

# THE HIGH COUNTRY THE OSOPHIST



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## Contents

The Ancient Wisdom in Africa  
by P.G. Bowen

The Ancient Wisdom  
in Africa.....1

Letters Received -  
Outreach.....12

Editor's  
Commentary.....15

Calendar.....16

That Asia is the source from whence all philosophy sprang is a universally accepted belief; and that Europe is the custodian and preserver of the knowledge originated in the elder Continent will likewise be generally maintained. Few ever consider that Africa also was once the home of a learning as profound as any Asia can show; and few if any, will believe that such learning remains alive to-day among the inhabitants of the Dark Continent. Yet that such is the truth, I assert, and shall endeavour to make clear in the following pages.

Many years ago, when I, a boy of ten or twelve years of age, followed my father's wagon through the wild Bushlands of the Northern Transvaal, Portuguese East Africa and Mashonaland, I met and gained the friendship of many Natives - principally Zulus - of the class known as Isanusi, a term, popularly but improperly interpreted as "Witch Doctor." Why those men, who with Europeans and even with their own people are always intensely reserved, should have favoured me with their confidence is something I do not, even now, clearly understand, yet they clearly did



so. I recall a conversation with one of their number, by name, Mankanyezi (The Starry One), with whom I was particularly intimate, which impressed me deeply; so much so that I have never forgotten it. My father had declared his intention of placing me in care of a Missionary, in order that I might receive some education, and learn white men's ways. I repeated his words to Mankanyezi, who shook his head doubtfully on hearing them and said:

Your teachers are doubtless learned men. But why do they strive to force their beliefs on us without first learning what our beliefs are? Not one of them, not even Sobantu,<sup>1</sup> knows anything of our real belief. They think we worship the spirits of our ancestors; that we believe our spirits, when we die, enter the bodies of animals.

They, without proof or without enquiry, condemn us, the Isanusi, as deluders of our more ignorant bretheren; or else they declare us to be wicked wizards having dealings with evil spirits. To show how ignorant they are, I shall tell you what we teach the Common Man (Ordinary Native).

We teach that he has a body; that within that body is a soul; and within the

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1. Sobantu; Bishop Colenso - A great authority on native tongues.

soul is a spark or portion of something we call Itongo, which the Common Man interprets as the Universal Spirit of the Tribe.

We teach that after death the soul (*Idhlozi*) after hovering for a space near the body departs to a place called *Esilweni* (Place of Beasts). This is a very different thing, as you can see, from entering the body of a beast.

In *Esilweni*, the soul assumes a shape, part beast and part human. This is its true shape, for man's nature is very like that of the beast, save for that spark of something higher, of which the Common Man knows but little.

For a period which is long or short, according to the strength of the animal nature, the soul remains in *Esilweni*, but at last it throws aside its beast-like shape and moves onward to a place of rest.

There it sleeps till a time comes when it *dreams* that something to do or to learn awaits it on earth, then it awakes and returns, through the Place of Beasts, to earth and is born again as a child.

Again and again does the soul travel through the body, through the Place of Beasts, to its rest, dreams its dream and returns to the body; till at last the Man becomes True Man, and his soul when he dies goes straight to its

rest, and thence, after a space, having ceased to dream of earth, moves on and becomes one with that from which it came -- the Itongo.

Then does the Man know that instead of being but himself, apart, he is truly all the tribe and the tribe is he. This is what we teach, I say, for this is the utmost the Common Man is capable of comprehending; indeed many have only a vague comprehension, even of this much.

But the belief of us, Wiser Ones, is something far wider and greater, though similar. It is far too wide and great for Common Man's comprehension - or for yours, at present. But I may say this much, that we know that the Itongo is not the mere Spirit of the Tribe, but is the Spirit within and above all men - even all things; and at the end, all men being one in Spirit, all are brothers in the flesh.

Mankanyezi was a pure Zulu, of the royal blood. What his age might have been, I do not know, but certainly he was at least seventy. He was a tall, lean man, light chocolate in colour, of a distinctly Jewish cast of countenance, without a trace of the Negroid, with the exception of his snow-white hair which was frizzled. Both by the Natives and by the few white hunters who knew him he was regarded as a powerful magician, but only once did I get a glimpse of this side of his character.

A year or two subsequent to the talk above quoted, in company with a famous Boer hunter named Sarel Du Pont, I met Mankanyezi near the Limpopo River. "You go on a far journey," he said after some preliminary remarks.

"Only as far as the Zambezi," replied my companion. Mankanyezi shook his head.

"Much farther," I think. "You will, ere you again see this river, visit the Great Lake of the North (Lake Nyassa). To the eastward of that lake, you will visit the springs of another river, and there you will meet one of my elder brothers."

"Indeed," said Du Pont, "if it should happen that we go so far, which is not our intention, how are we to know this brother of yours? I suppose he is not your brother in reality, but merely one in the Spirit, as you say all men are?"

"He is as you say, not my brother in the flesh. I call him my elder brother because he is an Elder in the Family (Society) to which I belong, whose members are the guardians of the *Wisdom-which-comes-from-of-old*. There are many of us - one at least in every tribe and nation - throughout this great land. We are of many ranks, from the learner to the Master, and to those Higher

Ones whose names may not be spoken, I am a common Brother; he of whom I speak is my Elder.”

“But,” I asked in some surprise, “how can you know this man, seeing you have often told me you have never travelled beyond the Zambezi?”

“I know him, because I have often seen him, though not in the flesh. Often have we spoken together. Do you think the mind of Man can travel only in the flesh? Do you think thought is limited by the power of the body? See this and try to understand.”

As he spoke, he pointed to a lizard which basked in the sun, near by. Fixing his eyes upon it, he extended his hand, palm upward, towards it, and began to breathe slowly and regularly.

In a few seconds, the beady eyes of the little reptile turned towards him. It took a little run forward, then stopped, its sides expanding and contracting rhythmically. After a few seconds’ further pause, it again darted forward and settled itself upon the old man’s open palm. He let it rest for a minute, then slid it gently among the leaves where it quickly concealed itself. He looked at us and smiled gently.

“That is witchcraft (*ubutakati*)

perhaps you will say,” he said;

“Perhaps I sent an evil spirit to send the lizard to me. Or perhaps it is itself an evil spirit that serves me. If I tell you my mind went out and entered its brain and our two minds became one, you will not believe. Some day, perhaps, you will understand.”

Over a year later, near the source of the Rovuma River, to the east of Lake Nyassa, we put up at a Native village, and there met an old man (a Masai - not a Zulu) who greeted us as friends of his brother, Mankanyezi. From careful inquiries made by my companion, it became certain that this man and Mankanyezi could never have met. The one had never been south of the Zambezi, and equally certainly the other had never been north of the river. Yet there was no question of their intimate knowledge of each other, a knowledge which could not have been gained second hand, for a thousand miles separated their dwelling places, and the tribes had no point of contact whatsoever.

About the time of Dr. Jameson’s raid on the Transvaal, I entered the service of the B.S.A. Co. (Chartered Company), and since then down to 1924, I was almost continually employed by one or the other of the Colonial Administrations from the

Equator to the Cape, always in some capacity which brought me in intimate contact with the Natives.

Of the existence of the Society, mentioned by Mankanyezi, I received constant assurances, and once came in close contact with certain of its higher ranks.

Some years after the Boer War, I was engaged in work in behalf of the Natal Government, in a certain large Native Reserve,<sup>2</sup> in the course of which I was astonished to find occupying a remote, inaccessible valley, a small community of people - perhaps less than a hundred of all age and both sexes - who were certainly not Zulus, nor, in fact, of an African Race I had ever seen.

Had it not been for the fact that they lived the life of the Natives, and identified themselves in all respects with their Bantu neighbours, I should have said that they were members of some Southern European Race. In colour they varied a good deal, from the brown of a high caste Hindu to pure white. Their features were of pure European type, more uniformly classical indeed than is usual among Europeans.

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2. The confidential nature of the work upon which I was engaged and other circumstances makes it necessary for me

to be vague concerning dates and places.

The chief of this little community bore the Zulu name of Mandhlalanga (Strength of the Sun). He was a man of striking appearance, well over six feet in height, slight of figure, with wavy, snow-white hair, olive complexion and features which, with the exception of the cheek bones which were rather prominent, were almost pure Greek in type. Among the Zulus, he bore the reputation of being a supernatural being.

From the first, Mandhlalanga was extremely friendly towards me, and showed a desire to win my confidence. He gave me invaluable aid in the work in which I was engaged, and that, eventually, I completed it successfully was largely owing to him. As regards himself, he remained for a time rather reserved, however.

He and his people, he gave me to understand were Berbers, or rather Khabyles (he pronounced the name Kha-beel-ya, the "Kh" he pronounced as a guttural), from North Africa. But what they were doing five thousand miles from their native habitat, or why they chose to identify themselves with the Zulus, he did not explain.

Time, however, brought about a change in his attitude. One day I was speaking of the inexplicable manner in

which news of distant happenings spreads among the Natives, when suddenly he said:

“Thought is speedier than the electric spark and needs no wires for its conveyance. All it requires is a brain to despatch it and another to receive it. Would you believe if I told you that I and others of the Brotherhood to which I belong can transmit our thoughts one to the other, no matter how far apart our bodies may be?”

This was a rather startling statement, but I recalled what I had learned from Mankanyezi.

I replied, “Yes, I think I might believe that, but I should be more sure if you explained how it is done.”

“To explain our science to you,” he said, smiling;

“would be rather like trying to explain the differential calculus to a child who is ignorant of simple addition. However, I am satisfied that you have a mind unclouded by the average European’s prejudices and preconceptions, so, if you will, I will take you as a pupil and teach you the simple addition of our lore.

Whether you ever reach knowledge of differential calculus, will depend entirely on yourself. I can teach, but I cannot guarantee that you can learn.”

After some consideration I agreed to become Mandhlalanga’s pupil, and for a year continued under his instruction. Then circumstances arose which led to my abandoning my studies and quitting this portion of the country. I never again encountered my teacher, nor for a considerable portion of time afterwards did I ever receive a communication from him. With another of his fellows, however, whom I met at that period, I have several times been in contact, and have from him communications at infrequent, though regular intervals.

The sum of information I gained from Mandhlalanga, during that year, is not very large, and I am so far from clear concerning its exact significance that I shall make no attempt at explaining it. I shall content myself here with certain copious notes I made of his discourses at the time they were delivered and allow the reader to interpret them as he sees fit.

Mandlalanga, I may explain, is a master, or teacher in the Brotherhood mentioned by Mankanyezi. He has travelled in Europe, Asia and America. He speaks English and other European languages perfectly, but his talks to me

were conducted in the secret Bantu tongue, which to the ordinary Native has been dead for ages, and of the continued existence of which few Europeans are aware. In the following quotations, the reader must realise that many obscurities are probably due to the difficulty of rendering in English the exact shades of meaning.

Mandhlalanga deals as follows with “The Riddle of Existence”:

“The *Itongo* (Universal Spirit) is ALL that ever was, is, or ever shall be, conceivable or inconceivable.

The *Itongo* is ALL things, all things are of IT; but the sum of all things is not the *Itongo*.

The *Itongo* is ALL the power there is, all power is of it; but all power, perceivable or conceivable is not the *Itongo*.

ALL substance, ALL power, ALL Wisdom is of IT, and IT is in them and manifest through them, but IT is also above them and beyond them, eternally unmanifest.

Man who is of the *Itongo* can never know the *Itongo* while he is man.

All he can know of IT are certain manifestations which come within the

range of his perceptions.”

The pupil is generally taught that the manifestations are three in number. Namely:

1. Universal Mind.
2. Universal Force.
3. Universal Substance or Matter.”

But really there but two manifestations, Mind and Matter.

What we call force is not a separate manifestation. It is simply certain of the lowest, or grosser grades of Mind.

*Force is simply that portion of Mind which endows Matter with Form.* It is that portion of mind which transmits the idea of Form to the higher grades where Consciousness dwells.

Let the pupil think and he must see that this is so. Colour, size, shape, what are they? Simply light vibrations which when passed on to the Consciousness give the idea of Form.

And what is vibration? It is Force. Heat, cold, hardness, softness, varieties of taste and smell are all vibrations, and therefore also Force.

If you make Force a separate manifestation, then also must you make those planes of Mind which transfer the

ideas of passion or emotion separate manifestations.

In the beginning of a Cosmic Cycle, the *Itongo* first manifested in all the many grades of mind, downward into all the grades of Matter. But at first both Mind and Matter were unindividualised.

When, how, or why, only the *Itongo* can know. Individuality began in the highest planes of Mind -- those planes which touch on pure Spirit.

Understanding of what occurred is best gained by the following conception:

Think of the Cosmos, just before Individuality began, as a vast, amorphous ocean of Mind and Matter, its surface ripples and upper reaches, those planes of Mind which touch on Spirit; growing denser and denser, downward till matter, in Etheric form, is reached: downward till Ether becomes Gas, which can be likened to the mineral-charged lower strata of the ocean; downward till gases become liquids (muddy water): finally into solids (thick mud).

The beginning of Individuality in the Cosmic Ocean may be likened to the starting of myriads of tiny “whirlpools” among the ripples of the surface (the Spiritualised Mind). These “whirlpools” under the force of a growing flood-tide, extended deeper and deeper, till at last all strata were involved in the swirl.

Thus we have individuality set up, extending from Spiritual Mind to the Physical Plane.

The “whirlpool” on the surface represents the birth of the Soul. Its extension to the muddy depths represents the Soul’s descent into matter.

In matter the Soul has reached the aphelion of its cycle, and now it begins its long, slow return journey. By the process of evolution it climbs slowly upward, from mineral to plant, from plant to animal, from animal to man; through all grades and states of human development, shaking off, slowly and painfully as it climbs, the gross accretions gathered during its descent; up through the lower mind to the higher, it climbs till at last, its cycle complete, it merges with its source, the *Itongo*, and ceases to be individual, being one with the ALL.”

On Man and his destiny, Mandhlalanga discoursed thus:

Man is an individual, having in him, as has everything on the physical plane, all the attributes of the Cosmic Ocean of which he is an individual-ised portion. He has reached on his upward journey the stage of personal consciousness. I speak of Man in general.

There are undeveloped men whose personal consciousness is but rudimentary as there are others who have transcended personality and *know* their real Selves -- that immortal portion first individualised from the lofty planes of the Spiritual Mind.

Man is on a journey, the goal of which is union with the source of his being -- the *ITONGO*.

To reach that goal he must first pass through all experience the cosmos affords, and must shake off all accretions accumulated on his descent from unindividualised Spiritual Mind into grossest Matter. To do this, he is born and born again, for his physical body dies, as do his lower mental principles; only his higher mental principles which are akin with the *Itongo* survive individuality bestowed upon them at its opening.

These are the principles of Man:

1. The Physical body (*Umzimba*).

2. The Etheric body (*Isitunzi*).

This is merely the etheric counterpart of the physical body, and not really a separate principle, normally. But in certain abnormal states it is partially separable from the physical body. It is the medium through which the Lower Mind

(or Force) functions.

3. Lower Mind (*Amandhla*).

That portion of the Mind which shows as Life-force and other forms of what we call Energy.

4. The Animal Mind (*Utiwesilo*).

The planes of Mind which manifest as passions, emotions, and instincts.

5. Human Mind (*Utiwomuntu*)

The planes of Mind which manifest as human consciousness, Intellect, higher emotions, etc.

6. Spiritual Mind (*Utiwetongo*).

The higher planes manifesting Spiritual Consciousness.

7. *Itongo*.

The Ray, or spark of Universal Spirit which informs all lower manifestations.

My teacher gave the following account of the Brotherhood in which he holds the rank of Master:

“We call our Brotherhood, *Bonaabakulu abasekhemu*, using the ancient Bantu speech which is the mother-tongue of the most wide-spread group of languages in the Continent.

The name may be rendered in English as *The Brotherhood of the Higher Ones of Egypt*.

The Brotherhood was founded in Egypt in the reign of the Pharaoh Cheops; its founder being a priest of Isis. It has as its objects the spreading of the *Wisdom which comes from of Old* among all races and tribes in Africa, and the study and practice by its members of what we call *Ukwazikwesithabango*, which means that science which depends on the power of thought. It is the only true science there is.

These are the grades of the Brotherhood and some of the powers and functions they exercise;

#### 1. The Pupil.

The Pupil is one under probation which lasts from one to three years. During this time he is under instruction by a Master and subjects himself to certain disciplines. If found worthy he enters the Brotherhood as a Disciple, at the end of his period of probation. If unworthy he is dismissed back to the world.

#### 2. The Disciple.

The Disciple is an avowed member of the Brotherhood and subject to its disciplines. Under instruction he develops certain powers. That which in English is called 'Mesmerism,' is usually one of the earliest to develop.

#### 3. The Brother.

A full member of the Order with many developed powers, of which I may mention, only, power of communication by thought with those of equal or higher development, and what European occultists term *astral consciousness*.

#### 4. The Elder.

An advanced Brother.

#### 5. The Master.

The teacher of all lower grades. The Master has many developed powers (clairvoyance and clairaudience of the Etheric Plane, and control in a certain degree of Master, among many others). Mastership can be attained only by one who, in a past life, has attained Elderbrotherhood.

#### 6. Those who know (*Isangoma*).

Of these it is not permitted to speak save to say they have attained consciousness on the Plane of the Real Self. Only one who has reached Mastership on a previous life can gain Isangomanship.

Besides the above, we have lay Disciples and lay Brothers. They are men who are prevented by circumstances from becoming vowed to the Brotherhood. They are subject only to self-imposed disciplines and receive but such teaching as can be given from afar. We have many lay Disciples, not merely in Africa but in Asia, Europe and America. Lay Brothers, however, are but few, for without direct

instruction from a Master, few can reach this grade without incurring grave dangers. We constantly warn all unavowed Disciples against the danger of attempting to attain a brother's powers, unaided by the direct instruction of a Master.

Let it not be thought that our Isangoma, elevated though they be, represent the supreme development possible to Man on the Physical Plane. It is not so. There are others, not of any Brotherhood, save the Brotherhood of all. We call them Abakulubantu (that is, Supreme Ones, or Perfect Men). These are men for whom the necessity for rebirth has ceased. They dwell on earth in physical form by their own will, and can retain or relinquish that form as they choose. I speak of them but to assure the Pupil of their existence. Few, below the grade of Master, have ever seen one in the flesh, though all, from Disciple upward, may meet them in spirit."

Of the occult powers wielded by Mandhlalanga and his fellow Master, I saw several examples, but of these I do not feel at liberty to speak here. The reader has had, already, sufficient food for thought. I shall conclude with a rather cryptic quotation from Mandhlalanga on *The Source of the Brothers' Power*.

"Of the source of the power we

wield, the Pupil can learn but little until he attains Discipleship. But let him ponder this much. I have likened Individuality to whirlpools in the Cosmic Ocean. But all that Ocean has not been cast into individuality. Between the whirlpools, myriad though they be, stretch wide, smooth places, identical with them in composition.

Now, it can well be conceived that a "whirlpool," by setting up minor vibrations within itself may send out ripples through the smooth spaces which will strike upon and affect in some degree other "whirlpools." All the whirlpools are constantly doing this.

Now suppose a "whirlpool" to have gained the power to control its internal vibrations and to send them pulsating through the Ocean towards whatever objective it desires, can you not see that it may produce upon that objective whatever effect it desires?

Now think of the "whirlpool" as being a Man. Is it not clear that by getting full control of the vibrations of his higher planes, he may despatch through the Cosmic Ocean of which he is a part, ripples of various kinds and intensities, which, according to their nature and strength, will produce effects on all strata, from the highest, which is, of course, the most sensitive, even down to the "slime" and "mud" of the depths.

I give you this as food for thought,  
and bid you digest it well.

(The above article originally appeared in the *Theosophist*, Madras, India, in August, 1927, and was sent to the HCT through the courtesy of Rosemary Vosse, editor of *The Co-Exister* of Watersedge, South Africa).

I am a teacher at a local secondary school. Mr. Nyambe, a trained teacher is doing further training. Mr. Kamisa and Mr. Muntubulyo work for the mines (ZCCM), a mining company. Mr. Mwamba is doing training and the chances are that he will join the mining company after completing.

The major ore mined is copper, but there are other by-products/minerals like gold, diamonds and other precious metals but in small quantities. The ore is processed locally and all of it is exported in refined form - copper bars which are used in the making of telephone and electric cables.

Most of the farming done by local people is subsistence; they grow enough to feed themselves. We have commercial farmers who do the farming on a large scale for local consumption and for export.

From our woodlands we get timber, honey and beeswax, animal skins, horns and elephant tusks for export.

Zambia is a very poor country despite all the natural resources she has. We now have a true democratic government more or less like yours. Our former first president ruled for 27 years. This time a president cannot rule for more

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### Letters Received - Outreach

Liesel Deutsch, our hard working coordinator in Syracuse, N.Y., received the following from Chililabombwe, Zambia:

Dear Madame, Sister Liesel,

It was nice to hear from you! Chililabombwe was [formerly] known as "Bancroft," named after a pioneer mining prospector. It is not near Lake Nyasa, neither are we near Lake Tanganyika. We are on the border of Zambia with Zaire (then known as Congo Kiushasa). We are located in the North-western part of Zambia known as the Copperbelt Province. Chililabombwe lies between 26° and 28° East and 12° and 14° North. The nearest town from here on the Zambian side is Chingola.

than two terms of office.

The dairy farmers we have are commercial farmers who raise cattle on a large scale for beef and milk. Traditional or peasant farmers cultivate a small plot of land and keep a few animals to maintain their families.

There are two types of mining methods done. There is the open pit method where they use explosives to blast the 'open surface' of the earth hence forming a 'pit.'

Then there is the other method whereby a shaft is sunk in the ground and miners go underground by means of a cage (like an elevator in a tall building) - as deep as 3500 feet).

Our culture seems a little puzzling at first but once you get to know it, it becomes very clear. The majority of the people here have not yet embraced Theosophy. Otherwise, with a little patience to learn they realise that Theosophy is the way of life/living itself. Most of the teachings of Theosophy augur well with our way of life here.

One example will suffice here: Since most members in Zambia are Asians of Indian origin, the local people tell us Zambian members that we worship Indian gods! On the other hand, we

recognise in our traditional religion, rain gods, forest gods, etc. These are some of the points, whereby our if local people were patient enough to listen, they would see no contradiction at all. I can assure you that you will find our culture equally interesting.

Your shifting from German-French to American culture has given you a lot of invaluable experience in human nature. It gives you a clear view of understanding human beings. From what you explain, I cannot help but firmly believe that you are a true Theosophist, a source of inspiration, cutting through all human barriers and leading others on The Path.

We have not read any of Dr. Serge Kahil King's writings. With your approval, we would cherish the opportunity of studying them. We are also interested in the writings of Americans.

We have heard of Dr. Martin Luther King, but personally I haven't read any of his works. His book - 'Strength to Love' is very appealing. We are all Christians and we would not be offended in any way when or if you refer to the Bible. In fact, since we are also studying comparative religion, any religious texts can be quoted. We are going to learn a lot from you through this correspondence because it is very encouraging to know there are people who are, like you, concerned and

doing everything possible to make us study and understand the world better.

When I mentioned marriage, I did mean choosing a mate. Here, different groups of people choose in different ways. For example; in my country, parents play a very important role; [with] other people, it is an uncle or a brother who may play such a role. Every aspect of life here is governed by a particular tradition. The raising of children is one aspect - both parents are actively involved, but furnishing or repairing a house is a man's job, Cooking is strictly a woman's job.

The book "The Art of Loving" is very appealing since we experience different types of love. And it would be encouraging to know what others have experienced apart from one's own experience.

Our lodge was formed in 1983 and it is a very young one. The members who are married have wives who never came in contact with Theosophy. We are not yet fully fledged as to experience a marriage among the members. I can only imagine and agree with you that such a union must be a good one.

By nomenclature, I was referring to the system of giving names - especially children. We have a tendency here of giving names to our children reflecting

our history, successes, failures and any event that affects us directly as a family, a tribe or as a nation. For example; When a child is born, he is given the name of an uncle who passed away some time ago. If that child cries a lot, say for two days, the name is changed to another of the many ancestors and as if by magic the child calms down and we conclude that the child rejected the first name and accepted the second.

I have not heard of "The Inner Life," but the way you mention some sections, the book would do us good because dreams, telepathy, birth and death and religion are some of the topics new members ask about.

"Human Nature" by Arthur Robson, traces our behaviour from the lower life and connects it to our karma. He does mention the bodies of man, but not in detail.

We have a tape recorder. We would very much appreciate it if you sent us the tapes. I am sure we shall learn much from them. ...

On the first of March, 1993, the International President, Dr. Radha Burnier paid a visit to our lodge. She gave a talk to senior pupils and members of Theosophy. The topic was "Fundamentals of Theosophy." It was really nice to receive her and the visit itself boosted our morale. We

send you our best regards. Willies Tembo.

### **Editor's Commentary**

In last month's Outreach column, Daniel Entin mentioned a just published book; "*No Religion Higher Than Truth - The History of the Theosophical Movement in Russia 1875 -1922,*" by Maria Carlson. [Princeton University Press, 298 p., \$37.50] As my copy of the book arrived only last week, I haven't had time to read more than the first few chapters. It was immediately clear to me that the book deserves the attention of the theosophical community for several reasons;

The book is self-designated by the author as "the first such study [of Theosophy or Anthroposophy in Russia] by a scholar not ideologically committed to [these movements]."

Based on a casual reading of the first three chapters, my initial impression is of a serious bias against H.P. Blavatsky and her work. Examples: "Theosophy, a contemporary Gnostic gospel *invented* ... by H.P. Blavatsky", page 3. On page 40, the author states it as "highly unlikely that H.P.B. [during the 1860s] reached the Tibetan border or became a disciple of the Mahatmas," but instead, "actually remained in Russia much of this time, had an affair, became pregnant, and gave birth to an illegitimate child."

On page 41, the author exhumes the Coulomb-Hodgson affairs giving credibility to the attacks and slanders. Yet she curiously overlooks Vernon Harrison's critique of the 1885 Hodgson Report in the April 1986 S.P.R. Journal, which concludes that the Coulomb letters were forgeries and the Hodgson charges against H.P.B. were unproven.

Of especial interest is footnote 6 (Ch. 2), p. 214, which purports to be extracts from an 1872 letter from H.P.B. to the then Tsarist counterpart of our own C.I.A. In this quote, from "The Central State Archive of the October Revolution, MS #109;3;22" - H.P.B. is alleged to have offered her services to the Russian government as an "agent," citing her abilities as a "Spiritualist" and a "powerful medium."

This book is already generating considerable interest in the Theosophical community, and I hope to have a scholarly review available to HCT readers in about two months.

**SEE IMPORTANT SUBSCRIPTION NOTICE IN BOX ON PAGE 16.**

## Calendar

THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY IN DENVER

MEETINGS AND STUDY CLASSES ARE HELD IN DENVER ON THE SECOND AND FOURTH FRIDAYS MONTHLY.

MEETINGS ARE IN SUMMER RECESS UNTIL SEPTEMBER

### FINAL SUBSCRIPTION REMINDER

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(2) To present articles and essays consistent with *source* theosophy, otherwise known as the *Ancient Wisdom*, as given by The Masters and H.P. Blavatsky, and other theosophical writers consistent with this tradition.

(3) To examine contemporary ethical, religious, metaphysical, scientific and philosophical issues from the viewpoint of the source theosophical teachings.

(4) To impartially examine significant events and issues in the history of the theosophical movement which have affected and shaped its present-day realities.

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