



Excerpts from Chapters 1-6 The Light of the Russian Soul A Personal Memoir of Early Russian Theosophy

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Chap. 1 Theosophy's Late Arrival in Russia

Before the beginning of the twentieth century, Theosophy was practically unknown in Russia, despite the fact that a Russian woman had introduced its teachings to the Western world. Two reasons account for this strange fact.

The first reason is that the head of all Russian ecclesiastic affairs, including the censorship of Russian and foreign publications touching on religion, was Konstantin Petrovich Pobedonostsev [1827-1907], the Chief Procurator of the Holy Synod. He prohibited publication of anything that did not agree with the dogmas of the Orthodox Church, and his influence during the reign of Alexander III nearly destroyed Russia. He was an intolerant fanatic regarding orthodoxy and autocracy, and he deliberately built a wall between the czar and progressive elements of Russian society. His nefarious influence continued after the death of Alexander III, and guided the policies of the young czar, Nicholas II, causing an undercurrent of dissatisfaction and bitterly alienating Russian progressives.

Although the direct influence of Pobedonostsev ended with his death, his conviction that the salvation of Russia lay in the strictest adherence to autocracy and orthodoxy continued to govern the mind of the young czar, and all attempts on the part of the better Russians to communicate with the czar and with members of his government remained fruitless.

Russia was split between two parties. On one side was an opposition movement, consisting of all the best elements of Russia, standing for the enlightenment of the people and the improvement of their way of life, for freedom of thought and of the press, and for the introduction of a constitution. On the other side were the czar and his court and all the appointed higher officials, who were inclined toward reactionary policies.

The second reason why Theosophy remained unknown in Russia was that E. P. Blavatskaya [1831-1891, hereafter referred to by her westernized name Helena Petrovna

Blavatsky or its initials, HPB], although born and raised in the south of Russia, had spent almost all of her strange life outside Russia and was generally unknown to educated Russians. The only source of information about her and her activities was a book by Vsevolod Solovyov [1849-1903] entitled *A Modern Priestess of Isis*, published in Russia after her death. He was a personal enemy who depicted her as a charlatan and adventuress. Thanks to this book, not one voice was raised in her defense until 1906, when the first Russian translation was published of any of her Theosophical books. It was *The Voice of the Silence*, with a preface by the translator [Pisareva herself], attempting to make clear to the Russian public HPB's true significance and great value.

Chap. 2

Theosophy's Early Pioneers in Russia

Nina Konstantinovna Gernet [d.1932] deserves to be considered the first pioneer of Theosophy in Russia. She traveled abroad annually, attended most European Theosophical congresses, became acquainted with Annie Besant [1847-1933], and, at great personal risk, smuggled forbidden Theosophical literature into Russia. The main repository for this literature was in St. Petersburg, in the residence of a childhood friend, Anna Alexeevna Kamensky [1867-1952], who had attended secondary school with Nina Gernet in Geneva.

Anna Kamensky was born on August 25, 1867, in the town of Pavlovsk, near St. Petersburg. Until the age of fifteen, she enjoyed a very happy childhood, first in Germany (in Bavaria and Württemberg) then in Geneva, where she finished her secondary education. Her dream was to attend a university, but at that time her mother's financial situation had become desperate, so they were forced to return to their homeland. After Anna and Nina had finished school, both families, the Kamenskys and Gernets, returned to Russia, Anna Kamensky's settling in St. Petersburg and Nina Gernet's in Reval [now Tallinn, Estonia].

Anna Kamensky started earning money by giving French lessons as a way to support the family. She had become the chief support of her family, and all the harsh conditions she knew in early youth deepened her consciousness and further strengthened her already firm will, being like a preparatory school for her future role as leader.

At the age of seventeen she received an appointment as a French teacher in a progressive secondary school, Maria Stoiunina's gymnasium, and from the age of eighteen, she also managed to be employed as a governess on residential estates in various localities during Russia's three-month-long summer vacations.

Indicative of the qualities that defined her character is the fact that in those years, before starting a summer job, she always extracted from the parents of her future pupils one condition—that she be given a free hand in everything that concerned the way of life, conduct, and assignments of the children under her supervision. For the most part, the children she got were unruly and pampered, but she was able to bring them to heel. Doing so required her to struggle mightily with the parents, defending her education plan and freedom of action, but she always emerged victorious.

Her determination was all the more surprising because there was nothing aggressive about her nature. Her heart always raced when she entered into such momentous arguments with

parents because she knew that, if things went badly, she would have to leave immediately, losing her job with its salary and wasting all the effort she had put into her work with the children, even though her efforts had already promised success. The varied experiences of this summer work not only developed her pedagogical talent and innate heroism, but also acquainted her with the everyday routines and living conditions of several social classes in Russia.

At the beginning of my close relationship with Anna Kamensky, I was struck by many qualities that sharply distinguished her from all other people I knew. I sought an explanation from her mother, who confessed to me that she herself did not understand where her daughter had gotten these traits. When Anna was just an infant, her mother clearly saw a star over her cradle. And when she was two years old, she would work with stubborn concentration for hours on a drawing, until she had put an entire mosaic of color into it.

Later, after she had started school, Anna would burrow so deeply into her schoolwork that she did not see or hear anything going on around her. In spite of this, she remained a happy, alert child. When she finished her lessons, she loved to romp and play with other children and was always a leader in their games and activities. Any kind of falseness upset her, as something she could not understand.

Also, Anna could not bear any rudeness or cruelty in human behavior, particularly in behavior toward animals. Her mother was especially struck by how she combined a tender, yielding nature with outbursts of almost mindless fury whenever she saw children tormenting a living creature of any kind. Sometimes, in defending a victim, she would throw herself with such fury at a whole crowd of children that she would send them running away.

Her school friend, Nina Gernet, supported the observations of Anna's mother. Both of them told me that a characteristic in her childhood, uncommon in most children, was that every day she always drew up a strict plan of work and invariably carried it out.

Chap. 3

Anna Kamensky's Introduction to Theosophy

Anna Kamensky was deeply involved in the Enlightenment movement, begun in Russia on the initiative of progressive groups after the death of Pobedonostsev, with the intention of liberally informing the Russian people. The initial stimulus for the rise of the Theosophical movement in Russia was an unexpected event in Anna's life. As mentioned above, Nina Gernet had left a collection of Theosophical literature at Anna Kamensky's residence and repeatedly urged her to become acquainted with these works, insisting, "This is just right for you."

But Anna had to spend all day giving lessons in French in order to support her family: a mother, an aunt, and two younger sisters. She devoted all her free time between lessons, including Sundays, to her social enlightenment activities. Owing to this unending task, she was not able to follow her friend's wishes until an unfortunate event resulted in involuntary leisure.

In 1899, while hurrying to a lesson, Anna Kamensky slipped on the street, fell, and broke a leg. This accident forced her to stay in bed for an entire month. She remembered the collection

of Theosophical literature and asked for whichever book was at the top of the trunk holding Nina Gernet's Theosophical volumes. That book turned out to be Annie Besant's *In the Outer Court*. From the first page, Anna was so captivated that she read the whole book straight through during the night. When she had finished, it seemed to her that "before her a veil had been torn and she beheld the entire path of humanity and the entire meaning of suffering." Immediately after her recovery, Anna Kamensky became a member of the English Section of the Theosophical Society and, in 1902, traveled to London in order to become personally acquainted with Annie Besant.

When I became close friends with her—she was then thirty-four—she was a living puzzle to me. By family background and education, she belonged to the same cultural milieu as all my acquaintances and friends. But where did she get such a high degree of inner development in all areas of thought, feeling, and conduct? And how could she combine such rare meekness and gentleness with such a fiery temperament, irresistible will, and all the qualities of a fearless warrior?

I found the key to this puzzle much later, when the study of Theosophy acquainted me with Oriental psychology. Then, I understood that Anna Kamensky went about her Western business with an Eastern soul and that she had probably already entered upon the Path and had gone through a strict spiritual discipline in preparation for it. When we both began to work together in Theosophy, I was convinced that, above all, she had both a great capacity for work and a rare talent for organization.

Chap. 4

Theosophy and the Russian Soul

I have begun my account of the Russian Theosophical Movement with a characterization of Anna Alexeevna Kamensky because the extraordinary success and swiftness with which Theosophy began to spread through Russia depended on two factors. The first factor was Anna's character, specifically her personal qualities as one who took the initiative and then, served tirelessly as leader of the Russian Theosophical Movement, investing it with all the strength, integrity, and enthusiasm of her soul.

The second factor must be sought in the special psychological qualities of the Russian soul, which Anna shared. These special qualities distinguish it from the Western European soul and share more with the Orient, especially with India, in that the inner world is based on a religious principle. For India and Russia that is the main thing; all the rest is secondary, a mere temporary superstructure.

The attitudes of the cultured classes of Western Europe and Russia differ. For the Western European, earthly creations and earthly prosperity and personal and family interests appear to be the chief motivating force in life. For the Russian soul, the eternal questions and the voice of conscience come before all else. From these Russian values come the unselfish idealism of the Russian intelligentsia and also the greater part of the inner tragedy of Russians. They sin, as we all do, but they suffer more deeply from their faults.

If you peer into the inner meaning of Russian history, it is clear that the religious principle has been the chief motivating force in major events. After czar Peter the Great had eliminated the Russian Orthodox Patriarchy [in 1721, replacing it with the Holy Synod, controlled by the government], the Church—as a power—became an instrument of the state as well as a tool of the dynasty and of the privileged class. From that time onward, the progressive elements of Russia began to turn away from the visible church and to search for another source for the religious nurture of their souls. That became a sacrificial rite of serving unfortunate people.

The entire struggle of progressive Russia against reactionary government had a fundamentally religious character. That includes all of our revolutionary movements before the last, the Bolshevik revolution. In late czarist Russia, the most significant liberal political party was the Constitutional Democratic Party [called the Kadets, from the K-D initials of its Russian name: *Konstitutsionnaya Demokraticeskaya partiya*]. It had in view, first and foremost, the granting to peasants of surplus privately owned land and the equalizing of political and other rights for all classes. This aim was despite the fact that most of the members of the Kadet party belonged to the privileged class, the landed gentry. [The October Revolution by the Bolsheviks, founded on class hatred and disunity, lacked this religious principle, and for that reason it was not recognized by the Russian people. It was sustained only by force.—N. Reinke?]

This same religious quality of the Russian soul clearly shows itself in our Theosophical movement. The study of Theosophy focuses on the main thing, on eternal questions. And therefore Theosophy became for those who entered the Society their main interest in life, ahead of all personal, family, and party interests. Let me give a few examples. Russia is enormous, her expanses cannot be matched in Western Europe, and therefore it was very difficult to assemble all the groups of officers, scattered around that vast space, for common work. Doing so demanded great sacrifices. Yet, there was no way that any of the officers of provincial groups would fail to attend the annual convention on November 17 in the main headquarters in St. Petersburg, almost on the far western edge of Russia.

Anna Kamensky, elected as General Secretary (chairwoman) of the newly created Russian Section of the Theosophical Society, introduced into our work from the very beginning broad democratic principles. She decided nothing unilaterally and attempted in every possible way to encourage individual initiative and self-direction on the part of all local branches of the Society. With that as her goal, starting in 1909, soon after the legalization of the Russian Theosophical Society, she invited all branch representatives, in addition to attending the annual convention in St. Petersburg, to get together for summer work at Podborki [the Pisarev family estate] in the Kaluga district, where she was my guest during summer vacations every year until 1918, when along with other estates, ours too, was expropriated.

Even though the majority of the representatives of our branches were blessed with neither wealth nor leisure, all of them not only willingly, but joyfully, responded to this invitation. From all ends of the country—from Kiev, Yalta, Rostov, Kharkov, Poltava, Moscow, and St. Petersburg—they assembled for a second time each year for a summer week of work. Whatever the length of the journey, expenses, or personal business, nothing stopped them. Theosophy had

become for them the main thing in life, and they really “meant business,” as C. W. Leadbeater defined the proper attitude toward Theosophy.

Another example: from the very founding of the Russian Section, the most ardent desire of all its members was to attend the European Theosophical congresses, to see Annie Besant and the other leaders in person. So at each such meeting, the number of Russian participants at the Theosophical congresses increased, despite the fact that the majority of the members of the Russian Section were not wealthy and held regular jobs. They deprived themselves of much in order to save money for these trips; and at the last prewar congress in Stockholm in 1913, the number of Russian participants reached the hitherto unprecedented figure of sixty-five persons.

Chap. 5

Early Years of Theosophy in Russia

I now return to a chronological account of the early history of the Theosophical movement in Russia.

After reading Annie Besant’s book *In the Outer Court*, Anna Kamensky immediately became a member of the English Section of the Theosophical Society, and in 1902 set off for London, where she met Annie Besant, who had come there to preside at the convention. Shortly afterwards, Anna Kamensky wrote Besant a letter in which she described her soul’s current state of development and her wish to pursue enlightenment through Theosophical work. In reply to this letter, Annie Besant invited her for a visit and, after a prolonged conversation, declared that she would accept Anna Kamensky as her personal pupil.

At almost the same time, I, too, the writer of this account, came to Theosophy. In my inner life a serious crisis had come about: I had lost faith in God and all life had ceased to have meaning for me. My outer life was entirely satisfactory: I had a family, a good income, a good social position, everything that makes earthly life valuable, but I had lost the main thing, and life had become unbearable for me. I mention this personal experience to illustrate my characterization of the Russian soul. I started to pray to the “unseen world”—if it existed—to give me a sign. The books that I read, such as Annie Besant’s *Ancient Wisdom*, were the answer to my prayer.

In 1901, I happened upon—or more accurately, was taken to—Veldek, a picturesque little spot near Laibach in what was then Austria [now Ljubljana, Slovenia]. There, on the shore of a small Alpine lake, was Doctor Rikl’s sanatorium. Several Theosophists, including the General Secretary of the Dutch Section, W. B. Fricke [1842-1931], were there. I was presented to him, and he first introduced me to the field of Theosophy and supplied me with basic Theosophical literature. This literature offered answers to the eternal questions, and so I immediately decided to join the Theosophical Society.

Upon returning to Russia, I received a letter from Nina Gernet, whom I did not know at that time. In her letter, she expressed a wish to become acquainted with me. She then lived in Reval, and I in central Russia, slightly south of Moscow. I mention this in order to demonstrate

how actively and with what self-sacrifice she fulfilled her role as “soul scout” for Theosophy and the “Theosophical letter carrier,” as we jokingly called her.

She wrote that, in London, she had heard about my interest in spiritual questions, mentioned, in this regard, names I had never heard of, and indicated that she was prepared to come to visit me if I wished. This stunned me, since the journey from Reval to my home in Kaluga would take at least two whole days and would cost a great deal—all for someone she did not even know! I answered that I would be happy to make her acquaintance. She arrived and worked very hard to convince me of the need to propagate Theosophy throughout Russia, supplied me with Theosophical literature in the original, and persuaded me to accompany her to Berlin, where Annie Besant was expected in September. A seemingly insurmountable obstacle stood in the way of such a trip, but it unexpectedly resolved itself, and I was able to go with her.

Annie Besant was staying at the headquarters of the German Theosophical Section. At that time its General Secretary was Rudolf Steiner, and his active assistant was Maria Yakovlevna Sivers, the daughter of a retired Russian general and a very interesting and talented young woman. (Nina Gernet used to drop in to see her, and it was through her that Nina became acquainted with Steiner.)

In order to clarify what the relations were at that time between Annie Besant and Rudolf Steiner and the whole German Section, I shall mention an incident that occurred when Besant left after closing a Theosophical Lodge meeting. Steiner, who had been requested to translate her speech into German, did not confine himself to a translation of her lecture, but added a lengthy discourse of his own. All the senior members of the Section, with Maria Sivers in the forefront, turned on him with reproaches and complaints that, after a speech by Annie Besant, he had had the temerity to impose his own thoughts. He was extraordinarily embarrassed and muttered something or other as justification for what he had done.

On that same day, I was presented to Annie Besant, and from the first minute I felt such a strong sense of her greatness that, for the rest of my life, I remained her devoted servant. During the same stay in Berlin, thanks to Maria Sivers, I became acquainted with others in the German Section and became close friends with Rudolf Steiner, who was keenly interested in Russia and highly valued the Russian members of his Section.

On the return journey, going through St. Petersburg, I became acquainted with Anna Kamensky, for whom I had a message from Nina Gernet. On that first day of our acquaintance, we decided that, as soon as possible, we would have to start propagating Theosophy throughout Russia, and so I put together a short article about Annie Besant’s public lecture, and also about the origins of the Theosophical Society. Anna Kamensky placed my article in one of the major St. Petersburg newspapers, and we then agreed to collaborate in our work.

I invited Anna to spend her summer vacations at our country estate. In the following summer of 1903 she visited me and from then on, our close friendship grew. She spent all her summer vacations, as well as Christmas and Easter holidays, with me. Together we set a plan for collaboration in the interests of Theosophy, selected Theosophical books for translation and publication, established lectures for the first presentation of Theosophy to the Russian public,

and so on. In that same year, 1903, she in St. Petersburg and I in Moscow began to acquaint the Russian public with Theosophy.

In 1904, Anna Kamensky and I went to London for a Theosophical convention, where we attended the public presentations of Annie Besant and heard a series of her lectures on “The Science of Peace,” and afterwards went to the First International Congress in Amsterdam.

From there Anna Kamensky went to Veldek, to Doctor Rikl’s sanatorium, where I was first drawn into Theosophy. The purpose of her stay in Veldek was to strengthen her health for the strenuous work that lay ahead. From there, she continued on to me in Podborki and almost at once fell ill with such a bad case of typhoid fever that the doctors gave little hope for her recovery. I was certain that she would not survive this illness, and on the day of its crisis I saw the shadow of death on her face. But during the night something corrected itself, and in the morning I saw an entirely different person. She recognized me, smiled, and asked for something to eat. I was constantly near her, as was her associate, the recently arrived Tsetsilia Liudvigovna Gelmboldt [d. 1936].

I recorded Anna’s delirium, since it seemed to be a translation into symbols of the very essence of her soul. She imagined that she was sailing to be with Annie Besant in India and was always sending me into her cabin on errands. She asked for paper and pen and while lying down wrote letters in incomprehensible hieroglyphics. In her delirium she saw a young Catholic monk or priest in a forest beside the spring of a transparent stream, which he was continuously covering over with pine boughs. He was holding a chalice, which he filled from the spring and took out to the people who were walking and riding past the forest, and from which they thirstily drank the fresh water. And then the priest was praying, and she felt that he was she, that her soul had merged with his soul and that she was remembering herself in some other distant life. This vision returned to her again and again.

When she had regained consciousness, she wrote down another vision at my request. “Again a transparent mountain stream, and above it a marble female statue in a bending pose with a vessel full of water. The water is brimming over the edge and people walk up to her and drink. I look at her and merge with her, I know that she is I, that *such a one* I should be, and I feel myself strangely locked in place and at the same time arrows pierce my heart. I hear a quiet voice above me: ‘*Mater dolorosa*’ [Sorrowing Mother, a title of Christ’s mother at his crucifixion], and I know that I should not let myself shake, I must hold the vessel with water, although arrows are striking my heart and blood streams from it. An infinite tenderness fills me, sorrow and joy merge into one.” For that whole year she was very feeble, but already in the next year, 1905, she was able to travel to the Second International Congress in London, to which I was unable to accompany her.

Before legalization of the Society in Russia, no public presentations of Theosophy were allowed, so our colloquia had to be carried out in various salons, hosted by people interested in spiritual questions who had invited us for that purpose. One of these salons in St. Petersburg belonged to Anna Pavlovna Filosofov [1837-1912], whom the entire enlightened segment of Russia knew and respected. Her active role in all the liberal undertakings for enlightenment in the era of Alexander II was so great and so directly connected with the Russian women’s

liberation movement that her name will enter Russian history as one of the country's brightest luminaries. Thanks to the high position of her husband, one of the czar's favorite confidants, as well as to the charm of her brilliant personality and her outward and inner beauty, she managed to obtain from even the most reactionary ministers and counselors permission for the most progressive enterprises.

But during the period of our private meetings in 1905, I happened to get into a Spiritualist meeting in Moscow and to acquaint the Spiritualists with Theosophy. Their interest was quite keen, but this success frightened Pavel Chistyakov, who, at the time, was editor of the Spiritualist journal *Rebus* and also head of the Spiritualist movement in Moscow. He consequently denied me further access to spiritualist meetings.

Chap. 6

Activities 1906-1907

As a result of our quiet preliminary work and our presentations in private homes, when, in 1906, we managed to publish *Light on the Path* with a supplementary article on karma, the edition was immediately reprinted by Posrednik, the most popular publishing firm of that time. This proves that interest in Theosophy among intellectuals in Russian society was already awakening in the early days of our secret preparatory work.

At the end of 1906, my husband, Nikolai V. Pisarev, after joining the Theosophical Society, founded in Kaluga the publishing firm, Logos, and began to publish Russian Theosophical literature. The first book he published was *The Esoteric Philosophy of India* by the Brahmin J. C. Chatterji. The Logos publishing house prospered. My husband invested his wealth, his labor, and his love in this business. He established relations with the leading bookstores of the major cities, arranged for the books to be widely distributed at low prices, and soon began to receive from everywhere orders for Theosophical literature. Before the October Revolution, Logos had issued twenty-one publications, but afterwards our entire stock of books was confiscated.

The following year, 1907, Anna Kamensky and I, along with a group of other Russian Theosophists, attended the Fourth European Theosophical Congress in Munich. We left this congress feeling heavily depressed. The entire German Section, with Rudolf Steiner at the head, had completely changed its attitude toward Annie Besant. Maria Sivers, and after her, all the rest, had become Steiner's fanatical disciples, who thought that he should become the head of the entire Theosophical movement, displacing Annie Besant. Since I remained true to Annie Besant, they sharply broke off all friendly relations with me.

In that same year, 1907, Anna Kamensky decided to publish our own Theosophical journal, *Vestnik Teosofii* [the *Theosophical Herald*]. This decision was made because a person completely unknown to us had begun to publish a journal with the title *Theosophical Review*. Anna Kamensky went to see him and was convinced that the publisher of this journal had no connection with the Theosophical Society and had come up with the idea of publishing it solely because of the growing interest in Theosophy. Anna Kamensky's decision was very brave, since

we had no money for publishing, but so much material had accumulated that we decided to publish it in a format and size (of 110 pages) comparable with that of Adyar's *Theosophist*.

We managed to gather from among ourselves money for the first number, and then we received major assistance from the former Spiritualist Konstantin Dmitrievich Kudriavtsev, who had joined the Theosophical Society. He was manager of the St. Petersburg Municipal Typography and obtained for us favorable payment conditions for the paper. Everyone worked on the journal without pay, and every time we had financial difficulties somehow, from somewhere, help appeared, so our *Herald* continued prosperously for more than ten years.

The year 1907 was generally eventful for the Theosophical movement in Russia. It had already grown to the point at which it became necessary to consider seeking legal recognition. With this aim in mind, Anna Kamensky decided to call conferences in the most important centers of Russia: St. Petersburg, Moscow, and Kiev. The first conference was to be held in Moscow.

Work in Russia presented difficulties unknown in the West. It was very difficult to obtain legalization. Although Pobedonostsev had died and the revolutionary movement of 1905 had brought some changes and moderation, still the government looked askance at all social and private initiatives that had not come from above. This was one of the hindrances that Anna Kamensky had to struggle with.

Even in the highest intellectual levels of society, certain psychological tendencies presented great obstacles for organized Theosophical work. Thus in Moscow, within the circle where I was giving papers on Theosophy, in the salon of Nina Valentinovna Pshenetsky [d. 1933] (one of the first Russian Theosophists, who had joined the French Section, with which Colonel Olcott had established very friendly relations), there were a number of very learned members. One was the poet and future writer Andrei Belyi [pseudonym of Boris Nikolaevich Bugaev, 1880-1934]. Another was the clairvoyant Anna Rudolfovna Mintslova [1865?-1910?], who had a great influence on young people. A third was the erudite linguist Pavel Nikolaevich Batiushkov [1864-1930?], a member of the French Theosophical Section. They were all brilliant, but very difficult to work with.

Because of personality difficulties, the Moscow conference turned out to be an obstacle, instead of the help we had expected. Anna Kamensky had to contend strenuously with the anarchical tendencies of the Muscovites. They were against any and all organization, demanding an equal vote for all and an informal consensual resolution of all problems. Among other attacks, they reproached Anna Kamensky for deciding to publish the *Theosophical Herald* without having sought their approval and the approval of all others affiliated with Theosophy across the entire territory of Russia.

In this atmosphere of anarchy there were so many power-hungry voices that they upset several of Anna Kamensky's closest associates, and instead of a calm discussion of the main question—the organization of the Russian Theosophical Society—a real battle ensued, resulting in two opposing camps. Only through Anna Kamensky's enormous self-control and great tact were the raging elements calmed. In order to satisfy them, we adopted a rather strange formula that they proposed: “to unite around the *Theosophical Herald*.” When someone made the

reasonable objection that to unite around an inanimate object did not make any evident sense, the Muscovites changed the formula: “to unite around the *Theosophical Herald* and Anna Alexeevna Kamensky.” Everyone accepted this formula. Anna had obtained a victory, but it had cost her dearly: she fell ill and lay in bed with a terrible migraine the entire next day.

The second organizational conference took place in Kiev under the chairmanship of Nikolai Pisarev. Here Anna Kamensky encountered a new obstacle in the form of Orthodox fanaticism, but there at the same time she managed to persuade and pacify everyone and to restore the broken harmony. As a result, the Kiev conference unanimously agreed on the necessity of legalization and authorized Anna to call a third conference and to enter into negotiations with the authorities.

In St. Petersburg itself, the center of the movement, work continued successfully and harmoniously, and at the third St. Petersburg organizational conference there was no friction. By consensus, it was agreed to obtain legalization immediately, and Anna Alexeevna Kamensky was unanimously elected General Secretary of the Russian Theosophical Society.

(End)