

radiologist, Dr Webster. However, her confidence in his treatment being as effective as that of Manoukhin's was not high, and she therefore sought to return to Paris in order to continue the treatment with Manoukhin himself. (The treatment was expensive – and ultimately useless.) During the month of September 1922, by which time Murry had escaped to Vivian Locke-Ellis's house in Sussex, Mansfield actively sought out Orage. Both were now fascinated with the esoteric theories of G. I. Gurdjieff, on which they attended lectures given by P. D. Ouspensky. Mansfield visited the London home of Ouspensky in order to obtain further details about Gurdjieff, and her intention to return to Paris was not just to continue her treatment with Manoukhin, but with a notion of perhaps entering the community Gurdjieff was just then setting up – the Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man – whose philosophy decreed that a cure for physical ailments such as tuberculosis depended first upon a healing of the inner spirit. On 28 September, Orage resigned his editorship of the *New Age* in preparation for a similar move. For Mansfield, now seriously ill, this spiritual approach seemed to offer a real possibility of an alternative cure from her tuberculosis, in addition to her radiation treatment.

On 16 October 1922, Mansfield entered Gurdjieff's Institute, initially on a fortnight's trial, but soon becoming a permanent resident. Murry, who in 1922 had not yet entered his own mystical phase, admitted, 'I could scarcely bear to discuss the doctrines of Ouspensky with Mansfield. The gulf between us was painful to us both; and living under the same roof became a kind of torture. I could not bear it.' And Mansfield wrote in a similar vein to Murry on 11 October, just before entering the Prieuré, thinking back to their time together in Menton: 'I remember what we really felt there. The blanks, the silences, the anguish of continual misunderstanding. Were we positive, eager, real – alive? No, we were not. We were a nothingness shot with gleams of what might be'.<sup>38</sup>

Gurdjieff believed that civilisation had thrown men and women out of balance, so that the physical, the emotional and the intellectual parts had ceased to work in accord. Twenty years of his life, from 1887 to 1911, were dedicated to a search for traditional knowledge, concentrated in Central Asia. He started teaching in Moscow in 1912, but this work was disrupted by the First World War and the Russian Revolution. Together with the followers he had gathered over these years, who had somehow managed to leave Russia, he arrived eventually in Paris. There had been plans to set up his Institute in London, but these had been cut short by the British authorities who suspected him of being a spy. He arrived in Paris on 1 October 1922, having leased the Prieuré at Fontainebleau, sight unseen.

What precisely was Gurdjieff's teaching? "I teach," he said gnomically, "that when it rains, the pavements get wet." [...] His one constant demand is Know