# Teachings of GURDJIEFF

*An Account of Some Years With G. I. Gurdjieff and A. R. Orage in New York and at Fontainebleau-Avon*

THE JOURNAL OF A PUPIL

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*An Account*
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# I

# NEW YORK AND FONTAINEBLEAU 1923-5

AT THE END of December 1923 Orage, arriving in New York from Fontainebleau with a Dr Stjoernval, asked permission to give a talk, in the shop where I worked, on the ideas of G. I. Gurdjieff and his Institute. In London Orage had owned and edited the *New Age*, which Shaw called the best magazine of literature and ideas England had produced since the eighteenth century. I had met Orage but once. Dr Stjoernval was a physician who had worked with Gurdjieff in Russia, and with his wife had accompanied him to France.

A meeting was arranged, and on the appointed evening the shop was crowded with an audience of well-dressed, intellectual-looking men and women. I will give the substance of Orage's talk; it is clear and concise, and forms a basis for what follows in this Journal.

'The Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man, at Fontainebleau,' said Orage, 'which is based on the system of G. I. Gurdjieff, is really a continuation of the society called the "Seekers after Truth", which was founded in 1895 by a group of doctors, archaeologists, scientists, priests, painters, and so on, whose aim was to collaborate in the study of so-called supernatural phenomena, in which each of them was interested from a particular point of view. The members of the Society went on expeditions to Persia, Afghanistan, Turkestan, Tibet, India, and other countries, investigating ancient records and all kinds of phenomena. There were great difficulties, and some lost their lives through accident, others died, and some gave up the work. Eventually, with a small number of survivors, Mr Gurdjieff arrived in Russia in 1913. Their first stay was at Tashkent. From here they went to Moscow with the idea of arranging and putting to use the vast amount of

material that had been collected. In Moscow Mr Gurdjieff gave a series of talks, with the result that a number of scientists, musicians, doctors, engineers, and writers became interested. Preparations were made to start an Institute for the purpose of training pupils. But the outbreak of the first World War, followed by the revolution in 1917, made it impossible to continue the work there.

'Mr Gurdjieff decided to leave Russia. He and a group of pupils made a hazardous and difficult journey over the mountains to Tiflis, and there he carried out his plan of forming the Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man. More pupils joined. Later he found it necessary to go on to Constantinople, where, after many difficulties, the work of the Institute was continued. As time went on Mr Gurdjieff came to the conclusion that Europe would be more suitable for his aim. They went to Germany for a short time, and finally arrived in Paris. A demonstration of sacred dances and movements was given there, but although many French came, few showed interest. After a good deal of searching for a permanent place, the Château du Prieuré (or Château des Basses-Loges) at Fontainebleau-Avon was found and purchased in 1922, and here the Institute was established.'

At this point questions were asked. After answering them, Orage continued:

'Pupils are divided into two categories: those who are interested mainly in the theory of the system, and those who are not only interested in the theory, but also wish to work and be trained in the method.

'The system of training is based on the following conclusions: The life of our time has become so complex that man has deviated from his original type—a type that should have become dependent upon his surroundings: the country where he was born, the environment in which he was brought up, and the culture in which he was nurtured. These conditions should have marked out for a man his path of development and the normal type which he should have arrived at; but our civilization, with its almost unlimited means of influencing a man, has made it almost impossible for him to live in the conditions which should be normal to him. While civilization has opened up for man new horizons in knowledge and science and has raised his material standard of living, thereby widening his world-perception, it has, instead of lifting him to a higher level all round, only developed certain faculties to the detriment of others; some it has completely destroyed. Our civilization has taken away from man 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.

'It is upon this that the psychological system of Mr Gurdjieff takes its stand. The system proves by experiment that the world-perception of a 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.

'From this aspect our psychic life (as we perceive the world and express our perception of it) is not a whole, a whole that acts as a repository for our perceptions and a source of our expressions. On the contrary, it is divided into three separate entities, which have almost nothing in common, being different both in their substance and their function.

'These three separate and quite distinct parts—sources of the intellectual, emotional, and instinctive-moving life of man, each taken in the sense of the whole set of functions proper to it—are called by the Gurdjieff system the thinking centre, the instinctive-moving centre, and the emotional centre.

'Each truly conscious perception and expression of a man must be the result of simultaneous and co-ordinated working of all three centres, each of which must take its part in the whole task; that is to say, it must supply its quota of associations. A complete apperception in any given case is possible only if all three centres work together. But because of the many and varied influences which disturb and affect modern man, the working of the centres is almost always unconnected, with the result that his intellectual, emotional, and moving-instinctive functions fail to complete and correct one another; they travel along different paths, they rarely meet, and so his moments of real consciousness are very few.

'The three centres do not co-ordinate for this reason: there are, so to speak, three different men in a single individual; the first man only thinks, the second only feels, and the third lives only by his instincts and moving functions; so we have, as it were, a logical man, an emotional man, and a physical man. These three in one never understand each other; not only that, but consciously, and even unconsciously, they

interfere with one another, with each other's plans and intentions and work; and yet each of them at the moment when he is in action speaks with authority, and says "I".

'If we observe the working of the centres, we shall see how contradictory they are, how divided, and it will be obvious that man cannot be master of himself because he himself cannot control the work of his centres. He does not know even which of his centres will begin to function next. We do not notice this because we are under the illusion that there is a kind of unity of our various "I"s.

'If we will observe correctly the manifestations of the psyche of a modern man, it will be clearly seen that he never acts on his own initiative and for reasons within himself, but, by his actions, only expresses the changes that are brought about in his mechanism by causes outside him. He does not think: something in him thinks; he does not act: something acts through him; he does not create: something in him creates; he does not accomplish: something is accomplished through him.

'This becomes clear when we are able to understand the processes of perception of external and internal influences by each centre, by which responsive actions are brought about.

'The centres of a newly-born child may be compared to blank gramophone records upon which, from the first day or first hours, impressions of both the inner and outer world become inscribed. The recorded impressions are preserved in each of the three centres in the same order (often absurd) and in the same relation in which they were first received. The processes of thinking, reasoning, judgement, memory, and imagination are the result exclusively of the impressions recorded, which combine and associate in different ways under the influence of chance shocks. The records, whose contents thus become the centre of association, are set in motion with varying degrees of intensity by these same shocks. Another shock, or one of a different intensity, sets another record going and evokes still another association and consequently another train of thoughts, feelings, acts; and no centre can add anything of itself to the combinations formed in the other centres. The result is that a man's world-perception is the result of only part of his being, or, to put it another way, man has three different modes of processes of perception, which either have little contact with each other, or make contact by chance, and only partially. Therefore every conclusion a man comes to, every judgement, is the work of only one part of his make-up, the expression of only a small portion of the





material he has stored up; hence his judgements and conclusions are always partial, and consequently false.

'From all that has been said we can see that the first step in a man's balanced development is to show him how to be able to introduce, from the beginning, the work of the three centres into his psychic functions. When the three centres are able to work with equal intensity at the same time, then the three main wheels of the human machine will run smoothly and will not interfere with one another. They will not work as now, haphazardly, but function at their best in their separate capacities; also as regards the degree of consciousness which it is possible for a man to attain, but which in ordinary life he never reaches.

'It must not be forgotten that the degree of development possible for each centre differs with every man; so also do the impressions registered differ. Therefore the teaching and training of each person in the work must be strictly individual.

'In course of time the functional disorders to which the human machine is liable in ordinary conditions increase; and the machine can only be made to run smoothly after a long and determined struggle with the defects which have arisen in it. A man is unable to carry on this struggle alone and by his own efforts. Nor can he profit by the many methods of self-training and personal development in vogue (whether produced at home or imported from the Orient) which recommend indiscriminately methods and exercises—such as physical exercises, exercises in meditation, concentration, and breathing; systems of diet and fasting, induced experiences, and so on. These methods are prescribed for everyone, with no regard for individual needs and abilities, and take no account of personal peculiarities. Not only are they useless, they may even be dangerous; those who attempt to repair a defective machine without all-round and deep understanding may bring about certain changes, but these changes will cause other changes which an inexperienced person can neither foresee nor guard against. The human machine is always in mechanical equilibrium, whether it is running smoothly or not; therefore any change brought about in one place is bound to bring about a change in another place, and it is absolutely necessary that this should be foreseen and allowed for.

'To avoid unexpected and undesirable consequences it is important, when a man begins to work on himself, that he submit to the discipline imposed by the special and strictly individual methods employed by the Institute. We may say that one of the purposes is the development of new processes which will change and regulate the old ones. In other

words, in this work we have to develop new faculties, which cannot be attained in the conditions of the daily life we see around us; and a man can neither develop them unaided, nor by practising any general method.

'Only when every particular of man's organic and psychic condition as well as his upbringing and all the circumstances of his life are taken into account is the use of strictly individualized methods of training of this kind possible. To determine and prescribe for these conditions accurately a long period of time is necessary. The chief reason for this is that man from his earliest days, as a result of his upbringing, acquires an external mask and presents an external type that has nothing in common with his real type. As a man grows older this mask grows thicker, and at last he is unable to see himself because of the mask.

'To discover the particulars of an individual—what is real behind the mask—it is necessary to uncover the features and faculties of his type. For this his mask has to be destroyed; and this is a question of time. Only when the mask has been destroyed can we study and observe the man himself, that is, his real type.

'Those of you who are interested are invited to attend further talks, the time and place of which will be announced shortly.'

He then gave a short description of life at the Prieuré, and the kind of work that was done there, and ended by asking for questions. Of these there were a great many, but I could not follow them, though the audience seemed deeply interested and there was some discussion. For me the talk had little meaning. I was unable to grasp a single one of the ideas; perhaps they were too novel for me. It might have ended there, and the system have been just another straw in the wind, but the next day Orage came into the shop, and when I was introduced, he asked me what impression I had got. I said, 'None at all. I could not get the hang of it.' 'Never mind,' he replied, 'Gurdjieff is arriving in a week's time with forty pupils to give demonstrations of sacred dances and exercises. Why don't you come?' Since dancing had always interested me, I agreed.

At this first meeting with Orage it was as if I had always known him. Rather, 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.

The first demonstration was given at Leslie Hall, and all seats were free. The hall was filled with what are called 'interesting' people, that




Representation of a design for the programme of the Institute, 1923.

is, those who read, wrote, painted, or composed, or just talked about such things.

I found Orage behind the scenes swinging a little girl by her hands and talking to a man and woman, obviously her parents. When they moved away he told me that the man was a policeman in civilian dress, sent to ensure that no 'erotic' dances were shown.

I took my seat in the audience. A long time passed, and we became restless. Then, about nine o'clock, Orage mounted the platform, and after asking for silence, said: 'The demonstration this evening will consist chiefly of various movements of the human body taken from the art of the Ancient East—examples of sacred gymnastics, sacred dances, and religious ceremonies preserved in certain temples in Turkestan, Tibet, Afghanistan, Kafiristan, Chitral, and other places. Mr Gurdjieff, with other members of the "Seekers after Truth", carried out over many years in the Near and Far East a series of investigations which prove that in the Orient certain dances have not lost the deep significance—religious and scientific in the real sense—which they had in the remote past. Sacred dances and posture and movements in series have always been one of the vital subjects taught in esoteric schools in the East. They have a double aim: to convey a certain kind of knowledge, and to be a means for acquiring an harmonious state of being. The farthest limits of one's endurance are reached through the combination of non-natural and non-habitual movements, and by performing them a new quality of sensing is obtained, a new quality of concentration and attention and a new direction of the mind—all for a certain definite aim. Dancing still has quite a different meaning in the East from what we give it in the West. In ancient times the dance was a branch of real art, and served the purposes of higher knowledge and religion. A person who specialized in a subject communicated his knowledge through works of art, particularly dances, as we spread knowledge through books. Among the early Christians dancing in churches was an important part of the ritual. The ancient sacred dance is not only a medium for an aesthetic experience, but a book, as it were, or script, containing a definite piece of knowledge. But it is a book which not everyone who would can read. A detailed study of sacred dances and special movements and postures over many years has proved their importance in the work of the harmonious development of man; the parallel development of all his powers—one of the principal aims of Mr Gurdjieff. Exercises and sacred gymnastics are used in his system as one of the means for educating the student's moral





force, for developing his will, patience, capacity for thought, concentration and attention, hearing, sight, sense of touch, and so on.

'Tonight's programme will consist chiefly of group dances. In the Institute they precede individual movements, more complicated, and most of which are solo dances. In addition to the movements we shall give a demonstration of "Supernatural Phenomena", one of the subjects studied at the Gurdjieff School, a short explanation of which will be given later. The audience is asked not to applaud.'

After another long pause Mr de Hartmann came in with a small orchestra. Thomas de Hartmann, an aristocrat of the old school, had been a page at the Tsar's court, but had given up court life to devote his time to music. He was a brilliant pianist and composer. In his ballet, 'The Pink Flower', one of the first that Diaghileff produced in Moscow, Nijinsky first danced in public. Mme de Hartmann in her twenties had been a rising young opera singer. They met Gurdjieff in Moscow, and when the revolution came, literally left all and followed him over the mountains to Tiflis.

I was struck by the way Mr de Hartmann sat at the piano during the long pause. While the orchestra fidgeted and we, the audience, whispered tensely among ourselves, looking round to see who was there, Hartmann sat quite still, relaxed yet taking everything in.

At last the pupils came on to the stage and stood in lines. They were dressed in white tunics and trousers, the women's tunics long, the men's short. The women's hair was bound with gold fillets; not so the men's. In the Oriental dances which followed, both men and women wore appropriate and gorgeous costumes designed by Gurdjieff and based on those that were still worn in the East at the beginning of the century, some of which I myself had seen there.

At the command 'ruki storn' (or ruki v storonu) the pupils stretched their arms straight out to the sides; the music began, and, keeping the arms out, they beat out complicated rhythms with their feet. They kept this up, with arms outstretched, for fifteen minutes or more. There followed a 'machine group' in which the movements seemed to represent the working of machines or parts of a machine—single pupils or groups of two or three performing different movements, yet as a harmonious whole.

A group of the first six obligatory exercises was followed by a second six—'obligatory' because pupils were obliged to go through a course of them before they were allowed to perform the dances and the more complicated movements. These were called 'gymnastic

exercises' but were totally different from what I knew as gymnastics. Of the first six, three were from the Temple of Medicine at Sari in Tibet, and three from an esoteric school, The Seers, in Kafiristan. The effect on me of these exercises, the movements and the music, was electrifying. It was as if I had seen them before; they were new yet familiar, and I longed with all my feelings and instincts to do them myself.

These were followed by a large group, The Initiation of a Priestess, a fragment of a mystery called The Truth Seekers. As it proceeded, with movements, postures, gestures, and dances, it was as if all present were taking part in a religious ceremony. The music moved me profoundly, as indeed it did the rest of the audience; the change in the atmosphere of the hall could be sensed and felt. Gurdjieff's wife took the part of the priestess in this group.

After this came a series of Dervish dances in appropriate costumes. They comprised the Ho Yah Dervish dance from Chian (Ho Yah—O Thou Living God); a Big Prayer from an order of monks who call themselves They who Tolerate Freedom and whom the people call They Who Have Renounced; the Camel Step from Afghanistan; the ritual movements of the Veiled Monks of the Lakum order; a funeral ceremony for a dead dervish in the Subari Monastery in Thershzas; also dances of the Warrior Dervishes and the ritual movements of the Whirling Dervishes.

The Dervish dances were performed by the men pupils, although in some of them one or two women had minor parts. The rhythms and movements were vigorous, strong, and positive—masculine. One had a picture, so to speak, of man as the really active force.

Next came a demonstration of a pilgrimage. We were told that 'In Asia, especially in Central Asia, unusual pilgrimages are undertaken by people who have made a vow to compel themselves to suffer for a blessing received or hoped for. They travel to a holy place in an unusual or painful manner, such as turning somersaults, walking backwards, or on their knees. We shall show you a form of pilgrimage which is common in Caucasia and Turkestan. It is called "Measuring the way by one's length". The way is sometimes very long, up to eight hundred miles. The pilgrim proceeds from his home to the holy place in any kind of weather, perhaps carrying a pack of a hundred pounds, and often holding a fragile object, a gift for the shrine. Though such a pilgrimage often causes wounds which, according to Western ideas, ought to result in blood-poisoning, observers have never been





able to discover any cases in which the wounds were not healed the next day.'

Two or three pupils came to the platform and knelt, then stretched themselves out flat. They then drew up their legs under them and stood on the spot their fingers had touched, and repeated the movements round the stage. It is said that the famous Sufi saint, Rabia, who, 'although a woman, was the crown of men', made a pilgrimage in this way from her home to Mecca, a distance of some hundreds of miles.

The Pythia was a fragment of a ceremony performed in the sanctuaries of Hudarika in Chitral. It was described as the magnetic sleep of the priestess who, on the eve of the new year, foretells the events the members of the sanctuary will see during the year to come.

The women's dances were said to be a few preparatory exercises for the novices of various convents and some movements belonging to their ritual. I had seen something similar in Northern India and in China, but never in East or West had I seen anything to compare with the loveliness, the grace, the charm of these. The names were given as The Sacred Goose, The Lost Loves, The Prayer, The Waltz, and so on. While the dervish dances had expressed the active qualities of manliness and masculinity, the women's dances expressed the passive qualities of womanliness—tenderness and feminity. The music, too, with its lovely melodies, had a deep appealing quality.

The crowning point of the evening for me came during the series of movements called the Big Seven or the Big Group. It was from a religious order seated near Mount Ararat, the Aisors, a Christian sect tinged with Sufism. The series of movements was based on a very ancient symbol, the Enneagram, mathematically constructed like the movements of the order of the Pure Essenes, which was founded hundreds of years before Christ.

All through the evening thoughts and feelings had been stirring within me, reminding me by association of vivid emotional experiences—of dances of men and women I had seen in India and China; of the incredibly sweet singing of women in temples; of the drums; of the Taj Mahal, the Sphinx, and the Pyramids; the images of Buddha; the singing of choirs and the pealing of the organ in old cathedrals at Easter; all that had most deeply touched me in religion, music, and art had been gradually waking. Now the music of the Big Group began in a slow and solemn measure, almost of warning. As it proceeded, rising and falling in waves of sound, a sense of joy pervaded

my feelings; at the same time my mind was fixed on the complicated movements of the pupils. But with the feeling of joy was blended a sense, not of sadness, but of deep seriousness. It was as if it were saying something to me and I was trying to understand—a script that I was trying to decipher. Then, as the music swelled to a triumphant crescendo, a light broke. 'This,' I felt, 'is what I have always been searching for. Here is what I went to the ends of the earth to find. Here is the end of my search!' It was a clear conviction, without a particle of doubt, and from that time to this, never has any doubt assailed me.

During the interval, after the Big Group, I did not feel like talking. People no longer idly chattered; their talk was subdued. Also they were a little bewildered, since the movements fitted into no category of dancing known to them.

After the interval Orage came back to the platform and began to talk about the 'Stop' exercise. He said:

'In this exercise the pupil, on the command "Stop!" must arrest all movement. The command may be given anywhere, at any time. Whatever the pupil may be doing, whether during work, rest, or at meals, he must stop instantly. The tension of his muscles must be maintained, his facial expression, his smile, his gaze, remain fixed and in the same state as when the command caught him. The resulting postures are used by beginners for mental work, to quicken intellectual work while developing the will. The *Stop* exercise gives no new postures; it is simply an interrupted movement. Generally, we change our posture so unconsciously that we do not notice what positions we assume between postures. With the *Stop* exercise the transition between two postures is cut in two. The body, arrested by a sudden command, is forced to stop in a position in which it has never stopped before. This enables a man to observe himself better. He can see himself in a new light; he can sense differently and feel himself differently, and so break through the vicious circle of his automatism.

'The arbitrariness of our movements is an illusion. Psychological analysis and the study of the psychomotor functions as laid down by the Gurdjieff system show that every one of our movements, voluntary or involuntary, is an unconscious transition from one automatic posture to another automatic posture—the man takes from among the postures open to him those that accord with his personality; and the number of his postures is very small. All our postures are mechanical. We do not realize how closely linked together are our three functions;





moving, emotional, and mental. They depend on one another; they result from one another; they are in constant reciprocal action. When one changes, the others change. The posture of your body corresponds with your feelings and your thoughts. A change in your feelings will produce a corresponding change in your mental attitude, and in your physical posture. So that if we wish to change our habits of feeling and our habitual forms of thinking, we must first change our habits of posture. But in ordinary life it is impossible for us to acquire new physical postures; the automatism of the thinking process and habitual movements would prevent it. Not only are the thinking, feeling, and moving processes in man bound together, so to speak, but each and all three of them are compelled to work in the closed circle of automatic habitual postures. The Institute's method of preparing a man for harmonious development is to help him free himself from automatism. The *Stop* exercise helps in this. The physical body being maintained in an unaccustomed position, the subtler bodies of emotion and thought can stretch into another shape.

'It is important to remember that an external command is necessary in order to bring the will into operation, without which a man could not keep the transitional posture. A man cannot order himself to stop, because the combined postures of the three functions are too heavy for the will to move. But coming from the outside the command "Stop" plays the role of the mental and emotional functions, whose state generally determines the physical posture; and so the physical posture, not being in the state of habitual slavery to the mental and emotional postures, is weakened, and in turn weakens the other postures; this enables our will for a brief moment to rule our functions.'

At this point Gurdjieff came on to the stage, and I was able to observe him closely. He was wearing a dark lounge suit and a black trilby hat: a very powerful man physically, yet as light on his feet as a tiger. He looked at the audience with a half smile, and took us all in with a glance of his piercing dark eyes. He fitted into no type that I had known: certainly not the 'mystic' type, or yogi, or philosopher, or 'master'; he might have been a man who made archaeological expeditions in Central Asia.

The pupils having gathered at one side of the stage, Gurdjieff threw something into the air, and the pupils ran to catch it. He shouted 'Stop!' As if by magic the group became like statues in various attitudes. A minute or so passed. 'Davolna,' said Gurdjieff, and everyone relaxed and walked off. The exercise was done several times.

After this came the Chorovods—the folk and country dances, Mme de Hartmann coming on to the platform before each dance to give a few words of explanation. She began by saying:

'Almost all the peoples of Asia have their own dances. The Institute has collected over two hundred of them. The first we shall show, which is usually danced by young girls, comes from the region of Kumurhana in Turkey, though its origin lies in ancient Greece, and the postures of the dancers resemble very strikingly the designs on ancient urns and vases.' They actually did so, and the lilting melody might have been played on the pipes of Pan. This was followed by a harvest dance, of men and girls round a woman, from the oasis of Kerie.

The dance of the Tikins of Transcaspia was from the Festival of Carpets. It was a custom of the Tikins from various districts to bring the carpets woven during the year to a certain town and to celebrate. The carpets were combed and then pressed, so that only the fine fibres of the wool were seen. The ways of pressing were many and various. In Khorassan, for example, camel races were run over the spread-out carpets. In Persia they were laid out on the streets for people, camels, and donkeys to walk over. Among the Tikins, whose carpets are considered to be the finest, they were spread out and trodden in time to music.

After the folk dances came the Manual Labours. Mme de Hartmann said:

'These exercises form part of the rhythmical work of the Institute, that is, manual labour performed rhythmically. This was common in the East, where music was played during various kinds of manual work in order to increase production. It was to the accompaniment of music that many of the colossal constructions of the Ancient East were erected, as is known from inscriptions. The custom is still kept up at the source of the Pianje and in the oasis of Kerie and other places. When work in the fields is no longer possible, the villagers assemble in the largest building during the winter evenings and work at various tasks to the sound of music. Observations made at the Gurdjieff Institute of work done by groups to rhythmical music show that productivity increases from five to twenty times, compared with that of people working alone. We will now show three groups:

1. Combing wool and spinning thread;
2. Sewing shoes and knitting stockings;
3. Carpet weaving.'





The work movements, done to music and a sort of humming by the pupils, particularly interested me, for in a glove factory in Devonshire I had watched the girls working: one sang a folk song while the rest accompanied her with a sort of low humming. In Japan and China I used to watch the coolies doing monotonous tasks, hauling on ropes, driving piles, while singing in chorus; they really enjoyed the work. And I could not help comparing it with the way I used to toil, in New Zealand, for weeks on end, digging post-holes and undergoing other drudgery, suffering unbelievable boredom. Work rhythms were used in every part of the world up to fifty years ago—even in England. In ships the shanties went out with steam. In Germany, before the first World War, music was experimented with in factories; and in England radio music has been tried. But in neither case has it resulted in increased production; the rhythm is missing. In my father's factory the work was done by hand, and whenever the girls began to sing together spontaneously more and better work was done. Now all this seems to have disappeared under planning and automation. Human rhythm in work, which is an instinctive and emotional thing, has been superseded by the non-human rhythm of the machine and the conveyor belt. A deep instinctive need is left unsatisfied, and this leads to a craving for abnormalities, and even crime.

After the second interval came the last part of the programme, the 'tricks', 'half-tricks', and 'real supernatural phenomena'. Orage said:

'We shall now present some of the so-called "supernatural phenomena" also studied at the Institute. Mr Gurdjieff puts all such phenomena into three categories: tricks, semi-tricks, and real supernatural phenomena. Tricks are done artificially, the performer pretending that they result from some source of natural force; semi-tricks are not produced by sleight of hand, such as finding a hidden object blindfold; the third category, real phenomena, has as its basis laws which official science does not explain.

'As an example, let us take the well-known one of finding a hidden object. Something is hidden without the knowledge of a person who, though blindfolded, finds it, through holding the hand of a member of the audience. The audience believes that the finder reads the thoughts of the other person. It is deceived. A phenomenon really takes place without any trick on the part of the performer, but it has nothing in common with transmission of thought. It is done through the reflection on our muscular system of our emotional experiences. Since there is a muscular reaction to every small vibration of the physical body,

either by relaxation or contraction, it is possible with much practice to sense the most feeble vibrations, and these occur in the most stolid, even when the person is specially trying to subdue them. The hand which the blindfolded person holds responds unconsciously to its owner's knowledge of the hiding-place; its slight, almost imperceptible changes are a language which the medium interprets—consciously if he is versed in the secret, instinctively if he is ignorant of the law—and which leads him to guess where the object is hidden.

'Similar phenomena, produced through laws different from those to which they are ascribed and at the same time not artificial in their essence, Gurdjieff calls semi-tricks.

'The third class of phenomena comprises those having as the basis of their manifestation laws unexplained by official science: real supernatural phenomena. This has nothing to do with spiritualism, ghosts, and so forth. It is experiment in the reaction of a lower force to the impact of a higher force; or the reaction of pupils at a lower level to something given out from a higher level. The study of this class of phenomena is organized in the Institute very seriously and in full accordance with the methods of Western science. Not all members or pupils are admitted to it. Three conditions are necessary. The first is a wide and deep knowledge in some special branch; the second is a naturally persevering and sceptical mind; the third and most important is the necessary preliminary assurance of the future trustworthiness of the pupil, to ensure that he will not abuse the knowledge he may thus acquire for the pursuit of egoistic aims.

'As regards the tricks, their study is considered necessary both for the future investigators of genuine phenomena and for every pupil of the Institute; not only will their cognizance free a man from many superstitions, but it will also introduce in him a capacity for a critical observation indispensable to the study of real phenomena, which requires a perfectly impartial attitude and a judgement not burdened by pre-established beliefs.

'Among the present pupils there are some who have worked for a long time and are already acquainted with these phenomena. There are also young pupils who are far from understanding them. Yet all take part in the experiments.

'The phenomena tonight will be given as if all were genuine, though in reality they will consist of the three kinds—tricks, half-tricks, and true supernatural phenomena. But their classification we shall leave to your discernment.'





'The first,' continued Orage, 'is an exercise in memorizing, in remembering words. Some of the pupils will now go among you and collect words, which may be in any language. Although we can remember and repeat up to four hundred words at one sitting, we shall, in order not to weary you, take only forty. This is enough to give an idea of the possibility of developing the memory within a very short time. It must be pointed out that in the Gurdjieff system teaching is seldom direct, but almost always indirect. It must be borne in mind that all the exercises are designed for the development of quickness of mind and attention, which again have as their aim the fundamental one of the harmonious development of the pupil. No special exercises are given for the development of memory; the results are obtained through general work and exercises which assist the development of the whole man.'

About forty words were collected from the audience and read out once to the pupils on the stage, who then began to repeat them; and, as far as I could tell, most of them repeated them correctly, although many of the words were very strange. Then Mme de Hartmann, sitting among the audience, said, 'Now if you will give me some numbers I will transmit them, by suggestion, to the pupils.' She faced the pupils, who were on the stage, and in a few minutes they began to repeat the numbers which had been given.

She continued, 'The next exercise will be in the transmission of the names or shapes of objects at a distance by representation. We ask you to show or to name to the pupil who is sitting among you some object which you have on your person. The name or shape of it will then be guessed by the pupils on the stage.'

I had on my watch chain a small, rare greenstone 'Tiki', which I had acquired in New Zealand. I showed it to her, and the pupils gave a recognizable description of it.

When this was finished Mr de Hartmann said, 'Now I ask you to suggest to the same pupil the name of any opera that ever existed in any part of the earth. She will transfer it to me and I shall play an extract from it. Meanwhile I ask those of you in the front row to keep very quiet.' He then played extracts from a number of operas, some of which I had never heard of.

All this time the attention of the audience was drawn to the stage. They were completely mystified. Now Mr de Salzmann came on with an easel and large sheets of white paper, and Mme de Hartmann again sat in the audience. Orage said, 'We ask you to suggest, in the same

way, any creature, from the tiniest microbe to the largest beast, existing or prehistoric—fish, flesh, or fowl—to the pupil sitting with you. She will transmit it to the artist on the stage, and he will draw it.' Mr de Salzmann then sketched the animals, etc., with surprising rapidity and exactness. With this the evening's demonstration, which had lasted nearly four hours, came to an end.

The tricks and half-tricks completely baffled me. As a 'show' they were much more difficult than many I had seen done by professionals. I might have thought that the pupils had been through courses of magic; but I was a little relieved, and rather astonished, to see among the pupils two who had been fellow-members with me of the 1917 Club in London. All the same, it seemed like magic; and, as I was to discover, it was magic—but real magic.

As we were getting up to go I remembered that there had been no demonstration of 'real phenomena', and I wondered why. It was not until very much later, after much study, that I realized there had indeed been a very definite demonstration of real phenomena.

During the days that followed I could think of nothing but the dances and the music; and I was somewhat bewildered by the feeling that I had found that for which I had sought so long. My mind went back to Christian in the *Pilgrim's Progress from this World to the Next*, as was natural enough, for my family had been brought up on John Bunyan and the Bible; and my mother's people came from the Bunyan country. When I was a child it was as if his characters lived in the next village. I knew the book almost by heart and, thinking it over, there came to me the following passage:

> Now I saw in my dream that the highway up which Christian was to go was fenced on either side with a wall, and that wall was called Salvation. Up this way therefore did burdened Christian run, not without great difficulty, because of the load on his back. He ran thus till he came to a place somewhat ascending, and upon that place stood a cross, and a little below, in the bottom, a sepulchre. So I saw in my dream, that just as Christian came up with the cross, his burden loosed from off his shoulders, and fell from off his back, and began to tumble, and so continued to do, till it came to the mouth of the sepulchre, where it fell in, and I saw it no more. Then was Christian glad and lightsome, and said, with a merry heart, 'He hath given me rest by his sorrow and life by his death.' Then he stood awhile to look and wonder; for it was very surprising to him that the sight of the cross should ease him of his burden. He looked therefore, and looked again, even till the springs that were in his head sent the waters down his cheeks.



1. New York, January, 1924.