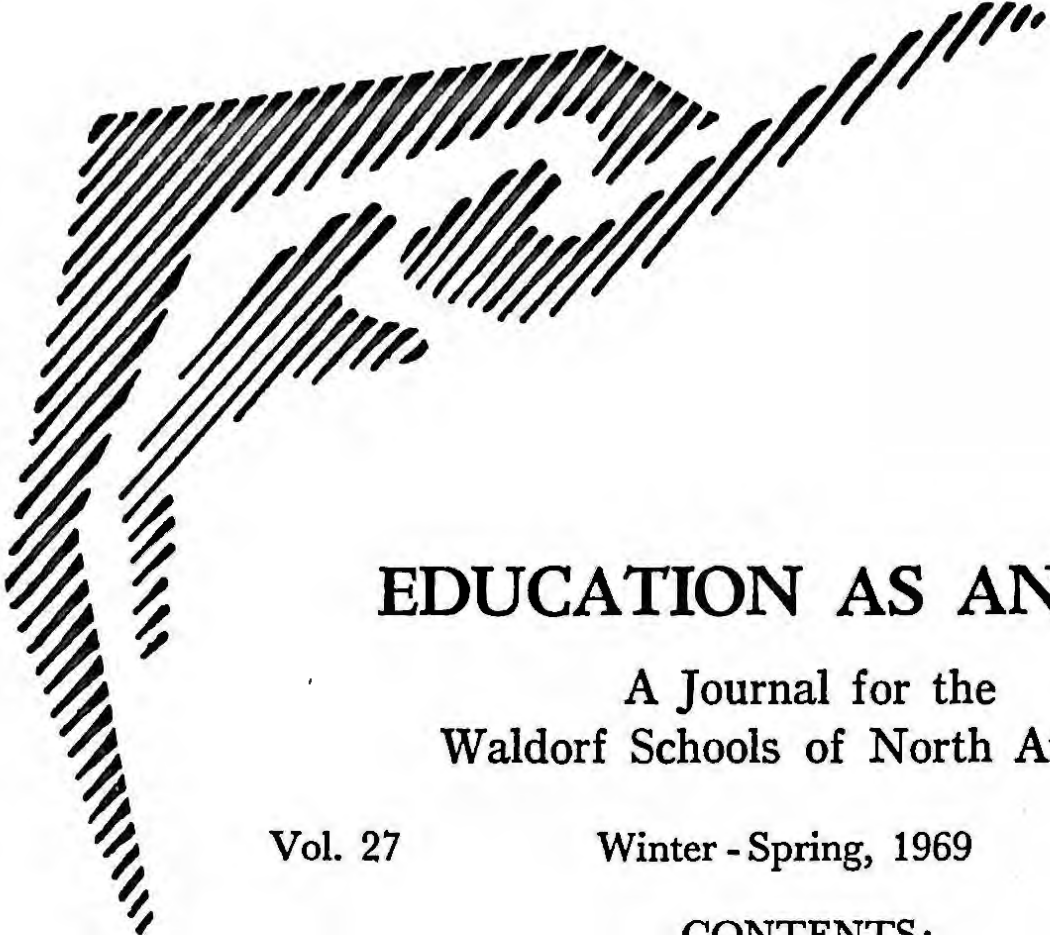




EDUCATION AS AN ART

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PRINCIPLES AND GROWING HUMAN BEINGS

From an address delivered before a meeting of high-school principals

Although I am listed as a speaker against the plan of "indoctrination" of pupils, you will not expect me to speak against democratic ideals as such. Indeed I am convinced that they arise from the very core of human nature. The recognition of "the inalienable rights of man" is a human feature just as well as the use of fire or the upright posture of the body. The question before us, however, is not whether democratic ways of life are desirable ideals which we ought to foster in the young generation — our problem is whether we can implant these ideals in the manner often advocated, namely, by teaching them as principles of conduct.

It is here that I ask to be allowed to disagree. My objection springs from pedagogical facts experienced over and over again. *One cannot implant abstract principles into growing human beings by simply teaching them as principles.* The mentality of the child and the adolescent, widely different from that of the adult, simply does not allow this. The child's mentality as described by the best knowers of our time asks for living imagery, as nature herself offers it. It grasps everything within the "fringe," as William James called it, of their living relations, never as isolated objects. The child experiences the human being, not in abstracto, but as the living

presence of this or that man or woman — never as an incorporation of principles, however dear these may be to the grown-up. Thus when we want principles to be present in the adult we must not inoculate the child. We must take the laborious way of first preparing the matrix or ground on which such principles may later grow. Principles are not seeds to be put into the child, they are rather fruits which will appear in the future. When this fruit is gathered the teacher may long since have passed away.

What, then, can we do to prepare children to become producers of sound human principles later in life, principles of human value and dignity, of freedom and inalienable rights? Instead of teaching ideals we must mold every subject taught so as to bring forth in the young soul an alive, rightly colored picture of man's whole being. All our efforts, in whatever subject, must be centered on this point. It is futile to try to teach the appreciation of human values as a distinct subject along with others, just as we cannot give separate lessons in character-formation. The human touch must adhere to everything we bring before the child. Every single subject must become man-centered, if you allow the term. That this is possible has been practically shown. I shall give some examples of this in a moment.

The point is that if our teaching has this touch upon it, the adults who go forth from our schools will know what they mean when speaking of man. They will have a deep appreciation of human values which no anti-human propaganda can take away from them.

It is in this matter of doing preparatory work for after-school life that the average school has failed. This has been said here with emphasis so I need not prove it. But I should like to ask: could anything else be expected since science in our age is what it is? How can we expect the teacher to convey to his pupils a feeling of the human kernel in all knowledge, when science itself is lacking this very kernel? If we are to accuse we have to go to the seats of learning, to those who set the tasks of modern inquiry. But we are not here to accuse. We want to understand. It was under the influence of natural science that research was directed less toward man himself than toward everything around him. Modern research is most tragically lacking a focus towards which all investigation should converge. This focus is the human entity in all its ramifications. Biology alone cannot solve this task. Psychology by itself cannot do it because it has made the borderline between man and animal indistinct. As to psychoanalysis, it gets stuck half way, entangled in neurotic problems and, when proceeding to the study of the child, poisons the atmosphere of inquiry with cunning suspicion.

From the places of higher learning the teacher of today receives the distorted picture of the child: as a little animal not yet human, with wicked and hidden cravings which have to be curbed or replaced by better strivings; an empty sack to cram knowledge into. He is not given the picture of the child as a living and ensouled individuality entrusted to the teacher's care. He has received no concept of what man, the mature being, really is. How can he give convincing weight to his words in speaking of human values while science continues to tell him that man is only a chance product sprung from the tip of the animal tree? How can he convey to the

child in his care a feeling that man is an aim worth striving for when, at the back of his mind, he has the notion that there is no real totality "mankind" — but only a number of sub-types each of which has come from another anthropoid ape in another climate?

Knowledge of man has first to be restored to its due place. Then it will provide the teacher with a firm foundation of facts upon which to base his description of the whole human being. And such a new knowledge of man is there since Rudolf Steiner gave it. It is possible, now, to present man as a comprehensive and archetypal form of which the higher animal forms are deviations. In a pictorial way such a truth can be given to the youngest child so that he can grasp it with his feelings. Such an idea sinks deeply into the soul and mind and will make him regard every one of his fellows differently when he grows up. Gradually the picture transforms itself into the idea that man is an aim to strive for; that he is a goal if not for the whole of creation, at least of mankind. A child who has taken up impressions from such a man-centered knowledge will, when grown up, be endowed with a stock of moral creativeness without our setting up abstract ideals before him, straw puppets stuffed with dry principles of goodness.

With the adolescent the task of the teacher changes, not in substance but in shade. The growing boy or girl wants to see in the teacher the living example of mankind. All depends now upon his living up to this expectation. What the teacher lives out before his pupils will set the standard for their concept of man. If he succeeds, the moral faculties in the pupils are furthered; if he fails, he not only disappoints the pupils, but saps their future moral strength. If he is a dry explainer, an absent-minded savant or a cold pedant he is obnoxious enough; but at least as harmful is the vague and abstract idealist and the pious sectarian.

From the way in which the teacher appreciates human dignity and capacity there springs up in the pupil's later life a conscious understanding of social necessities and of inalienable human rights. A formulation of such ideals may be latent in the adolescent so that when he hears or reads about them he will at once feel that these are of his innermost concern. We need not preach to him a doctrine which we have worked out in definitions. The living example he saw will have done its work. He recognizes consciously what he has learned to love and he knows it is worth living and dying for.

The lure of the demagogue who uses the trick of discrediting his opponents has no power over such a man or woman. They will never take brutality for force, nor emotional speeches for signs of greatness, nor will they fall victim to cheap illusions concerning the rottenness of intelligence or the glorious achievements of hatred. They will recognize the mean fanatic even in the disguise of the demagogue who poses as a world-savior. They will reject the paradise he promises because they do not want to live as mental slaves however well catered to. They will refuse the offer of having the future of numerous children assured, because they would have to pay for it with the sacrifice of freedom. They will never sign a declaration of dependence.

We do not speak of a dream here but of successful work done in Europe in two decades of school practice. Children in these Rudolf Steiner schools have taken up in early years, in picture form, what we have termed here as man-centered knowledge. Through years in succession they have experienced the enthusiastic presentation of man's development through the ages of history, culminating in his fight for freedom. They have taken up the ineffaceable impressions of man discovering fire, or of the Roman hero burning his hand in the face of his accusers. They have heard and have recited with trembling hearts the words of the 4th of July, 1776, that all men are created equal and that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, and that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness.

Men and women who have had such an education will not have been "indoctrinated," but they will have ripened the seed implanted in them at school.

—DR. HERMANN POPPELBAUM

(At the time, professor at Alfred University)

Reprint from "Education As an Art," Vol. 1, No. 3, 1941.

VALEDICTORY

Rudolf Steiner High School, June, 1968

A few weeks ago, a teacher came to one of our morning main lessons to speak to us on a matter concerning our misbehavior in one of her classes. How we did wrong seems not so important now — it was nothing very serious. However, what did impress me at the time and what comes to mind now as a most significant and life-long lesson is what this teacher told us. Of course, I cannot present this lesson as beautifully as she did, but I would like to offer the essence of her talk as I understood it.

She told us that as we grow up we go through a series of different stages; and at the particular points of development we are confronted by various experiences, we are influenced by a multitude of factors which in some way meet the requirements of our age, and we are impressed by divers forms and actions in life. What attracts our attention in the world and how we are affected by the things we see is not the same at age seventeen as it is, for instance, at twenty-five. A great many changes — transformations — occur in that lapse of eight years. Certain benefits are gained and others are lost. But when I say lost, I mean only in an outwardly appearing way. For example, we do not conduct ourselves in the same manner at twenty-five as we do at seventeen because of the increase of knowledge and experience. On the other hand, if we welcome and absorb the good impressions and opportunities that we are afforded at seventeen, no matter how trivial or non-utilitarian they may seem at the time, they will have a certain definite effect on us, whether we are conscious of it or not, and they will be influential in the formation of our character at twenty-five. The advantage man has over lower creatures is that he is able to take in sense impressions of his environment and then transform

them into his own particular being. The important concern is not to allow those good experiences and opportunities to slip by unacknowledged, because there will come a time when they will no longer be accessible to our asking. If I may present the example this teacher gave us . . . Imagine a rose — the life-giving forces streaming up through the stem into the sepals and petals, which open up to receive the warm sunlight. There is a definite grace and harmony in the whole movement of the flower and the onlooker is delighted merely by its loveliness. The odor and color of the rose evokes a personal sentiment within the individual . . . But whereas a certain length of time is required to produce the flower as it is, it takes only a second to destroy it. If you break the stem in half and crush the blossom, the rose will naturally die and it cannot be returned to life.

And so it is with all things. The moment comes when you can no longer retrace the steps that lead to those experiences which were hitherto ignored. I think this is one of the most fundamental concepts that I have learned during my six years at Steiner — how important and gratifying it is to be conscious of one's surroundings and to become absorbed in those events that one is confronted with. Each good experience, no matter how small, strengthens one's capacities, one's knowledge of the nature of the world, and thus brings one closer into unity with all things that make up the structure of the universe.

In reading selections from *Walden* during our literature course at the beginning of the year, I came across a few lines that I think are pertinent to what I have just spoken about. Thoreau said: "A single gentle rain makes the grass many shades greener. We should be blest if we lived in the present always and took advantage of every accident that befell us, like the grass which confesses the influence of the slightest dew that falls on it."

I remember when I entered the ninth grade and I heard about all the various main lesson blocks and art and crafts classes that I was to have during the next four years. And as a few of these were not to my immediate liking at the time, I asked myself if it was really necessary for me to have to take all these courses. In many schools, the range of subjects is narrowed down in scope to what is needed for credit or to that which meets the interests of the individual student. But here, one was required to attend a multitude of different classes, some rather unusual — eurythmy, for example. I asked myself of what use would an experience in book-binding be for me later on? Was it essential that I take three sciences in addition to mathematics? I had no intention of becoming a biologist or a chemist and least of all, a physicist.

This feeling, I must admit, remained with me for some time. But gradually, as I took these courses and realized what I had learned and how I had somehow developed through this learning, my attitude changed. I came to understand that the motive behind the Steiner education is not to train a student for a particular profession; biology is not given in order to encourage one to become a biologist, nor eurythmy to become a eurythmist, etc. If I am not mistaken, the purpose of offering such a variety of courses is to enhance the whole content of a student's life by activating his

awareness in such a way that his knowledge and appreciation is not restricted too early to some specific area, even if the student displays a genuine ability in that area, but that he senses within himself a grasp of and thereby a relationship with a number of things; that he strives to take in the whole of life as well as its individual parts. This brings to mind what William Blake wrote in his opening quatrain of *Auguries of Innocence*,

To see a world in a grain of sand
And a heaven in a wild flower,
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand . . .

I was never very skillful in book-binding, quite the contrary; but through what seemed to me at the time a nerve-racking experience owing to my lack of ability, I became aware of the work, care and precision that is necessary to bind a book. In former times, when books on a large scale were accessible to only the very few, they were regarded as something extremely precious and were the object of the deepest respect. Nowadays, however, we are so accustomed to buying paperbacks for seventy-five cents or so and then throwing them away, having read them, that our appreciation for the worth of a book — for the art it represents — has in general lessened. But I can almost assure you, that if you spend as long as I did to bind one book and most important, if you take advantage of that opportunity, you will not only increase your sense of accuracy but will also undoubtedly become much more conscious of the value of a book and will give it the care it deserves.

Another area where my attitude changed was in mathematics. Through my years here I came to realize that the latter is not simply a study of formulas, abstract and lifeless — of no interest whatever unless one is gifted in the subject. I saw — through the energy my mathematics teachers employed and the real wonder and delight they displayed when discovering a solution to a problem or when finding the laws of mathematics imbedded in nature — that there is an infinite relationship between the world of numbers and the forms and processes in life. One recognizes that the laws which express themselves externally in structures reflect a certain inner harmony and are necessary for the proper functioning of that structure. Consider the anatomy of the human being. We ourselves are constantly attracted to the ordering power of mathematics, consciously or otherwise. In one of our recent classes, we performed a statistical experiment with the Golden Rectangle. Ten quadrilaterals of varying sizes and shapes were placed at random on the blackboard. After looking at them for several minutes and then by taking a vote, we found that the one “most pleasing to the eye” was the one which contained the ratio of the Golden Section: the Golden Rectangle.

I mention this experiment because it shows that what activates the sensations, the likes and dislikes and the innate sense of harmony in man is somehow related to that which governs everything in the world. And if one approaches mathematics open-mindedly and with the will to learn, even if the understanding comes slowly, one will find pleasure in observing those relationships in life and will be able to use the mathematical knowledge one has gained in other areas — for instance, in art and literature.

I remarked before how my teachers of mathematics become so involved in what they are doing, and I have found it is the same for all the teachers here. By becoming completely immersed in their work, they seem to take on the character and spirit of whatever course they are presenting, and for this reason, they are able to impart to us a true and vivid picture of the subject matter. It is not a question of dictating a number of facts and if the student listens, he will pass the test. Facts are essential, but much more significant is the overall concept — the human story that leads up to a fact. In literature, for example, we are not restricted to making an intensive study of a certain literary movement or of analyzing the works of a particular author; we also learn about the small incidents in a writer's life, about the way he looked and dressed, spoke and moved, and about his various idiosyncrasies. When one is given such a full and realistic picture, one gains greater understanding of an author's writings, tends less to forget the key facts, and the whole thing is brought dramatically alive and made ever more interesting.

What I have tried to emphasize thus far is how in Steiner we have been encouraged to broaden our appreciation beyond what is of immediate interest or use to us; how in the minutest aspects of life even the least event or experience can be significant to one's well-being and healthy adjustment in relationship to the rest of the world. We see by the many crucial problems we are faced with today and by the great tragedy of last week (the assassination of Senator Robert F. Kennedy) how necessary it is for us to come together, to help each other and to learn to understand one another.

Only by grappling with the so-called little things, by expressing our interests, sensitivity and awareness in a number of small ways can we begin to sense within ourselves a true and humane understanding into the complex nature of things, and in so doing we will develop a richer satisfaction for the wonders of life and will joy in the marvelous opportunities it affords.

Each morning the classes in the high school recite a verse written by Rudolf Steiner. This past Monday was probably the last time the seniors will say it as a class and so I would like to conclude now with the first half of this verse.

*"I look into the world
In which the sun is shining,
In which the stars are sparkling,
In which the stones repose.
Where living plants are growing,
Where sentient beasts are living,
Where man, soul-gifted, gives
The spirit a dwelling place."*

I think if we seniors drink in the meaning of this verse and become conscious of ourselves and the world around us as the words suggest we do, we will have taken something truly valuable from our education at Steiner, and the memory of the school will thereby be even more significant to us as we go our separate ways into the future.

—CORINNE NIOX-CHATEAU, '68

A VOICE FROM CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Introduction to a Paper on "Old and Young Money" *written in the autumn of 1967*

It is now more than fifty years since Rudolf Steiner's thoughts on the Threefold Social Order were published. At the time, unfortunately, his ideas found too little interest and understanding among those they were primarily meant for. A few people felt somehow superior to such "ordinary" problems as money and economic affairs. Perhaps we have sometimes, unconsciously, felt superior to those of our fellowmen who are suffering want and deprivation.

And so we have had to discover how catastrophes result from social chaos and distress. Should not the agony of Nazi and Stalinist concentration camps have been enough to awaken an earnest concern for social questions? Are the social questions not becoming more and more urgent?

The world today seems divided into two parts, the East and the West. The West sanctions the freedom of the individual. But this freedom, which by rights must have its place in the cultural sphere, is to be found not only there but elsewhere: men have, in the Western nations, the freedom to accumulate colossal wealth, especially in the direction of machines and other means of production. Since they can do this on a personal basis, their wealth has the power to infringe on the freedom of others. This is the theme you can discover in the plays of Friedrich Duerrenmatt, "The Visit," "Frank the Fifth," and others. Our admiration of self-made men and business miracles cannot alter this fact.

On the other hand, freedom in the East, though not rejected so officially that it would antagonize, nevertheless is in every sphere curtailed. The government insists on full control. In the name of social justice, not only is the personal wealth that could be used as means to power forbidden, but unfortunately also every healthy and altruistic enterprise of individual initiative. Most corrupting of all is the effect of this loss of freedom in the cultural sphere, where independence is so vitally important. (It is due to this repression of freedom that the writer of these lines is unable to sign his name or to give more than a hint of his source material.) The social objectives which allegedly make all this necessary sometimes seem distorted or even completely *anti-social*. Merely consider the official preaching of class hatred, or the so-called "interruptions" arranged on a massive scale by the government: in certain cities almost every second child is destroyed before birth, in order to achieve the "equal" rights of women."

The abyss between East and West appears unbridgeable; on either side fanaticism wants no freedom at all, or else no limit to freedom. On both sides nuclear weapons are being piled up . . .

And yet, to anyone who has at all studied Rudolf Steiner's *Threefold Social Order**, it will seem a matter of course that freedom should be still more increased in the cultural sphere (consider, for instance, the govern-

*R. Steiner, *The Threefold Social Order*. New York, Anthroposophic Press, 1966. Paper.

ment-controlled education in the West), while in the rights- and economic-spheres freedom should be *replaced* by equality (in rights) and by brotherhood, fraternity (in labor relations).

It is the province of Central Europe to play a part in this development, that of a balancing, harmonizing middle point between the extremes of East and West. And therefore we Central Europeans — instead of one-sidedly admiring and adhering to the one or the other — would do well to consider this as our mission.

*Translated from the German and reprinted
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REPORT FROM SOUTH AMERICA

The ESCUELA WALDORF ARGENTINA was founded in February, 1968, in San Isidro, a suburb of Buenos Aires, by a group of seven families and a very experienced Waldorf teacher, Miss Annemarie Oehring. An unusual characteristic of the founding group is that the majority of its members are not students of Rudolf Steiner's teachings, but parents of children who had been in Miss Oehring's class in another school. When circumstances made it impossible for Miss Oehring to continue as class teacher in that school, the parent group decided to found the new school; this is a perhaps unique example of an intuitive recognition of spiritual necessity with consequent action.

The first school year, which ended in December, 1968, may be considered a great success for the simple reason that we are now preparing for our second school year to commence in March, an event which had been doubted in some circles because of the extremely difficult financial and administrative problems of a new and struggling institution. It has been due to the sacrifice and hard work of all concerned that this second year (and many to follow) will in fact commence.

Last year there were two grades, the first and third, and a small kindergarten. This year four grades are planned with, hopefully, an expanded kindergarten.

The responsibilities inherent in operating a Waldorf school in South America are enormous — as they must be anywhere — especially that grave duty to maintain the pure spirit of true dedication envisioned by Rudolf Steiner for the Waldorf movement.

It is the will and intention of the faculty of the ESCUELA WALDORF ARGENTINA to insure that this new institution, here in the South of the world, continue and augment the work already initiated by the other Waldorf schools in all parts of the world. We need the good wishes and prayers of all those men of good will who are in sympathy with our objectives.

—FRANK T. SMITH
(Faculty Member)

THE WALDORF MOVEMENT SOUTH OF THE BORDER

In 1965 a so-called Waldorf School, which had been founded in Mexico City in 1958, finally relinquished its identity. The major miscalculation had been the erroneous belief that public relations were more important than trained teachers. When I observed the inauguration — as a mute witness from a respectable distance — I said semi-prophetically: This event implies a delay of ten years for the introduction of Waldorf education in Mexico.

In actual fact, this word of mine was *not* prophetic, because more than 10 years have gone by and no Waldorf School is as yet in sight. The Waldorf name is heavily discredited in public and official opinion, and much remains to be done to restore its lustre.

It would have been absurd at that time to attempt to introduce a “real” Waldorf School in direct competition with another one bearing its name. Therefore, any survey of new possibilities had to be postponed until after 1965. Early in 1966 a weekly Educational Study Group was established, which has been meeting regularly ever since. Occasionally our efforts were enriched and stimulated by visitors from abroad, including Dr. Koehler from Toronto, Mr. and Mrs. Harwood, Mr. Edmunds, and Miss Olive Whicher from England, Mrs. van Oordt from New York. Our group is expected to constitute the nucleus of future supporters of the work, but it will not be the nucleus of a future faculty of teachers.

In 1966, and again in 1967, promising young teachers-to-be were sent for a regular teachers’ training to Emerson College in England. The number of students who successfully finished or who are still continuing the course fell below expectations. Though all of them were highly appreciative of what Emerson College meant to them, some discovered that their actual vocation was *not* in the field of education.

Under these circumstances it now appears mandatory that teachers’ training be immediately initiated in Mexico itself, so that we may tap the reservoir of those Mexican teachers whose only shortcoming is their inability to speak any language other than Spanish. This will be done in an unprecedented way. As an outcome of the lectures given by Mr. Harwood and Mr. Edmunds, a favorable climate developed at the National Museum of Pedagogy, a research institution reporting to the Ministry of Education. The Museum will organize and sponsor a six-month *Orientation Course* on Waldorf Education, open to all Mexican teachers. Hopefully, at the end of that course, 10% of the participants will volunteer to take part in a full one-year *Specialization Course*. If these expectations hold good, then and only then could the starting of a small school be envisaged for the Fall of 1970. This is the earliest possible date, and it may still be subject to many postponements.

The Orientation Course will be given mainly by local instructors, reinforced by Magdalene Siegloch from the Conservatory of Eurythmy, Stuttgart, and Siegfried Pickert, a veteran of Steiner education for more than

40 years, who is presently touring South America and is expected in Mexico in March, 1969. Additional guest instructors both for the Orientation and the Specialization Course will be announced at a later date.

—HANS BERLIN

*(Resident of Mexico City and former student
of the first Waldorf School in Stuttgart)*

From REMARKS TO THE EIGHTH GRADE GRADUATING CLASS

Rudolf Steiner School, New York, June, 1968

... On this festive occasion I thought I would make a wish for you. It had to be one that, if I said it out loud, would be a wish you could agree with, that you wouldn't be embarrassed by, that you wouldn't mind hearing pronounced in public.

You are surely of an age now where you experience the events of our times in a more than unconscious way; when the things that go on beyond the home and beyond the classroom touch you, and you begin to say 'Yes,' to some, 'No,' to others, and to many, 'Why?'

And *because* the world around you must begin to concern you, my wish began to center around the words balance and stability.

Balance and stability. Are they the same? I think not. In some ways they are quite opposite. Yet *one* can't be without the other.

A balance is maintained by active effort. It is not established and set, once and for all. Walk up one side of a see-saw, until you get to that magical point where it begins to tip; straddle that point, one foot on either side, and see how busy you must keep to sustain the balance. Think of the eurythmy rod you tried to balance on your head — how awake and active you had to keep, somewhere, to prevent it from sliding down.

The *symbol* for balance is the scale, the weighing instrument. That is also the symbol for justice. There are opposite sides to it, and the struggle between the weights in either pan keeps things in motion. In the movement there is a seeking towards the state of equilibrium. Such weighing, such seeking, such see-sawing goes on in each of us, all the time. Some things lift us up, others pull us down.

Yet a balancing scale cannot function unsuspended, or unsupported. And *that* is where the stability comes in. There is a center of support — in your physics lessons you called it the fulcrum — there is a quiet spot that bears, that sustains all this activity, this searching, these ups and downs.

If, as I have said, the swaying, the groping for balance, the up and down is in you, then this supporting spot, this center of firmness is also in you. It is you.

We say a person develops. Do we mean that he starts from nothing and gradually gains substance, assumes shape? The word itself suggests

almost the opposite. To develop means to unwrap. The treasure is there all the time, the wrappings that hide it are cast off one by one.

How can you, this very core and center, become ever more un-wrapped, and at the same time stronger, firmer?

You have many years of schooling before you. For that immediate future I would present you with the following three words. They are ordinary words, but I would like you to think of them in the light of their original meaning.

First: *Attention*. To be attentive means to *stretch towards* something. When you put your attention on something, you stretch — from where you are — to it. As you stretch, you grow.

Second: *Exercise*. You do physical exercises in gym, finger exercises as you learn to play the piano, mental exercises as you do math. To exercise, in its root meaning, is to *come out from the enclosed*.

Last — a word of which we ordinarily do not think very highly: *Curiosity*. We think of curiosity as superficial, a quick look at something that perhaps isn't even our business. We talk of idle curiosity. But to be curious originally meant to *bestow care*, to be care-ful, caring. And that, surely, can only come from the heart.

—SUSANNE BERLIN

(Class Teacher, Waldorf School, Garden City, New York)

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