

## METHOD OF «UNEXPECTED COMBINATIONS» BY MARCUS OSTERRIEDER

I happened to suddenly learn about the unauthorized inclusion of my name into some unions and societies for many times and in different countries. <...> I often happened to my indescribable amazement to come across my name in the most unexpected combinations since that time. <...> And who could bail that somewhere, someone, and somehow had not been misinformed?

*Nicholas Roerich*

### “Virtual” Roerich study...



*Иероним Босх (ок. 1460 -1516). Фокусник  
Национальный музей Сен-Жермен-ан-Ле  
(пригород Парижа), Франция*

An artistic, scientific and philosophical heritage of the Roerich family is of great importance for the evolution of the human development, as it is a source of a new cosmic consciousness. Nowadays we observe the emergence of a new kind of the cultural and historical thinking – a cosmic one, the basis of which is the Living Ethics, or philosophy of the cosmic reality [1]. This philosophical system is the subject of many dissertation researches; international scientific conferences are dedicated to its understanding.

The range of scientific researches on the Roerich study is rather wide. Recently, however, materials appear with increasing frequency claiming to be scientific as to their form, but, putting it mildly, they are very strange as to their content.

Among the authors of these researches who have formed the whole pseudo-scientific direction are V. Rosov, A. Andreev, A. Kuraev, O. Shishkin, S. Filatov, R. Lunkin and others. The artistic heritage and biographies of the Roerichs in their materials are distorted to unrecognizability.

The books and articles by these authors are characterized with one common feature: they all use the method of “unexpected combinations”. The essence of this method is the union of what cannot be united. The names of the Roerichs are combined with the organizations they have never been linked to and with the ideological positions of people they had a purely business and an extremely short contact with. The Roerichs are attributed with the aspirations unacceptable to them, with the actions they have

never undertaken, the qualities which have never characterized them. Whereupon the Roerichs' biographies, their literary and artistic creation, records, diaries, epistolary heritage are ignored and distorted. The above mentioned authors construct their own "overlapping" or "virtual" Roerich studies having even no slightest relation to the reality. Everything contradicting their version is declared as apologetics and is rejected.

One of the latest materials related to this field of study is the Article by M. Osterrieder "From Synarchy to Shambhala: the Role of Political Occultism and Social Messianism in the activities of Nicholas Roerich," published in the German collection dedicated to the study of New Age "occult and esoteric measurements" in Russia [2]. The scope of the problems covered in this collection is significant: "from cosmism to shamanism, from the exploration of the space to the Kabbalah, from neo-paganism to science fiction" [3]. It is by a long stretch of the imagination not a hyperbole: the category of occultists in this edition was replenished with Konstantin Tsiolkovsky, and a number of Soviet fantasy authors, and a politician from philosophy Alexander Dugin, and the "Rodnoverie" movement, and many others. Such mixture of dissimilar personalities and concepts is also a characteristic feature for the hereinafter regarded article by M. Osterrieder.

The weirdness of the collection does not end herein. The infamous journalist O. Shishkin is one of its authors. This author who has been developing the topic of "espionage" activities of Nicholas Roerich in his articles and books was convicted of the archival sources manipulation: in the court initiated by the International Centre of the Roerichs (ICR), and the author could not provide any confirmation of his fabrications. As a result, the court found the information contained in his articles as unfaithful [4]. It may seem that Shishkin appeared in the collection by mistake. But it is not the case: Osterrieder in support of his conclusions refers also to O. Shishkin, including his scandalous newspaper articles. Not coincidentally even Yu. Halturin who wrote a benevolent review of the specified collection was constrained to note that "the academicism of this edition sometimes *is contrary to the political correctness and is of a provocative nature* [emphasis added. – Authors], which makes the book more lively and interesting" [5]. You must admit that it is an extremely peculiar characteristic for a scientific collection!

The first thought arising upon the acquaintance with the works by Osterrieder: historical science is obviously not his calling, however, like any other area of the scientific knowledge. He would have achieved much greater success in belles-lettres. An experience of the "historical" researches by a mathematician A.T. Fomenko was sure to be close to him. Osterrieder like Fomenko enthusiastically constructs his own virtual world inhabited with characters invented by him. Purely by mistake, they have the names and surnames of specific historical figures.

The sources and literature are the basis of every scientific investigation. One would think that starting the work on the issues of the Roerich studies one should primarily base himself upon the source materials – the works by the Roerichs. But Osterrieder practically ignores the artistic creativity and essays by Nicholas Roerich, letters and essays by Helena Roerich. There are no references to the dissertations on the subject, the number of which exceeds several dozen nowadays. There are no references to the works of the founder of the modern Roerich studies P.F. Belikov and works by L.V. Shaposhnikova, a vicarious agent of S.N. Roerich and an outstanding researcher of the life and the creative heritage of the Roerichs. Perhaps these works are not available on the West? It is hardly to be so: most of them are presented over the Internet. But Osterrieder has managed to find such edition as the brochure by V. Sidorov published in Voronezh in 1995 instead [6]. The author does not refer to monographs, materials of scientific conferences, and he does not mention the publication about Roerich in today's press.

While analysing the set of references in the article by Osterrieder it becomes immediately evident that the majority of them are a part of one camp. Except O. Shishkin the article contains other doubtful authors as the "authoritative" researchers like A. Andreev, V. Rosov and others who provoked a reasonable criticism [7] by serious scientists who investigated the Roerichs.

Can we expect any objectivity and the scientific credibility from such work? Moreover Osterrieder relies not only upon the secondary sources, but also upon dubious books that hardly are

worth paying any attention at. For example, he mentions the idea of a Franco-Romanian writer Jean Parvulesco that the President of Russia Vladimir Putin is the diplomatic representative of “the Agharta” a secret brotherhood [8]. As the saying goes, no comment!

The same degree of reliability can be vested to the publication by Gregory Douglas [9]. According to his representation the chief of the secret state police of the Nazi Germany Heinrich Müller during the interrogation in 1948 (by the way, recognized as a historical forgery) [10] supposedly claimed that Nicholas Roerich was known to Gestapo with the “Lama” code nickname and addressed the Nazis for help. However, Osterrieder immediately specifies: “...however may very well never have taken place and were forged at a later date”. It is a daring research “culbite” [11], is it not? On the one hand, the author distances himself from this more than a dubious source, and from the other hand, by means of it, he carries out a number of subsequent “evidences” casting a shadow on the name of Roerich.

Osterrieder based himself upon the interrogation report of a scientist and a writer A.V. Barchenko by the Joint State Political Directorate dated of July 10, 1937 [12] where the latter spoke about his contacts with some mysterious “Great Brotherhood of Asia”. Let us remember that the person during such interrogations conducted by the means of torture could “confess” to anything including the espionage for several states.

But Osterrieder is obviously not interested in historical accuracy. As a result, in the activity of the International Centre of the Roerichs (ICR) which is aimed at defending the historical truth about the Roerichs, he observes the “persecution” of the “dissidents” [13], qualifying the editions published to protect the Roerichs and their creative heritage [14] as apologetic volumes. And all this happens despite of the high opinion on the scientific activity of the ICR given by a number of eminent scientists [15].

The fundamental misunderstanding of the essence of philosophy and cultural, evolutionary activity of the Roerichs runs like a golden thread through the whole article by Osterrieder, being reflected in a number of contradictions of his research method of “unexpected combinations”.

### **... and pseudoscientific methods**

Except the references to unreliable sources Osterrieder uses another method for the distortion of the historical reality. He makes contradictory conclusions based on the archival documents. In such a manner Osterrieder reanimates the version that Roerich was involved in the design of the dollar bill although the presented in the memories of the USA politician Henry Wallace evidence, which is referred, contradicts this hypothesis itself. Wallace recounts in details how this idea came to him without any references to Roerich. Furthermore, there is the evidence of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing at the US Treasury that Roerich was not involved in the design of the dollar bill [16].

Nicholas Roerich wrote in the essay headlined “Culture”: “My work from the very first years has been artistic, cultural and educational one. <...> We have never been engaged in politics, and, as I know, this situation sometimes caused confusion and even reproof. We have never been the members of any political party and even had some long and unpleasant conversations on that issue. But from the very beginning and till nowadays we remain non-party progressive people devoted to the cultural and educational matters.” [17].

Contrary to this statement Osterrieder substitutes the cultural and spiritual orientation of philosophy and activities of the Roerichs and their Masters with the geopolitical theory of secret societies and conspiracies [18]. “The further evolution of the humanity” associated, as Osterrider points out, with the coming of New Era and the “kingdom of Shambhala” is understood by him as unspecified social reforms, the result of a geopolitical struggle of “the Turan” East with the “the European and Iranian” West. The Roerichs understood the evolution, first of all, as the spiritual and moral development of each person and the humanity as a whole, based on the solid foundation of culture. Not coincidentally the philosophical system developed by them in collaboration with the Masters of the East was headlined the Living Ethics.

Nicholas Roerich became an author of the first-ever international treaty (the Roerich Pact), aimed precisely at protecting the cultural values, centuries-long spiritual accumulations of the humanity. Let us note that the project of the Roerich Pact gained a worldwide fame. “It was supported by major political and spiritual leaders of the time – the Pope, the President Roosevelt, the President of Czechoslovakia Masaryk and many other presidents, kings, scholars, and writers” [19] – as K. Smirnov wrote. Among the supporters of the bright ideas of the Pact were such personalities as Romain Rolland, Bernard Shaw, Rabindranath Tagore, Thomas Mann, Albert Einstein, Herbert Wells and many other famous figures of science and culture.

International scientific conferences are devoted to the Roerich Pact today. The Banner of Peace, offered by Nicholas Roerich, as a security symbol of culture flew to the space, was at the poles of the planet, on the highest mountain tops. The exhibitions devoted to the Pact and the Banner of Peace are held in many countries. For example, in the 2012-2015’s the ICR, together with the Committee for the Conservation of the heritage of the Roerichs, carries out the international exhibition project named “The Roerich Pact. History and Modernity”. In 2013, the exhibitions dedicated to the Pact are successfully arranged in Latin America – Argentina [20] and Uruguay [21]. In June, 2013 the exhibition headlined “The Roerich Pact. History and Modernity” was held at the UN Department in Geneva [22].

But Osterrieder without batting an eyelid combines the Roerich Pact, the philosophical concept of the community social structure which is supposedly considered to be the basis for this international agreement, and the “American fund” which is in some inexplicable way a part, in his opinion, of Nicholas Roerich’s “ideology of the Community” [23]. Osterrieder reaches the point of absurdity in this intermixture: the conferences in support of the Roerich Pact in Bruges, Montevideo and Washington D.C. remind him «very much of the present 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama’s... the public celebrations of the Kalachakra Tantra initiation rituals in the West» [24]. And what is the connection here, you might ask?

We must say that there are more than enough inconsistencies, contradictions, absurdities and just fantasies in the article by Osterrieder. Any science-fiction writer could envy his developed imagination. That is why you are no more surprised when you read that as if the artist himself told the Dalai Lama [25] about the existence of a whole network of tunnels and caves between Altai and the Himalayas. In fact, there were no contacts between Nicholas Roerich and the Dalai Lama – all attempts to get into contact with the latter in the process of the Central Asian expedition stroke against a wall of silence from the official Lhasa.

There is also a number of other unsubstantiated “connections” and “unexpected combinations” in the article. For example, the statement about “a very close relationship” of Kh. S. Lyuis [26] the founder of the AMORC [27] with Nicholas Roerich is absolutely unfounded. So the readers are proposed the “link” with the American Rosicrucians. Osterrieder even advances the assumption that “Roerich communicated certain occult techniques from Tibet, which were since integrated in the AMORC teachings” [28]. In fact, one of the most influential orders of his time the AMORC addressed Roerich as it strived to recruit prominent people.

Helena Roerich indignantly told this story in one of her letters: “There exists an organization of the Rosicrucians called “the Amorc” with its location in California; and it enjoys a very bad reputation in America, but in Europe, not knowing the true state of things, it impresses with its broadcasting scope. Honesty does not adorn their activities. This organization took advantage of Nicholas Roerich’s kind-heartedness and requested him to contribute two or three articles in their magazine and then without his knowledge issued the information about him as a Brother and a Delegate of the White Brotherhood, and so on. Moreover their head addressed Nicholas Roerich with a request to provide their museum with several local and Tibetan pieces. Nicholas Roerich with his characteristic compassion to every cultural undertaking sent a few pieces accompanied by a pretty letter with a list and a brief description of the pieces. And now we get to know that the letter was completely distorted, the pieces were just listed with a brief description of them on a separate sheet included in the letter with all possible additions and in the capacity of special gifts all but from the Lord of Shambhala and

the similar heresy!!! Fortunately, we save all copies of letters sent both to America [29], and other places”. As we see, Tibetan pieces turned into “occult techniques” according to Osterrieder.

In short, the “method of unexpected combinations” is in operation. His goal is evident: as a result of the majority of such artificial “links” with the most diverse organizations and individuals the reader must create the impression of the existence of an extensive network of the conspirators, led by some unified secret centre – and, of course, it is “the occult” one.

### **Culture or New Age?**

Completely ignoring the generally recognized fact that the Roerichs dedicated their lives to unselfish service of culture, the author looks upon Nicholas Roerich – the world famous artist, a philosopher, a scientist and a public figure – as an occultist, and his wife Helena Roerich – an eminent philosopher and the president-founder of “Urusvati” Himalayan Research Institute in India – as a medium.

Let us make a note of the fact that Roerich’s attitude towards mediumship was negative [30]. Helena Ivanovna Roerich wrote: “May no one ... consider mediumship as a gift, on the contrary, it is the greatest danger, and a stumbling stone for the growth of the spirit. The medium is an inn, it is an obsession. Veritably, the medium does not have open centers, and a high mental energy is missing in him” [31].

We can also find a critical attitude of the Roerich family towards the occultism in the letters of Helena Roerich. “Diverge from any “esoterics” – she said – not they, but the spirit hermits who devote their souls for the common good will build the New World” [32]. But Osterrieder apparently has got no idea of the notion of “a selfless devotion of the spirit” and “the common good” that’s why he is trying to fit the scale of the Roerichs individual within his narrow patterns.

Osterrieder endows the Roerichs with such qualities which were completely alien to them: ambitiousness, vanity, arrogance... The astronaut V. Sevastianov wrote the following words about Nicholas Roerich: “He amazes us with his passionate love for a Human Being and the Mankind, for the spiritual and cultural heritage; he amazes us with a wise and philosophical content of his criteria: intelligence, love, and peace” [33]. Unfortunately, these criteria were completely inaccessible for Osterrieder. There is not a word in his article about the development of friendly relations between Russia and India contributed by the Roerichs.

Osterrieder writes: “Agni Yoga has since become an influential and exceedingly popular element in the esoteric scene of the post-communist Russia” [34], thereby misleading the reader as to the qualitative composition of the Roerich's ideas followers in Russia. Meanwhile, if one investigates without prejudice the range of those persons and organizations among which the Living Ethics gains “an incredible popularity”, we will see only a small fraction of representatives of the omnivorous “esoteric circles” on the background of really numerous intellectuals: cultural workers and artists, doctors, teachers and especially scientists. They study and develop a multifaceted cultural and philosophical heritage of the Roerichs through their professional interests, and hold scientific and educational conferences and workshops [35].

Only since 1992 twenty international scientific and public conferences with high academic status and a large public response have been organized and hosted only in one International Center of the Roerichs that is casually mentioned by M. Osterrieder. Academicians and corresponding members of the Russian Academy of Sciences and Russian Academy of Education and the National Academies of Sciences of the neighbouring countries, doctors and candidates of sciences took floor at those conferences. Such interest of the scientists towards the Living Ethics with the foundations for a new cosmic thinking lies within the general trends of the modern development of the science.

Academician V.S. Stepin, writes: “One should distinctively emphasize the coincidence of the basic principles of the cosmism philosophy and numerous fundamental ideas of the modern scientific worldview and its philosophical conclusions. <...> The open nature of the modern scientific worldview

reveals its amazing proportionality not only to the principles of the philosophy of Russian cosmism but many philosophical ideas formulated in the traditional oriental culture” [36].

The creation of the United Scientific Centre for Cosmic Thinking Problems in 2004 at the initiative and with the active participation of the ICR became the logical consequence of such interest to the Living Ethics in a wide commonwealth of scientists. And in 2008 the agreement covering a wide range of issues related to the research in the field of a philosophical, artistic and scientific heritage of the Roerich family, the Living Ethics, the new cosmic thinking was concluded between the ICR and the Institute of History of Natural Sciences and Technology named after S.I. Vavilov of Russian Academy of Sciences.

Thus, the above mentioned statement made by M. Osterrieder which “establishes” a direct and straightforward link of the Living Ethics with “esoteric circles” is beneath any criticism, demonstrating a clear substitution of facts and a shift in emphasis.

With the same purpose – to tie the Roerichs and contemporary followers of their ideas to the “esoterism” – Osterrieder artfully combines the names of the Roerichs and their Masters with the notorious occultist Alice Bailey and her mentor hiding under the pseudonym of “Tibetan”. Osterrieder ranks “Tibetan” to “theosophical Great Masters” without a shadow of doubt.

The German author knows about directly opposite statements by Helena Roerich about A. Bailey and her mentor though. For example, in the letter dated October 10, 1954 Helena Roerich wrote, “Here is a piece of advice for you, my dear, do not read the books by Alice Bailey. She became the follower of Lucifer at the end of her life. At first, she did not hesitate to be a pupil of Sikkim inhabitant some Laden La who was in the service of the local government. We knew him. She called him to be her master, and even tried to link him with the great Figures of the White Brotherhood” [37]. The Roerichs and their collaborationists in America evaluated A. Bailey’s works negatively [38] and tried to distance themselves both from her and from established by her “the Arcane School” in 1923. “Do not have any relationship with Bailey school, because they are shown as hidden enemies” [39], - Helena Roerich emphasizes. And moreover, “Of course, do not vest any rights and copyrights to people associated with the “Arcane School”. Say determinately that we have never been associated with the “Arcane School” and we cannot cooperate with them” [40]. The forming-up of the artificial “associative array” by M. Osterrieder such as A. Bailey – Tibetan – Great Masters – the Roerichs, reveals the scientific immorality and incompetence of the author.

Osterrieder is trying to position the philosophical works of the Roerichs in a row with a new fashioned, but rather superficial “esoteric” sect of the New Age. The actual emergence of the term “new age” dates back to the first half of the twentieth century and is associated with the aforementioned name of Alice Bailey. This term in religious studies is used to denote a number of religious phenomena, “non-confessional, non-canonical beliefs” which became widely spread in Europe and the US in 60-70-ies of the XXth century [41] and in the modern ordinary understanding is connected with occultism, esotericism and mysticism.

The humanistic Roerich's heritage is out of all relations with the total mixture of the New Age, because this heritage foresees other priorities, including the development and preservation of culture, the improvement of the mankind through a cultural creativity. The activities of both the Roerichs societies in 1930-s and the modern International Center of Roerichs founded by S.N. Roerich and collaborating organizations have a cultural, educational and a scientific character and have got no relation to the occultism. But Osterrieder needs this “binding” of the Roerichs and their Masters to the ambiguous occult sects of the New Age for creating a very unique geopolitical version which would represent a typical “conspiracy theory”.

### **Culture, politics and Freemasonry**

In recent times various interpretations of historical events in the style of “conspiracy theories” are experiencing the next dawn. The characters of such theories are prominent political figures, famous people from the sphere of culture, philosophers and thinkers, who in any event included the public life

into the sphere of their interests. The key role in the “conspiracy theories” is usually played by different kinds of Masonic organizations which supposedly control the world history by means of secret levers. But M. Osterrieder steps forward and includes the representatives of practically all main spiritual movements and religions: the Buddhist tradition of Kalachakra and also «diverse Mongolian and Tibetan [Buddhist] brotherhoods, Muslim and Dervish orders and even Jewish Hasidic and Christian sectarian groups» into this «occult umbrella organization for the whole of Inner Asia» [42]. Various Western Masonic organizations are like the leaven in this mess, and first of them all it is the Ordre Martiniste [43] which supposedly «defined the doctrine and the plan» of both the French and Russian social revolutions [44].

The following members in some incredible way found themselves in the same pot of conspiratorial fantasies: the precursor of Martinists St. Ives D'Alveyder, the American Rosicrucian Order AMORC, the US president “Freemason” Franklin Roosevelt and the US Secretary of Agriculture “Freemason” G. Wallace, “Slavophil” Alexander Herzen and the “easterner” prince Esper Ukhtomsky, the Minister of Finance of the Soviet Russia “terrorist” and “Freemason” Leonid Krasin and of our contemporary leaders – the president of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin and the former Russian Prime Minister E. Primakov who according to Osterrieder’s logic are also the “Freemasons”.

It turns out that all these diverse individuals and organizations were engaged in the secret “fight against the oppression of the fossilized European imperialist powers” [45] in favour of “Eastern spirituality”. The Roerichs in this “struggle” according to M. Osterrieder are acting as “agents of Allal Ming and his occult politics” – the author does not undertake an attempt to judge on the true face of the Master “as an individual or a like-minded group” [46].

As the saying goes, we must be thankful for small mercies. It's even hard to imagine how the Great Personalities would be interpreted and distorted passing through the prism of Osterrieder’s consciousness. It is clear that Nicholas Roerich as one of the brightest figures of his time could not help attracting the attention of the fans of the aforementioned “conspiracy theories”. However, his socio-cultural activities have always remained outside of any article written in the spirit of such theories. The cultural and cooperative projects of the great artist and thinker requiring non-standard and wide solutions, as well as extensive contacts, actually had nothing to do with the geopolitics. Roerich repeatedly met with the powerful political, religious, spiritual leaders of the world on his way and it is certainly a very rich soil for the fantasies of modern interpreters [47].

Osterrieder is absolutely not interested in semantic nuances. He states that Nicholas Roerich was a protagonist of the theory of the synarchy by Saint-Yves d'Alveydre on the basis of two “facts”. Firstly, the “initiative of the “Banner of Peace” by Nicholas Roerich elusively” reminds him of the “the synarchic theory by Saint-Yves of the reform of the social life” [48]. Secondly, Osterrieder arouses suspicion of Nicholas Roerich’s belonging to the martinist order, which, in its turn, has adopted the philosophy of the social structure by St. Ives. Here is such a three-stage combination based on the “evidences” which cannot be proved, as the rumors concerning N.K. Roerich’s belonging to the Ordre Martiniste are supported by no means.

An attempt by Osterrieder to link the works by Saint-Yves and the activity of Nicholas Roerich is also one of “unexpected combinations”. And it is enough to address the letters by Helena Roerich and the Tower of Babel built by Osterrieder of his own fantasies and assumptions immediately collapses.

Helena Roerich wrote, “One should not assume the work by Saint-Yves d'Alveydre “Agharta” to be a wonderful and truthful record. In fact he visited Agharta of his own imagination and agglomerates of the subtle world. St. Ives was a typical psyche specialist and a medium. That is why his descriptions differ so much from the Truth. Namely, his Agharta has nothing to do with the White Brotherhood. The sphere of psychism is very deceptive. There are many fans to personalize the Great Personalities in the subtle world” [49].

It is characteristic that many prominent people in Russia were often accused of having links with the Freemasonry. Most often it was done with the aim of creating an image of the enemy and

discrediting their cultural activities. And the Roerichs have not escaped such slanderous accusations. It is not surprising that Osterrieder develops the Masonic theme in his article referring to the Russian authors.

“According to some researchers, – as Osterrieder writes, – Roerich became a member of the Ordre Martiniste already in his days in St. Petersburg at the eve of World War I. Some of his social contacts make this seem likely” [50]. It cannot be denied that this statement is rather bold. Osterrieder bases such conclusions only upon the fact that Nicholas Roerich met people among a wide circle of acquaintances who were under the author’s “suspicion” in Freemasonry!

Following the reference provided by Osterrieder we can see whom he included into his “some researchers” list. They are O. Platonov, O. Shishkin and V. Brachev. None of them deserves any confidence in terms of a scientific cleanliness. Shishkin and Platonov are the writers who have made a name for themselves by their own invented variations of the “mysteries of history”. Brachev is not an expert on the history of Freemasonry in Russia, and, oddly enough for a historian, while publishing the archival documents, he does not know how to use them for research purposes [51].

The topic of Freemasonry in Russia is hardly developed by the professional historians, although it is a buzz word. V.V. Polikarpov, the scientific editor of the magazine “The Questions of History”, writes: “The role of the Freemasons in the pre-revolutionary times and in 1917 is tiny and poorly investigated. <...> The literature is overwhelmed with an absolutely unsatisfying tragic content of what was happening in Russia in the manner of adventurous theatrical stylistics which is attractive for fans of suspenseful hokey-pokey and handy to propagate the Black Hundreds” [52].

Let us note that having ranked Nicholas Roerich to the Masons, Platonov, Shishkin and Brachev refer to each other. We failed to discover a reference for at least one serious archival document confirming the participation of Nicholas Roerich in the work of any Masonic lodge. Yes, such documents do not even exist, although the Russian and foreign lodges were keeping fairly extensive documentation. One of the few major publications on the specified theme i.e. the Encyclopaedic Dictionary of “Russian Freemasonry 1731-2000” by A.I. Serkov [53] testifies about it. It is based on the archival materials of the Russian lodges. It includes a dictionary of the Masonic terms, biographies of more than 12 thousand Freemasons, lists of the Masonic lodges. The name of Nicholas Roerich is not included in this publication.

The Roerichs highly evaluated the origins of the Masonic movement, but were critical of the state of a contemporary Freemasonry, considering it to be a movement which profanes the ancient knowledge. Helena Roerich wrote, “Of course, with all honesty Nicholay Konstantinovich could say that he had never been and is not a member of any Masonic lodge, or any other similar organization. He is attributed with many things, and many men try to somehow attach his name to their organization. We know, how the articles and letters of Nicholay Roerich were forged and distorted beyond recognition” [54]. And again, “Nicholay Konstantinovich and I have never been, are not and will not be Masons. <...> The details concerning our Freemasonry are just as wrong as the other legends and rumours about Nicholay Konstantinivich” [55].

But Osterrieder has got a different attitude. He literally robs the Roerichs of their words in his article. A similar trick is not even surprising. The author is simply compelled to take refuge in it. After all, the letters and essays of the Roerichs completely destroy Osterrieder’s intricate fantasies.

Nicholas Roerich was an internationally known artist who created more than 7000 of gorgeous paintings during his life, a scientist, a thinker and a public figure of international level. But the reader does not get to know about it from the article by Osterrieder, where the name of Roerich is only mentioned in a political context. Nicholas Roerich himself, as if anticipating such insinuations, wrote, “... it is possible that the malicious persons are doing all sorts of mean manipulations. For example – wherever the agricultural cooperatives are meant, the malicious persons can say that it was something political. But everybody knows that our cultural societies and organizations contain absolutely no political matters” [56].



Osterrieder incidentally touches the concept of the New Country, which he treats according to the notes by Helena Roerich as the Kingdom or “a terrestrial incarnation” of Shambhala. He believes that the New Country should extend over the entire territory of Russia and include Turkey and Persia [57], or to become a kind of pan-Buddhist, transnational New Country (Novaya Strana) «stretching from Tibet to the southern Siberia, including the territory that was governed by China, Mongolia, Tibet, and the Soviet Union” [58].

Having read all this you unwittingly ask questions. Can one, with a sober head and a good memory, write such things? And how does Osterrieder imagine the mechanism of creation of the aforementioned country, tailored of four parts of sovereign states?

“The concept of the “the New Country” has several meanings in the diary notes by Helena Roerich of her conversations with the Great Master: the New World, the country of the future and the New Russia” [59]. Helena Roerich wrote to her colleagues, “In the Doctrine Russia is pointed out as a new country which will be under the patronage of St. Sergius, but to accomplish this it must first be resurrected in spirit and be washed” [60]. The records by Helena Roerich reveal the problems of evolution of the Earth and the humanity for a distant future. And the way to the future is through the culture. “...The new world and the new country can only be entered with a reborn spirit, a new consciousness and using new ways” [61], – she wrote to A.M. Aseev. According to the interpretation provided by Osterrieder the philosophical and ethical concept of the “New Country” acquires heavy-footed geographical coordinates.

All this converts his work from the scientific research into the cheap yellow fiction genre.

Assessing the level and the condition of some modern historical researches, the academician of Russian Academy of Science V. L. Yanin writes, “We live in the era of a total lack of professionalism which corrodes all the spheres of our society – from its authority structures to the organization of the education system. <...> The society being brought on the scandals and addicted to the TV screen, thirsts for negativity and a disgraceful, scandalous behaviour. It is found of the magic tricks of David Copperfield and Anatoly Fomenko” [62]. Marcus Osterrieder’s creative work fully comes under this assessment.

The academician of Russian Academy of Science E.P. Chelyshev states, “All the multifaceted activity of Nicholas Roerich was devoted to Culture and its protection, science and confirmation of the Truth. His work took place outside the narrow frames of politics. In order to be certain about it, it is quite sufficient to read the numerous essays of Nicholas Roerich published in the 20-30-s of the last century which set out the main points of his concept of culture. Nicholas Roerich like all the great thinkers dreamed of a bright future of the mankind (the “New Country”) which, in his deep conviction, can come only through the understanding of the foundations of culture and its transformation into their daily lives but not through the adventurous political projects ...” [63].

The lofty thoughts of the Roerichs aimed at the preservation and the development of culture in which they saw the pledge of a spiritual development of the mankind could not be but of an immediate interest in the today's world. Maybe that's the reason why so many attempts are taken to compromise these thoughts not only at home but abroad as well.

“Roerich’s words addressed to the young people, to creators and builders of the future of the world are beautiful: «You, the young people, are to carry out one of the most fabulous jobs – to raise the foundations of the culture spirit, to replace the mechanical civilization with the culture of the spirit; to create and to build». He spoke about a «joyful work» as the basis for the future development: «the basis for the conversion of the world will be represented by work and creativity». The enemy of any stagnation, stereotypes, and inaction, Roerich defined his attitude towards life in truly immortal words: «They will ask you how to traverse life. Answer: Like crossing an abyss upon a taut string – beautifully, carefully, and fleetly». These words, like a major chord, reveal Roerich’s life confession” [64], – thus the academician Vladimir Engelhard wrote. This particular chord and not the method of “unexpected combinations” passed off as a scientific point of view shall become the tonometer in the study of the Roerichs’ life and activity.

*Editors of the translation:*

*Oksana Danilovich, Olga Karaseva*

## Notes

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7. See, for example: Assessment of thesis by V.A. Rosov ‘Russian-American Expedition of Nicholas Roerich to Central Asia in 1920s-1930s’ submitted for the academic degree of Doctor of Historical Sciences // International Center of the Roerichs (official site). URL: <http://en.icr.su/protection/heritage/documents/Trepavlov.php>  
See also criticism of the book: А.И. Андреев «Гималайское братство: теософский миф и его творцы»: *Защитим имя и наследие Рерихов. Документы. Публикации в прессе. Очерки*. Vol. 5. М.: МЦР; Мастер-Банк, 2010. P. 915–1027.
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9. *Ibid.* P. 129, note 125. *Osterrieder* here refers to the publication: *Douglas Gregory. Gestapo Chief. The 1948 Interrogation of Henrich Muller. From Secret U.S. Intelligence Files*. San Jose: R. James Bender Publishing, 1995.
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11. *Osterrieder M.* From Synarchy to Shambhala... P. 129.
12. *Ibid.* P. 118, note 62.
13. *Ibid.* P. 102–103.
14. *Ibid.* P. 103.
15. See, for example: *Живая Этика и наука* // *Материалы международной научно-общественной конференции*. 2007. М.: МЦР; Мастер-Банк, 2008. P. 32–43.
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24. Ibid. P. 126, note 105.
25. Ibid. P. 117.
26. Ibid. P. 116.
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43. Ibid. P. 115.
44. Ibid, note 51.
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