

# THE O. E. LIBRARY CRITIC

Published monthly at 1207 Q St., N. W., Washington, D. C.

BY

## The O. E. Library League

---

Vol. XXV

July, 1937

No. 1

---

Yearly subscription. United States and Canada, fifty cents; foreign, two shillings sixpence or 62 cents. Single copies, five cents. Blank (unfilled) British postal orders and stamps, Canadian paper money and stamps accepted.

---

Page 10-11

### Pekka Ervast and Theosophy in Finland

Theosophy reached Finland in 1891 through newspaper articles, and in the same year the first Finnish theosophists joined the Scandinavian Section of the Theosophical Society. In 1894 Pekka Ervast (born December 26th, 1875) who was to become the most prominent figure in the Finnish theosophical movement, embraced Theosophy with enthusiasm. At the beginning of the century he was in Sweden, where he was doing active theosophical work. Instead of staying there as he was asked, he returned to Finland, doing exclusively theosophical work until his death in 1934.

In the years 1899-1905 the theosophical activities were somewhat thwarted by the reactionary Russian regime, but the work was nevertheless carried on, especially among the working people.

In 1905 *Omatunto* ("The Conscience"), the first Finnish theosophical journal, made its appearance, and before the foundation of the Finnish Theosophical Society in November, 1907, such classics as Olcott's *Buddhist Catechism* and H. P. B.'s *Key to Theosophy*, had been published in Finnish. In 1908 *Omatunto* changed its name to *Tietäjä* ("The Wise One"), and from 1921 onwards it has been published under the name of *Ruusu-Risti*, in accordance with, and as the organ of the new theosophical society which, after many years of germination, grew out of the old body which no longer represented the Theosophy of H. P. B.

The years 1910-1916 were externally a period of growth, but internally the Finnish national society mirrored the vagaries of the Adyar Headquarters. Pekka Ervast came to represent views contrary to those of Mrs. Besant. He opposed the World-Teacher movement, knowing through his own spiritual experiences what was the real meaning of the

"Coming of Christ". As to the war problem he realized that the Adyar T. S. had abandoned the ideal of brotherhood, falling to the servitude of politics. War, although in worst cases the inevitable outcome of human ambitions, could never be sanctioned by the Masters of Wisdom. Should the ethical code of the E. S. members be inferior to the plain injunctions of Buddha or those of Jesus?

In 1917 Pekka Ervast resigned his post as the General Secretary which he had taken care of for ten years, accepting it, nominally, once more for a year in 1918. The Finnish T. S. was now dividing into two groups; the majority had an inclination towards social reforms—not to speak of the neo-theosophical ideas of that period. Pekka Ervast and the minority considered Theosophy as being a spiritual message for reforming individuals in the first place. In 1920 Pekka Ervast's plans to organize two parallel sections within the Finnish T. S. being frustrated, he founded together with a group of old theosophists, November 14th, a new society independent of the Adyar T. S., which was given the name of "*Ruusu-Risti*, Society for Occult Research in Finland". Pekka Ervast was elected its Leader for life.

The name of Ruusu-Risti (the Rosy Cross) was adopted chiefly to denote the practical character of the new Society, or Order, as it was termed later. It was the plan of Pekka Ervast that Ruusu-Risti should realize the Wisdom-Religion by setting forth the true teachings of Christianity. In order to do that, the necessity of studying other great religions as well is inculcated in its members. Special stress is laid upon the practical ethics of the Great Teachers (*e. g.*, the Eightfold Path of Buddha; the Paramitas; the Five Commandments of Jesus Christ) the ethical Way being, as it is held, the most reliable Occult Path.

Pekka Ervast, seeing that cooperation of independent theosophical societies would be of far-reaching results, submitted to the Theosophical Congress of 1921 in Paris a proposition concerning the foundation of a league of theosophical societies. The Congress had, however, "no time to discuss the proposition".

Pekka Ervast died May 22d, 1934, and Mrs. Hilda Pihlajamäki, a theosophist of long standing, was elected his successor. Pekka Ervast left a considerable literary heritage, part of which is still waiting for publication. Two of his works are available in English, *H. P. B.* (a play), and *The Sermon on the Mount*, both published by the Theosophical Publishing House, London.

The Ruusu-Risti Order is doing serious work with the firm conviction that it has a mission as an expounder and preserver of H. P. B.'s Theosophy in the North of Europe. As a school for individuals who are members of Christian churches by birth, Ruusu-Risti is preparing the ground for a new Reformation of Christianity that will be a natural result from Theosophy in practice.

Ruusu-Risti has at present over eight hundred active members, although no special propaganda for increasing membership has been done.

That Theosophy has become in Finland a spiritual factor to be reckoned with is largely due to the life-work of Pekka Ervast, who was one of the true Servants of Humanity.

JORMA PARTANEN

NOTE.—If any of our subscribers read Finnish, they would find the magazine *Ruusu-Risti* a valuable acquisition. It is published monthly and the annual subscription is two dollars, to be sent direct to *Ruusu-Risti*, Meritullinkatu 33, door 2, Helsinki, Finland.