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AN INDEPENDENT THEOSOPHICAL LEAGUE.

A FEW months ago circulars were issued announcing the proposal to form an Independent Section of the Theosophical Society, to meet the position which many members felt bound to take with regard to the serious dispute in the Society, and also to permit others to enter who were unable to accept the ruling of the President and governing body of the Society in that matter, and consequently were unwilling to join as ordinary members. The Section accepted the general objects of the T.S. and added others to emphasise their position. The further objects were as follows :

- (A) To uphold the ideal of pure spiritual growth and development taught in the Sacred Scriptures of all peoples, and to assist in disentangling that ideal from psychism and sensationalism of all kinds.
- (B) To foster and assist, so far as is possible, such spiritual growth in its individual members, by those means, moral, intellectual, and religious, which the experience of ages has shown to be applicable and effective.
- (C) To encourage the study of Mysticism, as distinguished from psychism and the occult arts.
- (D) To maintain and emphasise the following principles:
 - (1) That true spiritual progress is inseparable from moral conduct.
 - (2) That any teachings which ignore or violate the moral code accepted in common by all civilised nations, on the plea of higher or occult knowledge, are contrary to the laws of true spiritual life.
 - (3) That the principle of Universal Brotherhood does not preclude the due and proper administration of justice, nor the removal from membership in the Theosophical Society of any person whose continued membership therein is undesirable.

Rules were drafted in the expectation that the original

proposals would be accepted by the President and General Council of the Theosophical Society, but as will be seen in the following letter (already published in part) signed by several well-known members, it has been found impossible to carry through the Section and a new and entirely independent body is now being formed, to be known as the Independent Theosophical League. The body of this letter ("A Word with regard, etc.") was written and published when the idea of forming a Section of the T.S. was the only one in view and it must be read with that understanding, as part of it deals with work in the Society and has not been modified to apply only to the League now in process of formation.

It must be clearly understood that although the League is being founded by members of the T.S. for the reasons given below, the League itself is an entirely independent organisation and is not associated in any way with the actions of that Society, official or otherwise. Its membership is open to any who are in sympathy with its objects, whether or not they have joined, or propose to join, the T.S. The objects—the furtherance of brotherhood, and the study of religions and philosophies and the inner nature of man—are the same, with the additions already quoted, and the lines upon which the League will work are those originally laid down by the T.S.

Those who wish to join the League will find enclosed a form of application. Those who are not prepared at present to join but would like information of future developments should send their names and addresses to the Acting Local Secretary, as below.

Rules are not yet definitely formulated, but will include the provision of a General Secretary and Council, a Local Secretary and Committee for each country or group of countries, and (for the British division) an annual subscription of *2s. 6d.* Branches will be formed where members wish to unite in closer association for study and general intercourse.

The present pamphlet is intended especially for Great Britain and America, a corresponding pamphlet being issued in other countries. Applications or any enquiries should be temporarily addressed to

The Acting Local Secretary, I.T.L.

c/o 21, Cecil Court,

St. Martin's Lane,

London, W.C.

October, 1909.

A WORD WITH REGARD TO THE FORMATION OF AN INDEPENDENT THEOSOPHICAL LEAGUE.

In March last we issued a letter inviting such members of the T.S. as could not conscientiously accept resolutions 5, 6 (last sentence), and 8, passed by the General Council at Adyar on December 26th, 1908,* and yet wished to retain their membership, to join in the formation of a "new Section, neither circumscribed by geographical limits nor bound by all the rulings of the General Council, but free to follow its own independent system of administration, and affianced only to the Parent Society in its original scope and character, besides, of course, deriving its charter from that authority." The President, who at the time agreed to charter such a Section, and in the April *Theosophist* expressed her full sympathy with the suggestion, having afterwards, in the August *Theosophist*, taken a totally different view, we felt obliged, by considerations similar to those which prompted the original idea, to send to the *Theosophist* the paragraph

* See resolutions on p. 7.

quoted below,* and to modify our plan in some measure. The project which we now put forward is that of an International Independent League, which does not require any Charter, or involve any official relations with the President or the General Council. A few words as to the spirit and methods of this League will not be out of place.

We feel that the ideals which are embodied in the T.S. as we understand it, and the general principles which have been from time to time laid down for its guidance, are of supreme importance for the good and the progress of humanity, and that during the past thirty years the T.S. has been an important factor in the spiritualising and broadening of modern thought ; further, it has been to many of us a regenerating force in our lives. Therefore, though we think that the present policy of the governing body tends to endanger these ideals and principles, we yet feel that it is our duty and privilege to remain in the Society to which we owe so much, and to continue to serve it. At the same time, we wish to avoid any need that might in the future arise of a further expression of dissent from the policy of the governing body, and we believe that this can be most effectively done by forming

* " Having regard to the light in which the President of the T.S. has represented our proposal of an International Section in the August number of the *Theosophist*, we deem it right to renounce hereby all idea of applying for a Charter. We thought that the Theosophical Society, with brotherhood as its ideal, and eclecticism as its ruling principle, respected all honest differences of opinion and welcomed a frank expression of the same ; while, on the other hand, 'hostility' had no place in its grammar and lexicon. Our only aim in proposing the organisation was to provide within the constitutional limits of the T.S. a safe harbour for a number of good and earnest souls who seemed to have been thrown adrift by the recent storms therein, as also to turn some valuable time and energy away from fruitless controversy into channels of real spiritual work. This object cannot fail in its essence so long as there are pure and sincere hearts. Nevertheless, we offer our apologies to those who may have been in any way affected by our apparently premature invitation to join in the formation of an International Section, a project which we now feel obliged to abandon."

The above paragraph was sent for insertion in the October issue of *The Theosophist*, but did not appear in that number.

an International Independent League as suggested ; thus clearly enunciating and practically illustrating, once for all, the principle that the authority of the President and General Council is strictly limited to formal matters of administration, and that members are in no way compromised by their resolutions or declarations on other questions. Within such a League, open to all, whether members of the T.S. or not, we shall be free to carry on what we believe to be the true work of the T.S., without diverting any of our energies in undesirable controversy.

We shall therefore try to carry on the work along the old generally-approved lines, forming groups for the study of religious, philosophical, and spiritual subjects, carrying on such propagandist work as may seem desirable, and striving, both collectively and individually, to promote the realisation of universal brotherhood by whatever methods may commend themselves to us. We shall specially emphasise the effort (1) to ensure the freedom of the Society from all dogmas, and to avoid and resist everything that tends to narrow its broad and open platform, or to make it degenerate into a sect ; and (2) to guard it against all risk of moral degradation. In this connection we wish clearly to express our dissent from the position taken up by the General Council in the assertion of the liberty of every member to follow his own conscience with regard to all ethical matters, without thereby imperilling his status in the Society. We feel that this lends itself to an interpretation and application which is likely to lead to laxity in questions of morality, and to a lowering of the moral standard. We believe—and probably all will agree with us here—that such a result would be fatal to the ideals of the T.S., for it is only by obedience to the moral law that true liberty can be attained and true brotherhood be realised. We therefore consider that the purity and high moral standard of the Society would be far better safeguarded, and its objects would be more readily attained, by the emphasis-

ing of the principle which originally guided the Society and was expressed in Rules X. and XV. as revised in December, 1879,* which has been substantially repeated in all revisions of the Rules up to 1896, and which seems to us to be implicitly retained in Rule 18 as revised in July, 1896, and in Para. 15 of the Rules at the Incorporation of the Society, April 3rd, 1905.†

We shall also strive to emphasise the principle of tolerance, that is, tolerance of all opinions on matters religious, philosophical, and metaphysical, and towards one another's weaknesses and failings, wherever there is the earnest desire and effort to reach a higher ideal. We shall strive to make such tolerance not a mere dead-letter law, but a living feature in the League, extending the hand of fellowship as warmly to those who honestly differ from us in opinion as to those who are at one with us. We shall therefore welcome the fullest representation in the League of all shades of religious, philosophical, and scientific ideas; and shall scrupulously try to avoid and resist all tendencies to the building up of any form of papal authority, believing that strength and independence of judgment are a necessary foundation for all true spiritual progress. For this reason we think it wise to discountenance the issuing of statements as coming from the Mahâtmâs by officers or responsible members, and indeed the upholding of any form of psychic authority;

* X. The Parent Society, through the President-Founder, has the right to nullify any charter for cause, and to decree the expulsion of any Fellow, of whatever Branch, for disgraceful conduct, or the contumacious violation of the bye-laws or rules. . . . Provided, nevertheless, that no Fellow shall be expelled without an opportunity having been given him for an explanation and defence.

XV. Any Fellow convicted of an offence against the Penal Code of the country he inhabits, shall be expelled from the Society, after due investigation into the facts has been made on behalf of the Society.

† 15. All charters of Sections or Branches, and all certificates of membership derive their authority from the President acting as Executive Officer of the General Council of the Society, and *may be cancelled by the same authority.* (Italics ours.)

in this matter also we are unable to agree with what seems to us to be the present policy of the governing body.

With psychic research, when carried on along scientific lines, we have the fullest sympathy, for the search for truth in every department of human thought is one of our chief aims ; but we think that the following of the third object of the Society should be confined to such scientific investigation. We shall also try to avoid the tendency, which threatens all religious and spiritual movements in the present day, to crave for sensationalism and novelty, for we believe that this has a morbid effect on the emotions and the intellect, that it weakens the earnestness of the search for truth, and diverts the attention from the austere ideals of the true spiritual life.

We shall therefore strive to keep ever as our ideal, above all else, the purifying and spiritualising of the every-day life, recognising that there is an unbroken current of spiritual energy ever flowing into the world, and that all are strengthened and uplifted by this current in proportion to the earnestness with which they try to purify their own lives and to the spirit of devotion with which they strive to draw nearer to the divine life.

UPENDRA NATH BASU
 BERTRAM KEIGHTLEY
 B. K. LAHIRI
 ISHWARI PRASAD
 RAJENDRA LAL MUKERJI
 LILIAN EDGER

The following are the resolutions passed by the General Council at Adyar on December 26th, 1908, referred to on p. 3.

5. Resolved : " That this Council puts on record its full agreement with the action of Mr. C. W. Leadbeater in tendering, and of the President-Founder in accepting, his resignation, in the hope that the peace of the Society might thereby be preserved, and undesirable controversy avoided.

"That this object having been entirely frustrated, and a controversy, ever increasing in bitterness, having arisen, destroying the unity of the Society in Great Britain and in the United States, and hampering the whole work of the Society in those countries, it has become necessary for this Council to intervene in the matter under dispute.

"That it therefore re-affirms the inviolable liberty of thought of every member of the Theosophical Society in all matters philosophical, religious and ethical, and his right to follow his own conscience in all such matters, without thereby imperilling his status within the Society or in any way implicating in his opinions any member of the Society who does not assert his agreement therewith.

"That in pursuance of this affirmation of the individual liberty of such member and of his individual responsibility for his own opinions, it declares that there is no reason why Mr. C. W. Leadbeater should not return, if he wishes, to his place in the Society which he has, in the past, served so well."

6. Resolved: "That this Council re-affirms the principle laid down by the Judicial Committee and the President-Founder, in the case of Mr. Judge; that no charge against a member, official or non-official, involving the existence or non-existence of Mahâtmas, can be considered, and that the Society as a body remains neutral as to the authenticity or non-authenticity of any statements issued as from the Mahâtmas. It further declares that every member is equally free to assert or to deny the authenticity of any such statement, and that no member can be bound to accept or to reject, on any authority outside himself, the genuineness of any such statement."

8. Resolved: "That the Council agrees with the action taken by the President in issuing *A Letter to the Members of the Theosophical Society* and recommends that letter to the careful consideration of members."