

Concerning False Mysticism and Personal Ambition While Representing Anthroposophy

Marie Steiner's Letter to a Member in Estonia Concerning Valentin Tomberg, Who Later Became an Active Catholic

March 25, 1936 Haus Hansl

Dear Miss von Dumpff,

I would like to answer you as briefly as possible. I am letting lie a long letter that I have already finished writing, just as I did earlier with my letters to Tomberg. For I have read once again his letters from before and I know that he won't change his position. For my sensibility, he is astonishingly lost in delusions and arrogant. There's no sense in my writing something that won't be of any use to him and will be falsely interpreted. I can only advise you to read his first "anthroposophical tract" with those insulting words and just read what lies between the lines. And just ask yourself then whether one can present oneself in that manner as a spiritual investigator and for that purpose appeal in such a way to the masters who work hiddenly.

The question at hand is to what extent his relationship to the first class is thereby affected. For that reason I'm sending you these two excerpts from the introductory remarks with which Dr. Steiner introduced the sessions.

The commitments that the class members take on are the following: Anyone seeking membership in the first class commits himself, as a representative of the society, never to present his own initiatives to the world under the name and auspices of anthroposophy without having cleared the matter with the governing committee in Dornach.

He commits himself to belong to no other esoteric stream and, should he want to promulgate another esotericism, he should do that outside the first class and in fact may not belong to it anymore. Without discussing the matter with the governing committee at the Goetheanum, Tomberg has announced himself—in published material that he gives the name "anthroposophical tracts"—to be a bearer of the living stream, without which [Does this now match the original?] anthroposophy would wither. He thus denied the efficacy of Dr. Steiner's wisdom teachings—on which he himself stands and to which he owes everything, "like the air that one breathes" [Tomberg's own words]—and instead claims efficacy (living potentiality) for what he purports to offer from esoteric sources directly.

His apostle Bjelotsvetoff in Riga proclaims categorically a new current proceeding from Tomberg, which is to found a sixth race through eugenic occultism. And as if there is no time to lose—that everything must happen quickly, consciously to provide high and mighty souls with incarnation opportunities. Here, he wrote to a lady . . . [unprovided].

To be sure, there's nothing new about trying to provide advanced souls with incarnation opportunities; that's actually one of the frequently appearing childhood diseases of mysticism. In America, there are several colonies aiming to found the sixth race. Our movement should be perceived as too earnest to give room to such games. Such an attitude should be a result of the training that Dr. Steiner wanted us to cultivate here.

We must protect the first class from new esotericism. One must then decide—either for the new Bjelotsvetoff-Tomberg current or for the one given by Dr. Steiner. And it won't do to leave everything unclear just because it's comfortable. If, in fact, as you say, Tomberg works only with the wisdom teachings of Dr. Steiner, then he should renounce the claim of being the bearer of a new current of wisdom and bring his Bjelotsvetoff back to reason.

Those who don't want such things coming into the first class also have a right to exercise that freedom, which goes hand in hand with the commitments to which they have agreed.

You speak of having been "excluded" from the first class. No one has done that, and it is not true—at least in so far as, were you here, for example, you would not have been prevented from attending. As for the small group in Reval [now Tallinn] however—which wants to keep Dr. Steiner's esotericism separate from Tomberg's—they must be allowed to do that, and they have the right to work among themselves.

None regrets more than I that Tomberg's development has taken this course. Perhaps it wouldn't have happened if so much hadn't been made of him.

Here in Dornach we do not make a big fuss over people or get overexcited. Many perceive that to be a "lack of recognition". We, however, esteem accomplishments that combine themselves with fidelity and vigilant conscience.

Best Regards,

Marie Steiner