

# COLONEL ARTHUR L. CONGER



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Alan E. Donant

There is a dim tradition, in the oldest Indian books, in the great Upanishads, and the earlier Vedic hymns, that the Brāhmins were not in the beginning the spiritual teachers of India; that they received their earliest wisdom from the Royal Sages of the Rājanya or Kshatriya race.

— CHARLES JOHNSTON<sup>1</sup>

**T**HE PERSON SERVING BOTH MILITARY and religious convictions imposes a challenge upon our images of spirituality. Some, like Aśoka, discovered their inner potential in a reaction to the horrors of war. Others, such as Marcus Aurelius, ever in the midst of recurring battles, guided their entire lives from within. Theosophy and the modern theosophical movement have been well represented by individuals with military experience: Colonel Henry S. Olcott, General Abner Doubleday, Lt. Colonel E. L. Thompson of The Theosophical Society in Canada, and even H. P. Blavatsky, seriously wounded at the battle of Mentana near Rome, to mention a few.

I became interested in Arthur Latham Conger, Jr., after seeing a portrait of him (front cover). There was strength, kindness, and a certain freedom in his face, and another quality that I did not at first grasp but came to understand. He was an early theosophist who lived through momentous times as student, military man, and spiritual mentor. In each of these phases, briefly surveyed and documented here, we observe theosophic principles taken beyond the books and into daily life.

The Conger family arrived in America during the middle of the 17th century, settling originally in Newby, Massachusetts. In 1667 they moved, taking part in settling the township of Woodbridge, Middlesex County, New Jersey. On March 18, 1669, they were par-

ticipants in the first distribution of land, receiving 170 acres.<sup>2</sup> Over two hundred years later Arthur L. Conger, Jr., was born in Akron, Ohio, on January 30, 1872. He was the second of four children. His father, for whom he was named, was successful in business, military, and civic affairs. He was the director of many companies, participated in the Civil War and later became a colonel, was a state and national leader in the Republican Party, and a Mason (Knight Templar degree in the York rite and 32° in Scottish rite).

Arthur Jr.'s mother, Emily Bronson Conger, was remarkable as well. Her great-great-grandfather was a surgeon in Washington's army, and her grandfather was one of the first settlers of Ohio. She was influential in organizations such as the Daughters of the American Revolution, Order of the Eastern Star, and Women's Relief Corps. She was the author of *An Ohio Woman in the Philippines*.<sup>3</sup> She became a doctor of osteopathy in 1903, joining some of the first in this field in the world.<sup>4</sup>

One of the first notable events of Arthur Jr.'s life came at the age of thirteen. His 19-year-old brother Kenyon was involved in a racing-bicycle accident. The injuries were severe and, as was the custom then, the doctor recommended a year of foreign travel as the best remedy. Consequently, a week later Arthur, Kenyon, and Miss Marie Parsons — professor of European history at Buchtel College, Akron — found themselves on the high seas.<sup>5</sup> According to Arthur:

We had no definite plan, but went where we wished, and stayed in each country and place so long as we found it interesting and profitable. By December we had 'done' the British Isles and most of continental Europe. The family joined us in Rome for Christmas, and suggested a continuation of our tour to include the Mediterranean countries and the Near East. We accepted.<sup>6</sup>

While still a teenager, Arthur had the opportunity to meet Phillips Brooks (1835–1893), an extraordinary preacher in Boston, who may have influenced how Conger viewed his spiritual life. In a letter to a young inquirer in 1945 Colonel Conger recalled

a conversation . . . with Phillips Brooks, the illustrious spiritual teacher of the last century. I told him that I wished to fit myself to be a minister and asked him how to go about it. He replied: "Every man is a minister. You are too young to decide yet what sort of a minister you will be."<sup>7</sup>

Arthur entered Harvard in 1890. He was a member of the fencing team, the Chess and Whist Clubs, the Institute of 1770, DKE (Delta Kappa Epsilon), and in April 1892 co-wrote the music for the annual Dickey play.<sup>8</sup> For the *Fiftieth Anniversary Report of the Class of 1894* he described his preparatory education and his years at Harvard:

It was my good fortune to have selected as tutors in Latin and Greek, in preparation for the Harvard entrance examinations, two scholars who really knew and could interpret the philosophy and the religion of the ancients. The next step in my education consisted in the investigation of oriental religions, and in this study George Cabot Lodge played a leading part. We had more interests in common, from tastes in music to the love of good books, than was the case in any other friendship.<sup>9</sup>

Curiously, one of Conger's classmates at Harvard was Elliott Baird Coues, son of the Elliott B. Coues known for his unjustified public attack on the Theosophical Society, H. S. Olcott, H. P. Blavatsky, and W. Q. Judge in the *New York Sun* of Sunday, July 20, 1890. (This one-page purported interview was coarse and violent; a suit for libel was brought against both Dr. Coues and *The Sun*. See *The Path*, vol. V, August 1890, p. 153, for retraction by *The Sun*).

## THEOSOPHY

While at Harvard Conger discovered theosophy. He was admitted to fellowship in the Theosophical Society on June 16, 1892.<sup>10</sup> He described that early period in the following manner:

Claude Falls Wright, a volunteer field-worker for the American Theosophical Society, came to Boston and proposed a plan for organizing a Harvard Branch of the T.S. among the students. He got together six of us for an organizational meeting, and made application for a Charter. Mr. Judge was doubtful if anything would come of it, but he issued a Charter. The new Lodge had about a dozen meetings in the Spring of that year until the examinations and hot weather put an end to the meetings. Mr. Wright was called elsewhere, and I was then transferred from the Harvard Lodge to the Cambridge Lodge, which at that time was called Branch.<sup>11</sup>

During this period Arthur Conger and George Lodge discussed various aspects of Oriental religion and philosophy with everyone they

met. They did their best to convert the young Episcopal ministers who invited them to dinner and talks in the evenings.<sup>12</sup>

Conger, age 20, was recommended by George D. Ayers for the Esoteric Section (ES) of the Theosophical Society in late 1892. W. Q. Judge waited two years until November 1894 before admitting him.<sup>13</sup> One of his sponsors at this time was Margaret Loring Guild (?– 1945), a Boston theosophist who would later become Mrs. A. L. Conger.<sup>14</sup> In 1894 she was the Secretary of the New England Theosophical Corporation, Boston, Massachusetts, and one of the more articulate theosophical speakers of the time.

Conger graduated from Harvard the same year and faced a difficult problem with his parents. During his preparatory schooling, his father wrote to him on December 12, 1887, expressing his wish that one of the two boys would follow him in the publishing business.

My Dear Whittie — Agreeable to my promise I take the earliest opportunity to inform you that I had a very pleasant interview with the Hon Wm Henry Smith, Genl Mangr of the Associated Press, & he has agreed to give me the afternoon dispatches for Akron whenever I want them, but in view of the long service of the Beacon he could not give me the exclusive right, but I do not care for this. He wants me to form a pool to buy up the Cleveland Leader — but this is very private. I will look it over. Sometime I want one of you Boys to run a paper — but this is way in the future. The *first* business in order will be to finish at Harvard. Then we will form a Co-Partnership of “Conger & Sons” & we will *all* stand & stick together in every thing — & *always* stand by each other, & that [is] what I want you Boys to do *now* & forever, because in *unity* there is great strength — I rejoice every day that you are so nicely fixed at Cambridge. With lots of love for you all believe me as ever your Father. A.L.C.

Both parents, however, had expected Arthur (or Whit, as he was called by the family because of his constant whittling as a lad) to study for the ministry. He told them he no longer believed in those things. His mother argued that he did not know enough about Christianity to reject it, that he did not have to be a minister — he could be anything he wanted — but he should at least attempt to please his parents by trying to find out what the religion meant. He entered as a candidate for holy orders in the Episcopal Theological Seminary at

Cambridge at the age of twenty-two and completed the first year. Things were going as well as could be expected. He studied the *Sacred Books of the East*, the Greek New Testament, and the Hebrew Torah.<sup>15</sup>

He also continued his study of music composition under the American composer Edward MacDowell (1861–1908), well known for his piano works. They became close friends, with Arthur being treated as part of the family. In 1895 the MacDowells invited him to accompany them to Vevey, Switzerland, for the summer, and he gladly accepted. They would work until four in the afternoon, then get together for tennis or cycling. After dinner they would engage in conversation and perhaps a round of hearts.<sup>16</sup>

While in Europe, he wrote his mother that his mind was fully made up — he could not be anything but a theosophist — it was a waste of time to continue in the seminary. His parents' response was to meet him, upon his return, at the steamer in New York and spend a tumultuous, tearful three hours in a hotel room. In the end a compromise was reached: one more year at the seminary, at the end of which he could pursue whatever course he chose.<sup>17</sup>

During this period the whole class of 25 seminarians went through a difficult time with arguments over the relative merits of theosophy and Christianity. The head of the school must have complained, for the Bishop of Ohio knew about the discussions there, that Conger was a theosophist, and that he lectured on theosophical topics at the local Branch. The Bishop told Conger that such participation was improper for a candidate for the ministry. He was given an ultimatum: give up theosophy as far as active practice was concerned or resign from the seminary.<sup>18</sup>



Conger (age 18) Harvard Student

My father and mother took the same view as the Bishop, which made a decision easy. I resigned and went to New York and offered my services as a volunteer worker at the General Offices of the Society. I never regretted the decision.<sup>19</sup>

In a letter to J. H. Fussell dated May 17, 1896, the young Conger wrote:

My family have at last given their permission to my being a T.S. worker openly and my going to N.Y. or doing anything for theosophy. — only, so long as they are opposed to Theosophy, they do not want me to give to the Cause or spend on T.S. books any money which I receive from them, . . . Henceforth this poor body and its faculties such as they are and whatever they can be made into are the servants of the Lodge and Humanity. I shall certainly do all I can, and if you know of anything I can do, blacken boots or running errands that will help on, I shall be glad to do it.

After the death of W. Q. Judge (March 21, 1896), Katherine Tingley and a council of twelve met daily concerning the future of the Theosophical Society. Many years later she gave her impressions of Arthur Conger at that first meeting in the TS offices:

I can remember the day that Colonel Conger offered his services at 144 Madison Ave. He was a very unassuming character, rather retiring in nature. He seemed somewhat of a mystic to me, because he said so little and yet he carried with him in his presence, without words, a certain quality of trust — as though through his own soul he had a knowledge which perhaps others had not reached.<sup>20</sup>

At a morning council meeting a few days before the annual convention held at Madison Square Garden, April 26–27, 1896, Mrs. Tingley — knowing that 54 members and delegates from Boston and elsewhere had arrived — asked one of the members present if he would be kind enough to go downstairs and find a young man from New England named Arthur Conger and bring him to the meeting.<sup>21</sup> Either at this time, or shortly after, Conger became Katherine Tingley's secretary.<sup>22</sup>

About six weeks after the convention, in June, E. T. Hargrove wrote to Conger:

it gives me real satisfaction to know that you are at Headquarters, assist-

ing Fussell, who really needs help at this time of pressure. It was a bold move, but a bold move is often necessary. The opening which was your chance came & you did not miss it.<sup>23</sup>

A year later the 1897 annual convention resolved that the Lotus Circles, started by W. Q. Judge, would henceforth be independent of and separate from the official work of the TS. During the convention E. T. Hargrove made public his appreciation of Conger's work in his President's Report:

I must also mention Brother A. L. Conger, Jr., who has devoted his entire time to assisting Brother Fussell during the absence of the Crusaders. He has done so in such a way as to take upon himself a considerable portion of the labor which no one man could have shouldered singly.<sup>24</sup>

Three days after the convention, on April 29, a meeting was held at the headquarters in New York. It was determined then to organize a new effort toward a practical demonstration of brotherhood. The International Brotherhood League was designed around broad non-sectarian work among convicts, the poor in the cities, and the children in the Lotus Circles. The following day, when an election of officers for the new organization was held, Arthur Conger was elected Secretary.<sup>25</sup>

Nine months later, on January 13, 1898, a constitution for a new theosophical organization was presented to a meeting of prominent Theosophists at the home of Katherine Tingley. The new organization was called The Universal Theosophical Brotherhood, which a month later was changed to the Universal Brotherhood. Among the signators were Basil Crump, E. August Neresheimer, Robert Crosbie, Joseph H. Fussell, and Arthur L. Conger, Jr.<sup>26</sup>

## MILITARY SERVICE

Arthur's stay at the headquarters lasted two years. During that time the Griscoms did much to make it pleasant and interesting for him. C. A. Griscom was an early member who had the complete confidence of W. Q. Judge. Conger's feelings for Mr. Griscom were those for a "second father."<sup>27</sup> In April of 1898, Conger's family began showing active displeasure with his devotion to theosophy, cutting

him off financially. Out of money and not wanting to burden the Society, Arthur left to take part in the Spanish American War under the Regimental Company of Captain Newbold Morris.<sup>28</sup> Little did he realize that he would be in the military for thirty years, or that he would later work with Morris on the General Staff at the Chaumont headquarters in France during World War I.<sup>29</sup> Mrs. Tingley many years later would remark on his departure from Headquarters:

It all happened through the failure on my part to say a few words to him and the failure on his part to ask a few words of inquiry. A few words on the part of either of us might have made everything so different.<sup>30</sup>

On February 8, 1902, Conger married Margaret Loring Guild at Boston, Massachusetts. She is remembered today as the compiler of the *Combined Chronology* for use with the Mahatma and Blavatsky letters to Sinnett. Originally published in 1939, it remains in print.<sup>31</sup>

Arthur Conger's military career in itself was remarkable.<sup>32</sup> He rose through the ranks rapidly. During World War I, General Pershing chose him to be on his staff in France as Chief of the Department of Intelligence. Here he was appointed temporary lieutenant colonel August 5, 1917. While in the military he conducted a seminar on military history at Harvard during the summer of 1915, co-founded and edited a quarterly named *The Military Historian & Economist* (1916),<sup>33</sup> and wrote three historical documents: "The Function of Military History" (1916),<sup>34</sup> "President Lincoln as War Statesman" (1916),<sup>35</sup> and "The Military Education of Grant as General" (1921).<sup>36</sup> He was decorated for gallantry with the Silver Star Citation (1900) and the Distinguished Service Medal (1919), the Legion of Honor from the Government of France (1919), and the highest award given by the French government, the Croix de Guerre (1919), which he received from France's military hero Marshal Pétain (1856–1951).<sup>37</sup>

Following World War I he graduated from the Army War College in 1920, was made lieutenant colonel on July 1 of that year, was promoted to colonel on April 27, 1921, and commanded the 20th Infantry Regiment for two years. He served his last four years as Military Attaché to both Berlin, Germany, and Berne, Switzerland. He retired from active service on October 31, 1928.<sup>38</sup>

The *Harvard College Class of 1894: Fiftieth Anniversary Report* described Colonel Conger in the following manner:



Colonel A. L. Conger, San Antonio, Texas, c. 1922

Our foremost army officer, with a training based on a study of the Classics and of oriental religions and practice in musical composition; military historian; adept in the acts of friendship and foreign diplomacy; well-deserving servant of our country. — p. 102

## RETURN TO ACTIVE THEOSOPHICAL WORK

Colonel Conger's return to active Theosophical work occurred late in 1922, two years before becoming Military Attaché. On November 23, 1922, Mrs. Tingley left Point Loma to go to the eastern and southern US. The party stopped two days in San Antonio as guests of Colonel William O. Gilbert.<sup>39</sup>

while she was stopping at San Antonio, Texas, a military officer of high rank was announced at the door, and he introduced himself as Col.

Arthur Conger. The Theosophical Leader could not have been more delighted if it [had] been her own brother, for Col. Conger, as a young man just out of college, was her secretary in New York City in the early days . . . .<sup>40</sup>

Two messages from Katherine Tingley to Colonel Conger mark this event for us, the first a telegram dated January 8, 1923, saying: "Constantly recalling those happy hours with you looking forward to another happy time in our sunny California. Affectionately . . ." The second is a letter dated the next day, reading in part:

I am of [the] opinion, my dear Comrade, that you have carried Theosophy in your heart and in your life to a larger degree than I supposed; and that all the good seed that you have sown in right action must necessarily bring you a rich harvest. . . .

. . . Joseph Fussell, with tears in his eyes and a great big smile, seemed to be all "set up" because I had met you. So many questions he asked me about you. He told of your being at my house when I was away in Europe on my first Crusade . . . and of the old days. . . .

P.S. Dear Arthur Conger: In spite of your being separated from us outwardly for so many years, you surely must be connected with the Universal Brotherhood Organization in a very active way on inner lines; for I am reminded that you were present at its formation at my residence on West End Avenue, New York, in 1898. That surely must mean something.

Four months later Colonel and Mrs. Conger stayed several months at Point Loma as guests of Mrs. Tingley. The visit officially began with their being honored at an evening concert in the Lomaland Temple of Peace on May 21. This was followed by a reception and reunion with many older workers from the early days in Boston and New York.<sup>41</sup> On July 16 Mrs. Tingley opened the Fourth Session of the International Parliament of Peace and Universal Brotherhood. Colonel Conger, along with a number of speakers including Kenneth Morris, Joseph H. Fussell, and G. de Purucker, gave a short address on peace.<sup>42</sup> From this point until Katherine Tingley's death in 1929 there was a continuous correspondence between the two of them. The overriding theme of the letters was the importance of his working for theosophy.

Upon returning from her European lecture tour on October 26, 1924, Mrs. Tingley stopped in Boston to see Conger. She learned

from him that he was soon to be appointed Military Attaché to the US Embassy in Berlin. At the beginning of 1925 the Colonel was in Washington, DC; months later he was back in Berlin. On March 31, 1925, Mrs. Tingley in a letter to the Colonel detailed plans for another lecture tour of Europe, then added:

Now, I am burdening you with all this, for you and Margaret are so intimately connected with the Work, that I have dared just to give you the whole situation.

On May 26 of that year a letter addressed to him from the Department of State reads in part:

you are hereby designated to be Military Attaché to the American Legation at Berne, Switzerland, in addition to your duties as Military Attaché to the American Embassy at Berlin.

During this year Mrs. Tingley arrived in Europe and Colonel Conger spent time with her as well as assisting with publicity in Germany. In 1926 Mrs. Tingley went on another European lecture tour and while in Berlin stayed at the Congers' home. In a letter dated June 6, 1926, she wrote:

My visit here at the home of Colonel and Mrs. Conger was unexpected and has turned out to be in every way a blessing to myself and workers. . . .

Colonel Conger is the same royal, noble, trustworthy soul as of old, keenly alive to the best interests of our work, . . . It is so fine to realize that in all these years of distraction and disappointments and unrest and strains, he holds as tenaciously to Theosophy as he did when as a young man he explained to his father and mother, that Theosophy was henceforth to be his guide in life, and he would not desert us. He won his battle and now will begin to receive the help for a larger work, because of his past loyalty.<sup>43</sup>

On June 21, 1926, Mrs. Tingley wrote of Colonel and Mrs. Conger's having given a reception in her honor at their home. It was "attended by many of the most notable people of the city in private and public life, [and] was a tremendous success."<sup>44</sup> During this tour Conger must have traveled with Mrs. Tingley, as he signed a telegram to Point Loma from Czechoslovakia.

On November 4, 1927, Colonel Conger was again at Point Loma.

During a reception given him by Mrs. Tingley at her home, she gives this insight:

while he is fully doing this other duty as an officer of the American Government, yet that other part of his nature has been working with us all along. So we have had the silent watcher or the silent comrade all the way along to help us; . . .<sup>45</sup>



Colonel Conger with Katherine Tingley

In 1929 Mrs. Tingley wrote a long letter describing her plans for another trip to Europe. At this time Conger, having retired from the military in October 1928, was her guest at Point Loma. He left not only to recuperate from a bad siege of asthma, but also to finish his book entitled *The Rise of U. S. Grant*.<sup>46</sup> In June 1929 he received letters regarding Mrs. Tingley's injuries in an automobile accident in Germany and, a short while later, news of her death at Visingsö, Sweden. He remained in deep sorrow for quite some time, for over the many years they had developed a profound and rare relationship.

After the passing of Katherine Tingley, G. de Purucker wrote a

letter on July 30, 1929, expressing his friendship for Conger. In November the Colonel, still feeling the loss of Mrs. Tingley, wrote a short note to Dr. de Purucker, closing with a statement of his loyalty to him as the new leader of the Theosophical Society.<sup>47</sup> Five days later Purucker wrote to him about Mrs. Tingley's passing and closed with the following:

Thank you deeply, dear Conger, for your kind words of loyalty with which you end your note. I certainly do understand you, and knowing you as I do in these respects, the few brief words from you mean more to me than a whole letter full from some other. You have the true spirit, as the Buddhist Splendor is burning in your heart! I know that you are one of the reliables upon whom I can always count. Thank you!<sup>48</sup>

The next decade saw a new direction in the Society's work. The emphasis was upon public activity, organizational growth, and members learning the doctrinal aspects of theosophy and their relationship to the path of altruism. On January 15, 1932, faced with the rather sudden resignation of the American Section president, J. Henry Orme, Dr. de Purucker implored Colonel Conger, "one of the trusted officers of the 'Old Guard' . . . [and] a servant of Those whom we all serve," to run for the position "for which you are so eminently fitted."<sup>49</sup> Conger responded affirmatively first by telegram and then in a letter written from Takoma Park, DC, dated January 24, 1932:

There could be but one answer to your letter of the fifteenth and I trust that my telegram made sufficiently clear my position. . . .

Yet there are two conditions which are likely to circumscribe my usefulness in the position you propose for me, which I wish to mention, not because they made me hesitate in my reply, but because you should know about them — One is my poor health — the ailment contracted early in 1929 still hangs over me; the other is my present straitened financial circumstances which will interfere somewhat with the way I should like to "carry on."

Arthur L. Conger was elected to office on March 1, 1932.<sup>50</sup> During the 1930s he struggled with Parkinson's disease, which early on reached serious proportions and required him to give up the presidency of the American Section in January of 1933.<sup>51</sup> When his health improved, and on request of Purucker, he was again elected president on September 23, 1939.<sup>52</sup>

During his presidency he fostered the study of the theosophical philosophy and encouraged creative presentations of these ideas. In 1938 *Lucifer* became the official organ of the American Section and remained so until April 1951.<sup>53</sup> One example of the creative new approaches encouraged by Conger was *Theosophical Nuggets* (1940–1944), edited by James A. Long. *Nuggets* was a pocket-size magazine filled with theosophical concepts, letters of H. P. Blavatsky, quotes from *The Mahatma Letters*, and original articles by members of the American Section as well as European members.

It was during the 1930s that Conger became good friends with Dr. H. N. Stokes, editor of the *O. E. [Oriental Esoteric] Library Critic* and sometimes called “the watchdog of the theosophical movement.” Dr. Stokes regularly attended the *Mahatma Letters* study group run by the Congers in their home on Jackson Ave, Takoma Park. In 1942, Dr. Stokes appointed Conger as his literary executor, and entrusted James A. Long and Mrs. Goldberg (personal assistant to Dr. Stokes) as collaborators.<sup>54</sup>

As happens with growing organizations, personality problems and other conflicts occasionally arose in the TS. Cases involving the American Section were referred by Dr. de Purucker to Conger because of his administrative and personal abilities. In addition, Purucker kept Conger informed about financial and operational affairs of the Headquarters at Point Loma. The Cabinet continued this practice during its administration (1942–1945). In April 1940, before making the news public, Purucker wrote Conger that the headquarters and all facilities would be moved from Point Loma to Los Angeles County near Covina. On June 29, 1942, shortly after the headquarters moved, Purucker wrote Conger about certain ongoing problems in the American Section:

Please take it for granted, Arthur, that anything you find best for the spiritual and other health of the Section will meet with my approval, and I think I can give this blank endorsement at any time, knowing you so well, as I do, and your utter fidelity as well as high intelligence and diplomatic tact, and your ability also to stand firm should need be, like the true soldier you are.

Eleven days later he wrote to the Colonel:

Permit me to say, my dear Brother and friend of many years, and

even ages in the past, that all your answers to this correspondence, I mean this which you have allowed me to see, have been patterns of firmness, kindness, diplomacy, and clear-headedness; and these words are not empty, Arthur, for I mean one hundred per cent. of the significance of each one; . . .

Naturally I approve of your answers in every respect, in general and in detail, and I only wish that I had the ability to handle these situations as you have.

Two months later, on September 27, 1942, Gottfried de Purucker died, and for the next three years the Cabinet administered the Theosophical Society while Colonel Conger remained head of the American Section. During these years — the height of World War II — travel and communication in the United States were difficult, and to Europe and elsewhere nearly impossible.

## LEADERSHIP

On January 25, 1935, seven years prior to his death, G. de Purucker wrote a document which was later to become known as his instructions to the Cabinet. It dealt with how to proceed under certain circumstances after his death. In these instructions Purucker foresaw the possibility that his successor might not choose to assume office immediately. He wrote:

At the end of the term of three years, should my Successor as Leader of the Theosophical Society not yet assume office, i.e., should not have assumed office before the expiry of the term of three years after my decease, the Cabinet collectively and individually are hereby directed and instructed and requested, after all due deliberation and careful thought to elect some member who is in good standing in the Theosophical Society to be the Leader of the Theosophical Society and to enjoy all rights and undertake all the obligations and duties that such position calls for as outlined in the Constitution of the T.S. as has already been stated in the second paragraph of Page 2 hereof.

I pray and beseech the members of the Cabinet in office after I pass on to subordinate all personal feelings or idiosyncrasies of temperament, and possibly even their own convictions, to the majority-will of the Cabinet in its various deliberations and acts as expressed by their majority-vote; and I ask all members of the Cabinet to look upon themselves as clothed with the responsibility and therefore as carrying the dignity

which belong to their high office as personal representatives of the former Leader.

On June 30, 1943, nine months after the passing of Purucker and a little over two years before he was to take office as Leader, Colonel Conger wrote to Iverson Harris, Chairman of the Cabinet, in response to a private letter from him:

Thank you very much for your Air Mail letter of June 22. With your general attitude on the subject of G. de P.'s successor I am in entire agreement, but to explain my attitude in detail I should like to burden you with some extraneous thoughts.

The appearance of every new Leader has always been the occasion for a house-cleaning of the Society. This pressure is not applied solely with the change of leadership, but in individual cases may occur at any time. But the change of leadership always strikes home among the weak-kneed ones who cherish doubts secretly and provides the circumstances for the insanity which overtakes them.

The fact is that every Leader appears to be surrounded by mirrors which reflect his own image to the doubting Thomas.

What follows is important.

It is true, I believe, that no Leader of the movement has yet actually named his or her successor. The intuitions of the members have supplied the missing links; where intuition is lacking the result has been to plunge the would-be candidate into the abyss. The present circumstances of the Society are quite different than what they were in 1929. Despite the war, the educated public awaits with bated breath to see who the latest Avatara from Tibet is to be; then there is curiosity on every hand to know what miracles have been performed to prove his claims to the office. G. de P. gives the perfect response to this which is the proviso that if no one has established his claims in three years time, someone is to be elected to the office by the very prosaic Cabinet. My guess is that the new Leader, however selected and recognized in the meantime, will not under ordinary circumstances want his recognition made public until the three years have elapsed as provided for.

I have it from K.T. that when H.P.B. was visited by the Master on her sick-bed in the Maritime Alps, he caused to appear in a vision the seven Leaders who would take care of her work until she should come again. And if the White Lodge is interested in caring for and the training of three messengers yet to come, I see no cause for alarm as to the immediate successor to G. de P.

I do not mean by this that the Cabinet is infallible and could not

make a mistake, but even if it should the work will be carried on with the advantage of getting rid of a lot of deadwood. However, that is a remote contingency since we have it on the best authority that so long as there remain three conscientious workers in our Society, it can never be destroyed and a link for communication will always be provided.

Your ideas upon the subject of not expecting too much of the new Leader or expecting to find him a replica of G. de P. are wholesome and timely. Misunderstanding on this point and the idea that he can only speak or act on the dictation of a Master has been productive of ruin of many a promising pupil. Also you are quite correct in speaking of the Leader as *Primus inter pares* as G. de P. has made abundantly clear in his writings.

As ever faithfully yours,  
(signed) A. L. C.

On October 22, 1945, Colonel Conger was elected Leader of the Theosophical Society by the Cabinet.<sup>55</sup> His wife Margaret had died in June and he was confined to a wheelchair by Parkinson's disease. For a few, it was a prejudice against this illness and his being head of the ES that lay at the heart of the turmoil to come.<sup>56</sup> However, his personal assistants felt it a privilege to serve him. An indelible mark was made upon them and others by Conger's integrity and courage, his strong but gentle demeanor, and unqualified dedication to the theosophic cause. Contrary to rumors spread about him, many felt his physical impairment enhanced his mental and spiritual insight.<sup>57</sup>

Although my purpose is to give a general outline of Colonel Conger's life, I would be remiss not to remark briefly upon this change of administration, as there have been varying and sometimes inaccurate descriptions of "dismissals" from the headquarters staff at Covina. For example, in an article entitled "Discord is the Harmony of the Universe" Adam Warcup remarked: "Under Col. Conger, the Point Loma group had its night of the long knives in which a number of prominent members were expelled."<sup>58</sup> In an unpublished paper, given only in part at the Theosophical History Conference at the Point Loma Nazarene College, June 14, 1992, Dr. Gregory Tillett commented:

In March, 1946, Conger demanded the resignation of the dissidents; they declined to comply, were dismissed and ordered to leave the Society's headquarters forthwith, although for many of them it was their home, and has [sic] been so for years. There followed a purge of dissident members. Many of these — including Iverson Harris, Boris de Zirkoff,

Emmett Small, Sven Eek, Cardinal Le Gros, Judith Tyberg, Geoffrey Barborka, L. G. Plummer, Elsie Benjamin — continued significant Theosophical work . . .

Another example is found in Appendix IV of the Point Loma Publications edition (1975) of Charles J. Ryan's book, *H. P. Blavatsky and the Theosophical Movement*, and reprinted in *The Eclectic Theosophist*, No. 29, July 15, 1975, where it is introduced by the editors W. Emmett Small and Helen Todd, as "faithful to fact and dispassionately presented, . . ." I have added names in square brackets:

Those so uncharitably and swiftly deprived of former duties and responsibilities included, among others, the Chairman and the Secretary of the Cabinet [I. L. Harris, W. E. Small]; the Recording Secretary of the Esoteric Section [Mrs. I. L. Harris]; and the President [H. T. Edge], the Vice-President [Marjorie Tyberg], the Secretary [I. L. Harris], the Assistant Secretary, the Director of Studies [J. Tyberg], and the Registrar of Theosophical University [F. Collisson]. — p. 7

As Charles J. Ryan was an ardent supporter of Colonel Conger, it is strange to see his book used in this manner. Professor Ryan remained at the international headquarters of the Theosophical Society in Covina until his death on December 24, 1949, and provided notes and corrections for his book which were incorporated in the second and revised edition published in 1975 by Theosophical University Press for the centennial of the TS.

Adam Warcup's phrase, "night of the long knives," is uncalled for in light of the facts. As to the inaccuracies of the second quotation, I sympathize with Dr. Tillett, as he suggests in his conclusion that he had limited access to verifiable information. The following documentation should help to clarify the record.

Resignations from positions of responsibility in Colonel Conger's administration were indeed asked of some headquarters members after nearly eight months of their continuous public expressions of dissatisfaction. Iverson L. Harris and his wife, Helen, were asked to leave the headquarters in the fall of 1946.<sup>59</sup> Emmett Small was asked to resign from the editorial office on July 8, 1946. He left the Headquarters of his own accord July 28, 1946.<sup>60</sup> In a letter to Mr. Small on July 25, 1946, Conger offered help to the family:

From yours of July 24th I note that you will be leaving Headquarters

this Sunday. Please know that you have my heartiest good wishes for your future position and happiness.

You do not mention your wife and children leaving at the same time. I assume that you are already aware of our desire to be of whatever assistance we can while you are getting set up, and assure you that your family are welcome to stay here until you are able to care for them.

Boris de Zirkoff, on the other hand, had already left the headquarters years earlier under G. de Purucker's administration, as evidenced by a letter from Purucker to Conger on July 28, 1942:

As I have written you recently, we here at Headquarters are all of the opinion that Zirkoff has practically abandoned his status as one of the Headquarters Staff here . . . during the last few months [he] has not been seen around at all, except for a flying visit, I believe for about an hour, from Los Angeles. . . . but I am letting it be known now that he no longer is an International Headquarters Staff-worker, but is working entirely for Lodge No. 60, which has agreed to undertake his entire support.

Sven Eek also left some time earlier, between the end of 1941 and the beginning of 1942. On April 9, 1942, Eek wrote to Dr. de Purucker from Los Angeles: "I have not had the pleasure of seeing you for a long time, . . ." In the same letter he recounts his experiences at Point Loma ending in 1941. He eventually became the president of Lodge 60 in Los Angeles.

George Cardinal Le Gros never lived at the headquarters, except for a brief visit, though he was a frequent contributor to the magazines. Confused, he was not sure which way to turn. Visiting with a friend and old-time member of the Society, he heard a different story from that of the negative reports he had received from Covina, after which he wrote:

Since talking with you Sunday I have experienced a terrific inner shake-up and readjustment of viewpoint toward the state of affairs in the T.S.

For the first time in a long time I feel the strange, poignant nearness of that spiritual life which seemed to retreat after G. de P.'s death.

I am complete again, and free in my conscience to work for Theosophy through the T.S.<sup>61</sup>

Ten days later, on December 13, 1946, he wrote similar sentiments to Colonel Conger:

please know that I am always ready, at any time, and in the face of any difficulty, to respond wholeheartedly to any and every request that you might make in connection with the work of the Movement.

Under any organizational structure there come times when a new leader reorganizes the team. G. de Purucker had asked for the resignation or retirement of a number of members, some prominent. For example, shortly before he died, he asked Henry T. Edge to retire from the Cabinet.<sup>62</sup> In the case of Judith Tyberg, Colonel Conger requested the Board of Trustees of Theosophical University to accept her resignation as a Trustee. Following this action, she chose to resign from the faculty of Theosophical University and to leave the headquarters.<sup>63</sup>

Geoffrey Barborka was another individual who left under G. de Purucker's administration. He felt it his duty to leave before the headquarters was moved from Point Loma. Purucker wrote Barborka saying that he had considered him, along with his elderly parents, as part of the staff that would be moving to Covina. However, Barborka's mind was made up and he left before the Society's headquarters was transferred.<sup>64</sup>

L. Gordon Plummer left Headquarters during the Cabinet's administration. Later, on November 27, 1947, he wrote a statement he wished made public:

It is quite true that I left Headquarters nearly three years ago, and it is well known by all the members of the then-existing Cabinet, if not by everyone at Headquarters that I did so for reasons of health. I discussed this matter with Col. Conger after he became Leader, and he gave me his assurance that I did the right thing.<sup>65</sup>

The last name mentioned by Dr. Tillett is that of Elsie Benjamin, who had been G. de Purucker's private secretary. Never under Conger's administration did she waver or show anything but the highest respect for and loyalty to him as Leader. She knew well of Purucker's high esteem for Conger, as she had taken dictation and typed most of Purucker's correspondence. She wrote to Colonel Conger from England, where she lived in 1946:

I have been interested to see the reactions of people over here, coming to me quite unexpectedly, and it is fine to see that those who are selflessly working for the Cause recognize what you are; and that some

who are old-timers in Theosophy, but who have drifted into a selfish attitude of merely wanting to get more and more E.S. instructions and yet do nothing for the T.S. — some of these do not. So it proves that all this talk at Covina about so-and-so having given so many years of service, therefore his judgment is infallible — is all nonsense, to put it mildly.<sup>66</sup>

Some of these individuals did have strong differences with Colonel Conger and his theosophic policies. Some even attempted to become more organized in their dissatisfaction. An informal meeting was held at Judge Frank G. Finlayson's home in Los Angeles on Sunday, September 8, 1946. Present at that meeting were Judge and Mrs. Finlayson, Dr. and Mrs. Sven Eek, Mr. and Mrs. W. Emmett Small, Miss Florence Collisson, Miss Katherine Heck, Mr. and Mrs. Iverson Harris, and Mr. Boris de Zirkoff, who presided. Miss Judith Tyberg was present during the latter part of the afternoon. The following remarks by Iverson Harris were made in response to a direct question from de Zirkoff as to whether he was ready to join a Central International Committee which de Zirkoff and others present were inaugurating:

I for one do not feel that I can at present conscientiously join any such central committee as is here proposed.

If there was any outstanding individual among us around whom we could all rally, unite, and accept his proven leadership, without danger of causing further division in our own protestant ranks, I think there would be a better chance of our doing something effective to bring about changes for the improving and safeguarding the real interests of the T.S. But I know of no such individual yet.<sup>67</sup>

The acceptance of resignations from four Trustees of Theosophical University, submitted at the time of appointment as was customary, happened in the following manner. On June 19, 1946, Colonel Conger wrote to Iverson Harris as Secretary of Theosophical University requesting the resignations of H. T. Edge, President; Marjorie Tyberg, Vice President; Judith Tyberg, Director of Studies; and Florence Collisson, Registrar. The same day, the Secretary acknowledged in writing the request and said that according to the Articles of Incorporation, Trustees and Officers of the University "hold office during the pleasure of the Board of Trustees." A Trustee meeting was held the same day. From the minutes of that meeting come the following details. The Trustees present were Mrs. Marjorie M. Tyberg,

Mrs. Lolita W. Hart, Mr. A. J. Stover, Mr. William Hartley, Miss Florence Collisson, Miss Judith Tyberg, Mrs. Ethel Lambert, Mr. Iverson L. Harris. Doctors H. T. Edge and Gertrude van Pelt were absent due to illness. Vice President Marjorie Tyberg presided as Chair. Each resignation was dealt with one at a time. First was a vote on Dr. H. T. Edge: it was evenly split due to a proxy for Dr. Edge held by Marjorie Tyberg, who as Chair abstained. Then came a vote on Marjorie Tyberg and the result was identical. When the vote for Judith Tyberg came, she switched from her previous votes and voted in favor of her own resignation, breaking the tie. A similar event occurred with Florence Collisson, who switched her vote from the first two and voted for her own resignation, again breaking the tie. Judith Tyberg requested the Chair cast a vote to accept the Chair's and Dr. Edge's resignations to break the tie. The Chair then cast a vote to accept her own and Dr. Edge's resignation. The tie broken, the Board of Trustees accepted the four resignations.

The challenge to those involved in a spiritual organization in transition can be heartrending, and no blame can be cast. No doubt all who had made pledges to the highest within themselves to serve the cause of universal brotherhood had to consider well H. P. Blavatsky's admonition to her esoteric students:

No member shall, under any circumstances, bring any charge of whatever nature against another member, whether to H.P.B., William Q. Judge, or any other member of the Section. This rule does not imply that the Masters condone, excuse, or tolerate any fault or crime. But no member is the judge of the acts of another member or theosophist, in this Section less than in any other. For, while in every Exoteric Branch, its President and Council decide upon any charges against their Fellows, in this Section each member is to be judged by his Karma and the Masters alone.<sup>68</sup>

During this period, of course, TS work was proceeding as usual. On August 9, 1946, Colonel Conger renewed an old friendship with A. E. S. Smythe, head of the Theosophical Society in Canada. Conger wrote:

I look back on memories of the evenings spent with you at 144 Madison Avenue in the early days with infinite pleasure. As I was quite a bit younger than you I do not suppose you remember me as vividly as I do you. However, the main fact is that I never cease to regard you as a

friend and an elder brother — one of those egos who walk together side by side one lifetime after another.

This close friendship no doubt played a part in the friendly relations between the two organizations. In 1948 it was expressed by a generous gift from Colonel E. L. Thompson and the Theosophical Society in Canada to Colonel A. L. Conger and the Theosophical Society, Covina, of a limited edition of the Buddhist *Tripitaka* in 48 volumes, published by the King of Siam in 1932.

Conger's administration was one of transition, not only for the Society but also for the world just emerging from a devastating war. When he took office he made a rather simple statement regarding his administration. He said, in effect, that the Society must be turned from the receiving end of theosophy to the giving end.<sup>69</sup> This emphasis shifted the Society from leaning on the past, towards cultivating a modern presentation with which to begin the second half of the century. It manifested in a national speakers program, an overall expansion of lodges and membership, and an active publishing program. There was also a successful effort for Theosophical University to benefit from the GI Bill and to expand the number of staff and students. In addition, Conger encouraged John P. Van Mater, then Secretary General, to issue a *Theosophical Headquarters Bulletin* to open up dialogue with members around the world.

The first year of Conger's administration began a flurry of lecturing activity. Speakers were sent out to Canada, Europe, and across the United States.<sup>70</sup> During this time Elsie Benjamin came from England to spend two weeks at the headquarters in Covina, and to conduct a US lecture tour after her stay.<sup>71</sup> In the following years the TS gained immensely from this first year of public speaking activity. Lodges not only developed, but a model for members to build upon was established as well. Between October 22, 1945, and the end of 1946, a total of 17 new lodge charters and one new national section charter were issued.<sup>72</sup> By 1946, construction began on a new residence hall to handle the increase in students and visitors coming to headquarters.

The following year saw National Section conventions in the US and Europe. In the United States a convention of the American Section was held in Washington, DC, in April 1947.<sup>73</sup> Colonel Con-

ger attended, along with Martha Franklin and Alfred Spinks, one of his personal staff, Colonel Marion O. French, later to be appointed president of Theosophical University,<sup>74</sup> and Grace F. Knoche, then working at the American Section office in Colonel Conger's home in Takoma Park. When Conger heard that the hotel would refuse entry of an African-American FTS into the auditorium rented for the convention, he immediately invited the member to become his personal assistant day and night during the weekend event, thus allowing him to participate in the convention proceedings.

A new course at the Theosophical University for those interested in field work was begun due to requests from this national convention. In addition, on August 31, 1947, a Western Area Field Work Conference was held at the headquarters at Covina to explore new ways to introduce theosophy to the public.<sup>75</sup>

Europe had been devastated by the Second World War; Colonel Conger knew from experience what the difficulties were, and responded by sending representatives there to encourage new efforts. A series of European conventions were held in 1947 with headquarters representatives John and Ingrid Van Mater attending. The Swedish Convention was held May 25–26.<sup>76</sup> New by-laws were proposed and accepted in response to Colonel Conger's call for more activity throughout the Society. The Netherlands Convention on June 22 was one of the largest conventions held that year, with several hundred delegates attending.<sup>77</sup> The English Convention formally opened on August 3, 1947. The Saturday before, the General Council held a meeting passing new by-laws and electing Elsie Benjamin as President of the English Section. With Germany broken up after the war, not all delegates were able to attend the German Convention held July 3, 1947.<sup>78</sup> Certainly, as the war had prevented theosophists from carrying out many of their activities, these conventions were a profoundly moving experience for all who attended. Perhaps nowhere was this more poignantly felt than in Germany.

On May 29–30, 1948, the American Section held a Triennial Convention at the Society's international headquarters at Covina. Colonel Conger delivered opening remarks in which he spoke of HPB having "succeeded in changing the moulds of mind of two generations, but not in time to prevent the outbreak of two world wars of disastrous proportions, . . ." <sup>79</sup> Then he spoke of future work:

If we ask how many ways there are of spreading Theosophy, the answer is two. One is by personal contact, the other is by making use of the written word.<sup>80</sup>

He emphasized the importance of the small events in life:

The Theosophic life is made up of small events through which the spirit of Theosophy flows. Just so the impact of the Movement on the world is the accumulation of such small contacts . . . performed by true-hearted Theosophists in every land. Through these united hearts and minds which make up the T.S. the force of the Lodge flows. In this light our daily efforts take on real dignity and we see them contributing to the whole.<sup>81</sup>

Throughout his administration of renewal, one of Colonel Conger's chief endeavors was maintaining an active publishing program. New printing equipment was installed and, along with keeping the primary source literature of theosophy in print, he added new titles. Although the war had disrupted the ability to publish, it did not prevent European members from making translations of the writings of HPB, Judge, and Purucker. As soon as possible, these books began to be issued in various European sections.

In America the editing and printing of *Lucifer*, the organ of the American Section, moved to Covina. In 1948 Conger rebuilt the children's program, replacing the *Lotus-Circle Messenger* and *Junior Theosophist*, edited by Grace Knoche (Sr.), with *The Challengers Own*, along with related new activities. A summary of publishing activity during Conger's administration is as follows:

1946

*The Voice of the Silence* — Blavatsky  
*Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge* — Blavatsky  
*The Key to Theosophy* — Blavatsky  
*Studies in Occultism* — Blavatsky  
*The Bhagavad-Gītā* — Judge  
*The Crest-Jewel of Wisdom* — Śankarāchārya  
*Spirit in Crisis* — Oosterink

1947

*The Secret Doctrine* — Blavatsky  
*Fundamentals of the Esoteric Philosophy* — Purucker  
*Man in Evolution* — Purucker

*Questions We All Ask* (4 vols. boxed) — Purucker  
*Healing and Occult Science* — van Uchelen

1948

*The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett* in conjunction with  
 Rider & Co. of London  
*Gems from the East* — Blavatsky  
*The Ocean of Theosophy* — Judge  
*The Dialogues of G. de Purucker* (3 vols.) — Purucker, edited by  
 A. L. Conger  
*Nature's Magic* — Stover

1949

*Light on the Path/Through the Gates of Gold* — Collins  
*Practical Occultism* — Judge  
*Studies in Occult Philosophy* — Purucker  
*Theosophic Correspondence* — Saint-Martin  
*Everybody's Guide to Theosophy* — Harry Benjamin

1950

*Isis Unveiled* (Deluxe Edition with illustrations) — Blavatsky  
*Once Round the Sun* — Titchenell

#### MAGAZINES

*The Theosophical Forum*<sup>82</sup>  
*The Challengers Own*<sup>83</sup>  
*The Theosophic Challenge*<sup>84</sup>  
*Theosophical Headquarters Bulletin*  
*Lucifer*<sup>85</sup>

In July 1950, Colonel Conger initiated the eventual move of the international headquarters from Covina. He asked A. Studley Hart and James A. Long to search for suitable properties in the Pasadena area that would house himself and his immediate staff, as well as the entire headquarters family along with the administrative offices, library, and press facilities. By September a large home had become available in Pasadena to accommodate Colonel Conger and his second wife, Martha Franklin Conger (1878–1959), along with his personal and secretarial assistants, the Archives, and the TS and ES offices. The move was completed in early October.

It was a more challenging assignment to find adequate properties

in favorable locations for the headquarters administrative offices and personnel, and also for the library and press facilities. Studley Hart and James Long reported regularly to Colonel Conger. By early February 1951 he was most pleased to hear that the final papers had been signed for the "Deodars," which has housed the headquarters and its personnel since June 1951. Another building nearby, purchased to accommodate the library, press, and publications departments, required extensive renovation. However, Conger did not live to see the changes. Like his predecessor, G. de Purucker, he died shortly after the relocation of the international headquarters. He passed away in Pasadena on February 22, 1951, at the age of 79, thus bringing to a close a distinguished and remarkable life dedicated to the service of humanity.

It should be mentioned that during those five months of moving in 1950, the work of the international headquarters continued unabated. About six weeks after moving to Pasadena, in mid-December, Conger requested a meeting of the staff, as well as a representative of the American Section. He wanted a discussion of the work, the world situation, the situation of theosophy in the world, and theosophic work as it existed in the different national sections. Foreseeing new needs for the Society, he sent James Long on a world tour of the national sections to meet with officials and members. Mr. Long's first stop was England, where he received his first major directive from Colonel Conger: to close down the Esoteric Section in every country as he arrived.<sup>86</sup> While Long was in Australia, Conger asked his secretary, Grace F. Knoche, and the Western District organizer, George Simpson, to drive down to San Diego to ask the members to close their lodge and cease all public activity for the present. A week later Conger requested Miss Knoche and Mr. Simpson to close the San Francisco Lodge. Long returned to the US shortly thereafter. He described his return to the headquarters in Pasadena at the General Congress of the Theosophical Society held in The Netherlands:

I did get back very fortunately just one week before Colonel Conger had his heart attack — time enough to give him a very brief digest of what I had found and what I felt was needed and he knew, as did we, that his time had come to leave us. We were greatly relieved when he said one day: "The end of my journey will not be painful." And it was not. Of course I did not know what day or how the end would come.

But three nights before he passed on, I went upstairs to his room as I usually did before retiring, and said: "Colonel, I think I will turn in now." It was about 10:30. "Is there anything I can do for you before I retire?" He said: "Yes." I said: "Colonel, you just name it and I will do my best to do it." He thought a while and he looked up: "Finish the job you have started to the very end." I understood. I saluted him Good-night and Good-bye. The next morning he had a heart attack, did not regain consciousness for three days, and passed on. His memory in the Theosophical Movement will never fade out, nor will the effect of his Great Sacrifice be diminished.<sup>87</sup>

I conclude with a statement made in 1938. It sums up the singleness of purpose of Arthur Latham Conger who, as his life and work become better known, will be seen as a significant contributor to the health and vitality of the modern theosophical movement.

The higher Self in us will sound its clarion call to invoke the higher Self in our brother, whether that brother be Greek, Negro or Jew, master or servant. To the spirit in man conventionalities seem as trivial as do gradations of rank in a democracy. Despite all obstacles "Deep will call unto deep" be it in the office or in the home, in the market place or on a street car.

— ARTHUR L. CONGER, *Lucifer* (2:13), November 1938

#### REFERENCES:

All books and magazines quoted, and all letters and documents not specifically referenced herein, are held in the Archives of The Theosophical Society, Pasadena, California.

<sup>1</sup>*Crest Jewel of Wisdom*, Theosophical University Press, Covina, 1946, 95

<sup>2</sup>Harry Spengler, letter to Kenyon B. Conger, Dec. 4, 1939. Spengler was a grandson of David Conger. He remarks: "These facts from 'Historical Bulletin' Wash. D.C. Dec. 1903 and from official records, family bibles, and individual Congers."

<sup>3</sup>*An Ohio Woman in the Philippines: Giving personal experiences and descriptions including incidents of Honolulu, ports in Japan and China*, Press of Richard H. Leighton, Akron, Ohio, 1904

<sup>4</sup>*Representative Citizens of Ohio*, G. Frederick Wright, The Memorial Publishing Company, Cleveland, Ohio, 1913, 353-9

<sup>5</sup>*Harvard College Class of 1894: Fiftieth Anniversary Report, 1894-1944*, privately printed for the class by the Plimpton Press, Norwood, Massachusetts, 193. Herein called *Harvard Report*.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 103

<sup>7</sup>ALC to Virginia Vaughan, December 12, 1945

<sup>8</sup>*Harvard Report*, 102

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 103

<sup>10</sup>TS Membership Register, 1875-1878, 514

<sup>11</sup>"Reflections," *The Theosophical Forum* (25:9), September 1947, 521

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 522

<sup>13</sup>The following items are from the files of the Esoteric Section:

George D. Ayers to William Q. Judge, December 14, 1892, recommends ALC be admitted to the ES.

WQJ to ALC, November 28, 1894, "Your pledge being received, I send you herewith your certificate of admission into the EST, . . ."

WQJ & JHF to ALC, February 23, 1895, ES probation ends.

WQJ to ALC, March 5, 1895, ES Correspondence: "It gives me much pleasure to inform you that you are now a full member of the 1st Deg. E.S.T. . . ."

Secretary of EST to ALC, August 28, 1896, "you are now a member of the Second Degree."

<sup>14</sup>M. L. Guild to WQJ, September 14, 1894, recommending ALC to the ES.

<sup>15</sup>ALC to Rev. John Gaynor Banks, June 10, 1946, and "Reflections," *The Theosophical Forum* (25:9), September 1947, 522

<sup>16</sup>*Harvard Report*, 103-4

<sup>17</sup>"Reflections," *The Theosophical Forum*, September 1947, 522-3

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 523

<sup>19</sup>ALC to Rev. John Gaynor Banks, June 10, 1946

<sup>20</sup>*The Theosophical Path* (34:1), January 1928, 84

<sup>21</sup>Abbott B. Clark, to Miss Cor den Buitelaar, April 1948. Mr. Clark was the young man from California whom Mrs. Tingley asked to go down and get ALC.

<sup>22</sup>Mentioned in *The Theosophical Path* (24:2), February 1923

<sup>23</sup>E. T. Hargrove to ALC, June 19, 1896

<sup>24</sup>*Report of Proceedings, Third Annual Convention of the Theosophical Society in America, President's Report*, New York, April 25-6, 1897, 7

<sup>25</sup>*The Theosophical News: A Weekly* (1:47), May 10, 1897, Boston, 1

<sup>26</sup>From the original minutes of the January 13, 1898, meeting and the *Resolutions, Preamble and Constitution of the Universal Brotherhood* adopted at the Chicago Convention of February 18, 1898

<sup>27</sup>*Harvard Report*, 104

<sup>28</sup>"Reflections," *The Theosophical Forum*, September 1947, 523, and *Harvard*

Report, 104

<sup>29</sup>Harvard Report, 104

<sup>30</sup>*The Theosophical Path* (34:1), January 1928, 84

<sup>31</sup>Reprinted with two important Mahatma letters not included in A. T. Barker's *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, Theosophical University Press, Pasadena, 1973

<sup>32</sup>According to US Ambassador John Gilbert Winant, General George C. Marshall (Army Chief of Staff, US Secretary of Defense, Nobel Peace Prize) regarded Conger as "one of the best minds in the army" (*Letters from Grosvenor Square: An Account of a Stewardship*, Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1947, 135).

<sup>33</sup>*The Military Historian & Economist* (1:1), quarterly, January 1916, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts

<sup>34</sup>A. L. Conger, *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* (3:2), September 1916

<sup>35</sup>Captain Arthur L. Conger, The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Separate No. 172, From the Proceedings of the Society for 1916

<sup>36</sup>Colonel Arthur L. Conger, Wisconsin Historical Society, pamphlet reprinted from the *Wisconsin Magazine of History* (4:3), March 1921

<sup>37</sup>Harvard Report, 105. The National Archives ref. no. 093.412-108, June 29, 1920, refers to the Decoration of the Order of St. Michael and St. George, conferred by the British Government.

<sup>38</sup>Harvard Report, 104, and National Archives 121.5460c/4, April 3, 1925. National Arch. 121.54 Germany/4 September 17, 1924, gives details of ALC as Military Attaché also to Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and The Netherlands. National Arch. 121.54 Germany/4 September 27, 1924, ALC appointed to Legations at Christiania, Stockholm, Copenhagen, and The Hague. National Arch. 500.A15P43/135, February 16, 1927, appointment of ALC to the preparatory Commission of the International Disarmament Conference.

<sup>39</sup>Colonel Gilbert was Judge Advocate for the 8th Corps Area, with headquarters at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. He was chief counselor in military law to the Commanding General of the American Expeditionary Forces in France at the time of the signing of the Armistice. Col. Gilbert was also a theosophist. A summary of his military career is found in *The Theosophical Path* (23:3), March 1923.

<sup>40</sup>*The Theosophical Path* (24:2), February 1923, 188

<sup>41</sup>*The Theosophical Path* (25:1), July 1923, 84-5

<sup>42</sup>*The Theosophical Path* (25:2), August 1923, 195

<sup>43</sup>*The Theosophical Path* (31:2), August 1926, 192-4

<sup>44</sup>*Ibid.*, 195

<sup>45</sup>*The Theosophical Path* (34:1), January 1928, 85

- <sup>46</sup>The Century Co., 1931; reviewed by A. H. Meneely in *The Saturday Review of Literature*, July 11, 1931
- <sup>47</sup>ALC to GdeP, November 4, 1929
- <sup>48</sup>GdeP to ALC, November 9, 1929
- <sup>49</sup>GdeP to ALC, January 15, 1932
- <sup>50</sup>Official Announcement, International Theosophical Headquarters, Point Loma, California, March 1, 1932
- <sup>51</sup>ALC to GdeP, telegram of December 10, 1932: "Further reason for presidential change my physical condition unimproved am still incapacitated for actual writing or public speaking osteopath hopes for improvement conditioned upon complete relaxation."
- <sup>52</sup>Telegram, James A. Long to GdeP, and GdeP to JAL, September 23, 1939
- <sup>53</sup>The original *Lucifer* was founded by H. P. Blavatsky September 15, 1887, sub-edited by Annie Besant from mid-1889 to June 1891. It was subsequently edited by AB until September 1895, then co-edited with G. R. S. Mead until August 1897, at which time its name was changed to *The Theosophical Review*. The second *Lucifer* was edited by younger members of the HQ staff under the general editorship of G. de Purucker, from January/February 1930 until January 1935 when it, along with *The Theosophical Path*, was merged with *The Theosophical Forum*. The American Section took over the name *Lucifer* in January 1938.
- <sup>54</sup>Dr. Stokes to ALC, April 23, 1942
- <sup>55</sup>There were two dissenting votes, cast by the only two appointees not made by G. de Purucker (Helen Harris and Henry T. Edge).
- <sup>56</sup>Lolita W. Hart (Cabinet member) to the Cabinet, October 1, 1945: "He [ALC] has proved his loyalty, devotion and mental fitness through many years and may silence all objections as to his physical fitness on his arrival."
- <sup>57</sup>Interview with Kirby Van Mater
- <sup>58</sup>*The American Theosophist* (79:6), November/December 1991, 2-3
- <sup>59</sup>Minutes of the Cabinet of the TS, September 12, 1946
- <sup>60</sup>W. E. Small to ALC, July 9, 1946. Mr. Small resigned from the editorial office as requested, effective July 8, 1946
- <sup>61</sup>G. C. LeGros to A. C. Eppstein, December 3, 1946
- <sup>62</sup>I. L. Harris (Chairman of the Cabinet) to W. E. Small (Secretary of the Cabinet), May 13, 1942: "Please note that, effective May 11, 1942, the Leader [G. de Purucker] has retired Dr. Edge to the Council of Elders and has appointed Kirby Van Mater as a member of the Cabinet."
- <sup>63</sup>In accepting her resignation the Board of Trustees wrote: "The Board of Trustees regrets that this statement of yours . . . should involve your resignation as a teacher. It was the hope and intention of the Board that you

would continue your very useful and helpful activities as a member of the Faculty.” Letter from the Board of Trustees, June 24, 1946

- <sup>64</sup>Geoffrey Barborka to GdeP, December 19, 1941, and GdeP to G. Barborka, December 20, 1941
- <sup>65</sup>L. G. Plummer to Peter Flach, November 27, 1947
- <sup>66</sup>E. Benjamin to ALC, April 18, 1946
- <sup>67</sup>From the minutes of the informal gathering held Sunday, September 8, 1946, at 3 o'clock
- <sup>68</sup>E.S. Introduction, Rule 8, *H. P. Blavatsky: Collected Writings*, 12:495
- <sup>69</sup>James A. Long, *Report of Proceedings of the General Congress of The Theosophical Society*, Utrecht, Holland, April 15, 1951, 10
- <sup>70</sup>*Theosophical Headquarters Bulletin: International News and Notes*, No. 11, May 5, 1946; No.18, October 15, 1946; No. 19, November 5, 1946; No. 20, December 5, 1946
- <sup>71</sup>*Ibid.*, No. 20, December 5, 1946; No. 21, January 5, 1947; a summary of her tour is found in No. 22, February 5, 1947
- <sup>72</sup>*Ibid.*, No. 20, December 5, 1946
- <sup>73</sup>*Ibid.*, No. 24, April 5, 1947
- <sup>74</sup>*Ibid.*, No. 26, June 5, 1947
- <sup>75</sup>*American Section TS Bulletin*, No. 12, August 1, 1947
- <sup>76</sup>*Theosophical Headquarters Bulletin*, No. 27, July 5, 1947
- <sup>77</sup>*Ibid.*, No. 28, August 5, 1947
- <sup>78</sup>*Ibid.*, No. 29, September 5, 1947
- <sup>79</sup>Message to 1948 Convention, American Section; quoted in *Lucifer* (10:9), June 1948, 129
- <sup>80</sup>*Ibid.*, 130
- <sup>81</sup>*Ibid.*
- <sup>82</sup>*The Theosophical Forum* was resumed by G. de Purucker September 1929; in 1935 *The Theosophical Path* and *Lucifer: The Light Bringer* merged with *The Theosophical Forum*. It was edited by ALC from January 1946 until March 1951 when publication ceased.
- <sup>83</sup>March/April 1949–March/April 1951, *Challenger* Committee editors
- <sup>84</sup>September 1946–June 1951
- <sup>85</sup>See Note 53
- <sup>86</sup>*Proceedings of General Congress*, Utrecht, April 15, 1951, 14
- <sup>87</sup>*Ibid.*, 16

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