

In the following handwritten letter Beatrice Hastings expresses her personal feelings to Mr. Frank Arthur Ranicar, a close confidant and supporter of “The Friends of Madame Blavatsky” movement. She also expressed her concern about the lack of support from members of the Theosophical Movement, and the hindrances from the Leaders of the Adyar Society and from Point Loma. Her message about theosophists defending Blavatsky is as true today as it was then.

Mr. Ranicar was born in Wigan, Lancashire, England, in 1906. He served as Lieutenant in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve during WWII. After the war, late 1947, he married a woman from Manchester, Nounnee Agaroniantz. After Hastings’ death Ranicar was sent all unsold copies of her F.M.B. books.

---

4 Bedford Row, Worthing, July 29, 38.

Dear Mr. Ranicar,

Well, and what do you think of some “Theosophists” who pretend to believe that I am defending Blavatsky to get *prestige* for myself! The only prestige of any sort (anyway of the sort these sneaks mean) would be got by attacking her and smashing her forever. There’s where fame and fortune wave! I suppose it is a flip from Fate as in the “litry world” I am considered the most exclusive and haughtiest of writers and, in fact, am. I refused an offer to do a column in the “Chicago Tribune” at 50 dollars a week, rising, because I would not have a free hand. I left off writing for a paper my brother owns because he suppressed an article I wrote in Jan. 1935, saying that I smelled fire and brimstone in the visit of Laval to Rome. That meant a chance of a ROW as this brother gives me an allowance anyway. No row. I think he rather respected me, being a decent chap himself. But the real risk came when I began this HPB thing. I trembled when he came over here (he lives in S. Africa) and came to see me. I laid Vol I on the table, and waited for the BLOW. No blow. But I’ll swear there was a Master in the room, the atmosphere was strange. He glanced at the book and just said slowly, “I don’t know anything much about the lady...afraid I’m not interested. Hope you make some money this time.” I thought that I might, sometime, but it would all have gone in the fight anyway, as all has up to now. I never counted *stamps* for the first year, and you know how they mount up (my first leaflets, 5,000, all but a few hundred were sent out by myself). I never had a penny at the end of the month, had to cut off even the tiniest bus-ride. How I didn’t fall ill is a mystery. In fact I did at Xmas, flu and neuritis recurring several times all through the winter. *Those who can see* through brick walls know what I went through, without even a servant to bring me a cup of tea. My hands are still damaged from the hundreds of letters leaflets and parcels I had to do at the start of FRIENDS. It was all in the expectation, based on wildly enthusiastic letters from T’s, that ever so many people would come in and do something. Lord! talk of mayas! I never dreamed of running FRIENDS myself, but I found that the various FTS’s won’t work together. More, Arundale and Co and Purucker and Co. do doubt realised from the start what I only realised a little later — that when HPB comes to her own, they fade out, I also knew it in a way, but didn’t fathom their remorseless ambition and determination to keep their hold. It takes time for an outsider to understand that scores of well-known names

–2–

are names of Theosophical Crooks on the Path. I wish I believed in personal karma and that they would themselves get deserts. But I am only convinced as a Buddhist (if one must have a label!) of *general* karma,

and that if you do the “right thing”, your only “reward” can be to know that you are battling for the few who will come after and who may yet once again be faced with rack and thumbscrew. The more of these few there becomes possible, the quicker there will be anything remotely like a universal brotherhood. Many no doubt are even now getting shoved out of action in this black-magical world. For instance, I *know* of people who recognise HPB as a great genius but who wouldn’t venture to name her at present. Only a writer of my known reputation both as a writer and a controversialist *and* with at least a living allowance, could dare to do what I have done. The danger is that, although the reviewers won’t care to *attack* my books, they can, and do, ignore them so far, at least the ordinary Press. Here is where the FMB’s could *act*, writing in to papers and distributing the leaflets. I can’t get them to act. Only a bare half dozen have written to their papers. A good many distribute the leaflets, but a hundred or so seems to exhaust their energy (some pay the postage for others). If it were only a matter of *purse*, that’s no excuse, for the leaflets can be given away as well as sent. They are too *polite* to do this. The only person I know of who takes out a few and hands them about and leaves one on a seat in every tube or bus is a *spiritualist*! With a dozen of *that* spirit, we could have had a meeting in Hyde Park by now, as a preliminary advert. to a big hall meeting somewhere. I’m beginning to be sorry really that Theosophists ever took up this Defence of mine at all. If they hadn’t and I hadn’t been misled by their verbal enthusiasm, I should have worked in a quite different way and field. It is even quite a handicap to me that my dear friends can say that I have “gone Theosophist” — dangerous! Well, I’ll make it clear that I’ve not gone T’t and that except for a few, very few, I have had no help from FTS’s, but a lot of HINDRANCE and conspiracy to defeat the Defence. How Adyar and Point Loma would rejoice to know what the FMB Fund is! I’m terrified to tell anyone in case it gets abroad. I have to bluff just as poor HPB had. Old Arundale with a couple of thousand pounds to spend on his travelling expenses and old Purucker with a good many hundreds! Well well, I shall certainly change my tactics. The 94 rooms, have not seen the shadows of even a dozen T’t members and then only for a run in between other *more important* visits — except one member, a poor

–3–

woman from the *country*, who pays HPB the compliment of a regular fortnightly attendance, not *visit*. We have had some real talks and learned a few things. Every mortal kind of excuse, all those in the Gospel tale, is alleged, except, so far, burying their fathers. AS IF I COULDN’T MAKE EXCUSES! I have sat there for two whole days each week, either twiddling my thumbs or explaining to enquirers who dribble in one after another and exhaust my throat. Only the country member has ever offered to relieve me and only once has anyone invited me to lunch. I eat anyhow off a tray and hate it, not the tray exactly, but the rather tasteless food eaten alone after a depressing afternoon is simply not digested (even if I eat enough of it which I don’t always) and then follows a bad night. It’s abominable, disgusting, scandalous.

And it’s going to stop! I’m no *martyr*, not on the line of martyrdom at all. I do willingly whatever I can to win this cause. I see however that it’s not going to be won with the present forces. If I continued, one day I should round on them with a sudden clear perception of their selfishness (I do perceive it now but haven’t got to the point of a row) wipe the floor with them and walk out. You know, they take it for granted that I will persevere no matter what happens, but never reflect that it takes more even than an Adept could achieve to *succeed* against lazy apathy and selfishness!!! And the moment comes when a reasonable person decides that the game is up, and that long before the last move.

Well, I’ve seen that I could play this present game to the end and lose, and lose my chance of starting

another. I think I should do better to give them all the chance of resigning from the FMB, with return of their money (which would take a little time as it is mostly spent) and get out into the wide wide world. Imagine! the conclusion come to by the few who have given any money (and it's only a trifle, not a hundred pounds in all!) was to abandon the 94, although it is only just started and I have spent ever so much time and some of the money in advertising the *start*. Not to come come come themselves every week as I do, bring a friend or a stranger and give them a good tea and a light on the path, put all our heads together to devise ways of collecting people — but to stop, give in, let all the town know that we are defeated in our first public effort! And while outside papers, spiritualist, labour and whatnot, are congratulating us, and the Theos. papers like “Canadian Theosophist” and “Critic” are just hearing of the London place! I asked them to organise the

–4–

Talks on Madame Blavatsky. I can't tell you what is in their heads, but they took me completely by surprise and had evidently held a kind of informal meeting over the phone and decided *what I should do*. What I should do is to give up everything except writing the books and hand over the Fund to a Treasurer. I swear that is all there was *constructive* said. Now I've never been mixed up in any kind of group, don't know anything about the way to stick out for the right action against *apparently* reasonable suggestions and, I don't doubt, sincerely made. But what a sincerity!! The only stand I had wits enough left to make was to ask for or rather insist on a monthly public meeting in some hall (all my eye and Betty Martin as a possibly successful way *before* we have even got a nucleus at our own rooms, and I soon saw that!). In fact, I won't swear that it *was my* suggestion, or whether I merely caught at some remark on the subject. But that meant, I was reminded, more money. I said, “Well, will you do what Miss -- suggests, send out a letter to likely members, asking a guinea subscription for these public meetings and few of you who are known, sign it and make the thing work?” No, they wouldn't sign it! I fancy that we got mixed up here and that they fancied that I wanted to handle *that* fund. Far from it! But anyway the whole discussion left a nasty sensation on my mind, and when they were gone and I gave a few hours to *seeing* the whole thing, I revolted entirely. Leave 94, NEVER! Not if I had to give up my house here and go and live there. But of course, that would mean delay of any more books until some time next year, as I should just about ruin my health if I attempted this terrific work among the fogs and traffic that I never could stand even when I was young.

If I were to issue 50 vols and leave the country all around in the hands of the enemy with no contact, that would be exactly like bombarding a city without sending up your infantry. They fancy that if the next book is sent out bound in a cover and issued by a publisher that the rags would review it. No certainty whatever. And the hostile rags with one accord could just damn the *case* with faint praise for *my style*, and drag up once again the old scandals. What could stop them? They care nothing about a bound book, get hundreds; they care about the publisher's advert, but unless at least a hundred pounds was spent on special adverts, my book would only go on a list of other publications by same man, and he would not stop his other adverts because my book might be reviewed in a manner to make it

–5–

seem a dull, out-of-date production — and that is the likeliest line to be taken.

NOTHING will make Blavatsky *news* unless we can create discussion in public, or for the present semi-

public at 94; and until she *is news*, the editors won't care a damn how many books are issued. Your conclusion from the replies you got to the leaflets you sent out, that she is a red rag to a bull, is right. She is. But my God, we knew that! The aim of the leaflets is to wave this rag in the faces of bulls and trust to their rage exciting an opposite attitude in many, we *also* will read and learn at least that there is another side to the "impostor" slanders. A few bulls roaring would do us a lot of good. I quite expect some to come and roar when we begin our Talks at 94. Where the money is coming from to run the Talks if the present supporters drop out, I don't know, but think it will come. I shall make a great effort, and a last effort. If I have to give it up, that's the last will be heard of me, for without active co-operation now that I have written so much already, more books would be useless.

Besides, I am not going to do anything more if this fails, until the whole public knows that I have nothing to go with any TS of any sort. I am not going to clean up the record and see these Theosophists benefit by my labour. Nothing of the kind, as HPB used to say. The next book I would write would be "This Theosophical Society!", using all I have gathered personally about it to confirm the truth that the whole bunch with a few exceptions is utterly unworthy of Madame Blavatsky and making it clear that I myself have nothing in common with such people, What Dr. Hartmann wrote about Schleiden and others is archi-true today. "Men and women who for years have made a living out of the writings of H.P.B., the which they paraphrase and pass off as their own." And that is the base of all their other crimes. They corrupt as well as paraphrase; they spend the money on their own pedestals. See Adyar, spending 8000 Rs a year on the flower gardens and letting the Panchala (pariah) schools drop from 5 to one! If I had known the modern history of the TS' s, all of them, that is since HPB died, I daresay I should have shirked writing anything. What a pack of devils and dupes!

And I find some sectarian telling me the most appalling stories about some big pot. .and next I find that same sectarian hobnobbing with the Pot. Bah! what a book I could write,

–6–

Hope I never have to. It's as filthy as the Coulomb and Soloyoff atmosphere and with infinitely more complicated villainy. I hate them as I hate snakes, only the snake knows no better than to lurk and spring, and these terrible people use the very names of the Masters to cloak their secret purpose of collecting a crowd of more or less well-to-do *slaves*, I see what they do. By Jove! I tell you that a dramatic satire on the TS since 1891 would make me a fortune and if I were sure the time were come, I'd do it. But at present, the Public might mix up HPB with the caboodle. Wait!

I hope to goodness all this interests you, feel pretty sure it does. Anyway, you have helped all you can and you ought to know things in case there is a debacle. Now what I shall try is to get a few outside speakers once a month at 94, drawing-room meetings, These men will have to be paid a guinea, but they will swot up their subject and make it attractive. Also I shall give a press reception one afternoon before Xmas. If I had to give an acrobatic performance I would do it, I mean if my rheumatism would permit such a lark for the good of the cause. Seriously, what I will do if things go is to have a model made of the Hole in the Wall and invite the crowd to come and see it. It wouldn't cost very much and I'd have it made exactly to measure. Also the famous double-backed cupboard that stood allegedly (unproved) against the hole, or rather where the hole was going to be, for it certainly was not in existence when the cupboard was bought.

The sooner the few Theosophists who *really want* HPB vindicated begin to understand that this crusade can only be won by reckoning on the fangs of the opposition and getting protection to some extent from the public — the better! What I gather is that they won't much mind *my* provoking and facing the fangs, but that they themselves will keep on in a fashionably discreet way, *not* identifying themselves with a *fight*, although they will profit by a victory, Well, such being the case, I must separate myself from them all and that I'm quite prepared to do. It means a longer struggle but *may* mean that I have to abandon it for lack of money. Kismet. Ah, Mr. Ranicar, if you were only a millionaire to back me through thick and thin, we'd win this throw in a year. The SPR would wake up one day to find itself plastered all over with posters and a few stalwarts chained to their railings, and hundreds of men distributing leaflets from Bow to Buckingham Palace. Well, you are as poor as I am,

—7—

but we can keep on to the end of our powers and no-one can do more. About the 1000 stamps, one of our rich members offered to pay for leaflets, but I don't know now what will happen in the next week or two. They may all resign...

Cheerio!

Yours sincerely,

Beatrice Hastings.

---

AUG. 2. 38.

Just a note. Don't sell anything for stamps, anyway. You may need money later on. Wait until I've interviewed (just off to London) these people again. I'm going on with 94 until at least the 6 months I reckoned on is out.

Imagine! I didn't know where on earth the extra two pounds needed monthly for my room was coming from. Well, on July 30th, HPB's Russian birthday, came a letter saying that my monthly income was raised — TWO Pounds!!! I bet she sent it to me. Cheerio. Hold on!

B.H.

---