Waking Up in Chicago

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On November 30th, 1924, the architect Frank Lloyd Wright was looking forward to seeing a ballet at Chicago's Eighth Street Theater. Once in his seat, however, Wright's interest in the great ballerina on stage quickly faded as a beautiful young woman was ushered into his box during an early intermission.

Immediately smitten, Wright speculated to himself that she might be either French or Russian. Within a matter of hours, he would learn that the young woman, Olgivanna Hinzenberg was, in fact, Montenegrin. Her father was Montenegro's first Chief Justice, her mother a war hero, and her maternal grandfather a tribal chieftain and celebrated warrior in his own right.

Still, Wright was not entirely off-base in his conjectures: Olgivanna had indeed spent time in Russia and had most recently lived in France. She had come to Chicago ostensibly to attempt a reconciliation with her estranged husband, although the truth, as Wright would later find out, was a bit more complicated.

Olgivanna Hinzenberg was a student of the mysterious spiritual teacher G.I. Gurdjieff who had established an esoteric institute in France and whose teaching was making inroads into the United States. Gurdjieff had asked Olgivanna to help bring this teaching, colloquially called "The Work," to Chicago. Reluctant and feeling out of her depth, she begged to be allowed to stay in France. Yet in the end, Olgivanna, like many of Gurdjieff's followers over the years, chose to comply with the master's demands. On October 21, 1924, Olgivanna boarded a ship headed for New York.

Georgi Ivanovich Gurdjieff's name is not as well-known as those of other leaders of the new religious movements that thrived during his lifetime. Yet Gurdjieff's influence was, and remains significant, particularly within the various alternative spiritualities that sprang up in America during the second half of the 20th century. Gurdjieff is credited with being the first person to publicly disseminate the symbol of the enneagram, although it is important to note that while the enneagram is commonly used today as a personality typing tool, this practice did not originate with Gurdjieff, but was introduced by psychologists in the 1950s who appropriated the symbol for this purpose.

Gurdjieff is also noted for his influence on the Human Potential movement of the 1960s and 70s. In the book, *Unfinished Animal: The Aquarian Frontier and the Evolution of Consciousness,* counterculture historian Theodore Roszak stated that Gurdjieff's "... main contribution as one of the West's pioneer gurus was to harness the evolutionary image [of man] to a repertory of educational innovations in which we can now recognize the seeds of many contemporary therapies: T−groups, transactional analysis, Synanon games, [and] Erhard Seminar Training."

Other testimonies to Gurdjieff's influence can be found in the inclusion of two Gurdjieff-related books in HarperCollins' list of the 100 Best Spiritual Books of the 20th Century. *Meetings with Remarkable Men* was Gurdjieff's autobiography, later made into a feature film by director Peter Brook. The other book, *In Search of the Miraculous: Fragments of an Unknown Teaching* was

authored by his student P.D. Ouspensky and published in 1949. Its most recent printing was in 2001 and includes a forward by Marianne Williamson, a modern-day spiritual teacher who recently ended her campaign for the 2020 Democratic presidential nomination.

Organizations claiming a direct lineage to Gurdjieff also continue to operate: The largest among these is the Gurdjieff Foundation, which has dozens of affiliated groups that operate in nine countries.

The fact that Gurdjieff's teaching has continued seventy years after his death can, in my view, be attributed to two factors: First, his ability to attract highly accomplished, well-connected people as students. In addition, many of these students were professional writers and editors, skills that proved useful when it came to the dissemination of his teachings.

The second factor was Gurdjieff's willingness to seek out American students and, perhaps most critically, charter authorized study groups in the United States. His American pupils provided both financial support and a willingness to promote Gurdjieff within their own circles and cities. Several of these American students were either from Chicago or had some significant connections to the city. In fact, one the first cities to host a group was Chicago, with its origins tracing back to Gurdjieff's first visit to America in January of 1924.

Gurdjieff would return to Chicago several times over the next decade to meet with followers. His willingness to endure transatlantic travel in order to spread his teaching was consistent with how

he had spent much of his life, constantly journeying, both figuratively and literally, in pursuit of spiritual truth and then, after having received such, journeying to bring this knowledge to others.

Like many spiritual gurus, Gurdjieff's biographical details are sketchy and often wholly unreliable. His year of birth may have been as early as 1866 or as late as 1877. He was born in Alexandropol, Armenia and raised in Kars, which was then under Russian control.

While his family was poor, Gurdjieff himself had access to significant cultural and educational riches. His father was a carpenter and bard, teaching his son traditional poetry and myth while also providing a strict, disciplined upbringing. The family also attracted the attention of the local Russian Orthodox priest who arranged for young Georgi Gurdjieff to receive private instruction from local seminarians.

The environment in which Gurdjieff grew up was decidedly multicultural: Residents were from a range of ethnic and religious backgrounds. Young Gurdjieff would develop an aptitude for languages, a curiosity about religious and spiritual matters, and an insatiable wanderlust: As a young man, he spent decades traveling throughout the Middle and Far East, periodically returning home to recover from a horrific injury or persistent parasitic infection. Eventually, he would make his way to Russia, a hotbed of political intrigue and religious fervor, the later often manifesting itself in esoteric lodges, sects, and groups.

Gurdjieff would later claim that it was during many of his earliest journeys that he met and traveled with other spiritual seekers and was eventually exposed to esoteric teachings and practices that shaped his understanding of humanity's nature and spiritual condition.

He would come to believe that humanity had the potential to do great things, but most people spend their lives in waking sleep, buffeted by life circumstances and perpetually reacting, inwardly and outwardly, to external events outside their control.

He also believed that this condition was due to a number of factors, including unseen forces (similar to the Gnostic concept of "archons" or "rulers") that actively labor against human evolution. Other factors included cultural deficiencies created by equally asleep previous generations, along with the human tendency to become quite comfortable with unconscious, habitual thoughts, emotional states, and behaviors.

This comfort in habitual states and behaviors would lead people to a state of identification, not realizing that their attention, and indeed, their very being, is scattered into disunity, hampering personal effectiveness and both spiritual and psychological evolution. In the face of a rapidly changing world, one that would soon descend into decades of revolution and war, Gurdjieff questioned, and continued to question throughout his life, whether humanity would be able to survive without at least some percentage of the population evolving a new kind of consciousness.

The notion of applying the idea of "evolution" to an individual's spiritual growth was by no means unheard of in the west at the beginning of the 20th century. Eastern gurus, as well as Western spiritual teachers and occult lodges, such as the Golden Dawn and the Martinists, had similar teachings and offered various approaches to personal and spiritual development.

However, Gurdjieff was dissatisfied with the approaches used by others and sought to create a program of development that would encourage students to awaken from sleep by developing themselves physically, emotionally, and intellectually.

Unlike other approaches, this program of development would not demand that students make significant changes in the lives that they were already living: Students would not be required to give up their marriages or jobs. In fact, the ideal candidate for his teaching was "The Householder," someone who worked for a living and supported a family. In fact, the term "work" is critical to Gurdjieff's system: He constantly emphasized the importance of "working on oneself," those in his system would have to work toward awakening by going about their day-to-day tasks and interactions consciously, rather than making it through the day via old habits and routines.

Distinctive aspects of the Gurdjieff system also included working in groups with a qualified leader: According to his student, Peter Ouspensky, Gurdjieff continually expounded on the importance of group work. Using his metaphor of sleep, Gurdjieff noted that one person can have

a very difficult time keeping him or herself awake, but a group of people could work together to ensure sleeplessness.

By 1912, Gurdjieff, who had been working as a professional hypnotist, specializing in the treatment of drug and alcohol addiction, decided that it was time to begin teaching his system of development to the public. He journeyed to Moscow where he had connections, including his cousin who was an accomplished sculptor. Gurdjieff began work as a spiritual teacher, quickly attracting students that included famed esoteric teacher and author, P.D Ouspensky, along with classical composer Thomas de Hartmann and de Hartmann's aristocratic wife, Olga.

Gurdjieff's Moscow and St. Petersburg groups would meet regularly for direct teaching from Gurdjieff as well as discussion of their ability to work on themselves through various "tasks," perhaps best described as forms of behavior modification that could disrupt human mechanicalness and cause practitioners to awaken as they went about their daily lives.

Gurdjieff also began to introduce sacred dances that he had observed during his travels to his curriculum. Eventually, Gurdjieff and Thomas de Hartmann would work together to compose music to accompany these and other dances, known in Gurdjieffian parlance as "The Movements." The movements were intended to help the dancer or "mover" observe him or herself physically, mentally, and emotionally. They also eventually proved to be an attraction in their own right: Over the years, public performances were used to raise money and interest in Gurdjieff's work.

Gurdjieff's esoteric school began to grow and might well have flourished in Russia if it wasn't for the revolution. Discretion proved the greater part of valor and many pupils took flight, including Ouspensky who moved himself, and his family, to England, where he resumed his career as an esoteric lecturer and began teaching Gurdjieff's system to others.

Gurdjieff himself led a group of students away from Moscow, first stopping in Alexandropol, then Tiflis, Georgia, where, in 1919, he met a very young Olgivanna Hinzenberg and took her on as a student. Eventually, the group would return to Russia but eventually sought refuge elsewhere. During this time, they supported themselves by selling their jewelry, trading in Oriental rugs and, once in Europe, performing their sacred dances for curious crowds while Gurdjieff sought to obtain the necessary visas for relocating himself, his family, and his students.

After being turned down for a British visa, Gurdjieff and would eventually settle in France. In 1922, he took a flat in Paris as well as a property known as Château Le Prieuré at Fontainebleau-Avon. The property had previously been owned by the family of Captain Alfred Dreyfus and had been given to Dreyfus's defense attorney after the lawyer secured Dreyfus's acquittal. Gurdjieff thought it a perfect spot to house his new school: The Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man. The terms allowed Gurdjieff to lease the property with an option to buy it outright a year later.

In keeping with Gurdjieff's emphasis on conscious work, the master set his students to work on rehabilitating the property, which had fallen into disrepair. It should be noted that Gurdjieff himself participated in these activities: He was the son of a carpenter and supported himself during his earlier travels by repairing carpets, tools and even modern appliances. Days were spent hard at work, while evenings involved multi-course dinners, talks and rigorous practice of dance movements.

Not all of Gurdjieff's students were on board with his decision to set up a formal, communal institute for teaching his ideas, however. One of these students was P.D. Ouspensky, who had some personal conflicts with Gurdjieff. While Ouspensky's wife and stepdaughter decided to move to the Institute in France, he himself stayed in England and taught his own version of the system, attracting a significant number of pupils.

While relations were strained between Gurdjieff and Ouspensky, there was still some interaction between the men, as well as their students. One of Ouspensky's pupils was Alfred Richard Orage, a man described by George Bernard Shaw as "... the most brilliant editor for a century past," and by T.S. Eliot as both "... the finest literary critic of his day" and "... .the finest critical intelligence of our age." A former Fabian, Orage was the owner and publisher of an influential magazine, *The New Age*. Impressed by Gurdjieff, Orage sold the publication and went to live at the Institute.

After a few years in France, Gurdjieff decided it was time to explore the possibilities of extending his work to the United States. He had long been fascinated with America, which was revered as a near-mythological land of plenty by his childhood neighbors. In fact, Gurdjieff had used the name of “America” in some of his traveling business ventures: His appliance repair business was advertised as an “American Traveling Workshop, Here for Very Short Time, Makes, Alters and Repairs Everything.” It is also said that he captured sparrows, painted them rainbow colors and then sold them to an unsuspecting public as “genuine American canaries.”

Believing that American disciples might prove easier to teach as they had not yet been “spoiled” by an established national culture, and also suspecting that they might be a good source of much-need cash, Gurdjieff planned an American tour. He would bring with him a group of dancers to publicly demonstrate the movements and would seek to work with local people who might be interested in coming to France to train with him or who would be willing to help establish local groups outright.

In late 1923, Gurdjieff designated Alfred Orage as his advance-man in America. Orage would trade on his professional connections in New York, as well as other cities, to ensure what everyone hoped would be a successful tour. Orage's’ task was a daunting one. He arrived in New York in December of 1923, with no money and no definite plans set in place, yet was expected to find venues for lectures and dance performances, advertise these events and sell tickets. On top of all this, Orage was also expected to scout for new students and financial patrons for The Work.

Realizing that he needed help, Orage made his way to the offices of Margaret Anderson and Jane Heap, co-editors of modernist literary journal, *The Little Review*. Anderson and Heap had already published a review by Orage and were eager to be of assistance.

It should be noted that neither the magazine, nor its editors, were native to New York. Margaret Anderson, the magazine's founder, had been raised in Indianapolis. Frustrated with the constraints of middle-class life, she moved to Chicago in 1908 on the advice of an advice columnist. She began to involve herself in Chicago's growing literary scene, a scene that led H.L. Mencken to pronounce the city as 'the literary Athens of the West.'[1]

In 1914, Margaret Anderson rented an office in the Fine Arts Building and began to publish *The Little Review*. This offered her a level of freedom that her other editing and review jobs did not. Money was tight and she operated the journal for a time while homeless, living in a tent on the shores of Lake Michigan.

In 1916, she met artist Jane Heap. Heap had grown up in Kansas as the daughter of a mental institution warden and became a student at The Art Institute of Chicago in 1901. She would later help found the Chicago Little Theatre.

Anderson and Heap became lovers and business partners. They co-edited *The Little Review* which was rapidly gaining an international reputation for excellence. Anderson proved an

exacting editor who, in a fit of pique, once published an issue with 12 blank pages. She did this to protest the paucity of quality submissions to the magazine.

Eventually, Heap and Anderson would decide to move themselves, and *The Little Review*, out of Chicago. This led journalist, author, and screenwriter Ben Hecht to morosely suggest that a large sign with the words "And Where is Athens Now?" be hung outside the Fine Arts Building.

After a stint in San Francisco, Anderson and Heap moved to New York, creating a mild sensation in 1918, when they were arrested, and convicted, on obscenity charges for the act of serializing James Joyce's *Ulysses* in *The Little Review.*

As often happens after such highly publicized trials, the public image of both Anderson and Heap was bolstered, attracting new submissions and subscribers to their magazine, as well as solidifying their positions in New York's literary scene. As such, they also knew exactly where to send Orage for contacts who may be interested in Gurdjieff's teaching and who might also be able to provide him with leads on possible venues.

Their suggestion was The Sunwise Turn bookstore, a gathering place for the local literati. Orage visited the shop and spoke to part-owner Jessie Dwight, then but 19 years old. The 30 year age difference and the fact that Orage was married, albeit unhappily, did nothing to quell the instant attraction between the esteemed editor and wealthy bookstore part-owner. New York's resources were quickly put to Orage's disposal, with talks, given by Orage, about Gurdjieff's work

scheduled at the bookstore, as well as practice space offered for the group of dancers who would arrive with Gurdjieff in January of 1924.

Orage's work paid off: Gurdjieff and his group of dancers were scheduled for performances at the Neighborhood Playhouse as well as Carnegie Hall. Local society women came forward to offer assistance in publicizing events, and the literary community flocked to Orage's lectures at The Sunwise Turn.

After a trip to Boston proved a bust, Orage remained under pressure from Gurdjieff to schedule a visit to Chicago. Under a tight deadline, he arrived and connected with an acquaintance who was a professor at Northwestern University. Talks and lectures were quickly scheduled in both Evanston and in Hyde Park. The writer Zona Gale, the first woman to win a Pulitzer Prize for drama, happened to be coming through Chicago on the way to her Wisconsin home. She interrupted her trip to join the preparations, providing Orage with additional contacts and assistance.

A committee was quickly formed to promote a performance by Gurdjieff and his troupe. The committee was chaired by Antonin Barthelemy, the French Consul for Illinois and multiple Midwestern states. Other members included several well-known society women. Ballet dancer and choreographer Adolph Bolm offered his studio for dance practice and Orchestra Hall was booked for the performance itself on March 21st, 10 days after Orage arrived in Chicago.

Orage, Gurdjieff, and the others who had come to support the Chicago effort eventually returned to New York where additional work meetings took place, attracting several new students, including the aforementioned Margaret Anderson and Jane Heap, as well as Jean Toomer, a noted figure in the Harlem Renaissance who was fresh off the success of his first novel, *Cane*. Gurdjieff went back to France in the spring and Anderson, Heap, and Toomer would soon follow.

While Toomer would make the trip on his own, there are differing reports as to whether Jane and Margaret, who had ended their romantic relationship but remained partners in *The Little Review*, made the trip together or separately. What is known is that Jane Heap would bring Margaret's nephews, Tom and Fritz Peters, who Jane had legally adopted, with her to France. The younger boy, Fritz Peters, would himself become a direct pupil of Gurdjieff and would eventually become a successful author, writing an autobiographical account of his time with Gurdjieff that would boast a forward written by Henry Miller, who described Peters' account as "highly delectable." Peters would also go on to write the novel Finistère, considered to be a pioneering work in the genre of gay literature.

Soon after Gurdjieff's arrival in France a major disruption occurred: Sometime in July of 1924, the dates are sketchy, Gurdjieff was seriously injured in a car accident. As he began to recover, he made some important decisions about the direction of his work and the Institute.

Declaring that he would now live for himself, rather than everyone else, he announced that he was closing the Institute and that everyone would have to leave. He also expressed his desire to

complete, and publish, a series of books that would encapsulate the “All and Everything” of his teaching.

While Gurdjieff was indeed committed to writing his books, his threat of closing the Institute was not as definite as it initially seemed. Many students took him quite seriously and packed their bags, but those who knew him well opted to stay close by and were eventually accepted back onto the property.

Still, Gurdjieff recognized that some of his students needed to leave and begin their own “work in life.” One of these was Olgivanna Hinzenberg. Olgivanna had worked tirelessly for Gurdjieff and his Institute for over five years. She was considered one of his best dancers and had served as nurse to short story writer Katherine Mansfield who had spent the last weeks of her life at the Institute. Olgivanna was devastated, but Gurdjieff was insistent. Both she and Jean Toomer returned to the states on the same ship.

Once in Chicago, Olgivanna had two tasks before her: Repair her marriage and begin a Gurdjieff group. There appears to have been some misunderstanding about the second assignment: Gurdjieff and Orage, who by now the leader of The Work in the United States, expected Olgivanna to teach the sacred dances and movements, but not to actually lead an entire group. Olgivanna eventually began teaching local teenagers the movements, but without compensation. In any case, neither Orage nor Gurdjieff felt that she had the ability to provide the necessary leadership for the city and were looking elsewhere for a Chicago leader.

Her attempts to reconcile with her husband likewise proved fruitless: Olgivanna, for her part, had never loved him and their long separation had done nothing to change her feelings on the matter.

In any case, her meeting with Frank Lloyd Wright ended up short-circuiting both missions: The two began an affair and Olgivanna relocated to Wright's Wisconsin property, Taliesin, ostensibly as the property's new housekeeper, a poorly-constructed ruse that nobody believed.

What would then follow was a media sensation of outlandish proportions. Both Wright and Olgivanna were still married. While Olgivanna was able to secure a divorce, Wright continued to have difficulty procuring one for himself. To complicate matters, Olgivanna was pregnant and Wright was having extreme financial difficulties exacerbated by a massive fire at Taliesin that not only devastated the property, but also destroyed valuable artwork.

During this time, Olgivanna had sporadic contact with Gurdjieff, Orage, and Toomer. All three men were interested in the possibilities that might arise from Olgivanna's marriage, particularly since Wright owned a property that might be used to develop an American Institute. Toomer, in particular, was looking to develop the nascent Gurdjieff group in Chicago and wanted Olgivanna to teach The Movements.

However, these plans would have to be put on hold until Olgivanna delivered her child, which she did at the beginning of December 1925. The child was born in Chicago and someone had

tipped off the press: Reporters and photographers were camped outside the building, forcing Frank Lloyd Wright to sneak in a back entrance to visit his new daughter. Olgivanna's recovery was reportedly disturbed by a confrontation between herself and Wright's wife in the maternity ward. Eventually, both mother and baby had to be spirited away from the hospital so that everyone could get some rest.

Rest was in short supply for Wright and Olgivanna over the next several months, however. Olgivanna's ex-husband and Wright's current wife hired the same lawyer and began waging war against the couple. While they were now divorced, Olgivanna's former husband sought custody of their 8-year-old daughter, and then filed a lawsuit against Wright claiming alienation of affection. More seriously, federal agents were also pursuing the couple at Wright's ex-wife's behest: Olgivanna was wanted by immigration authorities as an "undesirable," while Wright was actually arrested under the Mann Act for taking Olgivanna across state lines for immoral purposes.

During these domestic and legal struggles, Toomer made his move toward establishing the Chicago group. He came to Chicago with high hopes and enthusiastically began regular meetings, attracting the attention of those involved in the literary and arts communities.

By all accounts, Toomer's Chicago group should have been a great success. According to Gurdjieff biographer Paul Beekman Taylor, records show that Chicago had over 500 dues-paying members. This allowed the group to meet its operating expenses while providing much-needed

revenue to the French Institute. Toomer himself made several visits to France for further instruction, which was then brought back to his Chicago pupils.

Success was not to last, however. 1929 brought the stock market crash and The Great Depression. Many people had lost their income and savings and fundraising became more difficult, putting a strain on Gurdjieff's American groups and their leaders. Even those who could continue paying dues to their groups were usually not in a position to visit the Institute in France.

Then, in 1930, the work in America was shaken to its core when Gurdjieff came for a visit to New York and dismissed Orage, who he claimed was no longer properly teaching the system. Gurdjieff was going to oversee the American work himself. Orage and Jessie Dwight, now his wife, decided to leave the country.

This left Jean Toomer in a quandary: Orage had been a friend, mentor, and supporter in both his literary and spiritual work. Toomer's own relationship with Gurdjieff was on shaky ground: This was not an unusual pattern for Gurdjieff, who regularly alienated his students, but Toomer's geographical distance from most of Gurdjieff's pupils meant that he might have not had a full understanding of this tendency.

Toomer decided to take the Chicago work in a different direction: Perceiving the need for the kind of physical labor that one could engage in at the French Institute, he set up an experimental commune on a rural property in Portage, Wisconsin. While few members of the Chicago group

were able to participate in the experiment, some did and it appears as though the experiment was at least somewhat successful.

In 1931, Toomer married a member of the Chicago group, Margery Latimer, a successful author of both novels and short stories. During their wedding travels, the press got wind of their mixed-race marriage. Upon their return to Portage, they faced threats of racist violence, forcing a return to Chicago and the end of the rural project. In 1932, Margery died at the age of 33, 12 hours after giving birth to the couple's daughter.

Distraught over the loss of his wife and alienated from Gurdjieff, Toomer left the work and ceased all Chicago group activities. To make matters worse, Gurdjieff lost his property in France and the Institute was evicted. Things were grim.

However, while the "official" Chicago group had ceased to be, records from this time period indicate that group members continued some efforts, although in a less organized fashion than before. Modern dance performer, teacher, and producer Dianna Huebert, who would later go on to marry noted architect Abel Faidy, had joined Toomer's group in 1930. In her writings about this period, she described ongoing connections between members, including a 1934 visit from Gurdjieff, which was particularly notable because it would be the first time that Gurdjieff and Frank Lloyd Wright would meet face-to-face.

After the initial scandal and furor surrounding their affair and marriage, Frank and Olgivanna Wright had eventually settled into what proved to be an enduring partnership. They were in the process of transforming Taliesin into a school of architecture, but one that would be based, at least operationally, on Gurdjieff's Institute. Apprentices would live at the school and participate in the physical labor of building and upkeep, while also enjoying a full range of educational and cultural programs.

Descriptions of this initial meeting, as well as subsequent encounters, between the two men vary by narrator. For his part, Gurdjieff was eager to establish some sort of connection to Taliesin, as he still hoped for a property on which he could rebuild his institute. He also needed Olgivanna to take some responsibility for his remaining pupils in Chicago.

Frank Lloyd Wright, on the other hand, was willing to talk about some sort of reciprocal arrangement, but also had difficulty giving away any of his authority to another. In one famous exchange, Wright allegedly suggested that students begin training under Gurdjieff, who would then send them to Wright to be "finished off." Gurdjieff became incensed, exclaiming that HE was the master and HE would do the finishing off.

While Olgivanna would remain a disciple of Gurdjieff's for the rest of her days, no official connection between Taliesin and Gurdjieff would ever be established. Gurdjieff returned to France to finish his books and work with his groups and pupils there. The Wrights would eventually open a second school, Taliesin West, in 1937.

Meanwhile, unrest was brewing through much of the Western world. The United States was in an economic depression and fascism was growing in Europe. By the end of the decade, P.D. Ouspensky took note of the winds of war and, deciding that he couldn't stomach another round of armed conflict, decamped to New York.

While Ouspensky and Gurdjieff had long been alienated from each other by this point, this move had the advantage of providing Orage's former pupils with some teaching and community. The Chicago pupils would not have this advantage of geography. The war would also disrupt communications between those living in France and Gurdieff's American students.

Among the pupils who remained overseas were the intrepid Margaret Anderson and Jane Heap, who had formed the nucleus of The Rope, an all-woman, mostly lesbian group in Paris that was directed by Gurdjieff himself, with Heap eventually joining him in its leadership.

Jane Heap eventually relocated to London where she led her own groups, even throughout the Blitz. For her part, Margaret Anderson remained in France, but left Paris with other Rope members in 1939 to seek shelter in the countryside. Gurdjieff's biographer James Moore noted that they had packed their car with ". . . the barest necessities: winter clothing, soap, candles, iodine, toothpaste, aspirin, two revolvers, and Rachmaninoff's Second Piano Concerto."

Anderson would only quit France when, in 1942, Americans and other foreign nationals were threatened with being sent to internment camps.

Reluctantly, and with a ticket paid for by Ernest Hemingway, she boarded a liner to the United States. During her voyage, she met, and promptly fell in love with, Dorothy Caruso, widow of Enrique Caruso. Like many of her fellow students, Margaret Anderson would write several books about her time with Gurdjieff.

At the end of the war, Gurdjieff was unwell but nonetheless continued to work with students and on his books. After the death of P.D. Ouspensky, many Ouspensky students ended up transferring allegiance to Gurdjieff, resulting in a renewal of the work and Gurdjieff's eventual return to New York, where, on his birthday, January 13th, 1949, Gurdjieff announced that the publication and public distribution of his book, "Beezlebub's Tales to His Grandson: An Objectively Impartial Criticism of the Life of Man" would take place later that year. Gurdjieff would not survive to see his book released to the public, but his literary executor Madame Jeanne de Salzmann faithfully oversaw its publication and distribution.

Soon after Gurdjieff's death, Madame de Salzmann also began to consolidate the groups operating in London, Paris, and the United States, eventually forming what is now known as the Gurdjieff Foundation. Activity began to resume Chicago: Dianna Huebert reports that Olgivanna Wright became her teacher in 1953. Records also show that by the 1960s, formal group resumed. The Chicago Foundation continues to operate to this day.

In conclusion, and on a personal note, I periodically find myself ruminating on why Chicago proved to be Gurdjieff's "Second City" here in the United States. Part of this may have been the sheer luck of Orage having connections here and the population of Boston being uninterested in Gurdjieff or his message. One consideration is that Chicago, despite its reputation as a city of big shoulders and big attitudes, could also be remarkably receptive to non-traditional spiritualities and religious expressions. The first Parliament of the World's Religions took place in Chicago in 1893 during the Columbian Exposition and the Theosophical Society in America would move to Chicago in 1907, eventually establishing a basis of operations in the suburb of Wheaton, where it remains to this day. The British occultist Aleister Crowley had followers in Chicago as early as the 1920s, and even the controversial Pentecostal evangelist, Aimee Semple McPherson, had a Chicago connection: She was ordained in a storefront church on North Avenue.

Whatever the reason, I find myself delighted and fascinated that Chicago played host to what proved to be a remarkable convergence of artistic, literary and cultural personalities. The City That Works, indeed.