understanding; a highly developed woman with inner power."

JUNE 21-22, 1941. Operation Barbarossa. German forces invade Russia. Within ten weeks they are at the outskirts of Leningrad.

JULY 1941. NEW YORK. Rodney Collin, who has joined British Security, and who had earlier been posted in Bermuda and then Mexico, arrives.

AUGUST 30, 1941. LENINGRAD. Germans begin a siege that will last 900 days.

SEPTEMBER 29, 1941. BERLIN. The Führer directs his generals "to wipe St Petersburg off the face of the earth."

DECEMBER 7, 1941. HAWAII. The Japanese attack Pearl Harbor.

DECEMBER 11, 1941. GERMANY. Adolf Hitler declares war on the United States.

1941. NEW YORK. Though Orage is seven years dead, the group still functions. Nott, who has come from England, arranges for Uspenskii to speak to the group at Muriel Draper's house on Madison Avenue. Uspenskii must have found Orage's students somewhat led off track, for as he will say years later—"I don't like to say this, but he [Orage] forgot many things and had to invent."

Among those attending is Fritz Peters, who in his early teens lived at the Prieuré. Peters had met Uspenskii there and considered him Gurdjieff's most objective critic.

At the meeting he asks:

"Why did you break with Gurdjieff and publicly disassociate yourself from the Gurdjieff work?"

Uspenskii smiles. "The answer is very simple," he says, "When I had found out that Gurdjieff was wrong I had to leave him."

Peters says, "I replied, with much greater feeling than I would have expected of myself, that I did not need to hear any more. It was a revelation to me to find that I was so fiercely loyal to Gurdjieff and to find that I was so positive that he could not have been 'wrong' about anything."

Like Peters, most of those attending find Uspenskii too coldly intellectual and lacking the emotional authority which they had come to expect from Gurdjieff and Orage.

Later, Nott assembles a smaller group, including some from the Orage group, to hear Uspenskii. A group is formed and is reinforced by a number of Uspenskii's English pupils, such as Lord John Pentland, his wife Lucy, and Christopher Fremantle.

C. Daly King, from the original Orage group and one of Orage's most loyal advocates, learns of Uspenskii's meetings. Still interested in the Work as a modern method for the development of man, King attends several meetings. A rigorous intellectual and scientist, holding a doctorate in psychology from Yale where he conducts research, King finds Uspenskii to be a "genuine gentleman in the exact sense." However, he also sees Uspenskii as an "incorrigible mystic, no matter how much or how successfully he may or may not have striven against that tendency after his meeting with and his instruction by Mr. Gurdjieff." Of their

discussion King says: "I found nothing of serious interest to me in his formulations and had no further contact with these groups."

Later, unable to agree with what he terms "The Ouspenskian Version" of the teaching and fearing Orage's presentation will be lost, King begins writing the teaching as taught by his mentor, which he titles *The Oragean Version*. Uspenskii's opinion of King is not recorded. As Uspenskii believes Orage "forgot many things and had to invent," he likely puts King in the same boat.

MAY 1942. LONDON. Bennett receives a message reminding him that no one is permitted to write anything about the System without Uspenskii's permission. It could not have come as a surprise. After Uspenskii's departure, Bennett decided to organize the teaching around the triads. He drafts a new chapter of his forthcoming book every week. He reads it to his group of thirty to forty people, then revises it in light of their questions and remarks. Bennett later publishes this as the second in his four volume *The Dramatic Universe*.

LATE 1942. MENDHAM, NEW JERSEY. An estate is purchased as a center for Uspenskii's activities. It is Franklin Farms in Mendham, New Jersey. There are rolling vistas of land with a large house of grey granite, once the residence of the governor of the state. Along the driveway leading to the farm's barns are empty silos and outbuildings, and decaying aviaries that had once caged ornamental birds.

Rodney Collin and his family move in and he commutes to and from his job with the British government in New York City. Collin finds himself exhausted from the commute to New York City and does not attend Uspenskii's meetings. One night he realizes that fatigue is not the problem. He jumps out of bed and goes to the kitchen where he finds Uspenskii alone drinking a glass of wine.

"Why am I afraid of you?" Collin shouts.

Uspenskii looks at him calmly and answers, "Why do you say I?"

The answer makes a profound effect on Collin. Thereafter he spends all his free time with Uspenskii.

Slowly, the pattern of life at Lyne Place is now reproduced at Mendham. Groups are formed and students given farmwork and housework. Madame Uspenskii, now crippled and walking with a cane, spends more and more of her time in bed but still manages to direct work activities. For de Ropp and many others, including Lord John Pentland, Madame Uspenskii became the teacher, working drastically, often painfully, on a student's emotional center. As Lord Pentland relates, "She was regarded by all as an independent source of the teaching... For many of us, she was the senior teacher. Her instruction, tempered in the hard

school of revolutionary Russia, at the kitchen of Gurdjieff's Institute [at the Prieuré] was direct, quite free from moralization."

Another of her pupils, who had also met Gurdjieff, says:

I can still feel the sensation that crept along my spine when I heard Madame approaching, her cane announcing her as she came closer and closer to the terrace of the dining room. Although small in stature, she looked and towered above us all through the sheer strength and poise that radiated from her presence. When she reached the long narrow tables at which we sat, everyone remained motionless, eyes glued to one spot, simultaneously wishing to draw her attention and yet to become invisible to her.

Uspenskii, for his part, only visits Mendham occasionally, spending most of his time in New York. It is de Ropp's opinion that by this time "Uspenskii was no longer a teacher. He had lost his power and wrecked his health by indulgence in two poisons, alcohol and nostalgia." He withdrew more and more into himself, becoming hypersensitive, and perhaps paranoid. "He was apt," says de Ropp, "at the slightest provocation to throw people out of the Work."

Uspenskii revises six introductory lectures which he had published in England shortly before he left. These were later published in 1950 as *The Psychology of Man's Possible Evolution*.

1943. MENDHAM. At sixty-five, Uspenskii's health begins to decline. He had begun to drink heavily. This aggravates a kidney problem and saps his strength. He understands that he shouldn't drink but says it is the only thing he can do to relieve his boredom.

To the end, he never gives any indication that the years without Gurdjieff have brought him to reevaluate his former teacher and their relationship. Frank Pinder felt "Uspenskii knew the theory, better than anyone possibly—he had the knowledge, but he did not understand. Denis Saurat, a professor of French literature at Kings College, believes that "Uspenskii could not submit to the pressure Gurdjieff brought to bear on him to break down his particular kind of vanity."

SEPTEMBER 9, 1943. PARIS. During a meeting at Gurdjieff's apartment, someone says: "You said once that even a cow can work alone."

"Excuse me," interrupts Gurdjieff, "I did not say cow. I said donkey. A cow is a parasite—it only gives milk. The donkey works."

1944. MENDHAM. Uspenskii speaks about the devil, saying that while he is not conscious, he is intelligent. "In no period can he have more power than in this," he says. "Now he is in full bloom. Only through man's help can the devil act. Because man has the possibility of evolution

[becoming conscious] the devil can stop him by creating conditions and obstacles against man's evolution."

JANUARY 27, 1944. LENINGRAD. The German blockade of St. Petersburg—what was once Uspenskii's beloved city—ends. The city has no pigeons and rats. Without food, people had to eat whatever was available in order to live. There are reports, too, of cannibalism. Of its three million inhabitants, it is estimated that a million to a million-and-a-half people have died, mostly of starvation.

JUNE 6, 1944. NORMANDY, FRANCE. D-Day landing by Allies.

JULY 20, 1944. WOLFSSCHANZE, EAST PRUSSIA. Colonel Klaus von Stauffenberg plants a bomb in a briefcase at Hitler's headquarters. The bomb explodes but Hitler escapes serious injury.

SPRING 1945. LONDON. Bennett receives a letter from Uspenskii's London solicitor calling him "a charlatan and a thief" and asking for the return of all of Uspenskii's material, including his lectures. A letter is also sent to Lyne Place instructing Uspenskii's pupils to break off all relations with Bennett and not to communicate with him on any subject.

Bennett, taking things into his own hands, has been giving public lectures on Gurdjieff's system and is just embarking on a new series of lectures. Some Americans had joined his group and he had given them letters of introduction to Uspenskii. The Americans think Bennett's lectures are copied from Uspenskii's pre-war lectures.

Thinks Bennett: "They must have given him very garbled accounts of what I was doing."

Bennett reads the solicitor's letter to his group and then says they can decide either to stay with him or join Uspenskii's group and "never see me again."

APRIL 30, 1945. HITLER'S BUNKER. BERLIN. With Russian troops only a block away, Adolf Hitler marries his mistress, Eva Braun, then he a last testament blaming international Jewry and the German General Staff for Germany's defeat. Then Hitler shoots himself in the mouth. Eva Braun takes poison.

MAY 7, 1945. REIMS, FRANCE. Germany unconditionally surrenders.

MAY 1945. MENDHAM. The World War concluded, Rodney Collin leaves government service to devote all his time to Uspenskii, driving him to and from meetings in New York and spending long evenings with him in his study. Says Collin: "It struck me very much how Uspenskii, in speaking about his parents, relations or old friends, always recalled their

possibilities, their best sides, what they might become, and never recalled anything negative or unpleasant.”

Besides people, a frequent subject of discussion is the period of dimensions in time and the idea of different times. “For me,” says Collin, “the key to the understanding of this idea up to a certain point lies in Uspenskii’s theory of six dimensions—the first, second and third [dimensions] are clearly the length, breadth and thickness of space; the fourth is the line of time that we recognize, the line of individual life; the fifth is infinite repetition of this life and all it contains—the ‘eternal now’; the sixth must be the dimension in which all exists everywhere, all possibilities are realized, and all is one. The fourth dimension is ‘time,’ the fifth ‘eternity,’ but what shall we call the sixth? For us it is Divinity itself.”

AUGUST 6, 1945. JAPAN. The United States drops the atomic bomb on Hiroshima.

LATE SUMMER 1945. 6 RUE DES COLONELS RÉNARD. PARIS. Fritz Peters, now thirty-one years old, visits Gurdjieff. Peters had been drafted into the American army and, though behind the lines in a secretarial job, the horror of the war had thrown him into a deep depression. Many narrow escapes—such as, when a group he was with at Torquay on the southern English coast was suddenly strafed by six German fighters and many were killed—put him in a highly nervous state. Faced with hospitalization, Peters convinces a general to give him a pass to go to Paris. When he left for Paris he had not slept in several days, had no appetite and had lost a great deal of weight. He was, he says, “very close to what I would have to call a form of madness.” He has no idea of how to find Gurdjieff but somehow manages to track him down. Gurdjieff is not home when Peters arrives at his apartment and so he waits inside the entrance. After about an hour he hears the sound of a cane tapping on the sidewalk. Presently, Gurdjieff appears and walks up to him. There is no sign of recognition. Peters says his name. Gurdjieff stares at him for a second, then drops his cane and cries out in a loud voice:

“My son!,” and embraces him. “Don’t talk, you are sick,” Gurdjieff tells him and leads him up the stairs to his second floor apartment.

Gurdjieff leads Peters down the hall to a dark bedroom, tells him to lie down and says, “This is your room, for as long as you need it.”

Peters lies down but begins to cry uncontrollably, then his head pounds. He gets up and goes to the kitchen where he finds Gurdjieff, who looks alarmed when he sees him. Peters says he wants some aspirin.

Gurdjieff shakes his head, “No medicine. I give you coffee. Drink as hot as you can.”

Drinking the coffee Gurdjieff has made and served him, Peters looks at Gurdjieff standing in front of the refrigerator, observing him. Peters suddenly realizes that Gurdjieff looks “incredibly weary—I have never seen anyone look so tired.”

Suddenly Peters, slumped over the table, sipping the coffee, becomes aware of an energy rising up within him and he straightens up, staring at Gurdjieff.

“It was as if a violent, electric blue light emanated from him and entered me,” says Peters.

All Peters’ fatigue drains from his body. He has never felt better in his life. But as his body is renewed, Gurdjieff’s body slumps and his massive face turns grey. It is as if Gurdjieff himself, says Peters, “was being drained of life.”

“You all right now—watch food on stove—I must go,” says Gurdjieff urgently.

In fifteen minutes or so Gurdjieff returns, looking, says Peters, “like a young man again, alert, smiling, sly and full of good spirits.”

Staying at Gurdjieff’s apartment, Peters notices that many old and destitute people visit Gurdjieff, who feeds them and gives them gifts or money. One day as he and Gurdjieff drink coffee, Gurdjieff looks at him reflectively and says: “I play many roles in life...this part of my destiny. You think of me as teacher, but in reality, *I also your father...father in many ways you not understand.* I also ‘teacher of dancing,’ and have many businesses: you not know that I own company which make false eyelashes and also have very good business selling rugs. This way I make money for self and for family. Money I ‘shear’ from disciples is for work. But other money I make for my family. My family very big, as you see—because this kind old people who come every day to my house, are, also, family. They my family because have no other family.” [Author’s italics]

AUTUMN 1945. 6 RUE DES COLONELS RÉNARD. PARIS. Peters wangles another pass from the army, returning to Paris to see Gurdjieff. The two discuss many things and laugh a lot together. The day Peters is to leave, Gurdjieff, seventy three years old now, tells him he is very tired and that when he finishes *The Third Series*, “my work will be done. So now I can die, because my task in life is coming to an end.” He then looks at Peters gravely, saying this also means that he can do nothing more for him.

“So when you get out of army,” Gurdjieff says, “do not come back here but go home where you belong and where you will find much work for self, and many experiences.”

They have lunch that day at Gurdjieff’s apartment with some twenty other students. Many stories are told and there is much laughter. But at the end of lunch Gurdjieff’s mood changes suddenly and he looks very

ill. He rises and supports himself by leaning on a chair. He then raises one arm and makes a large sweeping gesture around the room. The act galvanizes everyone's attention.

"Must make announcement," he says dramatically in English. "My last book is now finished, except for work with editor."

He pauses...taking in every person individually, as if he is weighing them.

"This mean," he continues, "my work is through—finished. Mean at last I can die..." Again a pause, the silence in the room deafening. "...but not just because book is finished. In life is only necessary for man to find one person to whom can give accumulation of learning in life. When find such receptacle then is possible die."

He gives a kind smile and continues: "So now two good things happen for me. I finish work and I also find one person to whom can give results my life's work."

Once more he raises his arm, this time with the index finger extended. Slowly the arm arcs about the room, the outstretched finger pointing at one person then another.

When the finger points at Fritz Peters, the arm stops.

The silence, the tension, in the room is immense.

Gurdjieff and Peters look at one another fixedly...

Finally, Gurdjieff drops his arm and leaves the room.

Momentarily, everyone seems transfixed. Peters finally breaks the silence by walking across the room. At the doorway he is stopped by one of the women instructors. She grabs his arm tightly and looks at him with a malevolent sneering smile.

"You will never learn, will you?" she says.

Peters pulls his arm away. "What does that mean?"

She laughs.

"How does it feel to be chosen?" she demands. "From the look on your face, I can tell you exactly what you are feeling. He pointed at you, didn't he? And now—with your colossal ego—you march out of the room...the triumphant successor."

Peters returns her smile.

"Your guess is as good as mine," he replies and leaves the apartment.

Peters, swamped with questions and doubts about what Gurdjieff had said, goes to see him one last time. The war in Europe is now over. Shortly after his previous visit America drops another atomic bomb on Japan.

Peters knocks at the door of Gurdjieff's apartment. He answers, looking sleepy and giving Peters a cold look.

"Already," Gurdjieff says, "I tell you good-bye, and already I think you in America. Why you come?"

Peters says he is on his way to America and has just come to say good-bye.

Gurdjieff, without hostility, says: "Cannot say good-bye again—this already done."

He gives Peters a final, impersonal handshake.

Peters turns to leave but Gurdjieff stops him with a gesture, saying sharply, with a smile on his face—"Americans drop bomb on Japan, yes?"

Peters nods.

"What you think of your America now?"

Peters goes to reply but Gurdjieff closes the door, gently, in his face.

1945. MENDHAM. Nott sees Uspenskii often. The two sit alone as they had in England, talking and drinking. Though Uspenskii has become what Nott describes as "a sick man, suffering from the weaknesses and lawful infirmities of old age, as well as from some specific disease [kidneys]," he finds Uspenskii mixing and drinking concoctions that were too powerful for him.

"You must have a stomach of iron!" exclaims Nott, taking a sip. "It's too strong for me."

"It's the only thing," says Uspenskii, "that relieves the boredom and depression that comes over me at times."

Long ago in *Tertium Organum*, Uspenskii had written about what he called the secret of the power of alcohol over human souls. "Alcohol," he wrote, "produces the illusion of communion of souls and stimulates fantasy simultaneously in two or more people."

MENDHAM. The effects of Uspenskii's long years of self-willed isolation from Gurdjieff, the failure to contact a school, nostalgia for the Russia of his youth, and the increasing amounts of alcohol have all taken their toll.

His secretary and pupil, Marie Seton, gives an alarming picture of Uspenskii in his final days in America. After lectures, she says, Uspenskii would ask a few of the group to go out with him to supper. But 'the party' began to break up later and later.

Uspenskii began to show a greater disinclination to leave the restaurant, she says. "The others would go and he would ask me to stay on. With the others gone he would have another drink and another and yet another, though he never became drunk; or at least, did not show it. One, two, three, four in the morning and still he would urge me to stay longer, and hour after hour he would talk—extremely interesting—about his homeland.

He instructed me to cancel the lecture. Uspenskii then asked me to go out to dinner. I felt the time had come when I must ask him for an explanation as to how he could consider that dinner justified the sudden cancellation of a lecture. Where did such action fit into

the System, and also where did his violent temper towards some people fit in?

'They are such fools,' Uspenskii said. 'I've lost control of my temper.'

'But surely, if we are to try to control our negative emotions, we cannot learn from you, if you can't control yours,' I said.

Uspenskii answered bluntly: "I took over the leadership to save the System. But I took it over before I had gained enough control over myself. I was not ready. I have lost control over myself. It is a long time since I could control my state of mind."

'Why don't you give up the lectures and try to gain control over yourself again?' I asked.

'The System has become a profession with me,' Uspenskii answered.

One day he said something that was somehow more revealing than anything else as to the way a man becomes entangled in a role, or a vocation.

'In Russia,' he said, 'there used to be a thousand or two thousand people at my lectures. Here there are a hundred—too few.'

One day he said: 'I have become dependent on the comfort, the luxury. I can't give it up.'

Here was a man who was at heart honest; a man who was not by any means devoid of compassion for people. But adulation and comfort and the dearth of friends and the terror of a period of war had sapped his will to keep theory and practice united.

If a man of the undeniable qualities of Uspenskii can go off the track and become absorbed in egotism and dependent on easy living, and become callous as to the effects on himself and on others, what of the gurus who are less basically honest?

When I went to the country house for practical work, I began to notice what I had not noticed in England: that the people who were the 'old members' and had been living under Madame's direction were drab in clothes, joyless, and strangely closed-up people with one another. All were fearful of her displeasure...I began to see the pursuit of self-knowledge had to, as it seemed, eliminate an atmosphere of warmth between people and something that might be described as a lack of lovingness.

SUMMER 1946. Uspenskii, ill with a kidney disease<sup>17</sup> but refusing to submit to treatment, gives his last New York lectures. At the end of the final lecture he announces to his sixty-some followers that he is returning to England.

1947. SPANDAU PRISON. BERLIN. Albert Speer, sentenced to ten years in prison, writes in his diary: "The catastrophe of this war has proved the

17. Aristotle held that the kidneys were seat of the soul.

sensitivity of the system of modern civilization evolved in the course of centuries. Now we know that we do not live in an earthquake-proof structure. The build-up of negative impulses, each reinforcing the other, can inexorably shake to pieces the complicated apparatus of the modern world. There is no halting this process by will alone. The danger is that the automatism of progress will depersonalize man further and withdraw more and more of his self-responsibility."<sup>18</sup>

JANUARY 18, 1947. MENDHAM. Against doctor's orders and pleas of his wife, Uspenskii returns to England. His skin is pale, his face flabby, from lack of exercise and a chronic kidney condition; Uspenskii is, physically, much older than his sixty-eight years of age. De Ropp, Collin and others at Mendham watch as Uspenskii slowly walks towards a waiting car. The England that Uspenskii will return to will be for weeks under heavy snow and cold. Electricity will be restricted and food rationed.

FEBRUARY 24, 1947. COLET GARDENS. Uspenskii holds the first of what will be six meetings at Colet Gardens. During the long years of his absence, Dr. Francis Roles and his followers faithfully continued to meet and study the System as Uspenskii had constituted it. The atmosphere is tense with expectation. Presently, Uspenskii appears. He is noticeably older looking. Using a cane, every movement obviously a painful effort, he mounts the two steps to the platform. He takes his seat as he had done since his first lecture in England twenty-six years before. With an impassive glance he looks out over the audience. The questions begin....

He is asked: "Do you wish us to continue with the program you gave us in 1940?"

"Program?" Uspenskii replies. "I don't know program. Which program?"

"Program which you gave in 1940."

"No, I don't remember," says Uspenskii.

Later in the meeting the subject is re-explored.

"We have been trying to follow out the teaching you gave us years ago," someone says.

Declares Uspenskii, "I gave no teaching."

"You told us certain things to help us."

"You misunderstand."

"Where can we begin to work now?"

"I will see what you want to know and where you want to begin," Uspenskii says, "and then we will see first step, and perhaps we will find

18. As early as 1916 Gurdjieff warned against a growth of automatism and personality. "Contemporary culture," he declared, "requires automaton....Man is becoming a willing slave. He no longer needs chains. He begins to grow fond of his slavery, to be proud of it. And this is the most terrible thing that can happen to a man." *Search*, p. 309.

second step. We don't know first step, that is the question. That you must remember."

MARCH 12, 1947. COLET GARDENS. At this meeting someone asks Uspenskii if he has abandoned the system.

"I never taught system," Uspenskii says.

"What are you going to try to teach us now?"

"That we may see."

Time and again, Uspenskii returns the question to the questioner, saying either he does not know or does not understand. His answers are short, simple. He urges people to make attempts for themselves. But some questions he does answer.

"Is there anything one can do at any given moment now to make sure that one will remember that moment later?" he is asked.

Replies Uspenskii, "No, we have nothing of that kind—no help in that way. Each one must find chief thing for himself—why one cannot remember."

"I believe that when I want something I only want it because I am selfish and possessive," someone asks. "I need an aim which is outside myself."

"Right. Very good."

"How can I make my will come into action as quickly as my desire?"

"Very good—we may see something from that."

MARCH 12, 1947. COLET GARDENS. At this meeting, Uspenskii is asked, "You said that many of our questions do not refer to you."

"Yes," answers Uspenskii, "quite right."

"Is it because there is no understanding of a purpose other than one's own small purpose?"

"I don't even see small purpose."

"I mean that the questions are based on the inevitable point of view—the personal one—and is it that they lack any idea of a larger purpose? Your purpose, or possible purpose for everyone here?"

Uspenskii: "Well? Further."

Finally, comes this exchange:

"Can we learn to be more humble?"

Says Uspenskii, "I never was humble myself, and I don't know how I can."

APRIL 1947. MENDHAM. Rodney Collin leaves for England just before Easter to be with Uspenskii. He will spend all summer and autumn with his teacher.

MAY 21, 1947. COLET GARDENS. At this meeting the question of memory is introduced by Dr. Roles.

"People who have been trying to do things," Dr. Roles says, "tell me that they simply don't remember to go on with it. They forget every minute. They do it once a day. Is it possible to start by trying to improve memory in some way?"

"Yes, if it is what I call memory," answers Uspenskii. He adds: "There are many misunderstandings about this."

What Uspenskii is most likely referring to in regard to memory can be found in Rodney Collin's book *The Theory of Eternal Life*. Collin writes that what we commonly understand can only refer to the denser worlds in which "perception travels through time slowly enough to yield a sense of past, present and future." But in the higher worlds there can be no memory. This is "because everything is *now* and everything known."

Later Collin writes: "For familiar levels of consciousness and for the impulses of memory arising from them death is an *absolute insulator*. To pass through death in the next life memory would have to be of a far greater force, that is, it would have to arise from an immensely higher intensity of consciousness than any we ordinarily know."

JUNE 18, 1947. COLET GARDENS. This is the last time Uspenskii appears in public. At this meeting he is asked:

"I think that what I have learned from these meetings is that I know even less than I thought I did. Is that a desirable result?"

Uspenskii, giving no ground, replies—"Sometimes it may be."

Many were baffled and bewildered by Uspenskii, among them the Harley Street surgeon, Kenneth Walker. He sees Uspenskii as a "very deeply disappointed man... Something had gone wrong and somebody had failed, but who it was that had failed was never very clear to me."

Others see it differently. Says Rodney Collin:

At Uspenskii's last meetings at Colet Gardens, he reached the deepest level [of sincerity] I ever met in a living man." Said another: "Uspenskii seemed very tired at first but I have noticed before how he seems to gain energy as the evening goes on. There were many questions and many answers, but it was from the emotional feeling that I gained the answers and not from the words. He seemed to be indicating that each must find for himself the particular personal difficulty that prevents remembering. I also felt that he conveyed that remembering was the whole thing and that with that everything else was added in the degree in which one could remember. I also felt that it was a very simple thing and that we could not be simple."

Of Uspenskii's return to England, Collin says: "He was a different man. So much of the vigorous, whimsical, brilliant personality, which his friends had known and enjoyed for so many years, had been left behind,

that many meeting him again were shocked, baffled, or else were given a quite new understanding of what was possible in the way of development.... He spoke to them in a new way. He said that he abandoned the system. He asked them what they wanted, and said that only from that could they begin on the way of self-remembering and consciousness." Those who understood the way that Uspenskii was now showing, he says, "realized that in the way of development true knowledge must first be acquired and then abandoned. That exactly what makes possible the opening of one door may make impossible the opening of the next."

SUMMER 1947. LYNE PLACE. After the meetings at Colet Gardens Uspenskii retired to his country home. Concluding that a new start could not be made in England, he instructs Collin and others to prepare for his return to America that autumn. He withdraws from life, sees very few people, and rarely speaks. But his silence is alive.<sup>19</sup>

Says Collin: "He would have two or three people sit with him, not doing anything, just sitting, smoking, occasionally making a remark, drinking a glass of wine, for hours on end. At first it was very difficult—one racked one's brains for what to say, how to start a conversation, thoughts of all kinds of imaginary duties elsewhere. Many people could not bear it. But after a while, these became the most interesting times of all. One began to feel—everything is possible in *this* moment."

When Uspenskii does speak, the topic is often of eternal recurrence. Says Collin, "Uspenskii never worked for the moment. It might even be said that he did not work for time—he worked only for recurrence."

Uspenskii is emphatic in his declaration that *Fragments of an Unknown Teaching* (later retitled by its publisher, *In Search of the Miraculous*) is not to be published. He does, however, retitle his 1915 novel *Kinemadrama* as *The Strange Life of Ivan Osokin*. The book is published in English before he dies.

SEPTEMBER 4, 1947. SOUTHAMPTON. Collin drives to the dock and puts Uspenskii's luggage on board a ship bound for America. A few hours before its departure, however, Uspenskii arrives. He has realized, perhaps, that to return to America is futile and too passive, for he tells Collin to unload his luggage. "I am not going to America *this time*," he says. [Author's italics]

To Collin, the experience "was like the 'stop' exercise on the scale of the whole Work. A stop was made in many lives, everyone's personal

19. Perhaps this reminded Uspenskii of the time when he visited Gurdjieff's small Moscow apartment on the Bolshaia Dmitrovka. Here, says Uspenskii, Gurdjieff's pupils "were not afraid to keep silent. This alone was something unusual. They came, sat down, smoked, they often did not speak a single word for hours. And there was nothing oppressive or unpleasant in this silence...." *Search*, p. 271.

plans were turned upside down, and a space made in the momentum of time where something quite new could be done. Then a most extraordinary and indescribable time began...."

SEPTEMBER 1947. LYNE PLACE. In what will be the final month of his life, though weak and sick of body, Uspenskii wills himself to make the super efforts needed to increase his vibration. Watching Uspenskii staying up day and night, demanding more and more impossible tasks of his body, it seems to Collin that his teacher is rising "in a crescendo of effort to meet the moment of death."

To impress familiar locations on his memory, Uspenskii has Collin drive him all over the south of England to places he had known, such as his former flat at Gwendwr Road, the house at Gadsden, and to Alley Cottage, Maurice Nicoll's old seaside cottage in Sussex. These excursions often last throughout the night, Uspenskii sitting silently in the back seat, always in the company of his beloved cats.

Says Collin: "When almost unable to set one foot before the other he would make his dying body walk step by step for an hour at a time through the rough lanes; force it to rise in the small hours, dress, descend and climb long flights of stairs; turn night into day; and require of his companions in order to remain with him, such feats of endurance as they in full possession of health and strength were scarcely able to accomplish."

One night not long before his death Uspenskii, having spent the whole night forcing his body to stay awake, says to Collin—"Now do you understand that things come right by themselves?"

"At that moment," says Collin, "I saw clearly that if we really understood that everything is done by effort, all our life would be on another basis. We would not be able to hope.... We, ourselves, have to develop our own will up to the highest possible point; that is, the power of putting into practice what we know."

In these last months Uspenskii communicates his ideas telepathically. Finally, one of his attendants, fearing that her imagination might overrun her, asks that he speak audibly. He did as she asked. Increasingly, many people at Lyne Place begin to have a sense of the miraculous taking place. (Later, Rodney Collin will write about this in an account he entitles *Last Remembrances of a Magician*.)

The coming of death creates an intensity that gives to the so-called ordinary occurrences of life a dimension and significance not usually seen. Sitting with Uspenskii at the dinner table, Rodney Collin watches him crumbling a bread roll on the cloth while under the table a cat ate the crumbs. As Uspenskii's love of cats was well known, Collin realizes the animal could have jumped on the table and Uspenskii would have

given him the whole roll. He watches the cat eat in the peculiar way well-fed cats have who will eat things they find for themselves but to which, if offered in a dish, they would pay no notice.

OCTOBER 2, 1947. LYNE PLACE. At dawn Uspenskii dies in Rodney Collin's arms.

After his teacher's body is taken away for burial, Collin returns to the bedroom where Uspenskii had died and locks himself in. There he remains for six days heeding no knocks or calls. Then a bell is heard in the kitchen, the same one that Uspenskii was accustomed to ringing. Collin's wife Janet enters the bedroom and finds her husband on Uspenskii's bed, emaciated, dirty, unshaven, his legs in a half-lotus position, looking as though he had been through a tremendous traumatic experience. During this vigil he had taken neither food nor drink. He believes he has been in telepathic communication with his teacher who has given him the knowledge which he will write about in *The Theory of Eternal Life*.

For Robert de Ropp, "Uspenskii, during the last phase of his life in America, had not lived like a Warrior [but] he certainly died like one."

Just a fortnight before his death, Uspenskii had said to a few friends who were with him: "You must start again. You must make a new beginning. You must reconstruct everything for yourselves—from the very beginning." This, Collin feels is "the true meaning of 'abandoning the system.'" As Uspenskii's use of English was imperfect, Collin believes what Uspenskii meant to say was "reconstructing everything *in* oneself (instead of *for* oneself)." Thus, each student had to both create in themselves anew the understanding which the system had made possible and achieve its aim of permanently overcoming the false personality and acquiring a new level of consciousness.

Over the years, Rodney Collin has grown quite close to Uspenskii, who seemed to regard the young man like a son. There appears to be what might be a "heart connection" between the student and teacher. "Uspenskii," he says, "never worked for the moment. It might even be said that he did not work for time—he worked only for recurrence."

Says Bennett upon hearing of Uspenskii's death: "Throughout the day I felt a great love towards him, such as I had never known while he was alive. Nevertheless, I was strongly aware of the difference between death after a long life on the earth and a premature departure. Uspenskii's potentialities had been brought into time, and they had undergone an irreversible transformation. There was something that I could not under-

stand and should not try to understand. A great cycle of my own life which had lasted twenty-seven years had closed. I felt love and gratitude towards Uspenskii, but I felt no nearer to him than I had before."

Years before his death, Uspenskii had told Bennett—who was concerned that business ventures would keep him away from meetings for months, if not years—of a Russian fairy tale:

A knight sets out on a great adventure. He arrives at a place where the road divides into three. Unable to decide which to choose, the knight sees an old man, who tells him that if he goes to the right he will lose his horse, to the left he will lose himself; while if he takes the road in the center, he will lose both himself and his horse. The knight reasons with himself that a knight without a horse is helpless, and a horse without a knight is useless, so he might as well risk losing both. He chooses the middle path, and after desperate adventures, in which the old man's prophecy is fulfilled, he finally reaches his goal.

Uspenskii told Bennett, "You are now in that position. But I may as well tell you that if the knight had chosen either of the other two paths, it would have been the same in the end. Only it was necessary that he should persist and never give up. That is the only condition."

Like the Russian knight, Pyotr Demianovich Uspenskii had chosen his solitary path and, however low he went, he never gave up and in the eyes of many of his students he reached his goal.

At Uspenskii's death, Gurdjieff's students in Paris, New York, and London number about 200. Uspenskii's students in London alone number some 1,000. Madame Uspenskii tells her husband's students that Gurdjieff is alive in Paris and to go to see him. More than half, believing what Uspenskii had told them—that Gurdjieff had forsaken the system after Essentuki—do not go. Dr. Francis Roles becomes the leader of the Uspenskii people in England.<sup>20</sup> Others follow Rodney Collin.

Says Rodney Collin: "I believe that Gurdjieff and Uspenskii were the two chosen agents of at least one stage of a new revelation. They were partners and complements, chosen because they represented and could transmit opposite aspects of the same truth. Two poles have to be separated for electric current to jump between them and make light. This was the reason for the separation of Gurdjieff and Uspenskii—it was by

20. Later, Dr. Roles will link up his people with Alan McLaren's School of Economic Science, which stresses an Indian approach. In the 1960s McLaren and Roles consider turning the school over to the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi and the transcendental meditation movement. For an informative look at these days, see Joyce Collin-Smith's *Call No Man Master* (Gateway, 1988). She also recounts her visit in Mexico City with her brother-in-law, Rodney Collin.

mutual agreement, to create a field of tension in which important preparations could be made.”

A requiem service is held for Pyotr Demianovich Uspenskii in the Russian Church at Pimlico.

The Russian “Service for the Dead” concludes:

Give rest eternal in the blessed falling asleep, O Lord,  
to the soul thy servant departed this life,  
and make his memory eternal.  
Memory eternal!  
Memory eternal!  
Memory eternal!

The body is buried in the courtyard of Lyne Church.

1948. TLALPAM. Following Uspenskii’s death, Rodney Collin appeared to a number of people to have come to a new level of being and authority. Now he and his family and followers arrive in Mexico and buy an old hacienda on the outskirts of Mexico City. He also buys land in the hills and begins to build an planetarium. Thus the Uspenskii version of the Work is planted in the ancient world of the Aztecs and Teotihuacans.

JANUARY 1948. ENGLAND. Cecil Lewis, an airman, author and co-founder of the British Broadcasting Company, had become a student of John Bennett’s. With the death of Uspenskii and Gurdjieff believed to be dead, Lewis says that “He, Bennett, alone remained as the custodian of these tremendous possibilities, which were Gurdjieff’s legacy to the world. How could we preserve them for posterity?”

Believing the international situation to be unstable enough that a third world war might break out and the teaching be lost, Bennett’s solution was to establish the teaching in a safe haven. Says Lewis: “With practically no further investigation...Bennett swept us all off our feet by deciding that something must be done at once. He suggested that South Africa was our best choice.”

Presently, Bennett and Cecil Lewis and his wife Olga, with a few others fly in a converted Lancaster bomber 6,000 miles to South Africa. The purpose of the trip: to scout feasible sites to set up the teaching.

Eastern Transvaal is finally chosen. The site, says Lewis, “is in a magnificent lonely valley, unspoiled by any ‘civilization’ and complete with river and hundred-foot waterfall.” The idea is to prepare a commune for some two hundred people.

Bennett, however, begins to have second thoughts. He prays for guidance. Deep into the night he says he becomes aware of a Presence that tells him: “You are not meant to stay in Africa. Your place is in London.

Trouble will come; not as you imagine, but differently, and you have to be in the midst of it. There is no need for Noah’s Ark, for this time there will be no flood. The task before you is quite different from what you suppose.”

Later, Bennett sees South Africa’s Prime Minister, Field Marshall Jan Smuts, who tells him: “You think that if European civilization is destroyed, something can still be preserved. I do not believe this. Europe is still, and for at least a century will continue to be, the bearer of the hopes of the human race...There is nothing like it in the rest of the world...The crisis in human affairs, as I see it, consists in the premature acquisition by mankind of powers which it cannot use wisely. But this crisis cannot be solved by running away from it. If you have understood the situation a little better than others, then your place is at home. Go back and preach the supreme importance of our European heritage.”

Bennett returns to London and the Lewis’, and a handful of others stay to build the commune.

1948. MENDHAM. Bennett visits Madame Uspenskii. He had tried to find Gurdjieff in Paris, but without success. He thinks either Gurdjieff had died or gone mad. “Gurdjieff is not mad. He has never been mad,” Madame Uspenskii tells Bennett. “He is living in Paris now,” Madame declares. “Why don’t you go to him?”

Earlier she had also told her more mature students, like Lord John Pentland and Christopher Fremantle,<sup>21</sup> that Gurdjieff is alive—“Hurry, don’t waste a moment. Go to him.”

1948. ENGLAND. Maurice Nicoll is told that Gurdjieff is living in Paris, but he shows no interest in seeing his former teacher. Perhaps he has heard that Gurdjieff, in speaking to those who have gone to see him, has accused Uspenskii and him of “stealing his teaching.”

1948. 6 RUE DES COLONELS RÉNARD. Sometime after the war Gurdjieff receives another visitor, Jesse Orage. Everyone is already eating lunch after a short conversation, Gurdjieff says to her:

“Jesse, you have my plate, my dinner.”

“No, I’ve had it,” she replies.<sup>22</sup>

Gurdjieff then begins to speak about a certain man who knew everything but lacked “the simple understanding...He tried for such and was too intelligent to grasp it.”

Jesse begins to cry.

21. Christopher Fremantle would later play a significant role in helping to establish the Work in Mexico and later America. See his book *On Attention* (Indications Press, 1993).

22. An interesting reply, given what has happened between her, Gurdjieff, and Orage.

Gurdjieff never takes his eyes off her.

1948. NEW YORK. Jean Toomer meets Gurdjieff. After the meeting Toomer writes: "I do not really know myself, who I am, my selfhood, my spiritual identity, or what I am. I have some information about it, but also some misinformation, some understanding, but much illusion. Real knowledge, real recognition, realization? No. What are my complex motivations? What is my aim, assuming that I have but one aim? I do not really know my wife, my child, my closest friends. I do not really know anyone or anything."<sup>23</sup>

AUGUST 8, 1948. ENGLAND. Bennett writes to Cecil Lewis in South Africa: "I am writing this on the eve of our journey into the unknown. At this time tomorrow Polly and I will be in Paris and we shall see G on Friday... Today, I feel like a new boy creeping timidly into the Great Hall of some ancient school—where even the other boys seem to be supermen and all about is a mystery. Somehow I cannot bring myself to realize that, at last, I have come to the possibility of real guidance and help... I will write you from Paris.

"We think of you battling with Nature in the distant South and we here struggling to keep our minds clear..."

AUGUST 1948. 6 RUE DES COLONELS RÉNARD. It is twenty-five years to the month when fifty-one-year-old John Godolphin Bennett, a powerful business executive and leader of his own groups, rings the bell. With him is his seventy-five-year-old wife, Winifred, known as "Polly."

Madame de Salzmänn answers and motions them inside.

They walk down the dark, dingy hallway, every inch of the walls covered with paintings, either ugly, bizarre, or decidedly amateurish.

The two are signaled into a small sitting room on the right. Its walls are also covered with paintings of the same dubious quality. Though it is early afternoon, the windows are shuttered and the only illumination is provided by electric lights. Bennett notices the furniture is shabby and the carpets threadbare. On either side of the fireplace hang representations of the enneagram, made from mother-of-pearl and sewn to fabric-covered black disks. In the corners of the room, abutting the street, sit two odd, glittering artifacts. One is a sort of stylized Christmas tree, made out of some gold-colored metal or gilded wood. It gleams from light reflected from countless prisms of glass. The other is a cabinet containing a large collection of dolls dressed in different national costumes.

23. What a heartbreaking recognition this must be for Toomer after twenty-five years in the Work. But the courage of such sincerity signals a new start. However, Toomer's physical condition steadily grows worse. After 1955 he is unable to take care of himself and his wife must put him in a nursing home. He will die on March 30, 1967.

as well as an assortment of keepsakes, pipes, musical instruments, Orientalia. When the room is properly lit, the cheap materials scintillate and sparkle, giving the feeling of being in Aladdin's cave.

Presently, in the doorway Gurdjieff appears.

Quite heavy now, he holds himself as erect as ever. He moves into the room with the same grace and economy of gesture as Bennett remembers from the Prieuré.

The moustaches are white now and the face has lost its firm outline, but the skin is still smooth. He wears a tasselled magenta fez, open shirt and rumpled trousers.

Madame de Salzmänn introduces the Bennetts.

Gurdjieff does not remember them.

For a few moments he takes Bennett in and then says:

"You are Number Eighteen. Not a big Number Eighteen but small Number Eighteen."

Soon, it is past two o'clock. There are only a few people in the flat. Gurdjieff suddenly says, "Chain. Chain."

People form a line from the kitchen to the dining room and pass plates of food. Bennett is seated on Gurdjieff's right, Bennett's wife on the left. Lunch is eaten. With his fingers, Gurdjieff slowly eats morsels of lamb and hard bits of goat cheese and fresh tarragon leaves. At one point the toasts to the idiots begin.

After the meal, which does not end until nearly five o'clock, Gurdjieff invites Bennett into the pantry for coffee. Though food is still rationed, the shelves of the pantry are stocked thick with tins and jars of food while dried fish and sausages of camel's meat, bunches of dried scarlet peppers, and sprays of rosemary hang from the ceiling.

"You know what is the first Commandment of God to man?" Gurdjieff asks, as he pours some coffee out of a battered old thermos bottle, takes a piece of sugar, puts it into his mouth, and sips coffee through it.

Bennett fumbles for an answer.

"Hand wash hand!"

Gurdjieff pauses to let Bennett absorb that. Then he says:

"You need help and I need help. If I help you, you have to help me."

Bennett says he is ready to do whatever Gurdjieff wants.

Gurdjieff speaks about his money difficulties, then asks Bennett what he wants from him.

"Will you show me how to work for my Being?"

"It is right," Gurdjieff declares. "Now you have much Knowledge, but in Being you are a nullity. If you wish, I will show you how to work, but you must do it as I say."

They speak quite seriously. Bennett is amazed. It is an exact continuation of the conversation they had had in Constantinople twenty-seven years before.

"I know my situation is hopeless," says Bennett at one point. "That is why I have come back to you."

Gurdjieff repeats: "If you will do as I say, I will show you how to change. Only you must stop thinking. You think too much. You must begin to sense." He then asks if Bennett understands the distinction between sensing and feeling.

Bennett's answer is an intellectual definition.

"More or less. But you only know this with your mind. You do not understand with your whole being. This you must learn."

SEVERAL DAYS LATER. Gurdjieff has gone on a trip to Cannes with a large sum of money that Bennett has given him. There is an accident as he drives through the town of Montargis: a small truck with a drunken driver comes out of a side road and ploughs into Gurdjieff's car, the impact is so great that the drunken driver and his passenger are instantly killed. Bennett had not gone on the trip but he is there when Gurdjieff arrives back at his apartment. It is dusk when the door of the car opens and Gurdjieff slowly gets out. "His clothes were covered with blood," reports Bennett. "His face was black with bruises... It was a dead man, a corpse, that came out of the car; and yet it walked."

Somehow, Gurdjieff gets to his room and sits down.

"Now all organs are destroyed. Must make new," he says.

Seeing Bennett, he says: "Tonight you come dinner. I must make body work."

With that the pain gives his body a great spasm and blood flows from his ear. Bennett thinks that he has a cerebral hemorrhage and, if he continues to force his body to move, that he will kill himself.

Gurdjieff asks Madame de Salzmann about some man. Told that he is in the American Hospital, he tells her to go see him. Then he adds:

"I wish watermelon. Buy watermelon when you come back."

Now Bennett realizes that Gurdjieff has to do this, for "if he allows his body to stop moving, he will die. He has power over his body."

AUGUST 1948. 6 RUE DES COLONELS RÉNARD. Bennett has brought about sixty students to Gurdjieff's flat. C. S. Nott, having coffee with Gurdjieff at the Café des Acacias, says to him that Mr. Bennett's return will be a very good thing for the Work, as he has a large organization and many of his students seem to have money. He says Gurdjieff replied laconically:

"Bennett is small thing. Useful for money, yes. He will bring me a thousand pupils and out of these I shall choose perhaps ten."

Reports one English person about lunches at Gurdjieff's apartment:

We all eat jammed around the table with our elbows in each other's tummies almost. The meal always starts with so-called 'salade' too disgusting, floating about in a little bowl. 'Not such salade never was'—and indeed I hope so. Then there is usually meat or bird with rice and a big dish of radishes, onions, etc. passed round to eat with it. Then a sweet—always very sweet and syrupy—and fruit, melon, grapes, etc. Sometimes coffee, sometimes not. Throughout the meal he [Gurdjieff] passes round oddments of food—apparently quite indiscriminately, so that one may easily find oneself eating sprats or bear meat with one's sweet, sheeps' meat from Bokhara, camel sausage from Kayseri—one never knows what to expect. Once he broke up fish in his fingers and then held out a fistful across the table, saying benevolently 'Who not squeamish?' The last evening we were there one of Brynn's goat cheeses was handed round which G. described as 'special Scotch cheese from Scotland' and enveloped us all with a baleful stare, defying us to deny it. All this is washed down with, mainly, bread or white vodka for the toasts, but there is also Mare, Calvados, Armagnac—most things...

Another comments on the music:

After the meal is over we go into the salon and settle ourselves on the chairs, the divan, the stools and the floor. G. sits in his chair and Lise [Tracol] brings him his little portable organ which he rests on his knee playing with one hand while he works the bellows with the other.

He then makes the strangest music—the most wonderful music. He says it is 'objective'—that is, the vibrations he produces have a definite effect on people, both organically and psychologically. It affects people in different ways, tough business men and scientists sit with the tears streaming down their faces, others are merely bored or puzzled, others again are moved but do not know why.

Dr. Bell asked him about this music, saying she found she did not listen to it with her ears. He said: 'Ears are no good for this music, the whole presence must be open to it. It is a matter of vibrations.' Then he added, 'But tears must come first.' He also said he had to put the whole of himself into these vibrations, it was very difficult for him. He is always exhausted after playing. Often he does not play. Then we play the records of the music.

This is the end of the session. The lunch session lasts from 1:30 to 4:30 or later; the evening session from 10:30 to 2 or 3 in the morning.

LATE AUGUST 1948. LASCAUX. Gurdjieff visits the caves. He tells Bennett that the enneagram, like the Sphinx, is not a symbol but an emblem of an esoteric society. Something happens and Gurdjieff makes it clear he does not want Bennett to travel with him.

"I go right," Gurdjieff says, "you go left."

"Then we must say good-bye to you?" asks Bennett, hoping to keep an opening.

"Yes, good-bye!"

Bennett gives no reason for this change in Gurdjieff's attitude, if, indeed, it is that. Back in Paris, Bennett experiences again being out of the body and separate from the mind.

When he meets Gurdjieff again, he is treated "as if I were an outcast." He believes he has done his best to follow Gurdjieff's guidance and instructions but, he says, "I had failed in understanding what was required, and in Gurdjieff's method this is the worst sin."

SEPTEMBER 4, 1948. PARIS. Bennett goes to Gurdjieff's café in the rue des Acacias. Gurdjieff is there but he ignores him. He responds only after much time and much prodding and only after Bennett tells him, "I cannot thank you for what you have done for me. That I can never repay."

Gurdjieff says nothing for a long time. People come and go. Finally he turns towards Bennett and says slowly:

"What you say about never repay—this is stupidity. *Only* you can repay. *Only you* can repay for all my labours. What you think is money? I can buy all your England. *Only you* can repay me by work. But what you do? Before trip I give you task. Do you fulfil? No; you do just the opposite. Never once I see you struggle with *yourself*. All the time you are occupied with your cheap animal."

Later, at lunch Gurdjieff speaks of conscience, saying that "When conscience and consciousness are together, then you will not make such mistakes."

Bennett drives Madame de Salzmänn home after lunch and tells her of his sense of having failed Gurdjieff.

"The work changes," she says. "Up to one point, one gets fairly clear guidance. Then comes a time when it is made so confusing that you can easily do exactly the wrong thing in the conviction that it is right."

RUE DES COLONELS RÉNARD. One day Lord Pentland, his wife, Lucy, and young daughter, Mary, come to lunch. Mary sits by her mother's side and just in front of Gurdjieff. She becomes bored. Gurdjieff suddenly speaks to her, saying—"In life it is never possible to do everything."

The child is puzzled. Having her attention, Gurdjieff points to the mess Mary has made at the table. "On my table you cannot make this mess," he says. "Perhaps at home Mother permits. Then if you want to do this thing, you must stay at home. But if you stay at home, you will not be able to come here and see me. So you see, you can never do everything."

In the evening at the end of the dinner, Gurdjieff asks Mary, "Who do you respect most?"

She doesn't understand the question.

"Who do you think is the most important person here?" her mother asks. Without hesitating, Mary declares—"My Daddy."

Gurdjieff beams.

"I am not offended," he says. "God is not offended either."

Gurdjieff explains that a person who loves his parents, loves God, and he says, "If people love their parents all the time that their parents are alive, then, when their parents die, there is a space left in them for Him to fill."

As the Pentlands prepare to leave, Gurdjieff pats Mary on the shoulder, saying to everyone present: "For my aim, I want twenty such. If I had twenty like her, I get my aim. Not because she special, but because she not spoilt."

OCTOBER 30, 1948. FRANCE. Gurdjieff sails for America with Madame de Salzmänn. On the boat train there is a large luncheon. Bennett is the Director of the toasts. He breaks the ritual by proposing a toast to Mr. Gurdjieff's health.

"No," says Gurdjieff, "I will propose myself health of English. Thanks to the English I sail to New York free from all debts. Pure *comme bébé*."

His parting message to everyone is: "Before I return I hope with all my being that everyone here will have learned the difference between sensation and feeling."

NOVEMBER 18, 1948. Cecil Lewis receives another letter from Bennett: "The truth is that everything is so exciting here at the moment that hardly anyone can bear the thought of being separated from it. At the same time if and when disaster strikes, the very people who are reluctant to do anything to share in building up a home for us to go to, will be only too ready and anxious to take advantage of what has been done... I am equally certain that within two or three years we shall enter that period of acute nervous tension which Beelzebub called 'solioonensius.' Such periods induce intense incentive to work in those who are capable of it, but they engender madness in those who have lost touch with the real aim of life... So our decision to seek a place in SA remains just as valid as it was three years ago."

WINTER 1948-1949. NEW YORK. Gurdjieff stays at the Wellington Hotel in Manhattan. He visits Madame Uspenskii at Franklin Farms in Mendham, New Jersey. He wants to begin to consolidate the groups, putting the "Uspenskii people" in contact with the dozen or so "Gurdjieff people" most of whom, like Peggy Flinsch and Dr. William Welch and his wife Louise, come from the original Orage groups. As a result, some of the Uspenskii group begin to visit Gurdjieff regularly at

his hotel. Among them are Lord and Lady Pentland, Christopher Freemantle, and Tom Forman. After every luncheon there are the toasts. Bennett has arrived from England.

Says Louise Goepfert: "Bennett returned to Gurdjieff's table and pronounced himself Mr. Gurdjieff's oldest pupil. When Bennett was put into the Round Idiot category, the same as me, it sat badly with me." Gurdjieff said of the Round Idiots—"those that never stop, but day-night-year-round continue."

Madame Uspenskii has sent Gurdjieff a chapter from her husband's *Fragments of an Unknown Teaching*, asking if it should be published. After the toasts, the chapter is read aloud to the group. About one passage, Gurdjieff says, "Is too liquid. Lost something." Overall, though, Gurdjieff praises it. "Very exact is. Good memory. Truth was so."

JANUARY 13, 1949. NEW YORK. *It was in the year 223 after the creation of the World by objective time-calculation, or, as it would be said here on the "Earth," in the year 1921 after the birth of Christ.*

Twenty-five years after having first dictated these lines, Gurdjieff decides to publish the first series of *All and Everything—Beelzebub's Tales to his Grandson*.

In the morning at Child's Cafe on Fifth Avenue, Gurdjieff's "New York Office," he tells Bennett to write a circular letter to all his students telling of his decision to publish the first series of *All and Everything*.

Says Bennett: "I asked for a sheet of paper, and wrote without knowing how or what I should write.... The manner of writing was completely foreign to me. I had used the word 'adept' instead of pupil. This both surprised and annoyed me, as the word 'adept' grated harshly on my ear as savouring too much occultism."

At lunch that day, Gurdjieff's rooms at the Hotel Wellington are jammed wall to wall with his students, overcoats piled four feet deep the length of the foyer. Early arrivals are seated cross-legged on the floor around the sofa, everyone else standing, Gurdjieff sits on the sofa with one leg characteristically tucked under him, parting his moustaches with the thumb and index finger of his hand. Finally, he takes a letter from his pocket and hands it to Bennett, sitting near him.

"Read, read—is for everybody," Gurdjieff said in a low voice and muffled Asiatic accent. He listened as if weighing each word.

Bennett, who says Gurdjieff handed him the letter as if he had never seen it before, read: "This circular is addressed to all my present and former adepts and to all who have been directly or indirectly influenced by my ideas and have sensed and understood that they contain something which is necessary for the food of humanity. After fifty years of

preparation and having overcome the greatest difficulties and obstacles, I have decided to publish..."

Following the reading, Gurdjieff says three representatives are needed, for France, England and America. For America he appoints Lord John Pentland;<sup>24</sup> for France, René Zuber; and for England, J. G. Bennett.

In the afternoon there is a children's party at Gurdjieff's hotel room. At the party's end everyone leaves, Bennett finds himself alone with Gurdjieff. Gurdjieff is at the end of a long drawing room seated on a low couch. Bennett goes up and kneels beside him, thanking Gurdjieff for all that he has done for him. Says Gurdjieff:

"What I have done up to now for you is nothing. Soon I return to Europe. You come to me, and I will show you how to work. If you do what I tell, I will show you how to become immortal. Now you have nothing, but if you will work you can soon have soul."

MAY 26, 1949. NEW JERSEY. C. Daly King completes *The Oragean Version*.<sup>25</sup> He does so because he feels Orage's understanding was different than both Gurdjieff's and Uspenskii's and was on "the verge of being irrecoverably lost." In a later book, *The States of Human Consciousness*, King will say of Gurdjieff:

With one exception the writer has never encountered anyone of whom he felt assured that the latter was living permanently in a state of Awakeness. The exception was Gurdjieff himself.... In these respects [the mode of living and the manner of contact with other persons, friendly, hostile or neutral] and many more, Gurdjieff manifested himself in ways never encountered by the writer, in ways so different from those of others that they constituted a plain and perceptible difference in level of existence upon his part. His famous reputation as an enigmatic rested largely upon this circumstance. He is the only person ever met by the writer who gave the indubitable impression that all his responses, mental, emotional and practical, were mutually *in balance* and thus the further impression that everyone else was out of step, but not this man himself.

AUGUST 1949. 6 RUE DES COLONELS RÉNARD. While reading aloud at the evening meal, Bennett suddenly has the experience of leaving his body. "I found myself several feet away from my body," he says. "My voice was

24. For an account of his unique capacity to teach and his understanding of leadership, refer to my book, *Eating the "I"* (Arete Communications, 1992).

25. In the book (privately published), King faithfully records the teaching, such as he received it from Orage. He makes some interesting points concerning self-observation and his book is worth studying. But, just as Gurdjieff pointed out eighteen years before to Orage and his groups, he overvalues the practice and appears to misunderstand its intent. Sure in his confidence in his intellect, C. Daly King will die in 1962 at the age of sixty-seven, not once in his published work questioning his viewpoint.

still speaking, but it was not 'my' voice any more, but a stranger's.... The sense of separation from the body persisted for several hours, although I remained inside it."

One mealtime Gurdjieff speaks to Bennett in a low voice on the Last Supper and the role of Judas. He tells Bennett that Judas was Jesus's best and closest friend and that he alone understood why Jesus was on the planet. By his selfless action Judas had saved the work of Jesus from being destroyed. Then Gurdjieff asks him:

"You know what I say of Judas and how differently the church teaches. Which do you believe is true?"

To Bennett it seems that somehow the crowded dining room and time disappears and he finds himself back in the Jerusalem of A.D. 33. He becomes aware of the good and evil forces at war and sees that Judas was unmistakably on the good side.

"You are right," Bennett answers. "Judas was the friend of Jesus, and he was on the side of good."

In a voice so low as to be almost inaudible Gurdjieff says: "I am pleased what you understand."

Several other times during the coming days Gurdjieff tells Bennett that his relationship with him is the same as that between Judas and Jesus.

Bennett says that once he and Lord Pentland were sitting next to one another and Gurdjieff says:

"Mr. Bennett is like Judas; he is responsible that my work is not destroyed. You," he says to Lord Pentland, "are like Paul; you must spread my ideas."

During these last days, Bennett says, Gurdjieff "never spoke of death, but of going far away."

OCTOBER 1949. LONDON. Bennett gives a series of lectures in London called, "Gurdjieff: the Making of a New World."

OCTOBER 21, 1949. PARIS. Gurdjieff sees the first proofs of the American edition of *All and Everything*.

OCTOBER 22, 1949. PARIS. Bennett finds Gurdjieff at his café in the rue des Acacias. He is dressed in his coat with the astrakhan collar, sheepskin boots, a brown and red woolen scarf folded over his chest and his black astrakhan cap. His appearance—that of a sick old man—is shocking. He looks ill, his face very dark, the eyes sunken with black rings around them. Gurdjieff speaks of the future.

"The next five years," he says, "will decide. It is the beginning of a new world. Either the old world will make me 'Tchik' [squash me like a louse], or I will make the old world 'Tchik.' Then the new world can begin."

OCTOBER 26, 1949. 6 RUE DES COLONEL RÉNARD. The decision is made to take Gurdjieff to the American Hospital. A stretcher is brought to his bedroom but he refuses to use it. Instead, he gets out of bed and appears in the hallway wearing his pajamas and a red fez. On seeing the stretcher he says, "Oy!" He sits on it upright, his fez at a rakish angle and lights a cigarette. Outside, as the stretcher is carried to the ambulance, the cigarette between his lips, he makes a sort of wave and says, "*Au revoir, tout le monde!*"

OCTOBER 29, 1949. AMERICAN HOSPITAL, PARIS. Mr. Gurdjieff dies. Dr. William Welch, the American doctor who had flown in from New York to give him liver injections, sits in the kitchen of Gurdjieff's flat drinking a big bowl of coffee. He says that Gurdjieff died peacefully, the sickness disappearing from his face. "I have seen many men die. He died like a king."

OCTOBER 30, 1949. PARIS. The funeral service takes place in the Russian Orthodox Church in the rue Daru. Mr. Gurdjieff's body is too large for the coffin; a larger one must be found. In absolute silence, the congregation stands for an hour waiting for the coffin to arrive. The priest is dressed in the old tradition with robe, silver cross and a chain, long black hair and beard. In a honeyed voice he asks:

"What did this man Gurdjieff teach? For my whole life I've wanted a congregation like this."

The chapel is lit with candles. Gurdjieff's body is dressed in his best suit, bought for the forthcoming American trip. It is covered with a pale cloth piled high with red roses, pink orchids, and white flowers. On either side of his head are two enormous bouquets of violets.

Says one pupil: "The face is like a statue's. Yesterday he looked alive still, a slight smile made him seem so; his skin had a most curious lavender tinge. Today he is darker, the smile has gone, he's already far away, the eyes have begun to sink, the lips are in a grave line, though not quite stern.... He looks as if he had just said: 'Now I go away with all my secrets and my mystery. My work is finished here.'"

Says another pupil:

I was overwhelmed by the force that came from him. One could not be near his body without feeling unmistakably his power. He looked magnificent; composed, content, *intentional*, for want of a better word. Not simply a body placed by someone else. He was undisguised, nothing was concealed from us. Everything belonging to him, his inner and outer life and all the circumstances and results of it, were there to be seen, if one could see. What force there was in him then! I have never seen anything in any way like it. This, I think, was what I had dreaded: I could not bear to see him with the force gone from him. Yet in fact I saw his power for the first time unobscured.

Five white and gold robed Russian priests and a cantor perform ceremonies, chanting and praying and singing, all in Russian. One by one all those assembled pass by the coffin, making a genuflection at his head, stepping up to the icon at his feet, kissing it and walking off to the left.

The Russian "Service for the Dead" begins for Georgi Ivanovitch Gurdjieff. It concludes:

Give rest eternal in the blessed falling asleep, O Lord,  
to the soul thy servant departed this life,  
and make his memory eternal.  
Memory eternal!  
Memory eternal!  
Memory eternal!

Just as the funeral ends, the electric lights in the church and in that entire quarter of Paris fail.

NOVEMBER 2, 1949. PARIS. Crowds stand along the street as Gurdjieff's coffin, still topped by flowers, is carried out and put into the large black funeral carriage. His family rides with him. Private cars and four large buses carry his students. The streets around the church are closed to traffic for blocks. At Avon Cemetery at Fontainebleau, in an icy sunny wind, hundreds walk through the cemetery gates to the family plot. Mr. Gurdjieff's grave lies between his mother's and his wife's, each of whose tombstones, with time, have bent towards one another, forming a stone triangle with the earth. At sunset the coffin, a golden cross at its head, is slowly lowered into its rocky, watery resting place. The long pale coffin in place now, a great sigh involuntarily issues from the people—the only sound they have made. The white and gold robed priest now begins to chant as, one by one, in accordance with the old Russian custom, people begin to pass by the body of their Teacher, kneeling, making the sign of the cross, throwing a handful of earth on the coffin, and passing on. Thrown with a handful of dark earth are a few red and white roses....

Lord John Pentland says that when Gurdjieff died the feeling was that "it was impossible to go on. Because up till a few days before he died, he was seeing everybody and appearing at meals...and refusing to allow various feelings to start [that he was going to die]. Fortunately, there were people who understood enough to help us all once he did die. Of course there were very few people.... Fortunately, somebody was able to show the way to go on without at once trying to manifest everything that they understood...."

That evening, following Gurdjieff's burial, Madame de Salzmann speaks with her French students and a few English people.

"When a Teacher like Mr. Gurdjieff goes, he cannot be replaced. Those who remain cannot create the same conditions. We have only one

hope: to make something together. What no one of us could do, perhaps a group can. Let us make this our chief aim in the future."

Bennett, who having witnessed the friction between Gurdjieff's close pupils, and marveling at Madame de Salzmann's optimism, says: "I was bound to agree that in unity lay our only hope."

Says Mr. Gurdjieff's secretary, Solita Solano:

"Madame de Salzmann will carry on his work as best she can, and I suppose we will all help her."

"We have so pledged..."

By the end of 1949, Gurdjieff's *All and Everything* and Uspenskii's *In Search of the Miraculous* simultaneously appear in print. Gurdjieff's Prieuré had become a convalescent home for physical invalids. Uspenskii's Lyne Place becomes a sanatorium for mental invalids.

Declares Frank Pinder:

Gurdjieff came to strike a big Doh, to help the upflow of the Law of Seven against the current of mechanical life.... Gurdjieff came to give us a New World, a new idea of God, of the purpose of life, of sex, of war. But who are 'Us'? 'Us' are those who accept him and his teaching and help to carry out this work. This world of ours cannot be saved in our measure of time. Had it been possible it would have been 'saved' long ago by prophets and teachers who have been sent. Those who look for the world to be saved by a single teacher in a given time are shirking their own responsibility. They wait in hope of a 'second coming' with no effort on their part—indulging in the disease of tomorrow.

So ends the extraordinary struggle of—how do we see it?—a teacher and his pupils, a magician and his adepts, an avatar and his disciples, a Messenger from Above and his would-be helper-instructors.



## OF USPENSKII, ORAGE, AND BENNETT

*Uspenskii, Orage, and Bennett were not ordinary men, not ordinary seekers.* As said in the Introduction, each was blessed with a rare and strong intellect, a deep occult understanding, great will and an enduring thirst for self-knowledge. Each could hold and direct the attention of a great many people, many quite powerful in ordinary life. In their own right, each was a magician. Yet none could take that extra step beyond themselves. To be sure, they each took many steps, passed many tests, made many sacrifices. They each *developed* in Gurdjieff's sense of the term. Yet none developed to a point where they could totally sacrifice themselves to Gurdjieff's mission. Uspenskii could not sacrifice his independence of mind; Orage, not his feelings; Bennett, not his thirst for adventure, his ability to create.

Despite the time and training Gurdjieff gave them, none of the three seemed to really understand the idea, monumental in its implications, that Gurdjieff had brought a teaching for our time—a teaching, he said that could save the world from destroying itself. They, like all seekers, were looking for a teaching for themselves, not for mankind. In this way they were indeed ordinary. Gurdjieff's aim in founding the Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man, as he states quite clearly in *All and Everything*, was to prepare helper-instructors who would help him disseminate and establish the teaching in the major capitals of the world. The Institute, which he once described as a "hatching place for eggs," had a very short life. Within twenty-three months of its purchase, Gurdjieff would close it. What precipitated this was his near-fatal car crash. But well before, he likely realized that no 'eggs' would hatch—that none of his pupils could make the necessary transformation in so short a time. Despite Gurdjieff's awesome powers, the immensity of his will and understanding, the egoism of his pupils could not so quickly be dis-

solved. Time was running out. The crash into a tree was the shock he needed to admit the hard truth to himself—the Institute was a dead end.

Looking back, it seems that what Gurdjieff had to do was what he apparently never could do: convince Uspenskii, Orage, and Bennett of the full authenticity of his message and his authenticity as its messenger.<sup>1</sup>

It was not difficult then to miss the mark... to miss the amazing fact and grace that a teaching so practical and powerful, and a man as unique as Gurdjieff, could appear at all.

So it was then, so it is now.

Of the three pupils, Uspenskii seems the oldest soul. Certainly, of the three, he was the first to meet Gurdjieff—and the depth of his understanding appears much deeper than either Orage's or Bennett's, both of whom early on had been Uspenskii's pupils. If Gurdjieff's *idée fixe* was the purpose of man's existence on earth, Uspenskii's was time in its fullest dimension.

Early on, Uspenskii had felt the gnawing emptiness of death. In his bones he realized that life was about dying. And as he grew up he saw through the sham of ordinary life, its deceptions and absurdities. He knew that all the carrots life offered were only dream carrots. He was the black sheep that could not be tempted with being a lion or eagle—or even a man. He had left the herd long before he met Gurdjieff, searching for a way to break out of life's magic circle. He realized that to break out took time and that each human being has only so much time. Therefore, he told Gurdjieff, "I formulated my own aim quite clearly several years ago. I want to know the future." He had come to the conclusion, he said, that "the future can be known." And, further, that a man "has the right to know the day and hour of his death...for what is the good of beginning any kind of work when one doesn't know whether one will have time to finish it or not."

In terms of the teaching, Uspenskii's great and singular achievement was his objective reporting of the ancient teaching Gurdjieff brought. His ability to absorb and so cleanly communicate the teaching shines with intelligence and integrity. The pity was, knowing the teaching, he could not fully live it. Two factors stood in his way. One was what he called his "extreme individualism." This, he himself admitted, was the

1. It is not surprising, for how many—even these many years later—would agree that Gurdjieff brought an ancient teaching that would save the world from destroying itself and that he, yes, this *kaphir*, was a Messenger from Above? If true, such an understanding could be likened to having a *revelation*. Uspenskii, Orage, and Bennett may have had such a revelation but their actions show they could not sustain it. There were many, of course, who did have the revelation, most notably Dr. Stjoernal, Thomas and Olga de Hartmann, Jeanne de Salzmann, and Louise March. But Stjoernal, the de Hartmanns, and March were not equipped for the role Gurdjieff needed to be played and Madame de Salzmann would apparently come into maturity only in his life's final phase.

fundamental feature of his attitude toward life. The other was the emotional scarring caused by his father's death, when Uspenskii was not yet four years old, followed the next year by the death of his grandfather. "For the first time in my life," he wrote, speaking of his wonderment upon reading a book on levers, "my world emerges from chaos." He was a boy of twelve or thirteen then. The death of his mother when he was sixteen and the later death of a beloved sister left him without a family. That he fathered no children of his own seems significant. "From an early age," he said, "I knew what life was about." Protecting him against feeling the grief of these losses was the isolation, the alienation that must be the background of "extreme individualism." These two factors—individualism and death—entwined within him like two snakes, the one feeding the other.

"Wraps Up The Thought." That was Gurdjieff's early nickname for Uspenskii. (Nicknames, he said, often point towards a pupil's chief feature or chief weakness.) What Gurdjieff saw was that when Uspenskii was asked a question, he would answer so completely that there would be nothing left of the question. In effect, he demolished it. Answering in this way not only demonstrated, one could also say showed off, his great intellectual capacity, but also pointed to a need to control; a word he used quite often. What Uspenskii was likely controlling was his emotional center. Later on, Gurdjieff said that some people's chief feature was so buried beneath its formal manifestations that it was incapable of discovery. "Then," wrote Uspenskii, "a man can consider himself as his chief feature just as I could call my chief feature 'Uspenskii,' or, as Gurdjieff always called it, '*Pyotr Demianovich*.'"<sup>2</sup>

"Pyotr Demianovich" began to weaken as a result of Uspenskii's work on himself and the telepathic experiences Gurdjieff induced in him in Finland. As a result, he began to feel his community more with other

2. A possible deduction might be that Gurdjieff could *not* discover Uspenskii's chief feature. It was too hidden. Which would mean that Gurdjieff, at root, didn't understand Uspenskii. This would account perhaps for Gurdjieff's failure, or inability, to change roles, or at least refrain from playing a role with Uspenskii to a point of no return. More likely, Gurdjieff understood that for Uspenskii to be any real use to him, he had to work directly on Uspenskii's emotional center. Though the odds against a breakthrough were great, Gurdjieff's mission and the urgency of the time meant that he had no time to coddle Uspenskii. It was *all or nothing*. Moreover, if the personality, that is, "Pyotr Demianovich," was the chief feature it meant that it was thick enough to resist any penetration, any discovery. In psychological terms the "armor" of personality was the chief feature—that which was always protecting, controlling, interpreting. "Pyotr Demianovich" did weaken, become penetrable. Uspenskii did achieve a new level of being with Gurdjieff but then "Pyotr Demianovich" presented itself. It wasn't until his chief feature played its last card and Uspenskii faced death that he finally came to the clarity and will to make the super-effort necessary to free himself.

people. What Uspenskii did not see, however, was that—because of his insincerity<sup>3</sup> with Gurdjieff—his rapport with his teacher also weakened. Within a year-and-a-half of first meeting Gurdjieff, Uspenskii was already distancing himself psychologically. Though he would relive his days with Gurdjieff until the end of his life, the fact is he remained blind to the real significance of the events in Finland, thus giving testimony to the incredible power of buffers, regardless of the quality of the pupil.

The seed of premature separation which Uspenskii planted in himself in Finland grew and festered, until in Essentuki he began to separate Gurdjieff from the teaching. Once sufficiently divided, Uspenskii, of course, was in a position (another of his favorite words) to judge Gurdjieff, who, he came to convince himself, was a “tainted channel.” This was not surprising. Next to “time,” the subject of “good and evil” seemed to be a major interest for Uspenskii. His interest likely stemmed from his feelings toward having his loved ones taken away from him. “Good and evil” was one of the chief contexts through which he saw life. It was the subtle interpretation coloring all his impressions. That Uspenskii kept the good end of the stick for himself, transferring the bad end to Gurdjieff (whose seemingly erratic behavior, it may be said, gave ample room for doing so) was in the cards from the start. From what Uspenskii reports, Gurdjieff invited, even fostered, such negative attitudes, intentionally creating division in his pupils. It was up to his pupils to see and work with it. A powerful and dangerous way to teach, but time, Gurdjieff knew, was short.

In breaking with Gurdjieff, Uspenskii set the teaching upon a new line. “I took over the leadership to save the System,” Uspenskii said. There is no reason to doubt that this is what Uspenskii believed. But to save it from what? To save it from Gurdjieff! From the very first, Gurdjieff’s ‘play’ had upset Uspenskii, made him wary. Gurdjieff’s ‘play’ was like that of no holy man, no teacher or guru known to Uspenskii. That he seemed to go out of his way to create negative and false impressions, that he cultivated people’s worst fears about himself, Uspenskii could not fathom. It was the doubt—that Gurdjieff was irrational—that would continue to grow in Uspenskii. In Essentuki, Gurdjieff’s stern and seemingly pitiless handling of Uspenskii’s friend Zacharov together with Uspenskii’s concern over where he believed Gurdjieff was leading them ultimately led Uspenskii to admit: “I gradually began to see that there were many things I could not understand

3. Speaking of his telepathic experience, Uspenskii wrote: “I knew that he [Gurdjieff] would not believe me and that he would laugh at me if I showed him this other thing. But for myself it was indubitable and what happened later showed that I was right.” *Search*, p. 263. What happened later is most likely his break with Gurdjieff in Essentuki. In that case, “this other thing” would relate to why he broke with him, i.e., “Gurdjieff was leading us in fact towards the way of religion.” *Search*, p. 375.

and that I had to go.” Of course, what Uspenskii does not mention was what he called the “St. Petersburg Conditions”<sup>4</sup> with which Gurdjieff worked on his emotional center. Opening this center would do what Uspenskii most feared—plunge him into the death and chaos he felt as a child. This was the ‘wound’ he carried, his burden, and, like us all, it was dressed in irrationality. Ironically, he used all his power of rationality to protect his irrationality.

Though he was quite successful in establishing his version of the Work in England, and later America, Uspenskii’s divorce from Gurdjieff would dog him for the rest of his life. It was a wound upon a wound. When asked in a meeting “if the line [of teacher to student; the passage, or octave, of the teaching] was broken when you left Gurdjieff?” Uspenskii answered huffily: “What has all this to do with Gurdjieff and me? I was working with Gurdjieff until I saw a difference in him. This has nothing to do with esotericism.” But, of course, it does. It was a lie that this very honest man had to live with. It seems reasonable to conclude that it drove him to drink.

If he refused to suffer emotionally with Gurdjieff, one German bombing of London was all it took to convince Uspenskii to sail for America. The reasons he left England are rational enough, but the fact is Uspenskii did what Gurdjieff never did: *he left his pupils*. Gurdjieff brought his pupils through a raging civil war, took responsibility for them in Constantinople, Berlin, at the Prieuré, and stayed on in Paris during the Nazi occupation.

At Mendham, the estate-farm in New Jersey that his followers had provided for him, Uspenskii gave his lectures as always, but grew increasingly reclusive. He began to see, in part, what had happened. “I took it [the leadership of the Work] over,” he admitted, “before I had gained enough control over myself. I was not ready. I have lost control over myself. It is a long time since I could control my state of mind.” And later he confessed: “The System has become a profession with me.”

Plagued with depression and kidney problems, against the advice of doctors and wife, Uspenskii left America to return to England. He hoped to make a new start with the pupils who had stayed behind. In the lectures he gave, time and again, he turned the question back on the questioners, trying to break them free of their doctrinal reliance on the teaching. He had taken the teaching, that is, his version or understanding of the teaching, as far as he could. He had reached a dead end. He needed to begin anew. For his pupils, he saw, that was not possible. In one of his last public meetings, he was asked: “Can we learn to be more humble?” Uspenskii answered: “I never was humble myself, and I don’t know how I can.” But, in fact, he was becoming humble through the

4. See Footnote 12, p. 89.

way that, unfortunately, most of us become humble—*humiliation*. His life, his search, had come to nothing. He had the self-sincerity, no small thing, to admit this to himself. And so, at the last minute, his bags already aboard a ship that would return him to America, he ordered his bags to be unloaded. "I am not going to America this time," he said.

What did he mean—"this time"? It must mean that he remembered, remembered having gone to America before in his previous life in the great wheel of eternal recurrence. So, at the very end, Uspenskii was able to return to where he began, to find the miraculous, to penetrate "beyond the thin film of false reality."

It was now, having reached the nadir of his life, that he began his valiant climb to the zenith and his ultimate triumph of stepping through time, of dying a conscious death. His last days, his great struggle with his body and emotions, and his breakthrough, are all recorded by his pupil and spiritual friend, Rodney Collin. In his thirst for the truth, his self-sacrifice, his faults, confusion, and rebellion, we can all perhaps see aspects of ourselves and know, too, through the testament of his life, that there is always the grace of redemption, no matter how far we stray, if we are open to it.

It is not recorded what idiot Gurdjieff ascribed to Uspenskii, but one that must be considered is 'enlightened' idiot. Nor did Alexander de Salzmann paint Uspenskii's animal on the wall of the Study House of the Prieuré. Had he done so, the animal would have been highly intelligent, visionary, mystical, stubborn, fiercely independent to a fault. Perhaps a white, or even a black, swan.

Orage was altogether a different type of animal; De Salzmann painted him as an elephant. But, Orage was also part fox—clever, possessed of breadth of intellect, charm, and benevolence. He wanted to be loved and so he was. He was the classic 'white knight,' the 'St. George' of *St. George and the Dragon*.

Of Uspenskii, Orage, and Bennett, the dynamic of relationship with Gurdjieff was deepest with Orage. Like Alexander de Salzmann and Fritz Peters, Orage could make Gurdjieff laugh. It is no small thing that at hearing of Orage's death, Gurdjieff, wiping the tears from his eyes with his fists, declared: "How you say it in your country? May his soul reach the Kingdom of Heaven! This man...my brother."

With an impartial self-honesty—not often found in Uspenskii or Bennett—Orage, brother of Gurdjieff, pinpointed the problem. He lacked, like Uspenskii and Bennett, the *absolute* faith. The difference was

—and this is considerable—Orage recognized it. He did not foist his problem off on his teacher. Wrote Orage to a friend:

I cannot go more than half a hog, let us say. I can regret it and wish that I had been different; but the fact remains that I cannot 'sell all'—and everybody—to follow G. in person. His method I continue to regard as the Word of God; I practice it to the best of my powers. His system I regard also as probably the very latest word of truth; but, as I cannot verify it myself, and have lost hope that I ever shall be able; and as, furthermore, I cannot merely believe and, still less, try to persuade others of just my beliefs—I see no probability of my resumption of G. groups or teaching for the rest of my life.

It is significant that the figure of Orage, the 'compassionate idiot,' dominates Gurdjieff's *Third Series*.<sup>5</sup> Orage, in a sense, symbolizes the teacher-student problem even more than Uspenskii and Bennett. He got much closer to Gurdjieff than either of the others and so, perhaps, well knew Gurdjieff's human side and his weaknesses. Orage's remark to Gurdjieff, for example, about the harmonium being a "sacred relic" was a pulling of the Messenger from Above's tail. Both Uspenskii and Bennett wanted to set up their own teaching. Orage simply wanted to remain a 'human being.' He was blind to the reason why he could not have his Jesse and his Gurdjieff, too.<sup>6</sup>

Gurdjieff tried to warn him but Orage was not listening. How deaf he had become is shown in the scene between Gurdjieff, Orage, and C. S. Nott<sup>7</sup> in which Gurdjieff speaks to the two men about his auto accident. Gurdjieff told them that he habitually picked an apple from a tree when driving from Paris to Fontainebleau. To do this, he drove with only one hand. On this particular day, he said, the wheel of his car must have bumped into something for afterward he could remember nothing. He was found with his head lying on a car cushion so as to stop the blood from his head wounds.

Having told this story, Gurdjieff continued, "You know, Orage," addressing him directly. Then he related to Orage how a man reacts when you do something for him. A man's attitude, he declared, would go from "kneeling and kissing your hand" to "suing you for not giving him enough." Gurdjieff ended by again repeating, "You know, Orage...we

5. It is said that in the original version Gurdjieff was much harder on Orage.

6. Gurdjieff's great generosity and compassion are seen in the *Third Series* where, along with the skewering of Orage and the reason for his failure, Gurdjieff revealed a great deal about himself and his own failures. Of the four books Gurdjieff wrote, it is the author's opinion, contrary to present opinion, that it is his greatest testament and that the text is *complete*, not incomplete.

7. See p. 115.

must pay for everything." After Gurdjieff leaves, Orage comments: "He was probably getting at us for not knowing how to give..."

To understand the true import of what has transpired we must know the issue between Orage and Gurdjieff. Like all students, Orage wanted knowledge but he had fallen in love with Jesse Dwight, a strong willed woman who seemed to have had little sense of or feeling for the Work, much less Gurdjieff's mission. She saw everything in the ordinary, formative way. She posed a great danger, therefore, to both Orage and Gurdjieff. In this sense, it could be said that the apple represented Jesse Dwight. Orage, given his many episodes with women over the years, thought, if with regard to this subject he was thinking at all, that he could have his 'native'<sup>8</sup> and Gurdjieff, too. He did not take this woman and the force she unconsciously represented seriously. But just as when Gurdjieff's vehicle hit an unexpected bump when he was not in full control of the car, Gurdjieff was warning Orage that his body would receive so great a shock from her that he would lose control over himself, i.e., lose his head. The result will be that Orage will remember nothing of his intention to awaken and the mission Gurdjieff has given him. Orage will self-calm himself from the spiritual catastrophe he has brought upon himself by resting his head on a cushion; that is, no longer thinking but enjoying creature comforts. It might be worthwhile, too, to consider the apple symbol as representing knowledge as in the Garden of Eden. (And for this, we must include the serpent, as well.)

Gurdjieff had given Orage a great deal but, with the giving, Orage's attitude changed. His self-love convinced him that he deserved and had assimilated what he has been given, and so he had no qualms about asking for more. As for Orage's remark that he and Nott don't know "how to give," (interesting how Orage includes Nott in this when Gurdjieff was clearly speaking to him) the real issue was not giving but that Orage was taking without paying. In effect, he was spiritually stealing. That he might have been "paying" in other ways was of no import. Only the teacher, the giver, can say how what he gives must be paid for.

Bennett's animal, had de Salzmann painted it, would likely have been a chameleon. Certainly, of the three men, Bennett was the most elusive. With time, the lives of Uspenskii and Orage took definite shape and proceeded along established lines, but Bennett's seemed to carom erratically from cushion to cushion, like a cue ball stroked with too much English. Where Uspenskii was concerned with finding "the new or forgotten road," the teaching that would release him from the circle of eternal recurrence...where for Orage it was the becoming of the Superman, an elder brother of the human race—for Bennett the one constant through-

8. A 'native' is a person totally identified with materialism.

out his life appeared to be the fifth dimension. (One says 'appeared' because with Bennett little is certain.)

Of the three, he left behind the largest and most varied body of writing. Certainly in terms of sheer volume he has many more books than both Gurdjieff and Uspenskii. Bennett has, as a result, had a major influence on the Work and, for some people, even defined it. Today, for example, many people talk about the "Bennett Work," as if he is on the same level as Gurdjieff, or, for that matter, Uspenskii and Orage.

Uspenskii thought Bennett "a criminal;" Gurdjieff thought him "a lunatic," that is, someone of unreliable values. In his writing, Bennett appeared quite candid about such shortcomings. For example, he admitted he had the "particularly irritating habit of telling lies, either from the desire to please people or from the impulse to avoid awkward situations. He wrote that, "I was well aware that I had no stable attitude. I had often compared myself to a chameleon that takes the colour of every background."

More to the point: "My exasperating habit of agreeing upon a course of action and then doing something quite different is tolerable only for those who can value a little gold even when mixed with much dross. I could make real sacrifices for the sake of unity and then destroy all the good-will I had gained by following a course of action I had agreed to forswear."

That, intellectually, Bennett saw a great deal about himself cannot be doubted. But did his admissions ever really reach his feelings? Did he ever come to realize his own powerlessness, nothingness, in the face of his weaknesses? Or, did he shield himself from his weaknesses by admitting them, seeming to hold nothing back? For example, shortly after the twenty-seven-year-old Bennett first came to the Prieuré in August 1923, Gurdjieff gave him what he called his "great experience."

Gurdjieff revealed himself to Bennett in a way he appears not to have done with Uspenskii or Orage (at least neither makes any mention of it). Gurdjieff infused Bennett with his *Hanbledzoin*—"I was filled with the influx of an immense power," said Bennett. Later, Gurdjieff told him: "There are some people in the world, but they are very rare, who are connected to a great reservoir or accumulator of this energy...those who have this quality belong to a special part of the highest caste of humanity...what you have received today is a taste of what is possible for you."

Gurdjieff then asked Bennett to stay on at the Prieuré and work with him. But Bennett was wary. His life was a long string of 'great experiences.' It was Bennett's blessing and curse. Always in motion, he feasted on experience. He was wary of coming under another man's will and direction, getting tied down. Like Uspenskii and Orage, Bennett had problematic relationship with his father. Whereas Uspenskii's and Orage's fathers died early in their lives—each one becoming at that time

the 'man of the family'—Bennett's father died when Bennett was an adult. However, the impression Bennett gives in his memoir *Witness* was that his father was absent from the home. Bennett characterized his father as being "incurably optimistic...constantly making plans for new journeys and new undertakings to make us all rich." Bennett's mother, coming from a puritanical New England family, likely held her husband in contempt for, as Bennett framed it, his father had an "inability to behave properly either in sexual or in financial matters." In effect, although for different reasons, Bennett became, like Uspenskii and Orage, his household's surrogate father.

The archetypal role of the father in the family is that of a king, and all three men were 'kings' before they were adults. They became used to being adored and having their own way. Kings do not lightly become princes.

So, looking for a way to decline Gurdjieff's invitation to remain at the Prieuré, and the 'demotion' entailed by acceptance, Bennett asked him—"If I should stay with you, how much time would be needed?"

He expected Gurdjieff would tell him twenty years. Instead Gurdjieff answered—"If you will devote all your energies to the task, it may take two years before you can work alone." *You can work alone.* Gurdjieff saw Bennett's chief feature and spoke to it.

To no other pupil is it recorded that Gurdjieff ever gave such a time limit and promise. Whether Gurdjieff was really serious is another matter. Whatever, Gurdjieff also promised to take Bennett with him to America to act as his interpreter. In sum, he was telling Bennett he would work closely with him. As appealing as that opportunity sounded, Bennett, nevertheless, insisted that he must leave, he had debts to pay off. He would return afterward, he said. Gurdjieff, under heavy financial burdens and cash-strapped himself, said he would pay all Bennett's bills. From Bennett's description, one gets the sense that Gurdjieff was almost pleading with Bennett to stay on. But Bennett was having none of it. He walked away, never to return to the Prieuré.

Later, Bennett explained why he left, twisting his interpretation strangely: "It was much rather as if Gurdjieff himself had withdrawn from me, and would not let me follow him." With Bennett—undoubtedly the most creative and daring of the three pupils—one has the disquieting feeling that, despite his many accomplishments, there was always something off center.

It would be twenty-five years before the fifty-one-year-old John Godolphin Bennett would reunite with Gurdjieff. Gurdjieff found Bennett immature and ignorant. Perhaps what he was really pointing to was that Bennett was a young soul, much younger than Uspenskii or Orage. (As Uspenskii once told Bennett: "You are like Madame [Uspenskii]. Both of

you have young souls. You have not the experience of living many times on this earth.")

Gurdjieff, according to Bennett, on several occasions likened their relationship to that between Judas and Jesus. "Mr. Bennett," says Gurdjieff, "is like Judas; he is responsible for that my work is not destroyed...."

Gurdjieff remarked to Bennett that Uspenskii's pupils, who were then coming to him, were spoiled by their being too intellectual. Bennett asked if Gurdjieff found *his* pupils spoiled. "No," Gurdjieff replied, "your people are not spoiled, but lunatic. With lunatic I can do something, not with spoiled."

It was Bennett who put forward the idea that Gurdjieff sent students away for their own development, thus taking the onus from those who left Gurdjieff. This idea along with its companion idea of 'graduating' from the Work, has created much confusion. Gurdjieff was preparing "helper-instructors" who would be instrumental in enlarging the Work and who could take part, as he expressed it, "in God's government." Certainly, some people were sent away. But this was because they were either unsuitable or could be of no further use. Both of Bennett's ideas, of course, are self-serving. Both support his own leaving of Gurdjieff, and later his disobeying of Uspenskii, and establishing his own line of teaching.

For Uspenskii, Bennett had been something of a problem child since the spring of 1928 when Bennett was jailed in Athens. Upon Bennett's return to London later that year, Uspenskii refused to speak to him. So Bennett, always the consummate political chess player, formed his own group. But slyly (always making a move that attacked in two directions simultaneously), he also sent Uspenskii transcripts of his meetings, implying that if Uspenskii disapproved of what he read, then, as Bennett said, "I would stop." As Bennett had been in the Work less than five years at best, it was indeed presumptuous of him, unauthorized, to start his own group. At the very least it revealed a lack of valuation. Moreover, exactly what he meant by saying "I would stop" Bennett left, quite characteristically, ambiguous. Would he stop speaking about whatever Uspenskii objected to? Or did he mean he would disband his group? In any event, Bennett would have forced Uspenskii to do what Uspenskii had decided not to do—to make a move, i.e., to break his vow and communicate with him. Whatever Uspenskii did then, whether he moved or didn't move, communicated or remained silent, Bennett 'wins.' For if Uspenskii made no reply (which he did) Bennett could then interpret this lack of response favorably, i.e., as Uspenskii's tacit approval of his activities.

In 1930 Uspenskii made his peace with the 'devil.' Seeking to expand his Work and needing able helpers, he invited Bennett to join him. For a time, things went well, but towards the end of the decade Uspenskii,

probably coming to the conclusion that Bennett could not be worked with, moved him outside his inner circle. In January 1941, with Uspenskii leaving for America, Bennett asked him about the reason for his lack of progress in the Work, wondering if it was because of a lack of a certain method or technique.

Uspenskii told him straight away: "It has nothing to do with methods. Your trouble is that you always make false starts. All your work consists of *false starts*." [Author's italics]

Bennett then shifted the conversation to the subject of group work: that is, Bennett's own groups.

Again, Uspenskii was quite direct.

"I can only consider the work [groups] at Lyne. The rest, so far as I am concerned, is dissolved."

The clear implication is that Uspenskii was telling Bennett to dissolve his groups.

Bennett, however, did not follow up on this, but again shifted to another subject. "Have you any objection to my trying to write out the System as far as I can remember?" he asked, making it sound—"trying to write out the System"—as if this would be an outline for his own purposes, and not the four volume study he planned to write.

Uspenskii told him: "In my opinion, writing is not useful."

After Uspenskii embarked for America, Bennett began drafting one chapter of a book every week. Hearing of this, Uspenskii sent a message to Bennett telling him no one was permitted to write anything about the System without his, that is Uspenskii's, permission. Bennett neatly side-stepped this by evolving his own philosophy, or teaching, centering it on the triads. Later, in 1945, Bennett would go even further and give public lectures. It was then that Uspenskii openly branded him "a charlatan and a thief" and instructed his pupils to have nothing to do with Bennett.

After Gurdjieff's death, Bennett crusaded for the Work, but his ideas and actions met with resistance from his peers. Stymied, he turned to Subud and later had a sojourn with Idries Shah. Then, envisioning a coming crisis for humanity,<sup>9</sup> Bennett opened his own school in England, hoping to do in only ten months what Gurdjieff himself had failed to do at the Prieuré in two years—prepare a core of "helper-instructors." His experiment in accelerated development was called by his critics the "Bennettron." During his students' residency, Bennett introduced them to intensive work with many different kinds of exercises and ideas taken from different schools. They studied Gurdjieff's books, as well, heard lectures by Bennett that ranged far and wide over esoteria, practiced the movements and *zikr*, fasted, staged theatricals, and did community service.

In California, biologist and author Robert de Ropp had also started a center to teach the Work, Church of the Earth. Some of his pupils left to study with Bennett. Upon their return, de Ropp says he "had expected well-trained, obedient, ready-for-service disciples. I received rebellious, starry-eyed, self-opinionated 'adepts.'... They were, as they put it, Messengers of the Higher Powers."

Of Bennett's critics, it is perhaps de Ropp who offered the most balanced insight into the complexity of the man.

The man was a Warrior of the first order, but ambitious. That was his problem. There were two men in Bennett. The first was a very sincere Seeker After Truth, who would spare no expense, no trouble, to learn more about the great game [transformation]. That aspect of Bennett I admired. But there was a second aspect. I called it the Arch-Vainglorious Greek. It was a Gurdjieffian term and referred to Alexander of Macedon, the strutting hero who had spread havoc all the way from Greece to India and then expressed regret that there were no more worlds to conquer... the Seeker After Truth was basically humble and sincere, content with little, modest and retiring. But the Greek was ambitious, full of great schemes, always liable to overextend himself, to attempt too much.

However one looks at Bennett, the feeling is that one has no sure footing. There is, to be sure, with all the dross, a lot of gold in Bennett. He, along with Uspenskii and Orage, added a great deal to the Work. Whatever his human failings, many of his ideas are potent, visionary, and bring a perspective not to be dismissed.

In terms of the line of the teaching, the octave of the Work, its force, was again halved with Bennett, as it had been with Uspenskii. Should the Uspenskii and Bennett versions of Gurdjieff's work be reintegrated with the original teaching, then the teaching that Gurdjieff payed so dearly to bring to those of mankind for whom it was prepared would regain its original force.

9. It is interesting to consider Uspenskii, Orage, and Bennett in terms of the future. Uspenskii is quite pessimistic and, given his theory of eternal recurrence, is looking backward. Orage gives little indication of what he thinks. Of the three men, Bennett is the most future-oriented. His insights and assessments are mostly on target and his recognition of what was needed following Gurdjieff's death seems now, in hindsight, to be largely true. Many of his ideas could have been helpful. But he could not subsume himself for long to any group effort which he did not lead. He was a slave to his own brilliance. He left perhaps three hundred or so students, some of whom are still connected with communities that he envisioned would act as "arks" in what he saw as the certain collapse of society; a collapse he thought would come about in the 1980s. Whether Bennett helped or hindered the Work after Gurdjieff's death remains a matter of heated opinion.

In all that has happened between Gurdjieff and his students, we may have lost sight of why, in fact, Gurdjieff came to us. Frank Pinder, a long-time student of Gurdjieff's, gives the most thoughtful summation:

Gurdjieff came to strike a big Doh, to help the upflow of the Law of Seven against the current of mechanical life... Gurdjieff came to give us a New World, a new idea of God, of the purpose of life, of sex, of war. But who are 'Us'? 'Us' are those who accept him and his teaching and help to carry out this work. This world of ours cannot be saved in our measure of time. Had it been possible it would have been 'saved' long ago by prophets and teachers who have been sent. Those who look for the world to be saved by a single teacher in a given time are shirking their own responsibility. They wait in hope of a 'second coming' with no effort on their part—indulging in the disease of tomorrow.

## NOTES

INTELLIGENTSIA. The word first entered the English language through Russian émigrés. It had been adopted from French and German, where in the 1830-1840s the term was used to designate educated citizens with progressive interests. Having a university education was not enough; one had to also have a strong interest in the public good. The word, then, referred to academics, men of letters, journalists, writers, and professional revolutionaries. With the twin emergence of scientific advances and secular societies, European intellectuals appeared in the sixteenth century as a distinct group who considered traditional philosophical questions outside the clerical and theological bulwarks. Dominating thought in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was the Socratic idea of innate ideas which had entered Western thought through St. Augustine. The immutability of human nature posited in such thought meant that people's behavior was also immutable. In 1690 John Locke's *Essay on Human Understanding* rejected the concept of innate ideas, declaring that all ideas had their genesis in sensory experience (thus, the beginnings of Behaviorism). In 1758 Claude Helvétius, the French philosopher, siphoned off the political ramifications of Locke's theory of knowledge and made a great leap of reasoning, arguing that since all of man's knowledge and values were the result of sensory experience, then if that experience can be controlled, it is possible to affect and determine people's thought and behavior. Says Richard Pipes in *The Russian Revolution*, "This is one of the most revolutionary ideas in the history of political thought: by extrapolation from an esoteric theory of knowledge, a new political theory is born with the most momentous practical implications." The control of sensory data, i.e., environment, is to be through reason, through rationality, which is of course the province of the intellectuals, the intelligentsia, or what we today would call the "cognitive elite." Unlike in England, the intelligentsia in Russia (as in France) was not allowed to participate in public life, a fact observed by de Tocqueville, and so they tended to run aground in extreme ideologies based on reason alone.

Only in an open and egalitarian society in which independent opinion can flourish can the intelligentsia have influence. The Russian intelligentsia came into being in the 1860s as the result of the Great Reforms of Tsar Alexander II. "To understand the [Russian] intelligentsia," writes Pipes, "it is imperative to keep in mind at all times its deliberate detachment from reality: for while the revolutionaries can be ruthlessly pragmatic in exploiting, for tactical purposes, the people's grievances, their notion of what the people desire is the product of sheer abstraction." There could be no belief in God or the immortality of the soul or accident in human affairs if one was to be a 'pure' Russian intellectual.

A HERO OF OUR TIME. Uspenskii speaks about the author, Mikhail Lermontov, in the chapter "Eternal Recurrence and the Laws of Manu" of his *A New Model of the Universe*, pp. 472-473. "The feeling of the repetition of events was very strong in Lermontoff," wrote Uspenskii. "He is full of presentiments, expectations, 'memories.' He constantly alludes to these sensations, especially in his prose. 'The Fatalist' [a chapter in *A Hero of Our Time*] is practically written on the theme of repetition and of remembering that which seems to have happened in some unknown past. Many passages in 'The Princess' and in 'Bela', especially the philosophical digressions, produce the impression that Lermontoff himself is trying to remember something that he has forgotten....In our time the idea of recurrence and even the possibility of half-conscious remembering becomes more and more pressing and necessary. In *The Life of Napoleon* (1928), D. S. Merejkovsky constantly alludes to Napoleon in the phrases 'he knew' ('remembered'). And later, in dealing with Napoleon's last years in Europe, 'he forgot' ('he ceased to remember')...I wished only to show that the idea of repetition and recollection of the *past* which is not in our time is far from being foreign to Western thought."

Translated by Vladimir and Dmitri Nabokov, the novel is published by Everyman's Library (Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1992). For a review of the book see *Telos* #8.

USPENSKII'S MOTHER, SISTER, AND WIFE. It is unclear when Uspenskii's mother and sister died. In J. H. Reyner's biography, *Ouspensky: Unsung Genius*, he has the twenty-year old Uspenskii and his mother visiting Paris in 1898 and her dying "shortly afterwards." Colin Wilson in his *The Strange Life of P. D. Ouspensky* says she died in 1894. Neither cite sources. Reyner states that the sister died "a few years after" her 1905 imprisonment. Wilson has her dying in 1908, the year when Uspenskii writes in his "Autobiographical Fragment" that he traveled to Constantinople, Smyrna, Greece, and Egypt. Reyner, oddly, speaks of Uspenskii meeting Sophie Grigorievna about 1905, well before his 1912 meeting

with Anna Butkovsky. Wilson says nothing of when they met. James Webb in his *The Harmonious Circle* ignores Uspenskii's early life, as does James Moore in his *Gurdjieff: An Anatomy of a Myth*.

FOURTH DIMENSION. In 1898 at the age of twenty, Uspenskii published his first book *The Fourth Dimension*. The two books by the Englishman C. H. Hinton, *A New Era of Thought* (1910) and *The Fourth Dimension* (1912), were a great influence on Uspenskii.

THEOSOPHY. Originated with Helena Blavatsky, a Russian occultist, medium, and author of *Isis Unveiled*, *Voice of Silence*, and *The Secret Doctrine*. Blavatsky's teaching draws heavily on esoteric Buddhism. In Gurdjieff's view Theosophy, and Western occultism, represent "a mixture of fundamental lines. Both lines bear in themselves grains of truth, but neither of them possesses full knowledge and therefore attempts to bring them to practical realization give only negative results." *Search*, p. 286.

RUSSIAN THEOSOPHY. Though theosophy had its adherents in Russia, it took root only through the efforts of Anna Alekseevna Kamenskaia (1867-1952), who organized the Russian Theosophical Society in 1908, lectured endlessly, and edited the Society's journal *Vestnik Teosofii*. The Society's headquarters was in St. Petersburg and Uspenskii was considered one of the leading theosophical thinkers and writers. A detailed history of the Theosophical movement in Russia is given in Maria Carlson's "*No Religion Higher than Truth*" (Princeton University Press, 1993).

THE QUEST SOCIETY. Formed in 1909 by G. R. S. Mead, Madame Blavatsky's secretary and a leading Theosophical writer and gnostic historian, because of the readmittance of C. W. Leadbetter into membership in the Theosophical Society by Annie Besant, its president. Leadbetter had been accused of pedophilia. The Quest Society still followed the Theosophical teachings and so the link between Uspenskii and theosophy continued when Uspenskii arrived in London.

PAUL DUKES AND 'PRINCE OZAY.' In his book, *Unending Quest* (Cassell & Co. Ltd., 1950), Dukes writes that he and P. D. Uspenskii "used to sit up long nights discussing mysticism, in particular the system of G. I. Gurdjieff, undoubtedly one of the great living teachers, whom Uspenskii acknowledged as master, but from whom he had none the less parted company." It is difficult to believe that a man of Dukes' intelligence and worldliness (he earned a knighthood by the age of thirty as Secret Agent ST 25) would not make the connection that Prince Ozay is Gurdjieff. Simply in terms of ideas it appears that many of Ozay's are similar to, if not identical, with Gurdjieff's. It seems odd that Dukes does not at least

mention the similarity in ideas. Moreover, Dukes clearly holds the Prince in high repute—he made a lifelong impression on him. If he believed Ozay was Gurdjieff, he would have certainly have sought Gurdjieff out in Paris after the war. But Dukes makes no mention of it. So either the two are of different identities or, for some reason Dukes—could he have believed Uspenskii's depiction of Gurdjieff as having gone mad?!—does not wish to acknowledge it. The only facts Dukes gives that mitigate against Gurdjieff being Ozay is that the Prince speaks better English than Russian and claims to have been in “many churches in England and America.”

**GURDJIEFF'S BIRTH.** In February 1930 Gurdjieff burned all his private papers, documents, and passports before going to America so, to date, there is no factual authentication of his date of birth. Most authors have taken this date as being 1877. However, James Moore, in his biography, *Gurdjieff: Anatomy of a Myth*, argues for 1866. He bases this largely on *Meetings with Remarkable Men* (p. 41) where Gurdjieff remarks that he was “about seven years old” when a cattle plague happened. Moore has evidence that in 1872-73 a rinderpest cattle plague developed in the area where Gurdjieff lived, thus Gurdjieff was born in 1866.

I believe that Gurdjieff was born—not in 1877 or 1866—but in 1872. This is based on dates Gurdjieff gives in *Meetings*. The year 1888 (pp. 64-65) plays a big part in Gurdjieff's life. It is then that he sees the Yezidi in the circle, learns of the evil spirit in the corpse of the Tartar, drinks for the first time, is accidentally shot in the leg, has a “silent romance” with a girl twelve or thirteen years old, and has the artillery range duel with Karpenko. If as Moore suggests, Gurdjieff was born in 1866, Gurdjieff would have been twenty-two years old when he fell in love with a girl nine to ten years his junior. This hardly seems likely. Born in 1877, Gurdjieff would have been eleven; if 1872, he would be sixteen. Both dates are feasible, though logic tends toward the 1872 date. We know from *Meetings* that Bogachevsky, or Father Evlissi, Gurdjieff's teacher, arrived in Kars in 1886, the year Gurdjieff's sister dies and he becomes interested in “abstract questions.” Using the 1866 birth date, Gurdjieff would be twenty years old when Bogachevsky arrived; if 1872, fourteen; if 1877, nine years old. Again, the 1872 birth date seems the more reasonable. Further, Gurdjieff would be either twenty-two, sixteen, or ten years of age when he ‘dueled’ with Karpenko. It's hard to believe that Gurdjieff at twenty-two would do anything so mad.

Olga de Hartmann felt Gurdjieff was considerably older than the birth date of 1877 but was unable to prove it. As her passport gave her birth date as 1896 when she was actually born in 1885, she dismissed the 1877 date given on Gurdjieff's passport. And, as stated in the footnotes, Louise Goepfert (March), Gurdjieff's secretary for many years, gives his

birthdays as 1872 in an unpublished essay she wrote within a year of his death, “Gurdjieff: An Indication of His Life and Work.” Of all his followers J. G. Bennett has perhaps made the most intensive search into Gurdjieff's background. In his *Gurdjieff: A Very Great Enigma*, p. 8, he stated: “So far as I myself can make out from various sources, from what he himself and his family have told us, it does seem probably that he was born in 1872, in Alexandropol.” Lastly, the first edition of *All and Everything* gave the year of his birth as 1872 on the dust jacket. In later editions, at his younger sister's insistence, the year was changed to 1877.

**GURDJIEFF IN RUSSIA.** The general consensus is that Gurdjieff arrived in Moscow in 1912. However, he is remembered to say in “The Material Question,” an addition to *Meetings With Remarkable Men*, that he arrived in Moscow the late part of 1913 (p. 270). In the Institute's prospectus circulated in 1922 it says, “Only a small number of them [Seekers After Truth] returned to Russia in 1913, with Mr. Gurdjieff at their head.”

**SERGEI DMITRIEVICH MERCOUROV.** Fifteen years younger than Gurdjieff, Mercourov was born on October 21, 1888, in Alexandropol. A cousin of Gurdjieff's, Mercourov's family were next door neighbors of Gurdjieff's family. Growing up, he developed somewhat of an interest in the occult and Hindu philosophy, but his passion was sculpting. His first commissions were of the Khan of Nakhichevan's concubines. Well regarded in Moscow circles before and after the Revolution, he took the death mask of Leo Tolstoi in 1910. Later in 1924 he took Lenin's death mask, executed a number of statues of him, and in 1939 was awarded the Order of Lenin. The first mention of Mercourov as the “M” to which Uspenskii alludes appears first in James Webb's 1980 biography, *The Harmonious Circle*, p. 93.

**SEEKERS AFTER TRUTH.** Gurdjieff tells the names of thirteen members of the group: Prince Yuri Lubovedsky; Professor Skridlov, anthropologist; Dr. Ekim Bey, hypnotist; Piotr Karpenko, mining engineer; Abram Yelov, linguist; Sarkis Pogossian, priest; Dashtamirov, astronomer; Baron X, ardent occultist; Vitvitskaia; Soloviev; Prince Nijeradze; Dr. Sari-Ogli; and Samsanov. Thomas de Hartmann, in his and his wife's book, *Our Life With Mr. Gurdjieff*, (p. 72) reports Gurdjieff saying there were fifteen members of the group, and that “There were also women...” So the last and unnamed member of the group must have been a woman. Three of the fifteen died during their expeditions. In terms of religion they were Orthodox, Catholic, Muslim, Jew, and Buddhist.

In the original manuscript of *Meetings With Remarkable Men*, Gurdjieff devoted a chapter Prince Nijeradze. Several times Gurdjieff rewrote this chapter but never completed it. Writes Bennett in *Gurdjieff: Making a New World*, p. 178, “We gather that Prince Nijeradze had been

concerned in some embarrassing episode connected with the difficulty Gurdjieff came up against, through having broken some of the rules of one of the Brotherhoods where he had been receiving help and teaching. One who heard the chapter read in 1933, recounts that it produced a profound impression by its account of the state of man who wakes up after dying and realizes that he has lost the chief instrument of his life, his body, and recalls all he could have done with it while he was still alive."

ANNA ILINISHNA BUTKOVSKY. In her book, *With Gurdjieff in St. Petersburg and Paris*, she twice writes that she first met Uspenskii in 1916. Later, she mentions his going to India and then returning. But we know from *In Search of the Miraculous* that he returned to Russia in November 1914. She also writes that she first heard of Uspenskii through his book, *Tertium Organum*, which was published in 1912. She writes her book in 1975 at ninety years of age and is likely to have been confused about dates. With James Moore, we take her first meeting with Uspenskii to be in 1912. However, Moore has Uspenskii first speaking to Anna about Gurdjieff when he returns from Moscow after a week of meetings with Gurdjieff in April 1915. In Anna's book, however, she writes: "You remember I told you [says Uspenskii] the time I went to Moscow... Well, that man is here now, in Petersburg. I've just come from him this moment." On the preceding page she writes: "Now that Uspenskii was back in St. Petersburg we resumed our morning meetings..." Clearly, there was a good deal of time that had elapsed.

THE STRANGE LIFE OF IVAN OSOKIN. Did Uspenskii self-publish the book before or after his April 1915 meeting with Gurdjieff? The likelihood is afterward, and if so, then he would have rewritten the scenes in which the magician appears. The magician then is Gurdjieff. And Zinaida may be Anna Butkovsky. On p. 131, Zinaida asks Osokin: "Well, are you going to Australia soon?" In Butkovsky's book, Uspenskii talks to Anna about going to Australia, p. 30.

LENIN. Brilliant, compulsive and secretive, Lenin's chief feature was hatred. Says Peter Struve, who had frequent dealings with Lenin in the 1890s: "His principal *Einstellung*—to use the new popular German psychological term— was *hatred*. Lenin took to Marx's doctrine primarily because it found response in that principal *Einstellung* of his mind. The doctrine of the class war, relentless and thoroughgoing, aiming at the final destruction and extermination of the enemy, proved congenial to Lenin's emotional attitude to surrounding reality. He hated not only the existing autocracy (the Tsar) and the bureaucracy, not only lawlessness and arbitrary rule of the police, but also their antipodes—the 'liberals' and the 'bourgeoisie.' That hatred had something repulsive and terrible

in it; for being rooted in the concrete, I should say even animal, emotions and repulsions, it was at the same time abstract and cold like Lenin's whole being." According to Lenin the decisive influence on him as a young man were the writings of Nicholas Chernyshevskii. A leading radical of the 1860s, Chernyshevskii was the author of *What is to be done?* a novel portraying the existing world as corrupt and doomed. Its hero, Rakhmetov, is the "new man" of iron will who is totally dedicated to radical change. Lenin borrowed the novel's title for his first political tract. Born in April 1870 to a well-off bureaucratic family, Lenin was expelled from the university for revolutionary activity. In 1893 he moved to St. Petersburg where he studied Marx's *Das Kapital* and agitated the workers. He was consequently jailed in 1895 and later given a Siberian exile from 1897 to 1900. After he was deported, he lived in a number of European capitals before finally taking residence in Switzerland. In appearance, Lenin was quite provincial looking and not at all attractive. In his *The Russian Revolution*, Pipes writes: "His strength of will, indomitable discipline, energy, asceticism, and unshakable faith in the [revolutionary] cause had an effect that can only be conveyed by the overused term of 'charisma.'" But he alone, of everyone, whatever side they were on, proved himself the grand master at revolutionary chess. His analysis was far deeper and more realistic. At all times he knew exactly his position on the "board," its strengths and weaknesses in terms of material force and time, and that of his opponents. Without illusion, he was an implacable foe. His will to win was absolute. No costs were too large. Tactics he could adapt to the moment, but the overall rightness of his strategy was never in doubt. He had long studied the French Revolution and would not make the mistakes of Robespierre whose cardinal mistake, according to Lenin was its "excessive generosity—it should have exterminated its enemies." He would seem to be a classic prototype for the Gurdjieffian hasnamus. "The question of power is the fundamental question of every revolution," said Lenin. And in his most famous remark, "Kto kogo?" or "Who-whom?" He says, that is, "Who masters whom?"

THE REVOLUTION. Lenin understood the crucial importance of timing. Writes Trotsky: "If we had not seized power in October we would not have seized it at all. Our strength before October lay in the uninterrupted influx of the masses, who believed that this party would do what the others had not done. If they had seen any vacillation at this moment on our part, any delay, any incongruity between word and deed, then in the course of two or three months they would have drifted away from us... It was just this that made Lenin decide to act."

SINCERITY. "I remember Uspenskii speaking very interestingly once in New York about sincerity. We think we have only to decide to be and we can be. But sincerity has to be learnt, slowly and painfully. Takes a long time. And when one finds sincerity on one level, one realizes that there is another completely different level of sincerity hidden beneath."—*The Theory of Conscious Harmony*, Rodney Collin, (p. 77). Said Gurdjieff in a meeting, "Many things are necessary for observing oneself, the first is being sincere with oneself. It is much easier to be sincere with a friend. Man is afraid to see something bad, and if by accident, looking deep down, he sees his own bad, he sees his nothingness. We have the habit of driving away thoughts about ourselves because we fear remorse. Sincerity may be the key which will open the door through which one part can see another part. With sincerity man may look and see something. Sincerity with oneself is very difficult, for a thick crust has grown over essence. Each year man puts on a new dress, new mask, one after another. All must be gradually removed, for until they are removed, man cannot see."

TRIADS. Intellectually, one of the most interesting of Bennett's many ideas is that every law has both a pure and impure form. This was why there had been no headway made with the triads. "Uspenskii had failed to recognize the true cosmic character of several of the triads," says Bennett.

THE DEVIL ACCORDING TO USPENSKII. "'The Devil,' that is, the slanderer or tempter, was in the original text [of the New Testament] simply a name or description which could be applied to any 'slanderer' or 'tempter.' And it is possible to suppose that these names were often used to designate the visible, deceptive, illusory, phenomenal world, 'Maya.' But we are too much under the influence of mediaeval demonology. And it is difficult for us to understand that in the New Testament there is no *general idea* of the devil. There is the idea of evil, the idea of temptation, the idea of demons, the idea of an unclean spirit, the idea of the prince of the demons; there is Satan who tempted Jesus; but all these ideas are separate and distinct from one another, always allegorical and very far from the mediaeval conception of the Devil." Speaking of the biblical phrase where Christ says, *get thee hence*, Satan, Uspenskii says that in this case Satan "represented the visible, phenomenal world, which must not "get hence" by any means, but must only serve the inner world, follow it, *go behind it*." *A New Model of the Universe*, "Christianity and New Testament," 154-55. For a serious study of this area, see *The Old Enemy: Satan & The Combat Myth* by Neil Forsyth, (Princeton University Press, 1987).

EVIL. Uspenskii quotes Gurdjieff in *Search* as saying that there can be no conscious evil. But in a deleted passage from the original draft he writes: "I said, 'Do you wish to say that there can be conscious evil, and

he [Gurdjieff] certainly said it can be. Anything that produces big phenomena can have mind and intelligence behind it. Then I remember he said—'Why are you upset?' I was upset because it meant changing all I thought before. He said, "It becomes even more interesting—it is one thing to have against you only mechanical forces and quite another to have intelligence; it is one thing to struggle with intelligence, and another to struggle with mechanical forces." Gurdjieff added that "If in a full sense conscious evil is possible, it is only possible in a very elaborate way and a very rare case." In *All and Everything*, Gurdjieff gives another perspective on the word 'evil,' p. 1139.

CONSTANTINOPLE PERIOD. The notes of Boris Ferapontoff, which extend from February 1920 through the summer of 1921, give a glance of how the teaching was presented at that time. It was said, for example, that "sol 12 can sometimes pass to la 6, if the shock was sufficiently strong, for instance, with the help of artificial, or sometimes, natural breathing." Ferapontoff stayed with Gurdjieff through the Prieuré period and was appointed along with five others, including Sophia Uspenskii, Jeanne de Salzmann, Olga Hinzenberg, Elizabeta Galumnian, and Dr. Konstantin Kiselev, as an Assistant Instructor of the Institute of Harmonious Development of Man. He taught movements at the Prieuré and, of all the Russian pupils, spoke the most fluent English. Ferapontoff died in 1930.

THE IDEAS. Uspenskii's appreciation for the Ideas that Gurdjieff brought never wavered. Though he recognized that "some separate fragments of it could be found elsewhere, but not connected and put together" in the form that Gurdjieff presented. He always understood that their origin was beyond ordinary life. In 1926 he wrote in *Fragments*, "The system is waiting for workers. There is no statement and no thought in it which would not require and admit further development and elaboration... [however] ordinary intellectual study of the system is quite insufficient; and there are very few people who agree to other methods of study who are at the same time capable of working by these methods." He understood that the power of the Ideas and the course of involution would have them eventually entering into scientific and philosophic language. "But," he says, "they will enter in the wrong form. There will be no right distinction between doing and happening, and many thoughts of ordinary thinking will be mixed with these ideas; so they will not be ideas we know now, only [the] words will be similar."

C. DALY KING. King (1895-1962) believes Orage, and not Uspenskii, taught the true Gurdjieff canon. Uspenskii he sees as having introduced into the Work "a sort of overlay of religious enthusiasm and of mystical atmosphere." In particular he finds Uspenskii's characterizations of self-

remembering and self-observation as fuzzy, saying they lack "rigorous and conclusive definition" and finding them more "far more introspective than genuinely objective." He also disagrees with the concept that man has many "I"s. Wrote King in his last book, *The States of Human Consciousness* (1963) "...in the waking state, as elsewhere, there can be only a single 'I'-entity involved." Earlier, wishing to preserve the teaching as he had received it from Orage, King had written *The Oragean Version* (1951) which remains unpublished. His other books include: *Integrative Psychology* (1931); *The Psychology of Consciousness* (1932) and *Heritage, A Social Interpretation of the History of Ancient Egypt*, unpublished. King appears to be a classic representative of man number three, the man who refers everything to the intellect.

MARGARET ANDERSON. (1889-1973). A woman of high energy, great beauty and sensitivity, Margaret Anderson lived a large portion of her life living by her feelings and emotions, trying to attain one of three states: liberty, ecstasy, and peace. The way many live out of the intellectual center, Margaret lived out of the emotional center. Wrote Hugh Ford, in his *Four Lives in Paris*, "Feeling, emotion, sensation, nuance, fine distinctions, and emanations were the qualities Margaret pursued and celebrated, none of which, in her opinion, intellectuals comprehended or considered useful. She prided herself on knowing what they did not know or did not care about." When Orage advised her, "Remember you're a pianist, not a piano," a recodification of Gurdjieff's "Act, don't be acted upon," she came to learn, as she phrased it, "The quality of every life is determined exclusively by its position in relation to acting or being acted upon." Her longtime companion, Georgette Leblanc, a singer and great beauty herself, never felt comfortable with intellectuals for as she said, "We live for emotions...they live for events. In our relations with people, we wait on the development of personal atmosphere; they don't wait, they crouch....They become critics." Margaret Anderson appears to be a classic representative of man number two, who refers everything to the emotional center.

THE INDIVIDUAL IS THE ONLY HOPE. During his talks at the Prieuré, Gurdjieff sometimes spoke of the historical situation. In *Boyhood With Gurdjieff*, pp. 160-61, Fritz Peters recounts him saying that "history had already proven to us that such tools as politics, religion, and any other organized movements which treated man 'in the mass' and not as individual beings, were failures. That they would always be failures and that the separate, distinct growth of each individual in the world was the only possible solution....As an individual developed his own, unknown potentialities, he would become strong and would, in turn, influence

many more people. If enough individuals could develop themselves—even partially—into genuine, natural men, able to use the real potentialities that were proper to mankind, each such individual would then be able to convince and win over as many as a hundred other men, who would, each in his turn, upon achieving development, be able to influence another hundred, and so on...."

ORAGE AND KATHERINE MANSFIELD. One of the few letters preserved among Orage's personal papers was a letter Katherine Mansfield had written to him on February 9, 1921.

Dear Orage,

This letter has been on the tip of my pen for many months.

I want to tell you how sensible I am of your wonderful unflinching kindness to me in the "old days." And to thank you for all you let me learn from you. I am still—more shame to me—very low down in the school. But you taught me to write, you taught me to think; you showed me what there was to be done and what not to do.

My dear Orage, I cannot tell you how often I call to mind your conversation or how often, in writing, I remember my master. Does that sound impertinent? Forgive me if it does.

But let me thank you, Orage—thank you for everything. If only one day I might write a book of stories good enough to "offer" you...If I don't succeed in keeping the coffin from the door you will know this was my ambition.

Yours, in admiration and gratitude  
Katherine Mansfield

I haven't said a bit of what I want to say. This letter sounds as if it was written by a screwdriver, and I wanted it to sound like an admiring, respectful, but warm piping beneath your windows. I'd like to send my love too, if I wasn't so frightened.

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### GUIDE TO THE REFERENCES

Each quotation or significant fact is designated by the code for the source material and the page upon which it appears. Thus:

I waited all these years. OLWG 54  
means the material will be found in the book *Our Life with Mr. Gurdjieff* on page 54.

### KEY TO THE TITLES

- AE ..... *All and Everything.* G. I. Gurdjieff  
AMDS ... *After Many a Summer Dies the Swan.* Aldous Huxley  
AMY ..... *All My Yesterdays.* Cecil Lewis  
ARO ..... *A.R. Orage.* Philip Mairet  
BWG ..... *Boyhood with Gurdjieff.* Fritz Peters  
BI ..... "Beloved Icarus." Joyce Collin-Smith  
BL..... Beinecke Library  
CPDO... "The Case of P. D. Ouspensky." Marie Seton  
E..... *Essentials.* Jean Toomer  
FLP..... *Four Lives In Paris.* Hugh Ford  
FR ..... *A Further Record.* P. D. Ouspensky  
GAB ..... *Gurdjieff: An Annotated Bibliography.* J. Walter Driscoll  
GAM ..... *Gurdjieff: Anatomy of a Myth.* James Moore  
GGE ..... *Gurdjieff: A Very Great Enigma.* John G. Bennett  
GKM ..... *Gurdjieff and Katherine Mansfield.* James Moore  
GMNW. *Gurdjieff: Making a New World.* John G. Bennett  
GR..... *Gurdjieff Remembered.* Fritz Peters  
GY ..... *The Gurdjieff Years: 1929-1949. Recollections of Lousie March.*  
Beth McCorkle  
HCG ..... *Herald of Coming Good.* G. I. Gurdjieff  
ID ..... *Invisible Darkness.* Charles Larson  
IP..... *Idiots in Paris.* John G. Bennett  
ISM ..... *In Search of the Miraculous.* P. D. Ouspensky

- JTG..... *Jean Toomer's Years with Gurdjieff*. Rudolph P. Byrd  
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 LRIA..... *Life is real only then when "I am."* G. I. Gurdjieff  
 MEPS..... *Diary of Madame Egout Pour Sweet*. Rina Hands  
 MLO..... *More Lives than One*. Claude Bragdon  
 MNP..... *Maurice Nicoll: A Portrait*. Beryl Pogson  
 MRM..... *Meetings with Remarkable Men*. G. I. Gurdjieff  
 NL..... *Nine Letters*. Rosamund Bland  
 NMU..... *A New Model of the Universe*. P. D. Ouspensky  
 NRHT... *No Religion Higher Than Truth*. Maria Carlson  
 OGA..... *Orage with Gurdjieff in America*. Louise Welch  
 OL..... *On Love*. A. R. Orage  
 OLWG... *Our Life with Mr. Gurdjieff*. Thomas and Olga de Hartmann  
 OUG..... *Ouspensky the Unsung Genius*. J. H. Reyner  
 PC..... *Psychological Commentaries*. Maurice Nicoll  
 RM..... *A Record of Meetings*. P. D. Ouspensky  
 RPDU.... *Remembering Pyotr Demianovich Uspenskii*. Merrily E. Taylor,  
 SL..... Sterling Library  
 SLIO..... *The Strange Life of Ivan Osokin*. P. D. Ouspensky  
 SLPDO.. *The Strange Life of P. D. Ouspensky*. Colin Wilson  
 SOC..... *States of Consciousness*. C. Daly King  
 TSTM.... *The Struggle of the Magicians*. G. I. Gurdjieff  
 T..... *Telos 7*  
 TAY..... *The Awakening Years*. Gorham Munson  
 TCH..... *The Theory of Conscious Harmony*. Rodney Collin  
 TEL..... *The Theory of Eternal Life*. Rodney Collin  
 TG..... *Teachings of Gurdjieff*. C. S. Nott  
 THC..... *The Harmonious Circle*. James Webb  
 TMO..... *Talks by Madame Ouspensky*. Robert de Ropp  
 TO..... *Tertium Organum*. P. D. Ouspensky  
 TOV..... *The Oragean Version*. C. Daly King  
 TWD..... *Talks With a Devil*. P. D. Ouspensky  
 UC..... *Undiscovered Country*. Kathryn Hulme  
 UF..... *Unforgotten Fragments*. Lewis Creed  
 UQ..... *The Unending Quest*. Paul Dukes  
 VRW..... *Views from the Real World*. G. I. Gurdjieff  
 W..... *Witness*. John G. Bennett  
 WGP..... *With Gurdjieff in St. Petersburg and Paris*. Anna Butkovsky-Hewitt  
 WW..... *Warrior's Way*. Robert de Ropp

## EPIGRAPH

- iii.....The Magus is the highest. SL  
 iii.....God give you the strength. THC, 321  
 iii.....a kind of walking God. JTW, 31

## PREFACE

- ix.....My work in the future would proceed quite independently. ISM, 389  
 xii.....Very good is. GY, 74-75  
 xii.....on the 15th of October. ISM, 369  
 xiii.....Never poke your stick. AE, 44

## INTRODUCTION

- xv.....thin film of false reality. ISM, 3  
 xvi.....by origin a kaphir. MRM, 148  
 xvii.....clear realization. MRM.  
 xvii.....specific 'delicacies'. LRIA, 8  
 xix.....common welfare. LRIA, 2  
 xix.....Contemporary culture needs automatism. ISM, 309  
 xix.....Unless the 'wisdom'. GR, 122  
 xix.....All leaders. BWG, 160

## A NEW OR FORGOTTEN ROAD

- 1.....a new or forgotten road. ISM, 3  
 1.....a more rational kind. ISM, 5  
 2.....the ballet will have. ISM, 6  
 2.....born in Moscow. RPO, 9  
 2.....clear mental pictures. RPO, 9  
 2.....I was under less imagination. RPDU, 14  
 3.....a dead wall everywhere. RPO, 10  
 3.....Work at school was dull. RPO, 10  
 3.....he sensed the unity of all things. NMU, 1-2  
 4.....very anarchistically inclined. RPO, 10  
 5.....unbroken line of thought and knowledge. NMU, 5  
 5.....the idea of searching for those schools. NMU, 7  
 5.....schools of the distant past. ISM, 4  
 6.....Here was a book. WGP, 16  
 6.....the most independent and talented. NRHT, 74  
 6.....These ordinary members. WGP, 17  
 7.....must always feel equal. WGP, 19  
 8.....across your orbit like a comet. WGP, 24  
 8.....almost boyish enthusiasm. WGP, 22  
 8.....women have taken. SLIO, 128  
 9.....driving force and a will to seek. WGP, 19

- 10.....as extraordinarily real. NMU, 309-10  
 10.....there was no I. NMU, 321  
 10.....Uspenskii Fourth. OUG, 19  
 10.....I was watching the play. TO, 258  
 11.....why don't you go. WGP, 30  
 11.....Speaking sincerely. SL  
 12.....Why on earth did I ever go. WGP, 31  
 12.....P.D. Uspenskii's lectures attracted a huge audience. NRHT, 73  
 13.....a mixture of superstition. ISM, 7  
 13.....Indian raja. ISM, 7  
 14.....Narcotics. TO, 278  
 15.....chemistry. ISM, 8  
 15.....chemistry. ISM, 8  
 15.....great knowledge of the human machine. ISM, 8  
 16.....feline grace and assurance. ISM, 10  
 16.....at once, without delay. ISM, 11  
 16.....Gurdjieff knew more. SL  
 16.....seclusion. ISM, 16  
 17.....man is responsible. ISM, 20  
 18.....an artificial life. HCG, 12  
 18.....empty and aborted interval. MRM, 8  
 18.....Moscow in 1912. Third Series, p. 28  
 18.....necessary to be independent. MRM, 249  
 19.....unavoidable friction. MRM, 270  
 19.....You believe in ventilation! UQ, 100  
 19.....You are a musical instrument. UQ, 107  
 19.....God is achieved not through activity. UQ, 108  
 20.....Are you afraid of risks? UQ, 113  
 20.....Sergei Dmitrievich Mercourov, Gurdjieff's cousin. THC, 93  
 20.....Uspenskii received a letter. SL  
 22.....Everything was beginning to totter. ISM, 29  
 22.....I have found the miracle! WGP, 35  
 23.....fine, virile features. WGP, 36  
 23.....in the presence of a Guru. WGP, 36  
 23.....Listen, Georgi Ivanovitch. SL  
 24.....People do not value a thing. ISM, 12  
 24.....all outward manifestation. WGP, 75  
 25.....People are machines. ISM, 52  
 25.....you do not remember yourselves. ISM, 117  
 25.....I remembered that I had forgotten. ISM, 121  
 25.....We are undoubtedly moving on to a higher level. NRHT, 77  
 27.....the matter of knowledge. ISM, 38  
 27.....Our ordinary European logical method. SL

- 28.....did not see me. SL  
 28.....fuller, ancient esoteric teaching. ISM, 205  
 29.....Time is breath. ISM, 213  
 29.....after a great struggle. SL  
 30.....fear of losing myself. RPO, 8  
 30.....Whatever is this rubbish. WGP, 79  
 30.....impossible to deceive Gurdjieff. WGP  
 31.....Wraps Up The Thought. WGP, 103  
 31.....The first camp. SL  
 31.....his eternal and continual playing. SL  
 32.....spread out before our eyes. MRM, 245  
 32.....I believe that Georgi Ivanovitch. WGP, 67  
 34.....People around Gurdjieff. SL  
 34.....Gurdjieff was a genius in his own domain. SL  
 34.....Gurdjieff was a genius. SL  
 35.....Every man's personal work. ISM, 226  
 35.....a state of unusual tension. ISM, 260  
 36.....I saw this man in motion. THC, 282  
 36.....the miracle began. ISM, 262  
 37.....extreme individualism. ISM, 266  
 37.....I knew that he would not believe me. ISM, 263  
 38.....Pyotr Demianovich. ISM, 267  
 38.....difficult to climb the hill. ISM, 271  
 38.....not afraid to keep silent. ISM, 271  
 38.....give up his suffering. ISM, 274  
 39.....suffered from ill-health. SL  
 39.....I felt myself growing. WGP  
 39.....I will try to hammer. WGP, 104  
 39.....'play' is indispensable. SL  
 40.....usually more whores here. OLWG, 8  
 40.....he knew how to explain. OLWG, 9  
 41.....when you live among wolves. OLWG, 12  
 42.....oil king. ISM, 325-326  
 43.....What a great and all-encompassing mission. NRHT, 171  
 43.....we must go abroad. ISM, 328  
 45.....If you want to rest. ISM, 340  
 45.....irresistible inclination to destroy. AE, 406  
 46.....those with guns. LFR, 21  
 46.....catastrophe, a shipwreck. LFR, 28  
 47.....how can one strengthen the feeling of "I"? ISM, 343  
 47.....all responsibility towards myself. ISM, 344  
 48.....I am a difficult, pretentious man. WGP, 105  
 48.....the plan of the whole. ISM, 346

- 48.....School is necessary. ISM, 347  
 49.....a very strange feeling. ISM, 346  
 49.....began to waver. ISM, 368  
 49.....What the matter was. ISM, 368  
 50.....their very existence which corrupts. LFR  
 50.....a very absurd quarrel. ISM, 370  
 51.....I am a svolotch. OLWG, 54  
 52.....I have now already spent. ISM, 371  
 52.....light of Eternity. NRHT, 80  
 53.....Society for Struggle. OLWG, 58  
 53.....Why always a suggestion of charlatanism. OLWG, 74  
 54.....drove away many useful. SL  
 54.....basis of his Work. OLWG, 69-70  
 54.....the way of religion. ISM, 375  
 55.....Infuriated beasts. MRM, 274  
 56.....The expedition intends. OLWG, 78  
 56.....devoted to me. MRM, 273  
 57.....we got out safely. MRM, 274-75  
 57.....she—is intelligent. OLWG, 122  
 58.....Why are you so astonished? OLWG, 147  
 59.....prices of all products. LFR, 6  
 59.....very characteristic. ISM, 381  
 59.....weakness of the intelligentsia. LFR, 33  
 60.....the ground had fallen. LFR  
 60.....Only scoundrels will survive. SLIO, 140  
 60.....Marxism to be satanic. GAA, 236  
 60.....strange confidence. ISM, 380  
 60.....I saw the same capacity in myself. SL  
 61.....negative frame of mind. ISM, 381-82  
 61.....striking appearance. THC, 178  
 62.....I finally gave up. MRM, 281  
 63.....sheep's heads. OLWG, 152  
 64.....would come to Constantinople. SL  
 64.....one of the very few men. W, 55  
 65.....being understood better. W, 55  
 66.....no effort. SL  
 67.....Lord Creator. TSTM, 47  
 68.....make one line out of that. ISM, 383  
 68.....Nothing but dirty jokes. SL  
 68.....problem of this 'play'. SL  
 69.....In former Russia. NMU, 388  
 69.....Deeply impressed. GAM, 152

## MAGICIANS AT WAR

- 72.....conscious of his aura. ARO, 24-25  
 72.....he was the novice. ARO, xxi  
 73.....a bird's strong beak. THC, 219  
 73.....Come if you like. W, 73  
 73.....I spent two hours with the man. NL, 5  
 74.....Uspenskii seemed rather depressed. NL, 63  
 74.....ordinarily we speak of 'I'. VRW, 75  
 75.....Everything more vivid. MNP, 72  
 75.....Gurdjieff was the teacher. TG, 27-28  
 75.....Uspenskii's command of theory. GAM, 163  
 76.....Normal human beings. MRW, 135  
 76.....I had decided. ISM, 385  
 76.....a hard outer shell. WGP, 22-23  
 77.....I don't feel influenced. KMB, 345  
 77.....This child I conceived. MRM, 292  
 78.....I want to learn. KML, 275  
 80.....build more solidly. PC Volume 1, 14  
 81.....I cannot change your being. MNP, 83  
 81.....halfway to death. ISM, 385  
 81.....My intellectual life was leading me nowhere. TG, 27  
 82.....Now what have I? TG, 28  
 82.....a hatching place for eggs. MNP, 89  
 82.....For the average person. GR, 126-27  
 82.....complete submission to a will not his own, ARO, 93  
 83.....the very depths of despair. TG, 28  
 83.....I think you dig enough. TG, 28  
 83.....a house of devotion. ARO, 93  
 83.....her face shone. KMB, 356  
 83.....an opportunity. KMB, 356-357  
 84.....celebrate Christmas in tremendous style. KML, 280  
 84.....You see, my love. KML, 282  
 85.....a very tame semi-existence. KML, 284  
 85.....a being transfigured. KMB, 359  
 85.....I have heard enough about that place. GKM, 3  
 86.....temptation. ISM, 389  
 86.....from the very beginning. SL  
 86.....When you return. MNP, 89  
 87.....Did you understand. SL  
 87.....Gurdjieff and I. THC, 382  
 88.....Institute work was not necessary. SL  
 88.....Dear Mrs. Page. SL  
 88.....If they repeat. SL

- 88.....Uspenskii was a brilliant. W  
 88.....St. Petersburg conditions. SL  
 89.....All that Uspenskii had of value. JTW, 90-91  
 90.....People who did not belong. SL  
 91.....Now only your mind is awake. W, 108  
 91.....the possibility of learning to work. W, 121  
 91.....too much knowledge. W, 121  
 92.....a big, brindled beast. MNP, 97  
 93.....his family had suffered much. TG, 34-35  
 93.....a super-unique-tragi-comic situation. MRM, 293  
 94.....gone off the rails. CPDO, 34  
 94.....break off all relations. SL  
 95.....successful religious teacher. JTW, 91  
 96.....'preach' about it. WGP, 84  
 96.....The life of our time. TG, 1-3  
 97.....the most persuasive man. THC, 281  
 97.....enjoy the talk. ARO, 79  
 97.....a feminine element. THC, 214  
 99.....None at all. TG, 6  
 99.....I was a mere youth. TG, 20  
 100.....All I had formerly. GAM  
 100.....his complexion is swarthy. ID, 40  
 100.....Power—something more than strength of body. JTG, 71-72  
 101.....The sensation in New York for the past month. ID, 35-36  
 102.....claims of humanness. GAM  
 102.....I felt that this man's note was intelligence. TAY, 253-54  
 103.....American women. TG, 31-32  
 104.....the attitude to finance. TG, 35  
 104.....the perfect disciple. MLO, 324  
 104.....acted like a small boy. UG, 83-84  
 104.....a planet too limited. UG, 136  
 105.....'Messiah' or not. BWG, 5  
 105.....only admit. THC, 362  
 106.....bit of live meat. AE, 1186  
 106.....Gurdjieff, Georgi Ivanovitch:his life and family:Mme. Ostrowska  
 106.....their usual superficial understanding. LRIA, 80-81  
 107.....a stubborn belief that I could make my own way. JTG, 72  
 107.....Damnation! TOG, 83  
 107.....Things begin to hum. JTG, 75  
 108.....the real value of manual work. JTG, 74-75  
 108.....more effort and more experience. JTG, 75  
 108.....I had to die. OLWG, 233  
 109.....He certainly was under some special kind of obligation. GGE, 98-99

- 109.....impact which his work and ideas could have on the world. GMW, 173  
 110.....shot straight into the air. JTG, 77  
 110.....the principle of seniority. SL  
 110.....For me he is X. W, 158  
 110.....totally unusual and impressive. TOV, 4  
 111.....Jean had a lot of nerve. ID, p 42  
 111.....It happened in the 223rd year. AE, 51  
 111.....beneficial truths elucidated. LRIA, 4  
 112.....very rare case. SL  
 112.....He wasted his substance. ARO  
 112.....Substances in me. THC, 339  
 112.....Gurdjieff, Georgi Ivanovitch:his life and family:Mme. Ostrowska  
 112.....four animals. LRIA, 36-38  
 113.....leaves all philosophy behind. THC, 311  
 113.....in the category of scripture. TG, 93  
 114.....Gurdjieff, Georgi Ivanovitch:his life and family:Mme. Ostrowska  
 114.....cancer grows worse. LRIA, 31-32  
 114.....very old soul. BWG, 78  
 115.....we must pay for everything. TOG, 100-101  
 115.....flayed by the fury. BWG, 33  
 116.....plumbed the depths. THC, 360  
 117.....I was startled by an uncommon inward event. ID, 46  
 118.....he is not a teacher. TOV, 11  
 118.....a good deal of Jean's life after he went to Chicago. ID, 45-46  
 118.....Prieuré was in debt. THC, 359  
 118.....million men in one. UG, 28  
 119.....I rejected his language. UG, 29  
 119.....degree of contact. LRIA, 40-42  
 119.....quite extraordinary about money. THC, 360  
 120.....Health—candidates for idiots. TAY, 265-270  
 121.....Writing, real writing. JTG, 63-64  
 122.....I ran out of my first marriage. OGA, 49  
 122.....love with a native. GAM, 215  
 122.....The sole means. AE, 1183  
 123.....The subject is suffering. LRIA, 151-152  
 123.....It sticks in my throat. JTW, 106  
 123.....you burn in boiling oil. THC, 363  
 124.....become a threat. BWG, 172  
 124.....Sympathy to Bennett. W, 149  
 124.....an expositor of Gurdjieff's System. W, 153  
 126.....he is more impossible than ever. THC, 364  
 126.....The whole trouble. SLIO, 17  
 126.....a man's whim. ARO, 115

- 127.....one of the 'elder brothers'. ARO, 115  
 127.....American dirt. GY, 17  
 128.....I always work in cafés. GY, 25  
 128.....acknowledge your sin. SL  
 128.....the only person. OLWG, 256  
 129.....If love not dissipated. GAM, 235  
 129.....Confess, Orage. JTW, 21  
 130.....think of reward. GR, 89-90  
 131.....Americans more receptive. GR, 27  
 131.....real possibility of learning anything. GR, 89  
 131.....necessary to make these things your own. UF, 33  
 132.....'elders'. OGA, 103-107  
 132.....I love the group. OGA, 107  
 132.....the end of my patience. OGA, 108-09  
 133.....all these years. W, 154  
 134.....candidate for the madhouse. LRIA, 70  
 134.....The charge against. TOV, 9  
 134.....Orage's idéé fixe. LRIA  
 135.....very limited knowledge. LRIA, 96  
 135.....Orage made a mistake. OGA, 111  
 135.....simply of being. TOV, 13  
 136.....entire sensing of the whole of oneself. LRIA, 111  
 136.....Joshua Gurdjieff. OGA, 115-17  
 136.....what Gurdjieff terms "philosophizing". LRIA, 123  
 137.....tails between their legs. LRIA, 127  
 137.....'loving father'. LRIA, 119  
 137.....G.'s going may or may not change things. JTW, 14  
 138.....cares for money only. JTW, 14  
 138.....Toomer I couldn't bear to look at. ID, 124  
 138.....ten dollars apiece. JTW, 19  
 138.....new methods of work. MNW, 175  
 139.....Mr. Gurdjieff has a very big plan. JTW, 38  
 139.....A New Muddle. JTW, 37  
 139.....I needed rats. JTW, 38  
 141.....I am satisfied that it is entirely possible. ID, 125  
 142.....why talk about it. RM, 15-17  
 142.....go away and teach. MNP, 109  
 143.....There is a new race in America. BL  
 144.....whole point of the method. OGA, 124  
 144.....With one leg pulled. UC, 64  
 145.....real, quite real. RM, 568-69

## THE GREAT BEQUEATHING

- 147.....5000 francs a year. GY, 61  
 147.....There was a time. THC, 371  
 148.....obsessed with the need. W, 168  
 149.....He had grown fat. THC, 421  
 149.....What could be in the man's mind? THC, 422-23  
 150.....You not as I counted. THC, 424  
 153.....I thank God. JTW, 52  
 153.....the most important leader. LRIA, 153  
 154.....I loved Orage as a brother. OGA, 137  
 154.....Grand Duchess. TG, 107  
 155.....but he is weak man. JTW, 107  
 155.....gift of God. JTW, 108  
 155.....What started in Russia. GMW, 108  
 155.....I now am old idiot. SL  
 156.....living on stale manna. UG, 94  
 156.....no longer in his confidence. W, 173  
 156.....inner animal. UC, 80  
 156.....a hopeless idiot. JTW, 76-77  
 157.....too light for this work. FLP, 280  
 157.....victim of self-observation. SL  
 157.....The magus. SL  
 158.....twelve-year old boy. SL  
 158.....Count Keyserling. SL  
 159.....height of his power. WW, 87  
 160.....He was extraordinary! WW, 99  
 161.....escaping from the treadmill. WW, 104  
 161.....go over his life again. WW, 105  
 161.....intelligentsia. WW, 87  
 162.....initiate people. SL  
 163.....Just think. SL  
 163.....enter in the wrong form. RPDU, 36  
 164.....psychological swarm. AMDS, 304  
 164.....there is no "soul" as such. AMDS, 304  
 165.....maybe through the mystics he could find the answers. ID, 150-151  
 166.....This I cannot remember. WW, 123  
 166.....Is my lack of progress. W, 178  
 167.....not a sharp break. W, 179  
 168.....break with Gurdjieff. GR, 72  
 168.....genuine gentleman in the exact sense. TOV, 284  
 169.....Orage "forgot many things..." RM, 492  
 169.....Why am I afraid of you? BI, 5  
 170.....no longer a teacher. WW, 152

- 170.....Uspenskii knew the theory. JTW, 91  
 170.....he is in full bloom. RM, 569  
 171.....charlatan and a thief. W, 206  
 172.....key to the understanding. TCH, 92  
 172.....My son. GR, 92  
 173.....I also your father. GR, 92  
 174.....Your guess. GR, 112-113  
 175.....relieves the boredom, JTW, 161  
 175.....Uspenskii began to show a greater disinclination. CPDO  
 176.....lack of lovingness. CPDO, 34  
 177.....I don't know program. RM, 585  
 178.....never taught system. RM, 616  
 178.....never was humble myself. RM, 624  
 179.....what I call memory. RM, 634  
 179.....absolute insulator. TEL, 85  
 179.....Sometimes it may be. RM, 642  
 179.....deeply disappointed man. SL  
 179.....He was a different man. TCI, xx  
 180.....not going to America this time. TCH, 179-80  
 181.....everything is done by effort. TCH, 6  
 182.....Collin returns to the bedroom where Uspenskii had died. BI, 5-6  
 182.....he certainly died like one. WW, 159  
 182.....You must start again. TCI, xxi  
 182.....he worked only for recurrence. TCI, xix  
 183.....I felt no nearer to him. W, 219  
 183.....Russian fairy tale. W, 128-29  
 183.....two chosen agents. TCH, 133  
 184.....he and his family and followers arrive in Mexico. BI, 9  
 184.....Gurdjieff's legacy to the world. AMY, 137-38  
 184.....he becomes aware of a Presence. W, 223  
 185.....if European civilization is destroyed. W, 226-27  
 185.....living in Paris now. W, 232  
 185.....you have my plate. THC, 372  
 186.....I do not really know myself. BL  
 186.....the eve of our journey into the unknown. AMY, 142  
 187.....You are Number Eighteen. W, 238  
 188.....black with bruises. UG, 185  
 188.....Bennett is small thing. JTW, 241  
 189.....We all eat jammed around the table. AMY, 145-46  
 190.....I go right. W, 265  
 190.....Only you can repay. W, 267  
 190.....you can never do everything. MEPS, 54  
 191.....health of English. W, 249

- 191.....everything is so exciting here at the moment. AMY, 142-43  
 192.....Round Idiot category. GY, 75  
 192.....adept. W, 253  
 193.....exception was Gurdjieff himself. TOV  
 194.....not 'my' voice. W, 261  
 194.....The next five years. W, 270  
 195.....Au revoir, tout le monde! IP, 104  
 195.....He died like a king. IP, 104  
 195.....What did this man. GY, 89  
 196.....various feelings. T, 7  
 197.....chief aim in the future. W, 274  
 197.....in unity lay our only hope. W, 274  
 197.....We have so pledged. UG, 212

## OF USPENSKII, ORAGE, AND BENNETT

- 199.....hatching place for eggs, MNP, 89  
 200.....I want to know the future. ISM, 99  
 200.....extreme individualism. ISM, 266  
 201.....I could call my chief feature 'Uspenskii. ISM, 267  
 203.....Gurdjieff and me. RM, 15-17  
 204.....This man...my brother. OGA, 137  
 205.....I cannot go more than half a hog. OGA, 124-25  
 207.....connected to a great reservoir. W, 121  
 208.....incurably optimistic...constantly making plans. W, 9  
 208.....as if Gurdjieff himself had withdrawn from me. W, 265  
 209.....is like Judas. W, 262  
 209.....your people are not spoiled, but lunatic. W, 252  
 210.....you always make false starts. W, 178  
 211.....a Warrior of the first order, but ambitious. WW, 327-28  
 212.....Gurdjieff came to strike a big Doh. TG, 224

# INDEX

## *All and Everything*

intended effects 113, 121  
known or seen as  
    Bible 125  
    *legominism* xviii, 123  
publishing of 149, 192, 194, 197  
understanding of 157  
writing of 111, 112, 113, 117,  
    120, 121, 122, 124, 125

## Bennett, John Godolphin

and fifth dimension 65, 207  
and Gurdjieff  
    appointed representative 193  
    arrives at Prieuré 90  
    decides to work with 187–190  
    final meeting 190  
    finds him in Paris 185–186  
    first meets 65  
    follows to America 192  
    given experience by 207  
    leaves Prieuré 92

and self-observation 148

and Uspenskii  
    cut off by 124, 171  
    decides to follow 95  
    first meets 63  
    helps with visas 70  
    invited back by 133  
    of his death 182–183  
    sent to Prieuré by 86  
    their relation changes 156

arrested in Athens 124

assumes role of teacher  
    asks students to choose 171  
    forms study group 124

idea of graduating 209  
opens own school 210  
unauthorized to write 169  
wanted own teaching 205  
writes out System 167

known or seen as  
    a nullity 187  
    ambitious 211  
    charlatan and thief 171, 210  
    criminal 207  
    like Judas 194, 209  
    lunatic 207  
    Round Idiot 192  
    sincere Seeker 211  
    small Number Eighteen 187  
    small thing 188  
    young soul 209

on shortcomings 207  
out-of-body experience 190, 194

Butkovsky, Anna Ilinishna  
    on Uspenskii 24, 76, 218

## Collin, Rodney

and Uspenskii  
    devotes all time to 171  
    first meets 162  
    follows back to England 177  
    follows to America 167  
    moves in at Lyne Place 166  
    moves in at Mendham 169  
    on final days with 179  
    relationship with 182  
establishes Uspenskii version 184

de Hartmann, Thomas  
    first meets Gurdjieff 40

- on Gurdjieff's roles 53–54  
only effort is necessary 58
- Dwight-Orage, Jessie  
and Gurdjieff  
at the Prieuré 105  
visits him in 1948 185  
warned by 123  
and Orage  
becomes his secretary 103  
first meets 97  
marries 122  
known or seen as  
a native 122, 206  
left-shoulder Angel 135  
nonentity 122  
squirring idiot 105
- Eternal recurrence 3, 4, 114, 148, 161,  
163, 180, 182, 204, 206, 211
- Fourth Way  
“the Teaching is Gurdjieff's” 95  
Bennett Work 207  
characteristics of 41  
gives nothing ready-made 27  
Oragean version 169  
primary rule of 37  
Uspenskii version 95, 169, 184
- Gurdjieff, Georgi Ivanovitch  
his life and family  
a *kaphir* xvi, 200  
arrives in Russia 217  
birthdate 216  
brushes with death xvii, 106,  
108  
describes family 173  
dies 195  
family 31, 46, 55, 56, 112,  
127, 196  
metis 158  
Mme. Ostrowska 20, 52, 56,  
78, 114, 116, 117  
mother dies 114  
whim 126  
wolf and sheep xvi–xvii  
known or seen as  
a Devil 121  
a prophet 105  
a unit in motion 36  
Arab sheik 13  
Armenian rug-dealer 139  
chosen agent 183  
Christ 32  
Dr. Black 53  
dubious messiah 119  
evasive 118  
extraordinary! 160  
father 173  
gone mad 94  
Guru 23  
in balance 193  
Indian raja 13  
Joshua Gurdjieff! 136  
*magus* 157  
man in motion 100  
most powerful 101  
not a teacher 118  
objective sanity 154  
our tempter 54  
Prince Ozay 19  
ruling prince 42  
solar god 145  
spiritual preceptor 83  
suffering Christ 127  
tainted channel 202  
the miracle 22  
understanding 75  
very strange man 160  
X 110
- Mission  
and lack of time 124, 201  
and special oath 109  
appoints representatives 193  
begins Moscow group 20  
begins Petersburg group 24

- disseminating teaching 18, 153  
establishing Institute xvii, 123  
aim in founding 199  
at the Prieuré 77  
in Berlin 71, 73  
in Constantinople 63,  
66, 70  
in Essentuki 47, 52  
in London 74, 76  
in Tiflis 58, 59, 62, 63  
New Mexico 151  
New York branch 103  
few understand 109  
fulfilling xviii, 111  
his stream 162  
Messenger from Above xvi, xvi-  
ii, xix, 162, 197, 200  
Orage's de facto mandate to  
teach 116  
recruits Bennett 65, 92  
recruits Uspenskii 13  
sends students to teach 92,  
159  
shock of car crash 107  
on Mme. de Hartmann 129, 158  
on Orage's death 153–154  
selected events  
accident at Chailly xviii, 106,  
107, 199  
accident at Montargis 188  
begins First Series 111  
begins Second Series 124  
closes Institute 109  
Dances performed  
in Constantinople 65  
in New York 99, 100  
in Paris 93  
decides to publish 192  
first talk in London 74  
Prieuré opens 78  
Prieuré sold 148  
publishes Herald 149  
rewrites *All and Everything* 123  
takes special oath 18  
visits to America 104, 126,  
129, 134, 143, 149,  
155, 191  
writes Third Series 155, 173  
teaching methods 27  
complete submission 82  
creating conditions 162–163  
detachment 58, 108  
irrational blaming 80, 89  
physical labor 79, 82  
playing a role 27  
powerful and dangerous 202  
providing shocks 28, 35, 49,  
87, 109, 116, 122,  
137, 140  
provoking emotion 54, 67,  
80, 202  
telling of one's life 30
- Hanbledzoin* 173, 207  
Helper-instructors  
accepting message and messenger  
200  
enlarging the Work 209  
need for 199  
teaching to save world 199  
unable to sacrifice themselves 199
- Idiots 105, 120, 139, 155, 156, 187,  
192, 204, 205
- King, C. Daly 221  
ally for Jessie Dwight 119  
appointed teacher 125  
defends Orage 134  
not admitted to Prieuré 117  
put off by Gurdjieff 118, 119
- Legominism* xviii, 111, 123

- Magician  
 and cunning 157-158  
 defined xi
- Magicians, The Struggle of the 1, 12, 13, 16, 20, 58, 59, 61, 66-67
- Mansfield, Katherine 77, 78, 81, 83-85, 98, 223
- Money  
 and reward 130  
 and understanding real teaching 131  
 and valuation 24  
 attitude towards 104  
 demand for 40, 52, 130, 148, 149
- Nicoll, Dr. Maurice  
 chooses Uspenskii as teacher 95  
 declines Gurdjieff on going to America 92  
 hears Gurdjieff is in Paris and doesn't go 185  
 teaches group in England 154  
 told to teach by Uspenskii 142
- Nott, C.S.  
 and Gurdjieff  
 at the Prieuré 107  
 on being with 113  
 on judging his teacher 154  
 on sign of perfected man 150  
 on understanding *All and Everything* 157  
 told he is hopeless idiot 156
- and Orage  
 defends Orage 154  
 first meets 99
- and Uspenskii  
 assembles group around Uspenskii 168  
 develops affection for 154  
 gives copy of *All and Everything* to 123  
 often drinks with 175  
 on the weakness of 155
- sees him lost 156  
 visits Lyne Place in 1935 154  
 visits Mendham in 1941 167  
 first meets 99
- Octave  
 of Work deflected 95  
 shock points 13
- Orage  
 payment 115
- Orage, Alfred Richard  
 and C. Daly King 110, 113  
 and Gurdjieff  
 arrives at Prieuré 81  
 copies *All and Everything* 138  
 de facto mandate to teach in America 116  
 edits writings 114  
 first meets 74  
 forms groups 103  
 generates interest in 93  
 humiliations 135-137  
 lesson on love 116  
 on *All and Everything* 125  
 on listening to 75  
 raises money for 93, 104, 111, 126  
 sent to New York by 93, 96  
 work at Prieuré 81-82, 83  
 and Jessie Dwight 102, 103, 112, 115  
 first meets 97  
 his chief feature 153  
 marries 122, 126  
 and The Sunwise Turn 110  
 and Uspenskii  
 finds job for 59  
 first meets 11  
 no match for him 72  
 publishes his Letters 71  
 sees him as teacher 74  
 breaks from Gurdjieff 122, 127  
 authorizes King to teach 125

- authorizes Toomer to teach 112  
 chooses magazine 137, 144-145  
 chooses vacation 120  
 decides to leave 138  
 demands initiation 126, 132  
 disobeys warning 205-206  
 fails to meet him 129, 134  
 lacks absolute faith 136, 204-205  
 philosophizing 136  
 refuses invitation 147  
 separates teacher from teaching 132, 143  
 takes without paying 206  
 tells his whim 126
- dies 153  
 his life and women 98, 102  
 ambition 127  
 giving to gain love 127  
 the man 71-72  
 to remain human 205
- known or seen as  
 an easy swiftness 102  
 charming manner 104  
 editor 137  
 fundraiser 137  
 intelligence 102  
 John the Baptist 137  
 loving father 135  
 most important leader 153  
 most persuasive 97  
 perfect disciple 104  
 super idiot 115, 123  
 teacher 113  
 too formatory 154  
 too intelligent 185
- meets C.S. Nott 99  
 payment 206
- Pinder, Frank  
 "the Teaching is Gurdjieff's" 95  
 on Uspenskii 89, 170
- why Gurdjieff came to us 197
- Prieuré  
 closes 147  
 description of life at 78-81, 82, 84  
 financing for 77, 88  
 sold 148
- Seekers After Truth xvii, 16, 96, 217  
 origin of 31
- St. Petersburg Conditions 88, 90, 95, 203
- Stjoernval, Dr. Leonid  
 revelation of Gurdjieff 33, 200  
 sent to America 93
- Telepathy 16, 35-37, 38, 181-182
- Toomer, Jean  
 and Gurdjieff  
 "ruler of Africa" 150  
 impression of 100  
 recognition of not knowing self 186  
 submitting to another's will 107  
 assumes role of teacher 111, 118, 152  
 attempts to found Institute 152  
 dies 186  
 manual work and transformation 108  
 racial identity 100, 143  
*Tzvarnoharno* 106, 134
- Uspenskii, Pyotr Demianovich  
 and Anna Butkovsky 6-10  
 and Bennett  
 advises to go to Prieuré 86  
 chosen as teacher by 95  
 cuts off contact with 124, 171  
 first meets 63  
 invites him back 133  
 on false starts 166-167  
 relationship changes 156
- and blame  
 for behavior of group 89  
 for closing of Institute 87

and drinking 148, 159, 170, 175, 203  
 and emotional center 201  
   "Uspenskii pepper" 89  
   acting stupidly 47  
   fears 29  
   Finland experience 35, 37, 201–202  
   his weakness 155  
   sacrificing knowledge 28, 29  
   St. Petersburg Conditions 203  
 and Lermontov 3, 159  
 and Orage  
   about the work of 168  
   first meets Orage 11  
   lies and betrayal of 87–88  
 and recurrence 182  
 and the Ideas 221  
   great achievement 200  
   knowledge and being 31  
   new idea of many "I"s 23  
   payment for the teaching xv  
   strengthening feeling of I 48, 60  
 and time 2, 4, 44, 161, 172, 200, 202  
 and women 8  
 assumes role of teacher 60  
   at Colet Gardens 165  
   at Warwick Gardens 159  
   authorizes Nicoll 142  
   challenged by students 142, 168  
   essence of his teaching 161  
   expands his work 133  
   founds Society 160  
   in America 168  
   in England 154  
   leaves pupils for America 166, 203  
   Mendham center 169  
   on man as machine 72  
   returns to England 176  
   separates system from Gurdjieff 61  
   speaks on evil and devil 145  
   students told to choose 94  
   Uspenskii version 95, 203  
   wanted own teaching 205  
 breaks from Gurdjieff xv, 202–203  
   announces final break 94  
   in Constantinople 69  
   in Essentuki 56  
   real break begins 37, 202  
 chief feature  
   "Pyotr Demianovich" 38, 201  
   extreme individualism 37  
 contacts with Gurdjieff  
   crosses Channel to him 86  
   double impressions 2, 14  
   final meeting 141  
   first meets 13  
   hears his thoughts 36  
 decides to help Gurdjieff  
   establish groups 23  
   establish Institute 74, 76  
   on ballet 66  
   organize the work 64, 66  
 demonstrates self-sincerity 175, 179–180, 203–204  
   abandons the System 180, 182  
   admits dependence 176  
   admits lack of control 176  
   admits not ready 176  
   admits System became profession 203  
   his silence 180  
   makes super-efforts 181, 201  
   returns to beginning 204  
 dies 182, 204  
 dislike for groups 24  
 doubts Gurdjieff 202  
   "it's not my way" 54  
   feels tempted 86  
   good and bad "I"s 94  
   irritated by 'play' 39, 67  
   judges teacher 36, 51, 54,

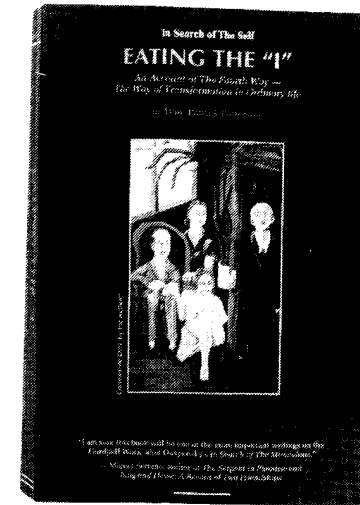
142, 160, 202  
 separates teacher from teaching 49  
 the two Gurdjieffs 68  
 his life and family  
   early life 2–4  
   loss of family 4, 5  
   Madame Uspenskii 52, 86, 159, 214  
   search for a school 1, 5, 11  
 humiliations  
   at the Prieuré 87  
   learn to read 16  
   not qualified to teach 75, 76, 95  
   psychological 'betrayal' 35  
 impression of Prieuré 81, 86  
 individualism and death 200–201  
 invitations from Gurdjieff  
   to be specialist teacher 59  
   to join him 45  
   to lecture at Institute 67  
   to live at Prieuré 86  
   to meet pupils 15  
   to return to Prieuré 90  
 known or seen as  
   a mystery man 156  
   a tyrant 159  
   a Warrior 182  
   an elephant 159  
   an emperor 159  
   at heart honest 176  
   authoritarian 159  
   chosen agent 183  
   deeply disappointed man 179  
   didn't know people 104  
   dominant 73  
   enlightened idiot 204  
   genuine gentleman 168  
   hard outer shell 76  
   too formatory 154  
   too great 159  
   unintelligent 95  
   vigorous, whimsical 162  
   warm, friendly 154  
   weak man 155  
   wonderful person 73  
 on Gurdjieff's methods 27, 28, 34  
   super effort 181  
 Wraps Up The Thought 31, 68, 89, 201  
 Uspenskii, Sophia Grigorievna  
   and Bennett 185  
   and Gurdjieff  
     at Prieuré 86  
     follows to Berlin 71  
     her teacher 69  
     in Essentuki 52  
     refuses to judge him 110  
     sends him Fragments 192  
     sends students to him 183  
     sent to England by him 124  
     visited by him in 1948 191  
   and her husband 52, 128, 159  
   and Parkinson's disease 165, 169  
   at Lyne Place 154  
   at Mendham 167  
   embarks for America 166  
   her allegiance 69  
   in France 128  
   known or seen as  
   Grand Duchess 154  
   independent source 169  
   senior teacher 169  
   strength and poise 170  
   warm, sympathetic 167  
   young soul 148

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