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Dear General Council Member,

This letter presents the salient features of serious and long standing problems within The Theosophical Society in England that seem unable to be solved from within the Section.

Pages 2 and 3 state why I am having to appeal to you, and outline the circumstances of the current problems.

Page 4 addresses the core issues and presents a few practical proposals for solution.

Detailed supporting evidence, observations and comments are contained in a separate document which can be provided if requested. Please note that the majority of observations pertain to events up to year 2008. I understand there have been changes in governance and the affairs of Tekels Park after this time.

To those whose automatic reaction (before reading on) would be to brand such action on my part as “divisive and unbrotherly” I would say that *not* to sound the alarm would be unbrotherly. If a doctor pronounces his patient to be paralysed from a stroke, we do not say that he is attacking his patient; that he should look only to the “healthy organs” in his body, ignore the diseased brain, and let his patient die. Therefore I write after nearly forty years intense involvement with The Theosophical Society in England, from a love of theosophy and not to attack it. We have to make allowances for our human imperfections, of course, but anyone who reads on will see that what I have presented is not just a matter of nit-picking and looking for faults, but a serious and intractable problem within the English Section and blocked lines of communication within the Section. This will not be put right by attempting to bandage over the haemorrhage, but only by a searching, thorough and objective analysis of the causes of the current difficulties. Criticism, however objective, is never welcome, but sometimes it may be indispensable; and someone has to take the first step.

All our courses and lectures whether internationally, or in England such as TheoVersity or the recent Diploma in Theosophy can only have meaning if based on an unshakeable foundation of the ethics and morality enshrined in the core objectives of The Theosophical Society – otherwise all talk about Masters, service to humanity, and promulgating esoteric principles ‘to let it be known that such a thing as theosophy exists’ are no more than meaningless platitudes. With every respect, may I state that Universal Brotherhood will only remain an idle dream unless we first inculcate higher standards of courtesy, conduct, transparency, responsible behaviour and accountability in our Society in England.

In conclusion, please discuss ways and means of rescuing the English Section. In a cohesive Society such as ours, the deterioration of one important Section may well result in the attrition of the TS fabric as a whole. This need not happen at all. But improvement will not occur automatically. Please ensure that the TS in England is re-elevated to its former position of pre-eminence. To this end it is of utmost importance to institute active, external monitoring in order to ensure that the monies from the eventual sale of Tekels Park are set aside for the maximum benefit of the English Section as whole. We owe this to all those who have devoted themselves selflessly to the welfare of the Society in England and worldwide.

With best wishes and regards,



Edi D. Bilimoria
DPHIL, DIC, FIMECHE, FEI, FRI, CENG, EURING

Reasons for appealing to the General Council

When serious problems arise, whether they occur within one's family or organization, the time-honoured method to seek an amicable resolution is to communicate with the head of the family or the governing body and head of the organization, and to do so with courtesy and goodwill. It is singularly ill-mannered and divisive to wash dirty linen in public or to incite a rebellion. The same principle of sorting out problems internally, rather than going public and muck-raking, and thereby maintaining dignity, must apply to Sections within the theosophical movement worldwide.

But sadly and unfortunately there are always exceptions occasioning the need to sound the alarm at the next higher level of management. When a Section is so stymied from within its own governing body, by the vested interests and personal ambitions of a hard core who have been in office for over three decades continuously and who seem to regard the TS as their own personal and private executive club and means for attaining power, resulting in complete loss of focus and leadership, an ineffectual governing body, and worst of all, abrogation of the core objectives of The Theosophical Society, especially its First Object, then active and direct external intervention at a higher level of authority is urgent and a dire necessity for survival. It has been my long term observation that much of the efforts of the previous National President have been used in 'damage limitation' – attempting to hold back, virtually single-handed, the sheer weight of antipathy, furtive manoeuvring and in-house fighting mainly over the Tekels Park issue. His initiatives and attempts to harmonize have been worn down and stifled by a highly dysfunctional Executive Committee of which three members (who I am prepared to name) intensely coveted his position as National President.

The situation in England is therefore approaching crisis point and seems incapable of being sorted out from within the Section. Autonomy and confidentiality are all very well, but can all too easily be used, indeed has been used, as an excuse to exonerate incompetence, irresponsible behaviour and the shameful treatment of willing workers and staff. But we are an international society and cannot afford to be insular in outlook: the decline of one major Section will degrade the fabric of the TS as a whole. Thus on the grounds that "emergency knows no law", and irrespective of whether or not the Rules allow it, I urge the General Council to consider appointing a task force to *monitor and actively intervene* in the affairs of the English Section, to question the present currency of its Charter, and to take steps to stem this once grand Section degenerating into stagnation. Without expelling six core members from office and the TS (whom I am again prepared to name) along with external professional input of enlightened leadership and governance, there would seem to be no hope for the future of the TS in England.

Outline of long-standing and intractable problems in The Theosophical Society in England¹

1. The President does not acknowledge, leave alone respond to an active member of nearly forty years²
 - regarding written communications pointing out the alarming apathy and decline of the Section; and
 - as additionally detailed in his TheoVersity³ report explaining the complete indifference and double standards of the Board towards a project ostensibly mooted to rejuvenate spiritual work at Tekels Park (TP), resulting in his decision to resign as Course Facilitator².

(A classic case of "just ignore a problem, or a person, and they will go away". Nonetheless the National President has informed the entire membership – Editorial, *Insight* Winter 09/10, p. 3 – that besides being President he is not only the 'administrative head' but also the 'spiritual head' and that he 'accept[s] that responsibility unreservedly'.)
2. Similar communication to the above, addressed to the National Council having been to no avail.¹
3. There are cliques, irregularities, conflict of interest and nepotism: e.g. the majority of the Tekels Park Management Committee (TPMC) are on the Executive Committee (EC), and the same people are on the National Council (NC); married couples and close friends are on both EC and NC.¹ For example, the Company Secretary of TPMC is on the EC, also on the NC, and lives on the Park in one of the Society's properties. Another example: the Estate Manager of Tekels Park who is on both the EC and the NC, as well as the Finance Sub-committee, is also an employee of TPMC, and is Company Secretary for the Theosophical Society.
4. The National Secretary (NS) has been suspended from her Lodge for five years, but still continues to hold office. The letter to the NS signed by three Lodge Officers, plus the Lodge President states that the NS has (a) behaved in an unethical manner; (b) at least five members have left the Lodge owing directly to difficulties caused by her in the Lodge; (c) the NS has personal ambitions to become National President over and above the best interests of the TS; (d) the NS should seek coaching and counselling to deal with her problems regarding the First Object of the Society.¹ The ensuing kangaroo court convened to sort out this matter was a deficient and irregular affair – full details can be provided upon request.¹
5. Incompetent interviewing, inadequate checks and ineffectual management supervision of employees at TP whereby one employee on the estate (where there are vulnerable women and children) was served a thirty four year prison sentence for attempted murder and a series of sexual offences (crime not committed at TP) [Letter from Hampshire Constabulary available for inspection].
6. Dickensian management and bullying of staff at Tekels Park (e.g. on one occasion the Guest House Manager fearing for her security, contacted the police having no one to discuss her fears with, and no recourse to management point of contact). [Photographic and documentary evidence available]. Note: Bullying and inappropriate behaviour by Directors, when proven, should be taken seriously by the National Council and Executive Committee with notice of disciplinary action, including possible termination of membership formally issued to the persons in question.
7. Three official Recorded Delivery Letters sent by the undersigned when on the EC to the Chief Executive Officer of TPMC regarding serious matters of security, health and safety at TP pertaining especially to 5. and 6. above and other issues, all returned to the undersigned unopened and marked 'Return to Sender' [Envelopes containing unopened letters returned available for inspection].
8. Confidentiality used to camouflage management irresponsibility and hide a burgeoning crisis; and the fabricated charge of a breach of confidentiality used as a ruse in an attempt to censure the undersigned for sounding the alarm regarding the callous interrogation of staff at a Tekels Park management meeting¹ – a mockery of the First Object of The Theosophical Society.

9. The non-EC component of the NC as indeed the whole of the membership largely ignorant of the true state of affairs by the arguably deliberate lack of transparency (the NC comprises some 40 members the majority of whom are largely ignorant about the situation).
10. Serious theosophical inquiry eroded on national and lodge programmes in favour of entertainment. For example the inability to rein in the Cardiff Lodge formerly of the Welsh Section (albeit not part of the English Section, but still in the UK) has resulted in a breakaway group advertising programmes more in the nature of an amusement arcade at a psychic festival or circus funfair, hence bound to deter any serious inquirer to the TS. The names of such as Annie Besant and Blavatsky are mixed up with “Ray’s Osho Meditation Centre Project Proposal”, “Angel Card Read-In, Agatha Christie Tarot, guru stuff”, and that “we should be in on that.” Moreover, one of the websites advertised (www.wisebeing.com) showing the seal of the Cardiff Theosophical Society and by implication, The Theosophical Society, marginalized with the emphasis put on Osho (Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh), inane cartoons and other cheap and irrelevant stuff (full documentary evidence available). Whilst entirely appreciating the need to attract new members by way of innovative programmes, hard experience shows that those who are attracted by occult/psychic entertainment will very rarely progress towards serious theosophical inquiry. An increase in membership based upon entertainment programmes is therefore no indicator of a prospering *theosophical* Lodge or Section.⁴
11. The Section now in financial difficulties despite handsome capital assets. Tekels Park has been, for over two decades, a massive financial drain plus a source of the most intense acrimony and possessive selfishness by some members. It is now being sold. The Park was professionally valued at over 10 million pounds sterling several years ago, and the NC voted by a two-thirds majority on 6 October 2007 to sell the Park in its entirety. However indecision, bureaucracy and strong vested interests – one TPMC member an employee of the Company, another residing in TS property on the Park – have meant that its inevitable and untimely sale now during the current downturn in financial markets will achieve a fraction of its former value.
12. The Chief Executive Officer and Guest House Director of Tekels Park have produced anodyne, one page reports for the National Council totally lacking in content, financial figures, budgets, planning, strategy, and completely failing to address, indeed avoiding all issues connected with health and safety, the serious financial drain of the Park on the TS, and the loss of morale of the dedicated Guest House staff.¹
13. Minutes of meeting by the TPMC rarely, if ever, communicated to the EC, despite repeated requests by the EC for such Minutes – further evidence of lack of transparency and inefficiency. *Note:* three members of TPMC also on the EC, and also on the NC.
14. The National President making no annual report to the members in *Insight*. Each member has a right to receive a detailed (say, 10 page) annual report from the President clearly and transparently communicating the affairs of the Section; together with a full and frank financial report with facts and figures about expenditure and income, a balance sheet, budget for the next year and reports from the Treasurer and Independent Auditor.
15. An insular attitude towards the rest of the theosophical community: e.g. no feedback obtained or reported in *Insight* from the English representative to the European Federation. Are trips to Europe a perk for the individual’s private enjoyment? Who pays for such trips: if by the Section then is this a responsible use of members’ dues? We have absolutely no idea what goes on.
16. The officers of the Society are freely awarded pompous titles such as Chief Executive Officer, Director (plenty of them), Chairman, Manager, Senior Editor, Deputy Senior Editor – personal status, power and control being arguably the principal motives.
17. The Section quite literally lacks any individuals of distinction or capable of outstanding leadership and organizational qualities – events at HQ, lodges and Summer Schools, the quiet withdrawal of several members of standing (names can be supplied), the deterioration of the once fine HQ library, the bookshop previously situated in front of the British Museum now relegated to three walls of the entrance lobby of National HQ – all evidence of the long-term, progressive decline of the once-grand Section towards mediocrity and unprofessionalism.
18. The recent trend discernible of discouraging any questioning and freedom of inquiry in favour of a dogmatic “back-to-Blavatsky” hierarchical dictate masquerading as “pure theosophy,” but having little to do with either Blavatsky or theosophy – rather evincing entrenched attitudes amounting to a fixation on just one or two books. Also of appealing to new members by belittling the manner of presenting the doctrines on the grounds of making them more accessible as shown by the “merry-go-round” national website (www.theosophical-society.org.uk), trite nature of Unattached Members Newsletters, and the near-tabloid style of publications.⁴

I therefore make the point that any Section that suffers from the sorts of problems as listed above is seriously in need of *external, professional intervention* owing to the paralysis of its internal governing body through bureaucracy, divisive internal factions and lack of direction. But most of all, by the usurpation of the Society by the closed shop mentality of a clique using the TS for decades as a vehicle for personal ambitions and hidden agendas, who have mismanaged resources and misused the trust placed in them by the members, the vast majority of whom have shown immense goodwill and have contributed tremendous time and energy to the welfare of the TS in England.

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1. Further documentary evidence in support of this summary available for inspection in an eight page report *Observations and Comments On The State Of The Theosophical Society In England*. Please note that observations pertain to events up to year 2008.
 2. Others have also complained about the current National President’s failure to respond to important correspondence. Examples can be provided.
 3. TheoVersity (until year 2009) comprised a structured and in-depth exploration and practical application of the perennial philosophy. The approach was to render Theosophy eminently practical and unencumbered of useless discussion, so that we are able to find objective expression in an all-embracing code of life. From 2006 to 2009, eight 3-day weekend and four single day events were held mainly at Tekels Park. Full details and reports with financial statements on this project as well as details on all courses held are freely available, along with course notes and handouts. Average attendance was between 20 and 30 students at each event. The previous National President contributed very significantly and on numerous occasions as course lecturer.
 4. By contrast, the strategy should be to attract quality members by putting every effort into upholding the highest possible standards of publications, websites, programming, lecturing, meetings, courses, and most of all, the conduct of TS members, staff and officers.

CORE ISSUES

Honesty, Accountability and Transparency by TS staff and workers (paid or voluntary).

PRACTICAL PROPOSALS

Proposal	Reason for Implementation and Perceived Benefit for the English TS
Clear Policies translated in terms of concise and unambiguous Rules that delineate the standard of behaviour expected of TS officers and members.	(a) Clear guidelines provide a measure against which misconduct and any subsequent potential disciplinary action can be taken. (b) A fog of Rules with grey areas (for example in matters of honorariums and travel expenses) makes political manoeuvring and manipulation much easier for self-serving individuals.
A scope of work for the short term, medium term and long term clearly set out, communicated to, and agreed with HQ staff and Lodge officers (to include the duties and expected performance of the National President).	(a) To avoid confusion and disagreements about ‘who does what’ and to provide a yardstick against which to monitor individual performance and ensure accountability. (b) A loose or ‘free for all’ arrangement is unlikely to result in focused endeavour, efficient use of human or financial resources or attainment of long term goals.
National Council with a maximum of nine members by reverting to the previous Federation system of election (London Federation, Southern Federation, etc.). Executive Committee with a maximum of seven members.	To have some 40 members on the Council, of which some 10 members (25 per cent) never turn up; and of the remaining 30 or so members, the majority of whom are virtually clueless about the true state of affairs and simply take their cue from the lobbying endeavours of those Council members <i>who are also on the Executive Committee</i> makes for a highly dysfunctional governing body. It promotes apathy and does not encourage independent decision making, democracy or progress.
Other than the ex officio officers, no member of the National Council should also be on the Executive Committee.	(a) To maintain independence between the policy making body and the executive function of the Society. (b) To obviate conflict of interest, cliques, and campaigning.
No person with vested interests to be on the National Council or Executive Committee or any Finance Committee.	To obviate vested interests and nepotism. An employee of a Company, or someone renting or owning property belonging to the TS on such a committee will invariably vote in favour of his own self-interest rather than the wider interests of the TS.
Husbands and wives, partners and close friends not to be on the same committee.	To prevent block voting and conflict of interest, hence to promote impartiality, independent judgement and objective decision making.
Full and transparent communication and reporting of important events (all Lodge affairs, Summer School, International Convention, World Congress, European Federation meetings) in <i>Esoterica</i> . This to include an annual, fully comprehensive (say 10 page) report on the Section sent to all members together with financial facts and figures. Still concerning transparency open meetings of the Executive Committee where any TS member may attend as an observer are recommended.	(a) Members will feel involved and empowered and not disenfranchised. (b) Manipulation, sloppy performance and cover-ups will be obviated. (c) To open up formal lines of consultation, so members feel no need to resort to back-biting and other clandestine ways of communication. (d) To minimize any attempt to “divide and rule”. <u>Please note:</u> The “Gosh! we’ve had an amazing year, but of course we have our problems” style of the one page reports produced by the (former) Chief Executive Officer and Guest House Director of Tekels Park for the National Council are not regarded as responsible or accurate feedback to the members to whom they are accountable and who have placed their trust in them – even more so for a theosophical estate in serious, long-term financial difficulties, where there have been major personnel safety concerns, and low staff morale. The TheoVersity Reports produced for the National Council are regarded as an example of what is meant by proper reporting and feedback to members. They include accurate summaries of events, future plans and financial figures. Both of the above mentioned reports are available for inspection..
National President’s annual report to Adyar to be approved by the entire National Council.	Ensures a balanced report by countering: any bias towards a favourite subject or a favoured person; and any inclination towards personal grandstanding.
National President to be elected by the <i>entire membership</i> and not just the National Council.	(a) Members will feel involved and empowered. (b) Lobbying and campaigning for a favoured person by a self-interest group on the National Council or Executive Committee will be obviated.
Stripping all officers of self-important titles and directorships. National President, National Secretary and National Treasurer being the only relevant titles. All other duties can simply carry a <i>functional</i> title like ‘Summer School Coordinator’, if indeed it is required.	Filters out by ‘natural selection’ those who wish to serve the Society, from ‘career theosophists’, using the Society as a vehicle to fulfil their personal ambitions for power and control, or acquire kudos (or fill in an otherwise empty existence after retirement from a job), under the guise of “working for theosophy”.
A maximum term limit of say 3 years (in exceptional cases 5 years) on a committee. And say, two terms maximum as Lodge President.	Serving on more than one committee between 30 and 40 years <i>continuously</i> does not encourage new ideas, new blood or fresh impetus. The argument that ‘there is no one else’ is unfounded; with a core group in more than one office continuously for decades, there <i>will indeed be no one else</i> .