Chapter 6

Paranoid association

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Concept of paranoid association

This chapter introduces those paranoid contagion groups (PCGs) that are larger than pPGs but nonetheless remain minorities within the environment in which they develop, and therefore cannot be described as paranoid societies (PS). They may be made up of a highly varied number of individuals, ranging from a few dozen to several thousand. In some cases, though few, they are larger in size and their members number in the millions.

To distinguish these intermediate-sized groups from pPGs and PS, we will use the term *paranoid associations* (PA).

Almost all of them carry out their activities within the broader society in which they exist, and do not withdraw to some remote location or isolated island. Members may retain their jobs, their social relationships, and even — with certain difficulties — their family life. Nevertheless, they always demarcate a rigid and impenetrable boundary that separates and protects them from the outside world. The PA alienates itself from a surrounding world that appears to it dangerous, if not contemptible. It is both present and absent, since two opposing forces simultaneously drive it to distance itself from and to draw closer to society: on the one hand, fear and the desire to survive and preserve its purity within an environment perceived as dangerous, hostile, and harmful cause the PA to isolate itself from its surroundings. But, on the other hand, the proselytizing zeal and the urge to persuade others of its own truths, the desire to save and/or to subjugate the surroundings, neutralize the tendencies toward isolation and push the PA to approach, in its own way, the rest of society.

These two contradictory forces not only determine the attitudes of the PA as a group, but also trigger profound and far-reaching changes in the relationship of each individual member with their own personal environment, with their family, close ones, and acquaintances. Membership in the PA is a profound experience that radically transforms the individual, turning them into a new being, into a *new man*. For them, and for those around them, everything changes radically.

We encompass the full range of PAs mentioned throughout this book under three broad headings: cults, messianic movements, and crisis cults.

Cults

The term *cult* has been used for centuries, having held different meanings depending on the historical moment, the place, and even the author. For our purposes, it will suffice to comment on the four main senses that, *grosso modo*, are delimited by the Royal Academy, by sociology, and by common usage.

1) The "cult" understood as heresy.

2) The "cult" understood as a schism or faction.

3 "Cults" understood as minority religions and in opposition to "churches".

4) The "cult" defined by its harmful or dangerous nature.

Of the four meanings, the fourth is the one that best corresponds to groups with the highest degree of paranoid contagion. The first two, however, are the only ones that tend to be reflected in the definitions of "cult" found in dictionaries.

1) The "cult" understood as heresy

Cult. A body of believers in a particular doctrine or of followers of a religion that the speaker considers false (15).

From the Christianization of the Roman Empire until very recently, the designation of cults has fallen primarily on those small groups that differentiated themselves and broke away, "by heresy or by apostasy," from that organization which at a specific time and place brought together the majority of Christian faithful, and which constituted the main trunk of Christianity in a given society, whether that of the Orthodox, Roman Catholic, or Protestant churches.

With the odd anecdotal exception, this dogmatic sense of the term has fallen completely out of use.

2) The "cult" understood as a schism or faction

Cult. A religious or ideological doctrine that differentiates itself and becomes independent from another (15).

Cult. A group of followers of a religious or ideological faction (15).

These two definitions, which lack the pejorative connotation of the previous one, allow any religious group or one endowed with an ideology to be catalogued as a cult, whether it has broken away from a pre-existing one or has come into being in some other way. This use of the term remains current mainly in written language. Thus, one can speak without further qualification of "the numerous Buddhist cults existing in Japan" or of the "proliferation of Satanic cults in the Levant" or of the "Afro-Brazilian cults of Brazil." In all three examples, the word "cults" could be replaced by others such as "groups," "societies," "organizations," "schools," "movements," "churches"...

It should be noted that, although the definition given by the Royal Academy permits it, the term cult is used on few occasions to refer to groups with secular ideologies, being reserved mainly for religious groups.

3) "Cults" understood as minority religions as opposed to "churches"

In the way the term "cult" is used in sociological research, the crucial feature that allows them to be distinguished is their small and minority character as opposed to churches and the beliefs of the majority. Cults, now, are no longer *any* religious or ideological group (as in the two previous definitions), but solely small religious groups, in contrast to the large, established, and majority churches.

Sociology's interest in cults stems from Max Weber himself (20), who described with subtlety the differences between churches and the groups that, in the Protestant world, at the end of the nineteenth century and especially in the United States, were identified as "cults" (which included, for example, the Quakers and the Baptist denominations). Curiously, the word cult, at that time, not only lacked a negative connotation but quite the opposite, owing to the moral rectitude it imposed on its members and, above all, because it constituted a guarantee of formality in business dealings, that is, of reliability in payments and deliveries.

According to his meticulous observations, it would have been characteristic of the *cults* that he studied to tend to isolate themselves from the rest of the world in order to form elitist circles that saw themselves as the only ones called to eternal salvation. Unlike membership in churches, which was normally determined by birth, membership in cults was entirely voluntary, although a simple determination to join them was not enough. Before being admitted, the candidate's past was severely scrutinized by the most authoritative members of the group, so that only individuals of irreproachable conduct could be accepted. On the other hand, common to all "cults" was an extraordinarily demanding moral discipline whose breach, when discovered, inexorably led to expulsion. These and other traits distinguished the nineteenth-century North American cults from the mainstream, established churches, led by priests or pastors, whose demands for Christian rectitude were enforced with far less severity.

In the current popular literature on cults, Weber's characterization of them is often reproduced. But the truth is that his description referred solely to minority evangelical groups of a specific historical moment and cultural sphere, in contrast to the Catholic and Protestant churches.

In reality, what truly mattered to him was understanding the role that these small religious associations played in the development of modern capitalism, by spreading a new value system in which methodical, tireless, rational, and professionalized work was transformed into a religious duty — perhaps the most important one — while at the same time making a virtue of saving, and of the incessant accumulation of money (absolutely immoral for traditional Christianity — Catholic, Lutheran, and even Calvinist — which would have considered it a sin of greed), the earthly demonstration that the Lord favors those who live a life of holiness — industrious, miserly, and austere. In contrast to the traditional ideal type who fulfilled his Christian obligations and the obligations proper to his estate or guild, it is in these religious groups that — according to Weber — the embryo of a new human type began to develop: the *professional*. A type, it must be said, viewed with contempt by his contemporaries and still incomprehensible to a large part of humanity.

So, rather than being interested in cults or sectarianism as a fully independent category, what truly concerned Weber were certain nineteenth-century Anglo-Saxon Protestant groups that shared several traits allowing them to be contrasted with traditional churches. And he was

interested in these groups, above all, insofar as they may have determined the birth of the capitalist mentality.

Modern sociology has continued to take an interest in cults and, following Weber, conceiving of them as minorities opposed to traditional "churches," although, when applied to the study of sectarian groups that have emerged over the last decades, sociological works have replaced the term "cults" with the expression "new religious movements," in order to avoid the polemical connotations of the term.

The three meanings discussed so far are very broad, but they are by no means the most commonly used. Obviously, the paranoid contagion groups we refer to in this book constitute a much more delimited sector. Not all "religious or ideological schisms or factions" can be included in the circle of sectarian cults that are the object of our interest. Nor does the fact of being a minority in a given context make a religious group sectarian. In our country, neither the Muslim community, nor the members of the Spanish Reformed Episcopal Church, nor the Lutheran residents of German origin constitute a sectarian group. Something similar occurs with the Samaritans of Israel and the West Bank, or the Lebanese and Israeli Druze. They are simply religions that, although they could be considered *cults* insofar as they are "religious factions" or insofar as they are minorities, they lack the sectarianism that distinguishes what we today typically understand as cults in the proper sense.

4) The sectarian cult proper

The cults that truly concern us are those that both current public opinion, certain official institutions in Western countries, the family members of their members, and "experts" tend to identify as such, with a more than notable degree of consensus.

They are certainly "religious or ideological schisms or factions" (for the most part) and they certainly have a limited or minority character within their environment, but that is not enough. Something more is needed *something more*.

In the late sixties and throughout the seventies, a notable influx of gurus and teachers from Eastern countries (especially Indian ones) took place in the United States, as they moved to the West to offer solutions to the great problems of human beings — remedies based primarily on principles and practices of Hinduism and Buddhism. Around these teachers, a plethora of groups of disciples sprang up, some of which reached a considerable size. The

exoticism of the attire worn by some of them contributed to making the phenomenon more visible.

Alongside these Eastern groups, others proliferated that also rode on the ideas and illusions of the *hippy* countercultural movement: the expansion of consciousness through drug use, radical rereadings of the New Testament — which insisted on absolute poverty —, egalitarian social utopias, the rights of Black people (which in certain cases veered toward exclusionary and even supremacist positions), etc.

Parallel to this amalgam of groups, others spread that, for the sake of simplification, we might call "conservative," aggressively anti-communist in character or that emphasized above all their opposition to the prevailing climate of sexual permissiveness. Despite this conservative component, some of these groups departed radically from the Christian religious tradition of North America and even from its democratic values.

This legion of messianic leaders and their groups of followers attracted the attention of the media and public opinion for something more than their novelty or exoticism.

When in 1969 three followers of Charles Manson broke into the home of actress Sharon Tate and murdered her along with three other people, for no apparent reason, the journalistic impact of the quadruple homicide was enormous, and it represented a first confirmation that the psychedelic dream could lead down unforeseen and dangerous paths.

The kidnapping, in 1974, of Patricia Campbell Hearst, daughter of media magnate Randolph A. Hearst, by the Maoist Symbionese Liberation Army, and her subsequent conversion into a member of the group, going so far as to participate in a bank robbery, produced an avalanche of press articles. For several months, the news of a girl who in a matter of days had transformed from a millionaire into a captive and from a captive into a terrorist filled the pages of news outlets.

Even greater in magnitude was the news of the suicide/homicide of more than eight hundred followers of Reverend Jim Jones, in the remote jungles of Guyana. The Reverend had enjoyed a certain notoriety for his actions on behalf of those most in need. But he had the vision that a nuclear catastrophe was going to occur in California and decided to relocate with his parishioners to safer lands. Near Jonestown he attempted to establish an earthly paradise, a world without racism and subjected entirely to the will of one who proclaimed himself to be equally the reincarnation of Jesus and of Lenin.

Alongside these three notable episodes, there was no shortage of news stories reporting tax fraud, assault, homicide, prostitution, etc. Photographs of many of these leaders showed them portly, surrounded by luxury, expensive cars, and even armed escorts.

In the face of these events and images, a conception of the cult imperceptibly took shape that was diametrically opposed to that of Max Weber. If the latter had spoken of two forms of religious organization opposed in their characteristics (church *versus* cult), the new cults were not conceived as religious organizations but as organizations in the service of power, money, and sex that would operate behind the *screen* of religion. The minority-cult/majority-church dichotomy was replaced by the sham-cult/true-religion dichotomy.

This social perception remains strong even today. While "true" religions would stem from a shared belief and be grounded in the sincerity of their leaders, cults should be regarded as something akin to a pantomime in the service of an unscrupulous leader or leaders with a great capacity for manipulation.

> [...] religions have been created for the benefit of their members. Cults... seem to exist for the benefit of their leaders (21)

In response to this phenomenon, perceived as profoundly harmful, an "anti-cult" movement emerged, structured around various associations, some of which still endure today. The main driving forces behind this movement were above all the parents of members, who had watched helplessly as their children were recruited and inexplicably abandoned — sometimes suddenly — their family, studies, friendships, and jobs. Former members who considered themselves deceived and harmed by their years of involvement also took part.

Over the course of the last three decades, a network of associations, self-help groups, and specialist professional practices has developed in Western countries, offering counseling and psychological support to family members, members, and former members. In turn, this development has facilitated the accumulation of case histories and multiple observations, making it evident that:

All cult groups are characterized by their potential to produce drastic changes in the behavior of their members. Some of these changes (in beliefs, in certain practices) are specific to each group, but others are universal and reflect the necessary existence of a common underlying dynamic. Some authors have spoken of a *cult syndrome* to identify this pattern of behavior

that, in general terms, is activated in those who join cult groups, beyond the specific beliefs and practices of each one of them.

The repeated observation that these changes — the "cult syndrome" — occur solely and exclusively among the members of certain very specific groups makes it possible to identify which groups should be catalogued as cultic, thereby avoiding ideological biases or prejudices. Noteworthy in this regard is the remarkable diagnostic agreement that tends to arise among professionals.

The "cult syndrome" is not induced solely by the Eastern or exotic religious groups that, initially, attracted the most attention, but also by:

- Christian groups, particularly evangelical ones, which from the standpoint of beliefs and values are not dissonant with their surrounding environment.
- Organizations that, from a dogmatic or hierarchical point of view, are integrated into the major traditional churches.
- Groups whose field of interests is not strictly religious: physical or mental well-being, "personal growth," Satanism, ufology, occultism, Philosophy, etc. Even some commercial organizations, whose objective is material enrichment, have come to be included in the field of cults.

The cult syndrome has also been described in followers of political groups (far-right and far-left as well as feminist) and, quite logically,Janja Lalich speaks of*political cults*(18). However, in this case, that of politically oriented groups, colloquial language has shown itself much more reluctant to consider them as cults, preferring to label them as "extremists," "terrorists," "radicals," etc.

In a not insignificant percentage of cases, the cult syndrome occurs when the individual joins certain manifestly pathological families.

The anti-cult movement has produced an enormously abundant body of literature. The large number of existing groups, the evolution of each one of them, and the continuous emergence of new cult organizations generate a large volume ofinformation and a constant need to update it. However, with regard to the essential aspects — that is, what would be common to all cult groups — we can observe that there exists a much more limited core of central ideas that are shared by the various authors.

Messianic Movements

Throughout the centuries, and among the ever-growing number of believers in the religions of the Book, thousands of people have claimed, with absolute conviction, to be one of the following three figures:

- The Jewish Messiah, a direct descendant of King David, who must restore, after a period of war and suffering, the Davidic monarchy, the Temple, and the glory of the people of Israel.
- Christ, whose second coming, foretold in the New Testament, will occur at the "end of Times" and in which the Antichrist will be confronted and defeated.
- The Mahdi awaited by Shi'ite Muslims.

> Here, in summary, is the scenario of the final hour: the last days will be marked above all by Gog and Magog, biblical figures of chaos and devouring fire. It will be the triumph of outer darkness. But at that very moment, at the highest crest of the wave, in the very heart of the dark age, a fleeting return of spiritual light will appear. This final flourish is embodied by the revelation of the Mahdi. In the *Dictionnaire encyclopédique de l'Islam* one reads: 'This concept has imposed itself, for the lucidity of the eleventh hour, like the moment of serene acuity that precedes death, constitutes a widespread human experience.' With the advent of the Mahdi, order will be restored and law will replace anarchy. But his reign will be immediately followed by that of a false messiah, the Antichrist, the Daijal. The most striking physical trait of the Antichrist is that he will have only one eye. He will present himself as the messiah, offering the world a parody of spirituality. He will perform numerous pseudo-miracles. His malefic dominion will not last forever. In the end, Jesus Christ will appear to save the world. The Mahdi is, therefore, a first messiah who announces and prefigures the return of Christ. Alone and without the help of Jesus, he is doomed to failure, which grants him a certain resemblance to the messiah son of Joseph in the Jewish tradition (1).

Some individuals kept their messianic claims secret, waiting for the moment when the signs would appear indicating that the time had come to reveal their true identity. Signs that never came.

> Messianic movements. Haïm Vital (16th century)

> Starting from the belief that in each generation there exists a potential messiah, he ends up convincing himself that he himself potentially carries the messianic essence and, later, that he is the messiah son of Joseph.
> Until his death in 1620, in Damascus, he valiantly awaits the sublime instant of the Revelation. But nothing happens and our man fades away in the waiting.
> One must wait until 1612 to discover the truth. On that date, the kabbalist, who feels his death approaching, publishes a surprising document: the *Book of Visions*, in which he explains that for forty years he has known that he is the awaited messiah and that he has had proof of this through dreams and visions (1).

Others, many, made such claims overtly public and received the consideration and treatment of *madmen*. In fact, it continues to be considered one of the characteristic themes of megalomaniacal delusions.

But there have also been self-proclaimed messiahs who have managed to create around themselves groups of fervent followers who, when they were not annihilated by the prevailing power, often continued after their founder's death for years, decades, and even centuries.

> Specifically, this curious Swiss character publishes in 1933 a series of pamphlets signed with the name of Jesus Zebaoth Jehovah, in which he reveals himself as the incarnation of Christ. He founds a small association, the Witnesses of Jesus Zebaoth Jehovah (which must not be confused with Jehovah's Witnesses!) and it would seem he manages to gather nearly five thousand disciples, convinced that Emile is the synthesis of the Father and the Son and that the devil does not exist.

His clientele consists essentially of peasants from the Upper Rhine.

The cult persisted until the nineteen-sixties" (1).

Crisis cults

The imperial expansion of the European powers that began with the discovery of America produced an enormous impact on the numerous peoples who came into contact with Western civilization. Anthropologists subsequently had the opportunity not only to access the study of the ways of life of a great number of prehistoric peoples, but also to observe the effect that acculturation (violent or friendly) produced on their way of life. They found that coming

into contact with the colonizers, in addition to producing a crisis in the value system and social organization of the affected tribes and chiefdom societies, led to a generalization of alcoholism and violence.

Another characteristic of acculturation processes is the proliferation of what are known as crisis cults, a concept we owe to La Barre (11). These occur —by definition— when a culture loses its stability through contact with another of superior technological and economic development. Although they were described in relation to the process of European colonial expansion, they would in fact have occurred, at least, since the times of the Roman Empire.

The main characteristics of crisis cults are summarized below:

- they organize themselves around a strongly charismatic leader, who usually begins his preachings following a mystical revelation;
- they often resort to violence, directed primarily against the colonizing or more developed civilization;
- they offer a new system of values and references, mixing indigenous ones, those of the invaders, and the leader's original contributions, in varying proportions.

> Crisis cults. Juan Santos Atahualpa (17th century)
> In the course of his journey to Europe he had stopped in Angola and had discovered with astonishment the existence of Black priests. His project now involves the building, under his divine staff, of an Indian Christian Church.
> In fact, his Christianity is a subtle blend of national traditions and colonization. Atahualpa considers coca a sacred plant (1).

they tend to have a marked utopian and magical component; as a curious aside, many of these cults (in America, in Africa, in Oceania and in Asia) promised their followers complete immunity against the white man's bullets, with catastrophic results;

some crisis cults evolve from the initial agitation to become more conventional churches that may even favor adaptation to and integration into the new society (when indigenous peoples are in the minority, as in the U.S.).

However, movements with messianic overtones similar to crisis cults have been described in apparently well-integrated and stable indigenous communities (and not in crisis), such

as the episode recounted by Goodman (5) in which a Pentecostal pastor created a religious community in a small indigenous village on the Yucatán Peninsula. It is also known that in some indigenous peoples (such as the Guaraní Indians) messianic movements were already a known phenomenon before first contact with the colonizers.

In the case presented by Goodman, which involved collective trance states and visual hallucinations, the village residents appeared to join the religious community after visiting the place of worship out of mere curiosity and experiencing in themselves the dissociative phenomena suffered by their neighbors who were already members of the group. Based on this observation, this author postulates the thesis that crisis cults are due to the emergence of altered states of consciousness in predisposed individuals, states that spread through hysterical suggestion to the rest of the community.

I have used the book "Religious Movements Derived from Acculturation" (14) to study the phenomenon of crisis cults. It provides numerous examples from the Americas,Africa, Indonesia, and Oceania, without our finding evidence to suggest that trance states and dissociative phenomena constitute a universal feature of them,even though they are not uncommon. What is more striking is the existence of some very clear tendencies, repeated across crisis cults from different continents, which lead us to think that they are not so different from the groups identified, in our own context, as*cults*.

Qualifications

This classification of PGs into three distinct groups is convenient from a descriptive standpoint, although its conceptual validity must be relativized taking into account that the points of overlap between the three types are abundant and the boundaries rather imprecise.

For example:

- Some current cult groups are led by individuals with messianic pretensions;
- the same is true of a large portion of the crisis cults that arose among primitive peoples following contact with the West and Christianity;

- it is not uncommon for Western groups, especially Christian ones with cult-like profiles, to take root among primitive peoples, playing a role similar to that of authentic indigenous crisis cults (with the small difference that hostility is no longer directed against the colonizer but against constitutive elements of one's own culture).

The specificity of groups whose leader is proclaimed the Messiah, Jesus, or the Mahdi must likewise be relativized. In fact, they do not differ in any way from others whose leader is merely a *prophet* who establishes or has established contact with the divine. They are distinguished only by that small difference of nuance in the exaltation of the leader. As if that were not enough, messianic myths — the belief in the future coming of a redemptive superhuman figure — are not exclusive to the religions of the Book, nor is the emergence of figures who claim to embody the myth. Taking *messianism* in an even broader sense, that of faith in a near future of perfection and happiness, it is transformed into a practically universal tendency of PGs.

It is also worth clarifying that the classification we use is not exhaustive nor does it necessarily cover all groups with paranoid functioning. Specifically, we have not included in this study either *mafia organizations* or *youth gangs*, in many of which the existence of a strong paranoid bias seems evident.

We have studied, however, several cases of a type of political organization that, despite their sectarianism, are not usually identified as cults, but rather with labels such as "radicals," "extremists," "terrorists," etc. These are OPs whose immediate objective is the imposition upon society as a whole, by whatever means necessary, of a totalitarian political system that in the majority of cases is of a nazi/fascist or Leninist or theocratic nature.

Specific cases mentioned in this book

In the fourth part of the book, the various manifestations of collective paranoid activation will be set out using multiple examples referring to the three types of PA: crisis cults, messianic movements and cults.

From the first, I have selected some cases from the Oceanic islands:

The hau-hau of the Mori of New Zealand was an uprising led by Te Ua, to whom the archangel Gabriel appeared in 1862, urging him to attack the English colonizers with the cry

of *"Pai marire-hau hau"*. Te Ua instituted a religion in which his person was worshipped and in which ceremonies were performed inspired equally by the Catholic Mass and by Western military liturgy.

I also include several references to episodes and *cargo* uprisings, a term used since 1935 by missionaries and traders to refer to a specific phenomenon of the Melanesian islands. These are crisis cults that periodically reemerge on those islands as a consequence, more than likely, of the cultural conflict experienced by Neolithic populations who practiced subsistence agriculture and who find themselves forced to insert themselves into a politically and economically advanced society.

The typical evolution of a *cargo* movement is as follows:

- an individual receives the message, through auditory and visual hallucinations, that something momentous is going to happen in the near future;
- the subject who has received the revelation undergoes a great personal transformation and gathers around himself a group of followers;
- he preaches a new ethical and legal code and a new system of beliefs that often includes ideas drawn from Christianity; in any case, it represents a break with the traditional Melanesian universe of customs, beliefs and values;
- the followers modify their attire in accordance with the leader's instructions, thereby enacting the acquisition of a new identity;
- they prepare an airport or heliport where the ancestors (or God) will land with abundant material riches (*cargo*);
- they abandon the cultivation of their gardens, eat all their pigs (the ultimate sign of wealth and absolutely indispensable in an economic system that revolves around the organization of feasts in which pigs accumulated over years with great effort are consumed) and burn the hoarded banknotes; none of that will be necessary after having received the *cargo*…
- finally, the *cargo* does not appear on the appointed date and the movement dissolves, if it has not been previously crushed by the police or the army after having defied the authority of the State.

I have also brought up several crisis cults from among the hundreds that arose among the indigenous peoples of the American continent:

Overá, a Guaraní Indian who in the mid-sixteenth century claimed to be God and the son of a virgin, created a religion that demanded the worship of his person; he promised a kingdom of happiness that would come after a comet eliminated all the Spaniards; in the meantime, his followers had only to worship the new god and perform the prescribed rituals; many of them abandoned their crops, certain of the imminence of the new kingdom.

In 1762 a Delaware Indian claimed that the Master of Life had revealed to him in dreams a set of new commandments for the Indians (a mixture of indigenous and Western elements), the fulfillment of which would allow all Indians to unite and drive out the white men.

Following the vision he had in 1799, the Seneca Indian Handsome Lake preached a new religion to his tribe —recently defeated by the Americans, stripped of their lands, deprived of their farming areas and with no animals left to hunt, the impoverished Seneca had given themselves over to drinking and witchcraft— which urged the abandonment of the warrior way of life and the cessation of the permanent struggle against the Americans, and compelled the abandonment of drinking and the adoption of new customs that would in the long run prove beneficial (farming would cease to be an exclusively female task, etc.).

In 1805, the Shawnee prophet Lauliwasikaw preached a new and successful religion that, while incorporating Christian elements, taught the Indians to remain faithful to a good part of their ancestral customs; he subsequently proclaimed himself *Open Door*, for his power over death and even Manabozho, the creator; his ability to predict a solar eclipse aided him in his career as a preacher.

Smohalla, chief of a small Sahaptan tribe, began preaching around 1850 a religion centered on respect for "mother earth," where the bones of the ancestors dwell, awaiting the day they can be reunited with their respective spirits when the Great Chief Above returns to the earth; the doctrine of Smohalla rejected agriculture and the invaders' custom of breaking open the soil to build their homes and buildings.

In the mid-nineteenth century, a Venezuelan Indian in the Brazilian region of the Río Negro proclaimed himself to be the second Christ, surrounding himself with a large group of followers; the movement was dissolved by the army.

The Ghost Dance of 1870 —which would allow the Indians to survive a great earthquake that, on the contrary, would wipe out the white men— was revealed to the Indian Tavibo by the Great Manitou in three consecutive visions; the cult spread like wildfire to other tribes of the vast region of the prairies and plains and inaugurated a succession of new ghost dances, also revealed by the Great Manitou to various Indigenous leaders. Even with notable variations, the different dances share the same core of beliefs: the imminence of a great cataclysm, the salvation of those who danced regularly, the resurrection of the dead Indians, the end of white supremacy and even the extinction of the Americans through direct divine intervention. Of particular importance was the ghost dance of the charismatic Paiute Wovoka (known as the "Ghost Dance of 1890"), which helped to unite tribes far removed from one another in a series of uprisings against the white men that would culminate in the disastrous Battle of Wounded Knee. The cult barely survived the defeat (December 1890) and the failure of the millenarian prophecies, which had been foreseen for the spring of 1891.

After having visited heaven in 1882, during an episode in which his family had come to believe him dead, the Indian Slocum created a Christian group notable for its very lengthy meetings in which attendees experienced powerful trembling throughout their bodies, for which reason they came to be known as the *Shakers* of Puget Sound; through the avoidance of sin, sobriety, and the performance of strange rites, Slocum's followers sought to cure their illnesses and ward off misfortune.

In 1892, Apiawaiki, a Chiriguano Indian (in present-day Paraguay) proclaimed his divine origin and led an uprising against the tutelage of the Franciscans; the followers of Apiawaiki perished when it turned out that the army's rifles fired not water but bullets.

In 1963, a Ge Indian woman (a tribe inhabiting Brazil) claimed to carry in her womb the brother of the mythical hero Aukhe; her religion prescribed the incessant practice of dancing and sexual promiscuity; her followers abandoned their usual means of subsistence to live off the plundering of peasants; but when the latter rose up against the prophetess's followers, it turned out that the Ge had not become invulnerable to bullets; the child was born dead... and the cult dissolved.

As for the *messianic movements* studied, they are mostly Christian. The reincarnations of Christ to which we will make reference are the following:

Aldeberto, a medieval preacher and miracle worker.

The Christ of Bourges, another medieval preacher around whom a band of highwaymen formed and whose cult survived his death for several generations.

The Anointed Savior proclaimed himself in the mid-15th century the messiah of the end times, called to eliminate the Antichrist (the pope) and the ungodly (all of humanity save fourteen thousand people). But the papal legate and the bishops of the Antichrist put an end to him.

Mother Ann Lee, a woman of *Shaker* background who, during her time in prison, began a career of revelations that would lead her to found a Christian communist community in which absolute chastity was attempted; apparently, it was her disciples who transformed her into the reincarnation of Christ, whose feminine aspect would have remained hidden during his first coming.

Pedro Veriguín, was handed over by his parents to the orphanage of the Christian cult of the dukhobor, at the behest of Lukeria Kalmykov, who had seen in Pedro the child in whom Christ (her late husband) was meant to be reincarnated. The "Queen Lukeria" was the wife and successor of the last leader of a Russian religious community, whose origins are traced back to the eighteenth century and whose opposition to the Orthodox Church prompted the harassment and several deportations to which it was subjected by the tsars. The second of these deportations (between 1841 and 1845) led them from southern Ukraine to the Transcaucasian province of Georgia, recently incorporated into the Russian Empire. On the lands assigned to them, the community prospered until it reached an approximate number of 20,000 souls. During this Georgian period, the dukhobor community drew closer to the anarcho-Christian theories of Tolstoy, with his advocacy of vegetarianism, radical pacifism, and the abolition of private property. Upon the death without issue of "Queen Lukeria", her designated successor, Pedro Veriguín, clashed with the moderate — and minority — faction of the cult, led by Lukeria's brother, which prompted the intervention of the public authorities and Pedro's arrest. From his Siberian captivity, however, he continued to lead the group, increasing its rigorism (with the prohibition of alcohol and tobacco) and pushing further the pacifist attitudes and peaceful resistance to the State (they refused to pay taxes, to swear oaths of loyalty to the tsar, to register their marriages, etc.). Following his instructions, the dukhobor burned their weapons and also refused to report for compulsory military service, recently introduced. With their room for maneuver limited by pressure from Russian

and international public opinion, the regime negotiated the community's departure from the country, which after various tribulations ended up in Canada (1899). With the financial assistance of Tolstoy, Kropotkin, and the Quakers, several thousand dukhobor eventually settled in the western provinces of the country, occupying the lands offered to them by the authorities. At the end of his captivity, the Russian Christ joined his community in America, dying ultimately in a bomb attack whose perpetrators were never apprehended. At the present time, the dukhobor faith is still professed by several thousand people, albeit in declining numbers.

Jacobina Mentz, granddaughter of a German Anabaptist who emigrated to Brazil, who through divine revelation came to know that she was the reincarnation of Christ.

Federico Augusto Hain, for whom the fact of having proclaimed himself Christ did not prevent him from denying all validity to the Bible and proposing a pantheistic theory; by the late fifties there were still some five thousand Hainites remaining in Switzerland.

Gilbert Bourdin; an eccentric science fiction fanatic who proclaims himself to be the reincarnation, simultaneously, of Christ and Napoleon.

The *khlysty* are a Russian flagellant group that came to light in the seventeenth century; they believed that their founder — Filipovich — was God himself, and his second leader and successor — Suslov — was Christ.

Kondraty Selivanov was a devout militant *khlysty*, self-castrated, who after having been named messiah by the *khlysty* preacher Akulina founded a successful cult that preached castration; not content with being the Messiah, he also claimed to be the reincarnation of Tsar Peter III; after his death, the circle of his followers endured for a century and a half, until the arrival of the Bolsheviks.

Anabaptism was a radical Christian movement with anti-intellectual and egalitarian overtones that arose in parallel with the Protestant Reformation. It denied the validity of the baptism of newborns and proclaimed the necessity of a second baptism. From its ranks emerged several messianic leaders, some of whom enjoy great popularity as they are considered forerunners of modern socialism. We shall make mention of four of them: Jan Willemsen, John of Leiden, Jan Matthijs and, the best known, Thomas Müntzer.

Moon, a Pentecostal preacher, recipient of divine revelations since his adolescence and self-proclaimed Messiah, has built a worldwide financial empire and has embarked his

followers on a fight to the death against communism, against sexual promiscuity and in favor of a new theocratic world order headed by himself.

Regarding Jewish messianism, mention must be made of the *Sicarii*, a dynasty of revolutionary leaders/bandits of Galilean origin who, from the time of Pompey's capture by the Romans in 68 BC, led several uprisings against the occupiers from Italy. Some of the Sicarii leaders openly revealed their messianic ambitions.

The Sicarii must be distinguished from the Zealots — a movement with collegiate leadership that brought together the most intransigent sectors of the Jerusalemite clergy — as well as from the would-be Messiahs who were proliferating in Palestine at that time. Judaism had transitioned from a stage in which the prophets — beginning with Isaiah — foretold the future coming of the Messiah, to the actual arrival of a flood of messiahs announcing their imminent ascension to the throne of David and the establishment of the long-awaited kingdom of peace and prosperity.

Hezekiah, the first Sicarii leader, was executed in 67 BC. He was succeeded by his son "Judas the Galilean," to whom we owe the "Fourth Philosophy," which presented itself as a new Judaism distinct from the three traditional schools (Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes). While from a strictly *stricsensu* doctrinal standpoint it barely diverged from Pharisaism (with its literal belief in the resurrection of the dead and immortality), there was an abyss between the followers of the Fourth Philosophy and the rest of Judaism when it came to their indomitable attitude and the violent and uncompromising manner in which they sought to impose a theocratic state subject to no foreign power, placing full trust in the belief that direct divine intervention, as in the days of the conquest of Canaan, would ultimately grant them victory. The followers of the Fourth Philosophy consequently rose up recklessly against armies that were more numerous,more experienced, and better equipped. They were hostile toward the rest of the Jews, believing it their duty to murder those who did not share their violent ideology and did not practice the benevolence toward gentiles prescribed by the Torah.

Among the *sicarii* leaders *sicarii* most prominent, we must mention Menahem, who, coming from the fortress of Massada, entered Jerusalem dressed in royal robes. He killed the high priest but would end up dying himself at the hands of the temple priests. Eleazar ben Yair is the leader of the large group of Jews who committed suicide at Massada rather than be captured by the Romans.

In the second century CE, Simon bar Koseba, recognized as the Messiah by broad sectors of Judaism (unlike what had happened with his predecessors), led an uprising that resulted in the death of more than half a million Jews, the enslavement of the messiah's followers, the expulsion of Jews from Jerusalem, the prohibition on the circumcised from entering the Holy City, and its complete Hellenization.

After the great diaspora, Judaism continued to produce isolated messiahs, more or less successful, with the return to Jerusalem as a recurring idea. We will cite the following:

- Moses of Crete (5th century), the first Jewish messiah born outside Palestine.
- The messiah of Yemen (12th century), executed by the Muslim king.
- Abu Issa (8th century), a Persian Jew of humble origins, proclaimed himself Messiah and led an armed uprising against Islam, with the predictable result.
- Sabbatai Zevi (17th century), a mentally unbalanced Romaniote Jew of humble origins, was accepted by broad sectors of Judaism —from London to Cairo— as the awaited Messiah; he preached a new Judaism that transgressed the Levitical prescriptions, in keeping with the Talmudic belief —a minority one— that these would disappear following the restoration of the Kingdom; shortly before the date of his coronation he was arrested by the sultan he was to dethrone, which only served to increase his prestige, as his time in prison was surrounded by wondrous events; yet his conversion to Islam, under threat of execution, caused the bulk of his followers to turn their backs on him; nevertheless, his most fervent devotees continued to regard him as the Messiah, explaining his strange behavior with curious esoteric arguments (the Messiah would have "descended into hell"); at the present time, Sabbateanism claims to have no fewer than one hundred thousand followers, the majority of them in Turkey.
- Jakob Frank, a century later, led an opaque militarist group that practiced profanations and sexual promiscuity.

With regard to *sectarian or manipulation groups*, I have included a ultra-conservative Catholic group of Brazilian origin, the TFP (Tradition, Family, Property). It is a viscerally anti-communist movement that advocates a return to the medieval model of the estate-based society, and which is equally distinguished by a millenarian component that leads them to believe that the apocalyptic end of this world is drawing near, to be followed by the Kingdom of Mary, destined to last one thousand years. It is they who will play a leading role in the imminent armed confrontation with the demons that will rise from the ground.

I have also included several references to evangelical groups. In the North American religious landscape, the evangelical movement is made up of several thousand churches that define themselves in opposition to the traditional Protestant churches (Episcopal, Methodist, Presbyterian, as well as the Black churches), from which they have wrested, more or less, half of the faithful. Although it is clearly not a monolithic movement, there are some common points that distinguish evangelical churches:

- they promote a religious experience of greater emotional intensity; common to all of them is the experience of "Christian rebirth";
- they tend toward a more literal interpretation of the Bible, denying, for example, the Darwinist theory of evolution;
- they often believe in the imminent Second Coming of Christ, or maintain that the United States is the current *chosen people* by God, whose providence intervenes directly in the historical vicissitudes of that country;
- they are associated with more clearly defined attitudes opposed to abortion and homosexuality, as well as with the defense of the traditional family;
- they are more closely associated with the "Christian right" of the Republican Party than traditional churches are;
- they have a flock in which racial and ethnic distinctions are blurred to a greater extent than in traditional Protestant churches or in the Catholic Church (the church of Hispanics and the Irish).

We find cult dynamics much more frequently within the evangelical movement than within traditional churches. And within evangelism, sectarianism is especially associated with two currents: Pentecostalism and *discipleship*.

Pentecostal churches believe in the return of the Holy Spirit that descended upon the apostles. Its activity manifests itself in the form of the gift of tongues (the ability to speak incomprehensible dead languages and the ability to translate them), states of trance during which the demon is cast out, healings through the laying on of hands...

Proponents of discipleship are convinced that the Christian life obliges the faithful to submit to their spiritual guide in the same absolute and unconditional manner as the twelve apostles did with Jesus. A good part of these churches also preach that each guide must "shepherd" twelve Christians and no more. Each of those twelve faithful, in turn, and in time, should come to "shepherd" another twelve Christians…

It is worth adding, in any case, that groups with the most clearly cult-like profiles tend in turn to distance themselves from the evangelical trunk from which they sprang, given that their exclusivist messianism leads them to reject, if not demonize, the rest of the churches and denominations. On the other hand, the direct line that their leaders have with the divinity allows them to introduce doctrinal innovations that distance them even further from the rest of Protestantism. Thus, to give an example, The Way International, which expects its followers to speak in tongues, denies doctrines commonly accepted by the Protestant and evangelical community such as the Trinity, the divinity of Jesus, or the virginity of Mary. But in its process of doctrinal differentiation it goes somewhat further, distinguishing, for example, between the "Holy Spirit" and the "holy spirit," or claiming that there were four criminals who accompanied Jesus at the crucifixion. Furthermore, the correct interpretation of the Bible makes it clear that Jesus rose on a Saturday.

The list of evangelical churches to which some reference is made in this work is as follows: *Boston Church of Christ, Community Chapel, Church of Bible Understanding, Set Free Christian Fellowship, University Bible Fellowship, Phoenix Valley Church of Christ, No-Name Fellowship, The Truth, Maranatha Christian Ministries, River of Life Ministries*, World Brotherhood, Truth Station, Divine Church of Salvation, and a small Pentecostalist community in an indigenous village in Yucatán.

The *Jesus Movement* developed in the 1960s and 70s in the United States within the framework of the counterculture and the movement of opposition to the Vietnam War and to the "system." Its naïf theology and the *hippy* lifestyle they advocated make it difficult to place within the evangelical movement. We will mention one group well known for its sexual scandals: the Children of God.

The Reverend Jones's People's Temple cannot easily be placed within the evangelical movement either. Its orientation toward action and social justice, and its "leftist" positioning, place it closer to the predominant liberal tendency in traditional Protestant churches.

I will bring up two groups that were born in the context of North American millenarianism during the decades preceding World War I: the Shiloh Christian community and the Jehovah's Witnesses (JW). The Davidians (the followers of Reverend David Koresh) can be situated within the same lineage, while constituting a recently formed group (and one with a recent end).

The universal Christian church was founded in the middle of the last century by French postal worker Georges-Ernest Roux, who at the age of 47 discovered his miraculous healing powers in a dog, which allowed him to become wealthy in a short time. Three years later God revealed to him that he was Christ…

Two Islamic sectarian groups are cited, of unequal size. Nation of Islam is a Muslim and racist organization that carried out significant proselytizing within the North American Black community. It preaches a heterodox Islam, with a marked Black supremacist component, which managed to attract 5–10% of the African American population. Subsequently, however, the majority would evolve toward a more moderate and orthodox Sunni Islam. The Morabitun are a small Muslim community, settled in Granada, founded by a Scotsman rebaptized as Abdul Qadir. In recent times the group has found success outside its Granada stronghold, achieving the conversion to its version of Islam of a small and impoverished indigenous Mexican community.

Hare Krishna is without a doubt the best-known Hindu sectarian group with international reach, thanks to its colorful and noisy street proselytizing, but it is not the only one. I will include some allusion to another guru established in Switzerland and Austria: Omkarananda Swami, who spent fourteen years in prison for attempted murder.

The Kashi Ranch is a rural community devoted to the practice of yoga and led by a woman, whom her followers call Ma. It is involved in legal proceedings concerning the parental custody of some children born within the community who were at some point "handed over" to her.

A well-known guru of the 70s was Baba, an American citizen who, upon returning from his spiritual training in India, began preaching in a New York park, without uttering a single word, through a sign language he had created himself. His followers, who baptized themselves as The Family, bought a coach and traveled to a ranch where they formed an agricultural community in which about 30 members resided (The Family was made up of about 100 followers). On the estate, the followers worshipped "Swami," the guru who had introduced Baba to Hinduism. Baba became progressively more violent with his followers, whom he scolded and beat. He raped and sexually exploited his female followers, all of which did not diminish his credibility among his disciples. However, while listening to an evangelical radio program, he understood one day that Swami was Satan, and he abandoned the group he himself had created.

Some cult groups cannot be fitted into any of the major religions of today and must be ascribed to minority, extinct, or diffuse currents; others claim to condense and include all religions within their fold, and there are also those that present themselves as a completely new religion, distinct from traditional ones.

The Hermetic Philosophical Institute (of Hermes Trismegistus), of Chilean origin, considers itself to be in possession of the essences of the Gnostic tradition.

Ordo Templi Orientis professes the "Thelemic" religion, created in 1904 by Aleister Crowley, a man of dissolute life and a well-known precursor of modern Satanism. The Thelemites are also linked to the Hermetic tradition, as well as to occultism, and use an Egyptian iconography in which Horus stands out, presiding over the recently initiated historical cycle. Their practices are identified as *Magick* and, at least at first, included sexual rites in which bisexuality and sadomasochism were practiced.

The Great White Brotherhood is a curious mixture of millenarianism, Christianity, theosophical ideas, and pure delusions, of Ukrainian origin but established in various parts of the former Soviet Union. The cult was led by Yoan Swami (reincarnation of God the Father, King Vladimir, John the Baptist, Krishna, Adam...) and his wife Maria Devi (reincarnation

of the Holy Spirit, of King Vladimir's grandmother, of the Virgin Mary, of Eve...). The *Usmalians* believed that priests are Satanic, that the Eucharist contains microbes that robotize people, that computers, electronic devices, and credit cards must be destroyed, and that the consumption of meat and pregnancy should be avoided...

Nueva Acropolis preaches a complex amalgam of Greek philosophy and esoteric religious traditions. It tends toward the realization of the "Superman." According to several authors who have investigated the group, its internal functioning follows militaristic schemes and they practice a Nazi-fascist liturgy.

Sai Baba, born in 1920, is an Indian guru who baptized himself with that name as a teenager, when he learned that he was the reincarnation of the Muslim holy man of the same name, who had died two years before his birth. Despite having barely left his country, he came to gather several million followers around the planet, especially in the Western world, fascinated by his message of unity and love. Sai devotees sing, gather, read Sai literature, and travel to the small village of Puttaparthi to enjoy the experience of being "blessed" by the saint (greeted from a distance with a raising of the hand). The guru also performs miracles: he lays eggs from his mouth and "materializes" small objects that he gives as gifts to visitors. In recent years, the numerous allegations by young adolescent males that the love he practices is more physical than what he preaches have increased desertions and diminished the movement's strength.

The Warriors of the Empire of Kir Fenix are a curious Luciferian group that deeply despises religions as a whole (Satanic ones included) and the *homo sapiens*, as well as his obsession with ceaselessly seeking orgasms. They, who are not human, consider Money and Power to be nobler and more preferable.

The Rainbow Community is headquartered in Lizaso (Navarre) and practices an orientalist syncretism with a certain predominance of Tantric elements.

C.E.I.S (Centro Esotérico de Investigaciones), a group created in Barcelona by someone who claims to be the reincarnation of Jesus Christ and Job, has been involved in a large number of legal proceedings. Throughout its history, the group has also attracted a certain degree of media coverage due to the practice of compulsory homosexuality and prostitution. Its members live in community and undergo prolonged "therapies."

The so-called "Mazagón cult," made up of the leader and nine followers, was formed out of a series of "Silva Mind Control method" courses, after which a stable group took shape that gradually incorporated esoteric elements and those of "contactism." The group migrated from Madrid to the coastal town of Mazagón, where beatings and humiliations (such as drinking dog urine, eating one's own hair, or scrubbing the floor with one's tongue) escalated in severity. The group dissolved when its members were arrested by the police following the death, by beating, of one of them, who had been accused of being possessed by the devil.

Guru Maharaj-Ji ranks among the most successful Indian god-men, although at the present time his movement is in clear decline. The son of a guru who died when he was eight years old, it is believed that his father's spirit took possession of his body. He preaches a syncretic religion centered on access to "Knowledge" and on the divinity of his person, but the meditation practices he teaches have an unmistakably Hindu character.

Universal Energy is a fairly successful group created by a former Korean sergeant, to whom Buddha and Jesus directly transmitted the doctrine. The exercises teach how to release human energy by opening each of the chakras "to 100%." Complete mastery of energy will open up possibilities never dreamed of: women will be able to become pregnant with two or three exchanges of thoughts with their husbands, will be able to give birth to two or three children per year, at any age, and with each pregnancy they will grow younger; nuclear warheads will be able to be redirected to uninhabited areas, the ozone layer repaired, the productivity of rice harvests increased, all kinds of diseases cured… Despite the fact that several fixed-date announcements of the end of the current world have failed, the group's followers continue to believe in the imminence of a new civilization of complete happiness, in which the pituitary gland and the pineal gland will be reunited… In the construction of the new civilization, an important role is to be played by the 100 sages who are aboard a submarine from which nothing has been heard for several years…

Raschimura, another god-man, leads a small group born in Sant Cugat del Vallès in the 1970s, teaches elements drawn from various Eastern traditions, and has found himself embroiled in a multitude of scandals, particularly for unlicensed professional practice. In recent years, some former female followers have reported having been forced into prostitution.

Mel Lyman, a well-known *folk* singer of the 1960s, drew the circle of his admirers along in his delusional drift, which led him to claim that he came from another planet (the

same one as Christ), that the Aryan race was superior, that he was the incarnation of the divine, of Christ… When toward the end of the decade he exchanged letters with Charles Manson, already imprisoned, his followers claimed that it was only natural for Christ and the Antichrist to correspond… During the 1970s the group turned toward criminal activities, which provoked an immediate police response and the subsequent retreat of the messiah's followers. With the founder now deceased, his followers currently form a peaceful community devoted to the real estate sector.

Certainly, not all cult groups revolve around religious beliefs or practices.

In California—during the 1960s and 70s—several groups flourished that were oriented toward psychotherapy and personal growth but operated with a markedly paranoid behavior pattern. I will include references to one of them: the Sullivanians. Also to be mentioned are two non-religious groups oriented toward the treatment of drug addiction: Synanon and El Patriarca.

Yahweh ben Yahweh (God son of God, in reality, the son of a Black pastor), having passed through Protestantism, the civil rights movement, and Islam Nation, created his own "neo-Judaic" church. He taught Black people that they and they alone were the true Israelites. The group oriented itself toward real estate and the cleanup of the most depressed Black neighborhoods, but the violent methods underpinning the group's business dealings and the several murders ordered by Yahweh ben Yahweh led to his arrest and the decline of his "Temple of Love".

"The Community", founded by the Argentine Silo, combines a psychology oriented toward the liberation from trauma with political activism. In our country, it was behind the Humanist Party (which merged with Izquierda Unida) and the creation of an ecologist party. Its members carry out a great deal of activity, attending frequent and lengthy meetings and publishing local advocacy newspapers.

The cult group Agora revolves around an interesting blend of Greek Philosophy, Psychology, and business management knowledge.

The commune of Austrian Otto Muehl claims to be an alternative to the traditional family, and is one of the few communes from the counterculture period to have survived the passing of the years. Obviously, it is not a democratic society but rather an environment in which the founder exercises absolute control and power.

Edelweiss was a small cult group of ufological orientation made up of children and adolescents, seduced by a leisure monitor, who believed they were going to be transported to another planet.

Scientology is a group of cult-like operation with an original doctrine that integrates ufological elements, science fiction, and a simplistic depth psychology that explains human malaise as a consequence of harmful unconscious elements (tethans, engrams) found within the individual that must be identified and expelled. It stands out for its capacity to enrich itself at the expense of its followers.

Finally, some APs can hardly be pigeonholed either among the *cults*, or among the *crisis cults* , or among the *messianic movements*.

Tata Dios (Father God, in Guanche dialect) established a cult to his divine person and led an uprising against foreigners that was suppressed *manu militari*. His cult survived him.

At the end of the last century, the Mennonite Russian Calas Epp led numerous followers to the region of Khiva, where on March 8, 1889, the descent of Jesus and the prophet Elijah was supposed to take place, which did not occur; abandoned by everyone except a few families, he would end up proclaiming himself the *fourth person of the Trinity*.

The KKK is a well-known semi-secret organization whose ideological axis is white supremacy, along with the defense of Christianity and Southern identity.

In the year 1578, the young Portuguese king Dom Sebastiao died without heirs while fighting against the Moors at Alcazarquivir, which precipitated the incorporation of Portugal into the dominions of Philip II. Many refused to believe in his death, and around the deceased monarch a legend was woven that claimed he was actually still alive and would one day return to establish a splendorous kingdom. Sebastianism spread throughout the empire and, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, two different visionaries, in the Brazilian region of Pernambuco, claimed to receive messages from the king, whose return was imminent. The first of them was Silvestre José dos Santos, nicknamed Maestro Qiom, who settled with his followers in the Serra do Rodeador, where they were defeated and massacred by the military. The second leader was Joao Ferreira, "His Holiness the King." His movement ended with a mass suicide and the final intervention of the army. But without doubt the most notable of the Sebastianisms was that of Antonio Conselheiro, prophet of the end of the world (which was to occur in the year 1900) and of the imperial restoration in

the person of Dom Sebastião. He preached through the villages of the Brazilian Northeast, dressed as a monk, railing against the neglect of the churches, against impiety and, with the establishment of the Republic, against civil marriage and the new taxes. A growing group of pilgrims joined him, eventually settling in the village of Canudos, the place where Dom Sebastião would soon appear. Drawn by the daily preachings of the wandering monk, thousands of poor peasants, former Black slaves, Indians, and former outlaws flocked to Canudos. Accused of conspiring with the English to overthrow the Republic, they valiantly resisted several attacks by the Army, until they were finally defeated and decimated.

The Lubavitch constitute a dynasty of rabbis Hasidic Russians whose sixth successor was forced to flee from the Bolsheviks to Poland and subsequently from the Nazis to the United States. In that country he launched a campaign to draw his lukewarm fellow believers toward Orthodox Judaism. He was succeeded by his son-in-law, who gave the movement an even more actively proselytizing orientation (they approach other Jews in the street to call them to the strict observance of Hebrew customs). In recent years, the idea that the coming of the Messiah is near has begun to take shape…

The Soka Gakkai

I have devoted particular attention to this Japanese Buddhist organization, born in the 1930s, which experienced spectacular growth in the second half of the century, achieving a more than notable spread among the humblest strata of Japanese society. The Soka Gakkai created a political party — the Komeito — which still holds significant representation in Parliament, extended its proselytism to the American continent, and finally, in 1991, severed its ties with the Buddhist cult — the Nichiren Shoshu — within whose bosom it was born and of which it claimed to be nothing more than a lay organization. In turn, the Nichiren Shoshu is one of the several cults into which the movement created by Nichiren split at the time of his death, as a result of personal and doctrinal disagreements among his disciples. It is a rigorist schism that in subsequent centuries remained always relatively isolated from the other Nichiren groups and in a markedly minority position.

As for Nichiren, he was one of the great reformers of Japanese Buddhism who came to the fore during the Kamakura period. His Buddhism was summed up in the incessant repetition of the *daimoku*, a phrase — Namu myoho renge kyo— which means "Adoration to the Lotus Sutra."

Let us now examine the process that spans from the arrival of the Buddhist religion on the Japanese islands to the creation and explosive growth of the Soka Gakkai.

The arrival of Buddhism in Japan

> Although the Japanese islands were never subjected to the political domination of the Chinese empire, there was considerable penetration of ideas and knowledge — such as ideographic writing — originating from the continent, remodeled in a second stage to adapt to the particular idiosyncrasy of the Japanese people.
> The Buddhist texts and cults of the Mahayana branch, the only one capable of establishing itself north of the Himalayas, began their slow entry into the Japanese archipelago in the year 538, in the baggage of a Korean embassy. The new ideas caused division at the imperial court, but the conversion of Empress Suiko (593–628) definitively established the new teachings (12).

Subsequently, with the founding of the Tendai and Shingon cults in the 9th century AD, which would leave all the preceding ones in a marginal position, a total of eight Buddhist cults came to be counted.

Until the emergence of new schools that took place during the Kamakura period, in the 12th and 13th centuries, the religious landscape remained relatively stable. Its most outstanding features were the following:

each cult relied on a *sutra* (religious text) in particular, which it considered to be the bearer of the essence of Buddhism;

there was an absolute separation between the monks and the people: the difficulty of the texts and concepts used, as well as the nature of the practices and ceremonies —complicated, lengthy (they could last up to a week) and shrouded in a veil of mystery — excluded laypeople from any possibility of access to Enlightenment, leaving them to content themselves with the possibility of hiring the services of monks to perform ceremonies and incantations with which to influence the weather, cure illnesses, etc.;

a certain fusion took place with the worship of local gods, as the *Shinto* deities were accepted into Buddhist temples

The Kamakura Period (1185–1333)

In Japanese historiography, this period is the one that follows the so-called *Heian* (peace) period, which began during the 9th century and during which the archipelago remained relatively isolated from its continental neighbors and Buddhist ideas predominated at the imperial court.

During the Kamakura era, the emperor was relegated to a ceremonial function, yielding predominance to the warrior caste, which plunged the country into endless armed conflicts. The feudal-vassal system in Japan was surprisingly similar to the one established in Western Europe around the year 1000 AD. Among other parallels, both were accompanied by an intense religious exaltation and renewal, led in Europe by the Gregorian Reform and, in the Japanese islands, by a group of founders of new cults as well as monks who, after having made pilgrimages to China, returned with versions of Buddhism unknown until that time.

During this period, a total of at least seven new cults were created, almost as many as in the previous six centuries. Following this mutation of the religious landscape, no new school would be forged until the seventeenth century, some five hundred years later, with the exception, it must be said, of the successive schisms (and mergers) of already existing cults, the fruit of personal confrontations and minor dogmatic differences in nuances of interpretation, which did not truly represent any significant novelty.

The two most important Chinese Zen schools (Rinzai and Soto) were imported by the hands of Eisai and Dogen, respectively. Both, dissatisfied with what they had learned in their country of origin, traveled to the continent in search of Enlightenment. Both versions of Zen share an insistence on the practice of meditation. The Rinzai school —which seeks to

achieve Buddhist Enlightenment through the resolution of paradoxes known as *koan*— is the best known in the West, and spread among the nobility and the most educated sector of society. Soto Zen, more widely disseminated, found success among the lower strata of the samurai caste. It insists on faith in meditation, given that the seated lotus position itself would be, in and of itself, Enlightenment.

The three Amidist cults (Jodo) offer the possibility of attaining "buddhahood" after death, and being reborn in the "Pure Land of the West" through the repeated and fervent invocation of the phrase Namu Amida Butsu ("Adoration to the Buddha Amida"). Amidism was very popular among the peasantry and is today the most widespread form of Buddhism in the archipelago.

The new cults of the Kamakura period share several common traits: they tend to distill all of Buddhism into a single essential principle and a single practice, the learning of which is simple; they shy away from the esotericism and complicated ceremonials characteristic of monastic life; and they insist on faith (with the exception of Rinzai Zen) as a prerequisite for the practice of Buddhism. This combination of elements was meant to make the Buddhist religion more accessible to lay society, extending the practice of religion beyond the walls of the monasteries.

Alongside the two Zen schools and the three Amidistones, the third great current that came to light during the Kamakura period was founded by the monk Nichiren. His Buddhism shared the characteristics of the rest of the Buddhisms of this period, but, on the other hand, was distinguished by a combative, intolerant attitude that did not admit the mere existence of the other cults, aspiring to have them eradicated by force and to have his truth imposed upon the population as a whole by political power.

Nichiren (1222-1282)

> Buddhist monk. Founder of the Nichiren cult (also known as the Hokke or Lotus cult) of Buddhism; one of the leaders of the 'new Buddhism' of the Kamakura period (1185-1333).
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> Nichiren was born in the seaside village of Kominato in the province of Awa (currently part of Chiba prefecture); his father was probably a low-ranking state inspector connected to fishing. Sent at the age of 12 to a nearby temple of the Tendai cult, Kiyosumidera, for his education, Nichiren underwent a crisis stemming from his doubts about the efficacy of

Pure Land (Jodo) beliefs; he prayed to Kokuzo, a Bodhisattva venerated at Kiyosumidera, and received a vision in which Kokuzo granted him wisdom. Ordained at the age of 16 as Zeshobo Rencho, he embarked on an extensive journey of study at the principal centers of Buddhist learning in the Kansai area, especially at Mount Hiei, and including stays at Onjoji and Mount Koya, returning around 1253. His early works show a preference for the esoteric teachings of the Tendai and Shingon cults as well as for the theories of an absolute monism derived from Hongaku (original enlightenment) Tendai, a growing faith in the Lotus Sutra, one of the most widely venerated scriptures of Mahayana Buddhism, and a strong rejection of Pure Land Buddhism.

On June 2, 1253, Nichiren preached against the Zen and Jodo cults at Kiyosumidera. Traditionally regarded as the founding of the Nichiren cult, this denunciation and a subsequent confrontation with the local magnate Tojo Kagenobu, a Pure Land devotee, for control of Kiyosumidera, led to Nichiren's expulsion from Awa the following year. Settled in Kamakura, Nichiren gradually replaced his esoteric Buddhist faith with early Tendai theories: on this basis he developed an increasingly exclusive faith in the Lotus Sutra with its doctrine of universal salvation and of the eternal Buddha Sakyamuni, whom he acclaimed as 'lord, teacher and father'. Stimulated perhaps by the Pure Land belief in the efficacy of the Nembutsu, the repeated invocation of the name of the Buddha Amida, as a means of securing rebirth in Amida's Western Paradise, Nichiren developed a similar belief in the practice called *daimoku* (title), a chanted recitation of the phrase Namu myoho renge kyo ('I take refuge in the Lotus Sutra') as an invocation that affirms the devotee's belief and that confers salvation and which Nichiren took as the object of his worship (*onzon*). Nichiren maintained that the *daimoku* of the Lotus Sutra contained all the merits of that sutra, as well as all the merits of all the scriptures and virtues of the Buddha; all these merits are spontaneously given to the person who, as he would later write, 'receives and keeps' the *daimoku*. He also developed his early idea of 'blasphemy' (heresy, absence of belief in the Lotus Sutra), according to which even silence or tolerance in the face of blasphemy would be taken as complicity in sin. Based on this idea, Nichiren completed in 1260 his Rissho Ankoku Ron (A Treatise on the Pacification of the State through the Establishment of Orthodoxy), which held the Jodo movement responsible for the recent disasters and urged its suppression; he predicted foreign invasions and other calamities if this were not done. Presented to Hojo Tokiyori (1227–63), who de facto held power in the shogunate of Kamakura, it led to attacks on his person and to his exile in Izu in 1261.

Nichiren's life in Izu is not well documented. The works that have survived show his growing doubts about esoteric Buddhism and the organization of his so-called 'five principles' (*gogi*) as the foundation of his belief: (1) the teaching (the Lotus Sutra); (2) the capacities of those who receive it; (3) the moment (the degenerate third age of Buddhism known as *mappo*); (4) the country (Japan); and (5) the order of propagation or (in later writings) the teacher (Nichiren). Nichiren developed a growing awareness of his mission as the persecuted ascetic (*gyoja*) of the Lotus Sutra, the Buddha's messenger in the final days.

Released from his exile in Izu in 1263, he returned to Kamakura, making two journeys to Awa in 1264 and 1266, during the first of which his old enemy Tojo Kagenobu nearly succeeded in having him assassinated. The arrival in Japan of the first Mongol embassy in 1268 cemented his hopes for the fulfillment of his predictions of foreign invasions made in the *Rissho ankoku ron*. His broadened denunciations of the Jodo, Shingon and other cults and of monks as prominent as Ninsho (1217-1303) of the Ritsu cult embroiled him in litigation, while his aggressive behavior and the arming of his followers ultimately led to his arrest and near execution at Tatsunokuchi, near Kamakura, in September 1271.

After remaining under arrest for several weeks, Nichiren was exiled to the island of Sado. Abandoned by most of his followers and expecting his imminent death, during his confinement Nichiren attempted to justify his suffering and his apparent failure as retribution for his own past sins and as the fulfillment of written prophecies concerning those who propagate the Lotus Sutra in the degenerate age of *mappo*. This period marked a critical turning point in Nichiren's religious life. The most notable of his apologetic works from that period is the *Kaimoku Sho* (1272, Opening the Eyes), which Nichiren undoubtedly wrote as a final testament for his followers. Specifically, during this period Nichiren began to identify his mission with the roles of two bodhisattvas from the Lotus Sutra: Jofukyo, who was persecuted in a distant past for his preaching, and Jogyo, the leader of a great number of bodhisattvas, disciples of the Buddha from an incalculable number of past eons who were called forth from beneath the earth to preach the Lotus Sutra. Nichiren believed that the *mappo* age was the appointed moment for Jogyo and his followers to appear and preach the ultimate truth of the Lotus Sutra. It was also during this period that Nichiren began to formally defend his already habitual tactic of aggressively criticizing the 'blasphemies' of others; even many of his followers had come to doubt this practice of *shakubuku* (literally, break and subdue), which had provoked his persecution. In response to this, Nichiren argued that *shakubuku* was a more

appropriate tactic for the degenerate age of *mappo* than the tolerant attitude of accepting the relative truth of other teachings (*shoju*, gather and accept) as a basis for conversion.
During his detention, Nichiren also began composing his mandala distinctive (written in Chinese characters) that places Buddhas, bodhisattvas and other deities around the *daimoku* of the Lotus Sutra. He continued producing mandalas and distributed them among his most fervent followers as objects of worship and protective amulets during his final years.
The miseries of his exile in Sado were partially alleviated by his successes in debates with local monks and in the conversion of new adherents. After 1272 he also began receiving visits from his disciples, who had started to regroup following the recent persecution, and he acquired a new optimism about his mission.
This optimism is reflected in several works, especially in the *Kanjin honzon sho* (The Object of Worship and Contemplation), his most sophisticated work, which he composed for his inner circle of disciples in the spring of 1273; it sets forth Nichiren's interpretation of *ichinen sanzen* (three thousand realms in a single thought), the Tendai theory of reality; the Pure Land of Buddha in this world; the object of worship; and the reinterpretation of *mappo* as the age in which the ultimate teaching of Buddha would appear. Nichiren continued developing this last theme in his subsequent writings.
Nichiren's proselytizing activities were so successful that his enemies attempted to suppress his movement in Sado, apparently without success. An initiative to secure Nichiren's release ultimately succeeded, and he left Sado on April 28, 1274.
After a two-month stay in Kamakura, attempting without success to persuade the authorities that only the exclusive adoption of his religion could repel the Mongols, Nichiren departed from Kamakura and settled in Minobu, in the province of Kai (Yamanashi Prefecture), where he remained until his death eight years later. Surrounded by numerous disciples, he guided his increasingly distant and often persecuted followers through a voluminous correspondence. His writings and teachings from this period display several distinct characteristics. He attacked Tendai figures, especially later esoteric writers such as Ennin. There is a sense of having transcended his Tendai origins through the belief that his doctrine, having remained hidden until this latter age, proceeded directly from the Buddha. His work gives the impression of a marked interest in the discovery of Buddhist history and in what he saw as his catalytic role within it. Nichiren clearly sets out his 'four maxims' (*shika kakugen*) denouncing the other cults: reciting the name of Amida leads to eternal hell; followers of Zen are demons; Shingon will be the ruin of the country; and members of the Ritsu cult are

traitors. The *daimoku* is the quintessential expression of the teachings of the Lotus Sutra. Nichiren summarized his beliefs in what he called the 'three great secret doctrines' (*sandai hiho*), namely: (1) the object of worship (*honzon*), defined as the Buddha Sakyamuni or impersonal truth itself; (2) the ordination platform (*kaidan*), a center for the Nichiren faith that he never defined but which was probably meant to parallel the Tendai center of Mount Hiei; and (3) the *daimoku* of the Lotus Sutra. He believed in the inevitability of a Mongol victory over Japan as just punishment for the unbelief of the Japanese. The failure of the two invasions was a great disappointment to him.

In his early years Nichiren had conceived salvation in terms of the present world, which he identified with the Pure Land of Buddha. Although he never abandoned the ideal of 'becoming a Buddha in one's present body', derived from Tendai and Shingon beliefs, his later works, perhaps reflecting his persecutions and his failure to convert the authorities, tended to give priority to future rebirth in *Ryozen jodo* (The Pure Land of the Spiritual Mountain), an idealization of Mount Grdrakuta, where the Lotus Sutra was preached.

Repeatedly ill from 1278, Nichiren left Minobu in October 1282 to head to a hot spring but got no further than Ikegami, where he died on November 21.

Nichiren has always remained an ambivalent and controversial figure, and his teachings and reputation have often been distorted by later writers, especially those who saw him as an ultranationalist devoted to the emperor. His loyalty was ultimately directed toward the transcendent truths of the Lotus Sutra, to which the political order was supposed to conform. His religion, a fusion of various elements of old and new Buddhism (with a growing preponderance of the latter), was driven by his magnetic personality and clearly filled a need among lower-status warriors, from whom many of his followers came and who saw him as a master not so different from their military chiefs. His often intemperate language and reputation as a fanatic must be weighed against his scholarship and genuine concern for his followers (10).

Let us briefly highlight the megalomania of this intolerant monk (in contrast with the traditional calm and not very belligerent attitude of Buddhist cults) who, not content with seeing himself and his movement as the incarnation of various mythical figures from the Mahayana pantheon, considered that the practice he had created was *the only one* suited to the new era that was to succeed that of *mappo* (destruction). A truth that had remained unrevealed since the times of Buddha Shakyamuni himself, and that it was precisely he — whose coming had been prophesied in the Lotus Sutra — who was to preach it.

> Let us now see what the encyclopedia Kodansha tells us about the cult he formed
> [...] Just before his death in 1282, Nichiren chose six senior monks as spiritual heirs: Nichiji (1250-?), Nitcho (1252-1317), Niko (1253-1314), Nikko (1246-1333), Nichiro (1245-1310), and Nissho (1236-1323); except for Nichiji, who departed for the Asian continent in 1295, these monks, together with Nichiren's old warrior disciple Toki Tsunenobu (known as Nichi-jo; 1216-99), founded the original affiliations in the Kanto region. This lack of a single leader, the ambiguities of Nichiren's teachings and the early absence of a complete and accepted canon of his writings, the influence of Tendai ideas, especially Hongaku monism (original enlightenment), the tendency to create exclusively secret doctrines or 'oral transmissions' that were supposedly derived from Nichiren himself, and differences of temperament among the disciples made schisms almost inevitable.
> The schisms in the movement developed in two phases, first in the Kanto area and then in Kyoto once the cult had spread there. The first schism was the withdrawal of the rigorist Nikko from Minobu to form his own group, the 'Fuji branch', near Mount Fuji. Although the other Kanto groups also quarreled among themselves, none of their schisms proved as lasting as the first one between them and the Fuji branch, which developed its own doctrines.
> In general, the Kanto successions spread their activities to Kyoto from the fourteenth century onwards, but it was the disciples of Nichiro, in particular, who established branches in Kyoto: Nichizo (1269-1342) established the Shijo succession at Myokenji, with a rigorist branch at Myokakuji (1378), and Nichijo (1298-1369) of Honkokuji established the Rokujo succession.
> [...] The persecutions of the sixteenth century led many Nichiren leaders to renounce the militant tactics of previous centuries. The exception to this trend was the Fuju Fuse cult initiated in 1595 by Nichio, which appealed to a strict observance of Nichiren's principle of neither accepting from nor donating to non-believers. This rejection even of government

offerings led to persecutions, and the last Fuju Fuse groups were forced underground in 1691 and only reemerged in 1876.

The strict governmental control of religious bodies and the policy of prohibiting religious conversions made moderation and compromise the only viable stance; the energies of the cult were directed predominantly toward Tendai scholarship, theoretical debates on *hongaku* monism, monastic observances, education in the cult's seminaries (*danrin*), and the publication of historical, biographical, and bibliographical works.

Many of these activities, which have continued to influence modern Nichiren doctrine and scholarship, were far removed from the life of the ordinary believer; however, the cult was able to obtain the patronage of the flourishing merchant class through the cults of various deities associated with the cult — cults that promised benefits in this life through the placement of sacred objects and through lay fraternities (*kochu*) organized for pilgrimages. Despite these popular activities, the religious practices of the cult, as was the case with other traditional Buddhist cults, tended to ossify into 'funerary Buddhism', especially in the latter part of the Edo period (1600-1868).

Modern period (1868-): "Nichirenism" - The Meiji period (1868-1912) brought few changes to the established Nichiren cult apart from the forced separation of Shinto from Buddhism and some nominal sectarian reorganization: the old Itchi factions of Kanto united into the small 'Nichiren cult' (1876) at Minobu, the Shoretsu factions remained independent under new names and the Fuju Fuse groups reemerged (1876). Except during a brief wartime governmental reorganization (1939-46), these divisions continue to exist today with few changes.

The real power of the Nichiren movements has passed in modern times to lay-oriented movements far removed from the traditional cults and generally referred to as 'nichirenism' (*Nichiren shugi*). These movements took different forms. Popular religious organizations emerged, characterized by faith healing and the promise of material benefits in this life, shamanic practices, in many cases ancestor worship, strong group consciousness, and a more or less aggressive proselytism. With the exception of Soka Gakai, which is linked to the Nichiren Shoshu cult (True Nichiren cult), few have clearly defined doctrines (10).

Nikko Shonin

After the death of Nichiren, the first schism was led by the disciple Nikko Shonin, due to disagreements over what he perceived as a relaxation of the uncompromising attitude of the late master.

> In simple and lucid language, Yamadaira set forth the historical causes by which Nikko Shonin made the transcendent decision to leave Mount Minobu seven years after the death of the Daishonin, who bequeathed to him his True Buddhism and who made him prior of the temple Kuon-ji in Minobu. [These facts are presented in the important work *Nikko Shonin Minobu Rizan Shi* (History of the Departure of Nikko Shonin from Mount Minobu) written by the 59th high priest of Nichiren Shoshu, Nichiko Hori]. Mimbu Niko, and also Hakiri Sanenaga, introduced many heretical perversions into the practices carried out at Mount Minobu —veneration of Shinto deities, substitution of the Dai-Gohonzon with the statue of Buddha Shakyamuni, and tolerance of the veneration of Amida Buddha— which Nikko Shonin found impossible to permit. In 1289, accompanied by a number of devoted followers, carrying the Dai-Gohonzon of the Supreme Sanctuary, the remains and a life-size statue of Nichiren Daishonin and other important relics, he set out for the plains of Taiseki, at the foot of Mount Fuji. Mimbu Niko assumed the position of prior of the temple Kuon-ji, where heretical and distorted practices prevailed.
>
> To summarize the situation and try to convey an idea of the pain and disappointment that Nikko Shonin must have felt at that moment, Yamadaira quoted certain passages from *Reply to Hara*: 'After much deliberation, I have decided that it is imperative to establish the teachings inherited from my master on a solid and incorruptible foundation, whatever the place... Now that the other disciples have betrayed the master, I see that I am the only one who truly understands his teachings, the only one who will fulfill his will and propagate True Buddhism' (9).

The small Nichiren Shoshu

The Nichiren Shoshu has survived for centuries as a marginal schism, closed in upon itself, characterized by certain doctrinal and religious practice peculiarities. It delved far deeper than the rest of the Nichiren cults into the process of self-deification that Nichiren had

initiated, reaching within the cult's doctrine the highest degree permitted by Mahayana theology: the identification of Nichiren Daishonin with none other than the Buddha himself.

The Nichiren Shoshu, whose main temple remains located at the foot of Mount Fuji, is distinguished by the importance it grants to the Dai Gohonzon, the mandala that Nikko Shonin took with him and which symbolizes the possession of the true doctrine of Nichiren. The members of Nichiren Shoshu install in their home an altar with a reproduction of said mandala – the *Gohonzon*-, and the faith and devotion toward the scroll plays a role just as important as the repetition of the *daimoku*. True to its uncompromising spirit, the Nichiren Shoshu grants the utmost importance to the removal from the home of any image or symbol belonging to any other Buddhist or *shinto* cult.

The Sokagakkai

One of the new religious movements of Japan. Founded on November 18, 1930 in Tokyo by Makiguchi Tsunesaburo, a schoolteacher who became its first president. The Soka Gakkai is a lay organization legally independent from the Nichiren Sho sect of Buddhism. The main temple is Taisekiji in the city of Fujinomiya, Shizuoka Prefecture. It is the largest of the new lay organizations in Japan; in the early 1980s, it claimed to have 6,000,000 active members; its overseas sister organizations comprise approximately 430,000 people in around 50 countries. In addition to its religious activities, it has been active in numerous cultural and social projects.

At the time of its establishment, the organization was called Soka Kyoiku Gakkai (Val-ue-Creating Education Society) and was composed mainly of schoolteachers interested in Makiguchi's educational theories. Makiguchi had originally sought to introduce various reforms into Japanese society through a fundamental reform of its educational system, but his educational theories received little attention from the academic world of his time. Makiguchi converted to Nichiren Shoshu in 1928. He became convinced that the best way to realize his educational ideals was through the teachings of the founder Nichiren, and it was in order to advocate for an educational reform integrated with religious values that he founded the organization in 1930.

The Soka Kyoiku Gakkai grew slowly during the 1930s. The first general meeting was held in 1939. There were around 300 members in 1940 and around 3,000 in 1942. On July 6, 1943, Makiguchi and his principal disciple, Toda Josei, the organization's director general, were imprisoned by the government along with 19 other associates, accused of violating the 1941

> revision of the 1925 Peace Preservation Law for instructing their followers that they should not venerate the Shinto, then the state religion, and for opposing the government's war policy. Makiguchi died in prison on November 18, 1944.
>
> Toda began to rebuild the organization after his release from prison in July 1945; the society's name was changed to Soka Gakkai (Value-Creating Society) to underscore its greater emphasis on religious rather than educational aims. Toda assumed the presidency of the Soka Gakkai in May 1951 and embarked on a vigorous campaign to consolidate and expand the organization. At the time of his death in 1958, the Soka Gakkai claimed to have 750,000 family units.
>
> Toda was succeeded by Ikeda Daisaku (born 1928), who became President in May 1960. Ikeda, who had converted to Nichiren Shoshu in 1947, had served as Toda's closest collaborator in the organization and in the expansion of Soka Gakkai activities during the 1950s. Under his leadership the Soka Gakkai grew rapidly in the 1960s and 1970s and also spread abroad, primarily to North and South America. He also traveled frequently throughout Japan and to Europe, North America, China, India, and the Soviet Union. He resigned in 1979, being succeeded by Hojo Hiroshi (1923–1981). The latter was succeeded by Einosuke Akiya (born 1930) in 1981.
>
> … The Soka Gakkai frequently holds seminars, orientation meetings, and community discussion gatherings to increase its members' understanding of Nichiren's orthodox Buddhism and to give followers the opportunity to share their faith and experiences. It also develops a wide range of educational, cultural, and social programs to transform its religious ideals into social realities. It has launched a campaign for world peace and, in accordance with the founder's ideas, has developed its own educational system, including Soka University, founded in Tokyo in 1971. The organization publishes numerous books and magazines; its newspaper, *Seikyo shimbun*, had a circulation of 4,540,000 in 1983. It also founded a political party, Komeito, in 1964, but separated the party from itself in 1970 (10).

The tremendous growth of the Sokagakkai, unparalleled in modern Japan, caused the small cult upon which it had initially depended to be eclipsed by its colossal lay organization, and ultimately…

> Soka Gakkai has been accompanied by controversy, both in America and elsewhere. At the present time the movement is going through a split between the 700-year-old Nichiren Shoshu priesthood and the lay members of Soka Gakkai. At the end of 1991, after a tense year of

> accusations and counter-accusations, the priests excommunicated all members of the SGI. The causes of this split are complex but are primarily related to doctrinal matters of Nichiren Shoshu Buddhism, the role and power of the leadership of each of the two groups, and certain financial issues (8).

The paranoidization of the adept

If it is true that certain groups "paranoidize" their adepts, this transformation should be reflected, *also*, when using psychodiagnostic instruments oriented toward the measurement and quantification of "the paranoid." Unfortunately, studies in that direction are not abundant.

Dr. Ungerleider, professor of Psychiatry at the University of California, published an interesting paper in 1979 (19). The sample on which the study was conducted consisted of 51 volunteers, who responded to an invitation made through the media to participate in a free psychological study. The subjects studied were divided into four groups: adepts; adepts who had returned to their group after a failed deprogramming; former adepts post-deprogramming; and voluntary former adepts. All were subjected to a psychiatric evaluation and all were administered an intelligence test (WAIS) as well as two self-administered questionnaires: *Interpersonal Chek List* and the Minnesota test (MMPI).

Spero (17) administered the following tests to 65 patients who had come to his practice for psychoanalytic therapy: WAIS, Bender, draw-a-person, TAT, sentence completion test, and Rorschach test. These were individuals who were still active members of cult groups or who had recently left them and who began a psychoanalytic treatment of several months' duration with him.

In much more recent times, sociologist Michel Gottschalk (6) interviewed 90 members of terrorist organizations — Jewish and Palestinian — most of them imprisoned. He also administered the MMPI-2 to them.

Do these studies suggest a paranoidization of the adept?

In Dr. Ungerleider's study, an increase in scale 6 (Paranoia) was observed among the subjects who were still active members of the group, but not among former adepts (scores on the Schizophrenia scale and on the L scale — for *lie*, lying — also increased).

For his part, Spero found in his militants a set of alterations that refer us to a clear paranoid state.

- constriction of cognitive processes and tendency toward stereotypy
- excessively rapid response times
- excessive interpersonal dependence
- narcissistic tendencies
- weakening of judgment and critical capacity
- in the TAT, a marked tendency toward a sharp separation between good and bad characters was observed.

Further on we will verify which aspects of paranoid behavior each of these alterations detected in the projective tests reflects.

Furthermore, both the clinical evolution and the repetition of the tests at the end of the psychotherapeutic process suggested that these alterations, for the most part, remit within a relatively short time after leaving the group and/or with psychological treatment.

As for the Palestinian and Jewish terrorists, they also scored above the controls on the Paranoia scale (among others).

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