

# From Synarchy to Shambhala

The Role of Political Occultism and Social Messianism  
in the Activities of Nicholas Roerich

*Markus Osterrieder (Munich)*

(Transliteration of cyrillic letters follows ISO/R9)

1 February 2007

## 1.

Since the late 1980s, the teachings of Agni Yoga, also known as the “Teaching of Living Ethics” (*Živaja ètika*), have become an influential and exceedingly popular element in the esoteric scene of post-communist Russia. There are several Roerich museums (in New York City, Moscow and Naggar, India) and various competing Roerich centers. The opening of archives as well as the recent publication of various diaries and personal papers of the Russian painter and occultist Nicholas Roerich (Nikolaj Konstantinovič Rerih, (1874–1947), his wife Elena Ivanovna (1879–1955) and several of their closest collaborators eventually revealed the amazing scope and messianistic ambition of the ‘spiritual geopolitics’ (John McCannon<sup>1</sup>) which was the driving force behind the activities of the Roerichs. Their ultimate objective – usually referred to as the ‘Grand Plan’ (*Velikij Plan*) – was to establish a pan-Buddhist, transnational ‘New Country’ (*Novaja Strana*) stretching from Tibet to southern Siberia, including territory that was governed by China, Mongolia, Tibet, and the Soviet Union. This ‘New Country’ was conceived as the manifest, earthly expression of the invisible Kingdom of Shambhala, “the Holy Place, where the earthly world links with the highest states of consciousness”<sup>2</sup>. Roerich’s presumptuous ambition was nothing less than to prepare the coming of a New Age of peace and beauty, which would be ushered in by the earthly manifestation of Maitreya, the Buddha of the Future. Only a small inner circle of confidants and supporters in New York was initiated in the full extent of the beliefs and aspirations of the Roerichs.

Recent research has increasingly focused on the political aspects of N.K. Roerich’s expeditions to Central Asia from 1925–1928 and from 1934–1935.<sup>3</sup> This new interpretation of Roerich’s background and motives has sparked off an ongoing polemical debate in Russia and has led to bitter divisions within the Roerich movement and its followers. Especially the Moscow-based *Meždunarodnyj Centr Rerihov* under vice-president L.B. Šapošnikova has vowed to defend the legacy against any “traitors” from within the movement and “liars” and “slanderers” from outside. First the MCR staged a witchhunt against the view that Nicholas Roerich might have been an active spy for the Soviet intelligence in Central Asia<sup>4</sup>; then the MCR tried to prove that Vladimir Rosov’s ground-breaking Ph.D. thesis,

1 See John McCannon: “By the Shores of White Waters: The Altai and its Place in the Spiritual Geopolitics of Nicholas Roerich.” *Sibirica*, Vol. 2, No. 2, 2002, pp. 166–189.

2 Nikolaj Rerih: *Serdce Azii*. New York 1929, part 2, Šambala, list 10.

3 Oleg A. Šiškin: *Bitva za Gimalai: NKVD – magija i špionaž*. Moskva 1999, 2nd printing 2000; Vladimir A. Rosov: *Nikolaj Rerih: Vestnik Zvenigoroda. Èkspedicii N.K. Reriha po okrainam pustyni Gobi. Kniga 1: Velikij plan*. Sankt-Peterburg 2002; *Kniga 2: Novaja strana*. Sankt-Peterburg, Moskva 2004. For a bigger geopolitical and diplomatic context see: Aleksandr I. Andreev: *Soviet Russia and Tibet: The Decade of Secret Diplomacy, 1918-1930s*. Leiden, Boston 2003; Aleksandr I. Andreev: *Okkul’tist Strany Sovetov: Tajna doktora Barčenko*. Moskva 2004.

4 Roerich was always under suspicion by the British SIS. Recently, this has been taken up by Šiškin 2000 and his articles in *Segodnja* (29 October 1994; 19 November 1994; and 10 December 1994); and Anton

in which much new material covering Roerich's political activities was published, had supposedly compromising scientific flaws.<sup>5</sup> For this purpose, a whole series of apologetic volumes have been published.<sup>6</sup>

## 2.

The publication of Elena Roerich's diaries<sup>7</sup>, which contain the transcribed messages received between 1920 and 1944 from the "astral plane" and transmitted by spiritual Masters of the so-called "Great White Brotherhood", to whom the Roerichs devoted themselves and their work, confirm that the Roerichs did not consciously act as imposters who used the common vocabulary and ideals of the Theosophical Movement as a means to conceal very mundane purposes. It cannot be denied that they seriously interpreted themselves and their "mission" as part of some larger spiritual Plan that ultimately should serve the advance of human evolution, especially since Master Allal Ming warmed them up by revealing their illustrious previous incarnations, thereby feeding vanity and arrogance – a phenomenon that occurs not exclusively in esoteric circles, but finds a especially fertile ground among adepts – and politicians.<sup>8</sup>

Then again, as one enters the sphere of occultism, one has to be aware that there are, like in politics, many diverging and conflicting views, interests and objectives. And one discovers very soon, how easily the spheres of occultism and politics interpenetrate. This has nothing to do with the set-up of conspiracy theories. For instance, the underground social networking of revolutionary movements and societies coincided in many cases of modern history with already existing invisible networks of societies like those of the

---

Pervušin: *Okkul'tnye tajny NKVD i SS*. Moskva 1999. See for example the refutation by A.V. Stecenko: "Byl li Nikolaj Rerih sotrudnikom spetslužb?", *Pravda*, 6 June 2003, <<http://www.pravda.ru/print/science/planet/human-being/31713-shambala-0>>.

5 "«Staroe pod maskoj novogo». Gruppy vidnyh uchenyh o dissertacii V.A. Rosova", *Novaja Gazeta*, no. 89, 23 November 2006; "Kul'tura, ne politika... K voprosu o neudačnoj dissertacii o Nikolae Rerih", *Literaturnaja gazeta*, no. 20, 26 September 2006; "Étika lženuki", Special'nyj vypusk *Novaja Gazeta*, no. 89, 23 November 2006.

6 Rerihovskoe dviženie: *Aktual'nye problemy sohraneniya i zaščity nasledija Rerihov v istoričeskom kontekste. Materialy Meždunarodnogo obščestvenno-naučnogo simpoziuma 2002 goda*. Moskva 2002; *Zaščitim imja i nasledie Rerihov. Tom 3: Dokumenty Publikacii v presse očerki meždunarodnyj Centr Rerihov*. Moskva 2005.

7 The diaries are preserved at the Amherst Centre for Russian Culture (Amherst, Mass.), Roerich Collection. Digital facsimiles (djvu-files) can be accessed at <<http://urusvati.agni-age.net/>>.

8 On 9 May 1921 Elena Roerich was told that she had been as a former empress of Mexico married to Allal Ming; other incarnations included – apparently eternally female – Nofretete, king Solomon's wife, an Indian empress and a priestess in Carthago. Nikolaj's credentials were quite impressive, too: He – eternally male – figures as a Chinese and ancient Slavonic priest, as the 5th Dalai Lama Lozang Gyatso (1617–1682), and, last but not least, as Chinese emperor under the name of Fu-Yama-Tsin-Tao. This corresponded to the spiritual name received by Roerich: Fuyama. ("Soobščeniya, polučennye v Londone s III po VIII m[esjac] 1920. New-York, Nov. 1920-1921 g, po 31-e maja", Elena Rerih: *Dnevnik*, tetrad' 1, 24.03.1920–31.05.1921, pp. 79-81. See also Zinaida Fosdik's diary entries for 29 July 1922 and 14 August 1928, in: Z.G. Fosdik: *Moi učitelja: Vstreči s Rerihami. Po stranicam dnevnika, 1922–1934*. Moskva 1998, pp. 77, 289.) As A. Andreev pointed out, the "revelation" of an alleged Lozang Gyatso incarnation was of paramount importance for all further dealings of N.K. Roerich, as Lozang Gyatso was the first Dalai Lama to wield effective political power over central Tibet. He initiated the construction of the Potala Palace in Lhasa and was known for unifying the country under the leadership of the *Gelugpa* (aka the "Yellow Hat" sect) school of Tibetan Buddhism, after defeating the rival *Kagyupa* sect (belonging to the "Red Hat" sects) and a secular ruler, the prince of Tsang. Gyatso also established warm relations with Gushi Khan, a powerful Mongol military leader, and with the Shunzhi Emperor of China, the second emperor of the Qing Dynasty. Since there was a doubt about the legitimacy of the Dalai Lama's sixth incarnation, Roerich could claim that he was the continuation of the true lineage disrupted in the 17th century. Andreev 2003, p. 295.

manifold Masonic brotherhoods. Thus, it cannot surprise that “the modern revolutionary tradition as it came to be internationalized under Napoleon and the Restoration grew out of occult Freemasonry”<sup>9</sup>. The same can be said for international politics when we approach the century-old relationship between secret intelligence activities and the occult, which by their very nature show striking affinities. Since the days of the magus John Dee, whose secret cipher identifying him to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth I is believed to have been none other than that of 007<sup>10</sup>, famous examples like Laurence Oliphant<sup>11</sup> and Aleister Crowley<sup>12</sup> on the British side prove how far the definition of the “occult” can be stretched. Elena P. Blavatskaja (HPB, 1831–1891), who was intimately familiar with all political hotbeds and backrooms of the late 19th century, was ready to offer at least twice in her career her services as a spy, to the Russian and British intelligence agencies respectively.<sup>13</sup> This is a cultural and social pattern that can be followed all the way from the 19th century up to the present, from Kipling’s “Great Game”<sup>14</sup> to its continuation, the Cold War, and finally to what is called nowadays the “Great Game, Round Two”<sup>15</sup> on the “Grand Chessboard” which in the eyes of some, alas, was and still is “Eurasia”<sup>16</sup>. There was a widespread conviction among Anglo-American and French occult circles since the 1880s to be engaged in an ongoing Great Game between Western and Eastern

- 
- 9 James H. Billington: *Fire in the Minds of Men: Origins of the Revolutionary Tradition*. New York 1980, p. 87.
- 10 Richard Deacon: *John Dee. Scientist, Geographer, Astrologer, and Secret Agent to Elizabeth I*. London 1968; Benjamin Woolley: *The Queen’s Conjurer: The Science and Magic of Dr. Dee*. London 2002; John Bossy: *Giordano Bruno and the Embassy Affair*. Princeton 1991.
- 11 Philip Henderson: *The Life of Laurence Oliphant: Traveller, Diplomat and Mystic*. London 1956; Anne Taylor: *Laurence Oliphant, 1829-1888*. Oxford 1982.
- 12 Marco Pasi: *Aleister Crowley e la tentazione della politica*. Milano 1999; there is now a revised German edition: Marco Pasi: *Aleister Crowley und die Versuchung der Politik*. Graz 2006. See also Richard B. Spence: “Aleister Crowley and British Intelligence in America, 1914-1918.” *Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence* 13 (2000), pp. 359-371; Richard B. Spence: *Secret Agent 666: Aleister Crowley, British Intelligence and the Occult* (forthcoming in 2007).
- 13 First in December 1872 to the Third Section in Odessa, cf. Maria Carlson: *No Religion Higher Than Truth: A History of the Theosophical Movement in Russia, 1875-1922*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press 1993, p. The unabridged text of the document is reproduced in Aleksandr Senkevič: *Elena Blavatskaja. Mistika sud’by*. Moskva 1999, pp. 125-131. In 1887, after HPB left India, the political situation had changed and she wrote to Sinnett during the political crisis caused by the Dulip Singh conspiracy: “I would upset all these French plans. [...] I am ready to become an infamous informer of your English Govt. WHICH I HATE, for their sake, for the sake of my Society and of my beloved Hindus [...] Ah, if Master would only show me the way! [...] That your Govt. here and in India, is so stupidly short sighted as not to see, that not only I am not, nor ever was a *Russian spy* – but that the very prosperity, progress and welfare of the T.S. depends on everything in India being quiet for years to come.” *The Letters of H.P. Blavatsky to A.P. Sinnett, and Other Miscellaneous Letters*. Transcribed, compiled, and with an introduction by A.T. Barker. London 1925, letter 88, pp. 206-07.
- 14 Karl E. Meyer, Shareen Blair Brysac: *Tournament of Shadows. The Great Game and the Race for Empire in Central Asia*. Washington, D.C. 1999; Robert Johnson: *Spying for Empire: The Great Game in Central and South-East Asia, 1757-1947*. London 2006; Peter Hopkirk: *The Great Game: On Secret Service in High Asia*. Oxford 2001; Peter Hopkirk: *Setting the East Ablaze: Lenin’s Dream of an Empire in Asia*. Oxford 1986; Jennifer Siegel: *Endgame: Britain, Russia and the Final Struggle for Central Asia*. London 2002.
- 15 The expression was coined by Brian Beedham, editor of the UK weekly *The Economist*, in a lecture at the Congress of Istanbul organized by the New Atlantic Initiative and the American Enterprise Institute. “The Atlantic Community in 2012: Three Scenarios”, 2nd of May 1998, <<http://www.aei.org/research/nai/events/pageID.400,projectID.11/default.asp>>.
- 16 Zbigniew Brzezinski: *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostategic Imperatives*. New York 1998; see as well Lutz Kleveman: *The New Great Game: Blood and Oil in Central Asia*. New York 2003.

occultists for spiritual domination over several parts of the world.<sup>17</sup> For example, a fierce confrontation existed between the members of the influential Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor, purporting to defend “Western hermetic tradition”, and the outlets of “esoteric Buddhism” like the Theosophical Society.<sup>18</sup>

In the context of the Anglo-Russian contest for hegemony over Central and Inner Asia, the Russian and later Soviet intelligence could indeed rely on the help of agents, who in some cases were at the same time spiritual or even religious dignitaries and whose interests coincided to some extent with those of Russian imperial policy. Thus, the German traveller Wilhelm Filchner claimed in 1924 (in agreement with the British) that the Buryat lama Agvan Dorjiev (1854–1938) – famous propagator of Tibetan buddhism, assistant tutor and diplomat in the services of the 13th Dalai Lama Thubden Gyatso (1876–1933) – held close contact with the Tsarist foreign office and intelligence as early as 1885, when Britain and Russia faced each other on the brink of war in Afghanistan, and that he trained other Buryat and Kalmyk lama-agents<sup>19</sup>. While this has been disputed by others<sup>20</sup>, there is enough evidence to suggest that Dorjiev was indeed entrusted with political missions not only by Lhasa, but also by the Tsarist Government, even if he wasn’t a “spy” in conventional terms.<sup>21</sup>

### 3.

According to Theosophical tradition, the “Masters” were beings of ineffable spiritual development and wisdom; the most famous ones were Koot Hoomi and Morya, in HPB’s days supposedly residents of Shigatse in Tibet. At the same time, already HBP claimed that there were incarnated, mortal men in flesh and blood. In this, the Roerichs, who joined the Theosophical Society in London in 1920, made no exception. They claimed to have met the Master Morya for the first time on 24 March 1920 at the same spot where HPB also met her Asian teacher – London Hyde Park. Since this initial encounter, the Roerichs received regular messages from “Morya”; indeed, on the very same day, Elena

17 C.G. Harrison: *The Transcendental Universe: Six Lectures on Occult Science, Theosophy, and the Catholic Faith. Delivered Before the Berean Society.* [1st ed. London 1894.] Hudson, N.Y. 1993, pp. 80-90, 98-99; Christian Chanel, John P. Deveney, Joscelyn Godwin: *The Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor: Initiatic and Historical Documents of an Order of Practical Occultism.* Edited by John P. Deveney. York Beach, Me. 1995, pp. 52-54; Alexandre de Dánann: *Un Envoyé de la Loge Blanche: Bô-Yin-Râ de la Teshu Maru au Grand Orient de Patmos.* Milano 2004, pp. 15-53. This notion has of course been eagerly taken up by the neo-Eurasianist movement in Russia after 1991. Especially Aleksandr Dugin, son of a KGB officer, enjoys to speak of an occult war between Atlanticists and Eurasianists. Aleksandr G. Dugin: *Konspirologija (Nauka o zagovorah, sekretnyh obščestvah i tajnoj vojne).* 2nd ed. Moskva 2005.

18 As a result of this confrontation, the Sikh Swâmi Narad Mani aka Hiran Singh published in 1911-1912 in the catholic review *La France anti-maçonnique* a sharp polemic against the Theosophists (Swâmi Narad Mani: *Baptême de lumière. Notes pour servir à l'histoire de la société dite théosophique.* Milano 2003). Narad Mani presented Guénon with some of the material that the latter used for his own influential attack against the Theosophical Society (René Guénon: *Le Théosophisme: Histoire d'une pseudo-religion.* Paris 1921). Guénon himself acted as a member of the H.B. of L. (see his own confirmation in his letter from 11 May 1936, published in *Rivista di Studi Tradizionali*, no. 71, July-December 1990, pp. 83-84).

19 Wilhelm Filchner: *Sturm über Asien: Erlebnisse eines diplomatischen Geheimagenten.* Berlin 1924, p. 5.

20 John Snelling: *Buddhism in Russia: The Story of Agvan Dorjiev Lhasa's Emissary to the Tsar.* Shaftsbury, Dorset; Rockport, Mass.: Element Books 1993, p. 39.

21 Aleksandr Andreyev: “Indian Pundits and the Russian Exploration of Tibet: An Unknown Story of the Great Game Era”, *Central Asiatic Journal* 45/2 (2001), pp. 163-180; Andreev 2003, p. 21; Tatiana Shaumian: *Tibet: The Great Game and Tsarist Russia.* New Dehli 2000, p 38-40.

Ivanovna began to note down the content of the spiritual messages transmitted to her.<sup>22</sup> They came to believe that their *Guide* (this very word in English was used), who preferred to name himself Allal Ming or “A-Lal-Ming”<sup>23</sup>, was “the spiritual teacher of Tibet”<sup>24</sup> and the “spiritual leader of the Pamir”<sup>25</sup>.

Like in the case of HPB and other personalities of the Theosophical Society, the researcher is confronted with two methodological options: The first is to dismiss such “communications” as pure blunder and to range them altogether in the realm of fantasy. However, the source material proves conclusively that throughout the 1920s and 1930s the main inspiration for the Grand Plan remained the steady flow of communications received by Elena Roerich who acted as a medium. And one has to admit, as John McCannon remarked, that “it is incredible just how much of his plan Roerich was able to accomplish”<sup>26</sup>, including the securing of fundings and diplomatic permissions for two expeditions into a highly sensitive area – the core region of the Great Game, as well as the building of a vast network of followers and financiers ranging from Paris to New York and Harbin. Therefore, the second option is to assume that there could be *some kind* of reality behind the communications, that they were not just made up or an expression of sheer madness. The next step would be then to ask: What could have been the true identity or the motives of the Masters? Such an approach has been attempted by scholars like K. Paul Johnson and Joscelyn Godwin who in their respective research tried to shed a light onto the mystery of the identity of the Theosophical Masters.<sup>27</sup>

At the same time, not only the European powers meddled, whenever necessary, politics with religion and the occult. In the mid-19th century, this strategy became increasingly popular among groups and movements who wanted to organize political resistance and diverse ways of religious-national *risorgimento* against foreign imperialist powers. Sayyid Jamāl ad-Dīn called al-Afghānī (1838–1897) tried to unite Hindus and Muslims of British India in a uprising against the Crown. Originally a member of a Sufi brotherhood, he not only shaped the modern concept of Pan-Islamism, but also adopted the social networking of Western Freemasonry, in which he got initiated, by establishing similar secret societies in the Muslim world. Out of this activity grew the Muslim Brotherhoods.<sup>28</sup> Paramhansa Yogananda (1893–1952) described in his autobiography how his guru Sri Yukteswar Giri (1855–1936) entrusted him with the mission to win the West for the teachings of Yoga as a spiritual counter-measure against material domination of India by the colonial powers.<sup>29</sup> If the Buryat lama Agvan Dorjiev was ready to work in the service of the Tsarist

22 V.L. Krymov, in whose London flat the first seances took place, later wrote that Elena Ivanovna originally introduced her husband to spiritism to brighten up his deeply melancholic mood. Vladimir L. Krymov: *Ljudi v pautine*. Berlin [1929], p. 209.

23 *Dnevnik*, 13 March 1927, t. 23: 13.08.1926–12.04.1927

24 *Listy sada Morii*, kn. 1, 23 September 1922, in: *Učenie Živoj Ētiki*, t. 1. S.-Peterburg 1993, p. 83.

25 *Dnevnik*, 10 August 1921, t. 2: 01.06.1921–05.09.1921.

26 McCannon 2002, p. 179.

27 K. Paul Johnson: *The Masters Revealed: Madam Blavatsky and the Myth of the Great White Lodge*. Albany, N.Y. 1994; K. Paul Johnson: *Initiates of the Theosophical Masters*. Albany, N.Y. 1995; Joscelyn Godwin: *The Theosophical Enlightenment*. Albany, N.Y. 1994.

28 Nikki R. Keddie: *Sayyid Jamāl ad-Dīn ‘al-Afghānī’: A Political Biography*. Berkeley, Cal. 1972; *Jamāl ad-Dīn al-Afghānī: An Apostle of Islamic Resurgence*. Ed. by M. Ikram Chaghatai. Lahore 2005; Nikki R. Keddie: *An Islamic Response to Imperialism: Political and Religious Writings of Jamāl ad-Dīn al-Afghānī*. Berkeley, Cal. 1968. Concerning the occult activities see Johnson 1995, pp. 71-112.

29 Paramahansa Yogananda: *Autobiography of a Yogi*. New York [1946], chapter 12.

government, he did it for the sake of the spiritual and political interests of Tibet, when her spiritual leaders believed it necessary to engage Russia as protective power.<sup>30</sup>

#### 4.

The rising influence of Eastern spirituality among Europeans and Americans was closely related to burning political questions like the condemnation of imperialism, social and economical reform in the colonies and contested areas like Central and East Asia, national and religious autonomy. For instance, HPB and Annie Besant both were, like many theosophists, politically rather on the left and very strongly engaged in emancipatory causes<sup>31</sup>. Besides, it has been recognized by a growing number of scholars that the phenomenon of occultism must be rescued from its status as an “irrational indulgence” as well as from rather partial concepts of “rationality” and “consciousness”, and that on the contrary an involvement with the occult was a *leitmotif* of the intellectual avant-garde.<sup>32</sup> The attraction exerted by Buddhist, Hindu or Muslim spirituality can't be exhaustively explained in the context of 19th century racial theories and the notion of “Aryan superiority”.<sup>33</sup>

In the case of Russia, the importance of the *social* factor, the idea that Asia was destined to be a potential ally in the fight against the oppression of the fossilised European imperialist powers, grew ever stronger in the course of the 19th century. In culture and religion of the Eastern Slavs there existed already in the pre-Christian period a strong Iranian (and this also includes a Zoroastrian and later Manichaean) subtext, demonstrated by linguistic influences<sup>34</sup>, which continually surfaced especially in numerous chiliastic folk beliefs, legends and sectarian cosmogonies.<sup>35</sup> However, a similar influence can be

---

30 Tat'jana Šaumjan: “Agvan Doržiev: les missions tibétaines auprès du tsar (1900-1901)”, *Slavica Occidentalia* 21 (2005), pp. 135-152.

31 The theosophical doctrines about “root races” are too often in a rather superficial way interpreted as a proof for racist, right-wing leanings by many researchers. Godwin suggested however that HPB's “Theosophy owed as much to the skeptical Enlightenment of the 18th century as it did to the concept of spiritual enlightenment with which it is more readily associated” (Godwin 1994, p. xi). John Zavos described how various religious reform movements including the Theosophical Society sought to mobilize Hindus by presenting particular ideas of what it meant to be a Hindu. It was in these movements that the ideology of Hindu nationalism began to be articulated. John Zavos: *The Emergence of Hindu Nationalism in India*. Oxford 2002.

32 See for instance Alex Owen: *The Place of Enchantment: British Occultism and the Culture of the Modern*. Chicago, Ill. 2004; Godwin 1994; Antoine Faivre: *Accès de l'ésotérisme occidental*. 2 vol., revised edition Paris 1996.

33 For an exploration of this aspect see Marlène Laruelle: *Mythe aryen et rêve impérial dans la Russie du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle*. Paris 2005.

34 Aleksander Gieysztor: *Mitologia Słowian*. Warszawa 1982; Evel Gasparini: *Il matriarcato slavo. Antropologia culturale dei protoslavi*. Firenze 1973; André Meillet: “Le Vocabulaire slave et le vocabulaire indo-iranien”, *Revue des études slaves* 6 (1926), pp. 165-174; Karl H. Menges: “Early Slavo-Iranian Contacts and Iranian Influences in Slavic Mythology”, *Symbolae in honorem Z.V. Togan*. Istanbul 1950-55, pp. 468-479; Max Vasmer: *Russisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*. 3 vol., Heidelberg 1953; Leszek Moszyński: *Die vorchristliche Religion der Slaven im Lichte der slavischen Sprachwissenschaft*. Köln-Wien 1992.

35 Mircea Eliade: *Von Zalmoxis zu Dschingis-Khan. Religion und Volkskultur in Südosteuropa*. Köln, Löwenich 1982, pp. 85-138; Michail Dragomanov: *Notes on the Slavic Religio-Ethical Legends: The Dualistic Creation of the World*. Bloomington, Ind. 1961; Ugo Bianchi: *Il dualismo religioso. Saggio storico ed etnologico*. Roma 1958, pp. 42sq.; Mihail L. Serjakov: «Golubinaja kniga»: *Svjaščennoe skazanie russkogo naroda*. Moskva 2001; Georgij P. Fedotov: *Stihi duhovnye: Russkaja narodnaja vera po duhovnym stiham*. Moskva 1991.

constated in several schools of Mahayana Buddhism, Shi'ite and Ismaili Islam.<sup>36</sup> One can add that it was a common topic among occult and esoteric groups in East and West — although some details and especially the interpretation of the spiritual consequences varied drastically — that the 19th century had come to an end by closing the Dark Age or Kali Yuga, that a New Age of spiritual Enlightenment and social reform would dawn. In the same period, religious millenarism had reached a peak, most of all in regions of the world where political conflict, ethnic or social oppression and injustice created the necessary climate for revolt.

When, after the European rediscovery of the Zend-Avesta in the later part of the 18th century<sup>37</sup>, the Zoroastrian legends about the eternal fight of the agricultural peoples of Iran against the nomadic peoples of Turan<sup>38</sup> spread across Europe, they were embraced by the Russian *intelligencija* as a fitting description of the social situation in the Tsarist Empire. They could be interpreted in terms of a historic dualism between the agricultural soil and the steppe, especially following the conquest of the Central Asian territories in the mid-19th century. But whereas Dostoevskij still spoke in terms of a White Man's Burden, the mission of the Russian *hristianin/krest'janin* ("Christian/peasant" – in Russian the words sound almost identical) to carry *agriculture* into the nomadic regions of Asia<sup>39</sup>, outlooks began to shift in the 1860s, when among the radical Left, the first hopes appeared for a renovation of Russia on the basis of her association with the Asian East. For such thinkers in their nascent Eurasianist mood, "Europe–Iran" turned into a synonym of stagnation and the old world. "Asia–Turan", on the other hand, became the symbol for the chaotic ferment that was necessary to overthrow the rigid tyranny, the *krivda* (injustice and lie) of the Tsar and to create a new, just world built upon *pravda* (justice and truth). Even Aleksandr Hercen (Herzen, 1812–1870), after his disappointment in the revolutionary Europe of 1848 and his resultant ideological approach to Russia's Slavophiles, pointed out that the focus of the world revolution would lie not in Europe but in the Turanian East, whose peoples, wrote Hercen, had received from Western civilization nothing but unhappiness, and who therefore would rise against the entire Teutonic-Latin world. Eventually Hercen came to bless in his paper *Kolokol* in 1860 the influence of the potentially revolutionary Turanian ethnic elements on Russia, even stating (from his London exile)

36 The ancient Zoroastrian eschatology influenced not only millenarist concepts in the muslim Shia (Henry Corbin: *Corps spirituel et terre céleste: de l'Iran mazdéen à l'Iran shi'ite*. Paris 1979), but also had a lasting impact on Buddhism in Tibet (Boris I. Kuznecov: *Drevnij Iran i Tibet: Istorija religii Bon*. S.-Peterburg 1998; Boris I. Kuznecov: *Tibetika. Sbornik statej*. Sankt-Peterburg 2003) and the millenarist movements among Western and Eastern christians (Alain Besançon: *Les Origines intellectuelles du Léninisme*. Paris: Calmann-Lévy 1977; Michail Agursky: "L'aspect millénariste dans la révolution bolchevique", *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique* 29 (1988), pp. 487-513).

37 Michael Stausberg: *Faszination Zarathushtra. Zoroaster und die Europäische Religionsgeschichte der Frühen Neuzeit*, I-II. Berlin, New York 1998; Michael Stausberg: "Zoroaster im 18. Jahrhundert: Zwischen Aufklärung und Esoterik", *Aufklärung und Esoterik*. Edited by Monika Neugebauer-Wölk. Hamburg 1999, pp. 117-139.

38 Concerning Iran–Turan see: Carsten Colpe et al.: "Altiranische und zoroastrische Mythologie", *Wörterbuch der Mythologie*. Ed. by H.W. Haussig, I/4, Stuttgart 1986, p. 448sq.; Markus Osterrieder: *Durchlichtung der Welt. Über die Anfänge der iranischen Kultur und Religion in Neolithikum und Bronzezeit*. Stuttgart 2007 (forthcoming); Marlène Laruelle: "La question du « touranisme » des Russes. Contribution à une histoire des échanges intellectuels Allemagne-France-Russie au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle", *Cahiers du monde russe*, 45/1-2 (2004).

39 "In Europe we are but parasites and slaves, but to Asia we shall come as masters." Fedor M. Dostoevskij: *Polnoe sobranie sočinenii*. S.-Peterburg 1891, Vol. XI, p. 515. See as well Markus Osterrieder: "Zarathuštra bei den Slaven: Die iranische Grundlage des slavischen Geisteslebens. Die Kultur des slavischen Ostens und der Schatten von Turan", *Das Goetheanum* 79 (2000), pp. 577-581, 608-610, 633-636.

that the Mongol yoke had protected Russia against Roman Catholicism and had saved the village community (*mir*) from destruction.<sup>40</sup>

Similar views could be found among *narodniki* (those “who went to the people”) like Sergej Južakov (1849–1910) who in 1885 spoke of the impending collision of Russia and Britain in a struggle for Asia in terms of a struggle of peasant Russia against shopkeepers’ England. The colonial exploitation by the British would result in nothing less than the death of Asia.<sup>41</sup> Another *vostočnik* (“Easterner”) and champion for the Asian cause, prince Ėsper Ė. Uhtomskij (1861–1921)<sup>42</sup>, believed at the time of the Boxer uprising (1900) that “in the community of Russia and Asia is contained the future solution of the Oriental question”. He also thought that “the bonds that unite our part of Europe with Iran and Turan, and through them with India and the Celestial Empire, are so ancient and lasting that, as yet, we ourselves, as a nation and a state, do not fully comprehend their full meaning and the duties they entail on us, both in our home and foreign policy.”<sup>43</sup> Uhtomskij was acquainted with Theosophy and a practicing Buddhist from the age of 15. His links with Buryats and Tibetans were surrounded with secrecy. While he was in no way disloyal to tsar Nicholas II, to whom he introduced Agvan Dorjiev in 1898, he saw the tsar as a potential liberator of the Asian peoples because of the way Russia was treated and rejected by the Western powers. “And there will come a day, when the Orient shall arise from its slumber, awakened and irritated by the stormy elements of the oppressing white race. Like our mythical Ilya Muromets, the Orient shall then feel a mighty power in itself and shall demand to say its word. [...] And Europe shall tremble. But neither threats nor violence nor accidental victories shall be able to accomplish anything [...]. In the eternal conflict between Europe and Asia, Russia shall decide in favor of Asia. Another judgment is not possible where the judge is the brother of the complainant.”<sup>44</sup>

---

40 *Kolokol*, 1 April 1860, quoted by Sarkisyanz 1955, p. 207sq. See also Nicola Fumagalli: *Cultura politica e cultura esoterica nella sinistra russa (1880–1917)*. Milano 1996. One of the most important cradles of the concept of modern Pan-Turanism was the Kingdom of Hungary, where it was popularized by literates like Sándor Székely de Aranyosrákos und Mihály Vörösmarty. One should not overlook at roughly at the same time, the idea of a Turanian empire was propagated amongst the Ottoman Turks by Ármin Vámbéry (Hermann Wamberger, 1832–1913), a Hungarian Professor, philologist and traveler who worked as an advisor to the Ottoman Sultan between 1857–1863, who was also doing intelligence work for Lord Palmerston of the British Foreign office. Vámbéry’s thesis was based on the observation that as much of Central Asia used Turkic languages as their main vernacular (except Persian speaking Tajikistan), this then necessitated the formation of “Turan”, which he saw as a political entity stretching from the Altai Mountains in Eastern Asia to the Bosphorus. It has been speculated that Vámbéry’s mission was to create an anti-Slavic racialist movement among the Turks that would divert the Russians from the “Great Game” which they were involved in against Britain in Persia and Central Asia. See: H.B. Paksoy: “Basmachi’: Turkestan National Liberation Movement 1916–1930s.” *Modern Encyclopedia of Religions in Russia and the Soviet Union*, vol. 4. Gulf Breeze, Fla. 1991; Geoffrey Miller: *British Policy towards the Ottoman Empire and the Origins of the Dardanelles Campaign*. Hull 1997; Serge A. Zenkovsky: *Pan-Turkism and Islam in Russia*. Cambridge, Mass. 1960; Michael de Fernandy: “Die Mythologie der Ungarn”, *Wörterbuch der Mythologie*. Edited by H.W. Haussig. I/2, Stuttgart 1973, pp. 209–260, here p. 231sq.

41 Quoted by Emanuel Sarkisyanz: *Rußland und der Messianismus des Orients*. Tübingen 1955, p. 208sq.

42 See David Schimmelpenninck van der Oye: *Toward the Rising Sun: Russian Ideologies of Empire and the Path to War With Japan*. DeKalb, Ill. 2001, pp. 42–60; Laruelle 2005, pp. 156–168; Johnson 1995, pp. 125–137.

43 Ėsper Uhtomskij: *Travels in the East of Nicholas II Emperor of Russia when Czarewitch 1890–91*. Westminster 1896, vol. II, p. 35.

44 Ėsper Uhtomskij: *K sobytijam u Kitae. Ob otnošenjah Rossii k Vostoku*. S-Peterburg 1900, pp. 44–45 and 48 and 79; quoted by Sarkisyanz 1955, pp. 220–222.

Like other Buddhists who were inspired by the teachings of Tibetan lamas and were familiar with the legends associated with the Kālacakra Tantra (“Wheel of Time Tantra”) ritual, Uhtomskij referred to the messianic advent of the so-called “Last King of Northern Shambhala.” This “Shambhala of the North” was considered to be a mythical land, thought to be situated somewhere far to the north of Tibet<sup>45</sup>, a “Land of Quietness.” On his travels through Central Asia in 1845-1846, the French Catholic Abbé Huc (Évariste Régis Huc, 1813–1860) came across an occult brotherhood under the command of the Panchen Lama called the Kelan. Their members believed that their leader would be reborn in the future in a country north of Tibet between the Tien-Shan and the Altai range, and that this country was connected to the prophecies of Shambhala. After the future Chinese conquest of Tibet, so it was told, the New Country in the North would be the cradle of the renewal of Buddhism, the dead would resurrect, and the Panchen Lama as the Universal Ruler would then crush the forces of evil and spread Buddhism over the entire earth.<sup>46</sup> Many elements of this tale would later resurface in the spiritual instructions of the Buryat lama Agvan Dorjiev and of the Roerichs.

Another tale from Tibet foretold that the King would be reborn as the Tashi (Panchen)-Lama at a time when Lamaism has declined and become impotent. In this future incarnation, the ruler of Northern Shambhala was expected to lead the Lamaistic peoples into the last and decisive combat against the enemies of righteousness. In a special prayer the faithful asked to be reborn as fighters of Shambhala’s armies against the opponents of truth, to prepare the advent of the realm of Maitreya, the Future Buddha, whose coming Lamaism also expected from the far north.<sup>47</sup> Then, a new Golden Age would dawn: “Grain shall then flourish on the fields without the necessity of ploughing.”<sup>48</sup>

The political implications of this hope that the White Tsar from the North as the potential liberator of Buddhist Asia could satisfy “yearnings for truth and justice on Earth”<sup>49</sup> were promoted at the court in St. Petersburg by *vostočniki* like Uhtomskij or the Buryat practitioner of Tibetan medicine Petr A. (Žamsaran) Badmaev (1851?–1920) who already suggested to his godfather Alexander III the annexation of Mongolia,

45 G.A. Combe: *A Tibetan on Tibet. Being the Travels and Observations of Mr. Paul Sherap (Dorje Zodbo) of Tachienlu*. London 1926, pp. 41-42. As an introduction to the Shambhala myths see Edwin Bernbaum: *The Way to Shambhala*. Garden City, NY. 1980. As seen from an Agni Yoga perspective: N.E. Kovaleva: *Šambala – èto ne mif*. Moskva 2002.

46 *Souvenirs d'un voyage dans la Tartarie, le Thibet, et la Chine pendant les années 1844-1846*. 2nd ed. Paris 1853, vol. II, pp. 278-280.

47 As early as 1848, the first Russian educated Buryat Dordji Banzarov formulated – under the immediate impression of the revolutions in France, Germany, and Austria – a Mongol if not Lamaist view of the revolutionary crisis into the following words: “The inhabitants of the Occident now have a period of turmoil. They have expelled their lords and khans and have become hostile to one another. It seems such also were the times in which Kesar was born into this world. Judging by the character of the present epoch, will not Kesar appear again? Then we will have the possibility to be among his thirty-three companions.” D. Banzarov’s letter to Bobrovnikov, dated 12 April 1848. D. Banzarov: *Černaja Vera i drugija stat’i*. S.-Peterburg 1891, p. 111. Although distinct from the Shambhala idea in literary origin, the expectations about the rebirth of Kesar (Gesar), the famous hero of Tibetan and Mongolian epics, do seem to converge with those about the Last King of Shambhala in the messianic and millennial expectations common to both of them. Thus, the hero king Kesar is expected to be reborn in Northern Shambhala. See Emanuel Sarkisyanz: “Communism and Lamaist Utopianism in Central Asia”, *The Review of Politics*, 20:4 (1958), pp. 623-633, here p. 626-27.

48 Sarkisyanz 1958, pp. 623-625.

49 In the words of the official Ivan Balašev in 1902; Schimmelpenninck van der Oye 2001, p. 198. See as well Dany Savelli: “Penser le bouddhisme et la Russie”, *Slavica Occitania* 21 (2005), pp. 9-88; Marlène Laruelle: “La place du bouddhisme dans les discours nationalistes russes du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle”, *Slavica Occitania* 21 (2005), pp. 225-242.

China and Tibet. He later was suspected of having been a secret envoy of the Teshu Maru brotherhood.<sup>50</sup> But they did not really depend on a specific type of government in Russia.<sup>51</sup> The “White Tsar” as a mythical leader could also have a proletarian background. For this reason, there was no contradiction, if Buryat lama Agvan Dorjiev first put his hopes in the Russian tsar, but after 1917 would court the Bolshevik leadership by stressing the compability of Buddhism and Communism. The same strategy was taken up by the Roerichs to whom the Himalayan Masters Masters explained the evolutionary necessity of Communism.

## 5.

Strangely enough, there are striking, but in no way accidental parallels to events in the occult underground of Western Europe. Louis Jacolliot (1837–1890), a French magistrate in Chandernagor, South India, introduced in 1873 the notion of a prehistoric “City of the Sun” called “Asgartha”, which was supposed to be the ancient seat of the Brahmatma, the chief priest of the Brahmins and the visible manifestation of the Divine and the theocratic social order on earth.<sup>52</sup> Two years earlier, the famous writer, politician and occultist Edward George Bulwer-Lytton (1803–1873), a close friend of Disraeli, published his novel *The Coming Race*, about a utopian, superior society, “destined to supplant our races”, living in a hidden underground city in the depths of the earth. Their egalitarian social order was built upon the principles of eugenics and controlled with the help of a hitherto unexploited force called *Vril*, by which Bulwer-Lytton supposedly meant the yet unexplored powers of electricity.<sup>53</sup> Bulwer-Lytton had been a member of an occult society called the “Orphic Circle”<sup>54</sup>, in which from the 1830s seances were held by means

50 Boris S. Gusev: *Petr Badmaev: Krestnik imperatora, celitel', diplomat*. Moskva 2000. Petr A. Badmaev: *Za kulisami carizma. Vospominanija. Memuary*. Moskva, Minsk 2001; Tat'jana I. Grekova: *Tibetskaja medicina v Rossii. Istorija v sud'bah u licah*. S.-Peterburg 1998, pp. 22-167; Tat'jana Grekova: “Pëtr Badmaev (1851-1920), « médecin tibétain » converti à l'orthodoxie. (Réflexions d'un biographe)”, *Slavica Occitania* 21 (2005), pp. 187-200. Concerning the occult allegations see Alexandre de Dánann: *Les secrets de la Tara Blanche. Lettres d'un Lama occidental à Jean Reyor*. Milano 2003, pp. 14-20; Louis de Maistre: *L'énigme René Guénon et les « Supérieurs Inconnus »*. Contribution à l'étude de l'histoire mondiale « souterraine ». Milano 2004, pp. 568sq.

51 The idea of a Pan-Buddhist state even inspired Baron von Ungern-Sternberg's secret offers to the Dalai Lama in 1921–22. Leonid A. Juzefovič: *Samoderžec pustyni: Fenomen sud'by barona R.F. Ungern-Šternberga*. Moskva 1993, p. 193; Andreev 2003, p. 153. Ungern-Sternberg was declared to be a *Mahakala* incarnation by the 13th Dalai Lama; *Mahakala* (Sanskrit *maha* “great” and *kāla* “time”) is a *Dharmapala* (“protector of dharma”).

52 See Joscelyn Godwin: *Arktos: The Polar Myth in Science, Symbolism, and Nazi Survival*. Kempton, Ill. 1996, pp. 81-83.

53 He wrote to his friend John Foster on 20 March 1870: “I did not mean Vril for mesmerism, but for electricity, developed into uses as yet only dimly guessed, and including whatever there may be genuine in mesmerism, which I hold to be a mere branch current of the one great fluid pervading all nature.” Earl of Lytton: *The Life of Edward Bulwer, First Lord Lytton*. London 1913, vol. II, p. 466; see also C. Nelson Stewart: *Bulwer Lytton as Occultist*. Montana 1997; Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke: “The Esoteric Uses Of Electricity: Theologies Of Electricity From Swabian Pietism To Ariosophy”, *Aries*, vol. 4, no. 1 (2004), pp. 69-90, here pp. 76sq. Like the *Treatise on Cosmic Fire* of Alice Bailey and Djhwal Khul, Elena Roerich's and Morya's books on “Agni Yoga” are devoted to explaining, with more elaboration than clarity, what the Agni or Fire of Shambhala is, and how it will function in the New Era: it is the “great eternal energy, this fine imponderable matter which is scattered everywhere and which is within our use at any moment.” Nicholas Roerich: *Shambhala*. New York 1930, p. 28. As J. Godwin remarked, “this could be a definition of Bulwer Lytton's Vril force” (Godwin 1996, p. 101). In the 1940s, Roerich announced, “energies of cosmic fire will approach the earth and create many new conditions of life.” Nicholas Roerich: *The Heart of Asia*. New York 1930, p. 163.

54 Robert Mathiesen: *The Unseen Worlds of Emma Hardinge Britten: Some Chapters in the History of Western Occultism*. Fullerton, Cal. 2001 (Theosophical History Occasional Papers IX); Godwin 1994,

of exploiting the astral forces of adolescents in their pre-puberty for astral traveling as well as the invocation of spirits into mirrors and crystals. One of the mediums was a young woman by the name of Emma Hardinge Britten (1823–1899), who would become a founding member of the Theosophical Society. In 1876 she published a book in which an enigmatic Chevalier Louis described an occult society headed by unnamed Eastern Adepts (resembling Blavatsky's Masters) called the Ellora Brotherhood, working "in a subterranean temple of immense extent" towards the "brotherhood of humanity" and "the discovery of occultism" by inculcating a progressivist occult current within human society.<sup>55</sup>

Yet it was the French occultist Joseph-Alexandre Saint-Yves d'Alveydre (1842-1909) who in the 1870s and 1880s joined the tales about a Master Lodge in the East, a superior underground society, the use of hitherto unknown forces and social messianism. Already in his twenties, he had possibly met with Bulwer-Lytton sr., but in any case he enjoyed a close friendship with Bulwer's son Edward Robert Bulwer-Lytton jr., the 2nd Baron Lytton of Knebworth (1831–1891), who during his later career as British minister to France (1887–91) took the trouble to translate Saint-Yves' homage to Queen Victoria, *Poème de la Reine*. In the late 1870s, Lord Lytton served as a viceroy of India (1876-80) and was concerned primarily with India's relations with Afghanistan, even precipitating the Second Afghan War against Russia of 1878-80 out of his concern for an imminent Russian invasion of India.<sup>56</sup>

As for Saint-Yves, he was during this period advocating a reform of social life that he called Synarchy. He was able to promote it thanks to his excellent social connections among the ruling dynasties of Western Europe, Scandinavia and Russia (Alexander III).<sup>57</sup> In 1877 he exposed the synarchical system for the first time in his book *Clefs de l'Orient* and he developed it during the following years in a series of "Mission"-pamphlets, *Mission actuelle des souverains*, *Mission actuelle des ouvriers* (1882) und *Mission des juifs* (1884). Saint-Yves explained how at the present stage of human evolution it had become necessary to adopt a threefold differentiation of human society along the three main spheres of social activity: Thus he suggested that there should be European Council of National Communities as a central institution for finance, banking and trade representatives; a European Council of National Estates taking care of legal and political questions; and finally an European Council of National Churches for the representatives of religions, higher education and the arts.<sup>58</sup> But it was only in 1885 (the year of the Anglo-Russian

---

pp. 205-225.

55 *Ghost Land; or: Researches into the mysteries of occultism. Illustrated in a series of autobiographical sketches*. Edited by Emma Hardinge Britten. Boston 1876, here quoted after the edition Chicago 1905, pp. 256-271.

56 John D. Rose: "Salisbury–Lytton: The Controversy over Russia's Threat to India, 1876-1878", *The New Review. A Journal of East European History* 13:1-2 (1973), pp. 3-16.

57 In 1877 he married in England Marie de Riznitch, Comtesse de Keller (1827–1895), a Polish noble woman from Odessa and a good friend of the Danish queen Louise. The couple was always well received at the Copenhagen court. A daughter of Louise was married to the Prince of Wales and later King Edward VII, another daughter to tsar Alexander III. These high-placed connections should prove very efficient for Saint-Yves to promote the concepts of Synarchy. They also contributed to the forging of the Franco-Russian *entente* in 1894 which gave Russia "the power to unleash a major European war whenever this might suit Russian purposes". George F. Kennan: *The Fateful Alliance: France, Russia, and the Coming of the First World War*. New York 1984, p. 252. Kennan contributed another thorough study: *The Decline of Bismarck's European Order: Franco-Russian Relations, 1875-1890*. 2nd ed. Princeton, NJ. 1980.

58 Jean Saunier: *Saint-Yves d'Alveydre ou une synarchie sans énigme*. Paris 1981; Jean Saunier: *La Synarchie*. Paris 1971; Jacques Weiss: *La Synarchie: l'autorité face au pouvoir depuis la préhistoire jusqu'à la prochaine paix selon Saint-Yves d'Alveydre*. Paris 1967; Geoffroy de Charnay: *Synarchie*. Paris 1946;

crisis), when Saint-Yves met a certain oriental initiate by the name of Hardjji Scharipf (or Haji Sharif), that he began to refer to an Asian origin of Synarchy. Indeed, Sharif claimed to be the “Guru Pandit of the Great Agarthian School”, from the hidden “Holy Land of Agartha” below the surface of the earth in the mountains of Asia, the residence of the “Master of the Universe” and a spiritually and technologically far advanced society where Synarchy had been realised long ago. On the 8 June 1885, Haji Sharif started to teach to Saint-Yves the mysterious language and alphabet of Vattan.<sup>59</sup> The result of this encounter was Saint-Yves’ book *Mission de l’Inde*, written not before 1886 but published only in 1910, in which he exposed Agartha<sup>60</sup> as an model illustration for a potential synarchical order.<sup>61</sup>

The synarchic ideas of Saint-Yves were carried on especially by founding members of the Ordre Martiniste (established in 1888) like Papus (Gérard d’Encausse)<sup>62</sup>, François-Charles Barlet aka Albert Faucheux (1838–1921)<sup>63</sup> and Pierre-Augustin Chaboseau (1868–1946)<sup>64</sup>. The Martinists and their associates became ardent advocates of a Franco-Russian rapprochement, not only because of their deep dislike of Bismarckian Germany, but also because according to their views, Russia was a key country in the present cycle of social

---

Yves-Fred Boisset: *À la rencontre de Saint-Yves d’Alveydre et de son œuvre. Tome I: La synarchie*. Rouvray 1996; Olivier Dard: *La Synarchie, ou, Le mythe du complot permanent*. Paris 1999.

- 59 Joscelyn Godwin: “Saint-Yves d’Alveydre and the Agarthian Connection”, *The Hermetic Journal*, no. 32 (1986), pp. 24-34; no. 33 (1986), pp. 31-38; Joscelyn Godwin: “La genèse de l’Archéomètre. Documents inédits de Saint-Yves d’Alveydre”, *L’Initiation*, no. 2-3, 1988, pp. 61-71.
- 60 Once more it was Aleksandr Dugin with his close contacts to the French *Nouvelle Droite* and to the followers of occult traditionalism as taught by Guénon or the Martinists, who began to spread in 1993 the rumour that among the military intelligence GRU (Glavnoje Razvedyvatel’noje Upravlenije) existed a secret Order under the name of “Agartha”. Dugin 1993, 2005.
- 61 A. Saint-Yves d’Alveydre: *Mission de l’Inde en Europe. Mission de l’Europe en Asie*. Paris 1886 [edition withdrawn], Paris 1910, Reprint Nice 1995. While it has been speculated that there was a likely Afghan background to Haji Sharif, a Sikh connection cannot be excluded, especially because during the year 1886, the leader of an anti-British insurrection attempt in the Punjab, Maharajah Dalip Singh, was waiting (in vain) in Paris for an agreement of a French-Russian entente against the Brits. Mikhail Katkov, HPB’s publisher in Russia, after having been involved earlier with Russian plans for British India during the Penjeh crisis, finally became personally involved with Dalip Singh. In Paris, the Maharajah attracted the attention of Juliette Adam and Élie de Cyon (Il’ja F. Cion) who would later associate with Saint-Yves’ heir in political occultism, Papus. Meyer/Bryson 1999, pp. 248-260; Michael Alexander, Sushila Anand: *Queen Victoria’s Maharajah Duleep Singh, 1838-93*. London 1980. The occult aspects are treated by Johnson 1994.
- 62 Marie-Sophie André: *Papus: Biographie: la Belle Epoque de l’occultisme*. Paris 1995; Philippe Encausse: *Sciences occultes, ou, 25 années d’occultisme occidental: Papus, sa vie, son œuvre*. Paris 1949
- 63 Barlet, also a member of the *Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor* and “cornerstone of all the [occult] groups” (Emmanuel Lalande) showed a particularly strong interest in sociological questions. “The revolutions which have so deeply modified Europe over the last century and those which seem to threaten her even more give a special importance to the art of governing people.” Barlet 1900, p. 5. “It was understood, at first, that Martinism’s sole purpose was to prepare its members for entry into an Order that could confer an authentic initiation [...] this was none other than the H.B. of L., of which Barlet had become the official representative for France.” René Guénon: “F.-Ch. Barlet et les sociétés initiatiques”, *Le Voile d’Isis* 30/64 (April 1925), pp. 217-221, here p. 220. See as well Jean-Pierre Laurant: *L’Esotérisme chrétien en France au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle*. Lausanne 1992, p. 135.
- 64 Chaboseau was conservateur adjoint at the library of the Musée Guimet in Paris where he promoted Buddhist studies; with Chaboseau’s support, Agvan Dorjiev could celebrate on 27 June 1898 a ritual in the Museum. Later, during World War I, Chaboseau became special secretary to Aristide Briand and was sent on diplomatic missions to the Balkans, because “most of the Balkan princes [...] were in 1914 Martinists” (Victor-Émile Michelet: *Les Compagnons de l’hiérophanie. Souvenir du mouvement hermétiste à la fin du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle*. [Paris 1937.] Reprint Nice 1977, p. 102).

revolution, the avant-garde of a new world order<sup>65</sup> and in any case ripe for synarchy. Some insiders even thought that Papus not only helped to forge the Franco-Russian *entente*, the “mystical alliance superior to all combinings of men”<sup>66</sup>, but also contributed to heighten the expectations for a coming social revolution in Russia.<sup>67</sup> No wonder that Papus’ intensive Martinist activities in Tsarist Russia, Serbia and Montenegro led to the initiation of several individuals who actively pursued a pro-French and anti-German foreign policy and who were known as notorious warmongers in their respective societies.<sup>68</sup> Papus’ associates fought against the “German party [in Russia] represented by [Sergej] Witte”<sup>69</sup> who (under the influence of the *vostočniki*) saw the future of Russia not in the final battle between Teutons and Slavs, but in the development of the Siberian *prostranstvo* (‘wide space’).

Many of the personalities and groups in the French occult scene who were attracted by the ideas of Synarchy also shared the opinion that Synarchy originally emanated from a hidden initiation centre in Inner Asia, where a secret brotherhood kept the primordial wisdom, the original Rosicrucian Masonry. When the authenticity of the newly published stories of Ferdynand Ossendowski (1876–1945)<sup>70</sup> about the subterranean realm “Agharti”

65 Papus said in an esoteric lecture in 1908: “I shall remind you that in 1848, we have entered the period of English domination. This will end at the moment when the cannon shot has been given – so they say in the Western esoteric circles – which means that Papistry will be destroyed by England, and she herself will be defeated by Germany allied to Russia and perhaps even to France. Then there will be the Prussian domination, but later, Russia will rule over the world. In this last period, France will enter another very brilliant cycle as harbinger of civilization of other nations, thanks to her alliance with the other countries of Latin tongue.” Encausse 1949, p. 200.

66 Juliette Adam in 1897 in *Le Matin*, quoted by André/Beaufils 1995, p. 174.

67 The occultist Gary de Lacroze, a former classmate of Papus at the Collège Rollin, remarked how quickly Martinism spread among the Russian aristocracy and the *intelligencija* and how it showed the same effects as the earlier Martinism at the eve of the French Revolution. He thought therefore that among the circles of Russian Martinists “the doctrine and the plan of the Russian Revolution will be defined”. During his last meeting with Papus shortly before the latter’s death in 1916, Papus said to Lacroze: Martinism “develops and enters the level of political realisations. I entrusted the Lodges with a social program that knows a lot of success: the obligatory civil service”. Lacroze added: “This is the germ of Sovietism.” Encausse 1949, p. 96sq.

68 First of all Grand Dukes Petr Nikolaevič and Nikolaj Nikolaevič (Commander in Chief of the Russian army during the first year of the World War I) who were married to princesses Milica (1866–1951) and Anastasija, both daughters of the Montenegrin king Nikola Petrović-Njegoš. All were Martinists. The women from Crna Gora (nicknamed “the black peril”, sisters-in-law as well of Serbian king Petar Karadorđević and Italian king Vittorio Emanuele III) exercised a considerable influence at the court. They introduced the tsar to the French healer Maître Philippe (whom Papus considered as one of his teachers), arranged Papus’ travels to Russia and spoke repeatedly with great enthusiasm about the coming war in the presence of French diplomats like ambassador Paléologue and military attaché General de Laguiche. See the correspondence by Laguiche, Ministère de Defense, Service Historique (Vincennes), Carton 7N 1478; Dominic C.B. Lieven: *Russia and the Origins of the First World War*. London, New York 1983, p. 72; Maurice Paléologue: *La Russie des Tsars pendant la grande guerre*. Paris 1922, vol. I, 22 July 1914; Jurij N. Danilov: *Velikij knjaz’ Nikolaj Nikolaevič*. Pariž 1930; Serge Caillet: *Monsieur Philippe, l’Ami de Dieu*. Paris 2000, pp. 84-100; Philippe Encausse: *Le Maître Philippe, de Lyon. Thaumaturge et homme de Dieu, ses prodiges, ses guérisons, ses enseignements*. Paris 1990, pp. 67-104..

69 In the words of Juliette Adam and Edmond Drumont; see Henri Rollin: *L’Apocalypse de notre temps: Les dessous de la propagande allemande d’après des documents inédits*. [1st ed. 1939], Paris 1991, p. 343. The associates of Papus were in general very hostile towards HPB as well. See Joscelyn Godwin: *The Beginnings of Theosophy in France*. London 1989. To make things worse, Sergej Witte was a first cousin of Elena Petrovna Blavatskaja.

70 A Polish engineer, writer, journalist and traveller who got involved in the counter-revolutionary Russian government led by Supreme Governor Admiral Aleksandr Kolčak. Ossendowski also participated in the forging of the so-called *Sisson-Documents* (George F. Kennan: “The Sisson Documents”, *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 28, No. 2 (June 1956), pp. 130-154). After Kolčak’s defeat in 1920, Os-

and its sacred language “Vattanan” were disputed in the salons of Paris – traces of plagiarism of Saint-Yves’ descriptions seemed too obvious<sup>71</sup> –, René Guénon intervened in 1925 that he had no reason to doubt Ossendowski, as Saint-Yves had Hindu informants, whereas Ossendowski relied on Mongolian traditions; this could explain differences in spelling and detail. In his own book<sup>72</sup> Guénon asserted the reality of “Agartha”, sacral dwelling place of the “King of the World”, and commented on certain sacred symbols and traditions, similar to the ones exposed in the works of Nicholas Roerich. From another Sikh, Swāmī Narad Mani aka Hiran Singh (who was “apparently very informed of the activities of various secret societies, Western and Eastern alike”<sup>73</sup>), Guénon had already learnt about the Tibeto-Mongolian masonic brotherhood of the Teshu-Maru, composed of 33 lodges and a supreme occult Committee.<sup>74</sup> Another temporary associate of Guénon’s in the mid-1920s was Jean Marquès-Rivière (Jean-Marie Paul Rivière, then still in his adolescence, later a competent orientalist and notorious as an anti-masonic Nazi collaborator in Vichy France).<sup>75</sup> In 1925, Marquès-Rivière received an *ankur* (empowerment) initiation from a Tibetan delegation in Paris and joined (together with Guénon) the Brotherhood of the *Polaires*<sup>76</sup> where they met, among others, Vivian Postel du Mas and Jeanne Canudo.<sup>77</sup> The latter got in the 1930s deeply involved in the political activism of the Mouvement Synarchique d’Empire. The *Polaires* claimed to have a direct channel via an “Oracle of Astral Energy” to the “Rosicrucian Initiatic Centre” Agartha situated somewhere in the Himalayas.<sup>78</sup> One has to add to this puzzle that the mysterious occultist of British origin

---

sendowski joined a group of Poles and White Russians trying to escape from communist-controlled Siberia to Burma through Mongolia, China and Tibet, but stopped in Mongolia and joined the army of baron Roman von Ungern-Sternberg as a commanding officer of one of the self-defence troops. He also briefly became von Ungern-Sternberg’s political advisor and chief of intelligence. In late 1920 he was sent with a diplomatic mission to Japan and then USA, never to return to Mongolia. After his arrival to New York, Ossendowski started to work for the Polish diplomatical service and possibly as a spy. At the same time, in 1922 he published his first English language book: *Beasts, Men and Gods*. It is also very likely that he worked as an agent for Japan. Witold Michałowski: *Tajemnica Ossendowskiego*. Warszawa 1990; Richard B. Spence: *Trust No One: The Secret World of Sidney Reilly*. Los Angeles 2002, p. 48.

- 71 Ferdynand Ossendowski: *Beasts, Men and Gods*. New York 1922. Marco Pallis: “Le Roi du monde et le problème des sources d’Ossendowski”, *René Guénon (Les Dossiers H)*. Edited by Pierre-Marie Sigaud. Lausanne 1985, pp. 145-156.
- 72 René Guénon: *Le Roi du Monde*. Paris 1927, new edition 1958. The “King of the World” is a priest-king who is residing in the spiritual centre of the world, designated symbolically by the “Pole”. The whole world rotates around this “Pole”, and this movement is represented by the “sign of the Pole”, i.e. the *Swastika*. Cf. Guénon 1958, pp.18-19.
- 73 Paul Chacornac: *La Vie simple de René Guénon*. Paris 1958, p. 53.
- 74 Concerning the Teshu Maru see: De Dánann 2004.
- 75 Jean Reyor: *Quelques souvenirs sur René Guénon et les « Études Traditionnelles »*. Document confidentiel inédit. <<http://cretrg.free.fr/HP13j5n6/DCI.pdf>>; Victor Trimondi, Victoria Trimondi: *Hitler, Buddha, Krishna: eine unheilige Allianz vom Dritten Reich bis heute*. Wien 2002, pp. 277-288. Marquès-Rivière would soon after write a book in which he postulated a Western origin of the King of the World (his sign is the *Swastika*) in his hidden realm in the East, from which he sends an envoy once a year to instruct the Dalai Lama. Jean Marquès-Rivière: *À l’ombre des monastères tibétains*. Paris 1956 (1<sup>st</sup> ed. 1929), pp. 145-148.
- 76 Pierre Geyraud: *Les sociétés secrètes de Paris. Parmi les sectes et les rites*. Paris 1939, pp. 56-67; Gérard Galtier: *La Maçonnerie égyptienne, Rose Croix et néo-chevalerie*. Monaco 1989, pp. 306-325.
- 77 Who were also for a certain period of time members of the *Polaires* and frequented the Martinist Order. Galtier 1989, pp. 313-315; Dard 1998, pp. 65-78.
- 78 Zam Bhotiva: *Asia misteriosa. L’Oracle de Force Astrale comme moyen de communication avec « Les Petites Lumières d’Orient »*. Paris 1929; Reprint: *Asia misteriosa et le mystère des polaires*. Combronde 1995.

Gaston de Mengel would in 1937 inform the SS-Brigadeführer Karl Maria Wiligut (aka Weisthor, 1866–1946), head of Section VIII (Archives) for SS Race and Settlement Main Office (RuSHA), how he obtained “through a Russian friend” documents which allegedly uncovered the activities of a “Buddhist Centre Ch’An Cheng Cob”. This centre, claimed de Mengel, had its headquarters originally in Urumchi, but it had settled now in Tibet. Its purpose was to “found buddhist centres in various countries” by spreading the impression that it was identical to the hidden “Aghartta”.<sup>79</sup>

## 6.

According to some researchers, Roerich became a member of the Ordre Martiniste already in his days in St. Petersburg at the eve of World War I.<sup>80</sup> Some of his social contacts make this seem likely. He certainly shared the conviction held by many occult orders and societies that Russia (a reborn Russia-Zvenigorod) was destined to have a great future, that it would become a Saviour of the nations. And while Roerich always argued for the supreme importance of Culture and its manifestation in “Beauty” in the evolution of mankind, his initiative “Banner of Peace”, addressed to the leaders of states, and the underlying ideology of *Obščina* (“Community”), with its odd fusion of Buddhist spirituality, a quasi-communist social order and American capitalist money under the guidance of an enlightened Leader, always reminded of Saint-Yves’ triple synarchy under the *Supreme Pontiff*.<sup>81</sup> Roerich first met Agvan Dorjiev and heard his instructions about Shambhala in 1909, when he was a member of the construction committee of the new Buddhist Kālacakra Tantra sancturay in St. Petersburg.<sup>82</sup>

Likewise, Roerich’s affinities to Martinism and Synarchy were also visible in his link with Harvey Spencer Lewis’s order Antiquus Mysticusque Ordo Rosae Crucis (AMORC). He was introduced to the Lewises possibly by an American AMORC member from Chicago spending some time in Shanghai in the early 1920’s and who organized AMORC’s

79 Bundesarchiv Koblenz NS 19, 3974, 48sq.; Franz Wegener: *Heinrich Himmler: Deutscher Spiritismus, französischer Okkultismus und der Reichsführer SS*. Gladbeck 2004, pp. 106-107.

80 According to this version, which is vehemently denied by the followers of the MCR (see S.V. Skorodumov, I.M. Sebeleva: “Nazad v buduščee (Vosvraščenie v 1937 goda?): Otkrytoe piš’mo”, *Gazeta Sodružestvo*, no. 11, July–October 2003, <<http://www.roerichs.com/Sodr/N11/6-1.htm>>), N.K. Roerich – in the footsteps of his father Konstantin – joined the Martinist lodge of Grigorij O. Měbus under the mystical name Fuyama a few years before the war and received his initiation from the “Sovereign Delegate” of the Russian Martinist Order Czesław Czyński (mystical name “Punar Bhava”), who was appointed in 1913 by Papus as “Legat de l’Église Gnostique Universelle en Russie” (in 1910, he became also X° O.T.O. [Ordo Templi Orientis] member for the Slavonic territories). *Zapiska po 1-mu otdeleniju Osobogo otdela Departamenta policii «ob Ordene martinistov» ot 01. 1911 g.*, quoted by O.A. Platonov: «*Ternovyj venec Rossii*». *Tajna istorija masonstva. 1731–2000*. Moskva 2000, pp. 707-708). See also Šiškin 2000, pp. 18-23; “Jubilee edition” of the *Oriflamme*, Bad Schmiedeberg, 1 June 1912, p. 14. For a survey of the Russian Martinist Order see Andrej I. Serkov: *Istorija ruskogo masonstva 1845-1945*. Sankt-Peterburg 1997, pp. 67-90; Viktor S. Bračev: *Čekisty protiv okkul’tistov (Okkul’tno-mističeskoe podpol’e v SSSR)*. Moskva 2004, pp. 41-61, 89-126.

81 Elena Roerich nevertheless found no good words for Saint-Yves in her letters: “St. Yves d’Alveydre was a psychic and a medium; and toward the end of his life, he fell under the sway of his astral instructors to such an extent that his books are perhaps even more erroneous than the books of some other authors of occult novels. Of course, his Agartha and the Supreme Pontiff are his peculiar refraction of the great Shambhala and its Lord. It is amusing to see how he mixed existing exoteric legends with the astral accumulations and instructions received by him from astral impersonators.” Elena Roerich to E.A. Zil’bersdorf, 5 September 1935. E.I. Rerih: *Pis’ma. Tom III (1935g)*. Moskva 2001, letter 174.

82 Aleksandr I. Andreev: “Iz istorii Peterburgskogo buddijskogo hrama”, *Minuvšee. Istoričeskij al’manah*, 9 (1992), pp. 380-408, here p. 387; Aleksandr Andreev: “La Maison du Bouddha dans le Nord de la Russie (Histoire du temple bouddhique de Saint-Petersbourg)”, *Slavica Occitania* 21 (2005), pp. 153-178; Aleksandr I. Andreev: *Khram Buddy v Severnoj stolice*. Sankt-Peterburg 2004.

participation in the Roerich Peace Pact. AMORC, it must be said, was affiliated with both the Ordre Martiniste et Synarchique<sup>83</sup> and the Ordre Martiniste Traditionnel<sup>84</sup>. When Roerich set off for his Central Asian expedition, Lewis was keen on making him a legate of AMORC for Tibet, which apparently Roerich never was, in spite of his rather close relationship with Spencer Lewis<sup>85</sup>. Nevertheless, AMORC claims until the present day that Roerich communicated certain occult techniques from Tibet which were since integrated in the AMORC teachings.<sup>86</sup> Lewis proudly mentioned the correspondence he received from Roerich's second expedition.<sup>87</sup>

The Altai mountains – and, more widely, Siberia – were at the very core of the Great Plan, an indispensable component of the “New Country”, because Roerich believed the Altai would become a double for Shambhala – as the fabled land of Belovod'e, or the Land of White Waters, celebrated in numerous Russian folk legends, especially

83 One of the oldest surviving regular Martinist Orders which has had a continual existence since its founding in 1918 by Victor Blanchard (Sar Yesir).

84 Conceived to be a rival order to Blanchard's OMS, the *Traditional Martinist Order* was established in 1931, with Victor-Émile Michelet as Grand Master and Chaboseau as deputy Grand Master. Though he had received his martinist initiations in the OMS, AMORC Imperator Ralph Maxwell Lewis was asked by the OMT in 1939 to import martinism to the U.S.A. and he was given the necessary charters and other documents.

85 There is a membership certificate inducting Nicholas Roerich into AMORC's OMCE (Order Militia Crucifera Evangelica, originally created by AMORC and the British Martinist Order) dated 18 November 1929. It is signed by H. Spencer Lewis and counter-signed by Ralph Lewis, but it was left unsigned by Roerich. Gary Stewart – the former Imperator and President of the Board of AMORC from 1987 to 1990, founder of the Confraternity of the Rose Cross (CR+C) in 1996, Knight Commander of the OMCE and the Sovereign Grand Master of the British Martinist Order – stated: “Roerich was never a member of AMORC. However, he was closely associated with both H. Spencer Lewis and Ralph Lewis over a span of about 25 years in that there was considerable correspondance between them. The earliest correspondance I can find from Roerich to HSL is dated May 10, 1922 and refers to the sending of an article entitled ‘Rigor Mortis’ meant for publication in the AMORC magazine of that time. Over the years he sent a number of articles, some of which, quite sadly, were highly edited by AMORC to make it appear he was a member as well as to change some of the content. About half of the articles submitted by Roerich were published. Roerich also sent a number of items to the AMORC museum most of which were of a Tibetan nature. One was a coral ring. In turn, AMORC was, if not the first, one of the first, organizations in the United States to fly Roerich's Banner of Peace.” Gary Stewart, posting on the Google Groups Rosicrucian list, 25 August 2006, <<http://groups-beta.google.com/group/rosicrucian/msg/47f68b5ef4727246?hl=de&>>.

86 Christian Rebisse: *Histoire du rosicrucianisme* <<http://www.rose-croix.org/histoire/histoire19.htm>>. See also Christian Rebisse: “Rosicrucian History from Its Origins to the Present, part XVIII”, *Rosicrucian Digest*, vol. 84, no. 1 (2006), pp. 25-26. The US citizen Joseph J. Weed, who affiliated with AMORC in 1932 and eventually was appointed as Grand Councilor with responsibility for the North Atlantic States, continued his study in the teachings of Agni Yoga and the Arcane School, was a Trustee of the Nicholas Roerich Museum, and became a Director of the Agni Yoga Society. He was not the only AMORC member in NYC who was at one time also active in Agni Yoga.

87 “I am happy to say that on Monday, March 20th, the day of our New Year anniversary, I received a personal registered letter from our great Brother who is the international representative of the Great White Brotherhood. I refer to Nicholas Roerich. His letter came from the monastery in the Himalayas where he spends a part of each year in personal contact with the highest representatives of the Great White Brotherhood. From this sacred place came his message to us for the New Year, and with it a special article of inspiration and helpfulness to be published in the next issue of our Rosicrucian Digest. In his personal letter he states that he would warn all of us to be watchful at this very critical period of transition from the old cycle to the new, and from the old race of thinking men and women to the newer race of evolving beings, and to watch out for the last and most desperate forces of evil to try to destroy or prevent the activities of goodness and truth.” *The Rosicrucian Forum*, April 1933, Vol. III, No. 5, p. 130.

among sectarians like the *Beguny*.<sup>88</sup> Roerich was also intrigued by all the stories about underground tunnels and caverns that existed below the earth. Therefore, one of the Altai legends that most excited Roerich was the tale of a vast tangle of tunnels purported to honeycomb the underground realms deep beneath the mountains. Drawing upon the tales of the underground Agartha (or Agarthi), Roerich envisioned an intricate network of tunnels and chambers linking the Altai with the Himalayas. Even the Dalai Lama was drawn into Roerich's speculations, for, as he thought, the tunnels in the Altai led all the way to Lhasa and the Potala Palace.<sup>89</sup>

Another occultist in early Soviet Russia who tried to synthesize Saint-Yves's social utopia with natural science, Bolshevism, the fascination for Tibet and Buddhist spirituality, and the search for Shambhala was Aleksandr V. Barčenko (1881–1938).<sup>90</sup> After his arrest in 1937 by the GPU, Barčenko “confessed” during the interrogations how he had been approached in 1923 by two members of what he called the “Great Brotherhood of Asia”, supposedly an occult umbrella organization for the whole of Inner Asia, uniting diverse Mongolian and Tibetan brotherhoods, Muslim and Dervish orders and even Jewish hasidic and Christian sectarian groups.<sup>91</sup> The first of the two men was the lama Naga Naven, “the representative of the centre Shambhala”<sup>92</sup> who lived at that time in the house of the Tibetan mission in Leningrad and who explained to Barčenko that he came to Moscow for negotiations with the Bolshevik leaders in order to “advance a rapprochement between West Tibet and the USSR”. The lamas of Western Tibet under the leadership of the Panchen Lama disagreed with the policy of the Dalai Lama who after 1904 got on more friendly terms with the British. The second was Khayan Khirva, member of the TsK of the Mongolian Peoples Party. Both were pressing the Soviet government for close political and cultural relationships between the USSR and West-Tibet via South Mongolia.<sup>93</sup>

## 7.

Indeed, the wooing of the Soviet leadership by representatives of Tibetan Buddhism, in the rival services of both the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama, had reached a peak in the mid-1920s. Dorjiev, still loyal to the Dalai Lama, called for the abolishment of the *khubilgan* or *tulku* worship cult and the prohibition of divination by both Buryat and

88 Kirill V. Čistov, Vera Sokolova: *Russkie narodnye social'no-utopičeskie legendy XVII-XIX vv.* Moskva 1967.

89 McCannon 2002, pp. 172-176.

90 Barčenko – writer, scientist and occultist – believed in the existence of a highly advanced culture in prehistoric times which he identified both with the realm of Shambhala and the underground civilization of Agarthi, governed according to Synarchy – a form of communism, as described by Saint-Yves. Secret brotherhoods in the remote areas of Inner Asia would keep its secrets. Barčenko called for a “scientific and propagandist expedition” to Mongolia and Tibet, in search of the “Red Shambhala”. Andreev 2003, p. 108-109; Andreev 2004.

91 Protocol of Barčenko interrogation, 10 June 1937; Šiškin 2000, pp. 368-369; Andreev 2004, pp. 166-167. That such a “working community” was actually possible, in spite of the deep aversion within the Kālacakra Tantra tradition against Muslims, is for example confirmed by the existence of the Sufi Tariqah Yasawiya in the Ferghana Valley and Kafiristan. Its members were always looked upon in a suspicious way by other more orthodox Sufi communities because of their close ties with Tibet and China. According to John G. Bennett, the Yasawis taught Gurdjieff a lot about sacral music and dance. John G. Bennett: *Gurdjieff: Making a New World*. London 1973, chap. 4; see also De Dánann 2003, pp. 174-177.

92 Statement by A.A. Kondiajn, June 1937, Arhiv UFSB SPb. and Lenoblast', D P-26492, l.18; quoted by Andreev 2004: 168.

93 Protocol of Barčenko interrogation, 10 June 1937, Arhiv FSB, delo A.V. Barčenko; Šiškin 2000, pp. 368-369; Andreev 2004, pp. 166-167.

alien lamas. This caused a dramatic split of the clergy in Buryatia and Kalmykia.<sup>94</sup> On their side, the Roerichs would on their first expedition in 1928 blame the 13th Dalai Lama for the ultimate degradation of Buddhism and the schism into separate Western and Eastern traditions, and would correspondingly praise the 9th Panchen Lama Thubten Choekyi Nyima (1883–1937) as the true and unique Ruler of Tibet.<sup>95</sup> The Panchen Lama, following his escape to Inner Mongolia in 1924 after a dispute with the Dalai Lama when he sensed that he might face threat after his own monastery's monks were being prohibited from holding any office in the Central Tibetan government and his officials being locked up in Lhasa, sought Chinese protection, spoke in favour of Chinese revolutionary leader Sun Yat-sen (1866–1925) and advocated the union of Tibet with China in the context of a larger Five-Nationalities-Confederation.<sup>96</sup>

Still, even Dorjiev clearly favoured Soviet influence over the British, and he implied in his autobiography that the Buddhist teachings were generally in harmony with the recently introduced system of Communism in Russia. Under the benign patronage of the Bolshevik regime, Russia would become a land worthy of the noble title “Supreme Place”: one, in which the Buddhist religion thrives.<sup>97</sup> Some of his followers went even further and declared that Buddhism had prefigured the ideals of Bolshevism, that Shakyamuni Buddha had been some sort of proto-Bolshevik and that his spirit lived on in Lenin.<sup>98</sup>

The Buddhists were not the only religious group who sought to reconcile spiritual messianism and new political order. Precisely upon the establishment of Soviet power over Russia there followed rumours about the coming of Antichrist, the Second Advent of Christ and the End of the World<sup>99</sup>, and the Bolsheviks themselves were proclaiming the old revolutionary phrase: *My Staryj Mir razrušim do osnovan'ja, a zatem my naš, my Novyj Mir postroim!* (“We shall destroy the Old World to the foundations, then we shall build our New World!”). Thus by the 1920's a sect called “The New Testamentarians” attributed to Lenin a “Third Testament” (after that of Moses and Jesus Christ)<sup>100</sup>, while at the same time some peasant sectarians (permitted to keep the land which they had taken back in the Revolution) did consider Lenin “a Messiah of the 20th century”. As for the Čulkov Sect (in the Leningrad area), the Red Star did become an object of a Cult — through association with the Star of Bethlehem.<sup>101</sup>

By now it is time to ask once more: What actually was the origin of the communications transmitted to Elena Roerich since 1920? Were they only deception, delusions, manifestations of a psychially deranged person? Or was there some truth in the recurrent claim that there existed a hidden “great Asian brotherhood” with a political agenda of

94 Andreev 2003, pp. 159-160.

95 Andreev 2003, p. 315. See *Dnevnik*, 13 April 1926, t. 22, 21.05.1925–12.08.1926: “The ray showed how the Tashi Lama becomes the chief of the buddhists without the Dalai Lama”.

96 Fabienne Jagou: *Le 9<sup>e</sup> Panchen Lama (1883–1937). Enjeu des relations sino-tibétaines*. Paris 2004, pp. 137-210; Parshotam Mehra: *Tibetan Polity 1904-37: The Conflict Between the 13th Dalai Lama and the 9th Panchen. A Case Study*. Wiesbaden 1976; Melvyn C. Goldstein: *A History of Modern Tibet, 1913-1951: The Demise of the Lamaist State*. Berkeley, Cal. 1989, pp. 252-264.

97 Snelling 1997, pp. 205-206; Andreev 2003, pp. 160-161.

98 Snelling 1997, pp. 205.

99 “Sostojanie antireligioznoj raboty na dannom etape”, *Pod znamenem Marksizma*, Nov./Dec. 1931, pp. 193-195; cited by Manuel Sarkisyanz: “Milleniarism in the Soviet Revolution”, *Filosofskij vek. Al'manah. Vyp. 13. Rossijskaja utopija epohi Prosvješčenija i tradicii mirovogo utopizma*. Edited by T.V. Artem'eva, M.I. Mikešin. Sankt-Peterburg 2000, pp. 307-319, here p. 315.

100 A. Roščin: *Kto takie sektanty*. Moskva 1930, quoted by P. Zarin: *Političeskaja maskirovka religioznyh organizacij*. Moskva 1934, pp. 84f.

101 Zarin 1934, pp. 27, 84f. See also Agursky 1988.

its own?<sup>102</sup> And who was behind the so-called “Tibetan Master” “Djwahl Khul”, who was known to be one of the Theosophist’s “Ascended Masters” and who since the 1920s spoke “through the astral light” to another medium, the founder of Lucis Trust and the Arcane School Alice Bailey? “Djwahl Khul” came forward in 1938-39 with nothing less than the idea that all contemporary ideologies of the 20th century were in one way or another inspired by the “Shamballa force”.<sup>103</sup> The general assumption that this only proves again the overall dangerous influence of “irrationalism” and “the occult” doesn’t take into consideration very concrete historical and geopolitical manoeuvres or interests.

Roerich was not only spoilt by the “Masters” with obvious and rather plump flattery, for example, that his paintings contained a deeper meaning for the future and a spiritual power<sup>104</sup>, or that Roerich’s Karma was to glorify Russia.<sup>105</sup> It was also stated that the rebirth of Russia meant the rebirth of the whole world<sup>106</sup>, since she was “the mother of the small nations” and would “defeat the nations attacking her”.<sup>107</sup> In early 1921, the Master still uttered the opinion that the Bolsheviks would be overthrown within the next 2 ½ years, that there would be a coalition government in a constitutional monarchy and that the Caucasus, Ukraine, Finland and even Poland would be reunited with within the next seven years.<sup>108</sup> All these predictions turned out to be more or less wrong, but it didn’t seem to shake the Master’s authority when he started to encourage them after 1922 to embrace Communism and Lenin as the necessary preparation for the impending rising of Shambhala: “Lenin is with Us”<sup>109</sup> and the Roerichs should “work for communism”, so that the hidden name of the highest Planet might be revealed. “Communism is necessary

102 The French engineer and occultist Jean Calmels (d. 1961), former Martinist *Supérieur Inconnu*, who got initiated into esoteric lamaism by the Buryat physician Włodzimierz N. Badmajeff (Vladimir N. Badmaev 1884–1961, a nephew of Petr Badmaev) in Warsaw between the wars, thought that the region between Ferghana, Kashmir and Nepal served, similar to the People’s Republic of Tannu Tuva with its capital Kyzyl, as a corridor of interaction between Muslim and Lamaist spirituality, even if there were violent confrontations in the outer world, which had no great importance for the deeper occult exchange. Letter from Jean Camels to Jean Reyor (Marcel Clavelle), 25 June 1943, De Dánann 2003, pp. 116-117.

103 “The men who inspired the initiating French revolution; the great conqueror, Napoleon; Bismarck, the creator of a nation; Mussolini, the regenerator of his people; Hitler who lifted a distressed people upon his shoulders; Lenin, the idealist, Stalin and Franco are all expressions of the Shamballa force and of certain little understood energies. These have wrought significant changes in their day and generation and altered the face of Europe, incidentally affecting Asia and conditioning attitudes and policies in America.” Alice Bailey, Djwahl Khul: *The Externalization of the Hierarchy. Section II: The General World Picture* [1938-39]. New York 2001, p. 133. It seems that Alice Bailey initially tried to win the Roerichs for a possible cooperation (Fosdik 1998, 25 November 1929, p. 537), but Elena Roerich would always warn her followers not to get involved with Bailey and her Arcane School, established in 1923: “A cooperation of Arcane School with Agni-Yoga Society is absolutely impossible.” (11 July 1952). “The Teacher Djwahl Khul has nothing in common with Tibetan impostures of Madame A. Bailey” (Letter to E.P. Inge, 4 March 1953). “I advise you, my dear one, not to read books by Alice Bailey. At the end of her life she manifested herself as a follower of Lucifer. At the beginning she didn’t feel embarrassed to express herself as a student of one Sikkim resident, somebody named Laden-La, who was in the service of the local government. We knew him. She called referred to him as her teacher and even tried to link him with great Figures of the White Brotherhood” (Letter to H.P. Inge, 10 October 1954). See Phillip Lindsay: *Alice A. Bailey, H.P. Blavatsky and Helena Roerich: Cleavages Between the Followers of Three Traditions: The Theosophical Society, The Arcane School, The Agni Yoga Society*, 2004, <<http://www.esotericastrologer.org/EA%20Essays/AABHPBHR.htm>>.

104 *Dnevnik*, t. 1, 24.03.1920-31.05.1921.

105 *Dnevnik*, t. 1, 24.03.1920-31.05.1921.

106 Elena I. Rerih: Letters (17 December 1935) p. 95.

107 *Dnevnik*, tetrád’ A – Knigi i ustavi, 04-05.1921.

108 *Dnevnik*, tetrád’ A – Knigi i ustavi, 04-05.1921.

109 *Dnevnik*, 29 May 1925, t. 22: 21.05.1925–12.08.1926.

for the evolution, therefore glory is to Russia for her first step”.<sup>110</sup> However, before he could fully serve the cause of the Masters, so it was said, Lenin had to undergo in his post-mortem existence some sort of transformation in a Kama-Loka sphere: “Lenin will be transformed for cooperation. There is so much blood on him! Like on Saul. On Christ is more blood. Lenin did not look for blood and was delighted about every newcomer. – [Question:] Where is he now? – [Answer:] He is now reposing in a purging sphere. – [Q.:] When will he be transformed? – [A.:] I think, by 1931.”<sup>111</sup> It was the duty of the Roerichs “to help Russia”, because Lenin was misunderstood.<sup>112</sup> For only to them was given the Silver Key, the secret word “M[aitreya] is Communism [...] Maitreya is Community”.<sup>113</sup> As a consequence, in the 1927 version<sup>114</sup> of the Agni Yoga volume *Obščina*, Lenin was presented as a messenger of the Masters and a servant of the Evolution.<sup>115</sup> He had become a Mahatama, a big soul<sup>116</sup>. Both Marx and Lenin had carefully sensed the achievements of the Sign<sup>117</sup>. The East would venerate Lenin “for the clarity of the construction and the dislike of convention, and for the faith in the children as symbols of evolving mankind”.<sup>118</sup>

In early 1924, when the Roerichs had settled in Darjeeling, Nikolaj Konstantinovič was recognized by some Tibetan lamas from the Moru monastery as the incarnation of the Great Fifth Dalai Lama, and he also learnt about the Panchen Lama’s secret flight from Tibet. Then, apparently, another meeting with a flesh and blood version of Master M. aka Allal Ming took place. This initiated the preparation of the first expedition to Inner Asia and Siberia. In late 1924, Roerich was at the Soviet embassy in Berlin where he told the *polpred* (plenipotentiary) Nikolaj N. Krestinskij about the anti-Soviet activities of the British in the Himalayan borderlands. He left such an impression that Krestinskij reported to People’s Commissar of Foreign Affairs Gregorij Čičerin (incidentally Roerich’s university classmate) in Moscow, Roerich had “absolutely pro-Soviet leanings, which looked somewhat Buddho-Communitic”.<sup>119</sup>

110 *Dnevnik*, 28 June 1925, t. 22: 21.05.1925–12.08.1926.

111 *Dnevnik*, 28 June 1925, t. 22: 21.05.1925–12.08.1926.

112 *Dnevnik*, 12 December 1925, t. 22: 21.05.1925–12.08.1926.

113 *Dnevnik*, 17 January 1926, t. 22: 21.05.1925–12.08.1926. Fittingly, the Central Committee used during the same period rhetorical elements from the epistles of St. Paul by declaring: “Lenin is alive in the soul of each individual Party member.” the, “Every member of our Party is a particle of Lenin. Our entire Communist community is a collective embodiment of Lenin”. Benno Ennker: *Die Anfänge des Leninkults in der Sowjetunion*. Köln 1997, p. 90.

114 In the 1936 edition published in Riga, which is the one commonly in print today, all references to Lenin are deleted or missing altogether.

115 See the apologetic essays of the Roerich followers Ju. M. Ključnikov: *Put’ k obščine: Agni Ioga o Lenine, revoljucii, sud’bah Rossii i Mirovoj Obščine*. Novosibirsk 1991; Valentin M. Sidorov: *Rerih i Lenin*. 2nd ed. Voronež 1995.

116 *Obščina*. Urga 1937, part II, XII-2.

117 “Marx and Lenin carefully sensed the achievements of the Sign. The communist has to be open to all new possibilities.” *Obščina*, p. II, XII-12. “I already said that our representatives visited Marx in London and Lenin in Switzerland. Evidently the word Shambhala was uttered. At different times, but in the same way both leaders asked: ‘Which [are] the signs of the time of Shambhala?’ It was answered: ‘The Era of Truth and of World-Community.’ Both leaders said the same: ‘May Shambhala dawn as soon as possible.’ With the words of the leaders we measure the heirs. We can’t include in Marxism and Leninism the narrowness of ignorance. If the ignorant would dare to call himself Marxist or Leninist, tell him harshly the evident representation of the foundations of Community.” *Obščina*, p. III, II-26.

118 *Obščina*, p. III, I-12.

119 Krestinskij to Čičerin, 31 March 1925, Arhiv Vnešnej Politiki Rossijskoj Federacii, f.04, op.13, p.87, d.50117, l 14; Andreev 2003, p. 296.

In early 1925 Roerich travelled to Paris to meet the Bolshevik “Minister of Finance”, the freshly appointed *polpred* Leonid B. Krasin.<sup>120</sup> Originally an engineer<sup>121</sup>, Krasin was in the early days before the War intimately involved with the campaign of robbery and other illicit means used to finance the revolutionaries, at the same time (at least from 1896 to 1902) acting as an Ohrana informant.<sup>122</sup> He also had connections through his Masonic affiliation to the Grand Orient de France.<sup>123</sup> One purpose of Roerich’s visit was to obtain from the Soviets the mining and agricultural concessions in the Altai area as a first condition for the founding of the utopian “New Country”.<sup>124</sup> But Krasin was not only a trade spokesman of the Soviets, he also was, together with Lunačarskij, in charge of the commission that had planned and built the Lenin mausoleum<sup>125</sup>. It was Krasin who made the proposal to turn the mausoleum into a people’s tribune, a place from which Lenin was to speak to future generations through the mouths of his successors.<sup>126</sup> Already in 1921, Krasin was convinced that through the future advances of Science “one will be able with the help of the elements of Life of a human being to reconstruct the physical human being itself”.<sup>127</sup>

Under the guidance of the Master, the Roerichs were thus ready to add to the nascent Lenin cult a crucial mystical and chiliastic aspect taken from Buddhist spirituality, which should help, like the spiritual recommendations by lamas like Agvan Dorjiev, to win the Buddhist world for the Soviet cause (or was it the other way round?). Thus, when the expedition reached Urumchi in April 1926, the Soviet Consul General A.E. Bystrov reported from his meeting with Roerich to Moscow that there were “letters from the Mahatmas for Comrades Čičerin and Stalin. The task of the Mahatmas supposedly is to unite Buddhism and Communism and to create a great Eastern Union of Republics.” They wanted to join the Tashi (Panchen) Lama, he added, in Mongolia “to set out in a spiritual procession for the liberation of Tibet from the British yoke.”<sup>128</sup> When the Roerichs eventually arrived in Moscow on 9 June 1926, they brought a little casket with earth from Buddha’s birthplace for the tomb of Lenin as well as several paintings depicting the coming Buddha Maitreya and a Mahatma, whose face resembled that of Lenin. On 21

120 He arrived at about the same time as the Tibetan delegation, from which the future *Polaires*-member Jean-Claude Rivière allegedly received his initiation.

121 Timothy O’Connor: *The Engineer of Revolution: L.B. Krasin and the Bolsheviks, 1870–1926*. Boulder, Col. 1992; Michael Glenn: “Leonid Krasin: The Years before 1917. An Outline”, *Soviet Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (Oct., 1970), pp. 192-221

122 Spence 2002, p. 84.

123 Osobyj Arkhiv (OA), f.92, op.5, d.15, l.38; O.A. Platonov: *Istoričeskij slovar’ rossijskikh masonov XXVII-XX vekov*. Moskva 1996, p. 65.

124 Aleksandr I. Andreev: *Soviet Russia and Tibet: The Debacle of Secret Diplomacy, 1918-1930s*. Leiden, Boston 2003, p. 296; Vladimir A. Rosov: Nikolaj Rerich: Vestnik Zvenigoroda. Ėkspedicii N.K. Rericha po okrainam pustyni Gobi. Kn. 1: Velikij plan. Sankt-Peterburg 2002, p.

125 Nina Tumarkin: *Lenin Lives! The Lenin Cult in Soviet Russia*. Cambridge, MA.–London, 2nd ed. 1997.

126 Ennker 1997, p. 234; Michael Hagemester: *Nikolaj Fedorov. Studien zu Leben, Werk und Wirkung*. München 1989, p. 285. Olga V. Velikanova: *Obraz Lenina v massovom vosprijatii sovetskih ljudej po arhivnym materialam*. Lewiston, NY 2001; Olga V. Velikanova: *Making of an Idol. On Uses of Lenin*. Göttingen 1996. According to Konstantin Mel’nikov, the architect who designed Lenin’s sarcophagus, “the general idea” of permanently preserving and displaying Lenin’s body originated with L.B. Krasin. (Tumarkin 1997, p. 181.) Krasin wrote in *Izvestija* one week after the funerals that the world significance of Lenin’s grave would surpass Mecca and Jerusalem. He suggested that as an inscription on the mausoleum there should be simply LENIN. It was Krasin’s idea as well to use the mausoleum as a speaker’s tribunal. (Tumarkin 1997, pp. 191, 193.)

127 Mihail Ol’minskij: “Kritičeskie stat’i i zametki”, *Proletarskaja revoljucija*, 1931/1, p. 149sq.; quoted by Hagemester 1989, p. 285.

128 Andreev 2003, p. 297.

April 1926, Allal Ming had communicated that he shared the Roerichs' joy about Lenin, who represented their bridge and a source of light: "You still could help in building the Lenin memorial. To find the red stone, a square in the foundation and, of course, the signs of the Soviets and the happy Tibetan signs. I recommend the inscription: 'Lenin – great Teacher' in seven languages."<sup>129</sup>

On 18 March 1926, Allal Ming had dictated the letters that were presented to the "Moscow communists" in June. Therein the Masters asserted that "measures should be urgently taken to introduce Communism worldwide as a step towards the necessary evolution."<sup>130</sup> Maitreya was nothing else but the symbol of communism, the negation of God was seen as a natural phenomenon in Buddhism. Eventually "Europe will be shattered by the union of Buddhism and Communism."<sup>131</sup>

## 8.

Yet after the withdrawal of Soviet engagement in Inner Asian affairs around 1930, Allal Ming and the Roerichs seemed less convinced of the efficiency of the Bolsheviks and began to turn towards the United States to gain support for the realization of the "Grand Plan" in the course of a second expedition, officially with the purpose of setting up an agricultural cooperative in Inner Mongolia, a cooperative bank and cultural establishments.<sup>132</sup> American financial support had been assured through the Roerich Museum in New York and rich patrons like Charles Crane and Louis Horch ever since 1921.<sup>133</sup> From 1933, they had an enthusiastic supporter in the Secretary for Agriculture, Henry A. Wallace (1888–1965), who was himself deeply immersed in all kind of spiritual and occult matters: seances, symbols, secret societies, rituals, astrology, Native American and Oriental religions.<sup>134</sup> Wallace had attended meetings of the Theosophical Society since 1919, joined the Liberal Catholic Church associated with Theosophy, and became a Scottish Rite and a Blue Lodge mason until he received the 32nd degree in 1928. By 1929, his search had led him to Roerich who became in the early 1930s his revered "Guru" until the abrupt and complete break during autumn 1935. But up to this moment, Roerich's suggestive power was considerable. When Wallace suggested in 1934 that the symbol of the Great Pyramid from the Great Seal of the United States would be appropriate for the dollar bill, he was probably convinced by the arguments of none other than Nicholas Roerich.<sup>135</sup>

---

129 *Dnevnik*, 21 April 1926, t. 22: 21.05.1925–12.08.1926.

130 Rosov 2002, p. 180.

131 *Dnevnik*, 18 March 1926, t. 22: 21.05.1925–12.08.1926; Rosov 2002, p. 148. Andreev 2003, p. 298.

132 For details see Rosov 2004.

133 Robert C. Williams: *Russian Art and American Money: 1900–1940*. Cambridge, Mass. 1980.

134 Graham White, John Maze: *Henry A. Wallace: His Search for a New World Order*. Chapel Hill, N.C. 1995; John C. Culver, John Hyde: *American Dreamer: The Life and Times of Henry A. Wallace*. New York 2000.

135 Williams 1980, p. 111. This is also the point of view of the Franklin D. Roosevelt American Heritage Center Museum: "Nicholas Roerich was also influential in FDR's administration, and was the pivotal force behind placing the Great Seal of the United States on the dollar bill." <[http://www.fdrheritage.org/fdr\\_museum\\_preview.htm](http://www.fdrheritage.org/fdr_museum_preview.htm)>. Wallace later used to point out the Masonic background of his idea: "In 1934 when I was Sec. of Agriculture I was waiting in the outer office of Secretary [of State Cordell] Hull and as I waited I amused myself by picking up a State Department publication which was on a stand there entitled, 'The History of the Seal of the United States.' Turning to page 53 I noted the colored reproduction of the reverse side of the Seal. The Latin phrase *Novus Ordo Seclorum* impressed me as meaning the New Deal of the Ages. Therefore I took the publication to President Roosevelt and suggested a coin be put out with the obverse and reverse sides of the Seal. Roosevelt as he looked at the colored reproduction of the Seal was first struck with the representation of the 'All Seeing Eye,' a Ma-

With a little help from Wallace, the Roerichs were eventually able to approach the President himself and to win Franklin Delano Roosevelt for their Banner of Peace initiative, which obligated nations to respect museums, cathedrals, universities and libraries as they did hospitals, to become part of the United Nations organizational charter. This was consistent with FDR's policy of hemispheric coordination and cooperation in the Americas, as well as with FDR and Hull's "good neighbour" foreign policy.<sup>136</sup> The Roerich Peace Pact was signed by Wallace, representing the USA, and by all the members of the Pan-American Union as a treaty in the White House, in the presence of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, on 15 April 1935. Of course Roerich never mentioned that "the initiated ones" expected the coming of Maitreya Buddha and the dawning of Shambhala for the year 1936 or later, and that this would be – according to the Kālacakra-Tantra tradition as well to the instructions given by Allal Ming – accompanied by great turmoil and war.

FDR was no stranger to mysticism, he always had a strong interest in the occult. Moreover, his receptivity was limitless and his curiosity enormous.<sup>137</sup> According to the Wallace papers, the real mystic was perhaps the President rather than Wallace.<sup>138</sup> A mason since 1911, Roosevelt became a member of the high grade Scottish Rite in 1929 (where he received the 32nd degree) and a member of the Imperial Council of the Shrine (Ancient Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine for North America); eventually FDR was appointed as Honorary Grand Master of the New York Order of DeMolay on 13 April

---

sonic representation of The Great Architect of the Universe. Next he was impressed with the idea that the foundation for the new order of the ages had been laid in 1776 but that it would be completed only under the eye of the Great Architect. Roosevelt like myself was a 32nd degree Mason. He suggested that the Seal be put on the dollar bill rather than a coin and took the matter up with the Secretary of the Treasury. When the first draft came back from the Treasury the obverse side was on the left of the bill as is heraldic practice. Roosevelt insisted that the order be reversed so that the phrase 'of the United States' would be under the obverse side of the Seal... Roosevelt was a great stickler for details and loved playing with them, no matter whether it involved the architecture of a house, a post office, or a dollar bill." (Wallace to Dal Lee [editor of *Astrology Guide* and *Your Personal Astrology*], 6 February 1951, Henry A. Wallace Papers, University of Iowa, Correspondence). "I was struck by the fact that the reverse side of the Great Seal had never been used. I called it to Roosevelt's attention. He brought it up in Cabinet meeting and asked James Farley [Postmaster General and a Roman Catholic] if he thought the Catholics would have any objection to the 'All Seeing Eye' which he as a Mason looked on as a Masonic symbol of Deity. Farley said 'no, there would be no objection.'" (Wallace to George M. Humphrey, Secretary of Treasury, 10 Dec. 1955 (Henry A. Wallace Papers, University of Iowa, Correspondence). See as well M.L. Lien: "Two Sides But Only One Die: The Great Seal of the United States," *The Retired Officer* (June 1982), p. 33.

136 An autograph letter in FDR's own handwriting, written to Secretary of State Cordell Hull, says: "Dear Cordell:/ As you know I am very [underlined] keen about the Roerich Peace Pact and I hope we can get it going via 'the Americas'—Will you and Henry Wallace talk this over and have something for me when I get back?/ FDR." Facsimile on the website of the Franklin D. Roosevelt American Heritage Center Museum <[http://www.fdrheritage.org/fdr\\_museum\\_preview.htm](http://www.fdrheritage.org/fdr_museum_preview.htm)>. The Roerich Pact and Banner of Peace movement grew rapidly during the early 1930s, with centers in a number of countries. There were three international conferences, in Bruges, Belgium, in Montevideo, Uruguay, and in Washington, D.C. Needless to say, this recalls very much of the present 14th Dalai Lama's "Kālacakra Tantra for World Peace" initiative. The public celebrations of the Kālacakra Tantra initiation rituals in the West by the Dalai Lama are said to contribute spiritually to the approaching "world peace" through the advent of Shambhala. See the extremely critical analysis of Tibetan spiritual politics in Victor Trimondi, Victoria Trimondi: *Der Schatten des Dalai Lama: Sexualität, Magie und Politik im tibetischen Buddhismus*. Düsseldorf 1999.

137 Frank Freidel: *Franklin D. Roosevelt: Launching the New Deal*. Boston 1973, p. 75.

138 Torbjörn Sirevåg: *The Eclipse of the New Deal and the Fall of Vice-President Wallace, 1944*. New York 1985, pp. 522sq.

1934 at the White House.<sup>139</sup> FDR was equally deeply fascinated by the geography and history, the cultures and religions of Inner Asia, from Tibet to the Siberian border – “the chess board of international politics”<sup>140</sup>. Because his ancestors were linked with China, he always attributed a far greater importance to China than many other US politicians. In 1942, inspired by James Hilton’s 1933 novel *Lost Horizon* about a utopian lamasery high in the Himalayas in Tibet whose inhabitants also enjoy longevity, Roosevelt named his new retreat in the Catskill Mountain Park, Camp Hi-Catskill (today’s Camp David), *Shangri-La*.

This attitude is reflected in the series of eight letters addressed to the president by Elena Roerich and written “from the Himalayan heights” between late 1934 and early 1936, of course at the instigation of “the Masters”. While none of the letters are from the pen of Roosevelt, the correspondence evolves into an indirect dialogue and demonstrates that there was a positive response (“transmitted messages”) from the President. The diaries during this period reveal how Elena Ivanovna was constantly admonished by the Master to focus her thoughts on FDR. Although he was leaning towards her<sup>141</sup>, the Master said, “Roosevelt has not yet understood the essence of the deal, but we shall still give him some time”.<sup>142</sup> But according to Henry Wallace, the strongest bond between FDR and Roerich was the President’s mother Sara Delano Roosevelt.<sup>143</sup> This is confirmed by the diaries, where the Master repeatedly suggests approaching the President’s mother in order to gain an influence over FDR.<sup>144</sup>

After the exchange of letters had begun, the “Master” instructed Elena Ivanovna to “speak about the meaning of the potential of Asia” and that “the New Russia could be the best friend of America”. In the meantime, Fuyama should keep during his expedition “the famous secrecy” in Japan and Mongolia, because “they love secrecy” there.<sup>145</sup> In her letters, Elena Roerich addressed FDR as “not only the Ruler but the true great Leader” who had the singular choice to accept “the Highest Help and the Fiery Messages” “at the threshold of reconstruction” of the entire world, when “the fate of many countries is being weighed on the Cosmic Scales”.<sup>146</sup> Since the President had “so beautifully accepted the Message [...] free from prejudice”, Elena Ivanovna started “to unfold before You gradually the entire Plan of the New Construction, in which You and Your Country are destined to play such a great part”.<sup>147</sup> FDR was warned of the preparations for war “from the land in the East” (by which she meant, according to the diaries, Japan<sup>148</sup>) and “from the land beyond the ocean, on the pretext of protection of China”<sup>149</sup> (England). FDR was addressed as an integral part of “the Construction of Light” where “nobody can replace him”<sup>150</sup>. The

139 Folder Roosevelt Family Masonic Papers, 1935. Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library, Hyde Park, NY.

140 Robert Dallek: *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932-1945*. New York 1979, p. 117.

141 *Dnevnik*, 27 December 1934, t. 40: 15.08.1934–03.02.1935.

142 *Dnevnik*, 26 May 1934, t. 39: 01.05.1934-14.08.1934.

143 Culver/Hyde 2000, p. 136.

144 *Dnevnik*, 28 January 1934, t. 38: 30.10.1933–30.04.1934.

145 *Dnevnik*, 28 January 1934, t. 38: 30.10.1933–30.04.1934.

146 Elena Roerich to FDR, 10 October 1934, Roosevelt Papers Official File (OF) 723, folder “Roerich Peace Pact, 1933–1945”, Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library, Hyde Park, NY.

147 Elena Roerich to FDR, 15 November 1934, Roosevelt Papers OF 723.

148 *Dnevnik*, 10 November 1934, t. 40: 15.08.1934–03.02.1935: “One attempt will be effected through a provocation by Japan; the other attempt through an instigation of England on the pretext of protection of China”.

149 Elena Roerich to FDR, 15 November 1934, Roosevelt Papers OF 723.

150 Elena Roerich to FDR, 27 December 1934, Roosevelt Papers OF 723.

“Master” transmitted to the President that “a Great State will be created in the East. This beginning will bring that equilibrium, which is so urgently needed for the construction of the great Future. America was since long linked with Asia. [...] Thus one must accept that the peoples occupying the larger part of Asia are destined to respond to the friendship of America. [...] The alliance of the nations of Asia is decided, the union of tribes and peoples will take place gradually, there will be a kind of Federation of countries. Mongolia, China and the Kalmuks will constitute the counterbalance of Japan and in this alliance of peoples, Your Good Will is needed, Mr. President.” FDR was advised to keep the US well-armed against all future provocations, while the Master communicated to Elena that Japan was set to unleash a war against America out of her lust for conquest.<sup>151</sup>

Ironically, it was because of the growing suspicion of Roerich’s apparent pro-Japanese activities and contacts to the Japanese War Ministry and Foreign Office that FDR and Wallace both cut off all personal relations after 1935. However, this doesn’t mean that Roosevelt despised Roerich altogether after that date. When Elizabeth Avinoff-Shoumatoff<sup>152</sup> (1888–1980), paintress of Russian origin, started her watercolor proof studies for her famous unfinished portrait of Franklin D. Roosevelt in July 1943, executed in FDR’s final hours, she and her brother Andrej were invited to lunch at FDR’s estate in Hyde Park. According to her description, the two men soon discovered a common interest in the occult. And Andrej was struck by the bust of Nicholas Roerich, which he saw prominently perched on Roosevelt’s shelf.<sup>153</sup>

Indeed, Roerich seemed to keep all options open. When Nikolaj Konstantinovič came from Tokyo to Manchuria in June 1934, it seemed as if Roerich were professing his approval of the Japanese military advances on the Asian mainland, and he had constantly expressed his admiration for Japanese art and culture.<sup>154</sup> Moreover, Heinrich Müller, in charge of Gestapo section (Amt) IV in the Nazi Reichssicherheitshauptamt (RSHA), claimed during his 1948 interrogations that Roerich was known to the Gestapo under the code word “Lama” and that he had contacted the Nazi regime in 1934 to ascertain whether they were interested in supporting his undertakings in Inner Asia.<sup>155</sup> Allal Ming insisted throughout the 1930s that the main objective remained the establishment of the Kingdom of Shambhala under Russian leadership, the creation of the New Country: “The Kingdom of Shambhala is the hegemony of Russia. This formula is the corner stone. [...] There was never so much talk about Russia – in such a unique way the Path of Shambhala is in creation. One should not speak about it, as Satan doesn’t sleep, but you can perceive

---

151 *Dnevnik*, 10 November 1934, t. 40: 15.08.1934–03.02.1935.

152 Elizabeth emigrated to the United States in 1917 with her husband Lev A. Shoumatoff [Šumatov, before 1916 Schumacher], then a representative of Aleksandr Kerenskij’s provisional government, who later played host to Gurdjieff in the US. Her extraordinary talent for portraiture brought commissions from some of the most illustrious families in America, Great Britain and Europe. President Roosevelt was sitting for her in Warm Springs when he suffered a fatal cerebral hemorrhage on 12 April 1945.

153 See <[http://www.fdrheritage.org/fdr\\_museum\\_preview.htm](http://www.fdrheritage.org/fdr_museum_preview.htm)>.

154 White/Maze 1995, pp. 88-89.

155 Gregory Douglas: *Geheimakte Gestapo-Müller: Dokumente und Zeugnisse aus den US-Geheimarchiven*. Berg am Starnberger See 1995, pp. 50-51 (translation of: *Gestapo Chief: The 1948 Interrogation of Heinrich Müller. From Secret U.S. Intelligence Files*. Los Angeles, Cal. 1995). Concerning the Nazi Tibet expedition in the 1930s see: Christopher Hale: *Himmler’s Crusade: The True Story of the 1938 Nazi Expedition into Tibet*. London 2004; Thomas Hauschild: *Lebenslust und Fremdenfurcht: Ethnologie im Dritten Reich*. Frankfurt/M. 1995, pp. 168-199; Trimondi/Trimondi 2002, pp. 115-174. Tibetan leaders like regent Reting Rinpoche (who discovered the incarnation of the present 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama) and the 9<sup>th</sup> Panchen Lama addressed in the 1930s “under the sign of the Swastika” very sympathetic greeting messages to the “King of Germany Mr. Hitler”. The “supreme chief of the Buddhists in China”, reform monk T’ai-Hsu (1890–1947) proposed in a 1937 letter to Hitler that Buddhism was the ideal religion for the German people united under the “Führer”. See Trimondi/Trimondi 2002, pp. 318-321.

how the Path of Russian (*Rossijskoj*) Asia consolidates. Already now every map is witness to the might of Russia. But add in your thoughts Turkey and Persia, and you will get the new borders of Shambhala.”<sup>156</sup>

By 1938, Dorjiev and Barčenko, like many other “political occultists” of their generation, had tragically perished during the Stalinist purges. Roerich’s second expedition had failed. But still, in 1991, N.K. Roerich’s son Svjatoslav Nikolaevič told Vladimir Rosov that the “Altai is a very important centre, a centre of a big future” and that Zvenigorod remained “a great reality and a great dream”.<sup>157</sup>

## 9.

Since the 1970s, the work of the Roerichs found a steadily increasing recognition in Soviet Union, culminating in the meeting between Svjatoslav Roerich and the couple Michail and Raisa Gorbačev in the Kremlin on 14 May 1997<sup>158</sup>. This paved the way for the establishment of the MCR on the exquisite premises of the Lopuhin estate in downtown Moscow. The rich repertoire of facts, lies and rumours about occult politics and secret brotherhoods found a revival in the early 1990s among the ever-growing followers of the neo-urasianist movement. Pre-eminent in this movement is the above-mentioned Aleksandr Dugin with his rather close links to both the European right-wingers and “esoteric traditionalists” (adepts of Saint-Yves, Papus, Evola, Guénon et al.), who began to spread the rumour about the alleged existence of a secret brotherhood Agartha in the ranks of the GRU. Franco-Rumanian writer Jean Parvulesco (Pârvulescu) even added that Vladimir Putin had to be seen as an envoy of this order.<sup>159</sup>

In the meantime, the Roerich Society could count on some political support and influence, for example by former prime minister Evgenij M. Primakov, a trained orientalist and from 1977 to 1985 Director of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences, who attended the Roerich Jubilee Conference on 9 October 1999 in Moscow.<sup>160</sup> The disaster of the flawed and shady economic policy conceived by the so-called Harvard Boys and the Čubajs clan during the early 1990s under the presidency of Boris El’cin<sup>161</sup> helped to create a social climate in which further “Westernization” found an increasingly strong opposition and provoked calls for a “patrotic period of reform” as the only safeguard against the forces of fundamentalism.<sup>162</sup> Aleksandr Dugin promoted “Eurasianism” as an universal opposition to Western-inspired globalisation, avant-garde of the anti-globalist movement and the foundatuons of a future pan-Asian alliance.<sup>163</sup>

---

156 *Dnevnik*, 4 April 1936, t. 42: 19.10.1935–11.06.1936.

157 Rosov 2004, p. 280.

158 Both, but especially Raisa, favoured the resumption of activities of the Roerich foundation on the territory of the Soviet Union. Gorbačev commented on the May meeting: “This meeting is our oldest wish. When you consider the roots of Soviet-Indian relations, the first germs of friendship between the two countries are linked to the Roerich family.” *Pravda*, 15 Mai 1987.

159 Jean Parvulesco: *Vladimir Poutine et l'empire eurasiatique de la fin*. Synergies Européennes, Secrétariat Européen. Bruxelles, 29. Juni 2000, <[http://utenti.lycos.it/ArchivEurasia/parv\\_vpeef\\_fr.html](http://utenti.lycos.it/ArchivEurasia/parv_vpeef_fr.html)>. See as well Jean Parvulesco: *Putin i Evrazijskaja imperija*. Sankt-Peterburg 2006.

160 *Primakov at the Jubilee Roerich Conference, Moscow 9 October 1999* <<http://www.sangha.net/Photos/Conf-091099.html>>.

161 Janine R. Wedel: *U.S. Aid To Russia: Where It All Went Wrong*. Testimony before the Committee on International Relations U.S. House of Representatives, September 17, 1998, <[http://www.house.gov/international\\_relations/full/ws917982.htm](http://www.house.gov/international_relations/full/ws917982.htm)>; Janine R. Wedel: “The Harvard Boys Do Russia”, *The Nation*, 1 June 1998; Janine R. Wedel: *Collision and Collusion: The Strange Case of Western Aid to Eastern Europe*. New York 2001.

162 This was announced by Michail Leon’tev in *Segodnja*, 24 November 1994.

163 Aleksandr Dugin: *Osnovy geopolitiki. Geopolitičeskoe buduščee Rossii*. Moskva 1999, pp. 190, 214-249.

With regard to foreign policy, the signing of the *Treaty on Deepening Military Trust in Border Regions* in Shanghai on 26 April 1996 by the heads of states of Russia, Kazakhstan, the People's Republic of China, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan was a big step in this direction. The Treaty has led to the creation of the Shanghai Five grouping. In 2001, the five member nations first admitted Uzbekistan (thereby transforming it into the Shanghai Six). All six heads of state signed on 15 June 2001 the *Declaration of Shanghai Cooperation Organization*, aiming to realize a higher level of cooperation. In July 2001, Russia and the PRC, the organization's two leading nations, signed the *Treaty of Good-Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation*. Among other nations of the region, Mongolia became the first country to receive observer status at the 2004 Tashkent Summit, followed by Pakistan, India and Iran at the 2005 SCO summit in Astana, Kazakhstan. Mongolia, Pakistan, and Iran have since applied for full membership to the organization; not so India. But the SCO has also encouraged India to join the organization, saying that they would properly consider a membership application should it decide to join the group.

In this context, it doesn't seem altogether accidental when the full extent of the dealings of the Roerichs emerges today in Russian bookshops and newspapers, like some glaring spotlight, pointing once again the path to *Rossijskaja Azija* or a Shambhala version of *Evracija*. Indeed, the Kremlin has learnt how to make use for diplomatic purposes of the considerable prestige the names of the Roerichs enjoy in various parts of Asia. When the freshly elected President of the Russian Federation granted a 50-minutes interview to the editors of *India Today* and *The Russia Journal* in October 2000, he referred to Nikolaj Roerich as the prime example of "the spiritual closeness that binds all people" – foremost Russian and India.<sup>164</sup> And while on 4 December 2002 in New Dehli, Putin was discussing future collaboration between the intelligence agencies and special forces of the two countries, his wife Ljudmila was opening an exhibition called "The Himalaya Saga" with paintings of Nikolaj Konstantinovič.<sup>165</sup>

As a countermove, the Indian prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee offered in May 2001 \$200,000 to the International Roerich Memorial Fund for the preservation of Roerich's home near Naggar in the Kullu Valley (Kashmir) by announcing he would act as "Chief Patron of the trust" in honour of the "great saint".<sup>166</sup> In early November 2001, Vajpayee was on a diplomatic visit in St. Petersburg and gave a speech, in which he stressed the importance of the city for the mutual relations between the two countries. He underlined the continuity that could be traced from the pioneering discoveries of Afanasij Nikitin (who was the first Russian to "discover" India in the 15th century) to the plans of Peter the Great for securing a maritime access on the shores of the Indian Ocean, and finally to the birth of Nikolaj Roerich in St. Petersburg. Vajpayee added that Nikitin's travels opened

---

164 AG: "I've been associated with Russia a long time. Almost everyone I meet here has some kind of a personal memory of India – movies, songs, actors... What are your associations with India?" – Putin: "First, I'd remember an artist well known in both Russia and India – Nikolai Roerich. Roerich's life was an amazing life, a marvel of creativity and astonishing example of spiritual closeness that, perhaps doesn't lie on the surface, but is nevertheless the spiritual closeness that binds all peoples." *The Russia Journal*, September 30–October 06, 2000, Vol. 3, No. 38 (81). <<http://www2.russiajournal.com/printer/weekly3685.html>>.

165 *Strana.ru*, 4 December 2002 <<http://www.putin.ru/smi.asp?dd=4&mm=12&yy=2002>>, <<http://www.events.ru/news.phtml?id=2568>>

166 The prime minister added: "Coming here again today has filled me with a special sense of satisfaction and elation. For this is not an ordinary museum, it is the *karma bhoomi* of one of the world's greatest artist-intellectuals of the 20th century." *Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee donates Rupees Ten million to International Roerich Memorial Trust*. Press Release Moscow 29 May 2001 <[http://www.indianembassy.ru/docs-htm/en/news13\\_t69.htm](http://www.indianembassy.ru/docs-htm/en/news13_t69.htm)>.

the path perceived nowadays by Russia, India and Iran “as a strategic axis for Eurasia”: “Our three countries signed an agreement in September to develop this corridor.”<sup>167</sup>

Finally, on the webpage of the embassy of the Russian federation in New Dehli, one could access an interview given in 2002 by the ambassador Aleksandr M. Kadakin, a well-known orientalist and indologist, who was befriended with the family of Svjatoslav Nikolaevič Roerich and the former Indian prime minister Rajiv Gandhi. When he was asked by the journalist about the future of India and whether the recent events in Afghanistan could be interpreted in terms of Huntington’s *Clash of Civilizations*, Kadakin answered enigmatically, as if he were quoting Allal Ming: “BM: China is predicted to have [sic!] a future of a superpower. Does the future also belong to India? What is your attitude towards the latest developments in Afghanistan, India’s neighbour? What is it – a clash of religions or civilisations? – Kadakin: No doubt the three Asian giants – Russia, China, India – have a great future. People justly say: ‘Light will dawn in the East’.”<sup>168</sup>

---

167 Tarun Basu: *The Importance of St Petersburg in the Vajpayee Itinerary*. Indo-Asian News Service, <<http://www.rediff.com/news/2001/nov/05russia.htm>>; <<http://www.rediff.com/news/2001/nov/05vaj.htm>>.

168 The Embassy of the Russian Federation in the Republic of India: *Ambassador’s Interviews, Speeches and Articles*. *Light will Dawn in the East: Interview with Alexander M. Kadakin*, <[http://www.india.mid.ru/india/sp\\_05.html](http://www.india.mid.ru/india/sp_05.html)> Replying to the question of a journalist of *Times of India*, “What are your views on the growing axis between China, Russia, India and Iran?”, Kadakin said on 13 Juni 2002: “This is only a reflection of the convergence of our stands. All four countries share the same attitude to terrorism. They share the same vision of a new world order. Of course there are problems between India and China but we felt, why not focus on areas where there is no conflict?” Rashme Sehgal: “Core of Terror”, *The Times of India*, 13 Juni 2002. <<http://www.meadev.nic.in/govt/kadakin-toi-13june2002.htm>>.