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**PREREQUISITES FOR THE “THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY”
ESTABLISHMENT ON THE TERRITORY OF FRANCE DURING
THE PERIOD OF THE “MAGICAL REVIVAL”**

Abstract. *The purpose of the research is to characterize the “Theosophical Society” formation and activities as the element of the “Magical Revival” in France in the XIXth century. The methodology of the research is based on the principles of historicism and scientific objectivity. In addition to general scientific methods: analysis, synthesis, philosophical method, induction and deduction, special historical methods have been used in the study: historical comparative, historiographical, historical and typological methods, as well as – for a complex study – the interdisciplinary method of sympathetic empiricism has been used to define esotericism as a religious component of society. The scientific novelty is that, for the first time in the Ukrainian historiography, the processes of institutionalization of occult societies issues development on the territory of France began. In particular, an important component of the study of this topic is to elucidate the process of the Magical Revival, as a complex sociocultural phenomenon that emerged on the territory of France in the second half of the*

*XLXth century. The formation of the Theosophical Society is part of this process, so it is crucial to consider the history of this organization in the appropriate context. **The Conclusions.** Due to the latest approaches to analysis of the study on “Western Esotericism”, which made it possible to establish a link between institutionalization of the esoteric movement, the spread of the occult press, and deployment of the activities of the Theosophical Society on the territory of France. It has been proved that the specified factors are appropriate to be considered part of the process of the Magical Revival and the previous traditions of the French society. The presented facts made it possible to expand the list of prerequisites that influenced the Theosophical Society establishment in modern historiography.*

Key words: esotericism, religion, history, Theosophy, France, occultism.

ПЕРЕДУМОВИ СТАНОВЛЕННЯ “ТЕОСОФСЬКОГО ТОВАРИСТВА” НА ТЕРИТОРІЇ ФРАНЦІЇ У ПЕРІОД “МАГІЧНОГО ВІДРОДЖЕННЯ”

***Анотація.** Мета дослідження – характеристика становлення та діяльності “Теософського Товариства”, як елементу “Магічного Відродження” на території Франції у XIX ст. **Методологія дослідження** базується на принципах історизму та наукової об’єктивності. Крім загальнонаукових методів: аналіз, синтез, філософський метод, індукція та дедукція, у дослідженні використовувались спеціальні історичні методи: історико-порівняльний, історіографічний й історико-типологічний, а також – задля комплексного дослідження – використовувався міждисциплінарний метод симпатичного емпіризму, для визначення езотеризму як релігійної складової суспільства. **Наукова новизна** полягає у тому, що вперше в українській історіографії започатковано розробку проблематики процесів інституалізації окультних товариств на території Франції. Зокрема важливим компонентом студіювання означеної теми є висвітлення процесу Магічного Відродження як складного соціокультурного явища, що розпочалося на території Франції у другій половині XIX ст. Становлення Теософського Товариства є частиною цього процесу, тому важливо розглядати історію цієї організації у відповідному контексті. **Висновки.** Аналіз новітніх підходів до вивчення “Західного езотеризму” уможливив встановити зв’язок між інституалізацією езотеричного руху, поширенням окультної преси та розгортанням діяльності Теософського Товариства на території Франції. Було доведено, що вказані фактори доречно вважати частиною процесу Магічного Відродження та попередніх традицій французького суспільства. Викладені факти дали змогу розширити перелік передумов, які мали вплив на становлення Теософського Товариства.*

Ключові слова: езотеризм, релігія, історія, Теософія, Франція, окультизм.

The Problem Statement. The interdisciplinary study of Western esotericism is considered to be one of the leading scientific directions in modern world as an independent and complex sociocultural phenomenon. The history of the formation and development of numerous institutions that broadcast esoteric ideas is an inextricable part of the study of the above-mentioned phenomenon, in particular, in the context of such a complex process as the “Magic Revival” (hereinafter referred to as the MR), which began in the XIth century from the territory of France. The key mystical organization operating within the geographical boundaries of Western Europe at the end of the century was the “Theosophical Society” (hereinafter – TS), which was established by a prominent figure of the occult movement in 1875 – Helena Blavatsky. Unlike most of the mystical Orders that functioned in the Western European region and were liquidated at the turn of the century, the TS carried on its activities in the XXth century, even on the territory of Ukraine. An active popularization of the TS ideas in the media space was one of the features of this organization. In general, the specifics of deployment and activity of occult Orders, in particular the TS, were not covered in modern historiography sufficiently or were based on outdated concepts that did not provide a complete and comprehensive knowledge of the above-mentioned topic. Hence, the topicality

of the presented topic is determined by the fact that it has not been covered in modern historiography of the occult movement of Western Europe of modern era sufficiently and it needs a more detailed study, especially in the context of the MR. At the same time, taking into account the rapid spread of various ideological paradigms that are reflected in modern information space, it is vital to identify social systems of a religious model accurately, such as the TS, which broadcasted their ideas to the society actively. It is the study of the historical path and the specifics of their formation that allows us to identify positive or destructive tendencies in their influence on modern society.

The purpose of the research is to characterize the “Theosophical Society” formation and activities as an element of the “Magical Revival” in France in the XIXth century.

The Analysis of Sources and Recent Researches. The majority of historiographical materials on the presented topic are written in English and are of a foreign origin mainly. One of the first modern works that which focuses on the analysis the activity history of the French branch of the TS is the monograph of Jussel Godwin “The Beginnings of Theosophy in France”, which is part of an outstanding project on the study of esotericism “L’Esoterisme Musicalen France, 1750 – 1950” (Godwin, 1989). The above-mentioned monograph is unique because it focuses on the prerequisites and early period of the TS branches activity on the territory of France. The author elucidated the factors and circumstances that influenced the development of the theosophical movement thoroughly. J. Godwin outlined four main prerequisites that stimulated the TS establishment in France: first of all, it was the presence of numerous lodges of another secret society – the “Masonic Order”, from whose ranks a significant number of adepts of the theosophical movement emerged; second of all, F. Mesmer, an outstanding occultist of the XVIIIth century, who spread the ideas of hypnotism, magnetism and various trance states, was active namely in Paris; third of all, it is the influence of spiritual practices that were spreading on the territory of France actively; fourth of all, the author focused on the activities done by the French occultist Louis Constant (a magical pseudonym Eliphas Levi), who is considered to be a key figure of the MR (Godwin, 1989, pp. 2–3). It should be noted that the above-mentioned prerequisites were accepted by other diverse researchers, whose works made up modern historiography of the TS. However, due to new approaches to the study on the history of Western esotericism published archival materials expanded the information model of the TS activity significantly and the prerequisites for its emergence, in particular on the territory of France.

The topic on the MR and the occultism ideas popularization was covered in a monograph of a cultural nature quite meaningfully and was called “The Place of Enchantment British Occultism and the Culture of the Modern” by the American researcher Alex Owen (Owen, 2004). In the presented monograph there were analyzed the origins of the British occult movement in the light of a cultural paradigm. Despite the fact that the geographical boundaries of the monograph covered the British Isles mainly, and the central theme of the study was the peculiarities of the British esotericism, A. Owen examined the influence of the French mystical ideas on the Victorian occult model thoroughly. In particular, the author pointed out that it was Paris that became the center of the occult movement in Western Europe. The French mystics developed esoteric ideas and broadcast them to other European countries actively. As Britain is geographically close to France, the influence on the occult establishment was very strong. In the researcher’s work there are analyzed the activities of such prominent mystics as E. Levi, A. Kardec, S. de Guita, G. Encausse (Papus) and the others. There were numerous examples concerning the influence of the French sacred model on the representatives of the British esoteric organizations (Owen, 2004, pp. 44–45). However, it should be noted that

A. Owen considered the TS and the occult theories of H. Blavatska to be the central factor in the MR development on the territory of France. According to the author, it was Theosophy who became a relevant form of fulfilling sacred needs, both for women and men of a different social status (Owen, 2004, pp. 22–23).

One of the most fundamental works on the history of the theosophical movement in France is the thesis work, published by the historian Marie-José Delalande and entitled “Le mouvement théosophique en France 1876 – 1921” (Delalande, 2007). The above-mentioned research focuses on a very wide range of various issues related to the history of the creation and activity of the TS in the second half of the XIXth and at the beginning of the XXth centuries. The research consists of two large parts. The first part of the thesis contained the analysis of the prerequisites for the TS establishment, which almost completely coincided with the set of factors cited by D. Godwin and were consistent with the general trends of the theosophical movement. The paramount difference in the above-mentioned presentation of the prerequisites was a rather extensive overview of the influence on European esotericism of “Eastern” cultural traditions, which actually formed the ideological basis of the society (Delalande, 2007, pp. 196–223). Other factors influencing the TS formation were outlined in the work, written by M.-Kh. Delalande, almost did not differ from those identified in Godwin’s work. It is obvious that the format of the doctoral thesis allowed the author to highlight the research objectives presented in the work more systematically. In addition, in the first part there are analyzed the formation and spread process of the TS in France in the XIXth century. The researcher managed to reproduce the course events of the early period of the TS history consistently and integrally, especially in the context of its formation as part of the social system (Delalande, 2007, pp. 349–357). The second part of the work was dedicated to the history of the TS activity on the territory of France in different chronological segments of the XXth century. The number of issues elucidated in the research was very great and covered almost all important aspects of the French branch of the TS history.

More generally, the subject of the MR on the territory of France was elucidated in the monograph of the British historian Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke entitled “The Western Esoteric Traditions: A Historical Introduction” (Goodrick-Clarke, 2008). The above-mentioned monograph focused on the study of the Western esotericism phenomenon on the basis of philosophical and historical approaches. The subject of research was a wide range of issues related to the esoteric tradition of Europe, starting from the era of the Ancient World and ending with Modern History. However, the author singled out two conceptually related topics, presented in the corresponding sections of the book: the formation history of the TS and the French MR. As in the works of other researchers, E. Levi was identified as a key figure in the MR development and his diverse occult publications were noted, which influenced the popularization of the esoteric movement, even outside France (Goodrick-Clarke, 2008, pp. 192–196). At the same time, the topic of the TS formation history was elucidated in a rather original way. It was noted that the active spread of materialism and popularization of Charles Darwin’s “evolutionary” theory gave impact to the TS not only to intensify its activities, but also to adapt its theories to the challenges of the XIXth century. According to the theory presented by Goodrick-Clarke, H. Blavatska’s concepts were a response to global world processes and ideas. After all, the main source of inspiration for H. Blavatska was the Eastern sacred systems, namely Hinduism and Buddhism, one of the central ideas of which was the evolution of the soul and the improvement of moral and ethical qualities of a person (Goodrick-Clarke, 2008, pp. 211–212).

J. Monroe drew attention to the fact that already in 1875 in the Catholic and Republican press of France, a discussion about spiritualism and the activities of spiritualists developed (Monroe, 2003). Carlos S. Alvarado believed that we should recognize the conceptual contributions of spiritualists to esoteric studies. After all, he contributed to the process of studying and understanding mediumism and its conceptualization (Alvarado, 2020, p. 714). On the other hand, M. Morrisson stated that the spirit of the occult revival was based on a vogue for the esotericism. And in this regard, a significant role was played by the occult periodical press, which spread occult ideas massively (Morrisson, 2008, pp. 3–4).

The Results of the Research. The process of MR and its connection with the history of the TS formation should be considered before highlighting the prerequisites that influenced the theosophical movement development in France. The MR phenomenon is very complex in order to give a comprehensive characterization of this phenomenon. Hence, it is appropriate to analyze individual elements of the above-mentioned process. Modern researchers of Western esotericism believed that the French occultist E. Levi was at the origin of the “Magic Revival”. E. Levi was able to satisfy the needs of the “romanticized” European society of the XIXth century in an alternative sacred doctrine by publishing a number of original works (“Dogme et ritual delahaute magie” (1856), “Histoire de la magie” (1860) and “La clef de sgrands mysteres” (1861)) (Granholm, 2014, p. 44). The MR process began on the territory of France right after the publication of E. Levi’s works and covered other countries of Western Europe very quickly. E. Levi’s role in this process was fundamental that researchers considered him to be the founder of a form of occultism, which, in its main features, is also relevant in the modern world (Strube, 2017, p. 569). At the same time, it should be noted that France was quite prepared from an ideological point of view for the appearance of the MR, under the conditions when the rational era of the “Enlightenment”, which was a product of socio-political processes of the French society, actually discredited the Orthodox Christian system of the Catholic Church completely and was accompanied by a deep religious crisis (Blackbourn, 1991, pp. 779–782).

Another contemporary of the events, E. Maitland, noted that the variety of religious doctrines can be reduced to two fundamental directions: the revival of esoteric philosophy and the revival of mysticism (Owen, pp. 20–21). The followers of the MR sought inspiration for new spiritual doctrines outside the traditional Christianity mainly. The source of new sacred concepts for the mystics of the XIXth century served ancient Christian texts, Eastern religious traditions and pagan myths. In addition, the occult societies followers were offered individual practice, as well as the “hidden truth” that was the basis of ancient texts. Popularization of these ideas was facilitated by the grouping of people into esoteric organizations and closed groups, which in some cases had competing ideological systems (Owen, p. 21). In fact, the MR spread gave a strong impetus to the institutionalization of the occult movement, of which the TS was a part.

The TS history began in 1875 on the territory of the United States of America, where at that time there was a rather favourable environment for the development of alternative forms of religion. It is worth noting that H. Blavatska came to New York in 1873 and, with the help of the influential mystic H. Olcott, integrated into the esoteric community of America quickly. Owing to the fact that H. Olcott was a prominent lawyer and publicist this process was facilitated. Due to his efforts and certain advertising that H. Olcott did with his articles in popular newspapers, H. Blavatska became known among the general population, primarily in esoteric circles. Since, at that time the most popular esoteric direction was spiritualism, it was in that stream that H. Blavatska’s quasi-sacred activity unfolded (Magee, 2016, pp. 249–250).

The headquarters of the future Society was located in New York, in the house of H. Olcott, where H. Blavatska lived. Due to the fact that H. Blavatska was known to a large number of occultists, various meetings, spiritual sessions and lectures were held in this headquarters by prominent American mystics, who formed the “backbone” of the organization. At the end of 1875, during one of the meetings, the Theosophical Society was formed, aimed at studying and popularizing occult sciences. The following figures of the esoteric movement became the basis of the TS, in addition to H. Blavatska: H. Olcott, S. Pancoast, E. H. Britten, C. Sotheran, G. D. Newton, C. K. Massey, and the others. The society expanded its activities quickly, both in the United States and in Europe owing to a considerable experience and extensive funds of materials of an esoteric nature (Goodrick-Clarke, 2008, pp. 217–218). According to Anna Delcheva Kaltseva, the universal brotherhood of humanity’s core formation without distinction of race, colour or creed began already at that time. At the same time, special attention was paid to the study of Aryan and other sacred texts. The purpose was to explore the hidden secrets of nature in all its manifestations, as well as the mental and spiritual potential of a person (Delcheva Kaltseva, 2019, p. 230).

At the same time, the majority of modern historians believe that the full development of the TS activities in France should be counted from 1884. It was at that time that the leadership of the organization began a journey to Europe in order to resolve the accumulated contradictions in the ranks of the TS (Delalande, 2007, p. 360). It is worth noting that among the high-ranking officials of the TS, the founder and head of the organization went to France. In her letter dated January 25, 1884, H. Blavatska wrote that the problems of movement must be solved in London, but she was sick and needed treatment in the south of France precisely (Blavatskaya, 1996, pp. 151–154). However, in our opinion, the dating of the beginning of the theosophical movement in France in 1884 cannot be considered correct. According to the facts provided by D. Godwin, the French mystics activity in the ranks of theosophical centers began much earlier. In 1876, the New York branch included French theosophists. In 1879, the organization called the “Theosophical Spiritist Society of France” was formed on the territory of France, which, we believe, should be considered the original form of institutionalization of the TS. At the same time, although the named Society had an indirect relation to the sacred model of theosophists, the central ideological paradigm was the doctrine of the outstanding French spiritualist – A. Kardec. In fact, H. Blavatska knew about the existence of the above-mentioned society for five years, but had no direct influence on it (Godwin, 1989, pp. 7–8). The researchers often date the theosophical societies activity development in the country namely in 1884, the beginning of direct relations between the founders of the TS and the French theosophists due to the ambiguous situation that developed around the pioneers of the theosophical movement in France.

It is essential to analyze and enlarge the prerequisites for the emergence of this organization on the territory of France in order to understand of the history of the formation of the TS holistically. As it was above-mentioned, modern scholars established several groups of prerequisites that constituted a favourable basis for the French branch of the TS. In particular, D. Godwin was one of the first to identify a number of factors that influenced the theosophical movement activation in France. The first prerequisite that contributed to the emergence of the TS on the territory of France was the activity of the Masonic Order long before the Theosophists appeared there. In particular, a type of Masonic movement of a mystical nature was quite popular in France itself. The usual Masonic rite was called “Memphis-Mitzraim” and was based on the ancient Egyptian mythological model. However,

the above-mentioned esoteric Order was not directly related to the theosophical doctrine, but the presence of such institution contributed to the emergence of more traditional occult societies in the society (Godwin, 1989, p. 3).

The second factor D. Godwin identified was the active spread of the esoteric concepts of Mesmerism and Magnetism on the territory of France in the XVIIIth century (Godwin, 1989, pp. 3–4). The esoteric direction originated as a medical method justified by Anton-Franz Mesmer, aimed at nervous disorders treatment. According to Mesmer, the theory was based on the fact that there was an invisible substance in a human body, which, was involved in maintaining the vital activity of the body. The researcher nominated such substance as “Animal Magnetism”, which is why his method came to be called Magnetism. As a result, official science denied the effectiveness of the above-mentioned technique after the appointment of two commissions and a thorough examination of Mesmer’s methods (Magee, 2016, pp. 223–224). However, interest in the concept of Magnetism was maintained in the occult environment actively and was quite lively even in the XIXth century. For example, a number of elements of Mesmer’s theory were used by the pioneer of MR – E. Levi in his works (Churton, 2008, p. 317).

The third fact is also related to a mystical concept, namely Spiritualism, which was quite popular in France. One of the central figures among the followers of this direction was A. Kardec, whose ideas were very popular in France (Godwin, 1989, p. 4). It should be noted that the French society accepted the appearance of spiritualism as an alternative form of fulfilling sacred needs quite enthusiastically. A number of facts prove that in the middle of the XIXth century spiritualism was very popular on the territory of France, and especially in Paris. In addition to the constant discussions, which were unfolding in the society concerning the reality of spiritual practices, the congresses were also held, where scientists debated. As a result, it was depicted on the pages of popular publications widely (Delalande, 2007, pp. 225–226).

According to Godwin’s systematization, another prerequisite that influenced the TS formation was the activity of E. Levi, who was actually the main popularizer of the occult ideas in the second half of the XIXth century. The main peculiarity of his works was that E. Levi not only described various esoteric traditions, but also focused on the intellectual reception of certain concepts (Godwin, 1989, pp. 7–8). According to modern authors, it was E. Levi, who is considered to be a key figure in the spread of the MR in France. This prominent esotericist is also considered to be the founder of the “Ceremonial Magic” as a form of realization of human spiritual needs. The TS used elements of Ceremonial Magic in their occult practices in turn (Goodrick-Clarke, 2008, pp. 192–193; Granholm, 2014, pp. 43–44).

Although the prerequisites defined by D. Godwin became the basis for subsequent research, it is obvious that the group of factors defined by the scientist does not cover the entire set of prerequisites for the TS formation. In particular, M. Kh. Delalande added another factor to Godwin’s list, namely the active popularization of “Eastern” sacred motifs in France at that time. In fact, in the XIXth century the “Eastern Renaissance” took place, which stirred up mass interest in Eastern culture (Delalande, 2007, p. 197). The study on the Eastern religious model gained institutional and professional forms in the XIXth century. As of 1822, the “Asiatic Society” was opened in Paris, and in 1823, the “Asiatic Journal” began its work, where numerous materials related to the culture of the East were published. In addition, France occupied a key position in the pan-European “Eastern Renaissance”, owing to the participation of a significant number of French scientists in this process. It should be noted that the presented fact is very crucial in order to understand the prerequisites that influenced the TS formation, taking into account

the fact that the mystical doctrine of the organization was formed on the basis of a religious paradigm, and some society members were part of the scientific environment of researchers, who dealt with the East issues (Delalande, 2007, pp. 200–201).

The British researcher N. Godrick-Clarke also emphasized the prerequisites for the TS formation in his fundamental study of Western esotericism. In particular, the researcher was able to enlarge the list of already existing prerequisites for the TS activation of in France. According to N. Godrick-Clarke, the work written by Ch. Darwin “The Origin of Species”, was one of the factors influencing the activity and spread of the TS, in which an attempt was made to prove the origin of a human being from more primitive biological beings, as a result of evolution and a “natural selection”. New scientific concepts gained popularity, first of all, among intellectuals as the Orthodox forms and dogmas of religion were discredited by turbulent socio-political processes and the development of natural science significantly by the middle of the XIXth century. However, the leading ideological paradigm of H. Blavatska had as its goal the search of a compromise between religion and science. One of the main components of the theosophical doctrine was evolutionism, namely the “spiritual evolution” of a human being as a form of development. In fact, the ideas of evolution, which were expressed by Ch. Darwin in a materialistic context, were involved by H. Blavatska in her theory, but already in a sacred sense (Goodrick-Clarke, 2008, pp. 211–212).

During a general overview of the trends in the development of Western esotericism as an independent sacred model, W. Hanegraaff noted that by the XVIIth century the occult movement existed in the form of an unsystematic intellectual tradition that took place in Europe. Only in the middle of the XVIIIth century the process of structuring and institutionalizing the esoteric movement begins (Hanegraaff, 2013, p. 8). The process of institutionalization, in our opinion, is one of the key factors in the TS formation on the territory of France, during the MR period. France acted as the initiator for the structural Orders of an esoteric nature formation. It was facilitated by numerous socio-political preconditions, in particular, the religious crisis and the activities of the Masonic Order, which was spread in the majority of countries of Western Europe during the Enlightenment. Esoteric organizations developed their activities in France, the purpose of which was not just the individual improvement of a personality, as in adepts-Masons, but also training in the practical use of magical practices. The Order of Knight-Masons Elect Priests of the Universe (“Elus-Cohen”) was one of the first esoteric societies, founded in 1766 by Martínez de Pasqually, on the territory of France. The organization had a clear structure based on esoteric principles, each level had a certain initiation and opened access to the information case. The Order focused on ideas of Judeo-Christian content from the point of view of a sacral model. In general, the doctrine of the Order was based on theurgical principles and rituals, designed to interact with the “powers” of God. The above-mentioned Order was one of the first to have a clear structure, which remained the prototype of modern esoteric societies (Goodrick-Clarke, 2008, pp. 140–141).

It should be noted that the Order of Knight-Masons Elect Priests of the Universe (“Elus-Cohen”) carried on operating and keeping its tradition even after M. Pasqually. It was on the territory of France that the ideas of M. Pasqually continued to be studied and improved by his student L. K. Saint-Marten, who approved this direction of esoteric doctrine. A bit later, the trend was called “Marténism”. St. Marten held the position of M. Pasqually’s secretary starting from 1771 and had a high level of initiation in the hierarchy of the Order. In his works, the French occultist criticized rationalist philosophy actively, especially in the context of knowledge of God and the spiritual mission of a human being on Earth (Churton, 2016).

His most vigorous activity as a member of the Order unfolded in the city of Bordeaux. During the period between 1767 and 1771, a dozen branches of the Order of Knight-Masons Elect Priests of the Universe (“Elus-Cohen”) were established in the city, and the ranks of the society included more than a hundred people, which, for the XVIIIth century, was quite a significant figure (Goodrick-Clarke, 2008, pp. 140–141).

The occult branch representatives of the Masonic Order also supported the trend of institutionalization of the movement actively. For example, in Toulouse during the XVIIIth century paramasonic esoteric societies were active (Galtey, 2012, pp. 210–211). The activities of the “Memphis-Mitzaïm” masonic lodges, which had an occult character, were booming near Paris soon, namely in 1815 (Galtey, 2012, p. 117). E. Levi in his letters to Baron Spadelieri made hints that he was related to one of these orders. In a letter dated November of 1861, E. Levi, used quotations from the “New Testament”, invited Baron Spadelieri to join his “companionship” (Levi, 2016, p. 8). In a letter dated April 13, 1862, E. Levi noted that he had 12 students, who were scattered throughout Western Europe, but all of them were united by the practices, which were provided by the French mystic (Levi, 2016, pp. 75–76).

The above-mentioned facts demonstrate clearly that the processes of institutionalization of occult societies on the territory of France had a long and thorough tradition. In the second half of the XIXth century the process of the MR intensified the spread of occult societies. During this period, such flagships of the esoteric movement appeared in France as the “Martinist Order”, founded by G. Encausse, a native of the TS, and the “Kabbalist Order of the Rose-Cross”, founded by the outstanding mystic S. de Guaita (Owen, 2004, pp. 44–45). But the first organization founded during the MR period, namely in 1884, was the TS, which, in fact, encouraged diverse figures of the esoteric movement to found occult societies (Owen, 2004, p. 44). The above-mentioned facts illustrate clearly that French society was ready to accept the mass institutionalization of the mystical occult movement as part of the social system. At the same time, the TS not only focused on the past tradition, but was also a pioneer of this process in the context of the MR.

Another factor that influenced the prerequisites for the TS formation and was practically not elucidated in modern historiography – is an active spread of the press of a mystical nature. For example, the foundation of the theosophical magazine was indirectly considered by D. Godwin in his monograph, but he did not cover its activities in the context of prerequisites. However, at that time France was one of the leading countries in journalism development and distribution of publications of various orientations. Periodicals specially devoted to occult and esoteric doctrines appeared in France starting from the XIXth century. In 1858 the magazine called “Revue Spirite” was founded, edited by A. Kardec. The topic of the magazine was aimed at studying the theory and practice of spiritualism, which developed in the French society actively (Revue Spirite, 1858). Another magazine of a spiritual nature was founded in Paris, which was called “Revue Spiritualiste” in the same year, but edited by Z. J. Pierart. In addition to the theory and practice of spiritualism, the following topics were considered on the pages of the magazine: Theurgy, Magnetism, Ontology, Psychology and many other areas devoted to the study of a human nature (Revue Spiritualiste, 1858). In 1865 one more magazine called “Union Spirite Bordelaise” was founded, the leading topic of which was the phenomenon of spiritualism. The peculiarity of this edition was that, in addition to elucidating topical issues of spiritualism, considerable attention was paid to the problem of reconciling spiritualist ideas and Catholicism (Union Spirite Bordelaise, 1865). At the request of the French society, which was quite keenly interested in the ideas of magnetism, in 1778 the

magazine called “Revue Magnetique” was founded. The above-mentioned magazine focused on the study of phenomena of a human psyche and popularization and development of the concept of magnetism (Revue Magnetique, 1878).

It should be noted that the emergence of numerous publications on an esoteric nature was synchronized with the process of development of the MR and, thereby, stimulated the MR development. At that time the popularity of magazines in Europe indicated that it was an effective tool for spreading Theosophy, Esotericism and Spiritualism in the society. It is no coincidence that in 1887, the magazine “Lucifer” was published in London, which was later actively used by Theosophists in order to discuss esoteric ideas (Lucifer, 1887). The magazine “The Theosophist” appeared on the territory of India quite similarly (1879), whose active contributors were the British and French followers of the TS, including H. Blavatska (The Theosophist, 1879).

H. Blavatska understood the importance of periodicals, hence, already from the early stages of the TS existence focused on using them as a means of broadcasting her ideas. H. Blavatska was directly involved in the activities of periodicals owned by the TS representatives. In particular, in a letter dated December 7, 1882, she expressed her concern about the unstable and poor quality of the magazine “The Theosophist” (Blavatskay, 1996, p. 85). Based on the above-mentioned, it becomes clear that the TS, as one of the first to expand its activities on the territory of France during the MR, could not ignore such a serious tool for influencing public opinion. Due to difficult circumstances of the TS organization, the process of creating a theosophical printed organ also suffered many obstacles and was delayed. Therefore, at the early stages of the TS formation, the publishing side was used to provide information support. In 1887 the French branch of the TS received its own magazine called “The Blue Lotus” after attracting certain investments, which for a long time helped the followers of Theosophy to broadcast their ideas in the French society (Godwin, 1989, pp. 12–13). As in the case of the general process of institutionalization of the occult movement on the territory of France, the public environment was prepared for the emergence of the press of an esoteric nature, which was evidenced by the popularity of numerous magazines on esoteric topics.

Kelly E. Hayes noted that already in the XXth century the TS activities, in particular the spread of its theosophical literature, led to the emergence of a Brazilian spiritualist lodge called “Love for God” (Amor a Deus). At the same time, the spiritualist newspapers, conferences, radio programmes and other mass media were also an important vector with the help of which theosophical ideas spread in Brazil (Hayes, 2020, p. 65).

The Conclusions. The factors, which influenced the TS formation were consistently and systematically analyzed in researches of modern scholars. These prerequisites include the following: the activity of the Masonic Order of an esoteric model; spread of Magnetism doctrine; popularization of Spiritism practice; creation and distribution of works by Eliphas Levi; growing interest of the French society in the culture of Eastern countries. In addition, little-studied prerequisites of the occult movement, which were relevant in the MR period, were identified and characterized additionally. Due to the synergistic methodology application, the need to take into account two more factors that influenced the TS formation was substantiated. First of all, the institutionalization of alternative forms of religious cults on the territory of France had a coherent tradition, the origins of which can be seen at least in the XVIIIth century. Owing to the presence of this tradition and society orientation to the structuring of a mystical movement, the TS managed to build an effective system. During the period of the MR, it was the TS which was the first organization of an esoteric nature that

created a centralized structure. Therefore, France was one of the first countries where the occult movement was institutionalized. Another factor that influenced the spread of the TS during the MR was that France had a developed press of a mystical direction. The leading publications of an esoteric nature are identified and their thematic specifics were outlined. At the same time, the analysis of the correspondence of the leader of the TS – H. Blavatska and the influence of these publications, made it possible to establish the important role of the press in spreading the ideas of theosophical doctrine. The presence of an already formed information system in broad circles of the French society had a very positive effect on the spread of the TS activities. This article does not claim to be an exhaustive and comprehensive study of the chosen topic, but it can serve for further scientific studies of Western esotericism.

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