

# A Historical Introduction

by

Daniel H. Caldwell and Henk J. Spierenburg

## The Formation of the Esoteric Section

### H.P. Blavatsky, Head of the Esoteric Section

In the October 1888 issue of *Lucifer* the following announcement was published:

#### Official Notice<sup>1</sup>

Owing to the fact that a large number of Fellows of the Society have felt the necessity for the formation of a body of Esoteric Students, to be organized on the ORIGINAL LINES devised by the real founders of the T.S., the following order has been issued by the President-Founden-

I. To promote the esoteric interests of the Theosophical Society by the deeper study of esoteric philosophy, there is hereby organized a body, to be known as the 'Esoteric Section of the Theosophical Society'.

II. The constitution and sole direction of the same is vested in Madame M.P. Blavatsky, as its Head; she is solely responsible to the Members for results; and the section has no official or corporate connection with the Exoteric Society save in the person of the President-Founder.

<sup>1</sup> *Lucifer*, October 1888, last page; *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, vol. X, pp 154-5; vol XII, p. 481

III. Persons wishing to join the Section, and willing to abide by its rules, should communicate directly with:- Mme. H.P. Blavatsky, 17 Lansdowne Road, Holland Park, London, W.

(Signed) H.S. OLCOTT,  
President in Council,

Attest:- H.P. BLAVATSKY.

### The Real Head of the E.S.

In the *Preliminary Memorandum* (dated December 14, 1888), H.P.B. wrote:<sup>2</sup>

The real Head of the Esoteric Section is a Master, of whom H.P. Blavatsky is the mouthpiece for this Section. He is one of those Adepts referred to in theosophical literature, and concerned in the formation of the Theosophical Society. It is through H.P. Blavatsky that each member of this Section will be brought more closely than hitherto under His influence and care if found worthy of it. No student, however, need inquire *which* of the Masters it is. For it does not matter in reality; nor is there any necessity for creating one more chance for indiscretion.

### William Quan Judge's Appointment

On December 14, 1888, William Quan Judge was appointed by H.P.B. as her representative within the Esoteric Section for a part of the world: America:<sup>3</sup>

KNOW

DARE

[SEAL]

WILL

SILENCE

<sup>2</sup> The quoted text as given in the first edition of the *Preliminary Memorandum* has been published in *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, vol. XII, pp. 488-9. In the 2nd ed. of the *Preliminary Memorandum*, which was retitled *Book of Rules* and published September-October, 1890, the same text appeared on pp. 4-5.

<sup>3</sup> The text, with its facsimile, has been published several times, *e.g.*, in *The Theosophical Forum*, vol. XXV, no. 12 (December 1947), facing p. 705; *H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, vol. X, pp 194-5; vol. XII, pp. 482-3.

## Esoteric [TS] Section

As Head of the Esoteric Section of the Theosophical Society I hereby declare that William Quan Judge of New York, U.S., in virtue of his character as a chela of thirteen years standing and of the trust and confidence reposed in him, is my only representative for said Section in America and he is the sole channel through whom will be sent and received all communications between the members of said section and myself, and to him full faith, confidence and credit in that regard are to be given..'. Done at London this fourteenth day of December, 1888, and in the fourteenth year of the Theosophical Society..'.

[Seal]

H.P. BLAVATSKY.'.

**H.S. Olcott's Appointment**

On December 25,1889, the President-Founder of the Theosophical Society was appointed by H.P.B. as her representative within the Esoteric Section for another part of the world: the Asiatic Countries:<sup>4</sup>

Theosophical Society, Esoteric Section  
London, 25th December, 1889.

I hereby appoint Colonel H.S. Olcott my confidential agent and sole official representative of the Esoteric Section for the Asiatic Countries.

All correspondence relative to admission into, and resignation from, the Section shall be referred to him, and all Instructions transmitted by him, and his decision is to be taken and accepted as given by myself. Such correspondence to be invariably marked "Private" on the envelope.

(Signed) H.P. BLAVATSKY

**Appointment of Other E.S. Officials**

Other appointments made by H.P.B. are listed in the *Book of Rules*, pp. 21-22:

<sup>4</sup> Published in *Lucifer*, January 1890, p 437; *The Theosophist*, March 1890, suppl p cv; *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writing*, vol XII, p 89 and p 484.

There are at present two Councils or executive bodies of the E.S., each consisting of seven members appointed by the Head of the Section, one of which exercises its functions in Europe, India, and the Colonies, and the other in America.

All matters of Organization, Administration, and Discipline are dealt with by the above mentioned Councils, and their unanimous decision will be final, if approved by the Head of the Section...

The Secretaries and Agents of the Head of the Section are:

Bertram Keightley and G.R.S. Mead for the general work of the Section at the London Headquarters...

The Treasurer of the Section is Countess Wachtmeister, at the London Headquarters.

## The Relation between T.S. and E.S.

In *Lucifer* of February 1891,<sup>5</sup> H.P.B. wrote in a commentary on an article by H.T. Patterson:

From the very beginning its second rule<sup>6</sup> stated, that the “Esoteric Section has *no official or corporate connection* with the Exoteric Society”. Henceforth it will be called “the Esoteric School of Theosophy”, simply.

## The Formation of the Inner Group

### H.P.B.’s Announcement

H.P.B. announced the formation of the Inner Group to the general membership of the Esoteric Section in the new *Book of Rules*, pp. 34-5:

In consequence of the different rates of progress of members, it has been found necessary to form an inner circle of Esotericists, who are deemed to have progressed sufficiently to receive more advanced teaching than those of the outer circle, and who are accordingly pledged to secrecy even as regards other members of the E.S. as well as conforming to a stricter mode of life.

<sup>5</sup>*Lucifer*, February 1891, p. 451.

<sup>6</sup>Rule II in Olcott’s *Official Notice*, see our p. vii.

The names of those in the inner circle will remain unknown to those in the outer, so that no opportunity for personal jealousy will be afforded. Should such exist, however, in the mind of any Esotericist, it will be detrimental to him alone.

It will always be possible for those in the outer circle to become members of the inner, but this will depend entirely on their own progress and merits.

No one must apply for entrance into it, for any application will be regarded as an absolute disqualification.

Under instructions from the Head of the Section, the members of the inner circle may be empowered to correspond with those of the outer circle with a view to their further teaching.

In a circular issued to the E.S.-members, dated November 3, 1894, William Q. Judge wrote:<sup>7</sup>

An Inner Group was... formed by H.P.B.' at London, so that she might give out teachings to be recorded by the members, and, if possible, teach them practical occultism. Of this Mrs. Besant, with George Mead to help her, was made the Secretary.

## **A Letter of Invitation to Join the Inner Group**

Under H.P.B.'s direction, Annie Besant and G.R.S. Mead wrote a letter dated August 19, 1890 to selected E.S. members inviting them to join the newly established Inner Group:<sup>8</sup>

Dear Fellow Student,

If you are ready to comply with the following conditions, H.P.B. is prepared to admit you as a Probationer into the "Inner Group" of the E.S.

<sup>7</sup> *By Master's Direction*, p. 3; see also *The Theosophical Forum*, April 1940, p. 277.

<sup>8</sup> This letter was, without the text of the pledge, published in *The Theosophical Forum*, June 1940, pp 417-8. The complete text, including the pledge, now published here, can be found in the *Minutes* in the handwriting of Mrs Cleather, p. 1 (but see note 9 on p. xil)

- 1) That you observe strictly the rules of the E.S.
- 2) That you preserve the strictest secrecy on the instruction given, and on the fact of your membership in the "I.G."
- 3) That you abstain from meat-eating and preserve absolute chastity.<sup>9</sup>
- 4) That you agree to leave the Group immediately, if from any reason your presence interferes with its perfect harmony.
- 5) That you attend regularly the meetings of the Group, on the day and hour agreed on.
- 6) That you are prepared to take the following pledge

*Pledge to be taken before the first meeting:*

I declare once more, before my Higher Self, which I invoke, that my desire is to obtain instruction only in order to fit myself for the service of others: that I put away all worldly thought and personal ambitions: that I am free from all hatred and uncharitable feelings to others: That I submit myself as a humble and obedient student of Gupta-Vidyā.

Aum!

*Formula to be used instead of the above before each meeting:*

"I declare that I am ready.

So help me, my Higher Self."

*Regulations:*

Each member is expected to provide himself with a note book; and to prepare in writing from one to three questions which are to be handed to the Secretaries.

If you, therefore, can comply with all the above conditions, will you attend here at 8 p.m. on Wednesday evening, Aug. 20th.

Yours most sincerely and fraternally

Annie Besant

G.R.S. Mead

*Secretaries.*

<sup>9</sup>Dr. J.H. Fussell says in a note in *The Theosophical Forum*, June 1940, p. 438: "Number 3 of these 'conditions' is not given [in the *Minutes* in the handwriting of Mrs. Cleather]... In the... Notes of the I.G., part of which is in the handwriting of Claude Falls Wright, and part in another unrecognised handwriting, this omitted 'condition' appears as number 2)... The other 'conditions' are numbered and given identically..."

## The Members of the Inner Group

There are only a few sources for the history of the Inner Group and most of these sources are written many years after H.P.B.'s death. There are three books written by one of the members of the Inner Group, Alice L. Cleather, who was pledged as a member on September 17, 1890, during the third meeting of the group. Each of these books contains some information on the Inner Group.

She [H.P.B.] selected six men and six women (the first time that half the traditional "Twelve Disciples" have been women) from among her most trusted workers, and formed them into an Inner group bound by a more solemn pledge.<sup>10</sup>

The Inner Group was formed, and held its weekly meetings at 19, Avenue Road, in a room which had been specially built for it, leading out of H.P.B.'s bedroom; into it no one but herself and her twelve pupils ever entered. We had each our own place, and our own chair; and H.P.B. sat with her six men pupils on her right, and the six women on her left hand side, in semi-circular formation, during our instructions.<sup>11</sup>

The members of the Inner Group were, the following six women and six men; both groups in alphabetical order with their initials:

A.B.	Annie Besant (1847-1933)
A.L.C.	Alice L. Cleather (1856-1939)
Í.C.-O.	Isabel Cooper-Oakley (1854-1914)
L.M.C.	Laura M. Cooper (7-1924)
E.K.	Emily Kislingbury (?-?)
C.W.	Constance G.L. Wachtmeister (1838-1910)
H.A.W.C.	H.A.W. Coryn (1863-1927)
A.K.	Archibald Keightley (1859-1930)
G.R.S.M.	George R.S. Mead (1863-1933)
W.R.O.	Walter R. Old (1864-1927)
E.T.S.	E.T. Sturdy (1860-1957)
C.F.W.	Claude Falls Wright (1867-1923)

<sup>10</sup> Alice Leighton Cleather, *H.P. Blavatsky, Her Life and Work for Humanity*, Calcutta 1922, p. 68.

<sup>11</sup> Alice Leighton Cleather, *H. P. Blavatsky as I Knew Her*, Cilicilla 1923, p. 24

There were three “out-side” members of the Inner Group:

R.B.K.L.	Rai B.K. Laheri (?-?)
W.W.W.	William Wynn Westcott (1848-1925)
W.Q.J.	William Quan Judge (1851-1896) <sup>12</sup>

### The Inner Group Meetings

There were twenty “regular” meetings of the Inner Group at which H.P.B. gave esoteric instruction. There were also two “special” meetings (Nov. 12, 1890 and Jan. 8, 1891) at which H.P.B. gave no teachings. All these meetings were held on Wednesday evenings, except the meeting on Jan. 8, 1891. In the diagram given on the next page one can see at a glance the dates of the Inner Group meetings and the attendance of the members at the meetings.

Present at the first meeting on August 20, 1890, Constance Wachtmeister, Annie Besant, G.R.S. Mead and Claude Falls Wright took the I.G. pledge and were told by H.P.B. about the “extreme seriousness of the instructions given”. The second meeting was held three weeks later on September 10th. The third meeting of the I.G. was held on September 17th; Alice Cleather and Laura Cooper were admitted and took the pledge. With ten members present at the fourth meeting on September 24th, H.P.B. gave answers to eight questions submitted to her.

Soon after the Sept. 24th meeting, “...the Inner Group... was suspended for... a time, *by the Master’s order*, ...for unseemly wranglings between two of its members”. Almost seven weeks later on Nov. 12th, the next meeting was convened; “after prolonged discussion, the group resolved to bind itself together by a special pledge”. H.P.B. resumed her oral esoteric instructions at the Nov. 26th meeting. Regular meetings continued weekly (except that no meeting was held on Dec. 10th up to and including the meeting of Feb. 11, 1891.

On Jan. 8, 1891 (the day after the regular weekly meeting), a special Inner Group gathering was held. At this meeting, Rai B.K. Laheri (one of the “out-side” members, who was on a visit to England) took the Inner Group pledge in the presence of H.P.B., Isabel Cooper-Oakley, Laura Cooper, Walter Old, Claude Falls Wright and G.R.S. Mead. Since Laheri could not attend the regular meetings, H.P.B. asked Alice Cleather to “copy and send the teachings after each meeting” to Laheri in India.

After the Feb. 11th meeting, Inner Group meetings were held on March 11, March 25, April 1, April 15 and April 22, 1891. Soon after this latter meeting, H.P.B. became seriously ill and died on the 8th of May.

<sup>12</sup>See p. xxvii, footnote 37, of this *Introduction*.

Looking at the “attendance” diagram, it is interesting to note that none of the Inner Group meetings had all twelve members in attendance. Archibald Keightley attended only the three I.G. sessions in September, 1890, for he had to leave England on an extended trip to New Zealand and America. Annie Besant was absent from the last three April, 1891 meetings of the I.G.; she left London on the morning of April 1st for a trip to the United States where she lectured on behalf of the Theosophical Society and attended the annual T.S. American Convention. Of the twelve members of the Inner Group, Claude Falls Wright was the only member to attend all meetings. G.R.S. Mead attended all but one of the I.G. gatherings.

Month:	08 09 09 09 11 11 12 12 12 01 01 01 01 02 02 03 03 04 04 04
Day:	20 10 17 24 12 26 03 17 24 31 07 08 14 21 28 04 11 11 25 01 15 22
Year:	90 90 90 90 90 90 90 90 90 91 91 91 91 91 91 91 91 91 91 91 91
AB	x x x x x x x x x x x x x x x x x
AK	x x x
ALC	x x x x x x x x x x x x x x x x
CFW	x x
CW	x x
EK	x x x x x x x x x x x x x x x x x
ETS	x x x x x x x x x x x x x x x x x x
GRSM	x x
HAWC	x x
IC-O	x x
LMC	x x
WRO	x x

### Annie Besant’s Appointment

A month before her death, April 1, 1891, H.P.B. appointed Annie Besant to an official position in the Inner Group. The text of the appointment was seen by U.P.B.’s representative for the E.S. in America, as can be seen at the end of the text of the document:

[Seal] E.S. Order

I hereby appoint in the name of the *Master*, Annie Besant Chief Secretary of the Inner Group of the Esoteric Section and Recorder of the Teachings.

H.P.B..’

To Annie Besant, C.S. of the I.G. of the E.S. and R. of the T.

April 1, 1891

Read and Recorded April 1 1/91. William Q. Judge, Sec. US.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> *The Theosophist* June 1932, pp 230-1 (text and facsimile); *H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, vol XII, pp 484-5

## H.P.B.'s Death

On May 8, 1891, H.P.B. died quite unexpectedly, after a prolonged illness. According to Laura M. Cooper's testimony, three members of the Inner Group were present at her death bed:<sup>14</sup>

When all hope was over the nurse left the room, leaving C.F. Wright, W.R. Old and myself with our beloved H.P.B.; the two former knelt in front, each holding one of her hands, and I at her side with one arm round her supported her head; thus we remained motionless for many minutes, and so quietly did H.P.B. pass away that we hardly knew the second she ceased to breathe; a great sense of peace filled the room, and we knelt quietly there until, first my sister [Isabel Cooper-Oakley], then the Countess [Constance Wachtmeister] arrived.

## The Inner Group Defends H.P.B.

Shortly after the death of H.P.B., the members of the Inner Group published a declaration in defence of H.P.B.:

### A Declaration<sup>15</sup>

We, the undersigned members of the Theosophical Society (and members of the Inner Group of the E.S.) at the stake of our personal honour and reputation, hereby declare:

That we have fully investigated all the accusations and attacks which have been made against the personal character and *bona fides* of H.P. Blavatsky, and have found them in the vast majority of cases to be entirely false, and in the few remaining instances the grossest possible distortions of the simple facts.

Knowing moreover, that accusations of plagiarism, want of method and inaccuracy, are now being made and will in the future be brought against her literary work, we make the following statement for the benefit of all Fellows of the Theosophical Society and for the information of others:

H.P. Blavatsky's writings, owing to her imperfect knowledge of English

<sup>14</sup> In *Memory of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, by Some of Her Pupils*, London, New York, Madras, 1891, pp. 6-7; verbatim reprint London 1991.

<sup>15</sup> *Lucifer*, May 1891, p. 247; *HP. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, vol. XIII, pp. 203-4.

and literary methods, have been invariably revised, recopied or arranged in MS., and the proofs corrected, by the nearest "friends" available for the time being (a few of whom have occasionally supplied her with references, quotations, and advice). Many mistakes, omissions, inaccuracies, etc., have consequently crept into them.

These works, however, have been put forward purely with the intention of bringing certain *ideas* to the notice of the Western world, and with no pretension on her part to scholarship or literary finish.

In order to support these views, innumerable quotations and references had to be made (in many cases without the possibility of verification by her), and for these she has never claimed any originality or profound research whatever.

After long and intimate acquaintance with H.P. Blavatsky, we have invariably found her labouring for the benefit and instruction of the Theosophical Society and others, and not for herself, and that she is the first to make little of what others consider her "learning". From further instruction however, which we have received, we know for a fact that H.P. Blavatsky is the possessor of far deeper "knowledge" than even that which she has been able to give out in her public writings.

From all of which considerations, it logically follows that no accusations can possibly shake our confidence in H.P. Blavatsky's personal character and *bona fides* as a teacher. We do not therefore intend in future to waste our time in useless refutations, or allow ourselves to be distracted from our work by any attacks, further than to repeat our present statement.

We, however, reserve to ourselves the right of appeal to the law, when necessary.

**G.R.S. MEAD,**  
**W.R.Old,**  
**Laura m. Cooper,**  
**Emily Kislingbury,**  
**E.T. Sturdy,**  
**H. A .W. CORYN,**

**Constance Wachtmeister,**  
**Alice Leighton Cleather,**  
**Claude F. Wright,**  
**Archibald Keightley,**  
**Isabel Cooper-Oakley,**  
**Annie Besant.**

## The Reorganization of the E.S.

On May 27 1891, the British E.S. Council (consisting of the 12 members of the

Inner Group plus W. Wynn Westcott and William Kingsland) and William Q. Judge (representing the American E.S. Council) convened a meeting in London to discuss the future of the E.S. after H.P.B.'s death. The minutes of the meeting are as follows:<sup>16</sup>

### *Eastern School of Theosophy*

#### **To All Members of the E.S.T.**

A full meeting of the Council, as appointed by H.P.B., was held at the Headquarters of the Theosophical Society in Europe, 19, Avenue Road, London, England, on May 27, 1891. The American Councillors were represented by Brother William Q. Judge, with full power, and Brother Judge attended as the representative of H.P.B. under a general power given as below:

[follows the document as given on pp. viii-

ix] The Council passed the following minute:

In virtue of our appointment by H.P.B. we declare:

That in full accord with the known wishes of H.P.B., the visible Head of the School, we primarily resolve and declare that the work of the School ought and shall be continued and carried on along the lines laid down by her, and with the matter left in writing or dictated by her before her departure.

That it was recorded that there was ample proof by witnesses, members of this School, that her last words in reference to the School and its work were: "KEEP THE LINK. UNBROKEN! DO NOT LET MY LAST INCARNATION BE A FAILURE"

That her words to Brother Judge in a recent letter were read stating that this Section (now School) is the "throbbing heart of the Theosophical Society".

That it was resolved and recorded that the highest officials in the School for the present are Annie Besant and William Q. Judge, in accordance with the above-quoted order to William Q. Judge of December, 1888, and with the order of April 1, 1891, to Annie Besant, as well as with the written

<sup>16</sup>The complete text of the minutes of this meeting was published for the first time in *Echoes of the Orient*, vol. III, compiled by Dara Eklund, San Diego 1987, pp. 350-3.

declaration of H.P.B. in a letter to William Q. Judge dated March 27, 1891,<sup>17</sup> which we now here have read, in which she wrote that Annie Besant should be so considered. The order of April 1, 1891, is as follows:

[follows the document as given on p. xv]

That it was resolved and recorded that the outer probationary degree should continue its existence and work with the material in hand, and that the 2nd and 7th clauses of the Pledge be altered as follows:

2. I pledge myself to support before the world the Theosophical Movement, and in particular to answer and obey, without cavil or delay, all orders given me through the outer Heads of this School in all that concerns my Theosophical duties and Esoteric work, so far as I can do so without violating my positive obligations under the moral law and the laws of the land; and I expressly agree that I may be expelled from the School and that the fact of such expulsion may be made known to its members, should I violate this pledge of obedience and secrecy.

7. I pledge myself to preserve inviolable secrecy as regards the signs and passwords of the School and all confidential documents; and to return the latter to one of the outer Heads of the School, or their agents, in case of my resignation, or when requested by them to do so.

That it was resolved that the said Annie Besant and William Q. Judge send notice to all members of the School, asking from them a declaration of allegiance to the School, and that they will reaffirm it in the new form above given.

That until replies to the said notice are received no more of the Instructions, as revised before the departure of H.P.B., nor any of Instructions No. IV,<sup>18</sup> ought to be sent out or delivered.

That the names of all members who shall reply in the negative to said notice, and of all who shall fail to reply, shall be stricken off the list and a return of all their papers and documents of the School be required to be made to the said Annie Besant and William Q. Judge.

That when all members shall have replied to said notice, those whose answers shall be in the affirmative shall receive Nos. I, II and III of the Instructions, as corrected and reprinted, if not already forwarded.

That respecting No. IV of the Instructions, the same shall be sent under the rule laid down by H.P.B. before her departure, to wit, to those whose answers to the Examination Paper No. I indicate a fitness to profit by them;

<sup>17</sup> The text of the letter is given on p. xxxvi

<sup>18</sup> See the section about *Instruction* No IV on pp. xxii-xxiii

and that in future, as discretion shall show, a new edition of said Examination Paper shall be sent out to those whose replies were not up to the standard at first, as well as to later members who may never have received the said paper, and whenever upon any new edition of said Examination Paper - or any other sending out thereof - the standard shall be reached by any member in his or her answers to the questions put, then in every such case the member shall be admitted to the Second Degree, and Instruction No. IV shall be sent as promised by H.P.B. before her departure.

That applicants for admission to the School must show a knowledge of exoteric instructions so far given out, by answers to questions to be sent them.

That the questions to candidates be sent out signed by Annie Besant and William Q. Judge.

That the preliminary pledge be altered so as to include these questions among the documents not to be shown to anyone, and that the "Questions to Candidates" are to be returned with the answers thereto.

That having read the address drawn up by Annie Besant and William Q. Judge, we put on record our full accord with it.

That this Council records its decision that its appointment was solely for the purpose of assisting H.P.B. in a consultative way, and that as she had full power and authority to relieve us from duty at any time, our office and that of each of us ends with the above resolution passed in order as far as possible in our power to place the future conduct of the School on the basis directed and intended by her; therefore we collectively and individually declare that our office as Councillors ceases at this date, and that from henceforth with Annie Besant and William Q. Judge rest the full charge and management of this School.

*(Signed)*

**ANNIE BESANT,**  
**Alice Leighton Cleather,**  
**ISABEL COOPER-OAKLEY,**  
**Laura M. Cooper,**  
**H.A.W. Coryn,**  
**Archibald Keightley,**  
**William Kingsland,**  
**Emily Kislingbury,**  
**G.R.S. Mead,**  
**W.R. Old,**

*Councillor E.S. T.*

**E.T. Sturdy,**  
**Constance Wachtmeister,**  
**W. Wynn Westcott,**  
**Claude F. Wright,**

WILLIAM Q. Judge, *for the entire American Council E.S.T., and individually.*

## The Documents

### **The E.S. Instructions (I, II, and III) and Other E.S. Papers by H.P.B.**

H.P.B. wrote three Esoteric Instructions for the members of the E.S. These three documents were issued as follows: No. 1: January/February 1889; No. II: March/April 1889; and No. III: December 1889/January 1890.<sup>19</sup>

Other important E.S. communications written by H.P.B. include the *Preliminary Memorandum*<sup>20</sup> (dated December 14, 1888); the *Preliminary Explanations to No. III of the Instructions*<sup>21</sup> (12-page pamphlet issued October 1889); and the 2nd ed. of the *Preliminary Memorandum* enlarged and retitled the *Book of Rules*<sup>22</sup> (issued September or October, 1890). Other miscellaneous letters and papers to members of the E.S. have been published in several different sources.<sup>23</sup> Unfortunately, there are many other miscellaneous E.S. notices/communications from H.P.B. that have never been published.

<sup>19</sup> Published in *H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, vol. XII, pp. 513-538; pp. 542-570 and 599-641 resp. The coloured plates I, II and III are bound opp. p. 580

<sup>20</sup> Published in *H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, vol XII, pp. 488-498.

<sup>21</sup> Published in *H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, vol. XII, pp. 581-599.

<sup>22</sup> Issued September/October 1890, 35 pp., 4.75" by 6.25"; not published by Boris do Zirkoff in *HP Blavatsky Collected Writings*.

<sup>23</sup> *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, vol X, pp 154-155, pp 194-195; vol XL p 295, pp. 306-311, pp 341-342, pp 178 184, pp 558-559; vol XII, pp 89, 479-485, 499-511; vol. XIII, pp. 203-204; Dora Eklund, *Echoes of the Orient*, vol III, San Diego 1987, pp 285-478

## Instruction No. IV

In the *Notice*<sup>24</sup> prefacing *Instruction* No. IV, Annie Besant made the following remarks:

The matter contained in this Instruction was delivered orally by H.P.B. in her Group Teaching of members of the Third Degree...

By her direction the matter was rearranged under headings as given below...

Mrs. Besant's statement that H.P.B. herself directed the editing of *Instruction* No. IV is confirmed in two other E.S. documents. In the *Minutes* of the meeting (dated May 27, 1891) of the E.S.T. Council, two references to *Instruction* No. IV support Mrs. Besant's statement.<sup>24 25</sup> Also in an E.S. document entitled *Reprint of Instructions I, II and III* (dated April, 1891), it is clearly indicated that *Instruction* No. IV was being typeset and printed on the H.P.B. Press in April, 1891. The relevant portion of that document reads:<sup>26</sup>

One thousand copies of the Instructions have been printed, and No. IV is now going through the press.

The new Instruction, however, will not be sent to all members of the E.S., but only to those who are judged sufficiently advanced to require it.

*For the Council E.S.*

G.R.S. MEAD

*Secretary E.S.*

*Approved:*

**H.P. Blavatsky,**

*Head of the E.S.*

*April, 1891.*

<sup>24</sup> *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, vol. XII, p. 655 and p. 127 of our book.

<sup>25</sup> See p. xix of our *Historical Introduction*

<sup>26</sup> On p. 4; the document is signed and dated on p. 7.

Research indicates that *Instruction* No. IV is a rearrangement of materials given by H.P.B. at the Inner Group Meetings Nos. V-XIII (November 26, 1890 - January 28, 1891). This material will be found on pp. 28-67 of our book.

One edition of *Instruction* No. IV was published in *HP. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, vol. XII, pp. 654-673. The text as given in our book on pp. 127-150 has been transcribed from a copy of the original instruction, signed by both Annie Besant and William Q. Judge.

## The First Supplementary Paper to Instruction No. IV

The *First Supplementary Paper to Instruction No. IV* is not composed from any materials from the Inner Group *Minutes* but consists of a series of explanations and elucidations written by Annie Besant and William Q. Judge on various statements made in *Instruction* No. IV. One edition of the *First Supplementary Paper* was published in *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, vol XII, pp. 675-687. The text is given in our book on pp. 153-164.<sup>27</sup>

## Instruction No. V

*Instruction* No V is a rearrangement of materials given by H.P.B. at the Inner Group Meetings Nos. I-XX (August 20, 1890 - April 22, 1891). One edition of *Instruction* No. V was published in *H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, vol. XII, pp. 689-712. The text as given in our book on pp. 167-194 is verbatim with a copy of the original instruction, signed by both Mrs. Besant and Mr. Judge.<sup>28</sup> It should also be noted that *Instruction* No. V (as well as *Instruction* No. IV) was issued *after* H.P.B.'s death.

*Instruction* No. V (see pp. 173-174 of our book) contains a quotation from an unpublished (1882?) letter from the Master K.H. to A.O. Hume. Two of the three extracts quoted from the Master's letter are also given on pp. 102-103 of *The Path*, vol. IV, July, 1889 in an article "Judge the Act: Not the Person" by Jasper Niemand (the pen name of Julia Ver Planck, later Mrs. Archibald Keightley). Jasper Niemand prefaced the quotations with the following: "...let us read some remarks from an Oriental Adept which came into our possession many months ago."

<sup>27</sup> The text in *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, vol XII is signed by W.O. Judge only. But see what Booris de Zirkoff says on p 653 of. vol XII

<sup>28</sup> See note 27

## Instruction No. VI

In 1901, The Eastern School of Theosophy,<sup>29</sup> P.O. Box 1584, New York, N.Y. issued to its esoteric members a book entitled *E.S. T. Instructions: Nos. IV, V and VI*. The book reprinted *Instruction No. IV*, the *Supplementary Paper to Instruction No. IV*, and *Instruction No. V*. The book also included a new (never issued before) *Instruction No. VI*, which was partly composed (see pp. 191-206 of the 1901 book) of H.P.B.'s oral instructions at I.G. meetings Nos. VII, VIII, XIII, XIV, XVII, and XVIII; these portions had *not* previously been published in either *Instruction No. IV* or *Instruction No. V*. This I.G. material as given in *Instruction No. VI* is published in our book on pp. 198-211.

*Instruction No. VI* also contained extracts from some of H.P.B.'s unpublished letters as well as "hitherto unpublished letters of Master K.H." (see pp. 206-237 of the 1901 book). For more information on *Instruction No. VI*, see p. 197.

## Published Versions of the Inner Group Teachings

All of the above mentioned E.S. Instructions (including those with Inner Group Teachings) were issued "strictly private and confidential" to E.S. members only. But since 1897, different versions (either edited, abridged or incomplete) of the text of the Inner Group Teachings have been published (*i.e.* for the public):

The Inner Group *Minutes* were published (*without* the attendance list, the dates and numbers of the meetings, the numbers of the questions, and private indications) in the 1897 Third Volume of *The Secret Doctrine*.<sup>30</sup> Roughly 95% of the text of the *Minutes* is printed.

In *The Theosophist* (vol. XLVI, August 1925, pp. 632-634; reprinted in *HP. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, vol. XIII, pp. 288-289), C. Jinarājadāsa published parts of the *Minutes* of Meeting No. XIII, in the handwriting of H.P. Blavatsky.

<sup>29</sup> This particular E.S.T. was affiliated with The Theosophical Society in America, New York, N.Y., which was headed by Ernest T. Hargrove. Hargrove's T.S./E.S.T. (1898-1935) should *not* be confused with Katherine Tingley's T.S./E.S.T. (Point Loma, California). For a historical overview of the Hargrove T.S./E.S.T., see John Cooper's article *The Esoteric School Within the Hargrove Theosophical Society in Theosophical History*, Vol. IV, April-July, pp. 178-186.

<sup>30</sup> *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. III, London-Chicago-Benares 1897, many reprints, pp. 537-594; reprint as vol V of the 6-vols ed with different pages, Madras (Adyar) 1938, many reprints, pp. 510-567.

In *The Theosophist* (vols LII-LIII, January 1931 -July 1932), C. Jinarājadāsa published the Inner Group *Notebook* of Mrs. Isabel Cooper-Oakley, *without* the attendance lists. The *Minutes* of the 3rd, 4th, and 20th Meeting are not in this *Notebook*.

In *The Theosophical Forum* (vols XVI-XVIII, April 1940-April 1941), Dr. J.H. Fussell published parts of the official *Minutes* in the handwriting of Mrs. Alice Cleighton Cleather.

In the same magazine Dr. J.H. Fussell published also the variant readings from the *Notebook* of Claude Falls Wright.\*<sup>31</sup>

In 1985, Point Loma Publications, Inc. published the first edition of *The Inner Group Teachings of H.P. Blavatsky to Her Personal Pupils (1890-91): A Reconstruction of the Teachings* by H.J. Spierenburg. Using the various sources listed above, Henk J. Spierenburg tried to reconstruct a fairly 'complete' text of the Inner Group *Minutes*. See pp. xxix-xxxii of our present book for more details on the first edition.

*None* of the above mentioned sources contain the complete text of the Inner Group Teachings.

## ***The Complete Official Minutes of the Inner Group Meetings***

In the letter of invitation to join the Inner Group (see pp. xi-xii of this *Introduction*), prospective members were told:

Each member [of the Inner Group] is expected to provide himself with a note book...

In the *Notice* prefacing *E.S. Instruction* No. IV, Annie Besant told how H.P.B.'s verbal teachings to the members of the Inner Group were recorded:<sup>32</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Dr. Fussell says in *The Theosophical Forum*, vol. XVI, p. 278: "The record... is incomplete, being a record of only the first 10 out of the 20 meetings held. The first and last parts of [the] record... are in the handwriting of Claude Falls Wright, the middle part being in another, unrecognized handwriting,"

<sup>32</sup> Published in *H.P. Blavatsky Collect Writings*. vol. XII, p. 655 and on p. 127 of this book.

...The matter contained in this Instruction was delivered orally by H.P.B. in her Group Teaching of members of the Third Degree. It was thus given with a view of its being transmitted to members of the Second Degree, and was carefully written down by the students at the time, one of the number reporting it in shorthand. All the notes thus taken were compared, and a fair copy was made by the two secretaries, Annie Besant and George R.S. Mead. This copy was again checked by questioning H.P.B. on any point that seemed obscure...

Annie Besant,  
Chief Secretary of the Inner Group and Recorder of the Teachings.

The same is said by W.Q. Judge in a circular to the E.S.T. members:<sup>33</sup>

An Inner Group was... formed by H.P.B.-. at London, so that she might give out teachings to be recorded to the members, and, if possible, teach them practical occultism. Of this Mrs. Besant, with George Mead to help her, was made the Secretary...

The conversations of H.P.B.-. with the Inner Group were taken down in a more or less fragmentary form by the different members in notes, and later Mrs. Besant and George Mead wrote them out as Secretaries...

A somewhat identical statement is made by Alice Leighton Cleather in one of her books:<sup>34</sup>

The I.G. Teachings were given orally by H.P.B. at its meetings in 1890-91. It was the duty of the two secretaries, Mrs. Besant and Mr. Mead, to write these Teachings up, from notes sent in by *all of us*, after each meeting, and record them in a book. This record was dealt with at each succeeding meeting, corrected and often amplified by H.P.B.

That H.P.B. really corrected the *Minutes* herself is clear from a publication in *The Theosophist*,<sup>35</sup> wherein we can find a part of the *Minutes* of Meeting No. XIII (pp. 62-67 and 115-120 of our book) in the handwriting of H.P.B.

<sup>33</sup> *By Master's Direction*, dated November 3rd, 1894, p 3; see also *The Theosophical Forum*, vol. XVI, April 1940, p. 277.

<sup>34</sup> Alice Leighton Cleather, *HP. Blavatsky, A Great Betrayal*, Calcutta 1922, p. 83.

<sup>35</sup> August 1925, pp. 632-634; reprint in *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, vol. XIII, pp. 288-289. C Jinarājadāsa says in an introduction that the text is exactly as H.P.B. wrote it.

According to Judge, each of the members of the Inner Group was in the possession of a complete copy of the *Minutes*:<sup>36</sup>

I have a complete copy of these, and so has each member of the Inner Group...<sup>37</sup>

One copy of the Inner Group teachings was sent to Rai B.K. Laheri, as indicated by Alice Leighton Cleather in the following words:<sup>38</sup>

I... was instructed by H.P.B. to copy and send the teachings after each meeting to Rai B.K. Laheri...<sup>39</sup>

From the various statements quoted above, we can conclude that (1) a “fair copy” of H.P.B.’s Inner Group Teachings was transcribed by Mrs. Besant and Mr. Mead; that (2) this copy was corrected and finally approved by H.P.B. as the “official” Inner Group *Minutes*; and that (3) “complete” copies of these official *Minutes* were made for each member of the Inner Group.

Furthermore, when Mr. Judge went to London after H.P.B.’s death, he became a member of the Inner Group. Also the E.S. was reorganized and Mrs. Besant and Mr. Judge became Co-Heads of the E.S.T. Under these circumstances it was only natural and logical that Mr. Judge was also given a “complete” copy of the official Inner Group *Minutes*.

Mr. Judge’s copy of the official *Minutes* is preserved in the archives of the Theosophical Society (Pasadena, California). This copy is in the handwriting of Alice Leighton Cleather. Facing the first page of the text the following notation is to be found also in Mrs. Cleather’s handwriting:

(Copied - July, 1891, - for W.Q.J.) A.L.C.<sup>40</sup>

A typewritten (verbatim) version of Mr. Judge’s copy of the Inner Group

<sup>36</sup> In his *Circular By Master’s Direction*, dated November 3rd, 1894, p. 3.

<sup>37</sup> W.Q. Judge became a member of the Inner Group in 1891. In his *E.S.T. Circular By Master’s Direction* of November 3, 1894 (p. 3), Judge wrote: “I am a member of the Inner Group and have been since 1891” Mrs. Besant confirmed Judge’s statement in her circular (dated December 19, 1894) to E.S.T. members “It seemed to all of us natural and right that he [W.Q. Judge] come in, and we joyfully welcomed him” See also *The Theosophical Forum*, vol. XVI, April 1940, pp. 277-278.

<sup>38</sup> In a letter to *The Canadian Theosophist*, December 1937, p 302.

<sup>39</sup> On Rai B.K. Lithcii, see the pp siv and M of our book.

<sup>40</sup> *The Theosophical Forum*, vol XVI, April 1940, p 278

*Minutes* is now preserved in the library of Daniel H. Caldwell (Tucson, Arizona). Almost a decade ago, the late Walter A. Carrithers, Jr. (founder/secretary of The Blavatsky Foundation) gave this typewritten copy to Daniel H. Caldwell for safekeeping. It is from this typewritten copy of the Inner Group *Minutes* that the main body of text in our book (pp. 3-92 herein) has been printed. *Nothing* has been changed in the text and the lay-out, *except* the transcription of the Sanskrit.

With the issue of this second edition of *The Inner Group Teachings of H.P. Blavatsky*, the official *Minutes* of H.P.B.'s Inner Group Teachings are for the first time completely published.