

San Fernando, Calif.,
Aug. 14, 1936.

Mr. John Gibson,
Milwaukee, Wis.

Dear Brother:

Your letter was received with pleasure. Always feel free to write me relative to any philosophical or ethical problem if you feel that I can be of help to you. The question of conscience is vital and I am glad to discuss it, especially with one who, like yourself, takes such a matter seriously.

Unquestionably all of the factors which you mention are, to a greater or less degree, factors in the determining of the concrete expression of conscience. Often the action seemingly dictated by conscience is not so in fact because the latter has been misinterpreted. Training and habit can easily lead to distortion, yet on the other hand, right-training may clear away rubbish in the mind so that the voice of conscience is interpreted the more clearly. But all of this does not change the fact that the LIGHT of Conscience is the spiritual and eternal Man, and this fact gives to Conscience its primacy.

The source of conscience being the inner or subjective man its manifestation must be through the individual and the highest authority in all moral decision. It is always more important that the individual should follow the dictates or seeming dictates of his conscience than that he should correctly interpret its meaning in action, although the latter is of an importance second only to the former. In other words, motive is of prime importance, while technique, though by no means to be neglected, is a secondary matter. There is no more important mark of the white Adept and of movements under His sponsorship than just this emphasis of faithfulness to conscience on the part of a student. The student, who in obedience to an order from his Guru, violates his conscience, fails in that test, and this holds even though the order or suggestion would be seen to be perfectly proper in the light of a greater understanding.

As the complement of the foregoing it follows that any individual or system which requires of followers or members obedience to an external authority first when there is a conflict between that and conscience, marks itself at once as belonging to the current of the Shadow. This being in the current of the Shadow may be conscious but more frequently it is unconscious, but the practical effect is the same, i.e., the crushing or exploitation of the Soul, the one really serious sin.

From the premise with which "Dialectic Materialism" starts I would expect as a logical consequence that the proponents of that truly heretical dogma would deny the authority of conscience acting through the individual soul. Therefore the answer which Mr. Washburn received to his question was not at all surprising as the leaders of materialistic communism have shown considerable capacity for logical consistency in their thinking. A "dialectic materialist" naturally could not recognize the highest authority

as springing from the Spiritual Man without undermining his whole philosophy.

The question of conscience is merely one phase of the issue brought forth by dialectic materialism and as this issue is vital to any work such as that of the "Assembly of Man" that is based upon the Atmavidya, and farther, as you are individually trying to identify yourself with these two utter incompatibles and therefore must be torn inwardly so long as you do this, I propose to analyse this issue with the hope that no doubt will be left in your mind. Three primary facts may be recognized in connection with present movement that is dominant in Russia. First, "Dialectic Materialism", a philosophic standpoint. Second, Communism, which may or may not be a necessary consequence of dialectic materialism, but in so far as it is such a consequence it becomes materialistic communism. Third, the actual existent Soviet Government. I shall not devote time to the discussion of the latter two facts except in so far as they are involved in the discussion of dialectic materialism. Like all living things the Soviet government has involved modifications and adjustments and therefore has in it elements which not only do not follow from dialectic materialism, but in some respects are even antagonistic to it. With respect to materialistic communism it may be said that criticism of this can be divorced entirely from a consideration of communism as such. The communism of a Buddhism monastery is manifestly something entirely different. The crux of the whole issue which is really vital lies in the word "materialism".

If there had been any doubt in my mind as to whether the Marxian movement could be reconciled with the philosophy and purpose of the White Brotherhood that doubt would have been removed by a brief reference to the "Hand Book of Communism". The words of Marx and Lenin that I read there were perfectly clear. They mean basically Materialism in the sense that is known in philosophy as Naturalism and in the sense that is the diametric opposite of the Atmavidya. If one is true the other is false and there is no middle ground here. Now for the analysis.

The main theses of the Atmavidya are as follows:

- a. The One Reality is the Self-existent, Parabrahman, or the Absolute of Hegel.
- b. The Self, the "I AM", the Atman, pure subjectivity, is identical with Parabrahman, or the Absolute.
- c. All that exists is Conscious, and Consciousness.
- d. That the phenomenal Universe is projected outward from pure subjectivity.
- e. Hence ponderable matter and form, the world of space, time and causality, have only a derivative existence and hence are, however relatively real, still quite unreal from the standpoint of ontological metaphysics.

Now with respect to dialectic materialism both Marx and Lenin make it perfectly clear that they predicate self-existence of the material world as given through the senses. (Refer to Lenin's discussion and repudiation of the phenomenology of

Ernst Mach. Incidentally the phenomenology of Mach is almost identical with the analagous phsae of Gautama Buddha's philosophy.) Enough has been said. The universe either is a phenomenon or it is self-existent, it cannot be both. To choose the Atmavidya is to deny dialectic materialism and visa versa. And, brother, you must make your choice; you will get nowhere hanging on the fence between the two. I think I see why with your unusual capacity for understanding and exposition you still lack the insight which brings the Peace of Soul-certainty. Dialectic materialism is the blind that keeps the Light out.

Atmavidya means literally "Self-knowledge". Owing to the identity of Atman and Brahman Atmavidya is identical with Brahman-vidya, or Divine Wisdom or Knowledge. In the Greek we have "Theosophis" which has precisely the same meaning. From the standpoint of purely speculative philosophy this is merely one among alternative philosophical hypotheses. But it is possible to reduce the Atmavidya to certainty. This possibility exists by reason of the fact that in addition to knowledge from experience (empiricism) and knowledge by deduction (logic mathematics) there is a third kind of knowledge which I call "Knowledge through Identity". This latter is, in fact, the basis of all certainty. (Without it we must wind up with David Hume in absolute agnosticism.) The roots of logic and mathematics inhere in it. (Neither mathematics nor logic can prove the principles on which these sciences rest, nor are they derived from experience, yet of no knowledge are we more certain.) The possibility of knowledge by experience also inheres in this as was so well shown by Kant in the "Critique". Knowledge through Identity differs radically from all relative knowledge in that it is not knowledge of an object, but the purely subjective element which is the basis of all objective knowledge. Now it is possible to realize this Knowledge, but not as an experience or a deduction, though both the latter forms of knowledge may help in a subsidiary way to prepare the way. It is the profoundest level of meditation, actually "Samadhi". From the standpoint of relative knowledge it is indistinguishable from absolute emptiness, yet when realized it is known as absolute fullness. It is possible for a man to achieve this Recognition and then while he is enfolded within it he literally stands superior to the whole Universe and all hierarchies. I mean he finds himself superior to space, time and causality and thus free from all karma. He is in the stream of consciousness of all Sages of all times. At this point that which heretofore has been belief in or conviction of the truth of the Atmavidya becomes certainty. For one who has attained this there is no longer metaphysical doubt or a vital problem concerning the Soul.

Through philosophy and religion one can trace the thread of the Atmavidya even though hidden beneath a covering of ignorance and superstition. Rationalism starts with the "Cogito ergo sum" of Descartes, and his two great followers, Spinoza and Leibnitz, had even clearer spiritual insight than he had. The idealistic through of Kant and Hegel is the last great systematic expression threaded on the Atmavidya. It is the central theme of Jesus, Buddha and Shankara and many others less prominent in religious-philosophical history. Now in this dualistic world always when

there is an outpouring of Light there is also a stronger manifestation of the Shadow, and this we often know as the Judas force. It is the inverse reflection of the Light. Hegel was a bonified manifestation of the Light although he did not interpret as clearly as did the best exponent of the Vedanta and did fall into some errors of interpretation. He had his shadow and that was Karl Marx, a man who grasped the dialectic logic but who failed utterly to realize the soul of Hegel's message. The result was an inversion in which matter was exalted to the place of Dicty. He seems to have carried out the inversion quite consistently and thus has given us perhaps the best existant systematic exposition of the philosophy of the Shadow that we have. Judas had at least the decency to repent and so far as I know has never been regarded as a prophet. If Karl Marx had confined himself to killing the body of Hegel he would have done vastly less harm than is the case with his writings that have so successfully buried the soul of the Hegelian Light for so many people.

You can perhaps now see why we regard dialectic materialism and all that has flown out of it as belonging to the black brotherhood. In the movement there are sincere and unselfish men just as there are such priests in the Roman Catholic Church, but in such cases their force is captured to further the ends of the brotherhood of the Shadow. Their sincerity will ultimately save them individually, but does not change the fact that their effort furthers quite other than ideal ends. Adepts, obscured or conscious, doubtless will appear upon the Russian scene as they have appeared, so we are told, within the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church, but they will be there to salvage human souls, not to further a false doctrine.

I too value profoundly the ideal of no exploitation of man. This, however, is all contained in the Golden Rule and the Categorical Imperative of Emanuel Kant. "So act as to treat humanity whether in thine own person or another in every instance as an end, never as a means alone". That is the most satisfactory statement I know for ruling out exploitation of man. But dialectic materialism means systematic exploitation in the most invidious sense. It means in practice the exploitation of the Soul, the Divine part of man, to serve the ends of the animal, the exaltation of brute muscularity above real intelligence. It brings bondage to man, not freedom. It means the real crucifixion of man, even though the modern Moloch is known as the "Collectivity". I see in Russia today more systematic exploitation than anywhere else, and that in the most invidious sense of all. Exploitation through underpayment of muscular energy, while an evil, is relatively trivial in comparison.

If Stalin is Chengis Khan he has made some progress I admit. The Khan was a conqueror and had very little sense for administration. The administrative virtues of his empire were due to a Chinese, whom he loved. (Thus showing that the Khan was not wholly black, or he could not have loved any one) Stalin has administrated with real administrative capacity. But there is the same will and skill to employ massive cruelty as an instrument of power. In this Stalin is successful as the Khan was successful. The

German general staff failed in this, as I see it, in that they were ethically incapable of carrying it out with the thoroughness required. The formula is every man, woman, child and animal slain and not one stone left upon another. You can make a political prisoner work who has valued ability by holding the threat of death or pain to his loved ones over him. North central Asia has produced the kind of genius that knows how to use this instrument of power. Georgia is near the land of that tradition. Yes I respect Stalin, just as I respect Ghengis Khan and Ravana. Relatively the Ceasars and the Napoleons are less dangerous.

There are several other interesting questions worthy of analysis such as the Soviet doctrine of "work", but I think enough has been said to make the fundamentals of the issue clear. There remains but one point that I would like to call to your attention in that it has an important bearing upon the contradiction you are trying to encompass. From the standpoint of dialectic materialism Astrology can be nothing more than a meaningless superstition. The whole rational basis of Astrology inheres in this that the phenomenal universe is the objective manifestation of an inner or spiritual reality. The Universe thus stands as a symbol from which true knowledge of the soul can be derived, once the student has the correct key. From the standpoint of the Atmavidya there is a valid science and art of Astrology. If you have proven to your satisfaction that Astrology is a valid science then you have in fact contraverted dialectic materialism.

That I have written at such length is testimony of how much I care for and value you. I wish for you the soul-satisfying and undying joy, the Knowledge which commands Freedom and greater power for helping this humanity that in a large part is dying for lack of the real Water of Life. If you really grasp the Significance of the Atmavidya you will have all this.

Ever fraternally yours,

P.S. I am sorry that the mailing of this letter was delayed. However, there is a point that has come to my mind since writing the foregoing that I would like to note, and take the present opportunity before forwarding this letter.

I believe that Hegel had made a major discovery in the dialectic logic, but that discovery properly belongs to occult and spiritual philosophy, whereas the 'foot-logic' of induction belongs to materialism. Now it is fundamental to the dialectic method that it cannot stop its movement until an all-comprehending Idea or Consciousness is attained. In the Hegelian usage this was found in the Infinite which comprehends at once everything and thus transcends all dualities. But there is possible reverse movement that cannot stop short of an absolute Zero in the sense of complete negation or Absolute Darkness in the negative sense. Karl Mark in focusing upon matter, rather than Spirit started the movement in the latter sense and so, if Marksism followed consistently to the end one would arrive at the negation of absolute unconsciousness or emptiness. I cannot see this in any other light than the black Path in the invidious sense, though I am unprepared to say whether Marks

was a conscious agent in this or was merely a sort of inspired medium under the control of the brothers of the Shadow.

Marks gave a creative impulse to the dialectic movement in the materialistic direction. His first synthesis is the communistic state. Now, this synthesis in its turn becomes a thesis that arouses its own antithesis, for clearly the communistic idea is within the dualistic field. For the very fact that it stands as something to be fought for shows that it has an 'other' which stands opposed to it. What is this other? It must be something that is other and yet of essentially the same kind, just as 'bad' is the other of 'good', but belongs like 'good' to the moral field. It seems to me that we must find that other in something that agrees in the essential of being totalitarian, ruthless and highly illiberal but centers power in a class or level or sense opposite to communism. Further this other should be historically aroused in active opposition to communism. Actually we find such a movement springing up in Fascism in its various forms. Between Fascism and Communism there is bitter warfare but I, together with a number of other observers find the similarities between Fascism and Communism far more significant than the differences. So we can study the one through the other.

What is the synthesis of these two? I think it lies in the idea of totalitarianism. With this idea I stand in unqualified opposition. It means regimentation in the most ruthless sense and thus is the absolute negation of freedom. Whether the communistic thesis or the fascist antithesis is worst I am unable to say, but there is one alleviating factor about the latter. It lies closer to the men who have had long hereditary experience in government and such men know instinctively the weakness of extremes. They understand compromise and so it becomes possible for the rest of the world to live with them. Those who are new to government do not understand this, in general, and so they are dangerous.

Since returning to San Fernando I have been busy writing a book that I believe will be of major importance. I have finally broken through to the culminating Awakening and I have something now of quite another dimension. If you have not already done so I wish you would read Dr. R.M. Bucke's "Cosmic Consciousness" and also the chapter on "Mysticism" in the "Varieties of Religious Experience" of William James. This deals with a matter of Awakening to a new kind of Consciousness which transcends the subject-object field. It is potential in a number of persons at the present time and is really the first objective of those who are engaged in the work of the Assembly of Man and the Theosophical Movement. Without this Awakening I see no solution of the social problem as well as of all ultimate problems posited by the intellect. I would like to see you throwing your force more fully in this direction for I am well aware that neither your heart nor mind can find what they desire in the subject-object field. If you wish it I will submit some of my discussion to you for comment before publication.