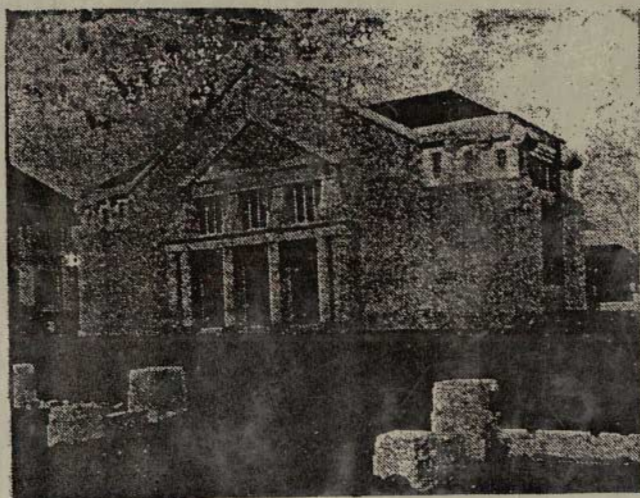


Herman A.O. de Tollenaere



The POLITICS of DIVINE WISDOM



BANDOENG LOGE DER THEOSOPISCHE VEREENIGING

Theosophy and labour,
national, and women's movements
in Indonesia and South Asia
1875-1947

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een wetenschappelijke proeve op het gebied van de Sociale Wetenschappen

PROEFSCHRIFT

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aan de Katholieke Universiteit Nijmegen
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Herman Arij Oscar de Tollenaere

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To my sister, Els de Tollenaere

My mother told me how, for the first time, as a child, she boarded the tram from The Hague to Wassenaar. As it passed the rich people's mansions there, she cried out to her father: 'Oh! I have never seen such beautiful houses before!' 'Yes', my grandfather replied; but added that they were built with the sweat of the Indonesian workers.

In the 1920's, Indonesian students published their *Indonesia Merdeka* magazine in the Merelstraat in Leiden. When my father came to The Netherlands a decade later, he went to live in that street, in a boarding-house with Indonesian and Japanese students. I lived there during my childhood.

As I grew up, I followed political controversies in the 1960's US from papers. Martin Marty writes that occultists were mainly on the conservative side of these questions. On composition of 'New Age' groups, Eileen Barker says: 'one of the most prominent features of the movements is the disproportionate numbers of materially advantaged, middle (and upper?) class followers, whom they attract.'¹

January 1996. The Dutch businessman Gerrit van der Valk says he is telepathically gifted. He advocates the theosophical 'Akasha chronicle' method in historical research.²

The 1990's. Beliefs like contacting spirits of the dead, reincarnation, astrology, and paranormal healing are widespread. Authors note them from Dutch universities to British royalty's Camillagate affair,³ to the US Pentagon intelligence's Star Gate affair.⁴

This is not an overnight development. Some of its previous history is in this book. Scientists and others may think, prematurely, once they as individuals know aspects of occultism are nonsensical, there is no longer a social problem.

One can reproach critics, from Friedrich Engels up to Theodor W. Adorno, that they did not take phenomena like mysticism, occultism, spiritualism, and others, seriously enough.⁵

¹'New Religious Movements. Yet Another Great Awakening?' in Phillip E. Hammond, *The Sacred in a Secular Age*. Berkeley, University of California Press, 1985, 36-58, 40.

²Eric van Onna, 'Gerrit en Toos van der Valk', *VARA TV-Magazine*, 6-12-1-1996, 4.

³*Mure*, 3-10-1991; 19-12-1991. VAN VUGT, 20, attributes occult tendencies among Dutch university students to government pressures to study faster. The *Daily Mirror*, 19-12-1992. British Princess Diana engaged a clairvoyant to contact her late father as her marriage to Prince Charles went on the rocks.

⁴D. Waller, 'The Vision Thing. Ten years and \$20 million later, the Pentagon discovers that psychics are unreliable spies'; *Time*, Dec. 11, 1995. The 'ultra-secret Defense Intelligence Agency' spent millions on 'Star Gate' (official code name) involving fortune-tellers in snooping on the whereabouts of Soviet submarines, North Korean tunnels, Colonel Gaddafi, etc; to no avail. The CIA also had its secret paranormal programs.

⁵SENFT, 7. 'One cannot fight nonsense, just by saying it is nonsense.' Australian investigator of astrology Geoffrey Dean, interviewed *NRC* 10-1-1991.

Theosophists, though, saw progress in the evolution of consciousness with the nearing of the sixth root race, progress up from the mental plane, to the buddhic, intuitional plane¹, with clairvoyance for all. Like with some other systems of thought, one attraction of theosophy is that once you accept a few axioms, the whole universe seems to fall coherently into place around you.

Is a third (or 4th, or ...) perspective possible, when one investigates especially links to political history in Indonesia and India?

I hope I will start discussions. I hope this book will clear up some misunderstandings: though inevitably it will produce new ones, there being hardly any 'definite' books on any subject. I hope readers will let me know their criticisms, so if I ever publish anything again on this, it will be an improvement.

I am very grateful to the people who helped me (any not mentioned should see it as deficiency in my memory or space, not in gratitude): my parents Felicien de Tollenaere and Anna de Tollenaere-Blonk. I shall never forget how Carla Risseeuw helped me on my way, as I began. Professors G. Huizer and G. Lock presenting me contributed much to the cohesion of my thesis. I also owe gratitude to Rudi Jansma, Dr. Harischandra Kaviratna and Miss Rajesvari Kaviratna, whose ancestors played a prominent part in the 1880 reception of the TS leaders in Sri Lanka, and in subsequent Buddhist education there; F. Tichelman and E. Schwidder of the Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis, the people working at Leiden university library and Instituut Kern, Nirmala Nair, Tine Ruter, M. Avé, Wan Dengkeng, H. Maier, Hans van Miert, Mrs Madelon Djajadiningrat-Nieuwenhuis, A. Ollongren, Hon Tom Wong, H. van der Laan, Yvonne Houps, Jurrie Reiding, J. Persijn, Catherine Wessinger (Loyola University, New Orleans, USA), Catherine Candy (Loyola University, Chicago), Joy Dixon, Robert S. Ellwood, J. Santucci, Charles Coppel, Susan Blackburn, Iem Brown, D. van Arkel, I. Schöffer, W. Otterspeer, Soemmi Kasanmoentalib, Nanette Wyshjer, A. Caluwaerts, Frits Evelein and Faye van Ierland of the *Theosofische Vereniging* in Amsterdam, E. Rietkerk and others at the Nederlands Historisch Data Archief for photo scanning help, H. Poeze, D. Henley, Rita de Coursey, Rosemary Robson, and others at the Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land en Volkenkunde in Leiden.

They helped me in the more desperate moments of writing this thesis (abbreviated in Dutch: 'diss.') when I reflected how close the abbreviation is to Dis, the Roman god of hell. Is having to rewrite from scratch after accidentally erasing your computer file the 1990's equivalent of ancient Sisyphus' punishment? Has blaming the computer for your mistake anything to do with the doctrine of Karma?

Do I have the right to write this book?

Tell them.....; As pure water poured into the scavenger's bucket is befouled and unfit for use, so is divine truth when poured into the consciousness of a Sensualist..... according to a 'Master'² of TS founder H.P. Blavatsky.

¹BESANT and LEADBEATER(1913), 5. MARCAULT(1930), 672.

²Letter to HPB from her Master; CLEATHER(1922A), IV.

The word 'sensualist' has not just one sense. As the set of opposites, 'materialist' and 'idealist,' has different meanings in philosophical, and in everyday language.

'Sensualist' can mean: A. Sensual, materialist person in a pejorative context. B. One who subscribes to the doctrine that all knowledge is derived from sensory perception: sensationalist, in the sense(!) of a follower of the eighteenth century French philosopher Etienne de Condillac.

I do not consider myself a dogmatic sense B sensualist. However, I wrote, trusting my own two eyes, though deficient, more than the 'Spiritual Eye of Clairvoyance' of theosophists like Leadbeater. Alice did not take everything in Wonderland for granted. Without questioning of political, religious, and scientific authority, there is no freedom.



The use of a book, from 'Alice in Wonderland'



HOW THIS BOOK WAS WRITTEN

This book was written in English; not on account of compliance with a Dutch Education Minister's wish English should become the language of universities in The Netherlands; not on account of theosophist C.W. Leadbeater's clairvoyant prediction it would be the 'universal commercial and literary language' of the year 2763 A.D.;¹ just laziness. Most sources and literature on theosophy² are in English, so it saved translating; not to mention inaccuracies, inevitably creeping in with translation.

Unless stated otherwise, all translations of quotes, originally not in English, are mine. I quoted Japanese authors' names as in the originals; though the order of personal and family names may be incorrect. Indonesian geographical names are in the new spelling. Names of persons are in the old spelling, except if they, like Sukarno, also played an important role after the introduction of the new spelling.

Wherever possible, I tried to avoid using 'learned' expressions for their own sake, or without explanation.

Numbers after authors' names, or years of publication, are page numbers. Dates are in the day-month-year format; 1-3-1900 is 1 March 1900, for instance.

I made illustrations with the WordPerfect Presentations, Harvard Graphics and PCPG computer programs.

MASTER KEY TO SYMBOLS

CAPITALS	author's names; titles in References, p. 412ff.
Fat	emphasis
Interrupted underlining	my emphasis in quotations
<i>Italics</i>	title of book or magazine
Small	quotes; footnotes, etc.
Solid underlining	emphasis by authors quoted
[Square brackets]	my interpolations

¹LEADBEATER(1971), 122. W.Q. Judge in *The Path* May 1886: 'The Sanskrit language will one day again be the language used by man upon this earth, first in science and metaphysics, and later in common life.' DONKER: the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi in the 1990's wanted Sanskrit as only school subject.

²Big T or I? Writings on theosophy do not agree. When Krishnamurti, after leaving The Theosophical Society, wrote 'theosophy' his ex-colleagues did not like that. *TT* May 1932, 220f. That I, like others (*TH* Jan. 1987, 28) use 't' is not preference, one way or the other. It saved typing; also, many theosophists prefer the idea of an impersonal god (θεός, *theos* in Greek) to a personal God with personal name. The *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1978², says 'often capital T' for TS doctrine, as distinct from more general 'theosophic' 'mystical apprehension of God'; which is not our subject. See p. 8. The New York- and Adyar-based organizations both called themselves The Theosophical Society; others the TS. ELLWOOD and WESSINGER(1993), 79 speak of the TS (Pasadena now; Point Loma earlier) as The TS; of TS (Adyar) as the TS; this should be inverted (RANSOM(1950), 38).

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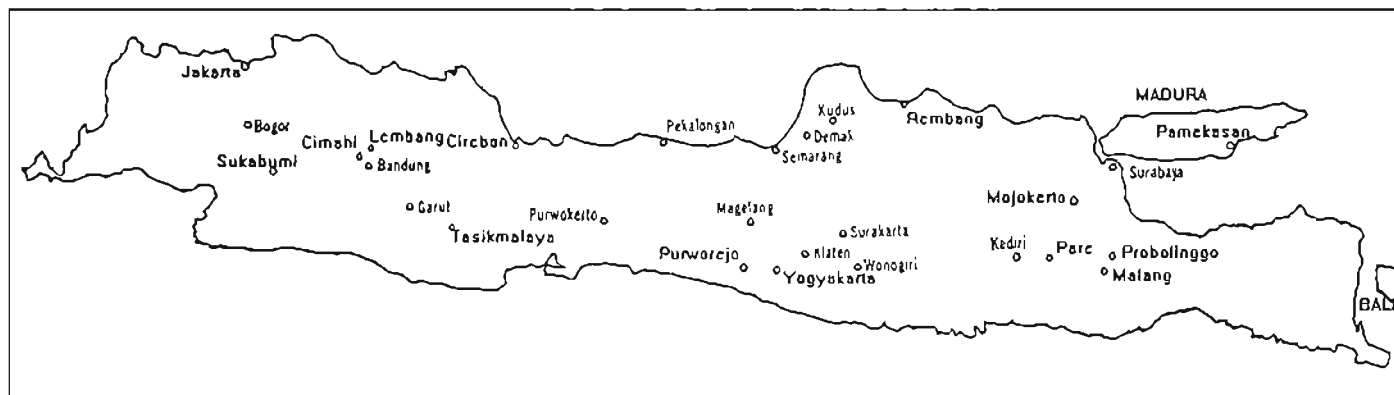
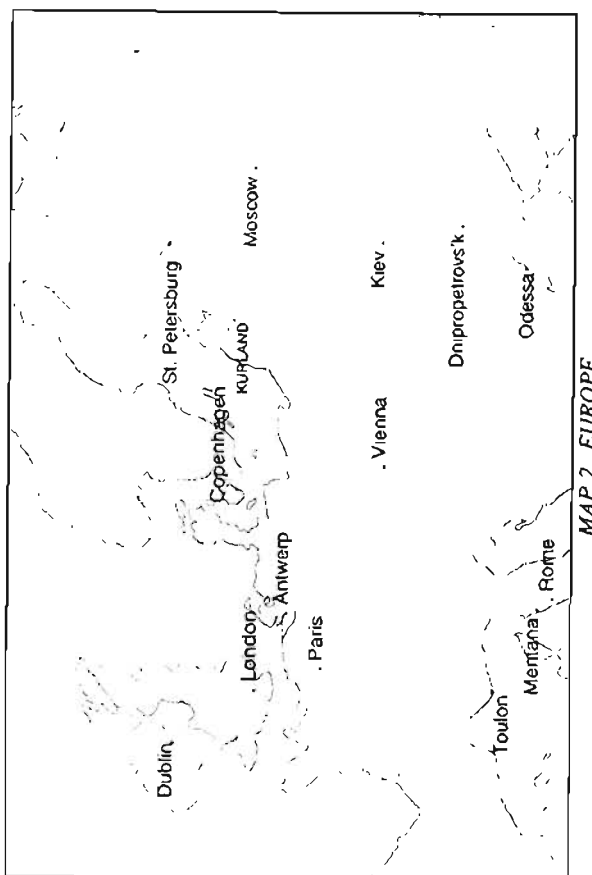
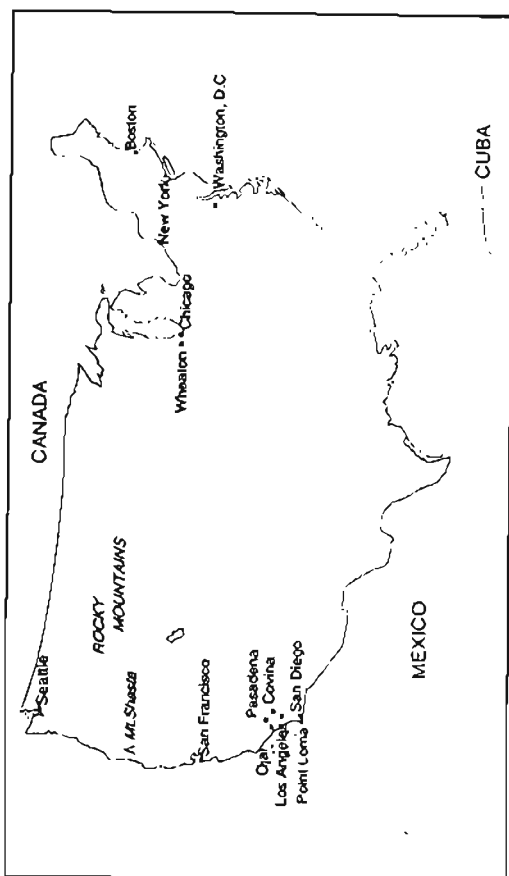
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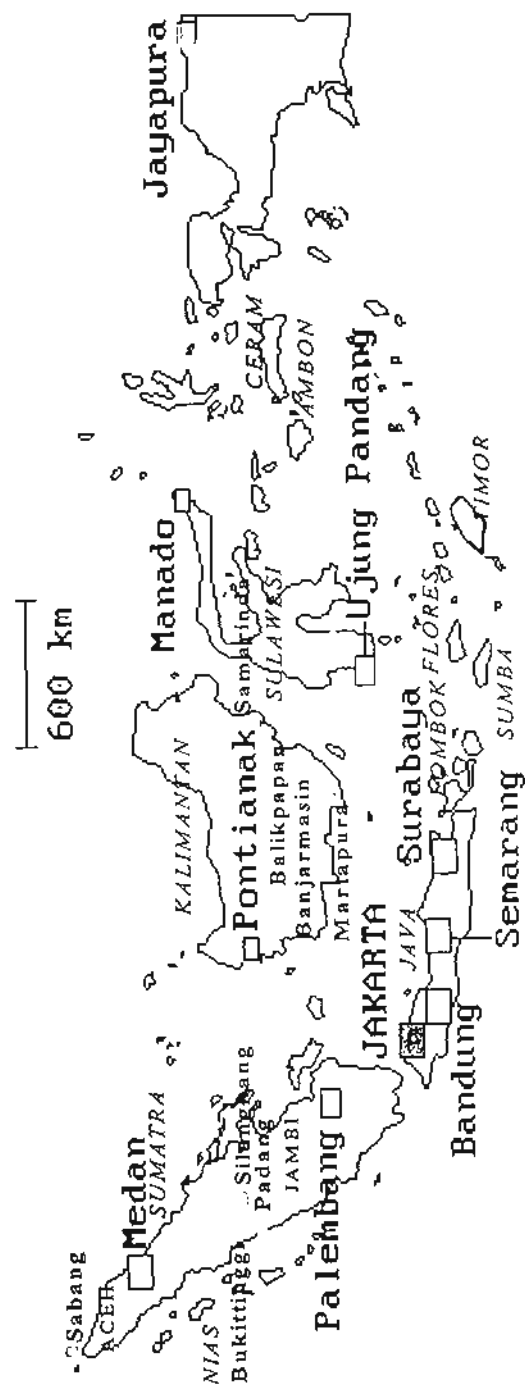
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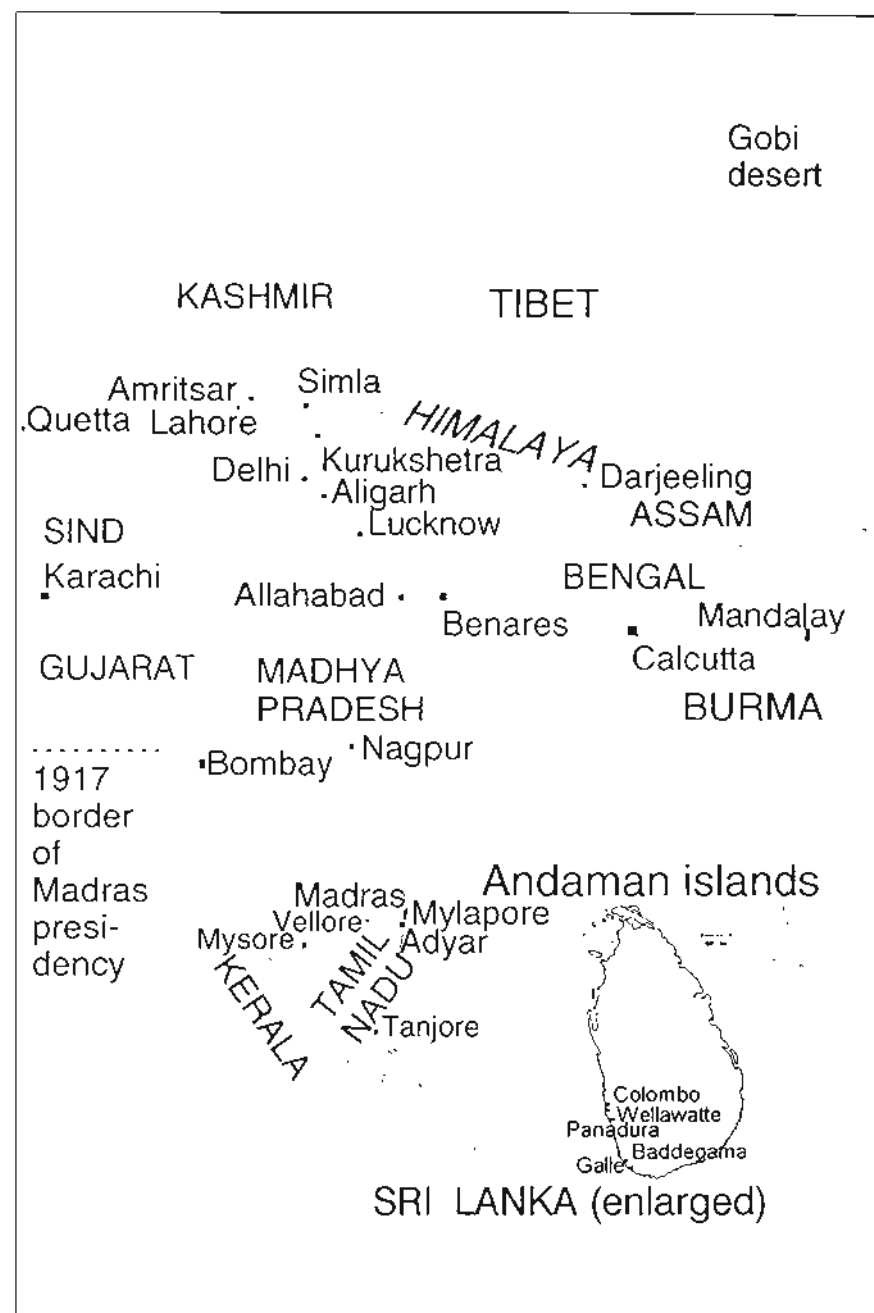
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MAPS





MAP 5. INDONESIA



MAP 6. SOUTH ASIA

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAB	Alice Bailey
AB	Annie Besant
AdB	<i>Adyar Bulletin</i>
AJS	<i>American Journal of Sociology</i>
AMORC	Ancient Mystical Order Rosae Crucis
AP	<i>Acta Politica</i>
AR[P]	Antirevolutionaire Partij (The Netherlands)
AT	<i>American Theosophist</i>
BAC	<i>Buddhist Annual of Ceylon</i>
BAH	<i>Boekenkrant Ankh-Hermes</i>
BCW	<i>H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings</i>
BNA	<i>Bulletin Nederlandse Arbeidersbeweging</i>
BPCA	<i>Besant Privy Council Appeal</i>
BTS	Buddhist Theosophical Society (Ceylon)
BU	Budi Utomo (Indonesia)
BV	<i>Broad Views</i>
C. of E.	Church of England
CE	<i>Christelijke Encyclopedie</i>
CEI	<i>Cambridge Encyclopedia of India</i>
CHC	Central Hindu College
CIS	<i>Contributions to Indian Sociology</i>
CJ	Curupumullage Jinarajadasa
CPI	Communist Party of India
CPN	Communist Party of The Netherlands
CWL	Charles Webster Leadbeater
DGA	<i>De Groene Amsterdammer</i>
DK	Djwal Kul (a Mahatma of the Great White Brotherhood)
DN	<i>Daily News</i> (Colombo daily)
DNT	<i>De Nieuwe Tijd</i> (Dutch socialist monthly)
DVH	<i>Doesburg's vroegste historie</i>
DVS	<i>De Vrije Socialist</i> (Dutch anarchist paper)
ENI	<i>Encyclopaedie voor Nederlandsch-Indië</i>
ENIA	<i>Ensiklopedi Nasional Indonesia</i>
EO	Evangelische Omroep (Dutch Protestant broadcasting corporation)
ES	Esoteric Society; Esoteric/Eastern School
FPC	Freethought Publishing Company (London)
FTS	Fellow of the Theosophical Society
GEPB	<i>Grande Enciclopédia Portuguesa e Brasileira</i>
GS	General Secretary
GSA	George Sidney Arundale
HB	<i>Hindia Baroe</i> (Indonesia)
HEI	<i>History of European Ideas</i>
HOTS	<i>Herald of the Star</i>
HP/dT	<i>Haagse Post/de Tijd</i>

HPB	Helena Petrovna Blavatsky
HPO	<i>Hindia Poetra</i>
HSO	Henry Steel Olcott
HT	<i>History Today</i> (Great Britain)
HVW	<i>Het Vrije Woord</i> (Indonesia)
IESHR	<i>Indian Economic and Social History Review</i>
IG	<i>Indische Gids</i> (on Indonesia)
IISG	Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis (Amsterdam)
ILP	Independent Labour Party (Great Britain)
IM	<i>Indonesia Merdeka</i>
IP	Indische Partij (Indonesia)
IPO	<i>Overzicht der Inlandsche en Chinees-Maleische Pers</i> Originally typescript, later printed, press reviews, made in Weltevreden for the Dutch East Indies government. Present at KITLV and IISG
IS	<i>Indische Stemmen</i> (Indonesia)
ISDP	Indische Sociaal-Democratische Partij (Indonesia)
ISDV	Indische Sociaal-Democratische Vereeniging (Indonesia)
ISKCON	International Society for Krishna Consciousness
IT	<i>Indian Theosophist</i>
IV	<i>Het Indische Volk</i>
IW	<i>Indië Weerbaar</i> (Indonesia)
JAAR	<i>Journal of the American Academy of Religion</i>
JB	<i>Javaansche Bladen</i>
JCH	<i>Journal of Contemporary History</i>
JMH	<i>Journal of Modern History</i>
JS	<i>Jong Sumatra</i>
KH	Kut Humi (a Mahatma)
KITLV	Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land-, en Volkenkunde (in Leiden)
KM	<i>Koem Moeda</i> (Indonesia)
KOT	<i>Koloniale Tijdschrift</i> (on Indonesia)
KS	<i>Koloniale Studien</i>
KT	Katherine Tingley
KV	<i>Koloniaal Verslag 1 Nederlandsch (Oost-) Indië</i> . Annual reports by the Dutch government to parliament on Indonesia. Printed at <i>Algemeene Landsdrukkerij</i> , The Hague
LB	Le Lotus Bleu
LCC	Liberal Catholic Church
LD	<i>Leidsch Dagblad</i>
LOC	<i>De Locomotief</i> (Indonesia)
LSSP	Lanka Sama Samaja Party
LTV	Lid Theosofische Vereeniging (FTS in Dutch)
LucH	<i>Lucifer</i> (The Hague magazine)
LucL	<i>Lucifer</i> (London magazine)
M	Morya (a Mahatma)
MAS	<i>Modern Asian studies</i>
MB	<i>Maha Bodhi</i> (Journal)
MBB	<i>Maleische Bladen in de Buitenbezittingen</i>

MBS	Maha Bodhi Society
MCB	Maleisch-Chinesche Bladen
MEW	Marx Engels Werke
MJB	Maleische Java Bladen
MR	Modern Review (Calcutta)
MRBTD	Maandelijkse Revue van Brochures en van Tijdschrift- en Dagbladartikelen, of IG
NB	Nationalistische Bladen
NCE	New Catholic Encyclopedia
NI	New India
NIE	Nieuw Indië
NIP	Nationaal Indische Partij (Indonesia)
NOID	New Oxford Illustrated Dictionary
NRC	Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant (-Handelsblad)
NSB	Nationaal Socialistische Beweging (The Netherlands)
NSW	New South Wales (Australian state)
NY	New York
OCSI	Overzicht van de gestie der Centraal Sarikat-Islam in het jaar 1921
ODI	Orde der Dienaren van Indie (Indonesia)
ODL	Old Diary Leaves
OELC	O(riental) E(soteric) Library Critic
OH	Oetoesan Hindia (Indonesia)
OM	Oetoesan Melajoe (Indonesia)
OP	Opbouw (Dutch liberal monthly)
OR	Occult Review
OSE	Order of the Star in the East
OTO	Ordo Templi Orientis
OVIW	Orgaan van de Vereeniging "Indië Weerbaar" (Indonesia)
PEB	Politiek-Economische Bond (in Indonesia)
PI	Perhimpunan Indonesia
PKI	Partai Komunis Indonesia
PMA	Personal memories of G.S. Arundale
PNI	Partai Nasional Indonesia
PPPB	Perserikatan Pegawai Pegadaian Boemipoetera (Indonesian pawnshop employees' union)
PRI	Partai Ra'jat Indonesia
PT	Pewarta Theosofie boewat tanah Hindia Néderland (Indonesia)
PW	Pantjaran-Warta (Indonesia)
RANI	Regeerings-Almanak voor Nederlandsch-Indië; two volumes came out once a year at Landsdrukkerij, Batavia (Indonesia). All quotes from second volumes
RC	Roman Catholic
RvA	Recht voor Allen (The Netherlands)
SA	South Asia. Journal of South Asia studies
SAAM	Sarekat Adat Alam Minangkabau (West Sumatra)
SAN	Sociological Analysis. A journal in the sociology of religion
SD	The Secret Doctrine
SDAP	Sociaal-Democratische Arbeiders Partij (name of Dutch Labour Party till 1946)
SDF	Social Democratic Federation

SDh	Siri Dharma (Indian women's magazine)
SH	Sinar Hindia (Indonesia)
SI	Sarekat Islam (Indonesia)
SM	Soeara Merdeka (Indonesia)
SME	Soenting Melajoe (Indonesia)
SPD	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands
SPR	Society for Psychical Research
SR	Soeara Ra'jat (Indonesia)
SRIA	Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia
SUNY	State University of New York
TB	De Theosofische Beweging (Amsterdam monthly)
TH	Theosophical History
THA	Theosophia (Amsterdam)
THC	Theosophical History Centre
THNI	Theosophy: The history of a nineteenth century imposture
TinA	Theosophy in Australia; or in Australasia
TiNI	Theosofie in Nederlandsch-Indië
TKA	'T Kan Anders (Dutch magazine)
TM	The Theosophical Movement (Bombay ULT magazine; or: ULT book of that title, published 1925 and 1951)
TM	Transcendental Meditation
TMNI	Theosofisch Maandblad voor Nederlandsch-Indië
TPH	Theosophical Publishing House
TPS	Theosophical Publishing Society
TR	Theosophical Review
TS	Theosophical Society
TT	The Theosophist
TTC	The Theosophy Company
TUM	Theosofische Uitgevers Maatschappij
TUP	Theosophical University Press
TV	Theosofische Vereeniging (TS in Dutch; old spelling)
TW	Theosophical World
ULT	United Lodge of Theosophists
UNP	United National Party (Sri Lanka)
VA	Vrije Arbeid (The Netherlands)
WED	Wederopbouw (Java magazine)
WT	From/On the Watch-Tower (editorial)
WW	Warna-Warta
WWH	A Woman World-Honoured

GLOSSARY

I. in Indonesia; S. Sanskrit

adat	traditional (mainly unwritten) law and customs; I
Adhi Dharmo	Exalted Duty; I.
Adipati	high Javanese title of nobility
alam	world; I.
Aryo	Javanese title of nobility
assistant resident	Dutch official, ranking below resident; I.
Batavia	pre-1942 name of Jakarta
Budi Utomo	Beautiful Endeavour; name of Javanese organization founded in 1908
Buitenzorg	pre-1942 name of Bogor
brahmana	highest (originally: priestly) of four varnas. S.
bupati	highest rank for Javanese in Dutch colonial administration. Dutch regent
controleur	Dutch official, ranking below assistant resident. I
dalang	wayang theatre puppeteer or stage-manager; I.
Datoek	West Sumatran title of nobility
desa	village; I.
dewan	prime minister of Indian principality
gamelan	Javanese and Balinese forms of music, mainly on metal instruments; I.
hadj	Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca
hadji	Muslim who has been to Mecca
hormat	homage; I.
Insulinde	Indonesian archipelago; also name of early twentieth century opposition party
jimat	amulet; I.
Jonkheer	lowest Dutch title of nobility, baronet
kabupaten	region, administered by bupati; bupati's residence; I.
kampung	neighbourhood, I.
kaum muda	young people; I.
kraton	palace; I.
kromo	non-noble Javanese person; Javanese language, as spoken to higher ranking person
ksatriya	second highest varna; noble; warrior. S.
Makassar	old name of Ujung Pandang
Mas	lowest Javanese title of nobility
Mas Adjeng	Lady, equivalent of Mas for unmarried women; I
maya	in Hindu theology and theosophy: blindness, illusion; S
Ngabehi	Javanese title of nobility
paku	pivot; I.
panchama	late 19th century term for person not belonging to one of the four varnas; S.
Pangeran	[usually non-ruling] prince; I.

priyayi	nobleman; (traditional) official; literally, a king's younger brother. I.
Raden	Javanese title of nobility, higher than Mas
Raden Adjeng	Lady; title for Javanese unmarried women, higher than Mas Adjeng
Raden Ajoe	Lady; title for Javanese married women (first wives if marriage is polygynous) of relatively high nobility
Raden Mas	Javanese title of nobility, higher than Raden; in the Central Java principalities a more exclusive title than elsewhere
Raden Mas Toemenggoeng	Javanese title of nobility, higher than Raden Mas
resident	Dutch official, ranking below governor-general and governor; I.
santri	pupil of Muslim boarding school; social category as for instance in GEERTZ(1960); I.
sembah	greeting, for instance a prince, with hands folded before one's face; I
sinar	ray; I.
Solo	old name of Surakarta
sudra	lowest varna; S.
Susuhunan	title of ruler of Surakarta; roughly, king or emperor; I.
Sunan	shorter form of Susuhunan
toean	Mr; lord; I.
vaisya	third highest varna; merchant. S
varna	one of four main castes in Hinduism; S.
Volksraad	advisory council of the Dutch East Indies from 1918, elected by limited electorate
wayang	(especially Javanese) theatre, in various forms; best known with puppets; I.
yuga	long period in Hindu chronology; S
zemindar	Indian landlord

PART 0. INTRODUCTORY

1. POLITICAL HISTORY OF THEOSOPHY; THIS BOOK'S BORDERS

This book is of history. History of political views; views originating from various social backgrounds, meeting one another, sometimes clashing sharply. It is part of the history of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, times of big change in technologies and economies. Twice there was a world war. Colonial empires were conquered and broke up. Political and religious ideologies changed.

The Theosophical Society (TS; see list of abbreviations, p. XVIII), was founded in 1875. Its history has more links, and different links, to politics than one might suppose from much literature. This organization is also interesting as a relatively well-organized 'nucleus' of a looser, broader occult current, influential in those times.

It claimed to bring its members and the world at large the fountainhead of truth behind all religions and sciences. From the first sixteen members in a New York drawing room, it spread to scores of countries, recruiting or strongly influencing hundreds of thousands,¹ mostly upper or middle class men and women. Why were palmists, astrologers, the father of Indonesia's first president, mayors from Seattle in the United States to Karachi in today's Pakistan, United Kingdom ministers, a New Zealand Premier, future Prime Ministers of Australia and India,² in one organization?

Many grouped around them did not join, but for a shorter or longer time thought: 'Well, there must be some truth in it'.³ Millions either bought their books, or borrowed them from general, or theosophical, libraries. When radio became popular in the 1920's, theosophists had their own station in Australia, and influenced a Dutch broadcasting authority.

¹Needless to say, 'influencing' not in the sense of any conspiracy theory. SITARAMAYYA, 119 credits Annie Besant with 'millions of followers in the East and the West' (he was not one of them) Anarchist opponent RABBI(1898A), 1: theosophist membership 'millions.' An exaggeration then; and later, though membership did grow in the post 1898 decades. During AB's presidency (1907-1933) 111,682 new members joined the TS (Adyar); see p. 89 of this book.

²BESANT(1913C), 157: a FTS became mayor of Seattle. For Karachi see p. 270. For New Zealand and Australia, p. 126-7; Nehru of India, p. 271; Sukarno's father, p. 354.

³Two examples of many who, while rejecting some aspects of theosophy, accepted many other aspects: Portuguese author Fernando Pessoa; see p. 99; Dutch Frederik van Eeden, p. 59.

⁴H. Hotchener 'The greatness of the TS', 7W March 1937, claimed TPH had sold more than 2 million books. Also, many books by leading TS (Adyar) members, and by non-Adyar theosophists, came out at other publishers'. In The Netherlands in 1902, 500 £'s worth of Adyar theosophical books were sold. In 1905, it had risen to 2000 £ 'mostly to non-members'; 7T Oct 1907, 95. Sizable, given lower price level, and lower Dutch guilder-sterling rate then. MUTHANNA, 63: 448: Besant's Bhagavad Gita translation 'sold in millions of copies'. Millions? BROOKS(1914A), 175 estimates 100,000 till then. CAMPBELL, 35: 500,000 *Isis Unveiled* copies sold 1877-1980. LEADBEATER(1922), 16 claimed 'more than a hundred thousands copies' of *At the Feet of the Master*, by J. Krishnamurti, printed up to 1914.

The TS also aroused opposition. Indonesia eventually had the most numerous non-ruling communist party in the world. Why did the paper, out of which it arose, have the leader of Indonesia's theosophists as its most criticized opponent? Why did leading communists Semaoen and Darsono write their first ever articles against theosophists?

I asked two questions: 1. Was the Theosophical Society apolitical? 2. Was the Theosophical Society politically leftist? I looked for answers in the TS' relationships to three types of political movements: labour, national, and women's movements; especially in colonially ruled countries in South Asia and Indonesia. Both how theosophists saw those movements, and how people active in those movements saw theosophists, is important for this. How did the TS influence politics of its time, how was it influenced by them?

This book needs a start and a finish. My start is in 1875, in the foundation year of the Theosophical Society. My finish is in 1947, the year of India's independence; one (not the only one) country where theosophists sometimes had sizable political impact. I tried hard to cut out everything before 1875 or after 1947. Sometimes I only half-succeeded, if issues were too closely linked. But I do not pretend to have elaborate ideas on the Theosophical Society as it is now, in the 1990's.

A. QUESTION NUMBER ONE: WAS THE TS APOLITICAL?

British historian Hobsbawm, writing on the 'age of empire', mentions Annie Besant and 'the apparently non-political ideology of theosophy'.¹ What, then, was appearance, what reality?

Imelman and Van Hoek said on the ideas of longtime prominent TS member Rudolf Steiner that Hobsbawm's 'appearance' was also reality. The description by socialist Van Ravestein of theosophy (and spiritualism) as 'anti- or unsocial views' is related to this.² [Might the views not more often be anti- or unsocialist?] Implicitly, many political history writings, also those including Mrs Besant, support this viewpoint by excluding or almost excluding theosophy.³ Annie Besant, though, said about herself:

¹'India', in this work, means what many authors then called 'British India', including today's independent India, Bangla Desh, Pakistan; sometimes also Burma, depending on time and context.

²HOBBSBAWM(1987), 288.

³IMELMAN and VAN HOEK, 123. VAN RAVESTEYN(1917), 630. A. Koopmans, in DEN DULK c.s., 7: Steiner's 'anthroposophy... Because it is a *Weltanschauung* and view on life ... therefore it may become active in all aspects of the world and life'. J. van der Meulen, *ibid.*, 14 denies anthroposophy is apolitical or non-social 'as this movement, on the contrary, manifests itself in numerous fields in society'. The criticism of being 'non-social' is, indeed, incorrect for anthroposophy, as for its parent, theosophy. Critics had better investigate instead where within society occult movements stand.

⁴Otherwise good OREN does not go into Besant's theosophical ideas at all. The recent biography TAYLOR(1992) has 156 pages on the 15 years before Annie Besant joined the theosophists, 1874-1889; that is, 10.4 pages per year. On her 44 years in the TS, Taylor spends 86 pages; 1.95 pages per year (she also has 18 pages on the TS pre 1889). Some theosophist authors on AB write few on her time before 1889; there is a sort of either/or situation in literature on her.

They say: "Mrs. Besant is a religious teacher; she must have nothing to do with politics". But I assure you that just because Mrs. Besant is a religious teacher, therefore she has everything to do with politics.¹

As for the theosophy of the Society to which she made her annual convention presidential speech:

Some people say: "What has Theosophy to do with politics?" Everything ... Religion is either everything or nothing.²

There is a similarity to James Webb. Though disagreeing with Mrs Besant on the value of occultism, he wrote:

Indeed, because the occultist is necessarily a philosopher -although he may most frequently be a very muddled one- it is difficult to imagine him without political opinions.³

This political history of theosophists does not pretend to deal exhaustively, as an aim in itself, with their claims that some superhuman beings live in Tibet, some on other planets (see p. 28); of astrology, occult chemistry, auras or yoga; of para-normally restoring eyesight to the blind;⁴ of opposition to inoculation. Neither is its primary subject the internal organizational dynamics of the Theosophical Society; nor their links to issues like 'charisma' which sociologists of religion study much. Nor does it pretend to cover the whole field, usually seen as 'political'. It selects the subjects of Parts IV to VI; see p. 5.

The Indian National Congress, before theosophist Annie Besant became its president in 1917, asserted a difference between 'social' and 'political' issues.⁵ At Congress sessions, one could only discuss political subjects, in a narrow sense; beginning with her presidency, 'social' ones as well. An example of a political issue: should India be a British colony? an autonomous Dominion? or an independent republic? Child marriage was a 'social' issue; though influenceable by governments and legislatures.

In this book, we will use 'politics' in a rather broad sense. As did Annie Besant:

People want to exclude politics from life, as though "politics" did not include all the activities of collective life. Politics are not the doings of political parties any more than the Government is the State. Some wiseacres would not ... allow the blood to course unhindered through artery

¹BESANT(1917A), 19. J. NEHRU(1956), 343, on Mrs Besant: 'There was a spiritual and religious element about all this, and yet there was a strong political background to it'.

²BESANT(1917A), 63-4; repeated in different wording *ibid.*, 65.

³WEBB(1971), 200.

⁴OLCOTT(1954), 399ff. The TS (Point Loma-Covina-The Hague) is one of the organizations claiming succession to de Purucker. It held out to potential participants in a 1990 'alternative thinking' course, as thinking is the cause of health, or of illness, the prospect of ceasing of illness, maybe taking effect not in this life, however; in the next one, after reincarnation.

⁵JINARAJADASA(1986), 15: [Annie Besant] 'strenuously opposes any form of inoculation'.

⁶HEIMSATH(1964), 342: 'In 1917, under the presidency of Mrs. Besant, the Congress broke its long-standing rule of ignoring social questions; under Gandhi's leadership, after 1920, the Congress continued to pass resolutions on social reform at its annual sessions'.

and vein from and to the same heart. They would insist on setting aside some to circle round the liver, some round the brain, some round the lungs, as they divide morality, religion, commerce, professional life, into separate and dissociated organs, instead of organs of the whole body politic.¹

We will not just see that social categories usually seen as 'politicians', like ministers and MPs, were well represented in Theosophical Society memberships of diverse countries and times. We intend to look, for instance, at views on relationships of men to women as well as of the British government to India.

The international TS then did not give rise to an international political party.² There is direct and indirect influence on politics though. Only in the long run, afterwards, may you tell which was strongest. Complex links exist between ideas on, say, art, and ideas on society and politics. Wherever relevant, I refer to these links.³

Are movements like the Theosophical Society 'running away from politics'; or running from one form of politics to another? Should critics not look at differences in politics rather than at supposed apoliticism?

B. QUESTION NUMBER TWO: WAS THE TS LEFTIST?

A fairly widespread view of movements like theosophy sees them as politically progressive. Its supporters do not always argue convincingly, though.

James Webb's *The Flight from Reason* is a general history of occultism of c. 1820-1910. It includes, but does not focus only on, the Theosophical Society and political aspects. Webb speaks of the TS as part of 'progressive' thought.⁴ Also, of kinship of occultism with 'Nationalisms, Socialisms', and 'Women's Rights'; so, in the context of nineteenth century Europe, where association of nationalisms with the political right was weaker than later, with the political left. He extended this to later twentieth century Asia, and (probably) Britain, by answering the question of occultists' politics: 'Let us imagine a 'hands-off Viet-Nam' demonstration, with perhaps a delegation from North Viet-Nam among the protesters.' Elsewhere though, Webb implicitly contradicted this, speaking of conservative monarchist occultists in France, influencing British TS member Anna

¹BESANT(1916B), 362. BESANT(1917A), 19, rejected the idea of strong separation between the political and the non-political, as 'man is one: he cannot divide himself into water-tight compartments'.

²Unlike the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's TM movement's 1990's Natural Law Party: DONKER. At the 1925 Jubilee Convention, the TS declared as one of its aims the establishment of a World Government on the spiritual basis of restoration of ancient religions' Mysteries; RANSOM(1950), 23. Freemasonry, more so than the TS in some phases of its history, is officially opposed to political links; yet COHEN, 134, wrote: 'But all this does not mean that the movement has no political aspects or political consequences'.

³Well-known theosophy-influenced artists: Scriabin, the composer; Mondrian, the painter.

⁴WEBB(1971), 54. WEBB(1974B), 249.

Kingsford; and of theosophy as one influence on German nazis.¹ We will see how this was with 'nationalisms, socialisms and women's rights' in a colonial context.

US sociologist Tiryakian considered secret societies linked to occultism as mostly progressive, though conceding some, like the US Ku Klux Klan and Germany's post-World War One Thule Society, were reactionary.² Tiryakian wrote that esoteric thought has 'a model opposed to the static, stable or harmonious view of things inherent in the natural attitude'. He added, though, 'to document this point would require much more space than here available'.³

His colleague Daniel Bell focused on one category of the political left: in 1970, he linked in passing 'nihilism and anarchism' to 'gnostic esotericism'.⁴ Linking these two in this way suggests conventional wisdom of the 'surely, everyone knows that' type. If everyone knows already, then no one needs research, confirming -or partially or completely denying- it. However, I think we do need more research on this; so I started some of it.

I myself for most of my life have known hardly more about Annie Besant's politics than her socialism in the 1880's and Indian National Congress presidency in 1917-8. If one knows only two points of a long sequence, one presumes the connecting line is straight; in this case, going through a politically leftist area all the time. I presumed that all too readily then.

One can compare conservatism or progressiveness⁵ in two ways. First, in individuals' views before and after they joined, or before and after they left, the Theosophical Society. This is the most difficult way, needing biographical material on many persons. I did this mostly on Annie Besant, who plays a role in all parts. Second, what I did mainly, in relationships to the three movements of our Parts IV to VI.

Why did I choose those three subjects? Because labour, anti-colonial national, and women's movements are big movements about which much material should exist. As for contents, most people see all three as emancipatory and progressive. So, how relations with them are may say something on the TS's rate of progressivity. I looked at the ideas of theosophists about these subjects. Also, at the ideas of outsiders to the theosophical movement, concerned with those political subjects too; they met theosophists on 'their' fields, and came to see them as allies, or as opponents.

Though leaders did try to get members in line, the Theosophical Society developed its

¹WEBB(1971), 218, 228; 189; 202f. Ibid., 60, on Himmler. MOSSE(1961); MOSSE(1966), MOSSE(1978), also claim influence of theosophical ideas on Nazi ideology. WEBB(1971), v saw 19th century occultists as the precursors to 'the romantic revolutionaries of today.' xiv: 'the occult and the revolutionary, run in the same paths'.

²TIRYAKIAN(1974), 270-1.

³TIRYAKIAN(1974), 268.

⁴Quoted TIRYAKIAN(1974), 269.

⁵Here, 'progressive' stands for assent to; 'conservative' for opposition to equivalence among people; supporting democracy, respectively hierarchy; opposition, respectively assent to a stronger military. All these issues will come up in later chapters.

inconsistencies and contradictions, like most movements lasting beyond a certain minimum of time, and involving more than a certain minimum number of people. One cannot say that the ideas of theosophists on politics were monolithic. Does this imply, though, that the spectrum of these ideas reflected in a completely proportional way all views¹ on politics of the world from 1875 to 1947; from revolutionary anarchism or Marxism to all types of fascism (including the Spanish type, closely connected to the conservative wing of the Roman Catholic church)? Were all ideas equally represented, including of a state based on orthodox Protestant Christianity, or on orthodox Islam? Or was there rather a focus in the spectrum of theosophical ideas on politics; a focus that on many, though not on all, subjects was somewhat right of centre?

Why might it be right of centre? In our Part III we will look at which social categories were over-represented, and which were under-represented, among TS supporters.² It is not an infallible rule that organizations, attracting, as it turns out, mostly members from higher income or status groups are always conservative; or that organizations, recruiting mostly lower income or status categories, are always progressive; let alone that all their members, one by one, have conservative, respectively progressive views. Still, this type of connection between position in society and views has more probability. People who have much to lose tend to have different ideas from those who have little to lose; as various social scientists see it.³

C. WHAT IS DIVINE WISDOM?

How should I define theosophy⁴ for this book? As for movements or organizations—not doctrinal content; that comes later. One might do it in three ways:

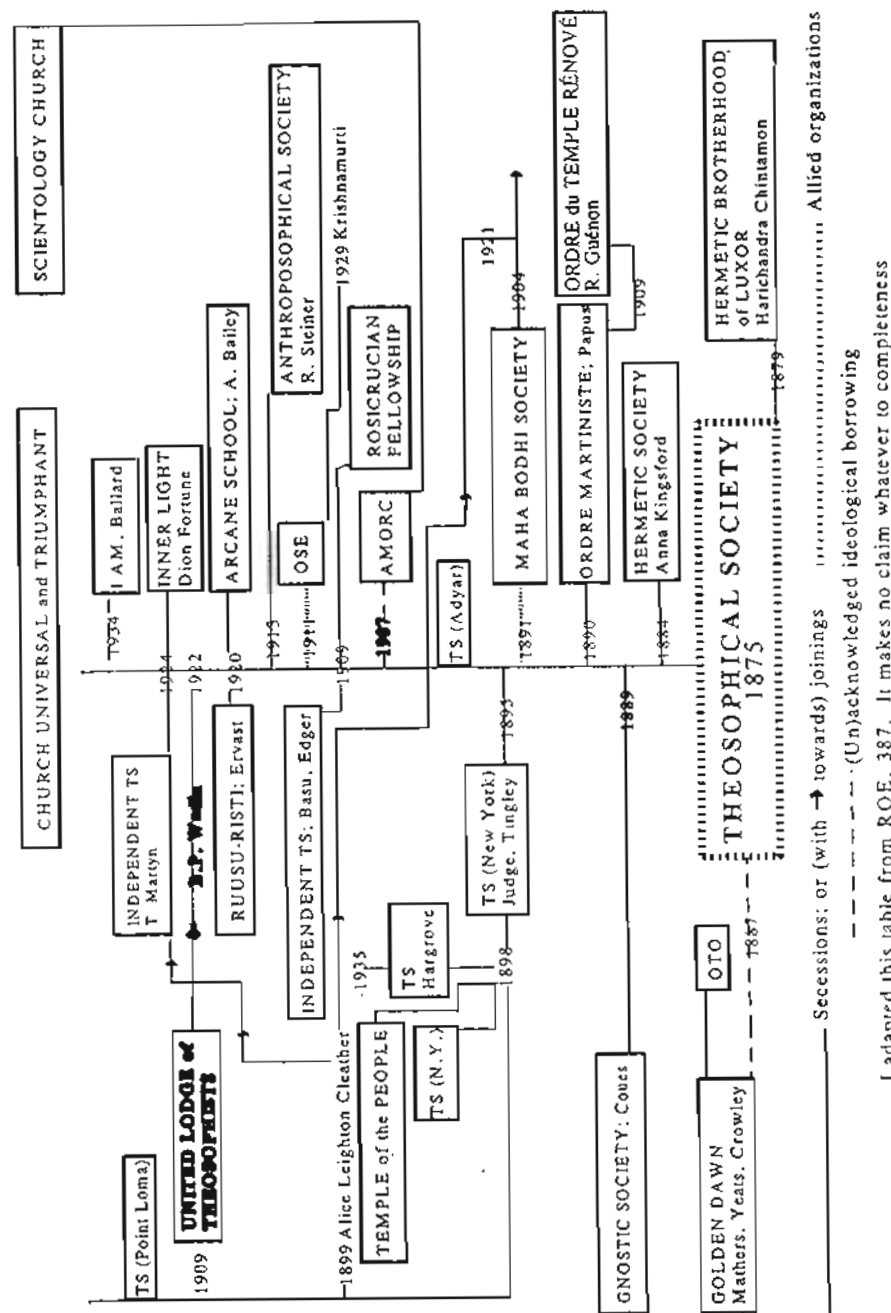
A. In a wide sense, people call various attempts within various religions to get knowledge of God, or of 'higher worlds', theosophy. B. The ideas within the

¹BESANT(1921G), 4: 'We have among us [the TS] every variety of conservative, liberal, moderate, extreme views on every religious, political and social opinion'. Roughly true; but it leaves open the questions if 'every' is 100%, and if all varieties were equally influential.

²Throughout this book, both over- and under-representation are meant as compared to populations as a whole, unless it is specified in the context.

³Sociology of knowledge deals with links of ideas to social categories. VAN DOORN/LAMMERS, 195-6; BERGER(1967), 117f. BERGER/LUCKMANN, 138: 'Different social groups will have different affinities with the competing theories and will subsequently, become 'carriers' of the latter.' Roberto Michels, 'Conservatism' in *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, vol. 3, N.Y., MacMillan, 1950: 'Undoubtedly, the classes which most readily experience conservative feelings and work out complimentary ideologies are the wealthy classes, those who have something to conserve.'

⁴'It is not right, when one in spiritual science or Theosophy, or generally in occultism, defines much, talks in concepts a lot'. R. Steiner, *Die geistige Führung des Menschen und der Menschheit*. Berlin 1911, 16.



Secessions; or (with → towards) joinings

----- (Un)acknowledged ideological borrowing

I adapted this table from ROE, 387. It makes no claim whatever to completeness

Theosophical Society. There, they translated theosophy as Divine Wisdom.¹ C. Ideas outside the direct framework of that Society, but acknowledgedly or otherwise traceably influenced by B.

The links of some of A to the theosophy of the TS, founded in 1875, are tenuous. They would burden this book with looking backwards for many centuries, probably with 'diminishing returns'. So we will only use senses B and C.²

Already before 1891, when Helena Blavatsky, co-founder of the Theosophical Society, died, there were some secessions from it. There were more after 1891.³ The first of two larger ones happened in 1895: most United States members, taking along some of other countries, split from The Theosophical Society, headquartered in Adyar (South India) to form the Theosophical Society, eventually known as TS (Point Loma).

A second secession happened in 1913. The majority of the German section, led by General Secretary for life Rudolf Steiner broke away,⁴ or was expelled, with part of the membership of other sections, to form the Anthroposophical Society. As with the TS (Point Loma), this change in name⁵ did not mean big changes in many of the major doctrines.

We will meet more, smaller, splinter groups later. Not all of them are unimportant for a study of the politics of Divine Wisdom.

In this book, simply 'Theosophical Society' (TS; members are FTS, Fellow of the Theosophical Society) means TS (Adyar); presided over, until 1947, the end of our period, by Colonel H. Olcott, A. Besant, G. Arundale, and C. Jinarajadasa, respectively.

The TS (Adyar) gets most of the attention: because they had most members; because

¹BLAVATSKY(1987), I. The word 'theosophy' came from Webster's dictionary, when the TS was founded in 1875, and various possible names were suggested. *TH* July 1986, 177.

²Antoine Faivre, 'Theosophy', in ELIADE(1987), vol. 14, 466: 'the Theosophical Society, which bears only a distant relationship to traditional theosophy.' GUÉNON(1921)'s not that friendly neologism *théosophisme* for the TS, as different from *théosophie*, did not catch on much; though HUTIN did use it.

³See p. 7 for some of the organizations. J. Gordon Melton, in his Introduction to T. MILLER(1991), 7 estimated 'over one hundred separate groups that can be traced directly to the Theosophical Society (though few bear that name)'.

⁴The version found in much literature: GOODRICK-CLARKE(1986), 104; ROE, 215f: 'split off'; TAYLOR(1992), 296: 'departed'. But STEINER(1925), 293 himself maintains he was locked out, trying to stay in on his own terms. The *GREAT SOVIET ENCYCLOPEDIA* vol. 25, 589: 'After the [Krishnamurti] schism took place, R. Steiner formed an offshoot movement ...' No: it was 16 years before that schism. HUTIN, 1376, wrongly calls Steiner 'a former pupil of Madame Blavatsky'. PAUWELS and BERGIER, 175, construct a scheme of 'black magic' 'satanic' Blavatsky theosophy versus Steiner's 'white magic' anthroposophy. This conspiracy theory doesn't explain why Steiner was an official in the 'satanic' TS for so long and did not leave voluntarily. RAVENSCROFT has a similar theory, and scores of pages on Steiner; yet not a single sentence on Steiner's TS membership.

⁵If one believes in an 'inner God' in man, the difference between 'divine' and 'human' wisdom is not big. Ironically, 'Anthroposophist' was a pseudonym for a Bombay Christian opponent of the TS in 1879. *BCW*, II, 25.

they had most political impact, certainly in India and Indonesia.

D. OTHER LIMITS AND LINKS. THIS BOOK'S DIVISIONS

India and Indonesia are big countries, central in world colonization and decolonization history; India also in religio-spiritual theosophic ideas. One can see its attraction to a person like Annie Besant, politically ambitious already before joining the TS.

About Indonesia I have written in comparative detail. Theosophical history, and more so history of theosophists' relationships to politics, of this important country is closer to being virgin territory than of India. Iskandar Nugraha's M.A. thesis of 1989, which I did not know about until 1995, is an exception.

Ceylon,¹ easy to reach from Adyar headquarters, was an example of a relatively small country where a limited number of 'The' TS, or other, theosophists might make a difference.

Other countries like The Netherlands, Britain, or Australia in themselves are not my subject. They only are sometimes in this book as part of the background. Some links of their political history to the TS may also be interesting. But really including them would mean too many disparate chapters. South Asia and Indonesia have more factors in their histories in common, limiting disparateness. There, one can study anti-colonial national movements; not in, say, Germany's history.

This study is divided into six parts. PART I is about how theosophists see the universe, planet Earth, and prehistory and history of humankind; compared to other, religious and scientific, views. I made it as compact as possible. Though not my real subject, one needs it for context.

PART II looks, more or less chronologically, at the history of the Theosophical Society (and related organizations) from 1875 to 1947. PART III looks at from which social backgrounds the TS recruited members.

PARTS IV to VI are about relations to three political movements. They are: the labour movement; national movements in colonially ruled countries; and the women's movement.

One could say: PART I, ideas; PART II, history; PART IV to VI, history of some political ideas, and their interaction with the social and political locale of the time.

Limiting myself to the three subjects of Parts IV to VI, in this book I did not use all opportunities that the many sides of the politics of theosophy present, to look at most major problems² and currents in political life at the time. Theosophists had relationships, some parallel, some antagonistic, to most of these, from anarchism to fascism, communism to czarism, social democracy to liberalism.

The subject is also many-sided, in the sense of on the borderlines of many disciplines:

¹Today officially and internationally known as Sri Lanka; spelt sometimes Shri. 'Lanka' then was the usual name in Sinhalese, its most widely spoken language. This book often uses 'Ceylon' like most contemporaneous English-language sources. Independence, 4-2-1948, agreed on by 1947.

²ROE, XV: 'many moral issues emerge ... The list includes race, gender, species, progressive education, peace ... music ... art.'

history, political science, sociology, philosophy, religious science... Discussing theosophist prehistory and history concepts needs some geology and biology.

Many-sidedness has its drawbacks too. Sometimes, I felt reminded of these lines by Dutch Annie M.G. Schmidt:

Achter elke muur zijn andere muren/ en nooit een eenhoorn of een bieteboom.

Behind every wall, there's other walls/ never a unicorn or a bugbear.

During my research, I found lots of mythical creatures (at least, belief in them); but mainly, labyrinths of 'other walls'.

2. WHAT SOURCES AND LITERATURE SAY AND DO NOT SAY

The Theosophical Society has advantages as an object of historical research in the 1875-1947 period: it was neither too big nor too small,¹ international, existing all of that time, a well-recorded organization. Overall, there is not too little material. Too much?

The quantity of printed paper produced by theosophists probably outnumbers the publications of any organization.²

TS 'magazine density' per member must be one of the highest of the time international magazines, plus at least one for most national sections and many local 'lodges'. Pamphlets and books in many languages came out. Hundreds of them were by Annie Besant alone.³ She owned *New India*, for some time the best-sold daily paper of Madras presidency in South India.

Some of the publications were explicitly political (like the weekly *Commonwealth*). Others, like the best known TS monthly *The Theosophist*, contained both explicitly political articles, and articles implicitly interesting as background, if you try to put their ideas on politics into perspective.

Some of my findings on various political questions are from bulky books on them, some, though, are short remarks, often from short articles, sometimes asides from a context that is seemingly not much related to the subjects.

Did I overrate these remarks? Here, one should think of the possibility that within a social context (of a certain society, of a certain class, or a certain organization) some ideas are thought of as so self-evident that they need little or no defence or explanation.⁴

So an enquiry into the history of important ideas may yield little material evidence, if

¹Unlike a tendency such as world trade unionism, with its hundreds of millions of people involved. Roman Catholicism or Islam are also too big, and have too long, too complicated, previous histories. Neither would a really small, short-lived movement, concentrated in one country, do.

²SPIERENBURG(1988), 158.

³M. COLE, 195, estimated: 'four or five hundred books and pamphlets and an infinite quantity of articles'. MIERS, 162: most of the work was done by her ghostwriters like Ernest Wood; certainly in her later years. Madame Blavatsky wrote 'close to one thousand individual articles' in the 1874-1891 period; B. de Zirkoff, preface to *BCW*, XIV, p. VII.

⁴Not 'The Commonwealth', as misspelled in *TMM* 1918, 559; and in GUÉNON(1921), 287.

⁵RISSEEUW(1988), 177, based on Bourdieu, speaks of 'doxa'.

they are 'above discussion'; and maybe much on subjects writers within that society, class or organization feel uncertain about.

One also should consider, when looking at the history of theosophist ideas, how accessible sources are.

There is not just 'too much material.' There is 'too little' at the same time:

Given that much essential Theosophical historical material is in closed collections, the researcher who would be objective faces a major hurdle. Such [for instance, Esoteric Section] archives are generally closed to outsiders, or to anyone whose approach will not be that of a 'true believer'.¹

Do later reprints always have the same value to historians as originals? According to theosophist Price:

Several branches of the Theosophical Publishing House have been reprinting some older Theosophical books with changes that adjust their content to modern knowledge and sensibility. But such changes admittedly alter the originals and thus distort history.

Ideas about racial differences and class distinctions have been prime candidates for deletion.²

A. AUTHORS OF HISTORY FROM THE INSIDE

Theosophists have always written about their own past (though those interested in history sometimes complain other theosophists are not); more so than non-adherents. In 1985, a Theosophical History Centre, organizing conferences and publishing pamphlets, was established in London, then attached to the TS English section. Also since 1985, there is *Theosophical History* magazine, more or less connected to the Centre, 'although the two are technically separate'.³

Many theosophists' writings have the advantages, and/or the disadvantages, of history, written from 'within' organizations in general. Some are apologies⁴ for authors' stances within (in this case) the theosophic movement, or for leaders authors may follow, they may also be attacks within or without that movement.⁵

¹TILLET(1989), 44.

²PRICE(1988B); PRICE(1988A). Van Vledder of the Dutch TS in a 1992 lecture: Jinarajadasa's *First Principles of Theosophy* is no longer reprinted 'as it mentions races .. not human races ... [VOORHAM(1988): 'no link at all to physical race'] In our times one is prohibited using the word race, then one is supposed to discriminate against people.' As for 'not human [physical] races', BESANT(1919B), 71 defined 'race' as: 'An ethnic type, distinguished by marked physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual characteristics, consisting of a root-stock, and, later, of branches.' These branches are 'Sub-Races'; races have a 'common [divine] Ancestor', as with Blavatsky.

³TH Jan. 1985, 16. See also *Informationsblatt für Theosophie in Deutschland* 16 (1990), 9ff.

⁴Just one example: CLEATHER(1922B). The Christian Paulus Orosius, fifth century A.D., wrote *Historia contra paganos*-history against the pagans; to him, historic truth was subservient to religion.

⁵A sharp example: CLEATHER(1922A). Changing sides in more than one case necessitated re-writing history. E.g., Bahmanji Pestonji Wadia had been a long time assistant to Mrs Besant;

Tillett sums up five problems in theosophical 'self-portraits':

There is a spectrum of historical dishonesty across which attempts to present Theosophical history can be ranged. In selecting examples I have kept to the area I know best - but I would not suggest that only the Adyar-based Society offers specimens of all these.

1. omit inconvenient material ... 2. edit out inconvenient material ... [in] new editions.¹
3. incomplete statements likely to mislead ... 4. misleading statements ... 5. false statements (or shall we call them lies).²

Tillett proved TS leader Leadbeater misstated his own birth-date, and overstated the social status of his family.³

So far the problems, if theosophists deal with their own history. These are linked to a problem that we will meet on p. 35, the problem of theosophists with history in general.

The history of all movements for human regeneration is in large measure a failure ...

Theosophical history is in a sense depressing (as is Buddhist history or Christian history).⁴

As he wrote this, Price was thinking of internal conflicts.

Those conflicts are 'depressing' in another sense: few of them were about the theosophist view of history. A view of non-Darwinist evolution of socially and 'racially' 'higher' and 'lower'⁵ humans; tied to the central Karma and reincarnation axiom.

after his 1922 break with her, he upgraded Besant's 1890's leadership rival, W.Q. Judge, in his writings.

¹CLEATHER(1922A), 76f: AB and G.R.S. Mead inserted their own ideas into their (3rd) edition of Blavatsky's *SD*: 'Annie Besant's corruption of the Secret Doctrine'. Ibid., 71f. 'Tampering with H.P. Blavatsky's writings'. CLEATHER and CRUMP(1927): [AB's *TS Voice of the Silence* editions] 'contain errors and even, in some cases, deliberate alterations and omissions'. CLEATHER(1922A), herself, 2 quoted HPB 'I am the mother and creator of the Society: it has my magnetic fluid ... Therefore I alone and to a degree ... can serve as a lightning conductor of Karma for it.' The dots I underlined stand for 'Olcott' in HPB's original. Mrs Cleather after 1895 did not recognize Olcott as president. Quoting that letter in CLEATHER (1922B), 26, 'Olcott' is there, no dots. Anthroposophists editing Steiner's early work put 'Anthroposophy' in most spots where Steiner wrote 'Theosophy'. Dissident anthroposophist and owner of Cagliostro publishers Spaan called this editing: 'falsifications'; THISEN, 17. In 1951, six years after Indonesia's declaration of independence, the Theosophical Publishing House brought out Leadbeater's *The Occult History of Java*, reprinting 1929-30 articles from the *Australian Theosophist*, but omitting the last article 'in which he praised the Dutch East Indies government; see p. 356. TICHELAAR(1977), 122: 'One can hardly see this magical removal as white [= 'good'] magic'.

²TILLET(1989), 45-8.

³TILLET(1982), 11f. GOODRICK-CLARKE(1985), 90f. proved the same two things on Austrian theosophist cum Hitler's mentor on 'race' Lanz von Liebenfels. Leadbeater was leader of the ES (TS inner circle) 1933-34. He had played an important part earlier on; in the 1880's he was Secretary in Adyar. See p. 55. Misspelling 'Leadbetter': CUMBEY, 49; MOSSE(1961), 87.

⁴PRICE(1987), 50.

⁵In the *Secret Doctrine*, BLAVATSKY(1977), vol. II, 421: 'Mankind is obviously divided into god-informed men and lower human creatures. The intellectual difference between the Aryan and other civilized nations and such savages as the South Sea Islanders, is inexplicable on any other

Or, conflicts were not about elitism pervading the movement, dividing 'the Few' from 'the masses who need only practical guidance'¹ (not 'philosophy'). Not about the threat of turning the TS official object of 'Universal Brotherhood' into an empty shell via fine print on 'older' and 'younger' brothers.²

B.FROM THE OUTSIDE

Sometimes, theosophists see it as problematic if people look at their history 'from without': 'Ellic Howe is not a believer in anything occult, which renders his editorial contributions shallow.'⁴

Can only pious Roman Catholics write about the long history of the papacy, can only the Reverend Ian Paisley write an Oliver Cromwell biography?

Many non-theosophists can hardly imagine a body, which they often see as unworldly or escapist, linked to politics. Though political aspects especially have interested quite some outside authors; like me.

These observers tend to disregard the connection between theosophists' views on the nature of the world, on animal and human evolution and history -one might say, their philosophy- on the one hand; and their views and actions on practical politics on the other hand.⁵

For instance Dinnage's biography treats Besant's theosophy unsympathetically as a

grounds. No amount of culture, nor generations of training amid civilization, could raise such human specimens as the Bushmen, the Vedddhas of Ceylon, and some African tribes, to the same intellectual level as the Aryans, the Semites, and the Turanians so called. The 'sacred spark' is missing in them and it is they who are the only inferior [italics HPB] races on the globe, now happily -owing to the adjustment of nature which ever works in that direction- fast dying out'. Yet theosophist VOORHAM(1988) protested 'that in the 18 big volumes of Blavatsky's collected works no one can show a single passage, a single sentence, a single word from which a racist thought might appear'. JINARAJADASA(1948), 28, attacked the doctrine of 'superior' or 'inferior' races; without saying who supported it.

¹To whom H.P. Blavatsky dedicated her *The Voice of the Silence*

²BLAVATSKY(1987), 247.

³EDGER(1903), 180f; translated into Dutch and sold by the Indies TS; *TMM* 1922, 464. GANDHI(1940), 194, on theosophists he met in South Africa: 'The chief thing about theosophy is to cultivate and promote the idea of brotherhood. We had considerable discussions over this, and I criticized the members when their conduct did not appear to me to square with their ideal'. WEBB(1974B), 249 on TS 'quarrels': 'There never was much conflict on principle.'

⁴Jean Overton Fuller, *TH* Oct. 1985, 73. VAN LEEUWEN(1921H), 109: Count Witte had little sympathy for his cousin Blavatsky 'and just because of that could only be a bad biographer'.

⁵JINARAJADASA(1948), 5; 13 emphasized the link: 'a small body of Theosophists ... as statesmen, artists ... etc.' as 'only possibility to renew the world'. Writings on theosophist politicians tend to play down (see TINGAY on Postgate's Lansbury biography) or omit (WEHLER; WESSELING, 141 on Hübbe-Schleiden, who described himself as having 'no other interests day or night' than theosophy; *TT*, June 1899, 555; SHARMA(1972) on Sir S. Subramania Iyer) their theosophy. KUMAR did not mention as theosophical inspiration to AB her Masters, HPB or CWL.

'fantasy world',¹ separately from her 'sympathetic' politics. However: even the weirdest fantasy ultimately has its origins in reality. It may influence that reality strongly, in ways much more earthly than occult magic.

Mrs Besant gets by far the most attention; this is understandable in view of her prominence in Indian and British politics. Many books in which Annie Besant enters the Indian history scene in a small or larger supporting part² also juxtapose, instead of connect, Besant's theosophy (if dealt with) and her politics. They do not point out the not only spiritual, but also political, watershed theosophy marked in her ideas.³

With due regard to U-turns and contradictions in Besant's personal history, a link runs through theosophist political history, from quite before till quite after her time; both in and out of her society. Basically, Mrs Besant was a person, more able at putting into practice theosophical political ideas, which leaders before, besides, and after her held as well, in some form or other.

Many have failed to see the link. Marxist writers were on far more familiar ground criticizing ideas, closer to their own (social democracy; secular anti-colonialism) than with ideas that to them were 'too far away', 'too weird' to deserve, maybe, more than a sneer in passing.⁴ One can compare this to many Marxist reactions to forms of religion; and, surely before 1933, to some of their reactions to fascism.⁵

Anarchists, often seen by theosophists as main opponents, relatively frequently wrote polemics against theosophy; from Rabbie in 1898 to Senft in 1991.

Women's historians⁶ are interested as many women have been prominent in the TS, certainly compared to other religious organizations. I found, by the way, less in my sources on relationships to women's movements in Asia than in Europe; which explains the relatively small size of my Part VI. Some women's historians work within what one might call a feminist-Marxist framework. A keen eye for possible gender and/or class prejudice, though, does not automatically make for a keen eye for questionable 'race' doctrines.⁷

A keen eye for biographical scholarly detail, as in Tillett, is also no guarantee for much more than passing references to racial theories; or to politics in general.⁸

¹DINNAGE(1986), 122.

²GHOSE(1975). SHARMA(1972) does not include her at all.

³ROMEIN(1976), 634-5 gives the reader an impression of continuity. 'There was, however, another side to the tempestuous Annie Besant. She was also a mystic ...'; ALI(1985), 6. Unfortunately, this useful book usually does not have references of quotes.

⁴PALME DUTT. VAN RAVESTEYN, 412. LAXNESS, 178: 'confused theosophic cant'. Henk Sneevliet, and ROMEIN(1976), 631ff. investigated the TS somewhat more.

⁵DIMITROF(1973), 102ff., criticized them.

⁶ROE, 162f. See part VI.

⁷For example BURFIELD(1983), besides a tendency to over-estimate socialist and feminist influences in theosophy, ignores 'race', though she does note upper class elitism. TAYLOR(1992) mentions TS race theories only in a small note on p. 368.

⁸TILLET(1982), 104. SMITH, 154 does mention HPB's 'pseudo-anthropology'.

Concerning sociology and other social sciences, Zaretsky speaks about 'neglect' of esoteric groups, though he himself considers

the occult is a legitimate and important area of investigation in its own right and as an avenue leading to greater understanding of the society of which it is a part.¹

Another category, writing about theosophy (including, sometimes, its views on politics) from the outside are Christian apologists for Catholicism or Protestantism.² Much of their work, though, falls outside the scope of this book, being 'purely' theological (like attacking TS views on God as 'pagan') or legal (like accusing H.P. Blavatsky of fraud, or C.W. Leadbeater of perversion).

TABLE 1. VIEWS ON RELEVANCE AND PROGRESSIVENESS OF THEOSOPHY

	THEOSOPHIC OCCULT VIEWS POLITICALLY IRRELEVANT ¹	THEOSOPHIC OCCULT VIEWS POLITICALLY RELEVANT
THEOSOPHISTS RATHER PROGRESSIVE IN POLITICS	Dinnage; T. Ali; Muthanna; Nethercot	Tiryakian; J. Webb
THEOSOPHISTS RATHER CONSERVATIVE IN POLITICS	J. Nehru; Engels, Van Ravesteijn, Laxness; many Marxists	This book ⁴

This book aims to be the first study of the Theosophical Society on the three selected subjects in political history; also the first one from an unusual viewpoint (see the lower right cell of Table 2); which it hopes to prove at least as plausible as the three other ones in that table. It tends to (over-?) emphasize what others under-emphasized. Throughout the book, I have tried to present controversial issues in a many-sided way; showing different sides, both within and outside the theosophical movement, in controversies. I

¹ZARETSKY, vii.

²Catholic: F.J.W.S., 55: the TS is 'the wolf in sheep's clothes'. LUNS, 4, of the Dutch Roman Catholic Apologetic Society: 'this foolish and impious system of ideas'. Protestant: HAITJEMA c.s. HUTTEN, CE(1929), vol. V, 418ff. Ibid., 420: 'Theosophy is the absolute opposite of the gospel of God's mercy', ibid., 418: it is nothing but a return of 'the old Gnostic errors' (a Christian version of reincarnation theory they oppose?).

³Thinking the ideas politically irrelevant is not the same as denying the relevance of Annie Besant as a person, or the TS as organizational framework; OWEN(1968).

⁴It is basically also Reva POLLOCK GREENBURG's view. She mentions mainly only Annie Besant, however, as the main theme of her book is the Fabian Society, not the TS. SMITH, 142, saw the TS as a 'heresy of the right'. GOODRICK-CLARKE(1985) focused on links to the Austrian and German extreme right. He has a halfway position on significance (why else write a whole book?) or insignificance (his discussion of the *Thule Gesellschaft*, 135f.).

did not aim primarily to support or to attack either theosophists or opponents of theirs. Rather, from my work, people with more or less conservative views may find they are closer to theosophists' than they thought; or progressives may find distances are greater than they thought. On the other hand, leftist foes or rightist friends of viewpoints, akin to those of the TS, may find that their estimate of distances between themselves and theosophists on the political field was more or less correct.

PART I. ON THEOSOPHY

1. THEOSOPHY ON ITSELF AND THE UNIVERSE; RELIGION AND SCIENCE

Theosophy, as its various schools see it, is Super-religion¹ and Super-science:

Theosophy itself is Religion; not *a* religion, but religion *per se* carried to the *nth* degree ... It is Philosophy, also; not *a* philosophy, but philosophy *per se*, carried to the *nth* degree ... It is Science; not *a* science, but science *per se*, carried to its *nth* degree, so that no human intellect can compass its bounds.²

In the future, it will end differences between religion and science, which twentieth-century people see in their *Maya* [illusion]:

... we should not go far wrong in saying that the religion of this community is to do what it is told. There is no sort of divorcement between science and religion, because both alike are bent entirely to the one object, and exist only for the sake of the State.³

Theosophy aims high:

The philosophy of Theosophy, i.e., *Brahma-Vidya* has answers for all questions, explanations for all phenomena, and has no unsolved problems.⁴

Reading how high theosophy aims, one may ask, as Annie Besant did:⁵ how are the aims related to practice, for instance (Super-)political⁶ practice?

¹WILSON(1970), 143, speaks of 'the "supra-religious" system of Theosophy'. Krishna Dasa in *NI*, 25-8-1924, 9: 'religion of religions'. BESANT(1921C), 'H.H. the Maharaja [of Gwalior] wishes to be built temples of the different religions in India. Already a Hindū Temple, a Mosque, and a fine Sikh Temple have been built in this beautiful park, and our T.S. Temple of the Ancient Wisdom stands on a hillock above everything else—a suitable position for a T.S. Lodge'. *TB* March 1932, 138: Dutch GS J. Krusheer 'mentions Mrs Besant has said, that the Great Ones, who live deep in the Himalayas, possess a chart on which every Religion is represented in its colour. The Theosophical light is *white*' [all colours; BLAVATSKY(1987), 58] 'The Theosophical Society was chosen as the corner-stone, the foundation of the future religions of the world.' *TT* May 1937, 102.

²DE PURUCKER (1947), 26. *Ibid.*, 14, on HPB 'Her great work, *The Secret Doctrine*, she called "the Synthesis of Science, Religion and Philosophy." These words, to many who do not understand their full import, may perhaps at first blush seem somewhat ambitious words ...'

³LEADBEATER(1971), 24. This book, based on clairvoyance, is on the new race, A.D. 2760.

⁴*Brahma-Vidya* (Sanskrit): literally, knowledge of Brahman. *TM* March 1934, 73; quoted *OELC* May-June 1934. 'We can say safely that Theosophy today is the only doctrine in the world which never fails to provide the answer.' LEOLINE L. WRIGHT, 21. 'Theosophy solves all problems in ... art ... politics ... nationalism, internationalism ...' G. Arundale, 'Theosophy is the next step', quoted *OELC* Oct.-Nov. 1937. 'The doctrine we promulgate being the only true one': letter from the Brotherhood's (see p. 44 of this book) Grand Master, quoted CLEATHER(1922B), 36.

⁵'No practice is responsible unless it is based on true metaphysics. No metaphysics is true, that is, viable, if it does not lead to a responsible practice'. *An introduction to the science of peace*, 53.

⁶DAS(1947), 446-7: 'In short, what the Human Race needs today, is a World Religion, which will ... be ... the very oldest, indeed eternal, all-inclusive, universal religion, which will expressly

How theosophists related to religion and science is interesting for our later look at political consequences. Jawaharlal Nehru, some thirty years after the end of his TS membership, wrote politics must be based either on magic or science. 'Personally, I have no faith in or use for the ways of magic and religion.'¹ In the times we write about and after, on the one hand many political movements claimed to base themselves on religious truth; like the Roman Catholic State Party in The Netherlands, or Hezbollah (Party of God) in Lebanon. On the other hand Marxist parties,² or the French *Parti Radical*, claimed scientific truth. As theosophy claimed both religious and scientific truth, politics, based on it, are an interesting case of a not that frequent combination in views.

One also finds the relationship in society between religion and science in one of the categories into which sociologist of religion Bryan Wilson divides religious movements; in the category which he calls 'manipulationist'. He regards Christian Science and the Theosophical Society as prime examples of manipulationism. Manipulationism to him is a type of religion linked to the evolving of more impersonal and complex types of societies. Manipulationists claim their doctrines to be science as least as much as they claim them to be religion.³ They differ from what Wilson calls introversionists who withdraw from politics.⁴

This part is about theosophy after it had become a more or less coherent doctrine, say after 1888 (publication of *The Secret Doctrine*). Earlier on, it was less easy to distinguish from ideas in spiritualist circles. H. Newton, first TS treasurer in 1875, said the Society started as 'pure' Spiritualists; it added interpretations of (for instance) South Asian religions years later.⁵

include . . . all the existing religions, and will also provide a World Order, a World Organization, which will not abolish any, but will include, moderate, federate, all existing nationalities.'

¹ *Whither India*; quoted BRECHER(1959), 194-5.

² Indonesian Marxist paper *SM*, 10-5-1917, 13, translated 'social democracy' as 'ilmoe Sama Rata'; the science of equality.

³ WILSON(1975), 15: 42. Ibid., 504, in his Conclusions: 'the new manipulationist sects of the modern world, which, by means that claim to be scientific, metaphysical and religious, offer men the prospect of greater success in the world by the enlargement of their natural faculties and intelligence.' GEERTZ(1960), 317, has the name 'Javanese science' for mystical movements in East Java; in a small town, Pare, which he called 'Modjokuto'. Some of these had connections to the TS.

⁴ As examples of introversionism WILSON(1970), 118f. names Christian sects in North America, like the Amish and the Hutterites. Of manipulationist Christian Science, he writes, ibid., 148: 'Christian Scientists have been prominent in politics: a number of American Senators have been Christian Scientists, and so were Lord and Lady Astor and Lord Lothian, British Ambassador to Washington in the early war years.' Conservative Lady Astor was the second woman elected to Westminster parliament, after Constance Markievicz. On Java, GEERTZ(1960), 317: "'This-Worldly'" Mysticism.'

⁵ *TH* July 1886, 182. MANSION, 31: theosophy as 'simply copying Indian forms of religion', is too simple. Spiritualism: see p. 45.

A. RELIGION

In all religions, philosophies (and sciences), throughout human prehistory and history, theosophists say, one should differentiate between an outer, 'exoteric' doctrine, for the 'thoughtless multitude';¹ and, more importantly, an 'esoteric', Inner, occult ['hidden'] Doctrine for the Initiated, for the Few. These Inner doctrines are basically the same. They all derive from the Ancient Wisdom, from the source of all religions:²

there must also be one truth which finds expression in all the various religions-except in the Jewish ...³

And they will reunite with this Wisdom, with Theosophy; to form what we call a super-religion. Whether one's religion, one's exoteric creed, is Christianity, Hinduism, agnosticism, or whatever, does not matter to the Theosophical Society, as long as one's esoteric creed, one's super-religion, is theosophy. So in principle one may combine membership of the TS, as far as it is concerned, with that of any religious community.⁴

¹ Greek philosopher Iamblichos, about A.D. 300, the author of a historically doubtful biography of Pythagoras, made an early reference to the opposites 'esoteric' versus 'exoteric'; using it for differences within Pythagoras' school. VON FRITZ, 211. Iamblichos is highly valued in the TS: 'Iamblichos now is known under another name [of his present incarnation] as one of the Masters, who helped to found the present Theosophical Society'; T.H. Martyn, 'De Wereldkeraar en democratie', *TMM* 1920, 115.

² DE PURUCKER(1940), 38. BLAVATSKY(1987), 246: 'uneducated masses'. DAS(1947), 417: 'All believe their respective religions to have two aspects, one, for the masses, another, for the few advanced souls; ...'

³ For Theosophy is the true and authentic Mother of Religions and Philosophies and Sciences: the great central systemic Source whence all the latter originally derived in past times, and therefore is their Interpreter; it interprets the hid meaning and secret symbology of all these ancient systems'. DE PURUCKER(1940), 51f. DE PURUCKER(1906), 6: theosophy 'is the great central Light, whence all other lights originate'.

⁴ BLAVATSKY(1987), 45

⁵ May one also combine membership in the TS (Adyar) with membership in another theosophic organization? The General Secretary of the British section, Bertram Keightley, asked Olcott this in 1904. Did Olcott's ruling of a few years' earlier 'that any member of the T.S. [Adyar] joining the Judge-Tingley organization [the T.S., Point Loma], *ipso facto* cancelled his membership in the T.S.' still hold good? Olcott, in an Executive Notice, published *TT*, Feb. 1905, suppl., x, replied it still did: 'nothing could be clearer than that a person who links himself with such a hostile body [the Point Loma TS] has lost his right to remain with us as a fellow member: he has to choose between two opposite poles.' As the decades passed, this ruling gradually was no longer applied. On the relationship of the Point Loma TS to other theosophists, TINGLEY(1915), 26 stated: 'This organisation does not have any relationships in any way to whatever other societies and bodies, which call themselves Theosophical'; '... call themselves Theosophical and which do not recognize Katherine Tingley as the Leader and Official Head of the Theosophical Movement all over the world'; DE PURUCKER(1906), 23. Dr. Peverelli of the Pt. Loma TS asked the Dutch East Indies TS (Adyar) for its members' list in 1932; it refused. *TMM* 1932, 86.

1. Karma, reincarnation, human origins

Theosophists reject chaos or chance.¹ For centuries, Christians had taught that chance does not exist, but that every event, even a tiny sparrow falling off a roof,² happens according to the will of a personal god. Nineteenth century science weakened this idea. If the uncomfortable spectre of chance should be explained away, then it had to be done on a different basis.

H.P. Blavatsky introduced two interdependent principles of order in the universe: Karma³ and reincarnation. She thought them central among tenets that all religions should have in common. For over 2,500 years, in some form, these two had been part of Hinduism, and, differently⁴, of Buddhism.

They certainly were not central from the start in theosophy. In *Isis Unveiled*,⁵ her

¹Sir S. Subramania Aiyar in a memorial speech to HPB in Adyar: 'According to the well-established doctrine of Karma, there was no such thing as an accident'; 'White Lotus Day in Adyar', *TT*, June 1906, 701. See JINARAJADASA(1939), 3. Psycho-analyst Jung also wrote, in *The Psychology of the Unconscious*, 'there is no such thing as chance.' Quoted Lady Emily Lutyns, *Psycho-analysis and the Ancient Wisdom*, *TT*, Oct. 1920, 55. Both occultism and Sigmund Freud influenced Jung. Lady Emily thought that some of Jung's ideas were 'closely akin' to theosophy, but others 'grossly materialistic'. In the 1990's, geologist and palaeontologist Stephen Jay GOULD rejects teleology and predictability, often seen in the U.S. as linked to evolution. He sees survival not as a teleological reward for 'fitness', but as a question of the luck of the draw in a 'grand scale lottery'. Studies of, for instance, the fossils from the Burgess Shale in Canada show that survivors seem to have nothing in common. 'Suppose you are a very successful fish; and then your pond dries up. You become extinct ... Also Homo sapiens is here by the luck of the draw.' See p. 37.

²According to JINARAJADASA(1921A), 42, 'no more wonderful fact exists' than the divine link to the sparrow, 'it is literally true ... Mighty Beings guide every event'.

³A complex Sanskrit term, summed up as 'cause and effect', 'fate', etc.; not 'eternal repose'; CLARK, 23. For theosophists, roughly, the belief all good or bad fortune of a human (or a set of humans, an animal, or an atom) is due to that being's own good or bad deeds in the past; the past of this life, or the past of earlier incarnations. Leadbeater in 'Theosophy in Every-Day Life', *TT*, May 1905, 471: 'a man who has studied the Theosophical system ... knows that under the unerring will of Divine justice if suffering comes to him, it comes because he has deserved it; it comes because it is necessary for his evolution in consequence of actions which he has committed, of words which he has spoken, of thoughts to which he has given harbour in previous days and earlier lives; and so the whole idea of injustice as connected with suffering is absolutely removed from him'. For instance, how do you explain that a child is born 'without healthy brains'? Besant, in 'Mrs. Besant on theosophy and reincarnation', *TT*, Apr. 1906, 536: 'Idiocy and lunacy are the results of vices'. BAILEY(1922A), 41 distinguishes five categories: world karma; racial, national, group, and individual karma. HPB, quoted *TT* Apr. 1931, 180: theosophists should preach karma and reincarnation 'wherever thou findest a chair or table to speak from.'

⁴For instance, not tied to the caste stratification of society in Buddhist theory. *Anatta* doctrine denies immortality of the soul; see p. 46

⁵Vol. I, 351. MEADE, 255; 417.

first book from 1877, Madame Blavatsky considered reincarnation a rare exception. Only after going to India two years later, she considered it the general rule.

What if ancient Egyptian religion, Islam, or Christianity do not have karma and reincarnation? Theosophists solved the problem by claiming the Initiates within these religions¹ kept the teachings secret, and did not commit them to accessible writing, as the 'ignorant many' might misunderstand them.

In Hinduism, karma and reincarnation teaching was tied to caste.² In theosophy, it was tied to class/caste by the tenet of 'old souls', who are ahead on the path of spiritual evolution, having lived more lives than young souls. It was also tied to doctrines of an 'Aryan race', of racial superiority, rising in the late nineteenth century.

So upper and middle class Europeans, Americans, Australians, and Indians, adding pseudo-biologic and pseudo-historic racial theories deepened 'higher-lower' ideas on society of conservative Brahmanism.

As both the origin, and the future, of all religions is the one Wisdom Religion, called since H.P. Blavatsky's revelations³ theosophy, so the origin and future of all humans is the

¹Egypt: DE PURUCKER(1940), 605: 'In this the Egyptologists are entirely wrong.' The Egyptologists, *ibid.*, 607: 'whose only argument against Herodotus' [Greek historian; de Purucker's authority on this, as were Europeans from before Champollion's decipherment of the hieroglyphs in the early 19th century] assertion is that they have not yet found proof ...'. In late antiquity Egypt even most priests could not read hieroglyphs. So reincarnation-initiates, if any, could have written down their ideas, safe from the 'thoughtless multitude' (*ibid.*, 38) of their times, these ideas then might have been rediscovered later. In de Purucker's days, millions of inscriptions had already been found, many of which were on ideas on life after death; quite different ideas though. Schopenhauer, too, thought that ancient Egyptians believed in reincarnation, but he lived a century of Egyptology earlier. There was in ancient Egypt a belief that people after dying had powers to appear like animals; Herodotus may have confused these ideas with Greek Pythagorean ideas of reincarnation by way of animals. Islam. O.S.M., 'Reincarnation, an Islamic doctrine'; *TT* Oct. 1910, 49-54. PARRINDER, 273. only 'a few extremists' among 'some Shi'a Muslims, especially in India' believe in reincarnation. Christianity: 'St. Jerome says that the doctrine of rebirth was an esoteric doctrine with the early Christians.' Kate C. Havens 'Psychic science and reincarnation'; *TT* Oct. 1902, 50. 'Even the Syrian Sage, Jesus the Avatara [incarnation of a god, especially Vishnu, in Hinduism] ... is said to have taught certain things to his disciples in private, whereas to the multitude the same truths, or at least parts of them as the case may have been, were taught not openly ...'; DE PURUCKER (1940), 54 'The Christ stood thus in front of humanity, that he taught them, as far as they could understand, the idea of reincarnation; Karma ... that is what he taught.' Rudolf Steiner, 7-7-1909, on St. John's gospel. To DEKKER-GROOT(1919), 33-4, the story of the two brothers Jacob and Esau proves reincarnation teaching in the Bible; as a just God cannot hate Esau for what he did in this life, but only because of sins in previous lives.

²HEENGAAN en TERUGKOMEN, 77. See our Part III.

³Isabelle Pagan, 'Aryan mythology', *TT* Nov. 1914, 143: 'our Aryan revelation'. *TT* Sept. 1930, report of TS congress: Bishops Wedgwood (760) and Leadbeater (764-5) use it in a positive sense. Most theosophists do not use the word revelation like Christians. Here it refers to books like *Isis Unveiled*.

Divine Principle.¹ Theosophists use this more all-embracing (or more 'vague'²) expression more frequently than 'God.' Most reject the Christian (or Muslim, or Jewish) doctrine of a personal God. Madame Blavatsky also emphasized her image of God differed as a God of Karma from the image as a God of Mercy from the Bible or the Koran.³

So the return to the Divine Principle was the future of humans: but only after very many reincarnations, lasting hundreds of millions of years.

Essentially, there is just One life, the life of *Avatar*,⁴ the 'Central Fire'⁵ from which sparks fly outwards; sparks identical with, yet different from, the Central Fire.

So, Man does not descend from animals, from 'lower' life forms, but is of divine origin.⁶ Theosophy shares this idea with conventional Christianity (which, however, draws a sharper dividing line between Creator and creature⁷), dominant in 1875's most powerful countries; though challenged by scientists categorized as 'materialists'. For the theosophists' view of long-term development of life on earth; and its similarities to, and differences from, two other views, see the table on p. 32.

Religions, and theosophy, are forms of idealist thought; idealist in the sense of thought opposed to materialist philosophy. In this philosophical sense, the only one of two 'materialism' senses which Mrs Besant saw as a 'serious opponent' of theosophy,⁸ we will use 'materialism' and 'idealism' throughout this book.⁹ H.P. Blavatsky opposed materialist and

¹'Theosophy considers humanity as an emanation from divinity on its return path thereto.' BLAVATSKY(1987), 217.

²For this objection to TS doctrines: MANSION, 34; *TT*, July 1907, 792, quoting French Protestant minister Chazal; LEADBEATER (1922), 410, MOSSE(1961), 86. *TT*, Feb. 1906, suppl., xxv: 'talk as to foggy and vague theories [of the TS]'. Mrs Besant, before she joined the TS, warned her readers against 'vaguely worded' theosophy; *National Reformer*, 18 June 1882; quoted TAYLOR(1992), 236.

³*BCW*, XIV, 42: her God is 'the God of Immutable Law, not charity; the God of Just Retribution, not mercy, which is merely an incentive to evil-doing and to a repetition of it'.

⁴The 'Lord' (Sanskrit), the Creator, in Hinduism more or less synonymous with Brahma, or Siva, or any god who is considered the highest.

⁵Aristotle attributed the theory of a Central Fire to followers of Pythagoras; COXON, 904.

⁶See p. 28. BESANT(1889), 11: 'Man, according to Theosophy, is a compound being, a spark of the universal spirit being prisoned in his body, as a flame in the lamp.'

⁷As did the Islam of a Javanese Muhammadijah critic of the theosophy-influenced *Budi Setia* movement: 'these people thought that God and man were one, in contrast to Islam which teaches that God is God and man is man'; GEERTZ(1960), 317.

⁸BESANT(1894), 3-4. Ibid: 'That [non-philosophical; of 'pleasure' and 'enjoyment'] materialism will never rule the world.'

⁹T. Carlyle, an influence on AB, HPB (see ARUNDALE(1920)), T.H. Martyn (MARTYN(1914), 261) and Arundale (*TT* Apr. 1936, 84; 'one of the greatest of modern writers', *TMNI* 1918, 244); expressed idealist philosophy in his *Sartor Resartus* 1.11: 'matter exists only spiritually, and to represent some idea, and 'body' it forth.' *TMNI*, 1917, 313-9, had a partial Dutch translation of *Sartor Resartus*. Dutch neo-Hegelian philosopher Bolland, quoted as motto, *TMNI*,

atheist thinking even more than she did the Christian form of religion.¹

2.Christianity

TS relations with Christianity were mutually ambiguous from the start. Conservative Christians especially see any creed different from their own, as 'pagan', as diabolic. Especially an occult one; the TS is the best known organized occultism.

A too impulsive missionary in the Central Provinces [of India; today's Madhya Pradesh] actually called us [theosophists] ... 'devil-worshippers'.²

Though Christians attacked the TS since its inception, it attracted³ other Christians to its

1918, 14, briefly described his idealism as: 'What is truth? Idea.' Jacket text, *TT* Sept. 1930 (etc.). III: 'The Theosophist is ... dedicated ... to the destruction of materialism.' Anna Kingsford, *TH* July 1987, 85: 'destroy the canker of Infidelity.' BESANT(1912A), 91. 'I may add that most of us regard the Theosophical Society as the result of a spiritual impulse, sent out into the world by the White Brotherhood, in order to save the world from sinking into Materialism, and to prepare the minds of men for the restoration of the esoteric teachings of religion'. Hubbe-Schleiden, FTS, was not that idealist when dealing with his practical colonialism: 'the economic question ... to-day is the basic element of all politics'; quoted WEHLER, 431. *CE*, 420; and MICHEL, 17 accuse theosophy of 'materialism'; they see materialism (or humanism; CUMBEY, 23) as the great anti-Christian conspiracy, including all that is not Dutch Protestant Gereformeerde Kerk, respectively Roman Catholic. 'Materialist' also is a favourite term of abuse among occultists disagreeing with one another; for instance, PROKOFIEFF, 17. Cathy PORTER, 36, wrote of the idealist-materialist dilemma as people saw it in 19th century czarist Russia, as 'angry shouting matches between "materialists" and "idealists": those who believed that the injustices of the present could only be removed by radical social changes, and those who looked back to the religious philosophies of the past, and held that it was only people's thoughts and feelings, never their social institutions, which were amenable to change'. H.P. Blavatsky belonged to the 'idealists' of this perspective.

¹*BCW*, XIV, 41: 'No real philanthropist, hence no Occultist, would dream for a moment of a mankind without one title of Religion. Even the modern day Religion in Europe, confined to Sundays, is better than none'. HPB had written to Aksakov that atheists were not admitted as TS members; MEADE, 155. A letter by HPB, *TT*, Nov. 1931, 162: 'every scamp, every atheist, every murderer'.

²*LucL*, vol. 2, March 1888-Aug. 1889, 355. Also F.J.W.S., 27. Later, a Miss M'cNeile, 'A lady who came to India as a zealous theosophist', had a vision of Christ, and, according to missionary THOMPSON(1914), 30, 'overwhelmed by a sense of sin fell at His feet'. She then wrote *From Theosophy to Christ*; *ibid.*, 1. In 1920, the all-Anglican bishops' conference in Lambeth Palace in London was not as hostile, though spiritualism, Christian Science, and theosophy included 'serious error': 'On the other hand, it must not be forgotten that these movements are very largely symptoms and results of reaction against materialistic views of life. We cannot but sympathise with persons who seek a refuge from the pressure of materialism'. Quoted A. Besant, *WT*, *TT*, Oct. 1920, 6. Besant predicted, *ibid.*, 8: 'The next generation of bishops will not only speak respectfully of Theosophy, but will bless it as the trunk from which spring the branches of all religions.'

³In 1906, LUNS, 8, worried about TS attraction on Dutch Catholics. According to member Frederick J. Allen, quoted *THNI*, 7-8, in the early 1890's the Dublin TS Lodge had among its members: 'Catholics, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Methodists, Unitarians, Swedenborgians,

membership, also since its inception: even clergymen,¹ both Roman Catholic and Protestant, even an Anglican bishop of Haiti.² Sometimes, people who had left Christian churches, rejoined them after becoming theosophists and interpreting Christianity from a theosophic perspective then.³

Now and then, though, there were problems with some Christian members.⁴ The theosophist seal, printed on magazines and books, has a snake; in Christian iconographic tradition, a devil symbol.⁵ Its Egyptian 'pagan' *Ankh* (life) hieroglyph⁶ did not attract especially Christians. Neither did the name *Lucifer*⁷ for a leading TS magazine.

Lucifer ... They have boycotted it in London, and will not allow it to be sold at the news-stands ... She [HPB] laughed as she said: There are people who believe that I am the devil with horns and hoofs.⁸

3. Other religions

Within a few years of its founding, the TS started to attract many members from various non-Christian religious backgrounds. This was not surprising, as both theosophist doctrines and symbols were a mix from many religious and philosophical systems and beliefs and other



TS symbol, with Ankh sign in the middle. From *TT* Jan. 1911, 481

Quakers, Positivists, Agnostics'.

¹RANSOM(1938), 115, among the first 16 members was Rev. J.H. Wiggin, editor of *The Liberal Christian*. Olcott noted during his visit to Australia in 1891: 'Clergymen of orthodox repute and much influence joined the Society'. Quoted MURPHET, 246.

²BCW, II, 52, claimed (unnamed) American bishops had joined the TS.

³For instance, after the founding of the Liberal Catholic Church; and Anglican David Gostling from England, the Bombay lodge president; *TT*, Apr. 1905, suppl. xxv. Sec. p. 38.

⁴In 1882, Dr. G. Wyld, the British TS president, resigned because 'the heads of the Society in Bombay [HPB and HSO] ... had systematically, and without discriminating between popular or verbal and esoteric or Theosophical Christianity, continually ridiculed that [Christian] faith.' *TH* Apr. 1987, 74.

⁵Snakes shed their skins, interpreted as 'old bodies', and it's not easy to find a dying snake. So, many cultures see them as symbols of immortality, or of reincarnation. *TT* July 1936, 342, interprets the TS snake as 'Indian'. But the seal is from 1875, when reincarnation was not a TS doctrine! A Dutch Protestant 1980's anti-occult book was called *The realm of the snake*.

⁶Described by HPB as 'the handled cross or the Egyptian TAU'. BCW, III, 315.

⁷Literally 'light-bearer'. In Christian mythology, name of a fallen angel who became the devil.

⁸'A visit to Madame Blavatsky.' *Commercial Gazette*, Cincinnati, 13-10-1889; as reprinted WACHTMEISTER(1976), 137.

sources.

Some of them were, in no particular order of importance: ideas ascribed to Hermes Trismegistos,¹ Pythagoras,² and other Greek and Roman antiquity philosophy and religion; tarot³ from medieval Italian card-playing; triangles from Freemasonry; also masonic

¹H.J. Rose, 'Hermes Trismegistos', in N. Hammond/H. Scullard (eds.), *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1972², 503: 'Hermes Trismegistos, a clumsy translation of Egyptian 'Thoth the very great', with the adjective], emphasized by repetition ... When so named, Thoth is the reputed author of the philosophico-religious treatises known collectively as *Hermetica* ..., also of sundry works on astrology, magic and alchemy. These are invariably late, Egyptian in the sense of being produced in Egypt by men of Greek speech, and (except for the astrology books ...) contain little or nothing of native Egyptian doctrine or custom. Their attribution to the Egyptian god of letters is a result of the then prevalent enthusiasm for the supposed ancient wisdom of Egypt ...'. KROLL, 795: the various writings are not really interconnected; some parts are as late as the fourteenth century A.D. In the fifteenth century, after their rediscovery, they were reputed to be much older than Pythagoras and Plato thought; MEEUSE(1983), 27-8. Theosophists believed that 'Hermes Trismegistus' reincarnated as Jesus Christ; and later as the Order of the Star in the East's World Teacher; A. H[e]ymans], 'Vragenbus', *TMM* 1926, 148.

²Pythagoras has become [through reincarnation] the Master K. H., well known in connection with the Theosophical Society, [as a Master, its real Leader] and he speaks out the Theosophical ideal of the State-the father-mother of its citizens, the Protector of all.' BESANT(1912A), 74. Diana BOWDER, 183: 'Pythagoras wrote no books, and his followers were noted for secrecy ... later Pythagoreans, as well as members of other sects, tended to attribute their own views to him to gain authority.' A. Pennacini, 'Retori', 1847f, in F. Della Corte (ed.) *Dizionario degli scrittori Greci e Latini*, Settime Milanese, Marzorati, 1988. Of the speeches, ascribed to Pythagoras, no one can tell if they are really his. *Lexicon der Alien Welt*, Zürich, Artemis, 1965, 2490: followers then said of teachings 'αὐτός εἶπε', 'he [Pythagoras] said so himself'; an early instance of arguing from authority. Ibid.: 'the [Pythagorean] order, with its hierarchic structure was one of the principal mainstays of aristocracy against the democratic tendencies until the midst of the 5th century B.C.' Also to VON FRITZ, 210, Pythagoreans were 'aristocratic and oligarchical.' To G. Casertano, 'Pythagorici', 1635f, in DELLA CORTE, especially with later Pythagoreans, both politically conservative and progressive tendencies existed. Brooks taught young Jawaharlal Nehru about Pythagoras; J. NEHRU(1958), 15. Annie Besant, *WT*, *TT* Oct. 1915, 7, named Pythagoras as the inspiration for HPB's silencing her on leftist politics: 'In the old Pythagorean way, she imposed on me silence on the subjects I cared for most ...'. Leadbeater claimed that in a former life in the ancient Greek world he had become a member of Pythagoras' school after meeting him in 504 B.C.; H[enry] H[itchener], 'How Theosophy Came to Me, By Bishop C.W. Leadbeater', *TT*, June 1930, 544. One should be careful not to draw too direct a line from the school of Pythagoras to theosophy; or, as theosophists and others sometimes tend to do with ideas which differ in time or in place, to Buddhism. The *Prisma Elektronische Encyclopedie* from 1990 stated under 'Pythagoras' that he [rather, his school, as no writings can be attributed to him with certainty] aimed at 'liberation from the wheel of reincarnation'; but the 'wheel' is a Buddhist, not a Greek, metaphor.

³Olcott, *ODL*, *TT* Dec. 1901, 137. Later to be expelled French FTS PAPUS (d'Encausse; 1860-1916), 62 in 1889 claimed a religious origin for tarot cards; the 'Gypsy, although both ignorant and vicious, has given us the key'. HPB played patience and divined from cards.

influence in calling a local branch 'lodge', and in secrecy, pledges of loyalty; belief in 'the astral light', and spirits from spiritualism (though interpreted differently); 'fairies' from (Russian, British, etc.) folk religion; a heavenly hierarchy of 'Angels or Devas' from the *pseudo-Dionysius*' writings of about A.D. 500; *Arhat* from Buddhism-used in the sense of theosophist high degree initiate. One can find the story of the vanished country (continent?) of Atlantis in Plato, and in nineteenth century Ignatius Donnelly. The idea of an age-old struggle between good White Powers and bad black powers (see p. 31) is familiar from Zoroastrianism and Manicheism. Much is borrowed from various Hindu schools of thought.

Supporters saw this heterogeneity as Eclecticism with a positive connotation, taking the core, the best, from all (other) doctrines. Some 'others', chiefly South Asian religions, became a bit more equal than others, when TS headquarters moved to India in 1879 (Bombay, later Adyar near Madras). Especially Hinduism became so;⁴ especially after Annie Besant became president in 1907.

Theosophists were proud of the brotherliness at their gatherings, believers in many religions sitting peacefully side by side. Outside the TS, such was not always the case.

CLEATHER(1923), 4.

¹BLAVATSKY(1987), 27ff.

²The 'Cottingley fairy photographs': in 1920/21 Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Edward Gardner, TS English section general secretary after 1924, (JINARAJADASA(1925), 256) published photos in the *Strand magazine*. These were said to be of 'real' fairies. The makers, Elsie Wright and Frances Griffiths, young girls in 1920, confessed in 1981 and 1983 the photos were a hoax, with cut-out fairies of 'Windsor and Newton Bristol board, secured to the ground with hat pins'. Alex Owen, 'Borderland forms: Arthur Conan Doyle, Albion's Daughters, and the Politics of the Cottingley Fairies, 1924-1945', *History Workshop*, 38, Autumn 1994, 48-85; JIPPEES Frances Griffiths called Doyle's and Gardner's associate in the case, Geoffrey Hodson, 'a phony.' Later, Hodson spoke as TS leader in Indonesia, and published articles on autocracy of the wise as synthesis between totalitarian and democratic politics. See p. 365.

³BESANT(1921), 42. *Pseudo-Dionysius* writings (wrongly ascribed to the first century A.D. Christian saint Dionysius) also influenced the writings of Thomas Aquinas and other Christian (especially Roman Catholic) theologians on 'angelology', assigning angels their places in a hierarchical system. Deva means god in Sanskrit and its use in this cosmological context dates from 19th century theosophy. BESANT(1912A), 69: 'the hierarchies of superhuman Beings-Devas, Angels and Archangels'. VAN GINKEL(1915), 20f. *TMNI*, 1917, 214: 'Deva's, also called Angels'. TICHELAAR(1977), 121: 'angels, in India called "Deva's"'. L.E. Girard, in *TMNI* 1920, 293, has also 'fairies' as synonym for devas. *TT*, Mar. 1906, 431, 'Notes on the science of the soul', by W.A. Meyers, thought St. Dionysius really was the author of the *Pseudo-Dionysius* writings. So did VAN LEEUWEN(1920C), 236, who spelled the name as 'Dionysus the Areopagite'.

⁴'current Theosophical teachings ... They are all only extracts from the [Hindu] Vedas, Upanishads, Puranas, etc ... The Hindu Religion is the oldest and most comprehensive, and it contains the moral and spiritual teachings of all religions of the world.' R.P. DAS, 28. But Swami VIVEKANANDA, vol. IV, 263, called the TS 'this graft of American Spiritualism'; *ibid.*, 264: 'Hindus ... do not stand in need of dead ghosts of Russians and Americans!'

Critics thought it a 'mishmash'.¹ Madras daily the *Hindu* in 1911 proved that outsiders sometimes could find common ground:

Representatives of Hinduism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, and Islam wrote to the paper condemning Theosophy, and noting that while in theory members of any religion could join the TS and continue to practise their faiths, in fact they were obliged to adopt a collection of doctrines and ideas which was inconsistent with any of them.²

'Our' period saw the rise of other attempts at 'super-religion'. One of the best known, originating from Iranian shi'a Islam, was *Baha'i*, seeing itself as youngest (and best, because taking the best from earlier ones) world faith. It had some common ground with the TS. Though *Baha'i*'s leader Abdul Baha (Abbas Effendi), son and successor of prophet Baha'u'llah, sympathetically addressed a theosophists' meeting in 1913, he wrote of TS belief in reincarnation as 'puerile imagination'.³

Even if we limit ourselves to India, theosophy was not the first attempt at synthesis between different religions. In Indian Islamic history, sixteenth century Mogul emperor Akbar, trying to found a syncretist Sun⁴ religion took some steps towards Hinduism. So did Ahmadiyyah Islam. Sikhism, and since the nineteenth century, Brahmo Samaj and Arya Samaj, started from a Hindu background, but by their monotheism took steps towards Islam (and Christianity).⁵

B.SCIENCE

W.Q. Judge wrote his teacher H.P. Blavatsky's 'object was to make religion scientific, and science religious'.⁶ We have seen something of theosophists' relationship to religion. How about science?

The scientific revolutions, first of Copernicus, later of Darwin and the enormous prolonging backwards of the time scale in geology⁷ undermined not only the Christian God's

¹F.J.W.S., 55. FODRAINE, 137-8: 'If one loves twenty beautiful women, and one takes the eyes from one of them, another one's nose, and yet another one's legs, one is left with a corpse which does not breathe any more. That is what the theosophists tried to do.' Maybe Christian critics remembered two brothers in their faith discussing its declining influence. 'Isn't it terrible, people won't believe in anything anymore! -The real problem is people will believe in anything.' See also ROMEIN(1976), 632.

²TILFETT(1982), 140f. Mrs E. Richmond in 'Theosophy the source of all religions', *TT*, Oct. 1898, 9: 'The claim made for Theosophy that it is the source of all religions is a very large one, and one that meets with much opposition from members of some of the religions of the world ...'

³WEBB(1971), 251. Marguerite Pollard, 'The Bahai Movement and Theosophy', *TT* Sept. 1912, 822-8; 828.

⁴Nearly four centuries later, TS leader Jinarajadasa praised him for it; JINARAJADASA (1934). The Koran (41:37) forbids sun worship.

⁵See JONES(1976); YADAV.

⁶(New York) *Sun*, 26-9-1892, quoted SMITH, 159. BESANT(1900), 8; (1905), 368; (1908C), 39f; approvingly quoted Plato: 'Science should be the helper and handmaid of religion.'

⁷As many pointed out, including Sigmund Freud; GOULD.

authority (whether or not He exists). They also worked towards 'dethroning human arrogance'¹ which certainly exists. To some, the function of modern occultism is to fulfil a strong desire to reconcile the findings of modern natural science with a religious view that could restore man to a position of centrality and dignity in the universe.²

Now, we go to the individual sciences. First, astronomy. Theosophists see the universe as orderly and hierarchical.³ There is a link here to their views on political and other human life on earth.⁴ They see heavenly bodies as inhabited by super-humans⁵ and as parallel to humans, like all astrology:⁶ 'The sun and the stars [are] ... living entities, alive and intelligent, making and unmaking what Theosophists call Karman.'⁷

¹GOULD.

²GOODRICK-CLARKE(1985), 29. HPB saw the aim of her book the *SD* as to give to man his rightful place in the plan of the Universe. Theosophist MURPHET, 128, saw it thus: '... Darwinism and other iconoclastic theories of advancing science were lowering man's traditional image of himself. The book [*Esoteric Buddhism* by A.P. Sinnett of the TS] tended to reverse the process, offering a deeper, more acceptable concept of the old idea that man was made in the image of God'. On this 'magic-analogical thought, micro-macrocosmic conception' see FISCHLER, 283.

³'Cosmos' for universe is from Greek κόσμος, order; from the idea in ancient Greek religion that gods had made order out of chaos. Recent astronomers tend to emphasize chaos in outer space.

⁴'Every great man, every honest man, is by nature a son of order, not of disorder. ... he is the preacher of order. Does not all human work in this world consist of bringing order?' Carlyle, quoted by G.S. Arundale, speech in Madras January 1918; as in *WED*, Aug. 1923, 45.

⁵DE PURUCKER(1940), 199. 'There are beings on other planets of our solar system -one would not call them 'humans,' and yet they are actually more evolutionally advanced than we human beings are- who think diviner thoughts than we do. There are also beings or entities inhabiting the Sun ... [surface heat, astrophysicists say, over 4000 C°; even Teflon skins would not do. But De Purucker's *Fundamentals of the Esoteric Philosophy*, Pasadena, TUP, 1979, 62 etc. says, sunlight is purely spiritual, not hotter than the object it shines on] and consequently the Sun and its globes have inhabitants thinking god-like thoughts, because having a god-like or solar consciousness.' De Purucker was Theosophical Society (Pt. Loma) Leader, 1929-1942. On this point, Leadbeater of The TS agreed. Rudolf Steiner: stars are 'homelands of the Gods'; quoted VREEDE and MEYER, 194. Erich von Däniken was not original.

⁶BESANT(1893), her autobiography, begins with her horoscope by 'Alan Leo'. *BCW*, III, 45. 'Astrology ... a sublime science'. JINARAJADASA(1938), 65: 'true astrology will be the predominating religion of mankind.'

⁷Karman is the Point Loma TS form of Karma. DE PURUCKER(1940), 152. Today still, primary schools which Steiner's anthroposophical TS offshoot set up, teach so on outer space. Nineteenth century German philosopher Fechner (theosophists say that he taught their Mahatma KH) also thought stars were alive. We already mentioned heavenly bodies' god-like commensals on p. 28, note 5. Some astrologers now take Neptune into account; but like all planets that were discovered post-1700, after the invention of better telescopes, it played no part in traditional astrology. Though TS vice president A.P. Sinnett, in *Broad Views*, Jan. 1906; quoted *TT*, Feb. 1906, 390, wrote, basing himself on clairvoyance: 'the Chaldean [Mesopotamian] astrologers of the period [21,000

Two paragraphs before, we mentioned Goodrick-Clarke's view that occultism attracted those who wanted to re-establish in the centre of the universe Man and 'his' planet. Astrology, like ancient astronomy with which it is intertwined, is geocentric: the stars in constellations like the zodiac signs only have 'special relationships' if seen from Earth. The zodiac has only 'related' stars, if seen from the geographic and cultural context of ancient Greece and Arabia; so it is not universally human,¹ let alone cosmic. Anthropocentrism in theosophy is less tied to planet Earth than other anthropocentrisms are, as theosophists believe humanity in the long run will move to planet Mercury.²



Next, let us turn to chemistry. Annie Besant and C.W. Leadbeater, with the help of a 'Theosophical microscope' (clairvoyance) looked at the hydrogen atom: six main bodies, contained in an egg-like form. It rotated with great rapidity on its own axis, vibrating at the same time and the internal bodies performed similar gyrations.

The 'six bodies' each contained three 'ultimate physical atoms'.³

Mrs Besant did not only have occult, but also practical social and economic ideas on chemistry. She addressed the 1916 Theosophical convention in Lucknow in India:

You must make your [Indian] chemists, like the German chemists, the servants of your manufacturers.⁴

Next, biology. Well into the 19th century, Aristotle's 4th century B.C. idea that species are immutable -which became the established opinion of Christian churches- strongly influenced it. Central to the breakthrough of evolution theory was Charles Darwin publishing *On the Origin of Species* (1859) and *The Descent of Man* (1871). He stirred many supporters; certainly initially many opponents too.⁵

years ago] ... most certainly knew of the existence of Neptune'. DE PURUCKER (1940), 183 and 193, explained why it was not one of the 'Seven Sacred Planets': 'It is no proper planet of our solar system. It would be correct, doubtless, to look upon Neptune as a captured comet of a certain age'. Astronomy notes size is different: the diameter of Neptune is 49,100 kilometres, with comets, it usually is a few km. The mass of Neptune is more than 50,000,000 times that of comets at their maximum (computed from map: *The solar system*, Washington, D.C. National Geographic Society, 1990. D. Bergamini et al. *The universe*, s.l., Time-Life 1964, 69). According to Annie Besant, the seven sacred planets are 'ruled by the "seven Spirits before the throne of God," mentioned in the "Revelation of St. John"'; BESANT(1912A), 85.

¹JANSSEN(1954), 21-2: ancient Egyptians did not have the zodiac concept.

²BESANT(1912A), 85.

³A. Besant/C.W. Leadbeater: *Occult chemistry*; quoted TILLET(1982), 67f. An 'ultimate physical atom' is the smallest indivisible unit of matter. Non-occult chemistry divides the hydrogen atom into basically two components: 1. one proton, 2. one electron, in circular, not 'egg-like' orbit around it. BESANT(1921I), 36: clairvoyance as 'super-sense telescope or microscope.'

⁴BESANT(1917A), 61.

⁵One of biologist Louis Agassiz' motives for opposing Darwin was his belief in human racial inequality. He thought humans of different 'races' had different ancestors; an idea he shared with AB and Leadbeater. In 1862, Harvard University expelled John Fiske for supporting Darwin's theories; ROTHMAN, 295. At Olcott's and HPB's New York 1870's home, nicknamed 'the

To many Christians (and other believers) the idea was anathema that man was not created by God; but had evolved from an animal, from a beast, especially an ape-like beast, abhorrent to humans to whom apes look like a mocking comment on themselves, too close to the model for comfort.

When biologists tried to lecture on Darwinism in the southern US, religious shock troops, shouting 'Go to hell with your gorilla!', attacked them. Until the Reagan presidency, up to now, US pressure groups, overwhelmingly made up of non-biologists, claim 'creationism', not evolutionism, is true. They demand at least equal status with evolution biology for it in education.

H.P. Blavatsky, in the *Secret Doctrine*, and her followers, solved the riddle of creation/evolution of humans; apes and other animals, by claiming apes and other animals descended from humans-not vice versa:

Man is, in fact, the most primitive of *all* stocks on earth ... the other Vertebrata, as well as the great groups of the Invertebrata, likewise were derived from the human stocks, but in the previous Globe-Round.¹

every vital cell ... contains within itself the potentiality not only of the divinity latent within it, but it also contains ... numerous lower ... life-impulses, which ... would produce an inferior creature, whether it be an elephant, ... a dog,² or some biological 'sport' which past history shows has not yet appeared on earth. The reasons ... why such cells ... in man today do not evolve forth into new phyla³ beneath man are ... : First, *evolution, as a process of unfolding new bodies and starting new stocks* has permanently ceased for the remainder of this Round.⁴

Lamasery', was a stuffed dead ape they called 'Professor Fiske', it wore a 'white 'dicky' and necktie around the throat, manuscript in paw, and spectacles on nose'. An 1878 journalist, quoted MURPHY, 87

¹DE PURUCKER(1947), 121 HPB in her manuscript, the later *Secret Doctrine's* vol. III, on differences with Darwinists: 'To the advocate of the "animalistic" theory, our cosmogenetical and anthropogenetical teachings are "fairy tales" at best ... For those who would shirk any moral responsibility, it seems certainly more convenient to accept descent from a common simian ancestor, and see a brother in a dumb, tailless [all baboon species have tails] baboon, than to acknowledge the fatherhood of Pitris, the "Sons of God" ...': BCW, XIV, 2. WEBB(1971), 52 ascribes to HPB, without references, the opposite of her real ideas: 'Man had evolved from apes - perhaps'; 'Just as *homo sapiens* had evolved from a lower form of animal life'. 'Do not fall into the mistake of the western way of thinking, and say that man descends from the animal; that is not true'; BESANT(1900), 151. 'Man, as a spiritual Being, comes forth from God and returns to God'; BESANT and LEADBEATER(1913), I. LANZ VON LIEBENFELS(B), 26 on Darwinism. 'the general monkey nonsense.'

²BLAVATSKY(1977), vol. II, 684: animals are 'post-Human'. 'Animals are the refuse of human evolution'. Rudolf Steiner, quoted R. MEYER, 95. '... that animals and monkeys are degenerate men, is the basic thought of the old esoteric anthropologies!' LANZ VON LIEBENFELS(B), 27. 'men did not develop out of the animal world, rather the other way around ... by unnatural cross-breeds'. Guido von List, quoted DE KUIF(1985A), 6.

³Large categories in biologic classification. E.g., the phylum Vertebrates includes humans, fish, etc; the phylum Arthropods: insects, crabs, etc.

⁴DE PURUCKER(1940), 319.

So today evolution (except 'spiritual evolution') stands still.

Of late, animal liberationists criticize 'speciesism',¹ as an analogy to 'racism' or 'sexism'. Christian religion has been blamed for much speciesism in history,² resulting in cruelty to domestic animals and wholesale extinctions of non-domestic ones. But mainstream Christianity has no speciesism monopoly.

As many theosophists are well-known for vegetarianism, and/or anti-vivisectionism,³ and many have warm feelings for their domestic animals;⁴ one might think there are no traces of speciesism in theosophical theory. Are there not?

Fitting in with what we have seen on evolution theory, theosophists often refer to animals as 'younger brothers'.⁵ TS (Pt. Loma) Leader Gottfried de Purucker wrote:

The human soul can no more migrate over and incarnate in a beast-body than can the psychical apparatus of a beast incarnate upwards in human flesh ... because the impassable gulf ... which separates ... the Human Kingdom and the Beast Kingdom, prevents any such passage ... from the one up into the other, which is so much its superior in all respects ... there is the impossibility that the imperfectly developed beast-mind and beast-soul can find a proper lodgment in what

¹B. Noske, *Humans and other animals* London, Pluto, 1989. In speciesism the human species is the one and only yardstick for all (other) animal species. There is similarity to the geocentric world view; for instance, of astrologers. Speciesists believe *a priori* in the 'superiority' of humans (especially, if male in many views), and the 'inferiority' of other species. Thus, one can exaggerate the uniqueness of humans (all species, all individuals have a certain uniqueness) as tool-users; lately it was discovered, a species so comparatively 'low' as a West Java fish picks up leaves to hide behind from enemies. Any observer must guard against exaggerating the point in ('spatial', or biological, or ...) space from which the observing is done. In many religions, nocturnal animals, like bats or owls, are suspected of links with the devil, or other 'dark powers'. One may link this aspect of anthropocentrism, looking from the viewpoint of diurnal humans, to the equation in many religions (not just in theosophy or Christianity) of good with 'light'; bad with 'night; darkness'.

²MICHEL, 14: 'On no star or planet lives a ... being, that noble and that divine as us, living limbs of the Holy Cross, who surpass all plants and animals and life.' Usual exceptions in Christian history: the saints' lives traditions of Anthony of Egypt and Francis of Assisi. French Renaissance thinkers like Montaigne and Gassendi (not Descartes) tended to upgrade the position of animals.

³Mabel Collins was president of British anti-vivisectionists; 58 MPs were vice-presidents. 77, Oct. 1907, 3. BESANT(1907B), 173f. bases anti-vivisection on superiority of humans to animals. LEADBEATER(1922), 585: 'The proper substitute for 'vivisection' is, of course, clairvoyance.' R. HALL in *Animals are equal* (243; 247) quotes CWL in support of her ideas. Her predecessor in belief in clairvoyance, though, was not also her predecessor in beliefs in equality: one should not project these backwards into the history of occult movements.

⁴KOOT(1913), 261: in 1911 in Indonesia, of members of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in the Dutch Indies 'only - 12' were also 'members of our TS. This really disappointed me.'

⁵Arundale, 77 Apr. 1936, 75. Eighteenth century German philosopher Herder called them 'elder brothers' of humans.

TABLE 2. THREE VIEWS ON CREATION and/or EVOLUTION
(all dates very approximate)

	CONSERVATIVE CHRISTIANS of 1875 or later	THEOSOPHISTS	BIOLOGISTS, GEOLOGISTS, LINGUISTS, etc
SOURCE of INFORMA- TION	Literal interpretation of the Bible	The Masters and higher clairvoyance	Excavations and other research
ORIGIN of LIFE	God 5,000 B.C. ¹	Divine Principle, Logos, <i>Isvara</i> , 320,000,000 B.C. ²	Non-living ³ matter 2,500,000,000 B.C.
STATICS/ DYNAMICS of LIFE	Species stay static from Creation till Judgment Day	Creation, ⁴ evolution, from, and eventually back to, Divine Principle	Evolution: relatively simple species into more complex ones
ORIGIN of ANIMALS	Created by God, a few days earlier than man, 5,000 B.C.	Descent from cast- off, 'lower' human cells ⁵	Unicellular organisms evolved into 'animals' 750,000,000 B.C.

¹Dublin-born Anglican Bishop Usher, 1580-1656, who added up years from genealogies in the Bible. Blavatsky 'the old exploded notions of the Jewish Bible with its 6000 [years] of the world'. Quoted *TT*, July 1931, 627. BESANT(1921), 38-9: 'When I was a young girl, most people that I was with thought that the world had not existed beyond six thousand years.' Dutch East Indies TS leader Labberton thought the 'Jewish' computation did make some sense, though 'naive'; not as the beginning of world history, but as the beginning of its Kali Yuga (see p. 38) era; VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1910), 2.

²BLAVATSKY(1977), vol. II, 710.

³DE PURUCKER(1940), 170: 'The Esoteric Tradition recognises no so-called 'dead matter' anywhere in Infinitude ...'

⁴The Christian creation concept was rejected: BLAVATSKY(1987), 83.

⁵DE PURUCKER(1940), 319; SCHWARZ(1905), 551. This is the important difference of TEPPER's (see p. 460 of this book) family tree from usual biologists' ones. LANZ VON LIEBENFELS(B), 31f. did not see it; or pretended not to. TILLET(1982), 5, sums up theosophists' ideas on evolution: 'from minerals to Man and beyond to Superman'. That misses the point of the supposed human/divine derivation of minerals; who, if their Karma is right, may become human later. It misses the difference from Darwin; or 'Social Darwinism'.

	CONSERVATIVE CHRISTIANS of 1875 or later	THEOSOPHISTS	BIOLOGISTS, GEOLOGISTS, LINGUISTS, etc
FUTURE of ANIMALS	Depends on Last Judgment	After many reincarnations, will, in later Rounds, become human; still much later, Divine	? Depends on human world economy, etc.
AGE of EXTINCT GIANT REPTILES	Contemporaries of man, 5,000 B.C.	Contemporaries of '3rd Root Race man' 15,000,000 B.C.	230,000,000 to 65,000,000 B.C.
ORIGIN of HUMANKIND	Created on 6th Day of Creation	Part of, which will return to, Divine Principle	Descent from 'ape- like' primate mammal
PLACE of ORIGIN of HUMANKIND	Paradise, Garden of Eden	Imperishable Sacred Land, near North Pole ¹	Africa, most probably Ethiopia- Kenya area
ANTIQUITY of HUMANKIND	5,000 B.C.	320,000,000 B.C. 'First Root Race'	400,000-200,000 ² B.C. <i>Homo sapiens</i> ; 3,000,000 B.C. older 'man-like' species
ANTIQUITY of 'ARYANS'	Since the downfall of the tower of Babel?	'At least 1,000,000 years; Aryan (Fifth) Root Race' ³	No 'Aryan race'; Indo-European or Indo-Germanic lan- guages 2500 B.C., maybe common origin from unknown language, 4,000 B.C.
ARYANS in INDIA	India far from geographic focus of Bible	For 850,000 years ⁴	Since 1750 B.C.?

¹SCHWARZ(1905), 551.

²Allan C. Wilson, in: *Scientific American*, Apr. 1990.

³BLAVATSKY(1977), II, 470-1.

⁴SCHWARZ (1905), table K. But JINARAJADASA (1933), 20,000

to it is truly a godlike sphere which in consequence it cannot enter.¹

Proud, upright, head² high,³ Man stands on this earth
He can act thinkingly, feelingly, calmly
Animals toil laboriously, heads [kop] down below
they toil all their lives, to fill their stomachs⁴

Some animals are more unequal than others:

It is highly probable, however, that no normal human being would care to have an anthropoid ape around the house as a pet: their extremely bestial and often disgusting habits . . . would probably and fortunately preclude this.⁵

... embryo of a gorilla ... The horrible bestial mouth was there.⁶

We saw on p. 29 many people abhorred the idea of descent from an apish animal more

¹DE PURUCKER (1940), 597. But: 'How is the rascal . . . ever to be paid off for his evil deeds, if he can't be put into service as an omnibus horse or mule, or entombed in a snake's body?' H P. Blavatsky, quoted RAWSON, 211. BESANT and LEADBEATER (1913), 116 have one exception: reincarnation from apes to 'low' humans, like 'Lemurian' Africans. BESANT (1889), 29: 'No Theosophist believes . . . that the human Ego can enter a lower animal'. Besant, in 'Mrs. Besant on Theosophy and Reincarnation', 77, Apr. 1906, 534-6, admitted that, as a punishment, a human soul might be linked to an animal body, but, 'The penal connection of the human Ego with an animal form is not reincarnation'. The theosophic view of the practically unbridgeable gap between humans and animals in reincarnation differs from influences on the TS: in the Greek antiquity school of Pythagoras' reincarnation doctrine, animals play a key role. In this, theosophy also differs from many Hindus. 'But in my next life I can go into another body. It may be a dog's body or a cat's body, or a king's body'. HEENGAAN EN TERUGKOMEN, 32, also 57. Dutch feminist anthropologist Postel asked a Sri Lanka Buddhist surgeon: if he lived badly, might he be reborn as a woman? 'O yes, or even as an animal'. *Mure*, 10-1-1991, 7. On women, see p. 386.

²There is a difference, untranslatable into English 'head', between Dutch *hoofd* (used for humans and 'respectable' animals, mainly horses) and *kop* (mainly for non-'respectables', animals, and some people).

³Theosophists' ideas on the occult significance of the upright position see PARTLOW.

⁴Antroposophic nursery rhyme, from WICHERT. In occult biology there seem to be no kangaroos, or fish like the Stargazer (*Uranoscopus*), looking up all the time. HPB speaks of 'the battle of divine human Spirit, and imperial WILL of man against gross and blind matter in the shape of tigers, leopards, rhinoceroses and bears, without mentioning venomous snakes and scorpions'. *BCW*, II, 76. Jörg Lanz von Liebenfels thought the root of all evil had a sub-human animal nature. GOODRICK-CLARKE (1985), 91f; etc. He was a self-styled theosophist; LANZ VON LIEBENFELS(B). Mathilde Ludendorff-von Kemnitz-Spiess in her extreme rightist writings was another example of speciesism. She distinguishes between protozoans; multi-cell animals; and *Hyperzoen* (humans). DUDA and LUDENDORFF (1987).

⁵DE PURUCKER (1940), 821.

⁶DE PURUCKER (1947), 144-5.

than the idea of evolution from animals in general. The theory of anatomist Frederic Wood Jones that small Prosimian *Tarsius* was ancestral to humans, prolonging the human family tree back into time by tens of millions of years, attracted some among them in the 1920's¹.

Both the Adyar TS monthly for Indonesia, and De Purucker, Point Loma Leader, enthusiastically quoted Wood Jones. Wood Jones helped De Purucker to correct his manuscript of *Man in Evolution*.² It criticized Wood Jones on one point. To go back to *Tarsius* was not far enough, as man according to Theosophy was 'the most primitive of all stocks on earth'.³ Biologists never accepted Wood Jones' theory.

Writing about how theosophists see themselves, the universe, life on and off earth, we have been moving slowly to their views on human prehistory and history, to the subject of the next chapter.

2. THEOSOPHY, PREHISTORY, HISTORY, PARAHISTORY

Dirk van Hinloopen Labberton, the former Dutch East Indies TS General Secretary, became a D. Litt. at Amsterdam university in 1931, writing on history. He wrote in theses that a Marxist or Roman Catholic history 'cannot be the "true" history'. 'The true and honest historian should have "Satyān naasti parā dharma"'⁴ inscribed on his banner'.⁵

Often, to theosophists clairvoyance and myth were truer history than historians' history was. On the concluding page of the first volume of her *Secret Doctrine*, Madame Blavatsky contrasted 'legend', being 'living tradition', favourably to history.⁶ Annie Besant wrote: 'A myth is far truer than a history, for a history only gives a story of the shadows, whereas a myth gives a story of the substance that casts the shadows'.⁷

¹His *Man's place among the mammals* came out in London in 1929.

²DE PURUCKER (1947), vii, 143, 178. 'De Uitkijk', *TMN* 1926, 45.

³Ibid., 121. R. MEYER, 96, quotes Steiner's *Theosophy of the rosicrucian* (1907): 'Man is the first born being of the whole cosmos'. *OELC*, Apr. 1932, quotes *Theosophy* (US ULT parent lodge magazine) March 1932, 'Studies in Karma': 'there are no animals'. There are only temporary detached fragments of ex-human protoplasm, physical and psychic. . . Thus, the only possible result of settling a human affection upon an animal is a backwards alteration of the individual who makes that error.' *OELC*, Jan. 1937 'Busting the Ballards', quoted Ballard of 'I Am' (who claimed to quote the Master the Count de Saint Germain): 'While it may hurt some, the Mighty Truth is, that animal forms were created in the beginning, by these powerful black magicians'.

⁴Sanskrit; translated into English as the motto of the Theosophical Society since Olcott and Madame Blavatsky visited the Maharajah of Benares: 'There is no religion higher than truth'.

⁵VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON (1931), Stellingen, 3.

⁶BLAVATSKY (1977), 676.

⁷*Esoteric Christianity*, quoted by J. Henry Orme, 'The Wandering Jew', 77, Dec. 1919, 267-8. In her 'Aspects of the Christ', *TMN* 1913, 340: 'You all know that a myth is much more important than history. . . a fact . . . is only the fourth or fifth reflection of the great truths in the World of Ideas. A great idea, which is in heaven, is cast down into coarser and coarser matter, each new coarser sphere destroys one of the aspects, and when in this way most aspects have

As expressed by Rudolf Steiner:

From ordinary history Man can learn but few about mankind's experience in earlier times ... What Archaeology, Palaeontology, Geology, too, may teach us, always keeps within narrow boundaries. Exoteric history must limit itself to what has been preserved in time. No one can say if what has been preserved is the real as well, if he sticks to the exoteric explanations.

Everything that arises in time, though, originates from the Eternal. But the Eternal is not accessible to sensory perception ... man ... however, can develop forces, slumbering within him, in a way he may get knowledge about this Eternal. If man thus extends his perception, he is no longer dependent on exoteric proofs in order to know about the past ... From perishable history he proceeds into imperishable history ... This history, however, is written with completely different letters than the usual one. In Gnosis, in Theosophy it is called 'the Akasha Chronicle'.¹

Only the Few, who may disclose from it just bit by tantalizing bit, know this Chronicle.² It is hard for pedestrian exoteric history (or political science, or any discipline) to rise to the Divine Wisdom level of Akashic super-History.³

Unlike 'materialist' historians, who may divide time by bits of pottery, or by what stone or what metal tools are made of, spiritual theosophists linked their view of history to racial theories. This aspect will come later. Now, I just mention its division of eternity into seven very long periods: 'Chains' or 'Manvantaras'. These Chains are divided into seven 'Rounds' each, with seven 'Root Races' each (separated by global catastrophes), with seven 'sub-races' each.⁴ Charlotte Despard touched upon this aspect, and also upon a second aspect, its

disappeared, and at last the idea appears into the material world, then they call this mutilated dead body a fact. That is the real nature of facts, to which people look up so much! On the contrary, a myth is the rendition of the Idea, as it exists in the heavenly world, and so it is always true.

¹STEINER(1909), 3f. BESANT(1921), 38: 'a person sitting at Adyar ... can see back, and back, and back, and back, for hundreds of thousands of years; nay, he may go into almost inconceivable numbers of years, and by direct observation may say what happened in that far-off past; that is called "reading the akashic record". Sometimes, in reading it, you find that history has been very inaccurate.' Akasha: a Sanskrit word theosophists borrowed from Hindu theology; interpreted by DE PURUCKER(1981), 6 as 'radiant, luminous' (primordial substance). Theosophists use 'aether' (a word used in early physics, later dropped) more or less as a synonym. LEADBEATER(1922), 498: 'you must not take it for granted when you meet with any of our Theosophical terms, in Hindu or Buddhist books, that they mean exactly the same thing. Very often they do not.'

²STEINER(1909), 7: 'On the sources from which these communications come, I am still bound to maintain secrecy now. One who knows these sources somewhat will understand why ... How much of the knowledge hidden in the womb of Theosophy will be allowed to be communicated bit by bit, is totally dependent on the attitude of our contemporaries.'

³See Van Leeuwen, p. 122. 'Intellectual thinking brings nothing but headaches'; from: 'Kerstmis', *Schoolkrant Vrije School Mareland*, Dec. 1989, 4; the magazine of a primary school in Leiden based on Steiner's teachings. Lemuriël Baboen in TOONDER, 25: 'Thinking can bring us nothing but misery.'

⁴BESANT and LEADBEATER(1913), 30: A. Warrington, 'A Sketch of Theosophy and Occultism', 77, Aug. 1905, 654f., 661. He, and LEADBEATER(1913), 202, have 'world periods' between Rounds and Root Race periods. Smaller periods of seven years are also very significant;

teleology:¹

In the beautiful series of lectures, given by Mrs. Besant ... 'The Changing World', a picture is drawn of the incoming tide, of the little waves which are sub-races, and the great waves, which are root-races. That is a fine symbol of historical periods. One after another they come and go, and to those who watch them it may seem that they barely, if at all, move in upon the shore of human progress.²

Unlike those who were then her fellow theosophists, Charlotte Despard here did not mention the questions, linked to the problem of teleology, of chance, of the possibility of various alternatives, of 'human free will'.³ Despard then belonged to both women's suffrage movement and TS. Both were growing; her teleology was optimistic.

Were all theosophists optimistic? An interesting question: their Society's century of birth, the nineteenth, with the hindsight of knowledge of the trenches of Verdun; Auschwitz; and Hiroshima, has been accused of optimism. Also, the 'exoteric' adopted faith of TS founders Blavatsky and Olcott, Buddhism, as an influence on nineteenth-century European thinking, was often accused of pessimism.

Many Buddhists rejected the accusation. But pessimism attracted many Europeans (such as Schopenhauer,⁴ Richard Wagner, Nietzsche) in what they saw as Buddhism.

It has been said nineteenth century 'Buddhist' influence on Europe and the US was a one-sided mix of northern or Mahayana Buddhism⁵ (in itself, Theravada purists from countries like Ceylon said, Hindu-influenced), and non-Buddhist Hindu writings, with metaphysical.

J. WILKINSON. St. Augustine, too, divided world history into seven ages. The tinct of global catastrophes, destroying much or all life, is found in Scheuchzer (18th century), a believer in the biblical deluge; anti-evolution 19th century biologists Cuvier and Agassiz (whom BLAVATSKY(1908), 179 quoted in support of anthropocentrism); and Fabre d'Olivet, CELIER, 79.

¹Affirmed by DE PURUCKER(1947), 169. VAN GINKEL(1915), 6-7 'occult science, which teaches that nature always works towards a given goal'.

²Opening sentence of DESPARD (1910). She quoted from a lecture by AB in St. James Hall in London, 16 May 1909, see *JMNI* 1918, 221-2.

³Dutch East Indies TS General Secretary Van Hinlopen Labberton said, in a speech to *Budi Utomo*: 'Also, every individual has his task in this world, has to perform a certain kind of labour in it. He himself may fancy he is doing everything himself, but in truth he is nothing more than a wayang puppet. There are dalangs [wayang puppet masters] who are behind this, and these dalangs are the ones deciding about the drama which will be played'. Still, humans have a margin of freedom. Some, those who gladly perform their task, use this margin well. Others, who in their discontent rebel against karma, abuse freedom; and will face the consequences of being useless wayang puppets; VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1909), 8. Theosophist astrologer VAN GINKEL(1915), 48 wrote: 'that the humans are just cells, material vehicles of the various effects of national Dewa-consciousness'.

⁴Who wrote: 'The fundamental difference of all religions I can ... only see as whether they are optimistic or pessimistic ...' Quoted DE KRUIF(1988), 11. Madame Blavatsky considered him one 'of the great minds that lived during our period of history'. 77 Oct. 1883, 12.

⁵MB, Dec. 1933, 497. Different views on Mahayana vs. Theravada influence exist.

elitist, and pessimist undertones.

The idea that today's humanity was in a 'dark age', a Kali Yuga within history, appealed to Western pessimists, like the Italian geology professor De Lorenzo, an honorary member of the Maha Bodhi Society founded by theosophists, and a senator in the Mussolini era. 'The Aryan race is now in its Kali Yuga, and will continue to be in it for 427,000 years longer.'¹ Hindus thought Vishnu's tenth² avatar would end the Kali Yuga. So did Steiner, but he was not as pessimistic about time-spans as Blavatsky.³

Madame Blavatsky saw her century as 'this, our most savage and cruel century'.⁴ In the writings of her followers, one can find both optimism and pessimism.⁵ Optimism in many publications of Besant's TS (Adyar); an organization which grew steadily till 1928.⁶ Pessimism for instance with smaller groups, or with individuals like Mrs Leighton Cleather.⁷

Nineteenth century Briton T. Carlyle influenced theosophist ideas on history. We find his influence in the idea that a Mahachohan, a Manu, and a Bodhisattva lead every new 'root race' era in the TS calendar of world history.⁸ His opinion (from *On Heroes and Hero Worship*)⁹ that history is chiefly made by 'great men' also inspired patriotic school history

¹BLAVATSKY(1908), 155. This was also the view of DE PURUCKER(1906), 3. Hindus believe the Kali Yuga started with the end of Krishna's earthly life; BESANT (1927), 7.

²Krishna, 8th, Buddha; 9th avatar (not to the liking of many Buddhists).

³Also according to the old Oriental traditions, the Kali Yuga, to which are allotted 5,000 years [3100 B.C. till A.D. 1899-1900] is finished today'. Quoted R. MEYER, 59. Steiner started biological-dynamical agriculture (by which outsiders know anthroposophists best) in the 1920's, as he thought old Kali Yuga seeds would not do in the New Age. Ibid., 194. A book advertised in the TS' book catalogue (TT, Sept. 1905, suppl., liv. TS annual report on 1905, 78; these annual reports are at the back of TT volumes) *The Dates of the Kali and Satya Yugas*, by David Gostling, the president of the Bombay TS, predicted the Kali Yuga would last till A.D. 2448. In Hindu chronology, the Satya Yuga is the positive era, opposite to the Kali Yuga.

⁴BCW, III, 207. DE PURUCKER(1940), 705 also bitterly attacked the 19th century: 'yet unforgotten but in no wise regretted, has left to its child the twentieth century a legacy from which the world is still suffering; . . . There is probably in past known history no single term of one hundred years which has been so heavily scored with the records of moral failures'.

⁵BLAVATSKY(1987), 227: 'Because the final goal cannot be reached in any way but through life experiences, and because the bulk of these consist in pain and suffering'. DE PURUCKER(1940), 341, shows sympathy for Oswald Spengler's pessimistic views, in spite of Spengler's anti-theosophism.

⁶LEADBEATER(1971). WESSINGER(1989), 312. Also optimistic: TINGLEY(1915).

⁷CLEATHER(1922A), 22.

⁸C.W. Leadbeater 'The Masters and the Path'; quoted TILLET(1982), 105. One might eventually reincarnate this high by prominence in the TS. VAN DER LEEUW(1920), 20: the 'great man' is recognized 'spontaneously; his authority being that 'of the Spirit.' H.P.B. coined the neologism *Mahachohan* from Sanskrit and Tibetan. Manu is the Creator of mankind in Hinduism. In the Rig Veda, India's oldest religious writing, he is the son of the sun god. A *Bodhisattva* in (especially Mahayana) Buddhism is a potential Buddha.

⁹On which G. Arundale based his Jan. 1918 Madras speech; WED, Aug. 1923, 45-6; 48-9.

primers in many countries; and twentieth century fascist ideology.

Personally, I do not subscribe to Carlyle's view. Nevertheless,¹ I subdivided next part, PART II, in terms of leading TS personalities; because of the autocratic position those leaders had.

¹Compare B. JOHNSON, 2.

PART II. REIGN AFTER REIGN¹

This is a more or less chronological account, up to 1947, of the theosophical movement. Chapters are named after TS leaders. Yet, they do not pretend to be personal psychological portraits. I will discuss some political issues that we will come across more extensively in later parts.

I. REINCARNATION OF A BUDDHA:² H.P. BLAVATSKY, 1831-1891

I have no doubt whatever that I am a Buddha. That little image of bronze in his shrine is me as I was a thousand or ten thousand years ago.³

It you will be led by me you will approach the light of truth and power, and become more potent than any Jehovah the Jews ever conceived.⁴

A. THE NOBLE WIDOW(?), 1831-1875

Her devotees saw her as the White Lotus,⁵ the Great Theosophist, one of the (super-

¹Leadbeater on Besant, quoted CLEATHER(1922A), 40: 'In her reign ...'

²Many say, one mark of a Buddha is non-reincarnation. HPB (BCW, XIV, 404f.). Buddha reincarnated as the Hindu Sankaracharya-whom many Buddhists see as an enemy of their faith. In 'Some inquiries suggested by Mr. Sinnett's *Esoteric Buddhism*', TT, Sept. 1883, 295-310, as reprinted BCW, vol. V, L. A., Philosophical Research Society, 1950, 182, she denied Sankaracharya had persecuted Buddhists. Steiner claimed the historic Buddha, after Nirvana, in the 17th century, at the request of non-historic (17th century fiction?) Christian Rosenkreutz went to Mars; to end a war between rocks? Oslo speech 1912, quoted VREËDE and MEYER, 48. PROKOFIEFF, 103. In theosophy, life moves inside the solar system, sometimes towards the sun, sometimes from the sun out. In the SD, Sanat Kumara moved from Venus to Earth (and Buddha came with him according to Steiner; PROKOFIEFF, 79). 'Jupiter is not yet inhabited, but its moons are.' BESANT and LEADBEATER(1913), 7. CRUMP (OELC Sept. 1939): 'my step-aunt Mabel Collins' got written messages from 'the Nirmanakaya [Buddhist enlightened one] HPB'; 48 years after 1891. In HPB's first book *Isis Unveiled* (1877) she spelt 'Bhudda' and 'Kristna'. The years of occult training in India and Tibet, where she claimed she read the oldest book in the world, Dzyan - not Dyman, as with WEBB(1971), 50- do not seem to have included spelling. Dutch translation of DE PURUCKER(1981), 26: 'Boedhda'; no fault of De Purucker's probably.

³Blavatsky, quoted RAWSON, 212. 'Some one of the company suggested that it might be a relief if Buddha should retire into Nirvana and give us another rest of a few thousand years' Ibid., 213.

⁴HPB, quoted RAWSON, 214

⁵Theosophists commemorate 8 May, the day of her death, White Lotus Day. In Hinduism, the lotus is linked to the god Vishnu.

⁶BCW, vol. XIV, p. VII; preface by B. de Zirkoff. DE PURUCKER(1940), 339, 371, 373, 374, 383, etc. LANZ VON LIEBENFELS(B), 23 'grossen Theosophin'.

human) Great White Brotherhood living among mere earthlings,¹ at least equal in rank to Jesus Christ.² They sang hymns in her praise.³

Her parents knew her as Helena⁴ Petrovna von Hahn. 'Of noble birth', later theosophists⁵ stress. Like many Russian empire nobles, her father was of German ancestry: Hahn-von Rottenstein⁶-Hahn, related to rulers of a Mecklenburg principality.

¹CRUMP(1923), 69: '... H.P.B. could scarcely have been of a lower occult status than what is known as an 'Accepted Chela', which is no more than she herself claimed to be. The Masters themselves called her 'Our Brother H.P.B.' which certainly implies a higher status'. BESANT(1909A), 85: '... To those who sent her, she was: *The Brother, whom you know as H.P.B., but we -- otherwise*'. 'A Master' on HPB in 1875, quoted TT Aug. 1931, 558: 'Chaste and pure soul; pearl shut inside an outwardly coarse nature ... Anyone might well be dazzled by the divine light concealed under such a bark.' 'For the purpose of the theosophical work that body was an instrument used by one of the Masters, known to us as H.P.B.' A. Keightley, quoted: PRICE(1986A), 23. Many leaders of religious organizations claim relatively low status for themselves; but let followers (or Masters) accord them higher status. For this 'division of labour': HUTTEN, 574, quote 'Peace Mission' Father Divine: 'If my followers believe I am God, and by this conviction are led to renew their lives and experience bliss and happiness, why should I hinder them?' The leader of the Holy Grail Message Movement, O. Bernhardt used to have close contacts to the TS (Adyar) earlier; MIERS, 3. Ibid., 174, claims businessman Bernhardt had been repeatedly jailed for fraud. After he founded his cult, his followers called him 'King'. When he prohibited this, he was called 'the LORD'; HUTTEN, 560. Weissenberg, founder of the Evangelical Church according to St. John, called himself John the Baptist reincarnate; but his followers Jesus Christ; HUTTEN, 522f.; 535, *ibid*, calls this church 'poor man's theosophy'. Muslims may see a certain parallel in the history of Christian religion. Koran, sûra 5, ayat 116: 'And when Allah said O Isâ, son of Marjâm, hast thou said unto mankind: Take me and my mother as Gods, beside Allah?', he said: 'Glory be unto Thee! it is not for me to say that which I know to be not the truth'.

²DE PURUCKER(1940), 1058: '... and it may as well be frankly stated that H.P. Blavatsky was a Messenger opening such a Messianic Cycle, and that a previous Messianic Cycle ended ... some 2160 years ago, more or less, with the life and work of the Avatara whom the West knows under the name of Jesus the Christ.' See also LEADBEATER(1922), 172. Many theosophists think Jesus lived about 100 years B.C. Late twentieth century Unification Church 'Moonies' follow the traditional Christian birth year. They say Jesus was born 1930 years after Abraham; because 'history repeats itself', the Lord of the Second Advent (=their leader, the Reverend Moon) was born A.D. 1930. *Waarom en hoe herhaalt de Geschiedenis zich?* [Why and how does History repeat itself?] S.I., Unification Church, n.d.

³Hail, Blavatsky! Thy holy doctrine our heart awakens', hymn which opens all South American TS meetings; written by Viscountess de Sandé, of Rio de Janeiro; TT June 1931, 298.

⁴Latin alphabet transcription of Russian Yelena or Jelena.

⁵CLEATHER and CRUMP(1928), 5; BESANT(1909A), 85: 'the noble House of the Hahns'; TM(1951), 27; Leaflet *International Headquarters Hall*, TS, s.d. (1980's?): 'of noble family'; CRUMP (1923), 46: '... she who came of a noble Russian family, and could when she saw fit behave like an Empress, as Mrs Cleather has often told me.' TMNI, 1919, 271: 'a Russian princess or at least of high Russian nobility'.

⁶TT May 1933, 299. CE, V, 418, spells Rotenstein.

He was an army colonel.¹ Helena later claimed (incorrectly) that her mother, granddaughter of Princess Dolgorukova and thus distantly related to the imperial Romanov family, died when she was a baby.²

She was born on her family's large estate, close to the city of Yekaterinoslav,³ founded by Czarina Catherine the Great; today's Ukrainian name is Dnipetrovsk.

1831, the year of her birth, was thirty years before official (not yet, on all counts, practical) abolition of serfdom. In the Ukraine, and south Russia proper, serfage had the particular intense form called *барщина*, *barstcheena*. Their masters could legally, depending on their dispositions, whip or sell peasants.

Serfs beaten to death were said to haunt cellars of a Blavatsky family estate. It is said Helena caused the death of a serf boy, threatening to set a malignant water spirit on him.⁴ If the story is true, superstitious awe may have gone hand in hand with awe of social 'betters', even if they still were children.

This was a society where Russian Orthodoxy was the state church and the only legal church; but where many pre-Christian beliefs in spirits still survived.⁵ A stratified society with a strong 'them versus us' sense. A society where the position of women was inferior, even compared to Western Europe then. Where women could not legally get higher education⁶ of the same level as men before 1917. Where they could not get any education, or own any property, without permission of father or husband. Little Helena learned to ride well on horse-back, though.

That Helena Petrovna belonged to both the privileged class and the underprivileged sex, in an autocratically ruled country, would influence the doctrines she was to develop in rivalry to official religion. Not in the simple, mechanical way of making her a militant feminist or at all times an unambiguous monarchist, however.

¹TILLET(1982), 27. TUP Agency, *Catalogus* 1989, 4. MEADE, 123, says her father was a captain; though HPB (ibid.) and TINGLEY(1915), 4, claimed he was a general.

²MEADE, 28.

³So not in 'Siberia'; CAILLET, ROE, 8 calls her 'a White Russian'. That is used for: a) the nationality from 'White Russia; Belarus'; east of Poland, north of the Ukraine; b) a supporter of the armies fighting the October revolution after 1917. A) is out of place; b) out of time for HPB.

⁴MEADE, 25f. *TT* Feb. 1938, 442.

⁵In the USSR of 1990, 11% were said to believe in contact with spirits of the dead (in the US in that year, 42% claimed to have had that kind of contact personally; SENFT, 34). *Informatiebulletin*, USSR embassy in The Hague, 14-7-1990: 'Atheisten geloven in voortekens'.

⁶Art schools were an exception.

When Helena was 17 years old,¹ she married 39 year old² General Nikifor Blavatski,³ the vice-governor⁴ of Erivan in Armenia. That made her name in Russian for the rest of her life: Blavatskaja. As Madame Blavatsky, or as HPB, she became known, however. She separated after a few months; there was no such thing as a legal divorce in Russia.

She hated her married name, because it reminded her of her husband as an individual;⁵ and was proud of it, because of her status as a general's wife; or widow? Right after becoming a citizen of the US republic in 1878, she did not use a title of nobility. However, she did use a countess' coronet on her 1884 calling card.⁷

Controversy, mystery, and speculations surround her life from 1849 to 1874. She wanted it that way.⁸

Her separation had not made her a total outcast to her family, or to all of the ruling set of Russia. Her cousin, the czar's prime minister Count Witte, in his memoirs accused her of all kinds of scandals (as did British Lady Asquith, who, unlike Witte, did not know her). Others though, like the member of the Imperial Council, Aleksey Aksakov, in the 1870's,⁹ and General Prince Emil von Sayn-Wittgenstein, Czar Alexander II's relative and aide de camp in the 1877-78 Russo-Turkish war,¹⁰ eventually joined her Theosophical Society. In Cairo in 1884, she was entertained at the Russian consul's.¹¹ While in India, some English were suspicious of her: could she be a spy of the czar's government, their rival in Afghanistan and elsewhere?

¹MEADE, 55. She was not 18, as WEBB(1971), 44, WEBB(1974B), 249; and, based on Webb, OTTERSPEER(1991), 41 say; or 16; TILLET(1982), 27.

²Not 'four times her age', as OTTERSPEER(1991), 41 says. Not 'elderly', as in GUENON(1921), 11 and SKLAR, 11; 'about forty years older', RUGE, 4; '43 years older', HUTTON, 588; 'over sixty', A. KOK, 660; and CE, vol. V, 419.

³Russian spelling. The usual 'y' spelling was incorrect: *TB* Nov. 1931, 472, SOERIKOESOEOMO(1923A), 17, and Russian PROKOPIEFF spelt 'Blavatskij'. Russian general and relative Fadeyeff spelt 'Blavaci' and 'Blavacki', *BCW*, III, 446-7. VAN DEDEM, 103 and VAN DER MERWE, 77 etc. 'Blavatsky'. BLOCH, 194, 'Blavatzki'; YADAV, 80: 'Balavatsky'.

⁴Not the Governor, as in *TIN*, 4.

⁵RAWSON, 209. She sometimes gave her first name as 'Helena'. Helios was the ancient Greek sun god. Helena was the name of the first woman saint of the Russian Orthodox Church.

⁶She appeared not to know in 1887: 'she snapped: she knew nothing about old Blavatsky, he was probably dead long ago and they had better go to Russia if they wanted to know anything about him.' WACHTMEISTER(1976), 63.

⁷*TT* Aug. 1931, 624, 645.

⁸'Between HPB from 1875 and HPB from 1831 to that date is a veil drawn, and you are in no way concerned with what took place behind it, before I appeared as a public character.' SMITH, 146 quoted.

⁹Between 1881 and 1888, he was for some time a TS vice president. JINARAJADASA(1925), 253.

¹⁰*TT* Aug. 1905, 704; *Almanach de Gotha*, Perthes, 1883; 177.

¹¹TILLET(1982), 39.

Madame Blavatsky later claimed about her pre-1874 days that she had made intensive contacts, in Tibet and elsewhere, with the Great White Brotherhood, also known as the Adepts, the Masters, or (after 1879) the Mahatmas or the Transhimalayan Lodge. She said they were a group of, originally, human beings, usually staying in Tibet. By enlightenment they had transformed themselves to transcending their physical bodies, and acquiring miraculous powers. They included Masters like KH,¹ and M (Morya).

It is said Helena Petrovna got much of the inspiration for her statements on the Brotherhood from the novels of British Tory politician Bulwer-Lytton.² He was the father of Lord Lytton, Viceroy of India, and grandfather to prominent theosophist Lady Emily Lyttons.

Tibet was inaccessible then. Its government banned foreign visitors, the Himalayas were unclimbed by Europeans as yet. It had a reputation as the country of the legendary snow leopard (known now to exist, though in jeopardy of extinction), and of the legendary Yeti (spoken of as 'subhuman'; disputes on its existence still raging). To verify or falsify³ Helena Petrovna's story on superhumans was not easy.

Some questioned their qualities, a Dutch anarchist paper asked in 1898:



Somewhere in the Himalayas, the Masters' abode was, according to HPB. Picture: Mt. Everest, highest of these mountains

¹Full name Koot Hoomi Lal Singh (or Sing? His (or HPB's??) spelling was not certain from the start. Before KH, 'Gulab Singh' was used as signature under messages which were said to come from the Brotherhood: a name well-known as founder of the Kashmir ruling dynasty from the 1840's on; an important military ally of the British during the 1857 Mutiny.

²ROE, 7. Edward George Earle Bulwer-Lytton, 1803-1873. NEDERVEEN PIETERSE, 234, speaks of him as main protagonist of England's world leadership, liberal (?) 'Baron Henry [sic] Lytton Bulwer.' The 'Baron' came only after the House of Commons; his Viceroy son became an Earl. He also, like his Conservative party leader Disraeli, was a prominent opponent of Darwinism, PARODIZ, 13.

³Attempt to verify: *Canadian Theosophist*, June 1927; attempt to falsify: MEADE, 69f. Emily Sellon, 'Blavatsky, H.P.' in ELIADE(1987), vol. 2, 245-6 does not investigate claims critically. With Blavatsky, *dugpa* (Tibetan 'red-capped' monk; usual spelling *drugpa*) is a term of abuse; unlike many Tibetan ideas on relationships between different monks. In a letter from HPB to an Indian in 1878, before departing for India (published *TT* Aug. 1931, 626-9), she did not claim she had been there before, explicitly denying having been initiated there: 'I, a woman and a European!!!'; but did claim occult training thousands of kilometres west; in the Middle East, and having met Travancore Brahmins.

Couldn't these 'masters' be just Jesuit fathers, oriental style?¹

Other outsider sceptics denied their very existence, and the authenticity of the letters allegedly written by them, and delivered to A.P. Sinnett.² H.S. Olcott, H.P. Blavatsky, and others.

Theosophists wrote many books and articles on who wrote Mahatma Letters. They consider the Great White Brotherhood to be the TS First Section, its real Initiators. Already in 1851, Madame Blavatsky is said to have got their message to found the TS twenty-four years later. Ascribing letters to Them in vain, or denying Their writings seen as authentic, is desecration in theosophist eyes.³ What theosophists say on individual Mahatma messages depends on where they stand in conflicts within the movement, like the one with William Q. Judge.

During nearly 60 years in theosophical thought and organizations, I came across about ten Mahatma Moryas, who not only flatly contradicted each other, but some of them called the others everything under the sun.⁴

B. DO AS THE SPIRIT SAY DO, 1875-1879

It is certain Helena Petrovna spent time in the Middle East, especially Egypt, to study snake-charming and magic; and that she was involved in spiritualism.⁵

The United States Fox family started spiritualism in 1848. Circus director P.T. Barnum put the Fox daughters on show. By the time they were old ladies, they confessed it had all been a hoax.⁶ But by then, too many believed in their early sayings, to believe their later sayings. P.T. Barnum: 'There's a sucker born every minute'.

After most 1848-1849 revolutionary movements had been repressed, during the 1850's spiritualism rose in Europe.⁷ Karl Marx saw them as the times when 'China and the tables started dancing, as the rest of the world seemed to stand still.'⁸

¹RABBIT(1898A), 1. The *London Standard* in 1883: the TS is 'a society founded on the alleged feats of certain Indian jugglers'; MEADE, 278. CUMBEY, 48: [the Masters] 'these demonic messengers'.

²JONES(1989), 170: 'Sinnett became a major link between Blavatsky and the Mahatmas' In fact, it was the other way around: Sinnett got his Mahatma messages by way of Madame Blavatsky.

³CLEATHER(1922A), viii.

⁴J.H. Dubbink, *TT* Jan. 1986, 120.

⁵Here used in the specific sense of belief in communication with the dead. Not in the more general sense of a philosophy which claims primacy of the spiritual over the material; more or less a synonym of idealist philosophy, opposite of materialist philosophy.

⁶WEBB(1971), 3. Margaret Fox said they had used a ball on a bit of string to make 'spirit rapping' sounds; CONSTANDSE, 13.

⁷RANSOM(1938), 7ff.

⁸*Das Kapital*, volume I in: *Marx Engels Werke (MEW)*, vol. 23 (Berlin: Dietz, 1962), 85 'China' refers to the T'ai Ping rebellion, from 1850 to 1864.

In France, Hippolyte L.D. Rivail, who called himself Allan Kardec, became influential with his *La Revue Spirite*.¹ Though his doctrines included reincarnation, Madame Blavatsky did not like to acknowledge him as an influence, as his Roman Catholicism repelled her.²

Spiritualism attracted, to use an anachronism, 'trendy' people; it had become harder to turn to politics, for the moment firmly, in some cases brutally, taken in hand by traditional princely, aristocratic, or military élites. One needed some 'rebelliousness' to become a spiritualist; a rebelliousness that usually did not cross the border between the other side of death, and this side of social revolution.³

Spiritualism fought materialist philosophy. It believed matter was just a by-product of the spirit. Hence, a 'medium' (sort of nineteenth century equivalent of a pagan antiquity oracle priest, or priestess), living contact between the 'spirit world', 'the other side', and seances (spiritualist gatherings) could bring about 'materializations', letting cups, shawls, letters,⁴ or other items appear seemingly out of nowhere, out of the realm of the spirit.

Spiritualism soon found itself in conflict with many Christians, as well as with materialists; though quite a few Christian clergymen applauded it as proving the immortality of the soul. Theosophists would later have disputes on this with Theravada Buddhists holding the *anatta* -literally, 'non-existence of the soul'- doctrine.

Spiritualism was an international, but not internationally organized, movement. It was not even nationally organized in most countries where it had support, in spite of

¹A rival group, led by Professor Z. Pierart, published *La Revue Spiritualiste*; RANSOM(1938), 14. WILSON(1975), 117, misspelling Rivail.

²She distanced herself from Kardec, *BCW*, vol. V (1883), L A, Philosophical Research Society, 1950, 48 and 115.

³Close friends and relatives of British Queen Victoria, though probably not she herself, engaged in spiritualist seances; and believed in reincarnation; LONGFORD(1966), 423. According to occult research by Annie Besant, Victoria was a reincarnation of Alfred the Great, king of Wessex 871-901, who fought against the Danes. *Reincarnation*, translated *TMNI*, 1919, 422. Austrian Empress Elisabeth ('Sissi') and Rumanian Queen Elisabeth ('Carmen Silva') had spiritualist seances together. COPPENS. Philosopher Büchner thought spiritualists had support especially among 'the cultured classes'; quoted D.L.N. Vink, 'De Terugtocht van het Materialisme', *TMNI* 1916, 209-22; 210. HPB, *BCW*, III, 97 wrote of 'spiritualists and mediums of the St. Petersburg grand monde ... We seriously doubt whether there ever will be more than there are now believers in Spiritualism among the middle and lower classes of Russia. These are too sincerely devout, and believe too fervently in the devil to have any faith in "spirits." Count Witte agreed with his cousin HPB at least on the social background of spiritualists in the czar's empire. 'Every night, I remember, Tblisi society gathered at our home around Yelena Petrovna. ... There came for example Count V.-D. and the two counts O.-D. and other jeunesse dorée representatives ...'; quoted *TMNI*, 1921, 44. Later, in Britain in 1957, the situation was different from HPB's, and many social theorists' view, but consistent with a view which questions the widespread perception of the role of religion as particularly lower class: STARK, 705, who did not mention Spiritualism, found that of the upper class, 50% believed in the devil, vs. 32% of the working class. See p. 135.

⁴'Materializations by HPB; Adyar TS headquarters museum preserves some. HPB did not want to be called 'medium'; as that would imply she wasn't in control.

some attempts. More or less loose groups, sometimes in more or less loose contact with other groups, formed around certain media¹ (newspapers) and mediums (people).

When H.P. Blavatsky and others from a spiritualist background formed the Theosophical Society in New York in 1875,² it appealed to believers in her 'materializations' and other supernatural 'phenomena'; in recently influential Eastern wisdom (for the TS, not much farther east than Egypt at first); to non-materialist critics of orthodox (Russian or otherwise) Christianity-'Churchianity', many in the TS called it; and especially to those who wanted to combine all these into a solid organization.

The Theosophical Society seems to be attracting within its pale in India some of those who have been forced to give up ancient superstitions but who aren't strong enough to rest upon reason alone.

Annie Besant said this in 1882, the first time she wrote on the TS;³ it might have been about countries on both sides of the north Atlantic ocean as well as on India. Why might 'those' not be 'strong enough'?

Since at least the days of Copernicus, cracks had begun to show in the various Christian churches' monopoly as supreme authorities on scientific questions, in traditionally Christian countries.⁴

In the very 19th century, when these countries subjected one heathen land after another, because 'we have got the Maxim gun. And they have not.' (Hilaire Belloc), cracks showed in the Christian monopoly as religion of the overwhelming majority, as theology in the narrow sense, as main source of inspiration for ideologies that either propped up, or attacked, the social *status quo*.

The theosophical movement was one of the first to jump into these cracks. It was one focus attracting those who wanted a break with many doctrines of the established or state churches of that time (like Anglicanism or Russian Orthodoxy); yet wanted no complete break with all Christianity, or -one step farther away from orthodoxy- no break with all religion; not with all concepts of the Supernatural.⁵ Those wanted still 'to keep alive in

¹Alfred A. Haighton was one of the few to deliberately use 'media' as plural for 'medium' (person). See his preface to HEUZÉ, 5. French Paul Heuzé was a sympathizer of René Guénon; *ibid.*, 10.

²7th July 1875, 177, 182. Not 1876 as in HARRISUSANTO; or 1881, ABU HANIFAH, 16. The TS was also not 'founded at Adyar near Madras in 1886', as Subhas Chandra BOSE, 23, wrote.

³*National Reformer*, 18-6-1882. Reprinted by Indian freethinkers of the time; quoted NEFF(1933), 185f. 'As a form of mysticism beyond the realm of creed, theosophy attests to the crisis of the traditional religions it tries to replace.' GREAT SOVIET ENCYCLOPEDIA, vol. 25, 589.

⁴Linguist Max Müller (*India, what can it teach us?*; 28) recalled the impact when, as an 1840's schoolboy, he learned about Sanskrit: 'All our ideas on Adam and Eve and paradise, on the tower of Babel ... seemed to turn around our head in a wild dance, our old world had fallen apart, someone had to come to gather the splinters, to try to build a new one out of them, to live with a new historical consciousness.'

⁵Theosophists reject the word; not the existence of much usually included in it.

man his belief that he has a soul, and the Universe a God.¹

Breaks with religious mainstreams do not necessarily go hand in hand with social rebellion. Catherine Wessinger names the TS as example of

Groups whose members may accept and conform to the social order, but reject the religious terms of the mainstream society.²

From three different sides: theosophists, non-TS opponents of the labour movement, and staunchly non-TS Marxists, eventually came parallel views on changes in social position during the nineteenth century of on the one hand, ideas like atheism, and scientific theories supposedly associated to them; on the other hand, theosophy.

Marxists like Van Ravesteyn, Cornélie Huygens and Pannekoek had a theory that after about 1848 the bourgeoisie, ceasing to be revolutionary, had no more use for materialism, and switched to various idealist philosophies. This Van Ravesteyn saw as the cause of the rise of spiritualism and theosophy.³

Ex-Darwinist Prof. Virchow wrote on Darwinism, when he had become an opponent of it: 'I hope it did not escape your attention that Socialism has contacted it!' In a debate at a German medical congress, he said against Haeckel, that if he kept propagating Darwinism, revolutions like the Paris Commune in 1871 would result.⁴ People increasingly associated 'materialism' with Marxist or anarchist labour movements.

During a later wave of workers' rebellion, in 1918, Dutch East Indies theosophist leader A. van Leeuwen made a speech in Cinihi against socialism. He said,

It is not by chance that the very [19th] century which brought us agnosticism, unbelief, and materialism, also became the century of social democracy. The brotherhood of men was seen in the fact that we are all children of the Earth, all formed from the same matter. But there is a higher Brotherhood, we too are children of one and the same Father ...⁵

Helena Petrovna, though popular for her phenomena, did not become president of the Theosophical Society. Part of the reason may have been an organization, not just admitting women, but led by a woman, might have looked less credible to respectable New York in the 1875 ideological climate on the 'proper' role of women. She became Corresponding Secretary, a relatively minor office, though one for life, like the presidency.⁶ But:

¹Rules of the TS, as quoted by HPB: BCW, II, 51

²'Introduction', 5 of WESSINGER(1993).

³VAN RAVESTEYN(1917) PANNEKOEK(1917). Whatever the merits of this view on the social origins of theosophy, the TS would also attract European nobles, with no recent revolutionary past. Also non-Europeans like Brahmins; mostly privileged, but not identical to bankers or factory owners.

⁴R. Virchow, *Die Freiheit der Wissenschaft im modernen Staat*, Berlin 1877, 12. D. de Lange,

⁵'De tegenwoordige stand van het Evolutievraagstuk', DNT 1917, 497.

⁶TMNI, 1919, 90.

⁷VAN MANEN(1916), 433. She called herself 'Secrétaire Général' in the 1880's. TT Aug. 1931, 624. In 1882, she was treasurer as well; JINARAJADASA (1925), 24. Contrary to what

I am the mother and creator of the Society; it has my magnetic fluid ... Therefore I alone and to a degree Olcott can serve as a lightning conductor of Karma for it.¹

TS President² (President-Founder; for life, until 1907) became Colonel (US Army, retired) H.S. Olcott. To a journalist, he explained the Society's religious aims, and its political aims as well:

In the State, we wish to spread high notions of honour, patriotism, responsibility and that international exchange of courtesy ...³

The TS supported pro-Mazzini activity of New York Italian republican immigrants in 1878, which led to a conflict with the consul for the kingdom of Italy.⁴

Lawyer William Quan Judge was a prominent member in those early New York days.⁵ The only woman, apart from Madame Blavatsky, of the first sixteen was Mrs Emma Hardinge Britten. Colonel Olcott in 1875 referred to her: 'who both as a lady and a Spiritualist is highly respected in two hemispheres'.⁶

Mrs Hardinge Britten published a book, *Art Magic*, containing many ideas later to become well-known in theosophy. This apparently was not to the liking of Madame Blavatsky,⁷ who, sooner than planned, published her own first book. It was *Isis Unveiled*.⁸ Mrs Britten left the TS, quarrelling with its leadership both before and after leaving. Olcott wrote 'the sarcasms and piffings' of Mrs Britten against the Society were much resented.⁹ She was the first major case; not the last.¹⁰

For some time, the New York TS was almost dead. 1878 saw signs of revival: after

MIERS, 301, says, HPB never was TS president; neither was Olcott ever 'squeezed out' as president by Annie Besant. FAUCHER(1984), 38, HOUKES(1995), 31 and M.F. JAMES, 213, have AB succeeding 'in 1891 to Helena Blavatsky to the presidency' of the TS; she actually became PTS sixteen years later.

¹See p. 12 n. 1. 'Magnetic fluid': a 18th century idea (Mesmer); rejected by physicists

²Not 'secretary'; as in OBEYESEKERA(1992A). Not 'president upon Blavatsky's death' as in Shirley J. Nicholson, 'Theosophical Society' in ELIADE(1987), vol. 14, 464

³See p. 62 note 8

⁴Hartford Daily News, 2-12-1878, as reprinted: TT Dec 1933, 419.

⁵HPB, letter to Italian paper *Fanfulla*; reprinted TT May 1932, 234f. Italian nationalist Giuseppe Mazzini (1805-1872) on the one hand opposed Roman Catholic clerical and monarchist politics, on the other hand Marxism. A TS lodge in Genoa was later called Giuseppe Mazzini Lodge; *General Report of the Thirtieth Anniversary and Convention of the Theosophical Society*, 1905; 145.

⁶Not 'W.A. Judge', as in *Aschehougs Konversations Leksikon*, Oslo, Det Mallingske Boktrykkeri, 1974, vol. 18, 783.

⁷OLCOTT(1907), 27. Also one of the first 16 was her husband, Dr. Britten.

⁸M.N.O., 'A schismatic brotherhood', *The Statesman* (Calcutta), 16-1-1924.

⁹In 1877; not 1871, as in UGLOW, 63. Then, HPB had not published anything yet. Also not '1887', as in CLARK, 23.

¹⁰M.N.O.(1924).

¹¹RANSOM(1938), 78: of the first sixteen 'only H.P.B. and Col. Olcott remained to the end'. She does not count Judge-he seceded in 1895; or D.E. de Lara (ibid., 112) who 'seems to have remained a member till he died'.

some preliminary groundwork, a British Theosophical Society started. Contacts in Greece and Turkey had been established. The TS, though, remained small, until its leaders Olcott and Blavatsky arrived in India in 1879.¹ They had left General Abner Doubleday, veteran of the Seminole, 1854-55 Apache Indian, and Civil wars,² as caretaker for the executive in New York.

C. WILL INDIA DESERVE IT? 1879-1884

The foreword to the address that Olcott gave 'At the Framji Cowasji Hall, Bombay, on March 23rd, 1879 ... before a large and enthusiastic audience' said:

... the Society should command the sympathy and secure the enrolment of the educated and advanced -free-thinking- minds in all countries, and especially in India where the founders of the Society have come to settle. More Hindooized than most of the Hindoos born on the soil-enraptured with the ancient learning and philosophy of India -devoted to India- for India they have left their homes and sacrificed all worldly considerations. Let us hope India may appreciate this self sacrifice, and deserve it.³

Also from Bombay,⁴ in October 1879, came the first issue of their international magazine *The Theosophist*. It declared:

Unconcerned about politics; hostile to the insane dreams of Socialism and of Communism, which it abhors - as both are but disguised conspiracies of brutal force and sluggishness against honest labour ...⁵

In the nineteenth century West, the interest in south and east Asian philosophies gradually rose.⁶ An interest, not matched by widespread knowledge, relatively little of the ancient sources in languages such as Sanskrit (for Hinduism), Pali (Theravada Buddhism), let alone Tibetan, had been translated into European languages then.

Most Asian countries that were not yet colonies, became so by the last quarter of the nineteenth century. If they were colonized, pressure on the life of the inhabitants (political, economic, in the field of ideas) increased.

¹Not in 1878, as in SCHWARTZBERG, 69. French Catholic priest and occultist Constant ('Eliphas Levi'), and Anna Kingsford in her 1882 book *The Perfect Way*, and later Rudolf Steiner, saw 1879 as an occult watershed year, a case where history, at least of the TS, and occultism may happen to agree. See GUÉNON(1921), 295, IMELMAN/VAN HOEK, 7.

²VAN MATER(1987), 93. BCW, vol. 1, 459.

³Reprinted in: VAN MANEN(1916), 429.

⁴The NCE forgets Bombay, saying it was published in Madras from 1879. CUMBEY, 48 has the TS move from New York in 1875; M. LUTYENS(1975), 10, in 1882 (both wrong). *Aschehoug's Konversations Leksikon*, Oslo, Det Mallingske Boktrykkeri, 1974, vol. 18, 783, wrongly has the headquarters in Benares before they went to Bombay; A. KOK, 361, headquarters in Benares in 1882, in Bombay later.

⁵HPB, TT #1 (1879), 7: 'What are the Theosophists'; BCW, II, 105f; quote in CLEATHER(1922A), 61 is not 100% literal.

⁶MUTHANNA, 70f., on Annie Besant and subjects like Karma and Yoga: 'She was the first Western philosopher who talked about these subjects in the far off lands', overrates her undeniable originality a bit.

In the field of ideas, in India and Ceylon, missionaries and sometimes other Christians had material and immaterial privileges under colonial government. In India and Ceylon (as in Ireland), taxes that benefited only the Anglican Church were levied on people of all faiths.¹ Missionaries tended to look at the enormously complex and diverse philosophical and religious situation of the South Asian subcontinent as 'abominable native heathenism'.

We should not forget that, contrary to the image of the 'ever unchanging Orient', there were already divergences and dynamics before the start of colonial rule; as we discuss three of the possible South Asian reactions to missionary (more generally, colonial) pressure.

1. Conversion to Christianity. Only a small minority in India did this, as did a somewhat bigger, but still less than 10%² minority in Ceylon, smaller, thus easier to influence, than India. Ceylon had been subject to missionary influences since the 16th century incursions of Roman Catholic Portuguese.

2. Withdrawing into isolation with one's own religion, seen as dogmas not to be changed, fondly remembering the idealized 'good old days', hoping someday the Gods might bring them back. There certainly was isolationism among nineteenth century Hindus: in many Hindu circles it was illegal to travel outside India. A Brahmana who had broken that law would be made an outcast, and would have to undergo purification rites to be re-admitted.

3. Trying to find a non-colonial answer to the changes in one's society. Trying to modernize, without necessarily to 'Westernize' or Christianize, certainly not to colonialize. In the political field, this led to nationalist movements (both secular and more or less influenced by one religion or another, including in some cases, paradoxically, Christianity).

In the religious field, this meant developing arguments against the missionaries, both from re-interpreting national traditions, and from non-(orthodox) Christian Western sources. Already in pre-colonial times, critical currents in both Hinduism and Buddhism had attacked for instance tenets of caste, and denial to widows of the right to remarry.³

From 1875,⁴ just before 1879, on, the Arya Samaj, founded by Swami Dayananda Sarasvati, spread fairly rapidly, mainly in northern India. The swami attacked image worship, polytheism, and caste practices in Hinduism. He recognized only the Vedas as holy scripture, not the numerous other writings many Hindus considered sacred (like the Puranas). News of his activities reached Olcott in New York.

In Ceylon, a Buddhist ideological counter-attack had already begun somewhat earlier. Christian missionaries had challenged Buddhist monks to a debate. In 1864 in Baddegama, the first of a series of discussions took place. The most famous of these

¹TT, July 1905, 586. SUMATHIPALA, 15. In Ceylon in 1885, there were only 24.756 Anglicans; E. BALFOUR(1885), vol. I, 634; so less than 1% of the people.

²ROGERS, 323; 9%. SCHWARTZBERG, 96, estimates 9.8% in 1901

³HEIMSATH, 9.

⁴Not 1870; as in GUÉNON(1921), 27.

debates, held mainly near the island's west coast, was in Panadura in 1873. It attracted over 10,000 people; according to most present, the Christians lost. An account of this debate, which Englishman Peebles published, got quite some attention, including the TS.¹

So two religions, with hundreds of millions of adherents, not Christian, like the TS founders, showed present-day vitality besides age-old reputation. But they were up against a colonial government unsympathetic to them.

Would not these religions be thankful to a super-religion in the making, such as theosophy, if it helped them; for instance with newspaper publicity, or with a non-Christian education network? Organizing Spiritualists might prove as difficult as transporting a mass of frogs in a wheelbarrow.² Pope Pius IX, Czar Alexander II, head of the Russian Orthodox Church, or the Episcopal (Anglican) bishop of New York City, would surely not accept the TS as superchurch to their organizations. Maybe someone, somewhere else, would?

HPB and HSO contacted both Swami Dayananda and Ceylon Buddhist priests about possible co-operation, and got positive replies; as this was the first time the recipients of the letters discovered European or American sympathizers with what missionaries from these continents denounced as paganism.

Colonel Olcott and Colonel Hahn's daughter thought of moving to Ceylon, but correspondence with Bombay convinced them India had better prospects.³ They embarked to Bombay, arguably setting a precedent for many poor hippies and rich yuppies in search of instant spiritual glory.⁴

¹MURPHET, 132. SUMATHIPALA, 23-4. Christians sometimes reacted sharply to the Buddhist revival; E. BALFOUR(1885), vol. I, 495: 'the defiant and blasphemous expressions which they [Ceylon Buddhist publications] contain against the sacred name of Jehovah, are probably the most awful ever framed in human language'. Yet, decades earlier, 'the initial response of the Buddhist monks to Christian missionization was not unfriendly. Buddhist monks even gave Christian monks permission to preach in their temples, and were surprised when this gesture was not reciprocated'; OBEYSEKERA(1992A).

²WILSON(1975), 71 sees spiritualism as a 'thaumaturgical' type of movement, and theosophy as a 'manipulationist' one, with more scientific pretensions and more 'modern' organization than loosely structured spiritualism. But (ibid) he writes: 'in manipulationist and conversionist movements thaumaturgical elements are sometimes present ... In some ways the manipulationist sects in advanced societies are the developed equivalent of the thaumaturgical religion of simpler societies; in conformity with their cultural context they have made appropriate adjustments, and offer their knowledge as objective, de-mythologized, and universalistic in its implications, and acceptable in terms of scientific principles'. Nineteenth century spiritualists already sometimes made scientific claims, a 1870's spiritualist paper in Boston in the US, to which HPB contributed, was called the *Spiritual Scientist*.

³H. S. Olcott, 'In memory of Mr. Ranade', *TT*, Sept. 1905, suppl., I.

⁴G. MEHTA(1979). Rajavi PALME DUTT(1940), 499f, commented in between Blavatsky's days and the 1960's: 'the sapient Western traveller, who goes to visit the immemorial East ... whether to drink at the muddy fountain of Oriental spiritual higher thought [like theosophists], or to expose with patronizing scorn the innate backwardness of 'Mother India' [like Katherine Mayo], is

Why was there soon a conflict with the Arya Samaj? Apart from clashes between Arya Samaj and TS religious views,¹ politics differed. In the religious Samaj, there was a political anti-colonial undertone (though not an overtone just twenty-odd years after the defeat of the uprising known as the 1857² Indian Mutiny). Dayananda's supporters prayed every day:

May no foreigner come to our country to rule over us, and may we never lose our political independence and become enslaved [sic] to foreigners.³

This was not easy to blend with TS visions of a World Empire of all 'Aryans' (including both British and Indians; see p. 247f.).

Olcott⁴ speaks of a misunderstanding. But Swami Dayananda's biographer sees double-crossing by the TS leadership. After first recognizing Swami Dayananda as personal, and TS, spiritual leader,⁵ they went to Ceylon to profess Buddhism.

Even before Olcott and Blavatsky landed in Galle on 17 May 1880, Ceylon's Buddhist monks had been preparing a warm welcome. Cheering crowds of thousands greeted them. H.P. Blavatsky presented the VIPs among these with handkerchiefs, which she magically embroidered with their names, including a spelling mistake. They publicly

visiting only a museum of medieval lumber, and is blind to the living forces of the Indian people'. Helena Petrovna's hashish smoking may have set a precedent too: 'Hasheesh multiplies one's life a thousand fold. My experiences are as real as if they were ordinary events of actual life ... It is a recollection of my former existences, my previous incarnations. It is a wonderful drug, and it clears up a profound mystery.' HPB quoted: RAWSON, 211. HPB opposed hashish in writing too, most dedicated followers (but not P. JOHNSON(1990), 22) deny that she ever used it. Tetrahydrocannabinol (active chemical in hashish) was supposed to be the material basis for some 20th century spiritual ideas too.

¹JONES(1989), 169-70, mentions two areas of conflict. The first one, 'on the Aryan concept of God', is correct; Dayananda had a monotheist concept of a personal God. Jones' second area of conflict, [Blavatsky's and Olcott's] 'sharp criticism of contemporary Hinduism' is more doubtful. Dayananda himself did not like the term Hindu, reminding him of traditionalists whom he fought, and preferred 'Arya'. Theosophists had a better relationship than the Arya Samaj with the orthodox of the *Sanatana Dharma* school, like G. N. Chakravarti. As is evident from JONES(1989), 174, 179. The relationship of the TS to the Prarthana Samaj, linked to the Brahmo Samaj, had never been close: 'For years, we lived near the Prarthana Samaj in Bombay, but its platform was ever closed for, and refused to us, even when asked for'. Editorial note by HPB, *TT* Aug. 1883, 274.

²Not 1847, as TAYLOR(1992), 233 'Thirty-two years' implies.

³Swami Dayananda, *Aryabhinnava* 303-4; quoted YADAV, 5. See also the swami's *Satyarth Prakash*, quoted ibid. TS relations to political emancipation paper *The Statesman* were also not good in 1881; HPB complained her labour was 'rewarded by the majority of the natives (on whose behalf it was started) by the most foul abuse, suspicion, and ceaseless attacks upon the Theosophists'; *BCW*, III, 387f.

⁴ODL, vol. I, 394ff.

⁵JORDENS, 212-3: 'no doubt ... the Theosophists acted with duplicity.'

⁶Mary K. Neff 'The hidden side of 'The Theosophist''; *TT* Nov. 1929, 195 blames the conflict on the swami's 'jealousy', and wanting the leadership for himself. But that was offered to him by the TS.

recited the Buddha's Five Precepts (Pansil), and were thus formally admitted to Buddhism.

Dutch sailors, stranded on Ceylon, had become Buddhists centuries before them. The TS leaders, though, were the first to come especially to the island from another continent to embrace the faith. As they belonged to the 'respectable classes', Buddhists saw them as valuable allies in negotiations on their position under British rule.

After the Arya Samaj broke with Olcott and Blavatsky in 1882, they moved TS headquarters south, closer to Madras lawyer and orthodox Brahmana T. Subba Row.¹ He helped H.P. Blavatsky in the first stages of writing her new book, *The Secret Doctrine*. They could buy an estate at a low price in Adyar,² near Madras city. They had a shrine built, where Mahatma letters appeared miraculously. Hindus gave quite some support. So did some Parsis, a numerically weak but in some cases financially strong community, descended from Zoroastrian immigrants from Persia.³

Some influential British living in India also joined the TS (see p. 104), like A.P. Sinnett, editor of Allahabad newspaper the *Pioneer*.

Attractiveness in Asia in turn attracted new members in Europe and North America. Then, many Asian writings were translated. While many Orientalists were hostile to



A.P. Sinnett in 1917; from *TMNI*, 1921, 343

¹The headquarters were not moved as late as 1907, as FRÉDÉRIC(1984), vol. IX, 122 suggests; or as early as the start of the TS; VAN DER MERWE, 136. Not already in 1879, as in *Bonniers Lexicon*, Stockholm, Bonnier, 1966, vol. 14, 312, and in VARENNE, 225.

²Not 'Adyar', as in LIGOU, article on AB.

³MEADE, 288, calls the Parsi Padshah a 'Hindu'. *CEI*, 362: '... as Theosophy became more Hinduized ... Parsis began their own 'Zoroastrianized Theosophy'. The distance did not become as big as with India's Muslims though.

theosophy, their work showed the long history -pre-dating Christianity- and literary qualities, in religions which many had so far dismissed as 'crude barbarian paganism'.¹ Increasing sympathy for those faiths was not bad news for an organization claiming to represent the link between them and the long hidden, authentic, original, tradition of the West, as opposed to merely 'exoteric' Christianity.

Some Orientalists² eventually became FTS. The TS Adyar library collected and published manuscripts in South Asian (and other) languages; though some charged the TS with editing these to fit theosophist interpretation of Eastern religions.³

The move to Adyar would make south India the region arguably most receptive to theosophy in the world for many decades to come. This is not without its irony and complications, when one looks at TS racial doctrines on south Indians. Theories of separate northern origins for southern Brahmans might solve those complications.

The move south also meant Ceylon became easier to reach from headquarters. Olcott especially was very interested in the island. His popularity even survived a clash with an earlier ally, Buddhist High Priest Mogittuwatte, who accused him of using Buddhism for ulterior theosophic purposes. Another important High Priest, Sumangala, took Olcott's side.

When Blavatsky and Olcott visited Ceylon in 1884, they had a companion: C.W. Leadbeater, ex-Church of England priest, who had turned theosophist and Buddhist via spiritualism. He joined the TS on 20 November 1883. From 1886 to 1889, Leadbeater was in charge of the network of Buddhist schools the TS set up to break the Christian monopoly. Olcott wrote to HPB:

Leadbeater is making a good impression on the people ... and he will not dream of trying to break off the Buddhists from the TS and set up a little kingdom of his own.⁴

Olcott was not so sure about others.

In presenting South Asia with an alternative to Christian education, theosophists were fairly successful, in Ceylon more so than in India. In 1904 Ceylon, Ananda College of the Buddhist Theosophical Society differed from government and Christian education in that

¹W.T. Stead in 1894 on H.P. Blavatsky, quoted *TMNI* 1920, 432: 'Still more conspicuous has been the success which this remarkable woman has had with her striving to get into the somewhat hard heads of the West European races, and especially into those of the English, the conviction (a conviction, which until then existed only within the heads of the Orientalists led by Professor Max Müller), that the East as far as Religion and Philosophy were concerned in no way was inferior to the West'. A missionary paper in Indonesia in 1918 called 'Muhammadanism' (Islam, the majority religion there) 'a plague for the Dutch East Indies' and attacked Chinese religion; quoted *TMNI*, 1919, 3.

²RICHARDUS, 11: J.W. Boissevain.

³YADAV, 2, his Introduction of the Autobiography of Swami Dayananda Saraswati, 'found that the English translation of the [1879-1880] *Theosophist* was awfully mechanical and at places quite confusing.'

⁴TILLET(1982), 51. RICHARDUS, 18: CWL 'thought ... of becoming a Buddhist' in 1906; he then already was for 22 years, and even after becoming an LCC bishop never gave that up.

'Our College, alone, has for Principal and teachers men of native birth-Sinhalese Buddhists'.¹ Still, for other schools and at other times, theosophists attracted from Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand (the last two relatively strong within the TS) men and women teachers, who may have thought of opportunities to be close to the Masters, and to help co-religionists or fellow Aryans. Teachers were about the lowest category of TS members on non-Asian social ladders. Princes, duchesses, and daughters of Viceroy of India were at the top end. The TS used school buildings as venues for lodge meetings and lectures, both local and from abroad.

D.FAQIR² OR FAKER? FROM COLOMBO TO COULOMB, 1884-1888

Though both TS leaders and many members came to it by way of spiritualism, theosophist organizational and doctrinal discipline did not really appeal to all interested in 'phenomena'. Some joined the TS enthusiastically, some moved to its periphery, some became hostile to it. The labyrinth of loose, autonomous spiritualist circles did not prove easy to encircle by the snake in the TS seal.

'Spiritualist' as used in theosophist writings eventually got a pejorative undertone.³ Historian Annie Romein-Verschoor wrote of theosophist attacks on spiritualism as confirming 'the rule that "faiths" fight one another more the closer to one another they are'.⁴ In *The Key to Theosophy*, published in 1889, H.P. Blavatsky devoted a chapter to 'The Difference between Theosophy and Spiritualism'. 'I must state here that it is Theosophy which is the true and unalloyed Spiritualism, while the modern scheme of that name is, as now practiced by the masses, simply transcendental materialism.'⁵

In 1882, in England, the division was not so clear yet. Both FTS and non-FTS, future Conservative Prime Minister Arthur Balfour and many university men among them, formed the Society for Psychical⁶ Research, to investigate mediums and phenomena. Many SPR members hoped to be able to separate 'real' from 'fake' psychism by establishing certain controls. Professor Myers, FTS, and a prominent SPR member, suggested Blavatsky's phenomena as a good field for research.

The TS leaders initially agreed. Richard Hodgson, who did the main work for the

¹TS General Report on 1904, 46.

²Faqir=a saint in Sufi tradition within Islam; *TT* March 1934, 567.

³*TMNI*, 1916, 472, said the difference was: 'Spiritualism drags down the spirits of the dead, theosophy lifts up the souls of the living'. Sometimes theosophists saw spiritualism a bit more positively, as doing the preparatory work for the real, theosophical, work: 'The sappers and miners of the Theosophical Society-Spiritualism and Materialism'; CLAUDE WRIGHT(1890), 343. And A.P. Sinnett, looking back at the rise of spiritualism, saw it as giving 'reality to ideals and principles essential to the maintenance of religious faith'; *TT*, June 1921, 301.

⁴ROMEIN-VERSCHOOR, 81. *TMNI* 1923, 321-4, reacted to an attack on the TS by Dutch spiritualist Jankheer Mr. [a law degree] R.O. van Holthe tot Echten in *Het Toekomstig Leven* magazine.

⁵BLAVATSKY(1987), 33.

⁶BOLLAND(1911), 77 translated it, unusually, into Dutch as 'zielig onderzoek'

investigation committee, in Adyar and elsewhere in India, as he began was quite sympathetic to the TS.

However, 1884-85 became probably the most controversial of H.P. Blavatsky's controversial sixty years. A treacherous conspiracy against a noble woman, theosophists say. Helena's exposure as a fraud, their opponents state. After more than a century, the two views (and various 'sub-views' within each) have still not reached common ground.

In 1884, an old acquaintance of Madame Blavatsky's Egyptian days and TS Assistant Corresponding Secretary,¹ Mrs Emma Coulomb², ran away from the Adyar estate. She claimed HPB had faked the Masters' letters, their miraculous appearance in the shrine was due to trap doors made by her husband, and dolls and various people, including a police inspector,³ had posed as 'Mahatma apparitions'.

Hodgson's opinion was that several theosophists at Headquarters had tried to deceive him. That there was deception, by Subba Row, Dr. Franz Hartmann, and others; this theosophist defenders of Madame Blavatsky⁴ admit. That there was some deception by HPB; this TS President Olcott, Vice President Sinnett, and Hartmann alleged later, much to many theosophists' indignation.⁵

After private circulation of a preliminary report in December 1884, Hodgson's final report was published in 1885, amid much publicity. Opinions in the full committee had differed. Member Stack wrote:

Everybody suspects the mediums or conjurers and surrounds them with severe conditions. The Theosophists on the contrary require to be approached with respect and they perform their marvels where they like, when they like, and before whom they like.⁶

About Stack's allegation that the TS had 'purchased' witnesses, other members said 'TRUE BUT ? RELEVANT. POINT IS RESPECTABLE PERSONS INVOLVED.'⁷

Hodgson's report was very unfavourable to HPB. He considered her a fraud and 'I cannot profess myself, after my personal experiences of Madame Blavatsky, to feel much

¹CAMPBELL, 88. In the 19th century, many thought of noble persons as more credible than servants, certainly if dismissed. ROE, 83. 'Mrs Cooper-Oakley . . . asked sharply if the questioner took the word of dismissed servants'. WESSINGER(1991), 97 'disgruntled servants'. In her own view, Emma Coulomb was not a servant, but a 'lady' in her own right, wife of a former hotel owner, who had helped HPB when she was in need in Egypt. She was not paid a salary; FULLER(1987), 2. In an earlier conflict, in 1880, TS leaders had taken her side against Rosa Bates, who accused her of a poisoning attempt; MURPHET, 120. Olcott's reaction to the Coulomb accusations was, as quoted *THNI*, 12: 'We have a lady [HPB] of such social position as to be incapable of entering into a vulgar conspiracy with any pair of tricksters to deceive the public'. *BCW*, II, 137: 'Our correspondent is perfectly trustworthy and has a place in the highest social circle'.

²Not 'Coloumb', as in N.M.C. Tideman, 'H. P. B.', *TMNI* 1920, 429-34, *passim*.

³Inspector Pillai; PRICE(1986A), 29.

⁴*Ibid.*, 29.

⁵CRUMP(1923), 66f.

⁶PRICE(1986A), 39.

⁷*Ibid.*, 40.

doubt that her real object has been the furtherance of Russian interests.¹ He did not prove this secret agent theory then. It would reincarnate thirty-four years later, when Annie Besant accused ex-German TS leader Rudolf Steiner (see p. 80).

Theosophist Leslie Price tries to shield Madame Blavatsky by pointing to her occult, as opposed to political, outlook. Price admits this distinction was not total:

It is idle to deny that H.P.B. had some political interests, for she claimed after all to have fought for the Italian Nationalists, and to have been shot for her efforts. Although I understand she may be mentioned in the files of the India office that deal with subversives - she was kept under observation after her arrival with Olcott ...²

H.P. Blavatsky's *Secret Doctrine* and other writings show one can call neither her nor her organization apolitical. Her views obviously had influences from her Russian ruling class background. Whether she had links to the 'Third Section', the secret police, is still unsolved.³ Both she and Olcott had public contacts with Russian government representatives; unwise for non-public agents. Olcott repeatedly received Russian princes, including future Czar Nicholas II. Blavatsky wrote on British Indian politics in the *Russkii Vestnik* of the czarist Katkov, and on Russian politics in Sinnett's *Allahabad Pioneer*.⁴

Madame Blavatsky, who had moved from Adyar to Europe earlier in 1885, reacted

¹Ibid., I. According to material in Washington archives, Olcott did gather information on the British Indian Army for the US government, MURPHET, 110

²Ibid., 28. US official of the TS Coues, 77, Oct. 1888, suppl., IV, foresaw a role for his organization as a potential great power in US politics.

³BCW, vol. I, 262f. In 1877 she defended czarism in the US press against charges that it was anti-Semitic; and in 1880 in Allahabad daily the *Pioneer* against charges of the *Economist* that it was anti-Armenian; ibid., II, 263f. A *Pioneer* article by her on Russia's foreign relations: BCW, III, 75f. P. JOHNSON(s.d.), 99: 'The issue of HPB's political involvement has never received the serious consideration it deserves ... HPB could have been a Russian 'spy'... in the very limited sense of being a free-lance explorer who may have gained some financial support by writing reports of her findings to the government of her native country ... Her connections with the aristocracy and the military would easily have provided opportunities for such employment ...' Ibid., 101: 'Theosophists have tended to regard HPB's mission ... as transcending any possible political goals. This seems naive and ill-informed in light of the clear intent of both HPB and her Masters ... to revive the national identity and pride of India and Ceylon. But to have objectives related to political change and connections with Russian intelligence does not make one a spy.' MURPHET, 109: British intelligence in India thought Madame Blavatsky: 'a Russian of the ruling class, and therefore suspect'. Madame Novikoff, who did work for the czar's intelligence, thought HPB 'a great Russian patriot' in her London days; TAYLOR(1992), 239. Maria Carlson, 'To Spy or not to Spy: "The Letter" of Mme Blavatsky to the Third Section', *TH* July 1995, 225-31: in 1888, a Soviet magazine published a letter of 26 Dec. 1872 from HPB, asking for employment as secret agent of the czar. Maria Carlson was not sure if this was genuine or communist anti-theosophy.

⁴BCW, II, 294f; 263f; 351f.

furiously to 'the two miserable Coulomb people, who had eaten her bread for years'.¹ She wanted to sue the TS' opponents. However, the majority of the leadership, including lawyers Olcott and Subba Row, did not want a court case, to Helena Petrovna's anger. Some FTS, like Myers, reacted by resigning.

Subba Row quarrelled with HPB after 1885. They agreed that, besides the visible body 'principle', there were more invisible 'principles' in man, than only the soul. But they disagreed on the number of principles. Madame Blavatsky discarded Subba Row's idea of four as mystic number,² in favour of seven.³ Nevertheless, he had pretty much influence on the TS. It still calls its highest award of honour the T. Subba Row Medal.⁴ Row died in 1890.⁵

The 'Mahatma-Coulomb-SPR' crisis shook the TS, but did not break it.⁶ Bad publicity is publicity too. Besides, missionaries joined the attack. In the eyes of many Hindus and other Indians this made HPB a martyr. Certainly so in the eyes of Price:

Madame Blavatsky may have been officially unveiled by the 1885 report, just as Jesus of Nazareth, another 'impostor' was decisively dealt with by physical crucifixion.⁷

¹TT July 1907, 794. In weekly *De Taak*, 23 and 24 from 1918, GS for Indonesia, D. van Hinloopen Labberton, called the Coulombs 'instruments of the British Indian Jesuit fathers', though they, after their break with the TS, had worked with Protestant missionaries, VAN DEN HEUVEL, 5.

²In Subba Row's 1881 TT article *The Sevenfold Principle in Man*, the controversy was not evident yet. BCW, III, 400f.

³These seven, with Sanskrit names, ranging from the highest Atma (the Divine soul) to the lowest, the Rupa or body, also were in the introduction by Prof. Elliott Coues, then one of the two main US theosophists, to a book under the pseudonym of 'F T S': *Can matter think?* Boston, The Biogen Series, no. 4, 1886. Dutch author Frederik van Eeden based his philosophical views in *De Broeders* (The Brothers), written in 1894, on it. He thought that, in spite of the Sanskrit names, ancient Indian philosophy 'did not have such a scheme ... But though this is a modern fantasy, nevertheless it seems to me to be wise and fruitful and for the time being, agreeing with what we discover through study and self-reflection'; VAN EEDEN, 195-6. In 1921, he considered *De Broeders* his 'most important work'; VAN EEDEN, 21. Van Eeden (1860-1932, not '1830-1930' as in DJAJADININGRAT-NIEUWENHUIS, 43) was typical of many who, though critical of some aspects of theosophy, yet were fairly deeply influenced by it. On appreciation of Van Eeden by theosophists, see for instance the editorial of *TMNI*, 1917, 53. He was successful as an author and unsuccessful as the founder of an utopian socialist community and later, in 1918, as a liberal splinter group (*Algemeene Staatspartij*) parliamentary candidate.

⁴TILLET(1882), 303: Rudolf Steiner won the medal in 1900, RANSOM(1938), 190: that was in 1909, is probably right here. TILLET's (ibid.) awards list is incomplete; see RANSOM(1950), 224. TILLET (ibid.) says the medal is 'in memory of' Subba Row. It is by now; but it was first resolved upon in 1883, when Subba Row was still alive.

⁵One year before HPB. So he could never, as MIERS, 76, claims, have 'seen her appear as a ghost at seances after her death'.

⁶New lodges admitted to the TS: 42 in 1883, 11 in 1884, 17 in 1885, 15 in 1886, 22 in 1887. LucL vol. VI, 1890, 165.

⁷PRICE(1886A), 31.

E. FROM LONDON TO NIBBANA,¹ 1888-1891

Theosophy got more publicity in 1888,² when H.P. Blavatsky's *The Secret Doctrine*, all 1571 pages of it,³ came out. She saw it as an improved version of *Isis Unveiled*. Its contents are central to later theosophist theorists: 'Everyone should read that book.'⁴ Not even all theosophists did. In 1922 in Indonesia, of 1600 FTS less than 250 owned copies.

young people ... turn away from *The Secret Doctrine* because its style is nineteenth century and repugnant to them ... Even among older members ... *The Secret Doctrine* is pronounced unreadable.⁵

Tillett thinks it 'irrelevant' whether or not Leadbeater derived his best-selling books from *The Secret Doctrine*: 'her works remain obscure and largely unread outside a select circle.'⁶

In weighing irrelevancy, however, one should remember that obscurity may not only repel. It may attract as well, especially in religion. Dange pointed out the part played by understood, or half-understood language in religions: Latin with Roman Catholics, Pahlavi with Parsis, and so on.⁷ One might also think of Sanskrit in nineteenth century Hinduism, or, still more clearly, in nineteenth and twentieth century theosophy in North America.⁸

To some extent, the part of the SD in the TS parallels that of the Bible in medieval Europe. Then, the authority of the clergy was supposed to rest on it, they quoted from it

¹Pali equivalent of Sanskrit Nirvana

²Not '1889' as in BESANT(1912A), 16 and Shirley J. Nicholson, 'Theosophical Society' in ELIADE(1987), vol. 14, 464

³In two volumes: 'Cosmogonies' and 'Anthropogenies'. In 1897, Mrs Besant brought out a third volume: 'Occultism' from unpublished manuscripts. Theosophists disagree on whether or not this volume contains materials that HPB wanted in the volume three she did plan. Boris de Zirkoff in his preface to BCW, XIV, p. XXVI-XXVII, thinks parts of it were not intended for the reading public, but were 'given under a solemn pledge of secrecy which was blatantly violated by their publication'.

⁴DE PURUCKER(1947), 15.

⁵TMN 1922, 621. J. MILLER, 190. PRICE(1986A), 25: 'Theosophists have a favourite and perhaps not entirely fair way of responding to superficial observations about their movement. "Have you read 'The Secret Doctrine'?" they enquire ...'

⁶TILLET(1982), 4.

⁷DANGE, vol. 3, 151: 'history shows that God has never ordained that his devotees must understand the language of his divine utterance ... the practice has been that all the transactions between God and his devotees have been carried on in something like a code language.' See also BCW, II, 43.

⁸OELC March-Apr. 1935: 'Youngsters to shoot Sanskrit'. U.S. primary school children of the TS (Point Loma) which had very few Indian members, were taught Sanskrit. Daily *Sathia Varthamani* reported that Annie Besant defended Sanskrit in religion, though most Hindus did not understand it, from 'the science of sounds'; quoted TIEMERSMA(1907), 211.



Madame Blavatsky in her bath-chair in the garden of Annie Besant's house, 19 Avenue Road, London, in 1890. From: CLEATHER(1923)

in their writings, or in sermons to the illiterate.¹

The first printing of the *Secret Doctrine* was soon sold out; a year later, a second printing proved necessary. One may wonder how many copies of these and later editions served merely as ornaments on bookshelves. One SD reviewer, Annie Besant, became so impressed that she joined the TS in 1889.² How important this was we will see.

In Mrs Besant's London house, HPB died in 1891, leaving her ring to AB.³ Students

¹VAN DOORN/LAMMERS, 196: 'Systematized ideology ... is the product and often also the property of a small minority.'

²So she certainly was not 'one of the founders of the Society', as VARENNE, 225 writes; and Sheila Rowbotham, *Women, Resistance and Revolution. A History of Women and Revolution in the Modern World*. N. Y., Pantheon, 1972, 205. Neither did she join in 1893, as Subhas Chandra BOSE, 23, wrote; or in 1888, as one might conclude from JONES(1989), 174.

³UGLOW, 63: 'she was estimated to have 100,000 followers at the time of her death'; Webster's *Biographical Dictionary*, Springfield, Merriam, 1972, 158 has the same estimate; see also E. LUTYENS, 190. If you count as 'followers' only FTS, a more than tenfold over-estimate. ADB Nov. 1909, 359: in 1895 worldwide not much more than 5,000 active members. The CE(1929), vol. V, 419, errs the other way round: 'In 1891 she had to die in London, left alone by all.'

of a religious movement always ask: will it survive its charismatic¹ originator? It did, as the next chapters will show.

2. REINCARNATION OF KING ASHOKA:² H.S. OLCOTT, 1891-1907

A. IMPHEE, PAPERS, BULLETS, INSURANCE AND GHOSTS, 1832-1875

Some seventy years before Leadbeater examined his earlier lives, on 2 August 1832, Henry Steel Olcott³ was born into a Protestant business family in Orange, New Jersey, USA. In 1857, he wrote a book *Sorgho and imphee* on Asian and African sugar-canes. In the United States up to then, one could only grow sugar in the southern slave states, and northern sugar processors were interested in possibilities of lessening their dependence on the South. State legislatures asked Olcott to lecture to them about the canes.⁴ Mainly on agriculture, he wrote for the *New York Tribune*.

Horace Greeley owned this paper. He was most famous for the publicity he had given the Fox family when they started spiritualism.⁵ And for his slogan 'Go West, young man': as 'Manifest Destiny' of the US he saw supplanting the Amerindians. The paper opposed slavery in the South.

In 1861, the United States civil war broke out. Marx called it slave-owners' rebellion, Olcott 'the slaveholders rebellion'⁶ and rose to colonel in the Union (northern) Army

¹T. MILLER(1991). According to WILSON(1970), 19f the role of charismatic leaders in religion in industrial societies is smaller than earlier on, the fields of politics and entertainment differ in this.

²Some twelve years ago [about 1901] the present writers [CWL and AB] engaged in an examination of some of the earlier lives of Colonel H. S. Olcott. In the incarnation preceding the last one he was the great Buddhist King Ashoka. LEADBEATER(1971), 1. see also *TMNI*, 1919, 142. Ashoka ruled most of India, 272-231 B.C. Since 1947 independence, his Ashoka chakra [=wheel] symbol is in the Indian flag. It is said his family introduced Buddhism to the Sinhalese of Ceylon.

³Sometimes misspelt: Steele; Adelta Peterson: 'The making of a President of the Theosophical Society', *TT* Aug. 1936, 394, LEADBEATER(1909), 'G. Olcott', PROKOFIEFF, 17; 'K.S. Olcott', HOUKES(1995), 31; 'Allcot', VAN DEDEM, 466; 'Alcott', YADAV, 80, and LEGGE(1972), 24; 'Olcot', FRÉDÉRIC (1984), vol. IX, 122. Nor was he, as *ibid.*, a 'British colonel'; or born in '1830'; PARRINDER, 208.

⁴OBEYESEKERA(1992B) calls his father 'a Protestant minister'; not confirmed elsewhere. His ancestors were seventeenth century Puritan immigrants from England. Olcott considered that 'a better heritage than even a share of the blood royal'; MURPHET, 1.

⁵MURPHET, 7.

⁶NANNINGA, 23.

⁷*TT* 1898: report on 1897, 3.

⁸WEBB(1971), 44: Olcott 'whose military rank proved when examined to be rather less impressive than his imposing beard'; based on Webb, OTTERSPEER(1991), 42: rank less 'genuine.' Webb does not elaborate on this. If he suggests a fake rank: General Abner Doubleday

Before the war ended in 1865, he worked in the Washington War Department, later in the Navy Department (both not yet known as 'Department of Defense', or housed in the Pentagon).

Later he became a lawyer. He wrote the official report, as Director, of the US National Insurance Convention (New York 1871).¹

For a long time, he had been interested in spiritualism. In 1874, he went to the New York state Eddy farm,² which had a reputation for being haunted. There he met for the first time Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, one year older, as interested in spirits, but a good deal more experienced than he was. And 'of noble birth'; the American Revolution had abolished royalty and nobility in the States a century ago. Even today, though, they still fascinate many Americans in countries, other than their own.

B. PRESIDENT-FOUNDER AND OCCULT PUPIL, 1875-1891

From 1875 onwards, Olcott was TS president for life; not H.P. Blavatsky. We have already written on respectable New York opinion about non-male chairpersons. Also, HPB did not like addressing big meetings; though she strongly impressed many who met her in small gatherings.

So public speaking was left to Olcott; it would take him to nearly all continents. HSO also felt more at home in down to earth administrative and organizational work.

There was an inner, as opposed to a merely outer, hierarchy, however.

Sinnett ... mentions her 'rough language' to, and 'tyranny over', Colonel Olcott, omitting to add that he was her occult pupil, and, as such, his very strong and troublesome personality had to be severely disciplined if he was to be of any use for real work.³

In 1882, Blavatsky and Olcott stated:

Before we came to India, the word Politics had never been pronounced in connection with our names; for the idea was too absurd to be even entertained, much less expressed.⁴

One should see this statement, as Van Hinloopen Labberton wrote later, as 'of course, nothing but a concession to existing problems and the distrust of the [British India] Government'; there were accusations of spying, in the repressive colonial political context.⁵ The statement limited 'Politics' to a narrow area, including spying. It excluded

or other officer theosophists might have exposed that. Or is it just a reference to Col. Olcott seeing more Washington ink than battlefield blood? Then he was not the only one.

¹RANSOM(1938), 39. Was his Report by then really still 'the standard work on Insurance in the United States'?

²This was not 'the farmhouse of Christian Science Founder Mary Baker Eddy', as in *Info India. Madras. Athens, Tourist publications, 1990; 66.*

³CRUMP(1923), 71. *THNI*, 3: 'Colonel Olcott is only a lieutenant in this organisation.'

⁴CLEATHER(1922A), 61.

⁵VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1916E), 151. That was also the view of AB's 'The Wider Outlook', *TT* Nov. 1916; reprinted *TMNI*, 1917, 4.

for instance, journalism with Horace Greeley; war as a 'continuation of politics by other means', whether in the US, or at Mentana,¹ where H.P. Blavatsky claimed she received a gunshot wound; HPB's claims for herself in the international politics field;² HSO's War Department work; a claimed near-appointment by United States President Johnson to a leading position at the US Treasury, which went wrong because Olcott was said³ to have sided against Johnson in a political crisis; post-1865 employment as insurance industry lobbyist to New York State legislature; 1878 pro-Mazzini activity by the TS in New York.⁴ It excluded talks with future Russian czars; it excluded views on the situation of India and Ceylon.

Indian Brahmanas held a ceremony to admit the TS founders into their caste. Most Hindus saw this more as friendly gesture than as legally binding.⁵ Olcott, in spite of his aversion to the 'aura' of 'low-caste people',⁶ continued to support reforms of at least the caste system's excesses. Later, this would sometimes lead to disagreements with Annie Besant. He also supported political criticism of excesses of colonialism, as expressed in the Indian National Congress then. He certainly was not as politically active as Mrs Besant would be later, though.

HPB and HSO did not always agree. Certainly not after Blavatsky left⁷ for Europe, never to return, after the 1884-1885 Coulomb shrine scandal. Later, she, and Olcott's theosophist opponents, would charge he did not defend her enough then.⁸

Olcott was much interested in Buddhism, in Ceylon and elsewhere. He had written a Buddhist catechism, with Sumangala and Mogittuwatte advising him.⁹ It went through many printings, both in its original form and as abridged by Leadbeater, for instance for the expanding network of TS-managed Ceylon Buddhist schools. Olcott now helped to

¹An 1867 battle between Garibaldi and the Papal state, plus French military.

²BCW, vol. 1, 388, reprinted her letter to the *Tiflis* [=Tbilisi] *Messenger*: '... it wouldn't be a bad thing for the Russian government to flirt with me a little, as I might have some influence upon the forthcoming Russian-American progressive and defensive alliance.'

³RANSOM(1938), 39. According to documents quoted by MURPHET, 316, politicians and businessmen like New York banker Le Grand Lockwood, recommended him to President Johnson for the job of Assistant Secretary of the Treasury. Unfortunately, Murphet, to improve readability like others writing on history sometimes do, does not name sources; nor does he have footnotes.

⁴Letter HPB (see p. 49, note 5; 141, note 4): 'Our President, as representing the opinion of our Society is taking a prominent part with the Republicans ...'

⁵OLCOTT(1904), 638; he thought the only foreigner thus honoured before was Warren Hastings.

⁶Olcott, *ODL*, 77 Dec. 1898, 132.

⁷ENCYCLOPEDIA UNIVERSALIS says she left India in 1887; 2 years' late.

⁸CLEATHER(1922A), 2f: 'the shameful way in which she was thrown overboard, like a second Jonah, by Colonel Olcott and the TS council at Adyar in their cowardly panic during the crisis of 1884-85, H.P.B. says ...'

⁹OBEYESEKERA(1992A): 'The role of the monks was to effectively and uncompromisingly throw out overt or hidden elements of Theosophy'.

design an international Buddhist flag. His efforts to set up TS branches in Buddhist countries, other than Ceylon, were nowhere as successful. He managed to found some lodges in Burma, recently annexed to British India.

However, Olcott's 1889 journey to Japan, much publicized in the theosophist press, and given three chapters of over sixty pages in *Old Diary Leaves*,¹ led to just one lodge, which fizzled out a few years later.² Unlike Buddhism in Ceylon, Japan's non-Christian religions did not need support against a Christian colonial government (though some Buddhists might feel apprehensive about the government's newly-emphasized Shintoism).

C POISON, MARS, TAROT, AND GROWTH, 1891-1907

In spite of disputes with Olcott and some other FTS, during H.P. Blavatsky's last years her position had been central. After 1891, one could expect pushing to fill the empty spot at the top. Annie Besant and William Judge, HPB-appointed European and American ES leaders, respectively, both said the First Lodge, the superhuman Masters, continued to appear and to write letters. But were Judge's and Besant's Mahatmas the same ones?³ One version accused Judge (another version, Annie Besant⁴) of forgery; getting himself a stock of special ink, blank Adept paper, and a seal he had found among Madame Blavatsky's belongings after her death, training himself in Transhimalayan hand-writing (showing influence of having learned writing originally in Cyrillic script, and English spelling in America⁵) to mail letters to himself and others.

Which way would the pendulum swing? What was Olcott's position in the power struggle between the two? Or would they join against the president for life?

At first, the latter seemed to come about. Under Besant and Judge pressure, Olcott resigned, 21 January 1892;⁶ but was told by Mahatma KII on 10 February to resume office as President-Founder. Then, (the same?) Mahatma KII wrote to Judge that Olcott plotted to poison Annie Besant.⁷ Judge obligingly informed AB. AB though, as obligingly, informed Olcott, the two joining forces against Judge. Judge then accused

¹OLCOTT(1954), IV, 92ff. Chapters: 'Visit to Japan', 'Successful crusade in Japan', 'Further triumphs in Japan'.

²James Cousins had to start from scratch in Japan in 1920, twelve people, including Koreans and an Indian, joining. COUSINS and COUSINS, 363. Later, army captain Kon led Tokyo's Miroku Lodge; he died 1936. 77 Jan 1937, 291.

³CAMPBELL, 105ff. NETHERCOT(1963), 29f. LUNS, 12, wrongly claims HPB was still alive when Judge was accused of faking Masters' letters.

⁴CLEATHER(1923), 30 accuses both of using forged Master's messages.

⁵SMITH, 154. L. A. Shepard, *Encyclopedia of occultism and papapsychology*. London, Gale, 1978, 927.

⁶JINARAJADASA(1925), 226.

⁷Olcott on 1892, *ODL*, 77 Apr. 1902, 387: 'I certainly never did anything to warrant him [Judge] in making, in a forged letter, my own Teacher and adored Guru seem to say that, if Mrs Besant should carry out her intention of visiting India, she might run the risk of my poisoning her!'

Besant of black magic.¹

In 1895, a split occurred. In the Inner Group (six men, six women, formed by Madame Blavatsky in 1890 as 'non-sexist' equivalent of Christ's Twelve Apostles),² secret at the time, but of which Alice Leighton Cleather felt free to divulge the membership thirty-two years later, an eight against four majority sided against Judge.

Countess Wachtmeister, Emily Kislingbury, Annie Besant, Isabel Cooper-Oakley, her sister Laura Cooper, George R.S. Mead³ (these two would marry later), and Messrs. Old and Sturdy supported Olcott. One woman, Alice Leighton Cleather, and the three men Archibald Keightley, Herbert Coryn, and Claude Wright of the Dublin lodge, supported Judge.

The majority of the US membership,⁴ and quite a number in other countries, left the TS (Adyar). From then on, there would be at least two bodies calling themselves Theosophical Society.⁵ Judge established one of his own, headquartered in New York City. This had the advantage of being both where he lived and the TS' 1875 city of origin.

In Ireland,⁶ most, like Dick (Irish Astronomer Royal) sided with Judge. Like Besant, Judge was of Irish ancestry; he was born in Dublin, not London, unlike her. In 1904, most Irish theosophists split back to Besant, only to split away from her again soon afterwards. If one knows about the long-standing mutual influence of Irish and Indian national movements, then the schismatic, always numerically weak, character of theosophy in Ireland is not totally irrelevant for Asian politics.

After the split, Judge got both an astral and a card-reading backstab from his opponents. London magazine *Modern Astrology*,⁷ edited by 'Alan Leo' [ps. of William Frederick Allen], FTS (Adyar), pointed out: 'Judge who had Mars there [in his horoscope; the planet was named after the Roman god of war] and caused a secession.'

In his *Old Diary Leaves*, Olcott remembered:

Mr. [S.V.] Edge . . . and I, amused ourselves at this time with the Tarot cards, and certainly got some strange prognostications. In one memorandum of the 26th June which at my request, Mr. Edge put into writing and signed, and which is pasted in my Diary, I find a prophecy

¹WACHTMEISTER(1989), 58.

²CLEATHER(1923), 22ff.

³Spelling AHMAD SUBARDJO DJOYODISURYO, 84, 'G.F.S. Macad'.

⁴Including one Mr Rambo; ODL, TT March 1904, 324.

⁵For Dutch speakers, confusion was less. The TS (Adyar) called themselves: Theosofische Vereeniging; Judge's TS: Theosofisch Genootschap. One can translate 'Society' both as *Vereeniging* (or *Vereeniging*, new spelling) and *Genootschap*. Under Tingley, Judge's TS was called 'Universal Brotherhood and Theosophical Society'. To make things easy for historians, Adyar theosophists sometimes called themselves 'Theosophical Society and Universal Brotherhood'. For example: Annual Report on 1903, 67.

⁶CAMPBELL, 167f.

⁷Oct. 1907, quoted TT Oct. 1907, 180. It offered Mr Leo's horoscopes: fifty French francs or more for 'rigorously scientific' ones, under fifty for 'science combined with intuition'. GUÉNON(1921), 232.

which seems to have pointed directly to the action of Mr. Judge. What other interpretation can be given to these words: 'There is serious trouble and danger from somewhere, and a woman has a hand in it; there are folly and deception to be feared which will give rise to enmity and trouble-this seems serious; there is moral death for some one; perhaps a foolish affair on the part of a leading member; at all events, some act of suicidal folly.'

The woman to whom the cards alluded was Katherine Tingley. She had been, some said, an actress,² and, certainly, leader of the Christian 'Do Good Mission'. Weeks after Judge died in 1896, one year after the start of his own TS, she inherited³ his Esoteric Society Outer Head office; according to her interpretation of Judge's will. As with H.P. Blavatsky before, with Olcott and Besant later, there was unclarity and conflict over that interpretation.

Olcott called Tingley: 'an American spiritualistic medium',⁴ who had played no part while HPB lived, though claiming contact with her spirit now.

Mrs Tingley, however, called herself 'Second successor to H.P. Blavatsky, Leader and Official Head'; or (on bills for a Bombay public meeting) 'Leader of the entire Theosophical Movement throughout the World'.⁵

¹TT Dec. 1901, 136f. *The only official history of the Theosophical Society*. The cover of the second series, London, TPH, 1900: 'The true history of the Theosophical Society' Olcott, *ibid.*, 137 admitted to 'a great deal of nonsense in these divinations, by cards, coffee-grounds and other agencies, but there is also a great deal of the other sort . . . For instance, at this moment in Paris, a lady who earns a very handsome living by reading fortunes in coffee-grounds, and the noble army of card-reading fortunetellers, would never have been kept in profitable practice if their prognostications had not been often verified.'

²CAMPBELL, 132. She was born in 1847, not 1842 as one might guess from NETHERCOT(1963), 387. The low status of the acting profession in the eyes of Victorian judges of decency may have caused her later silence about it. Still, she had the Isis theatre built at Point Loma. The time some could make millions acting in southern California was still a few years away '... the working lives of Victorian actresses brought not wealth and fame but social and economic marginality'; Martha Vicinus, review of T. Davis *Actresses as Working Women. Their Social Identity in Victorian Culture*, London, Routledge, 1991; in Routledge's *Gender and Women's Studies* 1991/1992 catalogue, 16.

³Constitution of Tingley's TS, Art. 4.4: 'The person, invested with this office [of Leader and Official Head] appoints his or her successor.' Quoted: RABBIE(1898A), 1.

⁴ODL, TT, Aug. 1906, 809. 'Spiritualist' was not a friendly word by then in the TS. It had gone some way since Olcott praised Mrs Britten in 1875, see p. 49.

⁵ODL, TT May 1905, 454. AB's title as leader of Co-Masonry was: 'The V... Illus. Bro...[ther] Annie Besant 33', First Sovereign Lieutenant Grand Commander of the Order', JINARAJADASA(1986), 44. Both Mrs Besant and Mrs Tingley were remarkably modest and to the point, if one compares them to Aleister Crowley, 1875-1947. He saw himself, among many other things, e.g. as a reincarnation of Lao Tse, as a defender of HPB's 'pure' theosophy against Leadbeater; TILLET, 204. Crowley's titles were (OELC, Aug. 1935): 'The Most Holy, Most Illustrious, Most Illuminated, and Most Puissant Baphomet X°', Rex Summus Sanctissimus [Most High and Holy King] 33°, 90°, 96° [mason's high degrees], Past Grand Master of the United States of America, Grand Master of Ireland, Iona, and All the Britains; Grand Master of the

KT in 1896 tried to expand her TS by a Theosophist Crusade around that world. Apart from herself, Mrs Leighton Cleather and other speakers, this included travelling musicians. In Germany and The Netherlands, she had some success.

Not so in India. Tingley and Hargrove, president of her Society, left the others behind to go to Darjeeling, close to the Himalayas, to meet the Masters. Early in the Darjeeling morning, President Hargrove found out his Official Head had slipped away. When she came back, she told she had had a private exclusive talk with Master M.¹

The *Times of India*, 30-10-1896 reported on Tingley's Crusaders' meeting of the previous evening in Bombay Town Hall:

... although seating accommodation had been provided for some five hundred, of the general public only about seventy five persons, principally Parsis, attended the meeting ... Mr. Claude Falls Wright ... hoped a branch would be started in India, when things were less disturbed than now.

Katherine Tingley held a meeting in Ceylon, in the Floral Hall of Colombo, on 12 December 1896. As in India though, this did not lead to much support for her. Olcott commented: 'Something went wrong before the tour was finished, for Mr. Wright and his wife left Mrs. Tingley on the way home.'²

More rifts appeared in her TS: Hargrove started what he called The Theosophical Society; Dr. J. Salisbury started the TS (New York).³ In 1899, Mrs Leighton Cleather, not amused by the flop in mystically all-important India, and later accusing Tingley of 'Vampirism',⁴ resigned. During the following years, Mrs Cleather wrote on Celtic and Germanic myths in Wagner's operas. It would be some twenty years before she would influence Asian, mostly Ceylon, politics.

Mrs Tingley centred her organization's activities on its new headquarters in Point Loma, California, built on cleared sagebrush country.⁵ Annie Besant, Olcott's successor, held roughly the same opinion as he about Judge, his TS, and KT.

Most of his colleagues have separated themselves from the leader he chose when his insight was clouded by physical disease.⁶

Knights of the Holy Ghost; Sovereign Grand Commander of the Order of the Temple, Most Wise Sovereign of the Order of the Rosy Cross, Grand Zerubbabel of the Order of the Holy Royal Arch of Enoch, etc. etc. etc. National Grand Master *ad vitam* [for life] of the O.T.O. Also, Supreme and Holy King of Ireland, Iona ... I STOP!! My fingers should rest from typing

¹CAMPBELL, 134f.

²ODL, TT May 1905, 454-6. ODL, TT, June 1906, 517. Mrs Tingley travelled again in Asia in 1920, VA, May 1921, 94.

³CAMPBELL, 135f. TM(1951), 302.

⁴CLEATHER(1922A), 48: 'Vampirism, pure and simple, on the psychic plane (I found that Mrs. Tingley well understood this form of Sorcery)'.

⁵VAN MATER, 88.

⁶BESANT(1909B), 353. BESANT(1910C), 285 claimed Judge had rejoined the Adyar TS posthumously, 'winning clearer vision on the other side'. In the July 1931 *Canadian Theosophist*, James Pryse (TS printing press manager in HPB's time) called Tingley a 'malodorous charlatan'.

Olcott was a fairly good public speaker and organizer, though not on the level of Annie Besant. When he died in 1907, from the consequences of falling down a staircase, like Mrs Besant later, his Theosophical Society had grown from 16 in an 1875 New York drawing room, to: 'almost 10,000' in 1902.¹ 14,863 in 1907.² In 1904, Olcott wrote:

Thus, little by little, our Society is acquiring, by the advancement of its members, more and more influence in the conduct of public affairs.³

Olcott though was as unable as his successor would be later to prevent internal conflicts. At the end of his, and the beginning of Besant's, presidency, the Leadbeater controversy, one of the Leadbeater controversies, led to resignations and expulsions.

Not only growth, also a high membership turnover rate,⁴ characterized TS membership statistics. In Olcott's day, the number of charters issued to lodges had risen from 1 in 1878 to 958 in 1907. Only 567 of these 958 lodges still existed in 1907 though, so 391 had withdrawn, been expelled, or fizzled out.⁵

It is not fair to compare this turnover rate to age-old established institutions like the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland (part of its English counterpart, in 'our' period consisted of religiously fashion-conscious people, and might be compared). A comparison with turnover rates of political parties -then a pretty recent phenomenon as well- would be interesting.

3.REINCARNATION OF HERAKLES:⁶ ANNIE BESANT, 1907-1933

To her the science of politics was an aspect of the Divine Wisdom whose principles are firmly based on the bedrock of humanity's spiritual oneness, and not on expediency, which, alas, so largely dominates world politics today.

A.EMPTY CHURCHES AND MATCHES, 1847-1891

Annie Besant⁸ was the politically most interesting PTS. She had a very good voice for

the *dugpa* [see p. 44] inspired Purple Mother.⁹ Purple was Tingley's favourite clothes colour when speechifying.

¹TT July 1903, 631.

²JINARAJADASA(1925), 264.

³TT June 1904, 573: 'Theosophist Vice-Chancellors', when a FTS became Vice-Chancellor of Punjab University.

⁴AdB Nov. 1909, 359: out of the 2400 US members, per year 300's membership finished.

⁵JINARAJADASA(1925), 264.

⁶According to C.W. Leadbeater. CLEATHER(1922A), 16.

⁷The Besant Spirit Series, vol. 3, quoted: KUMAR, frontispiece.

⁸Not 'Ammie'; FRÉDÉRIC(1984), vol. IX, 122; not 'Besanson'; KORZEC, 50; 'Besant' as on a Madras road sign; 'Besant', Semaoen in SM, 25-8-1917; 'Besant', AHMAD SUBARDJO DJOYOADISURYO, 84; 'Besant', TSUCHIYA(1987), 142 and 150. EO TV program *De geheime agenten van New Age* (The Secret Agents of New Age) of 1 Jan. 1992 translated 'Besant Theosophical Lodge' as *Byzantijns theosofisch gebouw*. Naming the TS the first New Agers, the

speaking in public. We should remember the extensive spread of the microphone, levelling chances in this aspect of public life, came only during her last years.¹ She had the reputation of having silenced, on her own, a big workers' demonstration in London in 1881; thus she prevented a fight between them and police. She tells of training, while a vicar's wife, by preaching at pews in an empty church.²

On 1 October 1847, she was born in London, as the daughter of a doctor active in trade, of mixed English-Irish ancestry; and an Irish mother.³ Her father died when she was five. Annie grew up without family money of her own, in a politically liberal, religiously pious Protestant⁴ environment. Such a background was not a recommendation for some well-off Tories who became theosophists before her, like Isabelle de Steiger:

As an Irish⁵ woman, she [AB] was, of course, 'agin' all governments and 'agin' everything that did not meet with her approbation.⁶

Later, she would be known as Dr. Besant. That was because of an honorary degree in law, conferred in 1921 by Benares Hindu University. When she was about 18, English universities were inaccessible to women; and she lacked formal grammar school education. She would learn much in the classes of Bradlaugh's Secular Society later.

Young Annie Wood was very interested in religion. In 1867, she married Anglican vicar Besant; a priest's wife was the closest she could get to becoming a priest.⁷

The more she investigated Christianity, the more inconsistencies she found. Frank Besant as a person did not prove to be as appealing as his office as a parson. Behind Victorian 'don't wash dirty linen in public' sentences in her autobiography, are hints she

program associated them with the medieval Eastern Roman empire, rather than with their 20th century president. The concept of a New Age originates from European astrology. It believes the constellation of Aquarius is about to influence humanity; this is supposed to bring great benefits.

¹NETHERCOT(1963), 370: she had India's first PA system installed in 1925

²BESANT(1893), 115. MUTHANNA, 36: 'While alone and in her teens, she often lectured to the empty benches at the Sisby church' She did it only once, while 25, in Sibsey; WESSINGER(1989), 46

³BAIG, 15 calls Mrs Besant and her follower Margaret Cousins 'English women', as do CEI, 347, SCHWARTZBERG, 219 and L. FISHER (1984), 108 on AB. 'Irish', certainly for Mrs Cousins would be correct: she wrote, COUSINS(1941), 10, her views differed from most British in India, 'Being Irish'. For AB, BESANT(1893), 13, 'three-quarters of my blood and all of my heart are Irish.' Sir S. Subramania Aiyar, in his letter to president Wilson: 'that noble Irish woman who has done so much for India.' VARENNE, 226, KRISHNASWAMI(1963) and WEBB(1971), 31, who -paranormally?- prolongs her life till at least 1920, call Margaret Noble (Sister Nivedita), Irish follower of Swami Vivekananda, 'English'. Compare NETHERCOT(1960), 327 calling Sinhalese Buddhist Jinarajadasa 'Indian'; JONES(1989), 176, calling him 'the first Indian president'; and Dutch Indies D.L.N. Vink, FTS: 'the Hindu Jinarajadasa': *TMNI*, 1918, 557.

⁴which, like the Orthodoxy of HPB's youth, included belief in beings like banshees and fairies BESANT(1893), 27.

⁵De Steiger's mother was an Irish Protestant too! BURFIELD, 42. After leaving the TS, de Steiger would become one of comparatively few Britons(?) in Steiner's Anthroposophical Society, in the 1920's.

⁶Quoted BURFIELD, 48.

⁷BESANT(1893), 70.

was abused and ill-treated.¹

Legal divorce was not possible. Separation was; losing the children she loved, first one, then the other, to her husband. With her ex-husbands' employer, there was divorce. Financially not immediately: she got into poor circumstances even worse than after her father's death and had to make a living cooking and sweeping floors at a vicarage in Folkestone.² Soon afterwards, she became a well-known journalist and public speaker for atheism. Working closely with radical liberal M.P. Charles Bradlaugh, she was interested in both domestic and foreign politics. Annie Besant wrote on women's rights, and for strong opposition to the excesses of British rule in Ireland, Sudan, and India.

After opposing socialism, in 1885 she joined the social democrat Fabian Society.³ The Fabians aimed to bring about socialism gradually, without an all-out attack on the ruling class (gradualism had been the tactics Roman military leader Fabius Cunctator, Fabius the Waverer, used with some success against the Carthaginian invasion of Italy in the 3rd century B.C.).

Bradlaugh, non-socialist⁴ though born poor and in favour of trade union rights, did not like this step. But she could still write for his paper. So far, her views had moved to the left. She took steps further left: to the Marxist Social Democratic Federation (where the quality of her Marxism was questioned though⁵); and by her leading part in the 1888 East End London strike of female match factory workers. Isabelle de Steiger, whom she would join in the TS next year, did not like it:

I remember especially the speech to incite the match girls to their first strike. What a cruel and second-rate policy that was.⁶

Socialism in Britain was much smaller than in, say, Germany. Too small? And were there not other ways, apart from her ex-husband's C of E., to satisfy her interest in religion?

Time for one of Annie Besant's many changes. George Bernard Shaw, her fellow Fabian in the 1880's, in 1917 quoted British sceptics: 'She will die a Roman Catholic.'⁷

This change was towards the Theosophical Society. Besant had attacked theosophy earlier; reading books by A. P. Sinnett had not convinced her.⁸ Madame Blavatsky had reacted more mildly to that criticism than to others. After the journalist W. T. Stead⁹ had

¹BESANT(1893), 88. NETHERCOT(1960), 43: he threatened to shoot her more than once.

²TAYLOR(1992), 75.

³The *Grote Nederlandse Larousse Encyclopedie*, Scheltens & Giltay, 's-Gravenhage, s.d., vol. IV, 554, wrongly implies socialist ideas had played a role in her 1873 separation from the Reverend Besant.

⁴Though WEBB(1971), 17 speaks of 'the Socialist Charles Bradlaugh'

⁵BESANT and NAIRN. See p. 140

⁶De Steiger, quoted BURFIELD, 48. Actually, their first strike was in 1885, with no leading role for Annie Besant; TAYLOR(1993), 207. JINARAJADASA(1986), 9: '1885' may confuse the two strikes.

⁷SHAW, 10. VON PLATO, 14 wrongly says she was Roman Catholic before she was atheist.

⁸DEVI(1972)'s remark that she read them already in 1866 is undoubtedly a misprint.

⁹TAYLOR(1992), 240. William T. Stead was a propagandist for imperialism and for the paranormal, a friend and fellow-worker of both Cecil Rhodes (NEDERVEEN PIETERSE, 257)

introduced her in 1889, Annie Besant literally went down on her knees to HPB.¹ She compared her change to a child's which 'has out-grown its baby-clothes'.²

Within a year, she was one of the twelve apostles of the Inner Group. Within one more year, on 1 April 1891, H.P. Blavatsky, five weeks before she died, 'in the name of the Master' appointed Mrs Besant 'Chief Secretary of the Inner Group of the Esoteric Section and Recorder of the Teachings'.³ This made her the equal in Europe to Judge in America, who had joined at the start. Only during the first 14 years of Theosophical Society history, and the last 14 years, after 1933, of this book's history, Annie Besant was not a leading TS member.

The theosophists were in Victorian terms a society of, mostly, her 'betters'. How would one of petty bourgeois background react to this new environment; though her qualities obviously were greater in many fields than those of many in that environment? She put off some older members; but her later arch-enemy Alice Cleather waxed lyrical.⁴ Spectacular conversions always bring publicity, and a brilliant speaker, tirelessly fast-writing journalist, and determined organizer like her was clearly an asset.

Bradlaugh's secularists broke with her. Madame Blavatsky compelled her to change some of her earlier progressive opinions rightwards.⁵

Annie Besant's adoption of Theosophy necessitated a retreat from several of her positions on women's rights, and from many of her socialist activities.⁶

The break with socialists was not fast and instant; yet, complete within two years.

'Her political activities, however, did not cease.'⁷ A biographer like Catherine Wessinger⁸ stresses continuity in her ideas, and Nethercot discontinuity. Not just spiritual, also political dichotomy showed, though from opponent to supporter of the

and Annie Besant, who had been in love with him, TAYLOR(1992), 197f. Engels on Sted, 'a totally crazy fellow, but brilliant businessman'; *MEW*, vol. 38, 191.

¹BESANT(1893), 344. Olcott: 'she burst out of the iron cage of Materialistic Atheism' *ODL*, *TT* Feb 1903, 264. The *NCE* lets AB join in 1890, *NOID*(1978), 142 in 1887.

²BESANT(1889), 3.

³CLEATHER(1922A), 85.

⁴Disputed by CLEATHER(1922A), 85ff.

⁵*TT* March 1890, 346. NETHERCOT(1960), 299: AB was a 'rough outsider' to the 'aristocratic social group where her conversion had taken her.' DINNAGE(1986), 79 quotes Olcott on fears 'her fads ... into our respectable body ... might keep influential women away.' This contradicts the last part of Dinnage's *ibid.*, 77 theory: 'She was perhaps simply bored with trade unionism ... with her socialist colleagues and with her growing respectability.'

⁶CLEATHER(1922A), 64.

⁷POLLOCK GREENBURG, 18.

⁸BAYLEN/GOSSMAN, 88.

⁹WESSINGER(1989); however, WESSINGER(1990), 32: 'complete reversal' on feminism. Dora Kunz, 'Annie Besant' in ELIADE(1987), vol. 2, 117: 'Throughout her life she remained devoted to social and educational reform.' Was that always from the same perspective on society, though?

British and Russian monarchies, the House of Lords, and the British army; from supporter to opponent of birth control and universal suffrage. Rather than explaining that by a few men's influence,¹ one might argue she had moved from environmental influence of one class to another. Laura Oren wrote: 'Her attraction to ritualism and an authoritarian structure remain to be explained adequately by future biographers.'²

Some of the explanation may be her general post-1889 rightward trend, as her new surroundings influenced her. In this, the future PTS was not the only FTS. In a still wider sense, also outside of the theosophists, the French proverb that a Jacobin who becomes a minister is not a Jacobin minister, points to this mostly subtle pressure to conform in an environment that is new to an individual; also if that individual is, according to that environment's formal rules, in a superior position.

B. ESOTERIC AUTOCRAT, 1891-1907

The Exoteric Society [the TS as the outside public knows it] is purely democratic [?]. On the other side we have an Esoteric Body which is practically autocratic in its constitution. *The greatest power will always be in the hands of the E.S., and not in the head of the Society.* I know that I exercise a quite unwarrantable power. But you cannot help its existence.³

After her American counterpart Judge had broken away, Annie Besant was only ES leader. Her relationship with exoteric president Olcott was reasonably good,⁴ in spite of some differences. On 16 November 1893, she landed in India for the first time.

Especially early on in India, Annie Besant was uncritical of caste. This brought her into conflict with Indian social reformers, for whom, with her sharp oratorical attacks, she made life difficult in Madras presidency.⁵ It brought her into alliance with conservative Brahmanas. However, she was not Indian-born, so she could not enter temples. Even in her early days in India, some interpreted her teas as religious ceremonies: an Indian PTS crawled under her tea-table to worship her feet. She did not appreciate it much; the movement of his back threatened to shower her with hot tea.⁶

¹NETHERCOT(1963), 11f. See p. 372.

²OREN, 90.

³Annie Besant in *Theosophy in India* magazine, quoted: KHANDALVALA(1907), 33.

⁴Most accounts say. But not BROOKS(1914A), 133, who reported Olcott saying: 'THAT HE WOULD NEVER, AS HE LIVED, LET THAT WOMAN BECOME PRESIDENT OF THE T.S.'

⁵HEIMSATH, 327ff. 'Her chief targets for ridicule were the social reformers, whose influence she regarded as debilitating.'

⁶BROOKS(1914A), 79. MUTHANNA, 114: 'She was a saintess and also an incarnation of Kaali or Durgi.'

Many theosophists outside India also worshipped Annie Besant. Editor A. van Leeuwen of the Dutch East Indies TS monthly recalled the first time when he heard her speak in Amsterdam:

Before she came, the whole overcrowded church was in a state of tension, as if something sacred and awesome was about to happen, and when she appeared in her white attire, striding like a priestess through the human masses, then we all arose amidst the deepest silence and the whole wide space was filled with currents of reverence and love, which in their intensity became nearly material, and forced the greatest blasphemer to practise awe and silent reverence. We do not understand the greatness of this woman, we only see as high as our spiritual eye can reach, but higher still her spiritual greatness towers above that.¹ W.B. Fricke, former Dutch GS, said



Annie Besant, photo
The Theosophical Society

The TS is a hierarchical society. The General Secretary is directly linked to Mrs Besant, and through her to the Masters of Wisdom.²

Annie Besant founded Central Hindu College in Benares in 1898.³ Some of its Indian pupils were less reverent sometimes. Once, 'naturally sceptical' boys hung bunches of keys, connected by strings, from windows. At night, they pulled the strings. 'All over the compound' people heard the keys jangling. Drawing scared faces, the boys told college authorities of the ghosts' sounds. Mrs Besant treated them to a lecture on what to do and not do in the presence of evil spirits.⁴ Later, after a conflict about promotion of the Order of the Star in the East (see p. 76) by Hindu College's authorities, she would help to expand it into Hindu University. She presided over its Board of Control. To this day, it is an important focus of denominationalism in Indian life, including political life

When the Boer War raged (1899-1902), most socialists and Indian, or Irish, anti-imperialists (like James Connolly, who fitted into both categories) sided against it; with the Boers,⁵ or definitely not with the British. Like Maud Gonne, who had joined the theosophists at roughly the same time as Annie Besant, but had left soon, and now organized an anti-war women's march. Like the Annie Besant of 1881, when she wrote *The Transvaal*.

The Annie Besant of 1899 interpreted the Bhagavad Gītā, deriving a doctrine of 'just

¹TMNI, 1918, 488.

²TB 1917, 133.

³COLE, 227, wrongly says the CHC was a model for (earlier) schools and colleges in Ceylon.

⁴SRI PRAKASA, 69-70

⁵Subhas Chandra BOSE, 24; and small Jawaharlal Nehru; J. NEHRU(1958), 12.

war' from it. In the Boer War, and in later wars, she saw the British army as fighting on the side of higher spiritual evolution.¹

On 25 January 1906, a war, bloodless this time, broke out in the TS over C.W. Leadbeater. CWL was, with Besant, one of the Society's most popular public speakers, writer of best-selling books and pamphlets, frequent contributor to magazines. And now, on that January day, Mrs Helen Dennis, Corresponding Secretary of the United States ES, accused him of advising boys to masturbate. Many joined the attack.

Olcott forced Leadbeater to resign. Olcott expelled Jinarajadasa for supporting Leadbeater too enthusiastically; then reinstated him on 3 January 1907. Olcott wrote a letter from his deathbed to Leadbeater 'at the Masters' request', opening possibilities for rehabilitation. The Masters, and a reappearing H.P. Blavatsky, wanted Besant to succeed as PTS.²

She was the only candidate. There was no opposition candidate;³ but still, there was opposition. G.R.S. Mead in March 1906 had written: 'Whoever succeeds in this high office [of president] in the Theosophical Society must be a man of the most tolerant views ...'.⁴ He, and others, were afraid that Annie Besant would prove to be a woman of views too tolerant on Leadbeater. As president, she might reinstate him; and bring 'psychic tyranny'.⁵

C.STARS AND SPLITS, 1907-1913

Opposition to Mrs Besant was most marked in the United States and England.⁶ Still she won, thanks to solid support from new US general secretary Van Hook, India (though not GS Upendranath Basu), Steiner's Germany,⁷ The Netherlands, and other sections.

She did reinstate Leadbeater, as she told an Esoteric Section meeting on 6 September 1908, in Adyar, because Madame Blavatsky had urged her so when they met at the Masters' abode.⁸ Like many theosophist opponents of Leadbeater, Tillet sees Annie Besant as completely under CWL's influence. Cleather blames this on 'sheer femininity

¹BESANT(1908C), 75.

²Deathbed dialogue, recorded by Mary Russak, quoted VREEDE and MAYER, 98 and MURPHET, 305f; [Olcott]: 'What is your Divine Will in reference to my successor-whom shall I appoint? Answer: (Master M.): Annie Besant.' Besant herself, in TT March 1907, 425-6, was more implicit. But in TT, July 1912, 503, 'The growth of the T.S.', she wrote of herself as 'the Masters' nominee'. See NETHERCOT(1963), 103, on HPB's appearing. Contrary to NAGAZUMI(1972), 192, AB was not 'the third president of the Society'.

³Contrary to what ROE, 137 'alternative candidates' says.

⁴TR, March 1906, WT. Quoted TT, Apr. 1906, 553

⁵Mead, quoted WESSINGER(1991), 103.

⁶At a TS congress, 'Two English ladies said they could not live long enough to undo the bad Karma of voting against A.B.' TT, July 1907, 794.

⁷Steiner was President, his future wife Marie von Sievers Secretary, of Berlin's Annie Besant Lodge of the TS, which they had started in 1905. Annual Report on 1905, 56; 148.

⁸The Link magazine [of the ES], as quoted THOMPSON(1913), 25.

... just simple woman, relying upon male guidance and authority.¹ That simple? Roe disputes it.²

Besant had the all-powerful positions of President and ES Outer Head. Leadbeater during some of her presidency, officially just had the position of Corresponding ES Secretary for Australia; and the experience of falling from grace (including, briefly, Annie Besant's) once. His unofficial position of rising star depended on Annie's official one, on her goodwill. Dependence was at least mutual. It does not make a very good impression if, as President, you admit accusations against the best-selling author and well-known propagandist of your organization.

Was Besant not more dependent on the ideology, created by H.P. Blavatsky, developed by Olcott, Leadbeater and herself, in a certain social setting, than on Leadbeater personally?

The *Adyar Bulletin* of May 1909, 231, wrote:

There is a friendly competition going on in our ranks as to who is going to hold the record for frequent lecturing. Mrs. Besant and Dr. Steiner stood first in our estimation, but we find them totally eclipsed by Mr. F.T. Brooks, who has been an active worker in India for many years. Between November 1st, 1908 and April 30th, 1909 he held 361 meetings (in 118 days)...

F.T. Brooks had gone over to the TS while living in Belgium in 1896; along with other local *Ordre Martiniste* members.³ A few years later, Brooks got a place in world history as tutor to young Jawaharlal Nehru. A few years after 1909, two out of the three above-mentioned lecturers were no longer in Annie Besant's TS. Brooks' parting was not too friendly; see his writings *The Theosophical Society and its Esoteric Bogydom*, and *My resignation*.

Steiner's parting was not too friendly either. In both cases, a major factor had been the founding of the Order of the Star in the East. After non-public preparation under names like 'Lieutenants of the Lord',⁴ it went public on January the 11th 1911, and got its

¹CLEATHER(1922A), 19-20. MERS, 248: he held her 'in a kind of occult imprisonment.'

²ROE, 275; 284. See p. 372 on AB and men.

³BROOKS(1914A), 46. For the *Ordre Martiniste* see p. 7 of this book.

⁴NETHERCOT(1963), 148. TILLET(1982), 138, 302: 'One could presume only the wealthy could join [the Purple Order] if regalia of this quality were obligatory.' Members wore gold and silver insignia. A. KOK, 577 errs; so does the *NCE*, saying the OSE's 1911 founding was at an Ommen congress.



Jiddu Krishnamurti at Eerde castle in Ommen in July 1926; photo The Theosophical Society

best known name in July 1911. In theory it was separate (the OSE had non-Theosophical Society members),¹ in practice it was not easy to distinguish from the TS. It taught the coming of a World Teacher, both Christ and Maitreya,² who would bring a new World Religion, fit for the coming Sixth Aryan sub-race, and eventually the Sixth Root-Race. This World Teacher was said to inhabit the body of young Jiddu Krishnamurti, son of a Telugu Brahmin ES official.³

George Arundale, Headmaster of Central Hindu College, put his coming in also a political perspective:

the great Aryan empire will stand revealed. In preparation for that Flower of the Future, for centuries hence, will come in the very near future ... the Bodhisattva Maitreya, clothed in Indian form, to carry the great uniting message through the world, the Heart of the East and the Head of the West.⁴

Krishnamurti advanced rapidly on the spiritual path: in 1912 he got his Second Initiation⁵ in Taormina on Sicily. That place was dear to Annie Besant, as there Pythagoras had taught ancient Greeks 'their duty as citizens to the

¹LEADBEATER(1922), 583: 'Even the Order of the Star in the East, which is an offshoot of the Theosophical Society.' CAMPBELL, 128: 30,000 members. NETHERCOT(1963), 344: claims of 60,000 [N] to 100,000. E. LUTYENS, 167: 16,000 at a Hollywood Bowl (US) meeting *Algemeen Handelsblad* 14-11-1912, 'De waarde der theosophie voor Indië', quoted *IG* 1913, *MRBD*, 99-101, claimed many Protestant preachers in The Netherlands had joined the OSE. In Indonesia, the OSE had 613 members on 1 July 1913, more than the TS then; Mrs C. VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1913), 470.

²In Sanskrit, sacred language of northern (Mahayana) Buddhism, the name of the successor to the historic Buddha Gautama. In Pali (everyday language in the days of the Buddha, and sacred language in Theravada Buddhism) the word is Metteyya. Computations on his coming differ, (as with Christians on the time of the return of the Christ). *MB*, 1933, 10 estimated he would come in a million years' time.

³Not Krishnamurti, as in *CE*, vol. V, 420; or 'Chrishnamurti' as in VAN DEN HEUVEL, 19. Born on 11 May 1895 (*BPCA*, IV: 12 May according to British computation; M. LUTYENS(1975), 1-2) he was of course not 15 years old in 1925; as the *Grote Nederlandse Larousse Encyclopedie*, Scheltens & Giltay, 's-Gravenhage, s.d., vol. IV, 554, has it.

⁴*CHC Magazine*, Oct. 1910, quoted *TT* Nov. 1910, 314.

⁵In TS doctrine, there were five Initiations on the path to full, Divine, membership of the Great White Brotherhood; and still higher Initiations beyond this. Besant and Leadbeater had both passed their fourth, or Arhat, Initiation, and so were 'on the threshold of divinity'. TILLET(1985), 104-5; 220.

State'.¹

This messianism repelled and attracted many. It first attracted, but soon repelled Krishnamurti's father. In 1913, he fought a custody court case against the TS leaders over the Lord Maitreya's vehicle-designate and his brother. In the Madras High Court, he won: should Annie Besant have then come to India without returning the two boys to their father, she would have been jailed.² But in the appeal before the London Privy Council in May 1914, Krishnamurti's father lost.

A German speaker, Count Hermann Keyserling from Czar Nicholas II's Baltic lands, for a short time believed in Krishnamurti as 'the Messiah of the future ... I was loth to give it up again; for it gives joy to live under such a supposition'.³

Rudolf Steiner's ideas about 1900 had moved in a way somewhat similar to Annie Besant's a decade earlier: from some sympathy for the social democrats, less deep than AB's, to occultism and elite theories. He had been appointed Esoteric Society Arch Warden for Austria and Germany in 1904. Later, he had put himself, in effect, on the same level as the president of the Theosophical Society; that was a problem for long-term peaceful coexistence in an authoritarian organization.⁴ Some saw him as a reincarnation of St. Thomas Aquinas and Aristotle.⁵ Now, he objected to the reincarnation of Herakles' Order of the Star in the East.⁶ Hübbe-Schleiden and Dr. Hugo Vollrath, German OSE leaders, clashed with Steiner. Steiner expelled Vollrath; Annie Besant reinstated him. Steiner called for Besant's resignation; instead, she expelled Steiner, who formed his own Anthroposophical Society in 1913. Its impact was not equal in all countries: in Indonesia,

¹WT, TT, Aug. 1912, 642. See for Pythagoras our p. 25.

²BPCA, 98.

³KEYSERLING(1921), 558.

⁴... there are now two equivalent schools, one in the east, the other in the west. Every one has its own two Masters: Mahatma Koot Hoomi and Mahatma Morya, the Master Jesus of Nazareth and the Master Christian Rosenkreutz. The one school is led by Mrs. Besant, the other by Dr. Steiner. Steiner at Munich ES meeting, 1-6-1907, quoted SPIERENBURG(1987), 23-4.

⁵Self styled according to H. Wimbauer *Die Individualität Rudolf Steiners, das offenbare Geheimnis der Anthroposophie*. St. Ulrich 1984; quoted SPIERENBURG(1987), 30.

⁶VREDE and MEYER, 34. Steiner said AB offered him recognition as St. John the Evangelist reincarnate, if he would accept Krishnamurti as Christ reincarnate. Steiner refused (many of his followers see him as the 20th century Bodhisattva). At the 1935 anthroposophical congress, those disbelieving this were expelled from office; *ibid.*, 204. *Ibid.*: there were objections to Sicily as the place of Krishnamurti's Second Initiation, as it was haunted by Klingsor (known from Wagner's operas) and his black magic colleagues. *Ibid.*, *passim*. Steiner did not really 'protest against millenarianism'; ROE, 313. He protested against *Krishnamurti-centred* millenarianism, but did expect the return of the Christ; a World Teacher, but in a different body. His body? Anthroposophists still discuss this. How compatible are these claims of august previous lives (NETHERCOT(1963), 203) with theosophical doctrine that, by and large, the human soul, incarnation to incarnation, edges, from a relatively low level, closer to divinity? OELC, Oct. 1932, 'Dr. Arundale looks forward', knew of at least 27 incarnations of Mary, Queen of Scots, alive at that time. *La Duchesse de Pomar*, FTS, née (in Cuba) MURPHET, 180) Princess de Mariategui, also known as Lady Caithness (1832-1895), already claimed to be one fifty years earlier.

only 'five Steiners' were said to have resigned from the TS.¹

1912 was a year of movement. In England, a strike movement, denounced by Mrs Besant;² and a fast growing women's suffrage movement, led by Mrs Emmeline Pankhurst (an old acquaintance of Besant), and her daughters Christabel and Sylvia. Ireland was stirring. In India, 'extremist' nationalists became more and more active in universities and elsewhere. Even czarist autocracy could not stop social movements in the Russian empire.

Would Annie Besant go to the right again, like in the 1890's, and as her attack on the English strikers suggested? Or would she go the other way around? Along what lines would the new *Commonweal* weekly write?

As far as caste in India is concerned, Heimsath suggests a pretty linear development from conservatism to reformism.³ This may lose sight a little of AB's flexibility.

D.WATCH-TOWER⁴ IN THE STORM, 1913-1918

The Leftward turn was not unequivocal. 1913 saw Annie Besant in conflict with Bhagavan Das, ex-general secretary of the Indian TS, about her authoritarianism, about her, and Headmaster George Arundale's, involving of Central Hindu College in the OSE,⁵ and about what Das saw as Besant's paranoia concerning 'political seditious and extremists' at CHC.⁶

According to the *Theosophist*,⁷ she then had a meeting in the supernatural city of Shambhalla. There, the Lord of the World,⁸ three occult degrees higher still than the Masters, gave her political instructions to work for Indian autonomy.

¹WEBB(1974A), 236. VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1913E), 451.

²BESANT(1913A), 671ff. Reprinted from *AdB*, 1-9-1912.

³HEIMSATH, 328ff.

⁴'From the Watch-Tower' [abridged: WT] was the name of AB's editorials, in the 1890's for *Lucifer*, then for *TR*, then for *The Theosophist*.

⁵TILKEMA(1932), 11. Arundale gave pupils marks on their school reports for unusual subjects: 'discrimination, desirelessness, affection, ... devotion, recognition of ideals [like the OSE's], purity'.

⁶CLEATHER(1922A), 43f.

⁷'Dr. Besant's Occult Life', *TT* Apr. 1933, 145.

⁸Contrary to *TM*(1951), 293, Krishnamurti was not claimed to be that 'Lord of the World'. Sometimes also known as Sanat Kumara (*SD*; son of Brahma in Hinduism). Sanat: 'eternal' in Sanskrit; not='Satan', as in CUMBEY, 238. Sanat Kumara was said to have come from Venus millions of years ago, with the Lords of the Flame; RANSOM(1938), 47. TS 'Lotus circle' children sang a song to them; *TT* March 1907, 472. BESANT(1921), 74: 'I am not able to go far enough and tell you anything about the leaving of Venus, but I happen to have seen [paranormally] their arrival here. Venus is more advanced than we.' 'Wheat, bees and ants were brought from Venus by the Lords of the Flame'; but Atlantean scientists 'produced wasps from bees, and white ants from ants.' BESANT and LEADBEATER(1913), 137. Non-Initiate biologists think wasps are older than bees; and termites (who are not white ants) much older than, and not much related to, ants.

Soon, two papers spread Besant's, and her TS's, re-emphasized (not totally new) interest in Indian politics. *The Commonweal* weekly first came out on 2 January 1914.¹ On August the 1st 1914, three days before World War I, started her daily *New India*.²

Tillett claimed that for every theosophist

who, like George Arundale, threw himself into political work at the Hierarchy's command, there were a dozen who claimed that Mrs Besant was misguided and misleading the TS into a sphere of activity from which it ought to be specifically protected.³

Even allowing for hyperbole in style, several points contradict this. In India, Besant's Home Rule political activities made the TS more attractive. Even higher strata of Indian society, whom one might see, from a radically pro-independence viewpoint, as collaborators, saw Britain's military and economic dependence in the First World War as an opportunity to re-balance power between 'central' and 'satellite' élites. If Besant's views were as unpopular as Tillett claims, then why did worldwide, not just Indian, membership rise, in spite of the difficult wartime circumstances?

The world war deepened Mrs Besant's conflict with Rudolf Steiner's anthroposophists. They took sides opposite her in the conflict between British and German rulers, which cost millions of non-ruling lives. To Annie Besant, her own war against Steiner's 'forces of darkness' and the world war fused. She wrote that Steiner had tried to take over from her in order to have a German spy network, including Christian missionaries, harming the interests of the British empire.⁴ Of Steiner pre-1914, she wrote

¹Not in 1917, as one might think from SITARAMAYYA(1969), 131.

²SENGUPTA, 113, incorrectly wrote that 'The Common Weal' came out first after *New India*.

³TILLETT(1982), 159. Arundale saw his President as: 'to become one of the greatest Rulers of the World, of Gods and men.' His letter, 25-10-1912, quoted CLEATHER(1922A), 47; THOMPSON(1913), 9. ROE, 284, rightly says AB, unlike other religious leaders, did not herself claim to be the World Teacher. But she considered herself the future Manu (Creator) of the Sixth Root Race. RANSOM(1938), 386. Margaret COLE, 225: her political activity in India 'came directly out of her theosophical interest'.

⁴Her *WT*, 77, Dec. 1914, 197-8: 'The object of it all was to make Germany dominant in the T.S., and to force upon the whole Society the peculiar form of Steinerran Theosophy. ... Now, looking back, in the light of the German methods revealed by the war, I realise that the long continued efforts to capture the Theosophical organisation, and put a German at its head, the anger against myself for foiling these efforts, the complaint that I had spoken of the late King Edward VII as the Protector of the Peace of Europe, instead of giving that honour to the Kaiser [Wilhelm II], was all part of the widespread campaign against England, and that the missionaries [who had attacked her on the Krishnamurti custody court case] were tools skilfully used by the German agents here to further their plans. If they could have turned the T.S. in India, with the large number in it of Government servants, into a weapon against British Rule, and have taught it to look to Germany for spiritual leadership, instead of standing, as it has ever done, for the equal union of two Free Nations [Britain and India], it might gradually have become a channel for poison in India. To do this it was first necessary to destroy its President [AB], known to stand for union between the two Peoples during the last twenty years [so, from shortly after joining the TS on, excluding

as:

the German aggression of two years ago ... Then, as now, the campaign was directed against England, but we did not know that it was a part of a world-wide organization, intended to destroy the Island Empire. There was an outburst of hatred, following on a subtle invasion of other countries which had been going on for years.¹

E. Schuré had contributed to both the French TS and French nationalist ideology before 1914.² He, and Mabel Collins, editor of *Lucifer* before Madame Blavatsky fired her in Feb. 1889,³ had taken Steiner's side in the TS civil war. They had to adjust to find themselves on AB's side of the world civil war.

From 1916 till 1919, the TS had no functioning German section. That was because Annie Besant had also come into conflict with Germans who had stayed loyal to her against Steiner, like Vollrath and Hübbe-Schleiden, ex-planter in West Africa and colonial lobby leader. Hübbe-Schleiden in 1882 had defined his aim as 'a German India in Africa', a big colony 'which would be the cornerstone of the German colonial empire'.⁴ Now it had turned out that Britain was unwilling to let Germany have an 'India' of its own without a fight.

Mrs Besant and Leadbeater saw the War as a conflict between Divine and Dark Powers, with the British empire leading the 'right' side. However, Besant thought fighting for that empire should go hand in hand with fighting its excesses in India.

Annie Besant worked hard, in spite of advanced age, beginning as early as four or five in the morning.⁵ In 1915, she started mass meetings on a large scale, as a way to put pressure on the authorities, for one of the first times in India.⁶

Daniel O'Connell had 'invented' mass meetings in the country of her ancestors, Ireland, in the 1820's, in support of claims that mainly benefited the politically handicapped Roman Catholic sub-élite. Cobden and Bright had developed them in her native England, in the 1850's; Marx and others in the 1860's. International socialism, her political homeland from 1885 till 1889, developed them further.

Mrs Besant's left turn was not only about India's social or Home Rule problems, but also about whose solidarity in Britain she looked for for her views. A few years earlier, that had primarily been the king, the House of Lords and 'all who appreciate the responsibility of ruling an Empire. These are comparatively a small minority, and the

her more radical earlier years]. In 'The Wider View', 77, Nov. 1916, Annie Besant thought that Steiner had got the money for his propaganda against her from the German secret service.

¹*WT*, 77 Dec. 1914, 196f. Also *WT* of 77 Oct. 1915, 15; and Jan. 1916, 350-1.

²Schuré resigned from the TS on 3 March 1913; VAN DEN HEUVEL, 17.

³*TM*(1951), 148. GUÉNON(1921), 47 has her resigning in 1883. B. Lievegoed, in DEN DULK c.s., 81, suggests Steiner only had followers on the European continent; which is not true.

⁴STOECKER, 239.

⁵SEMAOEN(1917), 68.

⁶Often Gandhi is credited with making Congress a mass movement. True; but on a smaller scale Tilak and Besant had done the groundwork. In 1876, when there was famine in southern India, poor people held mass protest meetings in places like Salem: VREEDE(1917B), 6.

majority care more for football-matches and horse-races'.¹ Now, in the *Theosophist* editorial, she advised looking for support among British workers in view of 'upper and middle classes' vested interest in a subjected India.² This went deeper than just one of Besant's, and her supporters', flirtations with her socialist past, which happened at times when it seemed opportune like the 1930's world crisis.

Sir C.P. Ramaswami Ayar, the future *dewan* of Travancore principality, who had been the lawyer opposing Annie Besant for Krishnamurti's father in the 1913 custody court case, later said on his ex-opponent:

She made politics a live and practical thing, as much discussed in the villages as in the drawing rooms and cloistered places.³

In practice, she no longer applied her idea of a few years ago: 'the great mass of the population, they are ignorant ... they care nothing for changes of the Government'.⁴ She did not speak any Indian language except some Sanskrit, though; she could speechify to them only in English, which made for a barrier. Still, Mrs Besant and those around her formulated the demands. Still, it prepared the masses to formulate their own later.

One may say the widening of political interest in the 1910's, furthered by Annie Besant, contributed to her later decline, now not only Home Rule became a matter of discussion, but also issues like her Brahman supporters' privileges, especially in Tamil Nadu.⁵ The political non-Brahmin movement, growing in South India about 1917, attacked Besant in a pamphlet for refusing to introduce inter-dining between people of different castes in her organizations because she regarded the Sudras as mere 'younger brothers'.⁶

1916 saw Mrs Besant's agitation take organizational form in the Home Rule League. It grew fast. Non-FTS became the majority of its members. Among them were Motilal and Jawaharlal Nehru, and the future first governor-general of Pakistan, Jinnah.

Irish movements had for a long time been an influence on India. In 1916, the Easter uprising in Ireland by Connolly's Irish Citizen Army, and part of the Irish Volunteers, re-focused world attention on Ireland. The rebellion appealed to Jawaharlal Nehru.⁷

¹'Inarticulate wrongs', *TT* Sept. 1912, 856.

²*TT* Jan 1916, 354-5.

³RAMASWAMI AYAR, 616. GANDHI(1940), 324: 'Dr. Besant's brilliant Home Rule agitation had certainly touched the peasants'; affirmed by WADIA(1917), 6; but J. NEHRU(1958), 32, contradicts this. According to a British official then, who mentioned delta villages in the Tesali region, 'New India has a very wide circulation in rural areas generally'; quoted MORTIMER(1983), 72.

⁴BESANT(1914A), 109.

⁵IRSCHIK, 37.

⁶IRSCHIK(1969), 51. BESANT(1917A), 25: 'I know you call a man a servant, whose time, whose body, you buy for so many rupees a month; that is the lower service, the service of those who are in the stage symbolized by the Shūdra-the younger souls. But the higher service ...'. DINNAGE(1986), 107: AB 'attacked caste', puts it too strongly; her views differed according to time, but she mostly attacked excesses.

⁷J. NEHRU(1958), 35.

Trotsky applauded it; but regretted it took place 'under an archaic flag'.¹ Lenin applauded it, and disagreed on the 'archaic flag'.

George Russell, 'AE', former supporter of first Katherine Tingley, later Annie Besant, wrote about uprising leaders Connolly and Pearse with a mixture of setting at a distance and admiration:

Their dream had left me numb and cold.

But yet my spirit rose in pride ...

Here's to you, Pearse, your dream not mine,

But yet the thought for this you fell

Has turned life's waters into wine.²

'Easter Week' got sympathy from Irish theosophist James Cousins in *New India*. Annie Besant had to sack him,³ and Madras governor Lord Pentland⁴ slapped securities on her daily. Censors opened her private mail; and cut articles out of copies of *The Theosophist*.⁵ Police spies infiltrated the TS headquarters.⁶ It became illegal, first for civil servants, later also for government pensioners, to join Mrs Besant's Home Rule League.⁷ In June 1917,⁸ the governor interned her with two fellow League and TS officials, Arundale and B.P. Wadia. He banned the writings of all three of them. Hastily, their articles, already printed and bound for the July *Theosophist*, were cut out; only 1.5 centimetres at the margin was left.⁹

One hour before internment came into effect, Pentland had a final personal talk with Annie Besant. He offered her a way out: leaving India for Britain. She refused. He refused to answer her question why exactly she was interned.¹⁰ Secretary of State for India Joseph Austen Chamberlain¹¹ later also refused such an answer to British MPs. Annie Besant's last words of the interview with Lord Pentland were: 'I believe your hand deals the death blow to the British Empire in India'.¹²

Opinion on her internment varied. Her ally Ramaswami Ayar wrote:

¹*Nashe Slovo*, 4 July 1916; quoted RAFTERY, 4.

²quoted DUDLEY EDWARDS, 336.

³TAYLOR(1992), 302. MORTIMER(1983), 71 'she supported the Easter Rebellion' is too strong.

⁴Not Lord Portland, as in MORTIMER(1983), 73.

⁵BAKSHI, 88. *WT*, *TT* Apr. 1917, 7; for instances copies sent to Java.

⁶Annie Besant, *TMNI*, 1918, 290.

⁷GROVER(1967), 289.

⁸So not '1916' as in VARENNE, 225.

⁹*TMNI* 1918, 286. *WT*, *TT* July 1917, 358-9, 1.5 cm in Leiden university library copy.

¹⁰Th. Vreede, 'Annie Besant geïnterneerd', *LOC*, 27-7-1917. Also translated into Malay as 'P.J.M. Njonjah Annie Besant di bawa ke tahanan', *PT* 1916-17 (10), 113-8. Based on the *Commonweal*.

¹¹Known as Austen Chamberlain; 1863-1937. He joined the Conservatives after earlier Liberal Unionism.

¹²TAYLOR(1992), 305.

¹³Th. Vreede, 'Annie Besant geïnterneerd', *LOC*, 27-7-1917.

She was conscious of running the risk of being regarded with suspicion by the Indians, so she courted internment.¹

Rabindranath Tagore thought: 'This internment will do more towards obtaining Home Rule, than all her political work'.² The editorial of *The Theosophist* expected final victory and stated its view on the relationship between theosophy and politics:

For the first time, in the modern world, politics have been lifted [by Annie Besant] from the domain of mere earthly political arrangements, and an attempt made to realise something of the occult basis underlying them ... Philosophy and Politics are ever inseparable ... If politics in most countries are uninspiring, it is the lack of statesmen that is at fault; the cure is not to put an end to politics and keep them away from philosophers, but to bring philosophy and spirituality into them. Theosophy has so far served the world in several fundamental ways, it has shown the basis of religion, the basis of education, and the basis of true social reform; the era has surely begun when Theosophy will show the world the eternal basis of statecraft also. For true statecraft is Theosophy. Pythagoras at Crotona proclaimed that message; Plato carried on the tradition, Marcus Aurelius [philosophically interested Roman emperor of the second century A.D.] showed how it could be lived.³

During Annie Besant's confinement, in the London government the more flexible Edwin Montagu succeeded the conservative and Conservative Chamberlain.⁴ Montagu was reminded of the myth of:

... Shiva who cut his wife into fifty-two pieces, only to discover that he had fifty-two wives! This is really what happens to the Government of India when it interns Mrs. Besant.⁵

The daily *De Indiër* of Indonesia thought of a story from another religion, as it

¹RAMASWAMI AYAR, 616. GUÉNON(1921), 292 'mock internment' (mutually agreed upon by AB and authorities, to trick Indians) is unsubstantiated. The version of Indian communist M.N. ROY(1971), 216, though unfriendly, is not such a conspiracy theory. 'Mrs Besant rendered a valuable service to the imperial cause so dear to her, although the bureaucratic government did not seem to appreciate her merits and made a pseudo-martyr of her'. The 'M' in Roy's name stands for Manabendra; not Manabrenda, as in VAN BERGEN, 156, 161; etc. From among Marxists in Indonesia, A. Baars wrote, in 'Nationalisme in Britsch-Indië, (Sloot)', *HVV*, 10-9-1917, 224: British authorities 'now have even gone as far as to intern Mrs BESANT, certainly not a revolutionary fighter. Her only sin was to believe in the sincerity of the English' objections, which are that the Indians are supposed to be unable to rule their country. She fought that opinion strongly, but in a childish way [with a 'moot Parliament' in Madras] ... But the English rulers do not even tolerate her sincerely meant propaganda'.

²Quoted *LOC*, 27-9-1917, 1e blad, 'De interneering van mev. Besant'. Famous Bengal poet Tagore was not a member of the Theosophical Society, though he occasionally worked with them.

³WT, 7 July 1917, 360-1.

⁴Jamnadas Dwarkadas in *NI*, 25-8-1924, 28, attributed the appointment of Montagu to the 'unique agitation not only in India but in Great Britain and also in America' against Besant's internment. TAYLOR(1992), 305-6, suggests pressure by US president Wilson may have contributed to AB's release.

⁵Edwin S. Montagu *An Indian Diary*, quoted *TT* Jan. 1931, 278.

compared Annie Besant's internment to the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.¹ Indonesian Marxist Semaoen compared her to his fellow Social Democrat Society executive member Henk Sneevliet, then also facing government persecution for sympathy with the movement of colonially ruled people.² Though not religious like the other comparisons, Semaoen's was also very complimentary, as Semaoen himself then had a sharp political conflict with Indonesia's TS leaders.

All this showed Annie Besant's prestige, also outside India and outside her Theosophical Society. It also disproved Gregory Tillet's claim that opposition to Besant's politics was general. As far away as Iceland,³ the TS started a campaign to free her. In the USA, this brought theosophists into conflict with the Department of Justice.⁴ In Australia, convention decisions of 'theosophists supported her' politically.⁵

Internment raised her already great popularity with Indians to its highest point ever.⁶ She had to be freed on 16 September 1917.⁷ On 26 December, the Indian National Congress elected her president. Practically unanimously: she got 45 votes. Ironically, her rival who would soon push her into the background, Gandhi, got only one vote.⁸

¹Quoted *TMNI*, 1917, 338. *The Java Bode*, from Jakarta, quoted *LOC*, 27-9-1917, 1e blad, 'De interneering van mev. Besant', thought it strange of the government to intern her. 'Wherever we read about her political work in India, we keep finding in it that spirit of loyalty to England and the British government, which she tries to drive home in her speeches to British Indians too'. The editorial of Indonesia's TS monthly, VAN LEEUWEN(1917B), 341-2, asked support for Besant: 'But, brothers, maintain vigilance, do not weaken in your struggle against the satanic being which sets its traps with seemingly beautiful promises, keep the ranks closed. In the times of danger unity is everything, divisions bring us defeat. Just one doubtful thought of the greatness and sincerity of her whom we elected to lead us at the head of the army which wants to fight for divine ideals of evolution and fraternization, and then the snake of darkness will gnaw its way to your heart before you suspect it. "BE STRONG, BE COURAGEOUS, BE TRUE", let this motto of our president be ours in the hours of trial and struggle.'

²SEMAOEN(1917), 68.

³*TT*, June 1918, 396f.

⁴*OELC* July/Aug. 1939.

⁵ROE, 233.

⁶'If the British government had wanted to give an impulse to reach the ideal which the awakening British Indian has set before himself, it could have done no better than this'. A. van Leeuwen, 'Uit de pen der redactie', *TMNI*, 1917, 338. TIJPTO MANGOENKOESEMO(1928), 15: the internment 'of course, merely added fuel to the fire.'

⁷According to Montagu's diary, quoted SITARAMAYYA(1969), 137, AB 'violated her pledges' to the government which were linked to release. Sitaramayya's comments, *ibid.*: 'What these pledges may be, when they were given, and to whom, we do not know!'

⁸BAIG, 215. MECHANICUS wrote of five objections by opponents to AB's presidency. He named only four: 1. Annie Besant was not Indian. 2. She might mix her religion with politics. 3. Her Home Rule League as an organization might compete with Congress. 4. She 'did not take into account the country's real needs'. Mechanicus identified the opponents, perhaps simplistically, with the Moderate wing of Congress. When Moderates later broke away, to form the National Liberals jointly with Mrs Besant, these objections were not repeated.

Annie Besant was the first woman Congress president,¹ the first one active as such during the whole year of office,² not just at the once a year session. We saw she was the first president to introduce resolutions on social issues in Congress.³

But 1917-18 was the highest that Besant's, and her TS', political influence in India would ever get. 1917 was the year of the October revolution in Russia, which she abhorred; and which would inspire many of her rivals in Indian politics, and of B.P. Wadia's rivals in trade unionism. 1918 brought the end of the War, and with it, a dip in the fortunes of theosophists' supporters in politics.

Indian national movement and British empire were on a collision course; India's side needed a new leadership. In the view of one historian,⁴ during 1918, Annie Besant 'blew hot and cold on the question of opposing the government, thereby alienating the Home Rulers, who had hitherto looked to her for leadership'. In the years after 1918, her blowing would become colder.

E. AFTER THE WORLD WAR, THE WORLD TEACHER, 1918-1933

Congress rapidly became a mass movement. Annie Besant and her 'Mylapore clique' supporters (sometimes in alliance with unorthodox Muslim Jinnah and orthodox Hindu Pandit Mohan Malaviya) isolated themselves from its majority, when they basically accepted the British government's Montagu-Chelmsford proposals in September 1918; and opposed Gandhi's *satyagraha* strategy of passive resistance to the repressive Rowlatt Act. That act became law on 18 March 1919.

In Delhi, protesters were shot. Mrs Besant isolated herself further. She reacted:

as a Government's first duty is to stop violence-as in Glasgow the other day-before a riot becomes unmanageable, brickbats must inevitably be



Gandhi, as
portrayed on a
Sri Lanka stamp

¹Not Sarojini Naidu (who was really second), as in MURUGESAN and SUBRAMANYAN, 244. Margaret COLE, 230, says AB's presidency was 'an honour which had never been accorded before to any woman, and probably will never be accorded again'. Two more women, Naidu among them, had already been presidents when Cole wrote this. Annie Besant was not the first Irish Congress president: in 1894 Irish MP Alfred Webb presided; VAN DEDEM, 482.

²SITARAMAYYA(1969), 350. So Mrs Besant was not 'president of the Indian National Congress from 1917 to 1923', UGLOW, 57; nor 'At the beginning of 1917' elected 'chairman'; HUSSEY, 377. To pay the travelling costs of AB as Congress president, and other purposes which she might think fit, the TS inaugurated 'The President's Fund', as its members 'know that to her all work is sacred'; Jinarajadasa in *TMNI*, 1918, 46.

³See p. 3, note 6. Though ALI, 7 implies the contrary.

⁴OWEN(1971), 66.

answered by bullets in every civilised country.¹

Many more bullets: on April 13th, led by General Dyer, the British army massacred a thousand² unarmed protesters in Amritsar. Besant's ambiguous reaction to this: 'the battle-cry at Amritsar, as the mob murders and burns, is "Gandhi ki jai"' made her critics even angrier.³ When, in the 1920's, as a National Liberal Federation leader, she attempted to speak in public, hostile audiences often made this impossible.⁴

In trade unions, Besant lost influence in 1922 when B.P. Wadia left both her TS and trade unionism.⁵

Annie Besant tended after encountering problems in the field of religion, to turn to politics, and after failures in politics to increase emphasis on religion. Failures there were; like when she spent much time trying to make her constitutional views on India into law. The Coming of the World Teacher, which had not been so absolutely central to her while Krishnamurti, the Vehicle, was in England during the war, became very central again.

1928 was a high water mark of TS influence: in terms of overall membership,⁶ 45,098. Not in Indonesian or Indian politics, that had been ten years earlier. In British politics though, the May 1929 general election was a climax; six FTS became MPs.⁸

¹*NI*, 31-3-1919; reprinted BESANT(1919A), 52. 'Glasgow' referred to violence against the Scots labour movement; an instance of the link in imperialism between domestic class and overseas colonial oppression.

²ALI, 25. There is a dispute over the exact number. Sarojini Naidu on Dyer's forces: 'My sisters [Amritsar women] were stripped naked, they were flogged, they were outraged'; SENGUPTA, 161.

³'Victory to Gandhi'; BESANT(1919A), 63.

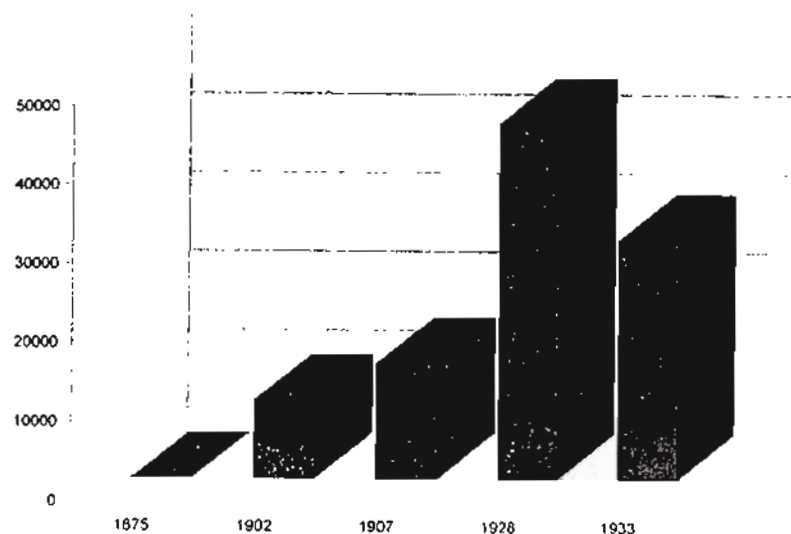
⁴TAYLOR(1992), 317.

⁵The National Liberal Federation had been founded after a suggestion by Edwin Montagu, Secretary of State for India, in talks with Indians in Jan. 1918; MAJUMDAR(1969), 271. DANGE, vol. 1, 52, written in the twenties, considered 'Beasantine' (sic) as a synonym for 'treacherous'. In early 1920, certainly in Madras she still had goodwill left from earlier years when she returned to Adyar, 30,000 to 40,000 people came to welcome her, according to *New India*, quoted *TMNI* 1920, 98-9.

⁶PALME DUTT, 379 gives Wadia losing a court case as cause for his leaving trade unionism.

⁷TILLET(1982), 242. The *ENI*, vol. VI, 763, figure of 'more than 50,000' for 1930 is incorrect. Figures in NUGRAHA(1989), 63 differ slightly.

⁸TINGAY, 221: the six were Peter Freeman, George Lansbury, David Graham Pole, John Scurr, Ben Tillett, and Henry Charles Charleton; misspelt *ibid.* once 'Charleston'. So roughly 1% of British MPs were theosophists, vs. far less than 1% of the electorate. *Ibid.*, 225: 'the 1920's... has not been paralleled before or since in its [TS] history.' Tingay adds major Leslie Haden Guest,



Total Theosophical Society membership, 1875-1933

Some Roman Catholics saw this growth as a danger. Dutch poet Ernest Michel attacked Krishnamurti and the TS:

thou, reincarnators of Christ, polluters of Christ; thou, uranic rats; thou, infertile adulterers, thou, poofy pooches; thou, lesbian curs; ... Christ ... thou hast degraded now into a little Indian homosexual, into a nancy boy ... thou who hast castrated Christ, polluted and soiled him into the filthy catamite ... these violators of children's innocence ... these dirty animals, should not they in this 'liberal' country be beaten to death with sewer pipes?¹

Keen observers could see Krishnamurti felt ever more uncomfortable about his Messiah-like part. 3 August 1929 Krishnamurti disbanded the Order of the Star, by then the name of the former OSE. Weeks later, a world economic crisis broke out.

'It seems that theosophy has impinged most on society at times of anxiety and reorientation'.² These were times like that. Writers in *The Theosophist* expected so. Rightly?

The thirties saw many people interested in new, untried political ideas. They were not that different from the 1912-1918 period in this. Could Annie Besant, could the TS, like then, increase its political influence by a new turn? A turn to the left? As

active in the British TS and MP from 1923-7; then, for Labour as were the others, though he later stood as an Independent and as a Conservative. In 1950, he was created First Baron Haden-Guest of Sailing.

¹MICHEL, 7; 31.

²ROE, XII.

A.S. Wickremasinghe, Ceylon general secretary, suggested?¹

The membership of many organizations, active in very different fields, dependent on members' contributions, shrank in the early 30's.² Some organizations went through an upturn though (like the Swedish Social Democrat and the Dutch Communist parties).³ Why not so the TS?

Annie Besant responded in 1929 by increased involvement in Congress politics. In 1930, there seemed to be signs of reconciliation with the Point Loma TS, now that her old opponent Katherine Tingley was dead. Her successor de Purucker invited an Adyar delegation to the 1931 celebration of H.P. Blavatsky's birth centenary. Besant accepted for herself, and for Leadbeater. De Purucker accepted AB; but not Leadbeater. And the whole plan was off.

Annie Besant, after a tiring 1930 European tour, after falling down a staircase, and after a long illness in Adyar, died there, 20 September 1933. Leadbeater succeeded her as ES Outer Head, but died in 1934.

So there had to be a new President, and a new ES leader.

The sixth volume of the *Cambridge History of India*, on the 1858-1918 period, which had appeared one year before her death, gave her only three brief mentions in its 660 pages. That hardly did justice to her historical importance. But it was symbolic of the decline in her political influence after 1918.

During the twenty-six years of Besant's presidency, 111,682 new members joined.⁴ She had obviously been a good propagandist. In 1933 though, of the total 143,439 who had joined in both Olcott's and her days, only 30,836 remained. Undoubtedly, this was due to deaths as well. Theosophists, however, did not recruit most of their members from income groups who died relatively young. Many must have left pretty soon.⁵

4. REINCARNATION AS REPRINT: GEORGE ARUNDALE, 1934-1945

She is the one person in our Society who commands love and reverence of both the members and the outsiders.⁶

In Motwani's 1933 view on Annie Besant, her successor, no matter how popular with

¹WICKREMASINGHE(1932).

²Just an example: the membership of the Utrecht branch of the Dutch Society for the Protection of Birds from 1931 till 1934 dropped from 427 till 315; *Jaarverslagen en bijdragen* Amsterdam, Nederlandsche vereniging tot bescherming van vogels, 1937, 146; 152.

³CPN membership went from 1,100 in 1930 to 5,500 in 1933. Circulation of *De Tribune*, their daily, from some 3,000 in 1929, to 20,000 in 1933. L. DE JONG, vol. 1, 101.

⁴Calculated from the figures in: *TT* Feb. 1934, 698.

⁵'No member, whether prominent or insignificant, has ever left us without becoming our bitter enemy.' BLAVATSKY(1987), 253. That is too much of a generalization. The GS for Indonesia, quoted *TiNi* July 1936, 109: 'It is not difficult to make people theosophists; but it is to keep them that way.'

⁶Kewal Motwani, 'Theosophy and the Theosophical Society', *TT* Oct. 1933, 75.

theosophists, would not have her influence on politics, outside the Society. In a later Indian historians' view, 'Most of its [the TS] importance in Indian life was due more to the personality of Mrs. Besant than to any inherent strength of the movement'.¹

The presidency went to George Arundale. First, we will look at his life² before his election.

A. HOME RULER, BOY SCOUT AND BISHOP, 1878-1933

George Sidney Arundale was born on the 1st of December 1878, the son of an English congregational preacher. As his mother died in childbirth, his aunt, long-standing theosophist Francesca Arundale, adopted him. So he was the first PTS to get a theosophist upbringing from early childhood; maybe that was not a good preparation for daring innovations.

In 1909, he became Principal of Central Hindu College. The Acting Chief Secretary to the government of Madras wrote to the Home Secretary of Arundale in 1916, as secretary of the Home Rule League: 'his name is mooted as possible political successor to Mrs. Besant'.³ In 1917, he was interned with his President.

He married Srimati Rukmini Devi in 1920. She was the 16 year old daughter of TS Brahmin parents. The marriage caused some stir: Arundale was a theosophical Initiate. And Annie Besant at the Krishnamurti court case had stated that Initiates do not have sex. So, new explanations had to be found (also when Jinarajadasa married later).⁴

Rukmini Devi Arundale became well known as leader of the Kalakshetra dance group, and of the Young Theosophists. In 1953 she was a candidate for the TS presidency;⁵ in 1977 for the presidency of the Republic of India. This was a sort of afterglow, long after the political prestige maximum that Annie Besant had given the TS. Rukmini lost on both occasions, but sat in the Indian Senate.⁶

In 1921, Lord Baden-Powell appointed George Arundale Provincial Commissioner of the Indian Boy Scouts Association.⁷

¹MAJUMDAR/RAYCHAUDHURI/DATTA, 887. K.P.S. Menon, looking back at his student days in Madras in *Many worlds revisited*. Bombay, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1981, 43: 'Mrs Besant was my political idol. . . [But] I always had a distrust of the mumbo-jumbo of the Theosophical Society'.

²Not his 'Lives', in previous incarnations, as described in: BESANT and LEADBEATER(1913). 'Star name': Fides; *ibid.*, 7. He was promised a future as Buddha on the planet Mercury; an offer withdrawn later; E. LUTYENS, 70.

³Letter of 17-11-1916, quoted BAKSHI, 49.

⁴TILLET(1982), 186.

⁵NETHERCOT(1963), 457. She ran against her brother Sri Ram

⁶NETHERCOT(1963), 406.

⁷RANSOM(1938), 442.

In August 1925, Dr.¹ Arundale was consecrated bishop of the Liberal Catholic Church, closely tied to the TS (Leadbeater was Presiding Bishop).² He often went to The Netherlands: an important LCC centre was in Huizen, and in Ommen the OSE held its Star Camp⁴ mass meetings. Dutch theosophists had some influence in newly emerging radio broadcasting.

Arundale also founded a commercially successful theosophical radio station in Australia, called 2GB (=reincarnation of Giordano Bruno=Annie Besant).

B. MEN AND GERMANS, 1933-1945

In 1933, membership was 14,262 lower than five years earlier. Members spoke of 'crisis in the Theosophical Society';⁵ though in his 1931 convention lecture, Harendra Nath Datta said:

I cannot feel any 'alarm' about its future, for it is not a mere human institution. It was founded under the orders of the Masters, it is therefore Their society and it cannot die.

Mrs Besant's death brought the TS its first presidential election with more than one candidate. With two candidates; Arundale produced letters in which the Masters appointed him as rightful heir, and heavily defeated opponent Ernest Wood. *The Theosophist* had refused to print Wood's election manifesto.

Differences had not been about the Führer who had started his Thousand Years German Empire earlier that year. Reacting to a letter in the 1933 *Theosophist* from Germany's ex-Order of the Star in the East leader and translator of *At the Feet of the*



C.W. Leadbeater as a Liberal Catholic Church bishop; photo *The Theosophical Society*

¹ROE, 296. Doctor 'honoris causa, from the would-be theosophical world university' (which never got off the ground). Contrary to this, 'De nieuwe Voorzitter der Theosofische Vereniging', *TiNI* Nov 1934, 152 claimed he was a Cambridge LL.D. M. LUTYENS(1975), 42 and 214: Arundale had a Cambridge Moral Science honours degree. He himself was principal of the World University, of which he wrote: 'We shall not ask someone to grant us a charter, so as to make our degrees respectable and approved by the world . . . the degrees that are conferred in the name of the Master-those shall be recognised by the world, as no degrees conferred by human agency can ever be'. Arundale wrote: 'The World University is an embodiment of part of Krishnamurti's nature' *Herald of the Star*, Sept 1925; quoted TILKEMA(1932), 27.

²By 'the Lord Maitreya himself'; NETHERCOT(1963), 364.

³VAN ZEYTVELD, vol. II, 428, incorrectly says the LCC 'separated from' the TS.

⁴TILLET(1982), 238: Huizen is 'about twelve miles from Ommen.' Actually, it is more than seventy miles. During the Second World War, nazis used Star Camp premises as a concentration camp.

⁵TT May 1930, 97f. NETHERCOT(1963), 448 quotes the English section: 'the general loss of the Society's influence in the community.'

Master, Hugo Vollrath, defending Nazi persecution of Jews as 'racial hygiene', non-candidate Jinarajadasa denounced anti-Semitism.¹ Arundale in the early years of Hitler's career as Leader and Reich Chancellor tended to give him the benefit of doubt:

I wonder, by the way, how many Theosophical brethren perceive in this swerving of Europe in the direction of dictatorship the first beginnings of a real United States of Europe. We must learn to be able to discern great forces at work even in forms which are distasteful to our own individual temperaments. Hitler and Mussolini are Men whether we approve of their methods or not. They could not have reached their pre-eminence had they not in them the stuff of which Men are made, and be it remembered that Men are by no means necessarily confined to the stuff of which we personally think they should be made ... If they love little children and are tender towards them almost all else may not only be forgiven but may even be justified.²

One of Arundale's early presidential decisions was banning former World Teacher Krishnamurti from the Adyar grounds; from the site of many memories of his youth. The TS lifted that ban only in 1980, a few years before Krishnamurti's death.³

Arundale was popular with many theosophists. He retained popularity with some non-TS Indians from his CHC and Home Rule League days. He was not less interested in politics than Annie Besant, proposing to change the *Objects* of the TS, to expressly include 'politics'.⁴ In 1937, he campaigned

to show that Theosophy is the veritable Key to every situation, to every impasse, to every conflict ... in nationalism, in internationalism, in all the sciences ... in politics.⁵

He did not have Besant's personal and political prestige, inside and outside of India, though. Mainly for India, he founded the short-lived political fortnightly *Conscience* on 2 February 1939.⁶ That year, he also became president of the New India League.

The Theosophist now reprinted old articles by H.P. Blavatsky; it had done that very rarely twenty years earlier.⁷ Already during Annie Besant's illness, the monthly had reprinted old articles by her, without noting differences between the times when they were written and the times when they were re-printed.

Arundale did that especially after the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939. On

¹WT, 77 June 1912, 327. VOLLRATH(1933). Jinarajadasa's reaction TT Oct. 1933, 111

²ARUNDALE(1933A)

³WESSINGER(1989), 97. A few years before the ban, Arundale had written *Krishnaji: Light-bringer*; not included in the *Bibliography of works by Dr. Arundale* in: PERSONAL MEMORIES, 82. Neither was his 1912 pamphlet *Alcyone and Mizar*, on his first meeting with Krishnamurti in 1910: 'never had I looked upon such a face as his-it was the face of the Boy Christ in incarnation before me'. Quoted M. LUTYENS(1975), 310.

⁴PMA, 77 Sept. 1939, 501. Ibid., 504: 'we do not talk nearly enough about Theosophy in politics'.

⁵GSA in TW Oct. 1937, 221, quoted: OELC, Oct.-Nov. 1937 'At the periscope'.

⁶PMA, 139ff. In a speech on 22 July 1934, Arundale said that 'his personal duty as President of the Theosophical Society was to stand for India and see that she won Home Rule and become a self-governing nation in the Commonwealth'. Quoted OELC Jan.-Feb. 1935.

⁷See tables, p. 391f.

India, before, during, and after the war Arundale had stuck to Annie Besant's 'tested and tried' line. As Gandhi frankly admitted,¹ from the Boer War till about 1918, that line, apart from smaller political and personal differences with Besant, had been basically his line, and that of other Indian politicians too: India as an equal partner within the British Empire, Indian military support for Britain in wartime.

Annie Besant's stand was becoming an anachronism to sharp-eyed observers in World War I; when reprinted by Arundale in World War II, it was even more so.

George Sidney Arundale died in Adyar, 12 August 1945;² just at a time when the TS re-established contacts with cut-off sections on the European continent. Total worldwide membership was a little above 30,000. TS historical self-portraits like RANSOM(1938), RANSOM(1950); contrary to the earlier JINARAJADASA(1925), gave no figures on members. Would they contrast with Arundale's claim 'Our membership is steadily on the increase'?³ At least one 1945 writer to the editor of the *Theosophist*, H.C. Samuels, thought that the defeat of fascism that year also necessitated a critical look at the TS' own history and ideology, from HPB on.⁴

5. REINCARNATION FROM BRAZIL: C. JINARAJADASA, 1945-1947

Curuppumulagge Jinarajadasa⁵ was the first Asia-born PTS from 1946 till 1953, succeeding Arundale as only candidate in the election. The last six years of his presidency are no concern of this book, as they are after the political independence of his country of birth, Ceylon, and his country of long-time residence, India.

A. FROM COLOMBO TO HIROSHIMA, 1875-1945

Jinarajadasa was born in 1875, the second son of parents he later described as poor and simple-minded.⁶ Leadbeater first met CJ in 1888, when he was 13 years old, and one of only 55 pupils in his Colombo Buddhist Boys' school, later to develop into Ananda College.⁷ He joined Leadbeater when he went back to England in 1889

An eminent Singhalese who was well acquainted with Leadbeater's true character, even at that time, in Ceylon, told me he was in the house when the boy's [CJ's] father came with a revolver, intending to shoot Leadbeater unless he gave up his son. My informant, being a devout Buddhist, feared violence, and persuaded him to desist, with the result that he lost his

¹ALI, 36f

²TM(1951), 295. Though the 1954 KATHOLIEKE ENCYCLOPEDIË, vol. 23, 69f. called 'H. Arundale' and de Purucker [† 1942] 'current leaders'.

³TT Feb. 1939, WT. RANSOM(1938), 1: 'ever-expanding.' But see figures OELC March-Apr. 1939.

⁴'Jews-Race or Nationality?' by H.C. Samuels, TT, Dec. 1945, 120, denying there was a Jewish 'race', contrary to official TS views.

⁵Spelling 'Jinarajadasi' only found in NCE.

⁶JINARAJADASA(1938), 118f.

⁷LEADBEATER(1933B), 197.

son, who was removed to a ship by his determined mentor [CWL].¹

In London, he went to live with Leadbeater. Leadbeater told Jinarajadasa there that he considered him the reincarnation of his own brother Gerald, who had been killed by Brazilian Indians. It is improbable,² though, that Leadbeater ever lived in Brazil or had a brother named Gerald.

Jinarajadasa graduated in Sanskrit and philology at St. John's College, Cambridge, in 1899. He helped Leadbeater in his clairvoyant investigations of leading theosophists' previous lives, and of occult chemistry. Though an Initiate, in 1916 Jinarajadasa too married: English Dorothy Graham.

Jinarajadasa became TS vice president in 1921, succeeding A.P. Sinnett who had died. In 1928 Annie Besant sidetracked him, and American Warrington³ took over the office. In 1934, he succeeded Leadbeater as ES Outer Head.

B. FROM ARYAN EMPIRE TO INDEPENDENCE, 1946-1947

1945. Neither defeated nazi Germany nor 'victorious' Britain turned out to be the nucleus of any world empire, Aryan or otherwise (though it took Suez 1956 for some politicians to find out).

Once again, after the war, a TS president could travel to continents far away from Adyar. Jinarajadasa was formally installed as PTS on 17 February 1946. Then, Vice President N. Sri Ram, Mrs Arundale's brother, put the ring that HPB had left to Annie Besant, on his finger.⁴

Jinarajadasa marked the modifying of TS views to fit better into an era in which ideas of democracy were more, and ideas of racial superiority were less accepted than before. A former leader of the Buddhist Theosophical Society and editor of its paper, Baron D.B. Jayatileke, became minister of soon to become independent Ceylon. Jinarajadasa marked India's independence by presenting Jawaharlal Nehru, ex-FTS, first prime minister, with a copy of an edition of Ashoka's edicts. But the vision of an Aryan world empire, much greater than Ashoka's, had died quietly.

¹CRUMP(1923), 56.

²TILLET(1982), 11-15; versus LEADBEATER(1911)

³See OELC June 1939.

⁴RANSOM(1950), 163.

PART III. WHOM DID THEOSOPHY ATTRACT?

Another great merit about Theosophy is the insight it has shown from the beginning into the value of our caste system as a preservative of the nation's spirituality, and as preventing Hindus from disappearing as a nation from the face of the earth.¹

This quote by the prime minister (dewan) of Mysore principedom, apart from seeing nations as based on religions, sees a form of social stratification as conditional to both nation and religion. We too will discuss caste, class and related issues, as they figured in the history of theosophists, before we get to matters like nations in later parts.

The next chapters are on social stratification and social conflicts. First, about from which social categories people joined the Theosophical Society. Then, on criteria for recruitment to it. The TS rose at a time when caste or class as principles in societies were increasingly challenged. So, this part is also a preparation for Part IV, which will look at where they stood in these controversies, and at how they related to political currents that focused on these problems.

1. SOCIAL BACKGROUND OF THEOSOPHISTS

A. THE AMERICAS AND EUROPE

From what social backgrounds did the TS attract people to its branches in many countries? In the Americas and Europe, one can say they were from the higher social strata. That the Theosophical Society in England

was an overwhelmingly upper and middle-class preserve needs no further demonstration than to note that its London meetings in the 1880s closed at the end of the Season.²

At London lodge in the 1890's, and in Hargrove's US breakaway TS from Judge-Tingley's breakaway, evening dress was mandatory at meetings.³ At the 1936 TS Geneva Congress, the Duchess of Hamilton⁴, with long-time FTS Miss L. Lind-af-Hageby, co-

¹RAO(1913), 152.

²BURFIELD, 28. NETHERCOT(1960), 292; id.(1963), 348. Season: when those thought important enough to meet Queen Victoria were presented at Court.

³OELC Dec. 1938. TILLET(1982), 54. HPB advised to ward off evil by wearing rings with jewels matching one's 'planet of the day' on successive days. Few working class men or women were able to afford a set of at least seven jewelled rings. In all 1930 issues of *The Theosophist* Emma C. Fleming from Los Angeles advertised: 'Precious and Semi-Precious Stones, suited to your birth date, temperament, and occupation'. She also had real estate for sale near the theosophic centre for the new race in Ojai.

⁴'Wife of Rudolf Hess' 1941 would-be negotiations partner. NETHERCOT(1963), 333: she was a friend of Mrs Besant. VAN BOSBEKE, 72: Hess was a member of the 'Golden Dawn' (founded in the 1880's by people from the TS orbit like Westcott and Yeats); and of its spinoff OTO.

officials of British anti-vivisectionists, jointly entertained the delegates.¹

The Antwerp branch paper was in French.² Then, less than 4% of the city's population was French speaking,³ virtually coinciding with the highest income groups.

The Theosophist 1903-04 reported, suppl. XVIII, on the Panchama education fund: 'E. Empain, Brussels Branch: 59 Rps, 11 anna.' Édouard-Louis-Joseph Empain, 1852-1929, was one of his country's richest bankers. He owned businesses in many fields, for instance in Paris Metro construction and Chinese railways. When many Belgian bankers were cautious about financing King Leopold II's Congo colony adventure, he was not. For his contribution to colonial activities, the monarch awarded him the title of Baron. The next king, Albert I, appointed him a colonel in 1914, and in 1918 a general and royal aide de camp. After the First World War, he acquired German chemical industry interests and founded Progil.⁴

Support for Adyar theosophy in the Americas varied; from Surinam's lone Paramaribo lodge, with the military Fort Zeelandia as its address and attached to the Dutch TS, to Cuba which had the world's highest per capita FTS % in 1942,⁵ and the Society's native US with its numerous lodges.

In Brazil, a great many of the relatively well-off were spiritualists in the mould of Frenchman Kardec.⁶ The relationship of Brazilian Kardecists to the TS was good. Remarkably, then, TS membership numbers there were low.⁸

In South America's second largest country, Argentina, TS membership was not large either. Though when Olcott lectured in 1900 at the Government Palace, he noted,

Very distinguished audience of 400 Senators, Deputies, Judges of High Court, Ministers of Cabinet, Professors, etc., and many ladies. Spoke over an hour in French fluently. Much

¹TT Oct. 1936, 4. Miss Lind was related to Swedish industrialists, owners of Liljeholmen stearin factory, and a sawmill; they were friends of eugenicist Ellen Key; NORLANDER, 448.

²TT March 1902, 376. Later, in the 1940's, a 'Flemish-speaking Lodge' was there; RANSOM(1950), 157.

³Percentage of Antwerp 1900 population over 15 years of age, speaking French only, or French plus German only, 3.96. There, a large majority spoke Dutch only, also, a smaller category whose mother tongue was Dutch, had learnt some French at school. Computed from: *Statistique de la Belgique Population. Renseignement Général du 31 décembre 1900* Brussels, Ministère de l'Intérieur et de l'Instruction Publique, 1903. Vol. 3, Répartition des Habitants, 374f. BESANT(1893), 48 was unaware of all this.

⁴Paul Jeanjot, 'Empain', *Biographie Nationale de Belgique*, vol. 34, Brussels, Bruylant, 1968, 265-9. This does not mention the TS; only Empain's interest in Egypt: he was buried in a Heliopolis crypt.

⁵RANSOM(1950), 127. A. H[eymans], 'De Uitkijk', *TMNI* 1927, 446.

⁶WILSON(1975), 117ff.

⁷RANSOM(1938), 466; writing of 1924.

⁸The TS Brazil Section started in 1920; General R. Pinto Seidl was its GS. To have its own section, a country must have at least 7 lodges, with at least 7 members each. JINARAJADASA(1925), 260.

praise and applause.¹

1. Nobility

British TS executive member H.O. Wolfe Murray, among others, linked the hierarchy of the nobility of the visible world to the invisible spiritual hierarchy.² The nobility was over-represented among members:³ Russian and Italian princes, Russian Princess Ada Troubetzkoy living in Italy,⁴ British Countess Muriel De La Warr, Viscountess Verena Maud Churchill,⁵ and the Earl of Crawford; German Countess Schack. In Spain, there was the 'Duc de Plasencia'.⁸

Countess Constance Wachtmeister was the widow of the Swedish foreign minister. She and her son were prominent TS members. She was one of Annie Besant's main supporters in the conflict with Judge. The Countess, however, got a conflict of her own with her later General Secretary in the early 1920's of the combined Denmark and Iceland section was Countess Bille Brahe Selby.⁹ The Dutch East Indies theosophical monthly described Countess M.E. de Prozor, wife of a czar's ambassador:

Madame Prozor is one of the most reforming Russian theosophists, who endeavours to spread the theosophical teachings and ideas, mainly within the "haute volée" of intellectuals. Before the war, she had a very active part in spreading the theosophical thoughts, first in Geneva, and later in Nizza [Nice], where she had a villa in the most splendid quarter, which she opened for the representatives of Art and Science.¹⁰

James Webb did not base his remark: 'But there was nothing aristocratic about

¹Quoted MURPHET, 288.

²'The Occult Origin of Nobility', *TT* Dec. 1910, 349-358. Ibid. 354 a table with 'ADEPT-KING' at the top, and 'Probationary disciples-Knights' at the bottom. See *TT* Nov. 1910, 163.

³See for this term p. 6, n. 2.

⁴*TT*, Jan. 1890, 1xx. The aunt of Prince Volkonsky had already joined in 1884, in Nice, at Lady Caithness' palace. *ODL*, *TT* Oct. 1905, 5.

⁵NETHERCOT(1963), 197. She was a daughter of the third Earl of Lonsdale, Leadbeater called her Roxana in his clairvoyant writings; TILLET(1982), 116. Her husband Victor Albert was Conservative Whip in the House of Lords, Lord Chamberlain at the coronation of Edward VII, and director of numerous companies. M. LUTYENS(1975), 115. *Who was Who* Vol. III. London, Adam, 1947; 252-3.

⁶NETHERCOT(1960), 291.

⁷NETHERCOT(1963), 117.

⁸*ODL*, *TT* Jan. 1904, 198. *Duc* (French) = *duque* (Spanish). The founder of two Spanish TS magazines was Marquis Francisco Montoliu y de Togores; *TT*, Aug. 1905, 693. Don José Xifré [not: Xifré], Spanish GS, was an 'aristocrat'; RICHARDUS, 15; of the royal court: BESANT(1920B), 107.

⁹*TT* 1920, cover.

¹⁰*TMNI*(1921), 81. On her husband, see p. 147.

Theosophy¹ on quantitative data. 'It attracted the same sort of recruit which such movements have always attracted', he said, quoting about the medieval lower strata intelligentsia.

May one transplant categories from 19th century Russia centuries back in time and many wersts west, then centuries forward again? Webb names examples: Wedgwood as 'frustrated clergyman'; he was not a poor village preacher, though, but a scion of rich ceramics factory owners.² And 'lawyer Baillie-Weaver' became a judge.

2. Business

Theosophy often sees as its predecessor hermetic philosophy, called after writings ascribed to Greek god Hermes.³ He was not just the god of deep philosophical mysteries, but also of business.

In Bryan Wilson's view, 'manipulationist' movements, as he considers the TS, pattern their organization after institutions of industrial society: educational institutions, 'business corporations and mail-order companies', rather than after older religious bodies' types.⁴ 'Doing business plus occultism certainly is more interesting than only doing business'.⁵ Lecturing in Benares in 1912, Annie Besant said she adopted the methods of the American Trusts for her World Teacher mission.⁶

Businessmen were well represented in the Theosophical Society. Thomas Alva Edison was an early, though not long-time, member. Later FTS from the US business world were Mary Dodge, of the car factory family,⁷ Alice Dupont 'of gunpowder fame', Colonel Lauder, and Henry Hochener, manager of thirties Hollywood film star John Barrymore.⁸

Dupont logo



Astrologic symbol of Mercury

¹WEBB(1971), 65. But *ibid.*, 64: 'What sort of person joined the Theosophists? ... Those ... to whom every tick of their drawing-room clock spelt boredom ...'

²He was James Wedgwood; not Josiah, as with CAMPBELL, 125f

³See p. 25. The equivalent of Roman god Mercurius (Mercury).

⁴WILSON(1975), 15; 42.

⁵The Vienna correspondent of daily *De Avondpost* in 1921; as reprinted *TMNI*, 1921, 428-33, 433.

⁶BROOKS(1914A), lii.

⁷TINGAY, 222.

⁸Dupont de Nemours; SANTUCCI, 9.

⁹*TT* May 1925, 144. Movie stars Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford joined the TS-linked Order of the Round Table; J. Kruisheer, 'Redactioneële Aanteekeningen', *TMNI* 1927, 2. TS-like movements had much support in southern California. Had this anything to do with fast up-and-down movements, not just financially, but also emotionally, of the movie business? A so far successful actor whose new movie flops, may not become poor, but may still become depressed

In England, import merchant John Yarker (1833-1914) helped to found the TS; later, industrialist Bibby was a prominent FTS. Daniel N. Dunlop¹ was long-time director of the British Electrical and Manufacturers Association. In the 1890's he was editor of the *Irish Theosophist*.² After the Judge split, he followed first Point Loma, then Adyar. From 1910 till 1914 he had his own theosophical magazine, *The Path*. Finally, he led the British anthroposophists.

Theosophist Sellegger was the Dutch Paper Manufacturers Association's chairman.⁴ TS leader Cochius was presiding director of the Leerdam glass-works. Another director of that firm, the Hilversum industrialist F.E. Farwerck, figured prominently in the Dutch TS and co-masonry linked to it.⁵

3. Military, clergy, and judiciary

Officers and their wives and children were strongly represented in Theosophical Society membership. 'It is interesting to notice how many officers of the army we count among our members.'⁶ Quite some were colonels and their families. Like: Portugal's general secretary Colonel Oscar Garçao,⁷ Col. Boggiani, GS in Italy,⁸ president-founder Olcott.

Ideas claiming to bring order into chaos may become influential in such an environment WILSON(1970), 148, on Christian Scientists: 'several prominent theatre and film actors and actresses have also been among their number'.

¹OELC Oct-Nov. 1935.

²TIRYAKIAN(1974), 165. 1895 Dublin lodge President; NETHERCOT(1963), 41.

³In 1904, he was president of the Battersea lodge in London. Annual Report on 1904, 97

⁴*TT*, August 1945, 183

⁵*TB* Feb. 1931, 102. In the Dutch TS' General Council since 1917; *TB* March 1917, 25. He was, apart from still other directorships, managing director of the Dutch carpets trust VENETA; and wrote on occult Germanic archaeology (also ps. B.J. van Zuylén). He was the propaganda leader of the Dutch National Socialists in the 1930's BRUGMANS(1938), 466.

⁶Annie Besant, 'Headquarters' Notes', *AdB* Aug. 1910, 227

⁷*TT* Jan. 1931, back cover. Well known Portuguese author Fernando Pessoa was the grandson of General Joaquim Pessoa and stepson of a *comandante*. *GEPB*, vol. xxi, 481. In 1915, he translated Leadbeater's *Manual of Theosophy* into Portuguese. From 1915-26 he translated Leadbeater, Mrs Besant, and other theosophists. In a December 1915 letter to Mário de Sá-Carneiro he expressed both admiration and doubt about theosophy. WILLEMSSEN(1983), 69-70. BARAHONA & LÉGLISE-COSTA, 54. *Ibid.*, 37 claim influence from 'the Rosicrucian league'; I doubt their '1888' founding year. Pessoa was also influenced by HPB: LÉGLISE-COSTA, 161; W. Old, FTS ('Sephariel'), *ibid.*, 160-1; *Les Editions Adyar*, *ibid.*, 160; Alan Leo, *ibid.*, 162; and A. Crowley, *ibid.*, 70; 156.

⁸JINARAJADASA(1925), 258. *TT* 1909, 397: major. HSO's Report to the Convention, 27-29 Dec. 1903, 7: [In Italy] 'among our recruits are a number belonging to the military and naval services.'

corresponding secretary-founder Blavatsky, G.R.S. Mead, 'son of an artillery colonel',¹ Col. A.E. Powell,² Col. Cleather and his wife Alice, 'the wife of Colonel Murray', in Australia Col. Prentice and Lieut.-Col. Braund.³

With him, we come to officers a bit higher or lower than colonels. President of the Vidya Lodge, Nice, France was 'Le Général Bazaine-Hayter'.⁴ There were General Blasius von Schemua in Austria,⁵ Rosa Frances Swiney, married to a major-general; Major-General MacKay in Australia;⁶ and Major-General J.H. MacRae in the USA. Lieut.-Col. A.G.B. Turner duly paid his 1915 membership dues.¹⁰ Major Graham Pole was Scots GS; Major Armstrong was in the Dublin lodge during the early 1890's.¹¹ Also, there were Captain Sidney Ransom, Captain Max Wardall (USA),¹² Captain Sellon of the TS in New York,¹³ Captain Adalberth de Bourbon,¹⁴ Captain Lloyd Jones of Australid,¹⁵ 'capitaine Plicheff', president of the only Bulgarian lodge at the time.¹⁶ US warrant

¹MEADE, 404 US Col. Arthur Conger, successor to de Purucker, had joined in Judge's time. He served in the Spanish, Philippine, and First World Wars; then became military attaché to Germany and Switzerland. *OELC*, March 1932.

²*TT* Jan. 1931, 278ff. He wrote *The Rationale of Reincarnation*.

³RANSOM(1938), 140 'General Murray' *BCW*, II, 503.

⁴ROE, 219.

⁵*TT* Feb. 1914, 791.

⁶GOODRICK-CLARKE(1985), 44 Von Schemua was also a member of the *List-Gesellschaft*, a fan club of occultist and anti-Semite Guido von List, of which the Vienna TS was a corporate member. GOODRICK-CLARKE(1986), 107.

⁷ROE, 173.

⁸ROE, 218. He visited Adyar in the 30's; died 1936. *TT* Jan. 1937, 291.

⁹NETHERCOT(1963), 384.

¹⁰*TT*, suppl. Feb. 1915.

¹¹*THNI*, 7.

¹²*TT* Aug. 1930, 654.

¹³*Ibid.*, 653. He succeeded Hamerster as TS treasurer. Married to TS Publicity Officer, ex-N Y lecturer in the history of art Barbara Sellon, who died 1936. *TT* Nov. 1936, 160.

¹⁴He had somewhat dubious claims of being grandson of King Louis XVI and Queen Marie Antoinette of France. He founded the first Dutch lodge 'Post Nubila Lux', in The Hague in 1881. RICHARDUS, 5. His death in 1887 caused much trouble for that lodge. His successor as its president was Mrs Hermance De Neufville-van Karnebeek, 1845-1937; KLEIN(1983), 89. She joined Tingley's TS later; HOUKES(1995), 33. She was related to the 1885-1891 Dutch Liberal foreign affairs minister Abraham P.C. van Karnebeek, whose son Herman Adriaan also became foreign affairs minister from 1918 to 1927.

¹⁵Of the Royal Field Artillery; DAS(1947), V, II; VII.

¹⁶TS Annual report on 1903, 111.

officer Captain G. Ragan started the Philippines TS.¹ Vice-Admiral Prince Fabrizio Ruspoli represented his navy at the post-World War I Versailles conference, and in 1921 was Italy's League of Nations representative.² Last, Argentine naval Commandant Fernandez,³ French Commander Courmes; and Mrs Gebhard, H.P. Blavatsky's host in Germany; married to a businessman, but 'widow of an army officer'.⁴

Also well represented were (sometimes ex-) Christian clergymen, and their wives and children. Generally speaking, in the late nineteenth century, the clergy had relatively higher positions on the ladders of pay and social prestige than they have now.⁵ Clergy (family) background TS examples: Leadbeater, Besant, de Purucker (a parson's son), parson's ex-wife Alice A. Bailey, former self-styled 'Fundamentalist' manager of Christian British soldiers' homes in India,⁶ Alice Leighton Cleather, 1880's London lodge president Anna Kingsford, G.S. Arundale, Schoenmaekers (Dutch ex-Roman Catholic priest), Sir Robert Kotze,⁷ Woodward,⁸ James Prys,⁹ United States general secretary A. Fullerton,¹⁰ US episcopal priest Rev. Dr. Currie,¹¹ an ex-Mother Superior of a Spanish nunnery,¹² a Dutch ex-Salvation Army officer.

... our Branch in Washington, D.C., is rapidly growing, and receiving into its membership men of note in the political and scientific world.¹³

We will meet politicians in various chapters.¹⁴

Judges and their families joined in several countries (Russack, Musacus, Humphreys,

¹*TT* June 1933, 261. He proposed a Philippines-Indonesia federation for the TS with English and Malay as languages; *TiNI* Nov. 1934, 122.

²M. LUTYENS(1975), 111; 131. He died 1936. *TT* Jan. 1937, 291. *OELC* 'At the periscope', March 1936. Star name 'Leo'; BESANT and LEADBEATER(1913), 7.

³TS Annual report on 1901, 30.

⁴CRUMP(1923), 63.

⁵TILLET(1982), 19f. In the Anglican diocese of Winchester, about 1878, candidates for priesthood had to be graduates of one of the four prestigious universities of Oxford, Cambridge, Durham, or Dublin; or pass a special examination. In Leadbeater's parish of Bramshot, he was the only rector or curate who was not a graduate of Queen's College in Oxford (but his uncle by marriage, the Rector, was).

⁶BAILEY(1951), 80.

⁷Son of a minister in the South African NG (Reformed) church.

⁸BAC, 1920, 10.

⁹WEBB(1971), 210: son of a US Presbyterian minister.

¹⁰*TT* 1905-1906, suppl., XXXIX.

¹¹*TT* July 1904, 637.

¹²ODL, *TT* Apr. 1904, 386: French-born Madame Le Roux.

¹³*TT* Sept. 1904, 758.

¹⁴TS Annual Report on 1903, 37: Italian senator, FTS, Count Gamba, had died. *TT* Nov. 1936, 189: Madame Cosma 'widow of a Rumanian statesman.'

Desider Szentmariay,¹ Cimon Prinari,² Woodroffe,³ Khandalvala, Subramaniya Iyer).

B.INDIA

The three last named bring us to India. One can gather something about the social background of those interested in theosophy when it started in that country, from the *Pioneer* of 8-12-1879. It wrote on a Bombay TS meeting:

several hundred of the most influential natives of the city-bankers, merchants, mill-owners, pundits, pleaders, etc.⁴

Indian society has four main caste divisions. These four have numerous subdivisions, differing from region to region. Contrary to many foreign -and its own conservative Hindu- theorists, India in practice has always had some social mobility. We know some of the ways in which this happened as 'Sanskritization', used for upward mobility of sub-castes in their entirety.⁵ Cases of mobility for individuals or families occurred as well: the name Gandhi means 'grocer'; Mahatma Gandhi's ancestors' occupation for generations. But his grandfather managed to become prime minister of a small principality (which in theory was a hereditary job again).

Class differs from caste, as it refers to the relationships of groups of people, of social categories, to contemporary means of social production. Every individual everywhere has a direct or indirect relationship to those means of production.

Caste in south Asia has co-existed for centuries with class. One might call caste the ghost of an earlier society's class divisions,⁶ haunting its offspring, sometimes long after the economic and social forces that generated it, disappeared or changed; propped up, sanctified, by orthodox Brahmanic interpretation of Hindu religion, sometimes also sanctioned by other religions in the subcontinent.

An example of the co-existence of caste and class in India is the social category of Brahman cooks. Orthodox Brahmins may⁷ only eat food cooked by fellow Brahmins (including themselves, or their families). If a Brahmin happens to belong to a rich class, deriving a relatively high income from his relationship to the means of social production, then he can afford to hire another Brahmin as a cook. Thus, he frees himself and his family from kitchen labour. In class terms, one can categorize Brahmin cooks as workers, not always the best paid of the working class. In a way, they are comparable to

¹FEKETE, 88: 1906 Hungarian High Court judge and TS chairman. Marie Loke was the granddaughter of a Dutch High Court judge; DE WILDE, 9.

²GS for Greece; 77 Nov. 1936, 192.

³Of the Calcutta High Court RICHARDUS, 24.

⁴Quoted 77 Dec. 1937.

⁵JALALI, 172.

⁶RAMABAI SARASVATI, 6: 'Without doubt, "caste" originated in the economical division of labour'.

⁷Based more on custom than on religious law texts, which sometimes expressly allow the contrary; RAMABAI SARASVATI, 5.

Annie Besant during the hard times in the Folkestone vicarage, just after her separation.¹

The main caste divisions are the four *varnas*; literally: 'colours'. According to many, this refers to the days after about 1500 B.C., when light-complexioned invaders from beyond the Himalayas² attacked, and partly subjugated, darker skinned people retreating southwards. Or was 1500 B.C. too recent? '... the primeval Brāhmins ... had been initiated in Central Asia';³ according to Blavatsky, at least 850,000 B.C.

Below these four divisions are the numerous casteless. Orthodox tradition sees them as illegal offspring of parents, differing in caste. Historians see many of them as descendants of those who were not immediately conquered by the invaders, so not included in the four *varnas* when they arose. Buddhists see many as Buddhists who came under Hindu rule, and as losers in a conflict were put at the bottom of the social ladder.

The idea of casteless persons had influence in Europe. Lanz von Liebenfels thought his lower class opponents were hereditarily inferior; he called them *Tschandalen*⁴ (from Sanskrit: *Chandala*).

The Brahman Maharajahs of Benares gave to the theosophists their family motto, which the TS translated as 'There is no religion higher than truth', and land to build Central Hindu College on. Bhagavan Das, son of a Brahman 'rich landlord' and prominent TS member, was from the same region.⁵

Later, membership centred in south India, especially Tamil Nadu. According to Kenneth W. Jones, Theosophical Society members in the Telugu-speaking districts north of Madras were 'aristocrats, officials, and members of the educated middle class'.⁶ Washbrook calls Annie Besant's supporters in Tamil Nadu the 'Mylapore clique',⁷ after the suburb between Adyar and Madras city centre. Her associates in south India were almost all Brahmins.⁸ In 1912, Brahmins were only 3.2% of Madras presidency's male population. Yet, they had 55% of the region's appointments for the highest offices to

¹See p. 71 Adyar TS headquarters employed a Brahmin cook; TS General Report on 1905, 5.

²JINARAJADASA(1923), 49 they 'gradually became browned by the Indian sun' K. Motwani, 'India's message to the World', 77 Oct. 1937: 'It was also through the medium of this Varna-ashtana-dharma that India assimilated the non-Aryans into her body politic and averted racial discord and disaster'. Not all agree on this. Early 20th century Indian politician and religious leader Sri Aurobindo; and later SETHNA(1980) argued there had been no 'Aryan invasion', and that Aryans and Dravidians were basically the same. Romila Thapar, in her Sardar Patel Memorial lectures, quoted KRISHNA, 285, stated: 'The historian ... cannot but doubt the theory that a large number of Aryans conquered northern India, enslaved the existing population and thereby established their language and culture, both entirely alien to the indigenous tradition'.

³BLAVATSKY(1908), 596.

⁴GOODRICK-CLARKE(1985), 242.

⁵A. MISRA.

⁶JONES(1989), 178.

⁷WASHBROOK, 239ff.

⁸IRSCHIK, 44.

which Indians could rise under the British *raj*.¹

Sri Prakasa described TS membership as largely 'orthodox Hindus in the professions of law and Government service'. Olcott wrote in 1906: 'the preponderating number of our Indian members are Government employees'.² If he was right, then membership as a whole differed from those branch secretaries of whom the profession is known. For among those, lawyers, not government employees, were the biggest category. Lawyers, though depending on government-established courts of law, are not government employees. The medical profession was less represented than the legal one, as Brahmans usually rejected it as connected to body fluids.³ If a secretary gave only an educational institution as his address, we have presumed he was a teacher or assistant headmaster, not a headmaster. Even so, the proportion of headmasters versus teachers and assistant headmasters within the TS seemed to be higher than on schools in general.

Annie Besant did not mind over-representation of lawyers in her Indian organization: 'Whenever I have needed people ready to sacrifice, I have found them in the vakil [lawyer] class.'⁴

Not only Brahmans were theosophists. British in India also joined.⁵ In 1912 in Madras presidency, 'Europeans and Eurasians' were 0.1% of the male population and held 8% of selected government jobs.⁶ Contrary to Dutch in Indonesia, they were definitely a minority in the Indian TS, though certainly more than 0.1% of members.⁷ Early on, General Morgan, and future Major-General⁸ Gordon, later Lady Emily Lutyens,⁹ daughter of Viceroy Lord Lytton, became members. Lieut.-Col. Lane,

¹IRSCHIK, 13-4. There were geographic concentrations of Brahmans within the presidency in and around Madras and Tanjore cities. SCHWARTZBERG, 107. An estimate for all Hindus in British India in 1941 was 3.7% Brahmans; COUSINS(1941), 101.

²ODL, 77, May 1906, 565. SRI PRAKASA, 145.

³BESANT(1921B), 215 wrote of 'classes' within the Brāhmana caste, 'lawyers, exceedingly numerous, ministers of States; medical men, a good many'. The last remark may be an exaggeration.

⁴BESANT(1917A), 62.

⁵'the good company of a number of English and other European aristocrats and men of science and high Indian officials-Generals, Colonels, Deputy Collectors, Magistrates, English Editors (many of them with their wives), who have also joined our Society.' RPB in the *Ceylon Observer*, 31-5-1880: BCW, II, 394.

⁶IRSCHIK, 14.

⁷0.1% would have meant five people for the whole of India. I estimate the percentage of India's TS membership of non-Indian ancestry was in the order of 5 to 10.

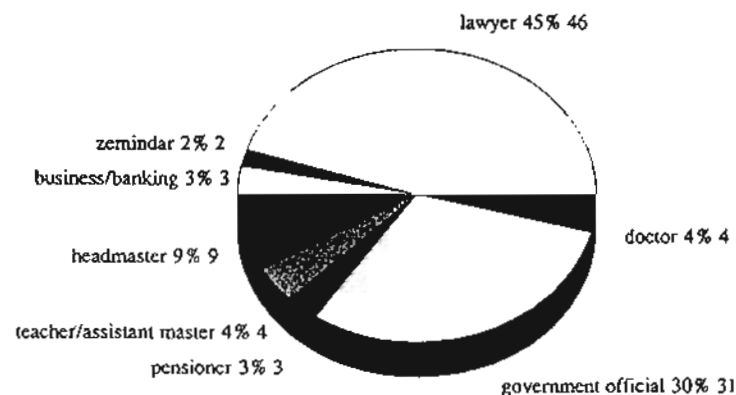
⁸TT, June 1931, 279. On his wife Alice, when he was still a Lt. Col. and police Superintendent: BCW, II, 260.

⁹She was also related by her sister's marriage to Conservative prime minister Arthur Balfour; M. LUTYENS(1975), 225.

Professions of India TS branch secretaries, 1898

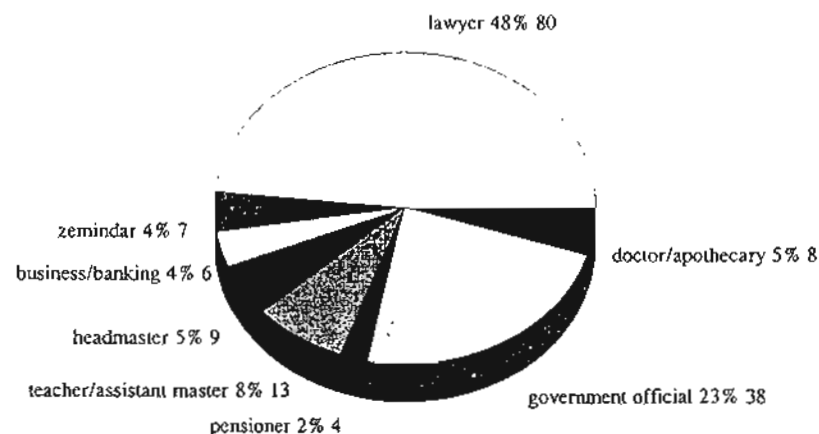
As far as given in General Report on 1898, 58-71

Absolute numbers and %



Professions of India TS branch secretaries, 1905

From General Report on 1905, 96f.



Inspector-General of prisons in India's Central Provinces, 'was certainly a honour to the TS'.¹

Indian princes² and their ministers also gave support. In an important principality within British India, Jammu and Kashmir, the Maharajah, a Hindu prince, though the majority of his subjects were Muslim, joined the TS. He also was the main financial backer of Central Hindu College which Annie Besant had set up.⁴ Landlords joined. Among them Byomkesh Chakravarti, in 1910 secretary of the Bengal Landholders Association, who lobbied against abolition of the zamindar system, which gave certain privileges to Indian landlords.⁵ Also, the president of Bellary lodge in south India, Rai Bahadur A. Sabhapathy Mudaliar, owning sugar mills as well.⁶

From start of the Indian TS in 1879, it had Bombay merchants like Moolji Thackersey as members; there still were in 1917.⁷ Businessmen came from various castes and faiths. Some were Parsi, like Pestonji Khan,⁸ others were Hindu. Tookaram Tanya, though a rich businessman, was sudra by caste; he asked Olcott to confirm him as a Buddhist first, but returned to Hinduism while remaining a theosophist later.⁹

In 1893, a separate TS lodge for vaisyas was founded.¹⁰ Gautama Lodge was its name (Gautama Buddha had not been the best friend of caste divisions). Annie Besant said in her *Lectures on Political Science* to business school students in 1918:

It may be well to begin this Introductory Lecture by saying why, in a College of Commerce, you should be asked to study such a subject as Political Science. It is hoped that from this college, men go out, who will be Captains of Commerce, capable of organizing and directing great commercial undertakings. These must be carried on within States, within Nations, that

¹Annie Besant, 'Headquarters' Notes', *AdB* Aug. 1910, 227.

²They were also popular with Katherine MAYO, 275f., whose views on India differed much from theosophists. As Annie Besant came to India in 1893, Mysore state closed all offices to allow employees to hear her. NETHERCOT(1963), 16f. DAS(1922), 33, then closer to Gandhi than AB was, was much less positive about the princes.

³Like the Mysore Dewan (prime minister); RAO(1913). The Prime Minister of Travancore State in 1904 honoured Besant 'as a goddess, as the living incarnation of the goddess Saravatie'; if the reporting of LUNS, 19 is correct; the spelling 'Saravatie' for Sarasvati is not.

⁴TS General Report on 1904, 62.

⁵S.J. Bose, 'Byomkesh Chakravarti', in S.P. SEN, 248f. He was also involved in *swadeshi* textile manufacture. Bose claims he, like others, was not conservative in all fields; he was 'for emancipation of women'. OWEN(1968), 172 calls him 'non-Theosophist'.

⁶ODL, *TT*, July 1906, 725.

⁷OWEN(1968), 170.

⁸BESANT(1920A), 210: he was a millionaire and a partner of the Khan & Co. firm of Colombo. He joined the TS in 1888 and died in 1920.

⁹ODL, *TT*, Dec. 1898, 135: 'in later years, when Mrs. Besant's open profession of Hinduism and defence of the Aryan caste system, turned the tide backward, I believe he reverted to his hereditary faith with much zeal'.

¹⁰ODL, *TT* Oct. 1902, 3.

have relationships with each other, and for their successful direction, knowledge of National and International conditions and laws, not only artificial but natural laws, must be acquired and assimilated. Moreover, it may be that, hereafter, a man trained here, may become a Minister of Commerce in a Provincial, or in the Supreme Government, and a very poor Minister would he make were he ignorant of Political Science.¹

C. INDONESIA

In June 1906, the TS in the Dutch East Indies was said to have 200 members. In 1913, there were 533. 'Of whom Europeans: 331, Natives: 177, Chinese: 25.'² In 1925, out of 1735 FTS 448 were women, 25.82%. As to age groups then: 20.20% was under 21; 55.89% from 21-40 years old; 36.87% 41-60; 5.2% over 60³ (Dutch pensioners often went back to The Netherlands; rather few Indonesians reached that age).

In 1930, of 2090⁴ members, 1006 were European. This was nearly 0.5% of all Dutch in Indonesia; the highest proportion anywhere in the world! See p. 110. 876 were Indonesian, at least in name nearly all Islamic. So, more Muslim members than in the rest of the world together. 208 were 'Foreign Oriental', as most Asians of non-Indonesian ancestry were categorized. Probably about 190 of those were Chinese; also more Chinese members than in the rest of the world put together.

'Foreign Oriental', 'European', and other categories, I use here as in Dutch East Indies law and Theosophical Society membership statistics then; not tied to actual country of birth.

1. Chinese and Indians

People of (partially at least) Chinese ancestry made up by far most 'Foreign Orientals'. The majority were *peranakan*, whose ancestors had been immigrating since the Middle Ages. Often, they had intermarried with locals. A minority were *totok*, these had come from China recently.

Probably, Chinese first joined the Theosophical Society in Surakarta. A report on the

¹BESANT(1919B), 1. Also reprinted *TMNI*, 1921, 538.

²TIEMERSMA(1907), 214. Mrs C. VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1913), 469. For a more chronological approach than in this chapter, p. 281f.

³NUGRAHA(1989), 277.

⁴*TT* Apr. 1931, 24. *ENI*, VI, 763. 1300 members in 1919: P. Fournier, 'Occulte Werkzaamheid', *TMNI*, 1919, 511. *Tjhoen Tjhoen*, May 1916, quoted 'Persoverzicht', KOT, 1916, 1400: Wonogiri, in the Mangkunegaran, was a numerous branch soon after its founding: '40 Chinese and 120 Native members'; *TT* Apr. 1917, suppl., ii. In 1935, only 9 were left there; *TINI* March 1935, 63.

local lodge speaks of 59 members in 1905, 'of whom twelve were Chinese'.¹ Of Chinese TS members, most may have been *peranakan*; as the TS was very weak in China, most *totok* Chinese lived outside Java,² and *peranakan* tended to adapt to other groups in Indonesia.

Which factors in Indonesia's history helped or hindered its reception of theosophy? As we will see with Indians, Dutch, and Javanese, both social stratification and religious factors were among them. So it was with Chinese.

Secretary Van Hinloopen Labberton thought that, in contrast with Christians, the TS attracted 'the better' Chinese.³ *The Theosophist* wrote: 'Among the native members there are some Chinamen, chiefly priests.'⁴ Religious views among Chinese were changing then. Earlier on, Confucianism had been more of a philosophical strand. Since the 1900's, the Confucian league *Khong Kauw Hwee* sought to change it to an organized religion, with Confucius as a prophet of God. 'The Confucian movement had been associated with members of the officer class.' These were people, to whom the government had given titles like major, or lieutenant, of the Chinese; and privileges. Newly emerging groups among Chinese challenged them. *Khong Kauw Hwee* had personal links to the TS, which also served as its organizational model.⁵

In the 1930's, there came also a Buddhist revival among Chinese. It had links to the TS as well. It spread beyond the Chinese community; see p. 365.

With Arabs, the second largest 'Foreign Oriental' group, their orthodox Islam made TS membership improbable; but the TS' Arjuna schools had at least one Arab pupil.⁶

The third largest 'Oriental' group were people from British India. The census in 1930 counted 30,000 Indians. 21,000, mostly of Hindu or Sikh faith, lived in Sumatra. Most were low paid agriculture workers in the Deli region around Medan; so, unlikely candidates for TS membership. 5500 lived in Java and Madura, of whom 600 in Jakarta. Especially in Central and East Java, most were Muslim, so, like India's Muslims, unlikely to join.⁷ Of immigrants in Jakarta from the Gujarat region, 70% were also Muslim. From Sind (where the Theosophical Society had support, until it became part of

¹COPPEL(1981), 192. TIEMERSMA(1907), 214, on the contrary, said that there were no Chinese FTS yet in 1906

²*Algemeen Handelsblad* 14-11-1912, 'De waarde der theosophie voor Indie', quoted *IG* 1913, MRBT, 99-101, named Chinese TS members in Bogor, Semarang, Surabaya, Malang and Surakarta

³VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1913D), 56: 'As the missions find their proselytes mainly among the lesser people (in British India almost exclusively the Pariah's, in Java the inhabitants of mountain regions, and in the Chinatowns very many who failed in the struggle for life)'

⁴TT Nov. 1910, 314. VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1913E), 450: including 'Chinese priest Jap Bing King'. NUGRAHA(1989), 246: some Chinese members in 1915 were 'trader'.

⁵COPPEL(1981), 190-2; COPPEL(1986), 34-5. See Sneevliet's remark on Chinese FTS; p. 173

⁶'Ardjoenascholen', *TMNI* 1927, 42; claim on the Gambir school

⁷MANI(A), 48-9.

Pakistan) though, most were Hindu, including many Brahmans and businessmen.⁸ Some of these may have joined the TS in Jakarta.⁹ In the capital, the TS may have had some ten Indian members; as in probably the only other case, Medan.³ There, D. Kumaraswamy joined the local TS lodge at 25 years of age in 1931. He worked at the office of an English firm exporting Deli plantation products. So his income was higher than of most fellow Indians there. He had prestige as religious and community leader. Becoming an FTS, 'Here he learned more about Hinduism from Europeans who attended the Society's meetings.'⁴ One should not explain Indian influences in Indonesia's politics, or in Indonesia's TS, mainly from the few Indian inhabitants, respectively members; see p. 294.

2. Dutch

People considered three 'European' categories: 1. Not very numerous groups of foreigners like English and Germans, also Americans and Japanese. 2. *Belanda totok*, recent immigrants intending to go back to The Netherlands. They were most represented in high level jobs of government and big business. *Totok* were roughly one fifth of all Dutch in Indonesia in 1930 (more among adult men). Most TS members on whom I have found biographical data fall under this category. If these data are representative, then the Dutch *peranakan* to *totok* ratio may have been the opposite of Chinese FTS. 3. The biggest group: *Belanda peranakan*, Indies Dutch, or Indo-Europeans. Generally, they were economically less well off than the *totoks*. They had lived in Indonesia for generations, and most had Indonesian as well as Dutch ancestors. Like Chinese *peranakan*, many were better at local languages than, in their case, the Dutch language. K.A. James, prominent theosophist and later Resident of Western Borneo, opposed this much.⁵

Absolutely and proportionally more Dutch joined the Theosophical Society in Indonesia than did British in India. One point here: the Dutch share of the total population

⁸MANI(B), 99; 104; 125. Ibid., 105: before the Second World War, Tamil Hindu businessmen controlled 90% of *batik* textile wholesale trade of Bandung.

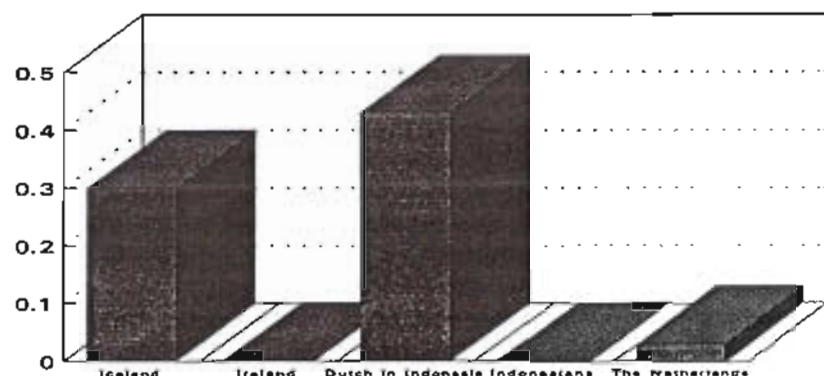
⁹VAN LEEUWEN(1921B), 170, mentions 'British Indian' TS members at a Jakarta meeting. VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1913E), 447 mentions 'Hindhoe's', probably from India, at a celebration in Bogor of Mrs Besant's victory in her first court case against Krishnamurti's father.

³See p. 330. See *TINI* 1932f. for 'Foreign Oriental' membership numbers in Medan.

⁴MANI(A), 67.

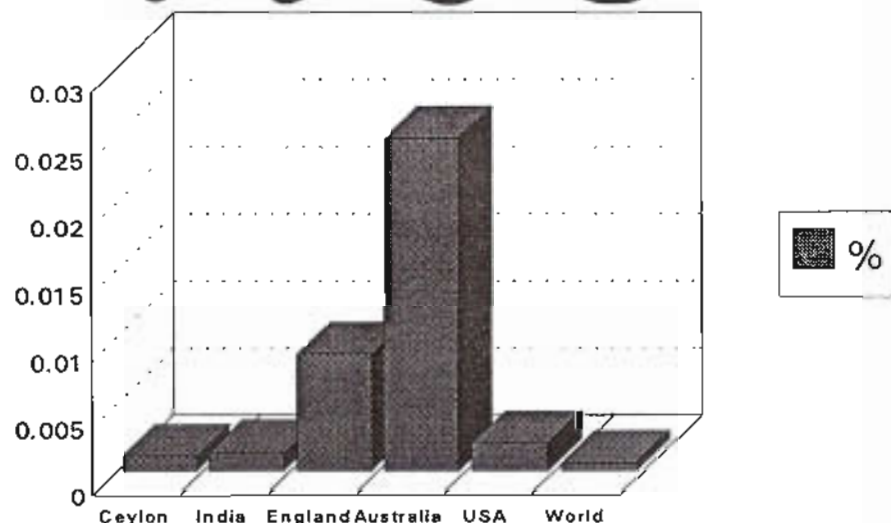
⁵TICHELAAR(1977), 74; RANI, 1919, 215; Resident 1918-20. K.A. JAMES, 378: 'I have heard so-called European children, coming straight from school, speak Malay to one another. Malay should be banned from every family calling itself Dutch and not Native. I mean, between parents and children and children mutually, with servants, of course, Malay is to stay as the medium.'

TS membership as a percentage of total population in some countries



In or about 1930

Sources: TT Apr. 1931, 18-33; OELC July-Aug. 1939; L. DE JONG, vols. 1, 166: 11 al. 102, ROE, 286; THORSTEINSSON, 11



In or about 1930; scale differs from upper graph

was bigger.¹ Why was TS-mindedness among Dutch in Indonesia higher than with Dutch in The Netherlands (see p. 110)? One factor may be that in The Netherlands all social groups, both privileged and underprivileged, were mainly Dutch. In the Dutch East Indies, Dutch tended to be comparatively privileged.²

Among them, traditionally Christian institutions were weaker than in The Netherlands. The *Vredesbode*, a Protestant missionary paper of Garut in Java, called the TS 'representatives of the ANTI-CHRIST'. It did not impress many Dutch there.³

Abraham Kuyper, ex-prime minister, was the leader of the *Anti-Revolutionaire Partij*, the main Protestant political group of The Netherlands. In *De Standaard*, his daily, in 1917 he announced the birth of a small sister party in the East Indies colony. Kuyper thought so far, the 'not very numerous Christians, wandering aimlessly' had been a poor second to 'the Theosophists' on the political stage there.⁴

Kuyper had a personal stake. His son Frederik had gone to the Indies. In the Bandung expatriate environment, 'Theosophy poisoned' young Kuyper in 1912. His father attacked theosophy at a party public meeting, and in many letters to his friend, A.W.F. Idenburg. Idenburg was the only *Anti-Revolutionair* governor-general, from 1909-16. Their correspondence showed worries about the TS in general, and in particular about Frederik Kuyper, and Surabaya Chinese Affairs official Henri Borel, FTS. Borel was an ally against Idenburg of M. van Geuns, editor of right wing liberal daily *Soerabaiasch Handelsblad*. Kuyper wrote 'It is so horrible how, also in this country, the civilized élite abjure Christianity and wallow in Theosophy'. The Indies worried him still more. Idenburg wrote to Kuyper: 'This theosophy progresses terribly here. I really consider it as still more dangerous (in our times) than Islam.' 'So, this will be the future religion of our poor Indies.'

¹LOCHER-SCHOLTEN(1994) Britons were 0.05% of India's population, Dutch 0.34% of Dutch East Indies population in 1930

²LOCHER-SCHOLTEN(1994) points out another difference between Dutch in Indonesia and in The Netherlands: in 1860, 50% of professionally active Europeans in Indonesia were civil servants. In 1930, this was 28%; in The Netherlands, it was 6%. Figures in STEVENS(1994), 148: 1860, 80%, 1930, 30%. One should add: relatively highly paid civil servants, as here Indonesians had many of the lower ranking government jobs CADY(1964), 538: in 1938, 42% of government administration were Indonesians (far less than Indians in India; see p. 104). FASSEUR(1995), 44: then, of high level officials less than 7% were Indonesian. TILKEMA(1932), 58, estimated that 50 among theosophists in Indonesia were teachers; 18 at theosophical schools, others at government schools.

³VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1916E), 148.

⁴Quoted IC, 1918 (40), 898; DE BRUIJN/PUCHINGER, 587. In 1918-1940, Christian parties always got a majority in Dutch parliament. Then, of seats for 'Europeans' in the *Volksraad* (the closest Indonesia had to a parliament), very much a minority was Christian parties'. The *Politiek-Economische Bond* and later the *Vaderlandsche Club* were big parties among Dutch voters in Indonesia. Their allies in The Netherlands, like them linked to big business and not to a Christian church, the *Economische Bond* and *Verbond voor Nationaal Herstel*, respectively, got only 1-2% of the vote at their maximum.

In 1915, Idenburg went to Protestant divine service in Bogor, where he resided, to a congregation 'very far from being the Bogor élite'. That year, he felt uncomfortable about the 'theosophical tendency, fashionable nowadays'; as he did on masonry.¹

Freemasonry and spiritualism, both strong before the TS came, provided a springboard for it. I could investigate whether memberships overlapped only for Javanese Masons; see p. 117. Co-masonry, with links to the TS, started in Indonesia in Jakarta in 1911. In 1925, it had six branches: Jakarta, Surabaya, Semarang, Bandung, Bogor and Yogyakarta.² More than half of European TS Fellows had also joined the Liberal Catholic Church in 1930.³

Government official A.J. Hamerster later became international TS Treasurer in Adyar.⁴ Like K.A. James, he also was a prominent LCC member. Other members were: P.W. van den Broek, *assistent resident*⁵ of Probolinggo in Java; the ex-director of the Native Prison in Surabaya, later in Mojokerto, W. Elderenbosch.⁶

Cornelia Rensina van Mook-Bouwman, according to her membership number, probably joined the TS in 1907 or shortly afterwards. In 1922, she was secretary of the Surabaya lodge. She published a poem on reincarnation and karma, 'Do not mourn!', in *TMNI* 1922, 51. Mrs Van Mook was also a member of co-masonry. Her husband was A. van Mook, of men-only masonry, and alderman of Surabaya. Her son was the future

¹DE BRUIJN/PUCHINGER, 202; 285; 296; 301-2; 374-5. SCHOUTEN, 42; 59. Not 'van Idenburg', as in G.E. HALL(1968), 936. VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1913D), 53

²Spiritualism: ROMEIN-VERSCHOOR, 64f; KARTINI, 184-5. Masonry: RICHARDUS, 16f. TSUCHIYA(1987), 42; Semarang masonic lodge 'played a major part' starting *TMNI*. Theosophy outjumped the masonic springboard: STEVENS(1994), 177; 259; in 1900, there were 714 masons; in 1930, 1402; less than FTS then. Masons, all male apart from co-masons, had fewer recruiting possibilities. In Indonesia, among Dutch in general and theosophists, women were a minority, unlike the TS in some countries. VAN DER VEUR(1968), 41-2, not naming the TS, mentions 'strong attraction' to masonry 'for some Eurasians'. Co-masonry: 'De algemeene Gemeenschappelijke Vrijmetselarij', by Abr., *TMNI* 1926, 311-8

³ENI, vol. VIII, 1890: at the 1930 census, 615 identified themselves as LCC members. Presumably, few of these were Asians or non-TS Europeans.

⁴He lectured in The Netherlands on 'C.W. Leadbeater as Hero, Sage and Saint.' *TB* Feb. 1931, 91.

⁵D. van Hinloopen Labberton, 'Soenan Bonang's leeringen', *TMNI*, 1917, 507; VAN DEN DOEL(1995), 251. *Assistent resident* was a rank in colonial administration, roughly equivalent to Javanese *bupati*, below governor-general, governor, and resident, and above 'controleur'. Van den Broek co-founded *TMNI* in 1901; VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1913B), 2. He wrote *Leerboek der Exoterische Theosofie*; out by 1918.

⁶His 'Toestanden in de inlandsche gevangenis te Mojokerto', *TMNI* 1920, 590-2, favoured prison reform on US lines, on which Governor Hunt of Arizona had written in TS papers; A. Besant, *WT*, 77, July 1921, 313. Indonesian prison doctor Joedo and public prosecutor Raden Soemijaringprodjo at Mojokerto, both also theosophists, were angry with Elderenbosch as they thought he had not been a good director, and had depicted conditions as worse than they were. See articles by M.B. van der Jagt, D. van Hinloopen Labberton, R.P. Soemijaringprodjo, and A. van Leeuwen in *TMNI*, 1921, 47-55.

governor-general, H. van Mook.¹

H.J. Kiewiet de Jonge, 'from a well-known patrician family', was an active member of the *Algemeen Nederlandsch Verbond*, which promoted contacts between Dutch speakers in The Netherlands, the Indies, Flanders, and South Africa, as well. His father, also H.J., chaired it. In 1916, he was adjunct referendary in the governor-general's secretariat and sat in Bogor local council.

He then wrote *De Politiek der Toekomst* [The Politics of the Future]. He gave as this book's 'claim ... an objective doctrine of the social processes in their inter-relationship, a system of objective political norms, to cut a long story short, a political system.' And a contribution to the 'science of ideology. La science des idées considérées comme simple phénomènes de l'esprit humain [the science of ideas, considered simply as phenomena of the human spirit].' After work at papers in Indonesia, Kiewiet de Jonge in 1924-6 was editor in chief of Dutch daily *De Telegraaf*; it had promoted Dutch theosophists in their early days. From 1928 to 1933 he represented the Dutch East Indies government to the *Volksraad*.²

A.G. Vreede was secretary to the government in 1917-1918, later head of the government Labour Office and Liberal Catholic Church bishop, eventually Presiding Bishop.³ In the army, Major Kooy was one of numerous FTS.⁴

Indonesia's first TS general secretary until 1922 was Dirk van Hinloopen Labberton.⁵ Labberton, 1876-1961, born in Doesburg, had been in the Indies since 1894, at first as technician and manager in a sugar processing plant. He claimed he had joined the TS in 1899. He married Frederique Henriette J. [mostly abridged as C[oo]s.] van Moitman, from a plantation director's family; she was a theosophist too.

In 1905, *The Theosophist* still misspelled: 'C.V. Heinloopen Labberton'. They would get to know him better soon. In 1910, he was in Adyar for eight months, studying both Sanskrit, which 'cannot be explained save in a Theosophical way', and occult colour doctrine, then still quoting Rudolf Steiner. Labberton there was in 'nearly daily' contact

¹NUGRAHA(1989), 246; 256; 272. STEVENS(1994), 234. Ibid: another co-mason was Mrs A.J. Resink-Wilkens, wife of Yogyakarta sugar entrepreneur Th.G.J. Resink.

²RANI, 1917, 719. BAX(1991), 49. HERING(1992), 1; VII. DE GRAAF, 342. VAN DER WAL(1963), 717; BROEZE, 24. KIEWIET DE JONGE(1917B), 3; 17. The KITLV's copy in Leiden of *De Politiek der Toekomst* was formerly property of fellow theosophist Mrs Corporaal-van Achterbergh; it had cost her 10,000 Dutch East Indies rupiahs.

³Referendary since 1910; government secretary since 3-1-1917, RANI, 1917; 1918. KOCH(1956), 198; TILLET(1982), 260. He also was a 'Very Illustrious Brother 30°' in co-masonry; TICHELAAAR(1977), 72; and a contributor to *Koloniale Studieden* magazine on social and political affairs; KIEWIET DE JONGE(1917A), 186. Marxist *Soeara Rajat*, 25-5-1919, 3. 'Pergerakan Ra'iat': KS was by 'very clever and very rich people, in Dutch Wetenschappelijke kapitalisten [scientific capitalists].'

⁴*TMNI*, 1916, 101.

⁵VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1913A), 118. VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1910). DVH, 2-3. TICHELMAN(1994).

with Leadbeater, who stayed with him on a later tour of Indonesia. As a good follower of Annie Besant, he did not really separate his theosophy from his politics; as we will see, he, *The Theosophist* in 1919, and others remarked so.

Labberton was secretary of the Dutch East Indies committee for the 1910 Brussels World Fair, and wrote the catalogue of the Indies exhibits. For some time, he became Batavia Society of Arts and Sciences' director. In 1915, he educated future officials at the government school; and was one of the four highest ranking officials of the Department of Education and Religion.¹ In the 1920's, he went back to The Netherlands and became headmaster of the 'Theosofisch Lyceum', a TS secondary school in Naarden. He became a D. Litt. at Amsterdam University in 1931, after writing a thesis on constitutional history.

In 1915 in Malang, the Krebbe sugar factory was also the address of the TS lodge: members, including its president, Mrs M. van Gelder-van Motman, related by marriage to Labberton, and G. Müller, its secretary, were linked to the factory management. Quite a few others' addresses on membership lists had the abbreviation 'sf', sugar factory.

Several officials of the *Koninklijke Pakkervaat Maatschappij*, a private company with a virtual shipping monopoly between Indonesian islands, were FTS in 1916.² *Jonkheer* N.J. Westpalm van Hoon van Burgh was secretary and treasurer of the Rubber Planters' League at Bandung, deputy manager of the Dutch Indies Commercial Bank, and sat in the executive of the Indies agribusiness syndicate.³ TS membership also included tea estate managers, like C.R. Krijgsman and H.E. Nouthout of West Java.⁴

J. van der Leeuw was director and major shareholder of the big Van Nelle coffee and tea company, based on plantations in Indonesia. Annie Besant awarded him the T. Subba Row Medal. He also was an LCC priest. He spent time in Australia with Leadbeater, in the Indies, in The Netherlands where he became TS General Secretary; and in South Africa, where he died, flying his plane.⁵

¹VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1913A), 116-7. VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1911). SCHOUTEN, 167. *RANI* 1915, 290. *TT* Sept. 1905, suppl. lii.

²NUGRAHA(1989), 252; 256; 263.

³VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1913A), 8. SCHOUTEN, 186; he married the daughter of the manager of the governor-general's palaces. *RANI* 1915, 498; 501. *Jonkheer* is the lowest Dutch title of nobility.

⁴MANGOENPOERWOTO(1916-17).

⁵ROE, 243. *TMNI* 1927, 45. KOESOEMODININGRAT(1921), 358. HARMSSEN, 227. M. LUTYENS(1975), 203. J. de Munck Mortier, 'Bij het heengaan van Dr. J.J. van der Leeuw', *TiNI* Nov. 1934, 131. DE RAAT; the company was also involved in tobacco, groceries, and provisioning of ships.

3.Javanese

Indonesia's most densely populated island was Java. There, especially in its centre and east, the eclectic or syncretic position of theosophy had potential appeal¹ among the nobles with links to the princely courts, the *priyayi*.² The theosophical monthly used *satrija* (from Sanskrit kshatriya) as a synonym.³ Indian influences on society had been strong in the early Middle Ages.

In Indonesia's late Middle Ages, gradually, from the northwest, Islamic coastal states, based on trade, arose.⁴ The agriculture-based Hindu kingdom in the interior of West Java in the 16th century was conquered by the sultan of north coast Banten.

Rulers of the great East and Central Java realm, at odds with Muslims of Surabaya and Demak near their north coasts, decided on a forward defence. They became sultans of Mataram, political as well as spiritual leaders of the Islamic faithful. In Java, the Brahman caste practically ceased to exist. The *priyayi* now topped the social ladder. Princes, though Muslim now, also kept alive pre-Islam, even pre-Hindu, traditions. Many Javanese continued to see the Mahabharata as deeply significant. That the Mataram monarchs later had to recognize Dutch suzerainty did not change this.

The realm was divided among different branches of the family; eventually, there were four ruling princes. Of those, the sultan and the Paku Alam resided in Yogyakarta. The two others, the most prestigious one, the *susuhunan* [roughly, king or emperor], and the Mangku Ngoro, lived in Surakarta.

Indonesian FTS mainly came from Javanese princely families and 'others from the *priyayi* class'.⁵ Several, like Raden Mas Aryo Woerjaningrat in Surakarta, and some in West Java, were *bupati*; traditionally, a hereditary job within the higher aristocracy.⁶

¹SOERIOKOESOEMO(1920B), 10: 'The Javanese usually wants to have nothing to do with theosophy and yet he thinks theosophically, in a general sense.' *TMNI* 1916, 534: 'Every civilized Javanese recognizes Theosophy's value.'

²This social category was also the most accessible to Dutch influences, like theosophy as it came to Indonesia; GEERTZ(1960), 235-6. Javanese religious ideas also influenced Dutch inhabitants.

³Warga Oepasaka, 'Wewahan katrangan bab oetamaning koerban ioemrapiing darmanpjoen Brahmana', *PT* 1920-1 (14), 102: 'Satrija (priyaji)'. *WED.* Oct.-Nov. 1921, 176-7: 'In daily life, one becomes a satrija by birth. One who is born the child of a sudra, cannot possibly be a satrija.' *Satrija* is not completely a synonym of *priyayi* though; it may have the wider meaning of (not necessarily noble) 'fighter'.

⁴P.L. Narasimham on Indonesian medieval history, 'The ancient Hindu colonies', *TT* Oct. 1915, 61; not very complementarily: 'Islām with all its terrors appeared.'

⁵*Algemeen Handelsblad* 14-11-1912, 'De waarde der theosophie voor Indië', quoted *IG* 1913, *MRBTD*, 99-101.

⁶Dutch: 'regent'; the highest position Indonesians might have in Dutch colonial administration. NUGRAHA(1989), 261; NAGAZUMI(1972), 192. In 1930, there were 76 *bupati* on Java and Madura islands; L. DE JONG, vol. 11a1, 183.

Raden Mas Toemenggoeng Pandji [a high title of court nobility] Djajeng Irawan presided over Djokdjakarta¹ lodge. He was the *patih* [prime minister] of the Paku Alam principality.² Prince Pakoe Alam VII (official name before his 40th birthday: Soerjodilogo) himself was also a member; and wrote the libretto for a *wayang* play at a TS congress.

Pakoe Alam VII was one of three Javanese who certainly joined both the TS and freemasonry.³ Though three is not a big overlap, these were all prominent, both in politics and in the TS. The other two were Radjiman and Sarwoko Mangoenkoesoemo.

Raden Mas T. Sarwoko Mangoenkoesoemo was the *bupati patih*, the prime minister, of Prince Mangkoe Negoro VII. He joined the Indies TS executive in 1934. The TS congress of 1936 was at his residence.⁴ Raden Radjiman Wediodipoerō was the court physician of *Susuhunan* Pakoe Boewono X Witjaksana of Surakarta⁵. This prince would later grant him the higher nobility name Wediodiningrat. Like Woerjaningrat, Radjiman was an important leader of the Javanese league *Budi Utomo*.

The oldest son of the *susuhunan* and special military aide to the governor-general, Prince Ngabehi IV (also spelt Hangabehi), joined in 1913. From 1939-44, he would rule as Pakoe Boewono XI.⁷

Notable was the elder brother of Pakoe Boewono X. The ruler gave him a title no one had held since the seventeenth century, of higher rank than other *pangeran*. This Prince Aryo Koesoemodiningrat was a major at the Royal Netherlands Indies Army's general staff.⁸ Influenced by Mr D. van Hinloopen Labberton, B. K. P. H. Koesoemodiningrat, besides the *ngèlmus* [doctrines], learnt in his youth from then well known gurus, had

¹Old style spelling for Yogyakarta.

²PT 1917-18 (11), 32. TS Annual Report on 1905, 137. Misspelt 'Trawan' in the 1903 and 1904 Annual Reports; Irawan in Javanese tradition is the name of one of Arjuna's sons.

³NUGRAHA(1989), 260. A. van Leeuwen, 'Uit de pen der redactie', *TNI* 1922, 218. VAN DER VEUR(1976), 34-6. LIGOU, 610: 'Few Chinese and Malays had joined [masonry]. Never more than a few score at the same time; Th. Stevens, personal communication. They included Paku Alam V and VI though; STEVENS(1994), 209 TSUCHIYA(1987), 53: 50 Indonesian and 14 Chinese masons in 1940.

⁴RANSOM(1938), 535. *TNI* Nov. 1934, 126.

⁵NAGAZUMI(1972), 192: he joined before 1909. TICHELMAN(1985), 617-8. court physician 1906-36.

⁶Born 1866, he ruled 1893-1939; DE GRAAF, 483. This realm was abolished politically after 1945 independence, unlike the Yogyakarta sultanate. In *TNI*, 1916, 455-64, 'Avondfeest in de Kraton', Annie H. v. V. described her presentation at the Surakarta palace, to which she had been invited along with the Resident, in October 1914. Witjaksana in Javanese here means 'the wise'. It may mean (human or divine) 'wisdom' or 'government policy'. TSUCHIYA(1987), 1f. See p. 315. According to RADJIMAN(1939), 84, he had been 'witjaksānā in spiritual sense, so in the true sense.'

⁷LARSON(1987). Mrs C. VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1913), 460. SCHOUTEN, 65.

⁸LOC, 1-5-1917, 1e blad, 'Comité-Indië Weerbaar in Nederland.' *TNI* Jan. 1933, 15-6.



Prince Koesoemodiningrat, from: *Djawa* 12 (1932), 318

embraced the theosophical doctrine.¹ Leadbeater, George and Rukmini Arundale stayed at his palace. In 1924, he addressed the TS world congress in Adyar. As an 'ardent theosophist', 'completely absorbed by theosophy', he often wore the TS seal cast into diamonds and other precious jewels. He died in 1932.²

Another aristocrat officer, Raden Mas Pandji Brototenojo, rose to lieutenant-colonel. In the 1900's, he co-founded Surakarta TS lodge; he was often its president.³ Shiraishi describes this lodge in 1916 as

¹SASTRASOEOWIGNJA, 318. Ibid., 319: in 1923, he established a dancing school with *Jong-Java*, of which his son-in-law Djaksodipoero was national chairman; LARSON(1987), 137. He helped to establish, and sponsored, the Arjuna school in Surakarta; VAN LEEUWEN(1921D), 344-5. He wrote on traditional Java textiles; *ENI*, vol. II, 248. *Pewartia Theosofie* advertised his writings *Rasa Djawa* [The Javanese Idea; in Malay] and *Kemadjoean lahir batin* [Outer and inner progress; Javanese].

²TT, Jan. 1933, 396. V. Zimmermann, 'Een zeldzaam feest in den kraton van Soerakarta', *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal- land en Volkenkunde*, 1919-'21 (59), 480-5; 481. *TNI* Jan. 1933, 15-6.

³*TNI* Jan. 1937, 32, 'In memoriam Br. R. M. Pandji Brototenojo'

a prestigious meeting place of Dutch, Indo-European, Chinese, Kasunan (Susuhunan's realm) and Mangkunegara princes, aristocrats, and high-ranking officials.¹ Prince of the Paku Alam dynasty, Soeriatmo Soerikoesoemo, FTS, thought:

The division of tasks is not alien to the Javanese society. The darma [special duty] of the Brahmana, the Ksatria, the Vaisha, and the Soedra, they have learned to understand. They look after rank and station remarkably.² Soerikoesoemo's magazine *Wederopbouw* wrote:

What, then, is the aim of the caste system? To point out to the people the fourfold Path of Discipleship.³

Soerikoesoemo, however, thought this purposeful stability was under threat as industrial workers rose:

And with Dr. Radjiman, we protest strongly against an endeavour: to make the Javanese tiller into a factory-slave as soon as possible. Very impertinently irresponsible is he who dares to utter such a thought. For a factory-slave with a jimat - we already dare to predict it now after the Garut⁴ affair - becomes a danger to society, like an anarchist, who walks around everywhere with a bomb and threatens society. Not the jimat makes a person into an anarchist, but the factory-slave in the Orient is the hotbed and the focus of anarchy itself. It only takes a small push to make the Javanese factory-slave a full-fledged "degenerate Samin".⁵

Jimat in the quote means amulet. Though Indonesia's theosophists and leftists agreed that jimats did not cause this Garut conflict, they disagreed on effects of amulets as on causes of class conflicts.⁶

¹SHIRAIISHI(1990A), 120.

²SOERIKOESOEMO(1923A), 15. His *Wederopbouw* referred not only to workers, but also to Indonesian non-noble businessmen, as *soedra* (see p. 327. Sanskrit: *sudra*). In a debate versus Soerikoesoemo, J.B. Wens, supporter of secular Indonesian nationalist Tjipto Mangoenkoesoemo, said: 'It will be the task of this and the next generation of Javanese to finish off once and for all the old Hindu caste system.' SOERIKOESOEMO et al.(1918), 39. Former Dutch Resident H.E. Steinmetz, in 'Reisindrukken-herinneringen-beschouwingen', *NIE*, May 1922, 163f., wrote: 'And how the Theosophists work and win followers! By continually pointing out the ancient high civilization on Java -mostly based on the Hindus- they have the sympathies of the higher classes.'

³Article 'Het kastensysteem in het licht der democratie', *WED*, 1920, 234f; *ibid.*, 235.

⁴Region of Java where an anti-government protest had been stifled at the cost of lives. See p. 233.

⁵Soerikoesoemo in *WED*, 1919, 158. Samin: see p. 123. Dutch right-wing liberal and 'advocate of colonial business', Balhasar Heldring, in his 1925 book *Van Calcutta naar Ceylon* also opposed industrialization because of political effects. He thought it would change the Javanese from a 'vegetable sleeping person' into a 'ferocious lion'. Quoted VAN BERGEN, 32.

⁶Raden Mas Noto Soeroto in The Hague daily *Het Vaderland* extensively quoted Soerikoesoemo's article, and added: 'For those believing in the power of prayer, like the Christian Scientists, or in thought power, like the Theosophists, and in general for those who admit the possibility of ensoulment of "dead" objects under certain circumstances, belief in a jimat is not

As social factors might attract part of the *priyayi* category to theosophy, so might religious factors. The TS was less successful with Javanese than with Hindus in India; but far more successful than with Muslims in India. Many *priyayis*' religious views were in between these two.

Clifford Geertz, in an influential, though not universally accepted,¹ study, divided Javanese society into three categories. He saw those three roughly as both social groups and as groups with different views on religion. I have summarized that view² in this table. As Geertz himself wrote, not all individuals fit neatly; like nobles or poor peasants who are strict Muslims.

	SOCIAL CATEGORY	VIEWS on RELIGION
<i>Prijaji</i>	nobles	syncretism with Hindu tendency
<i>Santri</i>	traders; upper and middle income peasants	Islam
<i>Abangan</i>	poor peasants and workers	syncretism with tendency towards animism and/or secularism

The religious make-up of middle level categories differed from, for instance, India; that made recruitment to the TS in principle less likely than there.

According to Ricklefs, theosophy arose in Indonesia at a crucial time for its aristocrats.³ Writing of some twenty years later, Reeve put the TS in the context of:

nonsensical at all.' Quoted *IG*, 1920 (42), 161. Leftist Soekirno, in *KM* 24-7-1919, quoted *IPO* 30/1919, 'Het gebeurde te Leles, Garoet', 2: 'The government is really wrong, if it links the jimat issue to this affair. Indeed, people call our nation superstitious. Before incidents happened in Leles, many of us, those who still are stupid, believed in nonsensical things bordering on the miraculous. This belief decreases now though, as our countrymen understand more and more that jimats are useless ... The rice [which peasants who were killed had refused to sell to the government] has killed the people, not the jimat.' Old spelling: djimat.

¹For instance NOER, 19, objected, seeing social and religious categories of people as quite different. See for the various views: J.P.M. van de Pasch, 'De criticus wikt, Clifford beschikt. Recensies van 'The Religion of Java': een kritische beschouwing', *Jambatan* 9 (1991), 1, 3-30.

²GEERTZ(1960), 6; 117.

³RICKLEFS(1993), 129: 'The higher aristocratic elite of Java was, by 1900, at a low point in prestige, authority and self-assurance. ... Many of the younger generation left administrative service and sought careers in law or medicine. Others produced intellectual movements which had a clearly anti-Islamic content, and which were linked to Theosophy. Such movements attributed Java's unhappy state to the spread of Islam ...' As for 'Others': there was some overlap, like Radjiman. On 'careers in law', see p. 121, n. 1.

the aggressive promotion by other Indonesians [largely *santri*, respectively *abangan*] of reformist Islam and Marxism suggested the possibility of the creation of a future state hostile to the [*priyayi*] tradition and to the people who came from it.¹

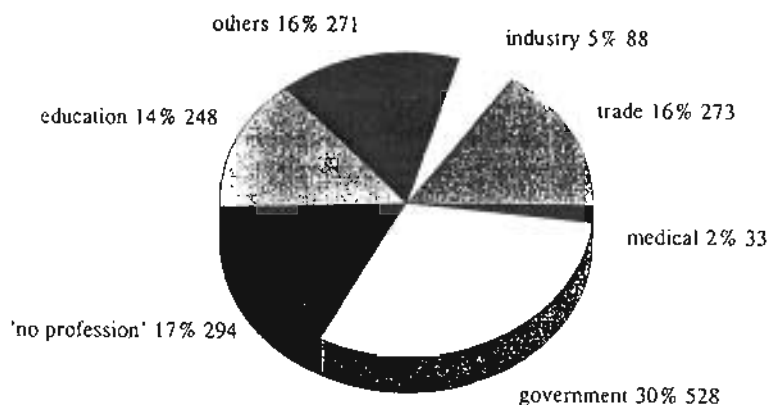
Van Hinloopen Labberton in 1913 had a 'trickle down' theory on theosophy in Javanese society:

... so far we are very exclusive in accepting people as TS members. Exclusively *priyayi* want to be inscribed in our books; a very good policy, as the survey is easier that way, and still in the end the common man benefits, if true religiosity and strong sense of duty and altruism adorn the powerful. If the higher level people practice the Theosophical lifestyle, the lesser ones will follow automatically.²

Recently, a Javanese of just below the nobility level had joined; at least according to Labberton then. He was Soemotjito, a retired village headman from the Purworejo region, who had disagreements with Muslim clerics.³

Professional categories of TS members in Indonesia, 1925

Computed from NUGRAHA(1989), 277



As for professions, the role of lawyers in early twentieth century Indonesian theosophy,

¹REEVE(1985), 8.

²VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1913D), 54.

³VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1913D), 49-50. NUGRAHA(1989), 263, though, has 'Mas Soemotjito'; the lowest title of nobility. Also, *ibid.*, 34: Soemotjito was a 'priyayi'.

and politics, was less than in India.¹ Probably, the reverse was true for doctors in politics, though not in theosophy.² The table shows occupational sectors for all nationalities together. It is unclear to what category for instance plantation managers were assigned: 'industry' as there was sugar processing with many plantations? 'trade'? 'No profession' probably includes housewives and rentiers.

Leadbeater, lecturing in Ujung Pandang, saw race differences behind class differences in Indonesia. Many of the upper classes of 'those whom people consider to be Chinese or Malays really belong to the Aryan race ... One finds the purely Atlantic types among the lower people.'³ An article in the TS' Indies monthly stated that classes of Java differed according to origin in the theosophical race doctrine:

It is mostly presumed that three layers of nations have reached Java. In the hoariest antiquity, the Polynesians inhabited Java. These probably belong, or are closely related to, the 3rd root-race, the race without a sense of taste⁴ from the great southern continent [Lemuria]. It was this race that committed the terrible sin [supposed sex with animals, which had evolved from humans earlier on], of which the monkeys are the silent witnesses. ... Next, there seems to have been an influx of Malays, maybe from Cambodia, according to Professor Veth. After that, Java was colonized for a long time by a family of the white race from Kalinga [India], of which Java still bears the marks. The Aryan colonists all the time tried to keep separate from the native people, in which they did not succeed completely, but certainly more or less, and up to today they have their own language [aristocrat form of Javanese] and their own traditions. A comparison of a noble family from the kratons [palaces] of the principalities, and one from the *goenong*⁵ proves that strikingly. The latter stare with bovine eyes and open mouth towards the world, only half-conscious of the crass material spheres. The educated European will immediately recognize his equal, maybe even his superior, in the Javanese nobleman with his culture and refinement. That which is nonsense to demand for the *wong dessa* [village inhabitants] (the vote, influence on government decisions, etc.), is not so for the nobility. That is why there is much misunderstanding. ... One should understand the Asian situations, which are very different from the European ones, more. And that may only be done with knowledge, love and

¹Contrary to what one may think from Ricklefs; see p. 119, n. 3. Only since 1906 were there Indonesian law students in universities; KONING(1968), 4; and later also in Jakarta law school. L. DE JONG, vol. 11a1, 143: in 1940, a total of 160 Indonesians had finished their law studies; including those not working as lawyers. *Kemadjoean Hindia* 17/22-3-1924, quoted IPO 1, 1924, 560: 'only 12' Indonesian jurists. FASSEUR(1995), 145: 40 Indonesian lawyers in 1939. Daniel S. Lev, 'Origins of the Indonesian Advocacy', *Indonesia* Apr. 1976, 135-70; 136: in the late 1950's, there were 189 lawyers per million people in India; in Indonesia, 17 lawyers only.

²LARSON(1987), 90: to many *priyayi*, doctor was a low prestige profession (as with Brahmins).

³Vragen. Mgr. C. W. Leadbeater te Makassar', *TMNI* 1926, 595.

⁴Theosophists believed only Aryans, the fifth root-race, had five senses; the third one ('Lemurians') only three, lacking taste (and smell). BLAVATSKY(1908), 113.

⁵Mountainous back-country. Mountains on Java are volcanic; see Leadbeater on volcanoes, p. 311. As Prince Mangkoe Negoro VII acknowledged, in fact Javanese princes often intermarried with non-nobles. Quoted E. LOCHER-SCHOLTEN/A. NIEHOF, *Indonesian women in focus. Past and present notions*. Leiden, KITLV, 1992.

goodwill, that is, with the help of theosophy!¹

This article led to an angry letter to the editor, speaking of 'the most intolerant bigotry, or racial or social nonsense.' It thought that the editor should reprimand 'Een Indische Stem' [An Indies Voice], especially on his 'bovine eyes and open mouth' clause. 'I, too, do not want to risk that I will have to call to arms my fellow party members against the theosophists, against whom I have nothing, can have nothing.'²

'Een Indische Stem' may have been C.A.H. von Wolzogen Kühr, former *assistent resident*. His critic may have been Tjipto Mangoenkoesoemo of the *Nationaal Indische Partij*. I have no conclusive evidence for this. I base it on a similar polemic they had earlier on; see p. 303; and the *Indische Gids* referring to Kühr writing in 1921 in *Theosofisch Maandblad*; it then had no articles under his name, so possibly under an alias. Editor Anton van Leeuwen did not mention which reader, or from what political party, the letter's author was; or to whom he reacted. Van Leeuwen replied:

We believe that this [letter to the editor] is a wrong view. The person who writes under the pseudonym 'An Indies Voice' is someone who (being in Holland now) already more than once, both in the [Theosophical] monthly and elsewhere, has put his pen at the service of the Indies' evolution, and certainly does not try to do that by bringing discord.³

Van Leeuwen pointed out, on, also Indonesian, (pre-)history:

Thanks to the occult data, which were given to us by the Leaders of the TS and by its workers, our historical knowledge is based on a very much greater body of facts and embraces infinitely more extensive periods in time than those which official science has at its disposal ... So, one should not be surprised that, if they are relict, also in our Insulinde [Indonesia] some traces of these Lemurian races are left, who peopled our earth 10 or 11 million years ago. ... Though not explained [by British theosophist author Scott Elliott], still one can gather that also in our Indies there are still such scattered Lemurian leftovers, and probably one can find these with the still so little developed tribes in Central Borneo, Celebes and on New Guinea. It is difficult to decide now if it is correct that such tribes still live also in the mountains of Java.⁴

This racial and social doctrine on Indonesia, while theosophists saw India as sacred Aryan land, may be one aspect of why the Dutch East Indies TS section was mainly European, contrary to the Indian one.

Yet, sometimes the section tried to influence peasants. By permission of the Dutch Resident of Rembang, in September 1915 Van Hinloopen Labberton, another prominent theosophist, Raden Djojosoediro, and two others, attempted to persuade the Samin movement.⁵

¹EEN INDISCHE STEM(1921), 508-9.

²Quoted VAN LEEUWEN(1921F), 535.

³VAN LEEUWEN(1921F), 535.

⁴VAN LEEUWEN(1921F), 536.

⁵Pemitran, 43, March 1916; quoted 'Persoverzicht. De Inlandsche pers', KOT, 1916, 784f.

About 1890, in northern Central Java, Soerontiko Samin, a peasant like most of his followers, had founded this non-violent anti-government movement. They spoke *ngoko* [Javanese as between equals] to *priyayi*, shocking them. They refused to pay taxes, or to work at unpaid labour like auxiliary police service. The local *bupati* imposed harsh penalties. This did not work, though. Worried officials thought one might try convincing as an alternative to force.

Saminism was definitely not Muslim in the orthodox sense. 'Nor does it seem to have been Hindu-Buddhist in inspiration.'¹ According to Dutch official A.J.N. Engelenberg, they were as opposed to theosophy as orthodox Islam was.² The theosophical delegates thought that Samin's movement had on the one hand 'some undesirable aspects, which presumably arose through stupidity; yet, really many good things too.'

When the sides met, 'Mr van Hinloopen Labberton had tried to convince them [Saminists] of the fairness of the auxiliary police service which the authorities demanded. He wanted to try to undermine their doctrine, by making them a present of a different faith, as a substitute.' They remained unconvinced.³

An international attempt to instill the simplest of theosophical tenets into 'simple' people, the Karma and Reincarnation Legion, had an Indies branch for some time. 'But there, it wilted away and petered out quietly through lack of effort and lack of interest from the class for whom it was intended.' Later, in 1926, a re-founded Legion had 200 members; 'few' of them were Indonesian.⁴

Still, later, in Java and the islands immediately to the east, as the only instance in the worldwide TS, hundreds of peasants became involved. In 1932, the Indies executive wanted to have an auxiliary organization (Dutch: *nevenorganisatie*). First plans were to call it *Kawan Theosofie*, Friends of Theosophy. Eventually, *Pemitran Tjahja*, the Association of the Light, was founded for 'the workers and the peasants'.⁵ I found no further mention of workers. The 1930's were the years of mass membership drives, mainly among peasants, of Subjects' Leagues of the Central Java principalities. Their slogan was 'The prince and people at one.'⁶

¹RICKLEFS(1993), 167; it still exists. KORVER, 132. ILETO, 225-6.

²VAN DER WAL(1967), 461. To A. Baars, 'Maar een Javaan. Het schandaal der particuliere landerijen van Soerabaja', *HVV*, 10-1-1916, 53, Saminism was a 'religious communist movement.' The Dutch government considered it 'anarchist communist'; *KV* on 1919 (1920), 9.

³Pemitran, 43, March 1916; quoted 'Persoverzicht. De Inlandsche pers', *KOT*, 1916, 784f.

⁴A. van Leeuwen, 'Het Parijsche Paasch-Congres', *TMNI* 1923, 350-1. L. Mangelaar Meertens, 'Karma en Reincarnatie legioen', *TMNI* 1926, 419-20. The Legion had various publications of its own; TILLET (1982), 226. *Reincarnation* was its English language-, *Reincarnatie* was its Dutch paper. *TiNI* 1932, 72.

⁵RANSOM(1938), 507, on this 'simple presentation of Theosophy among the illiterate,' misspells *Pemitran* *Thahja*; and *ibid.*, 559: *Pemitran*. *TiNI* 1932, 162; 1933, 134.

⁶DJAJADININGRAT-NIEUWENHUIS, 64. They all had tens of thousands of members. The biggest one, *Pakoempoelan Kawoelo Ngajogjakarta*, Yogyakarta Subjects' League, had 225,000 at its maximum.

Pemitran Tjahja held its first meeting in Cikondo village near Leles in West Java. 300 were present; twelve joined. The entrance-fee was f. 0.25; the (monthly?) fee was f. 0.05. So members paid less than full-fledged FTS. They had also fewer rights; neither voting, nor electing officials. Clause 6 of *Pemitran Tjahja's* rules said the main subject of meetings should be *At the Feet of the Master*; officially by Krishnamurti, some say by Leadbeater. 'This booklet should be read out and explained slowly and word for word.' In August 1933, branches existed in Ciamis, Banjar, and Delanggu.¹ The *Pemitran* had 14 branches in 1934. TS General Secretary Van Leeuwen wrote then 900 people in all went to its fortnightly meetings.

Once, we had a very obnoxious conflict with some orthodox and fanatical Muhammadans, who worked against our endeavours and tried to keep the people from going to the meetings. At the same time, whenever there was a theosophical meeting, they made lots of noise. After we had complained about this to the local authorities, and after one of the high Javanese officials had joined the TS as a Fellow, we overcame the problems, and our success increased.²

These peasants probably were *abangan*. In 1935, *Pemitran* members from largely Hindu islands joined full TS members in best wishes for

the Mother [T.] Society, which has become a torch on our way to the great Aim, to us, inhabitants of Bali and Lombok, who until recently have lived in ignorance's darkness.³

Van Leeuwen claimed about 1000 *Pemitran Tjahja* members in 1935.⁴ *Theosophie in Nederlandsch-Indië* after that scarcely mentioned it ever again.

D. OTHER ASIAN COUNTRIES

Though *TT* wrote: 'it may be that we are making the link in Java to propagate Theosophy in China', the TS never won many adherents in China.⁵ Finally, in 1922, nine Chinese and three English people founded the Shanghai lodge. Its president, Wu Ting Fang, was three times Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs, the last time in 1921, in the Canton military government. He died also in 1922 though.⁶

In 1920, the French Theosophical Society section founded a lodge in Vietnam. The TS always had few members there, many less than in colonial 'motherland' France. Still,

¹*TiNI* 1932, 168; 206. *TiNI* 1933, 91. *TiNI* Nov. 1934: 'big interest' in the villages around Tasikmalaya.

²VAN LEEUWEN(1934), 146. He did not say where the conflict was

³*TiNI* Nov. 1935, 198.

⁴*TiNI* Jan. 1936, 17.

⁵*TT* Nov. 1910, 314. Van Leeuwen, *TiNI*, July 1937, 111: 'It is remarkable that Japan and China appear to be so little open to our ideas, though so often exertions have been made to make theosophy find acceptance there.'

⁶*THA* Sept. 1922, 193. *TT*, Aug. 1936. GUÉNON (1921), 273. Wu Ting Fang had formerly been Chinese diplomatic representative in the USA.

Hutin¹ ascribes to it 'important and direct influence, for instance on karma doctrine, upon the syncretist religious Vietnamese movement Cao Dai ('Great House'). This movement would win millions of adherents, and considerably influence twentieth century Vietnamese politics, since its 1920's start in the country's southernmost area.

The king of Siam joined the Theosophical Society in 1880,² but no section was founded there then.

In Ceylon, among the first to join were Buddhist priests.³ Many rich Sinhalese lay families also joined.⁴ Buultjens as one of few prominent FTS came from a Burgher (traditionally mainly Protestant) background.⁵ As for other groups, there were few contacts with Tamils and Muslims.⁶

Peter de Abrew, FTS, furnished the land for building the Musaeus school. He remained involved with it later. He was

a big capitalist; he gave money for building temples. He was a prominent member of the Ceylon National Congress; not of the Council though, he was not much interested in politics.⁷ He was a long time broker for Volkart Bros., the Winterthur (Switzerland)-owned coconut coir firm whose all-important branches were in Ceylon, including Galle fort.

From Colombo, Albert Schwarz⁸ managed Volkart Bros. In 1893, he heard Besant lecture in Colombo. In 1895, he was recruited to the TS by fellow German speaker Mrs Musaeus; and helped Annie Besant buy her Benares home. When Olcott came to Ceylon, he stayed in Schwarz' bungalow. Schwarz was international TS treasurer from 1907 till his death in 1933, arriving in Adyar Feb. 1908, named vice president of the local Adyar lodge.⁹ In the *Golden Book* of the TS, his was one of the four photographs in the gallery

¹HUTIN, 1377.

²RANSOM(1938), 143. From 1868-1910, Rama V Chulalongkorn was king of Siam (Thailand). He visited Borobudur on Java in 1896; P.L. Narasimham, 'The ancient Hindu colonies', *TT* Oct 1915, 61.

³MALALGODA.

⁴Theosophical authors were not always clear on the island's social categories: Caroline Corner-Ohlms (7R vol. XXIX, 1901-1902, 260), writing about a Sinhalese environment, speaks of 'the Velalah caste'; a Tamil term. Olcott, *ODL*, II, 320, also wrote of Sinhalese 'Willallas'; and 'Vellallas' in *TT*, April 1890, 350.

⁵VAN DEDEM, 103, spelling Buultjens, spoke to him while visiting a Buddhist school in Colombo.

⁶'The Muhammadan fire bath', *TT* July 1906, 742ff, on Ceylon. Written by F. Pieters, clearly not over-familiar with Islam.

⁷Interview by the author with Dr. Harichandra Kaviratna.

⁸*AdB*, March 1908, 95f. DE ABREW(1933). 'Star name' (name valid for more than one incarnation), in Leadbeater's occult prehistorical research: Sappho; BROOKS(1914A), xv; misspelt Schwartz.

⁹*AdB* Oct. 1908, 292.

of honour.¹

E.OCEANIA AND CONCLUSIONS

Theosophist A.F. Knudsen was the manager of his family's big cattle ranching and rice growing estate on Hawaii.²

In Australia arose one of the most numerous TS sections, with political connections. One of the first members in the 1880's, Professor John Smith, sat in the New South Wales Legislative Council.³ At the first meeting that Olcott spoke at in the continent in 1891, an MP presided.⁴

Colonel Olcott was invited to lecture in the capitals of Australia, where he founded Branches, the membership of which were the best, both as to social position, influence and education.⁵

A. Deakin was president of the Victoria Association of Spiritualists in 1877. Later, he was a TS official.⁶ When Olcott visited Australia in 1897, he had lunch at the house of this best known of Australia's Fellows.⁷ Deakin kept up a lifelong interest in, and sometimes membership of, the Theosophical Society. He visited, and wrote on Ceylon, and on India. *The temple and the tomb*. In the 1900's he was three times prime minister, and came to an Annie Besant lecture.⁸ At first, he was a Liberal, later he contributed to union between liberal and conservative parties.

T.H. Martyn (Australia's ES and OSE leader and General Secretary 1917-1921) was one of the richest Australians.⁹ Leading businessman Martyn, after contributing his ideas against Chinese immigrants in Australia,¹⁰ later got into conflict with the Adyar leaders because of Leadbeater's homosexuality. He formed his own Theosophical Society, which

¹JINARAJADASA(1925), 218.

²TMNI, 1921, 445-6.

³BCW, vol. V (1883), L.A., Philosophical Research Society, 1950; 11. Michael Hoare and Joan T. Reid, 'John Smith, (1821-1885)', 148-50 in G. Serle/R. Ward, *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1976; vol. 6: 1851-1890, R-Z: Smith had been Young Men's Christian Association vice president in the 1860's; was in the Legislative Council since 1874; and met Madame Blavatsky and Olcott in Bombay in 1882, joining the TS.

⁴MURPHET, 246.

⁵LucL, March-August 1891, 436.

⁶Secretary of the Ibis branch; ROE, 94.

⁷TT, ODL, Jan. 1906, 243.

⁸AdB, Aug. 1908, 227. ROE, 68: E. Barton, first prime minister of Australia, Deakin's immediate predecessor, also went to hear her.

⁹ROE, 185.

¹⁰MARTYN(1919). On him, see ROE, TILLET(1982), M. LUTYENS, CLEATHER(1922A).

Alice Leighton Cleather joined. When in 1938 power in the Hobart (Tasmania) lodge changed hands from Martyn followers to Arundale followers, the new executive burned lodge library books by Mrs Cleather.¹

The 1933 Australia census found as % of breadwinners in the top income bracket with theosophists 20, vs. 11 for Anglicans, and 8 for Roman Catholics.²

New Zealand had a relatively numerous TS section. Among them were Lilian Edger, one of New Zealand's first woman university graduates; and leading politicians. Conservative Premier Sir Harry Atkinson joined the first TS lodge in Wellington in 1888.³ Olcott mentioned the Hon. William McCullough, FTS, a Member of the Legislative Council in 1893.⁴

We may conclude from this chapter that on all continents, groups above the average level in wealth and in social prestige were represented more among Theosophical Society members than among the general population.⁵ An individual from these groups may be politically indifferent; or leftist. So may, already more unlikely, small organizations consisting of such individuals. With thousands of such people, one has a potential for controversies with labour movements; and with national and women's movements, if these have a radical, mass character.

In Indonesia, a Javanese Raden Mas certainly differed from a captain of Chinese; or from a Dutch plantation owner. A Brahman in India was different again; as was a US businessman. All had individual reasons for joining the TS. But rising mass movements threatened the various privileges of all. One might expect a philosophy both going along with the tide of emancipation by its tenet of Brotherhood, and rendering it harmless by the 'older and younger brothers' doctrine, to have some success among groups like these.

2.THEOSOPHY FOR WHOM?

From the 1875 beginning,⁶ there had been a dilemma for the Theosophical Society: how to expand?

A. It appealed, and wanted to appeal, to people from real, or would-be, elites in

¹OELC Jan /Feb. 1939, Sept. 1939.

²ROE, 386 (those with £ 260 or higher income).

³Dictionary of National Biography. Thanks to R. Ellwood.

⁴ODL, TT, Nov. 1902, 68.

⁵Besides questions of social stratification, there is the question of age groups in the potential attraction of a movement like theosophy. Certainly among higher income groups in the late nineteenth century, average age was already rising due to longer life expectancies. More people lived to an age where conventional medicine could not solve their health problems; so there might have been a tendency to seek miraculous solutions. DOORMAN in a discussion of the attraction of esotericism in the 1990's saw this as one factor. Much of this is applicable to the TS even in the 19th century.

⁶The TS then temporarily expelled one founder member for giving it newspaper publicity, contrary to its semi-secret character. RANSOM(1938), 84.

various countries.

B. Like most organizations, it wanted to become big.¹ That might conflict with A, as philosopher Bolland remarked².

In the Dutch East Indies TS monthly, Humphry Hillary voiced the dilemma:

Here, the [theosophical] society seems to be at the parting of the ways. It seems to have this in common with hundreds of other organizations, from empires down to the most negligible little groups. Should it remain an elite body of those who prepare to go forward on the hard and dangerous path, or should it become a powerful worldly organization with hundreds of thousands of supporters who hardly know what mysticism means. We shall see what the consequences of that approach are.

Hillary was apprehensive about a possible influx of intermediate social categories. In The Netherlands ('all that I tell here is no fantasy'), he had been at a theosophical public meeting in a big hall. There, he found many male office employees 'who happened to have read the announcement of the lecture and were at a loss about how to waste their time', and 'giggling girls'. At another meeting, Hillary met a shop employee, 'a theosophist in his spare time. ... And he talks about his shop business, his body bent, gesticulating with his arms. And it never stops. Not all of the night. Trouble with employers, problems with junior employees. Shaking his head and shoulders, he finishes: 'I don't trouble myself with these problems between those reds and the employers. One could so easily be trapped into an extreme ...'.'³

For the TS, point A suggested organizing as a secret or semi-secret, occult, esoteric society: reluctant to enrol members *en masse*; requiring of applicants for membership nomination and seconding by already initiated members; appearance before a ballot committee,⁴ elaborate, mysterious initiation rituals, giving the new member the idea that he or she had to do something special, be someone special, to deserve this; that the door to becoming even more special was unlocked for just a moment. Mysterious procedures may limit growth; but they also may attract quite some people.⁵ Jawaharlal Nehru, who

¹Anarchist RABBIE(1898A) saw the TS' Universal Brotherhood object as the wish to 'control the whole lot'; like Roman Catholic or other churches. TRUZZI(1974), 252: 'Wider audiences of believers mean greater power and better status for the existing occult believers in the form of money, prestige, and general social acceptance'.

²BOLLAND(1910), 145, quoted Mrs Besant: 'Theosophy is not only for the learned, it is for all.' To elitist Bolland, from a non-elite family background, the TS was not esoteric enough: 'That means the secret Doctrine is an open Doctrine.' He also quoted (misunderstood?) 'The doctrine of the eye [merely exoteric doctrine] is for the multitude.'

³HILLARY(1921), 153. The last sentence often appeared in *TMNI* and other TS magazines.

⁴TILLET(1982), 29f.; on Leadbeater's 1883-1884 joining. See also BESANT(1907B), 65f. Lady Caithness in France was very exclusive; GUÉNON(1921), 185.

⁵BROOKS(1914A), 35: 'What a comment, by the way, on the moral calibre of the average 'esotericist', who values instruction more ..., if he knows his neighbours are deprived of it!' Jawaharlal NEHRU(1958), 15, on his joining: 'I did not understand much that was said but it all

joined the TS as a thirteen year old, later looked back:

I was smug, with a feeling of being one-of-the-elect, and altogether I must have been a thoroughly undesirable and unpleasant companion for any boy or girl of my age.¹

The histories of Hinduism and Christianity might seem to support approach A to theosophists.

For in Hindūsthān, all religious and philosophical teaching from time immemorial has been divided into two parts: that for the multitude and that for the Dwija's, i.e., the 'twice-born',² the initiated. The inner, secret, sacred, holy teaching, properly withheld from the thoughtless multitude, given only to worthy depositaries ...³

The lower castes do not have the philosophic religion of the higher castes, but worship God under the name of "Rama." The Hindu religion provides, as St. Paul expressed it 'the meat for strong men and the milk for babes.' Therefore the more ignorant (younger souls) among them are not burdened with all sorts of questions which would disturb their minds ... they look upon Him very much as the early Jews looked upon Jehovah.⁴

Even the Syrian Sage, Jesus the Avatāra ... is said to have taught certain things to his disciples in private, whereas to the multitude the same truths, or at least parts of them as the case may have been, were taught not openly ...⁵

Point A fitted in with theosophic views on history: which saw Initiates of secret Brotherhoods, as largely guiding it from behind the scenes. A much earlier example of a hard-to-join organization -if it existed at all as more than a hoax- had been the Rosicrucians.⁶ Such an approach is well known (!) from (semi-) secret societies, like

sounded very mysterious and fascinating and I felt that here was the key to the secrets of the universe'.

¹J. NEHRU(1958), 16.

²Interpreted here as Brahmins; but others (LIDDLE and JOSHI, 58): the three highest castes, also kshatriyas and vaishyas.

³DE PURUCKER(1940), 37-8.

⁴Jenne Douglas 'India, The Motherland'; 77 Aug. 1930, 711.

⁵DE PURUCKER(1940), 54f.

⁶In 1623 in Paris [VAN BOSBEKE, 17. LIGOU, 1040: in 1622] they put up wall-posters saying: 'If someone wants to see us just out of curiosity he shall never meet us; but if he really wants to inscribe himself on the lists of our brotherhood, then we, who judge the thinking, shall show them the veracity of our promises; so we do not give our address in this city [It would have been dangerous in Catholic France, for an organization founded by Lutherans, considering the pope 'an impostor, a viper and Anti-christ'. VAN BOSBEKE, 17], because the thoughts, joined to the real desire, will suffice to make us recognizable to him, and him to us.' Don't call us; we'll call you, by telepathic telephone. It obviously limits membership growth. German nobleman

Masonry, Rotary, the Benevolent Order of Elks, the Ancient Order of Hibernians, the Ku Klux Klan. Many of these, like the Theosophical Society, originated in the nineteenth century United States.¹ At least one point differed: the TS was one of the few to admit women members.²

Lucifer wrote that 'for the multitude ... Theosophy could not supply the place of a religion'.³ This suggested point A for recruitment. The TS, though, mostly did not base itself consistently on the exclusivity of point A. That would mean that Madame Blavatsky would have spoken on the Secret Doctrine only to small audiences, instead of, as she did, writing a publicly available book of that title.⁴

Point B suggested a 'theosophy for the masses'.⁵ *The Key to Theosophy* chapter of that name⁶ says, in catechism-like form:

Christian Rosenkreutz (not Rosencranz, as in *BCW*, vol. 1, 105f; *TM* (1951), 31; 1378²-1484²; if he ever lived) is said to have founded them. Annie Besant said Rosenkreutz reincarnated as the Count de St. Germain (1696? 1700?-1784); VAN BOSBEKE, 16; LIGOU. In 1912, Annie Besant and J. Wedgwood founded the Order of the Temple of the Rosy Cross, which F.J.W.S., 57 confused with Co-Masons. TILLET (1982), 167. Some 20th century Rosicrucians claim the real founders were ancient Egyptian Pharaohs, or some millions of years more ancient still. Most historians attribute its founding (maybe as a hoax) to 17th century Germans, VAN BOSBEKE, 14-6. MIERS, 383: only one of today's Rosicrucian organizations, the English SRIA, is from the 19th century (Bulwer-Lytton); the other, later, major ones derive from TS splits. In the 20th century, many 'Orders of Knighthood', claiming to represent medieval chivalry traditions, arose (VAN BOSBEKE), like Lanz von Liebenfels' (GOODRICK-CLARKE (1985), 106f) and Guénon's 'revivals of the Templars'; LIGOU, 887; 547; resp. with 1908 and 1909 as starting years. They attracted both 'real' nobles and *chevaliers d'industrie* (fake ones). A real one was Prince Marescotti Ruspoli di Poggio Suazo, in 1982 leader of the Order of St. Lazarus; VAN BOSBEKE, 393; related to Italian Vice-Admiral Fabrizio Ruspoli, FTS, who helped CWL in Adyar.

¹MEEUSE (1983), 18, writes of 'secret societies like Theosophists', but the Theosophical Society in its non-ES aspects was not a secret society in the strict sense. TIRYAKIAN (1974), 270, summing up some of these societies, wrongly includes Ireland's open political party Sinn Féin, which participated in elections from its early twentieth century beginning on, though later, it got sometimes banned, like the German Social Democrat Party and Mazzini's Young Italy had been earlier.

²BLEE: when the Klan started in the 1860's, it admitted no women. Later, in the 1920's, many from the Women's Christian Temperance Union joined the numerous Women of the Ku Klux Klan.

³Open letter to Archbishop of Canterbury, 1887; RANSOM (1938), 240.

⁴On the contradictions of secrecy, for instance TRUZZI, 251.

⁵BESANT (1894), 21: 'our brotherhood ... accepts into its sphere both the lowest and most degenerated and the saint and the hero'. In the 1940's, the few dozen of the recently formed Philippine TS saw the country's non-members as '18 million people to theosophize'; RANSOM (1950), 128.

⁶BLAVATSKY (1987), 245f. Contrary to HUTIN, 1375, Besant did not write *The Key to Theosophy*.

ENQ. How? Do you expect that your doctrines could ever take hold of the uneducated masses, when they are so abstruse and difficult that well-educated people can hardly understand them?

THEO. ... It does not require metaphysics or education to make a man understand the broad truths of Karma and Re-incarnation. Look at the millions of poor and uneducated Buddhists and Hindus, to whom Karma and re-incarnation are solid realities, simply because their minds have never been cramped and distorted by being forced into an unnatural groove ... And the Buddhists, note well, live up to their beliefs without a murmur against Karma, or what they regard as a just punishment; whereas the Christian populace, neither lives up to its moral ideal, nor accepts its lot contentedly. Hence murmuring and dissatisfaction,¹ and the intensity of the struggle for existence in Western lands.

ENQ. But this contentedness, which you praise so much, would do away with all motive for exertion and bring progress to a stand-still.

THEO. And we, Theosophists, say that your vaunted progress and civilization are no better than a host of will-o'-the-wisps, flickering over a marsh which exhales a poisonous and deadly miasma. This because we see selfishness, crime, immorality, and all the evils imaginable, pouncing upon unfortunate mankind from this Pandora's box which you call an age of progress ... At such a price, better the inertia and inactivity of Buddhist countries ...

ENQ. Then is all the metaphysics and mysticism with which you occupy yourself so much, of no importance?

THEO. To the masses, who need only practical guidance and support, they are not of much consequence; but for the educated, the natural leaders of the masses, those whose modes of thought and action will sooner or later be adopted by those masses, they are of the greatest importance ...

ENQ. Do you hope to impart this enthusiasm, one day, to the masses?

THEO. Why not? since history tells us that the masses adopted Buddhism with enthusiasm ... The chief point is, to uproot that most fertile source of all crime and immorality—the belief that it is possible for them to escape the consequences of their own actions. Once teach them the greatest of all laws, Karma and Re-incarnation, and besides feeling in themselves the true dignity of human nature, they will turn from evil and eschew it as they would a physical danger.

According to *The Theosophist* in 1898.

The Editor of *The Buddhist* [Ceylon Buddhist theosophical English language paper], at the close of a good editorial on 'Anarchism in Europe' says, '... if they are taught to look upon their present condition, not as the result of an arbitrary divine interference, but as, to a very great extent, of their own making, being mainly due to their actions in the past; ... then indeed, it may be hoped that they will show more contentment in their lot in life, greater patience in misfortune, more forbearance towards others, and stronger efforts to restrain their passions'.²

¹77 Sept. 1904, 764: 'the vulgar multitude of Christians'.

²MARX (1968), 68: nobles 'object more to the bourgeoisie creating a revolutionary proletariat, than to creating a proletariat in general'.

³77, Dec. 1898, 190, 'Anarchism in Europe' 77, Feb. 1906, 'What Humanity Needs', by 'Seeker', 360: 'Spread the two axiomatic truths of Theosophy -Karma and Re-incarnation—mutually dependent on each other, as widely as possible amongst the masses, show them the mechanism and chemistry of these two, but above all, prove to them the Righteousness of the Father of all, that every inch of His cosmos is a mirror of law and love, and within a few years our slums will be abodes of content and happiness, drunkenness and immorality will be things of the

So, one theosophist objection to Christianity was it lacked effectiveness in stopping 'murmuring' among the workers of 'its' countries. Leadbeater saw the problem with Christianity as that the poor had corrupted Jesus' original esoteric views to fit their own materialist ends; and that they still had too much influence on it.¹

To a United States audience, Leadbeater said:

You have in the immediate future the possibility of serious struggle; you have all the elements of a possible social upheaval, and you have no religion with sufficient hold upon the people to check what may develop into a wild and dangerous movement.²

Might theosophy do better than Christianity? Then, how about theosophic influence on the poor? How to do better than Christians like the Salvation Army, just beginning then, in this? How to set up Theosophy for the masses which point B, and HPB, suggested? Printing publicly available magazines, starting libraries, 'Harbour Missions', propaganda among workers, using radio after its invention.

Elites, in the long run, can only stay on as elites, if the multitude, the non-elite accepts their 'superiority', actively or passively. That is, if non-elites accept at least large parts of the same ideology, though not in the same way, as the elite.³

Theosophists often labelled the masses as ignorant.⁴ (Anarchist Constandse, though, wrote of the TS: 'the stupidity of the "better classes" has found its idol!')⁵ This would not do for winning them over. For that, you must have at least something to offer them.

From 1894 on, Olcott helped found the Olcott Pariah or Panchama Schools, for casteless children, financed by (mostly) theosophists. To Olcott's disappointment,⁶ Indian Fellows of the TS contributed but little financially (an exception was Allahabad teenager Jawaharlal Nehru).⁷ After 1933, only one school, then mostly for children of the lower-paid Adyar estate employees,⁸ was left of an all time maximum of five. So, compared to

past, while order and self-respect will take the place of scurrility and distrust'

¹The *Christian Creed*; paraphrased by Ernest Wood, *TB*, July 1931, 313-4. LEADBEATER(1920A), 423 denied Joseph, Jesus' father, had been a carpenter in a literal, not religiously symbolic, sense.

²LEADBEATER(1905B), 95.

³Annie Besant, quoted CAMPBELL, 70. 'in countries where reincarnation and karma are taken for granted by every peasant and labourer, the belief spreads a certain quiet acceptance of inevitable troubles that conduces much to the calm and contentment of ordinary life'

⁴Olcott: 'sin-burdened and ignorant masses'. *ODL*, *TT* Feb. 1908, 264. *TM*(1951), 89. 'ignorant masses'. VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1909), 5: 'the stupid hoi polloi'. 'Imbecile majority': BLAVATSKY(1883B). 'Jesus, who reminds his disciples that the Mysteries of Heaven are not for the unintelligent masses, but for the elect alone ...' BLAVATSKY(1987), 81.

⁵CONSTANDSE(1929), 22.

⁶*ODL*, *TT* July 1904, 582f.

⁷See p. 271. J.H. Cordes, working with Gandhi in South Africa then, also sent money.

⁸*TT* Feb. 1934, 588. *TT*, Apr. 1928, 99. MURPHET, 279. On 15 December 1903, the four Panchama schools had 567 pupils between them; TS General Report on 1904, 57. The maximum of five schools was reached in May 1906: N. Almee Courtright, 'The fifth Olcott Panchama free school'.

Ceylon, numerical success was low. That may have had something to do with their Buddhist character, which was emphasized early on, during Olcott's presidency; in Tamil Nadu, which by then had been mostly Hindu for centuries; or with the parents' poverty; or with easier communication for theosophists with 'respectable' parents, like Sinhalese planters¹ than with Panchamas (or harijans, as the TS, after Gandhi, came to call them later, in the 1930's). In spite of paternalistic ideas,² of Annie Besant's objections to untouchable children going to touchable schools,³ in practice the Panchama schools also criticized the *status quo*.

Criticisms of some obvious consequences of conservatism did appear in *The Theosophist*. It claimed in 1903 some categories of sudras should have more rights.⁴ Annie Besant gradually after 1904 began to criticize more aspects of caste as it worked in practice. However, Indian social reformers still attacked the TS in 1910;⁵ and in 1914, Brooks named 'Failure to tackle the Caste Evil in right earnest'⁶ as one cause for his resignation as FTS. In 1917, one of Besant's more leftist phases, *TT* wrote:

TT, June 1906, 692f. The fifth school was in the village of Krishnampet, part of Madras municipality. Earlier on in Krishnampet, there had been a missionary school, which had closed as the children did go to the school, but not one of them had converted to Christianity; *ibid.*, 692. *ibid.*, 693: contrary to the four other schools, not only Tamil, but also Telugu was the language of that school. TS Annual Report 1903, 41. Courtright: the bulk of pupils of HPB Panchama School are children of 'coolies' of a large tannery and several brickyards, that is, from a clearly urban-industrial background. From the 1890's on, the Arya Samaj and other reformers from a Hindu background, had also founded schools for casteless: MAJUMDAR(1969), 1000-1.

¹NETHERCOT(1960), 327: 'Buddhist schools for poor children'; and M. LUTYENS(1975), 13: 'poor Buddhist boys' give the inaccurate impression that the Ceylon schools were especially for the poor. Nethercot is spelt 'Nethercote' in MORTIMER(1983), and M. LUTYENS(1975).

²N.A. Courtright, superintendent of the Olcott Panchama Free Schools wrote in the *Madras Mail*, as quoted *TT*, Mar. 1905, 383-4. 'Mrs. Courtright begins by adopting the biological standpoint that "the limitations and possibilities for mental training of the child are almost entirely a matter of the child's ancestry." In accordance with this principle the schools do not aim at too high a mark of culture. The children are mostly destined to be servants and are therefore taught just as much as will qualify them for their lot of servitude under modern conditions.' Contrary to this 'biological' standpoint, and though the children were sometimes very hungry, examination results were 20% better for the casteless children than for the average for caste children in Madras presidency; TS General Report on 1905, 67.

³S. PANKHURST(1926), 152-3 quotes Annie Besant: 'It will need generations of purer food and living to make their [untouchables'] bodies fit to sit in the close neighbourhood of a schoolroom with children who have received bodies from an ancestry trained in the habits of an exquisite personal cleanliness and fed upon pure foodstuffs'.

⁴Sris Chandra Bose 'Patanjali on S'u'dras', *TT* Dec. 1903, 160ff.

⁵*TT* Dec. 1910, 458. On the other hand, breakaway ex-FTS and political right-winger GUÉNON(1921), 289 thought her too anti-caste.

⁶BROOKS(1914A), 26: '... nay, rank desertion of the few public-spirited Indians who did so.' He then denied his TS opponents' charges that he had joined the Arya Samaj, which was more critical on caste; but TAYLOR, 362: 'He became a member of the Arya Samaj [sic] ...'

But at Adyar, we are trusted by the poor and the needy.¹

That year, the Theosophical Publishing House also published Annie's presidential speech of the end of 1916 Lucknow TS convention. She urged her audience, if a casteless person saluted them on a street, to return the salute.²

In 1936, Bhagavan Das introduced a bill to validate inter-caste marriages in the Delhi Legislative Assembly; while still defending caste as he saw it had been originally, 'based on science of social organization'.³

Theosophist propaganda among the 'lower' classes never was very successful anywhere. In this, it might just be an example of much religion. At least for the post 1940 USA and Britain, R. Stark argued:

Surveys ... have invariably found out that contrary to the expectations of traditional social theory, the lower classes are least, rather than most, likely to be involved in religion. The proposed explanation of these findings is that the lower classes find radical politics a more attractive outlet than religion for their status dissatisfaction.⁴

It would be interesting to compare Stark's findings to earlier times and other countries. Others found similar data.⁵ R. Stark himself states that since eighteenth century Wesleyan Methodism there have been no more big Western working class

religious movements, and that politics have replaced them.

Yet, even if Stark's findings are also true for 1875-1940, and for countries other than France, Britain, or the US: theosophic working class support was low if compared to support for some other ideologies, both religious and non-religious, of non-working class origin, among workers. Look for instance at the hundreds of thousands of Dutch workers who joined Protestant or Catholic organizations. Or to British (or even to Dutch) 19th century political liberalism and the links to trade unions which it had then.

'Hewers of wood and drawers of water', to use Christian terminology, were not very fast in taking their places on the TS spiritual ladder as sudras or untouchables, as younger brothers. The Theosophical Society had too many would-be generals and colonels, too few foot soldiers.¹ The theosophical pyramid under construction turned out to be more top-heavy than Madame Blavatsky, or Annie Besant, envisaged.

Exceptions to the rule surprised Olcott. He reported on a visit to:

... Northern Sweden, and within the Arctic Circle. Besides the native Esquimaux² there were very few inhabitants save those working in the mines, and one would hardly expect that our Ancient Wisdom would appeal very strongly to the hearts and minds of a class so completely occupied in severe manual labour.³

Still, some miners there were FTS, an engineer from Kiruna had recruited them.

The Dutch Indies TS did not sound like it wanted to attract workers:

The *capitalist* as a rule symbolizes to the world the esoteric satisfied, personally strong, independence-conscious, individuality. The *worker*, on the other hand, is the symbol of the exoteric miserable, weak, dependence-conscious mass human.⁴

When Arundale in 1937 discussed benefits various categories might get from theosophy, he mentioned

The artist ... The businessman will realize through Theosophy the inherent nobility of business as a channel of growth. The industrialist ...

and omitted⁵ workers or peasants.

Still, tension between approach A and approach B existed.⁶ The TS tried to resolve it by having a Society within a society. Within the TS, the Esoteric Society, further subdivided into different hierarchical levels, was for the real elite. For joining the ES,

¹'There are soldiers and officers in the TS'; A. van Leeuwen, 'Un de peu de redaction', *TMN* 1920, 51. Nothing more was heard of a Theosophical League of Workers soon after its 1891 start; NETHERCOT(1960), 380; 392. GUÉNON(1921), 254; in Paris there was 'L'Union Fraternelle, to spread theosophy among the working classes'; and, *ibid.*, 257, a special organization for propaganda among Toulon arsenal workers. But: theosophy 'never became a grassroots movement'; *CEI*, 347.

²Who went thousands of miles east by kayak? Or their astral bodies?

³General Report 27th Anniversary Convention, 25-12-1902 Benares, 2.

⁴VAN LEEUWEN(1920B), 102.

⁵*TT* Oct. 1937, *WT*, 3; contrary to Annie Besant in 1922: NETHERCOT(1963), 343.

⁶In a letter to Olcott, Judge proposed having a separate lodge 'of mere common men of the working classes ... but we have to at the same time reach the better classes'. Published *TT*, Nov. 1931, 199. I have found no lodge for 'mere common men', actually founded according to this idea.

¹*WT*, *TT* Oct. 1917, 8.

²BESANT(1917A), 36.

³*TT* Nov. 1930, 152. DAS(1930), 11 saw the *varnas* as an universal, not just Indian, law of social nature: 'even in go-ahead U.S. America, a very large majority of the school-going children are congenitally unfit, by the low quality of their intelligence to usefully pursue studies beyond the lower grades or classes in the schools'; so, unfit to get any higher than the *sudra* level. DAS(1947), 467. 'The very sound scientific reason for avoidance of indiscriminate intermarriage and intermarrying is, of course, obvious. If we are to preserve and promote individual and racial health, we must eat pure food, drink pure drink, breathe pure air, in company with clean-living sympathetic friendly people of similar habits, and marry with persons of parity of temperament and compatibility of tastes, interests, likes and dislikes'.

⁴STARK, 698. *Ibid.*, 703: one of the surveys he named, in 1957 in Britain, found of self-styled upper class people 73% went to church at least occasionally; of the self-styled working class 39%. *Ibid.*, 704: of Conservative Party voters, 62% were church-goers; for Labour, 36%. Of the upper class, 85% believed in life after death, of the working class 49%. 88% of the upper class, vs. 70% of the working class, believed in Christ's divinity. In influential theories, like A. Toynbee's *A Study of History*, and Ernst Troeltsch, one finds the idea that 'sects recruited from the lower class'; WILSON(1970), 25 rejected this form of the idea of a positive link between lower income groups and religion for industrial societies.

⁵Stark's findings are mainly on Christian kinds of belief and practice. Closer to the TS is belief in astrology, on which we have figures from 1963 France; quoted FISCHLER, 288-9. Though differing in country, time and type of belief from Stark's, the figures are remarkably similar in finding a relatively high rate of belief in astrology in 'higher', and a relatively high rate of unbelief in 'lower' socio-economic strata. FISCHLER, 288: of the French as a whole, 30% believed in astrology. For 'Professionals, managers, executives' it was 34%; for small business owners 36%; for industrial workers, 'ouvriers', it was 29%; for farmers plus farm workers, it was 15%.

⁶STARK, 702.

one should have been a member of the ordinary TS for at least three years (this did not apply to Annie Besant; or to Krishnamurti later). Around it was the exoteric Society, which also attracted somewhat less august (though rarely truly 'proletarian') people. To become an ordinary member of the outer TS, contrary to the inner ES, one was not required to hold beliefs, apart from supporting the idea of Brotherhood. Annie Besant said on this point in her acceptance speech as president in 1907:

It [the TS] admits into its ranks men and women from any religion, from any conviction, and, if only they recognize the Brotherhood as a general principle, it does not require of them a belief in any fact, however certain it is, in any teaching, however important it is. With a splendid faith in the victorious power of truth, it disregards all the divisions, which superficially divide Mankind ... and welcomes even those as Brothers, who deny those very truths upon which the Brotherhood is based, and who even reject the Revealers [the Masters], who make possible its realization to Mankind. Its field of work is as vast as thought is, its omnipresent love is like the sun, who gives warmth and light to all, even to those who are blind to its light.¹

Just after he broke with the TS, in 1930, Krishnamurti said in a speech against elitism: 'Are you the specially chosen few? Then I am sorry, for I will not speak to the chosen people ... What I am saying is for everyone, including the unfortunate Theosophists.'²

¹Quoted *TMNI*, 1918, 288. According to J. Giles, 'Mixed musings on Theosophy', *TT*, May 1917, 177, 'no sensible person would be attracted to a Society by the bare proclamation that it stood for the "Brotherhood of Man".'

²M. LUTYENS(1975), 279.

PART IV. THE LABOUR MOVEMENT

The Theosophical Society was born at the time of the rise of the labour movement. We will look at how the TS related to it. Especially to its political components social democracy, communism, and anarchism. We should note, though, that actions for certain reforms, unionization, strikes, and revolutions, may be, but are not necessarily, linked to one or more of those three political currents. We focus on Indonesia in the 1915-1918 period. Then, and there, war was the main issue between the TS and labour. Earlier and later, and in India, economic labour disputes were more in the foreground.

1. SOCIAL DEMOCRACY AND COMMUNISM

Some 35 years before the Theosophical Society included Universal Brotherhood in its Objects, in the 1840's the Communist League had as its motto: 'All people are brothers.' This soon changed to the better known 'Workers of all countries, unite'. The Communist League was an international organization, in which migrant German workers in England were heavily represented. Its best known members were Karl Marx (1818-1883) and Friedrich Engels (1820-1895).

When what one may call the first transcontinental, though still mainly West European, organization based on workers' militancy, the International Workingmen's Association (First International), arose in the 1860's, they had a sympathizing weekly, *Samprakash*, in Bengal, and a small section in the U.S.

A. MARX AND ENGELS ON SPIRITUALISM AND THEOSOPHY¹

First, we will look at Marx' and Engels' ideas about spiritualism and theosophy. They wrote more on the former than on the latter. For only since the 1880's, the decade when Marx died and Engels was in his sixties, the Theosophical Society became sizable, first in south Asia, later in the U.S. and Europe. Its predecessor, spiritualism, then had been going for decades.

¹The pre-1918 labour movement did not differentiate between 'social democrat' and 'communist' as later. 'Communist' was more used earlier, 'social democrat' later in the nineteenth century. 'Communist' was sometimes a name for a current within anarchism. Supporters of anarchist Bakunin, when they were in the First International, also called themselves 'social democrats'. Only after the militant current of the Russian Social Democrats changed its name to Communist Party in 1918, and militants in other countries followed suit, a distinct communist identity arose.

²This chapter is re-written from DE TOLLENAERE(1992). CAMPBELL, 13 observed: 'Esoteric and mystical sources have been identified as part of the intellectual background for Hegelian and Marxist thought.' He did not elaborate on this observation, however, and neither will we. The statement relates to indirect influence of pre-1800 ideas via Hegel. This concerns, however, an earlier age than our subject.

1. Spiritualism

Marx and Engels, in their voluminous works, often referred to Spiritualism. On examination, all these references are brief to very brief. Some of them do not mention Spiritualism by name, but are jokes (for instance, by Marx in *Das Kapital*; see p. 45) about dancing tables, 'ghost-rappers, ghost-rapping shakers'.¹

Engels in a letter briefly put this movement into the perspective of U.S. society:

though the Americans ... have not copied medieval institutions from Europe, they did copy lots of medieval tradition, religion, English common (feudal) law, superstition, spiritualism, in short, all nonsense that was not directly harmful to business, and now is very useful to dull the masses.²

So he thought modern spiritualism was unmodern. He tried to explain its recent rise only when using the word 'now', as he wrote about usefulness to the rich in their battle against the poor.

Longest was a ten-page article by Engels, called *Die Naturforschung in der Geisterwelt*, 'Natural Science in the World of Ghosts'.³ Probably written in 1878, it was not printed during his lifetime. It first came out in an 1898 Hamburg social democrat calendar. It resembled T. Huxley's better known observations on credibility, or lack of it, of spiritualist mediums. The article ended with a Huxley quote. English zoologists from the sphere of Darwin and Huxley were prominent among the adversaries of spiritualism. One of them, Ray Lankester (1847-1929), had American medium Slade, whom Olcott and Blavatsky had sent to Europe in 1876, sued in court for fraud.⁴ Later, Lankester was one of the speakers at Marx' burial.

Engels thought that 'modern spiritualism was the emptiest of all superstitions.' As an example of fraud, he cited the Holmeses of Philadelphia. They had evoked the spirit of 'Katey King', an action that H.P. Blavatsky defended in the U.S. press.

Engels' article aimed at a sociological explanation only in that it asked what kind of scientist spiritualism was most likely to attract. Paradoxically, it concluded that the

¹MEW, vol. 18 (Berlin: Dietz, 1962), 99 (Engels, 'Die Internationale in Amerika': 97-103). This article originally appeared in the German social democrat paper *Der Volksstaat*, #57, 17 July 1872. 'Shakers' refers to a U.S. Christian sect.

²MEW, vol. 36 (Berlin: Dietz, 1967), 579. Letter to Friedrich Adolph Sorge in Hoboken. London, 29 November 1886; *ibid.*, 578-81.

³MEW, vol. 20 (Berlin: Dietz, 1962), 337-47.

⁴Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, *The History of Spiritualism*, vol. I, London, Cassell, 1926; 289f. HPB referred to this Lankester in her '(New) York against Lankester', which appeared in the *Banner of Light* on 14 Oct., 1876; *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings: 1874-1878*. First edition. Compiled by Boris de Zirkoff. Volume I (Wheaton, IL: Theosophical Publishing House, 1966), 221-5. *Ibid.*, II, 217: HPB saw especially 'Western biologists' as opponents. *Ibid.*, III, 20: British theosophist G. Massey was Slade's lawyer in England.

empiricist kind was more likely to than a priori theorists like German nature philosophers. Engels cited Alfred Wallace and Sir William Crookes¹ as examples of the former.

2. Annie Besant before theosophy

For four years prior to her joining the Theosophical Society in 1889, Annie Besant was, like Engels, active in the English socialist labour movement. She had evolved from a radical liberal to a Social Democrat. She joined the Fabian Society, and later the Social Democratic Federation besides. The Fabian Society was too moderate for Engels; Hyndman's S.D.F. was officially Marxist,² but was under fire for sectishness.

Although Annie Besant's biographer Nethercot did not quote from Engels' works, he did mention him several times. He wrote:

Certainly Mrs. Besant never darkened the doors of Engels' home, though she was the Fabian for whom he had the greatest respect, because of her influential pamphlets.³ Engels did not forgive her her earlier anti-socialism.⁴ He saw her as one of 'all those 'dummy men and women'',⁵ who played a part only while British workers were not confident enough for leadership from their own midst yet.

Engels complained that Besant's *Our Corner* magazine, to which he sent a review copy of the new English translation of his *The condition of the Working-class in England in 1844*, ignored it.⁶ Like Annie's supporters later, when she played a major part in India, Engels spoke of 'Mother' Besant; but not in their complimentary sense.

3. Theosophy

The only time Engels mentioned H.P. Blavatsky was in an 1891 letter. From London, he wrote to Kautsky:

Do you know Mother Besant has joined the theosophists of Grandmother Blavatsky (Blamatsky) On her garden gate, 19, Avenue Road, now is in big gold letters: Theosophical

¹Both would briefly become members of the Theosophical Society; RANSOM(1938), 19.

²Sheila Rowbotham, *Hidden from History: Rediscovering Women in History*, N.Y., Pantheon, 1974, 95: the 'so-called 'marxist'' SDF leaders. The *Grote Nederlandse Larousse Encyclopedie*, Schellens & Gillay, 's-Gravenhage, s.d., vol. IV, 554, claimed Besant was the first woman to propagate 'atheist Marxism'. But for instance Marx' daughters had preceded her in this.

³NETHERCOT(1960), 235.

⁴MEW, vol. 36, 101. Letter to Laura Lafargue (Paris). London, 5 February 1884; 101-3.

⁵Ibid., 710. Letter to Laura Lafargue (Paris), London, 11 October 1887; (708-710).

⁶MEW, vol. 37 (Berlin: Dietz, 1967), 58. Letter to Florence Kelley-Wischniewetzky (New York). London, 2 May 1888; (58-59).

Head Quarters. Herbert Burrows has caused this by his love.¹

These few lines in a private letter are all Engels (or Marx) ever wrote on the Theosophical Society. If he had thought it important, then he would have written more. Engels never wrote explicitly on the relationship of theosophists to politics. From what he wrote on religion in general, one may suppose it would not have been positive.² One may conclude Marx and Engels rejected spiritualism and theosophy. This rejection, though, they did not think of as important enough to waste much ammunition, in the form of writing-ink, on.

B. THEOSOPHY ON CLASSLESS OR HIERARCHICAL SOCIALISM, 1875-1918

1. 1875-1905

In 1875, four years after the Paris Commune, in New York the just founded Theosophical Society faced the question of compatibility with socialism. C. Sotheran, the first TS librarian

made some inflammatory speeches at a political street meeting [of strikers], to which H.P.B. strongly objected: ... 'A Theosophist becoming a rioter, encouraging revolution and MURDER, a friend of Communists is no fit member of our Society. HE HAS TO GO'.³

He went. H.P. Blavatsky in 1878 sent a letter to the Italian newspaper *Fanfulla*, attacking 'Communism'.⁴ One year later, Madame Blavatsky wrote in the first issue of *The Theosophist* on her Society:

Unconcerned about politics; hostile to the insane dreams of Socialism and of Communism, which it abhors as both are but disguised conspiracies of brutal force and sluggishness against honest labour ...

The first three words of the above quotation seem to bear out widespread ideas that theosophy and other 'Other World' movements are apolitical. Does not the rest, though, explicitly naming some political ideas, implicitly favour other political ideas?

In 1888 in *Lucifer*, the opponent of socialism T.B. Harbottle saw it as interference with Karma, as materialism, opposition to spiritual Hierarchy and 'an innate hatred of domination.' The 'socialist student of theosophy', who feared that he was 'still far from

¹MEW, vol. 38, 88. Letter to Karl Kautsky (Stuttgart). 30 April 1891 (86-88). The last sentence paraphrases Heinrich Heine's poem *Die Lorelei*. H. Burrows was a SDF member as was Mrs Besant; he joined the TS shortly before her. He left after the 1907 controversy on Leadbeater. Compare Engels' view to that of Sylvia Pankhurst, see p. 373. Pankhurst's father's views, like Besant's, had gone from liberal to socialist; unlike Engels, he had worked closely with Besant's labour free speech Law and Liberty League.

²'The essence of the state, as of religion, is humanity's fear of itself.' Engels, quoted BLOCH, 162.

³P. JOHNSON(1990), 46. Sotheran then was in the N.Y. Liberal Club; later he was in the Knights of Labor and Socialist Labor Party; in 1896, a Democrat convention delegate.

⁴Letter reprinted *TT* May 1932, 234f.

being a perfect Theosophist', J. Brailsford Bright defended socialism against Harbottle's charges.¹

Undeterred by her former associate G.W. Foote's remark, 'that the socialist, and every social reformer, is fighting against Karma [doctrine]',² Annie Besant joined the TS. Just afterwards in 1889, she still was a delegate from the *Fédération Radicale de la métropole de Londres* and of the match-workers to a Paris socialist congress. There were two rival socialist congresses in Paris then. Their participants: the moderates, called in French *Possibilistes*; and the revolutionaries, would join forces in the Second International only later. Annie Besant joined, and defended, the Possibilists.³

She had also gone to France to meet H.P. Blavatsky. Her new contacts with HPB and W.T. Stead, who were both seen as close to the czar's government, aroused suspicion in British socialist paper the *Labour Elector*.⁴ Mrs Besant before becoming a theosophist had supported the illegal democratic opposition to czarism, known as Nihilism. H.P. Blavatsky had attacked it. In the *Pioneer*, she called it a

black fungus ... Trade unions, infected with the notions of the International, sprang up like mushrooms; and demagogues ranted to social clubs upon the conflict between labour and capital ... the ranting spectre of the Nihilist delirium, the red-handed socialist.⁵

Madame Blavatsky was not only sceptical on socialism, as were other theosophists influencing Annie Besant's new surroundings, but also on smaller reforms like social

¹LucL, II, 232.

²Quoted BESANT(1889), 24.

³Le congrès marxiste de 1889/Le congrès possibiliste de 1889. Genève, Munkoff, 1976. MEADE, 432. NETHERCOT(1960), 280. Louis Dramard, co-writer with Benoit Malon in the possibilist *Revue Socialiste*, was FTS, GUÉNON(1921), 75. Dramard, born in 1848, lived in Algeria for some time. His writings on it were unsympathetic to French colonizers and Jews, and sympathetic to Muslims. *Dictionnaire de Biographie Française*, vol. VI, Paris, Lelouzeux et Ané, 1967, 730. RANSOM(1938), 245: in his TS lodge, entrance fees were low, 'In order to spread the truths of Theosophy among all classes' He died in March 1888; *ibid.*, 249.

⁴TAYLOR(1992), 250.

⁵BCW, II, 359f. 'The history of a "book"'. See also *ibid.*, 264. *ibid.*, III, 199: 'armies of Socialists and red-handed Nihilists obscure the sun of the political horizon in Europe.' *ibid.*, III, 207: 'the savagery production of this, our most savage and cruel century-the Nihilist-Socialists.' When the underground opposition killed Czar Alexander II in 1881, HPB was deeply shocked and became ill; BCW, vol. III, XXIV; *ibid.*, 121ff. *ibid.*, III, 155f., in 'The State of Russia', she described those involved with the successful attempt on Alexander II's life as 'four men, from the scum of Russian society, and one woman belonging to the nobility'; and in quotes to corroborate her view: 'the most dishonourable set of ruffians that ever trod the earth'; 'venomous reptiles'. The 'one woman', Sophia Perovskaja (Perovsky), was executed. When later that year a US clairvoyante, Mrs Cornelia Gardner, claimed she had seen Perovskaja's spirit, HPB denied the vision was really one of 'that wretched, heartless creature's spirit; or of that of another Nihilist: 'the Jewess, Jessie Gelfman', who had 'just been pardoned by the Emperor, [Alexander III; for pregnancy] and her death sentence commuted into deportation for life ... her worthless life was spared.' *TT*; BCW, III, 359f.

insurance. She preferred private alms. In *The Key to Theosophy*, the chapter *On Charity*, she wrote about giving money to poor people:

Act individually and not collectively ... As done now a good portion ... gets into the hands of professional beggars, who are too lazy to work.¹

A gentleman had given Blavatsky £ 1000 to spend for the benefit of poor women. Annie Besant wanted to spend it on a club for the London match girls she knew from their strike. Then, HPB wrote to Annie, warning her against a trade union link for this club. That would bring the TS into conflict with 'police and the whole of the conservative party'.²

Col. Olcott wrote on the 1894 end to her contacts with the match workers:

On the previous evening I went with Mrs. Besant to Bow St. to officially close the Women's Club. The experiment had proved a failure, probably because its moral tone was too high and there were no male fellows, potential lovers, to fill the time with courtship and kisses. We had a very pleasant evening, however, and the girls were amusingly enthusiastic over my singing of some Irish songs³ -things they could easily understand, being on their own intellectual level.⁴

H.P. Blavatsky's last 1891 telegram before she died to Annie Besant ran: 'Their [Masters'] blessing, my love. Beware socialism'.⁵ Soon afterwards, Annie Besant cut all remaining ties with the SDF, which already had become less since 1889.

Later, she still had occasional contacts with the Fabian Society as a guest speaker. Her views now were:

that ... Socialist Movement ... is making a tremendous blunder ... I shall dwell on to-morrow night in addressing a Socialist Society. They are forgetting the very root of progress ... They think that the future depends on economic conditions ... For society grows out of men, and not men out of society.⁶

In her later years, she became sceptical on the type of reforms she had fought for during the 1880's in the Fabians:

not in that way by small reforms wrung out by the exigencies of party strife ... a mere attack on privilege, by a tax here and a tax there ...

that was not voluntary on the side of the privileged

By the self-sacrifice of those who have, and not by the revolution and the uprising of those who have not. Revolution can destroy; it cannot build. The ignorant can rise up; they cannot

¹BLAVATSKY(1987), 244. HPB did not like beggars much: BCW, III, 243-4. 'Indiscriminate charity, said Sir W[illiam]. Harcourt [British Home Secretary in the 1880's], benefits only the sturdy beggars and becomes a great evil.' A.S.I. [=A. Subramaniya Iyer?], 657.

²Letters published *TT* Feb. 1932, 512.

³Probably many of the girls were of Irish background.

⁴ODL, *TT* May 1903, 454.

⁵Reprinted *TT* May 1932, 232.

⁶BESANT(1907B), 149.

construct. Not by the starving and the miserable can a social order be established ...¹

Besant's German TS colleague Hübbe-Schleiden had never been a socialist. He thought that 'rising crime and Social Democracy' were symptoms of decay, which showed German society needed colonial expansion policy as a safety valve.²

In his magazine *Broad Views*, TS Vice President A.P. Sinnett wrote on 'Socialism in the Light of Occult Science by an Occult Student'. He saw socialism as a derivation of Christianity of a utopian type which he rejected, an exoteric type, ignorant about karma and reincarnation:

dreamers' fancies, begotten in minds which are quite ignorant of the law of human development, and suppose that there is such a thing as uniformity of character among masses of men. He [Sinnett] says: "All writers of the Tolstoi or Bellamy type start with the assumption, as if it were an undeniable axiom, that every child is born, comes into the world on equal terms with every other, free of all previous claims or responsibilities, a new divine creation in each case set up by Providence with a stock in trade of limbs, appetites and capacities, identically the same throughout the race, and constituting an equal credit on the accumulated reserves of the race, if the selfishness of individual magnates had not enabled them to absorb their proper share." He explains this stupid conception as the outgrowth of Christian theological teachings during the last dozen or so centuries. He then proceeds to elucidate the grand theory of human development, in which it is shown that both the human body and spirit are equally the outcome of evolutionary agencies.³

Sinnett wrote this as in Tolstoy's homeland revolution had broken out.

2. Workers, peasants, and landlords of Latvia in 1905

Reacting to the 1905 revolution in the Russian empire, Olcott wrote a *Theosophist* article: 'The awful karma of Russia'.⁴ Most of it were parts of a letter from a lady theosophist whom Olcott called 'one of the purest, sweetest and most cultured of our members'.⁵ He did not identify her. The letter, however, strongly suggests she was a landed proprietress in Kurland. Or rather, she had been a proprietress until recent expropriation: 'The little income that still remains to me does not get paid ...'⁶ And Olcott spoke of her family:

¹BESANT(1911C), 91. Compare BESANT(1912A), 74-5: 'happy life ... must be ... brought about by the love and sacrifice of the higher, and not by the uprising of the lower. Mobs can make revolutions; but they cannot build a State'.

²Quoted WEHLER, 144.

³BV, Sept. 1905, quoted TT, Oct. 1905, 73.

⁴OLCOTT(1905), 56f. *Theosophy in Australasia* reprinted the article in 1905; TT, Jan. 1906, 311.

⁵OLCOTT(1905), 56.

⁶OLCOTT(1905), 58.

'Their property virtually gone ...'¹

Kurland today is independent Latvia's western part. Then, it was a subject territory of the czar's realm. Most workers in Latvia's cities were Latvian, Russian, or Jewish. Most peasants were Latvian. And most of the landed aristocracy, as in Estonia, and to a lesser extent also in Lithuania, was of German-Baltic German-ancestry.

Division along nationality lines coincided with division along social lines more closely than perhaps anywhere else in Europe.²

The 'Baltic barons' played an important role as officers in the imperial army, and as officials. By the empire's standards, St. Petersburg, the capital, was not far from their estates.³ Many of the empire's theosophists, like Marie von Sievers, the future Mrs Steiner, were from their ranks.⁴

The lady writing from Kurland to Adyar described, from observations, newspaper reports, and grapevine rumours, how Latvian peasants in revolt, aiming at expropriating big property, threatened these estates in the late summer of 1905. She and her family themselves had suffered financially, not bodily, from the peasants' movement. But the future worried them:

In the capital town, a few miles away, they have tragedies happening every now and then: strikes, street revolts, murders, and then there is shooting by volleys ... but the country is quiet and more beautiful than ever ... As the breath of roses and mignonettes comes to me through the open windows, I wonder whether the next summer will find us still on this plane.⁵

¹OLCOTT(1905), 59

²STRUVE, 274. Ibid. 'These German Balts who were not noblemen ... were, for the most part, businessmen, craftsmen and professionals'.

³The imperial Romanov family had often intermarried with German princely dynasties

⁴WEBB(1974A), 236: Rudolf Steiner cancelled a lecture tour of the czar's empire when it turned out that most of his prospective audience had fled from the 1905 revolution. At least one Baltic noble, Count Hermann Keyserling, born in north Latvia, visited Adyar headquarters before the First World War. His *Travel Diary of a Philosopher* was favourably considered and partly published in instalments in three 1913 issues of *The Theosophist*, to which he also contributed 'Reflections on Indian Thought and Life', TT, 1913, 481f. In the 1920's, newly independent Latvia's government, though it was far from Bolshevik, took away from big German landowners all property over fifty hectares without compensation; this led to trouble with the German government. STRUVE, 293: after Latvia had expropriated Keyserling's estate, he had to go to Germany, where he founded the School of Wisdom, much influenced by theosophical and 'Oriental' ideas. The School also considered political and social questions; Keyserling admired Horthy's Hungary, where aristocracy still was strong (ibid., 295); sometimes he expressed himself for a 'new caste system'; ibid., 293; and against the Versailles treaty. He hoped for an anti-Bolshevik 'Internationale of the really Best, the most Enlightened, the most Well-meaning in one word the Internationale of gentlemen'; quoted TT, June 1921, 306.

⁵OLCOTT(1905), 57. In theosophy, an individual's death does not mean its end; only the end of the lowest of its seven 'principles', of the physical body. Its invisible aspects then move away

... In this connection I wish to ask you [Olcott] a question: if our house should be besieged by some hundreds of howling ruffians -human beasts shrieking for murder- have I not the right to shoot my daughters, to break the fairest of my flowers, lest they should fall into the hands of those maddened fiends? I suppose one is not to kill oneself, as it may be the karma one has to endure, but may one not help others? In Odessa they have done such unspeakable horrors on lovely young girls, poor things belonging to their own socialistic party; unhappy creatures who went on board the rebel ships to take "proclamations to the brethren". The sea brought back their bodies: and how!

Olcott's correspondent denied that the Latvian revolutionaries had a case, also because the standard of living in the Baltic lands was higher than in the rest of the empire:

And here in our ... provinces the workmen are so well off, so well paid and well fed- every family having its cow and two sheep, not to count swine and poultry- whilst the farmers are all wealthy ... but the anarchistic propaganda has blinded all the best instincts and upset all sound thinking

Olcott reacted to the letter:

I ask my readers if they ever saw as striking a case of true Theosophy practically applied. Was it not for the comfort and helping of such souls that our movement begun? Put yourselves, you mothers and wives, in the place of this lady ... with the fiery circle of savagery contracting about their peaceful country village day by day.

Though the letter contained no call for financial help ('for they are gentles and self-respect keeps them tongue-tied')² Olcott responded with a call for a collection for those whom the revolution harmed. *The Theosophist* published receipt accounts.³

In an ironic twist, only the relative relaxation of autocracy after 1905 made it possible for the Russian TS to come 'aboveground'.⁴ Czar Nicholas II was interested in non-(officially) Orthodox occultism: about 1901, French occultist Papus, expelled from the TS for indiscipline, was his adviser; and Rasputin. The official head of Orthodoxy, though,

from the earthly 'plane' to another plane (like *Devachan*, the realm of the gods), to wait for future reincarnation. The Kurland lady's sentence expresses her idea that earthly life might not last much longer.

¹OLCOTT(1905), 58. Lower-ranking sailors of the warship *Potemkin* and other vessels of the imperial Black Sea fleet had taken control of their ships in 1905.

²OLCOTT(1905), 59.

³The "Russian Karma" Fund', *TT*, Nov. 1905, suppl., xii; Olcott, Sir S. Subramaniam, and others contributed. A railway strike in the Russian empire caused problems in transferring the contributions.

⁴According to OLCOTT(1905), 56: 'But they [theosophists in the Russian empire] have never dared to openly form themselves into chartered Branches, so pitiless and powerful has been the influence of the Orthodox Church and the officials who are dominated by its authority'.

only after the 1905 revolution made occultism legal, along with some other matters which so far had been not.¹

3.1908-1917

In spite of objections to revolution, TS 'missionary work' started in various Social Democrat parties, for spiritual and against materialist socialism. The *Adyar Bulletin* in 1908-9 mentioned Dutch, Finnish, and US cases. In The Netherlands

some members of the socialistic party, who are at the same time T.S. are uniting themselves in such an order and will in that way help this party with theosophical ideas as a basis for economic change. There will also be formed Christian order will on the same plan [of the TS Order of Service] to influence theological ideas.²

Dutch physician A.J. Resink in his writings of about 1908 was the only case I found of someone wishing to reconcile theosophy with Marxism, and Marxist with revisionist socialism too.³ Resink thought the TS would have to discard esoterism and democratize itself. Only thus it might attract socialists.⁴ For a few years a small group of Dutch social democrat theosophists kept going.⁵ Later, Resink would link religion and politics

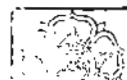
¹Nicholas II's brother-in-law, Grand Duke Alexander, was a 'convinced spiritualist' and after exile a friend of Alice Bailey's; BAILEY(1951), 208. The Russian Minister Plenipotentiary [roughly Ambassador] to Brazil, Argentina, and other South American states, Count Maurice de Prozor, was a TS member at large. In 1905, he visited the Buenos Aires Vi-Dharma lodge, along with Baron Pilar from Pillau [today: Baltijsk, a Baltic port]; *TT*, Sept. 1905, 756; *TT*, Mar. 1905, suppl., xviii.

²*AdB* Aug. 1908, 252.

³RESINK(A), 24. Also Nicaragua's Sandino had both theosophist and Marxist influences; but Sandino never joined the TS, or, as far as I am aware, explicitly discussed the relationship between those two sets of ideas. See ARIAS GOMEZ, 54-6; JINARAJADASA(1930A), 394.

⁴RESINK(A), 31. [bold type his] 'The discarding of esoterism is one side of the enormous social-psychological problem of democratizing it all'.

⁵VAN DER ZEE(1918A): 'Besides Resink, we should name of the group the secretary, Mrs C. G. de Vos, and Messrs. A. J. J. de Muta and G. H. Bertrand [a doctor; *THA* Dec. 1920, 287]. Though they hardly published anything ... the theosophical social democrat association in the years 1910, 1911, and 1912 had a certain zenith, even though that zenith consisted more, as one of them writes to me, in a rich inner life.' H. van Kol, party right winger especially on decolonization of Indonesia, often went there on business. He practised spiritualism and said that he 'got many good advices from the spirit world'; KARTINI, 184-5. He was 'attracted to theosophy'; in 1920, he founded *De Wicheleerde* society to apply divining-rods to geology and earth rays; F.G. van Baardewijk, 'Kol, Hendrik Hubertus van', *Biografisch Woordenboek van Nederland*, III, 348. Later, Dr. G.H. Ketner believed in ghosts and occultism, though he suspected 'he had many opponents on this within the [SDAP] party'. KETNER(1925), 3. See also *TMNI*, 1920, 543-4. Van Ravesteijn in *DNT* 1917, 226, accused Ketner of 'theoretically and practically repudiating Marxism'. Social democrat FTS G. Zwertbroek later became a nazi. *TB* Sept. 1932, 359. VAN DER MERWE.



differently: in the *Religieus Socialistisch Verbond*, a mainly Protestant socialist organization. He had convinced few fellow theosophists and few fellow socialists: 'the word 'occult' makes a Marxist run away.'¹

An example of that in The Netherlands was astronomer A. Pannekoek, fighting for 'the new proletarian philosophy, leaving no space anywhere any longer for mysticism.'² Also Pannekoek's co-editor of *De Nieuwe Tijd* magazine, W. van Ravesteijn, who knew Engels' works well. There was a similarity in his own writings to Engels': on theosophy he only wrote briefly and sarcastically. Once in Engels' case, twice with Van Ravesteijn. He described in 1917 'theosophist or Bollandist' views as variants of

This bourgeois wisdom ... this nauseous, disgusting mentality, which so characteristically belongs to a decaying and completely corrupt class without ideals, that one cannot find it in any earlier age of history, this specifically 19th century product, hateful and stupid like a modern Protestant or Catholic church building, a bourgeois drawing-room, or a bourgeois ladies' tea-party; to see this once again, dressed up in 'philosophical' clothes, and being proclaimed as the modern's most modern thing; really, we are not tolerant enough for this.³

When he accused his colleague Henriette Roland Holst of philosophical idealism six years later, he compared her views to theosophists'.⁴

Also like Engels, Van Ravesteijn wrote somewhat more on spiritualism. 'If spiritualism ... would only have its adherents among people of property large and small ... there really would be no point' in writing on it in a socialist magazine {Should not socialists know about their opponents' various ideas?} However, also workers, 'though, as we hope, not many', were spiritualists. Still less were FTS; which may explain differences in sizes of Van Ravesteijn's writings.

To him, spiritualism was to the labour movement 'as dangerous as the most fanatical orthodox faith.' Its attraction was presenting itself as science, rather than as the religion it was. Spiritualism was 'anti- or unsocial views'; with a 'social cause' in 'grown capitalism' though. It was: 'Only since the mid-19th century the separation of the individual from the old social ties in the Western countries (also the US) has gone that far, that great numbers of people get conscious of, and get completely desperate from, the

¹RESINK(A), 17. In the long run, he was more optimistic then; *ibid.*, 27. Because: 'Neither Marxists nor Christian Socialists know exactly what they want' [bold type Resink's]. *Ibid.*, 28. 'The propaganda [for theosophy] among social democrats will not take 30 years without bearing fruit!' He warned though, *ibid.*, 6: 'So the Theosophical Society does have the right to look at class struggle in its way, but it does not have the right to wish itself above class struggle, for this in practice means sanctioning bourgeois defense of private capitalist interests and fighting the Proletariat ...'

²PANNEKOEK, 303.

³VAN RAVESTEIJN(1917), 632.

⁴VAN RAVESTEIJN(1923). Roland Holst's religion was not the TS; rather, she had never broken with the liberal Protestant Remonstrant faith into which she was born; Carolien Boon/Ger Harmsen, 'Een poging tot bekering van Henriette Roland Holst', *BNA*, 32, Dec. 1993, 5.

feeling of becoming absolutely lonely resulting from it.¹

De Nieuwe Tijd then was popular with Sneevliet and other socialists in Indonesia, who asked Van Ravesteijn for advice.² Van Ravesteijn became one of few voices in Dutch parliament of immediate independence for Indonesia. In 1922, communist MPs Van Ravesteijn and Wijkoop made the first, defeated, proposal to use the name Indonesia instead of 'Netherlands Indies' in government publications.³

In 1908, Pekka Ervast wrote of the Finnish TS' history. From 1901 on, they had regularly had lectures, at first in a building owned by socialists, later in Helsinki headquarters of their own. There still was, though, 'a fraction of the Socialist party, which recognises Theosophy as the ideal religion, and would reform Society on the base of love and mutual understanding between the classes'.⁴

In 1909 in the United States, the New York Lodge's Mission League, part of the Order of Service,

has undertaken the quite interesting experiment of propagating among the socialists. The president, Mr M J. Whitty addressed them in a series of lectures which are said to be well received and fairly well attended. Some propaganda literature has been printed.⁵

However, 'Only a minority of occultists wanted reconciliation with socialists'.⁶

The reverse was also often true. In Denmark, suffragist Johanne Marie Meyer (1838-1915) was editor of the Social Democrat women's paper until there was a conflict. In the 1900's, she joined the small Danish TS for the last years of her life. This made her

relations to ... [the Danish Social Democrat] party leadership more complicated ... after she in her later years became more engaged in theosophy, which hardly had any working class support in Copenhagen.⁷

Annie Besant spoke in an Australian trade union hall in 1908. To her surprise, her speech went down well.⁸ Legislation had improved the position of labour in early 20th century Australia. To the discontent of Annie Besant, who said 'the death-rate of the

¹VAN RAVESTEIJN(1917), 628-30. Van Ravesteijn in *DAT* 1917, 223 accused the minister 'practising dictatorship' in Liberal Cort van der Linden's cabinet of being 'addicted to table-dancing and spiritualism.'

²TICHELMAN(1985), 211; 364-5

³HPO, Apr. 1922, 4-5, 'De naam "Indonesië".'

⁴Pekka Ervast, 'Finland', *ADB* May 1908, 158-9.

⁵*ADB*, Oct. 1909, 326 'An interesting experiment'.

⁶ROMEIN(1976), 638.

⁷DAHLSGÅRD. Letter from Tinne Vammen, Copenhagen, to me, 20-8-1991. *TS Annual Report* on 1904, 103, and 1905, 131: Meyer was president of Copenhagen's Maria Lodge, founded in 1904.

⁸TT Oct. 1908, I. ROE, 142f. Annie Besant 'Theosophy and the workers'; *TinA* 2-11-1908, 175.

children' went up due to trade union rights.¹ In 1912, she attacked British Liberal Prime Minister Asquith for concessions to striking miners' 'callousness and irresponsibility':

Trade Unions can thus not only conspire for the starvation of the public, and for forcibly depriving the non-Unionist of the right to labour to gain bread for himself and his family, but can also label at will those who are struggling against its tyranny. To such a pass has Mr. Asquith reduced the public by his subservency to organized labour.²

John Earle, FTS, became Tasmania's first Labor PM, for one week in 1909; he regained office in 1914-16.³ Another Australian politician, M. Reid, joined the TS at about the same time, the 1910's, that he went from his earlier Labor to the conservative National party.⁴ He was an example, like Mrs Besant, Maharadja (see p. 331), and others, of convergence between a rightward shift in political views, and a TS-ward shift in philosophy. With some individuals, this convergence had mainly to do with a new TS social environment influencing their ideas; with others, with moving right anyway, and then choosing theosophy among existing philosophies that might match this shift.

4. From czar to soviet. 1917 and after

In 1917, people like described in H.P. Blavatsky's quote (p. 142) toppled the czar's rule. The *soviets*, workers', peasants', and soldiers' councils with increasing Bolshevik party influence, took over for their headquarters near Petrograd (St. Petersburg) the building of the Smolny school, the Institute for Girls of the Nobility;⁵ they turned out its pupils and management. Its director's daughter was leading theosophist and Russia's Order of the Star in the East representative, Barbara Poushkine, née Princess Galitzine. She was related to Prince Galitzine, the czar's last prime minister, deposed in March 1917.⁶ Before the year ended, the soviets took over the government. Soon Madame Blavatsky's distant relations, the imperial family, were killed.

In the spring of 1917, when the Bolsheviks were not yet in the government, Russian

¹BESANT(1910C), 41.

²WT, TT May 1912, 159f. WT, TT June 1912, 322.

³ROE, 192.

⁴SULLIVAN, 356. An ex-trade unionist himself, in a 1921 official report he described shipyard union activists as 'loafing'. Justin C. MacCartie, 'The Karma of Money', TT, Dec. 1920, 231, was not satisfied with Australia's demographic and political development: 'the spending of large sums of borrowed money caused a large influx of the labouring element; so that now Australia is suffering from centralisation of the population in cities, where they produce nothing, and from an overplus of labour voters, who sway the political power of the country in directions which many think hazardous.' Relations of the Labor Party to the TS's 'Who's for Australia' political league were bad in the 1920's. ROE, 345.

⁵C. PORTER, 278-9. Catherine the Great had originally established it.

⁶KAMENSKY(1932).

TS General Secretary Anna Kamensky had travelled from Adyar back to Russia.¹ According to Annie Besant's 1920 Convention speech, in which she based herself not on Russian theosophists, but on 'a person who was in Russia at the time':

the Society was closed down by the Bolsheviks in December, 1919; it was offered liberty if it would spread among the populace the teaching that not only was there no God, but that religion was the primary cause of ignorance and injustice. ... Our noble Anna Kamensky boldly refused, after being subjected to long interrogation and insult. ... Communication with the outer world is forbidden by the Tyranny, and we have heard nothing since October last. When I bade her farewell in London, when she took up the work of the T.S. under the Tsar's régime, I said to her in the words of the Christ: "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves," but the far worse wolves of Bolshevism were then undreamt of.²

Anna Kamensky,³ Barbara Poushkine, and most other theosophists emigrated.

Why had the worst of the 1910's 'two world disasters: war and revolution'⁴ occurred? Rudolf Steiner in 1922 knew the answer: bad mathematics education at schools had caused Bolshevism in eastern Europe.⁵ Alice Bailey, who then had just broken with the TS, claimed she had received a letter from Mahatma Djwal Kul. It was comparatively positive on the Bolsheviks.⁶ Bhagavan Das from India held up the caste system as an example to Lenin.⁷

Three years after October 1917, J. Kruisheer wrote an article. In it, he argued that

¹WT, TT, June 1917, 240-1.

²BESANT(1921E), 501-2. Did the post-October regime ban the TS because of religious views? or were its members individually, as linked to the former rulers, suspect to the new ones, and did they therefore emigrate? As far as I could find out, neither Lenin, nor Stalin, nor Trotsky ever wrote either for or against the Theosophical Society (LENIN(n.d.) before the First World War did criticize the philosophy of US sympathizer of Buddhism Paul Carus, who invited Dharmapala to his country in the 1890's). Though communist governments later came to Cuba and Yugoslavia, TS (Adyar) sections there worked and published their magazines.

³Annie Besant met her in 1921 in Belgium, and reported in WT, TT, Sept. 1921, 514. 'She is looking. I am glad to say, very well, and is full of indomitable courage, despite the persecution she has undergone from the atheistic Bolshevik Government'.

⁴VAN DER LEEUW(1920), 5. CLEATHER(1922B), 38: Bolshevism was worse than world war [I].

⁵Die geistig-seelischen Grundkräfte der Erziehungskunst, quoted IMELMAN and VAN HOEK, 61.

⁶BAILEY(1922B), 115. She (He?) summed up various groups, 'definitely united for work of an occult and spiritual nature'. They might be in churches, labour movements, politics, the TS, Christian Science, New Thought or Spiritualism. 'I would add to this, one branch of endeavor that may surprise you.-I mean the movement of the Soviet in Russia and all the aggressive radical bodies that sincerely serve under their leaders (even when misguided and unbalanced) for the betterment of the condition of the masses.'

⁷DAS(1922), 113. DAS(1947), 546f: 'the four natural Types, which cannot be abolished; the non-recognition of which, and of corollaries, is the very serious flaw in the Russian Experiment'.

democratic 'rule by the masses' was an impossibility anywhere. He saw signs that Lenin's associates were moving away from earlier errors:

That which we see happening in Russia now is very remarkable in this respect, where Bolshevism at first showed itself as an exclusively democratic institution and treated the intellect with contempt, oppressed it, and many times murdered it, but where, according to the latest news, the state organization once again is going to be more and more hierarchical and government power now once more, automatically, moves away towards the hands of the intellectually most developed.¹

Kruisheer then already was the major shareholder of the theosophist printing business in Indonesia.² Two years later, he became General Secretary of the Dutch East Indies section, later of the Dutch section.

C. CONSCRIPTION IN INDONESIA? THEOSOPHISTS AGAINST SOCIALISTS

Before we go on, to a detailed account of the relationship of theosophists and socialists in Indonesia, 1915-1918, we must look at the views of both on war; as war was the main, though not only, issue in that relationship. Dutch Fournier wrote in 1917 in Indonesia about one who got to know theosophy:

Pain, suffering, wars, etc., etc., take on a completely different meaning to him, as he sees them as factors of spiritual evolution.³

We will see in what context Fournier's views fitted. First, briefly, general ideas on causes of and remedy for war. Then, individual wars.

1. Theosophists and war up to 1918

What causes war? According to Argentine's naval *Comandante* F.W. Fernandez, President of the TS' Vi-Dharma Branch:

the Western world which is always rushing through its experiences at headlong speed, always ascribes war to a material cause or to human initiative with the object of acquiring fresh territory or making permanent conquests as yet not fully perfected, those of the Orient who have inherited the traditions of the great teachings of the ancient wisdom as to the logical consequences of precedent actions [karma] as mingling with the great course of evolution, directed from above by those who have received the mission to regulate its progress [the Masters of the Great White Lodge] view it from a higher standpoint. Theirs is the duty to supervise not only the spiritual but the physical progress of the race. To such as have become familiar with this great fact these clashes of arms between nations, these displacements of populations, and these expansions of peoples all come under the action of the one immanent and eternal law of Karma.

Fernandez gave the 1905 Japanese-Russian and British-Tibetan wars as examples of how

¹KRUISHEER(1926), 207.

²NUGRAHA(1989), 240.

³FOURNIER(1917), 32.

armed conflicts fit in with Karma and Superhuman direction.⁴

Leadbeater, also in 1905, expected world peace from theosophy's expansion:

It is impossible to avoid the conclusion that if Theosophy spread gradually among these various nations, if the majority, or even a large minority, of each nation understood and accepted the Theosophical ideas, anything like war between such nations would be wholly impossible.⁵

1.1. From Kurukshetra till 1904

Kurukshetra was the name of a paper for the military, which the TS distributed in battle zones of the First World War.⁶ Originally, it was the name of a field. There, according to the ancient Indian epic the Mahabharata, of which the Bhagavad Gita forms part, two sets of brothers, cousins to one another, fought the decisive bloody battle over who would succeed to the royal throne. Poison gas had already been used there, as in 1914-18, according to Annie Besant.⁷

How to interpret the Mahabharata religiously and politically has been the subject of many discussions throughout the ages. Symbolic interpretations exist, which interpret the poem only in terms of a struggle between good and evil spiritual forces within individuals; like F.T. Brooks' *Holy War*.

Annie Besant though, the initial superior and later opponent of Brooks, writing on the Mahabharata, did relate it to non-symbolic military events. According to her *The Story of the Great War* (also translated as a series in the 1916 Dutch East Indies TS monthly).

Sometimes a whole nation goes wrong. Then the Gods place in its way a great war, or a famine, or a plague. ... And the Great War, the story of which we are about to study, was brought about by the Gods, because it was necessary for the evolution of the nation. We see many men and animals killed in a war, and say: "How terrible! how shocking!" But men and animals are only killed when the bodies they are in are of no more use: when a man cannot do more in a particular body, the Gods strike it away, so that the man may have a better one. Instead of regarding a God as cruel when he strikes away a body, you should think of him as kind, setting the men free to grow.⁸

In the Bhagavad Gita, Arjuna wavers about killing his cousins, but is told by Krishna

⁴*La Verdad*, July 1905, as quoted *TT*, Sept. 1905, 755. On Fernandez, TS Annual report on 1901, 30. He founded and edited the Argentine TS magazine *La Verdad*, *TT*, Oct. 1905, 72. *TT*, Dec. 1905, 229. 'Commandant Fernandez has placed us all under an obligation by suppressing the fat, naked woman that he had on the cover of that magazine [*La Verdad*]'.

⁵LEADBEATER(1905B), 91.

⁶*TMNI*, 1918, 304-5. J.J.W.B.P., 'De Nieuwe Era. Eene astrologische verhandeling', *TMNI*, 1917, 521: the Mahabharata war was between the '4th and 5th Root-race, and ended with victory for the fifth'. See also BLAVATSKY(1908), 155.

⁷*WT*, *TT* Oct. 1915, 2. She also published a Bhagavad Gita translation; BROOKS(1914A), 175, claims Bhagavan Das, who was not on the cover, did most real translating.

⁸BESANT(1927), 10-1.

to do so nevertheless. In Indonesia about the time of the First World War, both theosophists like Van Ganswijk and Van Hinloopen Labberton (see p. 192), and socialists, saw Arjuna as a hero. They differed, though, on what side of his inner conflict made him a hero.

With the Dutch East Indies TS, it was allowing soldierly duty to prevail over personal feelings. To S. Partoatmodjo, editor of daily *Sinar Hindia*, though, 'Arjuna may have had feelings like a socialist, so he shrunk from killing a fellow human' in his age of warriors. 'Maybe people then did not yet know about socialism, so people could be incited easily to go to war.'¹

Indonesians often retold the other famous epic poem from India, the Ramayana, as well. It also includes a war, which King Rama fought to get his abducted wife Sita (Sinta in Indonesia) back. The Indonesian TS congress of 20 April 1919 included a *wayang* theatre show of the Ramayana 'comparing it to the present world war. Both wars had as their aim: creating a new civilization.'²

Now, we move from these ancient wars, to nineteenth and twentieth century ones. During 1877-78 Blavatsky in the US press supported Russia against Turkey: 'I regard this war as one of humanity and civilization against barbarism.'³ Britain's government then opposed Russia; Annie Besant opposed that war itself.⁴ This was before she joined the Theosophical Society. We have seen that, besides non-pacifist civilians, many officers (we hear less of non-commissioned ranks and privates) were active in the TS.⁵ It might have caused tension with these categories of members, had Mrs Besant continued to hold the same views as before her joining.

Annie Besant's support of her government in the Boer War led to pacifist criticisms by Australian Mayers.⁶ Besant's reply to pacifists like her former self was:

What can be more inhuman than war ...? Aye, but that is not all ... learning thus to sacrifice himself for an ideal.⁷

¹SH 4-3-1919, quoted IPO 10/1919, MJB, 17-8. Partoatmodjo commented on an article by Honggodidjojo on the *Broto Judo*, an Old Javanese retelling of the Mahabharata.

²Neratja 17-4-1919, quoted IPO 16/1919, MJB, 2

³BCW, vol. 1, 260. RUGE, 10.

⁴NETHERCOT(1960), 145; TAYLOR(1992), 126.

⁵See p. 99f. 'Bertrand Russell pointed out that the act of an individual who kills another is called murder, but when a whole group of people murder millions of others, we call it a glorious war. There are many hypocracies [spelling sic] of that kind.' President of the Theosophical Society, Mrs Radha BURNIER(1986), 13. LA GRANDE ENCYCLOPÉDIE LAROUSSE, 9067: the TS has 'pacifist and generous ethics.' How does one define pacifism?

⁶MAYERS(1902), 596-600. BESANT(1908C). Some moderate English social democrats within the Fabian Society had an attitude similar to their ex-colleague AB; see VAN ARKEL(1966) stelling XIII.

⁷BESANT(1900), 116.

1.2. From Russo-Japanese war till 1914

Already when Japan waged war on China, 1894-1895, it had sympathy in the TS: they believed the Japanese general Nodzu was occultly protected.¹

When the Russo-Japanese war broke out in 1904, it interested people in India and Indonesia. One of theosophist reactions was an anonymous article: 'National Brotherhood. Where is it?' It deplored the war, and took a neutral position:

... negotiations will be resorted to and some settlement made, such as might have been arrived at before the war, had patience instead of passion been in the ascendant.²

Ultimately, the US government mediated a peace settlement. Had Olcott written or supported the article?³ If so, then it was similar to his government's position.

Annie Besant also was, differently, similar to her government. Great Britain was Japan's main ally.⁴ Mrs Besant praised a Japanese mother. That mother, after one son's death in battle, wished she had another son to die in the war.⁵ In *The Inner Government of the World*, she pointed out the higher world divine background:

Manu ... inspired and stimulated the Japanese, flung them against Russia.⁶

A Japanese visitor to TS headquarters wrote an article in praise of the *Bushido* mentality of his country's military. It had spread throughout society:

the Government ... allowed even the *Eta* caste [former untouchables] to become the glorious soldiers of our Emperor.⁷

Later, Annie Besant would sound less positive though Japan was still Britain's ally. She wrote, based on TS race doctrine (seeing both Britons and Indians as 'Aryan' 'Fifth Race'):

If the primacy of Asia falls either to Japan or China -both Fourth-Race Nations- evolution will suffer a serious set-back. Great Britain and India together are the natural leaders of Asia.⁸

In the period between the 1904 and 1914 wars, her ideas had not reverted to her former pacifism:

For the conquest of one country by another is not, as many people think, an evil thing. It

¹ODL IV, 155

²TT Apr. 1904, 446.

³In TT, Aug. 1906, 828. Olcott mentioned how he, in order not to compromise TS political neutrality, had reprobated a French resolution expressing sympathy with a Peace Society.

⁴In 1919, AB criticized the British government for having been too pro-Japan; without looking back at her own earlier writings. BESANT(1919A), 54.

⁵BESANT(1905), 366.

⁶Quoted TT Oct. 1937, 54. TT also wrote on 'Occult protection of Admiral Togo.'

⁷TT June 1905, 572f. See in praise of Admiral Togo's *Bushido* in the 1904-05 Russian war also: C. Stuart-Prince, an army captain FTS, TT, July 1905, 629; 'The religion of Japan', TT, Jan. 1905, 228-35.

⁸WT, TT Apr. 1917, 4.

mingles peoples, it gives the knowledge of one to the other.¹

In 1910, she suggested that Republican Theodore Roosevelt, who had fought, and ordered to fight, wars to establish *Pax Americana* in Cuba, the Philippines, Panama, and elsewhere, should be re-elected as US President; 'and perhaps given the powers of a Dictator.' Then, 'we should see a nation committed to the cause of peace.'²

One year before the First World War started, Besant and Leadbeater predicted clairvoyantly:

Julius Caesar, who reincarnated some time in the twentieth century in connection with the coming of the Christ ... persuades all the countries to give up war ...³

So the end of war would come from above, by someone known in his former life for wars of conquest.

They thought world problems

... may be remedied by an offensive and defensive alliance between the severed halves [the U.S. and England] and a similar alliance with Germany, the remaining great section of the Teutonic sub-race [of Aryans], would weld the whole sufficiently into one to make a federated Empire.⁴

1.3. World War I: views and visions from Adyar

Even a World War is not too bad against intellectualist stiffening.⁵

The two opposing alliances of the First World War have both been called imperialist.⁶

Even far away from the trenches, the war permeated everyday things like geographic names in newspapers, or greeting someone on the street. The British press wrote 'Germ-Huns'. In the land of Kaiser Wilhelm II and General von Moltke, saying *Guten Tag* made one a suspect of anti-patriotism. It should have been *Gott strafe England*; or *Sieg Heil*

¹BESANT(1911C), 20. In London's H P.B. Lodge, an army officer lectured on 'National Defence', *AdB*, Feb. 1909, 71.

²*AdB*, June 1910, 175.

³BESANT and LEADBEATER(1913), 454f. See also VAN DER LEEUW(1920), 135. ROMÉIN-VERSCHOOR, 82; 93: The TS leaders predicted that the Balkan wars before 1914 would not escalate into a world war. Argentine TS magazine *La Verdad*, of March 1906, quoted *TT*, May 1906, 625-6, predicted, after reading on the Astral Plane, several wars, including a bloody one between Germany and France on Alsace-Lorraine; but it predicted these wars would be in 1906.

⁴BESANT and LEADBEATER(1913), 322. Earlier, British politician Joseph Chamberlain, and Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany, had wanted a British-German alliance. Ten years after the First, eleven years before the Second World War, AB revived the British-US-German Alliance idea, 'because you are of the same race, and race is strong'. *TT* May 1928, 166.

⁵'Een wereldoorlog zelfs is niet te erg' tegen 'verstandsverstijving'. Dutch early twentieth century Christosophist theosophist M. Schoenmaekers, quoted *NRC*, 23-3-1990.

⁶ALI, 19.

(which is older than many people think).

To get pacifists and revolutionaries within their ranks in line, German Social Democrat leaders spoke about the horrors of czarist autocracy; their French and English colleagues of Prussian horrors; in order to support their own rulers and their allies.

Adyar, and A. Vreede in Indonesia, saw Britain and its allies as fighting on the side of Light, against darkness.¹ Annie Besant put forward a theory based on size: the British empire was bigger than Germany and its few colonies. Therefore, it was a much better base for the Aryan empire of the future, and it should win.²

Lady Emily Lutyens recalled both her initial, and her later, reactions:

I was full of patriotism ... and horror at the accounts of the German atrocities, but Krishna[murti] never believed them and was never carried away.

A few years later, Mrs Besant dismissed Lady Emily herself as *Herald of the Star* editor as 'too pacifist'; the *HOTS* 'should declare uncompromisingly on the side of the Brotherhood'.³

So far about war against Germany. How about war for- what? for W/whom?

In Australia, Mrs Bright, FTS, said of her son: 'I gave him up to the Masters to go to the War without a tear.'⁴ And Senator M. Reid, FTS, supported not just the war, but went farther, supporting conscription.⁵

Unlike some other pro-allies, Adyar theosophists saw the war not stridently as a 'war for democracy', as the TS did not have stridently pro-democratic traditions. Annie Besant saw it within a hierarchical framework.

war is a continually returning fact in evolution, in a God-planned world, an opportunity to acquire in few days, weeks, months, properties that else would need lives to acquire.⁶

¹TILLET(1982), 162 'Dark Lord Bismarck.' *Commonweal* #49: 'Is the Kaiser Anti-Christ?' Pro-allies Dutch FTS and leading astrologer Van Ginkel wrote in a well sold booklet on occult truths behind wars: 'So, behind the present struggle we see the big legions of Devas, divided into two camps, fight one another by way of the nations which have been allotted to them. Here, a great fight is fought between God and Lucifer ... It is the struggle between the Sun and Saturn, a crisis, necessary to the development process of humanity. For, according to occult information, the Devas who are on the Allies' side will absorb the other ones.' VAN GINKEL(1915), 47. VREED(1917A), 66: 'It is not because she [AB] is English, but because she knows [esotericism] and because she is a member of the White Lodge, that she has proclaimed, that justice is on the side of the Allies and that the Central states have become the tools of the powers, which work against civilization and development'.

²WT, *TT* Nov. 1914, 98f.

³E. LUTYENS, 69.

⁴ROE, 225.

⁵SULLIVAN, 356. Australians voted down conscription in 1917; see p. 213.

⁶Annie Besant, *Broederschap en oorlog*, from 1915; quoted CONSTANDSE(1929), 24f. Constandse called her views on war 'cruel and reactionary'. LIGOU, article on AB: 'she lets people know about the theosophical ideas ... opposes the military expenses' is not necessarily about the same periods in her life.

Annie Besant attacked American, including American theosophist, neutralism:

The United States, in her safe distance of the storm of battle while her sister Nations are writhing in the agony of struggle. One cannot wonder if this isolation be not somewhat selfish, somewhat harshly indifferent, a lotus-eating in a garden of peace ... How will her quiescence work on her future status among the Nations?¹

She did not agree much with socialist anti-war activities, or the 1915 The Hague peace congress, organized by American² feminists like Jane Addams, and Dutch ones like Aletta Jacobs. Marie Loke, FTS from non-belligerent Holland, though, sympathized with the The Hague congress. In August 1915, she was one of the 75 signatories of the manifesto *To the great Nations at War. An appeal to their common sense and their conscience*.³

In *The Theosophist*, Helen Veale wrote against British Labourite Ramsay MacDonald and his fellow pacifists.⁴ Ben Tillett, MP and FTS, was active in the British Labour Party's pro-war wing.⁵ In the times towards the end of 1916, however, when India's Home Rule action had become a mass movement, Annie Besant had shifted to the left. That also made her sound less pro-war than one or two years earlier:

The youth of the nations has been cast into the pit of slaughter. Those who ought to have been the fathers of the coming generation lie as corpses in bloody graves ...⁶

Still, she saw positive sides:

¹WT, TT Feb. 1915, 385. As war began, a 'Letter from a Neutral' (Rangoon, Aug. 23rd 1914) by Dutch FTS A. Verhage supported non-belligerence. Finnish GS (up to 1918; he started his own *Ruusu Risti* [Rosy Cross] in 1920) Ervasti thought: 'War ... could never be sanctioned by the Masters of Wisdom.' Partanen, OELC Aug. 1937. BAILEY(1922A), 105, said the war necessitated recalling the Buddha to earth [from Mars? see p. 40, note 2] 'employing the great mantram [formula] whereby the Buddha can be reached'

²A popular song in the USA in 1916 was: 'I did not raise my son to be a soldier/I brought him up to be my pride and joy/Who dares to put a musket on his shoulder/To kill some other mother's darling boy?' Quoted A. Blom/I. Romein/I.W. Oerlemans: *Hoofdwegen der geschiedenis*. Vol. II, Groningen, Wolters-Noordhoff, 1969³, 269. In 1918, U. S. feminist Carrie Chapman [spelt Chapmen in PT] Catt organized a conference in New York City, which Raden Djojosoediro commented on in 'Pibak Perempoean [misprint for Perempoean] Dalam Vredesconferentie', PT, 1918-19 (12), 59-61. Djojosoediro sympathized with the conference's wish that women should be represented at a future peace conference. He did not mention pro- or anti-war, or pro- or anti- the various warring parties, questions in the article

³DE WILDE, 29. Charlotte Despard was active in the Women's Peace Crusade.

⁴VEALE(1916). She based herself on AB's writings on the Mahabharata. Miss Helen Veale, astrologer, Madras National High School for Girls principal, lived at Adyar for many years; TT Oct. 1937, 7.

⁵HVV, 1915-16, 245.

⁶BESANT(1917A), 14.



the young men who tended to criminality, who were rough, who were what they call "hooligans," who recognised no social ties and no social duties-those have very often turned into men of courage, of vigour, who have distinguished themselves in this terrible war ... There were some men set free from gaol who had been punished for offences against Society, who have won distinction on the field of battle ...¹

Also, bloody as the war was, it happened according to divine law:

It is inevitable, there is no blame on any. The Nations are in the grip of a terrible fate and they are working out the natural fruit of materialism, which had put God outside human life, and had tied Him into a steel framework of religion.²

Looking back after the war, Bhagavan Das wondered if theosophists should not have led pacifist movements in all their respective belligerent countries, and suffered the pains and penalties of conscientious objectors. ... We have left others to do our duty.³

1.4. World War I: the USA

In the USA, Katherine Tingley in her Point Loma TS headquarters was then at quite 'safe distance'. Like her government, she did not mind being away from 'this terrible war in Europe'.⁴

In 1917, US president Wilson entered the war. Foster Bailey (Alice's husband) paid Wilson the compliment of calling him 'a chela of the 6th Ray'.⁵

Judge S. Subramaniya Iyer, ex-TS vice president and honorary Home Rule League president, sent a telegram to Wilson through American theosophists Mr and Mrs Hotchner⁶. It asked to apply his declaration on self-determination to India. In return, Indians would increase their war effort and supply the Allies with millions of soldiers.⁷ French TS paper *L'Affranchi* in 1918 depicted Wilson *U.S. presidential seal*



¹BESANT(1917A), 30f.

²BESANT(1917A), 29.

³DAS(1934), 4. Das saw World War I differently from AB: 'Why did they rush into the Great War ... and thereby so splendidly maintain law and order that they have slaughtered and mangled millions of human beings ... all ultimately for the benefit of a few capitalists?' DAS(1922), 20f; DAS(1947), VI.

⁴TINGLEY(1915), 14.

⁵MIERS, 62. Theosophists thought seven rays shone out from the Logos (roughly: God); BAILEY(1922B), 355. VAN LEEUWEN(1917A), 435: 'speeches of Wilson, America's great president, who in these sounds a note of humanity and nationalism, which is close to unique in history and would be worthy of a Theosophist ...'

⁶SITARAMAYYA(1969), 133, misspells 'Hotchner'.

⁷Manoranjan Jha. *Katherine Mayo and India*. New Delhi, People's Publishing House, 1971, 5. Edwin Montagu, though he was a reformer within the British government context, called this letter

and Kerensky as precursors of the Order of the Star in the East's Messiah.¹

1.5. World War I: Germany and Austria

German and Austrian theosophists' and anthroposophists' views on the war were a kind of mirror image of Annie Besant's. Steiner, Guido von List, Lanz von Liebenfels, they all, like Besant, saw the war as a holy war.² They opposed her 180°, however, as to who were the holy and the unholy sides.

What were ideas about those killed in action? Leadbeater thought the allied killed in action would be reborn into the new sixth sub-race.³

Von List had the same theory; about those fallen for the German and Austrian kaisers.⁴

So, various clairvoyant Initiate leaders, rival representatives of the Inner Government of the World, took the sides of their respective exoteric governments in the war. Ervast, and Krishnamurti (who managed to convince Lady Emily Lutyens) were, as far as we found, exceptions. In Ervast's case, the Russian government; in Krishnamurti's, the British one, were foreign governments.

Though Dutch astrologer Van Ginkel, FTS, backed the Allies, he quoted in his support Ludwig Frank, of the pro-war right wing of German social democrats. In the last letter before he died at the front, Frank had written to his associate Albert Südekum 'that in this war the foundation is laid for an immense progress'.⁵

to a non-British, though allied, government 'disgraceful'; MAJUMDAR(1969), 258. The 4-9 October 1917 US TS convention appealed to 'all nations holding autocratic sway over subject nations' to renounce their autocracy. Leader Warrington explained the resolution to Captain Ensor of the Dublin TS. The resolution was 'in very general terms', so to include not only India, but also Ireland. D.P. SINGH(1974), 201f. American theosophists founded the League for World Liberation then. Letter J. Santucci to me. Henry Hotchener in the March 1918 issue of *Young India* [a New York magazine; not to be confused with Gandhi's identically named one] wrote its theme was 'the Allies' plan of democracy for all subject peoples.' Annie Besant was asked to, but declined, to become League president. Ibid., 217-8.

¹GUÉNON(1921), 260.

²GOODRICK-CLARKE(1985), 47. Ibid., 86 from a 1917 Guido von List letter: 'the Holiest War'.

³TT, July 1916, 450; TILLET(1982).

⁴GOODRICK-CLARKE(1985), 88.

⁵VAN GINKEL(1915), 51. Albert Südekum was Prussian Minister of Finance 1918-1920. *De Locomotief*, 7-9-1916, 'Een gouvernementeel socialist', wrote of him: 'What Südekum said, did not differ much of what a National Liberal professor, or even a conservative like Heydebrand, would have said [on the war]. Südekum, ibid., said 'A people is forced to make war by its racial expansion force.'

2. Sneevliet versus Van Hinloopen Labberton

Even before the war, in November 1913, there had already been a debate on military expenditure in The Hague, at the *Indische Vereeniging* association of Indonesians in The Netherlands. The three leaders of the pro-independence *Indische Partij* Tjipto Mangoenkoesoemo, Soewardi Soeraningrat and E.F.E. Douwes Dekker, exiled from Indonesia, came to the meeting. Raden Mas Noto Soeroto in his speech said The Netherlands should defend the Indies. Reacting, Douwes Dekker 'deeply hurt' Noto Soeroto, by saying the need was 'first and foremost' education; on this, the colony's government was 'too stingy in comparison with the expenditure on defense.' In the debate, Tjipto, later also of the Indonesian social democrats, supported Dekker. Noto Soeroto got support from his uncle Raden Mas Ario Sooryopetro, theosophically-minded like himself.² During the war, that debate continued on a much bigger scale; and this time, mainly in Indonesia itself.

Not only the debate got big and sharp, its debaters were also prominent. In 1921, colonial official P.J. Gerke looked back at Indonesia's political movements.³ He thought only 'three Dutch names' had been important to 'the Native movement': Douwes Dekker,⁴ 'the political theosophist Van Hinloopen Labberton', and Henk Sneevliet. The two last named, and their organizations, became sharp opponents rather soon after initial contact.

The Dutch East Indies TS General Secretary, Dirk van Hinloopen Labberton, then was a teacher of the Javanese and Malay languages to future officials. A.J. Resink wrote that Labberton's relationship to authority earlier on had not been as close:

Mr Labberton belongs to the renegades of socialism. In his youth, he was a "me too"

¹POEZE(1986), 94. DJAJADININGRAT-NIEUWENHUIS, 50. KONING(1968), 6. Noto Soeroto thought Douwes Dekker 'unsympathetic' then, WANASITA, 109.

²Noto Soeroto, 1888-1951, grandson of the fifth ruler of the Paku Alam principality, and son of Indies army major, Freemason, and ex-Budi Utomo chairman Pangeran Noto Diredjo, wrote poetry which *TMN* reviewed. He was a Dutch army cavalry officer in World War I; DJAJADININGRAT-NIEUWENHUIS, 47. In the early 1920's, he contributed to *Vrije Arbeid* monthly, close to the Dutch *Democratische Partij*. This liberal party to the right of the *Vrijzinnig Democratische Bond* and to the left of the *Vrijheidsbond*, never won a seat in parliament. He later became secretary to Prince Mangkoenegoro VII, an old friend from the days when both had studied at Leiden university. CANNEGIER(1937), 118; 122. LOC, 22-5-1917, 'Prins Notodiredjo. †.' Sooryopetro, 1892-1927, was the brother of ruling prince Pakoe Alam VI; see p. 345.

³'De Inlandsche organisaties', VA, Sept. 1921, 185-8.

⁴See p. 300f. Douwes Dekker was of both Dutch and Indonesian ancestry; related to famous author Multatuli. Gerke thought him the most important one. WANASITA, 13. in a telegram, Sukarno called 'DD' 'the father of Indonesia's political nationalism'; not 'one of the fathers', as in VAN DER MARK, 202.

socialist,¹ but since then he has become a convert to and worshipper of capitalism. This went jointly with his evolution towards becoming a leader of the theosophical movement, which took off then.²

Though there had been socialist sympathizers in Indonesia at least since the 1890's, they did not organize openly until 1914. Then, they founded the Indies Social Democrat Society, *ISDV*. Already in 1908, Labberton felt this might happen. Then, the syndicate of big European sugar entrepreneurs asked him to write against criticisms of their industry. In his book, Labberton feared that 'demagogic influences', inspired by, say, 'KARL MARX', might influence 'eagerly copying Native public employees', and, already too oppositional, 'Native newspapers.' Labberton thought struggle between capital and labour had no basis in the reality of the Indies; yet, it disquieted him.³

Early on, before theosophists and socialists in Indonesia tried to start mass movements, for, respectively against, conscription, relationships were not yet antagonistic. *Sinar Djawa*, the daily of the *Sarekat Islam* of Semarang, which would get close contacts to socialists, praised Labberton in 1914 for plans to teach Islam at his teachers' training school in Jakarta.⁴

This showed also on 23 and 24 May 1915, at a congress in Semarang on local election law. Contradictions already were apparent, but participants still felt there also was common ground. On the one hand, Van Hinloopen Labberton's proposals were more democratic than the status quo, doing away with government-designated local councillors. On the other hand, they fell short of universal suffrage. His educational and tax-paying criteria to qualify as a voter excluded a 98% majority of Indonesians.⁵ They limited 'Natives and other Muhammadans', so far more than 90% of people, to one third of local council seats. Labberton said: 'The natives still do not see the public interest; they still consider the group interest too much.'⁶

In 1917, the government would implement most of Labberton's proposals.⁷ Not his women's suffrage proposal though: at the congress, suffragist and socialist Mrs A.P. Dekker-Groot thanked him for that 'chivalry'.⁸

¹Dutch: "'ook'" socialist'. DEKKER(1916): Labberton claimed to have studied Marx.

²RESINK(1917). Resink then was much more critical of the TS than a decade earlier. See p. 147.

³VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1908), 3-5.

⁴*Sinar Djawa* 110, 1914; quoted KOT 1914, 'Persoverzicht', 1253-4.

⁵Education in the Dutch East Indies was then less widespread than in, say, India. KIEWIET DE JONGE(1920A), 142: 98% of Indonesians were illiterate. SEMAEN(1966), 61, estimate on 1921: 95%.

⁶Varia. Vijfde decentralisatiecongres', *IG* 1915 (37), 1130. SCHRIEKE, 86-7.

⁷TICHELMAN(1985), 213.

⁸Varia. Vijfde decentralisatiecongres', *IG* 1915 (37), 1135. Jakarta's public prosecutor opposed women becoming councillors: meetings would get longer 'as the women talk so much.' Raden Ajoë Siswodiondjo, the first Indonesian woman to speak at a local government congress, opposed him. She said she did it shortly, to refute his long meetings argument. Ibid., 1133-4.

Asser Baars of the Indies Social Democrat Society thought Van Hinloopen Labberton's views fell short of necessary democratization. Baars supported Labberton's proposal to do away with racial criteria in the electorate, but objected to his retaining these criteria in allotting local council seats.¹ Replying at the congress on behalf of *Sarekat Islam*, Raden Achmad, town-councillor in Surabaya, also disagreed with that part of Labberton's plans.² So did Teeuwen and Van de Kastele of *Insulinde*, successor organization to the *Indische Partij*. Contrary to Labberton, Teeuwen did not want to speak of 'Europeans, Chinese and natives, but of human beings and citizens.'³

Marxist militant Sneevliet, then two years after his arrival in Java, also opposed that division.⁴ He approved of much in Labberton's speech. However, it lacked that the Indies colony should be free from The Netherlands. Socialist B. Coster approved of extending suffrage. 'Social democrats, though, do not see [Labberton's] vague public interest. They do see the contradiction between capital and proletarian.'⁵

Labberton replied that his principal difference with socialists was their wanting class struggle.⁶ He opposed Sneevliet's 'free from The Netherlands' view. The Indies should become more autonomous, but 'would still need The Netherlands for a long time.'⁷

J.C. Stam, Indonesia correspondent of Dutch Marxist weekly *De Tribune*, reviewing the congress under the pen name of Aroen, was rather positive about Van Hinloopen Labberton. He thought of him as 'someone with much sympathy for the Javanese.' He objected, though, like Van de Kastele, to Labberton's proposal to have central government appoint mayors and aldermen, 'as a brake on the democratic demands for suffrage.'⁸ The *Tribune* editors thought Stam should have emphasized Labberton's 'much sympathy' less, and his 'brake on democratic suffrage' more.⁹

¹'Het Decentralisatie Kongres, het Kiesrecht, en de Tribune', *HWV*, 25-10-1915, 15-6.

²AROEN(1915). 'Varia. Vijfde decentralisatiecongres', *IG* 1915 (37), 1130.

³Varia. Vijfde decentralisatiecongres', *IG* 1915 (37), 1135-6.

⁴Varia. Vijfde decentralisatiecongres', *IG* 1915 (37), 1133. Henk Sneevliet had been an official of the Dutch transport workers union. SARDESAI, 157 on him: 'the future leader of the Dutch communist party'; 'the' should be replaced with 'a'. In the twenties, he would help to found the Chinese communist party; in the thirties, he sat in the Dutch parliament for the Revolutionary Socialist Workers Party; in the forties, nazi occupation forces killed him.

⁵Varia. Vijfde decentralisatiecongres', *IG* 1915 (37), 1132. Ibid. has 'Koster'; probably a misspelling.

⁶The Order of the Star in the East, represented by Labberton, had as invocation: 'O Master of the Great White Lodge ... speak the Word of Brotherhood, Which shall make the warring classes and castes to know themselves as one.' RANSOM(1938), 390. Instead of 'prayer', 'invocation' is mostly used.

⁷Varia. Vijfde decentralisatiecongres', *IG* 1915 (37), 1138.

⁸AROEN(1915). Labberton said he opposed 'extreme democracy'; 'Varia. Vijfde decentralisatiecongres', *IG* 1915 (37), 1130.

⁹Editorial note to AROEN(1915). TICHELMAN(1985), 234.

Sneevliet wanted to start a magazine linked to his *ISDV*. He wanted it to include also articles by non-socialist experts, 'with this reservation, of course, that both other contributors and editors could object to their considerations.'¹ Just after the Semarang congress, he asked Van Hinloopen Labberton to be one of these external contributors, to what eventually became Indonesian social democrat weekly *Het Vrije Woord*.²

Labberton reacted in a letter to Sneevliet³ that the magazine 'should not have a one-sided S[ocial] D[emocrat] viewpoint, but advocate vrijzinnige [Dutch; liberal, especially in the sense of non-clerical] politics in general.' He added that he did not have much time to contribute anyway, and as turned out later, never contributed.

Fellow social democrats Koperberg⁴ and Koch sent letters to Sneevliet. In those, they objected to Labberton's politics and theosophic ideas on economy and philosophy. These, they wrote, would make him an unfit contributor to a socialist magazine. To Koch, Sneevliet's request was a sign that he had come to Indonesia only recently.⁵ Sneevliet's Marxist associate Baars was also unhappy with Sneevliet contacting the TS General Secretary.⁶

So Sneevliet in 1915 saw Van Hinloopen Labberton as someone with ideas, different

¹H. Sneevliet, editorial of *Het Vrije Woord*, vol. 1, 1, 1-2; as reprinted TICHELMAN(1985), 303.

²TICHELMAN(1985), 284.

³28-5-1915; published TICHELMAN(1985), 233-4.

⁴Letter from S. Koperberg in Weltevreden [today: Gambir, part of Jakarta] to H. Sneevliet in Semarang, 26-9-1915; as published TICHELMAN(1985), 283.

⁵Koch thought Van Hinloopen Labberton's principles differed 180° from socialist ones. Letter by D.M.G. Koch in Buitenzorg to H. Sneevliet in Semarang, 12-10-1915. Sneevliet archive, IISG, Amsterdam, 1559/11-14. As published partly in TICHELMAN(1985), 310 KOCH(1915) considered theosophy 'a spiritual asylum for the psychically unbalanced'. Sociologists of religion Charles Y. Glock and Rodney Stark later, likewise, wrote in *Religion and Society in Tension*, Chicago, Rand McNally, 1969³, 254: 'The entire occult milieu ... [of 'Theosophy, the I AM ... or the varying Flying Saucer groups'] is made up of persons afflicted with psychic deprivations.' Koch had debated against theosophist Kiewiet de Jonge on Marx' theory of value. He thought Kiewiet de Jonge, though able for a theosophist, knew nothing on Marx' or others' theories. KIEWIET DE JONGE(1917B), 111-4, based his criticism of Marx on Austrian economist and government minister Eugen von Böhm-Bawerk. KOCH(1956), 131, mentions a debate with Kiewiet de Jonge in Bogor on Marxism in the 1920's. It is unclear if that was a different debate, or if Koch at the time of writing his memoirs had forgotten that the debate was before or in 1915. Meanwhile, at the end of 1919, Koch had had trouble with the government, after Kiewiet de Jonge in his magazine *Indische Stemmen* had attacked Koch's sociological writings as Marxist. Other papers, and officials, joined the attack; KOCH(1956), 112-5.

⁶Letter A. Baars, Bandjar, to H. Sneevliet, Semarang, 4-10-1915; in TICHELMAN(1985), 292-3.

from his own, whom he respected.¹ From next year on, the relationship between social democrats and theosophists in the Dutch East Indies soon became worse. In the 1916 and 1917 volumes of *Het Vrije Woord*, Van Hinloopen Labberton was probably the most often criticized individual. Sneevliet would write on this change towards whom he called then 'the high priest of Indies theosophy':

Earlier on, we had seen this theosophist as an idealist, whose ideals we could not make ours, whose ideals we did not need, but whom we respected as a man who truly loved brotherhood. Unfortunately, we now must declare we have come to the conclusion that Mr v. H. L. now in our eyes does not differ from these propagandists of official religions, whose idealism is only an expedient to maintain a social order, clashing with neighbourly love and brotherhood, and making the personal pursuit of material success into the general rule. We admit readily that our opponent is a clever man, that he has influence [.... in original] but add without any reserve, that we are convinced that this cleverness and influence are at the service of oppressors and oppressors' interest, and that the political movement of the oppressed should never forget this.²

Labberton and other theosophists founded in 1916 in Jakarta a local electoral association called *Melajoe*.³ One exponent of it became Hadji Agoes Salim, since 1916 an active TS member. Salim, with A.F. Folkersma, translated Leadbeater's manual of theosophy into Malay as *Kitab Theosofie* in 1916. Salim's membership did not last long beyond early 1918.⁴ Soon after its founding, *Melajoe* in March 1916 discussed the right

¹In 'De koloniale begroting in de Kamer', *HVW* 25-11-1915, Sneevliet criticized Labberton's proposal to add MPs from colonies to Dutch parliament, as in France: 'I am afraid that such a measure would only strengthen reaction. No makeshifts, but our own representation [in Indonesia, not The Netherlands], with great powers.' Labberton later again wanted a 'constitutional change, which would make it possible to send Indies representatives to the Dutch parliament' 'Het standpunt van den heer v. Hinloopen Labberton', *LOC* 16-7-1916, 1e blad. He proposed to add 20 deputies to the then 100 Dutch ones; interview, daily *De Avondpost*, quoted *IG* 1917 (39), 666-7, *MRBTID*. *LOC* 20-9-1916, 2e blad, called the *ISDV*'s demand for a real parliament in Indonesia 'social-neurasthenic' 'import democracy'.

²Postscript to DEKKER(1916).

³'Voorzitter Theosofie Vereeniging Hindia dengan roepa-roepa perkoempoelan', *PT* 1916 (9), #1, 13-6. It existed at least till 1918; *IV*, 27-4, 8-6, 22-6-1918. Abdoel Moeis was *NIVB* and *Melajoe* candidate for Jakarta city council; *IV*, 20-7-1918. HERING(1992), 3: M.H. Thanrin was a *Melajoe* member.

⁴*TMNI* 1916, 195. *IV*, 16-2-1918. NOER, 110: he was born in 1884, 'the son of a government official who belonged to the nobility as well as a religious family.' Ibid. on his TS membership. He contributed to the theosophist monthly for instance 'Beschaving baroe' (New civilization) on the First World War, and in praise of US president Wilson; *PT*, 1918-19 (12), 33-6. Had Salim already left the TS when he apparently clashed with Djojosoediro on Sneevliet's exile in November 1918 (see p. 227)? Salim wrote he had originally joined *Sarekat Islam* at the request of the Dutch 'political section of the police'; NOER, 110, but rose to its executive and after 1945 to Indonesian Foreign Affairs minister; L. DE JONG, vol. 11a1, 288. From 1921-4 he was *Volksraad* member; the only *Sarekat Islam* one, as Moeis and Tjokroaminoto did not return. SHIRAIISHI(1990A), 342.

to vote, and to be elected, at local elections. Some members thought at least half of local councillors should be Indonesians.

The leader [Van Hinloopen Labberton] would consider a proposal like that unjust. Europeans, Foreign Asians and Natives should have one third representation each; because of, respectively, their knowledge, wealth, and numbers.¹

At another *Melajoe* meeting, 20 July 1916, Van Hinloopen Labberton said there should be 'extension of the right to vote to the educated of all races.'

The lecturer [Van Hinloopen Labberton] really thought it superfluous to say once more, that he did not support giving the vote to baboes [Javanese children's nurses] or garden-boys.

As for the right to be elected:

The lecturer thinks knowledge of the Dutch language is an indispensable demand for the right to be elected. Else, it is not sufficiently possible to understand the discussions, and to feel sufficiently at home in this organ [local council] which is modelled in the European way, to be able to work for the community's interests.

At the meeting, Van der Velde of the Bogor electoral association disagreed with Labberton's Dutch language demand.² Semarang daily *De Locomotief* also disagreed: Labberton on the one hand wanted some extension of voting rights. He combined that, though, with a 'really essentially reactionary concept, by which Mr Labberton right from the start would want to stop the franchise to have its effects.'³

Sneevliet approved of *Melajoe's* non-racial members' admission policy, but of little else, certainly not of theosophy as a basis for politics:

Theosophy, like Christianity and Islam, has among its devotees people with very different interests in society; people who want to go into very different political directions in virtue of their social interests. ... So, let them [as TS] stay out of all politics

Sneevliet predicted that TS politics would end in 'bungling, as they started with bungling.'⁴ Could one note here that the social status of theosophists was not as heterogeneous as that of Christians or Muslims; so it might bring some more, though hardly

in his conclusions criticises a widespread image of Indonesian history, where 'Soerjopranoto, a theosophist, became as Islamic as K.H. Dahlan, H. Fadrudin, and H. Agoes Salim ... Yet as we have seen, this is a fallacy.' He did not mention Salim's TS membership though; nor Soerjopranoto's later criticism of theosophy; see p. 300.

¹*Pemiran* 38, March 1916; quoted 'Persoverzicht', *KOT*, 1916, 783f. Labberton did not mention that most Europeans' wealth surpassed most 'Foreign Asians' (mainly of Chinese ancestry).

²*LOC*, 21-7-1916, 2e blad, 'Associatie-politiek in de praktijk'. *LOC*, 22-7-1916, 'Een associatie-debat'.

³*LOC*, 12-8-1916, 'Licht en Duister. Politiek in Indië. IV (Slot)'. Ibid: 'Labberton's party could not be our party, because we do not believe in unity of interests between the dominator and the domineered.'

⁴*SNEEVLIET*(1916B), 110.

monolithic, consistency as a basis for politics? Sneevliet suggested so months later, after social democrat-TS contradictions had aggravated on the war question. He then described Theosophical Society membership as 'in most cases totally ignorant about hardship, not knowing it from experience, nor from observation'.¹ Not only in social being, but also in social consciousness, theosophy differed from more numerous religions: 'This is a difference between Christianity and theosophy.' A minority among Christians still 'reproached the powerful with their crimes.' But 'from the theosophists' ranks, only voices sound for support of militarism, which will bring humanity new disasters.'²

In the editorial of the Indies theosophical monthly, Van Hinloopen Labberton reacted to Sneevliet's early 1916 separation of theosophy and politics. That separation was correct for Sneevliet's view of what politics was:

There should be partisanship, there should be strife, one class should be incited against the other one, is what he [Sneevliet] means. And therefore he cannot expect anything from the work of our Electoral Association *Melajoe*.³

However, a different view of what politics was existed:

The ancient politicians were the pupils of Pythagoras who had learned to serve the public interest in a truly Theosophical way, doing their duties for duties' sake, and not on account of personal wages. The statesmen, as Plato depicts them in his *POLITHEIA* [TH spelling sic], had to be Theosophists.⁴

De Locomotief thought of Labberton:

Bringing every social or political activity under direct or indirect influence of his philosophy is not one of Mr Van Hinloopen Labberton's least qualities. With him, action and organization are subject to his theosophical convictions.⁵

When Count van Limburg Stirum became governor-general, he received in audience on 13 May 1916 Labberton and then still *referendaris* [under secretary], a few months later government secretary, A.G. Vreede, as delegates of the TS executive.⁶

The question of bad housing for most of the urban population in Indonesia caused another clash. Westerveld, a social democratic member of Semarang town-council, spoke on this in June 1916 in Jakarta, and proposed inhabitants' action committees as a remedy.

¹*SNEEVLIET*(1916E) H Sneevliet, 'Een nieuwe onbeschaamdheid', *HVV*, 20-12-1917, called members of theosophist Kiewiet de Jonge's local electoral association in Bogor 'well-connected substantial citizens, though they are not especially firm in character.'

²*SNEEVLIET*(1916E)

³*VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON*(1916B), 196. Also other religious people might see Sneevliet's view as materialist, not taking into account spiritual unity even as social and economic interests differed.

⁴*VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON*(1916B), 196-7.

⁵*LOC*, 27-9-1916, 'Naar van Deventer's geest?'

⁶*PT* 9 (1916), #1, 12: 'T. B. G. G. baroe dengan theosofie' [The new Great Lord governor-general and theosophy].

Van Hinloopen Labberton then from the floor sharply opposed this 'call for class struggle. That was bringing division, where co-operation might be possible, that was inciting one group of citizens against another one, etc.' Westerveld commented:

But Mr Van Hinloopen Labberton abhors struggle, he does not want hatred and discord, he wants neighbourly love. We [social democrats] want this too, that is why we fight against a society which divides into two camps, those who own property and those who lack it, and which causes wars, as we have one now.¹

3. Conscription, the 'axis of all political activity'

Dutch Minister of Colonies Th.B. Pleyte, introducing his 1916 budget, wanted 'to replace the very expensive professional army [in Indonesia] by a bigger and cheaper one' of conscripts.² The most important question, more so than housing, in the conflict between theosophists and socialists became whether conscription should be introduced for Indonesians. That was the 'axis around which all political activity in this country' revolved then.³ *De Locomotief* wrote: 'For the first time, in the Indies a political question has been posed, on which truly general interest has come alive, among both European and native groups.'⁴ Minister Pleyte himself also recognized the central role of the conscription debate in waking up the earlier 'slumbering political life in the Netherlands Indies'. 'Various fundamental questions' became linked to it, 'like the relationship to Dutch authority, awarding political rights ... the Indies and the Javanese nationalism, the economical uplift, and others'.⁵

A month after the World War broke out, on 13 September 1914, six hundred people had met in Semarang in the *Stadstuin* (city park). They were of *Sarekat Islam*, of the transport workers' union *VSTP* with many socialist members, and of moderate nationalist organization *Budi Utomo*. Radjiman of *BU* and the *TS* was chairman. Also present was 'a brother of the susuhunan'; possibly Prince Koesoemodiningrat, prominent theosophist and Indies army major. The meeting discussed whether Indonesians should help, as Dwidjosewojo of *BU* proposed, the Dutch government's wartime effort, with either military service, or other personal work, or money.

Views both for and against had support. Danoesoegondo, the *bupati* of Magelang, advocated a militia. The chairman since 13 April 1913 of the local *Sarekat Islam* was Soedjono, a clerk at the Semarang *bupati*'s office. In 1913, he borrowed socialist books

¹WESTERVELD(1916A). Labberton accused the *ISDV* of being against all government measures whatsoever. To Westerveld, in *HVW*, 25-8-1916, 218, 'Drieërlei associatie', that was a generalization.

²B. BOUMAN(1995), 69.

³A. Baars, 'Mijn Ontslag', *HVW*, 10-11-1917. See also Kernkamp's remark, p. 198.

⁴*LOC*, 1-9-1916, 2e blad, 'De weerbaarheidsdag te Semarang.'

⁵*KV* on 1917 (1918), I. See also *KV* on 1919 (1920), I.

from Sneevliet, who considered him 'a bright guy'. Soedjono said 'The Javanese is the Dutchman's slave.' It was useless for the meeting to decide 'freely' to help a government, which would punish those unwilling to help anyway. Dwidjosewojo spoke of helping; though *Budi Utomo*'s rules did not mention military policy.

The meeting applauded Soedjono's speech. Soemarsono, a jurist and sceptic on conscription in the *BU* leadership, added that only a parliament might decide. There was, however, no 'Tweede Kamer' [Dutch: House of Commons] in Indonesia. And the Colonial Council [name later changed to *Volksraad*], which the government planned to have soon, was no parliament.

Tjokroaminoto, national *Sarekat Islam* chairman, said he was 'halfway' between Dwidjosewojo and Soedjono. He did feel some sympathy for the government; Indonesians certainly should not help an invading enemy. But should they fight enemies with arms? Recently, civilians of Leuven [Louvain] in Flanders had tried that. The German invaders had massacred them. Soedjono spoke again, poking fun at ideas of a militia. Next to the *Stadstuin* was the Colonial Exhibition. Its management had invited the people at the meeting to come and see it. It would, indeed, be a good decision to do that, right now. The *Budi Utomo* executive accepted that the meeting would not decide to help the government, and closed it.¹

From 1915, *Budi Utomo*² answered the conscription question with a yes, but ...

¹*Djawa Tengah* 207/8; *OH* 177; both quoted *KOF* 1914, 'Persoverzicht', 1677-83; *LOC* 14-9-1914, 1e & 2e blad, 'De Inlanders en de oorlog'. *LOC* did not mention Soedjono's sharp sentence on slavery. On him, TICHELMAN(1985), 169, 171; letter of Resident De Vogel to Governor-General Idenburg, 12 May 1913, in *Sarekat Islam Lokal*, Jakarta, Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia, 1975, 3; *SH* 27-2/3-1924, quoted *IPO* 1, 1924, 415. On Soemarsono, VAN MIERT(1995), 181-2; 378: he resigned from the *BU* executive, chaired by the future Mangkoe Negoro VII, in 1915 'The conflict was possibly on the personal composition of the delegation to The Netherlands of the Indie Weerbaar Committee'. Both *IW* and its delegation only arose in 1916 though Soemarsono's 1914 and later views make scepticism on conscription in 1915 more likely. 'Sm' [Soemarsono], in *WED*, Feb. 1920, 44-8, 'Belichting', wrote sceptically on conscription.

²See p. 284, VAN DER WAL(1967), 507. Among *BU* supporters, also quite some, especially in Semarang, and students, doubted or opposed conscription; SOERIANINGRAT(1916/17), 146, NAGAZUMI(1972), 99-100. Ibid., 101-2, at the 5-6 August 1915 Bandung *BU* general assembly, the delegates rejected the executive's unqualifiedly pro-militia views, and established a linkage with people's representation. In *Boedi Oetomo*'s Feb. 1916 issue, R. Sadikoen criticized militia plans; *HPO* 1916, 84-5. *BU* had professional soldiers among its members though, who might get better positions if the army expanded. Also, many Javanese noble families had traditions of being officers in princes' armies. Expanding Dutch authority had much reduced that career opportunity; some in *BU* saw World War I as a way of re-opening it. Sneevliet: 'All these long sabres, stars, gold collars, awoke the cupidity of the Indies armament propagandists.' SCHWIDDER/TICHELMAN, 268. Opposition in *BU* to conscription gradually increased; in their *Darmo-Kondo*, 14-2-1917, quoted *IPC* 7/1917, *JB*, 4, 'Anti-Government' by 'Bululawang man' preferred compulsory education to compulsory soldiering. In *WED*, 1918, 156f., 'De Indië Weerbaar feesten', 'Jong-Javaan' was rather critical. He linked support for conscription to 'founding of a school where our children can be educated in order to become officers.' Founding such a school, though not its

conditional on the government establishing a representative institution. Van Hinloopen Labberton, to the socialists' dismay, asked *BU* to drop that linkage, and support military service unconditionally. Sneevliet thought *Budi Utomo's* was

a shilly-shally view on militarism. But even this seems to go too far for Mr v. Labberton. Surrender to the armed forces is what he wants the Javanese intellectuals to do, unconditionally. And thus, this gentleman shows that he can make compatible with the "high ideals of theosophy", can make compatible with sense of brotherhood, with loving one's neighbour, action in favour of militarism, which here too, is on the increase; and which especially reaches its goal if it unleashes a general butchery of people. Thus, this colonial ethicist advocates zealously not-that-ethical militarism, which should make possible ethical colonial political reforms. Thus, this "friend of the Javanese" appears as an apostle of Dutch colonial imperialism. We should point this out, as Mr v. H. L. has influence within the world of Javanese intellectuals because of his theosophical propaganda, and thus, his exhortation should not pass unnoticed.¹

Later, in July 1916, the committee *Indië Weerbaar* (Arm the Indies. Literally, 'able-bodied Indies')² was founded, promoting compulsory military service for eligible male inhabitants of the country. In the Dutch East Indies TS monthly, Van Hinloopen Labberton, 'the father of *Indië Weerbaar*',³ explained it: the rule of non-violence was in the present age only valid for, it was only the *dharma* for, a small minority of saintly hermits. Even married priests of the Brahman caste had to defend their families. The *dharma* differed still more from non-violence for non-Brahmans:

I think that it is urgent to arm the Indies well to prevent threatening troubles, and that the desirable defensive arms will be a strong contribution to Law and Order [Dutch: *Rust en Vrede*].

The Netherlands deserves to stay on, to be the Western teacher of Insulinde [Indonesia], provided that The Netherlands realizes its task as Guardian.⁴

Resink, who a decade earlier had attempted unsuccessfully to link TS and *SDAP*, also

linkage, had been in the *Budi Utomo* platform, as point 9b, in 1917; *LOC*, 6-7-1917, 'Het programma van Boedi Oetomo.' The 1919 congress of [more or less] *BU's* youth organization *Jong-Java* rejected conscription; *WED*, 1919, 107. In early 1924, Dwidjosewojo and his *BU* executive proposed to the congress a program of 'Home Rule and introduction of a Native militia'; *NIE*, Feb. 1924, 38.

¹SNEEVLIET(1916A), 110; written, as some other articles, under the pen name -t.

²Spelling not 'Weerbaar' as in McVEY(1965), *passim*. *ENI*, vol. III, 699, KORVER, 59-62. Also translated as Indies Defence; Indies Home Defence. The adjective 'Weerbaar' was behind the substantive, indicating a situation which the committee thought of as desirable, rather than actual.

³FATAH(1917). Captain Rhemrev and Labberton would later quarrel about who really was 'the father of *Indië Weerbaar*.' Labberton admitted that 'Mr Rhemrev first spoke to me on the matter'; but that was not enough for organizational fatherhood. VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1916/17), 612.

⁴VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1916D), 516.

explained *Indië Weerbaar*. His explanation was critical, 'materialist' social, not Labberton's religious caste doctrine:

For some years, in the theosophists' ranks, the need has been felt for social work, that is, for social prestige! They have such hobbies in "charity", "education", etcetera. Mr LABBERTON for the first time, as a theosophist, has wanted to play a political role, and is very successful at this within the ranks of the bourgeois theosophists. The "*Indië Weerbaar*" movement has been an excellent way to increase the social prestige of theosophy [.... in original] in walks of life, which aim at something very different from wisdom! But Mr LABBERTON and his supporters do not care at all about that. If only success comes, if only the socially powerful of these times cast an approving little glance at the nice tinkering of the theosophical ladies and gentlemen.¹

Indië Weerbaar wanted 'To make the Indies able to defend themselves, by co-operation of all people's categories, under the leadership of the Dutch government.'² Van Hinloopen Labberton advocated this not only from the *JW* and Theosophical Society platforms, but also in the Officers' League of the Royal Netherlands Indies Army.³

Labberton's electoral association *Melajoe* soon discussed *Indië Weerbaar*. With Notoatmodjo, eventually a major conscription opponent, in the chair, debates were

¹RESINK(1917).

²MOEIS(1917A). Moeis, *ibid.*, also wrote of 'a living wall of armed forces, determined to sell their lives as dearly as possible.' *LOC*, 26-1-1917, quoted daily *De Nieuwe Courant*: 'to establish a strong Indies army, consisting of natives; in order that the people, primarily its nobility and its notable ones, will have more affection towards the [Dutch] Empire, of which, then, they will really understand that they form part.' Professor H.T. Colenbrander wrote in *De Gids*, 1917, 1, 560-1 'without him [the Native] we will never make it [defence]'. The original *Indië Weerbaar* resolution for 31 August 1916 explicitly named conscription for Indonesians. Insistence from the *Sarekat Islam* executive changed this to a more vague desire for stronger defence, leaving it to the Dutch government whether conscripting Indonesians was the way to this. In the public discussion between *JW* opponents and supporters, conscription, though, remained the main point. VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1916/17), 610-4.

³*LOC*, 16-7-1916, 'Defensie-prijsvraag'; also published *IG*, 1916 (38), 1406-7: the Officers' League offered a 300 guilder prize in a contest for best '20-40 page pamphlet'. The pamphlets should be 'preferably written as narratives' and would be translated into 'the main native languages.' Their contents should be 'an overview, comprehensible to the native population, of the great importance of strong armed forces to the Dutch East Indies; and also showing the necessity of founding a militia among people living in the Dutch East Indies.' The three-man jury for the contest were: Labberton, Major W.H. Holle, FTS (NUGRAHA(1989), 254); and Armed Police Deputy Inspector J.C.A. Bannink. The League's magazine, *Orgaan der Nederlandsch-Indische Officiers-vereeniging*, had reported on an Indies Military Science Society meeting on 6 March 1916 about introducing conscription. Also Indonesians had been invited to speak. The article was 'more or less disappointed' in their speeches: 'We had hoped for and expected ... more assent from the native side.' Some speakers, like *Jong-Java* leader Sariman, linked assent to conditions; Sastro Adimedjo was an outright opponent. Meeting chairman Captain Muurling had protested against the criticism. SOERIANINGRAT(1916/17), 148-52; *IG*, 1916 (38), 968-9 and 1408, MRBT.D.

'lively'.¹ Members expressed at least two viewpoints. On the one hand, 'a fairly general view',² accepting conscription only if linked to the coming of a parliament; unlike 'the existing [IW] committee's plans', on which that side's supporters had 'grave doubts'. They pointed to *Budi Utomo* and *Sarekat Islam* as precedents. However,

From another side, people argued that one should consider especially that linkage to be a major mistake, as it would take away the [*Indië Weerbaar*] campaign's value as an expression of spontaneity. People on that side pointed out that equal rights and all of the world's Colonial Councils would be useless, if another sovereignty were to replace the Dutch one. From another government one might not expect that it would continue the civilizing task, which burden The Netherlands has taken upon its shoulders over the last decades.

The meeting that night did not reach a 'definite decision'.³ Labberton's pro-conscription stance was said to have cost his *Melajoe* 'hundreds of members already immediately'.⁴

For 31 August, Queen Wilhelmina's birthday, *Indië Weerbaar* planned a public demonstration. From 1916 till 1918 that was its day of maximum activity. To prepare for it, the committee met in Jakarta on Sunday morning 23 July 1916. The meeting was not open to the public, though reporters of the friendly *Locomotief* and *Bataviaasch Handelsblad* attended. Of the twenty committee members present, one was Chinese, the local 'major of Chinese' (a government-appointed official); one, the local *bupati's* *patih* (secretary) was 'native'; two were women. At least four of those present, as far as the *Bataviaasch Handelsblad* named them, were active full time officers. A.G. Vreede and Labberton were part time officers. Several, including A.F. Folkersma, formerly a naval lieutenant, then 'Native Affairs' official and Jakarta town-council member, were FTS.

Van Hinloopen Labberton, after his experiences with *Budi Utomo* and recently with *Melajoe*, worried about 'increasing linkage of the demand for more political rights as a condition [to assent to conscription]'. Dissidents might voice that at the 31 August public meeting; that 'danger ... might even cause the ruin of the demonstration'. Was not sending an *Indië Weerbaar* delegation to the queen in The Netherlands a good

¹LOC, 14-7-1916, 'Kiesvereniging Melajoe.'

²Pemitan, # 133, quoted KOT, 1916, 'Persoverzicht', 1380-1.

³LOC, 14-7-1916, 'Kiesvereniging Melajoe.' Pemitan, # 133, quoted KOT, 1916, 'Persoverzicht', 1380-1: the debaters had asked the press not to identify them by name. Though Notoatmodjo may have hid his personal views as meeting chairman, probably his supporters criticized *Indië Weerbaar*, and eventually left *Melajoe*. On Notoatmodjo, see p. 221. TSUCHIYA(1987), 70 names a Notoatmodjo as *Taman Siswa* school founder in Mojokerto. That the other view was Van Hinloopen Labberton's and his supporters' is very likely from what he said of the *Budi Utomo* and Semarang *Sarekat Islam* views.

⁴Article by de R.: 'Misdadige verwording', IV, 14-9-1918. Labberton said on 20 July 1916 *Melajoe* had 600 members; LOC, 22-7-1916, 'Een associatie-debat'; compare SCHRIEKE, 88-9. Fifty showed up then, after the conscription debate; LOC, 21-7-1916, 2e blad, 'Associatie-politiek in de praktijk.'

alternative?¹ Finally, as its theosophist executive member A.G. Vreede moved, *Indië Weerbaar* decided to do both. It would send the delegation, with Labberton at its head. The demonstration would also go ahead; as Vreede proposed, to prevent dissent from hindering harmony and spontaneity, 'Debating would not be allowed, as is usual in demonstrations like this'.²

Both Douwes Dekker and Van Hinloopen Labberton had linked up with *Budi Utomo* in 1908, when it was founded, respectively its left and right wings.³ Now, between Sneevliet and Labberton it was a matter of linking with not one organization, but many, with many more members. Also among 'Europeans' and 'Chinese' political and social associations had multiplied. *Indië Weerbaar* tried to get them all to back it, and did get support; much opposition too though.

For instance, the Chinese community was virtually unanimously against. Sneevliet sneeringly suggested to Van Hinloopen Labberton a solution for this: enlisting 'theosophical Chinese'.⁴ A major part of Ambonese (soldiers from the Moluccas; then in Jakarta) are against IW.⁵ Tjipto Mangenkoesoemo also opposed it. The trade union of Indonesian government pawnshop employees, the PPPB, rejected *Indië Weerbaar*:

as it thinks this is militarist propaganda. Besides, this union thinks that militarism strengthens capitalism. Against that, the indigenous people, many of whom are proletarians, should fight.⁶

Daily *Tjahaja-Timoer* commented on IW:

¹NUGRAHA(1989), 244. TICHELMAN(1985), 444. LOC, 23-7-1916, 'Indië Weerbaar'. LOC, 26-7-1916, 'Indië Weerbaar!' RANI 1917, 719. Folkersma later went to The Netherlands, and founded the Ommen TS lodge there, close to the OSE centre; TMNI 1923, 615.

²LOC, 26-7-1916, 'De weerbaarheidsleuze.' IG, 1916 (38), 'Vergadering Comité Indië Weerbaar', 1558-9; reprint from *Bataviaasch Handelsblad*: 'Mr Vreede proposes to ban political debates at the big meeting and just to have the motion passed there.'

³SURYA NINGRAT(1918), 34.

⁴Sneevliet, HVW, 25-9-1916, 250, 'De Chineesche bevolking en de Weerbaarheid': pro-IW papers reported 'the apostle of conscription v [an] Hinloopen Labberton has not succeeded in a great meeting of Chinese, in convincing the Chinese, that *Indië Weerbaar* represents a Chinese interest as well.' Already LOC, 25-8-1916, 2e blad, 'De Siang Boe en "Indië Weerbaar"' reported on a Siang Boe league meeting. Of 100 people present, only one supported *Indië Weerbaar*. In HVW, 6-10-1916, 'De Chineezen en de Deputatie', Sneevliet wrote: 'The solution is obvious. Let a handful of theosophical Chinese form some new association, form a league of [government-appointed] majors, captains and lieutenants, maybe some will volunteer, and then, one will be able to swindle with the will of the people of the Chinese as well.' In his speech in The Hague to the Military Science Society, Labberton mentioned the 'impure role' of the Chinese and Malay language press. LOC, 24-8-1917, 1e blad, 'De militie in Indië.'

⁵Djawa Tengah, 203; quoted KOT, 1917, 'Persoverzicht', 112.

⁶VAN DER WAL(1967), 460.

⁷LOC, 24-8-1916, 'Indië Weerbaar.'

Now that the Indies are in danger by the war in Europe, they contact the Indigenous and Chinese associations, which they ignore at other times. The paper predicted 'failure'.¹

4. Marco and the battle for *Sarekat Islam*

Winning the support of the country's biggest organization, the *Sarekat Islam* (see p. 294), would be an asset to *Indië Weerbaar*; also, because *Sarekat Islam* had sympathies among the left in The Netherlands, thus improving chances for conscription all over the political spectrum.

Pantjaran-Warta, the daily of R. Goenawan, until November 1916 vice president of *Sarekat Islam*,² opposed *Indië Weerbaar* strongly. One of its editors, Mas Marco Kartodikromo, though not FTS, had some sympathy for theosophy, in early 1916 until *IW* began.³ He then was away to The Netherlands. There, he had contacts with anti-militarist paper *De Wapens Neder*.

On the ship back to Jakarta, Marco wrote his well-known series of articles *Sama rasa dan sama rata* [For solidarity and equality]. In it, he proposed that if the government were to introduce compulsory military service, conscripts should become conscientious objectors. Marco there also published anti-*IW* cartoons, and his poem against conscription, named 'Indië Weerbaar Committee!!'

Marco thought a militia of Indonesians would be primarily for internal oppression. Introducing the series, he quoted the famous story of Saidjah by 19th century Multatuli. Peasant's son Saidjah, searching for his lost fiancée Adinda, came to a village 'which the Dutch army had just conquered; so it was on fire, of course'. Saidjah found the bodies of Adinda's relatives. Then, dead, naked and horribly mutilated Adinda herself. Saidjah desperately tried to stop the soldiers with his bare hands, but got killed too. Marco thought if the *Indië Weerbaar* plans went ahead, then the next Saidjah and the next

¹19-2-1917, quoted *IPO* 8/1917, *MCB*, 19.

²*LOC*, 8-11-1916, 'De leiding der S.I.'; based on *Oetoesan Hindia*. Moeis accused Goenawan in *De Preangerbode* of supporting the Jambí armed uprising; *Tjahaja Timoer*, 103, Sept. 1916, quoted *KOT*, 1916, 'Persoverzicht' by A.H.J.G. Walbech and Ch.P.J. Blok, 1674. In 1915-6, the relationship between Tjipto Mangoenkoesomo and Goenawan was bad; 'De Javaansche Pers', 'Persoverzicht', *KOT*, 1916, 105. Still, both opposed *IW*. *LOC*, 3-7-1916, 'Uit de Maleische pers. De militie', quoted a *Pantjaran-Warta* anti-conscription article by 'Semeroe' [ps.], 'Do the Javanese people need conscription?' Conscription was 'a taxation, which the Javanese has to pay with his life.' 'Why do we need to shed our blood to fight an enemy, as we are not asked what we think of what we want and like?'

³On his way to The Netherlands, a letter included a Krishnamurti quote; Marco, 'Dalam pelajaran, Falmouth (Engeland), 21 Agustus 1916', *PW*, 12-10-1916, 1. SHIRAIISHI(1990A), 302, writes of Marco in 1924, a *PKI* member then, as 'a theosophist'. Was he really at the same time, then, both a *PKI* and *TS* member?

Adinda would die at the hands of their own countrymen.¹

EEN GOED VERSTAANDER HEEFT MAAR EEN HALF
WOORD NODIG



Zwarte broeder, zweer mij, dat ge met
dit wapen den vijand buiten mijne bezittingen
houden zult. Zoo zeg mij deze woorden na:
Zoo waarlijk helpe mij...

God almachtig!

—o—

Of soedarakoe orang islam, berdjandjitan
kepada kami, bahwa dengan ini senjata api
kami bersanggup melawan moeroehkoe.
Toeroelilah soempah jang kami katakan ini:
Saja bersoempah...

Toehan minis ampoen!

—o—

„Modar lojolomoe! to l sambet! dijloe-
ko banjoe kowe!” kata orang islam.

Cartoon with Marco's 'Sama rasa dan sama rata', IV, *PW*, 17-2-1917.
Text above it: 'A word to the wise is enough.' Below it: 'Black brother,
swear to me, that with this weapon thou wilt keep the enemy out of my
possessions. So help me...' Picture two: 'God almighty!'

The government did not give Indonesians equal status, though that would cost it much less than the *IW* delegation to The Netherlands.² On *IW*'s 'spontaneity', Marco wrote:

The Government has founded the *Indië Weerbaar* Committee, oh no, I beg your pardon! Not the Government has founded the Committee, but the Government's followers, and capitalists. Ha! ha! ha! This is ridiculous.³

The public prosecutor wanted to close down the press of *Pantjaran-Warta*. Marco could prevent that by saying he alone was responsible.⁴ He was put on trial. The public

¹*PW*, 14-2-1917, 1, 'Keterangan gambar di atas.' DEKKER(1916): 'They [*Indië Weerbaar*] only speak of a foreign enemy, but they mean the enemy at home [the trade unions] as well.' *Djawa Tengah* # 192, of Aug. 1916, quoted *KOT*, 1916, 'Persoverzicht', wrote: 'So, the militia really is intended as a weapon against the enemy at home, so, against our own brothers.' *SH*, 8-5-1918, quoted *KOT*, 1918, 1450: 'The Indies' only enemies are the money-bags.'

²Marco, 'Sama rasa dan sama rata', I, *PW*, 14-2-1917, 1-4.

³Marco, 'Sama rasa dan sama rata', IV, *PW*, 17-2-1917, 1.

⁴*PW* 23-2-1917; quoted *IPO* 8/1917, *MJB*, 9.

prosecutor said:

Also, what the accused says, that the *Indië Weerbaar* delegation is a government invention and not a manifestation of the country's inhabitants, clearly proves his criminal intent.

All this cost Marco a two years' jail sentence.¹

Throughout 1916-7, Muhammad Djoenaed, co-editor Abdullah Fatah (later chairman of the Petroleum Workers Union),² and others wrote sharp attacks on the Theosophical Society in *Panjaran-Warta*. That angered supporters of pro-government Jakarta dailies *Pemiran* first, *Neraja* later. One of them wrote an anonymous letter to *PW*, signing it 'Orang Bogor' [inhabitant of Bogor]. He said that there were many crazy and 'koerang adjar' [uncivilized] people, but none as bad as the *Panjaran-Warta* editors. He accused them of writing against *Indië Weerbaar* without attending its meetings. Editor R. M. Prawira Ningrat replied:

I admit that, in all of my life, I have never been to a meeting of the Electoral Association Melajoe, the Theosophists, or the Order of the Star in the East.

Prawira Ningrat rather went to more interesting meetings. He concluded: 'If we have to go to a lunatic asylum, we will not do so voluntarily; for we are sane people.'³

Three days later, Abdullah Fatah wrote:

To conclude our article, we should not be surprised that Lord Raden Djojosoediro, Editor-in-chief of *Pemiran*, also still editor of *Pewarta Theosofie*, takes "Buddhism" as the basis for our prosperity. ... But Muslims should fight that "Buddhism", jointly with the Social Democrat society.⁴

Fatah wrote that not only theosophy 'destroyed' Islam; it also did not square up with

¹Marco, 'Sama rasa dan sama rata', *PW*, 14-2-1917, ff. 'Eenige beschouwingen over Marco's actie', *LOC*, 6-3-1917, 2e blad. 'Marco', *LOC*, 16-3-1917. 'Het verhoor van Marco', *LOC*, 20-4-1917, 1e blad. 'Persdelict Mas Marco', *LOC*, 21-4-1917, 2e blad. 'Persdelict Mas Marco', *LOC*, 25-4-1917. After an appeal, the sentence was commuted to one year: *LOC*, 5-7-1917, 'De zaak-mas Marco.' Lines from the poem *Comité Indië Weerbaar!!*: 'Our Government plays conjuring tricks/The Indies' children are robbed/All our goods are embezzled/By blighters.' The poem also wished the *IV* committee members were dead. The cartoon with the series' first article depicted a fat 'naive (?) imperialist'. While sitting on the back of a thin Indonesian, he said: 'Oh Lord, grant that this accursed native defends my beloved Insulinde [Indies]!' The judge asked Marco: 'You write: "Were the natives to have to obey all of the government's orders, then they would no longer be humans, but beasts." Is that not an insult to the government?' Opinions on Marco varied widely: right wing *Preangerbode* called him 'the notorious native loudmouth Marco'; quoted *IG*, 1917 (39), 959, *MRBTD*. Ibid., 1219, quoted the *Sumatra Post*: after he went to jail, statues of Marco were erected in many village squares.

²*Oetoesan Hindia* 15-11-1918, quoted *IPO* 46/1918, *MJB*, 23-4. On Fatah, see also *Pewarta Soerabaja*, 9-10-1929, quoted *IPO* 43/1929, 127.

³'Bogorsche Causerie', *PW* 2-10-1916, 1.

⁴'Alasan apakah jang mesti kita pakai?', *PW* 5-10-1916.

either Buddhism or Hinduism. There never was any news of Labberton 'meditating up in the mountains to meet the Divine Teacher Vishnu.' Rather, Labberton 'every month lined his pockets with money which also comes from Kromo [non-privileged Javanese].' Labberton only got more power from theosophy, 'theosophy is just a tool to get gold.'

Due to the war in Europe, Mr Labberton has unmasked himself; as he asked the indigenous people especially to draw the sword to chase away the enemies, whom he thought would come, and would disregard his doctrine of magnanimity. Maybe he is scared that the people lining his pockets will be free. Surprise!

Fatah concluded:

From Mr Labberton's exhortation to draw the sword against the enemy, we may infer that theosophical doctrine is nothing but a way to keep the Indies under The Netherlands.

Fatah did not distrust all Dutch officials though, he saw D.A. Rinkes as an ally against Van Hintoopen Labberton. The popular goodwill that Rinkes created, 'is constantly destroyed by Mr Labberton and his Theosophy. This is not important though.'¹ If *Panjaran-Warta* editors had really thought theosophy as unimportant in Indonesia as Engels thought it in England, they might have written just a paragraph on it, like him; not their many pages.

An unsigned leading article in *Oetoesan Hindia*, the paper of *Sarekat Islam* president Tjokroaminoto, said 'that money for defence of the Indies could not come from the natives, the people are too poor for that.' 'Finally, the author advises the "Indië Weerbaar" committee, if it wants to get the native organizations to cooperate with it, to first to lay to heart the points which he had mentioned.'²

Van Hintoopen Labberton's supporter in the executive, and since November Goenawan's successor, Abdoel Moeis,³ was 'unconditionally' a partisan of making the Indies able to defend themselves.⁴ He admitted, though:

¹FATAH(1917). VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1916C), 247-8 accused Rinkes of 'dark machinations' against the theosophist teachers' training school Goenoeng Sari.

²*LOC*, 31-7-1916. 'Uit de Maleische pers Indië's weerbaarheid.' Tjokroaminoto linked assent to conditions; KORVER, 60. In *KM*, # 192, Aug. 1916, quoted *KOT*, 1916, 'Persoverzicht', 1658-9, appeared an article by him, which assented to defence, but not to conscription. The *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad* wrote on Tjokroaminoto: 'The S.I. in fact does not want anything of this military defence, but it would not be politically clever to say so clearly.' Quoted *IG*, 1918 (40), 470, *MRBTD*.

³New spelling 'Muis'; 1890-1957; *ENI*, vol. 10, 393. He was from Sungei Puar in Sumatra: *IG*, 1918 (40), 434, *MRBTD*. But: Padang-born; MOEIS(1917A). His title of nobility was gelar soetan panghoeloe, *ENI*, VI, 352. KORVER, 238-9: he moved to Java, becoming a journalist after earlier work as a civil servant.

⁴MOEIS(1917A). Moeis added, not as a condition: 'The Indies should become mature and autonomous. ... we recognize the need of guidance by The Netherlands.' The editors of *De Locomotief*, for which Moeis wrote, added a note to 'unconditionally'; to them, conscription 'seemed only to be admissible if at the same time Native education in all its forms was brought to a higher level.'

Not long ago, the general view of my fellow party members was: We are sold out to the Blanda's [Dutch] by Abdoel Moeis!

He recalled one West Java meeting in an article for daily *De Preangerbode*:

I was almost on my own, people cursed me and called me names like traitor to my country ... They did not want to become serdadoe [soldiers], and that was it!

Moeis' critics worried that 'anak bini [children and wife] would not be taken care of.'² Abdoel Moeis estimated that on 13 September 1916, of *Sarekat Islam*'s 120 local branches, only 20 supported conscription.³ Months later in Amsterdam, he faced an estimate by Soewardi Soeraningrat that 99% of *SI* members opposed *Indië Weerbaar*.⁴ Moeis called this 'definitely a lie.' He did not contrast his own earlier estimate to Soewardi's, but now said that 'out of 120 branches on Java, only three were against.'⁵

The majority of the *Sarekat Islam* executive finally, without enthusiasm and with linkage, decided to support *IW*.⁶ Tjokroaminoto was ill, though sometimes present,

²MOEIS(1917A). PLUVIER, 23; *ibid.*, 116, calls his supporters 'bourgeois-national Islamic'. A 1915 Dutch government report on *SI* included 'Abdoelmoeis' with 'people ... about whose attitude towards the Government ... one would not have to worry in the near future'. VAN DER WAL(1967), 441.

³'Abdoel Moeis op reis'; reprinted *LOC*, 9-9-1916, 1e blad.

⁴He claimed this had risen to 80 out of 120 in January 1917, when he wrote MOEIS(1917A). Moeis, a skilled speaker and debater, indeed may have changed some people's ideas; though he maybe exaggerated here.

⁵*LOC*, 20-8-1917, 1e blad, 'Sarekat Islam en de SDAP.' In the Dutch parliament, social democrat leader Troelstra quoted a telegram from Soewardi with the 99% estimate. *LOC*, 24-5-1917, 'De militie in de Tweede Kamer. I. Rede Mr. Troelstra.' Notowidjojo estimated at the *ISDV* general meeting of 28-5-1917 that 'at least 90% of *SI* members' disagreed with *IW*; TICHELMAN(1985), 510.

⁶*LOC*, 20-8-1917, 1e blad, 'Sarekat Islam en de SDAP.' *SI* also had many branches on other islands. NOER, 119 did not mention Moeis' earlier figures and accepted for 1916 the 3 of 120 figure from *Nerati* 29-9-1917; then, for many it was a matter of re-opening a divisive issue rather than of contents.

⁷Surabaya *SI* leader Raden Achmad opposed it; VAN DER WAL(1967), 460; 507. Moeis had already joined the local *IW* committee in Bandung; *HVV*, 10-8-1916, 207. Finally, he did join the all-Indies *IW* committee as *SI* representative; VAN DER WAL(1967), 501. At a public meeting, Tjokroaminoto defended the executive's pro-conscription decision. But he also pointed out that *Indië Weerbaar*'s aims were 'first and foremost the protection of capitalism; so it would be only just if capital owners would bear the majority of conscription's costs.' He then 'sarcastically' mentioned big sugar business; *LOC*, 20-2-1917, 2e blad, 'De S.I. meeting te Tjilatjap.' Socialist *Soeara Merdeka*, 25-4-1917, 5-6, 'Lagi hal Weerbaarheid', took notice. Moeis, though, in a interview with daily *He: Volk*, quoted *LOC*, 4-5-1917, 'Abdoel Moeis aan het woord', said: 'For this [conscription], one needs money. And it seems that one will have to get that for a major, if not, the major, part in the Indies, which boils down to direct or indirect taxation of the natives.'

around decision time.¹ Social democrats saw the resolution as the consequence of government pressure, which the official Van Hinloopen Labberton, present at the non-public executive meeting of 29 August in Blitar, had applied.²

Local branches never got a chance to vote on the decision at an *SI* national congress. According to the Bandung daily *Pertimbangan*, Moeis, talking to *Sarekat* left-winger Semaoen, admitted that in *Indië Weerbaar* he did not represent the branches, but only the national executive. By order of the government, that national executive had to keep somewhat separate from the locals. Thus, the numerically few at national level were easier to influence;³ for instance from the Theosophical Society; than at local level, where committed Muslims, leftists, or secular nationalists, might be tougher opposition.

In a letter to *De Locomotief*, *Sarekat Islam* member Prihatin thought that even if *SI* leaders would get concessions from the Dutch government in return for conscription, that would not be good for Indonesians or for *Sarekat Islam*. Only a small elite would benefit from those concessions. The people would be split into 'the soldier caste (k s a t r y a s) and the coolie caste (s o e d r a s)'.⁴

Indië Weerbaar founded local committees to organize meetings on 31 August in cities besides Jakarta. In Medan in Sumatra, W.H. van Tijen, head administrator of Deli Limited and chairman of the Deli planters league, and H. Ketner, of the Dutch-American Plantation Company, vice chairman of the East Sumatra rubber planters' league, and since 1918 *Volksraad* member, did that.⁵ In Surabaya, Hirsch, chairman of the sugar business syndicate, became *IW* chairman.⁶

Moeis' fellow delegate Dwidjosewojo said that 'under no circumstances the non-propertied classes should be taxed to pay for the defence budget', VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1916/17), 603.

¹MOEIS(1917A).

²A. Baars, 'De Centrale S.I. en "Indië Weerbaar"', *HVV*, 10-9-1916, 238-9 *LOC*, 30-8-1916, 2e blad, 'De houding der Centraal Sarekat Islam'; and 1-9-1916, 'Te Blitar'. Sosrokardono (in Malay) and Tjokroaminoto (in Javanese) read translations of anti-*IW* articles by Sneeveliet to the meeting. Moeis attacked their contents. He said the government spent 12 million guilders a year on 'native education', not 6.5 million as Sneeveliet wrote. Later, on 26-2-1917 in Geneva, Moeis said, according to *NRC* daily, that government 'native education' expenditure was 7 million; quoted *IG*, 1917 (39), 490, *MRBTD*. The Blitar meeting went on till 3.30 a.m. The *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad*, quoted *IG*, 1917 (39), 922, *MRBTD*; which opposed Goenawan, and claimed inside information, later wrote that of 14 executive members present, only Goenawan was completely anti-*IW*, three (it named only Moeis) were completely in favour; the ten others (including Tjokroaminoto) fell in between.

³*Pertimbangan*, 23-3-1917; quoted *IPO* 12/1917, *MCB*, 6.

⁴*LOC*, 22-9-1916, 2e blad; Prihatin, 'Heeft de C.S.I. hieraan gedacht?'

⁵*RANI*, 1917, 519. *LOC*, 1-8-1916, 'Indië Weerbaar.' Soon, Budi Utomo branch chairman, Raden Aloewi Dhanoe Pamekas, also joined as the only non-Dutch member; *LOC*, 12-8-1916, 'Indië Weerbaar'; *OVTW*, 1918, 3, 14. At a public meeting meeting of a thousand Indonesians in the Oranje cinema in Medan, Pamekas faced much criticism for this though; *IG*, 1916 (38), 1684, *MRBTD*.

⁶*LOC*, 21-8-1916, 2e blad, 'Uit Soerabaia. Indië Weerbaar.'

In Semarang, the mayor and the *bupati* joined. The committee wrote Mohamed Joesoef, local *Sarekat Islam* chairman, also supported them. By the time they published that,¹ Joesoef's position had already changed, however. The *SI* branch met on 5 August. Joesoef said he had assented to the request to join, as he thought that might make it 'easier to ask for rights to have influence in government matters.' So this view also was not as 'spontaneous' as Van Hinloopen Labberton might have liked. Members argued though, that the Dutch East Indies budget already spent 62.1 million guilders on the armed forces, and only 6.4 million on 'native' education. They voted that Joesoef should resign from *Indië Weerbaar*; and he did.²

The *Indië Weerbaar* delegation, led by Van Hinloopen Labberton,³ included representatives of organizations like Pangeran Aryo Koesoemodiningrat, the *susuhunan* of Surakarta's elder brother,⁴ of the Princes' League. According to various sources, they were not the only two FTS here; 'some more Javanese members' were among the other delegates.⁵ Danoesoegondo went on behalf of the *bupati*'s union, Dwidjosewojo for *Budi Utomo*; army lieutenant Rhemrev also went.⁶ The delegation was to bring the military requests to Queen Wilhelmina of The Netherlands and her government. In attacking Labberton, the socialist magazine questioned his theosophical philosophy:

Someone who speaks in favour of militarism, in a conquered country with a people heavily burdened by taxes, whose mode of production enables only minor accumulation of capital in this country, makes his own religion or morality a farce. Someone who does this and directs the Indies movement towards militarism, abuses it, and puts it into direct service of

¹LOC, 9-8-1916, 'Indië Weerbaar.'

²LOC, 11-8-1916, 2e blad, 'S.I. vergadering' C. van de Kamer, a Semarang *IW* supporter, reacted to the opponents' education argument: 'You want schools -more schools- OK, but then two machine-guns for each school, and one cannon for each five.' LOC, 14-8-1916, 'De propaganda vergadering van de I.D.P. te Jogja.'

³TICHELMAN(1994), 187: Governor-General Van Limburg Stirum appointed him. LOC, 28-3-1917, 'Politie en delegatie': the delegates were 'people, all tested for first class loyalty [to the government].'

⁴According to the Bandung correspondent of LOC, 6-10-1916, 1e blad, 'Bandoengsch en ander nieuws', Koesoemodiningrat also undertook the journey to accompany some sons of his ruling brother, on their way as students to 'negeri blanda [The Netherlands]'. 'The sunan's children have a house of their own there, in Oegstgeest [west of Leiden], where they live together.'

⁵TB 1917, 125. See also p. 205.

⁶W.V. Rhemrev, one of *IW*'s two secretaries in the four member executive, a captain since just before the delegates' departure, later a major, was army counter-insurgency specialist, in Aceh in the 1900's and against communists in 1927; and in the 1930's-40's a leader of the Dutch East Indies National Socialists. LOC, 6-7-1916; 'Indië Weerbaar.' VAN LEEUWEN(1917A), 438; L. DE JONG, vol. 11aI, 304; 366; 528.

imperialism, of Dutch Colonial-Capitalism.¹

Sneevliet also called people like Koesoemodiningrat, whom he did not name, 'Mendacious ... the Djocja [Yogyakarta] pangeran ... who on behalf of all of the people of the Indies dare to ask for armament.'² In the daily *De Locomotief*, Surakarta court physician Radjiman, a theosophist like his client Koesoemodiningrat, pointed out Sneevliet's mistake in Yogyakarta vs. Surakarta. He also protested against words like 'mendacious', and defended *Indië Weerbaar*. Radjiman wrote it was not, as Sneevliet said, 'only for capital, but for the people's right to exist.'³

5. Semaoen and buffalo, tiger, and lion

In August 1916, the two fellow theosophists and designated members of the delegation to Queen Wilhelmina, Van Hinloopen Labberton and Prince Koesoemodiningrat, went to Semarang to reverse the local anti-*IW* mood. They wanted to do that before their own public meetings on 31 August, the queen's birthday.

At a joint anti-conscription meeting of the *ISDV*, *Insulinde*,⁴ and *Sarekat Islam* local branches, on the morning of 20 August, Labberton showed up. But a unanimous vote immediately asked him to leave, as this was an internal action-organizing meeting, not a meeting to debate with pro-conscriptionists. Labberton claimed the right to attend, as he said he was a *Sarekat Islam* member. His opponents, though, doubted that: being of Muslim faith was a condition for membership. *SI* and social democrat papers repeatedly wrote on that point during the next months.⁵

Labberton and Koesoemodiningrat now attempted to turn around views of anti-conscriptionist organizations one by one, after the failure at the joint meeting. First, they tried to get the Semarang *SI* branch executive meeting on the afternoon of the same day to reverse their members' decision to oppose *Indië Weerbaar*. Of the two senior theosophists, Van Hinloopen Labberton was a high-ranking employee of Dutch government, which for nearly three centuries local people had come to know as dangerous to oppose. To

¹SNEEVLIET(1916C). At the *ISDV* general meeting in Semarang, 11-6-1916, Baars said that real 'able-bodiedness' for the Indonesian people meant a real parliament, without racial or financial limitations on the electorate, and not 'de wapenen der barbaren [=the weapons of the barbarians; military weapons; quote from Dutch song *De Socialistenmars*].' TICHELMAN(1985), 441; 395.

²Bederf van het Inlandsch verenigingsleven. *Bewerking voor weerbaarheid*, *HVW*, 10-8-1916. SNEEVLIET(1916D), 221, called Koesoemodiningrat correctly 'the Solo [Surakarta] pangeran.'

³Radjiman, 'Indië Weerbaar', LOC, 19-8-1916. *Pemikiran* 160, of Aug. 1916, also published the letter; *KOT*, 1916, 'Persoverzicht', 1655.

⁴Successor organization to the *Indische Partij*; see p. 301.

⁵In 'Een vraag aan de S.I. leiding', *HVW*, 10-10-1916, 9, Sneevliet asked the *Sarekat* executive if Van Hinloopen Labberton's claim of membership was true. The executive replied it was not, confirming Sneevliet's theory; Sneevliet, 'Het antwoord', *HVW*, 10-12-1916.

some *Sarekat Islam* leaders, he also was the most trusted Dutchman.¹ He knew Indonesian languages and culture well.² And he spoke in the first city where his Indies TS had obtained a permanent foothold. Prince Koesoemodiningrat was a leading member of a family which for even longer than three centuries had represented supreme worldly authority over most of Java. It had represented religious authority too, both pre-Muslim and Muslim; a family very much revered, even within the emancipatory *SI*.³

However, when these two asked the workers, low-ranking civil servants, and small traders of the Semarang *Sarekat Islam*, whether or not they renounced their opposition to conscription, the humble people replied politely but clearly 'mboten [no]'.⁴

The third meeting that day was a public debate in the evening, at the Semarang Military Club. First, Labberton spoke. Everyone noted he had put on a head-dress of the Surakarta type; 'clearly, to win the hearts of the *Sarekat Islam* people.' First, he protested against Mohamed Joesoef, 'who had left him in the lurch', resigning from *Indië Weerbaar*. Joesoef replied that, as elected chairman, he had to comply with 'quasi-universal' ideas in his branch.⁵ His earlier views, based on tactical considerations, had changed. Labberton said:

We live in very unusual times. In normal circumstances, there were enough armed forces to maintain law and order, but now, the Indies' defence was inadequate.

He wanted a 'defensive militarism.' The Dutch government

no longer saw the Indies as a conquered country, but as a colony. A conquered country is completely exploited for the benefit of the mother country; a colony, though, is not seen that way; nor are the Indies.⁶

Labberton said 'making the Indies able to defend themselves would also contribute to more order and discipline [Dutch: orde en tucht]. Who opposed defence? Socialists, 'who do not know what a fatherland is'; and old-style Dutch dihardes.

In the debate, Sneevliet replied first. He thanked Van Hinloopen Labberton for at

¹Maybe along with the governor-general's adviser Hazeu.

²'Semar' (pseudonym) in Soerikoesoemo's *Wederopbouw*, 1918, 67, wrote of him: 'He may be the only European, who has met the essence of the Javanese in his own cultural environment and [..... in original] has given it a handshake. There may be many Europeans who mean well towards us, but we have not found so far another one like Mr. Labberton, who lets his light shine and feels with us.'

³L. DE JONG, vol. 11A1, 25.

⁴SNEEVLIET(1916D), 221: 'De heer [Mr] Van Hinloopen Labberton heeft bot gevangen'; literally, 'caught flounder'; that is, 'has got his comeuppance'; did not get what he wanted.

⁵Pewarta Soerabaya, # 189 and 190; quoted KOT, 1916, 'Persoverzicht', 1671.

⁶LOC, 21-8-1916, 1e blad, 'De vergadering Indië Weerbaar.' On 'conquered country' or 'colony' also VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1916D), 517. *HVV*, 25-8-1916, 218-9, Sneevliet's 'Het Japansche Gevaar' paraphrased Van Hinloopen: 'Holland had been a predator in earlier times, but now the wolf had been reincarnated as a sheep!'

least debating, while colonial officials banned anti-conscription meetings. Sneevliet's idea of association differed from Labberton's: 'In practice, Mr L. neglects brotherhood. He does not differ from Christian propagandists for quick-firing cannons, Talma and Kuypers [leaders of the Dutch *Anti-Revolutionaire Partij*].' The reality of the First World War had shown that Van Hinloopen Labberton's line between 'offensive' and 'defensive militarism' was really fluid indeed. What was *Indië Weerbaar*? Support for imperialist politics. Count van Limburg Stirum, the new governor-general, was at its origin; not 'spontaneity'.¹

Teeuwen of *Insulinde* was the next debater. Men like Labberton

wanted to impose more duties on the people, but thought we were still too immature for more rights. We are considered mature enough to do duty for cannon fodder, however. Ethical gentlemen, give us that money [for the military] for schools, give us more education, give us better houses. No country has ever prospered through militarism.

Next came Semarang socialist local councillor Westerveld. 'We should have the means for learning, not for defence [Dutch: leermiddelen, maar geen verweer-middelen]; teachers, not military men.'

Telg asked Labberton why, as a theosophist, he promoted *Indië Weerbaar*. How about theosophical doctrines 'of brotherhood and love'?²

Then came Semaoen, a public transport worker and leading member of both *ISDV* and *Sarekat Islam*. Soon, he would write the anti-conscription book *Indië Weerbaar*. This book, in Malay, was the best sold Marxist one in Indonesia, at least until 1922.³ Later, he became the first chairman of Indonesia's communists. Semaoen said he opposed *IW*: 'His people had no say at all in their own country.'

Labberton replied. 'Big sounding phrases', like Sneevliet's, were 'useless. We should be practical.' Then, Labberton tried to divide nationalist *Insulinde* people from internationalist social democrats, 'who do not understand nationalism at all.' He replied to Telg: 'in practice, we are not so far yet that these [theosophical] ideals may already be applied completely.'

To Van Hinloopen Labberton, 'the Javanese people' was a kerbau, a domestic buffalo. The Dutch government was its faithful cowherd. An evil tiger was on the prowl,

¹LOC, 21-8-1916, 1e blad, 'De vergadering Indië Weerbaar.' Van Limburg Stirum had emphasized the need for stronger armed forces in his inaugural address; *IG*, 1916 (38), 969, *MRBTD*. Social democrat daily *Het Volk* 14-4-1917, quoted SCHWIDDER/TICHELMAN, 265: 'In a non-official way, from the [governor-general's] throne in Bogor, a committee was founded to make "Indië Weerbaar" popular. The comedy as a consequence of this was, to make a long story short, disgusting.'

²In 1913, there was a branch in Indonesia of the theosophist League for World Peace, led by Miss H.E. van Motman, Labberton's sister-in-law. *TMNI*, 1913, 175.

³SEMAOEN(1966), 75: 3000 copies. Probably the same as his *Anti Indië Weerbaar, Anti Militie, dan 3e Nationaal Congres Sarekat Islam*. Semarang 1918; McVEY(1965), 370. Spelling *ibid*. 'Militie' probably a misprint.

and the kerbau should support its herd.¹ The tiger was Japan. That remark by Labberton had repercussions which eventually sent Japanese journalist Yoroyoshi Minami to jail for one year.² From the audience came a reaction: a lion is in the Dutch coat of arms; so, a carnivorous animal as well. True, Labberton and Djojosoediro's daily wrote later; but the lion 'is magnanimous and the tiger is not.'³ If people joined the army, Labberton continued, then the buffalo would get horns; that would be good for both animal and herd. At this point, Semaoen interrupted the speech. He resented the kerbau metaphor; and had a long argument about it in Javanese with Labberton.

Semaoen, looking back at the incident weeks later, expected in the future 'the world will not be divided into domestic buffaloes and "botjah-angon" [cowboys]. Then, all people will stand next to one another, free and with equal rights.'⁴

Labberton said 'that as inner men the Semarang SI people agreed with him, though they asserted exactly the opposite.'⁵ Semaoen reacted in the first article under his name in *Het Vrije Woord*; as Darsono, Semaoen's future PKI executive colleague, sixteen months

¹LOC, 21-8-1916, 2e blad, 'De vergadering "Indië Weerbaar"'. HVW, 25-8-1916, 218: 'The Javanese, thus he [Labberton] said in his Semarang speech, should be compared with a domestic buffalo, which cannot dispense with its cowherd, the Westerner ... and which with its labour power helps to sustain its master as well.'

²LOC, 28-9-1916, 'Het artikel van Minami.' G[oenawan], 'Berhoeboeng dengan tangkapan toean Minami', PW, 2-10-1916. TICHELMAN(1985), 411. In *Pertimbangan*, 18-9-1916, Minami wrote an article, 'Who is more cruel?' In it, he called Labberton a *pengasoet* [provoker] who, 'ordered to do so by the government, had blazed abroad that Japan was acting harshly in Taiwan and Korea.' Why did he write it? 'The accused [Minami] says: the speech, which Mr Van Hinloopen Labberton held in Semarang, for the Indië Weerbaar movement; and in which he said that Japan is the Indies' only enemy. ... According to the accused, the people generally thought that these gentlemen [Labberton and H. Mouw] spoke in the name of the Dutch East Indies government.' As a witness, *Pertimbangan* chief editor Jacobus Rudolph Razoux Kühr confirmed Minami's article was a reaction to Labberton. So did Sneevliet at his own trial; SCHWIDDER/TICHELMAN, 246. *Warna-Warna*, in which Tjipto Mangoenkoesoemo wrote, 228, Oct. 1916, quoted KOT, 1917, 'Persoverzicht', 251 thought, when Minami went to jail: 'Besides, the public prosecutor has been unjust. He did not also send to jail [with Minami] that villainous theosophist and provoker VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON.' *Sin Po*, quoted IG, 1917 (39), 701-2, MRBD: the Japanese consul-general came to see Van Limburg Stirum. He demanded Minami should be freed, 'or else, also have Messrs Van Hinloopen Labberton and Mouw prosecuted in a court of law.' Nevertheless, from 1923-6 Labberton taught languages in Japan; TICHELMAN(1994), 187. In January 1916, before IW was formed, VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1916A), 54, had written: 'For The Netherlands, dangers threaten from Berlin. For the [Indonesian] Archipelago danger threatens from Tokyo. So it [military defence] is no question of siding for or against the allies or for or against the central powers.'

³*Pemikiran* (see p. 297), # 164, Aug. 1916, quoted KOT, 1916, 'Persoverzicht', 1668-9.

⁴'Javaansche mijmeringen en een droom', by 'De rode S.I.-er [The red SI member; very probably Semaoen]', HVW, 10-9-1916, 237-8.

⁵SNEEVLIET(1916D), 222.

later also wrote his first-ever article against a prominent theosophist; see p. 312. Semaoen sarcastically wrote down a theatrical form dialogue with Labberton:

Art thou in favour of *Indië Weerbaar*? No!

Is thine inner man in favour of *Indië Weerbaar*? No!

Semaoen hoped for a future of 'able-bodiedness' in socio-economic, not military, sense; when 'cannons and other tools of murder would be unknown in the Indies.'¹

After the end of the evening meeting, Van Hinloopen Labberton tried to reverse *Insulinde* chairman Topee's views individually, again in vain; to the anger of anti-conscriptionists.² At first, Labberton spoke to Topee in a 'very sugary' [*manis manis*] way. When this did not work, he 'intimidated' Topee. He said that the governor-general might ban *Insulinde* and the ISDV. *Pantjaran-Warta* wrote that Labberton was busy slandering Indonesia's political organizations to the governor-general; but hoped that Van Limburg Stirum would not buy it.³

6.Countdown to the queen's birthday

A few days later, opponents' charges that *Indië Weerbaar* was not spontaneous, but government-linked, got unexpected support from a pro-conscription leader: Prince Koesoemodiningrat. He spoke for a militia to the annual general meeting of the *Darah Mangkoenegaran*, the league of relatives of the Mangkoe Ngoro dynasty:

Really though, there is a secret behind this. It is, that the committee is a blind [Dutch: dekmantel] It really is the government, who wants this [conscription] Pangeran Koesoemodiningrat can totally agree with the Indië Weerbaar committee, as its aim is nothing but to pay homage and loyalty to the government ([Javanese:] ngatoeraken setio toehoe dateng kangdjeng gouvernement). As is apparent from the wayang stories, loyalty and devotion to one's master are a human's highest honour, and as a man has to die sooner or later anyhow, he should die honourably!⁴

Narpowandowo, the relatives' league of the *susuhunan*, the major one of Surakarta's two rulers, also met on *Indië Weerbaar*. 'A pangeran' addressed them, favouring it, and reminding them they were ksatriyas. Very probably, the pangeran was Aryo Koesoemodiningrat, the family's senior male member. After he spoke, there was a 'vehement debate.' Many did not object to the government expanding the armed forces;

¹SEMAOEN(1916).

²SNEEVLIET(1916D), 222: Labberton was 'on the warpath in order to continue the Indies' subjection and exploitation.' Sneevliet in HVW, 10-8-1916, article 'De Heer Hinloopen Labberton': 'Our religious Mr Van H. L. lays himself out to convert *Insulinde* to his conscription ideals. He implores *Insulinde* to stop its revolutionary action.'

³F.W. van de Kastele in *Modjopait*, 27-9-1916; as quoted and commented on in 'Gouverneur Generaal dan Vereeniging *Insulinde* dan ISDV', PW 3-10-1916.

⁴LOC, 25-8-1916, 'Indië Weerbaar en de Javaansche wereld.' *Tjhoen Thjioe*, 192, Aug. 1916; quoted KOT, 1916, 'Persoverzicht', 1672.

they did not want to serve themselves, however. After the speaker had reassured people on that point, he managed to have the meeting vote in favour.¹

Meanwhile, Abdoel Moeis also held pro-militia speeches; to socially less august and even more critical audiences. At Sukabumi in West Java, he spoke to a *Sarekat Islam* public meeting of 750. He said, like Labberton in Semarang, that the Indies were not a 'conquered country [Dutch: *wingewest*]' any longer, 'but a colony.' 'The Netherlands is the best master, and the Indies are not yet mature enough for self-government.' The Dutch *Locomotief* reporter commented:

With the uneducated, simple people of the villages there still is so much misunderstanding and prejudice [about *Indië Weerbaar*], that one finds it pleasing to hear one of their own race militate strongly and convincingly against those wrong ideas.

Moeis got many critical questions in Sukabumi. For instance, who would pay? Moeis said 'that the native should carry a very small part of the military burden as well.'²

Four days earlier than other cities, on 27 August, Surakarta had its *Indië Weerbaar* demonstration. In his opening speech, chairman Th. Landouw attacked Sneevliet. Then, Prince Koesoemodiningrat was to speak. He was present, but got someone else read his speech, as he had a 'slightly sore throat'; from that week's earlier meetings? Next, a teacher and member of the *Budi Utomo* local executive, Mas Ngabehi Josowidagdo, spoke, summing up arguments not just for, but also against, *Indië Weerbaar*. Landouw thought this too academic for a propaganda speech, and ordered Josowidagdo to sit down. As at other *IW* meetings, no debate was allowed. At the end of the meeting, Prince Mangkoe Negoro VII's military band played the *Wilhelmus*, the Dutch national anthem.³

On the evening of the same day, in the same city, the local *Sarekat Islam*, the *SI*'s founding branch, met in the *Habi Projo* building. Koesoemodiningrat went there to influence this branch, in his younger brother's capital, for conscription. The Surakarta *TS* lodge president Dr Radjiman, who earlier on had criticized especially this *SI* local,⁴ also came. The reporter wrote that most of the 1500 at the meeting were 'extremely cool towards the militia plans.' One asked for yet another condition: were the Javanese to consent to conscription, then the Dutch sugar businesses would have to return their lands to the peasants.⁵ Radjiman 'urged [*SI*] to mitigate their demands, and asked to co-operate

¹ *Pemberita Betawi*, quoted *KOT*, 1916, 'Persoverzicht', 1654.

² *LOC*, 28-8-1916, 'De S.I. te Soekaboemi en Indië Weerbaar.'

³ *LOC*, 28-8-1916, 2e blad, 'De meeting van "Indië Weerbaar" te Solo.' The speaker probably was identical to 'Mas Josowidagdo', a Surakarta *TS* member on 15 March 1915; NUGRAHA(1989), 245.

⁴ See p. 294. *PT* 1916 (9), #3, 16.

⁵ Later, in The Hague, *IW* delegate Laoh linked consent to conscription of his Northeast Sulawesi organization to abolition of 'humiliating unpaid labour' in the region. VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1916/17), 608.

with the [*Indië Weerbaar*] action, unconditionally.¹ The meeting voted, though, to keep 'neutral' on *IW*. Only months later, the branch were open opponents.²

On 31 August 1916, Raden Djojosoediro, editor-in-chief of *Pewarta Théosofie boewat tanah Hindia Nederland*, was one of the speakers at the Jakarta *Indië Weerbaar* demonstration in Decca Park. Prince Koesoemodiningrat also attended.³

Opponents could neither debate at *IW* meetings, nor have their own. In Surabaya, *ISDV* and *Insulinde*, whose anti meeting was banned, distributed leaflets. They said: 'Insist on a debate. The [*IW*] committee proves its weakness by not allowing a debate.' *De Locomotief* added: 'The police have seized all these dirty little rags -and there were extremely many of them- and will investigate who put them there.'⁴

Semarang was the only city where authorities did not ban the anti-conscription meeting. Three thousand, mostly Indonesian workers, came to Semarang's theatre on 31 August.⁵ This was the largest number of people so far at a socialist-organized meeting in Indonesia. *Insulinde* member Razoux Kühr handed out cartoons. They showed a platoon of poor Javanese, with Van Hinloopen Labberton standing in front of them as their drill-sergeant.

First, Teeuwen spoke against Labberton. 'All members of the *Indië Weerbaar* committee are wealthy, they own sugar plants, get big bonuses, etc.' Next, Mohamed Joesoef held an anti-militia speech in Javanese.

As did other papers,⁶ Sneevliet had attacked the theosophists' General Secretary in

¹ RADJIMAN(1917), 149, regretted the meeting's idea 'that the Government interests were supposedly only those of the Dutch.'

² See p. 203. *LOC*, 28-8-1916, 3e blad, 'Indië Weerbaar en de S.I.'; 'S.I. en de weerbaarheid te Solo.'

³ *LOC*, 4-9-1916, 2e blad, 'Bataviaasche brieven', 31-8-1916, extra-edië, 'Batavia' SCHOUTEN, 98.

⁴ *LOC*, 1-9-1916, 'De weerbaarheidsmeeting te Soerabaia'. *LOC* 30-8-1916, 2e blad, 'Uit Soerabaia': an *IW* supporter, nobleman Raden Wignja Darmadja, called a meeting of 140 people in Surabaya. He wanted them to vote for conscription, without any debate. The result, 'disastrous for the zealous Wignja Darmadja' was 'less than ten' supporters, the others left. *IG*, 1917 (39), 259f., *MRBT*, reprinted a letter from a Chinese to Van Limburg Stirum. He complained that police in Cirebon had removed anti-*IW* posters, which the daily *Sin Po* had put up, while leaving pro-*IW* posters, hanging besides them, alone.

⁵ P.W. Kern, Resident of Semarang, letter to the governor-general, 14-10-1916; in TICHELMAN (1985), 440. Kern's letter summarized the daily *Locomotief*'s reports. *Sinar Djawa*, 190, Aug. 1916, quoted *KOT*, 1917, 'Persoverzicht', 99-100, estimated 4000 were present, 'also government employees [presumably, many of those from public transport, which was part government, part privately owned].'

⁶ Malay language paper *Warna-Warta*, 189 and 192, Aug. 1916, quoted *KOT*, 1916, 'Persoverzicht', 1670: 'It is strange that Mr VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON, he, the leader and priest of theosophy, so, someone who should be against all bloodshed, has been willing to use his influence, both as a spiritual leader and as an expert on Javanese, to reduce the people to

Het Vrije Woord.¹ Here, he again challenged *IW*'s 'spontaneity'; also, Labberton's comparing Indonesians and government to a 'domestic buffalo; and a guy, who sits on top of it.' Sneevliet remembered Labberton's Javanese head-dress of a few days ago. To loud laughter, he called it and Labberton 'a *kain kepala* who is no *kepala*' [a head-dress of someone with no leadership mandate].² Now, the delegation would go to The Netherlands. If there the delegates would not just talk about armament and loyalty, but also about people's rights, then that would not be due to the pro-conscription movement, but to our anti-conscription movement. He called for 'all the oppressed to work together against the *Indië Weerbaar* action.' Robbers of *Insulinde* challenged Van Hinloopen Labberton's difference between offensive and defensive militarism: 'In both cases, people will have to fight.' He attacked the slogan of the Dutch navy lobby society 'Onze Vloot [Our Fleet]': 'Indië verloren, rampspoed geboren [If The Netherlands loses the Indies, disaster is born].'

Last, Semaon in Javanese held 'a speech to the echo, which loud applause

canon-fodder, in order to protect Dutch interests in the Indies. ... Why didn't this "priest" say honestly that the money for this very heavy war tax, which will be a inescapable consequence of *Indië Weerbaar*, will have to come out of the pockets of the Natives, who already today pay 30% more taxes than he does [tax laws favoured Dutch]? What does he care that their taxes will have to be tripled, if only he successfully carries favour with the government. Poor krono, *Indië Weerbaar* will even shear the hair in your neck away. Oh, you modern hellish scum! Oh, you modern leeches!

¹SNEEVLIET(1916D), 221: 'The priest of the theosophists, who postpones brotherhood until a following incarnation of present humanity. The man of high ideals, who plays at being the practical person, the pedestrian politician, to incite enthusiasm for cannons and machine-guns. The reform-minded ethicist, who propagates a power of defence, which works against reforms, if it does not make them impossible. The Westerner by origin, who plays at being the Easterner, in order to be more effective.' Later: 'Our truth-loving theosophical militarist'; *HVW*, 6-10-1916, 7. 'De Weerbaarheidsmissie naar Holland' H. Sneevliet, 'De terugkeer van D.D.', *HVW*, 25-2-1917, 84. 'the will-o'-the-wisp of the "LIGHTHOUSE" LABBERTON.' A. Baars, 'Het Nationaal Comité van Inlandsche Vereenigen', *HVW*, 25-12-1916, 49: 'the theosophical-ethical herald of the sacred gospel of defense of the fatherland, of cannons and machine-guns.' A. Baars, 'Het "program" van den Heer v. Hinloopen Labberton', *HVW*, 25-12-1916, 49. 'This theosophical-ethical militia propagandist'.

²*Kain kepala* was Sneevliet's literal translation into Malay from Dutch *hoofddoek*; *ikat kepala* was usual. *Kepala* may mean 'head' or 'chief'. Next day, 1 September, Teeuwen spoke at an *Insulinde* Semarang local election meeting. To loud laughs, starting his speech, he too put on a head-dress (a present from a Surakarta Javanese man at the anti-conscription meeting of the day before): 'Now, we start the *Insulinde* meeting in the Labberton way!' *LOC*, 2-9-1916, 1e blad, "'Insulinde"-vergadering.' More than a year later, in his defence speech at his trial, Sneevliet twice mentioned the head-dress of 'this so-called friend of the Javanese' Labberton. 'We socialists have the moral duty to rip the mask of demagogic philanthropy off these propagandists, who manipulate the Indigenous people and their organizations, even though we can allow them the pleasure to keep wearing the Mangku Negoro type head-dress.' SCHWIDDER/TICHELMAN, 264; 287.

interrupted repeatedly.' Critics of the organizers could debate here, in contrast to *Indië Weerbaar*'s meetings. Only one did, Aloewie. He asked in Javanese if a 'neutral' view on conscription was not best. As people prepared to vote on an anti-*IW* motion, the Dutch assistant resident, present in official capacity, rose to threaten to close the meeting. The organizers could avoid that.³

7. Jambi, geese, fox, converts, and Radjiman

Theosophist A.F. Folkersma, writing to his official superior, tried to minimize the Semarang meeting; Sneevliet was only 'a fanatic, headman of a very tiny little clique of socialists'.⁴

To the *Indische Sociaal-Democratische Vereeniging*, the war was senseless. To the Theosophical Society, it made sense in a perspective of higher worlds, karma, and reincarnation. In the editorial of *TMNI*,⁵ Van Leeuwen wrote:

This war of our times ... Abhorred by some, as if hell were brought here on earth, as if humanity had backslid into primeval lack of civilization, on the contrary others see in it the promise of a beautiful future, of a civilization, which, built upon the ruins of the earlier one, will stand firmer and will rise higher. The former look with the eyes of the worldling, the latter see with the eye of the spirit and thus understand completely the words of a Bolland "The wise man is at peace, even during war, for he is at peace with war."

Who supported, and who opposed *Indië Weerbaar*; if one draws the circles wider in Indonesia than *ISDV*, or *TS*?

De Locomotief wrote: for, 'nearly all import Europeans [recent immigrants or *totoks*] ...' Baars later commented that among *totoks*, 'tangan keras', hardliners, like the *Soerabaiasch Handelsblad* daily, and 'very ethical' Van Hinloopen Labberton worked together excellently for a long time in *IW*. So, differences were not as big as they

¹*LOC*, 31-8-1916, extra-edition, 'Anti-"Indië Weerbaar"'; *LOC*, 1-9-1916, 1e blad: 'De anti-meeting.'

²TICHELMAN(1985), 434.

³1917, 203.

⁴VAN LEEUWEN(1917A), 438: daily *Het Nieuws van den Dag* at first opposed *IW*. Its editor Wybrands wrote on possible alternatives to military spending: 'If, just for once, we would not brag so disgustingly, we, the Dutch, and if maybe sewers were to come here, *Registration Service*, *disposal of faeces in the cities*, *usury was fought*, *medical* (especially *obstetrical*) help were provided, *healthy drinking water*, *practical education*, *rapid justice*.' Quoted Sneevliet, 'K. Wijbrands over de Weerbaarheid', *HVW*, 25-9-1916, 250. *HVW*, 10-10-1916: the *Nieuws van den Dag* opposed Labberton's anti-Japan campaign, as it supported the Allies, including Japan. Many Roman Catholics also were against conscription: *IV*, 24-11-1917. A Catholic priest had come to see Sneevliet in 1914 to discuss common socialist-Roman Catholic anti-war action; Sneevliet in *HVW*, 25-9-1916, 250.

seemed.¹ *De Locomotief's* list of supporters continued: 'a fairly large part of the Indo-Europeans, and most Javanese intellectuals.' The daily might have added itself. To this, Soewardi Soeraningrat reacted: 'Whom does the Semarang paper mean by intellectual natives?' Many of them, Soewardi thought, were not the 'tame sheep' that *De Locomotief* considered them to be.²

The daily thought opponents were 'the lower class Javanese, most of whom are incapable of judging correctly.'³ From this, one might infer that the theosophists had become involved in class struggle, to which Labberton objected so much. One may suppose that, without the TS, to which the main *IW* propagandists belonged or were closely linked, the number of, especially Indonesian, supporters would have been low.

'Lower class' opposition sometimes expressed itself sharply. In August 1916, when *IW* propagandists came to Kemayoran kampung (neighbourhood), its inhabitants chased them out; they 'had to save themselves fleeing.' *Bintang Soerabaja* daily commented: 'So, not the Indies, able to defend themselves, but Kemayoran, able to defend itself.'⁴ The anti-*IW* press began to bring news items under headings like 'x Weerbaar', wherever people resisted authority. X in these stood for the armed uprising, or minor disturbance, area in these articles. For instance, 'Djambi Weerbaar' on the big uprising in the Jambi region, already known for petroleum underground.⁵ Labberton and Djojosoediro's daily *Pemikiran* wrote in one of its last issues that no excessively heavy arms should defeat Jambi:

No, one should extinguish the uprising by magnanimity and by lofty lessons. Then, undoubtedly, the subjects' love will end all uprisings in the Dutch East Indies.⁶

¹A. Baars, 'Hari tahoenan dari I. W. (IW's birthday)', *SM*, 25-8-1917, 2. Compare FASSEUR(1995), 195-6.

²SOERIANINGRAT(1916/17), 148.

³LOC, 1-9-1916, 2e blad, 'De weerbaarheidsdag te Semarang.' Ibid. 'The anti-demonstration was extremely abject ... dirty political show.' *Sinar Hindia*, from Semarang like *De Locomotief*, 21-11-1918, quoted IPO 47/1918, *MJB*, 18: LOC was 'such an Indies Rasputin', and 'slandorous.' *Pewarta Soerabaja*, opposing *IW* unlike LOC, estimated that of both Indonesians and Chinese, 'less than 1%' were supporters; # 189 and 190; quoted KOT, 1916, 'Persoverzicht', 1671. *Sinar Sumatra*, # 27, 1917, quoted KOT, 1917, 'Persoverzicht', 970, thought '80%' opposed *IW*. Soemadi in *SH*, 31-12-1918, quoted IPO 1/1919, *MJB*, 15 estimated that the Indonesian languages press were 'unanimously' and the people for 'more than 90%' against. Troelstra thought *IW* had some support from Indonesian 'intellectuals, who are close to the government ... but as distance from government increases, increasingly a hostile mood against that defence appears'; LOC, 24-5-1917, 'De militie in de Tweede Kamer. I. Rede Mr. Troelstra.'

⁴*Bintang Soerabaja*, 190, Aug. 1916; quoted KOT, 1916, 'Persoverzicht', 1672.

⁵Headline on the Jambi uprising, *WW* 204 from 1916; see KOT, 1917, 'Persoverzicht', 113; 116. *PW*, 3-1-1917, 'Kepoeh Weerbaar.' Semaoen in *SM* 10-6-1917, quoted IPO 24/1917, *MJB*: the oil companies wanted roads. Jambi people had to make those by unpaid labour; anger about this caused the uprising.

⁶*Pemikiran*, 184, Sept. 1916; quoted KOT, 1917, 'Persoverzicht', 240.

Contradictions sharpened in these years not only in Jambi and on conscription; in businesses too. Members of TS and *ISDV* also confronted one another as managers, respectively workers. In 1917, at least two of the four men management of the privately owned East Java Steam-Tram Company were active theosophists: Th. Vreede, brother of the Government Secretary, and L. Mangelaar Meertens, the later TS General Secretary.¹ This company then faced the rise of Indonesia's first big trade union, that of the transport workers. Vreede also was a member of the Board of Semarang harbour. There, Semaoen and other socialists then set up a dock-workers union, which went on strike several times.² At the Kaliwungu sugar factory, close to Semarang, Van Ganswijk, FTS, was a manager; the Marxist Mohammed Kasan a labour leader.³

H.W. Dekker was a transportation employee and the transport workers union's chairman. On 15 March 1915, and on 1 January 1916 still, he and his wife, A.P. Dekker-Groot, were members of both TS and *ISDV*. Then, contradictions were not that sharp yet, though combining these two memberships already made the Dekkers exceptional. Now, September 1916, however, H.W. Dekker warned against Van Hinloopen Labberton. Some might accept his *Indië Weerbaar* because of its leaders' religiosity: 'Beware of the geese, when the fox preaches.'⁴ He reminded Labberton that 'Jesus, whom you also recognize as one of your masters' had said

Put the sword in its sheath, for whoever lives by the sword shall perish by the sword. But such language would not be to the liking of the powerful, and so it is better to suspend brotherhood towards the great mass of the disinherited.⁵

Labberton, Dekker wrote, went further than government military policy:

¹RANI, 1918, 661. RANI, 1920, 785: Mangelaar Meertens also sat in the Surabaya Regional Council J.D. de Rooek, FTS, was a high level employee (*ingénieur*) of the eastern Java section of the government-owned railways. RANI 1917, 627.

²RANI, 1922, 595.

³OCSI, 33.

⁴DEKKER(1916). Dutch: 'Als de vos de passie preekt, boer pas op je gauzen.' ABU HANIFAH, 36, wrongly says Dekker, Sneeveliet and Brandsteder were teachers. NUGRAHA(1989), 243; 252. As membership numbers show, H.W. Dekker joined later than (and because of?) his wife. Besides the Dekkers, only two certainly combined both memberships on 1-1-1916: Tjipto Mangoenkoesoemo; and Darna Koesoema; TICHELMAN(1985), 53. Probably also Raden Pramoe, a leader of *Darmo Haimoko*. LARSON(1987), 42: it had a 'reputation for violence' against *Sarekat Islam*; the Mangku Negoro court (to which Semarang was financially important; B. Brommer etc., *Semarang. Beeld van een Stad*, Asia Maior, 1995, 22) probably sponsored it. Pramoe joined the Semarang *ISDV* as it started; TICHELMAN(1985), 268; FTS, NUGRAHA(1989), 247; 257.

⁵DEKKER(1916).

You really are "plus royaliste que le roi" [more monarchist than the king]. for in your speech [Semarang, 20 August] you admitted: 'If the government now does not ask for support in this issue, then we really should intervene ourselves.'

Labberton did not wait for a call-up. He served as lieutenant in the 'Volunteer Motor-car Unit in Java and Madura'. TS colleague and Government Secretary, A. Vreede, was Command Council chairman of the military volunteers at Bogor. The colony's Deputy Adviser on local government, and secretary of Bogor TS lodge, Arnold Meijroos, was Commander.¹ Dekker concluded:

To preach association and brotherhood with a revolver in one hand and a sabre in the other hand, seems to me the work of an imbecile or a demagogue.²

Theosophist C.C.W. van Ganswijk, of Kaliwungu sugar plantation, defended his General Secretary against Dekker, in a letter to *Het Vrije Woord*.³ What Jesus had said on violence was only an individually meant remark against 'Peter who was always rash'. On general, political, matters,⁴ Jesus had said:

'Render therefore unto the (Roman) emperor what is the emperor's.' And these taxes surely were for army and officials' expenses of the [foreign, as in Indonesia] dominators and not for education [on which Dekker would rather spend the money], for example. ... Thus, also Mrs Besant forcefully insisted that England would participate in the great European bloodbath, as the defender of the weaker nations' rights against the Prussian terror, of freedom against oppression, of progress against stagnation. The Theosophist judges an action by the motives. If someone like President [Theodore] Roosevelt goes into the jungles of Africa, where he has no business, to kill wild animals, purely as a hobby, then the Theosophist considers that to be a crime. But if a planter, living on the edge of the rimboe [Indonesian for jungle], sees his child threatened by a tiger, and he shoots the animal still just in time, then he performs a boon.

Nowadays, many tiger souls lived in human bodies. So, *Indie Weerbaar* was not at variance with brotherhood ideals, as Dekker wrote, but a consequence of them.

¹RANI, 1916, 809; 1918, 829-30. VAN DEN DOEL(1995), 261. LOC, 14-5-1917, 'Buitenzorgsch Vrijwillerskorps en Indie Weerbaar.' The Bogor volunteers became linked to *IW*. They were founded shortly after the beginning of the war; the government soon gave them the right to wear uniforms like those of the army; LOC, 17-9-1914, 'Vrijwillerskorps te Buitenzorg'.

²DEKKER(1916).

³VAN GANSWIJK(1916). He was president of the TS Purwokerto lodge in 1926; NUGRAHA(1989), 264; secretary of Dharma lodge, Yogyakarta, in 1934; *TiNI* Dec. 1934, 152; and Indies TS executive member since 1938; *TiNI* May 1938, 107. He organized Buddha Day celebrations at Borobudur; *TiNI* Apr. 1935, 114.

⁴An account of Noto Soeroto's speech in Haarlem in The Netherlands, 14 Nov. 1916, for the local branches of the *Algemeen Nederlandsch Verbond* and *Oost en West* organizations: 'He differentiated the individual's wisdom, that is, losing the ego into the universe, from the nation's wisdom which has to be mainly practical. Holland will have to lend a helping hand to the Indies in developing the Indies, and in order to make that unhindered development possible, will have to help arming the Indies.' LOC, 4-1-1917, 'Indische stroomingen, in verband met "Indie Weerbaar" en "Volksonwikkeling".'

From a viewpoint of consistency therefore, there cannot be any objection to arming oneself also against such human ugers. How else could the many military members in the Theosophical Soc[iet]y defend their viewpoint. To them, the ideal is the hero Arjoeno [Arjuna] from the Broto Judo, as his attitude was described in the Bhagavad Gita. ... Mr Labberton's [*Indie Weerbaar*] action is not surprising in the eyes of a single Theosophist.

Sneevliet, in an editorial postscript to Van Ganswijk, did not go much into religious-philosophical sides of theosophy;¹ mostly into socio-political aspects, like Annie Besant's 'support of Imperialism'.²

Mrs A.P. Dekker-Groot took the opposite side in the conflict to H.W. Dekker. Until September 1916, when her husband wrote against Labberton, she was *Het Vrije Woord*'s administrator. She had also been in the socialist festivities organizing committee, and in the executive of the Women's Suffrage Society.³ In 1917, she was against the social democrats, which upset Sneevliet. Baars in a letter to Sneevliet tried to console his colleague, taking aim at her theosophic ideas: 'Why should you care about the anger of that fat njonjah [Mrs] Dekker; let her just mind her Karma.' Addressing Semarang theosophists on 1 August, Dekker-Groot said: 'When contemplating the state of the world thoroughly, one can come to the quiet conclusion that "all is good, as it is", even if one has to cope with the greatest difficulties. It was our duty to help our oppressed brother ... but it was also necessary to inform him of the cause of his [own karmic] troubles.' The second, spiritual, duty was more important than the first. 'If justice and order [Dutch: *wet en orde*] were not the basis underlying our world system- then all would have been chaos.'⁴

She delivered a lecture at the Indies theosophical conference in April 1918, on karma and reincarnation.⁵ In it, she said that many clever people, like Christian church-fathers (whom she got to know in her youth), and economists like Malthus and Marx (whose

¹He quoted two sayings by Confucius against Van Ganswijk: 'Thou doth not even know how thou should serve the humans, then how should thou want to know, how one should serve the spirits?' And 'Thou who do not know life yet, how should thou want to know death?' SNEEVLIET(1916E).

²Ibid: 'How they [the theosophists] in their real lives go along with Maintainers of a society, in which exploitation and mockery of justice are conditional for maintenance. ... So far you have removed yourselves from social reality, so much lost yourselves in extrasensory things, that you see the *phrases* of the English imperialists on "the small nations' rights" uncritically, as if they were reality, and defend your hollowing out of the ideal of Brotherhood that way.'

³HVV, 10-4-1916, 121. TICHELMAN(1985), 216. HVV, 25-9-1916, 249, thanked Mrs Dekker for her work during a year, and kept silent about political-philosophical differences which most probably already existed.

⁴3-8-1917; published TICHELMAN(1985), 601; possibly reacting to Dekker-Groot's Semarang TS speech. At the end of 1916, *PT* 9 (1916), #3, 16 named her as secretary of the Yogyakarta TS lodge.

⁵LOC, 3-8-1917, 'Theosofie'.

⁶Reprinted as DEKKER-GROOT(1919).



ideas she came into contact with later), had already thought about differences between rich and poor. However, clever as these people were, they were unable to see root causes of these differences, as theosophy sees them in karma and reincarnation.

Some one writing under the pseudonym 'A convert [Dutch: Een bekeerde; H.W. Dekker??]', so possibly somebody whose ideas on theosophy and on socialism had gone the opposite way from Mrs Dekker, reported that TS conference for, formerly Dekker-Groot's, *Vrije Woord*. He thought that, compared to other speakers there

Mrs DEKKER is more practical, she says, be just well behaved children, you who suffer [Dutch spelling in original 'leidenden'; probably 'lijdenden' is meant] and are in want. From the wisdom of reincarnation it is proven, that you will return one more time into this small world, and then, things will be better; as for now, just start studying [theosophy] on an empty stomach, in a dirty slum dwelling without lighting. For our doctrine, which emphasizes Right and Justice, is merciless and hard.¹

This leftist criticism in Indonesia of 'the social sedative character of the theosophical movement', as historian Romein would say later,² was somewhat similar to the reaction of Swedish-American trade unionist and singer Joe Hill (Hillström) to U.S. Christianity in the same decade:

Work and pray/ live on hay/ and eat pie in the sky when you die.

Radjiman, on the other hand, criticized socialism in *Koloniale Studieën* magazine. He warned his countrymen against anti-government opposition, discussing the French revolution not as something from a finished past. He saw the workers' role in it as central as in 1917:

The workers' classes, set completely free after the French revolution, through ineptitude and inexperience relapsed into completely powerless status; incapable as they were of defending their interests, now that they lacked a governing hand. They had to take care of themselves, and were too immature for this.³

So one may doubt extremely, whether grafting socialist ideas upon our people, who so far have always been ruled by an autocratic government, would have positive consequences. Accepting socialist ideas, expecting all salvation from an economic uplift only, in many countries has led to a class struggle, which is at least as virulent as racial struggle. ... And

¹EEN BEKEERDE.

²ROMEIN(1976), 638.

³RADJIMAN(1917), 152. Actually, the French working class was less numerous and influential in 1789 than later in 19th century revolutions. Annie Besant in her atheist, pre-TS days, had written a pro-revolution *History of the great French revolution*. Reviewed *TT* May 1932, 214. The reviewer thought if she would have written it later, King Louis XVI would have been portrayed with more sympathy. On the supposed grandson of Louis XVI as FTS, see p. 100. She changed her mind later: the revolution 'only caused the drowning of the forward movement in blood, and has thrown France backward, and not forward as some people suppose.' BESANT(1907B), 101f.

whither all this leads in the end, as we said, the history of the French revolution teaches us, in which all moderate currents successively were defeated by extremist parties ...¹

He based himself on ex-socialist, then liberal, Frederik van Eeden, who wrote: 'From experience, I have come to the conclusion that material liberation can only proceed from spiritual liberation.'² Radjiman concluded: 'Or can we, may we, submit to Marx' materialist world view?' No; it still 'contradicted the Native people's psyche too much.'³

8. Around the world in 235 days

Before the *IW* delegates went to The Netherlands, Labberton answered critics in an interview with *Sin Po* daily. 'People who see me as a t h e o s o p h i s t who loves war, as I work for *Indië Weerbaar*, are wrong. For that movement does not want to bring w a r to the Indies; it wants to keep them p e a c e f u l.' That the poor would pay all the military expenditure increase, was also not true: big sugar companies' taxes might rise too. *Pantjaran-Warta* was sceptical of that: the companies would raise consumers' sugar prices; so, 'si Kromo would still be left to face the music.'⁴

Annie Besant in her convention speech at Lucknow in December 1916 mentioned the Dutch East Indies. They 'fortunately had a very sympathetic government which sees the TS' value.' Labberton's delegates would depart. Mrs Besant described the petition they had with them incorrectly as a Home Rule for the Indies petition. Thus, she assimilated to her own situation in India.⁵ Both Labberton's opponents and a supporter like A. Vreede in Indonesia would emphasize contrasts.

On 3 January 1917, it was departure day. Before the delegates embarked, Rhemrev 'laid down an enormous wreath with ribbons in the {Dutch} national colours at the feet of the statue of J.P. Coen.'⁶ Coen was a 17th century East India Company representative, whose military expansion had cost many lives. The delegation went on board the *Sindoro*.⁷ The governor-general's military aide, C.L.M. Bijl de Vroe, and Prince Koesoemodiningrat's sister had come to see them off.⁸ Contrary to plans, the Indonesian delegates probably became first of their country to go around the world.

Both government subsidies and big agricultural companies paid the journey.⁹ *Het Vrije Woord* put *IW*'s official adjective 'non-governmental' between snigger quotes.¹⁰ The

¹RADJIMAN(1917), 153.

²RADJIMAN(1917), 152.

³RADJIMAN(1917), 154-5.

⁴Kapi-Djembawan, 'Pertemoean dengan toean D. van Hinloopen Labberton', *PW* 5-1-1917, 1.

⁵*TB* 1917, 33.

⁶*LOC*, 3-1-1917, 2e blad.

⁷VAN LEEUWEN(1917A), 438; *DVH*, 4; on the itinerary.

⁸SCHOUTEN, 105.

⁹*HVV*, 25-9-1916.

¹⁰A. Baars, 'Mijn ontslag', *HVV*, 10-11-1917, 25-7.

paper's reporter at the theosophical conference wrote of 'a jaunt, paid for by the propertied class'.¹ *HVW* computed that 'apostle LABBERTON' had a 1900 guilders a month salary, high for then, while travelling as delegation leader. It commented:

On that pay, one can really be patriotic. Simplicity is one of the theosophical virtues. On 1900 guilders a month, a human, who loves simplicity, can break even, even in times of war and wartime scarcity.²

The ship went to Padang harbour; Van Hinloopen Labberton and Moeis held speeches in the city. Then, the party got a reception in Sabang, Indonesia's most north-western town. The ship continued to Colombo, then to the Suez canal.³ The *Sindoro* was shipwrecked near Gibraltar. Abdoel Moeis lost all his clothes and borrowed 300 guilders from Labberton and 500 from Dwidjosewojo.⁴

The delegation had to continue by train through Spain and France. They stayed with theosophical lodges.⁵ On 25 February, Labberton, after the Dutch consul in Geneva had introduced him, addressed a meeting of forty Dutch living in Switzerland. His subject

¹EEN BEKEERDE. *LOC*, 30-9-1916, 2e blad, 'Comité en deputatie' called the delegation 'conceivably the most expensive postman.' *LOC*, 28-3-1917, 'Politie en delegatie': 'a living and, besides, rather expensive, explanatory and propagandist memorandum.' SOERIANINGRAT(1916/17), 213: 'The movement has been set up by the gentlemen capital owners, who were willing to pay thousands of guilders to send their deputation to the mother country.' Ibid. it was 'capitalist-imperialist.' Views like those of 'Abdoel Moeis and Dwidjo Sewojo' were 'naive'.

²H. Sneevliet, 'De vaderlandshede der Indië Weerbaar delegatie', *HVW*, 20-3-1918. Prince Mangkoe Negoro VI, the retired predecessor and uncle of Mangkoe Negoro VII, then had a pension of 11,400 guilders a year; his wife's pension was f. 60 a year. *LOC*, 6-9-1917, 'Onderhoud der Mangkoe Negoro afstammelingen.' In 1913, Colijn added up his pensions, as ex-army officer and as ex-government minister, as f. 5800 a year; DE BRUIJN/PUCHINGER, 407. Sneevliet's monthly income as transport workers' union official in 1917-8 was f. 225, and later went up to 330. The monthly primary school teacher's salary of Mrs Sneevliet-Brouwer was f. 250. B. Coster, 'Een ezelstrap', *HVW*, 11-1-1919, 125.

³KOESOMODININGRAT(1921), 26f. Moeis' letters in *KM* 24/28-4-1917, quoted *IPO* 15&16/1917, *MJB*.

⁴KOESOMODININGRAT(1921), 56f; Jakarta 'S.I.'er' [*SI* member], *WW* 20-12-1917, quoted *IPO* 51/1917, *MCB*, 2. It claimed Moeis still had not repaid Dwidjosewojo, in spite of Dwidjosewojo asking for it by telegram. Though Moeis announced he would write more letters on the *Indië Weerbaar* journey, *De Locomotief* published no more after the first one of the series. British authorities had seized Moeis' 'extensive travel account'; *LOC*, 25-8-1917, 4e blad, 'Abdoel Moeis over Holland.' Moeis' daily *Kaom Moeda*, 23-4 to 10-5-1917 continued to print his letters at least till he was in the Mediterranean.

⁵VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1917), 396.

was 'The Netherlands' colonial task in the Indies.' Next day, Abdoel Moeis spoke, in an anti-Chinese sense. *Sin Po* paper complained it were 'lies'. The Dutch in Geneva did not know any better. *Sin Po* protested though against Labberton, who did, not contradicting Moeis.²

Already before the delegates departed, their opponents in Indonesia planned to found a committee in The Netherlands to counter them.³ *Hindia Poetra*, the magazine by Indonesians in The Netherlands, contained various views on the armed forces question. In the September/October 1916 issue, editor Soewardi Soerianingrat opposed *Indië Weerbaar*, and theosophist Raden Mas A. Sooryopoetro supported it. The third item on *IW* supported Soewardi. R.M. Soeloho [pseudonym? of Soewardi?]'s parodist inversion of a pro-colonialist poem by Dutch Speenhof against the *Indische Partij*, now turned it against *Indië Weerbaar*:

Indies, did you hear it [all in original?]
Prepare for the future!
Indies, keep your eyes open.
to the militia danger.
Put the little gang of troublemakers
with their obnoxious noise
into a very fitting jail
Keep on being master in your own house!
Do not judge too softly
Do not wait too long before you punish.
Do not fear to apply a pair of steel shackles
Do not fear a fitting judgment.
Let them themselves play at being soldiers
cosily together somewhere.
Indies, mind your interests,
Stay Tocan Basaar forever there!⁴

¹*IG*, 1917 (39), 489-90, *MRBTD*; from the *NRC*. The audience reacted with 'general assent'. The TS Viveka lodge in Geneva was founded 23 April 1912; *TT* May 1912, suppl., xii.

²*IG*, 1917 (39), 489-90, *MRBTD*; from the *NRC*. *Sin Po* 7-5-1917, quoted *IPO* 19/1917, *MCB*, 4-5. Other Chinese papers protested similarly.

³*LOC*, 21-9-1916, 2e blad, 'De anti-weerbaar actie', and *Sinar Djawa*, 217, quoted *KOT*, 1917, 'Persoverzicht', 99-100: *Insulinde*, *Sarekat Islam*, and *ISDV* executive members planned a committee with for *Insulinde* Soewardi Soerianingrat, J.H. François, and Boyer; also, representatives of *SDAP*, *SDP* [breakaway from *SDAP*; later: *CPN*], and Christian Socialists.

⁴*HPO* Sept.-Oct. 1916, 170. Dutch: 'Indië heb je 't al vernomen? Houd je voor de toekomst klaar! Indië houd je ogen open Voor het militie gevaar. Zet het troepje drukmakers Mei hun hinderlijk geraas In een zeer geschikte bajes ... Blijf in eigen huis de baas! Oordeel niet te teergevoelig. Wacht met straffen niet te lang. Wees voor geen paar stalen boeien En geen afdoend vonnis bang. Laat ze zelf soldaatje spelen. Ergens knusjes bij elkaar. Indië, let op je belangen, Blijf er steeds Toewan Basaar!' Speenhof had meant 'Toean Besar', Great Lord. The parodist had kept his wrong Malay spelling, sounding like 'Market Lord'.

After they arrived in The Netherlands via Germany, the delegation members addressed many meetings of different organizations. In a meeting of the Navy lobby society 'Onze Vloot' in Amsterdam, K. van Lennep read a poem in the delegates' honour. Its title, almost like the poem's by Marco, was 'Indië Weerbaar.' Though lacking Marco's two exclamation marks, it, too, voiced strong feelings. Their contents differed much, however. Its concluding lines were: 'Unity of interests/ For the Greater Netherlands, to which all of us are devoted.' Professor of history G.W. Kernkamp said there:

As in the seventeenth century one read The Netherlands' health from the pulse, which were the East India Company shares, so one in the future will read The Netherlands' health from the "Indië Weerbaar" movement's degree of development.¹

Abdoel Moeis held a speech, 'greeted by prolonged applause', to the The Hague branch of the Dutch right wing liberals.² He met with more opposition at a leftist May Day meeting. Van Hinloopen Labberton had urgently asked Moeis not to say anything there. Henriette Roland Holst, though, from the chair, provoked Moeis. Soewardi Soeraningrat opposed his views too, and pointed out that Marco, whom he had met months ago, was in jail.³ Later, on 31 May, at an SDAP meeting, Moeis faced Soewardi again, and MP Maurits Mendels. Moeis criticized the social democrat parliamentary group's negative views on *Indië Weerbaar*. SDAP leader Troelstra had called it a 'masquerade'.⁴ Mendels replied that he opposed

forcing the villager [Dutch/Indonesian: *desaman*] to fight for the Dutch interest. And for that, the *Indië Weerbaar* delegation came to The Netherlands, and that is what the soc [ia]l dem.[ocrat] parliamentary group opposed.

Mendels did not want to 'oblige people -who had been oppressed and exploited for

¹LOC, 3-7-1917, 2e blad, "'Indië Weerbaar'" wederom aan het woord.'

²The *Bond van Vrije Liberalen*. The party was also known in Dutch as 'oud liberalen' [old liberals]. LOC, 3-5-1917, 'Sarekat Islam en ethische politiek.'

³LOC, 14-7-1917, 'Indiërs op een Mei demonstratie te 's-Gravenhage.' LOC, 28-8-1917, 'Een onderhoud met Abdoel Moeis.' *De Tijd*, quoted IG, 1917 (39), 809-10, MRBTJ. J. Harinck, in 'Een Indiër tot twee jaar gevangenisstraf veroordeeld', *De Wapens Neder*, July 1917 wrote that there two IW members had debated against Soewardi. Soewardi wrote in Dutch socialist daily *Het Volk*, quoted IG, 1917 (39), 1221, MRBTJ: 'Our Indies soil is fertile enough, and does not need human blood as manure.' SOERIANINGRAT(1916/17), 177: IW was "'capitalist agitation'" and that is nothing but the truth.'

⁴Speech in Dutch parliament, 23-3-1917. Quoted TICHELMAN(1985), 433. He was Pieter Jelles Troelstra, not 'Jelle Troelstra' (P.J.'s son), as with HERING(1992), XV. Troelstra's later successor, Albarda, called IW 'a terrible comedy'; LOC, 3-5-1917, 'De Indische begroting in de Tweede Kamer.' SOERIANINGRAT(1916/17), 173: IW was 'purely a comedy.' Ibid., 213: Dwidjosewojo in *Algemeen Handelsblad* daily 'in a not very sympathetic way' had attacked Troelstra's views against IW.

300 years- to put guns on their shoulders to defend capitalist interests.'¹

In *De Nieuwe Amsterdammer*, Dwidjosewojo protested against Soewardi having written there that in his heart, he supported Soewardi's goal of 'absolute independence of Indonesia.' That would be 'a dubious privilege'. Dwidjosewojo did want 'zelfstandigheid [autonomy]' which differs quite from 'independence'.² On the concepts of 'zelfstandigheid', Home Rule; or independence, theosophists would face many discussions in both India and Indonesia.

The delegates went to a meeting of Indonesians living in The Netherlands. Future Governor-General H. van Mook was also present. Moeis debated against colonial policy critic Abendanon, who thought in the Indies aims other than the military deserved money.³ Aryo Koesoemodiningrat argued from

the Hindu doctrine, especially from the caste system. Anyhow, a society needs to join forces: the Brahmanas who take care of spiritual salvation; the Ksatriyas who keep the evolution going by fighting, the Waisjas who increase the country's economic development and the sudras who help to bring about material production. The lecturer [Koesoemodiningrat] linked this evolution to the coming of the god who became human, Vishnu. He has already come down to our world so many times, as it has proved to be necessary again and again to point out to degenerate humanity the right way. We must prepare this coming of the world teacher; for our world must be made worthy to receive Vishnu in our midst. ... So we should also prepare Vishnu's coming at an institute of higher education, which the Indies should get

The prince said that the different castes should co-operate; so should The Netherlands and the Indies. He compared the Indies' need of defence to the need of a fence around a house.⁴

The delegates saw army target-practice at the Hook of Holland fort, submarines at Den Helder, and later combat simulation by 12,000 men in the Loon op Zand dunes. On 19 May, they went to a military show in Amsterdam soccer stadium, which the Army supporters society organized.⁵ Social democrat Malay language paper *Soeara Merdeka*

¹LOC, 20-8-1917, 1e blad, 'Sarekat Islam en de SDAP.'

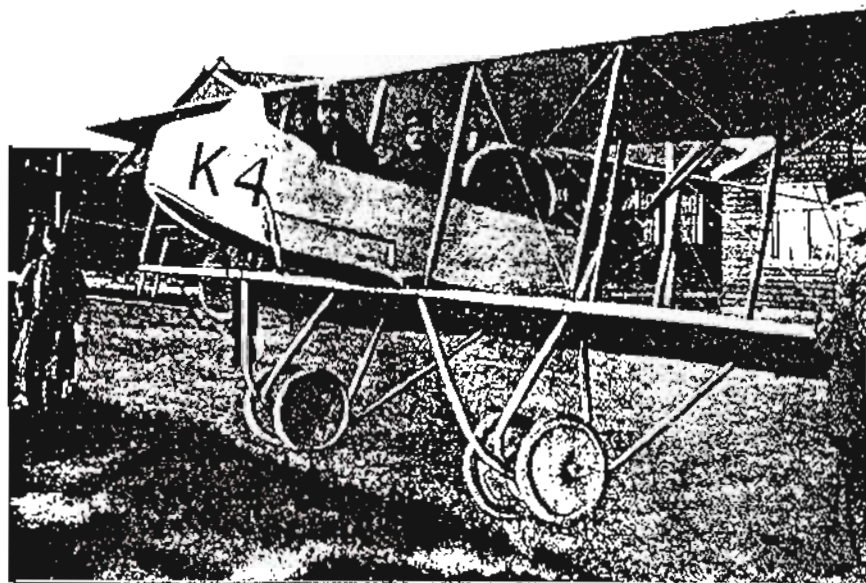
²Dwidjosewojo, 'Indië Weerbaar', *De Nieuwe Amsterdammer*, 2-6-1917.

³LOC, 2-7-1917, 2e blad, 'De Deputatie-Indië-Weerbaar als Gasten der Indische Vereeniging', HPO 1916/17, 242-60; 249. J.H. Abendanon, 1852-1925, had been a friend of Raden Adjeng Kartini. His criticism of traditional colonial policy went further than that of most 'ethici'. Noto Soerono argued there that countries like Britain and Germany should disarm first, before The Netherlands did so.

⁴LOC, 2-7-1917, 2e blad, 'De Deputatie-Indië-Weerbaar als Gasten der Indische Vereeniging', HPO 1916/17, 242-60; 247f. He said: 'We should have a pager (fence) around our house. Who, then, owns that pager? Of course, those who have built it.'

⁵KOESOEMODININGRAT(1921), 114f; LOC, 1-5-1917, 'Comité Indië Weerbaar in Nederland.' LOC, 2-7-1917, 1e blad, 'Indië Weerbaar.' 'Indische penkrassen', *Weekblad voor Indië*, 19-8-1917, reprinted POEZE(1986), 115: they also went to a military parade in Gelderland province, inspected a cannon in an armoured cupola in Den Helder, and an ammunition factory. The Amsterdam show by the 'Ons Leger' society: LOC, 30-7-1917, 'Ons Leger.'

reported that Moeis (possibly as first Indonesian in history) had boarded a plane at Soesterberg Air Force base.¹ Van Hinloopen Labberton and Prince Koesoemodiningrat sometimes wore their uniforms, respectively of lieutenant, and of major on the general



၂၂ ကုမ္ပဏီလီမိတက်သည် အောက်ဖော်ပြပါအတိုင်း နယ်စပ်ဒေသများတွင် လုပ်ငန်းများ ဆောင်ရွက်ခဲ့ပါသည်။

Transliteration and translation by I. Supriyanto

staff.²

Labberton wore it at his well-publicized speech to the Extraordinary Meeting of the Dutch military science society, the *Vereeniging tot Bevordering van de Studie van het Krijgswezen*, on 23 May 1917 in The Hague. General Snijders, the Dutch Armed Forces Commander, having just won a conflict with Minister of War General Bosboom, who had

¹KOESOEMODININGRAT(1921), 134. *SM*, 25-4-1917, 5-6, 'Lagi hal Weerbaarheid.' There were 49 Dutch military planes in 1917; BOSBOOM, 142.

²LOC, 1-5-1917, 'Comité Indië Weerbaar in Nederland.'

to resign, was among the audience.¹

First, Lieutenant-General De Waal welcomed Labberton from the chair. He explained that the society normally did not meet after 30 April. This, though, was 'of such extraordinary national interest', as it was on 'the militia, which will be introduced in the Dutch East Indies: at least, the intention to do so exists'.¹²

Then, Van Hinloopen Labberton explained *Indië Weerbaar*. Yes, some opposed it: mostly 'the Chinese imperialists'; and 'the European socialists who made mischief'. Strayed to the Indies at an evil hour, they have done everything to incite the population and the Indo-[European]s against Dutch authority.' They had succeeded with *Insulinde*. There was the threat of the colony's separation; 'a separation that would be fatal for the development of the Indies, but most of all for the Indo-Europeans' own future.'³ Dwidjosewojo, who also spoke there, told of *Budi Utomo* organized meetings in 1915 throughout Java on whether one should introduce conscription. There, 'Many words of abuse were hurled at my head.'⁴

What should happen 'to defend the Tricolour [Dutch flag] side by side, against all attacks?' Labberton thought: the 'battle-cruisers needed to be launched as soon as possible.' Submarines should be built as well. A central naval base should be built on the Sunda Strait, and a network of smaller naval bases all over the archipelago. Military airplanes, too, should be built in the Indies. Labberton rejected the dilemma 'army or navy. We say, a strong army and a powerful navy are both indispensable.' Labberton's view about naval bases was close to that of his Dutch East Indies Officers' League and TS colleague, Major W. Holle.⁵

Would conscript soldiers come from The Netherlands? The present constitution ruled this out. Labberton was not optimistic that 'Holland would change this Constitutional

¹*Het Vaderland*, 'Een milie in Indië', reprinted *IG*, 1917 (39), 904, BOSBOOM, 214 KOESOEMODININGRAT(1921), 94.

²VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1916/17), 577-8.

³VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1916/17), 582. *LOC*, 24-8-1917, 1e blad, 'De militie in Indië'.

⁴VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1916/17), 601. *OVIW*, 1918, 1, 15-20, 'Inlandsche militie'; 20. GOENAWAN MANGOENKOESOMO(1918), 21: Dwidjosewojo held much the same speech to Delft students of the *Onze Koloniën* league. RADJIMAN(1917), 149 on the meetings in Java: 'Then, complaints were made, as if the [BU] Central Executive members were government tools.'

⁵VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1916/17), 587. This contradicts TEITLER(1980), 35, on Labberton: 'In this scheme a battle fleet could play no part.' Ibid: Van Heutsz favoured the army side, [army infantry officer] Rhennev the navy side in the dispute. TEITLER(1988), 343-4: Holle proposed a naval base at the Merak Besar and Merak Kecil islands in Sunda Strait. Though the navy commander opposed the plan, among both navy and army officers there were supporters and opponents; *ibid.*, 335f.

stipulation, which is so against its Colonial calling, for the sake of the Indies' defense.¹

Conscription in the Indies should be universal, 'so, on all islands.'² An army of millions would be too much, however. It should be an honour to become a conscript: 'In principle, all have the duty of military service, but those who will have the privilege to perform it, will be selected.' He thought of about '30 men per desa.' Prince Mangkoe Negoro VII's forces were a good example.

'So, understanding the need for making the country able to defend itself, should permeate all schooling and education, not in a German type militarist sense, though.' Labberton preferred Switzerland, where the delegates on their way to The Netherlands had stayed with theosophists. There, he had seen himself that views of the Swiss army as 'too good to be true, and so nothing but maya [in theosophy: illusion]' were wrong. Some feared that Indonesians, if armed, would use those weapons against the Dutch. That view was incorrect: 'For the basic characteristic of Indonesian character is devotion, faithfulness, and attachment.'

'As far as money is concerned: the Indies should be able to bear all costs, except those of a battle fleet.' Van Hinloopen Labberton estimated the money needed at at least a quarter of a billion guilders.³ To implement all this, 'Now should come a man with military genius.'⁴ He did not name ex-Governor-General J.B. van Heutsz. The insider officers at the meeting, though, knew whom he meant. One way to look at Labberton's speech was as a stalking horse for Van Heutsz' views in the confrontation between

¹According to Labberton's interview in *De Avondpost*, quoted *IG*, 1917 (39), 666, *MRBT*, he wanted '10-20,000 conscripts' from The Netherlands to go the Indies. Minister Pleyte in 1914 had stopped sending Dutch regular military men to the Indies, but resumed it later; *BOSBOOM*, 48, 81.

²Not everywhere in Java though: 'There still are vast areas where the tribes still live in a state of savagery. One cannot bring those areas under a militia law' VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1916/17), 616.

³VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1916/17), 594. *LOC*, 24-8-1917, 1e blad, 'De militie in Indie.' *OVW*, 1918, 1, 15-20, 'Inlandsche militie'; 18. H. Sneevliet, 'Baars en V. Hinloopen Labberton', *HVW*, 30-10-1917. Van Hinloopen Labberton's financial estimate was roughly the same as Dekker's quote of Van Heutsz and Colijn; see p. 213. Labberton had already said on 20 September 1916 in Semarang that the Indies were rich enough to pay; *LOC*, 21-8-1916, 1e blad, 'De vergadering van Indië Weerbaar.'

⁴VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1916/17), 594.

⁵Labberton approved of the policies of colonial army commander and later, 1904-9, Governor-General Van Heutsz, who was not popular with the Dutch labour movement and anti-colonial Indonesians; VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1910), 169-70. Social democrat Troelstra in Dutch parliament in the early 1900's compared the general to a swine, quoting a poem by Heinrich Heine: 'Noch immer schmückt man den Schweinen bei uns/ Mit Lorbeerblättern den Rüssel'; 'Still, in our country, they decorate swines' snouts with laurels'; KOCH(1956), 34. The *Koloniale Tijdschrift* in 1916-7 repeatedly called for putting Van Heutsz in charge in Indonesia; Tertius [Gérard Valette; VAN DEN DOEL(1995), 381], 'Kroniek', *KOT*, 1917, 666.

different doctrines of Dutch armed forces officers.¹

In the discussion after the lecture, Pangeran Aryo Koesoemodiningrat spoke first. 'If a desa lacks a soldierly spirit, if the good military virtues are absent, then the people of that desa are at the mercy of scoundrels, as they lack the courage to resist. I myself consider making the country able to defend itself indispensable for improving the Native character.'

The prince spoke of Java's 'most beautiful qualities'; the 'ksatrija or knight's qualities. My great-grandfather, [susuhunan from 1823-1830] Pakoe Boewono VI, always used to say: 'Remember that you are knights, and should behave chivalrously.' When Pangeran Koesoemodiningrat's ancestors went to war, they wore a jacket, called *Onto Koesoemo*. This jacket of many colours had many pockets; in each of them was a coin to pay the costs of the campaign. If a *susuhunan* spent one coin for an unchivalrous purpose, then the jacket magically wounded its wearer on the spot from which that coin had come. In this spirit of chivalry, 'also the Dutch East Indies, under The Netherlands' leadership, will be able to be great and strong.'² Lieutenant-Colonel Merens said that he preferred a volunteer militia for 'natives.' 'Pressing people from the desas into service might bring major inequities and corruption', and 'much bitterness among the people.'³ General De Waal closed the meeting, wishing the cause of 'universal conscription' good luck.⁴

In February, Queen Wilhelmina had received a telegram from the Surakarta branch of *Sarekat Islam*. It warned her that Abdoel Moeis and his fellow delegates represented neither the 'people nor the *SI*.'⁵ 'Darah Hindia' in *Warna-Warna* applauded the telegram: that would teach Labberton, who 'sacrificed the Indies' well-being for an order of knighthood for himself.'⁶

Still, the queen met with the *Indië Weerbaar* people on 19 March 1917. She did so jointly with her Prince Consort Hendrik (Heinrich of Mecklenburg-Schwerin), ranking as

¹TEITLER(1980), 35-6. Van Heutsz' pro-German politics were compatible with Labberton's anti-Japan ones.

²VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1916/17), 595.

³VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1916/17), 608. *LOC*, 24-8-1917, 1e blad, 'De militie in Indie.'

⁴VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1916/17), 621-2.

⁵*LOC*, 12-2-1917, 2e blad, 'Afkeuring.' See on this branch p. 186. The new, pro-*IW* editor of *Het Nieuws van den Dag* headlined on this 'IMPUDENT S. I. TELEGRAM TO THE QUEEN'. Soedjono in *PW*, 19-2-1917, 'Djilat djilat'; also Marco, 'Sama rasa dan sama rata', *IV*, *PW*, 17-2-1917. The Jakarta *SI* also sent an anti-*IW* telegram, to Soewardi Soeraningrat; *Djawa Tengah*, 1917, 39, quoted *KOT*, 1917, 'Persoverzicht', 1109. *DT* thought that 'if earlier on *S.I.* members agreed with the movement, that was because Mr C. [sic] VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON and his followers had deceived them.' It had become less 'after the Deity VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON had left to The Netherlands.'

⁶'Apa jang dikerdjakan tentoe kedjadian', quoted *IPO* 8/1917, *MCB*, 17.

lieutenant-general of navy and army in the Indies.¹ Prince Hendrik, theosophically minded, knew of the TS through his friend Baron P.D. van Pallandt van Eerde, who presented Krishnamurti with Eerde castle,² and Arnhem Lodge president Baron H.P. van Tuyll van Serooskerken.³ Prince Koesoemodiningrat spoke for the delegates. The queen replied. She saw the delegation as

a strong confirmation of the faith, which I have always put in the disposition of those Princes and those people. The feelings, which you voice [Dutch: vertolkt], provide a strong basis of morality to what is happening and will happen to strengthen the Indies' defence. Those feelings enable a great development of force.⁴

Afterwards, Wilhelmina spoke with all the delegates individually.⁵

Saturday 31 March was the last day of the Dutch Students Congress in Utrecht. Recently graduated science student Dirk Struik reviewed it critically in socialist *De Nieuwe Tijd*. It was a sign of a rightward shift in ideas on Dutch universities, 'under the aegis of imperialism':

¹RANI 1917, 730. SCHWIDDER/TICHELMAN, 256: he was patron of *Onze Vloot* society. In 1916, Japanese paper *Yamato Shimbun* wrote that with Heinrich as Prince Consort, the Dutch East Indies were a pro-German security problem for Japan and the Allies. Japan should therefore buy the Indies from the Dutch, like the US bought the Virgin Islands. LOC, 30-8-1916, 2e blad, 'Japan en ons Indië.'

²Van Pallandt was also a local councillor in Ommen; BRUGMANS(1938), 1131. He led the Dutch Boy Scouts jointly with Prince Hendrik (and General Snijders). According to ZWAAP, the idea of bringing Krishnamurti to The Netherlands to stay was Hendrik's. The prince had his occult interests in common with relatives in the *Germanenorde*; HPB von Hahn; and his supposed son Mr Lier. In 1894-5, Hendrik had travelled extensively in India and Ceylon; BRUGMANS(1938), 14. L. DE JONG, vol. 14, 586: Prince Hendrik was a follower of 'Bo Yin Ra' (=J. Schneider-Franken; misspelt *ibid.* 'Bo Yung Rai'). BYR had been a prominent German FTS, working with Vollrath; MIERS, 424. After joining Heindel's Rosicrucian Fellowship breakaway, he broke with Heindel to form his own EBDAR (acronym for, translated: Plenipotentiaries of the August Knights) in the 1920's; MIERS, 80f; 133f. *TT* Oct. 1931, 121. review of Bo Yin Ra's *Book of Happiness*: 'Those who have read Eastern literature, Theosophical writings, 'New Thought' books, etc., will find no new ideas in 'The Book of Happiness'.

³TB 1917, 154. Traditionally, the Van Tuyll van Serooskerken family were stewards of the royal hunting-grounds of the Veluwe around Arnhem. They were related to Count Van Limburg Stirum and had also other ties to the Indies. BRUGMANS(1938), 1486. In 1917, the public prosecutor demanded jail sentences for Henriette Roland Holst and other editors of Marxist daily *De Tribune*, for an article 'Varkensheintje' [Little Hendrik of the Boars]. It protested against Prince Hendrik, an avid hunter, having the Veluwe forests stocked with boars. *De Tribune* thought 'these unloveable animals' and hunting parties would destroy natural values. The court case also got attention in Indonesia, like in *De Locomotief*.

⁴*De Telegraaf*, quoted IG, 1917 (39), 921, MRBTD.

⁵LOC, 5-6-1917, 'Op audientie bij de Koningin.'

On Saturday morning, the show-stopper came, (deliberately?) not announced in the program, the inevitable Van Hinloopen Labberton and Prince Pangeran Ario Koesoemodiningrat [sic], 'Indië Weerbaar' without any fig-leaf for a cover. ... After the Indies had become able to defend themselves, and also Lord Raden Mas Ario Soorje [sic] Poetro had informed us that the Indies and The Netherlands were sisters, the conservative economist from Groningen, Prof. C. A. Verrijn Stuart spoke ...¹

On p. 323 of his report on the journey, Koesoemodiningrat wrote of inspecting the trenches of the Holland Water Barrier, an old line of defence still in use then. Four pages on, he wrote of Madame Blavatsky. The delegates visited many businesses, like Wilton shipyard and the Leerdam glass-works, P.M. Cochius, FTS, chaired its board of directors.² Leftist weekly *De Nieuwe Amsterdammer* sneered that Labberton did nothing useful in The Netherlands, 'apart from missing the [Indies] theosophical Easter conference in Bandung.'³

The Dutch Theosophical Society held its biannual meeting in Utrecht, on 22 April. Labberton and Koesoemodiningrat were speakers; other *Indië Weerbaar* delegates also attended. As theosophists entered the Arts and Sciences building, members of the anti-militarist *Religieus Socialistisch Verbond* handed them leaflets, written by A.J. Resink and Baartman. These attacked 'Mr Van Hinloopen Labberton and the other theosophists who are in the Indië Weerbaar delegation.' The leaflets accused them of 'spiritual treason against the Indies people by collaborating with conscription in the Indies.' The religious socialists published their opposition elsewhere too.

Here, in Utrecht, they failed to convince the TS meeting. First, General Secretary Schuurman mentioned 'the great significance in occultism of the number seven', now in 1917. He introduced the theme of the day, Annie Besant's article 'The Wider Outlook'. In it, she had insisted on applying theosophy more in politics. Then, Brother, Prince, and Major Koesoemodiningrat spoke, 'proving the spiritual basis of conscription in the Indies.' He named 'Ksjatriyas, the Warrior caste. To rule them out would be the same as if a scientist were to omit fire from among the elements.' The prince mentioned Arjuna who did his duty. He finished by calling for support for *IW*.

From the meeting came a call to support the Boy Scouts too. Then, Labberton counter-attacked the contents of the leaflet. He said the authors of that Open Letter to the delegates supported much too soon in history 'spiritually-only defence ... an approach for which, if at all, only future races will be mature enough.' *Indië Weerbaar*

did not only aim at defence with cannons and money. Our Indies are a complex of the most heterogeneous tribes, the last remnants of the Lemurian race. These should be made, under Dutch rule, a unity, one people. ... We should no longer consider the Indies a conquered

¹D.J. Struik, 'Enkele geestesstromingen in de studentenwereld', *DNT* 1917, 264-71; 269. G. Harmsen, 'Dirk Struik vooraan in de communistische jeugdbeweging', *BNA* 36, Dec. 1994, 11-28; 23.

²KOESOEMODININGRAT(1921), 169; 201. HARMSSEN, 227. Cochius also was a Liberal Catholic priest; TICHELAAR(1977), 74.

³E., 'Indië Weerbaar', *De Nieuwe Amsterdammer*, 21-4-1917.

country, but a colony, and the Native for the time being a younger brother. We should be his guardian, until he comes of age. Along with other properties, in order to become mature he must also develop his Ksatriya nature.

Theosophists believed in brotherhood, and 'Our Indies brothers deserve just as much protection as our Dutch brothers.' Labberton finished, moving a vote of censure against Resink and Baartman, and of confidence in himself and *IW*. This got 'very enthusiast applause' from the floor.¹

On 28 April, in Artis zoo in Amsterdam, the delegates attended a banquet in their honour, organized by General Van Heutsz. Most people present were big businessmen; also (former) government ministers.² On 2 May, Koesoemodiningrat addressed the The Hague TS lodge on 'Evolution'. Next weekend, again 'some hundreds of people', mainly theosophists, went to Utrecht. This time, it was the Dutch congress of the Order of the Star in the East. They had come for the Order's Indies representative, Labberton, and for Aryo Koesoemodiningrat, also a member. The Hague daily *Het Vaderland* wrote: 'It is very significant, that thus the two members of "Indië Weerbaar" are also members of the Order of "The Star in the East".' Labberton spoke on 'Meditation' at the afternoon session, and again at the evening session.³

Minister of Colonies Pleijte gave the *Indië Weerbaar* delegates their farewell dinner in hotel *De Witte Brug* in The Hague on 2 June. Three days later, they departed for the return-journey via the US.⁴ Van Hinloopen Labberton was positive about the immediate results of the delegation, as the government had increased the military budget, had made concessions on Soewardi Soeraningrat's exile from Indonesia, and more higher education would come to the Indies.⁵ Soewardi reacted ironically to Labberton's gratitude for this.⁶ *Warna-Warta* regretted that the *IW* delegates, 'especially Messrs van Hinloopen Labberton and Abdoel Moeis' would now get the credit; while Douwes Dekker of the

¹LOC, 30-6-1917, 'De Deputatie: Indië Weerbaar' VAN DER WILLIGEN (1917).

²LOC, 8-5-1917, 'De Indië Weerbaar deputatie.' LOC, 14-7-1917, 'Een nieuwe serie weerbaarheidsredevoeringen.' Labberton said that 'The Netherlands should not let go of the Indies; neither should the Indies let go of The Netherlands.' Noto Soeroto had been invited to hold a speech, as he said, because he 'even in 1909 [in an article 'Java's weerbaarheid, Java's behoud', in the *Indische Gids*] advocated defense of the Indies as a national interest. ... Long live the Queen!' DJAJADININGRAT-NIEUWENHUIS, 48. Noto Soeroto's militia ideas were 'probably being influenced' by Mangkoe Negoro VII. This is possible: the two met in 1913 though, four years after Noto Soeroto's article; so, maybe influence as an expansion of his earlier ideas.

³TB 1917, 63. LOC, 25-7-1917, 2e blad: 'Congres van "De Ster in het Oosten".' From *Het Vaderland*; of which H. Borel, FTS, just back from the Indies, was editor then.

⁴KOESOEMODININGRAT (1921), 381. LOC, 14-8-1917, 2e blad, 'Terugkeer der deputatie "Indië Weerbaar".' They had to give up an earlier plan to go by way of Germany, Sweden and Russia; *IG*, 1917 (39), 806, *MRBT*D.

⁵VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON (1917), 393. See also his interview with *Het Vaderland* of 4 May 1917; quoted LOC, 7-5-1917, 'De Indië Weerbaar deputatie.'

⁶SOERIANINGRAT (1916/17), 224.

Indische Partij had asked for higher education much earlier on.¹

Labberton thought the government's next step should be sending prominent politicians and ex-officers (he named Van Daalen, Van Heutsz and Colijn) to the Indies, to implement conscription in practice.² Delegate Dwidjosewojo was also satisfied: 'the Crown's agreement with the opinion of the committee members became apparent when' Koesoemodiningrat, 'the delegation's oldest and noblest member', received an order of knighthood; Officer of Oranje-Nassau with swords.³ The daily *Djawa Tengah* wondered 'what the people, destined to be cannon-fodder, would get.'

N i l. When he will come back to the Indies, that Pangeran will point proudly to his adorned chest, the result of his mission. But the people will cry: as he maybe expects a still greater reward, to head the kraton [ruler's palace] one day.⁴

Sailing back home on the *Rijndam* did not go smoothly. Delegate Rhemrev quarrelled, especially with Abdoel Moeis.⁵ After the literal shipwreck near the Rock of

¹4-6-1917, quoted IPO 23/1917, MCB, 1.

²G.C.E. van Daalen, Van Heutsz' successor as Aceh War commander, until a report on his amount of violence against civilians came out. Then, in 1908, Van Heutsz dismissed him, though it was said that Van Daalen had basically carried on his own policy. 1913-14 Lieutenant-General Van Daalen was Indies army commander; VAN HEEKEREN. The two others were respectively of the *Bond van Vrije Liberalen*, and the *Anti-Revolutionaire Partij*. Colijn, ex-officer under Van Heutsz in Aceh, was a director of the Shell oil company, and later became prime minister. Lieutenant-Colonel Kerkkamp spoke to a Jakarta meeting of the *NIVB*, supporting *IW*, of 'conscription for all Dutch subjects' Who would introduce it? He expected no good from the present Dutch government or parliament: 'What we need is a dictator, someone who should do more than what Lord Kitchener has managed in Australia.' That dictator should be 'ex-Governor-General Van Heutsz'. LOC, 28-4-1917, 'Uit Batavia.' On Australia see p. 213.

³Interview with *Het Vaderland* of 4 May 1917, quoted LOC, 7-5-1917, 'De Indië Weerbaar deputatie'; and *IG*, 1917 (39), 808, *MRBT*D. The government sent the lesser known General Van Rietschoten to Indonesia, his report finally did not lead to conscription.

⁴Quoted NAGAZUMI (1972), 113. LOC, 14-8-1917, 2e blad, 'Terugkeer der deputatie "Indië Weerbaar".' Pleijte bestowed the order of knighthood at the farewell dinner in the name of the queen.

⁵6-6-1917, quoted IPO 23/1917, MCB, 5.

⁶Rhemrev's diehard colonialist views caused problems; TICHELMAN (1985), 652-3. On board the ship, Rhemrev said about 'natives' 'that they should be run through with bayonets.' Rumour had that Moeis then had hit Rhemrev in response. LOC, 25-8-1917, 'Terugkomst verwacht deputatie "Indië Weerbaar".' Ibid., the Batavia correspondent of *De Locomotief* estimated 'that the Indië Weerbaar movement had already been completely discredited with the natives.' In an interview, Moeis said other delegates had prevented him and Rhemrev actually hitting one another. When, at the request of the passengers of the ship, Moeis gave a speech on *Sarekat Islam* and *Indië Weerbaar*, Rhemrev tried to make it inaudible by making noise. Moeis felt 'extremely bitter' that 'someone with the same complexion as he [Rhemrev had Indonesian as well as Dutch ancestors; Moeis on the *Rijndam*: 'seven-eighths native blood'; 'Gestrand op de rotsen der verdeeldheid',

Gibraltar on the outward voyage, the United States press now headlined that the delegation 'has split asunder on the rocks of dissent.'¹ The *ISDV* paper *Soeara Merdeka*, and other papers, reported that Moeis and Prince Koesoemodiningrat, too, disagreed; and wondered whether it was personal or political. Labberton denied these reports.²

From New York, the delegates went west by train. For two weeks, they stayed at the Theosophical Society Krotana centre, then in Hollywood. Koesoemodiningrat lectured there on Islam. They met Warrington, the later TS vice president.³

The San Francisco political police asked Van Hinloopen Labberton, who knew Sanskrit and other Indian languages, to translate political pamphlets for them. Indians sent those pamphlets from California to the Dutch East Indies.⁴ Labberton sympathized

NRC, 7-9-1917; reprinted *IG*, 1917 (39), 1335], born in the same country, had said such slighting things on the people of the Indies.' *LOC*, 28-8-1917, 'Een onderhoud met Abdoel Moeis.' 'Gestrand op de rotsen der verdeeldheid', 1335: Moeis accused Rhemrev of breaking his word of honour, 'to recognize Van Hinloopen Labberton as leader in everything'; Rhemrev would face an *IW* court of honour when he came back to Indonesia; see on this, and a f. 25 fine for insult for Labberton, also *Neraja* 16-11-1918, 'Perkara Eerloos'; 18-12-1918, 'Rhemrev-Labberton'. Rhemrev in his report on the journey tried to sound more moderate, claiming that 'both Van Deventer [leading 'ethical' critic of old style colonialism; he was already dead] and he did not think the Javanese people were mature enough yet for awarding them political rights.' *LOC*, 11-9-1917, 1e blad, 'Indië Weerbaar.' TEITLER(1980), 35: 'only he [Rhemrev] remained true to the spirit of the mission' by limiting himself to defence. As we saw, Rhemrev did not do that. As for other delegates also mentioning non-military questions in a personal, or, say, *SI*, capacity as they were in The Netherlands anyway, *IW* had expected that would happen at least since its 23 July 1916 meeting: see p. 172. Rhemrev had been present there, as Dwidjosewojo remarked to him in The Hague on 23 May 1917: VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1916/17), 618. *IG*, 1916 (38), 'Vergadering Comité Indië Weerbaar', 1560: at the end of the meeting, *IW* and Chamber of Commerce president H. 's Jacob concluded that delegates would also 'voice wishes, which are not in the motion'; he also wrote in this vein in the *Java Bode*; see *ibid.*, 1570.

¹Quoted 'Gestrand op de rotsen der verdeeldheid', *NRC*, 7-9-1917; reprinted *IG*, 1917 (39), 1332. The *NRC* San Francisco correspondent worried, *ibid.*, 1333 that 'the committee had made itself into the laughing-stock of the American press, and so of the American public, and that American capital now will think twice before investing big amounts in a country' which was so careless on defence.

²In two letters to *LOC*, 26-9-1917, 1e blad, 'Een protest', and 'De beweerde verdeeldheid in de boezem van de deputatie Indië Weerbaar.' Van Hinloopen Labberton also denied press rumours that Koesoemodiningrat had designs on his brother's throne. *SM*, 25-9-1917, 86-7, 'M. M. M.', by 'Goblok'.

³KOESOEMODININGRAT(1921), 447-54. VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1917), 396. *LOC*, 2-7-1917, 2e blad: at the *Indische Vereeniging* meeting in The Hague on 14 April, Koesoemodiningrat 'promoted the Hindu-Buddhist doctrine'. See p. 199. Contrary to what ROE, 387, suggests, Warrington's Krotana Institute was not a split from Adyar, but a regular auxiliary organization.

⁴VAN BERGEN, 52, mentions Indians living in East Sumatra [probably Deli] in this context. D.P. SINGH(1974), 142f: the California Indians were the Hindustani Association of the Pacific Coast, a.k.a. Ghadar Party. They had contacts with M.N. Roy (*ibid.*, 241-2); later US communist

with Mrs Besant's Home Rule action. He found that these leaflets, though, were in a much more militant anti-British empire vein, 'very dangerous', and advised the Dutch Indies government to ban them. It acted according to the advice.¹

The journey continued to Japan and China. On 25 August 1917, the ship with the *Indië Weerbaar* delegates arrived back in the harbour of Jakarta. Koesoemodiningrat's brother, Pakoe Boewono X, had come to meet him.²

The prince worked on at his *Lampapihoen Kangdjeng Pangéran Arja Koesoemodiningrat ngideri bhoewana* [Journey around the world by His Highness, Prince Koesoemodiningrat]. The government publishers *Volkslectuur* brought out this account of the *IW* mission jointly with the TS printer in 1921. The over 600 pages of Javanese calligraphy-like script and photographs cost three guilders eighty cents. In 1922, readers of the Javanese People's Libraries borrowed it about 5700 times; rather frequently.³

9. Towards the end of conscription, 1917-1918

While the delegation was away, *Indië Weerbaar* supporters decided to form an association of dues-paying members, different from the earlier committee. Delegates Moeis, Rhemrev, and Van Hinloopen Labberton were present at the association's founding meeting, shortly after their return. Labberton thought some founders of the association might have intrigued behind his back, against his leadership and against Indonesians' participation. Chairman Pop's emotional denial reassured him, though.⁴

The new association was for every supporter of the trinity: 'Orange [royal dynasty], The Netherlands, the Indies.' Within it, 'One can be Protestant, Roman Catholic, modern

Agnes Smedley (*ibid.*, 172); E. Douwes Dekker, and, according to the police, with German spies. *ibid.*, 144 quoted its ideas as an 'incongruous mixture of [Irish] Sinn Féin, Marxian socialism, and Mazzini'. *ibid.*, 170: on 7 April 1917, one day after the US became a war ally of Britain, San Francisco police arrested Ghadar leaders. See also 'Een brief van Dr. Douwes Dekker aan den Volksraad', *IG*, 1919 (41), 891-4.

¹*LOC*, 8-9-1917, 2e blad, 'Verkeerd begrepen.' The San Francisco correspondent of the *Locomoteur* expected that the US government would ask Van Hinloopen to be an expert witness in the court case against the California Indians. See also *LOC*, 11-9-1917, 'Amerikaansche Brief.'

²*LOC*, 29-8-1917, 'De soenan op reis.'

³R. Kamil, 'Verslag van de Javaansche Volksbibliotheek over het jaar 1922', 29; in *IPO* 1, 1924.

⁴*LOC*, 1-9-1917, 'Oprichting Vereeniging Indië Weerbaar': 'Mr Van Labberton affirms this has reassured him [Dutch: hierdoor bevredigd te zijn]. The association decided not to elect Rhemrev to its executive, contrary to the 1916 Committee, and to plans from before the incident on the sea-voyage back. Later, both Rhemrev and the Sulawesi member of the delegation, Laoh, still joined the executive. Rhemrev said the original Committee had been 'purely militarist', while in the later Association 'economic able-bodiedness' was also important. *OVTW*, 1918, 3, 19-21, 'Indië Weerbaar week der afdeeling Soemedang.' SCHOUTEN, 177 calls 31 Aug. 1916 a 'members' general meeting'; but there still were no *IW* dues-paying members then.

or theosophist; one may follow Mohammed or Buddha ...¹ Labberton wrote articles for conscription, and addressed Theosophical Society meetings on it.²

Opposition had also continued while the delegation travelled around the world. On 23 March 1917, the daily *Pertimbangan*³ published a cartoon of a group of Indonesian draftees and their Dutch drill sergeant passing a chained watch-dog. Its caption was: 'This dog has to guard his master's property, without getting any rights in return. Will the indigenous people be ordered to guard this colony in the same way?'

On 25 June in the *ISDV* paper *Soeara Merdeka*, editor Notowidjojo attacked the slogan in delegate Moeis' daily 'Leve Groot-Nederland en zijn Volk [Long live the Greater Netherlands and their people]!'⁴ And 'Goblok' [pseudonym; 'Blockhead'] wrote as he had done before, 'that the real people of Indonesia [sedjatinja rajat Hindia] do not like to be made to be soldiers.'⁵

A month later, 'Goblok' mentioned Annie Besant's recent internment in *Soeara Merdeka*. He called her a 'heroine', 'really brave'.⁶ All people in Indonesia 'should see her bravery as an example'. In his concluding paragraph, 'Goblok' noted a contrast:

Another aspect: if we speak of Theosophy's leader in the Dutch East Indies, Mr Labberton, then he wants our country to be married off to The Netherlands, he chose the Government side in the Indië Weerbaar affair, he compared Indonesians [anak Hindia] to domestic buffaloes. So, a very big difference exists between this gentleman and Mrs Besant in British India. Is this theosophy really a sham? Only God knows.⁷

Goblok also criticized the 26 June issue of the new daily *Nerajia*; 'a government paper', he had already written earlier.⁸ That paper (with prominent theosophist editors) had headlined: 'People's representatives in The Netherlands.' 'However, that item was about the Indië Weerbaar committee. We know very well that this 'committee' are no representatives of the people, as all the Indies people did not elect them. ... Next time,

¹OVIW, 1918, I, 9-10: T. Ottolander, 'Eenzijdigheid? Neen!' It was that magazine's first issue.

²VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1917A). LOC, 4-9-1917, 1e blad, partly reprinted this from the TS monthly. 'Darah Hindia' wrote in WW, # 215, 1918, against a pro-IW item in TMNI by Labberton, translated from Dutch in *Nerajia*: IW 'only works in the interests of the Government and the capitalists.'

³Quoted IPO 12/1917, MCB, 6.

⁴Notowidjojo, 'Quo vadis domino', SM, 25-6-1917, 33-4. In his article 'Kaoem moeda djadi pahlawannja kaoem oewang', SM, 10-7-1917, Notowidjojo's slogan was, 'Death to imperialism'. See also KOT, 1917, 'Persoverzicht', 1495-6. *Kaoem Moeda* thought the Indies soon would become the 'legal wife' of The Netherlands, instead of the 'concubine' like earlier on.

⁵X., SM, 25-6-1917, 36-7.

⁶Also SEMAOEN(1917), 68, praised Besant, though 'ex-socialist', for her love and work for India.

⁷Goblok, 'M. M.', SM, 25-7-1917, 53.

⁸SM, 25-6-1917, 36, 'U.'

[act] 'more democratically', *Nerajia*!¹

Sneevliet in *Het Vrije Woord*, also of 25 July, wrote against conscription supporters. To him, they 'dreamt of compulsory soldiering instead of compulsory schooling ['weercplacht in plaats van leerplicht'], of fortresses instead of schools, of barracks instead of good housing, of militarism instead of democracy'.²

Soeara Merdeka three weeks later quoted Raden Mas Noto Soeroto, who said that military defence went hand in hand with a stronger economy and spiritual strength. Goblok commented:

I am someone who is still inexperienced in matters like an able-bodied economy and spiritual strength in the Indies. As for the IW slogans to shoot people, I disagree: as I really love people. I am *pro human*. I will not follow the Indië Weerbaar organization.

War would 'leave wives and children on their own'.³ Proving also part of *Budi Utomo*⁴ had anti-IW ideas, Djojowinoto from Semarang wrote in SM of 10 September:

As people know, an organization has arisen, Indië Weerbaar, which asks us, workers, to join. This Indië Weerbaar is a school, teaching how to shoot to kill in the name of THE LORD. And people like us are forced to make peace with the capitalists [kaoem wang: 'money people'], while the capitalists want to keep on sitting nicely in their rocking-chairs. Finding food is hard for us workers, we cannot go to school, our bodies are too thin to learn how to shoot to kill.⁵

In 1917, the social democrat Mendels mentioned theosophy unfavourably in Dutch parliament. He appealed to the Minister of Colonies, as Indies official C.J.I.M. Welter⁶ had dismissed socialist Baars from his technical school teaching job on 23 October, because of opposition to Van Hinloopen Labberton's IW campaign. A. Vreede,⁷ FTS, ex-IW executive member, and colonial government Secretary, signed the official dismissal.⁸ Baars had stated his opposition in a debate, on 12 September 1917 in the Pantj Harsojo

¹Goblok, 'L. L.', SM, 25-7-1917, 53.

²Quoted TICHELMAN(1985), 606.

³Goblok, 'O. O.', SM, 10-8-1917, 62. The Noto Soeroto quote was from *Nerajia* of 31 July.

⁴Koemandang Djawi 17-12-1917, quoted IPO 51/1917, JB: on 5 Dec. 1917, Djojowinoto chaired a meeting, founding a BU branch in Pekalongan.

⁵Djojowinoto, 'Toeroet membri djawaban', SM, 10-9-1917, 74-5.

⁶TICHELMAN(1985), 680-1. Welter became Minister of Colonies 1925-6 and 1937-41.

⁷Baars, 'Nationalisme in Britsch-Indië. (Slot)'; HWV, 10-9-1917, 224 had criticized Vreede: 'Mr VREED, as a theosophical-ethical Dutchman, who thinks only of the Dutch interest to keep the Indies'.

⁸HWV, 10-11-1917, 25: decision on 20-10-1917. *De Taak* magazine wrote on it: 'We think, as is well known, that the viewpoint of Mr Baars on the pro-conscription activity is certainly reprehensible.' But the magazine thought that, so far, the government had not given enough information to justify the dismissal. LOC, 8-11-1917, 1e blad: 'Het ontslag-Baars.'

building in Surabaya.¹ Abdoel Moeis had opposed him there. Moeis, according to Mendels,² was

under the aegis of the theosophical imperialist³ Van Hinloopen Labberton, and wanted to hoodwink the natives into support for the Indies Army.⁴

A *Sarekat Islam* member from Surabaya, Oemar Sikoet Tjokromenggolo, thought 'Kromo does not want to become a soldier, as he still is a 'slave', not a free citizen'. Instead of spending money on a militia, one should 'fight the many diseases which already have cost thousands of lives.' Tjokromenggolo criticized theosophical influence in his organization. The executive majority at Blitar, voting for *Indië Weerbaar*, had had no mandate from their branches.

The executive will probably reply that they surely have been up high in the sky, as Abdoel Moeis has flown in The Netherlands [at Soesterberg air-base], and that it needs mysticism as an

¹LOC, 11-9-1917, 2e blad, 'Indië Weerbaar', had announced it not as a debate, but as 'Messrs Labberton and Abdoel Moeis will speak on Indië Weerbaar.' The two principal accounts of the debate were by Raden Sosrokardono (pro-Moeis) in *Oeioesan Hindia*, 14/17-9-1917; TICHELMAN(1985), 636-56, and by Baars in *HVV*, 25-9-1917, 231-2; TICHELMAN(1985), 658-61. See also 'Sarikat-Islam contra ISDV', LOC, 11-9-1917; based on the *Nieuwe Soerabaiaasche Courant*. Baars had expected from the invitation that Labberton would oppose him as well in the debate; TICHELMAN(1985), 658. He did not speak, however, for which illness was given as a cause; TICHELMAN(1985), 639. According to LOC, 11-9-1917, Labberton had suddenly become ill when staying at the Kreet sugar plant in Malang. Moeis accused the social democrats of accusing Labberton of being a 'traitor and madman'; TICHELMAN(1985), 641. Tjokroaminoto briefly spoke in support of Moeis. TICHELMAN(1985), 50; 638: Moeis and Labberton had had to pressure Tjokroaminoto into participating.

²According to H. Sneevliet, 'De Heer Abdoel Moeis Volksleider', *HVV*, 10-10-1917, 7: 'little leaders of the ABDOEL MOEIS brand, tools of the V.[AN] HEUTSZES and HINLOOPEN LABBERTONS, little lackeys of the Dominator!' Sneevliet, also in October, on Moeis: one of 'the satellites of this philanthropic prophet [Labberton]'. SCHWIDDER/TICHELMAN, 264.

³VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1910), 168: 'An imperialist endeavour like this [in the Dutch East Indies] can be necessary at a given time as an involuntary expression of respective balance of power.' For his views on Van Heutsz, see p. 202.

⁴Quoted IDEMA, 367. Earlier that year, relations between *SDAP* and Indies theosophists had proved to be not completely antagonistic: *TMNI*, 1917, 377-8, reprinted some non-political nature poems from a book by socialist poet C.S. Adama van Scheltema. KJEWIET DE JONGE(1917B), 53, saw a movement away from 'one-sided historical materialism' among social democrats like Cunow [SPD right winger] and Hyndman and Belfort-Bax from England, which bode well for reconciliation with idealist philosophy. Ibid., 82, he also praised Troelstra voting for the 1914 military budget, emotionally moved by the beginning of the world war, declaring that 'The national idea now predominates over the conflicts within the nation.' Kiewiet de Jonge commented on the nation: 'a unity, deeper than all diversity in economic striving.' SNEEVLIET(1916E) in an anti-TS polemic had named Ben 'Tillet' as example of a rightist pro-war social democrat, without mentioning (and knowing of?) Tillet's TS membership.

inner basis (dasar batin) of the S.I. ... As within the S.I. executive theosophy, which is incompatible with Islam, gains ground; so, one may consider it as its enemy. ... R. Djojosoediro, Hadji August [sic] Salim, and Abdoel Moeis¹ are theosophists. They also head 'Neratja', a Government-subsidized paper, of which the tendency is to silence Kromo. Moreover, the S.I. executive members R.M. Soerjopranoto and S. Soerjokoesoemo are theosophists; the latter even is a half-Christian.²

The transport workers union met on 23 September, in Deca Park in Jakarta. Roughly 400 members, of whom 'about fifty Europeans', were present. Chairman H.W. Dekker discussed fast rising prices:

In speeches, Messrs Van Heutsz and Colijn have pointed out the need to make the Indies able to defend themselves [in Dutch: Indië Weerbaar, spelt like the committee]. And they say, that one needs 275 millions of guilders for this; yes, they say, the Indies are rich enough, and can pay that themselves!

Yet, he noted that the Indies government did not want to give a much smaller amount to the workers of the railways that it owned, to compensate for inflation.³

Australians voted down conscription in 1917, to the disappointment of the Dutch East Indies TS monthly. It saw that vote as a bad precedent for Indonesia. Editor Van Leeuwen continued on the social function of conscription:

How difficult it still is for many people to understand that a nation cannot grow, cannot become an economic state, without the painful coercion of duty and necessity. Fighting and militarism are still nearly always seen as the devils in our lives, which we should shirk away from and avoid as much as possible, as it is overlooked how inside every 'devil' a 'deva' hides, who is able to bring us up towards the Light. Pain is the great Initiator. Coercion and fate are the educators of a still infant race [Indonesians] towards a conscious idea of nationality and a high feeling of duty.⁴

In *Warna-Warna*, 'Je Patriot' [pseudonym] attacked the TS. He called Labberton

¹I found no confirmation elsewhere of Moeis' TS membership, though his politics were close to it. The pamphlet (see p. 205) mentioning 'other theosophists' besides Labberton (and Koesoemodiningrat) may be a pointer. So may TB mentioning 'some more Javanese members' (see p. 180); if the author either did not know Java from Sumatra; or if he thought Moeis, then living in Java, 'Javanese' in a wide sense.

²WW #295, 1917, quoted IPO 52/1917, MCB, 21ff. It is improbable that Soetaatna Soeriokoesoemo, though in *Adhi Dharna*, was an SI member then; maybe in earlier times when he also had been in the IP? 'Half-Christian' may allude to his Order of the Star in the East membership.

³'De ledenvergadering der VSTP', LOC, 26-9-1917, 1e blad.

⁴VAN LEEUWEN(1917A), 438. In the same year, fellow theosophist Kiewiet de Jonge came to a similar conclusion from economics and vitalist philosophy: 'The defense budget enables the nation to continue safely its exchange, and, if necessary, to carry through forcefully the regulations which this primary urge of life needs. So they are, one might say, overhead expenses; one cannot show their fruitfulness immediately, but without them the national production of material as well as spiritual values could not proceed undisturbed.' KJEWIET DE JONGE(1917B), 92.

'Beton' [Malay: concrete], 'the false prophet of theosophy-tai sapi' [ox dung] and 'a poison to society.' 'Je Patriot' also included in his article Labberton's 'accomplice R. Djojosoediro and his brother R. Sadarsan.'¹

Just after Russia's 'October', Sneevliet had to stand trial for an article supporting its February revolution, and saying Indonesia might learn from it. A clause in it against *Indië Weerbaar* was part of the indictment. In his defence speech, he analysed Indonesia's society, especially conflicts between peasants and big sugar business. He counterpoised his views to those of Van Hinloopen Labberton, 'the theosophical Sage',² as the sugar business employers' league had published them:

All that has happened here during the later years of Dutch rule has as its aim to further the development of capitalism. That, though, indirectly is in the people's interest too, the reformers of the Labberton ilk, who have enlarged so much on the blessings of the sugar plantations for the people, shout unanimously.

That view, Sneevliet said, was one of 'demagogues with both factual and financial interests.'³

Abdoel Moeis had described Russia as 'people slitting their throats mutually for no reason.'⁴ The ISDV though, supported the October revolution.

A break occurred between ISDV moderates and militants in the fall of 1917. Unlike an earlier break in The Netherlands, the moderates were a minority, especially so among Indonesian members. The ISDV majority gradually became communist.

The right wing social democrats called themselves Batavia [Jakarta] section of the [Dutch] SDAP at first; since 8 June 1919 *Indische Sociaal-Democratische Partij*.⁵ Views on *Indië Weerbaar* had certainly not caused the break.⁶ When on 3 November 1917, the Batavia SDAP brought out the first issue of its paper, *Het Indische Volk* [the Indies

¹6-12-1917, quoted IPO 50/1917, MCB, 1.

²SCHWIDDER/TICHELMAN, 264. VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1908), 31: the sugar business 'brings a gigantic financial boon to the Native people'. VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1914), 4: 'Many agricultural companies, especially in Java, make great profits in which the natives have a share.'

³Dutch: 'belanghebbende en belangstellende demagogen.' SCHWIDDER/TICHELMAN, 211. VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1908), 1: 'Also after I concentrated my work on other fields, I kept feeling interested in this [sugar] industry.'

⁴In a debate against Baars; quoted HVW, 20-12-1917, 76. Also Moeis in *Neratja* 26-12-1917, quoted IPO 52/1917, MJB: Baars talked of *Indië Weerbaar* turning people into cannon-fodder, while the Russian revolution was far worse. INGLESON(1975), 4's description of Moeis as 'PKI leader' is wrong.

⁵IG, 1919 (41), 1173: 'Jaarvergadering Indische SDAP.' Contrary to NOER, 110 that was not the [Protestant] Anti-Revolutionaire Partij.

⁶Just before the break, in September 1917, the then still Batavia ISDV section planned an anti-*Indië Weerbaar* meeting, jointly with *Insulinde* and *Sarekat Islam*. LOC, 7-9-1917, 1e blad, 'Anti-weerbaarheidsmeeting'; TICHELMAN(1985), 626. Ibid., 662: the public meeting did not go ahead, as *Insulinde* and *SI* also wanted a speaker from the Batavia ISDV section; and it could not find one.

People], they sarcastically recalled Sneevliet's proposal of two and a half years earlier to the theosophists' general secretary:

Also, the scout-master¹ with many followers: Hinloopen Labberton, the ultimate apostle of conscription and killer of socialists, yes, especially Labberton- was asked, for the sake of purity of Marxist food, to have his voice sound from the columns of the Indies first red paper.²

In its second issue, IV assured its readers that it had 'the same views as the organizations *Insulinde* and the ISDV' against *Indië Weerbaar*. It continued, referring to Labberton though not by name:

We deeply regret that in these terrible times, even so-called apostles of peace try to make the country share in the crazy, all-annihilating arms race.³

Behind IV's official propaganda were its capitalist, real aims: 'unhindered ownership of the sugar processing plants and tobacco fields, the coffee and tea enterprises.'⁴

Minister of Colonies Pleyte said that the PID, the political intelligence police, did not impede meetings. *Het Indische Volk* reacted sarcastically: obviously Pleyte thought anti-IV meetings 'were not worthy of the name of meeting.' If they had counted as meetings, and had gone ahead, then 'the propaganda of Messrs Van Hinloopen Labberton and their supporters would have been greatly harmed.'⁵

'A convert' reported for *Het Vrije Woord* on the speakers at the April 1918 Indies TS conference. Government Secretary A. Vreede said:

The Westerner is the elder brother, he should provide leadership. The Theosophist does not practice party politics, that would lead to self-destruction. Just look at Russia. 'Proletarians of all countries, unite' is brotherhood; but class struggle makes it into the very opposite of brotherhood.

¹Labberton was present when Countess van Limburg Stirum-van Sminia, the governor-general's wife, inaugurated the executive of the Dutch East Indies Boy Scouts. LOC, 6-9-1917, 'Indische padvinders' A. Meijroos, FTS, led the Indies scouts; 'Ardjoenascholen', TMNI 1927, 44. The Bandung Scouts headquarters was in the local TS building; J.A.B., 'Bandoeng-Loge', TMNI 1923, 183. In HVW, 4-1-1919, 'Padvinderij', 'Aroen' [J. Stam] criticized counter-revolutionary politics in the scout movement. Countess van Limburg Stirum, to celebrate the failure of Troelstra's attempt at revolution in The Netherlands, 'invited the scouts to shout out three cheers of 'hoezee' [hurrah] in honour of the Queen and the person who gave the scouts their flag, PRINCE [Consort] HENDRIK.'

²IV, 3-11-1917: 'Oproerige Krabbel.' As a supplement, the issue had a cartoon poster against IV by Dutch social democrat caricaturist Albert Hahn.

³IV, 10-11-1917, 'De Indië Weerbaar beweging en wij.'

⁴IV, 10-11-1917, 'Gemengd: Indië Weerbaar.'

⁵Quoted IG, 1918 (40), 868-9, MRBT. PID chief Captain Muurling was one of the founders of the *Indië Weerbaar* association. LOC, 1-1-1917. KOESOEMODININGRAT(1921), 546.

'A convert' commented:

Younger brothers, who are exploited on a giant scale by the elder brothers. He should understand that really is the cause (Karma).

The *Vrije Woord* reporter continued with a question on south-east Sumatra. There, a peasant uprising against government-imposed unpaid labour had been bloodily defeated. Non-rebel peasants had also been killed. What did Vreede think of the

dismaying reports, that in the Jambi region the elder brothers accidentally have hanged the younger Jambi brothers by neck? Where have you entered a protest against the untenable situation into which the younger brothers have come? Briefly, you sneeringly point to self-destruction in the present Russian situation. Of course, that suits the Theosophists' purpose. In Russia, they turn private property into common property; and about that, Theosophists prefer to talk only in their next reincarnation. ... [They do want] improvement, but only such improvement as does not hinder sacred property. Your makeshifts only aim to alleviate somewhat the consequences which capitalism (the cause) creates, to keep the people well behaved like children.

Het Vrije Woord considered Van Hinloopen Labberton's conference speech 'demagogic cant'. 'A convert' concluded:

For now, [criticism of present society] is too dangerous, and Theosophists will not hinder Capital in the slightest way, as it celebrates its triumphs by exploitation and oppression. That was the message which the Theosophical congress gave out, to the salvation of humanity.¹

In June 1918 local elections in Jakarta, a coalition of *Insulinde* and social democrats opposed Fournier, FTS, and his fellow *Nederlandsch-Indische Vrijzinnige Bond* candidates. *Het Indische Volk* vowed that it would 'fight them strongly, both by speech and by pen.'² It saw the bourgeois election machine as a 'Holy Alliance' between 'the [Christian] cross, the [theosophist] swastika, and the [masonic] triangle', with as its 'Aim: to bar the autochthonous people from the local council.'³ Fournier personally they called 'theosophist and engineer', whom the *NIVB* thought would raise the 'fallen little liberal jade' back on its feet. But to achieve this 'he, as a rule, is too much on higher planes.'⁴

¹EEN BEKEERDE.

²*IV*, 18-6-1918.

³*IV*, 22-6-1918: 'Telegram. Kruis, Swastika en driehoek.'

⁴*IV*, 18-6-1918. 'Fallen little liberal jade': in 1917, liberals had lost their majority in Jakarta city council because of the Perodjo housing scandal. A pro-*NIVB* leaflet said that Batavia *SDAP* and *Insulinde* candidates wanted to 'raise The Revolutionary I.P. flag instead of The [Dutch] Tricolour Flag!!!' *IV*, 20-7-1918. 1P: see p. 301.



Jakarta TS headquarters; TMNI 1922, 234

On 4 September 1918, *Sinar Hindia* published a criticism of the TS by 'Anarchist'. He wrote of Van Hinloopen Labberton, the 'world teacher' or 'Imam Mahdi' ('sic. Anarchist'). His TS wanted to build a big new headquarters in Jakarta, a central building with four big and four smaller buildings around it. That square got Blavatsky Park as its name. The Amsterdam monthly *Theosophia* wrote it was 'on the west side of the Koningsplein, the most fashionable and for our purpose most suitable

neighbourhood of Java's capital.' *Het Nieuws van den Dag* had protested against calling a big square after a 'fraud'. According to 'Anarchist' 'that great one of theosophy (Mme Blavatsky)' at her headquarters 'had been called a fraud by two professors'. What, then, should one think of Indonesians 'who have been fooled by this theosophy'? Theosophy did not really include all religions, as it claimed. Muslims would trust Labberton more if he would go on *hadj* to Mecca. 'Anarchist'

could imagine vividly, that after all the criticism by *Het Nieuws van den Dag* the theosophists sit together, meditating silently, in order to wait for the advice from the Mahatma from Tibet. Look out, *Nieuws van den Dag*, be prepared for the attack by the astral body of the Mahatma from Tibet! A teacher [Labberton] who still hopes to get rich, and strives to become chairman of the Volksraad, the Javanese call someone like that: panditaning anteloe [literally: teacher of gamelan music without lyrics, of 'tra-la-la', of no content] and, according to reincarnation doctrine, after his death he will turn into a pretjil (young frog).¹

Marxists in Indonesia did not like theosophists' links to institutions such as borstals. H.W. Dekker described the opening of one in an article with the sarcastic title 'Een helaas noodige stap van hoge sociale beteekenis [An unfortunately necessary step of high social significance]'. He called the borstal 'that creature of darkness', quoting 19th century liberal politician Thorbecke.² At the official opening, 'All the authorities were at that evil place. Director of Justice Department, priests, lord mayor, theosophists ... and other mainstays and preservers of the so-called social (dis)order'.³

¹*SH*, 179, 4-9-1918, quoted *IPO* 36/1918, *MJB*, 29-30, *THA* June 1922, 95.

²FASSEUR(1995), 181.

³*HVW*, 20-9-1918.

This had to do with Annie Besant's ideas on crime, which the Indies TS translated into Dutch. Besant criticized the policy of punishing individual criminal acts as acts. To her, the question was not even individuals who are criminal persons; it was a criminal 'underclass'. For reasons which she derived from reincarnation doctrine, that class should, as a class, be subject from very early on in their lives, from before they commit any crimes, to a type of benign state serfdom.¹ Kiewiet de Jonge, then of the Indies TS, favoured measures similar to Besant's; against long-term unemployment.²

¹Reincarnation, applied to the treatment of criminals and of the undeveloped class which is ever on the verge of crime, suggests a policy wholly different from that of our present Society, which gives them complete liberty to do as they like, punishes them when they commit a legal offence, restores them to liberty after a varying term of gaol ... In the light of Reincarnation I suggest that the congenital criminal is a savage, come to us as a school, and that it is our business to treat him as the intellectual and moral baby which he is, and to restrain the wild beast in him from doing harm. These people, and the almost criminal class above them, are recognisable from birth, and they should be segregated in small special schools, given such elementary education as they can assimilate, be treated kindly and firmly, have many games, and be taught a rough form of manual labour. The teachers in these schools should be volunteers from the higher social classes ... From these schools they should be drafted into small colonies, bright, pleasant villages ... ruled by men of the same type as before; they should have everything to make life pleasant, except freedom to make it mischievous and miserable; these colonies would supply gangs of labourers for all the rougher kinds of work, mining, road-making, portage, scavenging, etc., leaving the decent people now employed in these free for higher tasks. Some, the true congenital criminal, the raw savage, would remain under this kindly restraint for life, but they would go out of life (and, later, on into the next) far less of savages than they were when they came into it ... The chief difficulties would be innate rowdiness and idleness, for the criminal is a loafer, incapable of steady industry. The school would do something to improve him ... "he that will not work neither shall he eat" is a sound maxim, for food is made by work, and he who, being able, refuses to make it has no claim to it." BESANT(1912A), 78-9; also nearly identically BESANT(1920D), 110f. AB, *TMNI*, 1918, 293: criminals 'are ignorant child-souls, dangerous because they live in strong bodies and look like humans, though they lack the higher human characteristics' BESANT(1912A), 60. 'The criminal, the lowest and vilest, the poorest, foulest specimen of our race, is only a baby-soul, coming into a savage body, and thrown into a civilisation for which he is unfit if left to follow his own instincts, but which will provide for him a field of rapid evolution if his elders take him in hand and guide him firmly and gently. He is now at the stage at which the average commonplace men were standing a million or so years ago, and he will evolve in the future as they have evolved in the past.' To her, crime did not only have a link to the 'criminal class' category, but also to the 'racial' category of 'savages'; see the above quotes, and *ibid.*, 58-9: 'Put without metaphor: a human spirit, a germinal life, enters the babe of a savage; he has scarcely any intelligence, no moral sense; he lives there for some forty or fifty years, dominated by desires, robs, murders, finally is murdered.' On the link of class and 'race', see p. 121f. At that time, Professor Lombroso, a regular listener to AB's speeches when she was in Italy, propagated the idea of an easily identifiable 'criminal class', with more ideological than factual arguments.

²KIEWIET DE JONGE(1917B), 145: 'The unemployment question though, appears at its most difficult with those popular classes who are not skilled in regular labour, and only get absorbed into the world of employment if there is a strong upsurge in the streams of circulation. In this,

Five weeks later, *Het Vrije Woord* accused two Dutch officials, both Theosophical Society members. It wrote that *Controleur* Hamerster¹ had sexually harassed a village headman's sister, near Martapura in southern Borneo [Kalimantan]. Her brother, Senoessi, then made a failed attempt on Hamerster's life.

Hamerster got together with his military assistant, 'Captain Christoffel, the well-known 'woudlooper [bushranger]', now a theosophist and hunter after commercial claims'. Martapura was an important area for finding diamonds in 1918. Swiss-born Captain Christoffel 'had an important part in the oppression of resistance in the 'outer provinces' [outside Java] to Dutch 'pacification'.² It is said he became Annie Besant's secretary. He certainly had defended her policy on the world war in *The Theosophist*, with Van Hinloopen Labberton's approval.³

Christoffel and Hamerster tracked down Headman Senoessi and shot him dead. 'Authority, Dutch Authority, has been maintained once again.' And no one saw the sister's tears over 'the murdered hero, who was her brother and loved her.'⁴ *Neratja* also

especially the state itself, advised by both central institutions [state regulated: a banking league, and a trade and professional union, which he proposed *ibid.*, 143], should act, and strongly so. The community should not treat these elements, unable to maintain themselves in intercourse by social degeneration, as outcasts, but as weaklings. That is its duty: rather than out of rational understanding, out of necessity to keep the race as strong as possible and to exterminate all seats of social infection. ... These social weaklings should be protected against themselves by the regulation that every one who does not earn a minimum wage and does not have other income [from shares etc.] is stationed in the army or in a borstal. One should think here of a kind of Elmira [prison of N.Y. state, *TMNI* 1913, 479] system, not considered as a punishment. ... An argument against this, which would speak of unassailable liberty of the individual, would be a bogus slogan in this context'

¹Then, two Hamersters were *controleur*: M. and A.J. M. Hamerster throughout 1917 and 1918 was an 'official on leave'; so, presumably in The Netherlands. A.J. Hamerster, formerly of the Government Financial Affairs bureau, and later the TS treasurer in Adyar, in those years was 'official of the Outer [outside Java] Islands administration', he had already had leave in The Netherlands in 1915. So, very probably, *Het Vrije Woord* meant him. N.A. de Haart was the regular *controleur* of Martapura in 1918: *RANI*, 1918 and 1919. NUGRAHA(1989), 245.

²SCHWIDDER/TICHELMAN, 387. Sneevliet named him in his defense speech as example, with Van Heutsz, of oppression. Christoffel fought 'with merciless severity' in Aceh, where 'kapitan rimoeëng' (tiger captain) was his nickname; *ENI*, I, 89; II, 313; Sulawesi, and Flores; *ENI*, I, 718; II, 473. In 1907, he killed the last Si Singa Mangaradja prince of the Batak region; *ibid.*, I, 179. Diamonds: *KV* on 1919 (1920), 68.

³SCHOUTEN, 111; on 1917; unconfirmed elsewhere. AB had many secretaries. VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1916E), 148-9. CHRISTOFFEL(1916), written against Dutch *Commonweal* editor/acting Adyar librarian Van Manen, who clashed with AB's anti-neutralism; RICHARDUS, 29; not with Indian Home Rule, as NETHERCOT(1963), 232 suggests.

⁴C.C. v. D., 'Uit Duistere Streken', *HVV*, 9-11-1918, 47; based partly on *Soerabaiasch Handelsblad* of 24-10-1918. In the same region. Christoffel had killed the pretender to the throne of the Banjarmasin sultanate in 1905; *ENI*, I, 136.

reported; spelling Sanoesi, and not mentioning 'toean controleur's name or theosophy.¹ Anyway, the case did not hinder A.J. Hamerster's career. He was promoted to *assistant resident* on 29 April 1920.²

Labberton reacted to government plans on conscription law. He differentiated according to caste on who might object:

We ourselves in general do not condone objection to military service and inciting to it. ... The Ksatriya should risk his life in his country's service, and in protection of his kith and kin. But he, whose soul speaks against shedding blood, the Braahmana [sic] soul, wherever he was born [so not just in India], he should not be troubled by soldiering, in play or in earnest.³

Composer F. Belloni wrote an *Indië Weerbaar* march. On the queen's birthday, the *IW* association organized soccer matches for 'natives'; and a day later, for 'Europeans'.⁴ A plane at their military air-show crashed, injuring the pilot.

The anti-*Indië Weerbaar* campaign also continued.⁵ Social democrats saw its *IW* acronym as 'Idioten Werk', the work of idiots.⁶ On 31 August 1918, *Het Indische Volk* announced a big anti-conscription meeting in Jakarta, organized jointly by Batavia *SDAP*, *Insulinde*, and *Sarekat Islam*.

The manifesto for the meeting called the draftee contract a

military coolie contract, more cunning in its tendency than the worst contract that ever was invented in Deli. The people in *Indië Weerbaar* will drink champagne to your loyalty. ... They want to make you rich. That is why they rob you. Who among you is so stupid that he does not know that the tiger's velvet paw has murderous claws? Let that fat-head adorn himself with red, white and blue [of the Dutch flag], like an ox which goes to the slaughterhouse.⁷

¹'Christoffel madjoe lagi', *Neratia* 24-10-1918; 'Kapitein Christoffel di-Betawi', *Neratia* 12-11-1918.

²*RANI*, 1921, 277. He worked then at the Outer Islands Administration.

³'De nieuwe strafwetgeving voor Nederlandsch-Indië', *TMNI*, 1918, 51-2.

⁴*OVIW*, 1918, 3, 3. Ibid., 18. Ibid., 4/5/6 and later, had an ad: 'One of the ways to make the Indies Weerbaar, is drinking Jaco-Cocoa. With that, you make your body able-bodied, for Jaco-Cocoa is easy to digest and nutritious. In this way, you also support the Indies Industry.'

⁵*IV*, 10-8-1918 quoted *Sinar Hindia*: 'They want to make us able-bodied conscripts while our stomachs are empty ... For three centuries, our brains have been forced into inertia by the policy of keeping us stupid. They have been able to call us names like 'stupid like a domestic buffalo', lazy, rapacious, unreliable. Now, besides that, they want to force the Javanese to become soldiers, murderers. Over and above that: to increase the taxes to pay for the military budget. Who will become soldiers? The Javanese. Who will pay for it? The Javanese. They have given us [.... in original] conscription! instead of bread.' The article concluded with a poem: 'Peroet lapar, matanja gelap/Menboeka moeloet, bilang smeerlap (Because of a hungry stomach, the people go crazy/and if they open their mouths, they are called names like smeerlap; Dutch for bum).'

⁶'Oproerige krabbel', *IV*, 7-9-1918.

⁷Bold type *IV*'s. Coolie contracts: see p. 330.

Jakarta then had about 100,000 inhabitants. Of those, four to five thousand, 'some hundreds of them Europeans',¹ came to Deca Park on 1 September. This was the largest number so far at a political meeting in the colonial capital.²

From the chair, D. ter Laan of the Batavia *SDAP* opened the meeting, attacking the *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad* of theosophist Kiewiet de Jonge for its pro-conscription campaign. The authorities, he said, had allowed the meeting only on condition that Sneevliet and Semaoen's *ISDV*, and the Private Soldiers Union, would be excluded from co-organizing it. At this, the audience booed. Though the *ISDV* did not participate officially, one of the three speakers at the meeting was Alimin Prawiradirdjo, then its Jakarta branch chairman,³ and later prominent communist. The others were Notoatmodjo and Batavia *SDAP* leader R. Schotman. Alimin said that 'he certainly wanted an Able-bodied Indies, but not a military Able-bodied Indies. He wanted to make the people able-bodied economically.'

A lone gentleman, who refused an invitation to explain his views to the meeting from the rostrum, constantly heckled Alimin, shouting 'Long live *Indië Weerbaar*.' Alimin said: 'Just let fools shout out their opinion.' The heckler shouted again: 'Long live *Indië Weerbaar*.' Alimin said to loud laughter: 'The fools begin already.'⁴

Next day, the anti-*Weerbaar* opposition showed at the big pro-*IW* military parade in Jakarta. With disgust, Governor-General Van Limburg Stirum's aide, naval Lieutenant C.L.M. Bijl de Vroe, noted in his diary, that at the head of the parade

a gang of soldiers whirled about, singing the Internationale. Burns like Baars, Sneevliet, Brandsteder, and Schotman work far too well among our military.

The soldiers distributed pamphlets for the right to have meetings.⁵ 'Vengeur', pseudonym of J.F. van Nugteren, an oppositionist soldier, said in *HVW*, 5 Oct. 1918, 2, 'Indië Weerbaar': 'A call for conscription sounds through the [Indonesian] archipelago. The "elite" of society, the capitalists, fear a change of rule.'

On 7 September 1918, *Het Indische Volk* also attacked Kiewiet de Jonge: because, it said, in his *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad* he had given a biased pro-government account of an

¹'De Anti Indië-Weerbaar meeting', *IV*, 7-9-1918. Sneevliet, 'Pro en anti Weerbaar', *HVW*, 10-9-1918, wrote of 8000 demonstrators there. See also *Djawa Tengah*, 5-9-1918.

²When on 15 March 1917, 100 people were at a *Nederlandsch-Indische Vrijzinnige Bond* meeting, *LOC*, 16-3-1917, 'Uit Batavia', commented: 'This is quite a lot for Batavia.' *LOC*, 31-3-1917, 'Uit Batavia', described a protest meeting against the housing policy of the liberal local council (the Petodjo affair), as 'gigantic, more than 600'. Only the sensational trial of the murderer Brinkman, the correspondent thought, had ever brought together that many people.

³*HVW*, 5-10-1918, 8, 'Batavia.'

⁴Dutch translation of Alimin's Malay: 'Daar beginnen de gekken al'; 'De Anti Indië-Weerbaar meeting', *IV*, 7-9-1918. Ibid., Schotman explained the origin of the world war: 'big capitalists longed for the property of rich mines, for more colonies in East Africa.'

⁵SCHOUTEN, 162; 178.

incident, when navy sailors had refused to obey officers' orders.¹ In the daily *Sinar Hindia*, more militantly socialist than *IV*, Soemadi used even stronger words: the *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad* was 'a poison to the indigenous people.'²

The next *IV* issue, of 14 September, was an anti-conscription special. Kiewiet de Jonge had written in his daily that the anti-*Indië Weerbaar* action of the Batavia *SDAP* 'therefore was a rape of the political greatness of socialism.' Also the theosophist paper *Indische Stemmen* had, besides an article by Van Leeuwen, 'a specimen of pro-conscription cant' according to social democrat Daan van der Zee.³ Van der Zee had attacked *Indische Stemmen* on the issue of class contradictions or national and racial contradictions.⁴

A Surakarta *wayang* puppeteer dealt with conscription in his show.⁵ In Ujung Pandang on Sulawesi, three thousand people had met against *Indië Weerbaar* on 25 August. Sailor Arga from West Java told them that the militia plans 'should be kicked to the edge of the universe, as soon as possible.'⁶ Nine thousand turned up at a meeting in Kudus, a small Java town, of the local branch of the *PKBT*, the Workers and Peasants' League organized by *ISDV* militants, on 13 October 1918. Darsono and Marco spoke against *IW*; a motion against it was voted for. Sneevliet was unable to speak, as a car taking him there broke down.⁷ The October *Sarekat Islam* congress in Surabaya theatre voted unanimously against conscription. Baars thought it hypocritical that even Abdoel

¹*IV*, 7-9-1918, 'De dienstweigering der matrozen'; Kiewiet de Jonge wanted to 'save faces for the naval officers involved at any cost.'

²*SH* 21-11-1918, quoted *IPO* 47/1918, *MJB*, 15. Soemadi, a girls' school teacher, also wrote in *Sri-Diponegoro* and *Sri-Mataram*; *IPO* 15/1919, *JB*, 9.

³Article 'Weerbaarheidsgewauew.'

⁴'De doezelende Alarik [The obscuring Alarik; Alarik was a pseudonym in *IS*], *IV*, 31-8-1918: *IS* had said 'that the socialist movement does not recognize the indispensability of national striving in the world's development.' Van der Zee: 'Racial hatred is only a consequence of false feeling and false views. But class contradiction is real, based on the fact that one class owns the means, which the other class needs as badly to live. ... And as for those who try to moderate and to obscure us, we join them away.'

⁵*Bromartani* 3-11-1918; quoted *IPO* 45/1918, *JB*, 5.

⁶*Sri-Diponegoro* 11-11-1918, quoted *IPO* 46/1918, 'Extremistische bladen', 2; *Padjadjaran*, quoted *IPO* 49/1918, 'Nationalistische bladen', 1. *KM* 23-12-1918, quoted *IPO* 52/1918, *MJB*, 15: the navy discharged Arga dishonourably for this. He then started work at *Oetoesan Hindia*, translating Kropotkin, and as chairman of the sailors' union *Sinar Laoetan*. *OH* 23-12-1918, quoted *IPO* 52/1918, *MJB*, 22-3. Arga repeatedly wrote in *Panjaran-Warta*, for instance 22-3-1917; for some time, he joined the socialist league *Hindia Bergerak*; *OH* 15-6-1917, quoted *IPO* 24/1917, *MJB*.

⁷*SH* 219, 31-10-1918; quoted *IPO* 44/1918, 23-5.

Moeis now voted along with the others. Still, Baars was satisfied.¹ Chinese, and also Arabs, living in Indonesia, held anti-conscription meetings.²

In the end, the government did not introduce conscription. As the historian Fasseur has written, plans for it 'disappeared into a bureaucratic drawer'.³ Not just because of bureaucracy, however. Support for it weakened as the war ended; influential businessmen and politicians like Colijn preferred a military strategy based on the navy.⁴ And debates about the military among non-ruling civilians and privates had grown from scores in The Hague in 1913, to hundreds in Semarang in 1914, three to four thousand in Semarang in 1916, to many more thousands all over Indonesia in 1918. In these debates, opposition increased.

By now, this popular resistance grew at a time of, possibly, international revolution. Revolution took over from the ending war as the main issue between Indonesia's leftists and theosophists.

10. From *ISDV* to *PKI*, 1918-1927

On 15 November 1918, Darsono wrote in *Soeara Ra'jat*: 'Look how [in Europe] the Princes are being chased away like boars. ... Put out everywhere the RED FLAG, the symbol of HUMANITY, EQUALITY, AND BROTHERHOOD.' Indonesians, he said, should make workers' and peasants' councils take over.⁵

In Jakarta 'military guards had been doubled, patrols made their rounds.'⁶ High level officials' wives learned to shoot at the Indies army rifle-range 'which is really useful to ladies because of the Bolshevik fun in Russia.'⁷

¹A. Baars, 'De betekenis van het jongste S.I.-congres', *HVV*, 12-10-1918, 10-1. On 29-10-1918, in *Kaoem Moeda*, formerly Moeis, quoted *IPO* 44/1918, 12. S. G. [oenawan?] wrote, contrary to earlier policy: 'And then the militia, which is useless to Kromo. Kromo is able-bodied, if his stomach is full, and if he gets enough education.' According to a letter by official G. Hazeu to Governor-General Van Limburg Stirum on 23 August 1918, Moeis' views on conscription still led to 'fierce struggle' within *SI*, due to 'socialist-influenced opposition against the "Indië Weerbaar" movement'; published *KWANTES*(1975), 43. In a letter to *Sri-Diponegoro*, opponent of socialism S. Tondokoesoemo wrote that non-Javanese Baars should not discuss Javanese affairs. The paper's editor reacted: 'Then, how about the Government, and Labberton?' *Sri-Diponegoro* 11-11-1918, quoted *IPO* 46/1918, 'Extremistische bladen', 2. Socialist *SH*, 5-12-1918 wrote that Tondokoesoemo himself was 'under the influence of "Sugar Kings"'; quoted *IPO* 49/1918, *MJB*, 17.

²200 Arabs were at an anti-conscription meeting in Semarang. B., 'De Inlandsche militie', *HVV*, 29-3-1919, 223-4.

³FASSEUR(1995), 160.

⁴TICHELMAN(1985), 558-9.

⁵Quoted *IPO* 46/1918, 'Extremistische bladen', 3. Darsono was sentenced to a year in jail for an anti-*IW* article; *SH* 27-3-1919, quoted *IPO* 13/1919, *MJB*, 19.

⁶KIEWIET DE JONGE(1919), 98.

⁷SCHOUTEN, 168.

A wave of strikes swept across the archipelago. Not only by workers; also the students of the theosophist teachers' training school *Goenoeng Sari* in Jakarta went on strike. They complained of unjust expulsion of a student and authoritarianism of director Corporaal and a lady teacher of pedagogy. Moesso, the later communist leader, was a *Goenoeng Sari* student; I am not sure if that was exactly then, and if he also struck. Hadji Agoes Salim, though hesitating about whom to blame, thought that

the Director has acted more as a man of authority, who considered that authority had been subverted, than like a father guiding the students.¹

The *Budi Utomo* paper *Darmo Kondo* asked if the director really 'knew the Indigenous people', and wrote: 'A wise man does not act hastily, or in anger.'² *Oetoesan Hindia* commented on the dispute: 'The Javanese as such will not quickly act to defy their Chiefs, if the latter do not provoke that.'³ After mediation by *Volksraad* members Van Hinloopen Labberton and Abdoel Moeis, the strike ended. It caused Salim to write at length on strikes in general, attacking the ideas in the Hindu caste system on social cohesion.⁴ Salim wrote the school had been founded with 'unity' as its slogan. The conflict, though, had made him think 'that one cannot get unity by a name, or just by wanting it, but especially by applying it in practice.'⁵

In the wake of the Russian and German revolutions, Troelstra, and Marxists to his left, proposed revolutionary policies, which were popular among the more militant of Dutch workers. The position of the ruling class and of the royal family seemed to be uncertain. From the theosophical sphere came alarm, also in artistic form:

Thrones totter and crowns fall, and the realms crumble.
Where may a king still find fidelity?⁶

Soon though, the government managed to regain control, with the help of right-wing paramilitary organizations.⁷ Also with the support of the Indies TS monthly:

¹*Neratja* 18-1-1919, quoted *IPO* 3/1919, *MJB*, 4. *Darmo-Kondo*, 3-2-1919, quoted *IPO* 6/1919, *JB*, 2. On Moesso, *SH* 27-2/3-1924, quoted *IPO* 1, 1924, 420-1.

²27-1-1919, quoted *IPO* 5/1919, *JB*, 1.

³17-1-1919, quoted *IPO* 3/1919, *MJB*, 25. See also *KM* 20-1-1919.

⁴*Neratja* 20 and 21-1-1919, 'Mogok'.

⁵*Neratja* 4-2-1919, 'Praktijk associatie'.

⁶H.G. Cannegieter, 'Raden Mas Noto Soeroto', The Hague, Servire, 1926, 9; quoting 'the princely poet', *ibid.*, 5. In 1918, Dutch theosophically inspired Karel Schmidt painted a 'Portrait of Wilhelmina's fate.' Queen Wilhelmina looked into a 'karmic mirror': Schmidt represented threats of revolution around her as 'spears, daggers, and evil spirits.' Lien Heyting, 'De bezielende krachten van de schilder Karel Schmidt. Een allemachtig genie'; *NRC*, 26-8-1994.

⁷The government also made concessions, like votes for women and a shorter working week. After Sneevliet's exile from Indonesia, Dutch expatriates in Penang [now: Malaysia] sent a telegram to the queen, asking her to exile Troelstra from The Netherlands. *Neratja* 2-12-1918, quoted *IPO* 49/1918, *MJB*, 1. Van Kol and other *SDAP* right wingers opposed Troelstra's revolutionary plans.

... all the messages from the Motherland [The Netherlands] came to us about the revolutionary-bolshevik agitations, a sorry outgrowth to healthy evolutionary spirit. But the people of Holland indeed proved to be practical and matter-of-fact enough not to rush into the adventure of bogus beautiful socialist and anarchist promises.¹

Thank goodness, the government knew how to perform the action that was the only remedy against the surplus of such leaders as the S. D. A. P. has now.²

The editorial of the monthly summed up the theosophical ideal of society as: 'Duty above Rights'.³ A few months later, editor Van Leeuwen elaborated on the difference between revolutionary and hierarchical views of Brotherhood, and on relations of superhuman to political hierarchy:

... the sound of brotherhood which rings out now from the ranks of humanity's younger brothers is far from being refreshing and enjoyable to hear. Bolshevism, Democratization, Unification, and Levelling [Dutch: nivellering] are what they are striving for now, the demand of the majority, which thinks it may derive from the concept of brotherhood the right to 'Equality'. Break down all relationships, the masses roll forward like an unstoppable tidal wave, threatening to destroy all the results of ages and ages of work.

¹VAN LEEUWEN(1918A), 583

²VAN LEEUWEN(1919A), 4. In a speech in Cinnah that year, Van Leeuwen said: 'In social democracy a part of this Man has shown itself, the exoteric part, the human [as opposed to Divine] part, the wrong part, we will have to say. Man reaches out to the outside, directs eye and head and heart towards the environment and forgets that the source of all force is within.' *TMNI*, 1919, 89. In an editorial, *ibid.*, 98: 'The people outside [the social democrat movement], with all their seemingly beautiful words, see in Social Democracy instead of the way to a *social people*, the way to a *people's society*, in which power is given to the *majority* and not the *minority* of the best.' Though Van Leeuwen was for constructing a 'Theosophical-Social-Democracy' (*ibid.*) whose contents would differ from the *SDAP*: 'Theosophists have liberated the world from the chains of *scientific materialism*; now, once again theosophists will have to liberate the world from *social democrat hatemongering*'; *ibid.*, 101.

³VAN LEEUWEN(1919B), 350. Else, 'the evil is formed which leads to revolutions, to anarchy, to world wars'. *Ibid.*, 351-2: 'Workers' demands, parties' demands, religious communities' demands, and so on, endlessly. But finally, one will have to realize that this will create an abuse, which cannot last, and in opposition to these excesses towards *rights* the FTS will have to state now a preponderance towards the side of duty'. BESANT(1919B), 33: 'Duty above Rights, obligations above claims.'

Why is this? They did not understand the meaning. They missed the hierarchical principle in the idea of Brotherhood. Not all the same because they are all Brothers, but all in harmony, and in harmony between elder and younger ones, between wise and ignorant ones, between stronger and weaker brothers. Only then is construction possible. In the construction of the temple of humanity there are rafters, which should support the roof, there is the foundation, on top of which the walls arise. High up there is the golden dome, though, shining in the sunlight, crowning the building. Each part has its special place and task, and if everything wishes to be as high, if everything wants to be "roof", then [..... in original] *there is no construction*, but everything stays down.

A half truth [on brotherhood] is worse than no truth at all. ... Would not this be the reason why br[other G.]. Arundale [the later international TS president] advises revealing more of that which up to now was esoteric, to show the people and hold before them the truth of the existence of the "Elder Brothers" [superhumans in TS doctrine]; to proclaim and to propagate as a fact the Hierarchy of beings in this Universe, as the ideas of Karma and Reincarnation, which are the property of the whole world now, were made known by us earlier on? And is not it significant, that also just in these days an important new book came out: "*Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom*", as if from these Elder Brethren themselves a voice comes, to witness of Their existence?

That is what our task is! To accustom the world, including the Indies society, to the concept of "*Hierarchy*", of elder and younger ones, also among the earth's Nations and Peoples. A difficult task indeed in these times of revolution and democratization, but exactly because of that a still more valuable one.¹

Semaocn and his ISDV colleagues Baars² and Sneevliet were the subject of the January 1919 editorial of the Dutch East Indies TS monthly:

In our Insulinde the plant, deriving from that bitter fruit, thrives and grows. People like Sneevliet, Baars, Semaocn and so many others who are incapable of rising to spiritual heights, see nothing but the sham of the brotherhood in matter, while the Brotherhood in spirit still does not exist for them. ... „Demon est Deus inversus [The demon is the inverted God]", H. P. B. says in her Secret Doctrine. And for as long as the brotherhood in matter is our aim, for that length of time the Demon will be our loadstar, a light indeed that will lead us unto abysses of infernal pains and deepest darkness.³

In the same month, also Prince Soetatmo Soerikoesoemo in his *Wederopbouw* 'protested strongly against action and agitation'⁴ of the Marxists. Soerikoesoemo named a point against them which Van Leeuwen had not mentioned: the danger of confusion between anti-capitalism and opposition to other privileged people as well:

The way of propaganda against capital is reprehensible, as the people now can still not discern the difference between the capitalist and any other citizen, who can afford the luxury of driving a car [few could, in 1919 in Indonesia]. In the eyes of the people, anyone who lives in

¹VAN LEEUWEN(1919D), 488-9.

²The government forced Baars into exile in 1921; L. DE JONG, vol. 11aI, 260; SR, 16-4-1921, 1f: 'Diasingkankah Baars dari tanah Hindia?'

³VAN LEEUWEN(1919A), 4.

⁴SOERIKOESOEOMO(1919A), 14.

an extraordinarily beautiful house is a capitalist. First, let the people's education have an opportunity to rise to a higher level, and only then start the propaganda against capitalism. Not now, for that brings immeasurable misery. Even worse than the propaganda against capital is the propaganda for the idea of equality.¹ Soerikoesoemo inverted socialists' view of religion as opium:

Opium, for example, is a strong poison; surely, it often is an effective medicine. ... As opium is for the ill patient, so is socialism for suffering humanity. In both cases, there always is a chance of recovery; but the chance of perishing totally is bigger than that chance. Unfortunately, all authorized doctors at the moment are in complete agreement that, so far, there is no other remedy. We, though, rather stick to the natural way of healing-the (holy) water.²

The Theosophical Society leaders disagreed with Sneevliet. So did the colonial government, and thus, using emergency law, they banned him from Indonesia in December 1918.³ In a debate in the *Volksraad* (representative council), *Sarekat Islam* chairman Tjokroaminoto protested, as his executive had decided.⁴ *SI* vice chairman Abdoel Moeis had already urged the government to ban Sneevliet in 1917, and now said nothing.⁵ Prince Mangkoe Negoro VII did speak, but on Javanese culture, not on the subject of the debate, the banning.⁶

On 18 November, *Neraja* supported the exile proposal. 'Kita redactie O. H. [We, the editors]' of Tjokroaminoto's *Oetoesan Hindia* took *Neraja* to task for that view three days later. 'We protest strongly against the editor R. Djojosoediro. ... By this article, he has violated the principles of the S.I. national executive, of which he is a member. *No longer should R. Djojosoediro be in the S.I. executive!*'⁷ Though *SI* did not expel Djojosoediro, its next congress in 1919 would demote him (see p. 299). Darsono wrote in *Soeara-Ra'jat*:

This Djojosoediro, who applauded Sneevliet's exile, is nothing but a Government mouthpiece. It is alright that a paper exists which is based on the principles of the Government; but S.I.

¹SOERIKOESOEOMO(1919A), 15.

²SOERIKOESOEOMO(1920C), 2. VAN DER LEEUW(1920), 165 opposed Marxism in an at first sight anti-capitalist way: 'Marx in this respect is typical of 19th century mentality, as typical as capitalism he fought against, they are in this both symptoms of one and the same mentality!'

³L. DE JONG, vol. 11aI, 284.

⁴'Volksraad', OH 21-11-1918.

⁵'Aroen' [J. Stam], 'Documenten over de uitzetting van Sneevliet', HVW, 14-12-1918, 91-2. H. Sneevliet, 'Het SI congres te Batavia. Een woord tot de Leiders en Afgevaardigden', HVW, 20-10-1917, 9; published TICHELMAN(1985), 671. Sneevliet, in 'Ethisch farizeïsme', HVW, 5-10-1918, 3, and in 'Het verslag van den Volksraad', HVW, 9-11-1918, 42-3, called Moeis a 'government journalist'.

⁶'Aroen' [J. Stam], 'Documenten over de uitzetting van Sneevliet', HVW, 14-12-1918, 92.

⁷*Neraja* 18-11-1918, 'Sneevliet dienjahkan'; OH 21-11-1918, 'Neraja moefakat!'

people should not head such a paper.¹

A few days after the anti-Sneevliet article, editor-in-chief Djojosoediro went on sick leave. Fellow *SI* executive member, but already no longer fellow TS member(?), Hadji Agoes Salim replaced him, on 25 November. Then, *Neratja* wrote that the editorial had been against the views of Djojosoediro's fellow editors. The paper did not want to denounce it though, as long as Djojosoediro was not back from sick leave.

Raden Djojosoediro did come back on 28 November.² On 11 December, Salim wrote another version: that Djojosoediro had already been ill on 18 November.

The *Sarekat Islam* executive met on Sunday 22 December in Surabaya, first at Tjokroaminoto's house, then at the *Panti Harsojo* building. Ten executive members were present: Tjokroaminoto, Tjokrosoedarmo, Djojosoediro, H.A. Sjadz'ili, Soerjopranoto, Hasan bin Semit, Prawotosoedibjo, Sosrokardono, Semaen, Soekirno. Others, like Moeis and Mohamed Joesoef, were absent. Four left-wingers (very probably including Semaen, Soekirno, and Prawotosoedibjo, also an *ISDV* member) faced four right-wingers on the pro-exile editorial in *Neratja*. Semaen accused Djojosoediro's faction of 'lies on Sneevliet.'

Finally, chairman Tjokroaminoto helped a proposal, supporting Sneevliet, to a 5 against 4 victory; with one abstention. On the other hand, the meeting decided to accept Djojosoediro's profession of non-responsibility for the pro-banishment article.³

The Dutch Indies TS had strongly opposed Annie Besant's internment in British India. However, of this externment now they thought, concluding the 'infernal pains' editorial:

Thank goodness, the heart of society, which feels the pains, can remove the sting. Thank goodness, the government knew how to perform the action that was the only remedy ... Well may it continue in this way! And is not it splendid to see how at the same time as the externment of Sneevliet, on the very day that this man, this obfuscator of human idealism, had to leave the country where he tried to promote his false ideals; that on this very day the heart of society, the government, dived into its own bosom and caused the establishment of the commission for 'Overhaul of the principles of State structure of the Dutch East Indies'. ... May the Theosophical Society, may its members, help along to prepare this path, may the torch of truth that was given to us, bear a flame that will set alight many people still.⁴

H.J. Kiewiet de Jonge commented in the Dutch monthly *De Gids*:

It would have been neglect of duty, had the Government in the stormy November days allowed a man [Sneevliet] who openly, verbally and in writing, called for soldiers' and sailors' demonstrations; and consequently, was a strong threat to the reliability of the pillars of

authority over millions of natives, to stay in the colony.¹

Just before Sneevliet's externment, Soerikoesoemo had written:²

One is afraid to be a conservative, as everyone is progressive. A bystander then takes the side of the Government, and admires its great attitude toward that petty revolutionary lot.

In a farewell poem to Sneevliet in *Sinar Hindia*, S. Partoatmodjo wrote he had been 'Diboewang lantaran pengaroo kapitala riet [banished at the request of sugar-cane capital].'³ Sneevliet arrived in The Netherlands after the banning. On 17 February 1919, he spoke to a packed public meeting of the Communist Party of The Netherlands' Amsterdam branch. According to the reporter of the daily *De Tribune*:

The lecturer [Sneevliet] sharply attacked the hypocritical activity of theosophist HINLOOPEN LABBERTON, who wanted to make the Javanese enthusiastic for 'Indie Weerbaar'.⁴

In 1920, the social democrat society *ISDV* became the communist party of Indonesia, *PKI*, with Semaen as its chairman.

In 1921, the *PKI* paper *Soeara Ra'jat* commented on a speech by Besant in The Netherlands. They thought it was open to various interpretations: 'But the capitalists, who embrace theosophy, and who listen to Mrs Annie Besant's speech would surely interpret it as: 'The workers should not change the relationships of power.' ... So, the beautiful ways of theosophical theory will remain theory; and theory only.' The article finished calling on all theosophists, if they did not want that, to 'help the communist movement all over the world'.⁵

Though critical, this article still showed the sharp contradiction of *Indie Weerbaar* and Jambhi days had worn away. The contradiction on non-co-operation policy between Theosophical Society and not only *PKI*, but also other Indonesian political groups, then was only just beginning: as it had begun earlier on in India; see p. 346f.

On 26 January 1924, 'Orion', the abbreviation 'DI' behind the pseudonym [of Amir?] denoting membership of the TS-linked *Orde der Dienaren van Indie*, reported for

¹KIEWIET DE JONGE(1919), 351-2.

²SOERIKOESOEMO(1919A), 16. He printed it in *WED*, Jan. 1919; as he wrote in a note, he did not think it needed change.

³6-1-1919, quoted *IPO* 2/1919, *MJB*, 14.

⁴'Sneevliet in Holland'; from *De Tribune*, reprinted *HVW*, 17-5-1919, 298. 'HGH' [C. Hartogh] in *HVW*, 3-5-1919, 'Een vriendendienst', commented satirically on mystic numerology.

⁵SR, 16-9-1921, 3-4, 'Theosophie dan Komunisme.' Future leading *PKI* member Tan Malaka as a student in The Netherlands in the 1910's lived in the house of a theosophist landlady; when she met him again later she said: 'Hello Mr Bolshevik'; POEZE, 47; 54. He wrote in the Dutch communist daily on free speech in Indonesia: 'Also theosophists, missionaries and P.E.B. people make propaganda for their ideas in the Indies. ... such propaganda is allowed in the Indies. But a communist if he propagates his ideas loses his job and liberty'. He explained about missionaries and the *PEB*, not on the TS. TAN MALAKA(1922).

¹SR 6-12-1918; quoted *IPO* 50/1918, 'Extremistische bladen', 4.

²*Neratja* 25 and 28-11-1918, quoted *IPO* 48/1918, *MJB*, 1-2.

³'Hindia Belanda. Bestuursvergadering C.S.I.', *OH* 23-12-1918. McVEY(1965), 370-1

⁴VAN LEEUWEN(1919A), 4-5.

Neratja on West Sumatra. He saw the rise of communism, this 'modern poison'. It mixed there with pious Islam, 'like Hadji Misbach' [a Java *santri* PKI member].¹

Sinar Hindia then, reporting on the founding of a TS lodge, added that theosophists kept silent on mass production of 'guns and poison gas' in capitalism. It compared theosophists to Praboe Dasamoeke, the Javanese equivalent of the evil King Rawana in the Indian *Ramayana*.² Just afterwards, on 7 February, the communist Abdoel Hamid started a weeks long polemic against theosophy in that paper. He wrote an Open Letter to Soerya of pro-TS daily *Neratja*. Soerya, he said, 'was like a capitalist, as he had joined the TS.' He accused Soerya of getting a 'comfortable life' that way. The reply became 'Communism and Theosophy, Open Letter from Soerya to the Communist Abdoel Hamid'. Soerya remarked on 'the extremely obvious contrast' between communist views of revolution and theosophists' of evolution.³ *SH* of 25 and 26 April published 'Communism and Theosophy. Abdoel Hamid against Soerya.' Abdoel Hamid wrote:

*Soerya, how can one have compassion with one's fellow humans, if one neither knows nor feels the suffering? ... You lie till you are black in the face, Herr [German: Mr] Soerya! ... Mr Soerya is a theosophist, does he fear death? Does not theosophy say, that death is just a change of clothes. Why, then, does Mr Soerya fear revolution?*⁴

The paper *Halilintar* from Pontianak in Kalimantan picked up the controversy. On 24 May, 'Communist L. Tj. Hoo' wrote he could not back Soerya; as 'theosophy does not guarantee support for the people, because among theosophists there are also oppressors'.⁵

In the Bandung communist weekly *Matahari* [the Sun] of 3 March, 'Sj. Hoed.' criticized *Volksraad* member H. Soetadi. Formerly, he had been chairman of the Auxiliary Teachers' Union; *Matahari* wrote that he had done good things then. However, after joining the *Volksraad*, he had supported a proposal by Ten Berge to sack communist teachers.

What does it mean that H. Soetadi studies Theosophy diligently?

What does it mean that H. Soetadi sits at the editors' table of *Neratja*, as its editor-in-chief?

'Sj. Hoed.' saw *Neratja* as 'enemy of the people'.⁶ Soetadi sat in the TS national executive, at least in 1927.

PKI member Moesso spoke at a Red *Sarekat Islam* meeting in Nagrek (West Java) on

¹Quoted *IPO* I, 1924, 192-3.

²*SH* 21-26 Jan. 1924, quoted *IPO* I, 1924, 198.

³NUGRAHA(1989), 202-4. *Neratja* 24 and 25-3-1924, quoted *IPO* 15/1924, 76-7.

⁴Quoted *IPO* 18/1924, 204-5.

⁵Quoted *IPO* 23/1924, 450-1.

⁶Quoted *IPO* I, 1924, 540-1. *RANI*, 1922, 49; 1925, 48: the government appointed Soetadi as member in 1921 and 1924. *Api* 6/10-10-1924, quoted *IPO* 42/1924, 102-3: the Semarang members' meeting of 5-10-1924 of Soetadi's union rejected his spending union money on *Neratja*, of which Soetadi had only informed *Goenoeng Sari* teacher Sastrowirjo. See on Soetadi also NUGRAHA, 151; *TMNI* 1927, cover; *TINI* 1932, 93.

30 March 1924. He attacked the selling of *jimats*. Chandra of the *Orde der Dienaren van Indië* though, in *Neratja* of 4 April, defended belief in amulets, also for instance in divining-rods.¹ After *Neratja* had changed its name to *Hindia Baroe*, *Sinar Hindia* too changed to *Api* [Fire]. *Hindia Baroe* thought it was 'Fire' from Hell'.²

On 10 April 1925, the PKI tried to have a meeting in Surakarta. The police chased them away. Many communists then went to the *Habi Projo* building, where *Budi Utomo* was holding its congress. Josowidagdo, formerly of *Indië Weerbaar* (and still of the TS?) told PKI leader Marco to send most of his supporters away. They wore shabby *sarongs* [Javanese dress]. That was against the dress code of *Habi Projo*, a gentlemen's club. Marco refused. Then, the police drove the sartorially and financially challenged out. Marco stayed, and gave an address. It helped the left wing of *Budi Utomo* to win from the Surakarta-based right.³

In 1926, General Secretary J. Kruisheer spoke at the TS congress in Blavatsky Park in Jakarta. He warned against 'the pernicious agitation by the communists in this country'.

Not long ago, there was an article in their paper 'A p i', which reproached the Theosophists with cooling down the people 'like ice-sellers' if the communists had brought them to the boiling point.

Kruisheer warned of a fate like that suffered by theosophy in Russia; and of communist cells infiltrating, trying to disrupt the TS. The officials of lodges and centres should keep out all individuals who wanted to propagate their PKI 'doctrine of intolerance'.⁴

The government banned more and more papers and activities of communists and trade unions. In 1926-27, there were armed communist uprisings, first in Java. Then, in 1927, Kruisheer wrote in the editorial of his monthly on West Sumatra:

Last, we want to commemorate our brother Rahman gelar Soetan Maharadja (FTS # 2095), who was slain at the hands of the communists in Silungkang, where he was a teacher ... Fallen as a martyr to his conviction and his steadfast holding on to what he recognized as right, he has earned a right to the sympathy of all of us ...

The treasurer of the Indies TS collected money for Rahman's next of kin.⁵ Former *Indië Weerbaar* leader Major Rhemrev crushed the uprising in West Sumatra. The *Sarekat Adat Alam Minangkabau*, with links to the TS, helped him, as it claimed.⁶ A government committee to investigate the rebellion included theosophist A.J. Hamerster, a

¹*SH* 1-4-1924, quoted *IPO* 14/1924, 86. *Ibid.*, 82.

²'The Hell', *HB* 2/6-8-1924, quoted *IPO* 32/1924, 269-70. *HB* 1/6-10-1924, quoted *IPO* 41/1924, 69 headlined 'Driving away the plague of communism'.

³VAN MIJERT(1995), 260-2. See p. 349.

⁴HEYMAN(1926), 207.

⁵J. Kruisheer, 'Redactioneel Aanteekeningen', *TMNI* 1927, 110.

⁶BOUMAN(1949), 78.

former official in that area some 17 years earlier.¹

After the uprisings, the government banned the PKI completely and sent its members, and others, to prison camps in an epidemic-ridden area of New Guinea. Marco died from consumption in Boven-Digoel camp in 1932. As workers could no longer express dissatisfaction through political or union organization, the number of physical attacks, some resulting in deaths, on Dutch high level employees of plantations rose. This worried the government. A. Vreede, now director of its labour office, called a conference of his officials on those 'murders of assistant [managers]' in 1929.²

11. Indies social democrats and *Indië Weerbaar* after 1918

The end of the First World War meant in Indonesia: the end of conscription as a hot issue, linking revolutionary and reformist socialists, and opposing reformists to theosophists. The Russian question also sharpened contradictions between both former ISDV wings. So, contradictions between the moderates, soon called *Indische Sociaal-Democratische Partij*, and the Theosophical Society could grow less sharp. *Het Indische Volk* regretted earlier attacks on the TS General Secretary. It now saw him as:

One of the best [Representative Council members] from the bourgeois camp, maybe even the very best one. Also among us, Labberton has sometimes been discussed sneeringly, as someone who was not practical, who was said to have lost the right view on social conditions, because he looked at them too much through theosophist glasses.³

Some theosophists and former theosophists became active in the ISDP in this changed climate. In early 1919, A. Baars doubted if his moderate ex-colleagues should be happy with their new recruit Mrs Corporaal-van Achterbergh, wife and co-manager of the theosophist teachers' training school director. He quoted a 'sarcastic' item on her in the *Nederlandsch-Indische Vrijzinnige Bond*'s liberal weekly:

The *Vrijzinnig Weekblad* says that it was especially joyful that Mrs Corporaal was an ex-NIVB member. ... In three weeks' time, Mrs Corporaal's instincts for the poor, oppressed people had awakened. We wait expectantly for this principled and mature socialist leader's next incarnation. We now bet it will be in the *Oranjabond voor Orde*!⁴ Or we bet on a General-Association-of-

¹BOUMAN(1949), 13. *RANI*, 1911, 307.

²IG 1929 (51), *MRBTD*, 787.

³'Uit den Volksraad, Van Hinloopen Labberton'. IV, 13-9-1919. Koch and Koperberg, who in 1915 had warned Sneevliet against compromising the purity of Marxist thought by any contact with theosophists, about 1919 were rightist social democrats, rejecting revolution. Then their relationship to the TS improved: they both wrote in *De Taak* magazine, as did many theosophists. KOCH(1956), 130. *Ibid.*, 1: Koch started his 1956 memoirs with a sympathetic quote of Annie Besant.

⁴'Orange [Dutch royal family colour] League for Order.' Captain Rhemrev, former *Indië Weerbaar* delegate, founded the *Oranjabond voor Orde*, a rightist paramilitary outfit in the Dutch anti-Troelstra mould, in Malang in December 1918; *Nerajta* 24-12-1918, 'Perserikatan Oranje'. *HVW*, 8-2-1919, 'Een vertooning'. It was a corporate member of the *IW* association. *OVIW*, 1920,

both-Capitalists-and-communists!¹

Mrs Corporaal became Batavia ISDP section treasurer at the end of 1919.² H.J. Kiewiet de Jonge also joined, though only for a short time in 1919.³ Hadji Agoes Salim, with whose paper it had disagreed on *Indië Weerbaar* (see p. 319) now wrote in its weekly as an ISDP member.⁴

Indië Weerbaar limped on. Itself, its links to the TS, and to Indonesians,⁵ all were weaker now than in its heyday. Hadji Agoes Salim considered the pros and cons of a militia. 'The argument against is that the overwhelming majority of the people do not support a militia.' Nor, in his conclusion, did Salim himself by now.⁶

In 1919, near Garut in Java, government forces killed Hadji Hassan and his associates, who protested against the forcible selling of their rice. An alliance of *Sarekat Islam*, ISDP, and others organized a protest meeting. In *Indië Weerbaar*'s monthly, 'a sympathetic Sundanese (west Java) nobleman' wrote on it. He regretted both the killings and the protest meeting of 'passion and anger.' 'For God has a plan with the world. That plan is evolution. Kresna Moerti [Krishnamurti].' The first lines of the article had been a quote from *At the feet of the Master*, also ascribed to Krishnamurti.⁷

IW executive members had plans in early 1920 to disband the association. 24 May saw one of the last flickerings of life at its annual general meeting, in the Bandung theosophical lodge. Because General Snijders, ex-Dutch armed forces commander, spoke, the lodge building [see cover] was 'packed'.⁸ In 1923, the association disbanded itself at

1/2/3, 21.

¹A. Baars, 'Onder het Roode Zoeklicht', *HVW*, 11-1-1919, 128.

²IV, 6-12-1919.

³B. Hering, personal communication from Kiewiet de Jonge's son.

⁴NOER, 110. In 1920 Salim said to Hatta that he agreed with socialism; only its Marxist form was 'false and misleading.' HATTA(1981), 51. HATTA(1978), 85.

⁵GOENAWAN MANGOENKOESOEMO(1918), 22. already in Oct. 1917, an *IW* Association propagandist failed to get the *Budi Utomo* general meeting to join the Association; though its 1908-11 first president, a *bupati*, joined. *Nerajta*, 24-7-1919, thought the association had deviated from the earlier committee. The contacts of the Association with *Oetoesan Melajoe* were good though: for instance OM 5-5-1919, quoted IPO 25/1919, MJB, 10.

⁶*Nerajta* 28-12-1918, quoted IPO 52/1918, MJB, 8-9. In *Nerajta* 31-12-1918, quoted IPO 1/1919, MJB, 2, Salim again saw arguments in favour of a militia.

⁷The year before, Labberton's Dutch translation of *At the feet of the Master* had come out *OVIW*, 1919, 3, 2-10, 'Overdenkingen/Pertimbangan'. Probably the same author, under the pseudonym *Indië Weerbaar*, wrote mostly the same article for KM 27-8-1919, quoted IPO 35/1919, MJB, 11-2; concluding 'The relationship between Government and People should be as between a father and his children!'

⁸*OVIW*, 1920, 1/2/3, 2. Bandung TS buildings moved to Olcott Park in 1930; *TT* Apr 1931, 24, after the Second World War, Dutch and Indonesian government negotiators met there.

last.¹

In 1932, Tilkema characterized the TS politically as:

Theosophists in Java are rather conservative. In the main, they are politically colourless; at the very most, liberal democrat or something. Even then, though, their views are as undemocratic as the others'. Sure, we do know a few members, who have joined the social democrat party; however, as many of our members think, this really is somewhat shocking.²

D. LABOUR, COMMUNISM, AND INDIA

International disgust among many poor people about the war and rising prices did not bypass Madras in 1918. In the spring, the textile workers went on strike. In September, food shops in many neighbourhoods were looted.³ In this climate, B.P. Wadia was active setting up unions in Madras, aided by Arundale; he then opposed strikes though.⁴ According to a British government report, while in Britain Wadia met communist labour activist Shapurji Saklatvala, a Parsi like himself. Saklatvala warned Wadia 'on no account to involve Besant' in Indian trade unionism; also people organizationally linked to her should not 'have any connexion [sic] with the labour movement'.⁵

Other countries might follow Red Russia's example. In Hungary, 'the subsequent [1919] bolshevik régime made Theosophical work impossible'.⁶ Theosophists in Ceylon deplored 'Bolshevist anarchism that has become rampant in many lands'.⁷

In 1919, Annie Besant gave as the reason for her shift to a less anti-colonialist stand 'India is now menaced by revolution, and Bolshevist propagandists are at work'.⁸

Mrs Besant had objected to state ownership of industries in 1916.⁹ Still, in 1919 she joined the British Labour party, which became much bigger after 1918 than before 1914.¹⁰ English TS General Secretary Baillie-Weaver had feared that her 'completely opposite' views on war might mean trouble between her and Labour.¹¹ Lady Emily

¹OVW, 1923, 6, 8, 'Opheffing der vereniging "Indie Weerbaar"?'.

²TILKEMA(1932), 9. Ibid.: the ISDP 'could hardly be called liberal, certainly not revolutionary.' It never managed to get more than about 200 members.

³TAYLOR(1992), 313. 'Voedselreletjes te Madras', *Soerabaiasch Handelsblad* 8-10-1918; from *Times of Ceylon* 10/12-9-1918.

⁴TB July/Aug. 1932, 319. PALME DUTT(1940), 369.

⁵TAYLOR(1992), 313. B.B. MISRA(1976), 171.

⁶FEKETE, 89.

⁷BAC, 1920, 10; goodbye article by A.D.J. to Woodward.

⁸BESANT(1919A), 26.

⁹NETHERCOT(1963), 246.

¹⁰NETHERCOT(1963), 292f. OREN, 90 [wrongly]: 'she did not join the Labour Party until the 1920's.'

¹¹THA Jan. 1920, 319.

Lutyens pointed out that Besant's still favouring Kingship by divine right would cause friction.¹

Her political philosophy has been "hierarchical, and Guild Socialism", while she abhorred Syndicalism and Direct Action.²

In England, non-revolutionaries seemed to become stronger. The International Conference on Labour and Religion took place in London, September 1919. George Arundale's report showed that many of those present belonged to the right wing of British Labour. From among them,

The Right Hon. George Barnes, Minister in the war Cabinet, opened the Conference with a strong warning against the perils of materialism, illustrated in the recent war and often offered to the common sense of the working men by callow academic exponents. ... He emphatically denied that the Labour problem was purely a question of wages and of the stomach.³ It was essentially a religious question—a question of man's proper place as man, and not merely as wage-earner. Six or eight months ago he was a little alarmed at the ferment in the Labour world, but he felt that we had now got over the worst.⁴

Other speakers were the Anglican Bishop Gore, Arthur Henderson,⁵ and George Lansbury:

AB's 1889 speech there could be no division between religion and politics, made such a great impression on Lansbury ... that he eventually embraced Theosophy and carried its social

¹BESANT(1921B), 117 'Labour has no use for Kings'; quoted TAYLOR(1992), 314.

²Krishna Dasa, *NL*, 25-8-1924, 16. Ibid., 40 explained this astrologically. GHOSE(1984), 50: she 'gave her own definition' of socialism; quoting from her *The Future Socialism*: 'a truly aristocratic socialism, controlled by duty, guided by wisdom.' BESANT(1919B), 133: 'a Socialism ... not of compulsion and confiscation applied to the rich by the poor for the benefit of the latter'; but 'a return, at a more complicated social stage, to the principle of the family, therein are elders, equals, youngers, marking out stages of capacity. Human evolution consists in bringing the separate wills of men into perfect accord with the Will of God, the individual wills with the Universal Will.' Ibid., 143, of labour's 'inability to produce without direction and supervision, even if they had seized both land and capital.'

³In November 1918, Barnes had defied a Labour Party decision to resign from the cabinet; F. OWEN(1954), 499. He had also had a conflict with Winston Churchill, who had raised striking workers' wages against Barnes's wishes; *ibid.*, 452-3.

⁴ARUNDALE(1919A), 108.

⁵ARUNDALE(1919A), 109. Henderson 'insisted that the Labour Movement would never attain its highest ideals until it was instinct with the Spirit of Jesus Christ'.

precepts into his career as Socialist labor leader and Cabinet officer.¹
As conference delegate for India, B.P. Wadia

declared that in the recently-born Labour Movement of India the spirit was intensely religious, dominated by the ideas of Karma, the Immanence of God, and the solidarity of man. Within each caste there was the greatest brotherhood. The Brahman prince would let his daughter marry a Brahman cook, though between the castes no intermarriage was allowed.²

In 1921, Mrs Besant again took up the subject of workers' ideas on class war:

A special hatred develops amongst them against those who are better-off, a thing which is of course utterly un-Theosophical, and which it is the duty of every Theosophist to try to eliminate, wherever he may be living, whatever his particular views, whether sympathetic or antagonistic to Socialism.³

And of revolution:

Always mischievous when it achieves that violent form.⁴

Was violence really the problem with Annie Besant's post-1889 views on class conflict and revolution? Then, one would also expect it to be a problem when a Government with the Great White Brotherhood on its side applied it, in a war against governments with black magicians on their side, as Mrs Besant described the First World War. We saw on p. 86 her views on government violence against unarmed brickbat-throwing Indian supporters of Gandhi. A basic tenet of Annie Besant in most of the second half of her life was that the masses should not rule (see p. 320f.).⁵ 1920's TS Vice President Jinarajadasa commented on old and new 'socialisms':

Buddha ... was the greatest 'socialist' that ever could be, but different from the socialists of

¹NETHERCOT(1960), 315. He for instance participated in the OSE and the 1937 TS Copenhagen congress.

²ARUNDALE(1919A), 108-9. Wadia was in a British Indian government delegation to the Washington international labour conference; BESANT(1921F), 412.

³BESANT(1921C), 114.

⁴Ibid. A few months earlier, G. Gibbon Chambers, *TT*, Nov. 1920, 128-9: 'Judas [to Christians, a traitor to Jesus] failed because he loved an ideal and a section only of humanity-the oppressed. Many to-day have the vision of Judas, and would establish the Kingdom with guns and armoured cars, but- 'the Kingdom cometh not by violence.' ... Only the vision of Jesus can succeed-the love of ALL humanity ...'

⁵In her views then, violence originated among masses rather than among elites: 'This divergence between her and Gandhiji has persisted steadily, because she has held that any movement for 'mass action' or 'direct action' released forces which must degenerate into violence'; JINARAJADASA(1986), 37-8. BESANT(1912A), 75: 'Basing itself on the study of the past, Theosophy can lay down certain principles. ... The principles are: that Government should be in the hands of the Elders, i.e. the wisest, the most experienced, and the morally best; ... that freedom brings happiness only to the educated and self-controlled, and that no one, so long as he is ignorant and unself-controlled, should have any share in the government of others, and should only have such freedom as is consistent with the welfare of the community.'

to-day in that he levelled up and not down.¹
Wadia broke with Annie Besant in 1922:

Wadia charged ... she was privately afraid of the labour movement on account of her many rich and capitalistic friends, and she never forgave him ... [for having] diverted attention away from her Home Rule organisation.²

The October revolution's impact worried the British rulers in India much. In the nineteen twenties, they declared Russian thousand rouble notes illegal in India; one of the not that many instances when a capitalist government has acted against owning bank-notes. The reason in this case was the imprint 'Workers of the world, unite.' Millions all over India were confiscated.³ Communists had to deal with British repression. In 1923, the first in a series of anti-communist mass trials took place.⁴

How strongly Indian communists reacted to theosophists varied according to how strong theosophists were where they lived. Of four 1920's prominent Communist Party of India members, Bengali Muzaffar Ahmad in his memoirs did not mention theosophy at all. Bombay resident Dange mentioned Mrs Besant a few times. In Madras, the TS had conflicts with Mallapuram Singaravelu Chettiar, ex-local Maha Bodhi Society president, now of the CPI. Chettiar wrote on these conflicts.⁵ M.N. Roy in the 1920's wrote about Besant. He then lived in Europe, where she was more in the public image of India than in his native Bengal.

While Annie Besant worried that the Indian National Congress was not anti-communist enough, communist M.N. Roy worried that it was not anti-Besant enough. He thought it so cautious as to be 'hardly distinguishable from the Liberal League or the Home Rule show of Mrs Besant'.⁶ He criticised Gandhi:

the prophet himself [Gandhi] throws overboard his program of triple boycott to welcome Mrs Besant and her followers back into the Congress fold ... such a devoted imperialist as Mrs Besant.⁷

The communists did not get the blame for their own actions only

[When in 1924] a new terrorist outburst occurred in Bengal, and the police, warned by Mayor

¹JINARAJADASA(1923), 53.

²NETHERCOT(1963), 285f.

³WHITE, 100.

⁴WHITE, 102: 'a trial was instituted ... in 1923 at which a number of Indians who had received training in Soviet Russia were charged with conspiracy.' White bases this on British parliament reports and on the *Times* of 16 May 1923; but for instance Dange and Singaravelu Chettiar had never been to the Soviet Union, let alone had been trained there.

⁵MURUGESAN and SUBRAMANYAM, p. 17; 23. Both Singaravelu, from a sudra, and Rahula Sanskritayana from a Brahman background, came via Buddhism to the CPI.

⁶M.N. Roy, 'Open letter to C.R. Das', 3 Feb. 1923; reprinted ADHIKARI(1974), 15.

⁷M.N. Roy for the CPI, *Appeal to the Nationalists*, 1 Dec. 1924; reprinted ADHIKARI(1974), 440.

[C.R.] Das of Calcutta, arrested various extremist Swarajist and Congress leaders, she [AB] attributed the outbreak of bomb-throwing and pillage to a Bolshevik conspiracy from Russia and openly praised the action of Das and the police ... when at the All-Party Conference she opposed Gandhi's resolution to investigate the Government's policy and actions, she was harshly condemned by most of the Indian press ...¹

Sometimes, Mrs Besant was sharply against her own past ideas, as when she defended segregated schools for caste and casteless children in India, and class segregated schools in England:

I know now that the conditions do not make the people, but that it is the drunken and dirty people who cause the conditions.²

Sylvia Pankhurst, formerly of the CP of Great Britain executive, in a book published by Bombay communists pointed out how Mrs Besant had changed in the nature vs. nurture debate since her 1886 *Why I am a Socialist*; which said: 'Take two healthy week-old babies ... the keenest eye will not be able to separate the aristocrat from the plebeian ... Education, training, culture, these make class distinctions ...'.³ This change had to do with differences between historical materialism and idealism on whether essential 'human nature' exists.

Annie Besant attacked Dange of the CPI on financial support which the Soviet textile workers union gave to Bombay colleagues in their 1927 strike.⁴

In 1930, the Adyar estate and the Vasanta press, Annie Besant's personal property, together employed hundreds; it was not a small business. When Adyar workers formed a union, Mrs Besant refused to recognize it. The PTS declared recognition would have been against the organic model of society; 'Here, all must make a family, some members being naturally the elder and the other the younger.' As a compromise, workers could

¹NETHERCOT(1963), 350.

²In the *Indian Review*; quoted S. PANKHURST(1926), 149. On the contrary, TJIPTO MANGOENKOESEMO(1928), 9: 'one cannot get improvement of the individual, if one leaves the circumstances under which the individual lives, alone.' BESANT(1917A), 36: 'an Englishman, who is often from the lowest ranks of society, drunken and brutal'. Ibid., 43: 'the ruffian of the London slum'.

³PANKHURST(1926), 150f. In 1919, Besant wrote in *Reincarnation* (translated TMNI, 1919, 421-2), taking the side of the 'nature' tenet, along social, and 'racial' lines: 'Once again, look at the evolution of man, from the stage on, which differs but little from the animal one, up to the stage of high civilization, and ask yourself [answer: reincarnation] what contributes to the difference between the limited contents of the consciousness of the child of the savage and the trained intelligence of a child of our own social categories. The properties, which show themselves in youth are very different ones in these two cases: when the child of the savage is transferred to a civilized environment, it progresses quickly during some years, and then, it comes to a standstill, because its intellectual facilities are not capable of any further expansion.' See also TAYLOR(1992), 313: 'the transformation of her attitude to socialism in general.'

⁴DANGE, vol. 3, 77-8.

form a *panchayat*.¹ After the dispute on the union in Adyar, A. Rangaswami Ayar wrote:

If the standard of brotherhood underlying that solution [union, no; panchayat, yes] cannot be achieved outside [of the TS], then just as an International Court of Justice is a desirable substitute for war, Mussolini's solution to have an impartial tribunal for the settlement of disputes between capital and labour instead of lock-outs and strikes, which are against the interest of the Nation, is the next one approaching Brotherhood.²

In the 1920's and 30's the idea of socialism became popular; at the same time, there were many rightward trends in world politics. There also was a rightward movement within social democracy. Elitist ideas rose with theorists like H. De Man, the chairman of the Belgian party.

Bhagavan Das' position was that there were arguments both for and against communism and fascism, that the two were rather similar,³ and that his own ideas of a spiritually scientific social system based on India's *varnas* were superior to both of them.⁴ He defined a brand of socialism acceptable to theosophy: 'not a Classless Society';⁵ socialism not as self-emancipation of the working class. Rohit Mehta, to become TS GS for India in the 1950's, differentiated likewise in the 1930's between unacceptable and acceptable socialism: Marx' was a

gospel of despair ... To know the racial programme is to hasten human evolution.⁶

He wrote this as Marxism was quite popular in the Indian National Congress.

E. THE LANKA SAMA SAMAJA PARTY

According to *The Theosophist* in 1931, Ceylon had eight lodges, with less than a hundred members between them. Next year, it turned out that the section had grown as the only one in the world.⁷ Especially the youth lodge was active. The new General Secretary, Dr.

¹JINARAJADASA(1931), Panchayat, village council of (traditionally, five) 'wise men', often idealized as a model not just for village, but also for national government. For instance the Nepal monarchy saw it as an alternative to allowing political parties; until the popular revolt of 1990.

²AYAR(1931). He was Annie Besant's National Home Rule League provincial secretary.

³J NEHRU(1972), vol. VI, 113: Das expressed this idea in public and in a letter to Nehru; who wrote back that he objected to this equalization with fascism, though he did not agree with all in the Soviet Union.

⁴DAS(1934)

⁵DAS(1934), vii. STRUVE, 305: Count Keyserling (see p. 145) after the First World War also wrote of 'not bolshevism or Marxian socialism, which did not deserve the name Socialist, but "true" socialism ... because if everyone claimed to be a socialist the Social Democrat Party could not survive'.

⁶Review in May 1937 *TT*. In a debate in Madras on 15 Jan. 1936, Mehta said 'revolutionary parties the whole world through had enjoyed worsening discontent and sad people's conditions.' 'Debat over wereldhervorming', *Tini* March 1936, 51f.

⁷*TT* March 1932, 622.

S.A. Wickremasinghe had taken over from his next-door neighbour Mrs Elisabeth Lourensz, 6 Theatre Road, Wellawatte.¹

A critical member, Wickremasinghe warned the TS on 'confused thinking and emotional outbursts of devotion to a leader'² replacing international brotherhood ideals.

The growth of the TS did not last when Wickremasinghe turned his energies instead to the island's new Marxist movement.³ In Wellawatte where he lived, in February 1933 a big workers' strike took place, which lasted until victory in July.⁴ S.A. Wickremasinghe became one of the leaders of the revolutionary Marxist Lanka Sama Samaja Party. As did Doreen Young, who had come as a teacher from England, and whom he married. He wrote 'India is in the midst of her struggle for freedom; there are signs that Ceylon's is about to begin'.⁵ The party which he co-founded, though the only one advocating independence, saw freedom more in international workers' than in nationalist terms. Wickremasinghe left the TS. Other founders of the LSSP had been at Buddhist Theosophical Society schools.

2. 'ANARCHISM AND SIMILAR EVILS'

Anarchism (with Irish and Italian nationalism, and forms of Hinduism) was one of the influences on the Indian Congress 'extremists' whom Annie Besant opposed pre-1913.⁶ Gandhi also mentioned it at the 1916 controversy with her known as the 'Benares incident'. There, he described himself as a kind of anarchist, albeit different from extremists.⁷ The official Short Title of the British government's repressive Rowlatt Act was 'The Anarchical and Revolutionary Crimes Act, 1919'. Ferdinand Domela Nieuwenhuis influenced for instance E.F.E. Douwes Dekker and Marco in Indonesia.

That many anarchists were atheists too might cause conflicts with theosophists.⁸ Theosophists' ideas also differed from anarchists, as from Marxists, on ruling and working classes, and on concepts of freedom.⁹ There was the question of how one sees

¹Back cover TT, Jan 1931

²WICKREMASINGHE(1932), 399

³TT, Annual report on 1933, 576: 7 lodges, 102 members; -23 compared to 1932

⁴LERSKI, 15.

⁵WICKREMASINGHE(1932), 402

⁶JINARAJADASA(1986), 25: 'the Bengal anarchist revolutionaries'.

⁷MUTHANNA, 161. In the South African *Natal Advertiser* of 1-2-1895, Gandhi had attacked materialist philosophy as the cause of 'the awful growth of anarchism'; GANDHI(1958), vol. 1, 166. TS dissident Anna Kingsford then in the 1890's influenced his views; *ibid.*

⁸See the polemic in *De Vrije Socialist*, p. 241. See p. 23. A French saying popular among anarchists is *Ni Dieu, ni maître*: neither God nor master. No God was just possible in the TS; but no Master?

⁹DE PURUCKER(1906), 18, defined freedom 'briefly' as 'the inalienable right of man to own property, and to use all possibilities and facilities with which Nature endows him, unless such action

the state as well. According to Marxists, the state should wither away eventually. The view of anarchists is still more negative; if possible, the state should be abolished today.

'Anarchism' in *The Theosophist* was a term of abuse. *The Secret Doctrine* described it as 'blood-thirsty'.¹ One of H.P. Blavatsky's objections to Western societies was 'the growth of the party of anarchy and disorder'.²

The Editor of *The Buddhist*, at the close of a good editorial on 'Anarchism in Europe,' says: '... The only possible remedy for Anarchism and similar evils, lies in a remodelling of the Western ethical philosophy so as to allow a place in it for the paramount truths of Karma and Rebirth'.³

Australian TS GS Carroll in 1893 attacked: 'gambling and speculation, and thousands of Nihilists, Anarchists, and Disrupters of Society ... glibly propose reconstruction of society'.⁴

Since the 1890's, in The Netherlands theosophists and anarchists reacted at one another. In 1892, Domela Nieuwenhuis, who then was evolving from the country's best known social democrat to its best known anarchist, had called his new-born daughter Annie.⁵ Annie, after Besant, because of her past work for socialism (she had left the SDF recently).

In Dec. 1895, Domela Nieuwenhuis and W.B. Fricke, the Dutch TS (Adyar) leader, debated. Domela said that 'theosophy and theology differed but little and that Blavatsky

should damage others'; and, more mystically: 'Freedom in its essence can only be conceived as [religious] TRUTH'. He, *ibid.*, 17-8, warned against 'The deification of civil or political freedom ... which made beautiful France into a battlefield'. Many Marxists and anarchists would disagree with the central position in De Purucker's definitions of both individual property and of religious idealism.

¹Quoted TT, Dec. 1945, 92. KIEWIET DE JONGE(19170), 70 admitted 'rare cases' existed of 'the great, august ideal of anarchism, the stateless society. We think though, that reality, especially of Russian nihilism and French syndicalism, has shown that these are not the right ages for this.' *Ibid.*, 56, Kiewiet de Jonge explained his view of the state: 'Everywhere one finds that the masses, that society, without force cannot develop itself into even a remotely complex organization. If contracts could be disregarded freely, property expropriated freely, then this opportunity would be used so unlimitedly, that all social order would transform itself into chaos. Or, more correctly, a social order would never have arisen then.'

²BLAVATSKY(1987), 245.

³TT Dec. 1898, 190.

⁴ROE, 73. About then, Austrian esotericist and anti-Semite follower of Lueger, Josef Schlesinger, attacked 'materialist' scientists 'leading humanity scientifically into the arms of anarchism'. SENFT, 20.

⁵She died in 1899. Domela called his children after socialists: Karel after Marx, Cesar after Cesar De Paepe from Flanders. And Domela said he called Louise after Paris Commune leader Louise Michel; but MEYERS(1993), 385, doubts that. *Ibid.*, 215-6, suggests without conclusive proofs that Domela and Annie Besant, who had met at the Freethought congress in Amsterdam in 1883, had an affair in 1890-91.

was a fraud.¹ Later, Van Steenis² broke with anarchism as he joined that TS.

This one may see as a pattern we also saw in others' biographies, of convergence between rightward political and TS-ward philosophical trends. Just before he joined, Johan van Manen, later TS magazine for Indonesia editor, still later Mrs Besant's *Commonweal* editor, had anarchist sympathies.³

In spite of theosophist attacks on anarchism, at least two Dutch (ex)-anarchists joined the TS (Point Loma): J. Sterringa, a bookseller; and W. Meng, an ex-preacher whose 'anarchist views melted away forever' when he joined.⁴ Dutch architect and TS (Adyar) member Lauweriks at first illustrated Meng's magazine.⁵

The paper *Recht voor Allen*, like Domela slowly evolving from social democrat to anarchist, on 10 Nov. 1896 reported a speech by Meng on 'Property, seen from a theosophical viewpoint.' *RvA* commented it was 'as useful as from a plumbers' viewpoint'; it 'could not make head or tail of' the speech. In *RvA*, 'Akrates' [F. Drion] thought Meng 'dangerous'; instead of fighting for a better society, he 'stared at the volumes' of Schopenhauer and others.⁶

In widely read anarchist paper *De Vrije Socialist* M.A. Rabbie, who had visited theosophic meetings as an observer, critically described theosophy as 'theology's last refuge'.⁷ Rabbie and editor Domela Nieuwenhuis attacked Sterringa about theosophic authoritarianism. Welcker describes Sterringa's Pt. Loma society questionably as less authoritarian than Adyar.⁸ In matters of authority and democracy, Domela Nieuwenhuis compared theosophists with the Roman Catholic church. He concluded in favour of popes, whom at least a few score cardinals elected.⁹ He also criticized Sterringa's disparagement of trade unions and his remark on 'materialist' anarchist workers:

And out of what miserable motives did they join [unions]? Fear of unemployment and hunger! As if it would be bad for humanity if they starved!¹⁰

¹HOUKES(1995), 32.

²WELCKER, 482f.

³RICHARDUS, 2; 66. M. LUTYENS(1975) and NETHERCOT misspelled Johann

⁴HOUKES(1995), 32.

⁵BAX(1991), 49-51. She describes, *ibid.*, up to 1896 as Lauweriks 'anarchist period' without mentioning the shift in Meng's magazine

⁶HOUKES(1995), 32.

⁷RABBIE(1898A).

⁸WELCKER, *ibid.* The oath of R. Crosbie, and others who then still were his fellow members, to Leader and Official Head Tingley ran: 'I ... recognizing the person called Purple as being the agent of the Master I serve ... do hereby unreservedly pledge myself to unquestioning loyalty and obedience to her ... with my life if need be ... So Help me my Higher Self.' *OELC*, Nov.-Dec. 1934.

⁹DOMELA NIEUWENHUIS(1898). That was not friendly to theosophists, as Domela considered the church of Rome to be the ultimate opponent of anarchism; A. DE JONG, 71.

¹⁰STERRINGA(1898B).

Domela Nieuwenhuis wondered how Sterringa could reconcile this with the tenet proclaimed in theosophy, of the brotherhood of humanity. Contrary to Van Steenis, Sterringa wanted to continue as both an FTS and an anarchist. He defended authority in theosophy by comparing occult knowledge to knowledge of potentially dangerous chemicals. From the DVS discussion, though, one can tell that his reputation among anarchists had received a blow.

Rotterdam anarchist Damme wrote a booklet against the TS in 1916.¹ Dutch atheist and anarchist Anton Constandse in 1929 (the TS' zenith) wrote a brochure against spiritualism and theosophy. He based his criticism on Annie Besant's *The changing World*, which said:

In India ... the submerged classes ... are far happier ... instead of blaming their neighbours, blame themselves for the discomfort of their own position, and sometimes determine that their next birth shall be a happier one by making the very best they can of the disadvantages here. ... If you are trampled on, you must recognise that it is only yourself of the past trampling on yourself of the present.²

He also quoted a then recent Dutch TS leaflet: 'Only seemingly these inequalities, which will remain with man for one earthly life, are imposed on him from the outside, in reality, they are based on differences in experience, or man himself has built them up in former lives, according to nature's laws.'

Constandse's comments were:

One may see that this nonsense is very reactionary ... I do not need to show that these fantasies just aim to reassure the rich capitalist and guarantee his riches as deserved property, while one teaches the poor person that only through repenting and patience he may improve himself. Still more materialist than Christianity, one promises to the exploited prole very tangible advantages.... [... in original] in a future that keeps one waiting forever. And meanwhile, one expropriates him, very surely, owing to extraordinary virtuousness!³

In June 1911, French anarchists (and, for different reasons, Roman Catholics) waged action against Annie Besant speaking at the Paris Sorbonne university.⁴ Leadbeater reaffirmed the stand against anarchism in the 1920's.⁵

3. CONCLUSIONS OF PART IV

Was the Theosophical Society apolitical? was our first question. From the material in this part, we answer it negatively. On *Indië Weerbaar* and other issues, the TS in Indonesia did not heed their opponent Henk Sneevliet's advice to keep out of politics. Nor did Annie Besant or George Arundale in India.

Now, our second question, on leftist or rightist politics. In 1875, right after founding

¹THISSEN, 16.

²BESANT(1910C), 28; 241.

³CONSTANDSE(1929), 24.

⁴RANSOM(1938), 392.

⁵LEADBEATER(1922), 85.

in New York, Madame Blavatsky already considered TS membership incompatible with socialism. After that, there sometimes was open opposition, sometimes, as in Finland in the 1900's, attempts to make the socialists substitute class struggle by 'love and mutual understanding between the classes.'

In Indonesia, especially since 1916, there were conflicts with the political labour movement, first mainly on conscription, since 1918 mainly on revolution. In India, the political labour movement gained momentum later than in Indonesia; in contrast to national movements in both countries. The 1920's saw the TS conflicting with trade unions and communists of India. Both in India and Indonesia, the theosophists' headquarters, respectively school, had industrial disputes.

Most Marxists saw religion as a 'private matter'. Marxists tended to comment but rarely on theosophists unless both groups became involved in a particular political issue. Anarchists already in the 1890's tended more to seek out the TS and criticize their philosophy. Marty Bax ascribed to the TS 'Ties with socialism, anarchism.' One should modify this. The links as for movements were more often of antagonism than of sympathy.

As for biographies of individuals, like Annie Besant, Senator Reid in Australia, Van Hinloopen Labberton in Indonesia, their socialism or anarchism was mostly in different phases than their theosophy. The few, like Sterringa and Resink, who really tried to link the two faced strong opposition; their attempts did not last. This is not truly surprising for a Society, of which, as Bax herself wrote 'A major part belonged to the Dutch patriciate [old established layers of the bourgeoisie; gentry] and the nobility, of whom some figured prominently in the Dutch business world.'¹ One might make more or less similar remarks on other countries.

PART V. IMPERIALISM, HOME RULE, NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE

1. IMPERIALISM

There are many different theories of imperialism. One may distinguish at least two types in the history of ideas.

On the one hand, Hobson, Lenin, many Marxists, and many economic historians, say that imperialism started about 1870. The basis of earlier colonialism had been mostly trade; unequal trade, if your position was strong enough. Strategic military points, mostly along coasts, protected that trade.

Since the 1870-71 Franco-German war, and French reparation payments after it, big banks could consolidate into 'financial capitalism'. Deeper military, political and economic penetration of many countries worked to integrate these into the capitalist world market 'on periphery'. Now, china or spices were no longer that central in the world economy. Agricultural and mineral raw materials, not necessarily from coastal areas, were. So were direct investments.

The US, Japan, big and some small European countries, all had their own ideologists to justify this. Olcott referred to one of them, prominent FTS:

that great scholar and renowned publicist, Dr. Hübner-Schleiden, the acknowledged author of that German policy of colonial expansion which Prince Bismarck fashioned out of his writings.¹

Another view of imperialism saw it as not so linked to a specific period, or to economics; rather as 'natural', 'timeless', projecting back into, say, the Roman empire,² both practices and ideologies. Theosophist authors also argued on these lines.

It was his love of law and order that moved the Roman to annex the barbarian without, that he too might enjoy the benefits of Roman law.³

Kiewiet de Jonge during the First World War described his post-war expectations:

¹ODL, 77 July 1903, 582. WEHLER saw Hübner-Schleiden as central -though not the only one- to German colonialist theory. He did not say much on his practice as a senior official, or a planter in West Africa; or on the TS. Dutch colonial politician VAN DEDEM, 466, got along well with Hübner-Schleiden.

²The Earl of Cromer [of Barings Bank]: *Greater Britain and greater Rome*; Lenin wrote against him. Or ancient Middle East realms: the 'British Israel Movement', including politicians Lord Vansittart and Jan Smuts, prime minister of South Africa and the first to use the word 'holism', religiously sanctioned the British empire by claiming not Jews, but British and related peoples were the true descendants of Israel, the British kings descended from the ancient Israel kings, and in building the Great Pyramid Egyptians had used the English inch as a measure; JANSSEN(1954), 24f; 'Een strijd om de Cheops-Pyramide', *TMN* 1923, 353-64. Or 16th century Portugal: TS-influenced poet and international business correspondent Fernando Pessoa believed in a new civilizing Portuguese empire in the near future; then, King Sebastião would return after three and half centuries, and he himself would be Luis de Camões reincarnate. PERRONE-MOISÉS, 87-8.

³J. WILKINSON(1930), 491. Caesar in the accounts of his wars was more cynically honest.

¹BAX(1994).

If then from this, or a next, war, a state or group of states will emerge all powerful, and will accept political leadership of the world without being challenged, then the nations will be able to rejoice about the amplification of their international law horizon, even though this hegemony may seemingly be a usurpation. For thus already to the Greeks seemed Alexander's [the Great of Macedonia] empire, to the Gauls Julius Caesar's rule, to the West European nations Charlemagne's or Napoleon's rule- and look at how beneficial the consequences of those reigns, often maligned in their times, were for the organization of mankind!

If such a world power should rise again, then we should trust either in history's eternal principles, or in Divine Providence -and is not that the same as the former- that, as after democracy's victory [in Athens before Alexander] and internal strife, in Hellas Alexander appeared, in Rome Augustus, in France Napoleon- that also thus at the head of that world-ruling state, or group of states, a world ruler shall appear in order to organize mankind with a firm hand, according to modern tendencies of development and to remove what would hinder the new social and political structures.¹

Annie Besant 'represented the extreme anti-imperialistic spirit' in the 1870's and 80's.² She then spoke of England's 'bullying, boasting, cruel imperialism'; of its 'land-stealing, piratical policy'.³ But later:

when I was a young girl, brought up as I was in a Whig [Liberal] family, I used to hear remarks about the Colonies very different from the remarks I hear to-day. They were spoken of grudgingly, with the hope that they would break away and make Kingdoms, Republics, as they pleased, of their own. They were not looked upon as parts of a mighty Empire ... And in the Colonies themselves there was much of the same idea- independence, separation ... But how different now!⁴

In the April 1912 editorial of *The Theosophist*, Annie Besant quoted a 'noble' editorial of the *Financial News*, as that paper was 'spiritualising the business world', also on Britain's links to its Empire:

The last twenty years have wrought a great change in us, and especially in the most deeply reflective section of the community made up of its business men. ... There, with almost furtive quietude, has arisen the conviction that while we must bate no jot of our endeavour to extend and fortify our material prosperity, our success is not the end in itself, but only the means to its attainment. Every factor in the outlook at this most critical period in the history of the world is full of suggestion that the uplifting of humanity depends upon the blending of the material and the mystic. Is it coincidence, or is it Design, that has joined under one Imperial flag the fearless [Indian] adepts of the mystic and occult, and the restless conquerors of the material resources of

¹KIEWIET DE JONGE(1917B), 238-9. Ibid., 239: 'South Africa [after the Boer War] has shown how fast both phases of usurpation and political community can follow one another.' Alexander the Great was a theosophical Master, according to Besant's *The Ancient Wisdom*, 4; as quoted LUNS, 24.

²BAKSHI, 27.

³BESANT(1877A), 4; BESANT(1893), 175; quoting from earlier writings, BESANT(1877A), 3: 'our inhuman cruelties'.

⁴BESANT(1911C), 18. BESANT(1919B), 70, defined: 'An Empire is an assemblage of free and subject Nations, with a common Government, which may be autocratic, or partly democratic.'

the earth? ... If we turn from the transient pomp and circumstance [of the English royal visit to India] to the eternal verities behind them we may come to see that the onward path of imperialism lies through a more intimate blending of Western modes of action with Eastern habits of thought. ... By this time we are all aware that to evoke the more permanent stimuli, and to arouse real enthusiasm among modern Imperialists, the notes of mysticism must be added to the chord: and the resulting harmony will awaken East and West alike.¹

Then, Annie Besant and C.W. Leadbeater wrote about imperialism as not limited to any age of imperialism, nor to planet Earth. On an island on the moon, millions of years ago, where comparatively 'good savages' lived:

help comes from outside which quickens their evolution. A stranger lands upon the island, a man of much higher type and lighter complexion -a clear bright blue- than the muddy-brown islanders, who cluster around him with much curiosity and admiration. He comes to civilise the islanders, who are docile and teachable, in order to incorporate them in the Empire, from the capital city of which he has come ... they ... decide that he is a God, and proceed to worship him ...²

Other savages, on planet Earth's satellite, were not docile:

Some of the humanity of the Moon succeeded in going beyond the Arhat Initiation, and their superiors were evidently from a humanity which had reached a far higher stage.

It was from These that an order reached the Ruler of the city -which was the capital of a large Empire- for the extermination of the savages of the mainland coasts. The expedition was led by Virāj ... with Mars³ under him ... The extermination of the savages -though done in obedience to an order that none dared to disobey- was regarded by the soldiers, and even by most of the officers, as only part of a political plan of conquest, intended to enlarge the borders of the Empire, these tribes stood in the way, and therefore had to be cleared out of it.

From the higher standpoint, a stage had been reached beyond which these savages were incapable of advancing on the Moon Chain, bodies suitable to their low stage of evolution being no longer available ... It was the 'Day of Judgment' of the Moon Chain, the separation between those who were capable and those who were incapable of further progress on that Chain ...⁴

¹AB, WT, TT Apr. 1912, 6-7.

²BESANT and LEADBEATER(1913), 45f.

³Virāj and Mars: 'star names' for the Maha Chohan and Master M. of the Great White Brotherhood.

⁴BESANT and LEADBEATER(1913), 48ff. As for the past, so for the future: Leadbeater discussed the esoteric meaning of the Last Judgment; LEADBEATER(1913), 209: at the end of this Round conditions will be 'specially adapted to favour rapid progress of more advanced Egos and will no longer agree with entities stuck into an inferior stadium of evolution. The crass vibrations of the violent passions and lowly and bad sentiments, necessary to develop the inert and barely organized astral body of the savage, will no longer be of use. In a world where a high intellectual and spiritual development will prevail ... the existence of savage races, with unrestrained passions and having only the will to fight, would evidently be a source of many difficulties and serious complications ... The best course possible, and the most profitable for them, is simply to exclude them from this evolution and have them wait [for millions of years] for the next planetary chain.' Ibid., 211: 'This condition requires a peaceful and contemplative life that would become impossible if on earth savage races, always ready for attack and massacre, should still remain.' A paraphrase of these ideas in LEADBEATER(1905A), 19. JINARAJADASA(1939), 34, proposed a 'Central Board of Trustees

2. HOME RULE. INDEPENDENCE

During relatively short, but sometimes crucial, periods, the Theosophical Society stimulated some Home Rule movements. For the two most important countries which we will discuss, India and Indonesia, one may put these periods roughly at 1913-1918.

The TS could not go along with, and was bypassed by, subsequent demands for independence and social revolution. We have discussed theosophists' problems with social revolution. Problems with non-co-operation strategies, which theosophists had in Ireland, India, and Indonesia, Annie Besant explained from the TS' basic principles; see p. 262f. An obstacle to going along with movements as they radicalized was the theosophical leaders' view of 'the great World Empire of the fifth [Aryan] race',¹ based on the British empire.²

for Backward Peoples'; somewhat akin to the 'ultra-imperialism' concept of some German social democrats.

¹VAN GINKEL(1915), 68. 20 years after the *Secret Doctrine*, Besant wrote her *Pedigree of Man* as a summary of the latter; TS treasurer Schwarz further summarized. Of the Aryan successors to the Atlanteans, the most recent branch had a global political future ahead: 'FIFTH SUB-RACE. The Teutonic. Also migrating westwards, occupied all Central Europe, and is now spreading over the world. It has occupied the greater part of North-America, it has seized Australia and New Zealand and is destined to build a world-empire and to sway the destinies of civilisation (pp. 150, 151).' SCHWARZ(1905), 554, table K: 'The Fifth or Aryan Race'. References to AB's *Pedigree of man*. VAN GINKEL(1915), 67: 'with the Teuton, one sees the long skull, the blond hair, the blue or light-coloured-eyes'.

²See p. 77f.; VAN GINKEL(1915), 62f. In her *Theosophy and Imperialism*, BESANT(1916C), 480, wrote on the British empire's future: 'The racial tie in the Empire would be the Aryan. As all the Nations in it descend from a common ancestor; and curiously enough, it would include the five sub-races already evolved-the Indian, the Persian exiles in India, the Egyptian, the Kelt, the Teuton.' Ibid., 482: 'India will bring to the common stock her sublime ideals of spirituality, of social interdependence, her higher standard of social honour, of the duty of the individual to the whole of which he is a part. Such a body politic as will be this Aryan empire the world has never yet seen. The combination of qualities in the constituent Nations will create a Federation unexampled in the history of the world. ... The various branches of the Aryan Race, developed in different environments, will unite in one splendid Imperial Brotherhood, the greatest the world has seen since the City of the Golden Gate [capital of the empire of the Atlantean race's 'highest phase'] was ruined, and that Aryan Empire shall rise higher and higher, until it overtops all that have gone before, the marvel of a world, the glory of Aryan humanity.' She saw the British empire as the basis for the Aryan empire, basing herself on theosophist Lieut.-Col. Peacocke's 'British Empire Destiny', in *The Leader of Mombasa*, quoted BESANT(1920A), 206f; 208-9: 'Our Lieut.-Colonel proceeds, after speaking of what I have called "The Inner Government of the World": You may now be asking: what has all this to do with the establishment of a British Empire? Well, if God (or Providence) be a reality and not a mere pious fancy, if He has a definite object in the creation of humanity, and if the growth of humanity is being guided towards the achievement of that object, it is surely of no small importance to decide what type of people shall be entrusted for a time with extensive power in the world and the right of governing other peoples of various types and Faiths, and so effecting their future development. ... Having proved suitable, it was decided that the British should be entrusted

The nation that shall lead tomorrow, that shall have a role comparable to that of *Manu*, of father, shall probably be England; on the mother, or *Bodhisattwa* side, we shall have India.¹

In, say, India's case, one should not tear asunder the links of empire because Indians belong to the same, Aryan, root race. And in, say, Africa's case, one should not tear asunder because Africans *do not* belong to the Aryans; and should learn from their elder brothers. When *The African Times and Orient Review* asked Mrs Besant how she saw 'the interests of the coloured races', she replied, linking 'racial' to British internal social inequalities:

English liberty ... cannot be suddenly transplanted into communities where the very alphabet of self-government is still to be learned. English liberty is now in danger, in consequence of too sudden and too large introductions of masses of ignorant people into the sphere of government [many of the workers recently got the vote], and a similar policy in hitherto non-self-governing peoples would have similar results. The partial measure of self-government given lately to India will make possible, ere long, the inclusion of all her educated classes in the governing class; but India is capable of exceptionally rapid progress, because she already possesses an ancient and splendid civilisation, and has merely to adapt herself to the new methods. ... 'Coloured men' is a wide term, and includes very different types, and no one system can be applied to all. Some coloured races are the equals of white races, while others are far more childish. The best heads and hearts in both races should guide, while the more childish follow.²

However, Guénon's view

we have the conviction, we might even say, certainly, that theosophism ... is above all an instrument at British imperialism's service³,

smacks too much of explaining world history by conspiracies.

Annie Besant preferred world empires; not just outside, but also inside Europe:

Yet Europe owes Hungary much for her resistance to the Turks. The multitude of small States created at Trianon form a setback for the evolution of the United States of Europe.⁴

Now, we will look at Home Rule, anti-colonial, and national (sometimes: nationalist) movements in three Asian countries

with the projected World Empire.' Peacocke was cousin to the Marquess of Ely; ex-major in the Boer War; *TMT* 1913, 181; and ex-president of the South African TS; TS Annual Report on 1903, 118.

¹French FTS G. Revel: *De l'an 25000 avant Jésus-Christ à nos jours*; quoted GUÉNON(1921), 293. Anna Kingsford, *The Perfect Way*, quoted GUÉNON(1921), 294: 'the existing connection between England and India elevates itself from the political into the spiritual sphere.'

²'Inarticulate wrongs', *TT* Sept. 1912, 856.

³GUÉNON(1921), 281.

⁴At Trianon the post-World War I treaty with Hungary was concluded. 1927 London speech by Besant, *TT* Apr. 1936, 92. Hungary's dictator-Regent, Horthy, invited Besant in 1929 to an audience. FEKETE, 90.

A.INDIA

1. Lord Curzon and other viceroys

Before we go into the relationship with eventually the major opponent of colonial rule, the Indian National Congress, we go into relations to that rule as British viceroys represented it.

In Annie Besant's view, the Himalayan Mahatmas' hierarchy included a 'Spiritual Viceroy' of India.¹

The first earthly Viceroy of British India we will deal with was one of the most controversial: Lord Curzon. Long before becoming viceroy, in 1887, he had called at Olcott's in Adyar to discuss theosophy.² Looking back, *TT* approvingly mentioned George Nathaniel Curzon, M.P., as he still was in 1894:

... displays that same brave declaration of opinion ... that have been so conspicuously shown since his coming to India. He writes to Mr. [W. T.] Stead 'I entirely sympathize with your projected publication of a quarterly review dedicated to the examination of so-called spiritual or supernatural phenomena.'³

In contrast to Annie Besant herself five years earlier (see p. 252), in 1899 the British Secretary of State for India (1899-1903), Lord George Hamilton, thought that she still mattered in the sphere of politics. He wrote to his fellow Conservative Lord Curzon:

Havelock told me that Mrs. Besant has been very useful in Madras in combating the Congress leaders, and denouncing Western methods of agitation as wholly unsuited to India, and endeavouring to establish a system of modern education associated with definite religious and moral training.⁴

According to Hamilton, Besant's Central Hindu College was a good antidote to secular education.⁵ Viceroy Curzon expressed his sympathy with Hindu College.⁶ He also visited the Adyar TS headquarters in 1900.⁷ *TT* praised Curzon repeatedly⁸; at a time

¹CLEATHER(1922A).

²RANSOM(1938), 244.

³July 1903, *ODL*, 578f. Unlike from Curzon, Stead got a 'scornful' reply from Prof. Ray Lankester; see p. 139.

⁴'Letter of George Hamilton to Curzon about Annie Besant's proposal for a college at Benaras, 9 August 1899', in: GROVER(1967), 207.

⁵GROVER(1967), 52.

⁶'Lord Curzon's sympathy with the Central Hindu College scheme', *TT*, suppl. Feb. 1899, xxi-xxii.

⁷JINARAJADASA(1925), 229. See also Olcott in *ODL*, *TT*, Sept. 1906, 882.

⁸*TT* Apr. 1899, 447: 'It looks very much as if he were going to be the greatest viceroy we have had since Warren Hastings [first British governor-general in India; since 1773]; May 1899, 509; 1901-02, 253 'A Great Viceroy'; Feb. 1903, 317. *TT*, Apr. 1906, 557, quoted Curzon's 'wise words to the graduates of the Calcutta University last year', on India: 'public opinion ... should treat

when he was very unpopular in India.¹ During Lord Curzon's time in office, a theosophist reviewed a critical book by an Indian:

It contains much that is good and helpful, but at the same time there is much that is misleading concerning the methods of Western countries, and, I think, concerning the intentions of Government in India. One serious mistake the author makes is to class the Australian aborigines and the American red Indians with the natives of India.²

A big issue in 1905 was Curzon's partition of Bengal. Students at Annie Besant's CHC went shoeless as a protest against it. AB herself stood at the gate 'and refused to admit any student without shoes.'³

When Annie Besant was in a left phase, Lord Curzon warned against women's suffrage in England because of the effect in India. She then called him

a late viceroy, more popular over here than in India whilst he was there.⁴

By 1917, relations had not gone back to their earlier friendly footing. Curzon then said in a British cabinet session on India

the revolutionary propagandists of the genre of Tilak and Mrs Besant were dangerous, and in the East things were apt to move with the startling rapidity of a prairie fire.⁵

At the end of 1916, just before Curzon's attack on her, Annie Besant had taken a defiant stand against those directly below the Viceroy; a stand, different from immediately earlier or later periods in her life:

No Governor, no Chief Commissioner can hinder one who works only for God.⁶

In July 1906, Annie Besant praised Lord Curzon's successor Lord Minto.⁷ She

Government as a power to be influenced, not as an enemy to be abused. Some day, I hope, this will come.'

¹ALI, 12f. MAJUMDAR(1969), 1: 'When Lord Curzon left India in November 1905, the whole country heaved a sigh of relief. Perhaps no other Governor-General excited such bitter hatred or provoked such ill feelings in the minds of the people'; including moderates like G.K. Gokhale. TIJPTO MANGOENKOESEMO(1928), 15 characterized Curzon: 'autocrat-despising all the people's rights.'

²X(1903), on S. Virabhadra Sarma, *Universal Problems*.

³NETHERCOT(1963), 87. The British authorities noted AB's 'firm position'; M.N. DAS, 31. Sister Nivedita (Margaret Noble), of Swami Vivekananda's organization, living in Bengal, differed: 'she sided with those who advocated the most radical measures of protest' against the partition; MAC MILLAN, 218. TIJPTO MANGOENKOESEMO(1928), 18-9 and Sukarno's foreword saw it similarly. Bengal was reunited in 1912.

⁴BESANT(1914B), 15f. Already BESANT(1911C), 167: 'the evil results of Lord Curzon's vicereignty.'

⁵Quoted WHITE, 98. Curzon later became father-in-law of British fascist Leader Sir Oswald Mosley.

⁶BESANT(1917A), 27-8.

⁷In *Central Hindu College Magazine*, July 1906; quoted *TT*, Aug. 1906, 875. MAJUMDAR(1969), 2, called Minto's rule (1905-1910) 'a tyrannical regime' in meting out punishment to the 'seditious',

repeatedly called for a Royal Viceroy¹ with an unlimited term of office, instead of the usual five years.

2. Beginnings. 'Congress and its mother body, our Society'. What is *Svaraj*?

The first session of the Indian National Congress was in 1885. Organizations like the Madras *Mahajana Sabha*, consisting of local Brahmins, 'several of whom were theosophists', had prepared the way for it.² According to Annie Besant, TS impact on the politics of India did not start with her; Blavatsky and Olcott had brought the charter of India's freedom from the White Lodge, but were unable to stir Indians into united action.³ In *LucL*, Dec. 1889, appeared an article by H.P. Blavatsky 'Our three objects':

... Congress. This remarkable political body was ... [made] by ... our Anglo-Indian and Hindu members after the model and on the lines of the Theosophical Society. It has from the first been directed by our own colleagues, men among the most influential of the Indian empire ... At the same time, there is no connection whatever, barring that through the personalities of individuals, between the Congress and its mother body, our Society.⁴

British official A.O. Hume was important to the early days of Congress, as its secretary from 1885 until 1906. By then, though, he was more critical of the TS than during the relatively short time he had been a member.⁵

In the Mahatma letters to Sinnett were frequent references to the 1880's Ilbert Bill proposal,⁶ which angered many British residents in India. It would have allowed Indian judges to preside in trials of Europeans; the Mahatma letters opposed the angry reactions, but considered the Bill 'extreme'. The Ilbert Bill was withdrawn. Olcott thought the British might 'rule through love' if they were to understand India more.⁷

in spite of some reforms in accessibility of government positions to Indians.

¹TT Nov. 1908, 99; BESANT(1910B). BESANT(1911C), 171. WT, TT Dec. 1915, 236-7

²WOLPERT(1977), 262.

³NETHERCOT(1963), 434; quoting AB in TT Jan. 1930.

⁴HPB in 1890 in *LB*: 'When the political agitation started, the National Congress was modelled after our plan...'; quoted GUÉNON(1921), 283

⁵PRICE(1986A), 40. For a short time after 1881, Hume was a TS vice president; JINARAJADASA(1925), 253. VAN LEEUWEN(1921H), 110, defending HPB against Count Witte, confused Hume with American spiritualist Daniel D. Home.

⁶TH, Oct. 1885, 198.

⁷ODL, II, 382. Olcott contrasted British *Raj* favourably to its Mogul predecessors: 'one cannot refrain from being thankful that this cesspool of animalism [the Mogul harem, etc.] has been purged by the influx of a purer and nobler civilisation'; ODL, TT, Oct. 1898, 129. Olcott on Lucknow, former royal capital of Aude: over it 'hangs -if one looks at it from the standpoint of the higher planes (clairvoyantly)- the dark cloud of the aura of the sensual and self-seeking character of the ruling class which made it, up to the time of the British Conquest, a cess-pool of animality.' TT, July 1906, 723. TT, Oct. 1898, 54-5, reviewed C.P. Hogan's *Text-Book of Official Procedure* of the British India government: 'Hence Local Governments and Administrations, nay every Native Chief

Part of the interest that Annie Besant had evoked in Indians since she first came in 1893 was her Irishness. Irish and Indian anti-colonial movements have a long history of mutual influence on one another; and on Indonesia.¹

Mrs Besant could not, though, impress Indians with a strong TS in Ireland. The TS early on attracted influential Irish individuals: W.B. Yeats, 'AE', C. Despard. Also, Maud Gonne². Conflicts, however, kept the organization small. Relatively much smaller than in the other island colony in Europe, Iceland. Though Indian politics might interest some Icelanders, Asians did not take much notice of Iceland.

On 18 February 1894, Annie Besant made her first speech to an Indian National Congress session, in Lahore.³ Nethercot paraphrased her in 1894: 'Her work in the sphere of politics was over ... she would never resume it.'⁴ But she had spoken a few months before about 'eight centuries of conquest and degradation'; meaning at the hands of both Muslims and Britons.⁵

When in 1922 she looked back at her pre-1913 phase, she denied her life then had been really apolitical:

In politics, I worked more in England than in India, well knowing that until pride in India was aroused, pride in her [Hindu] past and hope for her future, until social self-respect and

in India, could not do better than reorganize their Secretariats on the basis of those of the Government of India; in which case, the Text-Book of Official Procedure would be eminently useful towards the accomplishment of the object'.

¹INGLESON(1974), 9. ALI, 15; DANGE, vol. 1, 44; TAYLOR(1992), 270-1. At the 1894 Congress session, Irish MP Alfred Webb presided, another Irish MP sharply attacked the British government, and Annie Besant spoke. VAN DEDEM, 482f. Compare also O'CONNOR, 27. 'A.E.' (George Russell), editor of the *Irish Statesman*, 'telling ... Indians how to understand Gandhi ...'. Jawaharlal Nehru's sister, Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, when she was 16 won a gold medal for an essay on Ireland's Easter rising; J. Nayak (ed.), *Indian Womanhood. Then and Now*. Indore, Satprakashan, 1983, 255. Maybe there was also an occult mutual influence with Ceylon; TT Nov. 1898, 126 wrote a Sinhalese Buddha image had been found in an Irish bog.

²MEADE, 402. She also joined the TS' spin-off Golden Dawn for a short time; but by at least 1902 she saw occultists as charlatans. COXHEAD, 30; 52.

³ODL, TT Jan. 1903, 200; VAN DEDEM, 486. Contrary to SANGAT SINGH, 240 on AB: 'She came to the Congress platform for the first time in 1914.' Dharmapala, who sat next to Baron Van DeDEM, also spoke in 1894. DINNAGE(1986), 107 lets Congress start in 1906; 21 years late. In 2 out of the 3 regions which were over-represented in Congress politics (Madras and Bombay), the TS was relatively strong; only in the third one, Bengal, it was weak. Of 19,605 members of Congress, 3,905 were from Bengal, 4,061 from Madras, 4,857 from Bombay, 6,740 from all other Indian regions; MORTIMER(1983), 77.

⁴NETHERCOT(1963), 23.

⁵WWH, 16. She had also campaigned that year for election of Dadhabhai Naoroji, first Indian MP in the British parliament; TAYLOR(1992), 271. That she had 'only success in English or anglophile circles' in India (ENCYCLOPEDIA UNIVERSALIS; based on GUÉNON(1921), 122) is not right.

independence were awakened, no strong basis existed for political liberty.¹

Unrest, and influence of 'extremists' in Congress, spread in various regions. In the west, Tilak had contacts with both Bombay workers and Hindu clergy. In Bengal, British authorities condemned young Satyendra to death for an attempt on an official's life. The London *Times* of 1 Feb. 1909 praised Annie Besant's reaction, similar to that in 1905 on Bengal partition, in an article 'Mrs. Besant and Indian Unrest'. At a meeting in Bangalore, with Major-General Pilcher, FTS,² in the chair, and the dewan of Mysore, V.P. Madhava Rao, C.I.E., present, she said on Satyendra's death sentence:

after the crime of political murder had been committed the law was bound to take its course, and his mother's tears and prayers to the authorities, even to the King-Emperor himself, were to no avail.

Mrs Besant told how in Poona she had asked to join her organization for 'good citizenship.' She got as a reply that if that would help to release Tilak, then jailed in Mandalay,

three-fourths of the student population would join the movement. Her response was: 'Thanks. On those terms we can do without your Poona help.'

So in 1913 Annie Besant did not really shift from apoliticism to politics, but rather to a different approach in politics.

Dr. Nair, later to be co-founder of the non-Brahmin movement, in 1913 criticized Annie Besant as too pro-empire. Besant just then though changed her views to a more active pro-Home Rule stand.

Leadbeater was a staunch imperialist: 'what else than love holds this Empire together?', he asked rhetorically.³ The Australian Martyn reported private conversations with him, in which, he said, Leadbeater attacked Besant's politics.⁴ Martyn, however, by the time he reported this, had become CWL's bitter opponent. Leadbeater himself wrote that on the political work of Annie Besant, he held the viewpoint of the occultist: you trust and follow. And the Ruler of the World had inspired the PTS on Home Rule.⁵

How could Annie Besant combine her pro-British empire stance on the war, with a Home Rule for India stance, which to colonialist diehards⁶ was anti-British? According to Jinarajadasa, AB had had a vision of

¹Annie Besant, *The future of Indian politics*, quoted SHUKLA(1960), 89.

²ADB March 1909, 176.

³*The Great War*, TT Feb. 1916, 517. See also TILLET(1982), 149, 154.

⁴Ibid., 188f.; see F.J.W.S.

⁵NETHERCOT(1963), 217.

⁶JINARAJADASA(1938), 54: some of them were extreme; an Australian on AB: "That's the woman who worked to help the Germans win the war." At the end of 1916, Besant tended to think British India government leaders were among these diehards: 'I believe sometimes they thought that I got it [her money] from the Germans. (Laughter). So they shut me out of Bombay and they shut me out of the Central Provinces [Madhya Pradesh] (Cries of "Shame!")'. BESANT(1917A), 27.

victory of the Allies, which was therefore fore-ordained. It was this fore-knowledge by Dr. Besant of the victory of Britain and the Allies that made her go straight ahead and not swerve in the political campaign of Home Rule for India even though the British Empire was at war.¹

She said British policy in India was an obstacle to an allied victory.² *New India* wrote: the ideal of Self-Government for India along Colonial lines ... under the educative guidance of British statesmanship until Colonial Autonomy is attained ... obliteration of all racial privileges ...³

When Annie Besant swept to the left, at the head of her Home Rule League, and put less emphasis on the link with Britain than either earlier on or later, she said:

The duty of the Theosophist in India is to teach patriotism here as the Englishman teaches it - and rightly teaches it - in England. In India their patriotism must be love of their own land and only secondarily of the Empire at large.⁴

Her shift had increased theosophy's popularity in Indian politics, in late 1916, early 1917, as Dutch East Indies Government Secretary and ardent follower of Annie Besant, A.G. Vreede, said.⁵ Vreede wrote on aims, though:

Often - also with some English - there is the wrong impression that India asks for complete independence ... (though it would really like to see a Viceroy from the royal family).⁶

The 'delightfully vague' word *Svaraj*⁷ might mean both 'dominion status' and 'independence'. Many nationalists could live with that ambiguity at least for some time: they saw the former as possibly a transition, when the relationship of forces would permit so, to the latter. India's communists wanted an unequivocal meaning of *Svaraj*.⁸

So did Annie Besant and the TS; differently. They did not want that transition. In 1921, Mrs Besant would write that she left Congress owing to 'my refusal to countenance

¹JINARAJADASA(1938), 52.

²At the 1917 TS convention, she compared the situation with Old Testament Israelites, unable to win a war until one of them, who had stolen something, had been punished: 'As long as the sin of Achan is found within the Allies camp, the victory will be postponed'. *TMNI*, 1918, 284-5.

³NETHERCOT(1963), 224

⁴BESANT(1917A), 60

⁵Then, Vreede visited India for three months and attended Congress as a reporter for *Koloniale Studieën* magazine. VREEDE(1917B), 2: 'Theosophy, there it is, is the magic wand, which immediately, on both sides, takes away the "colourbar" ... and armed with that wand, I managed with the greatest of ease to collect my materials abundantly.'

⁶A. VREEDE(1917B), 46.

⁷BRECHER(1959), 71. A concept first raised at the 1906 Congress session by Dadhabhai Naoroji. Tilak, quoted BAKSHI, 62: 'I don't care for any name.'

⁸In 'Point of View of the Masses', *Masses*, vol. 1, 4, April 1925, reprinted: ADHIKARI(1974), 501, they wrote of Congress leaders: 'whittling down the conception of Svaraj to dominion status ... under the inspiration, it seems, of Mrs Annie Besant, who has left preoccupation with the beatitudes of Hindu philosophy for the more urgent task of assuring British domination in India under some form or other. Apparently she has not been able to inspire among her fellow members of the committee that love for "the British connection" with which she herself is consumed.'

"Self-Government within or without the Empire":¹

the votes of the local Congress organizations show that they no longer want Dominion Home Rule, but independence. I hold to the union between Great Britain and India as vital to both countries.²

Dominion status to many Indians had been a matter of tactics; to Besant, it was a final goal,³ divinely sanctioned. In his biography, Jinarajadasa summed up her views:

It will be seen from the ideals which she proclaimed that not only was there never any dream of the independence of India, but there was a clear enunciation that India was to remain a member of the British Empire under the headship of its Sovereign [the king].⁴

So it was a matter of principle, connected to the Aryan world empire to grow out of the present British empire.⁵ A matter of principle, based on her doctrines of the Inner Government of the World and Root-Races. It implied that British Aryans should not ride roughshod over Indian fellow Aryans. It also implied, though, that Indians should not separate from their fifth sub-race brethren. No writer, I think, ever emphasized how important these esoteric 'apolitical' ideas were for understanding her politics. After she had joined the Theosophical Society, Besant never again became a radical on whether complete independence, or rather something short of that, was the ultimate end; as apart from being for some time a radical on means.

If little more than the British crown ties dominions to Britain, and if the king-emperor is little more than a figurehead, then one may argue that dominion status and independence do not differ much. We will see, however, on p. 320 that Annie Besant did not want the king to be merely a figurehead.

One may have a speculative theory about the British empire, instead of dissolving as really happened, democratizing, which would have given a key-position to India. Gandhi's slogan in his South Africa years 'We are citizens of the Empire' pointed more or less in that direction.⁶ What separated Annie Besant from this 'democratized empire' view⁷ were not just her ideas on Africans and other people, but her opposition to

¹BESANT(1921A), 309.

²BESANT(1921A), 308.

³At least for this Manvantara. S. Subramanya Iyer, *Ni*, 25-8-1924, 5 put the accent a bit differently: 'the oldest branch [India] of the Aryan Race capable of contributing to the well-being of mankind as much as, if not more than, the later and comparatively smaller branch laying a false claim to superiority ...'

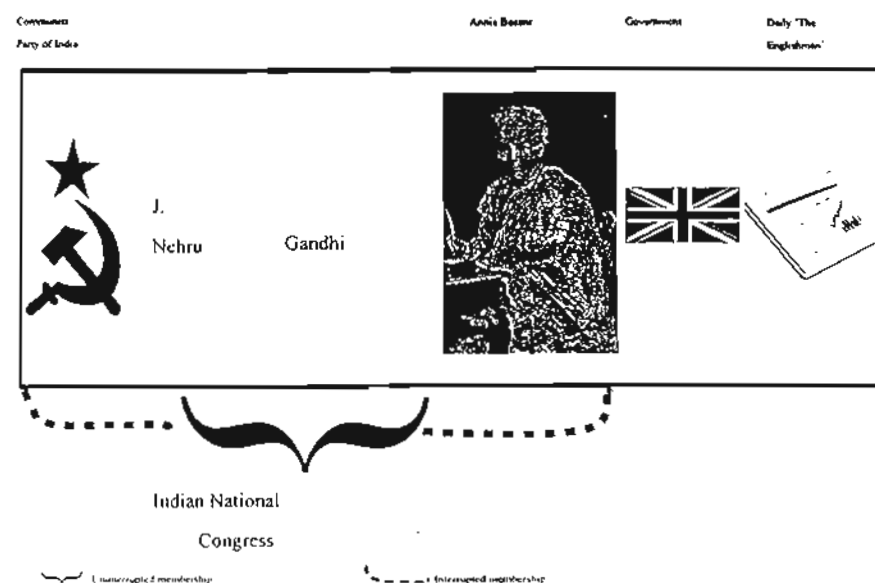
⁴JINARAJADASA(1986), 30-1; written in 1932.

⁵See p. 266. AIYAR(1924), 60: 'to enable [England and India], in spite of their differences ... to lead the Aryan civilisation of the future ...'

⁶Lord Sinha, in his 7 March 1919 speech at the London Savoy Hotel, MONTAGU et al., 28, claimed 'the status of equal British citizens' for Indians.

⁷Indian communist Shapurji Saklatvala argued that view would never be put into practice: 'Equal rights for India inside such an empire would be a grave danger to the British bourgeoisie, and not a gift, and unless British domination can be preserved by hook or by crook, by terror or by polished

universal suffrage even for poor 'Aryan' Indians or Britons.¹



Political spectrum of India, 1918-1933

In the 1920's, a left to right spectrum had evolved in Indian politics: from the communists to Jawaharlal Nehru, to Gandhi, to Annie Besant; and from the viceregal government to a paper like *The Englishman* on the extreme right.²

3. Gokhale, Tilak, and Gandhi

G. K. Gokhale's relationship to the TS was complex. Nethercot claims that he was an 'earnest Theosophist until his political conversion';³ and later that he was: 'an agnostic of the old Darwin-Spencer-Huxley ... school, and distrusted the mixing of religion

roguery, by [Conservative] baldwinism or [right wing Labour] macdonaldism, Britain has no use for India within the empire'. Article 'The Simon Commission', *Labour Monthly*, 1927; reprinted ADHIKARI(1979), 295.

¹See p. 249. MORTIMER(1983), 69: she did want a 'Parliament of the Empire'; the franchise for electing its Indian members would be limited to Indian MPs.

²The Indo-British Association, founded 30 October 1917 in London, also criticized the government for conceding too much to Indians. It represented part of British businesses with Indian interests; see the Maharajah of Bikaner's speech, 7 March 1919 at the Savoy Hotel in London; MONTAGU et al., 11.

³NETHERCOT(1963), 219. JONES(1989), 177: he was a member from 1890 till 1905; see also WOLPERT(1962), 163, mentioning neither Gokhale's direct reasons for joining, nor for leaving

(especially Theosophy) and politics.¹

Gandhi started his political life as Gokhale's pupil. Though he tried to be non-sectarian, Hinduism influenced his political thinking. Jawaharlal Nehru, who thought that 'Religion, I feel, is the bane of India' sometimes criticized him for this.² According to his autobiography,³ Gandhi first got to know the Bhagavad Gita and the Upanishads, writings central to his Hinduism, from theosophists in England, respectively South Africa. In 1895 in South Africa, he wrote about reincarnation doctrine: basing himself on *The Perfect Way*, by ex-TS London Lodge president Anna Kingsford, instead of directly on Hindu sources.⁴

When in London in 1889, he was interested in Mrs Besant; more so than in H.P. Blavatsky. Annie Besant was one of four people whose portraits hung in his room.⁵ When travelling through India, after he came back from Africa, he went out of his way to visit her.⁶

His view of Mrs Besant was higher than that of her TS. He refused to go to the 1911 London Universal Races Congress.⁷ That year, he wrote a letter, considering both Leadbeater and theosophy 'humbug'.⁸ In 1926, looking back at why he had never joined, in spite of personal links and repeated requests, he wrote

What has been a bar to my joining the [Theosophical] society is its secret side-its occultism. It has never appealed to me. I long to belong to the masses. Any secrecy hinders the real spirit of democracy.⁹

Gandhi's politics on empire up to 1917 were not radically different from Annie Besant's. He stood for supporting Britain militarily in the Boer War, the 1906 Zulu uprising, and World War I. On the world war, his position was at first slightly to the 'right' of Besant. When she was interned, he wrote a letter to the viceroy, asking for clemency for her. It included a sentence that he that he did not 'like much Mrs. Besant's ... political propaganda being carried on during the War'.¹⁰ Gandhi would later regard his call to enlist in the British armed forces as a mistake.¹¹ Usually he was better at admitting

¹ NETHERCOT(1963), 220.

² J. NEHRU(1972), vol. V, 545; speech in Lucknow, 24-9-1933. ALI, 37.

³ GANDHI(1940), 48; 115. L. FISHER(1984), 29, credits Sir Edwin Arnold, not the TS, with Gandhi's getting to know the *Gita*. BORMAN, and PAREKH, do not mention the TS, HPB or AB at all.

⁴ GANDHI(1958), vol. I, 166. Ibid., 142: he introduced Mrs Kingsford's books to South Africa and sold them.

⁵ MUTHANNA, 78-9.

⁶ GANDHI(1940), 174.

⁷ MUTHANNA, 105.

⁸ MUTHANNA, 95-6.

⁹ *Young India* 9-9-1926, quoted GANDHI(1958), vol. 31, 377.

¹⁰ GANDHI(1958), vol. XIII, 464.

¹¹ ALI, 36. Tilak then, too, supported joining the British armed forces; SHAY, 131.

earlier mistakes than either Annie Besant or Leadbeater.

At the 1915 Congress session, when Gandhi called the British government 'Satanic', Mrs Besant interrupted him, telling not to use these words.¹ In the 1916 Benares incident, Besant, supported by her Hindu University's princely financial backers, cut short Gandhi's speech against the princes' riches. Gandhi did not report it in his autobiography.²

Lady Emily Lutyens in 1916 started a Home Rule for India League in England, supporting Annie Besant's.³ Besant reacted to this:

I think the Auxiliary Home Rule League should be started at once with Snowden, Lansbury and any others they select for officers. But I think you should keep out of this ... I bowed to Mrs Besant's wishes and resigned ...⁴

The reaction of Annie Besant to Emily Lutyens' resignation was:

To join the League and leave it rather does harm.

The Home Rule League attracted many Indian FTS, and many more non-FTS. Though the latter eventually became some five-sixths of its membership, geographical distribution of its branches was roughly similar to that of the Theosophical Society.⁵ This disproves ideas on supposed widespread opposition to Annie Besant's politics⁶ then, at least in India. When the Home Rule League's Bombay branch started, 68 out of its 70 members were theosophists. After Mrs Besant was interned in 1917, however, this changed drastically: Jinnah became its president and in his wake 'the whole legal profession' joined.⁷ In Delhi, the local president was theosophist Miss Gmeiner, headmistress of Indraprastha girls' school. Colonial authorities in 1917, when their conflict with the League came to its high point, withdrew the grant-in-aid of Indraprastha. Also, rumours were spread, by the police, people said, on girls' morality at the school.⁸ A backbone for Besant was the 'Mylapore clique', called after the Madras suburb between the city centre and Adyar.⁹

As Besant's internment diaries show,¹⁰ contrary to what both her opponents and

¹ COUSINS and COUSINS, 274.

² GANDHI(1940), 356, only mentions meeting Malaviya then in Benares. GANDHI(1958), XIII, 210f; 243f.

³ E. LUTYENS, 79f. The *London Times* reaction in 1916 was: 'Cranky people in this country do many mad things, but surely the maddest is to encourage a Home Rule agitation in India'. Quoted NANDA, 54. A. VREEDE(1917B), 47: Jinarajadasa was League co-founder with Lady Emily.

⁴ E. LUTYENS, 80.

⁵ OWEN(1968), 172-3.

⁶ TILLET(1982), 159.

⁷ James Masselos, 'Some aspects of Bombay city politics', in: R. Kumar (ed.), *Essays on Gandhian Politics*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1971; 153. In Ahmedabad, Vallabhbhai Patel, later AB's opponent, was a member. B.B. MISRA(1976), 177.

⁸ SANGAT SINGH, 240.

⁹ WASHBROOK, 239f.

¹⁰ OWEN(1968), 176.

supporters wrote, she was not always against passive resistance of a type, roughly similar to that of Gandhi.

The *Theosophist* in May 1917 reviewed Gandhi's *satyagraha* ideas. The review was sympathetic; though wondering if 'the right men will come forward' for practice.¹

B.P. Wadia, Home Rule League lieutenant of Annie Besant before her controversies with Gandhi and later with himself broke out, gave a religious colouring to resistance. In a 25 November 1917 speech in Trichinopoly, he said:

The ideals of Passive Resistance so much approved of by the general public during recent months are permeated through and through by the spirit of sacrifice. Our people were willing to suffer for the good of the Cause-suffer without actively retaliating, suffer leaving the result of their passivity to the devas and rishis and the Lords of Karma.²

Annie Besant had brought Tilak back into Congress after their earlier antagonism. Jointly with him, she had started two Home Rule Leagues: one for Tilak's West of India region, one led by her for the rest of India. Good relations did not last though.

Mrs Besant wanted to strengthen the presidency within India's Congress: 'the duty of a leader is to lead.' When she made that presidential acceptance speech, many of her audience were already objecting.³ Her problem was that the National Congress was a more democratic organization than the TS, let alone the ES.⁴ Tilak objected to

the supremacy which she claims for her opinions in matters political under the guise that she is inspired by the Great Souls (the Mahatmas) and that such orders from them as she professes to receive must be unquestioningly obeyed.

He summed up differences:

Autocracy may be, and sometimes is, tolerated in theological and Theosophical Society matters, but in democratic politics we must go by the decisions of the majority ... Congress recognizes no Mahatma to rule over it except the Mahatma of majority.⁵

At that time, Annie Besant got also criticism for lack of democracy from within her TS. As US president Wilson spoke of 'making the world safe for democracy', his compatriots Alice and Foster Bailey, and Indian B.P. Wadia tried to do that for the Theosophical Society. It expelled them from office. The Baileys and Wadia went separate

¹W.D.S.B[rown], 'Mr. Gandhi on the "Satyagrahashrama"', *TT* May 1917, 235-6.

²WADIA(1917), 10. Ibid., 27-8: 'And now let me close. The transitional stage of Indian Nationalism is coming to an end. A New Age is upon us in this world-old country of ours. ... we will bring our beloved Motherland, in the years to come, to repeat the charm and prosperity of Ramachandra's [Rama's] Ayodhya.' Philip MECHANICUS in 1917 in *De Locomotief* wrote that "'passive resistance'" had been part of the program' of 'Mrs. Besant's supporters' 'since a long time.'

³NETHERCOT(1963), 273.

⁴ES leadership was for life, in the TS the presidency was in principle for seven years; in Congress for one year. Her Home Rule League had elected Besant for three years; SITA-RAMAYYA(1969), 126.

⁵Quoted TAYLOR(1992), 315.

ways. Wadia joined the, to Alice Bailey, 'fundamentalist' United Lodge of Theosophists,¹ which stayed small. Mrs Bailey, claiming contact with the Master DK from Tibet, became leader for life of her Arcane School. She had doubts whether and when India should become independent. She did not influence the debate there though.²

When Mrs Besant visited Ahmedabad in March 1918, she and Gandhi still shared the same carriage in a big procession.³ Soon though, the rise of non-co-operation campaigns led by Gandhi marked a downward trend for her.⁴ Imperiled with losing the majority for her views in Madras Congress, Annie Besant 'packed' the provincial Congress committee with supporters 'including European women and children'.⁵

In a speech against non-co-operation, Mrs Besant said:

Under the Gandhi Raj [rule] there is no free speech, no open meeting except for Non-co-operators. Social and religious boycott, threats of personal violence, spitting, insults in the streets, are the methods of oppression. Mob support is obtained by wild promises, such as the immediate coming of *Swaraj*, when there will be no rents, no taxes ...⁶

Annie Besant also used caste as an argument in her 1919 opposition to Gandhi: he had not confined moral-political issues to the Brahmans where they belong, but involved 'the crowd'.⁷ Sri Prakasa, who knew both, wrote: 'Mrs. Besant's appeal was more to the middle class educated folk, while the Mahatma[Gandhi]'s was to the vast masses of the country'.⁸

Bombay man Jamnadas Dwarkadas changed sides from Besant to Gandhi; so did Benjamin G. Horniman, editor of the *Bombay Chronicle*.⁹ Sometimes, someone changed sides the other way around. Dhawala, an ex-co-worker of Gandhi, spoke in Amsterdam for the TS on 29 November 1931.¹⁰ A talk between Annie Besant and Gandhi on 16

¹BAILEY(1951), 189. Founded in 1909 by ex-TS (Pt. Loma) members, dissatisfied with Katherine Tingley's autocracy. So not by W.Q. Judge, as in HUTIN, 1373, though the ULT considered him an important authority.

²BAILEY(1951), 71: 'India and Britain are closely related and have much karma to work out together and will have to work it out sometime, and the karma is not all British'. Ibid., 228: Arcane School contact to India was limited to a small group; 'All these men were old and have gradually died off.' She named as their leader 'Sir Subra Maniyer'; possibly ex-TS vice president Sir Subramaniya Iyer.

³B.B. MISRA(1976), 177.

⁴WALSH(1988): in 1918, AB 'abruptly withdrew from political activity.' One should rather say that her political influence declined, sometimes gradually, sometimes steeply, and with some ups in between.

⁵WASHBROOK, 310.

⁶Speech reprinted in Annie Besant's *India, Bond or Free*; quoted MAJUMDAR(1969), 359.

⁷BESANT(1919A), 65.

⁸SRI PRAKASA, LV.

⁹OWEN(1971), 70. Nevertheless, in *NI*, 25-8-1924, 26-9, Dwarkadas praised Annie Besant.

¹⁰7B Dec. 1931, 520.

February 1919 in Bombay railway station failed to produce results.¹

After Gandhi had announced his campaign, Mrs Besant in 1919 set up anti-non-co-operation, pro-police Committees of Public Order.² Was it, then, surprising that in the 1920's, she got booed at meetings in India? Mrs Besant's Home Rule League in 1917 had campaigned for the release of the brothers Mohamed and Shaukat Ali.³ In 1921 though, when the Bombay government arrested the Ali brothers again, Besant 'sent an approving telegram from Simla' and met the Viceroy several times.⁴

For not only had Mrs Besant become less popular with former friends; she also became more popular with former opponents. Not so much with diehard colonialist journalists⁵ as with government. In a 1920 letter, Sir Edwin Lutyens wrote: Governor 'Willingdon adores "naughty Annie", and it is amusing to have her hobnobbing with Governors.'⁶

AB expelled pro-non-co-operation TS members from the Esoteric Section: she claimed non-co-operation was against the Masters.⁷

On 16 January 1920, her Bombay speech 'The duty of the TS in India', spoke of her new policy of no to non-co-operation. She said it was more closely tied to the spiritual purpose of her society than her earlier Home Rule activity had been:

We did not commit the Society to that [Home Rule], any more than to its opposite. We could

¹Claim by Jamnadas Dwarkadas; OWEN(1971), 73.

²ARNOLD, 24. *WWH*, 54: 'the organization of bands of young men ready to maintain order, to contradict alarming rumours, etc.'

³BAKSHI, 51.

⁴NETHERCOT(1963), 333. TIPTO MANGOENKOESEMO(1928), 40. Montagu introduced an AB speech in England. 'On behalf of the Government, I am very grateful to her for her valuable help of the best kind', *Messenger* Feb. 1922, quoted *THA* Apr. 1922, 1.

⁵Daily *The Englishman*, representing the extreme sections of English living in India, in 1917 called AB 'a shameless political huckster'; and, still in 1919, accused her of a 'malicious and mischievous campaign against her own kith and kin.' MAC MILLAN, 218; 226. MECHANICUS extreme colonialists thought Montagu, in lifting Annie Besant's interment, 'gave in to some "sentimental Imperialists"'. Already in a March 26, 1910, letter, Mrs Besant complained to Lord Minto's administration about 'these lower English who are destroying your work and undermining the Empire'. Quoted M.N. DAS, 28.

⁶HUSSEY, 419. The Earl of Willingdon later, in 1931, became Viceroy. In the 1920's, when AB's popularity with Indians had gone down, it had gone up with Lord Willingdon since his governorship in Bombay; then he had banned her from his presidency in 1916. At the end of his governorship of Madras in 1924 he wrote: 'If I could get all editors to deal equally honestly [as AB] with this humble individual [Willingdon] I should feel life to be much easier.' Quoted JINARAJADASA(1986), 41.

⁷*TT* Apr. 1933, 148. Theodore Crombie, an ex-1910's Home Rule activist with AB, who in 1922 left to join the ULT, also shifted to the right in the 1920's. He reproached himself for not having paid enough attention to 'the English [that is, government] point of view' earlier on: BESWICK, 9-10.

not, without narrowing the platform of the Society. But now there has come an appeal which, above all other appeals, goes to the very heart of the Theosophical teaching, an appeal for co-operation between two sub-races [Indian first and Teutonic fifth of the Aryans] hitherto divided; and from the mouth of the King-Emperor himself there is a cry to help in the building of India by co-operation between the Indian and the Englishman, between the officials and the people. Do you suppose that the Theosophical Society can turn a deaf ear to the appeal founded on its First Object, which declares that it knows no distinction of race, of creed, of caste, of colour?¹

She left Congress when it decided in 1920 at the Calcutta special session to change its program 'so as to admit those who were against the British connection'.² Her influence declined; her weekly *Commonweal* folded in that year.³

At the end of 1920, Annie Besant held meetings in Bombay, opposing Gandhi's non-co-operation. The first meeting went off quietly, with few people, her supporters, attending. The second meeting attracted many, mainly her opponents. According to the account of *De Locomotief* from Indonesia,⁴ many ladies came.

The presence of the fair sex proved to be no obstacle to the opponents to air their indignation in several ways and shortly after Mrs Besant had mounted the rostrum it became clear that the aim of those not liking her, was to make the meeting difficult, and maybe impossible.

The lecturer soon found out what it was about and asked the ladies to leave the hall, when the noise became too loud ... after about twenty minutes, she pointed out to the opponents that she might easily have called for police assistance in order to make sure of an orderly meeting, for only a few constables would have been enough to chase them away.

She said though that she had preferred to decline armed force support, because she had thought that Gandhi's supporters would let her go ahead. Because such was not the case, though, she was duty bound to close the meeting, which finished amid shouts of "Shame, shame" and shouts of mockery by the opponents.

Annie Besant then, both in her *Theosophist* editorial and at a press conference for the Bombay dailies, explained her opposition to non-co-operation: against the Congress' call not to use government-conferred titles, against election boycott. And against education boycott too, which included Aligarh Muslim and Benares Hindu universities, both private, though government-subsidized.

Therefore I do not understand, Annie Besant said, why Gandhi also wants to destroy these educational institutions. ... Besides, when one looks at the matter from a national viewpoint, then nothing is worse than teaching disobedience to the children, whom one incites against their parents and their teachers, to leave their schools to which their parents have sent them. At the beginning of the movement Gandhi has declared that he would not extend his action to the schools, but now he declares openly that he does not care about education. So he has broken his promise, and I do not see, Annie Besant said, why he should have the right to complain if

¹Annie Besant, 'The Duty of the Theosophical Society in India', *TT*, July 1921, 323-4.

²BESANT(1921F), 411.

³NETHERCOT(1963), 299.

⁴As quoted VAN LEEUWEN(1921A), 3f.

[British prime minister] Lloyd George also might break his promise on India.¹

First, 'Mr. Gandhi and "the Ali Brothers"' went to Aligarh, where the students went on general strike. Annie Besant doubted that the university which she had founded would be spared:

As I said at the beginning of these notes, I am writing them in Benares, and we are expecting the invasion of the Destroyers to seduce the students of the Hindū university to be false to their duty to their parents and their country. I have given two lectures here to crowded audiences on "Co-operation" and "Non-Co-operation", showing the advantages of the one and the ruin consequent on the other. But the fun of tilting against the Government has captured the immature minds of the youngsters who, innocent of the ruin involved in Mr. Gandhi's subtle proposals, only see the side attractive to all high-spirited youths, of baiting the Government.

Behind striking students and Congress leaders on the one hand, and supporters of the British empire on the other hand, stood forces from invisible worlds:

This movement for Non-Co-operation is no movement of party politics, to which the Theosophical Society can remain indifferent. It has passed into a phase in which it menaces the very existence of India, her spiritual life, and her spiritual mission to humanity ... this India is now the mark of all the "Powers of the Darkness of this world," driven back in the West by the downfall of autocracy in Germany, and now turning their defeated, but still tremendous, energy on India, by whose undoing and hurling into chaos the onward march of the world may yet be checked for centuries to come. These hosts, ever the enemies of the Lords of Light-called Asuras by the Hindūs, Ahriman and his agents by the Zoroastrians, Satan and his angels by Hebrews and Christians, Eblis and his armies by the Musalmāns-they have caught hold of this movement of Non-Co-operation, *because it is a channel of hatred*, their favourite weapon, and are pushing its leaders onward, step by step, into wilder and wilder methods.² What was 'the onward march of the world?'

I believe that the union of Britain and India is part of "The Great Plan," and is necessary for the helping forward of human evolution; I know that this union is part of the Plan for our Race which the Lord Vaivasvata Manu [the Manu for the Aryan race] is carrying out; and as regards the insane policy now being forced on Indian politicians by intimidation and social boycott, and into which the ignorant masses are lured by promises of impossibilities, she did not mind standing alone on the side of right.³

Annie Besant's difference with Gandhi and the Congress majority was on radicalism of ends, rather than on radicalism of means. We have seen her earlier ideas on passive resistance. Violence was also less of a problem to her than to Gandhi. She was not always against violence by oppositionists, as when James Cousins wrote of his support for Ireland's Easter rising in her *New India*. The critical TS member Stokes even accused her of assassination plots.⁴ She did not always oppose violence by governments; see her

¹VAN LEEUWEN(1921A), 4. TILKEMA(1932), 39, quoted Gandhi's autobiography on 'those citadels of slavery-their [the students'] schools and colleges'.

²BESANT(1920B), 108-9.

³BESANT(1921F), 412.

⁴OELC, June 1929, and June 1939.

'brickbats and bullets' statement. She criticized Gandhi's inspiration, Tolstoy, as un-Indian. India's kshatriyas had always used force if necessary:¹

The gospel of Tolstoy, so fascinating in its beginnings, but so fatal in its inevitable ending of anarchy, the dragging of all down to the sordid level to which society had cruelly reduced its producing class, was one of the causes of Bolshevism in Russia. That infection has been brought over here by Tolstoy's disciple, M. K. Gandhi, with all the fascination of its philosophical side and the deadly implications covered by that philosophy, while the masses have not yet become obedient to the Inner Ruler Immortal, the Hidden God in man. ... Men not yet Self-ruled from within, and thus determined to righteousness, must be ruled by Law from without. The destruction of reverence for Law, ingrained in the Hindu religion, the doctrine of "civil disobedience" ... was the step which marked the parting of the ways which lead respectively to Freedom and anarchy. ... Under such circumstances, I call on all students and lovers of Theosophy, the Divine Wisdom, to range themselves under the banner of ordered and progressive Freedom, and to oppose the threatened anarchy ...²

Mrs Besant predicted that in the long run, his own people would turn against Gandhi.³

If India, the Mother fails, then will Bolshevism triumph for the time, and spread red ruin over the world. But I believe that she will not fail, that she will recognise her Dharma, and take her place in the World Order.⁴

The Theosophical Society since 1914 had held its world conventions in cities, and at times, so as to enable Annie Besant and delegates to attend both theosophical and Indian National Congress annual sessions. Originally, the TS had planned its Dec. 1920 convention in Nagpur to link up with the Congress.⁵ Now, though, that contradictions between Besant and the Congress majority had sharpened, she wrote:

If I went to the Nagpur Congress, I should only be allowed to speak by grace of Mr. Gandhi, and I do not regard speech as free which is granted or withheld at the whim of a dictator.⁶

Instead, the TS Convention was in Adyar, to fit in with the National Liberal Federation meeting in Madras. Mrs Besant spoke under 'our ancient Cathedral, the great Banyan tree in Blavatsky Gardens' to over 600 people.

She started her convention speech on 'The Great Plan' of Manu for ordered

¹Translated *TMW*, 1921, 493-4. She thought Gandhi's actions were worse than Tolstoy's: 'the threatened anarchy, unknown in India until brought here by the disciple of a western anarchist, who had at least the merit that, while sowing revolutionary ideas, he confined himself in action to peasant clothing and the making of shoes'. BESANT(1920B), 110.

²BESANT(1920B), 109-10.

³VAN LEEUWEN(1921A), 4. Ibid: the *Times of India* wrote that AB's Bombay meeting proved 'that Gandhi c. s. would not create a race of free citizens, but a gang of boorish anarchists and hooligans'.

⁴BESANT(1920A), 210.

⁵BESANT(1920A), 204.

⁶BESANT(1921A), 308-9.

evolution, from 'that very ancient adage: "As above, so below,"' and from divine plans on the solar system, Venus, and Earth. She finished on contemporary politics.

The plan of the Manu has been to build out of the Mother Country, India, and the British people in their own island, the great Empire of the fifth ['Teutonic Aryan'] sub-race. The other sub-races have had their dominance, and the time has come for the dominance of the fifth sub-race. ... That is why the English came here and others had to go away ... the English Nation, chosen to come here and blend with the Indian Nation in the building up now of the World Empire, to be really a World Commonwealth. ... These two are to be the main constituents of the Commonwealth, which is to be the model of the World Commonwealth of the future.²

The butt of her speech's finale was unnamed distant Nagpur Congress.

India is now divided into two great camps and two only: one camp marked by love and the other by hate, one camp marked by love of liberty and the other by desire to tyrannise, one marked by co-operation and the other by antagonism. It is for you to choose which of these camps you will strengthen.³

Theosophists knew 'that for forty-five years this teaching has been in the world and you ought to know more about it than the outer world.'

The outer world may be moved by temporary injuries, carried away by wrongs inflicted and sufferings endured, but you, students of the Wisdom, ought to realise that behind all these outside things the Inner Government of the world is ruling and ultimately must have its way, in one of two ways, by destruction or evolution; yours is the choice. If you find a movement marked by hatred, if you find a movement marked by tyranny over the opinions of others, by trying to force people along lines that some of them may adopt, if you find those means are means of compulsion, of tyranny, of social ostracism, of spreading hatred in India and dividing her more than she has ever been divided before, I tell you, no matter who may lead it, that is a movement of the Brothers of the Shadow and leads to destruction. Those are the marks that show what they are. The Lords of the Light sent our Society for this great crisis, to save the Indian Motherland.⁴

At the National Liberal meeting, Mrs Besant gave Gandhi only 'negative credit' for basing himself on the poor masses. To Indonesia's ex-FTS Tjipto Mangoenkoesoemo, that was to Gandhi's 'imperishable credit'.⁵

Literature on Annie Besant and her former fellow FTS, W.B. Yeats, views them similarly in their relationships to national questions in India and Ireland, respectively. Both were obviously supporters of the national movements in these countries; not, contrary to many later descriptions,⁶ of the national independence movements, though.

¹BESANT(1921I), 1. *THA* March 1921, 356.

²BESANT(1921I), 105-7.

³BESANT(1921I), 107-8.

⁴BESANT(1921D), 108-9.

⁵TJIPTO MANGOENKOESEMO(1928), 39.

⁶SK; *Grote Nederlandse Larousse Encyclopedie*, Scheltens & Giltay, 's-Gravenhage, s.d., vol. IV, 554, on AB's 'fighting for India's independence'. A.S. Berger & J. Berger, *The Encyclopedia of*

See p. 255 on AB and India. Annie Besant compared Ireland and India in early 1921:

strange that both, just now, are in so much trouble with England; the hatred between Roman Catholics and Protestants is like that of the anti-Brahmanas to Brahmanas in the Madras Presidency, and the political hatred is as bitter as that of [Gandhi's] Non-Co-operators.¹

Yeats supported the pro-dominion, anti-republican party during the 1922-23 Irish civil war and later.

Jinarajadasa in *New India* wrote that occult Initiates like Mrs Besant looked differently at possible independence of India. As of Ireland:

occultists. They have proclaimed that Ireland, whatever the costs, should not be allowed to tear itself away from the British empire, and that the Irish Deva ... got his orders from the Lord of the World.²

Annie Besant thought she saw signs of weakness in her opponents in 1921:

the Non-Co-operation movement, motivated by race hatred, by the desire for revenge ... That mischievous crusade is, I think, weakening. ... Mr. Gandhi, having failed with most of the intelligentsia, is now beginning to stir up the masses, who have real grievances, and are easily inflamed. There lies the danger-point at present.³

By 1922, Mrs Besant had become, in contrast to but few years ago, a 'Moderate of Moderates'.⁴ She saw two threats to India from the north: the red Soviets and small Afghanistan [both entangled in civil war by the way]:

Let us in the time of danger drop all criticism of government action [unlike during World War I] and stand firmly against revolution, which means bloodshed at home and invasion from abroad.⁵

Communist Party of India leader Manabendra Nath Roy, at the request of Lenin, in 1922 first published his book *India in transition*. In it, he postulated that differences between Mrs Besant and Mahatma Gandhi, though real, were not as big as they themselves, especially Annie, thought:

The advent of native orthodoxy in the person of Gandhi was preceded by a reaction, voluntarily

Parapsychology and Psychical Research, N.Y., Paragon, 1991, 33. AB 'leader of Indian independence'. WILSON(1970), 159: 'independent India (a cause into which Mrs Besant also threw her immense energies)'. MAC MILLAN, 25: 'Annie Besant, who scandalized the establishment by working for India's independence'. SAVILLE, VI: AB 'played an important part in the development of the national movement for Indian independence'. REEVE(1985), 7: the TS was 'involved in independence politics ... in India'. ELLWOOD and WESSINGER, 74 also: 'the independence movement'; without distinction of home rule to independence.

¹BESANT(1921F), 510.

²Translated as 'Occultisme en politiek', *TINH* 1932, 244-6.

³BESANT(1921D), 515-6. When journalist Durga Das met her in Adyar in 1922, she 'exploded against Gandhi'; Durga Das, *India from Curzon to Nehru and after*. N. Y., John Day, 1970; 103.

⁴MAJUMDAR(1969), 287.

⁵Quoted LOVETT/CADELL.

or involuntarily serving the cause of Imperialism. Annie Besant was its apostle. She was seemingly an avowed spiritualist [?] dreading all contamination of things material, but in reality a masked defender of the interests of the imperialist bourgeoisie, in spite of her Irish birth. She had always [?] been the champion of the British Empire, which she chose to call the foundation of a real League of Nations. Her ideal of the League of Nations was evidently the incorporation of the whole world in the British Empire. The same instinct which thirty years ago, had induced the liberal imperialist Hume to promote the idea of founding the National Congress, led Mrs Besant to arise from her theosophical esoterics, in which she had immersed herself ever since she came to India, and pollute her holiness with such sordid materialism as politics. Her instinctive zeal for the welfare (not spiritual) of the imperialist bourgeoisie disquieted her at the sight of the ominous clouds gathering on the political horizon. Long residence in the country and intimate relations with the lower middle-class [?] intellectuals, enabled her to gauge the situation cleverly. She set out with the mission of stemming the rising tide of revolution.

... Mrs Besant captured the imagination and admiration of the revolutionary-inclined young intellectuals by preaching with her wonted eloquence the familiar gospel of the spiritual superiority of Indian over Western culture, and condemning the British government as the worst manifestation of Western materialism from which, she exclaimed, the innocent children of sacred India must be saved. Thus a wrong channel was opened for the great revolutionary wave that was raising its majestic crest on the offing of the society. Essentially a socio-economic struggle, the impending movement must assume a political manifestation with considerable latitude to nationalist pre-occupations. The astuteness of Mrs Besant caught on the familiar, but harmless, political slogan of 'Home Rule' which swung the Extremists on her side, because it promised to head the movement abandoned by the Moderates. In consequence, those who might have sought the destruction of British domination with the aid of revolutionary mass-action committed themselves to the ambiguous programme of self-government within the British empire.¹

To Roy, both Besant and Gandhi stood for interests of ruling classes. The nationality of these classes differed though:

Mrs Besant could not prevent the inevitable, she only prepared the ground for Gandhi, whose advent pushed her into well-merited disgrace. Both preached the doctrine of orthodox nationalism, but the difference lay in the respective objects in view. The former desired to save the Indians from modern materialism in order to insure the continuance of British domination, while the latter's hostility to Western civilization was founded by the apprehension that it would strike at the root of the religious, intellectual and patriarchal vested interests which, in the name of spiritual culture, held the Indian masses in moral as well as material bondage.²

¹M.N. ROY(1971), 215-6

²M.N. ROY(1971), 217. Ibid., 230 'By introducing the slogan of Home Rule she [AB] saved India for the Empire; left alone, the Extremists, who controlled the Congress completely, might have repudiated the imperial connection, because the awakening mass energy had fired their imagination. The reactionary nationalism preached by Mrs Besant and subsequently taken up by Gandhi, was not compatible with that form of political state which would be the corollary to Home Rule. But Mrs Besant's reactionary designs concerned the [imperial] political and not [?] the [Indian internal] social aspect of the Indian movement. The reactionary tendencies contained in the orthodox nationalism of Tilak and the Gandhites are social; therefore they would brook no compromise with a political institution which would render them untenable. They would demand complete separation from the

When Gandhi had temporarily stopped civil disobedience, Annie Besant commented in 1923: 'it is the queerest revolution that ever was since Gandhi replaced Tilak, has had the queerest leader, and has now the queerest collapse.'¹

Gandhi generously claimed about his 'most formidable opponent':²

Her courage never shone so brilliant as when at the risk of losing her popularity she opposed Non-Cooperation.³

Besant's associate Ayar attacked Gandhism:

Non-Cooperation and Non-Violence in the political jargon of this period ... a blend of Western Anarchism and Materialism ... had nothing to do with the virile conception of life ... Indian culture always recognised that righteousness ... might ... depend ... as a last resort on physical force.⁴

In a lecture of H. Kumar to the Quetta TS lodge, he saw Islam's and Hinduism's common ground in that they both rejected pacifism.⁵

At the end of Mrs Besant's political work, the rift with Gandhi had not healed. She wrote in *New India* # 5 in 1930 that Gandhi was the 'most mischievous man in India.'

Nethercot saw Annie Besant as politically more far-sighted than Gandhi or Nehru. He thought that

if India had followed the advice of her and her party in 1929 the country would probably have obtained Dominion Status seventeen or so years earlier than it did, it would probably have retained Pakistan, and there would have been no Kashmir problem.⁶

This contributes to anti-Gandhi myth, which is as unsatisfactory as pro-Gandhi myth. It forgets opposition by diehard British colonialists. It also forgets Gandhi had better contacts with Muslims since his South Africa days than Annie Besant had. In theory, both AB and Gandhi tried to combine personal Hinduism⁷ with broad-mindedness. Gandhi succeeded better. According to Sri Prakasa, Mrs Besant 'never approached the Indian problem from the Muslim point of view.'⁸

British Empire with the desire to save India from the unholy contamination of the sordid materialism of the Western world, if they dared.'

¹Quoted SHUKLA(1960), 243.

²MAJUMDAR(1969), 1027.

³NI, 25-8-1924, 7.

⁴AYAR(1924), 62.

⁵TT Jan. 1934, 441f.

⁶NETHERCOT(1963), 468.

⁷And with AB, political Hinduism: 'Without Hinduism India has no future. Hinduism is the soil into which India's roots are struck, and torn out of that she will inevitably wither, as a tree torn out from its place. Let Hinduism go, Hinduism that was India's cradle, and in that passing would be India's grave.' AB, quoted: Ph.A. Ashby, *Modern Trends in Hinduism*. NY, Columbia University Press, 1974; 25.

⁸MUTHANNA, 184: 'Among the top leaders, only Mrs. Besant had good relationship with both the religious groups and no one else' is uncorroborated. SRI PRAKASA, XXI. TT, May 1918, 193: 'hardly half a dozen Muslims have joined the TS' in India; far less than joined Congress, or the Communists.

Muthanna attacks Gandhi for promoting Hindi as the national language for India. Yet in this, Gandhi did not differ much from Annie Besant, whom Muthanna contrasts favourably with him:

She felt that Hindi ... should become the official language of India. She recognized that this would create a hardship for Tamil-and Telugu-speaking people, but she felt that was a sacrifice they should make for the unity of India.¹

4. Jinnah, Das, Menon

Jinnah's and Annie Besant's views developed parallelly. Jinnah had led a Bombay anti-British *Raj* mass demonstration in 1918. Later, he was one of Mrs Besant's few allies after her break with Gandhi, saying 'Politics is a gentlemen's game', not 'working up mob hysteria'.² When jubilee meetings in 1924 celebrated half a century of public work by Annie Besant, Jinnah presided over the Bombay one.³

After the Second World War, Jinnah would become the first governor-general of Pakistan, then still a Commonwealth member. Karachi, that new country's biggest city, had had as mayor Jamshed Nusserwanji, FTS, from 1922-1934; Hindus and other non-Muslims then were a larger segment of its population than later.

In 1920, Rai Bahadur Purnendu Narayana Sinha was both Indian TS General Secretary, and Bihar Legislative Council member.⁴ Bhagavan Das in 1920 was president of the Indian Social Conference in Saharanpur.⁵ In the early 20's, he became closer for some time to Gandhi than to Annie Besant; in connection with Gandhi's campaigns of Jan. 1922 he was in jail.⁶ 1923-25 and 1931-37 he chaired Benares municipal board. Some of his ideas remained, or became again later, close to AB:

Swaraj ... the true and essential connotation of that word is the *raj*, the rule, of the community ... by its *true swa*, its *higher self*, i.e., its *wisest*, i.e., most *experienced* and most *philanthropic* men and women.⁸

In the 1920's, Krsna Menon was Propaganda Secretary of the Star Committee⁹ in the Order of the Star in the East. He also was the representative in England of Annie Besant's Home Rule League; which she had founded after Gandhi had taken over her original one. Congress then had no official representation there;¹⁰ that may have led to estimations in England of Annie Besant's influence, greater than Indian reality of the time

¹WESSINGER(1989), 226.

²MUTHANNA, 395-6; 402.

³RANSOM(1938), 464.

⁴Annie Besant, *WT, TT*, March 1920, 517.

⁵*TT*, Oct. 1920, 93-4.

⁶DAS(1922), 16. For nine months: A. MISRA, 157. SRI PRAKASA, 94.

⁷DAS(1947), 382. A. MISRA, 157.

⁸DAS(1922), XII.

⁹NETHERCOT(1963), 319.

¹⁰KAUSCHIK, 149-50.

warranted. Menon broke with Besant in 1930, changing from a theosophist to 'an agnostic' in religion; from a supporter of dominion status to one of independence, and from non-Marxism to pro-Marxism in politics.¹ In the 1930's, he became a left winger in Congress.² In the 1950's, he became India's Minister of Defence.

Ranganatham Mudaliar, FTS, had been provincial government minister in Madras.³ Another theosophist was B. Shiva Rao, MP.⁴

5. Motilal and Jawaharlal Nehru

Motilal Nehru was a theosophist for a short time,⁵ and a friend of Annie Besant's for a longer time. G.N. Chakravarti, another friend of his, via Mrs Besant recommended Brooks as tutor for his young son Jawaharlal Nehru.⁶ When Jawaharlal wanted to join the theosophists, 'he himself had soon dropped out [in the days of HPB; he] laughingly gave his son permission, but without seeming to attach too much importance'.⁷

Muthanna states that M. Nehru broke with Annie Besant, and took Gandhi's side out of spite, because Besant refused to nominate him as her successor as Congress president. The Publisher's Note preceding the book⁸ rightly singles this out, as it would be an important new discovery, if proven. Muthanna though does not corroborate this with documents or eyewitness accounts, so it is not proven (yet?).

Jawaharlal Nehru helped his theosophist tutor Brooks learn Sanskrit.⁹ He joined the Theosophical Society when he was 13, with secret passwords.¹⁰ Annie Besant herself initiated him.¹¹ Olcott complained many Brahmin FTS gave nothing for Panchama schools. There were exceptions; the Annual Report of the TS on 1903, 61, reported a gift for the Panchama Education Fund. 'Mr. Jawahar Lal Nehru, Allahabad 15 Rs.' He was then 14 years old.

¹MUTHANNA, 372f. S.P. SEN, vol. III, 99. Vijaya Lakshmi PANDIT, 286, ascribes this to his coming 'under Harold Laski's influence, and [Menon] moved away from his early [Besant] political background'. NETHERCOT(1963), 439: the council of the Commonwealth of India League in England in 1930 supported Congress; AB resigned from it.

²ALI, 55.

³*TT*, May 1933, 251.

⁴NETHERCOT(1963), 223.

⁵J. NEHRU(1958), 15, on his father: 'Curiosity probably led him to it more than religion'. The MUTHANNA, 73, description of Motilal Nehru as one of the 'staunch theosophists' exaggerates. He was also a member of Allahabad masons' lodge Unity # 29. LIGOU, 608.

⁶BROOKS(1914A), 178.

⁷NETHERCOT(1963), 75f.

⁸MUTHANNA, VII; 235.

⁹BROOKS(1914A), 178f. J. NEHRU(1958) though: he himself had not learnt much Sanskrit.

¹⁰MUTHANNA, 73. ALI, 7, omits whether or not he was FTS, suggesting he was not.

¹¹BRECHER(1959), 45.

Brooks broke with Annie Besant in 1914. Somewhat like Resink, he wrote: "Leading" and "following" are not in the program of Theosophy as understood by me.¹ Though Brooks shared some of Besant's non-democratic ideas on non-theosophists, he objected to her extending those to theosophists:

Why will they let rampant autocratic Bageydom be ... enthroned at the heart of their democratic society-not of drink-besotted slum-dwellers and illiterate labourers ... but of picked, enlightened, liberal-minded men and women drawn from twenty-two modern countries, and more? Surely, if democracy can ever be expected to begin accomplishing something good for itself, it is in a Society like this, the very antithesis of the 'mob-rule' which Mrs. Besant rightly deprecates. But no, Mrs. Besant uses the 'mob-rule' argument to ban ... democracy from the promiscuous nations of the world of to-day; and then, in *her own select Society*, ... she will in reality have none of it ... Does she really believe that all autocracy serves and holds power from the 'Great White Lodge', and that all democracy springs from the grim Brothers of the Shadow?²

Nehru wrote he let his TS membership quietly lapse when he went to England, because of lack of contact. Many theosophists lived in England, however; did he not outgrow the ideas? To what extent did he agree with Brooks' criticisms? He wrote of later times: 'But I am afraid that the theosophists have since gone down in my estimation'. After he ceased to be a religious devotee of Annie Besant, he still was later a political follower of hers. When that, too, stopped, he still valued her as a person: 'But, for Mrs. Besant, I always have had the warmest admiration'.³

He became a leading member, after coming back to India, of Annie Besant's Home Rule League. His first public speech ever, 20 June 1916 in Allahabad, was in support of Besant, whose papers then had trouble with government censorship. He called her 'that great and noble lady. Don't fail at this moment; follow her faithfully and let it not be said that you flinched when you ought to have supported her'.⁴

That the government interned her in 1917 made Nehru withdraw his two week old application for British military service. He moved to cease Indian support for military recruitment, and got also Congress moderates like his father and Tej Bahadur Sapru to pass this resolution.⁵

Like many others, he parted company after the controversy that Annie Besant's 'Brickbats and bullets' sentence caused in 1919.

With her Indian Liberal allies, she started drafting constitutional proposals. Her 1925 Commonwealth of India bill wanted indirect, *panchayat* type elections. The larger the area, from village to district to province, and so on until all India, the more property qualifications one would need to have the vote.

Dr Besant has never believed in merely counting heads without examining what is inside the heads, as is the principle of universal suffrage.⁶

¹BROOKS(1914C), 26.

²BROOKS(1914A), 147f.

³J. NEHRU(1958), 16.

⁴J. NEHRU(1972), vol. 1, 104.

⁵J. NEHRU(1958), 32; J. NEHRU(1972), vol. 1, 106; 108.

⁶JINARAJADASA(1986), 39.

Measuring what is inside heads is difficult even for brain surgeons. So, Annie Besant, like other opponents of universal suffrage, rather measured potential voters' insides of purses and strong-boxes. She proposed, much against Nehru's ideas, a sort of Indian equivalent to Britain's House of Lords:

The proposed Senate in Mrs. Besant's bill is a most objectionable body. ... it would be based on a restricted electorate and would be a reactionary body always causing deadlocks.¹

She had also made a step to the right, compared with her views of ten years earlier, on India's military affairs. In 1915, she had demanded for India: 'to have her own army, her own navy, her own volunteers'.² Now, though, the departments of Army and Foreign Affairs were to be reserved to the British empire.³ Jawaharlal Nehru advised Britain's Independent Labour Party that the bill not only fell short of the full independence which he wanted, but also short of 'full Dominion Status, not in theory only as Mrs. Besant's bill does'. He wrote of 'the milk and water provisions of Mrs. Besant's bill'.⁴ 'It was a measure which created no enthusiasm in the I. L. P. or in India'.⁵ Nehru's father Motilal was somewhat less negative to Annie's proposals. He at least on 5 May 1926 in Ahmedabad proposed that a committee should look into them; this, though, was voted down in the All India Congress Committee.⁶

The Communist Party of India thought that Jawaharlal Nehru did not criticize Mrs Besant's constitutional proposals enough.⁷ In the magazine *Masses*, the party attacked them; it was afraid that Congress leaders would compromise with them.⁸ CPI member Shapurji Saklatvala had been elected as the only communist MP in Britain earlier. Saklatvala wrote, looking back at 1918-9:

Annie Besant had come over as a friend of Indian freedom, and protector of her country's imperium, having as her faithful ally and admirer, even then, George Lansbury, and her indefatigable lieutenant, Graham Pole.⁹

Of the governing British Labour Party, only Lansbury and 11 other MPs supported her draft constitution.¹⁰ Everybody knew representative Congress leaders did not back

¹Note on a Proposal for a Parliamentary Bill for India, in J. NEHRU(1972), vol. II, 309.

²Quoted JINARAJADASA(1986), 27. See also MORTIMER(1983), 69.

³JINARAJADASA(1986), 37.

⁴Note on a Proposal for a Parliamentary Bill for India, in J. NEHRU(1972), vol. II, 306.

⁵Note on a Proposal for a Parliamentary Bill for India, in J. NEHRU(1972), vol. II, 305.

⁶SITARAMAYYA(1969), 301.

⁷Clemens Dutt, 'Indian Nationalism and the Elections', *Labour Monthly*, Dec. 1926; reprinted ADHIKARI(1978), 219-20.

⁸*Masses*, Feb. 1926, 'Future of Indian Nationalism': 'the lowest level of the Besantine constitution'; reprinted ADHIKARI(1974), 710.

⁹'The Simon Commission', reprinted ADHIKARI(1979), 291.

¹⁰NETHERCOT(1963), 360. Subhas Chandra BOSE, 121; CJ, *WWH*, 27; JINARAJADASA(1986), 38, and UGLOW, 57 wrongly claim that her '1925 Commonwealth of India bill won the backing of the

her. Gandhi, interviewed by *New India* on the bill, said 'I dislike the graded franchise'; and 'recognition of the King-Emperor as Sovereign' as 'indispensable condition'. '... nothing but the waste-paper basket is its destiny'.¹ C.R. Das objected that it had no sanction if the government rejected it.² Viceroy Lord Reading's autocratic 1921-6 rule was no time for compromise.

In 1927, Annie Besant was back in the All India Congress Committee.³ At the Madras Congress session of that year, the pro-independence motion got wide support. A bit too wide for Jawaharlal Nehru's taste:

The Independence resolution was supported even by Mrs. Annie Besant. This all-round support was very gratifying, but I had an uncomfortable feeling that the resolutions were either not understood for what they were, or were distorted to mean something else. ... The best way to get rid of them [pro-independence resolutions] was to pass them and move on to something more important.⁴

According to Annie Besant in 1928, 'The Congress is becoming an intolerable tyranny by denial of free speech to the minority'.⁵ J. Nehru's reaction on 16 November 1928 was that the problem was the other way around:

If Dr. Besant wants the majority of the Congress to bow down to the minority, or to an individual, that surely would be some kind of tyranny and the tyranny of a minority or of an individual is worse than any other tyranny.⁶

3 November 1929 came out the 'Delhi Manifesto': Gandhi, Annie Besant, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Motilal and Jawaharlal [who later said he was 'talked into signing' the manifesto though it was 'wrong and dangerous'] Nehru offered co-operation; after vague talk by the colonial government, containing nothing new, on Dominion status.

Talks with the Viceroy did not bring anything though. So, the Lahore Congress of 1929 demanded independence: 'This Congress ... declares that the word "Swaraj" shall

Labour Party.' Labour's right wing did use it as an argument against more radical steps by, for instance, the Independent Labour Party; J. NEHRU(1958), vol. II, 305. Though the Labour leaders like James Ramsay MacDonald did not officially support Mrs Besant's proposals, in his 1927 Congress speech in Madras Jawaharlal Nehru attacked them too: 'the sanctimonious and canting humbugs who lead the Labour party in England'; SHARMA(1964), 280.

¹NI 29 April 1925, reprinted GANDHI(1958), vol. 26, 558-9; vol. 27, 390.

²GANDHI(1958), vol. 27, 464.

³SITARAMAYYA(1969), 315. She then also, like fellow non-Muslims Sarojini Naidu and Pandit Mohan Malaviya, addressed the Calcutta Muslim League session. T. CHAND, 108.

⁴J. NEHRU(1958), 167. Nehru did not let his reservations on Besant into his Madras Congress speech; it praised her support for the resolution. SHARMA(1964), 276. Conclusion of TIJPTO MANGOENKOESEMO(1928), 48: 'India's movement can end only in the country's independence.'

⁵J. NEHRU(1972), vol. III, 76.

⁶J. NEHRU(1972), vol. III, 309.

mean Complete Independence.¹ The times of ambiguity, which could include both radicalism and Annie Besant's reconstructed Empire, were over.

In 1931, Annie Besant came out once again against universal suffrage in India.² This was about her last political statement. By that time, on this subject, she was to the right of many British and Indian Liberals and Conservatives.³ At the end of 1932 *New India* ceased publication; few subscribers were left.⁴

Jinarajadasa saw Mrs Besant's relationship to others in India as follows:⁵

The editor of the *Hindu* of Madras has suggested that she [AB] wanted to be given recognition as the only leader, and showed a smallness when the Indian national movement swept past her under the leadership of Gandhiji and left her 'stranded.' Swept past her? Aye, and into the ditch, where it now is. Was ever Mother India so humiliated?

In spite of all differences, many Indian political leaders praised her when she died in 1933. Jawaharlal Nehru called her 'that lofty character'.⁶ Madras city named more than one big avenue after her.

Josephine Ransom, then theosophical GS for England, lectured India's democrats in her 1933 Convention lecture:

In India, she thought the change was not yet so rapid. They were still arguing about slogans and watch-words like 'Democracy', which in the West were left behind.⁷

Next year, Manjeri Venkata Iyer in *TT* attacked democracy's philosophical foundations from the heights of Ancient Wisdom:

The modern idea of democracy is, in reality, based upon the utterly false 'scientific notion' that the world is but 'a fortuitous concourse of atoms and molecules' without any intelligent direction ... That a colony of idiots by putting their empty heads together can create wisdom seems to be the basic idea behind democracy ... Democracy is really rooted in materialism, selfishness or separatism, which emphasizes individual rights instead of individual duties. The divine conception of a State or society is biological or organic, in which fight for individual freedom takes no place.⁸

George Arundale, though he had a Home Rule League past, kept favouring a link with the British empire in the 30's. At the Benares convention, the official Indian, not the Congress flag, flew.⁹ His magazine *Conscience* paid much attention to Indian politics. Arundale kept fighting his predecessor's fights:

While the president of the Indian National Congress can now say without the slightest correction that violence must be met with violence, Dr. Besant was bitterly attacked for insisting that brick-

¹PALME DUTT(1940), 325.

²Quoted MUTHANNA, 376. See also NETHERCOT(1963), 442.

³Voorham, of the TS (The Hague), said in Leiden in March 1992, that AB had been important 'bringing democracy to India'; he used words she herself in most years would hardly have used.

⁴MUTHANNA, 392.

⁵WT, *TT* Oct. 1933, 3.

⁶Speech in Lucknow, 24-9-1933; J. NEHRU(1972), vol. V, 545.

⁷Josephine Ransom, 'Future Work of the Theosophical Society', *TT*, Feb. 1934, 621.

⁸IYER(1934), 457-8.

⁹*TT* June 1937, *WT*.

bats must be met by bullets, as everyone now agrees.¹

Here, he did not differentiate between violence by oppressors or by oppressed, deadly as both may be sometimes.

B. CEYLON

Contrary to India or Indonesia, Lanka did not have big movements of which the paramount aim was national independence. Since the 1930's, one party, Wickremasinghe's Lanka Sama Samaja Party, advocated independence as one of its aims. As it was an internationalist labour party, we have discussed it elsewhere.

There already was a Sinhalese Buddhist revival before the TS leaders arrived in the country, expressing itself for instance in the Panadure debate.² Blavatsky and Olcott already were popular before their arrival in Galle.³

This did not mean that many people accepted all of the TS doctrine. Olcott wrote⁴ few Buddhist monks believed in the Transhimalayan Masters, Madankare being about the only one.

Among the Sinhalese laity, one of few believing in the Masters, going farther than the sympathy of most for the TS founders' sympathy for Buddhism, was the fourteen-year old son of a furniture exporter, from Colombo's richest Buddhist family. He attended a Christian school (the only education then possible).

As the Anagarika Dharmapala,⁵ he would become well known in Sri Lankan history, both inside the TS as a prominent member, and outside as an opponent. He asked to go with the theosophical leaders to Adyar. His parents refused. Madame Blavatsky predicted 'That boy will die' if he did not go; he went.⁶

1883, Easter Day, a crowd of Roman Catholics⁷ attacked Buddhists near Colombo, killing one. On behalf of the subsequently formed Buddhist Defence Committee, Olcott went to London in 1884 to negotiate with the British government. He managed to obtain the recognition of Wesak (Buddha's birthday) as a public holiday. Before, the government had only recognized days on the Christian calendar. This increased Olcott's popularity. Of his activities, Murphet wrote:

Apart from the raising of an Education Fund, political action was necessary if the wrongs of the Buddhists were to be righted. So Olcott became a lobbyist for the Sinhalese people—something

they could not have done for themselves. He interviewed the Governor of Ceylon, Sir Arthur Gordon, who, fortunately, was interested in occultism and comparative religion. Henry was impressed, for instance, to find that he knew all about H.P.B.'s Simla miracles.¹

One should qualify Murphet's remark: 'something they could not have done for themselves' to 'which they were in a more difficult position to do for themselves'.

Enthusiast young Dharmapala founded the Maha Bodhi Society with Olcott in 1891. Already the first *MB* magazine, though, did not get that enthusiast a reception in *The Theosophist*.

After H.P. Blavatsky's death, on and off conflicts between Dharmapala and Olcott started.² In 1893, Dharmapala considered himself more of a theosophist than a Buddhist.³ Soon though, he quarrelled again with Olcott, who did not support his court case against a high priest of Shiva on rights to Buddhist historic grounds in Bengal. Dharmapala was not financially dependent on Olcott. He was from a rich family, some of whom became members of the Council (later: Parliament); plus he had subsidy from Mrs Forster of Hawaii. He wanted to propagate Buddhism in India, and could do so mainly among 'proletarian' social strata,⁴ attacking privileges of the Indian TS' Brahman allies. In 1904 Dharmapala broke finally with the TS.⁵

The rise of Annie Besant made it difficult to patch this up. Mrs Besant was far more interested in big Hindu India than in small Buddhist Ceylon; though she first lectured there in 1893, before ever having been in India.

The main source of income for the Galle TS' Mahinda college was T.D.S. Amarasuriya. A dilemma for the TS was that a main source of Mr Amarasuriya's income was selling arrack [a sort of gin], while Olcott and his TS stood for temperance. When in 1904 a mass temperance movement started, Amarasuriya decided to check it from within rather than confront it. In September of that year, he let Olcott speak at his property. Olcott proposed that the principal of Mahinda College should direct the southern province temperance movement.⁶ At the 1905 TS convention, F.L. Woodward read a report of the Galle Buddhist TS to Olcott, written by D.J. Subashinha:

I regret to note that the Temperance Movement, which last year spread like wild fire, ... and which once afforded great hopes for a bright future, is now on the verge of extinction. The failure is solely due to the leaders' dislike to be benefited by your world-wide experience in such organizing work, and their refusal to carry out the campaign on the lines so generously proposed

¹TT Oct. 1937, WT, 8.

²MALALGODA.

³S.C. SEN, 329

⁴ODL, quoted BOLLAND(1911), 78.

⁵Sanskrit name form, suggested to him by Olcott. Sometimes spelt Dhammapala (Pali), *LucL* VI, Mar.-Aug. 1890, 166; on the same page, also spelt Dammapala (in a letter from Japan).

⁶S.C. SEN, 331.

⁷Described by Madame Blavatsky, in 'The final result of the savage attack of the Roman Catholics on the Buddhists at Colombo', *TT*, Sept. 1883, 325, as 'the Roman Catholic ruffianly mob, of the so-called converts (mostly Malabarians)'. Malabar is in south-west India; roughly equivalent to today's Kerala. For India, many Christians live there.

¹MURPHET, 140. 'Miracles': like the sudden appearance of a cup and saucer at a Simla picnic.

²H. S. O., 'The "wail" of Dharmapala', *TT*, Apr. 1899, suppl. xxviii-xxx: 'this ambitious young man'. In 1893, after earlier conflicts, Olcott and Dharmapala still wrote together *The Kinship between Hinduism and Buddhism*.

³S.C. SEN, 337.

⁴BAC, 1921, 11-2.

⁵TT, Oct. 1906, 3. Olcott called Dharmapala 'a conceited young man'; *ODL*, *TT*, June 1905, 515.

⁶ROGERS, 338. 'Olcott was no doubt sincere in making his proposal, but it was clear he was used by Amarasuriya to undermine the temperance cause'.

by you.¹

In 1908, the first time Annie Besant came as PTS, she mentioned some opposition to her from Buddhist priests.² In the same year, Jinarajadasa wrote:

... certain fundamental ideas of Theosophy are looked upon and denounced as heretical by the Buddhists of Ceylon ... the impression distinctly in Buddhist lands is that it is Neo-Christianity! ... orthodox Buddhists dislike Theosophy for its theism and its doctrine of the Logos.³

After 1915's riots between Buddhists and Muslims in Ceylon, the government interned Dharmapala. They banned his paper *Sinhala Bauddhaya*, but it came back later. The government also suspected Annie Besant.⁴

In the 1920's, Alice Leighton Cleather influenced Dharmapala and his *Maha Bodhi* magazine, as one can read in issues from then, and 1938, and 1940; though she, like other 19th century born Europeans, was close to non-Ceylon Mahayana Buddhism.⁵ For Dharmapala, this was a way to keep faithful to theosophical ideas, while denying the authority of Adyar. There also was some praise for Mrs Tingley in publications like *MB* and the *Buddhist Annual of Ceylon*.

In 1920, the first issue of *BAC* came out. About then, the *Ceylon Theosophical Journal* also started; in the 1930's, it became *Ceylon Theosophical News*. Jinarajadasa, more categorically now than in 1908, wrote: 'I am perfectly aware how my fellow-Buddhists in Ceylon look askance at all Theosophical ideas as heretical.'⁶

Wickremasinghe's successor as theosophist GS in the 30's was T. Nallainathan, Frankfort Place, Bambalapitiya, Colombo.

Dharmapala's funeral in 1933 proved his popularity. *MB* estimated 100,000 mourners in Colombo. In April 1935, Jinarajadasa lectured in Wellawatte.

Arundale remarked on Lanka:

¹General Report on 1905, 66. ROGERS, 338-9, ascribes the decline of the movement to leaders' inexperience in 'organising ordinary people on an ongoing basis'.

²BESANT(1908C), Foreword, n. p. OBEYESEKERA(1992B): 'With the development of an educated bourgeoisie the monk order as the sole repository of the religion no longer held. Thus, it became possible for laymen to know more about Buddhism and its history than monks did.' This may have caused animosity with some monks, though the TS did not have an anti-monk policy.

³JINARAJADASA(1923), 72-4, written in 1908.

⁴NETHERCOT(1963), 238: 'Even in Ceylon Mrs Besant and her Theosophists were being blamed by the police as being partly responsible for the riots between the Buddhist nationalists and the Muslims. I am indebted to Mrs Kumari Jayawardena for a passage from a report of the Inspector General of police (Confidential Minute paper No. 14502 of 1915, Ceylon Government Archives), concerning the dangerous influence Mrs Besant and her Theosophist followers were supposed to be exerting against Great Britain.'

⁵DE PURUCKER(1940), 101: 'Hinayana ... means the 'defective' vehicle, the 'inferior' or 'imperfect' vehicle.' Also VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1910), 101: 'Hina-yāna ... that exoteric morality form of Buddhism.' Theravada Buddhists do not call themselves Hinayana.

⁶JINARAJADASA(1923), VI.

Mr. Frei is in Ceylon, looking after his estate. We were glad to meet again our old friend Major Robinson, who is doing good work in Colombo.¹

In 1945, the Ceylon Section had become so weak that headquarters in Adyar withdrew its charter, and replaced it by a Presidential Agency.² Some contributing factors why TS influence declined, gradually and with ups and downs, after their success with Buddhist schools, after 1904-1907, may have been:

1. Hinduism in the TS, as with Annie Besant, estranged Dharmapala and others.

2. Krishnamurti. He was not popular with some in Ceylon as a 'South Indian'.³ According to Kaviratna: 'When he was proclaimed as vehicle for the World Teacher, that was the greatest blow to theosophy in India.' 'In Ceylon' might be even more appropriate. Many did not expect the Maitreya (Metteyya) in the twentieth century. Still, quite some welcomed Krishnamurti festively, when he came there in November 1928 before he had stopped with his World Teacher mission.⁴

3. The gradually loosening ties between Adyar and the Buddhist Theosophical Society. Also, BTS influence in the 1880-1900 period increased, from 0.4 to 15.5% of the total number of pupils (see table, p. 280). But the twentieth century saw gradual decrease of BTS influence on education, in favour of that of the government.⁵

An episode in the loosening of ties between Adyar and the BTS was the Woodward affair. In 1920; the school principal Woodward⁶ had to leave the country, because he ate eggs. This was against most Buddhists' interpretation of vegetarianism. The farewell article in the *Buddhist Annual of Ceylon* did mention rampant 'Bolshevism'; not why he left.⁷

Most MBS political contacts in the 1930's seem to be with what later became the United National Party. Many Ceylon politicians had connections with BTS schools:

¹ARUNDALE(1936), 281.

²RANSOM(1950), 161-2.

³'Krishnamurti through Ceylon eyes', *MB* 1928, 621-2. *BAC*; *MB* 1928, 46.

⁴Letter by Krishnamurti on the visit, quoted M. LUTYENS, 265: 'Garlands at every station and devotion ...'.

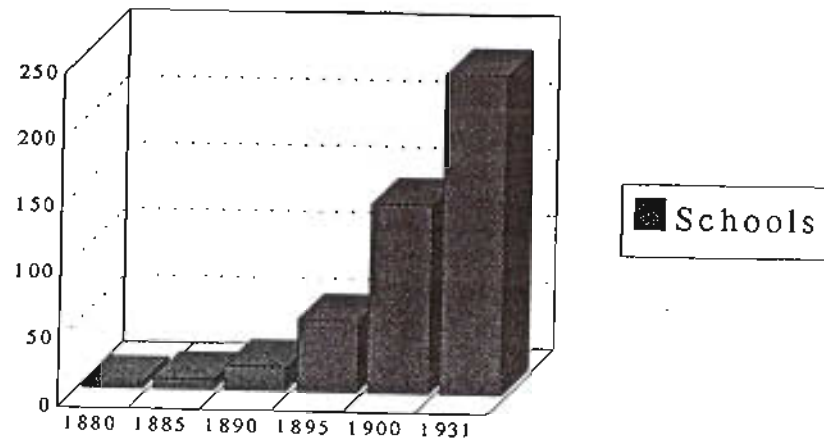
⁵From 1900 to 1931, the number of pupils in BTS schools went from 18,700 to 45,728 in 240 schools; but the percentage went from 15.5 to 14.13; so slightly down after the steep late nineteenth century rise; computed from SUMATHIPALA, 28; 204-5. In the early twentieth century, the number of private Buddhist schools, not affiliated to the BTS, had risen steeply, to about 360; *ibid.*, 205. Between 1931 and 1947, the percentage of Sri Lanka's schools that were private (aided), including BTS schools, went down from 63.63% to 50.73%; that of government schools went up from 36.37 to 49.27. Calculated from: SUMATHIPALA, 205, 336-7; with thanks to Prof. B. Morrison.

⁶Star name (Leadbeater's occult research): Lignus. BROOKS(1914A), XIII.

⁷*BAC*, 1920, 10; A.D.J., farewell article to Woodward. Interview with Dr. Harichandra Kaviratna.

BUDDHIST TS SCHOOLS in CEYLON

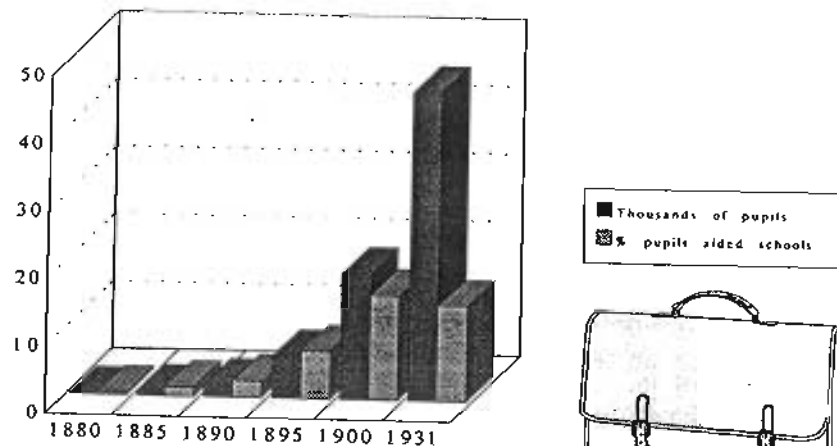
Numbers of schools



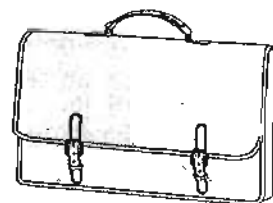
Computed from SUMATHIPALA, 28; 204-5.

Pupils

Numbers: thousands; % of all pupils at government aided schools



Computed from SUMATHIPALA, 28; 204-5.



D.B. Jayatileke ... later Minister of Home Affairs and Leader of the House, was in his younger days a General Manager of Buddhist Schools;¹ W.A. de Silva who became Minister of Health in the first State Council ... S.A. Wicramasinghe ... who was General Manager of the Buddhist Schools from 1932-34. Further the schools had committee members like D.S. Senanayake (1915-1920) later ... founder of ... UNP and first Prime Minister and S. Bandaranaike.²

C. INDONESIA

1. Beginnings and Budi Utomo

In 1880, 1881 or 1883, Baron von Tenggell from eastern Germany founded Indonesia's first TS lodge, in Pekalongan, on Java's north coast.³ That lodge fizzled out by 1885; Tenggell died in Bogor in 1893; numerical success was not immediate.

The first issue of the Dutch language monthly *Theosofisch Maandblad voor Nederlandsch-Indië* came out in July 1901.⁴ Twelve years later, half its subscribers were non-FTS.⁵ In 1903, five lodges existed in the Dutch East Indies.⁶ All their officials were Dutch, except for the president of Yogyakarta lodge, Raden Mas Toemenggoeng Pandji Djajeng Irawan.⁷ In September 1905, the first issue of *Pewarta Theosofie boewat tanah Hindia Nederland* came out.⁸ This magazine was not only in the Javanese language, but also in Malay,⁹ so not aimed only at East and Central Java, but at the island's western part and other islands too. It already had 200 subscribers after its second issue.¹⁰ Since

¹BCW, Vol. I, 511; he usually was translator of Olcott's speeches.

²Carla Risseuw, personal communication.

³ENI, vol. VI, 763 (the claim, *ibid.*, that Madame Blavatsky visited Java three times, is very dubious) *TiNI* Jan. 1936, 23, so more recent, has 1880. NUGRAHA(1989), 2 has 1881. Spelling in *TT*, Oct. 1883, 25. 'F. DE TENGNEGELL'. B. Hering, personal communication.

⁴NUGRAHA(1989), 24. TSUCHIYA(1987), 42.

⁵VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1913B), 3. *Theosofie in Nederlandsch-Indië* was for members only, while *TMNI* was also for outsiders.

⁶TS Annual Report on 1903, 104. They were, in order of founding: Semarang, Surabaya, Bogor, Yogyakarta, Surakarta. Up to 1910, Bandung, Jakarta, Klaiten, Medan, and Malang followed. *TiNI*, July 1937, 113.

⁷In 1905, he still was the only non-Dutch official in the, by then, six lodges in the Dutch East Indies.

⁸Ahmat B. Adam, *The vernacular press and the emergence of modern Indonesian consciousness (1855-1913)*, London, 1984; 350.

⁹All-archipelago trade language, which eventually developed into *Bahasa Indonesia*, official language of the Republic of Indonesia.

¹⁰*TT*, March 1906, 476. TIEMERSMA(1907), 216. In 1918-19, *PT* also advertised two translations of theosophical books, by Annie Besant on Islam and 'At the feet of the Master' by Krishnamurti, into the Sundanese language of West Java. That volume had 194 pages; the same year's volume of *TMNI* had 530 pages. From 1916-1920, *PT*'s administrators, all Dutch, changed

the 1920's there was a magazine in Javanese, *Koemandang Theosofie*, the Light of Theosophy; and another one in both Javanese and Malay, *Rasa*.¹

On 6 April 1912, the TS recognized the Dutch East Indies as an autonomous section.² Annie Besant announced: 'It is pleasant to chronicle the formation of a National Society in Java [ignoring Medan], which now feels strong enough to stand on its own feet, without the support of its mother, the T.S. in the Netherlands.'³

The sections still had many links though. In 1913, Baroness Mellina van Asbeck, daughter of the Dutch diplomatic representative in Paris, came from Europe via Adyar, to lecture on morality and evolution. Not only to TS lodges: Bogor masculine Masonic lodge asked her to lecture twice, once in Dutch, once in French.⁴ Later, in the 1920's-30's, two Dutch TS General Secretaries, Kruisheer and Van der Leeuw, had an Indies background.

What did people among the Dutch majority of Indonesia's theosophists think of colonial rule? General Secretary Van Hinloopen Labberton wrote that after the start of colonialism, 'the Teutonic race of the North soon followed suit; foremost of all' the Dutch. Their East India Company had been present in Indonesia since the seventeenth century. Labberton considered that it had conducted 'mutually profitable trade' with the islands, in spite of Company selfishness. Its rule had been limited to Java, the small spice-producing Moluccas islands, and some fortified points along coasts. According to Semaoen, only since the late nineteenth century colonialism had also become 'imperialist'.⁵ Since then, it had expanded rapidly militarily into islands everywhere in the archipelago. Labberton gave a historical account of these wars in scores of islands and regions: everywhere, 'robbery'⁶ or 'malevolent persons' had left the military no alternative but 'bringing them to their senses'⁷ by conquest, resulting into 'peace and

fast: first J. Kruisheer, then L.J. Polderman, then J.D. de Roock, then Mrs A.J.C. Gonggrijp-van Biokhuizen. VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1914), 19, thought 'the Sundanese, less civilized than the true Javanese of the centre and the Eastern part'. More Islamized, they were more distant from theosophy.

¹ENI, vol. VI, 764. In 1910, the TS published *Chabar* in Bandung; TT Oct. 1910, 155. 1924-5 the Goenoeng Sari group of the OSE brought out *Sterlicht* magazine.

²TT May 1912, suppl., vi. See also ENI, vol. VI, 763; TB, April 1931, 173.

³WT, TT June 1912, 327.

⁴VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1913B), 6-8.

⁵VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1914), 1; 3. SEMAOEN(1966), 51: 'The consequences of an imperialist policy only made themselves felt since 1900, that is, since the time the country was opened to international capital.'

⁶In Bali; VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1910), 176.

⁷VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1910), 171; in Jambi in Sumatra.

⁸VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1910), 174; on southwestern Sulawesi.

prosperity caused by the Dutch rule'.¹ On p. 202, we have discussed Labberton's ideas on General Van Heutsz and imperialism.

Was Van Hinloopen Labberton a typical representative of 'einische politiek' in colonialism? He himself did not like the word 'ethisch'.² Authors using it then, and now, do not mean the same by the word. Some call a group of Dutch officials, who criticized Dutch private business, ethical. Labberton was not 'ethical' in that sense. At the request of the syndicate of big sugar companies, he wrote a counter-attack to a well-known investigation by officials on the relationship of European business to the Javanese peasants. Their report said it contributed to their *mindere welvaart*; decrease in prosperity. Quite on the contrary, Labberton reacted; there was no *mindere welvaart*.³

H.J. Kiewiet de Jonge thought:

our Colonies should be ruled according to a system which in part looks like what people in the 18th century called 'enlightened despotism'.⁴

From Madame Blavatsky on, opinions of theosophists outside Indonesia about most Indonesians were lower than those on 'Aryan' Indians.⁵ TS leaders excepted the islands' upper classes though: an Aryan empire had existed, ten thousands of years ago, which colonised Sumatra and Java ... for the most part they were welcomed in these regions by the

¹VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1914), 16. VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1910), 170 on Aceh immediately after the conquest, though 'small gangs of robbers and irreconcilables' still fought the Dutch: 'now the people in the whole region are subjected to regular taxation, without trouble with its introduction. By providing education ... improving transport ... and the uplifting of agriculture and stock-breeding the government works strongly for the interests of country and people'. Ibid., 175, on Western New Guinea (Irian): 'Our officials' endeavours to accustom the still very primitive people to order and regularity and to end the many robbers' forays (so-called *raka* forays) already have caused fine results'.

²He preferred 'associate'; interview with *De Avondpost*, quoted IG, 1917 (39), 666-7. MRBTD.

³VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1908), 22.

⁴H.J. Kiewiet de Jonge, letter to his parents, 13-1-1915, IISG, Kiewiet de Jonge archive, # 40.

⁵H.P. Blavatsky wrote of the Krakatau disaster: 'An earthquake has just engulfed over 80,000 people (87,903) in Sunda straits. These were mostly Malays, savages with whom but few had relations, and the dire event will soon be forgotten.' 'Historical Difficulty'-why?, TT Oct. 1883, 3-10, in BCW, V, L.A., Philosophical Research Society, 1950; 199-200. In his family tree, TEPPER(1898); see p. 457; put Malays below Aryans, above Mongols, and far above Australians. SCHWARZ lumped Malays and Papuans together. Rudolf Steiner thought 'Malays' were 'doomed'. On Borneo (Kalimantan) live the Dyaks, whose language is of the Malay group. Part of their culture are the so-called Pengap chants. Theosophist HOOPER(1902), 531 believed Dyak 'savages' could never have written their beautiful Pengap chants. These were probably relics of some disappeared race. Compare HARA(1904) on the 'wild men of Borneo'. According to VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1910), 2 'Aryans and Indonesians were completely different.' Ibid., 3, links Indonesia to Lemuria, the continent of the TS 'third Root-race'. To Labberton, as both the Latin word 'lemur' and an ancient Aryan Indian word for South-East Asians, 'Dānawa', mean 'ghost-like beings', there should be ancient knowledge in Aryan legends.

people, who looked on the fair-faced strangers as Gods, and were more inclined to worship than to fight them.¹

In 1912, Van Hinloopen Labberton proposed that the Dutch prince consort Hendrik should come to Java. The daily *Bataviaasch Handelsblad* sympathised with Labberton's idea of strengthening Dutch-Java ties in this way. It was afraid, though, of 'pressure on the common men' of Java; the nobility would burden them with the costs of the prince consort's visit. To this, Labberton replied in *TMNI*.

Lately, there really is an excessive tendency to attack the Principalities' princely families. ... Yes, there are still really many good sides to the Principalities' families, whose members rightly consider themselves *arya*'s.²

In an article 'Java', *The Theosophist* mentioned contacts with the moderate nationalist *Budi Utomo* movement, founded in 1908. Its main support was among Java's aristocrats.³ On 16 January 1909, Labberton addressed a *Budi Utomo* meeting in Gambir, a Jakarta suburb. Three hundred people were present.⁴ He repeatedly said it must be Allah's will that Indonesia was now ruled by the Dutch.⁵ He spoke about the brotherhood of humanity, of occult racial theories, and of his wish that the Lord might increase the knowledge and morality of the people of the Indies. Labberton advocated fighting sins like gambling or drinking. Dutch journalists noted the speech:

While one may doubt the use of initiating the native, who already is greatly susceptible to superstition, still further into other forms of mysticism, certainly the conclusion of [Labberton's] sermon deserves universal support, as he points to vanity and wrongness of knowledge that is

¹BESANT and LEADBEATER(1913), 273. FTS former *Volksraad* member Th. Vreede, in a speech in Leiden university's Small Auditorium on 20 February 1922, said 'that the Hindu civilization in Indonesia probably is some millennia older than is usually supposed.' GOEDHART, 50. See the quote on Aryan occult prehistory on p. 122. In a less religious vein, the Dutch Resident of Surabaya, G. van Aalst, also thought that the 'Native race' should be divided into 'descendants of the Hindu rulers and of the original Malay-Polynesian people'. TICHELMAN(1985), 419. There certainly had been Hindu and Buddhist religious influence on Java's history.

²Labberton, 'Toestanden in de Vorstenlanden', *TMNI* Mar.-Apr. 1912; cited IG 1912, *MRBTD*, 797.

³TT Apr. 1909, 118. Its full name in the old spelling: 'Javanenbond "Boedi-Oetomo"', Javanese League *Budi Utomo*; VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1909), 3. *Budi Utomo* aimed at a 'national brotherhood irrespective of race, sex or religion'; 1908 leaflet by Soewarno, reprinted *SOEMBANGSIH*, 15. RICKLEFS(1993), 165; Governor-General Van Heutsz, in these early days, had good expectations of *Budi Utomo*. DJAJADININGRAT-NIEUWENHUIS, 47: even before *BU*'s founding, Labberton knew some of its later founders. The *BU* founders had also freemason contacts; STEVENS(1994), 50.

⁴VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1909), 3.

⁵VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1909), 8-9; 12-3.

not joined to higher religion and a correct way of life.¹

As did some others, one *Budi Utomo* leader, Radjiman, joined the Theosophical Society.² At *BU*'s 7 July 1917 congress, he was the strongest speaker against upgrading Islamic and downgrading pre-Islamic elements, and managed to win over the majority.³

In 1915, Dr Satiman Wirjosandjojo had founded a *BU* youth league, jointly with students of the TS' Goenoeng Sari teachers' training school. At first, its name was *Tri Koro Dharmo*; since 1918 *Jong-Java*.⁴

The relationship of TS to *Budi Utomo* was mostly good. Van Hinloopen Labberton regularly spoke at its congresses.⁵ Some sometimes criticized theosophy in the *BU* paper *Darmo Kondo* though;⁶ and at the 9 July 1916 Surabaya meeting, Vice-Chairman Soetopo⁷ thought Labberton criticized the Javanese's flaws too publicly.⁸

In Indonesia, some expected that a just prince, a *ratu adil*, would usher in an era of justice. According to a 1913 letter to Governor-General Idenburg by his adviser Rinkes, there was some convergence between this traditional expectation, and theosophical World Teacher propaganda, which Annie Besant had recently started with the Order of the Star

¹IG 1909, *MRBTD*, 534-5, 'De theosophie en Boedi-Oetomâ'. *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad* 18-1-1909.

²*Budi Utomo* president about 1914 and 1922; *Volksraad* member 1918-21. On 3 March 1945, the Japanese military appointed him chairman of the 'committee for research for preparation of independence'. He knew the writings of philosophers Kant, Hegel, and Bergson well; as some of their philosophies are rather conservative, it was not as surprising as TICHELMAN(1985), 618 suggests that he supported conservative 'Hindu-Javanism'. RICKLEFS(1993), 165. *BU* members to Radjiman's left saw him as 'a stuffy reactionary'.

³NAGAZUMI(1972), 116.

⁴PETRUS BLUMBERGER(1987), 165. VAN MIERT(1995), 44. Mangkoe Negoro VII was its patron; *HPO*, June 1921, 94.

⁵For instance, in 1914; *KOT* 1915, 'Persoverzicht', 99.

⁶In *Darmo Kondo*, quoted 'Persoverzicht', *KOT* 1914, 969-70, 'Kajoen' wrote that theosophy and the Order of the Star in the East were 'rubbish'; there already was too much religion, both of *sauri* Islam and other kinds, on Java, hindering people's material progress.

⁷In 1917, Soetopo spoke out against revolutionary socialism. He was rather militant within the *Budi Utomo* context though; his colleagues in 1922 rejected his support of striking government pawnshops employees. TICHELMAN(1985), 632-4.

⁸LOC, 11-7-1916, 2c blad, 'De jaarvergadering van Boedi-Oetomo'. The Lumajang local branch proposed to outlaw child marriage, and put legal minimum marriage age at 18 for girls and 25 for boys. Labberton said: 'there should not be marriages between children, or between aged men and very young girls. A people which allows such marriages, finds itself in a degeneration process. If the Javanese nation wants to improve itself, and to become equal to other nations, then it needs to keep that in mind.' He thought the Lumajang proposal's age limits were too high, though. 'The vice chairman, Raden Soetopo, regretted that was pointed publicly to the Javanese people's deficiencies. He proposed to deal with such questions behind closed doors from now on, as their discussion in public would hurt many Javanese'.

in the East.¹ Labberton in the same year thought 'Today too, one can imagine the danger that the Javanese expectation of a Messiah will again be abused for political aims.' The OSE should prevent this.²

Towards the First World War, the colonial government proclaimed an 'association policy', which it said was a fairer deal for 'natives'. The TS supported this policy.³

Theosophists did not base that support on the same philosophical foundations as Protestant Governor-General Idenburg though. When Christian missionaries said that association within the Dutch empire could only work on a common basis of religion,⁴ Van Hinloopen Labberton agreed. But he differed with them on the nature of that basis:

Dutch civilization in these lands will have to have a religious background in order to penetrate and to continue to exist. Only Theosophy, the Root of Faith in all faiths, will be able to provide

¹D.A. Rinkes to A.W.F. Idenburg; VAN DER WAL(1967), 101. See also Mas Mangoenpoerwoto, 'Bintang timoer [Star in the East]', *P7*, 1918-19 (12), 70-1. Soerikoesoemo in *WED*, 1920, 104: 'On the spiritual field, it is the Star of the East, which prepares the coming of the Ratoe Adil.'

²'Naschrift van de Redactie', *TMNI* 1913, 167f. *Ibid.*, 169f. 'Een leraar, die komt voor de Gansche Wereld' interpreted New Guinea stories on a thaumaturgist, expected to return, as confirming the OSE.

³VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1916D), 518: 'Let everyone in his surroundings fight for this and support the Government in its noble striving towards regeneration of our system of rule on the basis of Association'. See also *TMNI* 1918, 49. VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1917), 393, after visiting Queen Wilhelmina and other authorities as leader of the *Indië Weerbaar* delegation, wrote in *TMNI*: 'My definite impression from what I have seen in The Netherlands is that the ruler ideal which dates from before the abolition of slavery [in 1863 in the Dutch colonial empire], has been replaced with the influential and ruling Dutch by the idea of a policy of association, which will be consciously aimed at the education of the Dutch East Indies towards Self-government and the development of the forces and talents of the natives as much as of the riches of the country.' According to Governor-General De Graeff in a letter to Minister of Colonies Koningsberger on 5 January 1929, in 1918 Van Hinloopen Labberton had been the first to propose including Indonesians in Dutch delegations to international conferences; KWANTES(1984), 169. DIAJADININGRAT-NIEUWENHUIS, 42, defines 'association' as 'Indonesia and The Netherlands should cooperate on a footing of parity and equality between the two nations.' This assumes too readily that various people using the word, meant the same by it. See for instance Van Hinloopen Labberton, and A. Vreede's 'elder and younger brother' view (p. 215), vs. Sneevliet and Westerveld; p. 168, 182. Conservative Dutchman Ritsema van Eck interpreted 'association' as being different from 'assimilation': 'In association, besides an element of unification, there always is an element of segregation'; *De Indische Gids*, April 1920, as quoted *WED*, Feb. 1921, 22. See also his 'Indië's staatkunde en weerbaarheid', *De Gids*, 1917, I, 201-21. Lord Curzon on India in 1917: 'The policy of His Majesty's Government, with which the Government of India are in complete accord, is that of the increasing association'. Quoted MORTIMER(1983), 75. Albert Sarraut, French Minister of Colonies in the 1920's, had a chapter *La Politique d'Association* in his book *La mise en valeur des colonies françaises*. Reviewed by W. de Cock Buning in *NIE*, Sept. 1923, 7f. International 'association policy' was roughly the same as 'ethische politiek' in Dutch of that time.

⁴VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1916C), 243.

it. The future belongs to our philosophy of life.¹
This view did not make agreement with for instance Muslims easier.

Van Leeuwen, the TS monthly's editor who would later become General Secretary, received a letter. It asked about attitudes to Christian missionaries in Indonesia. Was it true that the TS saw mission among Muslims differently from among Papuans² in New Guinea (Irian), and from the islands of Timor, Sumba, and Nias?

In his reply, Van Leeuwen affirmed there was indeed such a difference, comparable to the one Annie Besant made between Christianity in India, and, for instance, Africa. Missionaries among Muslims basically did nothing more than taking away a nickel from them and giving them back ten cents. New Guinea and the other islands, though, were not like that:

Here [in the question] is probably meant the existing animism in these regions, a leftover from the Lemurian period and the Lemuro-Atlantean influences of thousands and tens of thousands years ago. Without any doubt, there the new and more noble Aryan Religion will be able to be very useful and, as also in all other countries religion laid the groundwork for civilization, thus also in these regions: with a more noble religion, a more noble civilization, a more humane civilization, will be able to establish itself.³

When Labberton was in The Netherlands with *Indië Weerbaar*, a reporter from *De Avondpost* daily interviewed him on Dutch relations to the Indies. 'A paternal authority should be maintained.' Also, though, the Indies' autonomy should increase gradually. He said people in the Manado area of north east Sulawesi saw the Dutch as allies, not as oppressors: 'a relationship, like the Batavians' to the Romans.'⁴ It should become like that for all of the Indies. Then, Dutch authority would be respected and honoured, especially

¹*Ibid.*, 248. VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1913B), 6. 'The Native society is too immature for unbelief. People with a strong moral basis from earlier incarnations may be very good citizens now, though they now are unbelievers or agnostics, we feel though that in this country, in this more primitive society a widespread unbelief would become a grave obstacle to all true progress.' Without mentioning theosophy, Colonel Fabius at a Dutch right-wing liberals' meeting on conscription said: 'The native in an Indies army should feel as Dutch as possible ... The speaker [Fabius] in this context also questions, if bringing Christianity will tie the natives more to us. It is a fact that Christianity does not ban drinking alcoholic beverages.' *LOC*, 7-3-1917, 1e blad: 'Bond van Vrije Liberalen en Indië. Het debat over de motie Van Heutsz.'

²VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1909), 6. The Malay language original of the speech has 'orang papoea-papoea jang masih biasa memakan sesamanja menoesia'; Papuans who still eat human flesh; the Dutch translation included with the original has 'wilden', savages, instead of Papuans.

³VAN LEEUWEN(1920A), 94-5. VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1910), 109: 'the less civilized peoples of the outer possessions [outside Java]'. TH. VREEDE(1925), 8 suggested 'that the 3/4 more developed people be accorded a temporary authority over the 1/4 less developed ones, or, put differently, that Borneo, Celebes, New Guinea and other less developed areas would be temporarily dominated and colonized by Java.'

⁴'Batavians were a Germanic (or Celtic?) speaking tribe, in the central Netherlands, west of Nijmegen. The Roman empire saw them as *socii*, military allies: a status above that of conquered enemies, and below full empire citizens. The Batavians rebelled militarily at least once.

if The Netherlands lets the Indies develop, as they are entitled to.¹

Labberton's fellow theosophist, Government Secretary A.G. Vreede, wrote in *Koloniale Studiefen* magazine on Indian politics. He wanted to warn especially 'Javanese readers' against losing sight of differences between Indians and Indonesians:

I do not mean to say anything humiliating, when I here pose the undeniable truth, that the people [Indonesians], entrusted to Dutch guardianship, are "younger" than those [Indians] who now are educated by England.

Vreede sympathized with Home Rule for India. However:

Without any doubt, through history and ethnological circumstances, the Indian nation has great advantages over the Indonesians, advantages that have given it a big lead.²

The TS brought out a new political weekly, *Indische Stemmen* (Indies Voices). It saw Annie Besant's *Commonweal* as its example.³ Theosophist L.J. Polderman claimed that about 1916 he had written in the daily *De Locomotief*, favouring a National Congress in the Dutch East Indies, as in India. He proposed this at a 1917 *Insulinde* meeting too. The socialist Sneevliet thought that idea of 'one Mr POLDERMAN' would harm

¹Quoted *IG*, 1917 (39), 666-7, MRBD.

²VREED(1917B), 2. Also quoted *OVIW*, 1918, 1, 'Inlandsche militie', 18-9. Writing of 'younger', of 'ethnological circumstances', Vreede thought of Root Races as Besant taught them. Ibid., 3: politics in India differed by their 'broad moderation'. Ibid., 4: 'a general development [in India], also measured by western standards, which is immeasurably higher than which is now still the case with our Natives'.

³*TMNI*, 1918, 208; 281. It was a continuation of the fortnightly paper *Inlandsche Stemmen*, an initiative of Van Hinloopen Labberton in September 1917, with himself, Hadji Agoes Salim, Abdoel Moeis, moderate social democrat (who had broken with the *ISDV*) W. Lubberink, and others as editors; TICHELMAN(1985), 57. For Lubberink, an ex-navy officer, *ibid.*, 380; VAN DER PAUW, 102-3: in the early 1920's, he briefly became a member of the Communist Party of The Netherlands. In 1924, he was an employers' organization official, and became editor-in-chief of *De Vaderlander* [The Patriot], the Dutch fascist party weekly. According to BROEZE, 24, *IS* first came out in November 1917. In May 1918, the name changed to *Indische Stemmen*, edited by Moeis and the theosophist P. Fournier, who also wrote in *TMNI*; *ibid.* Members of *Budi Utomo*'s youth organization *Jong-Java* wrote in *IS*: *TMNI*, 1918, 393. One contributor was B.J.O. Schrieke on landed property law; *IS*, 4-10-1919. The paper 'lacked contributors and subscribers'; *TMNI*, 1919, 511. But editor Kiewiet de Jonge in the 11-10-1919 *IS* issue, 133, wrote that 'in less than ten weeks' time the number of subscribers to *Indische Stemmen* has more than tripled'. According to HERING(1992), VII, the number of copies per issue went from 280 to 900, read mainly by 'petty clerks, the teachers, the foremen and lower police officials'. Nevertheless, *IS* then merged with another weekly, *De Taak* (the Task). BROEZE, 86, names as theosophist editors of the pre-merger *Taak*: Kiewiet de Jonge, Th. Vreede, and W.P.D. Corporaal. Radjiman also wrote in it; H. Sneevliet, 'Haar Taak', *HVW*, 10-8-1917. Among post-merger *Taak* editors, A.J. Hamerster was a prominent theosophist. Another editor was S. Koperberg, who in 1915 had warned Sneevliet against working with theosophists.

⁴POLDERMAN(1922), 3-4.

revolutionary ideas within *Insulinde*: 'Insulinde, a part of the National Congress, the Congress of the Princes and Bupati.'¹ According to Polderman, the Congress idea had faded into the background with the coming of the *Volksraad* (People's Council).²

Establishing this *Volksraad* was part of government association policy. In 1917, *Budi Utomo* put up candidates for it, at Van Hinloopen Labberton's request conjointly with his *Nederlandsch-Indische Vrijzinnige Bond*.³ This non-clerical electoral association eventually won most 'European' seats in the election. Labberton⁴ and three Indonesian FTS sat from 1918 on in the first *Volksraad*.⁵ The *raad* had 39 members in all. So more than 10% of membership were FTS; far more than any of the promillages in the graph, p. 110. *The Theosophist* saw this as a 'Nationalist movement on Aryan lines'.⁶ Soewardi Soeraningrat in the socialist daily *Het Volk* did not expect much from the council, as it was only partly elected, by limited franchise, with limited powers. He anticipated

that the *Volksraad* will be moderately conservative. Let me introduce our "representatives" to you. I. Dr. Radjiman,⁷ court physician of the Susuhunan of Solo, theosophist and scholar,

¹*HVW*, 25-8-1917, 224; H. Sneevliet, 'Doorbuigen of tot inkeer komen?'

²POLDERMAN(1922), 3-4.

³NAGAZUMI(1972), 125. Van Hinloopen Labberton also was on the *Budi Utomo* list of candidates; *LOC*, 29-8-1917, 1e blad, 'Boedi Oetomo'. Hadji Agoes Salim also joined the *NIVB*; NOER, 110. The *NIVB* was founded with support from the three main parties (rightist *Bond van Vrije Liberalen*, centre *Liberal Unie*, leftist *Vrijzinnig-Democratische Bond*) into which Dutch liberalism was then divided; *LOC*, 2-2-1917, 1e blad, 'De vrijzinnigen in Indië'. *LOC*, 29-9-1916, 2e blad, 'Een Indische Vrijzinnige Bond': the *NIVB* was 'moderate liberal'. *K V* on 1917, (1918), III: *NIVB* members were 'mainly from among the wealthier members of the European population.'

⁴His candidacy also had Bupatis' Union support; H. Sneevliet, *HVW*, 10-8-1917, 205, 'De jongste regentenvergadering en de Volksraad': their members, including Mangkoe Negoro VII, put up as candidate 'the theosophical fire-eater v. Hinloopen Labberton'. *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad*, 'Vergadering van den Regentenbond', reprinted *IG*, 1917 (39), 1548: Labberton topped the list of candidates. Of 34 Bupatis' Union members present, 33 voted for him; 28 for Polderman; Tjokroaminoto got 'one or two' votes. See also *LOC*, 16-7-1917, 2e blad, GOENAWAN MANGOEKOESEMO (1918), 19: bupati founded their union to prevent limitation of *hormat*.

⁵*TT*, Jan. 1919, 312. According to *DVH*, 4, 'most of the motions and proposals were by Van Hinloopen Labberton'; and he influenced the section in the 1922 new Dutch constitution on the colonies; see VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1921). He failed to establish 'one of the native languages' as a *Volksraad* official language. His *Volksraad* colleague R. A. A. A. Djajadiningrat proposed Malay; NAGAZUMI(1972), 140. Labberton was also a department of the interior official from 1918-1922. KWANTES(1975), 494.

⁶*TT*, Jan. 1919, 312.

⁷Radjiman was number one candidate on *Budi Utomo*'s list, *LOC*, 29-8-1917, 'Boedi Oetomo'. At a 'Nationaal Comité' meeting, preparing for the elections, on 19 May 1917, he had held a speech, 'from a theosophical viewpoint'. *LOC*, 22-5-1917, 'Bijeenkomst van het Nationaal Comité'.

conservative and eternal opponent of the ex-exile Tjipto.¹

Bandung daily *Kaoem Moeda*, then Darna Koesoema's, expected Labberton in the Council to fight conservatism; but 'that fight will keep within the limits of the principle that the Indies will remain under Dutch authority.'²

A committee of Javanese living in The Netherlands, led by Raden Mas Ario Sooryopoetro, celebrated ten years of *Budi Utomo*, partly in the The Hague TS building, De Ruyterstraat 67, on 20 May 1918.³ The theosophists also had a good relationship with the society of Indonesians in The Netherlands, the *Indische Vereeniging*. Sooryopoetro and his nephew Noto Soeroto then were prominent in it.⁴ Soerjopranoto had represented its paper for Indonesia. In it, Sooryopoetro explained theosophy as

This reincarnation doctrine has given birth to the caste system. Each caste has its own souls, which help to fit that caste's members for a definite task of the work in society and state. Do not we find this idea in genetics doctrine as well?⁵

The TS founded a central fund for 'all theosophical-social or political work' in the Dutch East Indies in 1919.⁶ In the next year, before the term of the first *Volksraad* finished, a second Dutch, and fifth in all, theosophist 'MP' joined Labberton, also for the *NIVB*: ex-Semarang local councillor Theo Vreede.⁷

Many publications frequently mentioned theosophists.⁸ In 1916, the editor-in-chief

¹*Het Volk*; quoted *JG*, 1918 (40), 343, *MRBTD*. In the valuable list of articles by Soewardi, TSUCHIYA(1987), 50-1 did not include Soewardi's *Het Volk* articles.

²*KM* 19-1-1918, quoted *IPO* 3/1918, *MJB*.

³NAGAZUMI(1972), 131. POEZE(1986), 125. *Javaansche Kunstavond ter gelegenheid van het tienjarig bestaan der vereeniging "Boedi-Oetomo"*, gehouden door in Nederland verblijvende Javanen Op 20 mei 1918 in het gebouw "Diligentia", den Haag. The Hague, Luctor et Emergo, 1918.

⁴POEZE(1986), 75: in 1911, Labberton was one of the *IV's* *pemimpin* (literally, 'leaders', donors). *Ibid.*, 76: Noto Soeroto went to the 1911 London Races Congress, to which Besant in vain had urged Gandhi to go.

⁵Soerjo Poetro, 'Op de Puihoopen van Oud-Java', *HPO* 1916/17, 228-35; 233.

⁶*TMNI*, 1919, 202; it started with 6000 guilders. In 1921, the *Theosofisch Steunfonds* had a capital of f. 100,000; *ENI*, vol. VI, 764. When he spoke to *Budi Utomo*, VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1909), 4, had denied that the TS was political; it only wanted to cleanse people's hearts, because else, people's political movements would also be unclean. He said that at a time when all organizations of a political nature were illegal in the Dutch East Indies; compare Olcott's views on apoliticism, linked to expectations that this might facilitate legalization of the TS in Russia; see p. 63f.

⁷KOCH(1956), 72; 130. He was not as active a *Volksraad* member as Labberton; SOERIOKOESEMO(1921B), 72. McVEY(1965), 450 wrongly calls Vreede an *ISDP* member.

⁸After an attack on Labberton by *Het Nieuws van den Dag voor Nederlandsch Indië*, which theosophists saw as inspired by Roman Catholic clergy, *TMNI*, 1918, 48, took stock of the TS' friends and foes among dailies. Apart from the *Nieuws van den Dag*, it said also about *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad*, *Preangerbode*, and *Soerabajaasch Handelsblad*: 'One should beware of these media.

and press reviewer of pro-colonial monthly *De Indische Gids*, ex-Indies army captain E.A.A. van Heekeren, felt weary. Once again, he had been reading anti-government column after anti-government column in Indonesian papers. 'The Native press', he wrote, 'broadcasts poison. ... if only the government wanted to understand the press' great power. Why cannot the government use men like Van Hinloopen Labberton, who have very great influence on Native society, and to whose voice they listen? ... How they should perform that task, by founding a new organ', or in another way, 'is a matter for more talks. But anyway, the Indies government should do something. From all sides, from this country and from abroad, they incite Kromo. The social democrats have their revolutionary organ, the *Insulinde* people broadcast their products of sedition.'¹

Next year, a new daily came out; in 1918, a remodelled old daily came out. Then prominent FTS, Raden Djojosoediro and Hadji Agoes Salim, and H.J. Kiewiet de Jonge, respectively headed *Neratja* (The Balance), and *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad*.² Both were accused of being government mouthpieces.³

In 1918 and 1919, of contributors to the TS' own *Theosofisch Maandblad*, all but Jinarajadasa were Dutch. The *Maandblad's* 1919 List of Contributors consisted of Jinarajadasa, ten Dutchmen, and five Dutch women.⁴ In 1920, leading *Budi Utomo* member, though not representative of all of *BU*, Raden Mas Soetatmo Soerikoesoemo, joined them. Before we look further at this leader of 'Javanese nationalism' politics, we look at other political movements which had emerged meanwhile.

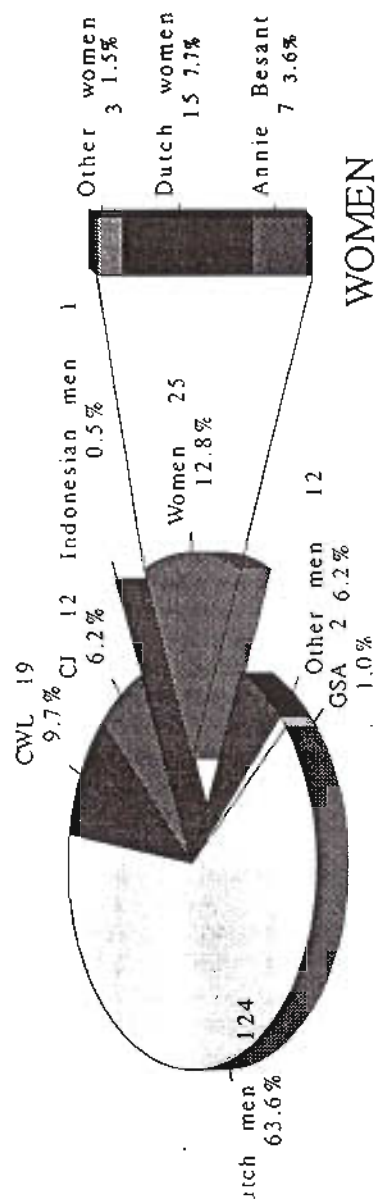
Who supports them financially or morally is an accomplice.' The *Javabode* and the *Bataviaasch Handelsblad* from Djakarta, the *Mataram* from Yogyakarta, the *Locomotief* and the *Indiër* from Semarang, and the *Sumatra Post* from Medan, were considered friendly. Things changed fast for the *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad*.

¹*JG*, 1916 (38), 1283. *MRBTD*.

²Salim was born in October 1884; according to KOCH(1960), 131, he sometimes called himself 'a Libra man.' In astrology, people born under the Libra sign are supposed to be moderate and balanced.

³Kiewiet de Jonge, who also wrote in *TMNI* and *Djawa* magazines, from 1918-19 was *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad* editor-in-chief; KWANTES(1975), 614-5. 'Aroen' (J. Stam), in 'Verantwoordelijkheid', *HVVW*, 9-11-1918, 46: 'Mr KIEVIT [sic] DE JONGE, who is very closely connected to Buitenzorg [the governor-general's palace in Bogor].' KOCH(1956), 112-3: he had got that job through intervention of the government Intelligence Service chief, Captain W. Muurling, to propagate the governor-general's policies; as with *Neratja*, which received government money. After Kiewiet de Jonge had been dismissed from the *Nieuwsblad* because of falling circulation, in 1919, when he lived in Gambir, he became editor of *Indische Stemmen*.

⁴See also the graph on p. 292 for the authors of articles. The five women were Mrs van Hinloopen Labberton, F. Beguin-Bickers, A.P. Dekker-Groot, E.H. Sonneborn-Grönloh, J. Westrik-Westers.



Jan. 1918-Dec. 1920

2. Post-Budi Utomo movements: Sarekat Islam

After 1912, more radically anti-colonial movements, which managed to get mass followings, upstaged *Budi Utomo*. They were: *Sarekat Islam*, based on Muslim lower level civil servants, small and middle business people, peasants, and workers; the *Indische Partij*; and later, in the 1920's, the communist *PKI*, and Sukarno's *PNI*.

The shift in attention from *Budi Utomo* to *Sarekat Islam* was potentially negative for the Theosophical Society, even though the *SI* was no strictly Islamic monolith. *Budi Utomo* tended to look for inspiration towards Hinduism,¹ also on the island of Bali (see p. 329), and towards India:

Of course, the Javanese men of culture, as they search for means for the construction of Java's decayed and ruined palace, are in need of materials which India's spiritual riches brought us.²

The 'masses' in the *SI* looked more to Muslim countries;³ or to Russia after 1917. That in India after 1917, Gandhi's non-co-operation pushed Annie Besant's views into the background, might complicate TS relationships with those in Indonesia who looked to India as well.

In 1916, the Dutch *Resident* Engelenberg reported on political and politically relevant movements of Indonesia. He described the Theosophical Society as ardent supporters of the association policy, who tried to win over Javanese to their ideas. He strongly doubted their chances of success, however, as the 'real Islamic spirit' would not be satisfied with the position of a mere spark of a syncretic Central Fire.⁴ Still, one can argue that in

¹VLEKKE, 412. G.E. HALL(1968), 752: *BU* 'took its inspiration from ... Rabindranath Tagore, and to some extent from Mahatma Gandhi' generalizes, especially for the early years. SOERIOKOESEMO(1919B), 72: 'The assimilation of the Javanese and the Hindu spirit in all respects succeeded so completely that Islam, invading later, could not undo what this Javanese-Hindu spirit had made, not even by violence and abuse of power. Though Islam seemingly vanquishes ... the ancient Javanese religion, in reality it has lost splendidly'. Noto Soeroto, 'Javaansche cultuur en Indische sympathieën', *WED*, 1920, 58: 'the Javanese have never forgotten their ancient [India] gurus'. Within *BU*'s youth league, *Jong-Java*, in 1924 theosophists, Christians and Hindus had instruction in their own religions; Muslims had not. NOER, 248.

²Noto Soeroto, 'Javaansche cultuur en Indische sympathieën', *WED*, 1920, 59.

³VLEKKE, 412.

⁴'Sneevliet said: 'British India should not be the example [for Indonesia]; rather, the proletarians should direct their eyes towards Russia. The civilized Dutchman acts like a dog, when he comes to the Indies'. 'Sneevliet in Holland'; from *De Tribune*, reprinted *HVW*, 17-5-1919, 298.

⁵A.J.N. Engelenberg, in VAN DER WAL(1967), 461. VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1910), 109, described the Indonesian Muslim as mainly tolerant, 'even though a Pan-Islamic movement is trying to kindle the unholy sectarian fire within him'. VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1916A), 51 thought that the Dutch colonial government would have to stop Indonesian Muslims from performing the *hadj*, the pilgrimage to Mecca, as pan-Islamism, linked to the Turkish government and to the 'Djadjal la'nat; the Anti-Christ' (ibid., 52), might influence them there. But 'the Government so far has done nothing to ensure the interests of its Muhammadan subjects, in order to prevent unholy fanaticism and sectarian religious hatred being encouraged amongst them and increasing the

Indonesia the TS had more Muslim members than in the rest of the world put together; though some might doubt the orthodoxy of these Muslims.¹

The theosophist Radjiman addressed *Sedio Moelio*, the *bupatis* union, on *Sarekat Islam* in late 1913 in Semarang. His speech concluded 'negatively in all aspects' to *SI*. In his own Surakarta he had observed that *priyayi* did not want to join a league like that. 'People still want to hold on to the existing distinction of castes.' So, *SI* was 'doomed to break up.' Also Labberton did not sound enthusiastic.²

Not all of the TS, or the Surakarta court, opposed *Sarekat Islam* so frontally. When it offered Prince Ngabehi IV its patronage in 1913, 'he accepted it impulsively.' His father, Pakoe Boewono X, soon ordered him to resign.³ Still, Prince Ngabehi may have been one of the theosophists through whom over the next years Labberton developed rather good contacts with at least some *SI* leaders. He spoke at the *Sarekat*'s first congress of 1916. Some of the leaders were originally not sharply anti-colonialist: Tjokroaminoto stood at first for an autonomous 'Indies state' within a 'Greater Netherlands' framework.⁴

Many *Sarekat Islam* members criticized the social hierarchy in Java. In 1914, Kiewiet de Jonge worried about sympathies of Dutch officials like Rinkes for 'democratic tendencies' in *SI*: 'as with the downgrading of native authority, the government also

possibility of disturbances, of which the maddened perpetrators in the end will be the worst victims'. Such a pilgrimage ban was not 'an obstacle to religion but only a fatherly precaution' D. van Hinloopen Labberton, 'Soenan Bonang's lueringen', *TMNI*, 1917, 505, called Javanese Islam 'a form of Islam, which, being meditative and theosophical, we should consider extremely important in relationship to our theosophical propaganda'. In *TMNI*, 1918, 599, Van den Broek thought that in spite of *SI* activity, Javanese would not become 'PURE' Muslims now, due to older, what he called 'Buddhist' influences. Probolinggo, close to the Tengger mountains, where Van den Broek was *assistent resident*, was one of the least Islamized regions in East Java. *TMNI*, 1920, 4f., reprinted a report from daily *De Locomotief* from 1 December 1919, of an *SI* meeting where Hadji Mohamed Dachlan, founder of the reformist Muslim Muhammadiyah organization, pleaded for tolerance towards other religions like Christianity. The *TMNI* editor supported this view

¹GEERTZ(1960), 316, 336: the mystical sect *Ilmu Sedjati* (True Science), founded by Prawirosoedarso, a Madiun court noble in 1925, acknowledged theosophy as one of its four sources of inspiration. It also called itself 'true Islam', to the anger of the orthodox. In Dec. 1928, it already had 4210 supporters, 2475 men and 1735 women. So, though geographically less widespread than the TS, it already had more support. According to the Dutch political police 'nothing at all has so far appeared of undesirable political action or influence.' POEZE(1982), 489. 'Prawirosoedarmo', *ibid.*, 219; and the at least 1915 and 1916 FTS 'Prawirosoedarmo (Raden), Mantri goeroe [education official] Malang'; NUGRAHA(1989), 247, 257; probably are the same person.

²'Dr. Radjiman's oordeel over de S.I.', *IG* 1914, 65-6. LARSON(1987), 56. VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1913C), 122 had criticized this branch of the 'Sarekat dagang Islamiah' for 'the unwisdom of the all too numerous members of this league, of whom the number has outpaced its leadership.'

³LARSON(1987), 43-4.

⁴L. DE JONGE, vol. 11a1, 233-4. *TB* 1917, 33.

undermines the respect for its own authority.'¹

At the end of 1916, Labberton had a disagreement with *Sarekat Islam* on the *hormat* question. *Hormat* meant prescribed, extremely respectful manifestations of loyalty by relatively lowly placed people towards, for instance, Javanese princes. Dutch colonial officials also claimed rights to *hormat*.

Van Hinloopen Labberton had already defended *hormat* at the 1915 local government congress.² Later also in an interview in the *Javabode* daily. He spoke of 'the infamous anti-hormat circular', in which officials had tried to limit the practice.

In the *Sarekat Islam* paper *Oetoesan Hindia*, 'a Javanese *SI* member' wrote that Labberton misunderstood 'the *S.I.*'s character.' It was not just a religious organization, as he thought, 'but a people's movement first.' So, it dealt with 'the suffering, the poverty, the lack of justice, etc., which oppress nearly all of the native world.'

Mr L. [Labberton], the author continues, has never been a Javanese who has become a victim of exaggerated *hormat*; there are quite some people like that among the oppressed. Through this (we would like to call it:) lust for *hormat*, there are some native noblemen, who fancy they are "radja [king]", and love to go beyond what is reasonable and fitting. ... the officials should be there for the people; and not the other way around. How can one win trust, if Kromo is forced to crawl and to sembah before a *bupati*, while Kromo's soul rebels against this?³

In the 16 November 1916 issue of *Oetoesan Hindia*, Van Hinloopen Labberton reacted for *hormat*; as

a truly civilized nation has manners, and so it is not slavishness, if one manifests respect towards others. ... In Europe, only the wealthy observe the forms somewhat, the majority of Europeans are conceited, bumptious and ill-bred. Is it really necessary that such etiquette is transferred to Java? ... Some humans are predestined to rule, others are predestined to form the people.

The *Oetoesan Hindia* editors added a note to the article, saying that they opposed *hormat* practice, and Labberton's defence of it.⁴

A member of the *Sarekat Islam* national executive, Raden Djojosoediro, was *Pewartas Théosofie HN* editor-in-chief.⁵ In early 1915, he also was the editor of *Taman Pewartas*. He became chief editor of *Pemikiran* (Association), at the end of 1915, or early 1916, when it became a daily. A Dutch official in 1915 had described *Pemikiran* as a 'sometimes rather vocal publication which had some influences from the *I.P.* with theosophical

¹H.J. Kiewiet de Jonge, letter to his parents, 6-8-1914; IISG, Kiewiet de Jonge archive, # 24.

²He said his views were 'far from those who wanted to incite the people against the *bupati* and to undermine *hormat*.' He thought 'that the *bupati* with their intellect might make the people progress.' *IG* 1915 (37), 'Varia. Vijfde decentralisatiecongres', 1138.

³*LOC*, 13-11-1916, 2e blad, 'Het karakter der S.I.'

⁴*Oetoesan Hindia*, 16-11-1916; as quoted A. Baars, 'Het "program" van den Heer v. Hinloopen Labberton', *HVV*, 25-12-1916, 49. Baars' *ISDV* supported the *OH* editors in this.

⁵*PT*, 1916-1921; covers. Since 1921, Raden Notoosoediro was editor along with Djojosoediro.

⁶*KOT* 1915, 'Persoverzicht', 121-2.

tendencies'.¹ When Djojosoediro came, earlier editors like Soekirno, who had *Indische Partij/Insulinde* and *ISDV* sympathy,² resigned out of opposition to theosophy. Many fellow *SI* members saw Djojosoediro as too much of an idealist; a Dutch official described him as 'a reliable person in all respects'.⁴ When Governor-General Idenburg's term ended in early 1916, *Pemitan* honoured him by sending his portrait to all subscribers.⁵ Every early 1916 *Pewarta Théosophie* issue had a *Pemitan* ad on its cover. The *Pewarta* issues of late 1916 and early 1917 all had the message that the daily paper in early October 1916 ceased publication, as subscribers did not pay.⁶

After *Pemitan*, in 1917, Djojosoediro started a new daily, *Neratja*.⁷ He did this together with fellow *SI* member, and then still fellow *TS* member, Hadji Agoes Salim. Like Abdoel Mocis, who also became an editor, Salim was from the Minangkabau region: from Bukittingi. *Sarekat* left-winger Alimin debated against him on 17 June in front of 1200 Jakarta *SI* members. Salim supported the liberal local council majority in the Petodjo housing speculation affair. Alimin opposed them.⁸

On 31 July in *Pantjaraan-Warta*, Alimin was not positive about *Neratja*'s contents.

¹D.A. Rinkes, in VAN DER WAL(1967), 382. About 1913 the colonial government feared the *Indische Partij* most, as it might radicalize the more numerous *SI*. In 1915, Rinkes thought another paper by Djojosoediro, *Tjahaja Timoer*, 'much improved' since 1913, quoted TICHELMAN(1985), 651.

²TICHELMAN(1985), 626.

³*Djawa Tengah*, # 8, Jan. 1916, quoted KOT, 1916, 'Persoverzicht', 500. The press reviews were by A.H.J.G. Walbeehm and Ch.P.J. Blok. 'Soekirno, who earlier on had been chief editor, said to him [the *Djawa Tengah* author] that he had no longer been able to contribute to that paper, because its real chief leader, the Officials' School teacher VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON, with DJAJASOEDIRĀ as chief editor ... [.... in original] are both theosophists. For the same reason, also Moh. Saefie left the board of editors.' On this conflict also *Modjopait* 18-7-1917, quoted IPO 29/1917, *MJB*, 19-20. *LOC*, 6-11-1916, 2e blad, 'De S.I. vergadering'; and 9-11-1916, 2e blad, 'S.I. vergadering'. Soekirno was Jakarta branch *SI* chairman. He spoke, as did Goenawan, his predecessor as chairman; TICHELMAN(1985), 49. *PW*, 5-4-1917, 'Keterangan': when Marco was put in jail, Soekirno was in a support committee. *Socara Merdika*, 25-6-1917, 36 mentioned Soekirno as participant in a Jakarta *SI* discussion on votes for women. *SM* thought: 'Many women fight for freedom and are workers, just like men. Why should not they too determine the direction, in which the country's situation should go?' McVEY(1965), 145: Soekirno caused the final break between *PKI* and right wing *SI*, by a speech against rich Muslims. After it, he had to run from the rostrum 'to escape a beating.'

⁴KORVER, 242. VAN DER WAL(1967), 496. Djojosoediro in 1917 was an unsuccessful *SI* candidate for the *Volksraad*, NAGAZUMI(1972), 124.

⁵*IG*, 1916 (38), 952, *MRBTD*.

⁶See also KOT, 1917, 'Persoverzicht', 98.

⁷N.V. Uitgevers Maatschappij Evolutie, *PW*, 26-5-1917, 4. Its publishers 'Evolutie' also published *Indische Stemmen*.

⁸'Openbare S.I. vergadering', *Javabode*; reprinted *IG*, 1917 (39), 1442f. Ibid.: Alimin attacked Tjokroaminoto, who also spoke, on *Indië Weerbaar*.

both on Petodjo and in general. He thought it could not stand criticism 'of Jan Compenie's' government'; or of itself. It preached passivity to 'Kromo.' 'Neratja's editors forget that if the people want to progress, they cannot do that by just remaining passive.' Passivity, contrary to what *Neratja*'s spiritual leaders said in another context:

Annie Besant also would not say to Uncle [Dutch: Oom] Labberton and his supporters: 'Hey, you theosophists, leave a nice jacket or gold-rimmed glasses alone. For you must stay weak and resigned and passive, and never get angry.'²

Neratja wrote that in April 1918 'the Member of the S.I. National Executive and of the Theosophical Society national executive, R. Djojosoediro' went on 'a propaganda tour in northern Java.' In that most Muslim part of the island, 'first and foremost, he insisted on less fanatical behaviour, and a closer adherence to the prophet's [Muhammad's] rules, instead of those of the Arabs. One should hope that the S.I. will heed this admonition by its Executive Member [and *Neratja* editor]'.³ In 1919, *Neratja* announced a plan by Jinarajadasa to visit Indonesia as 'truly good luck' for the country.⁴

The *Sarekat Islam*'s local level sometimes saw membership of theosophical organizations as problematic. Djoewarta, from a village near Majalaya in West Java, did not want discord with fellow villagers about not joining *SI*. When he went to an executive member to join, he heard that he was not acceptable, being an Order of the Star in the East member. He then resigned from the OSE. H.E. Noothout, tea planter and local OSE secretary, did not leave it at that. He wrote a letter to the editor of *Kaoem Moeda*. The daily replied that it did not know the local situation. It thought dual membership should not be a problem, as Djojosoediro was 'even a S.I. national executive member.'⁵

Soekirno was now also in the *Sarekat Islam* national executive. His involvement in peasants' action on large privately owned estates near Jakarta⁶ cost him 15 months in jail in 1919. Djojosoediro thought this was 'too harsh a punishment'.⁷ Van Hinloopen Labberton 'who feels that his life's duty is to help all God's creatures', also opponents' relations, supported Soekirno's family financially until the *SI* did.⁸

In 1921, Semaon estimated *Neratja* printed 2000 copies a day. Thanks to subsidies, the 'unofficial government organ's' issues are large but very inexpensive.⁹

¹The old Dutch East India Company; implying, here, basically there had been no change for the better.

²Article 'Ngambeg'.

³*Neratja* 202, 28-10-1918; quoted IPO 44/1918, *MJB*, 4.

⁴17-4-1919, quoted IPO 16/1919, *MJB*, 2. A speech by Jinarajadasa in Wonogiri on 8 July 1919, 'the state is firstly a Brotherhood of Souls, secondly an expression of Divine life.' *TMNI*, 1919, 424.

⁵*KM* 12-9-1918, # 168, quoted IPO 37/1918, *MJB*, 14.

⁶SR 25-5-1919, 3, 'Pergerakan Ra'iat', reported, concluding: 'Well done, brother Soekirno!'

⁷*Neratja* 28-7-1919, quoted IPO 31/1919, *MJB*, 1-2.

⁸*Neratja* 9-8-1919, quoted IPO 32/1919, *MJB*, 10.

⁹SEMAON(1966), 73.

In the spring of 1917, another (at first) theosophist *SI* executive member, Raden Mas Soerjopranoto,¹ founded the *Adhi Dharma* organization. Its original aim was 'to bring help and relief to people of good reputation who have got into trouble.'² Soeriokoesoemo and other Paku Alam princes also played leading roles in it.

The *SI* had two *Volksraad* members since 1918. One was its president Tjokroaminoto, the other one was vice president Abdoel Moeis. Moeis politically supported TS leader Van Hinloopen Labberton; while Tjokroaminoto was said not to like Labberton much.³

Since the *Indie Weerbaar* issue, the *SI* was divided into a left wing; and the right wing of Soerjopranoto, Hadji Agoes Salim, and Moeis. People called Moeis' wing 'Sarekat Islam putih', the white Islamic federation. The leftists were 'Sarekat Islam merah', the red *SI*;⁴ like the colours in the red and white flag of the *Sarekat* (also, later,

¹Soerjopranoto, born in 1871, was related to the Paku Alam (and thus, to Soeriokoesoemo) and an elder brother of Soewardi Soeraningrat; VAN NIEL(1960), 110. He was at first active in *Budi Utomo*. SHIRAIISHI(1990A), 122, calls him a personal friend of Van Hinloopen Labberton. He was classed under ex-TS members 'who maybe still were [members]'; SOERIOKOESEMO(1921B), 72-3.

²OH, 5-5-1917, quoted *IPO* 18/1917, *MJB*, 9. Bagoes Kasanbesari in *Senopati* 25-10/1-11-1924, quoted *IPO* 48/1924, 430-1: Soerjopranoto 'about 1912' founded the limited liability agricultural company 'Mardi-Kismo' in Wonosobo. Bagoes, and the anonymous front page article 'Arme Kromo', *LOC*, 2-11-1917, accused him of financial irregularities as secretary/treasurer there; Bagoes at *Adhi Dharma* later too. See also Jodjana Soerodiningrat, 'Grepn uit het Javaansche-economisch leven', *SOEMBANGSIH*, 55. *Adhi Dharma* was linked to *SI*, it included a school and an advice bureau in Yogyakarta, which developed into a rival to *ISDV* trade union influence; PETRUS BLUMBERGER(1987), 33, TICHELMAN(1985), 50; 666; SHIRAIISHI(1981), 96. LARSON(1987), 117: founded 'around 1915'; probably wrong. One aspect of it was to keep unemployed busy, and to 'morally uplift' them. Also called 'Leger van de Arbeid', Army of Labor. SHIRAIISHI(1990A), 110, notes its 'hierarchical' principles: Soerjopranoto was 'commander', not president. *Sri Mataram*, 29 Apr. 1919 had an advertisement for it, asking for 'officers', 'Persoverzicht', *KOT*, 1919, 900.

³KWANTES(1975), 55. *IV*, 25-5-1918, 'Kiesch', by D. v[an] d[er] Zee: 'Mr van Hinloopen Labberton (who has managed to keep remarkably quiet since his return from his military mission) has managed to make a big mistake once again.' At a dinner party, he said 'The floor is Mr Tjokroaminoto's.' Tjokroaminoto, though, had refused to say anything. 'We owed that to this clairvoyant of the Oriental soul [v. H. L.]'. Van der Zee continued with *Wederopbouw*'s positive quote on Labberton (see p. 181), and added: 'These very Javanese have now also kicked him. If Tjokroaminoto is still not convinced of the use of European 'guidance' and 'leaders' he will be soon.' In a reaction to Van der Zee, *Indische Stemmen* denied that Tjokroaminoto's refusal to speak was because of personal feelings against Labberton; quoted *IV*, 22-6-1918.

⁴In Padang in Sumatra, the *SI*'s left and right wings had red, respectively white, coloured membership cards; *IS*, 27-9-1919, 110. ABDULLAH(1971), 25 rather sees different religious views on Islam as the basis for the different card colours. In *IS*, 27-9-1919, 109, editor Kiewiet de Jonge thought one could differentiate the two wings as 'the socialist and the bourgeois, or as the proletarian and the small capitalist ones'. In *IS*, 13-9-1919, he saw *Sarekat Islam* as politically very diverse:

of the Indonesian Republic); or the colours in the Russian civil war, fought then.

Neraja wrote: 'If the S.I. will become an organization for workers only, then we will see that the same things will happen as in Russia. ... It is a good thing that there are other voices.'¹ To right wing leaders as we saw on p. 227, at least until 1918, theosophy was at least as important as strict Islam. It then was more a right wing in political and socio-economic sense than in religious sense. First, the left seemed to win. The fourth *SI* congress in October-November 1919 in Surabaya demoted Djojosoediro to a lesser office: executive adviser instead of member. A Dutch official observer saw this as one symptom of a decline of the right wing.²

The leftists reminded Abdoel Moeis of his *Indië Weerbaar* past; and Hadji Agoes Salim of his TS past and writings in *Péwarta Theosofie*.³ Moeis said of the left that they wanted to destroy religion and to replace Islamic family life with free love.⁴

As president Tjokroaminoto, who tended more to compromises between left and right, was not present at *Sarekat Islam*'s sixth congress in October 1921, Moeis presided then. Hadji Agoes Salim explicitly denied that he argued for 'the younger brother to elder brother relationship [as in TS theory], not for the idea of following blindly, but for brotherhood on a footing, equal for all.' Through him and through Moeis, resolutions were passed which led to expelling Semadeni and others of the left wing; they could after that only be politically active in the *PKI*.⁵

In May 1922, a secret government report thought that the split had fatally hurt the *SI*. Who would fill this political vacuum? The report named two possibilities: the *Nationaal Indische Partij*; and 'a theosophical hegemony'. It thought neither really probable; though it still considered theosophists prominent among Dutch informing young Indonesian intellectuals on 'cultural and social questions'.⁶

Not long afterwards, Moeis too left the *SI*. Its significance as an organization continued to decline through the twenties and thirties.⁷ *PT* editor Djojosoediro remained in the executive of *Sarekat Islam*'s anti-communist rest, at least until 1923.⁸

'anarchists, socialists, nationalists (bourgeois), clericals, etc.' In *IS*, 27-9-1919, 110, he thought that 'a class struggle amongst themselves would be very fatal'. In KIEWIET DE JONGE(1917B), 112, he had rejected the 'classes categorizing of proletariat and bourgeoisie, of worker versus capitalist.'

¹*Neraja* 206, 2-11-1918; quoted *IPO* 44/1918, 9.

²KWANTES(1975): report by P.J. Gerke on the *SI* congress, 230. See also letter by Hazen to Governor-General Van Limburg Stirum, 9 Dec. 1918, *ibid.*, 192.

³SDB, 'Awas, ada kritik, awas [Look out, there is criticism, look out]', *SR*, 16-8-1921, 5-6. M., in *Perniagaan* 11-10-1924, quoted *IPO* 43/1924, 195-6, on Salim.

⁴*ENI*, vol. V, 21; 197.

⁵VLEKKE, 421. SARDESAI, 157: the Marxists 'broke away' in '1920' is incorrect. *OCSI*, 30.

⁶*OCSI*, 50; 52-3.

⁷According to Hadji Agoes Salim in 1928, membership had fallen from about two millions to '12000 at most' then. PETRUS BLUMBERGER(1987), 322.

⁸KWANTES(1975), 508.

So did Soerjopranoto and Hadji Agoes Salim. Both had broken with the Theosophical Society, however. Contrary to the TS, *SI* came to advocate non-co-operation with Dutch authority. After the latter banned the *PKI*, common opposition to open communism was no longer a link to the TS. At the 1928 *SI* congress, Soerjopranoto warned: 'Islam has been able to withstand communism, but now has to fight Christianity and Theosophy, which try to destroy the religious foundations of native society'.¹ And Salim then wanted to introduce the *Ahmadiyyah* interpretation of the Q'uran into *Sarekat Islam*, as he considered it 'the best one to satisfy the needs of intellectual youth and to keep it far away from the commentaries of Theosophy, which are to be considered a major danger to Islam'.² So, earlier TS' contacts within the *SI* had turned into its most outspoken opponents.

In the early 1920's, the TS seemingly, at least in Jakarta,³ had a fairly good relationship to the modernist *Muhammadiyah*, more especially religious and less political than *Sarekat Islam*. That relationship was in a parallel decline in the late 1920's. Though H. Fachroedin of *Muhammadiyah* had doctrinal objections to *Ahmadiyyah*, he too thought 'the danger which threatens Islam now from Christianity and Theosophy, is considerable'.⁴

3. *Indische Partij* and Indo-Europeans

The *Indische Partij*, a political party that demanded independence, expanded rapidly after its founding in 1912. Under government pressure it was dissolved in 1913. The government banned from Indonesia its three leaders Tjipto Mangoenkoesomo, E.F.E. Douwes Dekker, and Soewardi Soerianingrat.⁵ Labberton, optimistic about winning people to his views as he would be later with the Samin movement, on 6 September 1913 wrote an open letter in *Theosofisch Maandblad voor Nederlandsch-Indië* in both Javanese and Dutch to Tjipto, Soewardi and their wives (so not to Douwes Dekker⁶). He admitted they were 'courageous' as persons; 'but still, you erred'.⁷ He urged them:

¹As quoted PETRUS BLUMBERGER(1987), 322.

²PETRUS BLUMBERGER(1987), 323. At the West Java congress of the *Partai Sarekat Islam Indonesia*, as the name had become, on 18 Aug. 1929, the *Ahmadiyyah* missionary from British India, Mirza Wali Ahmad Baig, said that theosophy had 'various doctrines which were at variance with Islam.' *Fadjar Asia*, 21/28-8-1929, quoted *IPO* 35/1929, 259.

³HB 1/6-10-1924, quoted *IPO* 39/1924, 633: Muhammadiyah then had contacts with the *Goenoeng Sari* school and the *ODI*, and a TS representative attended a meeting.

⁴*Bintang Islam* 25-6-1928, quoted *IPO* 27/1928, 1.

⁵Soewardi in 1928 changed his name to Ki Hadjar Dewantara. TSUCHIYA(1987), XI.

⁶Also Governor-General Idenburg thought: 'I have hope that the natives [Tjipto and Soewardi] will still change their mind; DD does not have much chance of this, unless God converts him completely.' VAN DER MARK, 202. Though a political opponent of 'DD', Labberton asked the government for clemency for him, when he was exiled; WANASITA, 112.

⁷VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1913A), 602.

You love freedom: but did you really think of what true freedom is? ... You really should know that True Freedom may only manifest itself as the tie of law exists and people act according to its limits. ... If you take away from a child that learns how to stand up and to walk, the tie by which the Father kept it up: surely it will stumble and not be free. ... Would you take away a young bird, still unable to fly, from its nest, which, yes, keeps it imprisoned high up in the branches, but which also by its limits saves and frees that youngster from an ignominious fall? Desist from actions like that. ... All that commits violence, all that murders, that soils itself with blood, in that red colour wears the mark of the Antichrist. For the country, only Government authority has the right to wield the club of punishment. It should do this with a merciful heart, though. ... **JAVA AND THE NETHERLANDS SHOULD BE ONE.** ... not in brute force, but only in Wisdom and Love one may find true progress. May such a force of wisdom and love be granted to you, so that you too may be an instrument to make Java great, jointly with The Netherlands. Oh, may the idea of Association grow within you in Holland. Y.N. Friend and Brother, D. VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON.¹

Tjipto, as a member of *Budi Utomo*, at the founding meeting had criticized Radjiman's anti-materialism: 'Who enjoys watching a wayang performance on an empty stomach?'² Tjipto had left soon, as older influential members rejected his opposition to aristocrat privileges, to Javacentrism, and his militant anti-colonialism.

He wrote much, for papers of various tendencies. As far as I know though, never in theosophical papers; except perhaps a few lines of protest on racial doctrines, published anonymously in the *Theosofisch Maandblad*. The Indies theosophist monthly named him as one of 'native' political leaders 'who used to be members of the Theosophical Society and maybe still are'.³ Van Leeuwen:

If one looks through the Society's membership list, one will be surprised at the fact that many of the leaders of the Native people's movement, who now act in such a revolutionary and vehement way, were once members of our Society, and that so many of them at the moment still are, even though their membership is more formal than real. ... If it is true what our leaders, the Masters of Wisdom and Compassion so often hold before us, that we, the other and often older members are as responsible for the defects and errors of our fellow members, as if we had committed

¹VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1913A), 600f. Also quoted *IG* 1914, *MRBTD*, 262.

²Darna Koesoema in *Weekblad voor Indië*, 26, Oct. 1917; quoted *IG*, 1918 (40), 248, *MRBTD*.

³Quoted SOERIOKOESEMO(1921B), 72-3. I am not sure when Tjipto joined (1908?, according to membership number), and whether or when he left, the TS. It is not very likely that he still was an active Fellow of the Theosophical Society by 1914-6, when he was an *ISDV* member and opposed *Indië Weerbaar*; though he still was on the members' list on 1 Jan. 1916; NUGRAHA(1989), 260. Then, and later, he called himself 'a revolutionary'. Also, a 'non-Muslim'; *HVV*, 20-12-1917, 71. He opposed Soetarno Soerioekoesomo. In his paper *De Beweging* in 1919, he called Soetarno's sponsor, Prince Mangkoe Negoro VII a 'sordid hunter of profits'; LARSON(1987), 121. SHIRAIISHI(1990A), 120, supposes on Tjipto: 'Early in 1916, as a theosophist, he must have frequented the theosophical lodge ... in Surakarta'; did he? and if he did, did he see it as a debating club while disagreeing with most other members' ideas? Might knowing members help his medical practice? *Ibid.*, 122, he married a Eurasian, Mrs Vogel; a 'batik entrepreneur and theosophist'. *Ensiklopedi Indonesia*, Jakarta, Ichtiar Baru, 1984; vol. 6, 3573 has Mrs 'de Vogel'; LARSON(1987), 116: Marie Vogel, whom Tjipto married on 2-2-1920.

these errors ourselves, then we really should become somewhat heavy-hearted.¹

What we have written on Tjipto may also apply to his sympathizer Darna Koesoema. Darna figured on the TS membership lists of March 1915 and January 1916; they misspelt 'Darna Koesoema'.² On him, too, I found no evidence of political parallelism to the TS leaders.

While an exile in the Netherlands, Tjipto pursued his medical studies further. In 1914, he wrote an article for the *Indische Gids* on *wayang* theatre. It had one sentence on the Indies TS section: it had correctly chosen *wayang* as an object of study, as that was important. As in Tjipto's other works which I read, he did not mention theosophical occult doctrines positively. He did mention that plays sometimes criticized Dutch authority. *Wayang* was a 'purely Javanese creation'.³

Also in the *Indische Gids*, Tjipto got an angry reaction. Its author was C.A.H. von Wolzogen Kühr, former *assistent resident* after a career in Surakarta and other places in Java and Madura. As were some of his relatives, Kühr was a member of the Indies TS.⁴ More so than Tjipto's, his article showed it. Tjipto was 'that native doctor, whom we would rather not have bandaging us, should our coarsely material body be wounded'.⁵

Kühr started with an anecdote from when he had studied to become a Dutch Indies official. Then, a fellow student at an April Fools' Day party had supposedly told of an ancient Hindu travelling by ship to Java. On board he had with him

'a complete set of gamelan instruments, wayang puppets ... and last but not least, [.... in original] a bunch of pisangs [bananas]! ... Why pisangs? 'Well,' the answer was 'to entice the still Polynesian, shy, autochthonous Javanese out of the trees, to tame them, and make them fit for unpaid labour, especially building the 'Hindu antiquities' like the 'Borobudur''

Though told as a joke, Kühr thought this [racist?] view was 'au fond [basically]' correct. What did Tjipto say, *wayang* 'purely Javanese'?

A primitive people [Dutch: *natuurvolk*] of Polynesian origin, still not influenced by the external civilizing element, maybe standing at a still lower stage of civilization than the Papuans, deep in the interior of New Guinea, do now- would people like that really have been the wayang's inventors? ... A *natuurvolk*, like the Polynesian Javanese, will not invent *wayang*, with lakons [plots] which speak of a much higher level of culture.

Kühr meant the level of the aristocrats among Javanese. The immigrants from India, country of 'the treasure of wisdom', he thought, because of their caste rules

¹VAN LEEUWEN(1921A), 8.

²NUGRAHA(1989), 247; 257. Looking at his membership number, he probably joined in 1915.

³TJIPTO MANGOENKOESEMO(1914), 530.

⁴NUGRAHA(1989), 250; 261. VON WOLZOGEN KÜHR(1914), 796.

⁵VON WOLZOGEN KÜHR(1914), 793. 'Coarsely material body'; Dutch: 'grofstoffelijk lichaam' is the lowest of the seven human principles, according to theosophy.

('tjatoervarnyam') had only mixed 'in moderation' with lower classes.¹

The Polynesian Javanese was, and stayed, a sudra. Then we, the Dutch, came; still witnesses of Hinduism's death throes in its fight against Islam. We came as modern Hindus, sired by the Aryans who had spread over Europe; finally arriving by sea in Java, in order to bring this new civilization, in which, as one may hope, we will succeed better than the earlier Hindus. Here the Aryan circle, with its great diameter, closes itself!

Kühr did not only oppose Tjipto Mangoenkoesemo's history. Concluding, he suspected Tjipto had hidden political propaganda for his *Indische Partij* in an 'innocent' article on art. Was it not 'an attempt to idealize the Javanese, and to downgrade the good things which come from the white brother'?

Tjipto had mentioned the three clowns in *wayang*: Semar, Gareng, and Petruk. Kühr thought that now, these three clowns were the IP's three leaders. 'The Great Dalang' [Governor-General Idenburg] 'has rightly locked them inside the wayang box (kotak)'. Thus, Von Wolzogen Kühr finished his defence of colonial rule.²

Of the three exiles, Tjipto came back in 1914; the others four and five years later. Ex-IP members kept their ideas alive under the names of first *Insulinde*, later *Nationaal Indische Partij*.³ At a public meeting in The Netherlands with his *Indië Weerbaar* delegation in 1917, Van Hinloopen Labberton said: 'I regret that the IP later became a revolutionary movement and did not want to be active in parliament.' Then Soewardi interrupted him: 'This is untrue, we were the first ones to ask for a parliament, and have always participated in local elections.'⁴

In 1918, TS-minded daily *Oetoesan Melajoe* described *Insulinde* as an 'opponent' of theosophy.⁵ Three years later, Semaoen saw it as 'a mixture of Eurasians, Dutchmen, and

¹VON WOLZOGEN KÜHR(1914), 792-3. VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1914), 2 on Java: 'they could exercise -and especially the Hindhus so- a favourable influence on the uncivilized aborigines'.

²VON WOLZOGEN KÜHR(1914), 798-9.

³KRATOSKA/BATSON, 268, incorrectly wrote already of 'Nationaal Indische Partij' in 1912.

⁴'De Deputatie-Indië-Weerbaar als Gasten der Indische Vereeniging', *HPO* 1916/17, 242-60; 251-2.

⁵See p. 333. Contrary to TS links to moderate competition, VAN NIEL(1960), 63 (accepted by REEVE(1985), 3) has: 'The cultural counterpart to the [IP] party became the Theosophical Society which had a remarkable influence on many disoriented Indonesians, but there is no indication of formal concerted action between the two groups.' The second part of this statement qualifies the first half, and what he ibid., 160, writes on the IP successor organization *Insulinde*: see the conflict on *Indië Weerbaar*, p. 187, 201. In an interview I had with Prof. van Niel on 29-10-1995, he said that now he saw the TS as 'very different' from the IP, and did not want readers to conclude otherwise from the 1960 quote. REEVE(1985), 7 says E.F.E. Douwes Dekker was FTS; he gives no source; not confirmed elsewhere. Douwes Dekker was a friend of Kautsky; Troelstra in 1915 introduced him to Trotsky in Switzerland. He saw Aryans as just a 'myth'; he thought Freud 'has finally liberated us from the human delusion of his [humans'] divinity'; WANASITA, 61, 64. Theosophists would disagree with both.

Indonesians, under the leadership of the first.¹¹

Especially in Surakarta, some people of mixed Dutch and Indonesian ancestry thought *Insulinde* was too anti-government. Surakarta area had a category of Eurasian big estate owners and otherwise prosperous men, lacking elsewhere in Java. Some had joined the local TS. In 1916, Th.R. Landouw, printing press and daily owner, also local *Indië Weerbaar* leader, tried to form a moderate party as rival to *Insulinde*.

He asked Van Hinloopen Labberton for help. Labberton wanted to help Landouw with the first of his two main aims. He, too, favoured 'a party, which under, with, and by way of the Dutch East Indies Government' would strive for 'uplifting and prosperity of the Indies'.¹² Landouw had a second objection to *Insulinde*: its pluralist membership policy.¹³ He said in Surakarta on 16 July 1916:

One may compare *Insulinde* to a beautiful woman, who receives Indies Dutch, Europeans, Chinese, Arabs, and Japanese into her chamber, if only they pay a 25 cents admission. They call that nationalism!¹⁴

Landouw wanted a party for Dutch only, both those who had lived in the Indies for generations and in most cases had also Indonesian ancestors; and recent immigrants, committed to their new country. Labberton, in Jakarta, did not really agree with this objection to *Insulinde*: 'no limitation to an "Indo-[European]party"' but a party for 'all people of good will'.¹⁵ At Landouw's Surakarta meeting, not only supporters of his plans, like C. van de Kamer from Semarang, showed up; also quite some opponents, like Sneevliet of the *ISDV* and G.L. Toepel and F.W. van de Kastele of *Insulinde*. When Landouw's son called Van de Kastele a "rotter" and a "coward", the meeting almost degenerated into a boxing match, though it was in clubhouse 'De Gezelligheid'.¹⁶ The correspondent of *De Locomotief*, though sympathetic to Landouw, admitted his party was not successful, as only thirty people joined.¹⁷

¹¹SEMAOEN(1966), 53

¹²SHIRAIISHI(1990A), 120. 'Het standpunt van den heer v. Hinloopen Labberton', *LOC*, 16-7-1916, 1e blad. As his train was behind schedule, Labberton missed an appointment with Landouw; *IG*, 1916 (38), 1420-1, *MRBT*. DAHM(1971), 30 incorrectly describes Labberton as 'Eurasian'.

¹³Tjipto Mangoenkoesoemo, 'De Indische Beweging', *IG* 1914, 11-18: the *IP* was 'for all in the richly endowed Indies country who consider themselves to be the dominated. As with the social democrats ... a bloodless class struggle is only possible if the dominated get political power.' Of 'Indische Partij voor Indo-Europeanen'; DJAJADININGRAT-NIEUWENHUIS, 49; only the first two words were the party name.

¹⁴*LOC*, 17-7-1916, 2e blad, 'De nieuwe partij'. *KM*, 1916, # 161, also reported on the meeting.

¹⁵Het standpunt van den heer v. Hinloopen Labberton', *LOC*, 16-7-1916, 1e blad.

¹⁶Gezelligheid: roughly 'cosiness; company.' Landouw's party's next meeting, on 30 July, was in 'De Harmonie' [Harmony] building.

¹⁷*LOC*, 7-7-1916, 'De nieuwe partij', announced that Landouw founded the party, and that Schrieke or Labberton would speak; two articles of the same title on the front page. *LOC*, 10-7-1916, 'N.D.A.P.', by Van de Kamer; and. *ibid.*, 'De nieuwe partij': again on Van Hinloopen

Weeks later, Labberton spoke at a meeting of the *Indische Bond*, also -then- a small organization which saw *Insulinde* as too militant and too inclusive. Labberton 'also thought that the Government neglected the organizations of Europeans who intended to stay, too much. Were they to remain passive on this, that would mean the Native would push them aside.' However, when that meeting decided to finish the *Indische Bond*'s open membership policy, and limit the right to join to persons classified legally as European, Labberton's daily *Pemikiran* regretted that.¹

4. Reconstruction of the Javanese nation

4.1. Debates against Tjipto, Soewardi, and Darsono

Raden Mas Soetarto Soerjokoesoemo,² 1888-1924, was from the Paku Alam ruling dynasty. Some arguments exist for calling him 'prince', as the Indies TS' monthly did,

Labberton and 'IP's and *Insulinde*'s more conservative elements'. Van de Kamer wrote that the new party 'would be loyal to the Dutch government'. *LOC*, 13-7-1916, 'De Nationaal. Democratische. Associatie Partij'. Van de Kamer said of *Insulinde*: 'its members feel so miserably independent and dominated'. Also, 'we do not want to hide that we disagree with the *socialen* [Dutch nickname for socialists] on capitalism and militarism [Dutch misspelling: militairisme]. ... We hope that the Dutch tricolour may keep flying over all the Indies, until the end of time'. *LOC*, 14-7-1916, 'De aanstaande Solo'sche vergadering'. Labberton 'had agreed to hold a speech at the founding meeting of the J. D. P.' IDP is *Indische Democratische Partij*; there was no clarity on the name yet. At the 16 July founding meeting, Radjiman also spoke briefly, 'on the psyche of humans generally, and of Javanese especially'. *LOC*, 7-7-1916, 'De nieuwe partij'. Landouw's point V was 'The right to be represented in the Second Chamber of Dutch parliament'. His point IX was 'Establishing a militia as soon as possible'; both points agreed with Labberton. *LOC*, 30-7-1916, 'De nieuwe partij', claimed membership had risen to 100.

¹*Pemikiran*, 183, Sept. 1916; quoted *KOT*, 1917, 'Persoverzicht', 97. Labberton had been Bogor local executive member of the *IB* in 1901 when it was bigger; *RANI* 1902, 411. Later, the *Indo-Europeesch Verbond*, more conservative than the *IP*, gained ground. TS ideas influenced some of its members: Miss H.C.L. van Maarseveen, jurist and daughter of a *controleur*, born in 1910, was in its women's auxiliary executive in the 1930's. She believed in astrology and reincarnation. She was Indo-European in the sense that her Dutch ancestors had also lived in Indonesia; not of intermarriage. VISSER&MALKO, 109f.

²KWANTES(1975), 63. TICHELMAN(1985), 270, spells 'Soejatman Soerjokoesoemo'; VAN DER WAL(1967), 539: 'Soejatman Soerjokoesoemo'; in *Ensiklopedi Indonesia*, Jakarta, Ichtiar Baru, 1984, II, 854: 'Soeratmo Soerjokoesoemo'; *WED*, 1919, 39 spells 'brother Soerjokoesoemo'; *Djawa*, I, 276-7: 'Soetarma Soeriakoesoema'. In Bali in 1920 he wrote a theatre play, *SOERIOKOESEOMO*(1921D); reviewed *TMNI* 1922, 254-5. In it, Astogini, daughter of a wise hermit, finally got her 'prince, the hero of my dreams'; *ibid.*, 64. All its characters are personifications of abstract ideas. When exactly Soerjokoesoemo joined the TS is not certain; probably 1916. Abdoel Rachman certainly was a member in 1915; NUGRAHA(1989), 242.

and we will also sometimes do.¹ He was an irrigation superintendent in the Public Works Department.²

Soerikoesoemo founded the Committee for Javanese Nationalism, as distinct from Indonesian nationalism, in 1917.³ Other founding committee members were Abdoel Rachman, 'Native expert' on housing of Jakarta local government,⁴ and Doctor Satiman Wirjosandjojo. From early 1918, the Committee published its magazine *Wederopbouw* (Reconstruction), 'perverted by the theosophist leaven'.⁵

A written debate took place in 1917-8 between Soerikoesoemo and Tjipto Mangoenkoesoemo. Tjipto wanted all-Indonesia nationalism, or, as he then called it, 'Indies' nationalism.⁶ His supporters thought Soerikoesoemo's Javanese nationalism 'narrow-minded'.⁷ Both the theosophist Tilkema and others later wrote on these two views of nationalism.⁸

¹KWANTES(1978), 127. He represented the high nobility league (Dutch: *prinsenbond*) of Paku Alam principality in the 1917 'National Committee', in which various Indonesian organizations prepared for the *Volksraad* elections; NAGAZUMI(1972), 206. The editorial address of *Wederopbouw* was the Paku Alam's palace in Yogyakarta. In a European ruling family, Raden Mas Soerikoesoemo would have had the title of prince. In the Central Java principalities, titles like Raden Mas (or Pangeran) were more exclusive than elsewhere in Java. Contrary to for instance Soewardi, Soerikoesoemo placed much emphasis on his descent.

²FEITH/CASTLES, 483. RANI, 1922, 49.

³SOERIKOESOEMO et al., 12. SHIRAIISHI(1981), 95, and LARSON(1987), 69, very probably wrongly, have 1914 as the founding year for the Committee (Shiraiishi also for its paper *Wederopbouw*), instead of 1917, (respectively 1918).

⁴OII 14-2-1917, quoted IPO 7/1917. MJB, 18.

⁵IV, 2-2-1918, 'Nieuw Maandblad'. In 1918, it listed as editors Soerikoesoemo, Satiman, and Abdoel Rachman. In early 1921 also Raden Soemadipradja; (mis?)spelling 'Soemadipradja'; TSUCHIYA(1987), 39; probably identical with 'Soemodipradja', a Bandung TS member; NUGRAHA(1989), 259. VAN MIERT(1995), 126. No hyphen, as in 'Weder-opbouw' in HERING(1992), VII and REEVE(1985), 19. Not to be confused with the Bandung 'General fascist monthly', appearing from 1934 on, also called *Wederopbouw*.

⁶Before 1920, mainly geographers used 'Indonesia'; already in 1916, Soewardi Soeraningrat used it politically; and later claimed he had already done so in 1913; TSUCHIYA(1987), 32. In the 1920's, it became more widely used in politics. This was marked in 1922 when the *Indische Vereeniging* in The Netherlands changed its name to *Indonesische Vereeniging*; and on 8 February 1925, when it also took the name of *Perhimpunan Indonesia*. KONING(1968), 6; IM, 1924, 134-5; and 1925, 2.

⁷KWANTES(1978), 394; SOERIKOESOEMO et al.(1918), 4. H. Sneevliet, 'De propaganda-tocht der Insulinders', *HVV*, 2-11-1918, 39: members of Tjipto's *Insulinde* thought a Javanese nationalist, who debated against them in Surakarta, 'provincialist'.

⁸BOUMAN(1949), 10 calls views like Tjipto's 'state nationalism'; versus ideas like Datoek Soetan Maharadja's in West Sumatra, and Soerikoesoemo's in Java, 'people's nationalism'; Dutch: 'volksnationalisme'; *ibid.*, also 'volkse nationalisme'; *ibid.*, 7: 'Eastern racial nationalism'.

Tjipto was two years older than Soerikoesoemo. His title was *Mas*, the lowest title in Java; somewhat equivalent to 'esq.' in nineteenth century England. He hardly ever used it. He called himself 'child of a kromo'; his father was a not very well paid primary school teacher.¹

At the time of the debate, Tjipto Mangoenkoesoemo maybe on paper still was a TS member. He certainly was a member of *Insulinde* and of the *Sociaal-Democratische Arbeiders Partij*, Semarang section. Tjipto and Soerikoesoemo knew one another from the times when the latter was more leftist, in the early *Indische Partij*. In 1913, they had been chairman, respectively vice-chairman, of the 'Native Committee of The Netherlands' one hundred years of freedom (from Napoleon's France) jubilee.² In 1916,

Though Bouman's categories, well known in, for instance, the history of Flemish versus Belgian nationalism, are helpful, I did not use them further, as especially the adjective 'volkse' (German: *völkisch*, English roughly: racial) suggests a close link to national socialist vocabulary. PETRUS BLUMBERGER(1987), 275, writes of 'racial-ethnic' movements; KRATOSKA/BATSON, 256, of 'ethnic' versus 'territorial' nationalism. TILKEMA(1932), 54-5, basing himself on B. Schrieke's *The Effect of Western Influence on native civilizations in the Malay Archipelago*, differentiated between 'social (or political) nationalism' [like Tjipto's] and 'cultural nationalism' [like Soerikoesoemo's]. He thought, *ibid.*, 56: 'Western education had dealt a heavy blow to cultural nationalism' and unwittingly caused 'social' nationalism. Soewardi Soeraningrat on 'cultural and political nationalism'; see p. 314. E.F.E. Douwes Dekker saw his 'political nationalism' as 'universal', unlike other forms; WANASITA, 16. M. Ignatieff, *Blood and belonging*, London, BBC Books, 1994, opposes democratic 'civil nationalism' to 'ethnic nationalism' which sees heredity as central. The problem with the word 'ethnic' is that it is Greek for 'national'; so if one says a national problem is an 'ethnic' problem, one does not really get any further. BOUMAN(1949), 10, as a theory both on international and Indonesian affairs, on the difference between the two nationalisms, in terms of where in society they find support: 'The urban, merchant and soldier type will be able to see state nationalism as his ideal come true; if the emphasis is on the state and not on the nation, one will be able to accept representatives of different races as citizens. In the volkse nationalisme the emphasis, however, is on the national ties, the feeling of a deeper belonging by language and race, and for instance a "naturalization" of aliens, which is acceptable in state nationalism, will be impossible. In the volkse nationalisme the tiller and the landed aristocracy will see their ideal fulfilled.'

¹L. DE JONG, vol. 11a1, 220. TSUCHIYA(1987), 19. *Djawi Hisworo* 3-9-1919, quoted IPO 36/1919, JB, 2, thought Tjipto was descended from Petruk, a clownish peasant character in wayang plays, not from princely Arjuna. SOERIKOESOEMO(1920B), 5. 'Tjipto, ... who is proud that he can reckon himself among the broad masses of the people, recently openly professed democracy, and wanted the people to be on the throne. A people's government! That is an utopia...'

²SHIRAIISHI(1990A), 63. VAN DER WAL(1967), 305. SOERIKOESOEMO(1920B), 4. Abdoel Moes also was in the committee, but first Soerikoesoemo, then Moes, resigned as other members collided with the government; TSUCHIYA(1987), 47. Soerikoesoemo wrote that he had been more militant in his youth, but had become older and wiser; SOERIKOESOEMO(1922A), 10-1. In an article in *Boedi Oetomo*'s paper, quoted LOC, 27-3-1917, 'Het inlandsch Nationaal Comité', Soerikoesoemo wrote that earlier on, he had been 'contemptuous of everything Javanese'. REID(1979), 288-9, basing himself on an anonymous 1920 *WED* article on the medieval

Soewardi Soerianingrat suggested, Tjipto disagreed with Soerikoesoemo's contributions to his paper.¹ Now, in 1917-8, their views were 'diametrically opposing'.²

In the debate, Soerikoesoemo first defined nationalism in general, as a form of egotism; good egotism though, compatible with 'making sacrifices, killing one's selfishness.' Nationalism differed not only from selfish egotism, but also from 'absolute altruism'.³ Then, he explained his Javanese nationalism:

Therefore, the founders of Boedi-Oetomo wisely decided to make this organization for Javanese only ... Those who think -and they are many- that Boedi Oetomo takes a narrow viewpoint, did not take into account the *natural* groups of nations. ... [Javanese] may not even expect that our closest neighbours [others in Indonesia] will lend us a helping hand. The Indies now are not one country, not one people with the same culture. ... Holland really made the Indies or Native people, while contrariwise, the Javanese people exist by themselves.⁴

Majapahit empire, claims there then was a 'new line' which brought 'erstwhile Javanese nationalists' towards Indonesian nationalism. Reid's 'erstwhile' is doubtful. There was some margin for differing views in *WED*. But for instance, SOERIKOESOEMO(1920E), 76, later than the anonymous article, once again re-stated editor Soerikoesoemo's opposition to all-Indonesia nationalism. The Committee for Javanese Nationalism kept its name at least until Soerikoesoemo died in 1924. From 1912 to 1917, Soerikoesoemo had moved from 'Indies' to Javanese nationalism, i.e., in the opposite direction. In December 1923, Satiman Wirjosandjojo once again attacked all-Indonesia nationalists and what he saw as their hijacking of Javanese medieval and later history, see p. 349 n. 1.

¹'Uit de Inlandsche pers'. *HPO* 1916, 27-8: Soerikoesoemo had written short contributions, 'Volkjes' [little sparks], to Tjipto's *Modjopati*, 'which are probably meant as propaganda for "the ancient Javanese religion." We should remark here that the *M.P.* editors are not responsible for the "Volkjes"'. The utterances by the Buddhist(?) Soerikoesoemo clearly caused critical reactions in the papers; while because of this, the well known journalist R. Djojosoediro saw the opportunity of explaining the theosophical view on this in *Kaem Moeda*.

²SHIRAIISHI(1981), 108. REID(1979), 282, writes: 'Javanese nationalism' 'differed radically only over Tjipto's advocacy of Indisch (not Javanese) nationalism'. But there were also the issues of democracy, racial doctrines, and Soerikoesoemo's theosophical 'Hindu' religious politics versus Tjipto's secular politics.

³SOERIKOESOEMO et al.(1918), 3. Raden Mas Soeryopetro, in 'De Jongeren in de Javaansche beweging', *HPO*, 1918, 57-9, which introduced *Wederopbouw* to The Netherlands; *ibid.*, 58, wrote of 'equilibrium between egoist chauvinism and altruist humanism'. VAN LEEUWEN(1921C), 251, defined: 'Nationalism is the abstract principle which lies at the base of, realizes and mirrors itself into, the community of individuals of one and the same race, which one usually calls Nation and which manifests itself in phenomena of a certain national culture, as in art, tradition, customs and habits.'

⁴SOERIKOESOEMO et al.(1918), 3-4. Soerikoesoemo in *WED*, 1918, 6, 'Gewijd aan mijn Kameraden in "Insulinde"', expected that if an 'Indies' nation were ever to arise, it would explode again soon. VAN LEEUWEN(1921G), 305: 'For what is "Javanism", if it is not something which makes this nation differ inwardly from other nations?' In *Djawa*, May-Sept. 1925, 154, the theosophist W.P.D. Corporaal wrote that Theosophy 'is in a sense identical to Javanism and to the basis of Oriental culture'; also quoted in 'Een gevaar in zachtzinnig gewaad voor de Indonesische

Religion has ceased to be a link a long time ago. Islam cannot tie us to the Sumatran, less still to the Ambonese or Manadonese [of north-east Celebes] who are not Islamic. Religion as a tie is very unwise, if not dangerous.

Ties other than Islam, or geographical political unity, as with Tjipto, existed:

And if we are wise enough to understand that the recognition of racial difference need not lead to racial discord, then I cannot understand why from some of our own countrymen there still is a strong protest against the exclusion of different races from Boedi Oetomo ... On this, Annie Besant wrote in *The Path of Discipleship* ...: 'He [man] is born into a *definite people* and that determines his national duties. For every human, his duty's borders are drawn by the circumstances of his birth.' Even though this sentence from an august personality settles it; next is a *Bagawad Gita* quote ... Çri K.r.s.n.a: 'One who does his life's duty, imposed by his nature, does not commit a sin.'

So Islam was not a fit tie; but other religion, linked to 'race', was. Not linked to chance:

It is not chance, or just a freak of nature, that we are born as Javanese with a nation of our own and a culture of our own.²

Tjipto Mangoenkoesoemo, defending his all-'Indies' nationalism, did not go explicitly into Soerikoesoemo's argument from Annie Besant's authority:

For my part, I just point out that it is not really the racial kinship which is decisive, but rather the material interest. ... That may sound somewhat materialist, but thus is the average human

Besides, that defence of national character may sound fine in theory, but in practice it will turn out to be a desperate struggle, from which one can hardly emerge victoriously.

The tendency in present day development is towards the levelling [Dutch: nivellering] of everything.³

The 'citizen of the world' takes over from citizens of special countries:

With every ship arriving, a number of foreigners is let loose on the Javanese people, which means that it would take superhuman exertion to keep this people in all its particulars 'free from foreign stains'.⁴ I will never believe such an endeavour will be successful.⁵

jeugdbeweging', *Indonesia Merdeka*, 1926, 19-23; 22; *IM* did not name Corporaal.

¹SOERIKOESOEMO et al.(1918), 4-5.

²*Ibid.*, 6. KIEWIET DE JONGE(1917B), 232: nations are 'the organic units, the racial complexes'.

³Het Indisch nationalisme en zijn rechtvaardiging; in SOERIKOESOEMO et al.(1918), 19.

⁴Dutch: 'van vreemde smetten vrij'; line from a Dutch nationalist song, the national anthem in the nineteenth century. Darna Koesoema in *Weekblad voor Indië*, 26, Oct. 1917; quoted *IG*, 1918 (40), 250, *MRBT*: 'van vreemde smetten vrij. He [Tjipto] can delightfully sneer at it.'

⁵SOERIKOESOEMO et al.(1918), 20.

Tjipto denied that outside influences meant 'degeneration' for Java.¹ He thought Soerikoesoemo had forgotten

Javanese, who, forced by poverty, leave Java, to look for work on other islands.²

In Tjipto's all-Indies nationalism, not race, but geography and individuals' preference were the criterion:

Thus, by 'Indies person' [Dutch: Indiër] we mean all who consider the Indies to be their homeland. ... Thus, I flatly deny it, when people say that a difference in spiritual life separates the Javanese from the Indo-European or Indo-Chinese.³

Tjipto, on the other hand, is not petty enough to see differences between, for instance, the Javanese person, and the Batak [of Sumatra] or the Dyak [of Borneo].⁴ Tjipto expected 'the dying-hour of racial nonsense';⁵ he based himself on Jean Finot, who denied the existence of 'race'.⁶

The language question was linked to the all-Indonesia or Javanese nationalism problem. Soerikoesoemo thought 'Malay belongs in Sumatra and not in Java.'⁷ As

¹Ibid., 61.

²Ibid., 33.

³SOERIKOESOEMO et al.(1918), 21-3. SHIRAIISHI(1981), 96, sums up as Tjipto's idea of a nation: 'a community of politically independent individuals'. Against that view, WED, 1920, 49, quoted French Renan: 'What is a nation? Ernest Renan has as a yardstick: a nation is soul and body together; a common market is not a fatherland; a spiritual family, not a mass, united by the outward form of the territory. A nation is soul in the past, spiritual principle in the present'. For Java, the editors thought, that meant, *ibid.*, 'the Oriental Thought and the Asian Spirit'.

⁴Darna Koesoema in *Weekblad voor Indië*, 26, Oct. 1917; quoted IG, 1918 (40), 250, MRBTD.

⁵SOERIKOESOEMO et al.(1918), 31.

⁶*Ibid.*, 60. As did, *ibid.*, 47, and in IV, 12-1-1918, 'A.M.': A. Muhlenfeld, who preferred Javanese nationalism, like Soerikoesoemo, but unlike him, rejected 'race'. In the same debate, Tjipto's supporter, Miss Bertha Walbeek, thought: 'If, alas! one still must distinguish between people, then that distinction should be: distinction in morals, distinction in intellect. Not in any case distinction in race.' *Ibid.*, 35.

⁷Soerikoesoemo in 'Vreemde talen voor de landszonen van Java', WED, 1918, 57f. WED, 1919, 113-4, 'What should every Javanese know? ... that his language is under threat from the possibility of an Indies Nation, where doubtlessly Malay will be made the official language'. WED, 1920, 42, on Sumatra: 'up to today, one does not find major influence of Hindu culture there'. Sumatran FTS Amir, though, wrote on Sumatra: 'the [Hindu] first wise teacher's teachings were too deeply implanted into the national soul for a few [Muslim] centuries to supplant them.' 'De Hindoe's op Sumatra', JS 1918, 57-60; 60. HERING(1992), III: Kiewiet de Jonge had written in 1914: 'I really start to see both the introduction and maintenance of Maleisch [Malay language] as a historical error. For two reasons: the natives will never feel tied to Holland when the Dutch language remains for their families and their vocations as something inconsequential to pursue. Secondly, low Malay is so primitive that thinking in that language only yields narrow and simple thought, which for those not exposed to Dutch, will form great educational hazards'. Translation from Dutch by Hering. In 1935, the Indies TS executive thought that Malay was still 'of very little importance as a "Cultural

foreign languages, Javanese secondary school students should learn Dutch and English, not French, German, or Malay.

Wederopbouw was in Dutch. Soerikoesoemo based that on Indian nationalists writing in English.¹ Malay was politically incorrect. Using Javanese would limit the paper's appeal in West Java and Madura. The Indies education review reacted sarcastically, quoting a song: 'Kees Kees Kees you have diluted it' [I saw you go to the pump with a bucket].² Milkman Kees in the song diluted his milk with water. The education review thought the Committee diluted its Javanese nationalism by propagating it in Dutch. The *Indische Gids* thought the Committee deserved a more positive reaction than this.

So did the Dutch government in The Hague. It thought Javanese nationalism 'could only have an ennobling influence. We hardly need to explain that this reconstruction of the Javanese culture in a modern spirit, on the basis of a great past, has the unqualified sympathy of the Government.'³

Interpreting history was another issue between *Wederopbouw* and, for instance, Tjipto. Tjipto's supporter, J.B. Wens, contrasted 'Boedi-Oetomo, which wants to go back to the "good, old" days' with 'the party of Indies nationalism, which wants to bring the Javanese to "better, new" times'.⁴ Soerikoesoemo thought his nationalism should inspire pride in Java's past, as seen in Hindu and Buddhist monuments like Borobudur,⁵ and as sung of by court poets (*pudjonggo*).⁶ Annie Besant had written (see p. 35) she preferred myth to scientific history; Soerikoesoemo wrote:

We really cannot do without a great national hero in the past and were we not to have him (suppose the situation was like that), I would simply put a fictitious person on stage and let him

language''' and refused to use it at TS meetings. *TiNI* Apr. 1935, 59.

¹Soerikoesoemo in WED, 1918, 1f; his first editorial.

²Dutch: Kees Kees Kees je hebt er water bij gedaan! Ik heb je met een emmer naar de pomp zien gaan. *Nederlandsch-Indisch Onderwijskrift*, quoted IG, 1918 (40), 617, MRBTD.

³KV on 1919 (1920), 8.

⁴SOERIKOESOEMO et al.(1918), 69.

⁵SOERIKOESOEMO(1920C), 3, saw Borobudur as the earthly 'shadow image' of 'the divine Temple of the Javanese Nation. ... And in this, we are fanatical'. 'De Groote Leer en de Wet zoals die geleerd wordt op de Tjandi Mendoe', WED 1922, 68-9, saw the ancient Mendur temple, not far from Borobudur, as the repository of wisdom. Leadbeater saw Borobudur as a 'spiritual magnetic centre' built on a special sacred spot and protected by a high deva to counteract black magic supposedly emanating from Java's volcanoes; TICHELAAR(1977), 120. The Rev. A.J. Hamerster 'The symbolism of the Borobudur', *TT* Jan. 1931, 224 on Java religious history: 'the people, having been won over [to Buddhism] from what was then the rather terrible cult of Shivaite Hinduism, to which they had been converted in much earlier times...' But historians, like VLEKKE, 22, estimate that Buddhism and Hinduism came to Java at about the same time. As for the best known religious buildings, they see the Shivaite Prambanan temple not far from Borobudur, as more than a century later than it; VLEKKE, 496.

⁶WED, June-July 1921, 88; KLOOSTER, 322.

function as our ancestor and ascribe to him the greatest of heroic roles.¹

This pride in Java's pre-Islamic past opposed *Sarekat Islam*'s strict Muslim wing.² One observer thought this wing felt 'threatened from two sides; from one side, because in Central Java Javanese nationalism is coming on strong again, with a return to ancient Hinduism or a transition to theosophy'.³ Prince Soerikoesoemo considered

Sarekat Islam is levelled down to a middle class party; the party of the 'Bourgeoisie' which wants to surpass the foreign 'Bourgeoisie'.

He described *SI* leader Tjokroaminoto: 'I saw the scarlet face, glowing with passion, of the demagogue'.⁴ Soerikoesoemo rather looked at 'the Hindus ... who in many respects are about 50 years ahead of us'.⁵

In January 1918, a critical review of *Wederophbouw*'s first issue appeared in the socialist *Het Vrije Woord*. Darsono, a supporter of *Sarekat Islam*'s Marxist wing, wrote it; later, he became a leading member of the communist *PKI*.

In this, his first ever article, Darsono had three objections. First, to Prince Soetomo Soerikoesoemo's theosophical style of writing:

Words of wisdom, making my poor head dizzy, and making it difficult for me to understand them. As long as His Highness keeps moving on the higher planes of the inner life, until then his scribbling will remain unintelligible to us, the uninitiated. And there are many non-initiates

¹Written contribution to Javanese cultural congress, KLOOSTER, 323. Ibid., history should be written in 'a fairy-tale like language'. Klooster, whose interest was historiography, did not mention Soerikoesoemo's theosophy. Ibid., 378 saw continuity between Soerikoesoemo and some post-1945 historians. They, Indonesian nationalists, differed from Soerikoesoemo's Javanese nationalism though.

²KWANTES(1975), 59-60. Ibid., 67: 'In these more Arab-Muhammadan circles, people do not trust Mr Labberton's theosophy at all'. SOERIKOESOEMO(1919B), 71-2: 'Islam must be right for Arabia and its surroundings, as Christianity is for Europe ... they do not correspond to the psyche of the Javanese. ... Every endeavour to make the Javanese a true Muslim or Christian, will therefore fail'. Ibid., 77: 'Mecca, the holy land of the Arabs, should not rule us any longer, and should disappear from our thoughts in order to be replaced by Java, the holy land of the Javanese'. Soerikoesoemo in *WED*, 1919, 173: 'Give up the land of Mecca and concentrate your thoughts on Java. Only then you are a good nationalist...' When, in a draft political program for Indonesia, POLDERMAN(1922), 7, proposed: 'Better religious education: viz. penetration into the meaning of the Koran and its prescriptions', editor Soerikoesoemo added: 'Not for all groups of the population'.

³KOT, 1918, 1325-6, 'Islam-beweging', by 'Tertius'. Christian missionaries were the other side.

⁴In Javanese culture, the colour of uncontrolled passion and lower (*kasar*) classes.

⁵Soerikoesoemo in *WED*, 1918, 35.

⁶*WED*, 1918, 1.

among my friends.¹

Darsono's second objection was a general one to nationalism. He pointed to its role in Europe of the world war:

So, nationalism generates hatred and hostility between people, and as a consequence, war after war will ravage the world.²

Third, Darsono doubted that a nationalism, based on worshipping Java's history, would be any better than other countries' nationalism; let alone better than 'international socialism' which he favoured:

Every Javanese knows, that during our culture [in the Middle Ages] one could hardly define it as peaceful. Wars, in which many human lives were lost, then were common phenomena. There was much arbitrary rule then.³

On 15 November 1918, Darsono's *Soeara-Ra'jat* wrote:

Also Javanese nationalism is useless. In Surakarta and Yogyakarta, inhabitants of a desa, along with the sawahs [paddy-fields] are SOLD [by Javanese landlords] to the sugar-factories. Where is Javanese nationalism then?⁴

Darsono certainly did not reject all of Javanese cultural history; only an interpretation of it which he thought strengthened the political right.⁵

The Javanese Nationalists antagonized *Sarekat Islam*'s distinctly Muslim wing, its Marxists, and Tjokrosoedarmo's language reform movement.⁶ Those three groups boycotted the July 1918 Congress for Javanese Cultural Development in Surakarta, which

¹Sukarno then was one of Darsono's friends; it would be interesting to know if his theosophical education made him understand Soerikoesoemo more than Darsono did.

²ONOSRAD. The pseudonym Onosrad was an inversion of Darsono.

³Ibid. For different reasons than orthodox Muslims, Marxists in *SI* were also sceptical on theosophists and others glorifying the pre-Muslim past. ALIMIN(1919), 21 wrote of 'noble parasites'. Darsono, in *SR*, 19-7-1918; quoted KWANTES(1975), 63: 'How could this Borobudur be built? Certainly only through the arbitrary power of the ruler, that is, the rajah.' Government official B.J.O. Schrieke commented on Darsono: *ibid.*: 'In these ultra-democratic walks of life, people are afraid that the Committee for the Development of Javanese Culture [of Soerikoesoemo, Radjiman and Mangkoe Negoro VII] works to restore the ancient social order.' POEZE, 572: the early 1920's communist leader Tan Malaka strongly opposed 'Hinduism' in Indonesia; as a Sumatran, he had less affinity to it. BOUMAN(1949), 50: Sumatran Muslim M. Amir in 1928 also called Borobudur 'the result of coolie labour'.

⁴Quoted *IPO* 46/1918, 'Extremistische bladen', 5.

⁵See for instance PETRUS BLUMBERGER(1987), 118: he saw strong female character roles in *wayang* plays as an inspiration for women to be courageous in the present's political struggle. GOUDA(1993), 16, did not mention Darsono when she wrote that Dutch and Indonesians spoke only of male, not of female, *wayang* characters in political comparisons.

⁶*Djawa Dipa*, which wanted to end the difference between High and Low Javanese speech. Noto Soetoro opposed it: *SOEMBANGSIH*, 139.

Van Hinloopen Labberton and the *Wederopbouw* editors organized, as 'antidemocratic'.¹ Only Tjipto Mangoenkoesoemo attended the congress as a democrat counterweight, considering himself 'extreme left, even among democrats'.² There, explaining his own views on Javanese culture, he had his second debate with Soerikoesoemo.

Tjipto attacked the caste system and other 'Hindu' elements in Java. 'This had now become a pillar of Dutch colonial rule and was suffocating whatever creativity the Javanese had.' Tjipto pointed out that, contrary to Soerikoesoemo's view of a hierarchical and harmonious past, for instance *wayang* plays had also elements of dissent and disobedience, which he valued.³

If I do not believe in nobles, then I do so as they are dominators, even though they are dominators of the same blood as mine, though somewhat bluish. ... Domination in any form, and by any person, goes against the grain with me.⁴

In The Netherlands, Tjipto's friend Soewardi Soerianingrat⁵ reacted critically to his relative Soerikoesoemo. Writing as a contribution to a book celebrating ten years of *Budi Utomo*, his tone was not sharp or personal. He began by differentiating between 'cultural and political nationalism.' There 'are many conservative elements among the former nationalists, who first of all want to maintain and to restore the so-called 'national essential identity [Dutch: *volkseigenheid*]', also at the cost of all whatsoever, if need be [dots in original] of national independence.'⁶ He thought that 'Soerio Koesoemo' 'confused the cultural and the political meanings of the word nationalism.'⁷ Soewardi himself loved Javanese culture. However,

¹SHIRAIISHI(1981), 97. Prince Mangkoe Negoro VII was founder and honorary president of the Java Institute, founded 1-8-1919; TSUCHIYA(1987), 121. It organized similar later congresses and brought out the magazine *Djawa*; see its issue 'Extra-nummer. Aangeboden aan P.A.A. Mangkoe Negoro VII. 4 september 1924', 1, 15. At the Dec. 1924 congress; *Djawa*, 1925, 153f.; Radjiman spoke (mentioning AB's *Lectures on political science* and Count Keyserling), as did W.P.D. Corporaal, and P. Post: 'This is the right place to think of Mrs Besant in great admiration'; *ibid.*, 183.

²Congress contribution, quoted *IG*, 1918 (40), 1389.

³Quoted SHIRAIISHI(1981), 97. The TSUCHIYA(1987), 44 remark that Tjipto stood for 'the destruction of Javanese culture' is wrong. Compare Darsono, p. 313.

⁴Congress contribution, quoted *IG*, 1918 (40), 1389.

⁵Soewardi, of the Paku Alam dynasty like Soetatmo Soerikoesoemo, was not as distant to Javanese nationalism as Tjipto: REID(1979), 284-5. Though Soewardi valued the Javanese language more than Tjipto, TSUCHIYA(1987), 37 over-rates their distance; and under-rates the political distance between Soewardi and Soerikoesoemo. Soewardi translated the *Internationale* into Malay; *IV*, 1-5-1920. Soerikoesoemo probably did not like these lyrics in any language. TSUCHIYA(1987), 34: in 1916, Soewardi said Malay should be all-Indonesia language; compare p. 310f.

⁶SURYA NINGRAT(1918), 27.

⁷SURYA NINGRAT(1918), 40. *Ibid.*, 39: 'obfuscation'.

For the sake of Indonesian solidarity, one needs to separate all cultural propaganda from political action. This will also help cultural propaganda, as many, who avoid political action, then will be able to participate without problems; while others [like Soewardi], unable to agree earlier on with the political-cultural league's political tendencies, then will be able to join the cultural league, without violating their [political] principles. Javanese nationalism, used as a way of political struggle, can easily become a refuge for exclusivists and imperialists.¹

After 1913, Soewardi never joined Soerikoesoemo in a political association; though, being a teacher, he would in the *Taman Siswa* education league in 1922. In *Wederopbouw*, Soerikoesoemo criticized Soewardi: 'Maybe the *Indische Partij* discipline harms him in this.'²

In the same book as Soewardi, Goenawan Mangoenkoesoemo, Tjipto's brother, mentioned a proposal by Committee for Javanese Nationalism member Satiman to have Sanskrit 'as instrument to study Western science.' Goenawan thought that 'absurd.'³

Prince Soerikoesoemo's view of the state was reminiscent of Annie Besant's 'Pythagoras-based' one (see p. 77). Though he quoted Plato:

The blossoms of thine host of scions, thou, Lady [the personification of Java], thou wantest to make incline towards glorification of the state, its institution and its economy. Remember, that the famous Greek philosopher, Platoon, like thou, founded his "State" on Beauty, Truth, Wisdom. ... To cut a long story short, we see Platoon rise up high in the shape of the Priest-King. Does not Java have priest-kings? Not even one? Well, Lady, look forward expectantly is the attitude in life, which fits us.⁴

Soerikoesoemo's nationalism, though, was 'not really a consequence of my love for a Javanese State as much as for Javanese Individuality'.⁵

4.2. *Wederopbouw*'s views: only Javanese or also theosophical?

The historian Tsuchiya recognizes Soetatmo Soerikoesoemo had a fairly long term influence. The *wijaksana* concept, which may mean 'politics', 'divine wisdom', or other things, is central to Tsuchiya's analysis. He considers there is a link between Soerikoesoemo using it, and limitations on democracy in Indonesia since 1959. In the late 60's-early 70's, Colonel Widyapranata was editor of Armed Forces daily *Angkatan*

¹SURYA NINGRAT(1918), 48. In an SDAP book, Soewardi opposed not only Dutch capitalism in Indonesia; also Javanese society was a 'feudal' 'corrupted tail-piece'. POEZE(1986), 117.

²WED, 1920, 57.

³SOEMBANGSIH, 137.

⁴BOEMI POETRA(1922), 168; 172. Boemi Poetra (Son of the Country) was one of Soerikoesoemo's aliases. Soerikoesoemo in WED, 1918, 41: 'The ideal state of Plato, which "will only arise when the philosophers are rulers, and the rulers philosophers"', is no utopia for the East'.

⁵SOERIKOESOEOMO(1920E), 76. *Djawa*, 'Extra-nummer. Aangeboden aan P.A.A. Mangkoe Negoro VII. 4 september 1924', 70, proclaimed an independent 'Javanese state' as final aim.

Bersenjara. He quoted Soerikoesoemo in support of his view of 'New Order', differing from other political systems.¹

When Shiraishi discussed the Tjipto-Soetatmo debate, he put Soerikoesoemo into a perspective of history of ideas on politics in Java.² He did not mention Soerikoesoemo's theosophy, or ideas on politics in the TS, though.

Herbert Feith and Lance Castles saw Soetatmo as important enough to include in their widely read textbook of Indonesian political thinking. Likewise not mentioning the TS, they left out some 'theosophical' parts of his text. They called it 'the anti-egalitarianism of the Javanese tradition'. Was at least part of it not tradition 'invented' by recent non-Javanese TS leaders?³

Soerikoesoemo explained the essential unity of international theosophist and Java nationalist ideas:

Many Javanese Nationalists, who follow theosophy, and thus are most readers of this paper [*Wederopbouw*], often do not know how they should tie together both seemingly contradictory ideas in a beautiful, harmonic whole. ... Jav.[anese] nationalism is the inevitable colour of Javanese culture, and so cannot possibly be at variance with theosophy, which in this context should mean 'divine'.⁴

Against Tjipto's all-Indonesia nationalism, he said:

If we [Javanese] really have to dissolve ourselves, then let it be into the World sea and not into an Indies ocean. ... Floating on the divine waves of theosophy, thou art yet the ship which spans the ocean ... it is Javanese nationalism that bears the mark of divinity.⁵

If we compare our universe now to a Waringin [banyan tree], and the divine plan to the roots, which are under the ground, hidden to our eyes, then theosophy is the trunk, and Jav.[anese] nationalism one of the many branches. So contradiction is out of the question.⁶

Though *Wederopbouw* was mainly on politics and culture, its links to the TS and to its spiritual views were clear. In an editorial, Soerikoesoemo promoted the coming of the World Teacher, the Order of the Star in the East, and H.P. Blavatsky.⁷ 'This struggle

¹REEVE(1985), 310-2. TSUCHIYA(1987).

²SHIRAISHI(1981), 203.

³FEITH/CASTLES, 483; 179; partly translating SOERIKOESOEMO(1920B) on 183-8.

⁴SOERIKOESOEMO(1920E), 73f.

⁵SOERIKOESOEMO(1920E), 76.

⁶SOERIKOESOEMO(1920E), 77.

⁷SOERIKOESOEMO(1921A), 1-3. SOERIKOESOEMO(1923A), 17: Europe today recognized 'the Apostles of the East'; four of the five he named were HPB, AB, 'Krishna Moerti, Jina Rajadasa'. *WED*, 1918, 218, saw as inspirations: 'Hegel and Bolland, Freemasonry and Theosophy'. Many authors in Indies masons' magazines disliked Bolland though; Th. Stevens, personal communication.

in our own cultural environment [for Javanese nationalism] is just a simple part of the great cultural struggle, which Madame Blavatsky started in Europe.¹ *Wederopbouw* reprinted a Dutch translation of Arundale's 1918 Madras speech *The road to leadership*.² It sometimes reproduced complete articles from the *Theosofisch Maandblad voor Nederlandsch-Indië*.³ Polderman, former administrator of *Pewarta Theosofie*, was correspondent from The Netherlands.⁴ Kiewiet de Jonge, though his relationship to Soerikoesoemo was good, was no all-out supporter.⁵

In 1918, Raden Mas Noto Soeroto was already writing for *WED*; in 1920, he became official correspondent in The Netherlands. In one article, he warned against Japanese imperialism. Soerikoesoemo seconded him in the same issue.⁶

Another contributor, under the pen name of Daba, and also the sponsor, without whom *Wederopbouw* would have been impossible,⁷ was Mangkoe Negoro VII, Pangeran Adipati Ario Praboe Prang Wedono. Probably, he was the real founder of the Committee for Javanese Nationalism; but stayed in the background because of princely status.⁸

¹Soerikoesoemo in *WED*, 1919, 128.

²*WED*, Aug. 1923, 45-50.

³For instance, *WED*, Sept. 1921, 121-45, the Aug. 1921 *TMNI* article 'De wajang of het schaduwspeel' by Mrs C. van Hinloopen Labberton. *WED* commented, *ibid.*: 'Of the Westerners, as a rule the theosophists are those, who can get access to the spiritual life of the Javanese'.

⁴See for instance *WED*, Oct.-Nov. 1921, his 'Overzeesche brieven', 168-71; and Dec. 1921, 249-54.

⁵KIEWIET DE JONGE(1917B), 21, had a position close to Soerikoesoemo's: colonial rule should rule all colonies differently: 'For the racial problem and the level of civilization are different for every colony. British India shows different objective standards of development from British East Africa, so does Java from Sumatra.' In *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad* of 19 March 1919, 'Nationalisme en federalisme', reprinted KIEWIET DE JONGE(1920A), 161f., Kiewiet de Jonge said of Javanese nationalist views that they 'certainly did not conflict with our short observations. Quite the contrary. They are really even an addition to them.' *Ibid.*, 80, he had favoured 'decentralization towards big regions of which the borders are mainly determined by racial differences'. He could not say whether Soerikoesoemo or Tjipto was right, though he tended to see the Dutch East Indies more as an unity; see *WED*, 1919, 34. For instance *IS*, 11-10-1919, 142; 144, quoted Soerikoesoemo's and other *WED* articles extensively. In a letter to his parents, 28-11-1919, Kiewiet de Jonge private archive, IISG, # 54, wrote of a 'fine tribute' by *Wederopbouw* to him. Kiewiet de Jonge was a contributor to Mangkoe Negoro VII's *Djawa* magazine.

⁶NOTO SOEROTO(1920). He wrote of Japanese colonial rule in Korea and *ibid.*, 19, of the oppression of a Korean movement against it, which included 'Rhee Syngman'; Syngman Rhee, who decades later became ruler of South Korea. For Japan, see p. 342.

⁷SHIRAISHI(1981), 96.

⁸KWANTES(1975), 612. NAGAZUMI(1972), 98-9; 202; CANNEGIER(1937), 122; VAN MIERT(1995), 93. For simplicity's sake, I call him Mangkoe Negoro VII throughout. Legally, this is incorrect: one only had the right to that title after one's fortieth birthday. Mangkoe Negoro VII succeeded his uncle, who had abdicated. *Djawa Tengah*, 41, 1916, thought that the succession was

Mangkoe Negoro VII ruled one of Central Java's four autonomous principalities; he was related to the rulers of the three other ones.

'Long before his [1913] arrival in The Netherlands', he 'had been attracted to theosophy and to theosophical literature.' According to Nugraha, he had officially joined the TS.¹ Under the name of Raden Mas Ario Soerjosoeparto, in 1914-15 he had been a lieutenant in the grenadiers of the Dutch army.² Queen Wilhelmina had received him; ultimately, he became her 'Special Adjutant'.³ From 1915-6 he had been president of *Budi Utomo*, succeeding Radjiman. He then was active in the pro-conscription campaign. After succeeding to the throne in January 1916, in 1918 he was still, to the indignation of moderate social democrat paper *Het Indische Volk*, and the approval of Djojosoediro's daily:

In the *Neraja* [26-12-1917], we read that five months ago a Boy Scouts association was already founded in Solo. They are trained by sergeants and dress is paid by the Mangkoe Negaran, except for the hats, which they have to pay for themselves. The paper hopes that this movement will flower in all of the Indies. [But IV commented:] Dangerous mimicking, in which militarism is very clear.⁴

the result of 'secret policy of the Government, which will at least make a few million [guilders] profit out of the new contract, which it will conclude with him. People expect, that as a consequence of this, a few Europeans will get exceptional promotions or orders of knighthood.' Quoted KOT, 1916, 'Persoverzicht', 679. Prang Wedono means commander of the armed forces. Dutch authorities allowed the Mangkoe Negoro dynasty armed forces of its own; as with the Paku Alam dynasty in the nineteenth century, and again since 1938, TEITLER(1980), 6; 40. According to 'Eenige opmerkingen over de tegenwoordige financiële politiek van het Mangkoenegorosche rijk', LOC, 19-2-1917, the Mangkoe Negoro realm had less than one 70th of the Dutch East Indies' inhabitants, but 'more than one 50th of all the armed forces.' It was roughly the size of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg and had 750,000 inhabitants in 1919; KIEWIET DE JONGE(1920A), 44; 892, 283 in 1930, LARSON(1987), 2. Though smaller than the *susuhunan*'s, or the sultan of Yogyakarta's, realms, the Mangkoe Negoro's was financially the strongest: its budget was larger than either. LOC, 20-4-1917, 2e blad: 'De begroting van de Mangkoenegaran over 1917.'

¹DJAJADININGRAT-NIEUWENHUIS, 47; *ibid.*: 'The secretaryship of the Theosophical Society of Surakarta in 1912, for instance, was linked to the Mangkoenegoro house.' NUGRAHA(1989), 171.

²DJAJADININGRAT-NIEUWENHUIS, 48: Colijn had helped him in this. He became a lieutenant-colonel when he succeeded to the throne; LOC, 17-11-1916, 1e blad, 'Hoofd Mangkoenegorosche huis.'

³RANI, 1940, 443.

⁴IV, 26-1-1918, 'Indië Weerbaar'. The aim of this 'Javaansche Padvindere-Organisatie', founded 'early 1916', 'seemed to have been mainly the training, in an atmosphere of order and discipline, of future recruits for the local legion [Mangkoe Negoro VII's forces]'; PETRUS BLUMBERGER(1987), 178. Countess van Limburg Stirum, the governor-general's wife, inaugurating the executive of the Indies Boy Scouts, mentioned 'army and navy officers' as its leaders. LOC, 6-9-1917, 'Indische padvindere'.

Kiewiet de Jonge saw the prince's realm as a model for the system of rule which he proposed for elsewhere in Indonesia.¹ Mangkoe Negoro VII suggested the federation of the four princes' states, thus in a way recreating the old Mataram empire; this was not successful.² He sat in the *Volksraad* from 1918-21 and 1923-4. He shared with Soerikoesoemo a great admiration for Rabindranath Tagore, whose poems he translated and whom he met personally.³ He donated the Surakarta TS lodge ground for its building. The prince also received Leadbeater at his palace in 1929. Leadbeater then in Surakarta was received at the *susuhunan*'s court too.⁴

What did Wederopbouw think about monarchy and democracy? How did these ideas relate to those of Dutch theosophists in Indonesia? and of Mrs Besant?

Annie Besant's republican phase lasted longer than Soerikoesoemo's involvement with the democrat and republican *Indische Partij*. In her pre-TS days, she had written in *English Republicanism*: 'The Republican spirit is the very core of English progressive thought'.⁵ Then, she approvingly quoted North England miners: 'We don't care to keep more cats than there's mice to catch.' By the feline metaphor, the miners expressed: 'the royal cats are ...



Mangkoe Negoro VII and his wife, the Ratoe Timoer. From: CANNEGIETER(1937)

¹KIEWIET DE JONGE(1920A), 44: 'the Mangkoe Negoro's realm, doubtlessly the best ruled' was 'a proof of what Native autonomy - also if restricted by [Dutch] government- may accomplish.' See also LOC, 23-8-1916, 2e blad, 'Een model vorstendom'.

²DJAJADININGRAT-NIEUWENHUIS, 63.

³CANNEGIETER(1937), 122. He also admired Frederik van Eeden, whose Tagore translations were popular in Indonesia; KONING(1968), 8. Contrary to TSUCHIYA(1987), 42, Mangkoe Negoro VII introduced Noto Soeroto to Tagore's work; DJAJADININGRAT-NIEUWENHUIS, 47; Noto Soeroto himself, in POEZE(1986), 96. *Indonesia Merdeka*, 1926, 25f., 'Twee Nederlanders aan het woord', 27, referred to Noto Soeroto as 'This Dutch copycat of Tagore, who as a poet does not even reach up to his knee'.

⁴TMNI 1923, 379. TICHELAAR(1977), 132.

⁵BESANT(1877B), 2. SRI PRAKASA, XXVIII: 'like every other Britisher, she [AB] was intensely devoted to the Throne', did not take into account younger years.

wholly unprofitable animals.¹ She wrote:

That Great Britain will become a Republic, none can doubt; the only question is-when? ... our cousins on the other [US] side of the Atlantic have set a good example.

If the British people were to follow this example, that would be the end of 'the weight of a German yoke'² by the Hannover-Saxony Coburg royals.

Annie Besant joined the TS after reading *The Secret Doctrine*. H.P. Blavatsky, basing herself on Plato, wrote in it on divine kings. Rulers should not be of the same level as ruled; just as 'We do not place a bullock or a ram over our bullocks and rams, but give them a leader, a shepherd...'.³

Mrs Besant later wrote *Sri Ramachandra, the ideal king*; the Indies TS translated it in Dutch in 1920, and in Javanese later:

You rightly speak of him as a Divine King. He was inherently superior to the people whom He ruled, and the people whom He ruled reached a high civilisation because they obeyed Him and others far more developed than themselves. It is like a Shepherd with sheep. The King is above the people: He guides them, tells them what to do, what not to do; they obey, and they flourish.⁴ There also seemed to be an ideal king in her own times: Edward VII.⁵ Later,

Jinarajadasa echoed her ideas:

none stands so high in achievement as Queen Victoria ... Disraeli, King Edward VII, who cemented into friendship two nations ... England and France.⁶

In a 1911 letter, Sir Edwin Lutyens wrote:

Mrs. Besant ... her ultra Imperialist ideal ... got 3000 radicals together the other night and talked Divine Right and Empire till they were nearly all sick!⁷

¹BESANT(1877B), 3.

²BESANT(1877B), 8.

³BLAVATSKY(1908), 389.

⁴BESANT(1921I), 77-8.

⁵BESANT(1910B), 175f.

⁶JINARAJADASA(1939), 19. Edward VII also has this good reputation with other supporters of the British monarchy; for instance Sir George Bellew, Knight Commander of the Royal Victorian Order, in *Britain's Kings and Queens*, Pitkin Pictorials, 1974, p. 22-3. Other authors, like MEYERS(1993), 129, might wonder if the 'cementing' was in London and Paris brothels. George Arundale wrote in 'The spirit of kingship', *American Theosophist*, June 1934, the divine-human hierarchy analogies applied to one country in particular: 'devas and Masters wore crowns like those of English kings.'

⁷Quoted HUSSEY, 172. See BESANT(1911A).

TABLE 3.¹ THEOSOPHY ON TEMPORAL AND SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY

	1ST PHASE thesis	2ND PHASE antithesis	3RD PHASE synthesis
TYPE OF RULE IN WORLD HISTORY	Direct divine rule by Priest-Kings, originally from planet Venus; for millions of years	Separation kings/ priests; ill-advised democratic experiments up to now	Future Priest- Kings; in those early days, as in the days that will close our human history
TYPE OF RULE IN TS HISTORY	Direct divine rule by Masters 1875-1888	Separation esoteric/ exoteric TS (Blavatsky- Besant/Olcott) 1888-1907	Besant both president and ES Head 1907f.

Thanks to her past reputation though, they at least came to hear Annie Besant, unlike others with her type of opinion. After the 1912 strike wave in England, Mrs Besant called for greater royal power.² Subtitles of her weekly and daily ran: 'For King...'.³

The table on this page represents Annie Besant's ideas on rule, both in world political history, and in her own Society's then 32 years.

A. van Leeuwen, editor of the Dutch East Indies TS monthly, and future General Secretary, was a former student with neo-Hegelian idealist philosopher and opponent of democracy Bolland. Van Leeuwen had a view of monarchies' sacredness, basing himself both on Annie Besant and on his former professor. After modern democracy, 'shall once more begin the Golden Age of the Priest-Kings, then the Gods will return to earth, the Angels will associate with men, in order to work together and to build the eternal Temple

¹Based on BESANT(1907B), 93-113. Compare the scheme for history: Divine Principle to man back to Divine Principle; and for doctrines: theosophy to separate religions to theosophy; see p. 21. VAN DER LEEUW(1920)'s explicit Hegelianism developed Annie Besant's implicit Hegelianism. PAPUS, 68, when he was in the TS, equalled 'Thesis, Antithesis, Synthesis' to 'Brahma, Siva, Vishnu'. Compare Nietzsche's view in *Beyond Good and Evil*: 'The democratic movement is ... A form assumed by man in decay'. JINARAJADASA(1939), 27 contradicted, in fact, Annie Besant, in the year that the Second World War broke out: 'the dictator represents the past of mankind and the free people the future.'

²BESANT(1913A), 77 Apr. 1913, 137. TAYLOR(1992), 314: she in 1912 approached the earl of Minto, ex-Viceroy of India, to form an anti-strike organisation of aristocrats, under royal patronage.

of Humanity.¹

Van Leeuwen thought a philosophical synthesis of democracy and anti-democracy should come. One should, according to him, answer the question if a theosophist should be a democrat, 'in the way of Bolland and Nietzsche: "With democracy, against democracy!"'² Van Leeuwen wrote:

Republicans are only the blind intellectuals in their mock wisdom, who because of the fog of semi-rational false thinking no longer see the Ideal and ordain that the Ideal is no longer there. They bring the poison of democracy, of superficial civilization into their more simple brothers' unsuspecting hearts. A republic cannot create culture.

He named the US republic as an example:

And our ancient Europe, which in contrast still has its culture, where still throbs a nation's heart, looking up in love and devotion towards its princes, it goes, driven by the blind social democracy into the abyss of superficial civilization and mediocrity.³

Van der Leeuw, sometimes of the Dutch East Indies, sometimes of the Dutch TS, wrote his thesis on 'Historical Idealist Politics', as opposed to Marx' historical materialism. He wanted 'aristo-democracy'.⁴

Hillary of the Indies, who knew Van der Leeuw's book would come out, thought he had made too many concessions to democracy. He saw Van der Leeuw as

a diligent theosophical worker and intelligent jurist. In this book, he will tell about an aristo-democracy, which has become rather popular recently in the walks of life of capitalists, who feel something of the new spirit of times and are sympathetic to it, but still do not want to lose their privileged position. It is a compromise, at the making of which people are very clever nowadays, between the republican and the monarchical idea. Someone, though, who speaks about "electing" a king does not understand the highness and augustness of the royal intelligence, the authority of majesty. The majesty, the ideal must be recognized unconditionally, else it is not an ideal. Then, it is vague sentimentality, only fit for raving young girls, not for men and male spirits.⁵

¹VAN LEEUWEN(1918A), 580-1. Also other theosophists admired Bolland. Ex-Indies GS Labberton in his first thesis when he became a Litt. D. in 1931, put Bolland's and Hegel's philosophy on a par with the Hindu spirit; VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1931), Stellingen, 1. *TMNI*, 1916, 33: 'Our great countryman, Prof. Bolland'. *TMNI*, 1918, 391.

²*TMNI*, 1918, 207.

³VAN LEEUWEN(1921G), 307.

⁴VAN DER LEEUW(1920), 188. *Ibid.*, 75, saw as characteristic for parliamentary government (as opposed to government by Priest-Kings, which he preferred) that not the 'best', but the 'mediocre' rule. *Ibid.*, 174: Parliament's 'time is up.'

⁵HILLARY(1920), 399. VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1931), 14 was not negative about electing kings. KRUISHEER(1920), 207, the later Dutch East Indies TS GS, thought that 'democratic only' rule would 'lead to the perishing of the nation'.

In 1920, many monarchies had just fallen and the Turkish one was about to fall. Hillary wrote of the relationship between kingship and rule by superhuman beings:

The theosophical writings teach us that a dewa [god; 'angel'] 'reigns' over a nation. So this means, that this nation is his way of expression, of sacrifice [by descending from high spirit into low matter], it is his body. ... So the rhythm of the dewa is the great Ideal, slumbering within the nation's individuals. Though this in the infancy of a nation is obeyed unconsciously-instinctively, and people then recognize kingship automatically, slowly the intuitive knowledge of the nation's consciousness and its ideal gets lost, along with which kingship also degenerates, without, however, disappearing totally, for if that should happen, then the dewa's body [that is, the nation] would be left to decomposition. Kingship is the expression itself of life.¹

After Besant's thesis and antithesis (see p. 321), Hillary expected the synthesis:

If it has reached the age of manhood, however, the nation shall feel its ideal once again and express it, consciously though, now, as one sees this with the personality. The expressing, the indication of the rhythm, will have to be done by the king. ... He is the light, the intelligence, the idea. One hardly needs to say that for a nation only one can do this. ... In him, the brotherhood is realized. It is hardly necessary to say that one other person or more could not possibly do this jointly with him. Should someone not want to be carried by the waves of the rhythm, then he would be a poison to the people. It would not be possible that he himself could indicate exactly the same ideal, the same rhythm as the nation's sunan [Javanese; roughly: king], for no two persons are equal. In case he should still be so highly developed that his ideal, his idea, might attract thousands of people, then he should look for another nation or make revolution, for the struggle of ideas in the higher worlds reflects itself as wars on the material plane. The people now do not seem to see this truth. They think of ruling nations by meetings and councils.

They deny kingship, though they subconsciously still hold to the royal ideal. ... Humanity has outlived the times, in which it instinctively recognized brotherhood and thus kingship and intelligence have not yet reached the stage in which they can make this vague intuition into conscious knowledge. Thus, one also denies in oneself the ideal, the king. For the outer world, the non-I is only a reflection of one's own consciousness. This gives rise to great restlessness. That is characteristic for this time of unbalanced people, so much different from far-off ages, when kingship was seen internally and externally and there was balance and calm, to which the papers and stone memorials left behind still bear witness. Nowadays people try to prove from history that progress lies in the development of so-called democracy.²

Hillary thought history taught different lessons: the situation in China and ancient Egypt had been best under monarchy. Russia owed its growth towards great and European power to the czars' autocracy. Prussia owed this to Frederick the Great.³

¹HILLARY(1920), 395. WESTRIK-WESTERS(1919), 362: 'True kingship can never disappear from the world, because the world never is without a Ruler, never without a King'.

²HILLARY(1920), 395-6.

³HILLARY(1920), 397.

Today, it is fashionable to say that it is so good that at last the feudal conditions in central Europe have ceased to exist. Those saying this forget that under the Hohenzollerns, however mediocre, or less than mediocre, they may have been, the German Empire has reached a hitherto unknown prosperity and the weakling German people, which had always been bullied by its more soldierly neighbours (Sweden, France, Denmark, The Netherlands), under their guidance has held at bay the furious joint attacks of all the world's nations. That is what the emperorship did! The [Habsburg dynasty] Danubian monarchy has managed, though beset by grave rebellions and enormous internal confusion, to still hold out under its emperors during four years of bitter war.¹

Hillary thought of the ancient monarchy as the counterweight to modern revolutionism:

Now, when there is screaming everywhere of equality and anarchy, with the reds [Marxists] as well as with the blacks [Roman Catholic politicians], and also on Java one hears more and more mockery and sneering about authority, ideal and nobility, it is certainly the TS' task to hold aloft the ideal of Majesty, to teach the Indies [so also outside Java] people once again their ancient reverence for His Highness the Susuhunan of Solo.²

The historian Legge wrote on theosophy, with a sideways glance at his subject, Indonesia: 'there is something patronizing in the earnestness with which Western enthusiasts urged Eastern wisdom upon India'.³ With Soerikoesoemo as an individual, it probably was more parallelism and inspiration than urge by, say, Hillary. *Wederopbouw* wrote on traditional homage to princes, the *sembah*:

We are glad that the so-called modernized Javanese cannot resist the desire to *sembah* respectfully before the [Surakarta] Sunan or the [Yogyakarta] Sultan. We hope that one day they will understand that the *sembah* is no dead form, but one of the ways by which one may reach THAT [the Absolute]. ... To us, it is something natural and it would even be sacrilege, were we not to do this, because we know that behind worshipping a prince much more is hidden than glorifying a human.⁴

Soerikoesoemo drew political consequences from the principle As it is above, so below:

the masses have no will and thus cannot rule. This is not only correct for the people of Java, who, as is said, have no "civilization" yet. It is also correct for the "highly civilized" nations of Europe and America.⁵

¹HILLARY(1920), 400.

²HILLARY(1920), 401.

³LEGG(1972), 24.

⁴'De beteekenis van de *sembah*', *WED* March 1921, 48-50; *ibid.*, 49. Noto Soeroto in *SOEMBANGSIH*, 140, had similar views. Soerikoesoemo saw Yudishthira from the Mahabharata and *wayang* plays as an example of a priest-king. The ruling prince Mangkoe Negoro VII sponsored Soerikoesoemo's magazine.

⁵Soerikoesoemo in *WED*, 1918, 95. SOERIKOESOEMO(1916), 98: 'We are Orientals, but ksatriyas above all else, and it is our duty to work towards an ideal state which does understand life's contradictions.'

If socialists and democrats err about Nature, then that seems to me to be something completely normal; but a theosophist, of whom one may certainly expect that he is better grounded in knowledge of Nature than the other people, to whom Nature only shows itself in its mechanical, lower aspect, a theosophist should penetrate deeper into the mystery and learn how to understand better the Law: "As above, so below [saying, quoted in HPB's *Secret Doctrine*, attributed to late antiquity 'Hermes Trismegistos'; see p. 25, 98]; as Nature, so man". I say, autocracy is the nature of the Will. No Will is thinkable which does not proceed in an autocratic way. It willed and it happened, that is the history of Creation. ... Where is democracy now; there, there is only pure autocracy. Democracy verily exists as Nothingness.¹

More extensively than in his 1920 Indies theosophist monthly article, Soerikoesoemo dealt with the subject that year in his booklet *Sabdo-Pandito-Ratoe*. *Pandito ratoe* means roughly 'philosopher-king'; 'priest-ruler'. It came out at Indonesia's TS publishers.² 'Democracy without wisdom is a disaster for all of us' was its motto. Its first sentence saw his task as an arduous challenge:

In times when social democracy progresses strongly, and people see the slogan [of Marco and others] *sama rata, sama rasa* as the only correct view ... it is a desperate attempt of the individual who dares to fight that.³

Soerikoesoemo rejected democracy, as it was 'purely materialist',⁴ in politics from a spiritual viewpoint.⁵

Yet, I think I can conclude from the theosophical publications and from many works by Annie Besant that theosophy is an implicit opponent of democracy. ... But that a committed theosophist, who sees the doctrine of human evolution as founded on the law of Karma and Reincarnation, will not think for one single moment of defending democracy, is absolutely beyond any shadow of doubt. For this law of Karma and Reincarnation automatically excludes.

¹BLAVATSKY(1908), 32. SOERIKOESOEMO(1920A), 310-1. *Ibid.*, 309: 'I begin here with the declaration that it is my aim, yes, higher still, that I regard it as my duty, to fight every manifestation of democracy, here in Java, everywhere where the opportunity presents itself to me. ... Communism and anarchy, for instance, also are from the realm of (pure) democracy and are nothing but the acceptance of the consequence, which has proceeded necessarily from the principle'.

²Reprinted at least once in 1920; Nijmegen university library copy. Reviewed *TMNI*, 1920, 358-9 ('the Javanese prince known to many of us').

³SOERIKOESOEMO(1920B), 3. *Ibid.*, 28 called Karl Marx 'the founder of democracy'.

⁴SOERIKOESOEMO(1920B), 8: as democracy 'believes man lives only once'.

⁵SOERIKOESOEMO(1920A), 309: 'I not only fight the fight against democracy on the surface, but also in the deepest depths of the human spirit.' SOERIKOESOEMO(1920B), 5: 'Democracy, though, will only be accepted by the individualist [as Soerikoesoemo called himself as opposed to 'socialist', and as a partisan of rule by philosophical and royal individuals] when it proves useful, according to the laws of God. And not earlier!' Further on, he concluded there was no such proof.

equality in rights.¹

He asked: 'Do the members of the Theosophical Society elect their Mahatmas?'² Nevertheless, *Budi Utomo* elected Soerikoesoemo to its executive; and from 1921 until 1924 he sat in the *Volksraad* (as government nominee).³

Van Leeuwen, Annie Besant in 1905 (the 'blunders of the unguided democracy' would yield to 'the authority of wisdom') and 1907, and Leadbeater, all saw democracy as an 'intermediate stage', 'this unlovely stage of democratic mismanagement', in between autocracies.⁴ So did Soerikoesoemo. He used the metaphor of politics as a river, usually flowing within its bed, but which sometimes floods (*banjir* in Malay):

To the real sportsman, the banjir, tearing along and destroying everything in its violent current, has a certain attraction, which others may understand only dimly. The history of mankind is not experiencing such a big banjir for the first time. During Plato's life, democracy has banished once before, and then it was Plato himself, who could not restrain himself, and tossed himself into the stream to counter it.⁵

So democracy was not completely unnatural, as rivers do flood sometimes. Nevertheless, it was not a desirable phase.⁶ Soerikoesoemo denied the link between national self-determination and democracy, made by US president Wilson and others.⁷

He saw society as an unequal family, as did Labberton; and Annie Besant, and Annie McQueen of the TS lodge in New York.⁸ Differing from these two ladies, Soerikoesoemo saw in the family⁹ not only the father, the ruler, and the children, elder and younger brothers, the subjects, but also the wife. That wife was for him the

¹SOERIKOESOEOMO(1920B), 7.

²SOERIKOESOEOMO(1920A), 311.

³VAN MIERT(1995), 198-200; VAN DER WAL(1967), 504.

⁴AB, *Theosophy and Human Life*, 49; from 1905; quoted by Bolland in notes to his copy of BLAVATSKY(1908), page before frontispiece. Leadbeater, *The Great War*, TT Feb. 1916, 520-1, claiming to report a talk with Bismarck's spirit.

⁵SOERIKOESOEOMO(1920A), 308. Ibid., 314: 'See, this is the price which I have to pay for the service of my Master and my firm faith in the justice of God'. TSUCHIYA(1987), 38, translates as 'rowing a boat', instead of swimming.

⁶SOERIKOESOEOMO(1920A), 310.

⁷Soerikoesoemo in WED, 1918, 93-5.

⁸Mrs C. VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1913). BESANT(1895), 5. McQUEEN(1901), 72f.

⁹GOUDA(1993), 8, also mentioned Soerikoesoemo, without going into theosophy, or his views on government and capitalists. She wrote *ibid.*, 2: 'In general, Europeans' invocation of family imagery across the board, was intended to bolster the myth of colonial societies as a natural, organic whole, and parental symbolism constituted a root metaphor that framed, defined, and delineated the discursive practices of colonial mastery.' *Ibid.*, 9, she admitted the family metaphor was not limited to 'colonial settings. However, political elites in most European countries presumed that workers and peasants were speakers of the same national language...' This depends on time; it may be truer at the beginning of a war, when soldiers are needed, for instance.

'capitalist' class. Prince Soerikoesoemo thought she should only concern herself with (home) economics, and not get politically powerful.¹ In the ideal situation

The duties which the father imposes on his wife and on the children, they accept gladly; they do not complain. That which Father says is good, for Father is wise! That is the ideal of a family, therefore also of the State.

If the wife rules instead, plutocracy causes wrongs. Under democracy, the children rule and all goes wrong. 'In such a family, one does not know of duties, all ask about their rights first.'²

One who believes that the word of the uneducated peasant [Dutch-Indonesian *desaman*] is equivalent to the one of the wise man, acts unjustly and believes unwisely.³

Fellow theosophist and fellow editor of *Wederopbouw* Abdoel Rachman, unlike Soerikoesoemo from West Java and not from a ruling family, criticized him mildly in the December 1920 *Wederopbouw*; reprinted in *TMNI*. Rachman thought there should be a 'joining of autocracy and democracy'.⁴ Not only democracy might bring 'anarchy', but there might also be a 'b a d a u t o c r a t' who 'does not deserve support'.⁵

An unsigned *Wederopbouw* article also aimed at a synthesis transcending run-of-the-mill autocracy and democracy:

A king with a council of wise men should be the ideal. The proponents of aristocracy, constructing their system, stress the human being, who is of divine origin, who should develop divinity in order to be able to reach THAT. ... Who thinks that the Divine Germ-cell, present in all people, can be developed, that love for his neighbour vanquishes human selfishness, such a person, we think, would do better to support a u t o c r a c y. The one who, while excluding the people, speaks and writes according to the spirit of that people; and not the one who lets everyone have their say on affairs, about which they are ignorant, is a democrat. ... Only thus will democracy and autocracy be able to co-exist.⁶

Lecturing to the Jakarta TS lodge, *Assistent Resident* A.J. Hamerster was happy to note 'a beginning of reaction' against the demand of power to 'the great masses of the people'. That violated the esoteric principle of Hierarchy. As became apparent in the

¹SOERIKOESOEOMO(1920B), 23; he meant Dutch, Indonesian, and other capitalists. An unsigned article in WED, 1920, 179-81, 'De Javaansche bourgeois en de nieuwe geest' said: 'An Eastern aristos usually calls the pedestrian sensuality and tendency towards superficiality and levelling of the Eastern newly rich man and upstart by the meaningful term "soedro [Sanskrit: *sudra*]", which means "njamtri", "njamtrik" ... He, the Javanese bourgeois-soedro, even though he may have Western education, is a threatening element. ... the greatest danger which ever has threatened our culture'.

²SOERIKOESOEOMO(1920B), 23-4.

³SOERIKOESOEOMO(1920B), 28.

⁴ABDOEL RACHMAN(1921), 14. Compare Van der Leeuw's 'aristo-democracy', p. 322.

⁵*Ibid.*: 13; 16.

⁶'De Oostersche Strijdwijze', WED, 1920, 163-5.

1920's as in the times of Napoleon I, autocracy may not only be rule by someone from a traditional princely family. It may also be rule by a dictator, not from an old ruling family, who may end contradictions between political parties by force. A Dutch theosophist (ex-assistent resident Von Wolzogen Kühr?) wrote under pseudonym:

And the people are thus conditioned by democratic slogans that they rather see those men at the party control button, moving the party machinery; men, servants of their instincts instead of rulers of these. Those party leaders, who are capable of few things however, hide behind all kinds of beautiful slogans if problems are intricate. So, in the political field, one has endless bungling, and nowhere is there a brisk tackling of the serious problems, which are so manifold in our times.

With good reason in the old continent [Europe] today many long for a strong man who can put the crippled affairs in order. Also in the [Dutch East] Indies one can feel this longing, and elsewhere as well. How will Nature answer this?¹

1920 showed that common membership in the Theosophical Society was not always a basis for identical views on political history by Dutch and Javanese, even if the latter were not militants. A *TMNI* article by P. Fournier² had a passage on the karmic inevitability of colonial rule because of the bad situation when the Dutch came. An anonymous *Wederopbouw* editor objected to this. Fournier explained his view in *Wederopbouw*.³ The *Wederopbouw* editors objected to the explanation: not to the karmic inevitability view itself, but it hurt that a Dutchman had stated it.⁴

¹HAMERSTER(1923), 135-6. EEN INDISCHE STEM(1921), 507-8. Already KIEWIET DE JONGE(1917B), 239-40, had written, as concluding paragraph of his *De Politiek der Toekomst*, linked to his prediction of a world empire after the world war (see p. 246): 'And the same argument runs analogously for establishing the national level reforms which I proposed [chamber of economic functional groups etc.] The more this happens through voluntary amalgamation of political parties, the better, but if it turns out that they are incapable of bringing about such grand style politics, then—once the desirability of the reforms is recognized—only from an overwhelming position of power is salvation to be expected. But such a state of world power is only a boon for humanity, along with much apparent oppression, as it, putting order into national or international intercourse, creates organic forms for the development tendencies, as it only forces social and political life into such forms as are necessary for the harmonious course of social functions, to make a long story short, as a state or world ruler is not only an organ of a supremacy, born out of political or military victory, but proves to be an organ of Law as well.'

²'Occultic werkzaamheid', *TMNI*, Nov. 1919.

³FOURNIER(1920), 35: 'Had the Europeans not come here, then the downfall of the Indies people would have been inevitable.'

⁴WED, Feb. 1920, 39-40.

5. Bali. Lombok. Outer islands¹

In 1915, the TS had one member in Bali: the Javanese Mas Djono in Denpasar. Later, 'The upper class Javanese, who visited Bali recently, are full of enthusiasm.' Mangkoe Negoro VII went there.² Soerikoesoemo went for three years, 1918-1921. On 6 April 1919, he inaugurated a *Budi Utomo* chapter at a meeting in Denpasar. The reporter regretted that the chairman had addressed Prince Soerikoesoemo with just 'dane'; in Balinese, 'you' for kshattriya caste persons. In Bali however, there were brahmins, making kshattriyas only the second caste. Soerikoesoemo saw Bali as religiously purer than Java. He thought of it as a counterweight to strict Muslims; Dutch officials who wanted to favour Roman Catholic missionaries in Bali distrusted him though.³

In 1934, Van Leeuwen went on holiday to Bali. There was no lodge yet. He met members at large 'Sister De Jong, who keeps theosophy's torch burning in Denpasar' and 'Brother Ooterdoo in Ampenan [Lombok]'. Van Leeuwen also spoke to three Dutch officials, successively Residents in Bali.⁴ Raden Mas Koesoemodihardjo of the TS in Java wrote in his 'Verslag Propagandareis Bali', *TiNI*, July 1937, 112, of his visit to the recently founded Adjana Nirmala lodge, the only one in Bali. It had 16 members, and I Goesti ('Lord'; Balinese title) Ketoet Djelantik was its president.⁵

Since 1921, *BU* had been active in Lombok island as well. The TS set up a centre among Hindus there in the 1930's.⁶

Theosophy made little headway in other islands to the north to east of Java. In 1915, H. Zwiers of the Ternate police was a member at large; as was J.W. Beck, Dutch *gezaghebber* [official with more power than usually, in a region considered militarily unsafe] of East Ceram. So were his colleague W.J.D. van Andel, and J.L.A. Ledebor, manager of the local mining company, in Paleleh (Sulawesi). In Ujung Pandang in Sulawesi, Lieutenant A.J.L. de Groot was. The only member in 1916 in Manado was M.E. Wawo Roentoe.⁷

Since at least 1922, the TS had had a centre in Banjarmasin on Kalimantan, and since

¹These islands were called in Dutch *buitenprovincen*, outer provinces; Labberton had first used the word about 1916, and it soon passed into wide usage. *ENI*, vol. V, 128; *JS* 1918, 121. VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1910), 167, had still used the word *buitenbezittingen*, outer possessions.

²NUGRAHA(1989), 243. LEKKERKERKER(1918), 472; *Bromartani* 19-1-1918, quoted *IPO* 3/1919, 6.

³*Darmo Kondo* 23-4-1919, quoted *IPO* 16/1919, *JB*, 2-3. Denpasar *BU* branch on 21 March 1923 had 249 members; *NIE*, Nov.-Dec. 1923, 21, 'Korte Inlichtingen'. SOERIKOESOEMO(1923B), 33; KWANTES(1975), 60; KWANTES(1978), 115.

⁴*TiNI* Nov. 1934, 129-30.

⁵In the 1950's, the lodge was still active; Djelantik published his ideas on Hinduism and theosophy for it in mimeographed form; several mimeographs in KITLV library.

⁶NAGAZUMI(1972), 117. *TiNI* Nov. 1935, 198.

⁷NUGRAHA(1989), 242-62.

1926 in Gorontalo on Sulawesi. Respectively, H.K.M. Defares, and Po Tong Hien, a local official and FTS at least since 1915, were chairmen. In 1932, Gorontalo closed and Banjarmasin too did not last much longer. The Balikpapan (Kalimantan) centre, led in 1922 by C.H.A. de Steur, was already gone in 1928; though the politically 'moderate' weekly *Persatoean* of Samarinda close to it published translated articles from *The Herald of the Star* of the Order of the Star in the East.¹

The TS had a member early on, in 1895, in Sumatra: P. de Heer, who lived in the Asahan area in the island's north. He attempted propaganda; but 'work here is very difficult, and there has been very little result. ... we have today [1910] four members of the Society'.² Things went somewhat smoother further to the north, in economically important Medan; though on Sumatra, it was not a typically Sumatran city.³ Also, for some time, in politically interesting West Sumatra.

6. West Sumatra

There, Datoek Soetan Maharadja, 1860-1921, 'father of Malay journalism', founded the daily *Oetoesan Melajoe* (Malay Messenger). Before 1916, Maharadja was a democrat,

¹NUGRAHA(1989), 247; 265-7; 272. *Persatoean* 7-20 July 1924, quoted IPO 29/1924, 148. *TINI* 1932, 24; 61.

²R. Dittmann, 'Sumatra', *TT* Oct. 1910, 158.

³MANI(A), 89: most inhabitants were immigrants. In 1930, 5.6% 'European', 35.6% 'Chinese', 4.9% 'other Asian', mainly Indian, of Indonesians, more than 50% were from Java: Javanese, Sundanese, Jakartans. Most Javanese were plantation workers, for whom TS membership was improbable. They were *koelies* (coolies), a status roughly between capitalist 'free labour' and slavery. There was also, in Medan and other places in the Deli region, a small category of Javanese middle-level civil servants. In 1915, Mas Atmodiwirio, Medan local authority clerk, and veterinarian Notoesoediro were FTS; NUGRAHA(1989), 242; 247. This category started *Budi Utomo* branches. Medan had the largest BU branch outside Java; *ENI*, vol. VI, 944. NAGAZUMI(1972), 133-4: in 1918 a few other chapters in towns close to Medan had more members. These branches, in contrast to movements like *Sarekat Islam*, paid hardly any attention to the *koelies'* conditions; VAN LANGENBERG, 118-9. TAN MALAKA(1921A): a few coolies had 'even joined' BU, though its relationship to them 'was mostly limited to useless sermons against dice-playing and prostitution.' He did consider *Budi Utomo* in Deli more democratic than in Java. In 1916, Labberton asked the government to investigate the coolies' situation; 'De Delische Contract-Koelies', *HPO* 1916, 85. Soerikoesoemo in the *Volksraad* spoke against the bad legal position of coolie migrants; *NIE*, Jan. 1924, 23: 'Uit den Volksraad. De "poenale sanctie".' In 1916, J.J.W. Brouwer Popkens was Medan TS lodge president; *PT* 9 (1916), #3, 16. TICHELAAR(1977), 89: Leadbeater laid the first stone for the TS lodge building in Medan in Dec. 1926. On 31 Dec. 1931, membership was 44: '29 Europeans, 1 Sikh, 6 Javanese, 4 Chinese, and 4 Hindus'; so not one 'real' Sumatran; *TINI* 1932, 139. A letter, probably from Deli, in *TINI* May 1937, 88: 'we must be theosophist in our daily work, to our crannies [clerks], coolies, superiors and inferiors.'

who fought the coastal aristocracy, and attacked the Dutch government in his paper.¹ After that, he became a conservative. He now allied himself with his former opponents as leader of the political party *Sarekat Adat Alam Minangkabau*.² This was founded in 1916. Both membership cards and ribbons in young female supporters' hair were orange, the colour of the Dutch royal family.³ Maharadja's political shift came at the same time as his connection with the TS. Datoek Soetan Maharadja

claimed to be a follower of theosophy. From 1917 until 1920 every week, if not every day, articles and series of articles on theosophy were published in *Oetoesan Melajoe*. Most of them were written by Minangkabau schoolteachers, who were graduates of the *Kweekschool*⁴ in Bukittingi. At the beginning of the century this school was the centre of the Theosophical Society in Minangkabau. Most of the popular Dutch teachers in this school were theosophists.

Since 1916, the TS had its own building in the main street of Bukittinggi.⁵ From 1916 on, *Oetoesan Melajoe* strongly supported Van Hinloopen Labberton's *Indië Weerbaar* campaign, which the local *Sarekat Islam* and *Insulinde* leaders opposed.⁶ In an *IW* speech, Maharadja called upon Minangkabau:

Let them show now, that they are not women who belong in the kitchen, but men, who since time immemorial have kept up training in bearing arms

Maharadja proposed setting up a rifle-club, 'like the Boers in Transvaal', right away. Though he was 'an old man', he would surely join, he told his cheering supporters.⁷

Oetoesan Melajoe also advocated bringing back forced planting of coffee by peasants.⁸ *OM* wrote disapprovingly of *Sarekat Islam*: did it want to 'lure the people

¹ABDULLAH(1973), 217f, BOUMAN(1949), 11. Bouman does not take into account Maharadja's 1916 shift. See p. 386 for Maharadja's views on the women's movement.

²Traditional Law Association of the Minangkabau World; ABDULLAH(1971), 17.

³BOUMAN(1949), 35.

⁴POEZE, 10: the only post-primary educational institution in Sumatra. 40% of students were from the Minangkabau region, the rest from elsewhere in Sumatra and other parts of Indonesia.

⁵ABDULLAH(1973), 233. For instance, the whole front page of *OM* 28-8-1919, quoted IPO 36/1919, *MBB*, 14 was a Maharadja article on reincarnation. Like many other *OM* articles, Maharadja's women's paper *Soenting Melajoe* reprinted it. A.L., 'Centrum Agam te Fort De Kock', *TINI* 1923, 518.

⁶ABDULLAH(1971), 29; referring to *Insulinde* as *Nationaal Indische Partij*.

⁷*OM*, # 163, Sept. 1916; quoted *KOT*, 1916, 'Persoverzicht', 1662-3. When the *IW* association started, Maharadja expected more from it than from the earlier committee, as he did not trust Abdoel Moeis; *OM*, 5-2-1917, quoted IPO 7/1917, *MBB*, 4.

⁸*OM*, # 191, quoted 'Persoverzicht', *KOT*, 1916, 95, noted that peasants had cut down coffee shrubs for firewood, and 'strongly advocates restoring forced planting [of government coffee. Dutch: dwangcultuur]'.

away from the *adat* associations'?'¹

Abdullah writes of Maharadja's SAAM:

The generally loyal [to Dutch rule] stance taken by the *adat* parties created the popular belief that, despite their frequent criticism of government policies, they were no more than government parties whose ideology represented Minangkabau-centered cultural nationalism.²

Oetoesan Melajoe praised Soerikoesoemo's Javanese cultural nationalism:

The Minangkabau people are very happy that, like them, the Javanese are not keen at all to change race (nation) (that is, to make the new nation and to be called *Indiërs* [Indies people; Indonesians]). It is despicable to change one's race.³

It also planned a Sumatran Cultural Congress, like Soerikoesoemo's Javanese one.⁴

Like those of Soerikoesoemo, SAAM ideas fell foul of Muslims, Marxists and all-Indonesia's secular nationalists in Sumatra's politics. In 1918, *Sarekat Islam* demanded that Maharadja should resign his Padang town-council seat, 'because he has always resisted all progressive measures.'⁵ *Jong Sumatra* wrote that Datoek Soetan Maharadja did not really differ from K. Wijbrands, rightist Dutch editor of *Het Nieuws van den Dag voor Nederlandsch Indië*: both were conservative. With one difference: the latter was honestly so, and the former was not. Some *Jong Sumatra* readers protested against this article by Mohamad Kanoen.⁶ Amir of *Jong Sumatra*, a theosophist like Maharadja, went

¹OM, # 225, as quoted 'Persoverzicht', KOT, 1916, 206. Ibid., # 203, in Bengkulu residency, a few months of *Sarekat Islam* had disturbed a forty years' tradition of peace and quiet. Ibid.: when SI worked at founding chapters in West Sumatra, 'the [OM] editors in issue number 225 urged the authorities to be vigilant.' Ibid., 374, OM, # 241 opposed founding a SI branch. 'Don't we have ourselves enough people who may lead a league; why should we resort to other races [the SI also had support elsewhere]?'

²ABDULLAH(1971), 28.

³OM 25-11-1918, quoted IPO 49/1918, MBB, 1.

⁴Mohamad Kanoen, 'De conservatieven ter Sumatra's Westkust in actie', JS 1918, 176-80, 178.

⁵OM, # 223, as quoted in 'Persoverzicht', KOT, 1916, 206; similarly to *Wederopbouw* later: '1. One Indies nation does not exist, there are many Indies races, from Madagascar to New Guinea. 2. If people talk of 'the Indies people', they might as well as talk of 'the Asians', and so, of 'the earth's inhabitants' as well.' Maharadja wrote in OM, # 144, 1918, quoted KOT, 1918. 'Persoverzicht', 91, against the existence of this 'newly created race, 'Indies people', to which Papuans, Alfurs [from the Moluccas] etc., will also belong.' OM, 8-4-1919, quoted KOT, 1919, 'Persoverzicht': 'They [Minangkabau people] do not want to be put on the same level as Dyaks and Papuans; also, they do not want people to consider them to be of one race with Kubus and Mentawai people [from Sumatra and an island close to it]. 'Persoverzicht', KOT, 1916, 676: OM, # 38 [new series] was unhappy about Malay as spoken throughout Indonesia: 'that, though, is pasar [street market] Malay, of which every true Malay is ashamed.'

⁶BOUMAN(1949), 47. See also *Neratja*, 26-3-1918.

⁷'Quos Ego....', JS 6/7/8 and 11, 1918, 115-8.

to see the SAAM leader in 1919. They managed an armistice.¹

Oetoesan Melajoe advocated establishing a prince of Minangkabau. *Kaem Moeda* daily jokingly asked: 'Maybe D. S. Maharadja, editor-in-chief of *Oetoesan-Melajoe*, will become Emperor of Minangkabau?'² Maharadja advocated that the queen of The Netherlands should get the title of empress of the Indies, as in British India.³

Abdoel Karim, a leading Maharadja supporter, worked in education, after training at the *Hoogere Kweekschool voor Inlandsche Onderwijzers* in Purworejo in Java.⁴ On 8 December 1917, OM announced him, and the *demang* [Sumatran official] of Matur, Datoek Rangko Maharadja, as speakers at a theosophical meeting in Bukittinggi that evening. It also expected the Dutch Resident and his wife. Rangko, secretary of the civil servants' league *Persekoetoean Ankoe-Ankoe Binnenlandsch Bestuur* may have been one of a category of officials, of whom OM wrote that they read 'the theosophical books and writings.'⁵

Abdoel Karim wrote: 'that the Natives will still have to learn VERY, VERY MUCH before they are fit for autonomy.'⁶ *Oetoesan Melajoe* of 25 November 1918 considered the possibility that the Dutch might lose the Indies. Who should rule then instead? Not *Insulinde*! Their local councillors, recently elected in Minangkabau, 'only came from common Native second class schools.'⁷

If we are no longer under the Dutch flag, then the best thing for us would be to come under the English flag. ... In their country, there are already many mosques, and last but not least, many practice *tasa'oef* = theosophy. That is the way we, *kaem koeno*, think.⁸

Kaum kuno (new spelling), traditionalist Muslims, and *kaum muda*, modernist

¹YAN MIERT(1995), 71.

²OM 18-1-1919, quoted IPO 4/1919, MBB, 2. KM 3-2-1919, quoted IPO 5/1919, MBB, 11.

³OM 11-9-1919, quoted IPO 38/1919, MBB, 1; and OM 18-9-19, quoted IPO 39/1919, MBB, 4.

⁴*Soeara-Kemadjoean* 15-12-1917, quoted IPO 52/1917, MBB, 6. Probably identical to 'Abdoel Karim Galar Soetan Sjarif, Inspector of Primary Schools, Bukittinggi', an FTS in 1916; NUGRAHA(1989), 251. OM 18-12-1917, quoted IPO 52/1917, MBB, 3: Abdoel Karim founded the Bukittinggi branch of the teachers' union PGHB. LOC 25-9-1914, 2e blad, 'De Kweekschool te Poerworedjo': the Purworejo school, founded in 1914, was for 75 students at maximum, selected by authorities.

⁵OM 8-12-1917, quoted IPO 50/1917, MBB, 1. OM 20-12-1917, quoted IPO 52/1917, MBB, 3-4. JS 1918, 76 on 2 January 1918. In 1915, 'Darwis galar Datoeh Madjo Lolo, supreme District official Loeboeh Sekaping' was a member; NUGRAHA(1989), 243.

⁶OM 30-10-1918, quoted IPO 45/1918, MBB, 1.

⁷In the Dutch East Indies, first class 'Native schools' were mainly for the nobility's children; financially less well off second class schools were for non-noble children.

⁸As quoted KOT, 1919, 494; IPO 49/1918, MBB, 1. Ibid.: 'Insulinde ... are opponents of *tasa'oef*.'

Muslims, then had disputes in West Sumatra.¹ The Theosophical Society saw *tassawuf* (Sufi form of Islam) as consistent with their views. Datoek Soetan Maharadja angrily rejected the view of *kaum muda* author Zainoeddin Labai 'who says "that tasawuof and theosophy are two different things"'; that was only 'envy of advanced Europeans'.²

Muslims, among other things, disliked Maharadja's theory that the Q'uran as people know it, was not the Divine original. That had supposedly been burnt by 7th century Caliph Osman, who substituted a fallible, human one of his own. *Thahja-Sumatra*³ reacted: 'D. S. M. has said all this to make the supporters of Tarekat [traditional mystic secret organization] and Theosophy believe that their roots are in the ['original'] Q'uran, burnt by Caliph Osman.'

Abdoel Karim now was not as enthusiastically pro-militia as OM earlier on:

We cannot fight a foreign enemy. There is no enemy at home. Also, we can fight an enemy at home better with a strong, well-organized police force.

He continued on the relationships of theosophy, Minangkabau, and The Netherlands to one another:

Superiors or leaders must be able to philosophize. ... Blessed is the empire, the country, the kampung, the village, whose inhabitants have the pure science! One learns that pure science, *tasawuof*=theosophy from competent teachers. So, the author really strongly hopes that the Indies Government feels bound to help promote pure religions and pure sciences (theosophy=*tasawuof*) and other fine sciences. So, it is necessary to found as soon as possible schools, in which able teachers teach pedagogy and psychology. ... S a m should see to it that Minangkabau adat, still famous now, does not get lost. There should be adat schools!

Should all go well, and people have the knowledge, necessary in these times, then Autonomy will be necessary, and will also be here. Autonomy, and not independence! Then, the militia may also come. Though it is not necessary.⁴

Abdoel Karim predicted a great leader for all religions for 1921.⁵ In 1929, he was a contributor on 'Evolution' to the monthly of Datoek Rangko Maharadja's civil servants' league; its name was now *Vereeniging van Inlandsche Bestuurs Ambtenaren*.⁶ In 1930, he became the only Indonesian writing in *The Theosophist*. He distinguished in the Q'uran between an esoteric part and exoteric non-essentials. The core was the teaching of 'one Divine life', really compatible with the Hindu Upanishads and reincarnation doctrine. The rest was 'only intended to apply to the Arabic people'.⁷

¹ ABDULLAH (1971), passim; NOER, 216f.

² 'Tasawuof boekan theosofie???' OM 20-9-1919, quoted IPO 39/1919, MBB, 4-5.

³ 2-1-1919, quoted IPO 2/1919, MBB, 1. OM, # 241 as quoted in 'Persoverzicht', KOT, 1916, 374: instead of the *hadj* to Mecca, pilgrims should visit a local saint's grave, so 'the money, which now benefits ... Arab traders, will stay in our own country'.

⁴ OM 2/3-12-1918, quoted IPO 50/1918, MBB, 1.

⁵ OM, 17-12-1918, quoted KOT, 1919, 494.

⁶ *Pemimpin Kita* Jan. 1929, quoted IPO 1929, # 3, 62.

⁷ ABDUL KARIM (1930).

Editor A. Latif of the by then SAAM-linked daily *Tjaja Soematra* wrote on the coming of the World Teacher. Shortly afterwards, on 16 and 17 May 1924, the paper translated an article from *The Herald of the Star* on the same subject. The 26-30 May issues had articles on theosophy and karma doctrine; and independence politics:

The rebellion in Ireland to get freedom did not lead to anything. [So] people here should not rush things; Indonesia is not mature enough for freedom yet.¹

7. Decline and non-co-operation, 1918-1923

Van Hinloopen Labberton worked hard in the *Volksraad*; however, not all appreciated him. Though *Het Indische Volk* now was friendlier than in *Indië Weerbaar* days, it wrote:

'Labberton speaks fluently, but never fascinates. Without any exertion, he speechifies for some hours at an amazingly fast speed, but because of the monotony of his voice it is impossible to listen to him all the way through'.²

Van Limburg Stirum, two years after first meeting Labberton, considered him in a letter to Minister Pleyte 'glib but really lacking content.' Still more negative was the governor-general's aide, Bijl de Vroe, in his diary.

Van Hinloopen Labberton, who, tiresome gasbag that he is, constantly wants the floor to himself, moves proposal after proposal. Then, he starts to walk to and fro, like a hen about to lay an egg ... Because of his very marked theosophical tendencies, people also call him 'the astral rabbit'.³

Active as Van Hinloopen Labberton was within the *Volksraad*, the future of Indonesia was decided outside it. In spite of the high expectations of some in 1918,⁴ the council turned out to be a 'mock parliament' to its critics.⁵

In 1918, as he had felt already in 1915,⁶ like Mrs Besant in India, Labberton had lost

¹ Quoted IPO 24/1924, 488-9. See also HB 12-7-1924.

² Uit den Volksraad. Van Hinloopen Labberton; IV, 13-9-1919.

³ VAN MIERT (1995), 141. SCHOUTEN, 144.

⁴ A. van Leeuwen in TMNI, 1918, 278 called the establishment of the Volksraad 'the historical moment which shall prove to be of inestimably high value to the Indies'. A year later, he was less optimistic, due to the 'struggle between differing interests being the order of the day' and the 'sea of details'; TMNI, 1919, 437.

⁵ Dutch: 'imitatie-volksvertegenwoordiging'; Sm [pseudonym of Soemarsono], WED, Feb. 1920, 44-48: 'Belichting. Militie en Volksraad'. Ibid., 44. HPO Sept.-Oct. 1916, 153, 'De Volksraad': 'het pseudo-parlementje' [the little fake parliament]. Indonesia's Marxists were already sceptical about the Volksraad in 1917, before it was established, because of the limited and graduated franchise.

⁶ When *Sarekat Islam* criticized his local election law views then, Labberton said 'that he felt like he had woken up someone who had slept for a long time; and that the person woken up now pushes and beats the one who woke him up.' *Varia. Vijfde decentralisatiecongres*, IG 1915 (37), 1130.

some former popularity. The government official B.J.O. Schrieke wrote on Indonesians' attitudes: 'Mr L.[abberton] strikes people as wanting to ram his leadership down their throats and they do not want that any more.'¹ Labberton basically had not moved, as political positions both to his right² and left were taken up.

Not even his theosophical colleagues always heeded him. On 2 July 1919, Radjiman of *Budi Utomo* sided with the government and the *Volksraad* majority against a motion which Van Hinloopen Labberton supported, to investigate a peasants' strike movement in the Central Java principalities.³ TS members had always been a minority in *Budi Utomo*. Yet, the critical articles in the *BU* paper *Darmo Kondo* of 1919 would have been improbable ten years earlier. They especially criticized theosophists in education.

At Labberton's insistence, theosophists had founded a teachers' training school, Goenoeng Sari, in Jakarta in 1913. The government put it on equal financial status with its own teacher training schools in 1918. Then, its first primary school teachers graduated. In 1920, it had 72 students, including seven girls. Its textbook for the subject Political Science was Annie Besant's *Lectures on political science*. Many of the other textbooks were also by her: *Text Book of Hindu Religion and Ethics*; *Sanatana Dharma* [on Hinduism]; *The Story of the Great War*.⁴

The Dutch East Indies Theosophical Schools Association founded the first 'Ardjoena [Arjuna] school' in 1921. For some time, P. Post was its headmaster; at the second school, also in Jakarta, Djokosarwano was in the early twenties. In 1927, the Gambir school had a 'heroes' hall' [Dutch: *heldenzaal*]. There already hung portraits 'of H. P. B., Col. Olcott, C. W. L., A. B. and Krishna[murti]'. Others, including Noto Suroto, were to come soon.

In 1932, five Arjuna schools existed in Jakarta, two in Bandung, one each in Bogor, Purwokerto, Jatilawang, and Ajibarang. In Ajibarang, portraits of TS leaders hung in the classrooms. The pupils celebrated White Lotus Day and Annie Besant's birthday. The only school in the 'Dutch-Chinese' category was in Surabaya. Since the 1920's, there was also a school, mainly for Dutch children.

Of teachers at all the schools together, only 18 out of 87 were TS members. Of a

¹Report by B.J.O. Schrieke, 27 July 1918; KWANTES(1975), 51.

²In *De Standaard*, 'Batavier' thought in 1919 that 'Mr Van Hinloopen Labberton had wasted all his scholarliness and knowledge' on the 'revolutionary' idea of association [promoted by 'Batavier's party leader Idenburg']. Quoted *JG*, 1920 (42), 67, *MRBT*. The *Anti-Revolutionaire Partij* had a broad definition of 'revolution.' That Labberton at a banquet at a *bupati's* had sat on the ground like the other guests, caused an uproar in a paper of Dutch diehards; *Neratja* 6-8-1919, quoted *IPO* 32/1919, *MJB*, 8.

³SHIRAIISHI(1990A), 170.

⁴VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1916C), 247-8. TILKEMA(1932), 39. *Goenoeng Sari* annual report of 1920, quoted *THA* 1922, 320-1. It had six year courses; *TiNI* 1932, 41. *Ibid.*, 240: on 1 July 1932 it had 132 students, including 38 girls.

total of about 2700 pupils, FTS were also a minority among parents.¹ A teacher wrote:

We have school-fees that are even higher than the fees at Government schools. There are good arguments to defend that measure though.²

So, financially speaking alone, one might expect parents of children at Arjuna schools to tend even more towards an elite than at other schools in the mainly illiterate Indonesia of that time.

We have already read (on p. 224) of *Darmo Kondo*, criticizing Goenoeng Sari's management when the students went on strike in January 1919. Three months later, the paper published an article on the school by S.T. Widigdo. He wrote of the two guilders fifty a month school fee, and f. 17.50 entrance fee. He asked himself 'What is this money used for?' Widigdo considered that the students were housed uncomfortably and unhealthily. 'Do [management] really have no care at all about the students' well-being? or don't they know of these abuses?'³

Kiewiet de Jonge thought that 'Now, Mr Van Hinloopen Labberton's personal tie' with Indonesian politicians, was 'gone'.⁴ He also thought that the Indies TS as a whole was past its zenith:

¹*ENI*, vol. VI, 764 'Ardjoenascholen', *TMNI* 1927, 44. TILKEMA(1932), 46-7 VAN LEEUWEN(1934), 147: 3 new theosophical schools in Indonesia made 40; a higher figure than Tilkema's. *TiNI* Jan. 1939, 27: 33 schools, 5000 pupils and 200 teachers. P. Fournier, 'Van drie Ardjoena-scholen', *TiNI* 1932, 181-2.

²TILKEMA(1932), 9. *Ibid.*, 36, on Katherine Tingley's school at Pt. Loma: 'The main objection to that system is, that it has become purely an upper classes' school. On average, a thousand [pre-inflation] dollars are asked for for each pupil. Such a system can never become of major social significance.' *Taman Siswa's* program said: 'Education should be for all, not just the upper strata of society. ... Education must begin with the lower classes, where its spread was most needed.' TSUCHIYA(1987), 57.

³*Darmo Kondo* 23-4-1919, quoted *IPO* 17/1919, *JB*, 2: 'The younger students are housed together in an open hall, there some forty sleep together. The older students have, not a room, but a tiny cubby-hole each. When it rains, the cubby-hole gets wet as the roof is poor. Soon, the student is standing up to his ankles in the water. ... Mosquitoes then mass around in their millions, as the school is close to a swamp.' In 1918, the school had to close down for some time, because of an influenza epidemic; *Neratja* 202, 28-10-1918; quoted *IPO* 44/1918, *MJB*, 4. The school moved to Lembang in the mountains, less prone to malaria, in 1927; TILKEMA(1932), 44. *Ibid.*, 36: Tagore, visiting Java, spoke to students in Lembang.

⁴Letter to his parents of 28-11-1919, Kiewiet de Jonge private archive, IISG, # 54. Though *Indische Stemmen* editor then, he wrote of himself: 'Our relationship with the Theosophical Association [rather: Society, so as not to confuse; from 1920-1923 the Theosophical Association was Alice Bailey's separate organization; later Arcane School, see p. 7] has become quite loose, although we are still on speaking terms with everyone and often have discussions with some of the leaders of the Association.' *Ibid.*: he was sceptical on the Liberal Catholic Church. Translation of the letter as in HERING(1992), 1. Mrs Kiewiet de Jonge's relationship to the TS stayed better for a longer time; B. Hering, personal communication.

As a movement theosophy has made, in the past, quite an impact upon the Indigenes. But that is shrinking visibly. Also for Oriental consciousness, so prone to fancy, it becomes more and more a time for realism: for power formation through political and trade-union organization. That need could not be met by the ideology of theosophy. ... the gap gets wider all the time.¹

If one compares Van Hinloopen Labberton to Annie Besant, he had some, not all, of her organizational and rhetorical gifts. Unlike her, he did not then shift to the right; he no longer was to Annie Besant's right, as *Soeara Merdeka* had charged in 1917; see p. 210. Like her, he had become caught between two opposing tendencies.²

These were: radicalization of the national movement on one side; and conservative retrenchment on the government side. The accession of a new governor-general, Fock, in 1921 marked that.³ Of his predecessor, Count Van Limburg Stirum, the TS magazine wrote of 'honour, which all Great ones deserve ... Great men cannot leave us unaffected'.⁴ Early in 1921, Van Leeuwen expected that the Indies TS might become the 'RUDDER' of 'the great future Ship of State'.

Is not that especially our task? To build our society up, so that it becomes a strong and good tool, a trusty rudder, worthy of the Great Helmsman? Once we are that far, undoubtedly that Great Helmsman too will come.⁵

Van Leeuwen still sounded more optimistic than Kiewiet de Jonge: 'More and more FTS move along the uncertain paths of politics, study clubs are formed, the theosophical book-shelf begins to fill up in its political section and at meetings, it becomes more and more a subject of speech and thought'.⁶ Theosophist J.N. van der Ley in 1921 temporarily became mayor of Bandung city.⁷ A. Meijroos, 1916 Bogor TS lodge

¹Letter to his parents of 28-11-1919, Kiewiet de Jonge private archive, IISG, #54. Translation partly as by HERING(1992), 1; partly as by myself. See also KIEWIET DE JONGE(1919), 100.

²SITARAMAYYA(1969), 150: 'Mrs Besant was soon feeling out of tune both with Government and with the people. The former deprecated her forwardness, the latter her backwardness'. *Jong-Java* at the end of 1920 wished there was an Annie Besant in Java; VAN LEEUWEN(1921A), 7.

³His period in office brought more repression and cuts in expenses on education and middle-level civil servants; both props for a movement like *Budi Utomo*. NAGAZUMI(1972), 149-50.

⁴VAN LEEUWEN(1921C), 171. *WED.* 1920, 156 on Van Limburg Stirum: 'this genuine nobleman'. Quite some Dutch conservatives thought his measures against Indonesian oppositionists were not strong enough. J.E. Stokvis in 'De wisseling te Buitenzorg', *VA*, Apr. 1921, 35: 'Lord Van Limburg Stirum is certainly no revolutionary, not even a democrat. He is a Dutch nationalist of a well-trying school, an aristocrat through and through, despotic by nature and really opposed to popular flattery. The main popular leaders during his rule landed in jail, or are on the way to it.'

⁵VAN LEEUWEN(1921A), 9.

⁶VAN LEEUWEN(1921F), 533.

⁷TICHELAAR(1977), 73, addendum typescript in KITLV, Leiden. Jelte Nicolaas van der Ley and Van Leeuwen in 1919 became Indonesia's first two Liberal Catholic priests; *ibid.* Later, Van der Ley became vicar-general of the Dutch East Indies LCC. In December 1919, he was one of the

secretary and from 1916-20 mayor of Surabaya, then already was mayor of Jakarta.¹ In that year's election though, both Labberton and Vreede lost their *Volksraad* seats.² Fellow of the Theosophical Society, Soetarto Soerikoesoemo, had been an unsuccessful *BU* candidate in 1917. Now, the government appointed him a member.³

He remarked on his colleagues' loss: 'They seem to fear the theosophical society, and yet, the government ought to be grateful to the men of theosophy most of all, if today there are still Javanese who trust the white ruler.'⁴ To Soerikoesoemo, an 'invisible bond' of a divine nature existed between 'the Native movement' and the TS.⁵

In 1921, the *Volksraad* discussed government proposals which based differences in civil servants' wages on their education. Soetarto Soerikoesoemo thought that differentiation in salaries should be based on 'the only real point-the difference in race ... surely a criterion which exists and cannot be denied'.⁶ Javanese civil servants compared their salaries to the higher ones of Dutch colleagues. However:

I think this very hunting after financial gain among my own countrymen is highly unsympathetic and definitely irreconcilable with their deepest essence. They have knowingly obscured this essence, because they want to go with the times, the times that have taken money as the yardstick. ... When I was still inexperienced, I always participated in protests, which had as their aim to get equal salaries for equal education levels. Since I got to know the situation on Bali island with its low standard of living, I thought to myself that the Western knowledge which we have learned at school would be truly a blessing to us, if only it could be tied to a low standard of living, as we have seen on Bali. ... We cannot and may not go along with the raising of salaries. In the conviction that I will meet with grave disappointments, maybe resistance as well, among my own countrymen, nevertheless I must advise to level down all salaries of the

rightist, mainly Dutch, majority in Bandung council, as opposed to the left caucus of Indonesian and Indo-European members, supported by *Nationaal Indische Partij* and *ISDP*. *IV*, 3-1-1920, 'Bandoengs gemeenteraad'. Bandung's TS lodge president, F. Moet, was also a city councillor; *RANI*, 1917, 720.

¹*RANI*, 1921, 766. *PT IX* (1916), #3, 16.

²SOERIKOESOEMO(1921B), 72. TH. VREED(1925) defended the *Volksraad*'s record.

³*LOC*, 29-8-1917, 'Boedi Oetomo'. *RANI*, 1922, 49.

⁴SOERIKOESOEMO(1921B), 72. BOUMAN(1949), 9: with the rise of anti-capitalism in Indonesians' political movements after the First World War 'there was a decrease in being influenced by Dutch -for instance theosophists- who sympathetically supported the growing self-confidence, and thus had doubtlessly won a "goodwill" for the Dutch cause, which in a later period other groups, which had less sympathy for Indonesian nationalism, would be able to use to their advantage. Also, the influence of the Javanese nobility, the exponent of Javanese culture and Javanese self-view, diminished.'

⁵SOERIKOESOEMO(1921B), 73. *Ibid.*: 'Should we think of chance here, of contingency, that especially the best leaders came from the ranks of that [Theosophical] society? Or should we rather see in this an ordered interplay of mysterious, divine forces, which rule all phenomena of life, and should at the same time proof be found in these, that this society has been allotted a certain calling and a certain task?'

⁶SOERIKOESOEMO(1922A), 9.

secondary school-educated, and to raise the workers, with whom the government is directly involved, somewhat.¹

Now, with disappointment on the *Volksraad*, ideas from before its establishment of the Indian National Congress' example resurfaced.² Van Hinloopen Labberton joined the Committee for Autonomy of the Indies, which wanted a better position for Indonesia within a decentralized Dutch empire. It proposed a federation, with one-third representation for The Netherlands, one-third for the Indies, and one-sixth each for Surinam and Curaçao. It had support from the 'Nieuw Indië' committee in The Netherlands, including theosophist Polderman and ex-minister of colonies Pleyte.³ Mrs Besant also supported it: 'Holland should give the Indies much more freedom, if it does not want to loose them'. The Committee for Autonomy soon collapsed under pressure by Governor-General Fock. Labberton joined a new 'National Committee' with *Sarekat Islam* support. Though disagreeing with his old Marxist opponents on the link with The Netherlands, on one point, naming the country 'Indonesia', he agreed with them.⁴

Some Dutch theosophists in Indonesia worried that he had moved too closely towards Indonesian militants, and had forgotten occult Truths about the difference between Brotherhood with 'brown brothers', and equality with them. The secretary of Sukabumi lodge, P.K.G. de Bont, wrote in *TMNI*:

Let us never forget that "brotherly love" pays least of all homage to "equality". Raising our brothers to the level of our own development is not possible for by far their majority, at least not yet. And because of that, there never can be any "equality". ... For we should all rise towards the Masters; well, as a consequence of the law "as above, so below", let our brown brothers also work their way up towards the level of Their development, and I can applaud that we give them the means to do so, but there should be discrimination here, else we become trapped into extremes. We really should take into account the type of development of the native people of the

¹SOERIOKOESEMO(1922A), 10-1

²POLDERMAN(1922), 5. Polderman counted on support of organizations like *BU* and *SI*; he also hoped that the organizations of princes and of *bupati* 'would follow the good example of their Aryan Colleagues in British India'; but had his doubts on organizations of Chinese and Indo-Europeans.

³KOCH(1956), 124; VAN MIERT(1995), 381; 'Pemerintahan jang berdasar persoedara'an atau perdamaian', *PT* 1920-1 (14), 81-98. *Nieuw Indië*, founded 5 October 1921 in The Hague, brought out a monthly of the same name; at first as an appendix to *Vrije Arbeid*, see p. 161. Later, most editors, like Joeke and De Cock Buning, were of the Liberal Democrat party; Van Kol was from the *SDAP*'s right wing. Few well known FTS wrote in it; though Th. Vreede was a founding member of the Committee and H.J. Kiewiet de Jonge for some time was its secretary. *HPO*, Aug. 1922, 80; *KOT*, 1922, 232. In *NIE*, Feb. 1922, 61, Th. Vreede wrote: 'The extremist slogan "free from The Netherlands" can only be made powerless by success for the action of the Committee for Autonomy.' KIEWIET DE JONGE(1920A), 126-7, had rejected an Imperial Council, as it would be impractical to expect that The Netherlands would consent not to have a majority in it.

⁴VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1921), 2. *TMNI* 1923, 499. VAN MIERT(1995), 188-9. See p. 149.

[Indies] Archipelago's different parts. As the situation is now, I think that there should be primarily the "economic development" of the people, only then one may proceed towards the political development. Prominent leaders of the theosophical movement in the Dutch East Indies really should heed this. Let us consider that the so-called ethical movement (ethical tendency) propagated by our society, is mostly misunderstood, and is seen by our brown brothers as a sign of weakness, as a sign of fear.¹

When Labberton addressed the congress of Dutch high level officials on 24 February 1922 in Jakarta, his speech was interrupted repeatedly.² *Boedi-Oetomo* magazine thought Labberton was by now 'alienated from the European world'.³

After writing bitter goodbye articles in, also *Budi Utomo*'s, *Darmo Kondo*, and a friendly farewell from *Boedi-Oetomo*, Labberton left Indonesia in 1922. He went to Australia, to live with Leadbeater and get further religious instruction from him.⁴ Then, he went to Japan,⁵ and returned to The Netherlands in 1926.

His ex-*Volksraad* colleague Th. Vreede spoke in Leiden in The Netherlands on 20 February 1922. 'The lecturer [Vreede] feels sympathy for the trade unions; they should be led towards the right track by the government'. The manager of the East Java Steam-Tram Company may have been thinking here of his brother Adriaan, by now director of the Indies government labour office.

Th. Vreede then discussed the future political status of that country.

If now we look for an answer to the question: the Indies autonomous or independent, then one should premise that The Netherlands cannot just withdraw. Our task should be finished, by hook or by crook. Purely conservative politics are [.... in original] untenable, though. Our

¹DE BONT(1921), 317; see also misprint correction note, 438; NUGRAHA, 244; 246. In the next issue, *TMNI* 1921, 349, W.P.D. Corporaal reacted; accusing De Bont, without naming him, of thinking in terms of inferiority vs. superiority; though not for "equality", Corporaal was for 'equivalence'.

²*IG* 1922 (43), 545, 'Het B.B. congres'.

³*Boedi-Oetomo*, 17-21 April 1922; quoted *IPO* 1922, 1, 126.

⁴*Ibid*; TICHELMAN(1994), 187. 'Een Sydney'sch hoofdkwartier', *TMNI* 1922, 488-9. Quite some Dutch went from the Indies to Leadbeater for instruction. In a letter to A. Vreede, Leadbeater reported listening with his Dutch group of house-mates to a Dutch radio broadcast of a speech by Queen Wilhelmina at 3.30 A.M. on 2 June 1927. 'A male voice (probably the Prince Consort or maybe Mr Philips [of the electronics business]) also spoke. A. G. V[reede].. 'De Java-Groep', *TMNI* 1927, 310-2.

⁵*SH* 27-2/3-3-1924, quoted *IPO* 1, 1924, 420-1; Moesso was educated at the TS Goenoeng Sari teachers training school. McVEY(1965), 169; Moesso was a 'protege' of Labberton: 'he did not exhibit revolutionary inclinations immediately when he was released [in 1923, from prison for *SI* activity], perhaps because Van Hinloopen Labberton planned to take him as his assistant on a [languages] teaching assignment to Japan.' Japan wanted Labberton, but not Moesso. McVey claims he then joined the *PKI*. After he did, *Nerajja*, 5/6-3-1924 wrote: 'He was an intelligent man, but the corruptors corrupted [pengroesak] him'; quoted *IPO* 1, 1924, 463. After the Second World War, he became *PKI* leader; anti-communist soldiers killed him in 1948.

morally abandoned policies of exploitation still exist in practice. To want to change that at once is as much of wishful thinking as wishing to bring about a revolution in the Dutch national character.

After an H.J. Kiewiet de Jonge quote in support, the account of Vreede's speech continued:

For The Netherlands, as the lecturer thinks, the continuation of the ties with Indonesia is to be wished for, in three respects: first, economic (obvious enough). Second, political. At the Washington conference, [H.A.] Van Karnebeek [Dutch Foreign Affairs minister; see p. 100] did not represent 7,000,000, but 7,000,000 + 47 million souls. ... Third, cultural. Noting Gandhi's non-co-operation in India, Vreede pointed at the need of:

fast reform, before it is too late. ... Greater dangers than threaten England threaten us [Dutch], because in Indonesia (unlike British India), more aggressive Islamism has outstripped passive Hinduism. The lecturer sees a lasting tie between The Netherlands and Indonesia, which together form an international state, as future ideal.¹

In his *Wederopbouw*, Soerikoesoemo had attacked a Japanese plan to buy the Indies from The Netherlands, like the United States had recently bought the Virgin Islands from Denmark, as 'large scale slave trade!'² He wrote

a co-operation with Holland for us is still a mandatory necessity. ... We still need the Dutch now. We will also recognize so frankly. With this recognition, we may ask frankly that they take into account a little our wishes. ... We must insist that Holland does not admit foreign capital. For the development of the Indies' giant resources, a giant loan should be contracted, but above all else: out with foreign capital.

What if Dutch authorities would not heed this? Who should rule instead of them then? Soerikoesoemo:

only then, is there a case for us to look for a different solution. ... Preferably, we should link our destiny with our Hindu neighbour, that is, prefer English rule above any other one, Japanese rule especially, even if we should have to bleed to death under British justice.³

So, a parallel to *Oetoesan Melajoe's* view of two years earlier. Soetatmo argued, though, from India's Hinduism; unlike his colleagues in more Islamized West Sumatra (see p. 333), who argued from the presence of Muslims and the section of the Theosophical Society in Britain.

Soerikoesoemo expressed his confidence in Governor-General Count Van Limburg Stirum, not in the 'plèbs' of some Dutch journalists, and concluded:

Let us be on our guards against over-estimating ourselves. Confidence in the force of the

¹GOEDHART, 51-2.

²SOERIKOESOEMO(1920D), 10. For an earlier Japanese plan: p. 204.

³SOERIKOESOEMO(1920D), 13.

masses means confidence in a blind force.¹

One year later, Soetatmo compared two 'masters' from 'Hindustan': Rabindranath Tagore, 'the spiritual guru', and Gandhi, 'the material master', and their influence on what Soerikoesoemo consistently called 'the Hindu people'.² He thought that Gandhi's *satyagraha* would have been unnecessary and not so successful, if the British government had listened more to the more moderate Tagore.³

Soerikoesoemo admired Tagore's ideas on education. He wrote to Mangkoe Negoro VII of his small-scale education experiments on Bali in 1920.⁴ In 1922, Soerikoesoemo was a founder of the influential, Tagore-inspired, *Taman Siswa* private schools' movement; it included Sukarno.⁵

Soerikoesoemo noted that Gandhi's non-co-operation policy influenced radicalizing Indonesians, for instance in the *Nationaal Indische Partij*; also, though he did not say so, in *Budi Utomo's* left wing.⁶ He doubted if that was sensible, but still 'Has Gandhi's time come yet?' was in itself a legitimate question for Java.⁷

In his 1921 speech to the *Budi Utomo* annual general meeting, Soerikoesoemo answered that question; negatively: 'And this [non-co-operation] is just what I do not want, I think Gandhi's time has not yet come and I also hope that that time will never come. Not because I am afraid of that, if circumstances would make it necessary for us; but still, all of us would rather reach our aim in a more peaceful way, and our *Boedi*

¹SOERIKOESOEMO(1920D), 15.

²SOERIKOESOEMO(1921B), 69f. Neither Gandhi nor Tagore would have thus omitted Muslims and other non-Hindus among the people of India. Tagore was from a *Brahmo Samaj* background, so not a Hindu in the narrow sense of the word.

³SOERIKOESOEMO(1921B), 69.

⁴1920 letter in KITLV archive; thanks to Hans van Miert.

⁵Not founded in 1921, as in SARDESAI, 157. Kiewiet de Jonge's account (VAN DER WAL(1963), 540), to Governor-General De Jonge of a talk he had with Ki Hadjar Dewantara, leader of *Taman Siswa*. Dewantara and Soerikoesoemo were related, as members of the Paku Alam ruling dynasty; VAN NIEL(1960), 53. SHIRAIISHI(1981), 96, and TSUCHIYA(1987), 58 name Soerikoesoemo as first president, Soeryopetro as vice president, and then still Soewardi Soeraningrat as first secretary, of *Taman Siswa*. Soeryopetro taught Javanese music at the *Taman Siswa* schools; WED, 1922, 184. Sukarno: see TSUCHIYA(1987), 59. Soerikoesoemo had paid much attention to Tagore's education work. In a *Volksraad* speech, he said that the Dutch East Indies government should send a delegation, including Dr. Radjiman, to India, to study Tagore's *Shanti Niketana* school; 'Rede over het Onderwijs door R.M. Soetatmo', WED, 1922, 92-3. In WED, 1922, BOEMI POETRA alluded to *Taman Siswa*. On the following pages, the articles 'Jong-Java vóór en binnen Taman Siswa', 173-7; KARNO(1922); 'Een nieuw Geluid', 182-90; 'Taman Siswa', 190-7, by 'Koento', have the movement as its subject.

⁶PETRUS BLUMBERGER(1987), 32.

⁷SOERIKOESOEMO(1921B), 72. His tone had become somewhat more anti-colonial since he wrote in WED, 1918, 9: 'We should consider Dutch rule an useful institution, a school given us by the Lords of Karma, the Dewas of *takdir* [fate].'

Oetomo ['the beautiful striving' with an undertone of spiritual harmony] would then be jeopardized.¹ Still, Soerikoesoemo's attitude to Gandhi was not as negative on principles as was Annie Besant's.² In the *Volksraad*, he rejected non-co-operation, but warned the government on the future:

Mr Chairman, our Indies may get into the very situation as the country of the Hindus. The right policy and the most extreme cautiousness therefore cannot be recommended often enough to the Government, before it is too late. At the moment, I can readily assume that amongst us there hardly is anyone who does not want co-operation with the alien Government of these colonies. This wish though, Mr Chairman, is joined to other wishes, which should rather be called difficult demands of the nationalists liberating themselves. So, do not cheer prematurely if we show our loyalty and seemingly acquiesce in the present situation. Guardianship goes with a moral obligation, which is included in the Educator's task.³

Soerikoesoemo did not get along well with Harloff, the Dutch Resident of Surakarta.⁴ A point on which *Wederopbouw* criticized the government was banning meetings in the 'very loyal' states that Javanese monarchs ruled:

The painful aspect lies mainly in the fact that the suspension of the right to hold meetings is only applied in the Princely States-Solo and Djokja [Yogyakarta], while Semarang [Semarang] goes scot-free! Semarang, the country of revolutionaries and communists, can meet without punishment as much as it likes. Whatever can be the cause of this? ... After Tjipto [Mangoenkoesoemo] left, there was no longer any reason to maintain that ban in Solo and yet, it is maintained until today.⁵

¹SOERIKOESOEMO(1921C), 244.

²SOERIKOESOEMO(1922A), 15-6 again doubted if Gandhi's non-co-operation was 'sensible', but did not doubt the wisdom and purity of Gandhi's character.

³SOERIKOESOEMO(1922A), 16. An editor's note to L.J. Polderman's article 'Congress-filosofie', in *WED*, 1922, 67, said: 'If this force [of non-co-operation] is felt by all, for just one simultaneous moment, then the Indies will lie in ruins-possibly also to our detriment! But if the reaction wishes to sharpen the situation in this country, then let us be prepared to drink the poisoned cup together'.

⁴SOERIKOESOEMO(1922B), 83. In July 1920, Harloff had already caused an incident at the wedding of Prince Mangko Negoro VII to the Ratu Timur; contrary to unwritten law, he had demanded that they see him first; Soerikoesoemo, 'Ongeschreven wetten', *WED*, 1920, 230f.

⁵Article 'Boedi-Oetomo', *WED*, 1922, 36. The ban was linked to the 1922 government pawnshop employees' strike, which, however, was already over by then. On the pawnshop strike, see 'Boedi-Oetomo', *WED*, 1922, 32-7. In the *Volksraad*, Soerikoesoemo spoke in the same vein: 'Further on, everyone must have noted that this restriction [of meeting rights] is limited mainly to the Princely States. Semarang goes scot-free, Semarang the city of the revolutionaries and communists. What might be the cause of this difference in appreciation? Mr Chairman, if I have understood the Governor-General's speech properly, then His Excellency wishes exactly the opposite of this.' SOERIKOESOEMO(1922B), 75. According to *NIE*, Apr. 1923, 'De Inlandsche Beweging in de laatste paar jaren', what had happened was that *Budi Utomo's* privilege of meeting without asking permission in advance, had been withdrawn. Organizations like the *NIP* or the *PKI* did not have that right in the principalities.

Wederopbouw's last issue, of August 1923, 14 months before Soerikoesoemo's death, still listed as correspondent in The Netherlands Raden Mas Noto Soeroto. It listed as editors besides Soerikoesoemo: Raden Mas Ario Sooryopetro,¹ Abdoel Rachman,² and Raden Mas Soetopo. On its last pages, Sooryopetro took issue with *Hindia Poetra* magazine. *Hindia Poetra* advocated non-co-operation policy, based on Woodrow Wilson's doctrine of self-determination.³ Sooryopetro reacted:

We deny the peoples' right to self-determination from the religious viewpoint that it is not for us, humans, to decide; we humans, and especially Javanese, have individual freedom as far as keeping ourselves pure and receptive for inspirations from Higher Levels is concerned, and in keeping on putting into practice these inspirations swiftly and strongly. No group of humans is excluded from putting into practice these inspirations. In its time, every continent will partake of these inspirations; thus, non-co-operation is not in keeping with divine-human devotion.

Non-co-operation is only based on a temporary fit of anger.⁴

8.Hatta and *Perhimpunan Indonesia*

Hindia Poetra was the magazine of, then, the *Indonesische Vereeniging*, of Indonesians, mainly students, in The Netherlands. That society grew more distant from the TS as Sooryopetro's and Noto Soeroto's original influence on *HP* waned.⁵ Noto Soeroto collected money to give Governor-General Count van Limburg Stirum a farewell present.⁶ When Van Limburg Stirum returned to The Netherlands on 13 September 1921, Indonesian students, led by Noto Soeroto, were there to welcome him. This led to a sharp comment in the Marxist *Soeara Ra'jat*: 'These students apparently have not heard about Gandhi yet'; referring to Gandhi-organized student strikes and other non-co-operation then. 'Under Lord van Limburg Stirum's rule, many people have been *exiled*, or have

¹See p. 309. He was also from the Paku Alam dynasty, and had been *WED* Netherlands correspondent along with Noto Soeroto; KONING(1968), 8. He greatly admired Soerikoesoemo; in a speech to a students' congress in Wageningen on 29 August 1918, he spoke of 'great ones amongst the Easterners, like both Tagore and Soetomo Soerikoesoemo'; *HPO*, 1918, 41. In *HPO*, 1920, 38, he described himself as 'Buddhist' by religion. He had married Dutch Miss L. van Oyen, who also wrote in *Wederopbouw*; *WED*, 1920, 80f. He died November 1927; TSUCHIYA(1987), 80.

²Probably identical with 'Abdulrachman' of the Jakarta *BU*. He protested 17-1-1929 against *Sarekat Islam's* non-co-operation; POEZE(1983), 20.

³*Hindia Poetra* of March 1923 had based the wish for independence on democracy; PETRUS BLUMBERGER(1987), 186.

⁴Soorjo Poetro [different spelling from the cover], 'Wederopbouw en de Keuze van Bouwmateriaal', *WED*, Aug. 1923, 53-6; 54.

⁵KONING(1968), 6.

⁶VA, July 1921, 152.

gone to jail.' In Australia 'this gentleman' had also voiced 'strange' ideas on Indonesians. And yet ... students thanked him. Noto Soeroto was 'no Tagore.'¹

On 14 December 1924, the *Indonesische Vereeniging* expelled ex-president and honorary president Noto Soeroto, with 45 votes to five.² Speaking to the congress of the *Algemeen Nederlandsch Verbond* in March 1925, Noto Soeroto denied Dutch papers' reports that he represented a moderate majority: 'I really know, that the overwhelming majority of my educated compatriots do not share my views.' Those 'showed that they had not understood the nature, and thus, the call of their racial personality [Dutch: *raspersoonlijkheid*].' In the less well off in Indonesia, he feared

a very ugly quality-the envy of the have-nots. The imported ideas of class struggle and destruction of present society are especially unfit to get my sympathy, as those ideas, permeating the uncritically thinking broad masses of the Indonesian nations, will lead to class hatred and class envy and to the scourge of an appetite for destruction causing amok [wanton murder].³

Before Noto Soeroto's expulsion, theosophists tried to prevent losing ground in the *Indonesische Vereeniging*. They had to do that while the social background, and the opinions, of Indonesian students changed, unfavourably to them. Cheaper transport from Indonesia, and more scholarships, made 'it was no longer exclusively students from upper aristocratic circles who went to The Netherlands to study, and the views of the newcomers differed markedly from those of the prewar generation.'⁴

Mohammad Hatta, then in the *Vereeniging* executive, later vice president of the Indonesian Republic, eventually became a major opponent of the TS in the IV. He came from a West Sumatra trading family. Supporting the *kaum muda*, he fought the *Oetoesan Melajoe* theosophists. At a meeting in Padang on 8 September 1918, he called their leader Datoek Soetan Maharadja 'pengchianai (traitor)'.⁵ When Hatta studied in Jakarta, 1919-1921, he met theosophists Fournier and Van Leeuwen.⁶

They once tried to get me to join the Theosophical Society ... I resolutely refused on the grounds that I was a committed Muslim. If Fournier said that being a Muslim was no barrier to becoming a Theosophist. Theosophy was not a religion -he said- but a teaching ... But I still refused.

¹SR, 1-10-1921, 6, 'Boekan Gandhi [No Gandhi].'

²KONING(1968), 6; IM, 1924, 134-5. POEZE(1986), 179f; DJAJADININGRAT-NIEUWENHUIS, 53; 56: Noto Soeroto was expelled because of a pro-Van Heutsz article, comparing the general to Mahabharata hero Bima. Semaoen, then in The Netherlands, also played a role in the expulsion.

³IG 1925, I, MRBT, 446-7; 449. H.T.D., 'Noto Soeroto over "Nederland en Indonesië"', KOT May 1925, 335 challenged Noto Soeroto's 'ras-persoonlijkheid' concept, as he was a minority.

⁴DJAJADININGRAT-NIEUWENHUIS, 52. Also: POEZE(1986), 157.

⁵JS 1918, 198-9; thanks to Hans van Miert.

⁶HATTA(1978), 146; HATTA(1981), 45; 86. In Indonesian, Hatta called Fournier 'kepala', 'the' or 'a' 'leader'; translated in English as 'Chairman' of the TS; actually, he was on its executive.

They were more successful with others at that time:

As far as I know, the people they had succeeded in ensnaring were Basuki from *Jong Java* and [Mohammad] Amir from the *Jong Sumatranen Bond*. Perhaps also Muhammad Yamin.¹

Theosophists like Polderman, Mrs Van Hinloopen Labberton, and Van Leeuwen sometimes lectured to the Jakarta branch of the *Jong Sumatranen Bond*, a league of students from Sumatra like Hatta.²

From 1917-9, Ahmad Subardjo Djoyoadisuryo was a TS member and went to live at their Jakarta headquarters at Blavatsky Park. He left soon, though, as he could not stomach the mandatory group meditation.³ In the 1920's, Subardjo became a member of the *Indonesische Vereeniging*; in 1945, minister in the first government of the Indonesian Republic. The Sumatran Amir Sjarifuddin became prime minister, before anticommunist troops shot him in 1948. In the 1920's in Jakarta, he started a three year TS course in philosophy, but stopped before the first year was over. Datoek Maharadjah Emas Abu Hanifah though, from the same island and later a leader of the Muslim party *Masjumi*, moved in these circles longer, successfully completing the course.⁴

In 1923, Fournier and Van Leeuwen came to The Netherlands, where Hatta was studying by then in Rotterdam. They had a new proposal for him. This time, not joining the TS itself, but a new organization, the *Orde der Dienaren van Indië* (Order of Servants of the Indies). According to a member of it, Tabrani, later, 'In all, membership of the *Orde* was about 50 ladies and gentlemen.'⁵ Hatta:

The organization's objectives were to achieve unity and mutual assistance and a sense of brotherhood, and its members were to write the initials *DI* after their name. I was invited to one of their meetings. Apart from Amir and myself there were two other members of the *Jong Sumatranen Bond*: Bahder Johan and Nazif. There were also some members of *Jong Java*. So that eventually the ideals of the *Orde der Dienaren van Indië* were to be thrust upon us. Certain rituals were performed at the commencement and the closing of the meeting.

Though he had misgivings about the *ODI*, Hatta then was not free to refuse. They knew he had financial problems continuing his studies; he desperately wanted to

¹HATTA(1981), 86. 'Sumatranen Bond' is a misprint. Yamin, from West Sumatra like Hatta, became minister in various Indonesian governments, 1951-55. REEVE(1985), 7: he married a theosophist. On psychiatrist Amir, POEZE(1986), 221.

²Jaarverslag van het Hoofdbestuur', JS 1919, 25-30; 26.

³AHMAD SUBARDJO DJOYOADISURYO, 82-6. Ibid., 572 he names himself as on *Wederopbouw*'s board of editors in 1917; but *WED* was not out yet then, and I also found no confirmation in later issues.

⁴ABU HANIFAH, 64.

⁵TABRANI(1974), 316; including Mrs Tabrani. See *WED*, Aug. 1923, 46. It was a parallel to V.S. Srinivasi Shastri's Servants of India. Shastri, Annie Besant's Liberal Party ally, had succeeded Gokhale as leader; ROE, 277, 279f.

continue. Van Leeuwen got him a scholarship. And Hatta joined.¹

The end of *Wederopbouw* was not immediately the end of Javanese nationalism. Ex-editor Satiman Wirjosandjojo then was a Surabaya local councillor. On 17 December 1923 in the *Indische Courant*, he announced the foundation of the Javanese Intellectuals' League. The League opposed all-Indies nationalism,² Islam,³ and what Satiman saw as *Budi Utomo*'s recent tendency to admit also 'low class' Javanese, leading to a 'democratic mess'. He thought the new League should organize 'the few who act, instead of the many who talk.' *BU* should reorganize itself, 'with the intellectuals as its soul, the non-intellectuals as its body'; an image which theosophists also used for their ES and outer TS.⁴

Satiman got much criticism. Fournier, writing in *Neratja* of 21 January 1924,⁵ did not support him: people in other islands would object. *Indonesia Merdeka* [Free Indonesia] magazine, successor to *Hindia Poetra*, published a unanimous vote of censure by the *Indonesische Vereeniging* against the League. The motion accused it of 'Javanese Chauvinism', which would help colonialist 'divide and rule' politics.⁶ A few months later, the magazine criticized the League's limitation 'not just to Javanese only, but worse still: to Javanese intellectuals only'.⁷

¹HATTA(1981), 86-7. In 1920, the Indies TS founded a scholarship fund; *ENI*, vol. VI, 764.

²Satiman thought Indies nationalists trespassed on Java's history: 'Do they [all-Indonesia nationalists] wish to diminish the glory of Mojopait [medieval empire with capital in Java and power in many Malay archipelago islands] or Mataram, by calling these empires Indies empires?' Quoted *NIE*, Feb. 1924, 17. 'Een Javaansche Intellectuelen Bond'.

³PETRUS BLUMBERGER(1987), 198. Satiman saw the *hadj* as a 'waste of money'.

⁴PETRUS BLUMBERGER(1987), 34-5. *NIE*, Feb. 1924, 17. 'Een Javaansche Intellectuelen Bond'. Satiman: *BU* 'gradually began to neglect its aristocrat nature'; it 'gives Kromo [name, common among poor peasants] and Wongso [wangsá; regional Javanese form for 'relatives'; here for non-nobles: *SH* 7-1-1924, quoted *IPO* I, 1924, 115] free admission.' He regretted that now in *BU* 'clerk and *Bupati* could sit freely next to one another'; PETRUS BLUMBERGER(1987), 34. *NIE*, Apr. 1924, 37-8: a few months later, there were talks between the executives of the Javanese Intellectuals League and *Budi Utomo*, said to have brought a good relationship between both. PETRUS BLUMBERGER(1987), 34-5 denied the talks' success. *Boedi-Oetomo* 25-30 Jan. 1924, quoted *IPO* I, 1924, 223-4: at talks on 30 Dec. 1923, Dwidjosewojo thought that 'the masses would feel humiliated' by Satiman.

⁵Quoted *IPO* I, 1924, 190.

⁶*IM*, 1924, 18; PETRUS BLUMBERGER(1987), 198. *Kemadjoean Hindia* from Surabaya, 31-12-1923/5-1-1924, quoted *IPO* 2/1924, 46, smelled 'fascism, Javanese imperialism and Javanese autocracy'. PETRUS BLUMBERGER(1987), 35: 'nearly all of the Native press' attacked Satiman; so did the *PKI*, which also criticized the *BU* executive for making concessions to Satiman. Social democrat *Het Indische Volk*, 2-1-1924, saw the League as 'still more a withdrawal within the golden fog of a supreme Javanism, to remove oneself still further from one's own suffering masses.' Quoted *NIE*, Feb. 1924, 17.

⁷*IM*, 1924, 30.

Radjiman and other executive members in 1924-5 tried to make ex-*Wederopbouw*'s ideas official *Budi Utomo* policy. At the April 1925 congress, the majority, including all-Indonesia minded members from coastal areas, rejected these mainly Surakarta-based views though.¹

In 1924, Fournier wrote a letter to Hatta. As Hatta remembered, it:

said that the policy of the *Indonesische Vereeniging* was not in accordance with the views of the *DI* [Servants of the Indies]. If I did not leave the *Indonesische Vereeniging*, I would have to resign from the *DI*. He also mentioned that the choice would not influence the scholarship I had been granted through the kindness of Ir Van Leeuwen. So I resigned from the *DI* group and I wrote Ir Fournier that I would repay the scholarship when I returned to Indonesia. As it turned out, however, owing to the vicissitudes of my life as a nationalist, I was not able to fulfil this promise until 1952.²

As with Krishnamurti, the TS had guessed correctly that Hatta would play an important role. With him, too, it would differ from what they wanted.

In the fall of 1924, Fournier addressed a Jong-Java meeting in Yogyakarta on 'Java's gift to the world'. *Indonesia Merdeka* was 'far from agreement' with him; Fournier 'temporized' in the Java or all-Indonesia question. They thought Fournier's 'unctuous preaching' 'a grave danger to our national struggle'.³ In May 1925, *IM* warned Indonesia's young people against both theosophists and Christians.⁴

The conflict between TS and Indonesian nationalists sharpened in late 1925-early 1926. *Indonesia Merdeka* wrote, so far, they had only 'warned'; warned that 'indulging in profound philosophizing on life is absolutely disastrous' to Indonesian nationalism. Now, though, there was a need to 'protest'. This happened after the Dutch East Indies Theosophical Society had forbidden its Indonesian Fellows to be members of non-co-operation organizations, 'if they still wanted to lay claim to the so-called "promotion towards world citizenship"'.⁵ The *Indonesische Vereeniging*, the *Perhimpunan Indonesia*, reacted. It declared that people who were members of both *PI* and the TS-

¹VAN MIERT(1994), 21-2. VAN MIERT(1995), 253-64.

²HATTA(1981), 91. Tabrani, *Bintang Timoer* 28/31-1-1929, quoted *IPO* 1929, # 6, 182 confirmed the declaration of incompatibility (the source wrongly has *Persatoean Indonesia* for *PI*). Authorities interned Hatta 1934-42. HATTA(1978), 157: he re-paid in 1950.

³*IM*, 1924, 108-11. 'Uit het Verre Vaderland'; *ibid.*, 108; Dutch: 'èn geit èn kool te sparen'.

⁴*Ibid.*, 109.

⁵37f.: 'Aan de Indonesische jeugdbeweging'; 39: 'From all sides, one has tried to ram various philosophies of life down your throats, counting on your youthful and therefore susceptible feelings. Theosophists, Calvinists, Catholics and others ... we think that you allow them to intimidate you too much.'

⁶Een gevaar in zachtzinnig gewaad voor de Indonesische jeugdbeweging', *IM*, 1926, 19-23; 19.

⁷Een gevaar in zachtzinnig gewaad voor de Indonesische jeugdbeweging', *IM*, 1926, 19-23; 20.

linked *Orde der Dienaren van Indië* 'which supports a policy that is against our nationalist principles' had to choose between these. Two out of the three individuals involved, chose for the *PI*. Only Amir, married to a cousin of Fournier, preferred the *Orde*.¹

Indonesia Merdeka asked why the TS had banned dual membership.

So, a ban against working along to realize our national freedom ideal. What, now, may be the reasons for this action? Is it because they consider that for complete dedication to Theosophical doctrine absolute negation of all worldly events is necessary? Or maybe it is their intention to make our young people into passionless monks, for the salvation of sinful humanity?

IM believed that the real reasons for 'the aforementioned political measures in their society which is otherwise of a very theological hue'² were 'very different' from anti-politics. They were different politics:

As Blandas [Dutch] it is of course in their interest that the colonies remain so, and they certainly are for doing their bit in defending the inhuman injustice in our country.³

IM mentioned that theosophists said

it is not good to be a Theosophist and to fight against one's fellow humans at the same time. But in this case that golden theory does not fit at all, for, unfortunately, here these fellow humans are antipodes of one another, that is, *dominators* and *dominated*. And does there now exist a more monstrous abuse against the realization of that brotherhood ideal?⁴

Also, theosophist and Dutch East Indies government adviser P. Post⁵ at a teachers' congress in November 1925 in Gambir, had criticized *Indonesia Merdeka*. He said it contained 'bloodthirsty essays'. These were the consequence of the editors' too 'Western intellectualist' education. That education had made them 'unbalanced', had disrupted their 'world view and spiritual life'. So they became 'susceptible to the development of undesirable theories like non-co-operation, communism, and hatred of Europeans, and a

¹Bestuursmededeling', *IM*, 1926, 32-3. VAN MIERT(1995), 69.

²Een gevaar in zachtzinnig gewaad voor de Indonesische jeugdbeweging', *IM*, 1926, 19-23; 20.

³Een gevaar in zachtzinnig gewaad voor de Indonesische jeugdbeweging', *IM*, 1926, 19-23; 20-1. Ibid., 21: Dutch FTS 'put aside all beautiful theories of humanity and brotherhood in the Dutch colonial interest'.

⁴Een gevaar in zachtzinnig gewaad voor de Indonesische jeugdbeweging', *IM*, 1926, 19-23; 21.

⁵Post was Headmaster of the theosophists' first Arjuna school in Jakarta, and editor of the Indies theosophical education league's paper *Associatie* [Association]. The paper folded after Post went back to The Netherlands in mid 1928. TILKEMA(1932), 44; 53. Post also spoke at the Dec. 1924 Java Institute Congress; *Djawa*, 1925, 179-80 and 183-4. *TiNI* Jan. 1935, 9: Post spoke at the 1935 Indies TS congress.

dangerous over-estimation of their own strength.'¹

Indonesia Merdeka reacted:

This rising star in the world of education now thinks he has found a remedy against all these terrible things, in the form of reforming present education into an "Eastern" system. That is, on a religious and philosophical (meaning, Theosophical!) basis, and this religious education should be "general spiritual education, which forms character and creates tolerance". Here, once again, the political reality emerges from behind Theosophical appearance!² Creating tolerance, indeed!³

IM thought Post himself, reacting to their magazine, had not 'given an example of tolerance'. It concluded on the TS: 'Brothers, be aware of this danger in a gentle guise!'⁴

As in India, the questions of co-operation or non-co-operation with colonial authorities, home rule or full independence, marked the disagreement between militants and theosophists. Van Hinloopen Labberton's successor as General Secretary, J. Kruisheer, was less politically prominent. The links to Indies artistic life were still rather strong. However, Kruisheer did not like all art. He wrote that, to theosophists, music is not only sound, but also vibrations which only people with occult perceptivity might feel. These might be good vibes or bad vibes. Basing himself on A. Tranmer of the South African TS journal, he warned against jazz music and dancing to it:

Really, all of Western Society is being "niggerized" [in strange Dutch: "verniggerd"], if I may borrow this word [from Tranmer]. Of course, someone in Africa knows the Kaffirs' coarsely sensual way of dancing. Compared to this, our Oriental styles of dancing are subtle and relatively innocent

At the TS congress in 1926, Kruisheer spoke of Besant's opposition to Gandhi as a model for the Indies: 'Theosophy and Non-co-operation are two diametrically opposed concepts.'⁵

Indonesia Merdeka in 1926 again criticized Satiman, on his opposition to non-co-

¹Een gevaar in zachtzinnig gewaad voor de Indonesische jeugdbeweging', *IM*, 1926, 19-23; 22. *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad*, 11-11-1925. Noto Soeroto on *PI* policy: a result of 'long neglect of moral education'; *IG* 1925, I, *MRBTD*, 450; in similar terms, Raden Mas Soeripto, 'De geest onder de Indonesische Studenten in Nederland', *IG* 1929 (51), 275-80.

²Dutch: 'Hier komt dan weer het politieke aapje uit de Theosofische mouw!' Post had advised the Dutch East Indies government to base education for Javanese on the *pesantren* model. That model was some centuries old; it involved Islamic boarding schools where one learnt, for instance, to recite from the Q'uran. The government did not carry out Post's advice. TILKEMA(1932), 52.

³Een gevaar in zachtzinnig gewaad voor de Indonesische jeugdbeweging', *IM*, 1926, 19-23; 22.

⁴Een gevaar in zachtzinnig gewaad voor de Indonesische jeugdbeweging', *IM*, 1926, 19-23; 23.

⁵A K[ruijsheer], 'De Uidijk', *TMNI* 1923, 226-7; compare Rudolf Steiner on jazz: *DE ROODE/VAN DER TUIN/ZONDERGELD*; and Leadbeater, 'How the dark powers work', *TT* Jan. 1932, 387f. HEYMANS(1926), 207.

operation. He saw it as self-conceit, as 'a manifestation of a discouraged people', as passivity.¹ IM reacted: 'Not the *Indian*, but the *Irish* Freedom movement has been our example. ... The non-violence principle is not part of our movement.'²

Satiman had said: 'Obtaining positions, both within society and within government offices, leads us to *zelfstandigheid*.' *Indonesia Merdeka* saw that as 'job-hunting'. Also, the Dutch word *zelfstandigheid* might mean both independence, and autonomy within the Dutch empire; they saw that as unclear. Satiman had a major role at meetings in 1926, replacing left-wingers from Semarang within the *Budi Utomo* executive with co-operationists, and overturning an earlier non-co-operation decision.³

9. Since Tabrani and Sukarno

In 1920, two students were in the Surabaya branch of *Jong-Java*: Sukarno and Tabrani. Mohamed Tabrani was born in 1904 in Pamekasan, Madura. A member of the Young Theosophists, he became editor of the daily *Hindia Baroe* [New Indies].

On 26 May 1924, *Hindia Baroe* had succeeded *Neratja* as that had succeeded *Pemitran*. From now on, the TS' *Indonesische Drukkerij* printed it. Hadji Agoes Sahm wrote one more thing had changed: government subsidies had stopped. Few opponents believed that.⁴ *Indonesia Merdeka* criticized it for its proposal not to boycott the *kabupaten* councils.⁵ After October 1925, Tabrani was chairman of the journalists' league *Asia*, which excluded communists from membership.⁶

Tabrani became chairman of the 'first Indonesian youth Congress' in Gambir, 30 April-2 May 1926.⁷ Organizations represented at that congress included the Young Theosophists, *Jong-Java*, Christians, and Muslims.⁸ Ex-*Perhimpunan* member Amir wrote sympathetically on it in the Dutch Liberal Democrat magazine. The *Perhimpunan* magazine was not as positive. That congress was the work of

undesirable elements, that is, the Dutch theosophists, who try to misguide our youth by way of

¹IM 1926, 36-9, 'De taal der jongelingschap': PETRUS BLUMBERGER(1987), 199.

²Sukarno agreed with the last sentence; speech in 1933, quoted VAN BERGEN, 21.

³PETRUS BLUMBERGER(1987), 278.

⁴HB 26-5-1924, quoted IPO 23/1924, 409. AMIR, 76; the paper had by 1927 already ceased publication. M. Tabrani, 'Het Persvraagstuk in Indonesië', OP, 1927-28, 549f. 45 TAHUN SUMPAN PEMUDA, 223. TABRANI(1974), 307. VAN MIERT(1995), 363.

⁵IM, 1926, 105-8, 'Algemene Negatie'. *Kabupaten* were ruled by a *bupati*; then, many *kabupaten* had roughly half a million inhabitants.

⁶M. Tabrani, 'Het Persvraagstuk in Indonesië', OP, 1927-28, 549f.; 566.

⁷PETRUS BLUMBERGER(1987), 390. STEVENS(1994), 152: the congress had a 'completely different tendency' from Soeripto's NIVJO. However, only later youth congresses, not led by Tabrani, were radical; and Tabrani and Soeripto together founded the PRI. See p. 357.

⁸AMIR, 77. PETRUS BLUMBERGER(1987), 390f.

the so-called Order of the Servants of the Indies.¹
The manifesto, convening the congress, said:

To be a nationalist in Indonesia means to be a Servant of God and to live in the Spirit. We do not need to be a politically strong people above all; we do not need to be above everything a physically healthy (sic! Ed. [of IM]) people; but we should be above everything a People which believes.

Indonesia Merdeka thought this only 'beautiful sounding phrases':

For example, our people are afflicted by an epidemic [frequent in Indonesia then]; yet, they are supremely happy, for they [all in this paragraph emphasis by IM] believe. The majority of our people are illiterate; yet, they are supremely happy, for they believe.... What intelligent human would, or rather could, believe this? Look, there the little political devil of the Dutch theosophists comes into play again! In our Malay language I.M. we have already warned against their satellite Tabrani. One should beware!²

Muslims at the congress were suspicious that the youth league to be founded there 'might get a theosophical character'.³ In the 1970's, the Indonesian historian Drs Mardanas Safwan wrote also of TS influence as a problem. Tabrani, looking back in 1974, saw Safwan's view as 'tidak benar' [not true]. He underlined his own view, maybe more of later times than of 1926 as it had been, with four synonyms: the ODI was 'autonomous, separate, *zelfstandig*, free' from the TS.⁴

Though Tabrani still was a *Jong-Java* member,⁵ his perspective was all-Indonesian, and co-operationist nationalist. On the one hand, the PKI uprisings of Java in 1926 and West Sumatra in 1927, were 'all kinds of restless and malevolent elements, who were incited to violent mass action by extremist leaders'.⁶ On the other hand, Governor-General Fock's 'iron fist'⁷ policy was partly to blame for the rise of communism. Between these, 'the position of moderate nationalists became more hazardous, day by day. In the eyes of their compatriots, supporters of extremism and non-co-operation, they were "cowards" and "traitors", while the Government considered them "revolutionaries"'.⁸

¹'Vaderlandse kroniek', IM, 1926, 42f.; 44.

²'Vaderlandse kroniek', IM, 1926, 42f.; 45.

³AMIR, 78. His conclusion, *ibid.*, 82: 'So the youth movement should continue to be a stranger to all extremism. But one may ask: for how much longer?'

⁴TABRANI(1974), 316.

⁵AMIR, 76.

⁶TABRANI(1927-8), 505.

⁷TABRANI(1927-8), 508.

⁸TABRANI(1927-8), 509. His conclusion, *ibid.*, 'Shared control [Dutch: *Medezeggenschap*] brings with it responsibility; and that will cause the Indonesian to bring about his ideal "Great Indonesia" by parliamentary means'.

The non-co-operating *Partai Nasional Indonesia* had personal history connections with the Theosophical Society: as in the case of a later education minister of Indonesia, Sarmidi.² Also Raden Soekemi Sosrodihardjo, father of Sukarno, the future first president, was FTS.³ Theosophy played a part in his son's education.⁴ Sukarno during his secondary school days lived in a rented room at Tjokroaminoto's in Surabaya. Thanks to Soekemi's membership, he could visit the TS library at Sawahan, where the city's lodge president D.L.N. Vink also lived (Princessealaan).⁵ Did Sukarno meet Mrs Van Mook, the mother of his opponent after 1945, there? In the library, he developed a frantic reading habit, including political books.⁶ Probably Carlyle; Abu Hanifah thought him a 'very, very great' influence on Sukarno.⁷ One book, said to have influenced him much, he probably did not get from the theosophical library: the account of the trial of Van Hinloopen Labberton's opponent Sneevliet, by Sneevliet himself and Baars.

Sukarno was apparently no longer close to the TS in 1921. As two wings formed in *Jong-Java*, he chose the 'red' wing. At the June 1921 congress in Bandung, he protested against neglect of poor people and against capitalism. Right wingers of the Jakarta branch of *Jong-Java*, like Basuki and Supomo (later well known as a jurist), held before the leftists 'the motto of theosophist Fournier: keep your head; and keep your heart warm.' Fournier had said this on 31 October 1920 at the inaugural meeting of the *Studiegroep Politieke Wetenschap*. It was a short-lived joint venture in Jakarta by *Jong-Java* and the *Jong Sumatranen Bond* to study political science; probably, Annie Besant's *Lectures: The Jakarta Jong-Java* then had its office in the TS headquarters.¹⁰

¹Originally: *Perserikatan*

²TSUCHIYA(1987), 68; 82, 86: Sarmidi Mangoensarkaro, born in 1904, 'a noble from Surakarta who grew up under the influence of Theosophy.' TABRANI(1974), 318: he was *ODI* member. He was active in *Jong-Java* and taught at a *Taman Siswa* school. He left, however, in 1928, to teach at the TS' Arjuna school in Jakarta. There, he joined the Young Theosophists. TSUCHIYA(1987), 86: he joined the *PNI* also in 1928. If that is correct, he probably will not have been a member of both for long, in view of the earlier TS conflict with Indonesian nationalists, and the later one especially with the *PNI*. See p. 350, 360.

³SUKARNO, 19. He was a primary school teacher by profession; with a relatively low title of nobility.

⁴SUKARNO, 21: 'although Father practiced Theosophy, he was legally a Moslem.'

⁵ROE, XIII; SUKARNO, 23; *ibid.*, 71: 'My grandfather inculcated in me Javanism and mysticism. From Father came Theosophy and Islamism.'

⁶PT 1916 (9), #3, 16. PT, 1917; covers. NUGRAHA(1989), 261. Vink in *TMNI*, 1918, 215: 'In the broad masses there is a fairly strong tendency towards the anti-idealist, in some of these social strata even towards the animal.'

⁷SUKARNO, 39.

⁸ABU HANIFAH, 41.

⁹SCHWIDDER/TICHELMAN, xxxvi.

¹⁰VAN MIERT(1995), 56-7; 79. J. K[ruijsheer].-B[olten]., 'Batavia-Loge', *TMNI* 1923, 234. SUKARNO, 49: he was *Jong-Java* chairman.

A few years later, Sumatran student Roestam Effendi told Sukarno he had joined the *Orde der Dienaren van Indië*. Roestam recalled that he reacted: 'You've fallen into the trap, haven't you, [Roes]Tam?'

Sukarno prepared the founding of the *PNI*, in 1927, with Tjipto Mangoenkoesomo, whom he called 'chief'.² Like Jawaharlal Nehru in India, in spite of connections from young years, the new party did not choose an elite ideology like Soeriokoesomo's, Van Leeuwen's or Vink's. It aimed at mass support and chose 'Marhaenism' as Sukarno eventually called it; Marhaen, like Kromo, is a name common among poor peasants. Many returned former *Perhimpunan Indonesia* members joined.

Sukarno admired Gandhi greatly, but criticized him on some points. His criticism of Gandhi differed from the theosophists' though. It was somewhat similar to Tjipto's objections to Soeriokoesomo:

The spiritually inclined Indian pays too little attention to the materialist side of the struggle . . . to have good results, politics should be based primarily on the real, concrete, actual situation. They never should lose themselves in the vague clouds of philosophisms and abstractions. . . . Especially Mahatma Gandhi, brilliant though he may be, has sinned greatly against this. As a logical consequence, society has turned cruelly against him.³

When *PNI* supporters founded a school in 1928, they voiced similar ideas.⁴

In 1928, Tabrani was a student in The Hague (The Netherlands), a contributor to *De Telegraaf* daily, and to the monthly of the Dutch Liberal Democrat party.⁵ He then wrote Sukarno a letter, 'urging him to come overseas and warning him to stay out of the public

¹ROESTAM EFFENDI, 398. Roestam wrote he joined to meet Indonesians from other regions. He later became the only Indonesian MP before the Second World War; for the Dutch communists.

²VAN BERGEN, 19. L. DE JONG, vol. 11a1, 323-4: Tjipto had inspired Sukarno in this. CADY(1964), 541 wrongly has 1929 as founding year.

³Soekarno's foreword to TJIPTO MANGOENKOESEMO(1928).

⁴Ruth T. McVey 'Taman Siswa and the Indonesian National Awakening', *Indonesia* Oct. 1977, 128-49. *Ibid.*, 139. Mohamad Nazif, Muhammad Yamin, Sartono, M.H. Thamrin and others founded the *Pergoeroean Rakjat* in Jakarta. They declared: 'We wish to avoid vague philosophizing over deep abstractions and transcendental concepts which do not relate to real life; we wish instead to show the Indonesian that he must direct all his emotion and thought to answering the concrete problems of this society.' McVey interprets this as anti-*Taman Siswa*. However, Sartono was an ex-*Perhimpunan Indonesia* leader. As the declaration is similar to *PI*'s polemic against the Theosophical Society (see p. 350), it may have been more against the TS.

⁵The *Vrijzinnig Democratische Bond*. A party supporter, writing as 'Koloniaal', *LOC*, 17-12-1917: 'So evolution (as against revolution) is the *Vrijzinnig Democratische Bond*'s slogan, and one can also find that spirit in its colonial activity.' Editors of the monthly *Opbouw* [Construction] included G. Bolkestein, P.J. Oud, who both later became ministers (Oud became Liberal Party leader), and W. de Cock Buning. Theosophist ex-*Volksraad* member Th. Vreede wrote in it on international economics: 'De Economische Conferentie te Genève', *OP*, 1927-8, 129f. On Tabrani see also POEZE(1986), 227.

eye for a while'.¹ Sukarno did not, however, and the Dutch East Indies government became concerned. On 8 November 1928, Kiewiet de Jonge as government representative in the *Volksraad* came out against strong language in Sukarno speeches. Sukarno was forbidden to use words like *merdeka* [freedom] and *kemerdekaan* [independence].⁴ On the other hand, Kiewiet de Jonge angered colonialist diehard journalists by shaking hands with Sukarno at his 1929 trial when he was a witness, as a sign of respect for an opponent.⁵

Leadbeater, visiting Indonesia for the fifth time in his life in 1929, approved of Dutch rule there. He thought that its 'pedagogical task' still needed at least 'half a century of vigorous work'.⁶ At the end of that year, two prominent Fellows of his society came in for criticism from the Indonesian press: A. Meijroos and Fournier.

When the Indonesian councillors of Jakarta wanted Thamrin as deputy-mayor, Meijroos objected. The Indonesian Thamrin did not qualify, as local government was 'moulded in the Western way'. Even the very co-operative paper *De Samenwerking* attacked Meijroos, comparing him unfavourably to the governor-generals Van Limburg Stirum and Fock. The councillors resigned collectively as a protest, and won.⁷

The criticism of Fournier also came from a moderate side; from *Budi Utomo* in his case. Earlier in 1929, *Boedi-Oetomo* had approvingly quoted Annie Besant on the value of 'self-assurance'. Then, however, Fournier made a speech on 'Indonesian nationalism, seen from a theosophical point of view.' 'Scientific politics' should prevail over 'sentiment'. He had no faith in an independent Indonesia. 'There was not any Indonesian nation, only an Indonesian people'. The daily *Sedjo Tomo* commented that Fournier said

¹INGLESON(1974), 87. Ibid: Hatta also thought Sukarno should be more careful; this 'might indicate collaboration between the two students in The Hague.' This, though, can only be true if then the Hatta-Tabrani relationship had improved since *Indonesia Merdeka's* attacks on Tabrani.

²HERING(1992), VIII, supposes Kiewiet de Jonge 'must have made a rather strong shift to the right abandoning his erstwhile political ideals.'

³INGLESON(1974), 78. When Sukarno was president three decades later, the translator of his speeches into English was Molly Bondan. She was born Mary Alithea Warner in New Zealand of TS parents, went to a TS-inspired school in Australia, and in 1946 married an Indonesian Hatta supporter George McT. Kahin, 'Molly Bondan: 1912-1990', in *Indonesia*, 1990, 158-62.

⁴INGLESON(1974), 79.

⁵KOCH(1956), 196-7. Later, Kiewiet de Jonge was the main eulogist at the 40 year jubilee of the right wing journalist H.C. Zentgraaff; *ibid.*, 219.

⁶TICHELAAR(1977), 121-2: quoting Leadbeater's article in the *Australian Theosophist*, 15 Jan. 1930. It was not reprinted with the other articles on Leadbeater's Indonesia journey, when *The occult history of Java* came out in 1951.

⁷'Het Gemeentec conflict', in *IPO* 47/1929, 251-4; and 48/1929, 282-6.

this 'purely to be able to bring about a co-operation of all groups of the people with the Government. The Government will be grateful to the lecturer.'¹

In a letter to the daily *Bintang Timoer* in 1929, Mohamed Tabrani claimed he had resigned from the *ODI*, as 'it had decided to base itself on theosophy'. He founded the weekly *Revue Politik* in May 1930. Months later, he also founded the moderate *Partai Rak'jat Indonesia*, Indonesian People's Party, of which he became chairman. *Rak'jat* was the *PRI* fortnightly.² Another *PRI* leader was Raden Mas Soeripto, nephew of the susuhanan of Surakarta.³ Governor-General De Graeff wrote he had helped Tabrani.⁴

A second attempt by cooperating nationalists to attract some of the *PNI's* membership was launched by Tabrani just two days before the *PNI* leaders' trial opened in Bandung on 18 August [1930].⁵ ... Tabrani was mistrusted largely because he was a member of the Theosophical Society organisation, 'Servants of the Indies', which was considered anti-nationalist. He and the other leaders were accused of holding associationist⁶ ideas and opposing the *PI* [*Perhimpunan Indonesia*] while students in the Netherlands.⁷

Supporters of the *PNI*, whose symbol was the banteng, saw Tabrani's *PRI* as merely a kancil.⁸ Members of the *PNI* youth league made it 'nearly impossible' for Tabrani 'to make propaganda speeches anywhere'. Once, a student at a meeting gave Tabrani a leaflet. As the orator looked at it, he saw it described him as a 'windy no-gooder'. Tabrani was so shocked that he stopped his speech immediately, and did not resume that

¹*Boedi-Oetomo* 1-10-1929, quoted *IPO* 45/1929, 169. *Sedjo Tomo* 2/7-12-1929, quoted *IPO* 50/1929, 335; *Medan Doenia* 12/14-12-1929, quoted *IPO* 52/1929, 397-8.

²*Bintang Timoer*, 28/31-1-1929, quoted *IPO* 1929, # 6, 182. INGLES(1974), 87.

³POEZE(1986), 197; *ENI*, vol. VI, 910f. He became a doctor of law in Leiden in May 1929; his thesis was on the law books of Java's principalities. He had been vice-chairman and chairman of the *Nederlandsch-Indonesisch verbond van Jongeren-Organisaties* in The Netherlands, founded by Noto Soeroto on 1 April 1926 after his break with the *Indonesische Vereeniging*. *IM*, 1926, 48; PETRUS BLUMBERGER(1987), 184; 431. POEZE(1986), 198: as did Mrs Besant for Indians, Soeripto objected to the word 'native' for Indonesians, as it sounded like 'savage, Bushman, cannibal or something.'

⁴*Algemeen Rijks Archief*, private archive De Graeff. Letter to his predecessor Van Limburg Stirum from 1930. As translated HERING(1992), 13-4: 'Behind the scenes, I am trying desperately --also particularly in view of next year's elections-- to promote the foundation of an indigenous middle-of-the-road party [note by Hering: the *PRI*]. A party, which any Government will need badly since it is indispensable to the normal development of parliamentary life in this country.'

⁵*ENI*, vol. VI, 911, has 14 September 1930 as official founding congress date.

⁶He had denied that in TABRANI(1929), 47.

⁷INGLES(1974), 125-6.

⁸PETRUS BLUMBERGER(1987), 432. A banteng, *Bos javanicus*, is a horned ungulate, up to 900 kilograms in weight. POEZE(1986), 178 writes 'benteng'; that means 'fortress' in Indonesian, though. A kancil, or Lesser Malay mouse deer, *Tragulus javanicus*, is the world's smallest ungulate at about 2 kilograms. Javanese animal tales depict it as clever but selfish.

night.¹ An estimate of *PRI* membership was only 200.²

The *PRI* stood politically for 'independence'³ in the form of 'dominion status', to be attained by parliamentary means.⁴ Economically, it stood for 'development in the direction of a modern monetary economy and with adjustment to the international exchange', also with stimulation of 'Indonesian economical initiative'.⁵

A *Budi Utomo* attempt to work closely with the new party misfired; a Madurese promoter of business interests like Tabrani did not automatically have the same ideas as Javanese aristocrats.⁶ He had criticized Noto Soeroto's monthly *Oedaya* [Rise] for being promoted by the Dutch government.⁷ Noto Soeroto criticized supporters of independence in The Hague in 1927:

National sovereignty and independence have become very relative categories now, if only because of the universal phenomenon of the world economy. In an ideal union of both nations, the Dutchman will be able to rise to a purer and higher type of his people, and the Easterner to a similar type of his particular group.

Indies TS General Secretary J. Kruisheer commented: 'Lord Noto Soeroto states the only correct viewpoint, in our opinion'.⁸

Noto Soeroto advocated the caste system, which led to 'happy acceptance of one's social condition, without envying the apparent privileges of other classes, social categories or groups'.⁹ In 1931, he published a book on his 'aristo-democrat' political system, invoking Plato, in the vein of Soerikoesomo and Van der Leeuw.¹⁰ It differed from *Wederopbouw* times in proposing 'local autonomy' for Java, no longer political nationhood. Even this, though, was suspect to supporters of Indonesian unity.¹¹

¹ABU HANIFAH, 83.

²Estimate by Kiewiet de Jonge, 18 Nov. 1931; he wrote of the *PRI* 'mainly active in the city of Batavia. The *PRI* is nationalistic, religiously oriented and principally cooperative...' HERING(1992), 69.

³Of which he had already written in TABRANI(1929), 57.

⁴ENI, vol. VI, 911.

⁵ENI, vol. VI, 912.

⁶Ibid. An attempt to introduce the *PRI* to West Sumatra failed; BOUMAN(1949), 79.

⁷TABRANI(1929), 55. *Oedaya* criticized Tabrani: it wrote its 'aristo-democracy' was incompatible with 'any movement, holding out delusions of an "Indonesia Merdeka" to the masses'; quoted POEZE(1983), 322-3. *Oedaya* started in 1924, 'guided only by a constructive idea of Dutch-Indonesian relations.' A picture of Borobudur with the sun rising over it was its masthead. POEZE(1986), 180. Soeripto broke with Noto Soeroto in 1930: POEZE(1986), 240.

⁸J. Kruisheer, 'Redactionele Aantekeningen', *TAMU* 1927, 164.

⁹Quoted POEZE(1986), 194.

¹⁰*Schets van een staatkundig stelsel op Aristo-Democratische Grondslag* Den Haag, Adi Poestaka, 1931. DIAJADININGRAT-NIEUWENHUIS, 53.

¹¹DIAJADININGRAT-NIEUWENHUIS, 55.

The 'democratic' part of the system would be *kabupaten* councils. They would be elected very indirectly, like the organs that Annie Besant had proposed for India. The councils would have only advisory powers, so as not to hamper the 'aristoi', the *bupati*.¹ For 'in certain families, one is born with qualities which one needs for the art of government; they have become instincts'.² After his break seven years earlier with *Perhimpunan Indonesia*, Noto Soeroto now, less spectacularly, also became secluded from the hardline colonialist right: he stopped contributing to the paper *De Rijkseenheid* [Imperial Unity].³

Noto Soeroto went back to Indonesia in February 1932. A committee of admirers, including fellow author and prominent Dutch TS member Miss Tony de Ridder, paid his fare.⁴ He found out he had become isolated there too. Though opposing parliamentary rule, he tried to get nominated to the *Volksraad*; in vain, however. Only the Theosophical Society gave him a platform for lecturing to sizable numbers of people. He declaimed for instance from his *Wayang Songs*. The concluding lines of one of these said victory might have to wait till next incarnations:

Lord, let me be a wayang [puppet] in your hands.

Then, after a hundred years, or a thousand years, Your hand will make me move again ...

And one day, my enemies will be silent, and the demon will lie down.

Lord, let me be a wayang in your hands.⁵

The TS considered this 'great Javanese poet's 'Aristo-democracy': 'Now, it is clear that he was a visionary!'⁶ His reunion with Mangkoé Negoro VII was 'like the two brothers Krishna and Baladewa'.⁷ He also met Sukarno, but disagreed with his ideas.

The Indonesian delegation to the All Asia Women's Conference, in Lahore, 19-25 January 1931, consisted of three *PNI* supporters. Mrs Roekmini Santoso was a daughter of the *bupati* of Jepara, and sister of Raden Adjeng Kartini (1879-1904), Kartini's writings are seen as the beginning of both women's and national movements in Indonesia. The two others were Miss Soenarjati, a teacher like Santoso, and Soenarjati's brother Soegondo.

After they arrived, they decided not to participate, as it was 'not really an Asian women's congress, but organized and led by European theosophic ladies'.⁸ Theosophists

¹POEZE(1986), 207f.

²Noto Soeroto, 'Principes der Aristo-Democratie', *IG* 1929 (51), 1193-1202; 1197-8.

³POEZE(1986), 239f.

⁴POEZE(1986), 242-3.

⁵POEZE(1986), 244.

⁶L. Mangelaar Meertens in *TiNI* Aug. 1939, 156.

⁷DIAJADININGRAT-NIEUWENHUIS, 59-60.

⁸PETRUS BLUMBERGER(1987), 388. 45 TAHUN SUMPAN PEMUDA, 102; this wrongly has the congress in 1928. Margaret Cousins, one of the ladies referred to, mentioned in

stood for co-operation with governments, unlike the *PNI*. So, the delegates limited their presence to an informal chat at a tea-party at the Lahore governor's.



Left to right: Santoso, Soegondo, Soenarjati.
From *45 tahun sumpah pemuda*, 102

The 'theosophic' may have bothered more than the 'European', in particular to Mrs Santoso. She was one of the few Indonesians in the largely Dutch *Vereeniging voor Vrouwenkiesrecht*. She sat in its executive, and represented it at the first Indonesian women's congress in 1928.¹

One may measure the relative importance of the Theosophical Society in the country from the 1931 *Encyclopaedie voor Nederlandsch Indië*. It contained a large article, much

COUSINS(1941), 145, that 'Women delegates attended from . . . Afghanistan, Java; Non-Asian visitors came specially for the Conference from England, America, Ireland and New Zealand'; not the controversy. As for non-co-operation: *ibid.*, 147, Sarojini Naidu was elected president, 'though she was then serving a sentence of imprisonment in Poona'. *Ibid.*: 'In a time of such disturbed political atmosphere and action it was also remarkable that the Government of India allowed such a significant Conference to take place in India without interference!' See also WICKREMASINGHE(1932), 402

¹PETRUS BLUMBERGER(1987), 388-9: the *PNI* defended the delegation. Many newspapers attacked it, as some women's organizations, not committed to non-co-operation, had also paid part of the delegation's travel expenses. BLACKBURN(1995), 6.

of it on TS activities in Indonesia.¹

In 1930, of the 24 full-fledged lodges, only two were outside Java, one-twelfth; outside Java lived one-third, not one-twelfth of the total population. These two lodges were an all-Dutch one in Ujung Pandang in Sulawesi, and one in atypically Sumatran Medan. In Abdoel Moeis' and Datoek Soetan Maharadja's Minangkabau region, there was only a small 'centre' in Bukittingi, not a full lodge.² The Ujung Pandang lodge and the Bukittingi centre soon stopped.³ Indonesia's TS (and LCC) had become relatively Java-centred. When the executive founded *Pemitratan Tjahja* 'to re-establish contact with the masses', Polderman said

We have *not* lost contact with the masses; that has never existed. We did lose contact with the intellectual indigenous people.⁴

Also politically, there was isolation from both radical nationalists and a moderate like Sutan Sjahrir. Sjahrir wrote in 1935 that 'eastern wisdom and religion' were wrongly 'esteemed highly'.⁵ Isolation on education politics too:

In the more conservative European theosophists' walks of life, the idea gets stronger and stronger that Indonesians have been given enough, and maybe already too much, education.⁶

To the leaders of Taman Siswo and Muhammadiyah the Theos[ophical]. Society simply does not exist. They go their own way.⁷

Of the two school-founding organizations that Tilkema named, the TS had had few contacts with *Muhammadiyah*. Much had changed, though, since Prince Soetatmo

¹Vol. VI, 763-4, nearly a full page. On the Liberal Catholic Church, there was also a nearly full page article, vol. VIII, 1890-1. One may measure the decline of the TS in post-1945, independent Indonesia, from two later encyclopaedias. In the 1984 *Ensiklopedi Indonesia*, Jakarta, Ichtiar Baru, 3307, which as a whole is more voluminous than its predecessor, the TS got only six lines, of which none was on Indonesia. Seven years later still, the *Ensiklopedi Nasional Indonesia* (HARRISUSANTO), about double the size of the *EI*, had only four lines on the TS; and also nothing on Indonesia.

²*ENI*, VI, 763.

³*TINI* Jan. 1935, 6: a centre for West Sumatra was re-founded.

⁴In 1938, it had ten local churches plus one 'centre'. Of these, only Medan (where there was also a small but active co-masonry lodge; TICHELAAR(1977), 150) was outside Java. Most held their services in TS buildings; only in Jakarta, Bandung, and Surabaya there were Liberal Catholic church buildings. *ENI*, vol. VIII, 1891.

⁵*TINI* 1932, 106.

⁶VAN DEN DOEL(1995), 387.

⁷TILKEMA(1932), 58.

⁸TILKEMA(1932), 59.

Soerikoesoemo's early leading role in *Taman Siswa*.¹

Van Leeuwen did not like Tilkema's criticism of the TS and theosophical education. In his review, he contrasted them favourably to the schools which the government did not recognize. The 'wild schools' to him were

mostly politically, religiously, or nationalistically biased. Very often fed by the small fire of antitheses: white versus brown, rich versus poor, capitalist versus worker, etc.²

In 1933, the TS of Egypt asked its sister organization in Indonesia to protest against the persecution of Jews in Germany.

The executive decided, as the TS is not a political league, and, additionally, there is no reliable information available, to decline this request.³

In August, Van Leeuwen wrote on the pros and cons of fascism. He concluded the chauvinist dangers were strongest. This led to a reaction by F.J. van der Veer, FTS, defending fascism. It was 'no danger to world peace', having brought Germany and Italy together. There were two internationalisms: one of pacifists and 'talking shops', and 'true, proud internationalism', as also in the Boy Scouts. Theosophy had 'the correct feeling for a corporative state', like the fascists. In a postscript, Van Leeuwen wrote that Van der Veer had convinced him somewhat; not really entirely.⁴

The names of the theosophist monthlies were now *De Pionier*, with Meijroos as an editor, respectively *Persatoean Hidoep* [Unity of Life]. The *TT* report on 1933 said membership had decreased by 300.⁵ That was as with other organizations in the years of economic downturn. Many Dutch dropped out, or went back to The Netherlands; many Indonesians could afford little. On 30 September 1934, 1184 members were left of

¹STANGE, 548: 'Taman Siswa philosophy ... resounded with the teachings of the Theosophical Society and Maria Montessori' is more correct for early, Soerikoesoemo, says TSUCHIYA(1987), 52-3, suggests a link between Soewardi Soeraningrat's views on education and Rudolf Steiner; that was 'not clear' though. REEVE(1985), 12, with neither Tsuchiya's cautiousness nor a Soewardi quote or other proof, says Steiner influenced Soewardi. Steiner wrote mainly on education after he started his first 'Waldorf school', sponsored by Waldorf Astoria cigarettes; after the world war, when Soewardi was already back in Indonesia. One later reference to Steiner: the translation in the educational paper *Medan Goeroe Hindia* of Dec. 1923, quoted IPO 14/1924, 53 of an article on Waldorf schools from Dutch daily *Algemeen Handelsblad*. The early name was *Taman Siswa*, in Javanese; as Tilkema still spelled it. After the death of Soerikoesoemo, it also founded schools outside Java; the name changed to *Taman Siswa* (Indonesian).

²A. van Leeuwen, 'Aanteekeningen over de brochure van den heer D. Tilkema getiteld 'Opmerkingen over Theosofie en opvoeding'', *TiNI* 1932, 140-51; 150-1.

³*TiNI* June 1933, 72.

⁴*TiNI* Aug. 1933, 89-90. F.J. van der Veer, 'Welke richting?', *TiNI* Oct. 1933, 107-10.

⁵583. TILKEMA(1932), 58, gave, for Java only, as membership figures: 700 Indonesians, 850 Europeans, and 200 Chinese. *TiNI* 1932, 287.

1930's 2090.¹ The Young Theosophists had disappeared since the 1920's; and had to be re-founded.²

The membership of individual lodges was not as nationally plural as the total membership. In 1935, the Malang lodge had 46 members, all 'European'.³ Of all the 35 lodges and 'centres', 15 had only 'Indigenous' and/or 'Foreign Oriental' members. These were mainly the ones with fewer members, in smaller towns.⁴

Though its printing company had failed, the economic crisis had not wiped out TS finances. In 1934 it founded the *Algemeene Centrale Bank* (General Central Bank), a limited liability company, also representing the big Dutch insurance firm *De Nederlanden van 1845* for the Indies, and handling Liberal Catholic Church finances 20,000 of its 100,000 guilders original capital were TS property. Five unnamed members owned the other 80,000. Van Leeuwen and Mrs J.A.E. van Blommestein-Land were its Board of Directors; suffragan bishop Monseigneur Fournier its manager.⁵

In spite of membership losses, Van Leeuwen sounded optimistic in his Diamond Jubilee greetings to Arundale:

Theosophy is for the Dutch Indies a source of ever refreshing Inspiration. Notwithstanding the difficulties of a Colonial Society, where two races are always somewhat opposed to each other ... Theosophy is acceptable to both ... The Indonesian people has assimilated several Religions and Philosophies [sic] and Theosophy is to her a Synthesis and a Solution of all problems, by its Message of the Divine Wisdom. The Dutch people has always striven for Freedom and Equality and to her Theosophy is to her [sic] the Apotheosis of that Ideal Message of Universal brotherhood, based on the Truth of the [sic] by its One Life.⁶

As membership had shrunk, so had interest in politics. From 1930-4, Fournier sat in the *Volksraad* as government-appointed member. He was also chairman of the by now small *Nederlandsch-Indische Vrijzinnige Bond*. Fournier, though, disappeared from the council; so did the *NIVB* from the political parties' list.⁷ When the Tasikmalaya lodge proposed that the TS should nominate three candidates for the *Volksraad*, the executive and the general meeting blocked this.⁸ Van Leeuwen had also lost his enthusiasm of two decades ago for strengthening the armed forces. In 1936, Dutch founded a committee *Let op uw Saeck*, similar to the earlier *Indië Weerbaar*. At least one FTS wrote to Van

¹VAN LEEUWEN(1934), 143. *TT* Apr. 1935, 90.

²*TiNI* Apr. 1936, 85.

³In 1913, Malang still had Javanese members; VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1913C), 121.

⁴Computed from *TiNI* March 1936, 46-7.

⁵VAN LEEUWEN(1934), 147-8. *Prospectus van "Algemeene Centrale Bank"*. N.V.; included with *TiNI* 1934. *RANI*, 1940, 496.

⁶Brief van den Voorzitter', *TiNI* Aug. 1935, 133.

⁷*RANI* 1933, 61; 67.

⁸*TiNI* Apr. 1935, 59.

Leeuwen that he should have been more positive towards it.¹

Already in Dec. 1928, *Jong-Java* had decided to merge with the all-Indonesia youth league *Pemoeda Indonesia*; against the objections of founder Satiman.² *Budi Utomo* merged with other groups in 1935. The name of the new merger party, *Partai Indonesia Raya*, Great Indonesia Party, marked a break with Javanese nationalism like Soerioekoemo's. Socially, it was still conservative.³ Its chairman became one of *BU*'s early leaders, Raden Soetomo. He had known Van Hinloopen Labberton well and had contributed to *Wederopbouw*. In 1924, he had founded a well-known study group as a less controversial sequel to Satiman's Javanese Intellectuals' League. *Bupati* Woerjaningrat became vice-chairman. Was he then still an FTS as earlier on?⁴

Tabrani in 1933 became chairman of the journalists' league *PERDI*.⁵ In 1936, his *PRI* finished. Then, in his daily *Pemandangan*, he supported the petition of *Volksraad* member Soetardjo, which asked the Dutch government for more autonomy.⁶ In 1940, Tabrani had a conflict with the nationalist leader and *Volksraad* vice president Thamrin, and changed his job from *Pemandangan* to the government publicity service. After 1940 he no longer was *PERDI* chairman. He was suspected of supplying the government with information which led to Thamrin's 1941 arrest; Thamrin died five days afterwards.⁷

A.J. Hamerster, former Indies government official and TS treasurer in Adyar, went to Ceylon as a Buddhist monk in the 1930's. He wrote in *Maha Bodhi* with James Arthur as his pen name.

In 1932, the Netherlands Indies government sent Ong Soe Aan, chairman of the *Giri Lojo* TS lodge in Bandung, to Madras to study opium policy. Ong also went to Adyar. There, Jinarajadasa introduced him to another *Maha Bodhi* author, the Buddhist monk Narada Thera from Ceylon. Narada had a speaking tour of Indonesia's TS lodges in 1934, converting many to his religion. According to Iem Brown, that mission was 'of singular importance' to the history of Buddhism in Indonesia.⁸ Two years later, Jinarajadasa came.

¹Brief van den Voorzitter N. I. T. V., *TiNI* Jan. 1937, 2.

²PLUVIER, 152. VAN MIERT(1995), 334.

³Soetomo's opening speech, first Parindra congress, 25 Dec. 1935: Parindra 'makes the best effort to woo them [the upper *priyayi* (interpolation by Anderson)] so that their dedication to the land and the people could be accelerated according to their own *dharma*, that is, the *dharma* of a true *ksatriya* according to their aristocratic blood.' Quoted Benedict O'Gorman Anderson, 'A time of darkness and a time of light: Transposition in Early Indonesian Nationalist Thought', in REID/MARR, 218-48; 246.

⁴LARSON(1987), 168.

⁵PLUVIER, 166.

⁶TABRANI(1974), 307. PLUVIER, 123. Ibid., 124f: militant nationalists were originally divided on the petition, but most ended up supporting it.

⁷L. DE JONG, vol. 11a1, 571-5.

⁸VAN LEEUWEN(1934), 145. BROWN, 9-11; 16. *TiNI* Nov. 1934, 123: this was 'the Occult Hierarchy's plan' for Java.

Also in 1934 and 1936, the leading US theosophist Geoffrey Hodson visited Java. The second time, he spoke not only to theosophical, but also to Rotary branches. Mangko Negoro VII invited him to a *wayang* performance, and later to a dance, at his palace.¹ Hodson was not that positive on his stay; what struck him in particular were many animal sacrifices and much black magic among the people of Java.² He remarked on contacts between humble Javanese and their august supernatural beings, like the goddess of the Southern Sea:

It appears unlikely that any ordinary Fourth ['Atlantean'] Root-Race man would contact these great Beings.³

In 1939, Hodson wrote in the TS press of Australia and Indonesia, on that year's contradiction between 'democratic' and 'totalitarian' governments. He thought:

It is clear that a compromise between the democratic ideal's complete freedom of thought and action, and the totalitarian state's complete subjection of the individual to the state will have to be found. ... What will be the solution? As I have already made clear, it will be benevolent and wise autocracy. Autocracy rules in the inner worlds. Autocracy rules in the Inner Government of the world. And a time will come, when what is esoteric now, will become exoteric. The Toltecs' Golden Age will be repeated once more on this planet.⁴

The Dutch East Indies TS' executive consisted of 'Sister van Blommestein-Land', nine Dutch men, of whom Van Leeuwen was chairman and Fournier vice-chairman, one Chinese, and three Javanese, in 1937.⁵ Next year, after 25 years, the theosophical teachers' training school had to close down because of finances. *Theosophie in Nederlandsch-Indië* mentioned plans that the 1942 theosophical world congress would be in 'J A V A!!!!!!'.⁶

Then other visitors came, though. The few thousand Indonesians, whom the army conscripted then 25 years after *Indië Weerbaar*, could not stop them. Thirty-one years after joining the TS, Susuhunan Pakoe Boewono XI died in 1944. One oral tradition says: of poison, for not accommodating enough to the Japanese army.⁷

After 1945, the TS was suspect to Indonesians, because of the connection with the

¹*TiNI* June 1936, 98.

²VAN LEEUWEN(1934), 144. 'Occult experiences in Java', *TT*, March 1937.

³G. Hodson, 'A Devi of the Southern Seas', *TT* Apr. 1937, 52.

⁴*Theosophy in Australia*, Apr.-May 1939; *TiNI* June-July 1939, 183. Toltecs, according to Annie Besant, were a sub-race of the 'Atlantean race' whose zenith was millions of years ago. Historians: an Amerindian people, whose empire in what is now Mexico was about AD 1000.

⁵They were Raden Mas Koesoemodihardjo, Soemardjo, and Kadiroen Mangoenpoernomo. *TiNI*, July 1937, 114. Kadiroen was president of the central Jakarta Djokerto lodge; M. Soeharno was its secretary. *TiNI* Dec. 1934, 152.

⁶*TiNI* Nov. 1938, 188.

⁷Personal communication of Donald Tick, Vlaardingen.

Dutch.¹ The prewar name Annie Besant Square in Semarang (like Olcott Park in Bandung, Blavatsky Park immediately west of Koningsplein, renamed Merdeka Square, in Jakarta) disappeared from the city map.² The road signs with Mrs Besant's name are still there in Madras. In this too, Indonesia differed from India, even though Jawaharlal Nehru, looking back, still criticized Annie Besant's policies.

3. CONCLUSIONS OF PART V

As for our question on apoliticism, the many connections we have found with Indian politics clearly answer it in the negative. This is also true for Indonesia; though there, decline in membership and influence in the 1930's did mark a retreat from politics compared to earlier on. In Ceylon, national independence was not high on the political agenda until the 1930's, when TS influence had declined much. The party putting it on the agenda, the LSSP, was primarily an internationalist labour, not a nationalist, party.

Now, our second question, on the TS' position in the political spectrum as far as national movements are concerned. Both in India and Indonesia 1918 marked a zenith in influence. While very soon afterwards, in India Annie Besant clashed with Congress on non-co-operation, in Indonesia this became an acute conflict later, though perhaps leaving more marks, in the 1920's. The TS in India allied itself with the co-operationist Liberals. In Indonesia, relations were good with socially conservative, not sharply anti-colonial 'ethnic' nationalists of Java and West Sumatra.

In Indonesia, the conflict with the labour movement preceded the one with the national movement; while it was rather the other way round in India.

Now, individuals' opinions. When Sinnett, after joining the TS, wrote more positively on Indians in his daily *The Pioneer*, Master KH in a letter complimented him: 'Such is the first political fruit of the society you have the honour to belong to.'³ More shifts of this type probably happened. They were mainly limited to views on elites among non-Europeans though, seen as 'Aryan'; not to views on for instance Javanese hill area villagers. They also had less to do with theosophists' views on home rule or independence, than with views on 'race' theories. To go deeper into this would require a part of its own.

¹GEERTZ(1960), 342. Ibid., 340: in Pare, during the post-1945 war, Dutch and pro-Dutch Indonesian police chiefs, both in the TS, formed the *Budi Setia* meditation group, with an all-priyayi membership. In 1934, Sapardjo was secretary of the Pare TS lodge; *TiNI* Dec. 1934, 153 STEVENS(1994), 361: in 1961, Rosicrucians, Freemasons, and Rotary were banned in Indonesia.

²Personal communication from Prof. Bambang Hidayat in Lembang.

³Quoted *TT* June 1932, 350. In 1879, HPB refused to print in *TT*, as a 'religious' paper, a complaint about unfair treatment of Indians in the Civil Service, though she sympathized with its contents. *BCW*, II, 161. In July 1886, Sinnett wrote in the *Transactions* of the London TS Lodge that the people of India 'are on a somewhat lower level of cosmic evolution'. HPB opposed this: 'How many times have I told you that if, as a race, they [Indians] are lower than Europeans it is only physically and in the matter of civilization or rather what you yourselves have agreed to regard as civilization.' *TM* (1951), 112.

PART VI. THE WHITE BROTHERHOOD: HOW ABOUT SISTERHOOD?

1. WOMEN IN RELIGIONS AND IN THE TS

At the TS' time of foundation, women were subordinate in most religions. Their subordination in society and religious community was religiously sanctioned.

Even so, many saw religion as a suitable field of activity for women; usually, if their needed activities were on lower levels of it,¹ like passing on religious values to sons, or scrubbing church floors.

When the Theosophical Society started in New York in 1875, two out of sixteen members were women. Of the first 24 Australian FTS joining 1879-1883, not one was a woman.² However, this gradually changed, until in the 1920's women were a slight majority of Australian members, though a minority of officials.³ Since 1888, 'without distinction of sex' had been in the TS Objects.⁴

How did their fathers, husbands, etc., who, according to the ideology of society as it was, were supposed to 'keep them in line', see their theosophical activity? Sir Edwin Lutyens, the only honorary FTS, mixed positive and negative feelings.⁵ He wrote on his wife Lady Emily and Annie Besant:

She has courage -her astral reincarnation theory frightens me- but, to the point, she has absorbed this summer all my wife's energies in her propaganda. All I can say that is better than Suffragettes!!⁶

Other husbands might like a 'suitable activity' for wives as they might other religious activity. The wives, however, could do it at a more equal level -sometimes: an equal level- with men than in the great majority of other religious activity. This made the TS attractive to religion-minded women at a time when some old barriers fell, and others started to show cracks.

At the same time, the TS did not require that they broke with social virtues.

¹LEADBEATER(1922), 369: 'They look on religion as a nice sort of thing to amuse the ladies' One can think of treasures of the Vatican, paid for by taxes the Papal State levied on the many prostitutes attracted by the many pilgrims to Rome. There is a certain parallel to cooking: women do the bulk of it, unpaid; once it gets paid, and certainly if highly paid, men do most of it.

²ROE, 14.

³ROE, 185: in 1918/19, 97 men, 133 women joined Australia's TS. In 1928/29, 25 each. ROE, 182f: 1891-1925 32% of lodge presidents and secretaries; 18% of presidents only, were women. In the Pt. Loma TS community, 63% were women in 1900, 58% in 1910; S.M. WRIGHT, 37. On the 1900-10 drop, she has a general theory of 'need for "male labor"'; she does not test it for the Loma TS case.

⁴JINARAJADASA(1925), 249.

⁵E. LUTYENS, 37f.

⁶HUSSEY, 172.

traditionally reserved for women (like 'chastity, sacrifice',¹ 'self-sacrifice'²). These were asked for in many religions,³ especially from women; sometimes by other women higher up, but mostly by men higher up, who apparently had to sacrifice less.

Women's high visibility in the TS made some of its opponents use sexism as an 'argument'.⁴ They spoke of it as 'hysterical women', or, more subtly, disapproving that its leaders were not all male as they ought to be: '[the TS'] leading men- I should say women.'⁵

Did this mean that there was no difference between the types of activities of men, and of women, theosophists? In 1918, Mrs Corporaal-van Achterbergh of the Dutch East Indies suggested there was; in the sense that women's activities were internal, while practical application in the wider social and political spheres was almost exclusively an all-male affair.⁶

This part is rather small, as I found in my sources more information on women's movements in Europe than on Asia. I limited the European part to what was necessary as background to Asia.

¹Motibai E. Bādivāla, 'Theosophy and Womanhood', *ADB* Dec. 1908, 370-1.

²TT Sept. 1913, 936. FARWERCK-BORRIUS, 4: 'woman ... as far as self-sacrifice is concerned, surely in general, can and will give more than man.' According to John Stuart Mill's *On the Subjection of Women* equal rights between men and women would take away this 'extreme self-sacrifice, which is the unreal ideal of feminine nature now' and equalize men and women as regards self-sacrifice. Christabel Pankhurst's 1913 remark, quoted READ, 298: 'Sacrifice yourself, sacrifice yourself,' is a cry that has lost its power over women,' was too optimistic.

³John Stuart Mill, *ibid.*, ascribed much of the difference between men and women in tendencies towards self-sacrifice, to philosophies and religions.

⁴BOLLAND(1911), 123 approvingly quoted Olcott's criticism of an 1879 HPB article. Bolland thought it 'an extremely female hotchpotch' ('een buitengewoon vrouwelijk hutsopje').

⁵LUNS, 6. 'Hysterical': ROHM, 77; *ibid.*, 21: he held her divorce against AB. The social democrat KOCH(1915) saw as one category of TS members: 'women, or rather: ladies, who are either unmarried or unhappily married, and, for want of a husband, embrace theosophical doctrine.'

⁶CORPORAAL-VAN ACHTERBERGH, 118: 'And now, within the Theosophical Society, this is the peculiar phenomenon: while in all of the Theosophical Society one finds a striving to apply the knowledge one has acquired in practice, in work within society, in imitation of our president's [AB's] work, this really is true only for our male members, while the female ones are practically completely out of this'.

2. MADAME BLAVATSKY

What were the views of the 'mother and creator of the Society', Helena Petrovna Blavatskaja, on women? Meade tends to see HPB as anti-feminist;¹ Roe as pro-feminist.² Her views were complex; for instance

H.P.B. always told me that her successor would be a woman, long before Annie Besant had become a member of the T.S.³

On the other hand, in the Mahatma Letters: 'Verily woman is a dreadful calamity in this fifth race.'⁴ And in the *Secret Doctrine*

the pure maleness is purely divine and spiritual, while the female in a sense is polluted by matter, it is, indeed, matter, and therefore an evil.⁵

When Madame Blavatsky wrote on the TS' Three Objects, she omitted the recent addition of 'without distinction of sex'.⁶

What were views on abortion, inside and outside the Theosophical Society? A doctor from Colorado, who had joined the still few US theosophists, asked Madame Blavatsky:

'Is Foeticide a Crime?' Not that I personally have any serious doubts about the unlawfulness of such an act; but the custom prevails to such an extent in the United States that there are comparatively only few persons who can see any wrong in it. Medicines for this purpose are openly advertised and sold; in "respectable families" the ceremony is regularly performed every year, and the family physician who would presume to refuse to undertake the job, would be peremptorily dismissed, to be replaced by a more accommodating one. I have conversed with physicians, who have no more conscientious scruples to produce an abortion, than to administer a physic, on the other hand there are certain tracts from orthodox [Christian] channels published against this practice; but they are mostly so overdrawn ...⁷

Madame Blavatsky replied: 'Theosophy in general answers: "At no age as under no circumstance whatever is murder justifiable!" Not because of 'one or another orthodox *ism*', but as abortion was a 'crime against nature', 'interference with the operation of nature, hence-with KARMA', and 'double suicide'.

¹MEADE, 24; 107.

²As do ELLWOOD and WESSINGER(1993). Roe overrates the significance of the goddess Isis in a title; as with *Ostara* the use of female (SNYDER, 347: 'Ostara ... the Teutonic god of beauty' is wrong) deities' names is no guarantee of feminism; nor was its editor Von Liebenfels' inspiration by HPB.

³WACHTMEISTER(1989), 52. At first, she had thought of American Mrs Holloway; MEADE, 294.

⁴*Mahatma Letters*, 421.

⁵Quoted MOERLAND(1989), 8. 'Master DK', quoted Alice Bailey, quoted PRICE(1986A), 23, spoke of the wiser, inner aspect of HPB as He, the exterior side as she.

⁶BLAVATSKY(1987), 39.

⁷'Is Foeticide a Crime', *TT*, Aug. 1883, 282-3.

For, indeed, when even successful and the mother does not die just then, it still shortens her life on earth to prolong it with dreary percentage in Kamaloka. ... Of course the sceptic of whatever class will sneer at our notions and call them absurd superstitions and "unscientific twaddle". But we do not write for sceptics.¹

Madame Blavatsky not only opposed the feminist view on the right to abortion,² but also breaking down the barriers between sexes. As is evident in her attack we mentioned earlier on the Russian 'nihilist' democrats:

The names of John Stuart Mill, Darwin, and Büchner, were upon the lips of every beardless boy and every heedless girl at the universities and colleges.³ The former were preaching Nihilism, the latter Women's Rights and Free Love ... The one let their hair grow like *nuzhiks* [peasants]; the other clipped their hair short and affected blue spectacles ...⁴

Indian child marriage appalled HPB as an individual; she never campaigned for its abolition though.⁵ She did not criticize orthodox Hindus' ban on widows remarrying:

If a female has entered the marital relation, she should, in my opinion, remain a chaste widow, if her husband should die.⁶

3. ANNIE BESANT FROM 'FULL-FLEDGED FEMINIST' TO DELICATE BALANCE

'My first public lecture should be on behalf of my own sex', Annie Besant wrote of the 1874 beginning of her career.⁷ During her pre-1889 period, she had literary, but hardly organizational influence on the young movement of women:

the women's suffrage movement did not dare accept her, a militant anti-Christian, among their ranks.⁸

In pamphlets like *Marriage* in 1882, she attacked violent husbands. In her *Our Corner* magazine, she wrote on subjects like 'Some Advanced Women in the Past', and 'Anti-Slavery Women'.⁹ Reva Pollock Greenburg considers her, in the time before she

¹Ibid., 283. Kamaloka is the equivalent in theosophy of purgatory in Christian theology.

²Anarchist Emma Goldman, for instance, who left the Russian empire for the US like HPB, though of poor parents, propagated pro-choice views on abortion in the late nineteenth century. CUMBEY, 41; 59, opposing both occultism and abortion, wrongly lumps them together in her conspiracy-led-by-Satan theory.

³Russian universities then did not take girls, heedless or not.

⁴'The history of a "book"', *BCW*, II, 359f.

⁵MEADE, 207; 480. Unlike Van Hinloopen Labberton in Indonesia; see p. 285.

⁶'Madame Blavatsky on Hindu widow-remarriage', *TT*, Aug. 1931, 639.

⁷BESANT(1893), 181.

⁸DINNAGE(1986), 31. Her speeches and free speech court cases attracted many young women though.

⁹POLLOCK GREENBURG, 15.

joined the TS, 'the first full-fledged feminist'.¹ And:

In demanding reproductive rights and sexual satisfaction for women, Annie Besant was clearly a century ahead of her times.²

W.P. Ball, a fellow freethinker opposed to her socialism, wrote of Annie Besant:

like most women, at the mercy of her last male acquaintance for her views on economics ...³

Her 1885 reaction to this was 'stupendous male self-conceit'. And her theosophic 1893 reaction to her 1885 reaction: 'A foolish paragraph'.⁴ Nethercot in a way echoed Ball, when he looked for the:

clue ... [to] her mutable career [1]... she yearned to be a martyr. [2]At the same time she was extremely susceptible to outside personal influences, particularly of a masculine nature.⁵

Annie Besant's joining the TS marked a ceasing or lowering of her involvement in progressive movements, women's movements among them. Madame Blavatsky objected to contraception, as it interfered with souls seeking reincarnation.⁶ She changed Besant's earlier views on birth control to 'restriction of the sexual relation to the perpetuation of the race'.⁷ She made Mrs Besant withdraw her pre-TS book *The law of population*.

According to Reva Pollock Greenburg, Annie Besant:

ceased publication of *The Law of Population* [sic] and refused to sell the copyright, depriving the public of one of the few explicit and inexpensive manuals on birth control, and one of the few well-reasoned arguments in favour of feminine control on reproduction.⁸

¹POLLOCK GREENBURG, 13.

²POLLOCK GREENBURG, 15.

³BESANT(1893), 315f.

⁴Ibid. Contrary to OREN, 90 she did not write, only quoted, the 'self-conceit' in 1893.

⁵NETHERCOT(1963), 11f; CLEATHER(1922A), 19-20 agrees; TAYLOR(1992), 161; 290 disputes this. Engels wrote to German socialist Kautsky on Annie Besant: 'Mother B. always is of the religion of the man who has subjected her.' MEW, vol. 38 (Berlin: Dietz, 1968), 191; letter to Karl Kautsky (Stuttgart), London, 25 October 1891, 190-1. Sylvia Pankhurst's biographer Patricia Romero has a similar doubtful theory on her subject. AB's feminist biographer Rosemary Dinnage has a sort of non-sexist variation on Ball's theme: DINNAGE, 51: 'latest set of beliefs from the latest strong personality'. Besant herself suggested Edward Aveling had become a socialist, as he had fallen in love with Eleanor Marx; TAYLOR(1992), 165-6. Things may work the other way around if one moves from one social environment and/or philosophy to another (see p. 73), one may become attracted to different types of people than before.

⁶ROE, 311.

⁷BESANT(1893), 243. AB quoted TILLET(1982), 89. TT, March 1913, 954, in a positive review of a book by Swedish eugenics theorist Ellen Key: 'the sex-function should only be used for the sacred purpose of generation.' St. Augustine already had this view in the 5th century A.D. in his *De bono conjugii* (On good marriage).

⁸POLLOCK GREENBURG, 15. Annie Besant used the words: 'entirely in the hands of the woman'. Quoted ibid. MAC MILLAN, 25 wrote of AB's TS days in India that she may have scandalized the establishment 'because she advocated free love or birth control.' That, however, was during a different period in her life, though some people never forget.

Ursula Bright, the wife of the Liberal M.P. Jacob Bright, set up the Equal Franchise Committee. Later, though, the Committee collapsed, as

Mrs Bright, like Annie Besant, became increasingly involved with Theosophy and left worldly concerns to others.¹

Just before a new upturn in the women's suffrage movement, and a leftward turn by Annie Besant, she wrote:

Woman claims the right to labour, but very often she has forgotten that employers can play upon certain characteristics of the woman that nothing can alter, because they are fundamental and natural.²

After that upturn, Annie Besant and other Co-masons took part as a group in a big London suffrage procession, June 17th 1911.³ Three years later, at a time of climax for the pre-World War I women's movement (and other mass movements), Mrs Besant spoke to a packed Albert Hall. The audience applauded her, they saw her as a veteran; though dissent sounded from the crowd when she wanted a compromise with Asquith's Liberal Party.⁴ To Besant's indignation, Christabel Pankhurst made theosophic suffragettes choose between the TS and suffragism.⁵

Allowing more space to opponents of her personal sympathies here than with some other issues, trying more scrupulously to maintain the TS' political neutrality, Besant thought: 'an anti-suffrage society would also be in order' for theosophists.⁶

When Annie Besant praised Madame Blavatsky in 1918, she said her teacher had 'a lion's heart and a male brain'.⁷ In 1925 AB

wrote an article to launch the League of Motherhood, but this was never used as I found that many feminists resented the tone of it and I did not myself think it quite suitable. The League of

¹POLLOCK GREENBURG, 27. This recalls a question we have already discussed for Annie Besant: a shift 'away from politics' upon becoming a theosophist? Or towards a different type in politics?

²BESANT(1910C), 99. Much earlier, in BESANT(1876), 7, though: 'pay women, for the same work, the same wage that men receive; let sex be no disqualification; let women be trained to labour, and educated for self-support.'

³E. LUTYENS, 32-3.

⁴BESANT(1914B). RAEBURN, 236.

⁵TT July 1914, 469. NETHERCOT(1963), 344 suggests she supported the OSE in the 1920's; but she then was a more traditional, Adventist, Christian. Sylvia PANKHURST(1931), 90, on her mother Emmeline, suggests a follow-up to 1880's friction: 'Annie Besant, then active in the same cause, whose short skirts and short hair Mrs. Pankhurst thought hideous.' Ibid., 91: 'It was said that ... Mme. Blavatsky, had been seen to extend her arm to abnormal length, in order to light a cigarette at the gas jet in the ceiling. Mrs. Pankhurst and her sisters attended some of the séances, but nothing remarkable happened during their presence. Mrs. Pankhurst was completely skeptical and dismissed Blavatsky's occult phenomena as mere imposture.'

⁶TT May 1914, 158f.

⁷TMNI, 1918, 283.

Motherhood never materialized but I wrote a book called *The Call of the Mother* ...¹

Margaret Cousins quoted what Annie Besant had said to her: 'You can work better with women than I can, you know them better.'²

According to Jinarajadasa, Annie Besant during her last years before 1933 did not want to stay a woman:

She has her eyes fixed on the future, particularly on a swift rebirth in an Indian body. Her preference is for a Kshatriya body -of course, a male one- for she says that in her inmost nature she is a Warrior.³

Both outright opponents of the women's movement and militant feminists were minorities in the TS. Annie Besant's later views agreed with this.

A. FIGHTING 'VICE'

One can observe the shift in Annie Besant's views on women in general also in her specific views on prostitutes.

Anti-prostitution crusades, in which he joined forces with the Salvation Army, were a favourite cause of Annie Besant's colleague, William T. Stead;⁴ and of many others at the 19th century's end. Opinions on the subject differed, though. Ellen Ross discusses

social purity leader Ellice Hopkins and feminist Josephine Butler (in Britain in the 1870's-80's). ... Both did "rescue work" among prostitutes, but Butler deplored Hopkins's antivice crusades. Butler's movement was explicitly feminist and was committed to defending the civil rights of the same prostitutes whom Hopkins was trying to drive off the streets.⁵

In her atheist and later also socialist days, Annie Besant based herself on Josephine Butler, whose 'heroism equalled by few women or by few men either'⁶ she admired. She thought

Ladies in the upper classes have no conception of the stress and agony that drives many a forlorn girl "on the streets". If some of them would try what life is like when it consists of making shirts at three halfpence each (cotton not provided) and starving on the money earned, they would perhaps learn to speak more gently of "those horrid women".⁷

Annie Besant then did not consider prostitutes as really at a lower moral level than many of the married women:

"If a woman may not earn a living by selling her labour," she wrote "she must earn it by

¹E. LUTYENS, 127.

²COUSINS(1934), 391.

³WT, 77 March 1933, 1.

⁴WILSON(1970), 63.

⁵Signs, Autumn 1992, 146, review of Judith R. Walkowitz, *City of dreadful delight. Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London*. Virago, 1992.

⁶BESANT(1876), 1.

⁷BESANT(1876), 7.

selling her body, and it makes comparatively little difference, if she be forced to sell herself, whether the sale is for life or for a term. Marriage for an establishment is as loathsome as sale for a night'. Few feminists or socialists were prepared to state the case in such strong terms.¹

² When Madame Blavatsky reviewed Alexandre Dumas fils' plea in favour of voting rights for women, she strongly objected to his view that the profession of prostitute should be legal.³ A quarter of a century later, Annie Besant addressed her theosophic followers as follows:

There are women amongst you pure and clean and good; there are women in the streets who lack every virtue you possess. Oh, your purity would be brighter if you shared with the impure, and tried to raise your sisters to that which is the blessing of your own lives.⁴

Her approach had shifted from differences in level of finance to differences in level of virtue; from women with bad or good luck, to women in the perspective of meaningful karma. To Annie Besant now, anti-prostitution was central to the women's movement:

that heroic struggle - the terrible battle against prostitution. And the fight against prostitution was also partly won, but there is very much more to do in that, and that is one of the reasons why the women's vote is wanted so badly.⁵

Dutch East Indies General Secretary D. van Hinloopen Labberton thought:

Work is one of the best ways of education. In Semarang, I saw in the women's prison how the morality improved by weaving and batik. Also in fighting prostitution, one finds that the Native woman needs only the *bâtera* (weaving loom) or the *ijanting* (little wax [pen-like] high in order to forget all sensuality, and to return to a chaste way of life.⁶

The question for Rukmini Devi Arundale at the start of her successful career as a dancer and dance group leader was not so much prohibiting prostitution as distancing herself from it. She made Tamil Nadu's Bharata Natya dancing respectable by doing it herself; before, it had been 'practised exclusively by the courtesans'.⁷

¹POLLOCK GREENBURG, 17, quoted and comments WIERINGA(1995), 80: Indonesian Suwarni Pringgogidgo stated the question similarly in 1933.

²BCW, vol. II, 512f: 'A French view of women's rights': 517.

³BESANT(1911C), 39.

⁴BESANT(1914B), 7.

⁵'De nieuwe strafwetgeving voor Nederlandsch-Indië', *TMNI*, 1918, 50. 'Oproep', *TMNI* 1923, 175, called on readers to fight all sex outside marriage: 'fight prostitution, neo-Malthusianism (birth control), homosexuality and all other forms of vice in deed, word, or thought.'

⁶N. Subrahmaniam, 'Rukmini Arundale', RAY, vol. 1, 57. J. Michael Kennedy, *CIS*, Dec. 1992, 333, writes of 'Brahmanised Bharatanatyam'. The question of distancing themselves also came with Indian Congress women street demonstrators, whom their enemies compared to 'street women' in the sense of prostitutes. Gandhi told prostitutes wanting to join the Congress to change their profession first; THAPAR, 87. COUSINS(1941), 70: 'the Devadasi or dancing girl heard the call of Mahatmaji [Gandhi] and left her vocation braving the treatment she might be given by her

4. INDIA

One influence on theosophy, orthodox Hinduism, in its doctrines had barriers against the equality of women.¹ In *Lucifer*, a Hindu defended death by fire for widows, and prohibiting widows from re-marrying.² Bernard, the former French Joint GS, defended orthodox Hinduism on women's position within it, basing this on reincarnation theory.³

G.N. Chakravarti, a leading Indian member of the TS and later an important adviser of Annie Besant, wrote an article against a Madras runaway wife. In it, he asserted male authority in marriage.⁴ A critical reaction to this by Captain Banon appeared in a later issue.⁵

In India, in 1893, the year Annie Besant first came there, 'for the first time native ladies would attend the coming convention' of the TS.⁶ Krishna Dasa commented on Besant's views of Indian women's issues:

she ... rushed to the defence and sometimes deprecated interference even with customs (like child marriage and enforced widowhood), which were really against the Hindu Shāstras, lest the high spiritual and sacramental ideal on which the institution of marriage and the relation between husband and wife were based in the Hindu Shāstras be lowered.⁷

Catherine Wessinger calls this 'a complete reversal of Besant's feminist stance, taken as a young atheist'.⁸

In the *Adyar Bulletin* of Dec. 1908, 370-1, Motibāi E. Bātlivāla wrote 'Theosophy and Womanhood'. It was one of the very few articles by an Indian woman in theosophical magazines, though by then many Indians and many women were writing in them. In those times, outside the TS, quite some Indian women wrote in magazines.⁹

Jawaharlal Nehru's sister, Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, remembered 1916, the year of

"respectable" fellow prisoners: but I saw the most orthodox of Brahmin women mingling socially, even eating with her, while she wept as she was being released because her Satyagrahi sisters had treated her as a soul and an equal.' Ibid., 89, favoured the abolition of *devadāsīs*. A *devadāsī*, linked to a Hindu temple, is not a prostitute in the commercial sense.

¹OELC, June 1939, quotes from the Vishnu Purana.

²Kali Prasanna Mukerji, F. T. S. in *Lucifer* VIII, 504-5. No reactions to this article appeared.

³BERNARD. In 1904, he became TS Branch Inspector in India; TS General Report on 1904, 16.

⁴'Hindu Marriage', 77 Oct. 1888, 53f.

⁵77 March 1889, 365-9.

⁶NETHERCOT(1963), 17.

⁷NI, 25-8-1924, 14. On widow remarriage, she clashed with reformer Hans Raj; HEIMSATH, 327.

⁸WESSINGER(1990), 32.

⁹BANNERJI studied them in Bengal (where theosophy was relatively weak) and in the social reform movement (which Annie Besant opposed). In the TS' early years in India, the Maharanees Surmonoyee gave it a financial contribution; BCW, III, 3.

upturn: 'Women like Annie Besant and Sarojini Naidu filled me with the ambition to be like them'.¹ She then went to the Lucknow Congress to hear them: 'I was their devoted "fan"'. Being only sixteen year old, she could not join Annie Besant's Home Rule League.² Padmini Sengupta claims about many Indian women that 'The internment of Annie Besant ... had the effect of bringing women belligerently into the political arena'.³ At the 1917 Calcutta Congress session, where Annie Besant became the first woman president: 'About 400 ladies were present'.⁴

In 1919, Mrs Besant was in a women's deputation to the government with Sarojini Naidu, and two women from one of India's richest families, Mrs Herābāi Tātā and Miss Mithan Tātā. The deputation's talks led to permission for provinces to decide whether or not women should have the right to vote.⁵ Gandhi's supporter Vithalbhai Patel accused Besant about 1920 of not working hard for women's suffrage.⁶ That Madras province got women voting first, in 1921 (the last province, Bihar, followed suit in 1929), one may interpret as a sign that the TS did have some positive influence there.⁷

¹PANDIT, 59.

²PANDIT, 62. The Home Rule League had a Women's Branch; AGNEW(1979), 35.

³SENGUPTA, 137 and 147-8; MAJUMDAR(1969), 253. on the participation of women as a special feature of the Home Rule League.

⁴MUTHANNA, 210. There, Annie Besant said: 'The strength of the Home Rule Movement was rendered ten-fold greater by the adhesion to it of a large number of women who brought to its helping the uncalculating heroism, the endurance, the self-sacrifice, of the feminine nature'; quoted SITARAMAYYA(1969), 130. 'There had been women members of the Indian National Congress from its inception'; COUSINS(1941), 27-8.

⁵SENGUPTA, 156; MAJUMDAR/RAYCHAUDHURI/DATTA, 967; COUSINS(1941), 35. Ibid., 32-3: the first Indian women's deputation to a British government official was in 1917. Then, Sarojini Naidu, Margaret Cousins and others spoke to Montagu. The vote was added as an afterthought. Cousins wrote, *ibid.*, 34: 'But in my own heart I thought it would be a century before Indian women would understand, or be interested in political matters. I entirely under-rated Indian mentality in that second year of my residence in India.'

⁶MUTHANNA, 275. NETHERCOT(1963), 299: Despard then wrote to India, defending her. OREN, 90: 'Some critics charged that Annie Besant diluted her feminism when she moved to India in 1894.' Gandhi, though opposing birth control devices, in speeches and writings mostly supported women's rights: P. Joshi (compilation). *Gandhi on women*. New Delhi, Centre for Women's Development Studies, 1988.

⁷Vijay AGNEW(1979), 113-4, also suggests the presence of Annie Besant and Margaret Cousins made a difference in Madras presidency. In 1881, before Annie Besant came, Madras province was already ahead of the rest of India in women's education; MATHUR(1973), 37. COUSINS(1941), 36: the vote was for 'women who possessed equal qualifications-a certain amount of literacy, property, age, payment of taxes, length of residence.' Ibid., 64-5 and 73: in 1923, only one million women had the vote; in 1936, five million. In Madras presidency, only 1% of women met with the strict qualification conditions; still, that was higher than anywhere else in India; AGNEW(1979), 113. Madras' percentage for male electors was 11.6. COUSINS(1941), 44 and 72: in 1941 Indian women were still dissatisfied with franchise qualifications like 'wifehood', though, according to Cousins, they 'favoured literacy qualification'. Cousins contrasted Indian men's, especially

The Liberal Catholic bishop and future TS president George Arundale defended ceremonial conservatism, adding ideas on 30's society:

... each woman is a temple of Motherhood ... how can any woman envy us who are within this [LCC] Sanctuary when she is an Altar, when she is a Priest, when she is a Sacrament, when she is an Offering all in one? Unfortunately in the world today women do not realize this splendid priesthood. Some of them seek after other priesthoods ... War ... unemployment... these crimes exist in our midst in no small degree because woman has forgotten, or perchance does not yet know, her mission, her power, her purpose. ... Men will execute, but women will inspire, and until women do inspire the world must surely continue to suffer.¹

Rukmini Devi Arundale was practically the only exception to the rule that no Indian women wrote in *TT*. In a Leadbeater experiment, a novelty for Hinduism, she also figured as female *purohit* [officiating priest]. The experiment succeeded, Leadbeater wrote: the blue-throated Deva² appeared.

Rukmini Devi Arundale said in her 1936 congress speech

In modern times, many people do not understand; they think that woman must be an exact likeness of man ... What many women want is freedom to be equal with man in his vices, the freedom of licence ...³

Rukmini applied her husband's ideas to the sphere of Indian politics:

Unfortunately, many women who are active in work in the outer world tend to become somewhat hard, and even, I might say, unwomanly ... women must be womanly just as men should be manly. The world suffers when woman strips herself of the womanliness and tends to become masculine. Often her masculinity is worse than the man's. A woman very strongly represents in herself the spirit of the home, and that spirit must never be lost ... We often hear people saying that such-and-such an Indian woman is a splendid speaker, is taking part in politics, is a great worker in the cause of India. I sometimes wonder if some of these women are really helping India. May they not sometimes, in fact, though not in intention, be hindering our Motherland?⁴

In the 1930's Indian Central Legislative Assembly, Bhagavan Das opposed the

politicians', relative lack of resistance to women's suffrage favourably to her earlier experiences in England and Ireland; COUSINS(1941), 38. Until 1926, women could not be elected to legislatures. Ibid., 60 and 86: by 1940, India had 80 women members of state and provincial legislatures, 'and thus ranks third [after the USA and USSR] amongst the nations of the world as regards the political influence and position secured by its women'.

¹ARUNDALE(1930).

²*TT* July 1932, 383. According to the Puranas, Siva swallowed poison to save the world from it. There was, besides with Brahman woman Rukmini, also a satisfactory experiment with an unnamed kshatriya man. Rukmini also performed the first *pūja* in a new temple in Benares; COUSINS(1941), 139.

³*TT* Oct. 1936, 18f.

⁴DEVI(1936), 199.

possibility of divorce.¹

Margaret Cousins, who had been active in the Irish women's vote campaign, after moving to India paid much attention to women there. In her book on Asian women,² she did not mention the Theosophical Society. She contributed to the 'only women's magazine in India', *Stri Dharma* (meaning in Hindu religious law 'proper conduct for wives'). *Stri Dharma's* editor, Mrs Malati Patwardhan from Bombay, Honorary Magistrate of Madras, District Commissioner of the Girl Guides, frequently travelled along with Krishnamurti.³ The magazine was linked to the Women's Indian Association, which had 2700 members by 1921.⁴ While Annie Besant was still alive, Cousins duly mentioned her TS president's opposition to Gandhi's non-cooperation in it.

After Besant's death, George Arundale did not inspire comparable docility in her though, and participation in Gandhi campaigns led to jail terms for Mrs Cousins.⁵ To the disappointment of Margaret and James Cousins, Arundale prevented men and women acting together in a play.⁶

A. EDUCATION

All teachers must be clairvoyant; it is an absolute prerequisite for the office.⁷

Some theosophical schools were: in The Netherlands the Pythagoras primary school in Ommen, and a secondary school in Naarden; the King Arthur school in Edinburgh, Scotland;⁸ in Australia till Martyn broke away and turned off the money tap. Most TS education effort, though, was in India, Ceylon and Indonesia. Before we move to women's education there, first some short general remarks on theosophy and education.

Madame Blavatsky had emphasized 'in all countries' 'non-sectarian education'.⁹ Practice in Ceylon, where Christian sectarian education was the only option before she

¹A. MISRA, 157.

²*The Awakening of Asian Womanhood*. Madras, Ganesh, 1922.

³*TT* 1930, 558. M. LUTYENS(1975), 173, 190, 196, 227-8, 243.

⁴AGNEW(1979), 104.

⁵She protested against division of labour by sex in the satyagraha movement; AGNEW(1979), 39.

⁶COUSINS and COUSINS, 379. If Arundale had permitted it, he certainly would not have set a precedent in India's theatre history. For instance, actress Kamlabai Gokhale had already performed with men on stage in 1904 and in movies since 1912; MOHAN, 13.

⁷LEADBEATER(1971), 61.

⁸TILKEMA(1932), 30.

⁹BLAVATSKY(1987), 44. Also in the 1879 *Principles of the TS*: JINARAJADASA(1925), 245.

arrived, had already differed. Annie Besant changed the theory, however.¹ In Kashmir,

Besant felt that generally it was not advisable to educate children of different faiths at the same institution.²

In 1912, she formed the Theosophical Education Trust: only ES members might join.³ Most joined Krishnamurti when he split.⁴

Ex-school principal Arundale expressed his ideas:

I see no reason why the education of girls should not substantially be the same as for boys, but with special emphasis on the management and beauty of the home, on food values and simple medicines. And in principle I favour co-education throughout the educational system.⁵

The Theosophist, in March 1897,⁶ illustrated with tables, showed little had been done so far on women's education in British India. When Annie Besant came there she wanted to change that. But on what lines?

AB expressed her ideas, rather new to her, that women's education meant preparing girls for a future as 'Goddess of the home'.⁷ One might argue that was still more liberal than those who did not want any education. In 1893, Mrs Besant and Olcott met

leading pandits of Benares for discussion. We found that they disapproved of education for Hindu girls in general, especially for the virgin widows ... on the other hand, they expressed their unqualified approbation of my Sanskrit libraries and schools and societies for Hindu boys. It was amusing to see the contrast between the appearance and views of Annie Besant, the champion, for so many years, of the uplifting and education of women, and the hard, stony conservatism ...⁸

¹TT Feb. 1906, 396. BESANT(1907B), 176. BESANT(1911C), 174: 'over here there is much feeling in favour of secular education because you have never had it and know not its results. New Zealand has it, and her youth is a problem ... racing, gambling, lack of all control and subordination.' Olcott (convention speech, TT, suppl. Nov. 1898, viii) saw the TS as a counterforce for 'the home of every Hindu boy who was exposed to' not only 'foreign missionaries' but also 'skeptical teachers'. Ibid., ix. AB called CHC 'absolutely Hindu'. See also 'Lord Curzon's sympathy with the Central Hindu College scheme', TT, suppl. Feb. 1899, xxi-xxii. TT, May 1906, 631, attributed increase in crime in Upper Burma to secular education there, contrary to religious education in Lower Burma. Gandhi, and 1930's and 40's Ceylon education minister C. Kannangara, favoured separation between school education and religion; SUMATHIPALA, 157.

²WESSINGER(1989), 227; referring to AB's *The Indian Nation*, 36. But VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1910), 185 preferred non-denominational government schools to then still mainly Christian religious schools in Indonesia.

³BROOKS(1914A).

⁴C. Jinarajadasa: 'Dr. Besant's work for education', TT July 1933, 396.

⁵TT Nov. 1937, 157.

⁶370. Parsis then had done most on women education, compared to other religious communities. In 1901-2, 67.15% of Parsi girls were at school; MATHUR(1973), 54.

⁷TT, March 1897, 331. TT, Jan. 1902, 252-3. Also TT, June 1905, 57.

⁸ODL, TT Dec. 1902, 130-1.

Besant later lagged behind Jawaharlal Nehru's view though.¹ S.V. Subrahmanyam, provincial secretary of the TS-linked Sons of India wrote from its Adyar headquarters:

The Indian woman should be educated in accordance with her immemorial traditions and her characteristic development through the centuries, and care should be taken that she does not grow into the militant and aggressive type of the suffragette of England.²

When Central Hindu College became Hindu university in 1916, its girls' school, founded in 1904, had to be disconnected. Lilian Edger led it.

Also in 1916, D.K. Karve founded the Indian Women's University. He got divergent reactions to it: Annie Besant advised him to make it an all-India institution; Margaret Cousins sat in its Senate.³ Gandhi had mixed feelings. Others rather supported co-education, like the students of the only Government College for Women, in Calcutta.⁴

According to Mathur, many among India's higher castes felt that education, if any, for one's daughters was not to get them employment, but a better chance of marriage.⁵

The advantages of education as an aid to a successful marriage did not influence the parents of the poorer classes. They were, on the other hand, less opposed to the employment of their daughters in independent occupations.⁶

At least two views on women's education in India, both class-linked according to Mathur, opposed one another. A government paper summed them up as follows:

The one school (i.e. the *Humanistic School*) would bring up girls on lines as similar as possible to those laid down for boys and would prepare them for a university career. The other (i.e. the *Vocational School*) would prepare girls primarily for home life ... By the former, it is contended ... that, after all, the school is intended to train the mind; that a woman should be so educated as to be a companion to her husband, and that experience shows that an education in the 'humanities' is that which is most sought after by the girls themselves ...

¹Pundit Jawaharlal on women's education', MB, Feb. 1934, 91-2.

²The Order of the Sons of India', AdB, Apr. 1910, 124f; 127.

³COUSINS and COUSINS, 278. MATHUR(1973), 132. Ibid., 133: a Japanese precedent was an inspiration. Ibid., 144: it attracted mainly Hindu women; many Parsi and Christian women were at co-educational Bombay university. C. v. d. V., 'Uit Allerhande Bron', KOT, 1918, 476f: at Women's University, studies were for three years only, to be finished at customary age of marriage. Domestic economy was a mandatory subject. Ibid., 479: 'many Indians, including women, poke fun at the idea of teaching university students how to use pots and pans.'

⁴MATHUR(1973), 132.

⁵'It is not desirable that there should be a separate University for women ... We women do not want to lag behind.' Quoted MATHUR(1973), 131.

⁶'People did not educate their daughters to get them employment but to marry them on better and easier terms. But as soon as a suitable bridegroom was available, the girl was at once placed in the seclusion of the *purdah*.' MATHUR(1973), 62.

⁷MATHUR(1973), 62.

By the other school it is argued that ... the majority of girls are precluded by early marriage from a university career ... that women with the traditional characteristics of decorous home-keeping are what the educated husbands themselves desire rather than the westernised product of the university, and that girls are, as a rule, physically incapable of the strain of a university course.¹

Annie Besant would not have agreed with the last part of that sentence. As did the British India government,² she agreed with neither view completely. Nevertheless, theosophists often sided more closely with the second, housewife, view; in Indonesia, as we will see, and in India. Looking at the TS' social base there, this agrees with Mathur's remark on socially different views.

Son of a landlord Bhagavan Das was president, his sister Srimati Uma Nehru was secretary of Crosthwaite Girls' College, Allahabad.³ In a speech there, he explained his ideas, similar to Annie Besant's 1900's ones:

Her vocation is on the whole different from man's, and it is in every way finer and nobler ... woman's natural and noble vocation is that of wife and mother ... the woman is the heart, the man the head ...⁴

I most earnestly pray with all the strength of my heart, that India may be saved from one particular phase of Western experience, viz., the setting of man against woman, and woman against man ...⁵

In the West, man and woman are said to have forgotten their older and true ideal, the same as the Indian, of better *half* and other *half*, and to be fighting for equality to-day. It is as if the right lobe and the left lobe of the same brain should fight with each other. It is madness. Our ideal has always been, not of equality, which involves odious comparison, whence conflict, but of identity of wife and husband, as two halves ...⁶

Nemesis has come, and they are trying to do all the things that men are doing and strive against them, in the battle of life, instead of nerving, heartening, vitalising them for that battle. This is scarcely natural, from the Indian standpoint.⁷

Man seems intended by nature to do all the rougher and harder outside work of "bread-winning" and all the competitive battling of life; and woman to do the comparatively less hard and more affectionate work of "house-keeping" and "home-making", and reserve her vital

¹Resolution of Female Education in India; Education (A) Proceedings, Nos. 1-12, October 1917. Quoted MATHUR(1973), 64f.

²MATHUR(1973), 66.

³DAS(1930), 2.

⁴Ibid., 12-4.

⁵Ibid., 15.

⁶Ibid., 16.

⁷Ibid., 18.

powers for the great toil and travail of maternity ... Some very false and very mischievous catchwords have become current, in consequence of the thoughtless speech and behaviour of foolish and arrogant men, who have been insulting womanhood ... about the "household drudgery" of women and the "dignified work" of men.¹

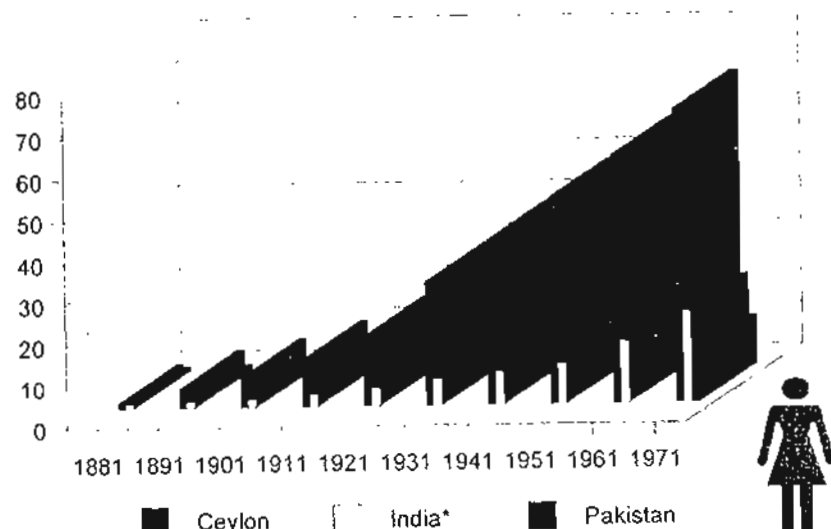
Das spoke of men, but omitted some feminists also opposing division of labour by sex.

His conclusion on the field of education was:

It would be well, therefore, if girls were educated primarily for home-making, and all that it means.²

5. EDUCATION IN CEYLON. THE WELL AND THE PENDULUM

Annie Besant's views on Ceylon were similar to those on India: Sinhalese maiden's education should not prepare her for a profession; 'That evil fate has not yet descended upon the East.'³ More progressive ideas were voiced later by Wickramasinghe.⁴



* Figures until 1947 British India; after 1947 Republic of India. Pakistan 1971 only

Women's literacy percentage in Ceylon vs. India and Pakistan

Apart from emancipatory or non-emancipatory ideas on education, there was the question of whether women should have education at all. Women's education in Lanka predated

¹Ibid., 19.

²Ibid., 22.

³BESANT(1908C), 3. (But how about women on farms?)

⁴WICKRAMASINGHE(1932).

TS involvement. That the relative influence of the Theosophical Society on education was bigger in Ceylon than in India, though, may have contributed to the literacy rate of Lanka women. It was higher than in other South Asian countries, though the 1881 starting position had not been much different.¹

An Australian, Miss Kate Pickett, became Principal of Colombo Sanghamitta Girls' High School, in June 1890. On 23 June 1891, she was found drowned in a city well with a high rim, very difficult to fall into inadvertently. Christians said it had been suicide; Olcott and other theosophists during the judicial enquiry indignantly denied this:² an accident! People seem not to have spent much time investigating a third possibility, that she had been pushed.

Kate Pickett's mother, Mrs Elise Pickett, stayed in Ceylon. Later in 1891, Mrs Musaeus Higgins, whose plans to come to the island dated from before Miss Pickett's death, joined her.³ This American widow, German-born, daughter of a High Court judge,⁴ would play a central part in the next decades of the isle's educational history.

Views of women from a German-American and from a Lanka background on girls' education were not automatically identical, as turned out when Mrs Musaeus Higgins sent in her resignation to Olcott on 21 December 1893. She had a conflict with Sanghamitta's ladies' committee. Olcott wrote of its previous history:

I introduced her into office at a public meeting of the women's Society and made them pledge her that she should not be interfered with in her management of the institution. I did this because the women of Ceylon had never been associated together in any public work before and as their domestic relations and house customs differed diametrically with those of Western women, I knew that it would be impossible for Mrs. Higgins to get on with these associated Sinhalese ladies unless she were given freedom of action.⁵

¹See graph, p. 383. In 1971, 71% of Sri Lankan women were literate, compared to 22% in India and 12% in Pakistan; CEI, 150. In 1921, the figure for British India was 4.5%; computed from *Encyclopedia Britannica*, London, 1932, 168. COUSINS(1941), 17, gives 2-3% for the time of writing for India as a whole; and *ibid.*, 98 0.5% for Bihar in 1930. For Ceylon, in 1911 the percentage was 11.7; in 1931 30.2; SUMATHIPALA, 48; 338. See also SCHWARTZBERG, 103.

²OLCOTT(1892). Olcott, *LucL*, March-August 1891, 510: over 6,000 attended Miss Pickett's cremation. Theosophists are strongly anti-suicide: "suicide", then I say, most decidedly not. Such a result can never be a 'natural' one, but is ever due to a morbid brain disease, or to most decided and strong materialistic views. It is the worst of crimes and dire in its results." BLAVATSKY(1987), 227f. Report of Annie Besant lecture, *TT* June 1897, suppl., xli: "The lowest part of the astral world is filled by souls actuated by the lowest type of brutal and animal passions ... Suicides and executed criminals of the lowest type are flung into this state of wretchedness ..." OELC July 1937, 'Suicide Bridge': Glendale, California lodge created 'thought forms' around a local bridge by invocation to prevent suicides. C. Jinarajadasa, *TT* May 1937, on suicide: "The more one knows ... the less one is inclined to general conclusions."

³*LucL* vol. VIII (1891), 438.

⁴*TT* Oct. 1901, 6. Misspell 'Huggins', TILKEMA(1932), 8. Her writings were popular amongst Dutch East Indies theosophists.

⁵ODL, *TT* Oct. 1902, 5f.

To regain that freedom of action now, land for a new school had to come from Peter de Abrew. Later financial contributions came from Albert Schwarz. On 1-5-1895, Dr. W.A.E. English, then associated with Mrs Higgins' school, became the *TT* sub-editor.¹

Her new school was successful. Sometimes maybe too successful, if one takes for a yardstick the tone that was set in Mrs Besant's speeches:

We offer Mrs. Higgins our congratulations; although we cannot say that our ideal of education for Singalese girls is to make them B.A.'s; 'G.H.' (good housewife) would be more to our taste.²

Mrs Musaeus Higgins' 1920 retirement plans³ and 1926 death were markers in the downswing of the pendulum of Adyar influence in Ceylon. Though her school's official De Abrew still looked among theosophists for contacts:

three free Buddhist scholarships, attached to Musaeus college ... three ladies of any nationality, between the ages of 32 and 40, who are well educated Buddhists, with a Buddhist missionary spirit ... apply to Mr. Peter de Abrew F.T.S., M.B.E.⁴

6. INDONESIA

How to react to women's emancipation was a theme in three of the categories in which the TS had members: Dutch, Sumatrans, and to a lesser extent Javanese around *Wederophouw* magazine.

On 26 October 1911, the theosophist 'Mr. S. v. d. W.' lectured to the Batavia [Jakarta] branch of the Dutch Women's Suffrage League. Very probably, she was the local teacher Miss Marie Simone van der Willigen; later to be involved with the Goenoeng Sari school.⁵ She said theosophy saw people as being at distinct hierarchical levels, comparable to age differences in a family. Sex differences differed from that, though. There 'is a difference between a man from our environment and our civilization, and a woman from the non-subject tribes in the interior of Borneo, so you could consider that man to be at a higher level than that woman; but the same difference exists between a man from those regions, and a civilized woman from our society.'⁶ Becoming a woman

¹ODL, *TT* Jan. 1904, 195.

²*TT*, Suppl. Feb. 1903, xii. 'Mrs. Higgins' success.'

³BESANT(1921E), 505: 'Mrs Higgins sorely needs an English Theosophical graduate, who can succeed to her place.'

⁴*TT* March 1937, XIV.

⁵NUGRAHA(1989), 136. She was from a prominent Dutch family. *RANI* 1912, 332; 1914, 312; 816: she was 'first class' (the highest rank) teacher; in Batavia since 1901. As one of only two women teachers then, the government gave her an order of knighthood. On 5-5-1913, she went to The Netherlands on leave. At least during the World War, she did not return. She probably was the 'M. van der Willigen' who wrote VAN DER WILLIGEN(1917) on the *Indië Weerbaar* delegates at the TS meeting. In 1933, Marie Simone van der Willigen published a Dutch translation of Mabel Collins' *The Idyll of the White Lotus* at TUM.

⁶VAN DER WILLIGEN(1911), 1.

was not low-level, though it was different:

I just said, one needs an incarnation as a woman for developing female characteristics. In that, I think, there is also a warning for those fighters for women's rights, who think that they serve their cause best by considering themselves man's equal as far as possible, and show that by copying his characteristics, habits, and acts. Also for parents who think that they help their girls most by bringing them up similarly to boys, and by developing characteristics in them which people like to see in boys. ... We should be *woman* and stay *woman*. Those who fail in this and fight against their femininity, waste their time and the opportunity, given to them [by karma]. They probably will have to spend still more lives as a woman, in order to obtain what they might have already obtained in this life, had they not striven for something which is not theirs. Now, certainly, life's circumstances are thus that woman can best develop and show her femininity as a wife and mother, and the man as provider of the family, and as the person, who in difficult circumstances supports and protects the others.¹

She argued from earlier incarnations for women getting the right to vote:

Who knows, how many present-day women in their pasts as men have worked at a government position; and they still have the characteristics which they acquired then.²

She also argued from Plato, 'one of the greatest theosophists.' And from the administration of the Theosophical Society: first, Madame Blavatsky had done it together with Olcott. Now, Annie Besant reigned, jointly with Leadbeater.³

The suffrage association became the *Vereeniging voor Vrouwenkiesrecht* for the Indies in 1919. Mr and Mrs Van Hinloopen Labberton joined. It was not really attractive to Indonesian women, though.⁴

In 1911, his more leftist phase, Datoek Soetan Maharadja started the 'first feminist magazine in Sumatra', *Soenting Melajoe* (Malay Ornament). Its slogan was 'May women's ability increase constantly.' Maharadja's daughter Zebaidah Ratna Djoewita was its first editor.⁵

Seven years later, progressive West Sumatrans were as disillusioned about *Soenting*

¹VAN DER WILLIGEN(1911), 8-9. Orthodox Hindus say a man may be 'punished', or a woman 'rewarded' by reincarnating as the opposite sex. The TS, with many women members, often kept silent on this. BLAVATSKY(1987), 202: 'the distinction of classes in Society, and of the sexes in the affairs of life ... all are due to what we tersely but truly denominate KARMA.' Theosophist and women's rights advocate COUSINS(1941), 24, saw beneath 19th-20th century improvements for Indian women: 'the spiritual belief of the predominant Hinduism of India-the belief in rebirth which held that the soul might in one life take a man's and in another a woman's body, and thus prevents the single-sexed monopoly of opportunity inherent in the creeds that postulate only one life.'

²VAN DER WILLIGEN(1911), 13.

³VAN DER WILLIGEN(1911), 14-6.

⁴BLACKBURN(1995), 1-3.

⁵ABDULLAH(1973), 217f; NOER, 216. Another Maharadja daughter, Ratna Tanoen, also contributed; IPO 43/1919, 'Vrouwenbeweging', 1.

Melajoe then, as with what Maharadja's views had become on other issues. This showed in the November 1918 issue of *Panoento-Istri*, the magazine of *Poetri Merdika* [Free Women] organization. There, Bahder Johan, describing himself as Social Democrat sympathizer, criticized

the conservative papers *Oetoesan Melajoe* and *Soenting Melajoe*. They say 'that the women have enough rights in Minangkabau.' Everyone knows, though, that this freedom is as a bird's in a cage.¹

In the same month, *Soeara-Perempoean* [Women's Voice] magazine said that *Soenting Melajoe* did not live up to its slogan. *Soeara-Perempoean* thought itself really the only women's magazine for Sumatra, 'one cannot say as much for *Soenting Melajoe*.'² A Maharadja supporter a year later called *Soeara-Perempoean* a magazine of 'whores and pub-crawling girls.'³

Javanese women within the Theosophical Society had little, if any, impact on debates. In March 1915, the TS had three Indonesian woman members, all unmarried ladies of the nobility in Bogor. They were Mas Adjeng Soerjati and Mas Adjeng Soelastri, both from kampung Anjer, Gang Sepatoe; and Raden Adjeng Tedjapoermana. In January 1916, the number had risen to five, all from Java: Raden Ajoe [Lady] Etrij Puhnama, the wife of the Malang public prosecutor, and Raden Ajoe Kanjana Ningrat from Ciamis had joined. About these five I found no further information.⁴

'Karno', pseudonym in Soeriokoemo's *Wederopbouw* magazine, in an article on the *Taman Siswa* education movement approvingly quoted 'a married woman':

The Javanese women's movement follows the Javanese men's movement directly. In their aim, they are the same: 'Changing the existing situation'. While the man strives after the greatness of his country, the woman gives her force for the happiness in the family. Though

¹In that issue, the articles 'Mother' and 'The Woman' also attacked *OM* and *SME*. Quoted IPO 46/1918, 'Vrouwenbeweging', 2. *OM* 7-12-1918, quoted IPO 50/1918, *MBB*, 7, 'very indignantly' wrote of a party in Padang, 'where the girls did not want to eat before the young men joined them and they could have fun. If this is the freedom which women want, the author says, then it is clear that this freedom will ruin both adat and religious law. Thank goodness, in Padang-Panjang the teachers' training school for girls is separate from the one for boys. The Government itself feels that the time has not come for Malays, when boys and girls may contact one another freely.' *OM* quoted IPO 5/1919, 1: woman should not get 'freedom, as the "new women" want it; that would not improve her situation. For instance, it would not be right, were women to add to their many freedoms the right to a husband of their own choice.' In *OM* 6-10-1919, quoted IPO 41/1919, *MBB*, 2, Abdoel Karim advised women: 'most of all, let your parents choose a husband fitting for you. For only then will your marriage be a happy and peaceful one, you will do well, and so will the children whom Allah shall give you!' *SME* 24-1-1919, quoted IPO 6/1919, 'Vrouwenbeweging' was against 'asking equal rights for men and women.'

²Quoted IPO 52/1918, 'Vrouwenbeweging', 3.

³*Warta Hindia* 6-8-1919, quoted IPO 33/1919, *MBB*, 14.

⁴NUGRAHA(1989), 249; 253; 255; 259-60.

limited, this is not inferior to the men's aim; as in domestic happiness man finds the perpetual source, by which he keeps his forces fresh for the struggle outside the home.¹

Thousands of Javanese women were involved in politics then, for instance in the *Sarekat Islam* of Semarang, and later in the *PKI*. However, the segment in the political spectrum of these workers and street market saleswomen was far away from the TS, at least since the founding of *Indië Weerbaar*.

These women had been driven underground by the time various organizations met at the 'first Indonesian women's congress', in Yogyakarta 22-25 December 1928. At this and later congresses, marriage laws were the main point. In Yogyakarta, a female teacher of a TS Arjuna School clashed with Siti Moendyah, of the Muslim women's organization *Aisijjah*, whom she accused of 'defending the institution of polygamy'. Siti Moendyah replied that she did not defend polygamy, merely understood why it existed.²

An Islamic man, who did defend polygyny against secular nationalists, proved that Annie Besant had prestige beyond her Society. This 'S.' in *Pembela Islam* named her and Schopenhauer among supporters of his view that 'one cannot fight polygamy, and monogamy cannot exist without prostitution'.³

When the Japanese army invaded twelve years later, still not even the governor-general's wife, Lady Tjarda van Starkenborgh Stachouwer, had ever been allowed to vote.

A. EDUCATION

In government primary schools in the Dutch East Indies at the end of 1908, girls were much under-represented: 45% girls with 'European' children, 13.5% with 'native' children, and 15% with 'other (mostly Chinese)' children.⁴

General Secretary Van Hinloopen Labberton was interested in girls' education. Like the *Theosophist* editor in 1903 on Ceylon, he opposed schooling of 'bluestockings'. In a polemic, he characterized an inspector of education as:

an opponent of domestic education, cooking lessons, washing lessons, and practical needlework (children's clothes, sewing on buttons etc.) at the Kartini schools [private girls' schools, founded in memory of Raden Adjeng Kartini], where he sees scholarly little Native ladies as his final ideal instead of well-educated, correctly Dutch-speaking, but otherwise solid and practical homemakers, whom we want to see to graduate there.⁵

The Arjuna schools of the Dutch East Indies Theosophical Education Association

¹KARNO(1922), 180. He did not mention the woman's name; it was Sriati Mangoenkoesoemo, SOEMBANGSIH, 130.

²PETRUS BLUMBERGER(1987), 376-7. WIERINGA(1995), 74; 77.

³*Pembela Islam* Dec. 1929, quoted IPO 51/1929, 351.

⁴Percentages were somewhat higher at the less numerous private schools. Roman Catholic nuns, not admitting boys, ran many of these; VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1910), 185.

⁵VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON(1916C), 249.

were mostly for boys. A reporter of *TMNI* wrote on girls at the Gambir Arjuna school:

Friday is girls' day. Of course, they cook themselves, both European and Native style, lay the table neatly, with tasteful floral adornments, note down various domestic things worth knowing, wash, wash floors, cut, sew, embroider, march [in the Girl Guides], stalk, command, and eat.¹

When, after Soerikoesoemo's death, the Javanese nationalist current within *Budi Utomo* tried in vain to make his ideas official *BU* policy, their program included a clause on educating women. It was like Mrs Besant's views about their South Asian sisters: 'Girls should be educated to become good housewives, not for positions in society'.²

Through W.A.L. Ros-Vrijman, the Theosophical Society had a personal link with education of Dutch women, who were bound for Indonesia as housewives. Mrs Ros was founder in 1920, and still executive president in 1928, of the *Koloniale School voor meisjes en vrouwen* [The Colonial School for girls and women]. It had three month courses. The Ministry of Colonies and The Hague local authority subsidized it.³

7. CONCLUSIONS OF PART VI

Once more, we can answer our question on apoliticism negatively. However, on Ceylon I found much more material on indirectly politically interesting education than on attitudes to the wider women's movement.

To our second question, of rather conservative or rather progressive politics, the answer differs somewhat from our parts on labour and national movements. Annie Besant's views moved rightwards, also on women's issues, after joining the TS. Politicians, for instance in Sumatra, saw theosophists as a brake on the women's movement. Nevertheless, conflicts rarely got as sharp as with India's Congress and Communist Party, Indonesia's Marxists, or Indonesia's women delegates in Lahore in 1931 (boycotting the conference because of the colonial, rather than of a specifically women's, issue).

Those other conflicts happened at their sharpest after 1916, as labour and national movements were on the rise. At that time, one cannot describe the women's movement as equally on the rise.

Jill Roe ascribes a downturn in women's influence to World War I. That is relative

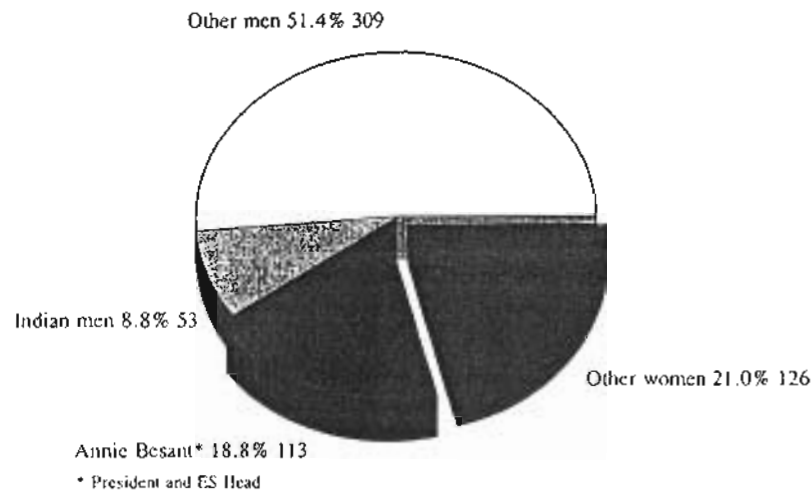
¹'Ardjoenascholen', *TMNI* 1927, 44.

²VAN MIERT(1995), 253. *HPO* July-Aug. 1916, 142-3: in Tjipto's *De Voorpost*, Soetatmo Soerikoesoemo had criticized a certain M.'s view that 'women's education brings immorality.'

³*IG*, 1928 (50), 'De Koloniale School voor meisjes en vrouwen in Den Haag', 1108-9; *Het Vaderland*, 18-2-1921, reproduced *HPO*, Mar. 1921, 45-8, 'De Koloniale School voor meisjes en vrouwen'. *Ibid.*, 46-7: 'What, then, does the Colonial School want? It wants to prepare the girls and women, who go to the Indies, for their task there. It wants, first of all, to bring them at the school into an Indies environment, into the Indies family amidst Indies servants, amidst language, people, and customs.' *IG*, 1920 (42), *MRBTD*, 367-8. *HPO*, Apr. 1922, 47: the queen was the school's patroness.

(women then were also needed for war work; voting rights in many countries came in the social revolutionary climate immediately after the war).¹ The end of the first feminist wave really happened in the 1930's-40's, as Roe² writes. Ups and downs in women's influence in the Theosophical Society roughly coincided with ups and downs in society at large. Not that high in the 19th century, greatly up in the 1910's, down in the 30's.

In *The Theosophist*, during the decade 1910-1920, more women authors contributed (apart from writings by Presidents) than before it; and after it.



Articles in The Theosophist, Oct. 1912-Sept. 1917, by authors' sex and country

After the 1929 death of Katherine Tingley, and the 1933 death of Annie Besant, maybe not entirely by coincidence, neither Point Loma nor Adyar had a woman leader during our period.³ Still, there were probably more articles by women (though not Asian women) in TS magazines than in many other magazines of the time; certainly magazines on religion.

There might have been even more, had women had equal access to TS management and writing activities, in proportion to their beliefs, as distinct from formal membership: French 1963 statistics on astrology say women then tended to believe in it nearly twice as

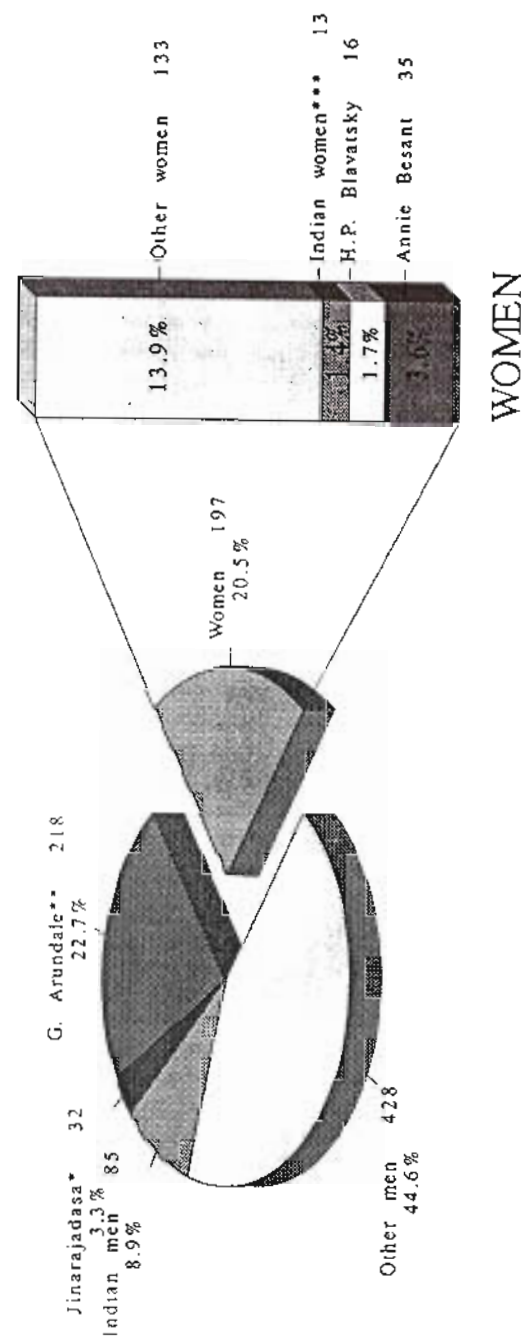
¹ROE, 213. See also ROMEIN-VERSCHOOR, 140. Sylvia PANKHURST(1931), 657 on why women got the vote at last: 'The shock to the foundations of existing social institutions already reverberating from Russia across Europe, made many old opponents desire to enlist the new enthusiasm of women voters to stabilize the Parliamentary machine.'

²ROE, 204.

³ELLWOOD and WESSINGER, 80.

AUTHORS in THE THEOSOPHIST

Articles; by sex and by country



April 1934-March 1939

much as men.¹ There was no similar sex disparity in traditional Christian beliefs.

One conclusion: opposition to feminism existed within the theosophical movement, but mostly as a minority (as were militant suffragists); and at the fringes (except for the Liberal Catholic Church, which one could hardly call marginal). Roe's remark: 'the T.S. eschewed sexism both in theory and practice'² is also not 100% correct, when one thinks of the Mahatmas.

Did non-feminist women become feminist after joining the TS? Or did feminist women joining become less so; which is arguable for for instance Annie Besant after 1889? From a feminist viewpoint, the theosophists' record becomes more favourable, if one compares it not with the women's movement, but with other religious organizations at the time. One might argue ideas of most theosophists on women were more progressive than those of other religious organizations then; and more progressive than their own ideas on many other issues.³ The prevailing attitude about women in the TS proves that to be relatively progressive about one nodal point of far-reaching issues, does not automatically make one so on others. Patriarchy in otherwise emancipatory movements is the other side of this coin, in other movements.⁴

¹FISCHLER, 288: 21% for men; 39% for women.

²ROE, 167. Mary Farrell Bednarowski, 'Widening the Banks of the Mainstream: Women Constructing Theologies', WESSINGER(1993), 211-31; 223-4. 'Theosophy has a history of women leaders and a long-standing interest in the feminine principle or the eternal feminine. At the same time, Theosophy has in its history a kind of antifeminism that emerges from an occult worldview.'

³BESANT and LEADBEATER(1913), 139: 'The exclusion of women from political power in England only came, it should be remembered, with the growth of democracy ... This is the nadir of political life, as the occult system is its zenith.' CWL and AB forgot that the few women not excluded from political power under absolute monarchy were so mostly because no convenient sons or brothers of dead rulers were at hand. COXON, 904: in Greek antiquity, the Pythagorean order, which was also conservative and oligarchic on many other issues, was 'open to women equally with men'.

⁴Anti-woman writer Strindberg also sympathized with Swedish Social Democracy late in life.

SUMMARY

The politics of divine wisdom

Theosophy and labour, national and women's movements in Indonesia and South Asia, 1875-1947

This book is not a full history of the Theosophical Society (TS), founded in 1875; it does not go beyond 1947. It is not even its complete political history; concentrating on India and Indonesia. My two central questions are: 1. What were the Theosophical Society's relationships to three political movements: labour, national, and women's movements? 2. How did outsiders, linked to these movements' fields of activity, agree, or clash, with the theosophists' approach to them? I based the book on many sources, both from theosophists, and from their allies and opponents in the political field.

One approach to 1875-1947 world political history is looking at it through a well-recorded organization, existing all of that time, international, neither too big nor too small. The Theosophical Society fits these criteria. It is also interesting as a relatively well-organized 'nucleus' of a looser, broader occult current, influential in those times. I included diagrams of numbers which I found, and other pictures.

Often, authors see theosophists' occult views as politically irrelevant; this shows in the little attention political history pays to them. On the other hand, authors connect them to progressive political views. James Webb associated occultism with 'Nationalisms, Socialisms.' Daniel Bell linked 'gnostic esotericism' to 'anarchism' without explaining this. Authors both left and right in the political spectrum, opponents and supporters of theosophy, often took one of these two views. This book questions both. I limited the complex notion 'nationalism' to nationalism in a colonial rule situation.

Part I is a brief outline of theosophic doctrines: it looks at theosophy's self-definition as religion of religions, science of sciences. It deals with its relationships to various religions. The doctrines of karma and reincarnation, of the non-existence of chance, and of the existence of higher worlds, are central to theosophy. When scientists attacked traditional religious views of Earth as the centre of the universe; and humans as the most important products of divine creation, theosophists tried to restore them in a scheme of non-Darwinist idealist evolution.

Part II is a brief history of theosophy. Its origins were in spiritualism. From the US, it spread, mostly to western Europe, south Asia, and Australia. 1917-8 was the high point of its influence on Indian and Indonesian politics; the 1920's of its influence in general. In spite of conflicts and splits, and a high membership turnover rate, the TS as an organization grew, from 1875 till 1928. The Theosophical Society attracted many thousands; it lost many again, though, especially after 1929. Arundale, who was not as dynamic a leader as Annie Besant had been, managed consolidation, but not new expansion, in the late 1930's.

Part III deals with social backgrounds of theosophists over the world. The great majority of supporters belonged to more or less privileged strata like the nobility, business, and officers. Theosophy, promising an international élite, *inter alia* worked as ideological

support for some sections of groups who felt they might lose privileges. In India mainly Brahmins; lawyers were very strongly represented. In Indonesia, many *totok* Dutch with good positions in government and business. About twenty Indians and 190 Chinese (many of them from 'officer' families, an élite which other Chinese challenged) were members at maximum. By far the most Indonesian members were from the Javanese nobility; fewer came from West Sumatra, and, after 1930, Bali and Lombok.

In theory, theosophy was for everyone. However, attempts to reach workers or peasants were infrequent and unsuccessful. In Indonesia, there were two, internationally atypical, attempts among peasants. In 1915, TS leaders attempted to stop Saminists, a non-violent protest movement in north Java, by converting them to theosophy. They failed. The second attempt, in the 1930's when the TS as a whole declined, was more successful and lasted longer. For some years, *Pemitratan Tjahja*, an auxiliary to the TS, had close to a thousand supporters in Java, Bali, and Lombok.

Part IV is on the TS' relationship to three tendencies in the labour movement: social democracy, communism and anarchism. From the beginning, the relationship was strained, as showed in Madame Blavatsky's anti-socialist declaration of intent in the first issue of her monthly *The Theosophist* in 1879. Marx and Engels referred quite often briefly, and not in a very complimentary way, to spiritualism. Engels once, in a 1890 private letter to Kautsky, referred, not in a positive sense, to the Theosophical Society. This set a pattern for later Marxists: reactions to viewpoints of theosophists mostly came only where these views were influential.

Opposition to revolution, as in the czar's empire in 1905, to anarchism, to communism, was consistent in theosophists' writings. The relationship with moderate social democrats was more complex. On the one hand, there were quite some links; on the other hand, a basic principle like universal suffrage was a problem with theosophists.

I have treated the conflict between theosophists and trade unions and socialists in Indonesia during the First World War, on military conscription, extensively here for the first time. Apart from Annie Besant's role in the Indian National Congress at the same time, it was the most important political question, linked to theosophists. It was also much less described previously than that. After 1916, socialists like Henk Sneevliet saw the General Secretary of theosophists in Indonesia, Dirk van Hinloopen Labberton, and his *Indië Weerbaar* committee, as their main opponents. Labberton was the most often criticized individual in their press. One may see Sneevliet and Labberton as the two Dutchmen who influenced Indonesian political movements most, though in different directions. *IW* was Indonesia's first twentieth century political issue, which got mass attention among all people's categories. It contributed greatly to polarization between left and right in the big *Sarekat Islam* movement, generally in Indonesian society, and against colonial authority; so, rifts with prolonged influences. Its effect was contrary to its sponsors' view of harmony along hierarchical lines of social and imperial pyramids.

Most main *Indië Weerbaar* supporters were TS members or allies. *Indië Weerbaar* also used links with theosophists outside Indonesia, in The Netherlands, the US, and other countries. This agreed with theosophists' views internationally of the first world war and other wars as spiritual clashes between divine powers and dark powers. Both Semaon and Darsono, later prominent in the world's largest non-ruling communist party, the *PKI*,

wrote their first ever articles against prominent Theosophical Society members. Another *PKI* leader, Alimin, in 1918 addressed Jakarta's biggest political mass meeting so far, against *Indië Weerbaar*. The journalist Marco in 1917 had to go to jail after a notorious trial, because of anti-*IW* writings and cartoons in his paper.

Among Indonesians in The Netherlands, TS supporters like Noto Soeroto and Sooryopoetro were for, Soewardi Soeraningrat against *Indië Weerbaar*. Soewardi later also opposed the policies of theosophists of the monthly *Wederopbouw*. So one cannot just assume, as has been done, that his later activities in the *Taman Siswa* education movement were based on the TS' or Rudolf Steiner's ideas.

Bolshevik authorities banned the small Theosophical Society of Russia in 1919. Most of its members emigrated, and formed the only TS section in exile. Relationships with Indian communists also were not good. M.N. Roy and Shapurji Saklatvala in exile, Dange in Bombay, and Singaravelu Chettiar in Madras criticized Annie Besant. Muzaffar Ahmad in Bengal, where the TS was relatively weak, did not mention her though. Sylvia Pankhurst criticized how Annie Besant's views on social inequality had changed, compared to her pre-theosophist days.

Indonesian Marxists' relationship to the TS was bad in 1918. Their paper accused the theosophists of basically supporting authorities who had bloodily defeated the uprising in the Jambi oil region. It also accused two prominent TS members, A.J. Hamerster and Captain Christoffel, of murdering a village headman in Borneo in a case of sexual harassment against the headman's sister. In 1921, contradictions from *Indië Weerbaar* times seemed to wear off somewhat. After then, though, the non-co-operation question became central. As in India, this question opposed not only communists, but also others to theosophists. General Secretary Kruisheer accused the *PKI* of a plot to wreck his TS in 1926. He also wrote that at least one member was killed by communists during the 1927 uprising in West Sumatra.

V, on imperialism and Home Rule and independence movements, shows how TS occult views of a future Aryan world empire, based on the British empire, on the one hand made them ask Britons and other imperialists to respect fellow 'Aryans'; on the other hand, to oppose total independence (for 'Aryan' or non-'Aryan'). India as a country, and 1913-17 as a period, were (important) progressive deviations from general TS political patterns.

Indian and Irish politics had much mutual influence. However, in spite of some personal contacts, theosophical influence on Irish politics was minor. The Theosophical Society in Ireland had relatively fewer members than for instance in Britain or The Netherlands; and many less than in Iceland.

In the early twentieth century, the TS had a good relationship with Lord Curzon, the Viceroy of British India; as showed during the controversy on the partition of Bengal in 1905. This changed, though, during Annie Besant's Home Rule action in 1916-7. As more, also non-privileged, people became involved in Indian politics, the TS' influence declined again. After 1918, Annie Besant lost the overwhelming part of her influence in the Indian national movement to Gandhi; though she tried to keep, and, later, to regain it. This later part of theosophists' role in India's politics is less described than the earlier one. So I paid some more attention to it. Mrs Besant came to oppose Gandhi's non-co-operation

strategy, which she had not rejected earlier. She now claimed non-co-operation was against theosophical basic principles. So, co-operation with colonial authority, unlike her earlier Home Rule agitation, was a religious duty. Non-co-operation supporters could no longer remain members of the Esoteric Section, the Theosophical Society's 'inner circle'. The Theosophical Society did not keep the earlier allegiance of people like Jawaharlal Nehru or Krsna Menon.

As in India, in Indonesia about 1916, the TS had a promising starting position in political life. For some years then, theosophist editors like H.J. Kiewiet de Jonge, Raden Djojosoediro, and Tabrani led pro-government papers like the *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad*, *Pemitran*, and *Neratja*. Also Hadji Agoes Salim was an active TS member and contributor to the monthly *Pewarta Théosofie* for a short time. Good contacts within political movements like the *Nederlandsch-Indische Vrijzinnige Bond*, *Budi Utomo*, and with Indonesians living in The Netherlands, existed. To a lesser extent, they also existed with *Sarekat Islam*, though ideas for instance on hierarchy differed. The government-imposed gap between *SI*'s national and local levels made influence at the national level by personal links like from the active Van Hinloopen Labberton to Djojosoediro, and possibly the later *susuhunan* Pakoe Boewono XI, easier than at the local level. Sukarno, later Indonesia's first president, read his first political books in the Surabaya TS library, because of his father's membership.

Annie Besant tended to emphasize Indian unity over regionalism, which in Tamil Nadu was associated with her non-Brahmin opponents. The situation with regionalism in Indonesia differed. Contacts were best with two groups, aimed at the nobility of Java and of West Sumatra. First, Javanese nationalists of prominent theosophist Prince Soetatmo Soerikoesoemo's magazine *Wederopbouw*, one among tendencies within *Budi Utomo*. Prince Mangkoe Negoro VII was *Wederopbouw*'s sponsor. *Wederopbouw* aimed at a Javanese state, a member of the League of Nations; and at reconstruction of Javanese culture in an aristocratic sense. Basing himself on Annie Besant, and on the philosopher Bolland, much quoted in the *Theosofisch Maandblad voor Nederlandsch-Indië*, Soerikoesoemo fought democracy on principle. Annie Besant changed her views on for instance universal suffrage, after she joined the TS. Both within their organization, and in politics, theosophists thought in terms of hierarchy and authority. The historians Tsuchiya and Reeve see influence from Soerikoesoemo's ideas as a factor in limitations on democracy in Indonesia since 1959. Tsuchiya in this, though, does not mention Soerikoesoemo's TS connection. David Reeve sees theosophy as an influence on the ruling Golkar party. In that view, authoritarian strands in theosophic thought may have influenced Indonesia deeper than India; though post-1945, the TS' reputation in India was better than in Indonesia.

The TS also had a link to the *Sarekat Adat Alam Minangkabau* of Datoek Soetan Maharadja in Sumatra. Earlier on in his daily *Oetoesan Melajoe* and women's paper *Soenting Melajoe*, Maharadja used to criticize Dutch authority and aristocrats. After about 1916, this changed. Then, he, and supporters like Abdoel Karim, kept writing theosophical articles. In these, they attacked *kaum muda* (Islam modernism), socialism, militant feminism, and all-Indonesia nationalism. Much in *Oetoesan Melajoe* was parallel to *Wederopbouw*, of which it approved.

Contacts to other organizations like *Sarekat Islam* weakened, if these aimed at broader

layers of people, and became more militant. In Jakarta, already from 1915 members of *Sarekat Islam*'s left wing around the daily *Pantjaran-Warta* (of Soekirno, Marco, Goenawan, Alimin and Abdullah Fatah), were sharply anti-theosophical. Fatah, of the petroleum workers' union, called for common action by Muslims and socialists against theosophical ideas. At least till the end of 1918, the TS' relationship to *Sarekat Islam*'s right wing (Djojosoediro, Abdoel Moeis, Hadji Agoes Salim) was close.

With *Budi Utomo*, relations were not as good in 1919 as ten years earlier. This showed in the strike by students of the theosophical teachers' training school in Jakarta. In the 1920's, ex-TS members like Salim and Soerjopranoto became the most avowed anti-theosophists within *Sarekat Islam*. Contacts with the *Indische Partij*, called *Insulinde* and *Nationaal Indische Partij* later, were not good. With *Perhimpunan Indonesia*, the organization of Indonesians in The Netherlands, relations deteriorated. Attempts to influence the new generation of members, like Mohammad Hatta, soon failed. The *PI* thought the TS: 'a grave danger to our national struggle.' In spite of Sukarno's theosophical education, his *Partai Nasional Indonesia* came to think similarly. It was based on non-co-operation with colonial authority. As in India, the Theosophical Society declared that membership in non-co-operation political organizations was basically incompatible with TS membership. *Perhimpunan Indonesia* in its turn banned dual membership with the theosophists' social and political organization. Indonesian *PNI* delegates withdrew from an international women's congress after finding that theosophists had co-organized it.

Indonesia had no parliament. In the first *Volksraad* from 1918-21, the closest Indonesia had to one, eventually five out of 39 members were theosophists; as was the mayor of Jakarta, A. Meijroos. As in India though, the TS was already past its real zenith. Both colonialist hard-liners and revolutionaries had grown to dislike Van Hinloopen Labberton. Labberton, isolated, went back to the Netherlands.

The Committee for Javanese Nationalism and *Wederopbouw* disappeared after the death of their founder, Soetatmo Soerikoesoemo. Gradually, the ideas of that committee too declined. *Budi Utomo* disappeared in a merger. The *Oetoesan Melajoe* paper of Datoek Soetan Maharadja ceased to exist.

VI deals with views on the women's movement. Both strong opponents and strong supporters were minorities among theosophists. Annie Besant represented an intermediate position. Before she joined the TS, people saw her as the most militant feminist of her times. Like on other points, during her rapid rise as TS leader she changed towards more conservative views. Also like on other points, shortly before World War I she began to defend somewhat more progressive views again, also on the position of women in India. Both on suffrage there, and on women's education also in Sri Lanka, positive influence is probable or evident. I could find some links of Dutch women TS members in Indonesia to the (moderate) women's movement. Not so, however, of the very few Javanese women TS members in the 1910's.

In 1914 in England and in 1920 in India, Annie Besant got some criticism for excessive moderation regarding the women's movement. The 1918-20 conflict with women's papers in Indonesia, reproaching the theosophists around Datoek Soetan Maharadja with conservatism, lasted longer.

Contrary to anti-colonial and labour movements, 1920-1945 was a time of decline for

the women's movement in many countries. So, the friction did not lead to a major worsening of relations like with the two other movements.

With those, relations worsened if their support got more of a mass character, and social groups that were little represented in the TS, increased participation in them.

In Indonesia, the conflict with the labour movement from 1916 on, predated the one with the national movement. In India, however, after 1918 the conflict with the national movement first became most conspicuous. Contrary to India, in Indonesia labour gained momentum before the national movement did (*Sarekat Islam* was various movements in one). The contradiction to the national movement in India clearly influenced Indonesia. India, of course, was the country of the TS international headquarters. However, as far as I found out, Indonesia did not influence relations with India's labour movement. Language may have been a factor here: more people in Indonesia knew English or Sanskrit, than people in India knew Dutch or Malay.

The supposition on the TS' 'apolitical nature' proves to be wrong. Both Annie Besant, and opponents like *Perhimpunan Indonesia*, contradicted it. However, the TS in Indonesia had a more apolitical attitude in the 1930's than before. That was not typical for all countries: though also in India political influence had declined, TS president Arundale tried to reverse that tide. Also against the 'apoliticism' supposition: quite some important politicians in various countries belonged to the TS, were influenced by it, or thought it important enough to oppose it.

As for the assumption on the special relationship to the political left James Webb himself already noted links between occultism and conservative French monarchism, contrary to his thesis on 'Nationalisms, Socialisms'. This book qualifies the thesis even more. In 1875-1947, one may find people like Annie Besant, Australian ex-Labor, later rightist Senator Reid, Dutch ex-anarchist Van Steenis, Datoek Soetan Maharadja, and probably D. van Hinloopen Labberton: they joined the TS and moved left to right on the political scale. On the other hand, people like J. Nehru, Wickremasinghe -from Ceylon TS to communist leader-, Krsna Menon, Charlotte Despard, and Singaravelu Chettiar, in a sense Krishnamurti, left the TS sphere and turned leftward in politics. A.P. Sinnett after joining the TS, wrote more positively on Indians in his *Pioneer*. His opposition to socialism, for instance, did not change though. More examples of movement in that sense probably exist. They were mainly limited to views on non-European élites, seen as 'Aryan'; not to views on for instance Javanese villagers.

The political direction of theosophists varied; the 1913-1918 period marked both more progressiveness and more influence than before or after. On the whole, it was more one among various positions within relatively upper social layers, than an opposition from below. The TS lost favourable starting positions. The involvement of broader groups of people in politics, with Indians and Indonesians both in their countries and in England or The Netherlands, made keeping influence difficult.

SAMENVATTING

De politiek van goddelijke wijsheid

Theosofie en arbeiders-, nationale en vrouwenbewegingen
in Indonesië en Zuid Azië, 1875-1947

Dit is geen volledige geschiedenis van de in 1875 opgerichte Theosofische Vereniging (TV); het gaat niet verder dan 1947 (onafhankelijkheid van India). Ook is het geen volledige politieke geschiedenis van deze organisatie. Het onderwerp is de geschiedenis van het snijvlak ervan met een aantal politieke vraagstukken, in het bijzonder in India en Indonesië. Hoe was de verhouding tot arbeidersbeweging, nationale bewegingen, en vrouwenbeweging? Wie waren in deze voor- en tegenstanders van de theosofen? Dit onderzocht ik aan de hand van bronnen, afkomstig van verschillende standpunten in de tegenstellingen.

De TV bestond langere tijd, in vrij veel landen. Zo was de vereniging noch te klein om interessant te zijn, noch zo groot, dat overzicht moeilijk werd. Dit maakt de relaties met de politieke geschiedenis van die tijd beter te onderzoeken. Ik heb grafische voorstellingen van gevonden getallen, en andere illustraties, opgenomen.

Hoe ziet de literatuur tot dusver de relatie van stromingen als de theosofie tot politiek? Ten eerste ziet men de occulte zienswijzen van theosofen vaak als politiek irrelevant. Dit blijkt o.a. uit de geringe aandacht die zij tot dusver in de politieke geschiedschrijving kregen. Ten tweede worden ze in het bijzonder met de politieke linkerzijde in verband gebracht: James Webb associeerde occultisme met 'Nationalisms, Socialisms.' Daniel Bell verbond zonder onderbouwing 'gnostisch esoterisme' en 'anarchisme'. Auteurs, zowel links als rechts in het politieke spectrum staand, en zowel voor- als tegenstanders van de TV, brachten vaak een van deze twee standpunten naar voren. Na mijn onderzoek moet ik beide in twijfel trekken. Daarbij beperk ik het voor veel interpretaties vatbare 'nationalisme' tot dat in een situatie van koloniaal bestuur.

Deel I vat de belangrijkste ideeën van de theosofen, over karma, reïncarnatie, het niet bestaan van toeval, astrologie, enz., samen. Ook geeft het de verhouding aan tot verschillende godsdiensten, wetenschappen, en geschiedenis. Toen wetenschappers traditioneel-godsdienstige visies op de mens als belangrijkste resultaat van een goddelijke schepping ter discussie stelden, probeerden theosofen die te herstellen. Dit gebeurde via een idealistische evolutieleer, afwijkend van die van bijvoorbeeld Darwin.

Deel II is een beknopt historisch overzicht van de Theosofische Vereniging van 1875-1947, en van belangrijke personen daarin als Helena Blavatsky, kolonel Olcott, Annie Besant, Rudolf Steiner, en C.W. Leadbeater. Vanuit de VS verspreiden de ideeën zich naar voornamelijk West Europa, Zuid Azië, en Australië. Ondanks afsplitsingen bereikte men het hoogtepunt qua ledental in 1928: 45.098 in enige tientallen landen.

Deel III gaat over posities in, en ideeën over, de maatschappij van theosofen. Uit welke maatschappelijke groepen waren TV leden afkomstig? In het algemeen waren dit groepen als adel, zakenwereld, en officieren. Theosofie, dat verwachtingen van een internationale elite opriep, werkte onder meer als ideologische steun voor delen van bevoorrechte groepen, die voelden dat ze misschien privileges zouden kwijtraken. In India meest Brahmanen; als beroepsgroep waren advocaten zeer sterk vertegenwoordigd. In Indonesië veel *totok*

Nederlanders, meer dan Britten in India, met goede posities in regeringsapparaat en zakenleven. Uit de categorie 'Vreemde Oosterlingen' waren vermoedelijk maximaal twintig Indiërs, geen Arabieren, en 190 Chinezen lid. Vele Chinese leden waren uit kringen van de Chinese (civiele) officieren, die toen onder kritiek lagen in de Chinese gemeenschap. De Indonesische leden behoorden vrijwel allen tot de Javaanse adel. Twee kleine uitzonderingen hierop waren (west) Sumatra, en, pas sinds de jaren dertig, Bali en Lombok.

In theorie was theosofie voor 'de gehele mensheid'. In de praktijk ontbraken arbeiders en boeren vrijwel in het ledenbestand; men probeerde nauwelijks dit te veranderen. Als uitzondering ondernam de TV in Indonesië twee pogingen onder boeren. In 1915 probeerde men een eind te maken aan de Samin-beweging, van geweldloos verzet in noord Java, door hen tot de theosofie te bekeren. Dit mislukte. Naar verhouding langduriger en succesvoller was de tweede poging, in de jaren dertig toen als geheel de TV achteruit ging. Toen functioneerde enige jaren de *Pemitan Thalja*, een nevenorganisatie met tegen de duizend aanhangers op Java, Bali en Lombok.

Deel IV tot en met VI behandelen politieke geschiedenis van de verhouding van de TV tot drie stromingen: arbeidersbewegingen, bewegingen voor zelfbestuur binnen, of onafhankelijkheid buiten, het kolonialisme, en vrouwenbewegingen. Deze stromingen kan men, breed gedefinieerd, emancipatiebewegingen noemen.

Deel IV gaat over de verhouding van de TV tot drie stromingen in de arbeidersbeweging: sociaal democratie, communisme en anarchisme. De verhouding tot het socialisme was problematisch sinds het begin, zoals bleek in de beginselverklaring door mevrouw Blavatsky in het eerste nummer van *The Theosophist* in 1879; en de korte afwijzende commentaren van Friedrich Engels op theosofie en verwante stromingen.

Hier speciale aandacht voor de tot nu toe in de geschiedschrijving weinig belichte strijd rond het comité Indië Weerbaar, met name van 1916-1918. In deze strijd, rond het invoeren van dienstplicht voor Indonesiërs, stonden vakbonden en socialistische als Sneevliet en Semaoen tegenover de Nederlands-Indische sectie van de TV. De meeste belangrijke voorstanders van Indië Weerbaar waren daar lid van of politiek verwant aan. Dit was in overeenstemming met de visie van theosofen, ook buiten Indonesië, op de eerste wereldoorlog en andere oorlogen als geestelijke strijd tussen machten van licht en duisternis. Men kan Van Hinloopen Labberton, de leider van de theosofen in Nederlands Indië, en Sneevliet zien als de twee Nederlanders die Indonesische politieke bewegingen het meest beïnvloed hebben, zij het in verschillende richting.

Indië Weerbaar was het eerste politieke twistpunt in de twintigste eeuw in Indonesië, dat massale aandacht trok onder alle bevolkingsgroepen. Dit conflict droeg veel bij tot polarisatie tussen links en rechts in *Sarekat Islam*, in het algemeen in Indonesië, en tegen het Nederlands gezag. Zo was het effect van Indië Weerbaar tegengesteld aan de ideeën van zijn oprichters over harmonie tussen klassen en in het koloniale rijk. De eerste politieke artikelen van latere leiders van de PKI, later de grootste niet-regerende communistische partij ter wereld, als Semaoen, Darsono, en Alimin, waren gericht tegen TV leden. Van Hinloopen Labberton was in 1916-7 de meest bekritiseerde persoon in de sociaal democratische pers van Indonesië. De eerste grote politieke meeting in Jakarta, in 1918, was tegen Indië Weerbaar.

Onder Indonesiërs in Nederland waren TV aanhangers als Noto Soeroto en Soeryopoetro voor, Soewardi Soerianingrat tegen Indië Weerbaar. Soewardi keerde zich

later ook tegen de politiek van de theosofen rond *Wederopbouw*. In dit licht kan men niet zonder meer aannemen, zoals beweerd is, dat zijn latere activiteit in de *Taman Siswa* onderwijsbeweging op de ideeën van de TV of van Rudolf Steiner gebaseerd zou zijn.

Bij crises in het Tsarenrijk voor 1917, zoals de boerenopstand in Letland in 1905, hadden mevrouw Blavatsky en kolonel Olcott zich tegen de opstandige bewegingen gekeerd. De bolsjewistische regering verbood de kleine TV afdeling in Rusland in 1919. De meeste leden emigreerden, en vormden de enige TV sectie in ballingschap.

In haar boek over India bekritiseerde Sylvia Pankhurst hoe Annie Besant's ideeën over maatschappelijke ongelijkheid veranderd waren, sinds de tijd dat ze socialiste en nog geen theosofe was geweest. Ook met Indiase communisten was de verhouding niet goed. Vanuit ballingschap bekritiseerden M.N. Roy en Shapurji Saklatvala Annie Besant; evenals Dange in Bombay, en Singaravelu Chettiar in Madras. Muzaffar Ahmad in Bengalen, waar de TV relatief zwak was, noemde haar daarentegen niet.

Met de Indonesische marxisten, die in 1920 de PKI vormden, was de verhouding slecht in 1918. Hun blad verweet de theosofen feitelijk steun aan de autoriteiten, die op zeer gewelddadige wijze de opstand in het oliegebied Jambi hadden neergeslagen. Ook beschuldigde het twee vooraanstaande TV leden, A.J. Hamerster en kapitein Christoffel, van moord op een dorpsheer in Borneo (Kalimantan) in een kwestie rond seksuele intimidatie tegen diens zuster. In 1921 leken de tegenstellingen uit de Indië Weerbaar periode iets te slijten. Maar toen en daarna kwam de vraag Wel of niet non-coöperatie op. Zoals in India plaatste deze niet alleen communisten, maar ook anderen tegenover theosofen. Algemeen secretaris Kruisheer beschuldigde de PKI in 1926 van een complot tegen zijn TV. Hij schreef later, dat communisten minstens een lid ervan doodden tijdens de opstand in 1927 in West Sumatra.

Deel V gaat over de verhouding tot bewegingen voor meer nationale politieke rechten, en uiteindelijk onafhankelijkheid, in koloniaal geregeerde landen. Een kort inleidend hoofdstuk bespreekt de ideeën in theosofische kring over imperialisme. Voor vormen van zelfbestuur binnen imperiaal verband bleek men vaak te voelen. Maar tegen onafhankelijkheid verzette men zich met wereldbeschouwelijke argumenten.

In Sri Lanka was de invloed na een veelbelovende beginfase al vroeg achteruit gegaan. Sri Lanka had weinig internationale invloed. De later populaire Dharmapala begon er als TV lid, en bleef steeds trouw aan ideeën daaruit, maar niet aan de leiding. Ierland had vrij veel invloed op India en Indonesië; maar de TV al sinds de jaren 1890 maar weinig in Ierland. Dit in tegenstelling tot IJsland: daar woonden uiteindelijk naar verhouding de meeste TV leden, maar het had internationaal weinig betekenis.

In het begin van de twintigste eeuw was de verhouding met de vertegenwoordiger van het Britse gezag in India, Lord Curzon, goed. Zo bleek bijvoorbeeld in de strijd over de deling van Bengalen in 1905. Dit veranderde tijdens de Home Rule actie van Annie Besant tijdens de eerste wereldoorlog. Naarmate in India bredere bevolkingsgroepen bij de politiek betrokken werden, verminderde de invloed van de TV weer. Binnen het Indian National Congress verloor Annie Besant van Gandhi en oud-TV leden Jawaharlal Nehru, en later Krsna Menon. In feite was de strijd in 1918 al beslist, al probeerde mevrouw Besant nog minstens tien jaar daarna het tij te doen keren. Dit deed zij onder meer door non-coöperatie politiek onverenigbaar te verklaren met haar spirituele beginselen. Leden van de Esoterische Sectie van de TV mochten dat alleen blijven als zij de non-coöperatie niet aanhingen. Enige

jaren later werden Indonesische leden van theosofische organisaties voor een dergelijke keus gesteld. De Nationaal Liberale stroming, die mevrouw Besant samen met de latere gouverneur-generaal van Pakistan, Jinnah, opzette, werd echter geen succes in India. Omdat over deze fase veel minder geschreven is dan over de Home Rule League in 1916-7, besteed ik er extra aandacht aan.

Sinds 1916 zo'n tien jaar lang in Indonesië, leidden theosofische redacteurs als H.J. Kiewiet de Jonge, Raden Djojosoediro, en Tabrani regeringsgezinde dagbladen, als *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad*, *Pemikiran*, en *Neratja*. Ook hadji Agoes Salim was korte tijd actief TV lid en medewerker van maandblad *Pewartia Theosofie*.

Van Hinloopen Labberton en drie andere TV leden kwamen in 1918 in de Volksraad, het surrogaat-parlement van Nederlands Indië. Begin 1921 waren vijf van de negenendertig leden TV lid, evenals de burgemeester van Jakarta, Mr A. Meijroos. Maar net als in India was het hoogtepunt al voorbij. Zowel voorstanders van harde lijn kolonialisme als revolutionairen waren Labberton gaan wantrouwen. Dit leidde tot isolement, en uiteindelijk tot vertrek van Labberton naar Nederland.

Annie Besant benadrukte in India boven-regionale eenheid; in Tamil Nadu was regionalisme verbonden met haar niet-Brahmaanse tegenstanders. In Indonesië lag dit anders. De contacten waren het sterkst met op de adel van twee regio's gerichte groeperingen. Ten eerste de Javaanse nationalistien rond prins Soetarno Soerjokoesomo's tijdschrift *Wederopbouw*, een van de stromingen binnen *Budi Utomo*. De uitgave van *Wederopbouw* was mogelijk dankzij prins Mangkoe Negoro VII. *Wederopbouw* streefde naar een eigen Javaanse staat, lid van de Volkenbond; en naar herstel van de Javaanse cultuur in aristocratische zin. Zich baserend op Annie Besant, en de in het *Theosofisch Maandblad voor Nederlandsch-Indië* veel geciteerde filosoof Bolland, keerde Soerjokoesomo zich principieel tegen democratie. Annie Besant veranderde in kwesties als algemeen kiesrecht van opvatting sinds ze TV lid geworden was. Zowel binnen hun organisatie als in de politiek dachten theosofen in termen van hiërarchie en gezag. Althans de Japanse historicus Tsuchiya ziet het doorwerken van Soerjokoesomo's ideeën als factor in het inperken van democratie in Indonesië sinds 1959. Tsuchiya vermeldt overigens Soerjokoesomo's band met de TV in deze niet. David Reeve ziet theosofie als een invloed op de regerende Golkar partij. Autoritaire trekken in theosofische ideeën zouden zo Indonesië dieper beïnvloed hebben dan India; hoewel na 1945 de reputatie van de TV in India juist beter was dan in Indonesië.

Ten tweede had de TV een band met de *Sarekat Adat Alam Minangkabau* van Datoek Soetan Maharadja in Sumatra. Maharadja was vroeger in zijn dagblad *Oetoesan Melajoe* en vrouwenblad *Soening Melajoe* kritisch geweest ten opzichte van Nederlands gezag en aristocraten. Sinds ongeveer 1916 veranderde dit. Toen schreven hijzelf, en medewerkers als Abdoel Karim, voortdurend theosofisch gerichte artikelen. *Kaem moeda* (Islam-modernisme), socialisme, strijdbaar feminisme en heel-Indonesisch nationalisme moesten het hierin ontgelden. Veelal liep *Oetoesan Melajoe* parallel aan *Wederopbouw*, dat het waardeerde.

Contacten met andere organisaties als *Sarekat Islam* liepen moeilijker, naarmate die zich op bredere volksgroepen richtten, en een scherpere lijn gingen volgen. In Jakarta waren al sinds 1915 leden van de linker vleugel van *Sarekat Islam* rond dagblad *Pantjaraan-Warta* (met o.a. Soekirno, Marco, Goenawan, Alimin en Abdullah Fatah), uitgesproken anti-theosofisch. Fatah, van de bond van petroleumarbeiders, riep op tot gezamenlijke actie van

moslims en sociaal democraten tegen theosofische ideeën. Marco werd in 1917 veroordeeld tot gevangenisstraf na publicatie van karikaturen, artikelen en een gedicht tegen diensplicht. Met de rechtervleugel van *Sarekat Islam* (Djojosoediro, Abdoel Moeis, hadji Agoes Salim) was de verhouding zeker tot eind 1918 wel goed. Deze vleugel was sterk vertegenwoordigd in het landelijke bestuur, de *Centraal Sarekat Islam*. Hier was de invloed van de TV groter dan veelal op plaatselijk niveau. De regering had een directe band tussen landelijk en lokaal niveau verboden. Zo konden persoonlijke verbindingen bijvoorbeeld van de actieve Labberton naar Djojosoediro een grote rol spelen; ondanks verschillende ideeën over bijvoorbeeld hiërarchie.

Met *Budi Utomo* was in 1919 de verhouding niet meer zo goed als tien jaar eerder, zoals bleek bij de staking van leerlingen van de theosofische kweekschool in Jakarta. In de jaren twintig werden ex-TV leden als Salim en Soerjopranoto de meest uitgesproken anti-theosofen binnen *Sarekat Islam*. Met de Indische Partij, later Insulinde en Nationaal Indische Partij geheten, was geen goed contact. Met de *Perhimpunan Indonesia*, de vereniging van Indonesiërs in Nederland, werd de verhouding uiteindelijk slecht. Pogingen tot invloed op de nieuwe lichting leden, zoals Mohammad Hatta, mislukten. De *PI* vond de TV: 'een groot gevaar voor onze nationale strijd.' Hoewel Sukarno theosofisch opgevoed was, en zijn eerste politieke boeken in de bibliotheek der TV in Surabaya had gelezen, ging zijn *Partai Nasional Indonesia* er ook zo over denken.

Deel VI gaat over de verhouding tot de vrouwenbeweging. Zowel uitgesproken aanhangers als uitgesproken tegenstanders waren minderheden in de theosofische stroming. Annie Besant vertegenwoordigde een tussenpositie. Voor zij lid van de TV werd, zag men haar wel als de meest uitgesproken feministe van haar tijd. Zoals ook op andere punten, veranderde zij hierin in conservatieve richting tijdens haar snelle opkomst als TV-leidster. Ook zoals op andere punten ging zij kort voor de eerste wereldoorlog weer iets progressievere standpunten innemen, mede inzake vrouwen in India. Zowel inzake kiesrecht voor vrouwen daar, als inzake onderwijs voor meisjes, mede in Sri Lanka, is stimulerende invloed waarschijnlijk of aantoonbaar. In de periode rond 1915 had de TV, voor zover ik kon nagaan, wel enig contact met de beweging van Nederlandse vrouwen in Indonesië, maar niet met die van Javaanse vrouwen.

Annie Besant kreeg in 1914 in Engeland en in 1920 in India enige kritiek dat zij niet ver genoeg met de vrouwenbeweging meeging. Langduriger was in 1918-20 de tegenstelling met vrouwenbladen in Indonesië, die de theosofen rond Datoek Soetan Maharadja conservatieven verweten.

In tegenstelling tot bij anti-koloniale en arbeidersbewegingen, was 1920-1945 voor de vrouwenbeweging, over de hele wereld bezien, een periode van neergang. Zo leidde de sinds 1914 enigszins optredende wrijving toen hier niet tot zo'n verslechtering in de verhoudingen als bij de twee andere bewegingen.

Met die andere bewegingen verslechterde de verhouding als hun aanhang massaler werd, en maatschappelijke lagen die in de TV weinig vertegenwoordigd waren, er een grotere rol gingen spelen. In Indonesië ging het scherpe conflict, sinds 1916, met de arbeidersbeweging vooraf aan dat met de nationale beweging. In India daarentegen stond eerst, vanaf 1918, het conflict met de nationale beweging op de voorgrond. Dit hangt er mee samen dat in Indonesië in tegenstelling tot India, de arbeidersbeweging eerder kracht won dan de nationale beweging (*Sarekat Islam* was een aantal bewegingen in een). De

tegenstelling met de nationale beweging in India had duidelijk invloed in Indonesië. India was dan ook het land waar de internationale leiding van de TV gevestigd was. Daarentegen beïnvloedde Indonesië voor zover ik kon nagaan, de verhouding met de Indiase arbeidersbeweging niet. Talenkennis zou hier een factor kunnen zijn: Engels en Sanskriet waren bekender in Indonesië, dan Nederlands of Maleis in India.

De veronderstelling over 'apolitieke aard' van de TV blijkt niet te kloppen. Zowel Annie Besant, als tegenstanders zoals de *Perhimpunan Indonesia*, bestreden dit. Wel nam de TV in Indonesië een meer apolitieke houding aan in de dertiger jaren dan daarvoor. Dit was niet typisch voor andere landen: hoewel ook in India de politieke invloed was gedaald, probeerde TV voorzitter Arundale dat tij te keren.

Tegen de veronderstelling pleit ook dat veel belangrijke politici in diverse landen lid waren van de TV, of erdoor beïnvloed; of de vereniging belangrijk genoeg vonden om stelling tegen te nemen.

Wat betreft de veronderstelling over de verhouding tot in het bijzonder politiek links: James Webb zelf wees al op verbanden tussen occultisme en conservatief Frans monarchisme; in tegenstelling tot zijn opmerking over 'Nationalisms, Socialisms'. Dit boek relateert die stellingname verder.

Eenzijds vind men in de onderzochte periode personen als Annie Besant, Rudolf Steiner, de Australische ex-Labor, daarna rechtse senator M. Reid, de Nederlandse ex-anarchist Van Steenis, Datoek Soetan Maharadja, mevrouw A.P. Dekker-Groot, en als de vermelding van Resink klopt, D. van Hinloopen Labberton. Dezen werden TV-lid, ongeveer tegelijkertijd met van links naar rechts gaan in het politieke spectrum. Anderzijds ging bij personen als Jawaharlal Nehru, Krsna Menon, M. Hatta, S.A. Wickremasinghe die van Ceylon TV- tot Ceylon communistische partij-leider werd, en Krishnamurti, afstand nemen van de theosofische sfeer samen met een politieke ontwikkeling naar links. A.P. Sinnett ging positiever over Indiërs schrijven in *The Pioneer* nadat hij TV lid werd (maar bijvoorbeeld zijn tegenstand tegen socialisme bleef). Waarschijnlijk waren er meer voorbeelden van ontwikkelingen deze richting op. Ze beperkten zich echter voornamelijk tot visies op niet-Europese elites, die men als 'Arisch' zag; visies op bijvoorbeeld Javaanse dorpsbewoners stonden hier buiten.

Voor de Theosofische Vereniging was 1913-1918 zowel een periode van naar verhouding meer progressiviteit (met name in India) als van meer invloed. Zowel in India als in Indonesië was 1917 een hoogtepunt. Daarna verloor men die gunstige uitgangspositie. De daling begon snel, ook al probeerde de leiding van de TV invloed te behouden in de periode 1920 en later. Dat bredere lagen van de bevolking bij politieke bewegingen betrokken raakten, bij Indiërs en Indonesiërs zowel in hun land als in Engeland of Nederland, bemoeilijkte het behoud van invloed.

RINGKASAN

Politik kebijaksanaan dewata
Teosofi dan gerakan-gerakan buruh, nasionalis dan wanita
di Indonesia dan Asia Selatan, 1875-1947

Translation: Marck Avé

Makalah ini bukanlah sejarah lengkap tentang Perkumpulan Teosofi (PT di ringkasan ini) yang didirikan pada tahun 1875; hanya sampai tahun 1947 saja (kemerdekaan India). Ini juga tidak merupakan sejarah politik yang lengkap dari organisasi ini. Pokok makalah ini ialah sejarah tentang persangkutannya dengan beberapa masalah politik, khususnya di India dan Indonesia. Bagaimana hubungannya dengan gerakan buruh, gerakan-gerakan nasionalis dan gerakan wanita? Siapa pendukung dan lawan para teosof? Inilah yang saya selidiki dengan memakai sumber-sumber, berasal dari berbagai pendapat dalam pertentangan-pertentangan.

PT sudah agak lama ada, di banyak negara. Persatuan ini tidak begitu kecil untuk menjadi menarik dan tidak begitu besar, sehingga sulit untuk ditata. Karena itu kaitannya dengan sejarah politik dari jaman itu dapat lebih mudah diselidiki. Saya masukkan grafik-grafik dari angka-angka yang ditemukan dan beberapa ilustrasi lain.

Bagaimanakah gambar yang diberi dalam buku sampai sekarang tentang hubungan antara aliran-aliran seperti teosofi dengan politik? Pertama pandangan okultis para teosof sering dianggap secara politik tidak relevan. Ini ternyata dari sedikitnya perhatian yang diberi kepada mereka dalam sejarah penulisan sejarah politik. Kedua mereka khususnya disangkutdikan dengan sayap kiri politik: James Webb mengasosiasikan okultisme dengan 'Nationalisms, Socialisms.' Daniel Bell tanpa berdasar menghubungkan 'gnostic esotericism' dengan 'anarchism'. Pengarang-pengarang, baik kiri maupun kanan dalam spektrum bidang politik, dan juga para pendukung dan lawan PT, sering mengemukakan salah satu dari kedua pendirian tersebut. Seusai penelitian saya ini, keduanya harus saya ragukan. Dan 'nasionalisme', yang dapat diinterpretasikan secara macam-macam, saya batasi dalam keadaan pemerintah kolonial.

Bagian I meringkas gagasan-gagasan terpenting para teosof, mengenai karma, reinkarnasi, tiadanya kebetulan, astrologi, dsb... Dalam bagian ini juga digambarkan hubungan dengan bermacam agama, ilmu-ilmu pengetahuan, dan sejarah. Pada waktu para ilmiawan meragukan pandangan-pandangan agama-tradisionil mengenai manusia sebagai hasil terpenting ciptaan tuhan, para teosof mencoba memulihkannya kembali. Hal ini dijalankan melalui sebuah ajaran evolusi yang idealis, berbeda dengan ajarannya Darwin.

Bagian II merupakan tinjauan sejarah mengenai Perkumpulan Teosofi antara 1875-1947, dan tokoh-tokoh penting dalam sejarah itu seperti Helena Blavatsky, kolonel Olcott, Annie Besant, Rudolf Steiner, dan C.W. Leadbeater. Dari Amerika Serikat gagasan-gagasan menyebar terutama ke Eropa Barat, Asia Selatan, dan Australia. Meskipun ada perpecahan mereka meraih puncak angka anggota 45.098 orang pada tahun

1928 di beberapa puluhan negara.

Bagian III menguraikan tentang kedudukan di, dan gagasan-gagasan mengenai masyarakat para teosof. Anggota-anggota teosof berasal dari golongan masyarakat mana? Pada umumnya dari golongan bangsawan, dunia pengusaha dan perwira-perwira. Teosofi, yang menyerukan harapan sebuah elite internasional, antara lain menjadi dukungan ideologis untuk beberapa bagian dari golongan atas, yang merasa bahwa mereka mungkin akan kehilangan hak istimewa mereka. Di India kebanyakan orang tergolong kasta Brahman; sebagai golongan pekerjaan banyak pengacara. Di Indonesia banyak orang Belanda totok, lebih banyak daripada orang Inggris di India, yang mempunyai jabatan tinggi di pemerintahan dan kehidupan usaha. Dalam kategori 'Orang Timur Asing' mungkin orang India paling banyak 20 orang, tidak ada orang Arab, dan 190 orang Tionghoa, yang menjadi anggota. Banyak orang Tionghoa dari lingkungan perwira (sipil) Tionghoa, yang pada waktu itu diujani kritik di kalangan orang Tionghoa. Anggota-anggota Indonesia hampir semuanya bangsawan Jawa. Dua perkecualan kecil ialah Sumatera (barat), dan, baru sejak tahun tigapuluhan, Bali dan Lombok.

Dalam teori teosofi adalah untuk 'seluruh umat manusia'. Dalam praktek hampir tidak ada buruh dan tani dalam daftar anggota; dan usaha untuk merubah keadaan ini hampir tidak ada. Sebagai perkecualan PT di Indonesia mengadakan dua usaha di kalangan orang tani. Pada tahun 1915 mereka berusaha menghentikan gerakan Samin, pemberontakan tanpa kekerasan di Jawa Utara, dengan mengajak mereka memeluk aliran teosofi. Hal ini tidak berhasil. Jika dibanding usaha kedua lebih lama dan lebih berhasil, pada tahun tigapuluhan dimana PT secara keseluruhan merosot sama sekali. Pada waktu itu Pemitran Tjahja, sebuah organisasi sampingan, berfungsi untuk beberapa tahun dengan hampir 1.000 orang anggota di Jawa, Bali dan Lombok.

Bagian IV sampai dengan VI membahas sejarah politik hubungan PT terhadap tiga aliran: gerakan buruh, gerakan-gerakan autonomi didalam, ataupun gerakan kemerdekaan diluar kolonialisme, dan gerakan-gerakan wanita. Aliran-aliran tersebut, kalau diberi definisi yang luas, dapat disebut gerakan-gerakan emansipasi.

Bagian IV membahas tentang hubungan PT terhadap tiga aliran dalam gerakan buruh: sosial demokrasi, komunisme dan anarkisme. Hubungan terhadap sosialisme agak bermasalah sejak permulaan, seperti dapat dilihat dalam pernyataan dasar oleh nyonya Blavatsky dalam nomor pertama majalah *The Theosophist* pada tahun 1879; dan komentar-komentar penolakan yang singkat dari Friedrich Engels mengenai teosofi dan aliran-aliran yang serupa.

Disini saya beri perhatian khusus mengenai pertengkaran yang tidak banyak diperhatikan dalam penulisan sejarah panitia Indië Weerbaar, yaitu antara tahun 1916-1918. Dalam pertengkaran ini, mengenai diadakannya wajib militer untuk orang Indonesia, perserikatan buruh dan kaum sosialis seperti Sneevliet dan Semaon melawan cabang PT Hindia-Belanda. Pendukung terpenting Indië Weerbaar kebanyakan jadi anggota PT atau satu arus secara politik. Hal ini sesuai dengan pandangan kaum teosof, juga di luar Indonesia, mengenai perang dunia pertama dan semua perang-perang lainnya, bahwa inilah perjuangan rohani antara kekuasaan hitam dan putih. Van Hinloopen Labberton, pemimpin PT di Hindia-Belanda, dan Sneevliet adalah dua orang Belanda yang paling

banyak mempengaruhi gerakan politik Indonesia, meskipun ke arah yang berbeda.

Indië Weerbaar merupakan sengketa politik pertama di Indonesia pada abad ke-20, yang menarik perhatian masal semua golongan rakyat. Sengketa ini banyak menambah polarisasi antara kiri dan kanan di dalam Sarekat Islam, di Indonesia pada umumnya, dan menentang kekuasaan Belanda. Maka dampaknya Indië Weerbaar ternyata bertentangan dengan gagasan-gagasan pendirinya mengenai keselarasan antar golongan dan keselarasan di wilayah kolonial. Artikel-artikel politik pertama dari orang-orang yang kelak menjadi pemimpin PKI, kelak partai komunis terbesar di dunia yang tidak memerintah, seperti Semaon, Darsono dan Alimin, ditujukan melawan anggota-anggota PT. Pada tahun 1916-7 Van Hinloopen Labberton adalah orang yang paling banyak dikritik di kalangan pers sosial-demokrat Indonesia. Pertemuan politik besar pertama di Jakarta, pada tahun 1918, ialah untuk melawan Indië Weerbaar.

Di kalangan orang-orang Indonesia yang berada di Belanda Noto Soeroto dan Sooryopoetro mendukung PT, Soewardi Soerianingrat menentang Indië Weerbaar. Kelak Soewardi juga menentang politik kaum teosof mengenai *Wederopbouw*. Dalam rangka ini tidak dapat diterima, seperti yang khlayak dikatakan oleh umum, bahwa kegiatannya kelak di dalam gerakan pendidikan Taman Siswa berdasarkan ide-ide PT atau Rudolf Steiner.

Sebelum tahun 1917 pada keadaan-keadaan krisis di kerajaan Tsar, seperti pemberontakan tani di Leliland tahun 1905, nyonya Blavatsky dan kolonel Olcott menentang gerakan-gerakan pemberontakan. Pemerintah bolsyewik melarang cabang kecil PT di Rusia pada tahun 1919. Anggota-anggotanya keluar negeri dan membentuk satu-satunya cabang PT dalam pengasingan.

Sylvia Pankhurst, di buku lewat India, mengkritik gagasan-gagasan Annie Besant mengenai ketidak samarataan masyarakat, yang berubah sejak waktu dia masih seorang sosialis dan belum menjadi seorang teosof. Hubungan dengan kaum komunis India juga tidak baik. Dari pembuangan M.N. Roy dan Shapurji Saklatvala mengkritik Annie Besant; begitu juga Dange di Bombay dan Singaravelu Chettiar di Madras. Muzaffar Ahmad di Bengalen tidak menyebutnya karena disitu PT relatif lemah.

Hubungan dengan kaum Marxis Indonesia, yang membentuk PKI pada tahun 1920, pada tahun 1918 jelek. Majalah mereka menuduh kaum teosof bahwa mereka dengan nyata mendukung autoritas, yang memakai kekerasan yang kejam untuk menekan pemberontakan di Jambi, sebuah daerah minyak. Majalah juga menuduh dua orang tokoh PT, A.J. Hamerster dan kapten Christoffel, membunuh seorang kepala desa di Kalimantan dalam sebuah kasus mengenai pelecehan seksual terhadap saudara perempuannya kepala desa. Pada tahun 1921 kelihatannya masalah pertentangan Indië Weerbaar sudah hampir dilupakan. Tetapi pada waktu itu juga muncul lagi masalah setuju atau tidak setuju dengan non-koperasi. Seperti halnya di India masalah ini tidak hanya menempatkan kaum komunis tetapi juga golongan lain, menjadi lawan PT. Pada tahun 1926 sekretaris umum Kruisheer menuduh PKI membuat komplot melawan PT. Kemudian dia menulis bahwa kaum komunis paling tidak membunuh satu anggota PT sewaktu ada pemberontakan di Sumatera Barat.

Bagian V membahas tentang hubungan PT terhadap gerakan-gerakan yang menuntut

lebih banyak hak-hak nasional politik dan akhirnya kemerdekaan, di negeri-negeri dengan pemerintahan kolonial. Dalam bagian pendahuluan yang pendek dibahas ide-ide teosof tentang imperialisme. Dalam rangka imperialis banyak orang setuju dengan bentuk-bentuk autonomi. Tetapi mereka menentang kemerdekaan dengan memakai pertimbangan-pertimbangan yang bersangkutan dengan pandangan dunia.

Di Sri Lanka pengaruh PT mula-mula besar sekali tetapi kemudian cepat berkurang, karena pengaruh internasionalnya hanya sedikit. Dharmapala, yang di kemudian hari menjadi populer, bermula sebagai anggota PT. Dia tetap setia kepada ide-ide teosofi tetapi tidak setia kepada pimpinan. Walaupun Irlandia lumayan banyak berpengaruh di India dan Indonesia, tetapi PT, yang sejak 1890 giat di sini, sedikit sekali pengaruhnya di Irlandia. Sebaliknya di Islandia terdapat relatif paling banyak anggota PT, tetapi hampir tidak berarti secara internasional.

Pada permulaan abad ke-20 hubungan dengan wakil kekuasaan Inggris di India, Lord Curzon, baik sekali. Ini terbukti dalam masalah persengketaan pembagian Bengalen pada tahun 1905. Keadaan ini berubah sewaktu aksi Home Rule yang dilakukan oleh Annie Besant pada Perang Dunia I. Pada saat dimana di India semakin banyak golongan masyarakat dilibatkan dalam politik, pengaruh PT berkurang lagi. Di Indian National Congress Annie Besant dikalahkan oleh Gandhi dan bekas anggota PT Jawaharlal Nehru, dan sesudah itu Krsna Menon. Sebetulnya pada tahun 1918 PT sudah tak berkutik lagi, meskipun nyonya Besant masih terus berusaha sampai sepuluh tahun kemudian. Antara lain dia berusaha muncul lagi dengan menyatakan bahwa politik non-koperasi tidak dapat disesuaikan dengan prinsip-prinsip spiritualnya. Anggota-anggota PT Seksi Esoteris hanya bisa tetap menjadi anggota kalau tidak setuju dengan non-koperasi. Beberapa tahun kemudian anggota organisasi teosofi Indonesia juga diberi pilihan serupa. Aliran Nasional Liberalis yang didirikan oleh nyonya Besant dan Jinnah, yang kelak menjadi Gubernur Jendral Pakistan, tidak berhasil di India. Saya memberi perhatian khusus pada tahap ini justru karena mengenai ini lebih sedikit ditulis daripada tentang Home Rule League pada tahun 1916-7.

Sepuluh tahun lamanya sejak 1916 redaktur-redaktur teosof, seperti H.J. Kiewiet de Jonge, Raden Djojosoediro dan Tabrani memimpin harian-harian pro pemerintah, umpamanya *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad*, *Pemiran* dan *Neraja*. Haji Agoes Salim juga pernah sejenak menjadi anggota aktif PT dan bekerjasama di majalah bulanan *Pewarta Théosofie*.

Pada tahun 1918 Van Hinloopen Labberton bersama dengan tiga anggota PT lainnya masuk Volksraad, parlemen surogat Hindia-Belanda. Pada awal 1921, 5 dari 39 orang di Volksraad, menjadi anggota PT, termasuk Walikota Jakarta, Mr. A. Meijroos. Tetapi sama seperti halnya di India puncaknya sudah liwat. Baik pendukung kolonialisme garis keras maupun kaum revolutioner mencurigai Labberton. Akibatnya isolemen dan akhirnya Labberton berangkat ke Belanda.

Annie Besant di India menekan persatuan supra-regional; di daerah Tamil Nadu regionalisme berkaitan dengan lawannya dari golongan non-Brahman. Di Indonesia duduk perkaranya lain. Hubungan PT yang terbaik berarah kepada golongan-golongan bangsawan di dua daerah. Pertama kaum nasionalis Jawa di kalangan majalah

Wederopbouw milik Raden Mas Soetatmo Soeriokoesoemo, salah satu aliran Budi Utomo. *Wederopbouw* bisa terbit berkat bantuan Pangeran Mangkoe Negoro VII. *Wederopbouw* menuntut sebuah negara Jawa, anggota liga Bangsa-bangsa; dan juga menuntut pemugaran kebudayaan bangsawan Jawa. Berdasarkan ucapan Annie Besant dan Bolland, tokoh falsafah yang sering dikutip di majalah *Theosofisch Maandblad voor Nederlandsch-Indië*, Soeriokoesoemo secara prinsip menentang demokrasi. Sesudah menjadi anggota PT Annie Besant berubah pikiran mengenai masalah hak umum untuk memilih. Baik didalam organisasi mereka maupun di bidang politik kaum teosof berpikir memakai patokan hirarki dan kekuasaan. Begitu juga sejarawan Jepang Tsuchiya melihat bahwa ide-ide Soeriokoesoemo merasuk sebagai faktor yang membatasi demokrasi di Indonesia sejak 1959. Tetapi dalam hal ini Tsuchiya tidak menyebut hubungannya Soeriokoesoemo dengan PT. David Reeve menganggap partai pemerintah Golkar dipengaruhi oleh teosofi. Karena itu sifat-sifat autoriter dalam ide-ide teosofi lebih banyak pengaruhnya di Indonesia daripada di India; meskipun reputasi PT di India sesudah tahun 1945 justru lebih baik daripada di Indonesia.

Kedua PT juga ada hubungan dengan Sarekat Adat Alam Minangkabau pimpinan Datoek Soetan Maharadja di Sumatera. Sebelumnya Maharadja melontarkan banyak kritik terhadap pemerintahan Belanda dan bangsawan dalam hariannya *Oetoesan Melajoe* dan majalah wanita *Soenting Melajoe*. Sejak tahun 1916 mulai ada perubahan. Sejak itu dia dan pembantunya Abdoel Karim terus menulis artikel-artikel tentang teosofi. Kaoem Moeda (Islam modernis), sosialisme, feminisme berjuang dan semua bentuk nasionalisme Indonesia, semuanya diganyang habis oleh mereka. *Oetoesan Melajoe* dan *Wederopbouw* sering berjalan paralel, dan tentu hal ini dihargai oleh *Wederopbouw*.

Hubungan dengan organisasi-organisasi lainnya seperti Sarekat Islam semakin sulit karena organisasi-organisasi tsb. makin ditujukan kepada golongan rakyat luas dan garis politiknya makin tajam. Sudah sejak 1915 para anggota sayap kiri Sarekat Islam dan harian Panjangan-Warta di Jakarta (dengan a.l. Soekirno, Marco, Goenawan, Alimin dan Abdullah Fatah), terang-terangan bersikap anti-teosofi. Fatah, dari serikat buruh minyak tanah, menyerukan agar kaum muslim dan kaum sosial demokrat mengadakan aksi bersama melawan ide-ide teosofi. Tahun 1917 Marco dijatuhi hukuman penjara setelah mempublikasikan berbagai karikatur, artikel dan sebuah sajak untuk melawan wajib militer. Hubungan dengan sayap kanan Sarekat Islam (Djojosoediro, Abdoel Moeis, haji Agoes Salim) berlangsung baik hingga akhir 1918. Sayap ini terwakili luas dalam pemerintahan nasional, Centraal Sarekat Islam. Disini pengaruh PT lebih besar daripada di tingkat daerah. Pemerintah melarang hubungan langsung antara tingkat nasional dan tingkat lokal. Dengan demikian hubungan pribadi misalnya antara Labberton yang aktif dan Djojosoediro dapat mengambil peranan besar; kendati ide-ide yang berbeda mengenai misalnya hirarki.

Pada tahun 1919 hubungan dengan Budi Utomo tidak sebaik sepuluh tahun sebelumnya, seperti ternyata pada aksi mogok siswa-siswi sekolah guru teosofi di Jakarta. Pada tahun 20-an bekas anggota PT seperti Salim dan Soerjopranoto terang-terangan menjadi anti-teosofi di dalam Sarekat Islam. Hubungan dengan Indische Partij, yang kemudian dinamakan Insulinde dan Nationaal Indische Partij, tidak baik. Hubungan

dengan Perhimpunan Indonesia, yakni perhimpunan orang Indonesia di Belanda, akhirnya memburuk. Upaya untuk mempengaruhi angkatan anggota-anggota baru, seperti Mohammad Hatta, gagal. PI berpendapat bahwa PT: 'adalah bahaya besar bagi perjuangan nasional kami.' Walaupun Sukarno diasuh dengan ajaran-ajaran teosofi, dan membaca buku-buku politik pertamanya di perpustakaan PT di Surabaya, partainya, Partai Nasional Indonesia, akhirnya sependapat dengan PI.

Bagian VI membahas hubungan dengan gerakan wanita. Baik kelompok yang terang-terangan pro maupun yang terang-terangan anti merupakan minoritas dalam aliran teosofi. Annie Besant mewakili posisi antar golongan. Sebelum menjadi anggota TV, ia dianggap sebagai seorang feminis yang terang-terangan pada jamannya. Namun seperti dalam hal-hal yang lain, ia juga berubah menjadi konservatif sewaktu dia cepat muncul sebagai pemimpin TV. Seperti dalam hal-hal yang lain juga, sesaat sebelum pecahnya perang dunia pertama pandangannya membalik agak progresif lagi, juga mengenai kaum wanita di India. Baik dalam hal hak untuk memilih bagi kaum wanita disana maupun dalam hal pendidikan untuk anak perempuan, juga di Sri Lanka, ada kemungkinan bahwa dia memberi pengaruh yang merangsang dan hal ini dapat juga dibuktikan. Dalam periode sekitar tahun 1915 PT di Indonesia ada sedikit hubungan dengan gerakan wanita Belanda, sejauh mana yang saya dapat selidiki, tetapi tidak ada hubungan dengan gerakan wanita Jawa.

Pada tahun 1914 di Inggris dan tahun 1920 di India Annie Besant dikritik bahwa dia tidak cukup turut serta dalam gerakan wanita. Pertentangan terhadap majalah-majalah wanita di Indonesia pada tahun 1918-20 berlangsung lebih lama, majalah-majalah tersebut menuduh kaum teosof disekitar Datoek Soetan Maharadja konservatif.

Tahun 1920-1945 merupakan jaman kemerosotan bagi gerakan-gerakan wanita pada umumnya diseluruh dunia, lain halnya dengan gerakan-gerakan buruh dan anti-kolonial. Perselisihan dengan gerakan wanita yang terjadi sejak 1914, tidak menimbulkan pemburukan hubungan seperti pada gerakan-gerakan lain.

Hubungan dengan dua gerakan lain menjadi buruk waktu pengikut mereka menjadi lebih masal, dan golongan-golongan masyarakat yang tidak ikut serta dalam TV, mengambil peranan lebih penting. Di Indonesia sengketa sengit terjadi, sejak 1916, lebih dulu dengan gerakan buruh daripada dengan gerakan nasionalis. Di India sebaliknya sejak 1918 sengketa dengan gerakan nasionalis muncul jauh lebih dahulu. Berhubung dengan keadaan di Indonesia dimana gerakan-gerakan buruh lebih pesat maju kekuatannya daripada gerakan nasionalis (Sarekat Islam terdiri dari beberapa gerakan yang bersatu), sebaliknya dengan keadaan di India. Pertentangan dengan gerakan nasionalis di India jelas mempengaruhi keadaan di Indonesia. Pimpinan PT internasional berkedudukan di India. Sebaliknya Indonesia tidak mempengaruhi hubungan dengan gerakan buruh di India, sejauh mana yang saya dapat selidiki. Pengetahuan bahasa mungkin menjadi faktor dalam hal ini: bahasa Inggris dan Sanskerta lebih dikenal di Indonesia, dibanding bahasa Belanda dan Melayu di India.

Asumsi mengenai 'sifat apolitik' PT ternyata tidak betul. Baik Annie Besant maupun penentang-penentangannya seperti Perhimpunan Indonesia, tidak membenarkannya. Memang betul bahwa PT di Indonesia lebih bersifat apolitik pada tahun tigapuluhan

dibanding pada jaman sebelumnya. Hal ini tidak khas untuk negeri-negeri lain: walaupun pengaruh politiknya sudah menurun di India, ketua Arundale masih berusaha untuk memperbaiki keadaan.

Hal lain yang menentang asumsi tersebut ialah bahwa banyak kaum politisi di manca negara menjadi anggota PT, atau dipengaruhi oleh PT; ataupun menganggap perkumpulan tersebut cukup penting untuk mengambil sikap.

Mengenai asumsi tentang hubungan terhadap khususnya politik sebelah kiri: James Webb sendiri menunjuk kaitan antara okultisme dan monarkisme konservatif Perancis; sebaliknya daripada ucapannya mengenai 'Nationalisms, Socialisms'. Buku ini membahas pendapat ini secara lebih relatif.

Pada satu pihak terdapat tokoh-tokoh seperti Annie Besant, Rudolf Steiner, M. Reid bekas partai buruh Australia yang kemudian menjadi senator sayap kanan, bekas orang anarkis Belanda Van Steenis, Datoek Soetan Maharadja, nyonya A.P. Dekker-Groot, dan kalau sebutan A.J. Resink memang betul, D. van Hinloopen Labberton. Mereka menjadi anggota PT, kira-kira pada waktu yang sama dimana mereka bergeser dari kiri ke kanan dalam spektrum politik. Pada pihak lain tokoh-tokoh seperti Jawaharlal Nehru, Krsna Menon, M. Hatta, S.A. Wickremasinghe, dari pemimpin PT Ceylon sampai menjadi pemimpin partai komunis Ceylon, dan Krishnamurti menjauhkan diri dari suasana teosofi bersama dengan perkembangan ke kiri. Sesudah dia menjadi anggota PT A.P. Sinnett menulis lebih positif tentang orang India dalam harian *The Pioneer* (walaupun dia tetap keras menentang sosialisme). Mungkin masih lebih banyak contoh-contoh mengenai perkembangan-perkembangan ke arah ini. Tetapi ini terbatas kepada pendapat terhadap elite-elite non-Eropa, yang dianggap 'bangsa Aria'; pendapat terhadap umpanya penduduk desa Jawa tidak diperhitungkan disini.

Untuk Perkumpulan Teosofi periode 1913-1918 merupakan jaman yang relatif progresif (khususnya di India) dan sekaligus yang sangat berpengaruh. Sesudah itu kedudukan semula hilang. Kemerosotan cepat berlangsung, meskipun pimpinan PT berusaha mempertahankan pengaruhnya pada tahun 1920 dan seterusnya. Pertahanan pengaruh menjadi sulit waktu masyarakat India dan Indonesia dari lapisan luas terlibat dalam gerakan politik, baik di negeri mereka sendiri maupun di Inggris dan Belanda.

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APPENDICES

The Theosophical Society arose in a historic period, when capitalism entered a new phase¹ (second lowest row of table, p. 456). Then, labour had mostly replaced feudalism as its main opponent. Increasingly, within the tension between 'order and progress' (A. Comte), capitalists tended to favour order. Had theosophy and related occultism any chance of becoming sizable, maybe even dominant, in these new social and political circumstances? Had the international character of the TS anything to do with internationalization, in spite of old and new contradictions, of ruling, or just-below ruling, classes?

In the table, columns 2 and 4 deal with perceptions of relationships between the highest level of authority with people on lower levels. It should be taken with even more gunny sacks of salt than this book as a whole: 1. as perceptions; 2. because especially the upper rows generalize from (West Central) European 'types'; 3. because each pair of rows links one social formation to just one ideology, one set of ideas; 4. in history's practice theoretical stages (rows) always overlap. The table is not intended as a dogma (Roman, occult, historic, sociological, or otherwise), or a prison. Even if true, it does not imply any established occult church took over the organizational position of nineteenth century established churches.

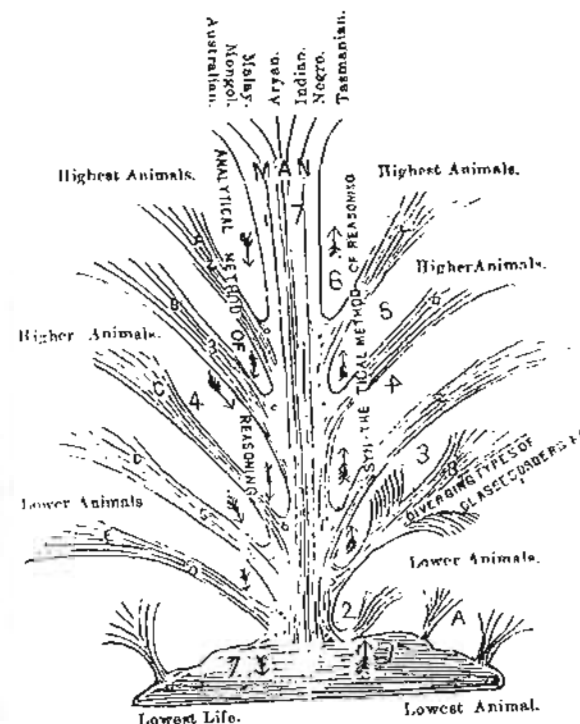
¹See p. 244 of this book: SENFT, 9. Ibid., 11: 'for the end of the 19th century the traditional possessing bourgeois type-puritanical, "inner directed"(David Riesman)and"anally fixed"(Sigmund Freud)had become obsolete as leader of a changing society, centred around the idea of achievement'. Ibid., 11-14, links this to the cutting of the earlier tie between bourgeoisie and enlightenment. HERKLESS, 509, writing about economists' and historians' thinking in the late nineteenth century, saw 'neo-idealism' as taking the place of empiricist positivism of 'economic orthodoxy before finance capitalism'. According to WILSON(1975), 41, movements like the TS 'appear to arise in achievement-oriented societies, where physical, economic, and social well being are open to at least some measure of competitive action'. In such an impersonal social context other means to gain wealth, power, and status may also exist-gangsterism, fraud, charlatanism, nepotism, and intrigue, as well as the use of esoteric knowledge'.

SOME SOCIAL AND IDEOLOGICAL HISTORY CATEGORIES			
	RELATIONSHIP OF INDIVIDUAL TO HIGHEST POWER	SOCIAL CATEGORIES	PUNISHMENT OF 'WRONG' DECISIONS
FEUDALISM	Indirect dependence on personal emperor or king	Pyramidal network of personal relationships from ruler to landlords to peasants	In the name of the ruler; indirectly by one's 'betters'
MEDIEVAL CHRISTIANITY	Indirect dependence on one personal God	Pyramidal network from pope to clergy to laymen and laywomen	In the name of God; indirectly by clergy. Your sinful nature and devil to blame
EARLY CAPITALISM	Direct dependence on local or national market	Merchant and early industrial capitalists, proletarianization of small property owners	By local or national market
PROTESTANTISM ¹	Personal direct dependence on one personal God	Princely heads of national churches; national synods	By personal God directly. Your sinful nature and devil to blame
DEVELOPED CAPITALISM (about 1870-)	Impersonal dependence on 'invisible hand' of world market	Economic hierarchy from monopoly capitalists and managers to workers	By impersonal market; no one to blame but yourself
OCCULTISM	Impersonal dependence (Parabrahman, Higher Self, I Am)	Occult hierarchy of Masters and Initiates	By impersonal karma; no one to blame but yourself

¹E.g., WEBER(1979); though it has some weak sides.

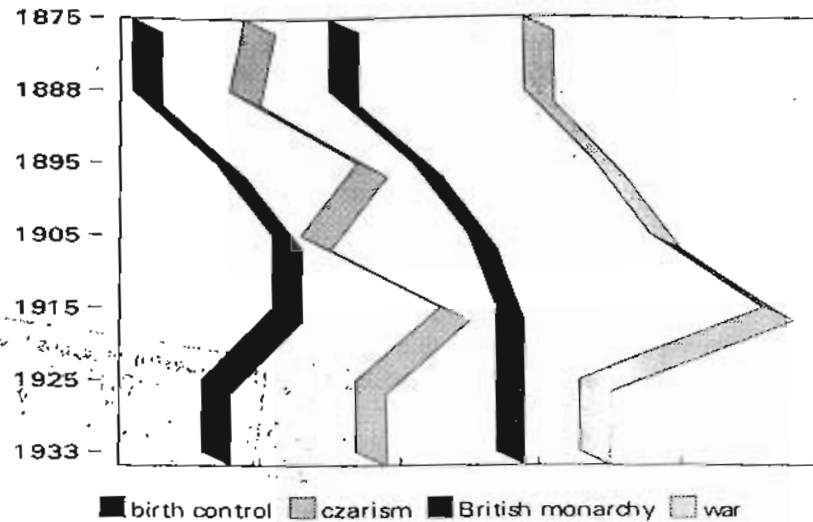
thought and teaching. The basal, undifferentiated life, extending laterally, and little, if at all, different since the commencement of life,

Idiographic Diagram of the Aspects of the Progress of Evolution of Progressive Animal Life.



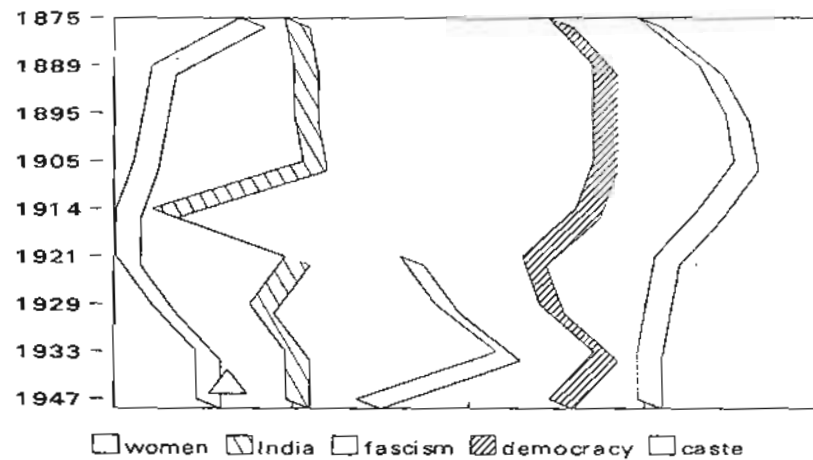
Tepper's 1898 family tree of animal species and human races (his differentiation of 'Indians' from 'Aryans' differed from other theosophists)

Changes in Annie Besant's thinking



In each diagram, the Y axis, from the top down, shows progression in time. The X axis shows a political left to right dimension. The diagrams show changes in views on individual issues; within each issue, in relationship to their starting points in their earliest years.

TS on ISSUES, 1875-1947



CURRICULUM VITAE

Herman Ary Oscar de Tollenacre, geboren in Leiden op 24 september 1949, behaalde daar het eindexamen gymnasium β in 1968. Eveneens in Leiden behaalde hij in 1971 aan de Rijksuniversiteit het kandidaatsexamen geschiedenis, met sociologie als bijvak. In 1974 behaalde hij het doctoraalexamen economische en sociale geschiedenis bij de hoogleraren P.W. Klein en D. van Arkel. Onderwijssociologie en geschiedenis der politieke theorieën waren de bijvakken.

Hij was redacteur van het Leids Studentenblad en het Leids Universiteitsblad. Later publiceerde hij op het gebied van geschiedenis der theosofie, van toepassing van computers in de geschiedwetenschap; en van muziek en natuurlijke historie. In 1993 publiceerde uitgeverij Balans te Amsterdam *Het Witte Zuidpoolboekje* over Antarctica.

