The Theosophical Society and its Subaltern Acolytes (1880-1986)

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ABSTRACT

The Theosophical Society (est. 1875), and its associated texts have sometimes been characterized as counter-Orientalizing or only partially Orientalizing, in the sense of at least departing from "official" British-Indian Orientalism and providing a critique of that discourse. In somewhat the same vein, the society has also been characterized as playful, self-ironic and/or postmodernist, and/or as broadly reformist in not only an anti-colonial but also an anti-patriarchal and pro-or-protofeminist way. These approaches fail to grapple with the nature of the orientalism that was fundamental to the foundation of the TS, as well as the pronounced entrepreneurial and exploitative aspect of the cult, its strategic and emotional structuring, and the significance of its syncretizing and revitalizationist processes.

REFERENCES

- ADC The Colombo diaries and notebooks of Anagarika Dharmapala
- ADS The Sarnath diaries and notebooks of Anagarika Dharmapala
- ADSU Unmarked Notebook of Anagarika Dharmapala at Sarnath.
- LHPH Letter Of H. P. Blavatsky To Dr. Hartmann 1885 To 1886. www.theosophy.ph/onlinebooks/lhp/lhp213.html
The Theosophical Society, with its international headquarters in Adyar, Madras, India, is today a worldwide body perpetuating the basic perspective and teachings of ancient Gnosticism, as promoted by Blavatsky in the 1880s and 1890s. While the society is a significant body in its own right, its influence has been extended through the hundreds of organizations that have taken the basic theosophical worldview and built variations upon it. Theosophy led directly to the founding of the Liberal Catholic Church, the Anthroposophical Society, the Alice Bailey movement, and the I Am Movement. Almost a "Theosophy" and the "Theosophical Society" are two quite different things, since the latter, embracing the former, includes still a few other things. Permit me to remind you that, in our Rules, our objects are defined as follows: 1) To form the nucleus of an Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed or colour. 2) To promote the study of Aryan and other Eastern literature, religions and sciences, and vindicate its importance. 3) To investigate the hidden mysteries of Nature and the Psychical Powers latent in man. Of these, the first is the most ... Has any one of those "prophets" ever benefited mankind, assuaged its social wrongs and miseries, alleviated its mental and physical woes, or lightened in any way for it the heavy burden of life? No! The Occult World is a book originally published in 1881 in London; it was compiled by a member of the Theosophical Society A. P. Sinnett. It was the first theosophical work by the author; according to Goodrick-Clarke, this book “gave sensational publicity to Blavatsky's phenomena” and the letters from the mahatmas, and drew the attention of the London Society for Psychical Research.