

From Exile: C. W. Leadbeater's letter to Fritz Kunz



Fritz Kunz, circa 1930

Fritz Kunz and his family were associated with C. W. Leadbeater since the early 1900s. He travelled extensively with him and had a close understanding of the events that led to his resignation from the TS in 1906. In the following letter to Kunz, CWL touches upon some of the underlying issues of that crisis. Much later in life Fritz Kunz had the intention of writing a biography of CWL and communicated that intention to John Coats, who would later become the President of the TS. That project, however, never materialized.

CWL's letter, whose transcription is posted below, followed by the facsimile of the original, is unique in many ways. It shows how busy he was in 'exile', writing books and answering a massive correspondence. But it also shows his reverie while referring to his worldwide lecture tour for the TS some years earlier and how he missed his dear friends. More letters from CWL to Fritz Kunz can be seen at:

<http://www.cwlworld.info/html/letters.html>

Permanent address: 10 East Parade, Harrogate, England
August 14th 1906

My dear Fritz,

I am still unfortunately without my typewriter so you will have to endure a manuscript letter. It is a first rate idea that you should write to Basil, and he forward the letters to me, because then you will not have to write the same thing twice. I am very glad that you are strong and well after all the strain of the tour around the world. As to your plans for the future, it seems to me a mistake to give up the idea of the English University degree; if one may be allowed to put it plainly, you are altogether too good to let yourself sink into the ordinary worldly money-making life. But of course on this point you must take the advice of your father and sister. Anyhow, keep in touch with us and write often.

I do not entirely agree with Raja's [C. Jinarājadāsa] sudden collapse but he must do as he thinks best. If it rested with us to bring the matter up at the Convention we might well let it alone, but Fullerton in his abominable circular asks the Convention to support resolutions ratifying his insane and wicked action; so the question *must* arise and surely no unprejudiced person will take his side. I shall be much disappointed in "the land of the free" if it does not justify its name by condemning persecution and declining to be bullied: and my hope is that everyone on our side *will* be at the Convention, and will vote straight. They cannot reinstate me as a member, whatever they vote; but they *can* change all the committee except poor old Fullerton and they *ought* to do so. Mrs. Besant's opinion is a mistake, but it applies only to the original question, not to the action of the committee, to which she objects as much as we do. It seems from what you say that Mr. Little joins the persecutors for which I am sorry; he *ought* to know me better. Remember: the original question is *not* now at issue; that chapter closed with my resignation; what is left is the conduct of the committee, which it insists that the Convention shall ratify: and if it does it proves that opinion is *not* free in the Society, which is a serious position to take.

I am interested in what you say about Howard [Maguire] for I have never received one word from him since all this began and I do not know how he stands so far as the physical plane is concerned. I thought he was probably their "fourth boy", who certainly declines to

commit himself to anything; but I also thought he must be the boy to whom the alleged cipher letter was written, because so far as I know only those who were at Newton knew the cipher. Yet that does not square with his saying that he “told the old hens nothing”; can they have stolen the letter from him, he having previously boasted of and explained the cipher? Of course with their usual unfairness they have never let me see that letter or a copy of it, and have left me to guess to what boy it was addressed.

As to myself, I am living very quietly, and happily enough, except that naturally I miss my beloved Secretaries at every turn. You see during that long tour we grew so much to be one family that it is difficult and painful to readjust oneself to utter loneliness. Whenever I see an interesting ruin or a beautiful bit of landscape my instinctive thought is “I must bring Basil and Fritz to see that”: and I have to make a distinct effort to bring myself to realize that the possibility of my having that pleasure is infinitesimal! Naturally also I think often of the tour for every article about me reminds me of it. Just think! The suit I am wearing we bought at Adyar, my shoes at Brisbane (soled in India) my socks are from Newton Highlands, my shirt from Whiteaway Laidlaw at Rangoon, my spectacles from Buffalo, my watch from “five grateful American Theosophists” (everyone of whom has since forgotten his gratitude), my hat from Launceston, Tasmania, my black alpaca coat from Vancouver, my back brush from Ridgewood, New Jersey, my giant pencil from the Hunts piano at Melbourne, my big lens from Mrs. Balch, my spring-balance from Chicago, my little cushion also from Chicago, with a cover made for it by Mrs. Pettit; my umbrella had a new handle put to it at Seattle and I am constantly wearing a cap that has seen all the oceans of the world. There is a pocket-book from Harrogate, and a little sword-toothpick that you made for me out of sandalwood. Can you wonder that my thoughts go back into that vivid past? Still I must also say that every day a thought of relief comes over me “no lecture tonight”; and I should gladly try to do something at “The Hidden Side” [*The Hidden Side of Things*] if it were not for the masses of letters. But it is not easy to work all alone. I am sure the quiet time has done me good in certain ways; you remember how nervous I became towards the end of the time, easily irritated by trifles; I have absolutely not felt impatient for months for there are no trains or post to catch, and nothing matters anymore! The peace is delightful, but it is a wrench to be separated like this; it is only half a life without my dearest friends, but it is a tranquil half! And what would happen if I met with an accident or fell ill, is a matter I resolutely put aside. It is a useful interlude, and if will only allow me to write those two books [*The Hidden Side of Things* and *The Inner Life*] I shall be thankful for it. Mrs. Besant has made a suggestion as to my going to Japan and working there; I shall find out more about it. But I think, so far as I can see, you may take it that I shall not make any big move for some months.

You see I am only suffering under a gross misconstruction of motive, just as Madame Blavatsky and Mrs. Besant have done. Colonel Olcott himself drew up for me at my request the form of resignation, stating that I withdrew “in order to save the Society from embarrassment”. I wrote afterwards asking him to include that form in his Executive Notice, but I suppose it was too late. Well, here is a regular chatty letter, just as though we had been talking. All good go with you. With kindest regards to the family and very much love to yourself

I am ever

Yours most affectionately

C. W. Leadbeater

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