

Theosophy in Uruguay

In 1896 an enigmatic person known as Count De Das, visited Uruguay, as recorded in a 1912 issue of a magazine entitled *Faro Oriental* (Eastern Beacon). After his visit, the word “theosophy” became known in Uruguay through the foundation of a group known as “Centro Ocultista y Teosófico” (Occult and Theosophical Center). Many intellectuals became members of this group, one of whom was Joaquín Carbonell, born in Spain but working at the University of Montevideo, the capital city of Uruguay, as professor of lineal and topographic drawing.

About 1896 or 1897, Mr. Carbonell publicly declared he believed in the existence of an occult world, a declaration that shows how much interest existed in the study of Theosophical ideas. By 1900 two Theosophical Lodges and some study centers operated as part of the Argentine Section.

In 1921, Annie Mennie Gowland, born in England but residing in Buenos Aires, capital city of Argentina, started visiting Uruguay to lecture in various parts of the country. In Montevideo, she stayed in the *Alhambra Hotel* and gave lectures in its main hall. Consequently, the Bhakti Marga Branch was founded, followed by the Leadbeater Branch. Sophia Branch, which had been dormant, was revived, and the following new Branches were formed: Gowland, Morya, Ariel, and Gautama.

In 1923, the Hiranya Branch of Montevideo operated as part of the Theosophical Society in Argentina. One of its members, Juan Geis, helped to form the “Centro Libre de Estudios Teosóficos” (Independent Center of Theosophical Studies), which met in the headquarters of *Círculo de la Prensa* (Press Center), a highly respected organization.

On October 10, 1923, Besant Lodge was created, whose committee members were Luis Vigil, President; Mario Radaelli, Secretary; Francisco Díaz Falp, Treasurer; with Francisco Alvarez Alonso, Lumen Cabezudo, Carlos de León, Alberto Casinelli, and H. Casinelli, as additional members.