

Russian Studies in Philosophy, vol. 41, no. 1 (Summer 2002), pp. 65–90.
© 2003 M.E. Sharpe, Inc. All rights reserved.
1061–1967/2003 \$9.50 + 0.00.

L.M. GINDILIS AND V.V. FROLOV

The Philosophy of Living Ethics and Its Interpreters

The Roerich Movement in Russia

The spiritual crisis and spiritual revival of the twentieth century

In many ways the twentieth century was a turning point in the history of mankind. Rebellious social forces defied any reasonable explanation. Philosophical theories of society (including Marxism) that had previously been considered true turned out to be inapplicable to the analysis of new historical processes. To an even greater extent than before, religion began to be used by its ministers in the service of corporate and political interests. The hope of solving the problems of human existence and social development with the help of science was also shaken, for many phenomena of human life and cosmic processes were not amenable to scientific explanation. In spite of the impressive successes of science, which changed the face of the world, a critical, even negative, attitude towards science increasingly took hold of public opinion, for the negative features of the technogenic civilization

English text © 2003 by M.E. Sharpe, Inc., from the Russian text © 2001 by the Presidium of the Russian Academy of Sciences. “Filosofiiia zhivoi etiki i ee tolkovateli. Rerikhovskoe dvizhenie v Rossii,” *Voprosy filosofii*, 2001, no. 3, pp. 85–102. A publication of the Institute of Philosophy, Russian Academy of Sciences. A.V. Stetsenko helped prepare this article.

Lev Mironovich Gindilis is a candidate of physico-mathematical sciences, a full member of the Russian Academy of Space Travel, and a senior research associate of the State Astronomical Institute.

Viktor Vasil’evich Frolov is a doctor of philosophical sciences, professor, and head of the philosophy department and dean of the Humanities Faculty at the Moscow State Forestry University.

Translated by James E. Walker.

that science helped to create became more and more visible. There were also cultural crises. Alongside beautiful examples of painting, poetry, literature, music, and architecture, a mass culture ruled by the dark spirit of consumerism, banality, and violence sprang up and entrenched itself. The moral sphere is in serious crisis. First the West and, following it, Russia tasted the bitter fruits of the sexual revolution. All of this was the reflection of a deep spiritual crisis that enveloped mankind, a crisis that became obvious in the twentieth century.

At the same time, a countertrend appeared and developed in the spiritual and cultural life of mankind, primarily in Russia. It amounted to a breakthrough of human consciousness to a new, cosmic level of thought. In Russia, this trend did not spring up in a vacuum. Many generations contributed towards the noble goals of the spiritual revolution, starting with St. Sergius of Radonezh, the devoted servant of the Russian land. The stage was set for this intellectual breakthrough by Russian poets (A. Pushkin, M. Lermontov, A. Blok), writers (L. Tolstoy, F. Dostoevsky), and philosophers (V. Solov'ev, S. Bulgakov, P. Florenskii, N. Berdiaev, I. Il'in, and others). The philosophers developed the idea of the cosmic nature of being and man, and substantiated the objective need to form a cosmic worldview. "In order to obtain light in the darkness that has enveloped the world, we need a cosmic deepening of consciousness. If we stay at the surface of life, the darkness will swallow us" [1, p. 148]. Russian scholars such as K. Tsiolkovskii, V. Vernadskii, L. Chizhevskii, and L. Gumilev laid the scientific and philosophical foundation for the new mode of thought. Tsiolkovskii developed an integral system of cosmic philosophy in which he formulated his ideas about the rationality and spirituality of the Universe and the role of Cosmic Reason in its evolution. Having discovered the interrelation of man and the energistic processes of the biosphere, Vernadskii developed his doctrine of the noosphere and pointed out within this framework the place and role of scientific thought. Chizhevskii defined the dependence of human history and natural processes on cosmic factors. Gumilev formulated a hypothesis about the natural-cosmic causes of the origin and development of nations.

The *Living Ethics of the Roerichs*, which contains a new, cosmic (energistic) worldview, has played and continues to play an enormous role in paving the way for the spiritual revival of the twentieth century. The doctrine was created in cooperation with the Teachers of India and published in Russian. This emphasizes Russia's special spiritual role in the development of the new mode of thought of the twentieth century. On the basis of this teaching a cultural-enlightenment movement linked with the Roerich name sprang up in many countries. It has flourished particularly in Russia and the countries of the former USSR.

In spite of the growing social role of this movement, neither it nor the worldview on which it is based has been subjected to serious philosophical analysis. Hence, we would have applauded the initiative of S.B. Filatov and R.N. Lunkin, who tried to fill this gap with their article (“The Roerich Movement in Russia: Re-establishing the Ties of Time” [Rerikhovskoe dvizhenie v Rossii: vosstanovlenie svyazi vremen], *Voprosy filosofii*, 1999, no. 12, pp. 63–73). Unfortunately, in our opinion, their attempt proved to be, to put it mildly, quite inadequate. Instead of an objective scientific-philosophical analysis, the article contains a very superficial exposition of the Roerichs’ teaching. It completely distorts the essence of the doctrine, discredits its founders—prominent figures of Russian and world culture—and the Roerich movement in our country. We believe it necessary to set forth our position in defense of the Roerichs against unsubstantiated attacks and of their teaching against arbitrary interpretation and distortion. Let us first look at the basic features of the Roerichs’ teaching.

The Roerichs’ philosophy: Living Ethics

Living Ethics is a synthesized scientific-philosophical teaching about the World Order as a whole; about its design, origin, and evolution, about the Laws of the World Order, about the role of the Rational Forces (Cosmic Reason) in the evolution of the Universe, about the place of man in the World Order and his close link with the Cosmos, about the evolution of man and human society, about the moral principles of Being and paths of spiritual perfection as a necessary requirement of Evolution.

It is impossible to convey fully the content of this very profound teaching in a short article. We will simply point out a few important propositions that, in our opinion, encapsulate its essence.

1. According to Living Ethics, the World Order is based on matter in the broadest sense. It includes the forms of matter studied by contemporary science as well as finer forms as yet unknown to science. The world develops according to Cosmic Laws, the study of which is mankind’s most important task. Cosmic Reason takes part in the development of the Universe and mankind on Earth is a part of this Cosmic Reason.

2. As we known, there are three basic forms of knowledge: scientific, religious, and artistic. Living Ethics attributes great importance to religion in the history of human society; however, in the current stage it assigns the primary role to science. “The world of the future, the higher world,” wrote E.I. Roerich, “is coming in the armor of laboratory rays. It is the laboratories that will show the advantage of the higher energy and will establish not only the superiority of man’s psychic energy over all forms of energy

known to this time, but also a clear qualitative difference. Thus the importance of spirituality will be fully demonstrated. Knowledge of the higher laws will subordinate technology to spirit and this will confirm the knowledge of higher goals that will lead to the transformation of all physical nature. Transformed nature and the transformed spirit of the people will suggest new and better arrangements for living" [2, vol. 2, p. 219]. According to Living Ethics, the field of science cannot be limited to the study of "inert" matter and "living substance" (or biological objects); it must include research on thought, consciousness, the soul (psyche), psychic energy, the problem of immortality, and the meaning of life, which were formerly assigned to the sphere of religion. Not only physical, but also psychic, spiritual phenomena must become the object of scientific study. These ideas of Living Ethics are close to the program proposed by Teilhard de Chardin, who believed that "a satisfactory interpretation of the universe—even a positivist one—must cover the internal as well as the external aspect of things, mind as well as matter. The true physics is the one that will include all-sided man in an integral picture of the world" [3, p. 40]. Of course, science can fulfill its role in the evolution of human society only if science itself undergoes essential changes. It must boldly throw off obsolete dogma and become more open and spiritual. Science has to penetrate beyond the limits of the physical realm into the worlds of fine energies, into other dimensions of multidimensional psychospiritual space. By expanding the sphere of activity of science, Living Ethics places primary significance on experiential learning. "We have to collect all of the facts that have not yet found their way into elementary textbooks," wrote N.K. Roerich. "We have to piece them together most conscientiously, without disdain and without arrogance" [4, p. 17].

As for the artistic knowledge of the world, according to Living Ethics, its role will grow. F.M. Dostoevsky said that Beauty will save the world. Living Ethics puts it more precisely: awareness of Beauty will save the world.

3. Living Ethics considers Culture a decisive factor in the development of human society. Therefore, the preservation and augmentation of the cultural wealth of all the peoples on Earth is a vital necessity for mankind. N.K. Roerich created a broad cultural movement under the Banner of Peace. He developed a pact on the protection of cultural monuments during wartime—the Roerich Pact—which later became the foundation for similar UN documents.

4. Living Ethics proclaims the equality of all people, regardless of gender, racial, national, or social differences. Social life must be built on a foundation of harmony of all the peoples of the Earth, on the basis of collectivism, community, and cooperation, with priority given to the moral principle. The

transition from hostility, confrontation, and separation to unity, harmony, and cooperation is the most important task of evolution in the current stage. Women have to play an important role in this process; they must become aware of their cosmic destiny, reclaim their trampled rights, and introduce the principles of love, harmony, and high spirituality into the world. Therefore, Living Ethics calls the coming epoch the Epoch of Woman.

5. It is impossible to establish a happy and just life on Earth if people remain ignorant and imperfect. Therefore, the establishing of a just social order must necessarily be accompanied by the perfecting of each individual. People must overcome their negative traits, transforming them into positive qualities. The most important task on this path is to get rid of the self, of egoism (in all of its forms) and to affirm and develop selflessness and tolerance in interpersonal relationships. For successful improvement there is no need to go off and live in a cave or a monastery, to shut oneself off and retreat from life. Living Ethics affirms an active living position of each member of society. In the process of perfection, a person must do his duty to his family, his people, his country, and all humanity. He must act in the name of the Common Good.

6. Living Ethics proclaims work as the most important means to man's perfection: not forced labor, but voluntary, creative work, physical or mental. Work must be intense but within one's powers. The quality of labor is of paramount significance.

Man's *psychic energy* develops in the process of conscious, purposeful work of a high quality. Living Ethics considers psychic energy the *most primary* energy, which lies at the foundation of the Manifest World. This is the main Creative Force of the Cosmos; it includes all of the basic energies, which are only different forms of it.

Mastery of psychic energy leads to the development of higher forms of consciousness: *emotive knowledge* and *spiritual understanding*, of which intuition and insight are partial manifestations.

Living Ethics shows the *natural* path of development of psychic energy. The natural path is the *path of the heart*, the path of love and work, the path of purified thinking, the development of lofty feelings and thoughts through contact with art and the tireless, sincere striving toward the Light.

7. In order to make progress on the path of perfection it is necessary to overcome ignorance. To do this, one must study continuously. One must know the achievements of past and present culture, become acquainted with the achievements of science, and study the surrounding world and oneself. Study, study, study is one of the basic demands of Living Ethics.

8. Living Ethics is open to all and is not imposed on anyone. Where they are not forbidden, the books of this teaching are sold openly. There are soci-

eties and circles devoted to study of Living Ethics. Anyone who wants to may take part in them. But Living Ethics considers it impermissible to preach, exhort, or impose its point of view. It speaks out decisively against all form of missionary activity. The gates to the Palace of Knowledge are open wide, but the seeker can enter them only by himself.

* * *

Let us consider some of the propositions of Living Ethics in greater detail. The problem of evolution is central. The conception of the evolution of the World, the Cosmos, the Universe as a whole, all the Matter in it and all of its constituent parts, including mankind and each particular individual, is one of the central ontological and moral ideas of Living Ethics. The idea of evolution aimed at the perfection of each individual and the entire surrounding World makes it possible to reveal the meaning of Being. "Why do you live? To know and to perfect oneself. Anything that is obscure does not satisfy us" [5, §230].

As we know, in science the ideas of evolution were established first in the social sphere. Apparently, they were expressed most fully in historical materialism. As for natural science, there the idea of evolution first made its way into biology, touched geology, but the inanimate world as a whole seemed entirely alien to evolution. This applies, first of all, to the Universe. For centuries, the idea of an immutable Universe prevailed (at least in European science). In contrast to the mutable world of terrestrial nature, the Heavens seemed to be a model of immutability, a kingdom of inalterable order existing since Eternity. Starting with Kant, evolutionary ideas seeped into astronomy, but they concerned the origin and evolution of individual objects: the origin of the solar system, the evolution of the stars, and so forth. As for the Universe as a whole, it seemed to be immutable and "indifferent" to any local changes occurring in its particular parts. In the second quarter of the twentieth century, this idea was profoundly altered. "The nineteenth century got rid of the metaphysical tendency in history and biology," wrote A.D. Sakharov. "It fell to the twentieth century to substantiate the evolutionary viewpoint of the world as a whole" [6, p. 76].

A decisive role here was played by the discovery of the fundamental fact that the Universe is expanding and by the appearance of cosmological theories of the evolution of the Universe as a whole. Along with evolutionary ideas in cosmology, synergetics, which arose in the second half of the century, led to the penetration of the idea of evolution into physics, which, for a long time, had been completely alien to such an approach and accepted only the idea of the cycle of matter. The introduction of evolutionary ideas into

physics brought it closer to biology and other disciplines, where these ideas had already won secure status. It turned out that in physics the phenomenon of self-organization can be seen at all levels, from atoms all the way up to galaxies—formations on an astronomical scale. What is more, the process of development can be traced even further. “In principle,” writes G.I. Naan, “we can already represent the evolution of the Universe, including the appearance of life, man, and society, as a unified process of the self-motion, self-organization, and self-complication of matter” [7, p. 269]. L.V. Fesenkova emphasizes the same idea. “The history of the Universe,” she writes, “from the Big Bang to the appearance of mankind appears as a unified process with genetic structural inheritance of various types of evolutionary processes from cosmic to social” [8, p. 35]. Thus, the penetration of evolutionary ideas into a previously alien field of knowledge led to ideas about the universality of the phenomenon of evolution and made it possible to fill out the philosophical idea of development as a fundamental law of the physical world with concrete scientific content. This is one example of how science developed along the lines of the ideas in *Living Ethics*.

As noted above, *Living Ethics* sees the development of the Cosmos as a universal process within the scope of which each phenomenon develops separately as well as a part of the whole. The idea of a limitless Cosmos that is spiritual, intelligent, purposefully and harmoniously arranged, and capable of continuous progressive development, which includes cycles of involution as integral parts of the overall evolutionary process, is a philosophical precondition for comprehending the cosmic evolution of man and mankind. The evolution of the cosmos has no limit in the past or the future. It occurs according to universal laws that do not depend on the will or desire of people. Its meaning consists in the ascent of various forms of life from an imperfect to a perfect state, in the spiritualization of matter, its refinement, and the increase in the frequencies of vibrations. Our planet together with its humanity is one of the intelligent worlds, the diversity of which in the cosmos is limitless. Like any other planet, it is a unique world. The terrestrial world interacts energetically with a variety of cosmic phenomena, astral and planetary systems. In the process of this interaction, the earth evolves and develops. The purpose of its evolution, like the evolution of the whole Cosmos, consists in perfecting terrestrial matter and refining or spiritualizing, it. Each individual and all mankind act as subjects of terrestrial evolution. Mankind is a natural part of the terrestrial world. It exists and develops in energetic unity with the Earth and mediates the Earth’s energetic exchange with the Cosmos. Therefore, mankind and each individual is charged with a very critical responsibility: following the path of self-perfection, to spiritualize oneself, nature, and society. In the present stage, the most impor-

tant task of mankind is to become aware of its responsibility for the fate of individual people, society, nature, and the whole planet. By progressing successfully along the path of evolution and building his life in harmony with cosmic laws, man can be transformed from an object of Cosmic evolution into an active and conscious subject of it. Then the opportunity to influence consciously the course of Cosmic evolution and to participate consciously in the construction of the Universe will open up before him.

From the standpoint of Living Ethics, man is immortal in spirit (i.e., in the higher forms of his consciousness). Immortality is understood as a state of *uninterruptible consciousness*. Each individual can attain this state by means of persistent labor and love, by means of the heart, as we said earlier. This interpretation of human evolution gives human life a profound meaning and motivates people to affirm culture, beauty, and love everywhere.

One of the pillars of cosmic evolution is the community. It is built on the basis of unification and cooperation. The idea of community stems from the very essence of Cosmic evolution, for unification embodies the mechanism of evolutionary development. In human society, unification is possible only on the basis of collaboration or cooperation. People have an objective need for cooperation, since man carries within himself a delicate energistic (spiritual) component of the Cosmos that unites him with all the phenomena of being. Therefore, the community is embodied in the very nature of man and is understood in the broadest sense as cooperation with all mankind, all worlds, and the whole Cosmos. This cooperation is realized through interaction between people and between man and the cosmos. So community involves each individual and mankind in Cosmic evolution.

The other pillar of evolution is Culture. In Living Ethics, Culture is treated as a self-organizing system of the Spirit connected with man's delicate energistic (spiritual) component. It is precisely the energistic nature of Culture that explains why Culture is the worship of Light, for Light (with a capital "L") is the finest spiritual energy by which man carries on an exchange with the highest spheres of the Cosmos. Moreover, beauty and love, which also support Cosmic evolution, originate in the space of culture.

People participate *consciously* in Cosmic evolution with the help of a spiritual Teacher who helps them progress toward perfection and ascend the spiral of Cosmic evolution.

Within the framework of the dialectical-materialist paradigm, man and society are seen primarily in interaction with nature that is mediated by material production. From this point of view, all essential changes in social development and the life of people are brought about by changes in the mode of production. While the natural prerequisites for the development of society and human existence are defined as only secondary, the cosmic factors of

their evolution are not taken into account at all. The new worldview gives man a cosmic outlook on the world in which every phenomenon of nature, history, and human life is seen as an aspect of a limitless cosmic evolution. The cosmic view of all of the phenomena and processes of the World Order makes it possible to draw man's consciousness out of the narrow confines of his personal, family, national, and planetary world into the infinite expanse of the Cosmos, but only if man unflaggingly fulfills his earthly duty. This approach organically links the finite phenomena of being with their infinite transformations in the past and the future. Within the framework of the evolutionary worldview of Living Ethics, human history, social processes, and man himself are examined in relation to the nature of their interaction with the Cosmos on the basis of universal cosmic laws.

As noted above, in its understanding of the world and man, Living Ethics relies on the scientific approach, which assumes that all the phenomena of the Universe can be scientifically explained, if not now, then in the future. And if some phenomena that we presently encounter do not lend themselves to scientific explanation, then in the future they will certainly be scientifically interpreted and their essence will be revealed in the process of knowledge. In this context, the views of representatives of traditional science and philosophy, which restrict the possibilities of knowledge to the physical world, look methodologically obsolete. Therefore, Living Ethics emphasizes that "knowledge is above everything. Anyone who contributes a particle of knowledge is already a benefactor of mankind. Anyone who collects sparks of knowledge will be a bearer of Light. Let us learn to guard each step of scientific learning. To neglect science is to sink into darkness" [9, vol. 3, p. 624].

On the basis of the idea of the essential Unity of the World, the energistic worldview of Living Ethics sees all of the phenomena of being as both spiritual and material. According to Living Ethics, Spirit and Matter, being the underlying Principles of the manifest World, cannot exist in themselves in a pure form. Spirit (breath, breathing, movement) can be manifested only through the cover of Matter and the Matter of the manifest World cannot exist without Movement (Breathing) and Spirit. At the beginning of each cycle of manifestation, the interaction of Fire (Spirit) with Unmanifest Precognetic Matter (or Prefiery Substance) gives rise to the Prime Fiery Substance, Spiritualized Matter, or *Spirit-matter*. This living, spiritualized Substance, fertilized by Fire, is neither Spirit nor Matter but their Unity or Synthesis. Everything that exists in the manifest World originates as a result of the subsequent differentiation, complication, and transformation of the Prime Fiery Substance (*Spirit-matter*). All forms of the Cosmos, from the coarsest and densest to the finest, are only granules of this Substance.

The matter studied by contemporary science corresponds to the physical level of Spirit-matter. Above it (on the scale of refinement and vibrations) are innumerable gradations of finer levels of Spirit-matter. Each higher stage is spirit in relation to the one below it. *Spirit is sublimated matter and matter is crystallized spirit.*

This view of the World Order is qualitatively different from the traditional materialistic worldview, which interprets phenomena of the spiritual order as opposed to the material order. Such an understanding of the world has a number of negative conceptual and methodological consequences. One of them is that the World Order is artificially split into a material and a spiritual sphere. In the methodology of scientific knowledge (psychology, physiology, medicine, etc.), this approach is oriented toward the investigation of physical and spiritual phenomena as having different natures. Such an approach forecloses any possibilities of a true understanding of the phenomena of the natural and social world, while the energistic worldview allows us to overcome these difficulties. According to Living Ethics, the spiritual and the material are not counterposed to each other as two opposites, but possess the same energistic or, what is the same thing, physical nature. "In actions and in thinking we cannot separate ourselves from matter. We turn to higher layers or coarser types of the same matter. We can show these interrelations scientifically. We can also demonstrate scientifically how the quality of our thinking acts on matter" [17, §101]. In our opinion, the conception of the energistic unity of Spirit and Matter is a qualitative breakthrough in the development of a philosophical and scientific worldview, since it does away with the contrived and artificial division between spiritual and physical phenomena. Thus, the energistic worldview of Living Ethics endows materialism with a universal character and analyzes within its limits all the phenomena of the World Order. "We must substantiate materialism to such an extent that all the scientific achievements of our time could be constructively included in the concept of spiritualized materialism" [9, vol. 1, p. 286].

In Living Ethics, society, like man, is seen as part of the Cosmos and the determinants of the concrete historical trends of social development, besides all the other factors, are primarily cosmic causes. In this regard, the historical development of society is interpreted as a stage of limitless cosmic evolution, within which society must achieve a certain spiritual perfection and then move on to a higher rung of cosmic evolution.

According to the teaching of Living Ethics, the Cosmos is multidimensional in its structure. It consists of the terrestrial world and an infinite diversity of other levels of being consisting of fine matter in which intelligent worlds exist. Along with the relative independence of each of these worlds, their evolution is dominated by a tendency towards unity. It manifests itself

by virtue of the fact that all worlds and levels of being have a common source of origin: the primordial energy from which arises everything that exists. It is this primordial energy (which is called psychic energy in *Living Ethics*) that makes matter spiritual. By means of it man also realizes himself as a spiritual entity. Assimilating this energy from the surrounding world, transforming it in accordance with the direction of his thoughts, feelings, and actions, man radiates into space the energy that he has processed, thereby participating in the cosmic metabolism. But in order for this interaction to be harmonious, people have to know what psychic energy is, what significance it has for their life and the evolution of the cosmos, and how it can be mastered. “We not only need to recognize that there is no void, but also to understand the life that surrounds us. An understanding of connecting and mutually nourishing life will show how omnipresent psychic energy is” [9, vol. 3, p. 243].

There is good reason for calling *Living Ethics* an energistic worldview. From the standpoint of this worldview, the evolution of man, society and nature is accomplished thanks to psychic energy. In connection with this, E.I. Roerich writes that “all energies, all elements come from one primordial energy or from a single element—Fire; that is why we talk about the *Unity* of all things, about a *Single Principle* from which the *Universe* originated” [10, p. 434]. Primordial energy is inexhaustible in its reserves and diverse in its forms. In relation to man, it is neutral, neither good nor evil. It is man who can use it for good or evil.

From the point of view of traditional philosophy, man who represents a combination of the biological and social, lives in the physical world only once and departs into nonbeing with the death of his physical body. Hence the meaning of a man’s life, in its optimal interpretation, is to realize within the bounds of his one lifetime his potential in certain cultural phenomena. This is a very noble task, but accomplishing it does not give a thoughtful man peace, for it does not link finite human life with eternity and, therefore, does not imbue it with true meaning. For most people, such an understanding of man justifies the widely held principle of living: since you live only once, get all you can out of life. In dealing with the problem of immortality, *Living Ethics* starts from the idea that man is multidimensional. According to this teaching, man consists of a dense, physical body and a whole set of fine bodies produced by his feelings, thoughts, and spiritual inclinations—by everything that forms man’s consciousness. Contemporary science is now close to studying the delicate material essence of life and of man. Thus, A.P. Dubrov and V.N. Pushkin, having analyzed a considerable volume of theoretical and experimental results, came to the conclusion that the human psyche and consciousness are energistic-informational phenomena [11] and the well-known Novosibirsk scientist, V.P. Kaznacheev, formulated a hypothesis about

the possible existence not only of protein-nucleic, but also of field or energistic-informational forms of life [12]. E.M. Egorova [13] recently presented a serious analysis of the current state of the problem of fine-energistic properties of life. "To become aware of the action of spiritual forces we must apply the scientific approach to the study of the causes of the phenomena of life, and we attain this awareness by formulating a *new* scientific worldview. Let me add that the role of science in transforming human consciousness can be especially important in our day, since only a scientifically grounded understanding of the higher components of man and living nature can counteract the wave of fanaticism, ignorance, superstition and other ill-begotten products of limited consciousness" [13, p. 61].

According to Living Ethics, an individual's psychic and physical condition is determined to a significant extent by how harmoniously he interacts with the higher energistic structures of the Cosmos. There is a law: the more developed a person is spiritually and the broader his view of the world, the more freely and naturally he assimilates the finer spiritual energies of the Cosmos. These premises are particularly timely now, when many people have become interested in the energistic or spiritual aspect of their existence. In response to this burst of interest, a very diverse literature has appeared in which various procedures for the mechanical development of man's psychic capacities are proposed. From the standpoint of Living Ethics, this approach is profoundly mistaken and pernicious, since it leads to very serious consequences for people's psychic condition and health. Fine-energistic processes must develop freely and naturally; they do not tolerate coercive, willful interference. Therefore, the most effective and safest approach to spiritual perfection is an orientation towards cultural and moral values and their affirmation in one's everyday life.

The level of a person's spirituality is determined by the level of development of his consciousness. The interpretation of consciousness in Living Ethics brings scientific research and philosophical reflection into a totally new system of coordinates. While from the standpoint of traditional science and philosophy, consciousness is a function of the human brain, can exist only on the basis of the brain, and is completely lost when a person dies, Living Ethics understands consciousness to be based on the infinite Cosmos with its energistic structures. Consciousness is a necessary quality of the Cosmos and is not necessarily connected with the brain. It exists in each phenomenon to the extent to which spirituality or psychic energy is present in it. In the cosmos, consciousness exists in an infinite variety of forms each of which is unique in its properties. The structure of human consciousness consists of two interrelated modes: present consciousness, which is embodied in one's everyday thoughts, and deep consciousness, which is connected

with the higher energistic fields of the Cosmos. A person's deep consciousness brings to the surface of his present consciousness knowledge that is extremely valuable and important for him and humanity. A necessary condition for the harmonious development of one's consciousness is one's interaction with the deep consciousness of the Cosmos. The development of a person's consciousness is a process of increasing penetration into the meaning of being, the meaning of one's own life, and the essence of things.

Traditional scientific knowledge, which develops for the most part within the bounds of rationalistic thought, is proving to be incapable of solving many problems of man's existence, starting with philosophical and ending with social problems. Nevertheless, the majority of scientists have a distinctive superiority complex regarding knowledge as compared to other forms of culture (art, religion, philosophy) and a monopoly complex regarding the interpretation of new problems and phenomena of human knowledge. Aside from all other factors, these complexes deprive scientists of opportunities to investigate phenomena that are unknown to them and worldviews that are not part of their customary thinking. Therefore, in order to develop, mankind needs some other ways and forms of scientific knowledge that go beyond the bounds of purely rationalistic thinking. One of them, as we have pointed out, is the spiritualization of science. The question here is how is scientific knowledge grounded philosophically. If its goals are limited by the traditional materialistic paradigm, then there is no way out of the closed circle of thought-limiting stereotypes that block science from the path to spirituality. Science will be spiritualized when it investigates the worlds of other dimensions and states of matter. For this to happen there must be not only a qualitative transformation of the traditional scientific paradigm, but also a reassessment of the potentialities of religion and art in understanding the world and man. However, religion, which primarily emphasizes the external, confessional forms of its existence (rituals, cults, etc.) and has moved away from the spirit of religious teachings, will never accomplish this task. Such religion will recede into the past. Its place will be taken by a spiritual knowledge of the world that comes from a synthesis of religion and science. The means for this synthesis will be the spiritual intuition of scientists, but scientists with a new worldview. Thus, in art, religion, and science "there is a basis that in the future will form their synthesis. In art it consists of the works of true art, in religion, of the spiritual experience of religious scholars, and in science, of the intuitive and logical orientation toward synthesis and the acceptance of the reality of the invisible world by the most spiritually developed scientists. It is precisely this last circumstance that will make it possible for science to restore the connection with the Higher Realm, which it lost over the centuries" [14]. Once it has chosen the path of synthesis, mankind

will break through to new vistas in comprehending the paths of its cosmic evolution.

Among the laws of the Cosmos, the leading one, according to Living Ethics, is the law of unity. In essence it says that each phenomenon of natural, social, and spiritual being is viable only to the extent to which it is interrelated with the World Order through hierarchical and horizontal connections. Man builds his life in conformity with the law of unity and other laws of the cosmos if he preserves his spiritual purity by affirming spiritual values in his life and exchanging energy with the Higher Realm. In this way, man interacts with something more perfect and beautiful. A righteous life among people, which is characterized mainly by and results in selfless, active love, is a necessary condition for harmonious interaction. Someone who elevates his personal interests into a cult and sets out on the path of egoism is incapable of such love and cannot be inspired by the interests of the Common Good. He destroys his spiritual purity and deviates from the law of unity. Then his spiritual world becomes deformed and fragmented. Culture or the striving toward Light helps one to avoid this spiritual condition.

* * *

So, the philosophy of Living Ethics contains the philosophical basis for a breakthrough to a new mode of thought, since it solves many philosophical problems in a new way. A prerequisite for such a solution is the acceptance of the objective laws of the World Order, which are of a universal nature and govern its evolution. The basic principles and approaches of Living Ethics to solving philosophical problems become increasingly credible when we turn to the data of contemporary science, which penetrates more and more into the new, "invisible" reality and gropes for ways to study it. All of this indicates that an adequate comprehension of the energistic worldview of Living Ethics is possible only if we analyze it thoroughly and systematically. But to do so we have to overcome the stereotypes of the old way of thinking that interfere with a proper understanding of the basic principles and problems of Living Ethics in their synthetic unity and development. The Roerichs, who attained the peak of world science, philosophy, and culture, synthesized the energistic worldview and thereby made the breakthrough to the new mode of thought. They showed that mankind is entering a new epoch in its development, when it is vitally necessary for each person to expand his consciousness and look at himself and the surrounding World in a new way. The new view of the World Order will include, along with the terrestrial, physical world, other worlds of fine matter (worlds of other dimensions), and reveal the unity of all worlds on the basis of the common laws of their evolution.

Science will prove that all phenomena of the World Order are of the same energetic nature. This worldview will help man to determine his true role in the evolution of the Universe. Man will become a conscious, active agent of cosmic evolution and will interact harmoniously with the world. The meaning of human life will lie in spiritual perfection and the spiritualization of his own nature, society, and the planet that he inhabits.

Mankind can attain the new mode of thought if people begin to overcome the stereotypes of the old mode of thought and strive toward the heights of the new worldview. The fate of Russia is also viewed from this perspective. "Russia's road to its own Temple, to the true New World, in the evolutionary interpretation of this word, runs not through illusory foreign goods, but through our hearts and souls. What the new mode of thought and evolution demand of us now is a leap that spiritualizes the matter of our life and thereby moves mankind forward. Russia can and must make this leap" [15, p. 186].

Wrong interpretation or conscious distortion?

Like any profound philosophical teaching, Living Ethics contains several layers of knowledge. It requires serious study, analysis, and understanding. Different approaches, assessments, and interpretations are possible here. Creative scientific discussions are needed. But two conditions that are necessary for any scientific discussion must be fulfilled without fail: there must be knowledge of the subject under discussion and a conscientious objective analysis. Unfortunately, the mentioned article by Filatov and Lunkin does not satisfy these requirements.

First of all, the authors have a very superficial acquaintance with the teaching they discuss. They judge Living Ethics by the statements of people who call themselves its followers and hardly ever use primary sources. And where they do (for example, on page 69, where the authors refer to the book *Community* [Obshchina]), they give a very distorted exposition. We will cite some examples of such distortions below. In addition to direct distortion, the authors profane the ideas of Living Ethics and give them a simplified interpretation. What is the point, for example, of their discussion of the "magnet-transformer" (p. 67) or their eschatological digressions (p. 68)? We can see to what extent the authors have mastered the doctrine of Living Ethics from the following statement: "The main thing in Roerichianity [no doubt the authors themselves made up this term—L.G., V.F.] is to make all this clear and explain it, to preserve the concept of esoteric knowledge but, at the same time, to make it accessible to everyone" (p. 66). Thus, the main thing in Living Ethics, from the authors' point of view, is not its contents, but its form—the striving to make it accessible. This is a very peculiar interpreta-

tion of the essence of a philosophical teaching. Without polemicizing with the authors on this issue, we will simply note that Living Ethics, in general, does not attach decisive significance to book knowledge. The main thing for it is the doctrine of the heart. One may not agree with Living Ethics on this, but one cannot be unaware of it. Every neophyte of Living Ethics knows this. The article pays a great deal of attention to the Roerichs' Central Asian expedition and yet the authors do not consider either the artistic or the scientific results of the expedition. They are only interested in the political intrigues surrounding the expedition, which are played up in some publications of the mass media. The authors date the most important event of the expedition, the Roerichs' arrival in Moscow, in 1925 (they arrived in 1926). One might think that this was a random error if similar "inaccuracies" did not recur throughout the article.

How can one explain such incompetence on the authors' part? Speaking of the goal of their research, they claim that they have tried "to fill the gap" in the analysis of the Roerichs' teaching and the Roerich movement, "based not only on the analysis of the writings of the Roerichs and their followers, but also on numerous interviews," which they conducted "with the movement's activists in various cities of Russia in 1996–99" (p. 64). Judging from the article's content, they apparently used the opinion-survey method for the most part. While this method of journalistic investigation may be used, with certain qualifications, in a sociological analysis of a social movement, it is completely unacceptable in an analysis of a philosophical doctrine. What conclusions did the authors reach on the basis of their method and their analysis?

Throughout the article, they dwell on the idea that Living Ethics, the rigorously formulated teaching of the Roerichs, is supposedly a religious doctrine. However, no one who has studied this teaching seriously has any doubt that Living Ethics is quite remote from religion. We have already talked about the relation of Living Ethics to science and religion. Yes, Living Ethics (like many other philosophical teachings, by the way) touches on such questions as immortality, the meaning of life, and moral problems, which are usually assigned to the religious sphere. But this is no reason to identify it with religion. The difference between science and religion and between philosophy and religion is determined not by their problematic but by the methods that are used to examine the given problems. Living Ethics uses the scientific method. It includes neither faith in the supernatural (everything is natural; there are only things that are known and things that are not yet known), nor ritual, nor cultic rites. A characteristic feature of religious teachings is blind acceptance of doctrine, while Living Ethics proclaims spiritual freedom, freedom of creativity, and recognizes only one authority, the authority of Knowl-

edge. It calls upon people to learn, to study the surrounding world and themselves, to expand their horizons and their consciousness, and to overcome ignorance. As we noted above, experiential knowledge is of fundamental importance here. Living Ethics recognizes that religion has played an important positive role in the history of human society; however, it assigns the main role in the current stage to science.

According to the authors of the article, the evidence for the “religiosity” of Living Ethics consists of the fact that many followers of the teaching consider themselves to belong to the Orthodox tradition. In fact, the whole Roerich family was close to the Orthodox tradition. Nikolai Konstantinovich Roerich depicted ancient Russian churches in his paintings and did mural paintings in Orthodox cathedrals. The entire family especially revered the Russian saints Sergius of Radonezh and Seraphim of Sarov and was closely linked with Ioann of Kronstadt. The last of the Roerichs, Sviatoslav Nikolaevich, asked in his will to be buried according to the Orthodox rite in St. Petersburg. Unfortunately, his wish was not fulfilled. Many followers of Living Ethics are believers and, as the article rightly notes, many of them have Orthodox icons in their homes. But this does not at all mean that Living Ethics should be classified as a religion. Many physicists, including some prominent ones, were (and still are) believers, but no one infers from this that the theories that they construct are religious and even less that physics is a religion.

It is not only wrong, in principle, to identify Living Ethics with religion, but there are also far-reaching consequences. We know that it was precisely the listing of Living Ethics as a religion by the Russian Orthodox Church in 1994 that provided its theologians with a “justification” to launch unprecedented attacks on Living Ethics and its followers.

Filatov and Lunkin not only declare Living Ethics to be a religion, they even impute religious *omnivorosity* to it (p. 64). In reality, (erroneously or intentionally) they confuse omnivorosity with tolerance. Yes, Living Ethics has great tolerance for all other philosophical and religious-philosophical teachings, and for all world religions. But tolerance does not mean omnivorosity just as belief in one’s ideas does not mean fanaticism. If it is not to turn into fanaticism, belief must be combined with tolerance. And tolerance, if it is not to turn into omnivorosity, must be combined with belief. The authors clearly do not take this dialectic into account. Living Ethics is tolerant of other conceptions; it does not impose its own point of view on anyone, but it does have a firm position of its own.

One more “delusion” of the authors is connected with the fact that they characterize Living Ethics as a *syncretic* teaching (p. 65). In accusing the Roerichs of syncretism, the authors either do not grasp the difference be-

tween “synthetic” and “syncretic,” or they are intentionally trying to disparage the Roerichs and their teaching.

We must particularly note the accusation that N.K. Roerich was a Freemason. “It is not known,” write the authors of the article in question, “whether N. Roerich himself was involved in spiritualism, but there were materials at least in the Russian press based on KGB archives about his belonging to Freemasonry” (p. 66). This is a very indicative sentence; it is characteristic of the authors’ style. Yes, they honestly admit that they do not know if N.K. Roerich was involved in spiritualism. Then why mention it? Only to cast a shadow on the great cultural figure. Now, regarding his being a Freemason, the authors never specify what press or archives they are talking about. Furthermore, since when is testimony in the press a basis for scientific work (and the article in question does claim to be scientific)? Did the authors check the reliability of the data to which they refer? We know otherwise.

The authors often refer to O. Shishkin’s publications. Some of them have already been assessed by a court. On 18 January 1996, the Tver Intermunicipal (District) Court of the Central Administrative Division of Moscow ruled in a suit filed by the International Roerich Center that a number of statements contained in Shishkin’s publications in the newspaper *Segodnia*, no. 208 of 19 October 1994 and no. 222 of 19 November 1994, did not correspond to the facts. Are the authors ignorant of this or are they pretending to be ignorant?

The International Roerich Center is presently checking the reliability of Shishkin’s publications to which the authors are so fond of referring. His version of events is set forth most fully in his book *Battle for the Himalayas. NKVD: Magic and Espionage* [Bitva za Gimalai. NKVD: magiia i shpionazh] (Moscow, 1999). Shishkin mentions a great many names and has many references to archival documents and this makes an impression even on an experienced reader. However, checking has shown that either the quotations are, to put it mildly, inaccurate or the references indicate the wrong source or the documents referred to are about something else. On the whole, the question is extremely muddled, to conceal the truth as much as possible. The scope of this article does not permit us to go into details. Let us confine ourselves to only a few examples. On pages 174–75, Shishkin talks about an agent of the OGPU, Azis Nialo, who warned the Moscow authorities that the Hindu Kush mountain ranges were not an insurmountable barrier to the British forces that were concentrated on the approaches to the Hindu Kush. Quoting, as far as we can tell from the text, the agent’s dispatch, Shishkin refers to the archive of the Russian Center for the Preservation and Study of Documents of Recent History [RTsKhIDNI] (now known as the Russian State Archive of Sociopolitical History [RGASPI]), fond 532, list 6, file 25, sheet

64. What is this document? It is a manuscript stored in RGASPI in the collection of the editorial office of the journal *The Revolutionary East at the Stalin Communist University* [Revoliutsionnyi Vostok pri Kommunisticheskom universitete im. Stalina]. The manuscript, which is 81 pages long, is titled *Outlines of the History of the Workers of Pamir* [Ocherk po istorii trudiashchikhsia Pamira], and its author is Azis Nialo. But what does this have to do with Roerich? It turns out that the same information, according to Shishkin, was contained in notes from N.K. Roerich's diary that he sent (so we assume; nothing specifically is said about this) to the Soviet consulate in Hsin-yang when the expedition was arrested by Chinese authorities. In another place (pp. 236–37), Shishkin reports on a meeting of the Soviet consul in Mongolia, Korolev, with the head of the United Labor Fraternity, A.V. Barchenko, who supposedly handed him petitions addressed to the Buryat scholar Gombodzhap Tsybikov and Nikolai Roerich. Shishkin gives a brief excerpt from Barchenko's letter to Tsybikov with a reference to an archival document. But there is nothing about Roerich in this document (RGAB, fund 1 (P), list 1, file 966, sheet 20). And Shishkin does not give any other references. On page 264, Shishkin reports on a meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik) on 11 February 1926. As Shishkin tells it, at this session the People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs G.V. Chicherin gave a report "On Tibet" and talked about "secret contacts of the Soviet government with the mountain kingdom." A reference is given to the RTsKhIDNI archive, fund 17, list 3, file 546. This document actually does concern a meeting of the Politburo on 11 February 1926 and Chicherin actually did give a report at this meeting. But nothing was said about Tibet, only about Switzerland and other European countries. We could go on with such examples.

Why do the authors of the article not pay attention to all these facts; why do they have blind faith in newspaper publications? Here we come to the second line of attack on the Roerichs and their teaching. If the first myth claims that the Roerichs' teaching is a religion, then the second myth, which the authors stubbornly push, is that the Roerichs' teaching has an *ideological orientation*. There is no need to talk about the fact that Living Ethics, a scientific-philosophical synthesis about the World Order, is not and cannot be ideological. Nevertheless, the authors try to link it precisely with Soviet ideology. "Not only the essence of the Roerichs' teaching, but also its history," they write, "facilitated the creation of a symbiosis of 'Sovietness' and 'Roerichianity'" (p. 70). And the term "Sovietness" is not precisely defined. At the beginning of the article, speaking about Soviet ideology, the authors tie it with the socialist idea, faith in the building of a bright and just future, pride in the successes of one's country, and acceptance of the rational justifi-

cation for the sacrifices made on the altar of victory (p. 63). To this we can add the ideas of altruism, community, the Common Good, and the rejection of the cult of egoism, profit, violence, and spiritlessness. All of this actually belongs to the Roerichs' teaching. But the ideas of "Sovietness," as the authors note, were closely linked with a repressive political regime in our country. And here the authors' attempt to make it look as if the Roerichs approved of and justified this regime is nothing less than bewildering. Yes, in spite of the perversions of the Stalin regime, the Roerichs did continue to believe in the bright future of our Fatherland, not because they approved of that regime, but because they thought on a completely different time scale. They understood very well that all of this would pass and the country would enter the future transformed.

What kind of collaboration with the regime can one talk about if Nikolai Konstantinovich and Elena Ivanovna Roerich were not even permitted to return to their homeland, their works were banned, and their followers were arrested. Even in post-Stalinist times (when the repressions were not as sweeping) their followers were expelled from the party and fired from their jobs. T.I. Murashkina cites an interesting document from the KGB archive published in the newspaper *Argumenty i fakty*. "The investigation of Soviet citizens who had unofficial contacts with the citizen of India—the artist Sviatoslav Roerich during his stay in the USSR—has been completed. Twelve contacts are recorded. In connection with the interest shown on the part of certain antisocial elements in the philosophical works of the artist Roerich, we have received analytic materials from agent Sergeeva that expose the true nature of the artist's worldview and demonstrate the falsity of his views" [16, p. 11].

Despite all this, the authors keep on repeating and inflate the myths about the Roerichs' collaboration with "Yezhov's NKVD" (p. 73), that the Roerichs were Bolshevik agents, agents of the Comintern (p. 69), and so on. We know that the special services collected materials on many prominent figures of Russian science and culture. In 1993, at the International Social-Sciences Conference devoted to Living Ethics, in the presence of the public, press, and television, representatives of the Foreign Intelligence Service of the Russian Federation turned over N.K. Roerich's materials to the International Roerich Center. They include Roerich's will, documents from the Central Asian expedition, Roerich's letters, letters to him, and denunciations of him. These materials and the fact that they were turned over to a public organization prove that N.K. Roerich had no connection with the intelligence services. To what end did the authors stubbornly repeat these inventions?

Let us give one more excerpt from their article. "The pathos of the revolu-

tionary transformation of the world and construction of an authoritarian, hierarchical (?) state was close to them [the Roerichs—L.G., V.F.]. The first book on the teachings of Agni Yoga, written in 1924–25, was *Community*, which is completely devoted to the conditions for building a new society with a strict hierarchical structure. In *Community*, Marx and Lenin are called ‘teachers’ [apparently, the authors consider this a terrible crime!—L.G., V.F.]. In the ideal state described by E. Roerich, everyone must labor incessantly, obeying the instructions of the ‘teachers.’ In this ideal state there will be no recreation (!), and books will be carefully selected (?). Children will be brought up outside the family (?) according to a program approved by the authorities (?)” (p. 69). Is this not an awful picture of a semifascist state, which can frighten a normal, cultured individual? Apparently, that is what the authors are counting on. But the fact is that the book *Community* contains nothing of the kind. Where did the authors get this? Either they did not read *Community* or they are intentionally engaging in disinformation. We will try to get to the bottom of this. *Community* was not the first book of Living Ethics, but the third. But the authors may be excused for one more mistake among many others. Let us deal with the essential issue.

We have already noted that in Living Ethics work is considered a very important means to personal perfection. But this refers to creative work, not forced work that people supposedly perform in obedience to the instructions of teachers. Here is what *Community* states about this:

The community is often accused of coercion against personal freedom. This accusation is applicable to a system based on compromise, but not to the community. In the conscious community there is a place for all kinds of work. Everyone can choose the work they want, for every work is refined by new achievements. . . . Let us give an example of Our Community. Our Friend the chemist V. wants to work on a new way of splitting rays—no one prevents him from doing so. Our Friend K. wants to improve the radio by using new light waves [this was written long before the invention of lasers and optical cables—L.G., V.F.]—no one prevents him from doing so. Our Sister P. works on a social problem in a neighboring country—no one prevents her from doing so. Our Sister Iu. works in agriculture and invents many implements—no one prevents her from doing so. Sister O. loves medicinal plants and educational issues—no one interferes with her. Brother Kh. has set up a wonderful loom and is also working on the transformation of communities. Brother M. is doing historical research. Our shoemaker is writing remarkable philosophical treatises. Everyone resolutely finds the work that suits them and can change it at will [17, §202].

And here is what *Community* has to say about coercive methods of management. We quote from the Mongolian edition.

Today's industry and all material production is so unbalanced quantitatively and qualitatively that for now it rules out the possibility of communist distribution of things. . . . It is of no use to take things away by force and thus create a passion for junk. The main thing is to abolish the ownership of land and inheritance and to conduct a well-planned educational campaign against the degrading influence of property. [18, pt. 3, III, 9]

"Any coercion," it says in the book, "is condemned. Forced slavery, forced marriage, forced labor provoke indignation and condemnation. But of all coercion, the most criminal and hideous is the forced commune" [18, pt. 3, II, 3]. To this we can add E.I. Roerich's interpretation of freedom and equality. "Of course," she wrote, "only the undeveloped part [of the people] understands freedom as willfulness and equality as a leveling of abilities. But basic social equality must be accomplished. Every citizen of a country is equal before the law, and only his abilities determine his place in social labor and construction" [2, vol. 2, p. 514]. And here is what S.N. Roerich had to say: "Living Ethics protests against any attempts to reduce man to the level of a blind tool devoid of inner moral support, conscience, and responsibility to himself, to others, and to all mankind" [16, p. 7].

The Mongolian edition of *Community* actually does talk about Marx and Lenin, and Lenin is in fact called a teacher. Apparently, this fact alone is sufficient for Filatov and Lunkin to cast a shadow on the Roerichs and their teaching. But one cannot go against historical facts. Like it or not, but at the time when *Community* was written Lenin really was a great leader in the eyes of peoples of the East. Here is what Jawaharlal Nehru wrote about this. "In Central Asia, even today, four legendary figures of great conquerors are remembered: Sikander (Alexander), Sultan Mahmud, Genghis Khan, and Tamur. To these four must be added now a fifth, another type of person, not a warrior but a conqueror in a different realm, round whose name legend has clearly gathered—Lenin" [19, p. 242]. "In our day," Nehru writes in the same book, "Lenin was a monster and a brigand to many English statesmen of high repute; yet millions have considered him as a savior and the greatest man of the age" [19, p. 308].

It is not clear where the authors got the idea that the way of life described in *Community* would exclude recreation and that children would be raised outside the family according to a program approved by the authorities. Again, we must surmise that either they did not read *Community* or they are engaging in deliberate disinformation. Let us leave this to their conscience. But *Community* actually does talk about school education. Let us give one excerpt.

School programs must be reviewed and the policy of reliable learning must be reinforced. Superstition drives people into crevices of horror. The

rectification of school thinking must be done quickly; otherwise, yet another generation of ignorant people will disgrace the planet. Natural science needs to be reinforced, recognizing the meaning of the term. Biology, astrophysics, and chemistry will attract the attention of the youngest child's brain. Give children the opportunity to think! [17, §157]

As we can see, the position that the authors ascribe to *Community* is so distorted as to be unrecognizable. Here is another example from an entirely different field. In the culture of many peoples of the world there is a myth about a fallen angel. Various religions and philosophical teachings give an interpretation of this myth. Living Ethics gives its own interpretation. Here is how Filatov and Lunkin characterize it. "Besides that," they write, "Lucifer, who is Satan in Agni Yoga, strangely represents one of the highest ranks of the hierarchy and his name was 'usurped by ignorant priests'" (p. 68). This quotation seems to imply that Living Ethics recognizes Satan as one of the highest hierarchs. From there it is but a short step to accusations of Satanism. The authors themselves do not make this accusation, they only make an unambiguous hint, leaving it to Deacon Kuraev, the author of the book *Satanism for the Intelligentsia* [Satanizm dlia intelligentsii], to dot the "i." In the cited excerpt, four words appear in quotation marks. The authors refer to E.I. Roerich's letter of 25 May 1938 as if to confirm that such an interpretation actually belongs to Living Ethics. Let us locate the place in the letter. "Of course," Roerich writes, "that Lucifer [that who he was *before the fall*—L.G., V.F.] fully lived up to the name given him and, probably, deeply regrets that such a beautiful name in later times was usurped by ignorant priests for his shadow or Antipode" [10, p. 289]. Thus, Roerich draws a clear line between Lucifer as the Light-bearing Angel before the fall and Satan as what he became after the fall. Later Roerich turns attention to the fact that the priests, in their ignorance, began to call Satan by the light-bearing name of Lucifer. That is what she is talking about. The authors, Filatov and Lunkin, have completely distorted Roerich's meaning and have provided occasion for accusing Living Ethics of Satanism.

This proves once again that the article is part of a campaign to discredit the Roerichs and their scientific, philosophical, cultural, and spiritual legacy.

In conclusion, let us dwell briefly on the method of analysis of the Roerich movement used in the article in question. The authors rightly note that the Roerich movement is quite a noticeable phenomenon in the cultural life of Russia in the last decade. In fact, in spite of all the external and internal obstacles, contradictions, and impediments, it continues to develop and grow stronger. In our time of unprecedented unscrupulousness, baseness, violence, and the cult of money, the Roerich movement, without advertising and pointless noise, is conducting, quietly and selflessly, cul-

tural-educational work, publishing newspapers, journals and books, putting out videos, and holding scientific seminars and conferences. Certain circles are very displeased and irritated by this cultural and spiritual work, as they are by everything that will not fit their philistine framework. Hence the persecution, slander, and distortion not only of the ideas of Living Ethics, but also of the Roerich movement in our country.

Of course, the Roerich movement, like any mass movement in the process of formation, has its difficulties and problems. And its followers are well aware of them (see, for example, the discussion of the problems of the Roerich movement in the journal *Novaia epokha* (2000, no. 1/24). However, even here the authors remain true to their principle of slander. Rightly noting the movement's diverse composition, for some reason they picked out the most odious examples to characterize it: one person believes that he is the incarnation of Confucius, another organizes religious processions under communist slogans, someone speaking in the name of the Roerich movement talks about a Jewish–Masonic plot (while certain circles accuse the Roerichs themselves of Jewish Masonry) and so on and so forth. All of this has nothing to do with the Roerich movement, although the members in such groups and organizations deliberately or thoughtlessly cloak themselves in the Roerich name, which is respected throughout the world and in our country. The authors' attempt to link the Roerich movement with the infamous White Brotherhood sect, one of whose leaders, Maria Tsvigun (simply a sick person), believed herself to be the incarnation of E.I. Roerich, is particularly disturbing. In the medical institutions of many countries there are people who call themselves Napoleon, Einstein, and so on. But it has not yet occurred to anyone to judge Bonapartism or the theory of relativity on the basis of this fact.

What problems exist in the Roerich movement, and what worries its participants? In January 2000, a roundtable of representatives of Roerich organizations in Russia and countries of the former USSR was held in Moscow. They talked about the need to intensify the cultural work of the societies. "We cannot allow the approach to teaching of Agni Yoga and our movement to become ideological. . . . We must not allow this. Therefore, there can be no orders, no directives, no strict instructions from above. This must be the creative work of cultured people, but for that we need to raise the level of culture and develop consciousness" (T.I. Murashkina, chairwoman of the International Council of Roerich Organizations [20, p. 20]). Why is it necessary to avoid the ideologization of our doctrine? This question was answered well by O.A. Urozhenko, vice president of the Urals Division of the International League for Protection of Culture, when he said that ideology is "the adaptation of an idea to mass consciousness, to mass culture. And today there is nothing more frightening than mass culture" [20, p. 27]. And here is the

opinion of the chairman of the Roerich Society of Iaroslavl, S.V. Skorodumov: “It is not enough simply to study the Roerich legacy; in doing so we have to travel the Roerich path, as it were; that is, we have to try to become educated people, because the Roerichs were exceptionally highly educated people” [20, p. 30]. This is what really worries the representatives of the Roerich organizations today. But the article discussed here overlooks these problems and digs up repugnant personalities and cooked-up facts.

The Roerich movement includes many representatives of the intelligentsia. It is supported by prominent figures of science, art, and culture. This arouses anxiety in the authors. “In fact, official support and the authority of prominent cultural figures have forced many people to take an interest in the Roerich movement” (p. 71). “Neglected by the government, the staff of museums, libraries, and scientific institutes find consolation in the Roerichs’ works” (p. 73). It seems that all of this is not to the authors’ liking. Do they really want the government to stop neglecting library and museum staff and to forbid them from freely taking up Living Ethics? For some reason, the authors are surprised and perplexed by the intelligentsia’s interest in the Roerichs’ teaching. But without noticing it, they put their finger on the true reason for its great popularity: “Many academics and professors see their commitment to Living Ethics, which finally combines science with spirituality for them, as a way to support culture and expand their horizon” (p. 73).

We know what great significance Nikolai Konstantinovich Roerich attributed to culture and the protection of cultural monuments. This is reflected in the famous Roerich Pact, which laid the foundation for subsequent UN documents on the protection of culture. The authors distort even the Roerichs’ position on culture.

In this situation, we consider it our duty to speak out in defense of the Roerichs and their philosophical and cultural legacy.

References

1. N.A. Berdiaev, *Sud’ba Rossii*. Moscow, 1990.
2. *Pis’ma Eleny Rerikh. 1929–1938*. Riga, 1940.
3. Teiïar de Sharden [Pierre Teilhard de Chardin], *Fenomen cheloveka*. Moscow: Nauka, 1987.
4. N.K. Rerikh [Roerich], *Obitel’ Sveta*. Moscow: MTsR, 1992.
5. *Obshchina*. Riga, 1936.
6. Sakharov, A.D. “Simmetriia Vselennoi,” in *Budushchee nauk*. Moscow: Znanie, 1968, pp. 74–96.
7. G.I. Naan, “K probleme kosmicheskikh tsvivilizatsii,” in *Budushchee nauki*. Moscow: Znanie, 1984.
8. L.V. Fesenkova, “Ideia global’ nogo evoliutsionizma: estestvennonauchnyi, mirovozzrencheskii, akseologicheskii aspekty,” *O sovremennom statuse idei*

global'nogo evoliutsionizma. Moscow: Institut filosofii AN SSSR, 1986, pp. 33–45.

9. *Uchenie Zhivoi Etiki v trekh tomakh*. St. Petersburg, 1993.

10. *Pis'ma Eleny Rerikh. 1932–1955*. Novosibirsk, 1993.

11. A.P. Dubrov and V.N. Pushkin, *Parapsikhologiya i sovremennoe estestvoznaniye*. Moscow, 1989.

12. V.P. Kaznacheev and E.A. Spirin, *Kosmoplanetarnyi fenomen cheloveka: Problema kompleksnogo izucheniia*. Novosibirsk, 1991, p. 114.

13. E.M. Egorova, "Elektromagnitnye polia i zhizn'," *Del'fis*, 1990, no. 4 (20), pp. 60–65; 2000, no. 1 (21), pp. 75–79.

14. L.V. Shaposhnikova, "Nauka i Zhivaia Etika," *Rerikhovie chteniia. Materialy mezhdunarodnoi obshchestvenno-nauchnoi konferentsii*. Moscow, 1997, pp. 27–28.

15. L.V. Shaposhnikova, *Grad Svetlyi*. Moscow, 1998.

16. T.I. Murashkina, "Zashchitim velikie imena Rerikhov i E.P. Blavatskoi," *Novaia Epokha. Problemy. Poiski. Issledovaniia*, 2000, no. 1/24.

17. *Obshchina*. Moscow, 1994.

18. *Obshchina*. Mongol'skoe izdanie. Urga, 1927. This edition was reproduced by several publishing houses in the 1990s. See, for example, *Obshchina*, Gorky: Goretskii Fond Rerikhov, 1991; *Obshchina*, Tallin, 1991.

19. Dzhavakharlal Neru [Jawaharlal Nehru], *Otkrytie Indii*. Moscow, 1955.

20. *Novaia Epokha. Problemy. Poiski. Issledovaniia*, 2000, no. 1/24.

