

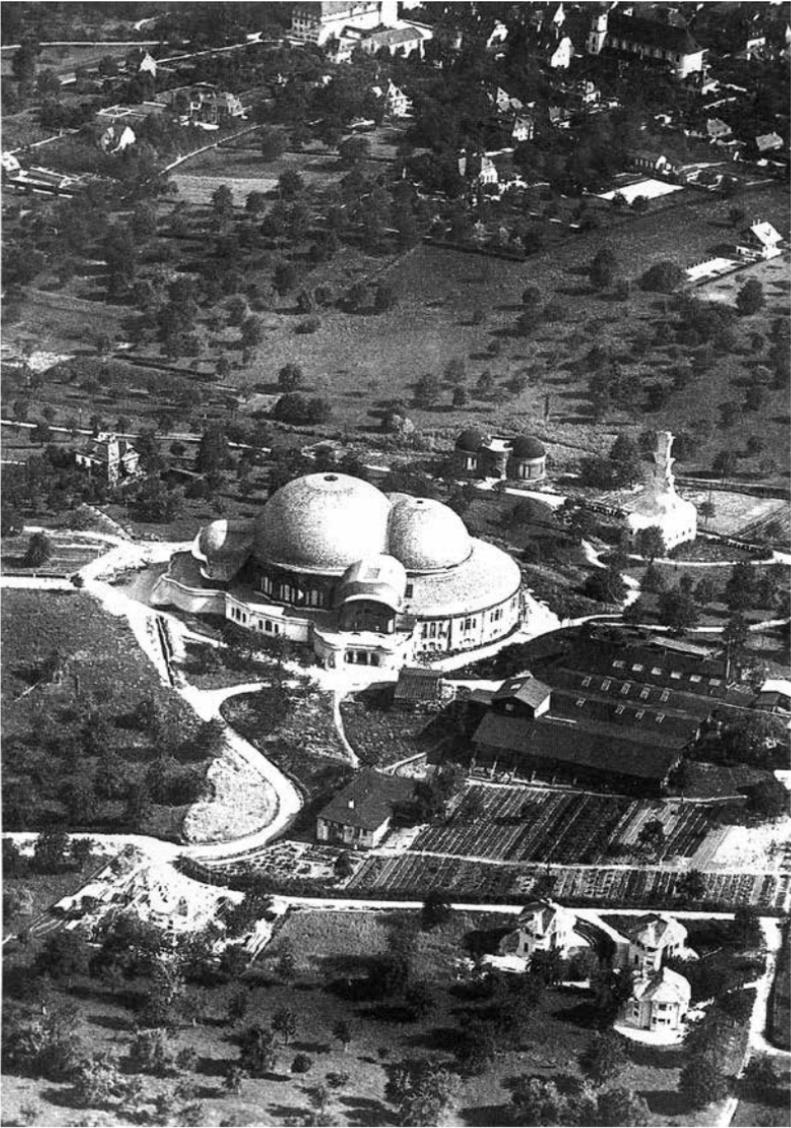


The Third Space

THE FIRST GOETHEANUM &
THE FIRST WALDORF SCHOOL

*What had they in common?
Is there a relevance here for us today?*

HENRY BARNES



The first Goetheanum and surrounding area

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The First Waldorf School

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Pedagogical Section Council of North America
School of Spiritual Science

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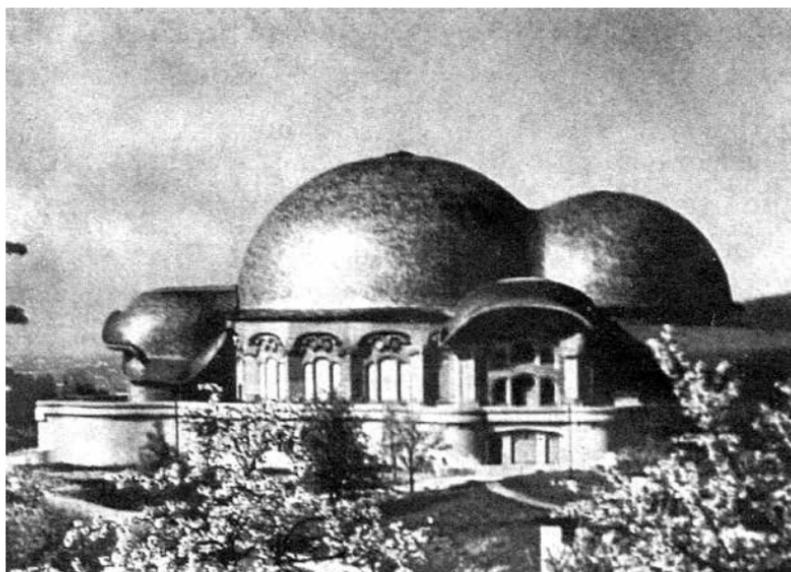
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The First Goethanum burned to the ground in the night of New Year's Eve 1922/23. The building, whose forms and colors spoke the language of the spirit, was no longer there. Ten years of work—selfless, creative work—destroyed in one night! Work in which men and women belonging to seventeen different nations had joined as volunteers alongside the Swiss workmen, working together within sound of the great French and German guns to the north, which, for most of the four and a quarter years of the First World War, had thundered back and forth along the Rhine.

For Rudolf Steiner, the building's architect/designer, the first and most immediate question was: Can the work still go forward in the makeshift facilities of the Carpenter's Workshop—the *Schreinerei*—a few meters higher up the hill? Can the work go forward with no backward glance and without delay? Is it beyond the limits of human endurance to continue where we left off yesterday? The Three Kings' Play was to be enacted that very New Year's afternoon. The answer came from the actors, and was echoed by stagehands, eurythmists, carpenters, artists, helpers: "Yes! It can go forward, and it will!"

This answer filled Rudolf Steiner with deepest, heartfelt gratitude. Yet behind the immediate question, and its wonderfully encouraging response, hovered another, still greater question: Can the spirit who had found her earthly home in the beautiful building on the Dornach hill, can she still find a home on earth? Of what materials can such a home be built? What architectural laws must it obey? Is there a building crew ready, willing and able to undertake the new construction?



The first Goetheanum



The second Goetheanum



The year which followed that New Year's night—1923—was a year of outer and inner testing, a destiny-laden year for Europe and for the world as well as for the Anthroposophical Movement. Outwardly, it was the year in which the French occupied the Ruhr, Germany's industrial heartland; the German economy totally collapsed; and Hitler made his first attempt at power. Inwardly, it was the year in which Rudolf Steiner wrestled with the question: Can there be a human community in which each individual member is independent and inwardly free, yet which—as a community—can take responsibility and effective worldly action? Concretely, can the Anthroposophical Society undertake the building of a second Goetheanum in which Anthroposophia, the being of Anthroposophy, can find a home as she once had found in the building that was destroyed?

The Anthroposophical Society, as it emerged from the Theosophical Society in 1912/1913, had not proven to be such a community. It included devoted members, many of whom were personal pupils of Rudolf Steiner during the early, undisturbed years of inward growth and experience. It had sought selflessly to administer the treasure of spiritual-scientific insights that had been entrusted to it. But it had not proven equal to the outward thrust of new initiatives that had arisen from these insights in recent years. The Waldorf School, the Coming Day economic and social initiatives, the Christian Community, all had their origin in the insights of Anthroposophy, but those who carried these initiatives had been drawn further and further into the periphery and their

“mother,” from whom they drew life and inspiration, had been neglected. And the many young people, who had come of age during the terrible tragedy of the First World War, did not find in the Society the “home” for which they longed.

One has only to read the lectures that Rudolf Steiner gave in Stuttgart and Dornach during the early months of this year¹ to experience the urgency with which he spoke to the Society’s members about these issues. These lectures make it vividly clear that for Rudolf Steiner the future of the Movement was at stake. Could the ongoing stream of spiritual-scientific insight, the creative life and spiritual substance that sought to enter human culture through the research and initiatives for which he had been individually responsible, could they find their “home,” their effective instrument, in a very human society in which—up to that time—Rudolf Steiner had not even been a member? He had been the Society’s teacher, its mentor and advisor, but he alone had carried the responsibility for the research, for the insights that flowed from the spiritual sources on whose behalf he spoke.

It is almost impossible for us today to estimate the intensity with which Rudolf Steiner wrestled with those questions during this fateful year. But it was out of the midst of these struggles that he directed the attention of his listeners—the Society’s members—to two examples of the way in which Anthroposophy is able, and wishes, to enter into life today. They were: the form and structure of the First Goetheanum and the ways in which the Waldorf School was founded and conducted its affairs. On January 23, 1923, he said to the members in Stuttgart: “Perhaps we may say that

the Goetheanum in Dornach and the Waldorf School and its procedures show how anthroposophical activity should be carried on in all the various spheres of culture.”²

★ ★ ★

From the perspective of the last years of the twentieth century, we look back and we look ahead. The century’s lessons have been, for the most part, bloody and unrelenting. What have we learned? To what extent have we mastered the art of building a social structure in which the individual is inwardly and outwardly free, yet the community of which she or he is a member is capable of wise, humane and effective action? Have we achieved this in outer life? Have we understood and realized this fully within the Anthroposophical Society and within the wider anthroposophical movement? How is it, for instance, within our Waldorf schools? Has Steiner’s suggestion to look to the form and structure of the First Goetheanum and to the founding of the original Waldorf School and to its way of functioning, has this suggestion still relevance for us today? In search of an answer, let us turn first to that building which stood for so brief a time on the Dornach hill.

★ ★ ★

Two domes of unequal size intersect to form an architectural whole. Sheathed with Norwegian slate that reflects the changing lights and shadows from the sky, the domes are carried by a wooden structure that rests on a concrete base which follows the curving lines of the building above it. The larger dome, housing the auditorium, faces west;

the smaller dome, enclosing the stage, faces east. We enter from the west and find ourselves in an entrance space from which, on either hand, a curving staircase rises to the floor above.

The stairs of poured concrete are each supported by an upthrusting column that evokes the thought of the trunk of a living tree or of a sculpted bone. As we approach the stair, we are greeted by a freely sculptured form of three interweaving elements whose dynamic harmony may remind us of the three bones of the inner ear which serve as our organ of balance. We climb the stairs and find ourselves in an upper foyer, bathed in crimson light from the great triptychal western window. A mighty human countenance, carved into the central panel, gazes tranquilly, yet very actively, upon us. A searching, questioning, contemplative human being looks out from the crimson glass. We turn and enter the auditorium through the carved wooden doors. We are at the back of the hall, beneath the organ loft, and become aware of seven pairs of great wooden columns curving away from us, growing taller as the floor slopes down toward the stage. Our first impression is probably not so much one of form as one of flooding color. If we have entered in the daytime, and especially if it is a bright sunny day, colors pour in through the tall triptychal windows set into the outer walls to our left and right, beyond the columns. Four great windows of translucent glass—light, clear green; crystalline blue; violet; and a peachblossom rose—engraved, as we have already seen in the red western window, with many forms and figures. Where the artist's drill dug deepest, light shines through most brightly, and where the beautiful Belgian glass is untouched,

the color shines most deeply. The forms in the glass speak a mysterious, awakening language. The colors from the windows not only paint the surfaces of the wooden columns and the backs of the auditorium seats, but also create colored shadows of complementary colors as they intermingle.

Gradually forms emerge out of the color: Each pair of columns is crowned, we discover, with a carved capital. And above the column capitals we discern a wooden architrave of carven, moving forms that flow in musical sequence toward the opening of the stage. And higher still, above the architrave, the domed ceiling rises, painted in strong and flowing color. Starting with the cooler colors above our head, our eyes are drawn upward as the colors intensify and then grow warmer as they descend toward the proscenium of the stage. We find ourselves looking through the stage opening into the interior of the smaller cupola that encloses the stage. Here, we sense, it is a different architectural lawfulness that holds sway. In the larger, western dome it is the inner gesture of the seven that speaks to us. We experience a crescendo from the utter simplicity of the first capital—Saturn—through the burgeoning, life-spending forms of the second—Sun—to the contracting, strongly stated, visibly emerging forms of the third—Moon—reaching a climax of self-sufficiency in the fourth—Earth/Mars—after which the forms begin to unfold, to resolve into the flow of a new freedom and musicality in the forms of the capitals of the fifth, sixth, and seventh columns—Mercury-Jupiter-Venus. Here, however, in the interior of the smaller cupola, sheltering the stage, it is the symmetry and cosmic harmony of the twelve that speaks to us. Six mighty pillars of equal height, standing to the right

and left of a central panel, support the domed ceiling. At the base of each column we find an impressive, throne-like seat. One can imagine a council of twelve of the wisest beings, seated together, sharing their wisdom, each from his special perspective. The ceiling above the columns is also painted in flowing colors that concentrate toward a light motif in the east just above the central panel, before which Rudolf Steiner intended the sculptured group to stand, on which he had been working since 1917.

Both the carved group and the central painted motif portray the same theme: a quietly on-striding figure between two contending powers, one up-soaring, earth-spurning; the other an immensely contracted, earth-seeking power. In the sculptured group—on which Rudolf Steiner continued to carve until his strength gave out in 1924—we meet this central figure, not locked in combat with the polarizing, adversarial powers, but moving quietly toward a distant, yet inwardly envisioned and experienced goal. When Rudolf Steiner spoke about this figure, he described it either as the “Representative of Humanity” or sometimes also as the Christ.

With the help of Arvia Ege’s diagrammatic drawing³ we can now see more clearly what arises spatially as a result of the two domes. If each dome stood alone, its ground plan would be a perfect circle. Because they intersect, both the circle formed by the outer walls that support the domes and the inner circle formed by the columns supporting the interior ceilings form an architectural space that is common to both spheres. This “third” space, however, not only unites but also

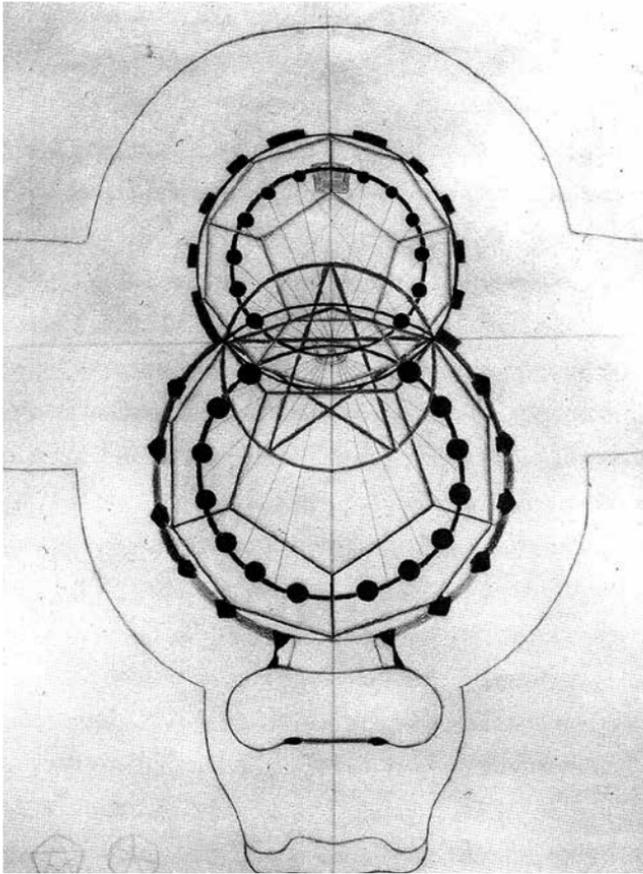


Diagram of the first Goetheanum

separates. In this sense it is a “threshold” that can become a key to an understanding of the entire structure.

The two spheres—the sphere of the seven and that of the twelve—are, in themselves, polarities. One might say, almost irreconcilable polarities. Every human being is welcome to enter the sphere of the seven, the auditorium, if he or she

wants to hear or see what goes on there. Christian or Jew, Buddhist or Mohammedan, agnostic or atheist, are equally welcome. They have only to take the initiative to come, to observe, and, if they so wish, to participate and understand. Each has the right to be there, to accept or reject what goes on. Here, each is equal.

The smaller, interior space, however, is grounded in the twelve. This space speaks of objective, cosmic realities. Here, hierarchy is at home. It is meaningless to vote whether four times four is twelve or sixteen, or twenty. In this sphere, hierarchy is neither arbitrary nor static, but exists in archetypal lawfulness.

Each sphere has its rightful place and function, yet in each a potential tyranny is hidden. One might say of the sphere of the twelve that it hides a potential “theocratic tyranny,” a tyranny of the truth that becomes dogma. But the sphere of the seven also hides a potential tyranny: the “democratic,” for which every truth is relative, every insight personal and subjective.

In a social organism, how can these potential tyrannies be reconciled? Can they come together in any kind of functioning whole? This is, I believe, where the “third space” emerges as a saving grace. And in the building, it was just in this third space that the speaker’s stand stood when Rudolf Steiner, or any other individual, spoke to the audience gathered to hear him.⁴ The one who spoke may well have achieved a significant truth, perhaps through arduous, dedicated research into the realm of the supersensible. If he is determined to project “his” truth onto, and into his audience, can he expect that his words will be accepted by his hearers

under the larger dome? He may well experience rejection and antagonism because what he has to say comes on as dogmatism, as indigestible nourishment! In such a situation, the speaker has to swallow the bitter pill and realize that as long as the truth is “his” in this personal sense, it may awaken curiosity, may even be experienced as brilliant, as logically convincing, but it will not be truly fruitful. He has to “let it go,” let it die, and he has to leave his audience free, and be prepared to wait to see whether or not it comes to life, is resurrected, in the hearts and minds of his listeners. (The same thing was, of course, also true for the artist who “spoke” from the stage whether in eurythmy, drama, recitation or music.)

And for the member of the audience who entered the hall with his or her rightful sense of personal individuality, he too had to “let go” of his right to self-expression, to project his perhaps arbitrary personal opinion, if he, in fact, wanted to hear what spoke from beyond that threshold.

I believe it is not farfetched to say that the building “came alive,” one might say, the building “rejoiced” when, in both spaces, this “mood of the threshold” held sway. One may truly say the building became human in the giving and receiving, in the crossing of that invisible threshold that both united and separated the two spheres. This is basically a rhythmic process, a taking in and a letting go, and the “Representative of Humanity,” the Christ Being, lives essentially in rhythm. Lucifer would like to inspire us to cross that threshold and be forever free. Ahriman wants to bind us to the sense world and convince us that there is no other. But the truly human spirit says: Learn to live in both spheres. When you are beyond the threshold, learn to give yourself over to the laws that hold

sway there, but never forget the earth, the needs and laws of its existence. Become a true “journeyman” in search of the only “master” who leaves you free.

* * *

We turn now to Rudolf Steiner’s second suggestion, that the manner of the founding of the first Waldorf School and the way in which it conducts its affairs also illustrates how Anthroposophy can rightly find her way into cultural life today. Here, indications are far less clear-cut; conclusions are more tentative, and the writer urges colleagues to join him in this research. What was it that could prompt Rudolf Steiner to say: “The way the Waldorf School was founded, the whole spirit of its founding, are matters for the Society’s pondering. This spirit should serve as a model in any further founding related either to the Anthroposophical Society or to the Movement.”⁵

Rudolf Steiner was always concrete and, in this case, I think we must first turn to the individual through whom this founding occurred—to Emil Molt. Molt was first, and foremost, a businessman, and very much a self-made businessman at that. He worked his way through every aspect of the business, much as the green snake in Goethe’s fairy tale works her way through the earth, “tasting” every surface, every rock and crevice, with the whole length of her great body. Like the snake, Molt encountered experiences—deep within the world of everyday practical life—which could not be understood in the context in which they first appeared. They required illumination from a different source. He carried these questions within him—digested them, lived

with them—and they led him, in the early years of the new century, to Spiritual Science and to Rudolf Steiner. These new insights, too, were digested, and little by little, the world he had known only from a practical, common sense experience, was lit up from another side and could be understood in a new, far wider context.

The “self-made businessman” knew from experience that the realm of economics, of true “business,” is the realm of working association and brotherhood. This had, from the beginning, been for him a matter of direct perception, embodied in experience. But, then, the horizon widened and he came to see that his native realm of economic life—deeply satisfying though it was—was, in itself, one-sided, incomplete. It required “light” and the “give and take” of fundamental human “fairness.” There awoke in Emil Molt the realization that life, in its wholeness, is a threefold reality, struggling desperately to be recognized and understood.

The war into which the nations of Europe had blindly stumbled was the furnace in which such questions were forged in the hearts and minds of individuals struggling, here and there, to make sense of the suffering into which millions of human beings were engulfed. And it was in May 1917 that such an individual—Otto von Lerchenfeld—turned to the one person who, he felt, might make sense out of the chaos. He turned to Rudolf Steiner in Berlin. Steiner listened attentively as Lerchenfeld poured out his questions and asked him to return the next day, that they might go to work. Three weeks of almost daily work resulted in two memoranda in which Steiner set forth his conviction that contemporary social life was seeking to free itself from the concentration of

power in the hands of a centralized, national, political state. The direction of social health today must necessarily find expression in three autonomous, yet interdependent spheres of human activity. Just as brain and nervous system, breathing and blood circulation, and metabolism in all its ramifications, together with the activity of muscles and limbs, must function independently, yet in organic association, so, Steiner argued, the three spheres of economic life, of creative, cultural life, and of the sphere of justice and law, of so-called political life, must be allowed to find their appropriate functions within the overall unity of the body social. This ideal of a threefold social structure toward which human society is unconsciously struggling was at the core of Steiner's two memoranda.

Von Lerchenfeld circulated one memorandum among leading personalities in the German government, and a mutual friend, whose brother was then cabinet chief to the Austrian emperor, undertook to do likewise in Vienna. Lerchenfeld reported momentary interest and attention on the part of some, soon extinguished by daily pressures and the heavy weight of habitual patterns of thought.

The memoranda, however, also found their way into the hands of a few individuals who were inwardly prepared. One of these was Emil Molt. Here, he discovered the thoughts that had been rising within him—waking up out of practical, but searching experience—found their completion, their wholeness. He saw at once the reality that they expressed and realized that—when the war finally ended—there might be a moment of openness when new ideas might be seen and heard. Molt, with a few colleagues, determined to put

themselves at the service of these ideas if, and when, the moment came.

The war ended in November 1918. In Germany, revolution ensued. Friends gathered in Stuttgart. They met each evening at Molt's home to share impressions, follow developments, and prepare for possible action. January brought the first chance to meet with Steiner in Dornach. Molt and two friends were able to be there. Steiner made it clear that only a radical re-thinking could really help. If the three agreed, he would write an Appeal to the German Nation and the Cultural World. If they could secure the signatures of one hundred significant individuals, the Appeal might be published and might attract some serious attention. They agreed to try. On February 2, they received the Appeal, and in a few weeks they collected 250 signatures and the Appeal was published in many leading German-language newspapers in Austria, Switzerland, and Germany.

Workers in the Waldorf-Astoria factory read the Appeal in the Stuttgart papers. They saw Molt's signature. "Who is this Steiner?" they asked. Molt spoke to them about Steiner and about his ideas. This led to questions of education and the thought awoke in Emil Molt: What a difference it would make if children of working-class parents might have access to schools now available only to those who can afford a full education. The thought became a resolve and Molt determined to put the question to Steiner when he was at last able to come to Stuttgart. He came on April 20, immediately after the publication of his book about the Threefold Commonwealth.⁶ On April 23, Steiner spoke to

the Waldorf-Astoria workers and then met with Molt and the supervisors. Molt seized the opportunity and said: I have been thinking how much a school is needed which the children of men and women who work here could attend. I want to start such a school. Would you, Herr Doktor, found and guide the school?

Rudolf Steiner's response was unquestionably one of heartfelt joy and profound gratitude. He had been asked! But the school that he saw was needed was far more than the school Molt envisaged when he asked. Steiner saw that what was needed was a school that could become a renewing force in education for human beings whose destiny it is to live in the age of the consciousness soul. And such a school could only fulfill its responsibility if it were, in the fullest sense of the word, an organ of the free spiritual life in human culture today. This would require that the men and women who taught the children every day must also be responsible for the conduct of the school in every aspect. In a society, however, in which teachers were civil servants, whose task it was to prepare students to fulfill their obligation in the existing order, this was a challenge that shook the very foundations! It was the fourth, and last, of the conditions that Rudolf Steiner said would have to be met if he was to take responsibility for the school. The four conditions were: the school would be open to all children; should be co-educational; should be an uninterrupted progression from the youngest years to the threshold of adulthood, and, as has just been stated, should in its guidance and administration, be the responsibility of those who meet and teach the children every day. Radical as the conditions were, Molt accepted them without hesitation and

went immediately to work. In less than five months, a site had been found, the building renovated, teachers gathered, and three introductory courses given⁷ which laid the foundation for an art of education which—nearly eighty years later—we are still only beginning to explore. On September 7, the Independent Waldorf School was dedicated in the presence of over 1000 people in Stuttgart’s Municipal Auditorium and one week later the school began with 253 children in eight grades! And all of this against a background of surrender and defeat, a punitive peace unilaterally imposed, the sea blockade continuing, and starvation imminent. The outer facts themselves speak of the spirit of the school’s founding!

Even this brief sketch may indicate one of the ways that we can understand what Rudolf Steiner had in mind when he said: “The way the Waldorf School was founded, the whole spirit of its founding, are matters for the Society’s pondering.” There was nothing theoretical in Molt’s question to Rudolf Steiner. He asked it out of the fullness of his being and was prepared to stand behind it without reserve. It was a selfless request and left Rudolf Steiner free. The time was ripe and the individuals were there, ready and able to put themselves wholeheartedly in the service of the initiative.

* * *

But how can we understand that “the Waldorf School and its procedures show how anthroposophical activity should be carried on in all the various spheres of culture”?⁸

With this, I believe, we find ourselves face to face with a significant riddle. In the same lecture from which we have already quoted, Rudolf Steiner said: “It is superfluous, in

the case of the Waldorf School, to ask whether its origin was Anthroposophy. The only question is whether children who receive their education there are being properly educated. Anthroposophy undergoes a metamorphosis into the universally human when it is put to work. But for that to be the case, for Anthroposophy to be rightly creative in the various fields, it must have an area—not for its own but for its offsprings’ sake—where it is energetically fostered and where its members are fully conscious of their responsibilities to the Society. Only then can Anthroposophy be a suitable parent to these many offspring in the various spheres of culture and civilization. The [Anthroposophical] Society must unite human beings who feel the deepest, holiest commitment to the true fostering of Anthroposophy.”

Here again we find ourselves confronted with a polarity: “Anthroposophy undergoes a metamorphosis into the universally human when it is put to work,” yet “it must have an area where it is energetically fostered and where its members are fully conscious of their responsibilities to the Society.” Are we not back in the two intersecting domes of the First Goetheanum? In order for Anthroposophy to speak freely and fruitfully to the world that enters the auditorium under the large dome, it must “undergo a metamorphosis into the universally human,” yet it must also have “an area where it is energetically fostered.” Isn’t this the sphere of the “twelve,” of the small dome, of the stage?

Surely both spheres are essential if Anthroposophy is rightly to enter cultural life today. But the question with which Rudolf Steiner wrestled throughout that fateful year 1923 was: Is it possible to unite such polarities within the

fragile fabric of a human community? Can the community be clearly visible, effective and strong, yet leave everyone, both within it and outside it, inwardly free? This was the question which was finally resolved for Rudolf Steiner in the reconstitution of the Anthroposophical Society at the Christmas Foundation Meeting.¹⁰ We shall also see, I believe, that it is a question that bears directly on the life and function of our Waldorf schools at the end of the century. The Anthroposophical Society was, for Rudolf Steiner, to be “the area where (Anthroposophy) is energetically fostered—not for its own but for its offsprings’ sake.” To the extent that this fostering is truly successful, the “offsprings” will have available to them the living spiritual substance which can “undergo metamorphosis into the universally human” as they put it to work in their particular field of practical life. And how was this Society constituted at the Christmas Foundation?

The Society, as such, was to be as open as any human society could possibly be. Every human being—of whatever religious, racial, national, economic or educational background—was equally welcome to become a member if she or he considers “the existence of such an institution as the Goetheanum in Dornach—in its capacity as a School of Spiritual Science—to be justified.”¹¹ Yet, within this open, public society, an esoteric institution was to be created, subject to its own laws and disciplines, but functioning in full public view. As we know, this was to become the School of Spiritual Science with its various Sections. At its center were to be the esoteric classes in which the pupil—if he or she chooses—might develop spiritual capacities and insights, step by arduous step. The insight and capacities so won, were

what the pupil needed if she or he then wished to apply them in a practical field of cultural endeavor. In this sense, the task of the School was, and is, research; that of the Society was the cultivation of the life of soul through anthroposophical study and work.

The Independent School of Spiritual Science was inaugurated on February 15, 1924, and Rudolf Steiner was able to complete the establishment of the First Class of the School before he left for England in August. He was unable to do more before his strength gave out at the end of September, when he had to forego all further outward activity.

With the establishment of the School of Spiritual Science, Rudolf Steiner also inaugurated the special Sections, always taking as his starting point the presence of an individual whom he knew and trusted and in whom he recognized a capacity for leadership in his or her particular field. Thus he recognized Albert Steffen as leader of the work in the Humanities (*Belles Lettres* or *Schöne Wissenschaften*); Marie Steiner for the Speaking and Musical Arts; Ita Wegman for Medicine and Therapy; Elizabeth Vreede for Mathematics and Astronomy; and Günther Wachsmuth for Natural Science. Initially, he retained leadership of the Educational or Pedagogical Section in his own hands.

The teachers in the Waldorf School asked Rudolf Steiner how they should see their relation with the School of Spiritual Science and received the reply that this was a matter of individual initiative and responsibility. It was Rudolf Steiner's expectation that a teacher, working to fructify his or her teaching out of Anthroposophy, would recognize that, in this sense, he or she "represented" Anthroposophy, and would

wish to unite him- or herself with the School of Spiritual Science. Within the Waldorf School, especially as the school grew and the number of teachers increased, it was natural that those who felt themselves united in this way with the School of Spiritual Science and its Section, would wish to create a space within which the deepening of the spiritual-scientific foundations of the education could be the central task. In the Waldorf School this community of teachers came to be known as the “Interne Konferenz,” and in the English-speaking world, as the College of Teachers, sometimes also as the Council.

Within a single, living social institution—a school—that includes children, teachers, parents, board members, alumni, friends—we find an organ whose members carry an “esoteric” responsibility. How is this to be understood? What does “esoteric” in this context actually mean?

Two human beings may stand side by side and may speak exactly the same words. Yet those spoken words can be experienced almost as if they belonged to two totally different languages! In one case, the words, and the thoughts they describe, spring from inner experience, they have been “lived,” “digested,” perhaps “suffered,” “wrestled with,” and, as a result, have become the speaker’s own. In the other case this has not happened. The words are abstract, perhaps brilliant, but they have not been transformed. They are “anonymous,” and one may even wonder: Who, in fact, is speaking?

If one recognizes this distinction, then one can also realize that the process can be carried further in meditation and inner exercise. But the essential distinction is the same. And if one keeps this characterization clearly in mind, then one

can think of a “college of teachers” as carrying an essentially “esoteric” responsibility, both within and on behalf of the school organism as a whole. Following the analogy further, the primary function of a “college” would seem to be the process of transformation through which, one might say, the “raw material” of Anthroposophy becomes both completely individual and universally human. To the extent that this process of transformation is achieved, what flows from the college into the organism as a whole will be health and strength-giving, will be a guidance and nourishment that is gladly received, and will help to build confidence, that elusive and intangible foundation on the basis of which the organism lives and thrives.

From this point of view, a college is not primarily an administrative organ. Yet an organism—a community, an institution, a school—needs to be “administered” just as my liver, my stomach, my lungs need to find their proper function within my body as a whole. In this sense, the life of my body needs “administration,” needs a continuous balancing flow of forces and functions to keep me alive and well. And within this mysterious and wonderful interplay, one organ, in particular, seems always to keep the whole “in mind.” Isn’t the heart this central organ in whose unnoticed, tireless, rhythmic pulsing the “awareness” of the whole organism ebbs and flows? On the tides of the blood, life and nourishment reach every living cell and return, not only with their spent forces, but also with a magical awareness of “how it is” with the organs everywhere. In the flowing blood and pulsing heart the organism as a whole senses its own life which is then reflected in the nerves that bring the

message to human consciousness. If there is a reality in this interpretation, may it not be then that a college of teachers within the bodily organism of a school acts as the sensing heart whose nourishing blood flows to every cell and returns with “news” of the state of health of every organ? And isn’t this, in fact, what we mean by “administration”? When it works well, the organism experiences “confidence”—the confidence that each individual is in the right place, at the right time, freely performing the essential function for which each is individually responsible on behalf of the whole.

And in this context, what might we call “anti-administration”? My answer would be: bureaucracy! If the organism is afraid that one organ has too much power, it sets up rules and regulations to curb and control the invasion, and eventually, what do we have? Paralysis! Which may take the form of endless hours of discussion in which nothing gets decided, but everyone has had his “fair share.” Or, the “boss” knows so well exactly how everything should be that the limbs and organs have built resistance to protect themselves from the too powerful directive flow!

Within the “administration” of the living organism, there are certain “techniques” that contribute positively to its wellbeing. The art of delegating responsibility is one of these. If the underlying confidence is there, then a single individual, or two or three, may well be entrusted to act on behalf of the whole, even to make independent decisions with which all will have to live. But such delegation, to be productive, must be definite, accountable, and freely given and received. And even consensus—sacred Waldorf “decision by consensus”—need not be immutable! Not infrequently, one quiet,

inconspicuous member may express just the thought, or characterize the situation, around which instant recognition gathers, and the deed is done!

But there are conditions without which nothing seems to work well. The sky seems always cloudy. No fresh wind blows. Especially within the college it must be possible to say what is on one's heart, no matter how awkward this may be. And this becomes possible if one knows that what is shared will remain within the collegial circle. If there is a "leakage" in heart or lung, the whole body is negatively affected; conversely the discipline of confidentiality within an institution is a very real source of health and strength.

Once again, even such aphoristic indications lead us back to the building on the Dornach hill. Where there is "autonomy" we find social health. If the insight that has been gained within the college—if the "raw material" of Anthroposophy has been thoroughly transformed—it can be allowed to "die" as it passes through the intervening space, and one can have confidence that it will be recognized and accepted by those who find themselves within the auditorium beneath the larger dome. And if they realize that the answers to the very questions that may have brought them there in the first place require a space in which they can be freely and authentically researched, they will recognize that they must let go their habitual ways of thought, their preconceptions and subjective demands, if they are to cross the middle space and experience the answers for themselves.

In the great sculpture whose presence was to have pervaded the entire structure from east to west, the adversaries each seek power, power to subject the human being to their



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will. The third figure, however, does not directly battle, he strides forward and, thereby, creates a space. And in this “space” the will-to-power finds itself in “nothingness,” and it too must die if it is to be resurrected. And in doing so, it is freed to be and do what it actually longs to do—to contribute out of itself what it alone can give, without which also the whole remains incomplete!

If humanity is to learn brotherhood, it will do so through a true economy; if we are to learn true human justice, we can do so only as we learn to meet each other as human being to equal human being. But for these two ideals to happen, we must learn to practice freedom. And the ground on which to practice freedom is the ground of cultural, spiritual life.

As the Goetheanum rose on its hillside in northwest Switzerland—angle point of European destiny—during the First World War, men and women came together freely from warring nations to help build it. Theirs was a cultural, spiritual, artistic deed.

When Emil Molt asked Rudolf Steiner if he would found and guide a school for the children whom he well knew needed it, his question was a cultural deed, asked in freedom, and the response was equally free.

In both the building and the school, their architect/designer recognized that polarities are essential to life. But he also knew that polarity calls for a “third space” in which power dies and can rise transformed. This is the risk inherent in every truly creative act. But it is also the risk that can lead to what is uniquely individual and at the same time is universally human.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Rudolf Steiner: *Awakening to Community*, Anthroposophic Press, 1974.
- 2 Ibid., p.10.
- 3 Diagram by Arvia MacKaye Ege (1902–1989). See Appendices A & B.
- 4 See Appendix C.
- 5 See Footnote 2.
- 6 Rudolf Steiner: *The Threefold State, The True Aspect of the Social Question*, Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1920. Since published under several titles, most recently, *Towards Social Renewal*, Rudolf Steiner Press, Bristol, 1992.
- 7 Rudolf Steiner: *The Foundations of Human Experience* (Formerly: *The Study of Man*), Anthroposophic Press, 1996; *Practical Advice to Teachers*, Rudolf Steiner Press, London, 1988; *Discussions with Teachers*, Anthroposophic Press, Hudson, NY, 1997.
- 8 Rudolf Steiner: *Awakening to Community*, p.10.
- 9 Ibid., p.11.
- 10 Rudolf Steiner: *The Christmas Conference*, Anthroposophic Press, Hudson, NY, 1990.
- 11 Rudolf Steiner: *The Life, Nature and Cultivation of Anthroposophy*, Anthroposophical Society in Great Britain, 1976. Par. 4, p.5.

APPENDIX

- A. Arvia Ege's diagram is based on her study of the work of Carl Kemper (1881–1957) as presented in *Der Bau: Studien zur Architektur und Plastik des Ersten Goetheanum* by Carl Kemper, et al., Verlag Freies Geistesleben, Stuttgart, 1966, 1984.
- B. In connection with the diagram it is important to know that the Foundation Stone of the First Goetheanum was composed of two intersecting dodecahedra of unequal size, made of hammered copper. The larger dodecahedron faced east, the smaller, west; in contrast to the two domes that rose above them. The Foundation Stone was laid in the Dornach hill on September 20, 1913. It is also important to note that the Foundation Stone of the re-constituted Anthroposophical Society, which was received into the hearts of those gathered in Dornach on Christmas morning 1923, was characterized by Rudolf Steiner as “the dodecahedron Stone of Love.”
- C. The speaker's platform was the gift of the Leroi family of Portugal. It survived the fire and is still in use today. It is a carved structure into which the speaker ascends by climbing two or three steps. He or she is then surrounded by the larynx-like wings. The speaker's stand was stored below the stage and was lifted into position at the center of the space formed by the intersection of both of the circles formed on the ground and by the walls supporting the two domes, as well as the circles formed by the columns supporting both domes. (See diagram)



Born in New York City, Henry Barnes (1912–2008) was introduced to the work of Austrian scientist and philosopher Rudolf Steiner in 1933. He attended the Waldorf Teacher Training Seminar in Stuttgart, Germany, and began his teaching career in 1935 at the New School

(now Michael Hall) in Great Britain. Mr. Barnes and Christy MacKaye were married in 1939, in Dornach, Switzerland, after which he returned with her to New York City. He taught at the Rudolf Steiner School there as a class teacher and high school history teacher from 1940 to 1977. From 1974 until 1991, Mr. Barnes was the general secretary of the Anthroposophical Society in America. For over 75 years, Mr. Barnes served anthroposophy and the Waldorf school movement in America and worldwide.

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