What Can Rudolf Steiner's Words to the First Waldorf Teachers Tell Us Today?

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Introduction

The first years of the Stuttgart Waldorf School can be seen as prototypical of the development of Waldorf schools and Waldorf teachers in general. We can benefit today from the events that took place in the six years between 1919 and 1925, while the first school was led by Rudolf Steiner. Examining Steiner's work in the school can give direction to the development of teachers and schools in the 21st century.

Sources

The lectures that Steiner gave to the teachers of the first Waldorf school are especially relevant here. The majority of lectures on education were given to a general audience, with only a few addressing the same group of specialists, that is, the college of teachers of the first Waldorf school. In Steiner's day, this group initially consisted of 12 colleagues; at the beginning of the sixth year of the school, the number had risen to 49. The following lectures were given to this relatively small group:

1. *Study of Man* (later published as *The Foundations of Human Experience*), *Practical Advice to Teachers*, *Discussions with Teachers* (Stuttgart, 21 August–6 September 1919; CW 293, 294, 295)
2. *Balance in Teaching* (Stuttgart, 15–22 September 1920; CW 302a)
3. *Waldorf Education for Adolescents* (*The Supplementary Course*) (Stuttgart, 12–19 June 1921; CW 302)
4. *Adolescence—Ripe for What?* (Stuttgart, 21–22 June 1922; CW 302a)
5. *Art in the Light of Mystery Wisdom* (Two lectures, Stuttgart, 7 and 8 March 1923; CW 283)
6. *Deeper Insights into Education: The Waldorf Approach* (Stuttgart, 15 and 16 October 1923; CW 302a)

Two other important volumes complete the category:

7. The 70 teachers' conferences with Rudolf Steiner: *Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner* (CW 300 a-c)
8. *Rudolf Steiner in the Waldorf School: Lectures and Addresses to Children, Parents and Teachers.* This includes addresses at monthly school festivals, seasonal festivals, and parents' evenings.

Study of Man: The First Year

After the opening address on the eve of the Teachers' Seminar, at which Steiner outlined the school's administrative set-up in a few sentences ("not bureaucratically, but collegially … in a republican way.... Each one of us must be completely responsible. We can create a replacement for the supervision of the School Board as we form this preparatory course and, through the work, receive what unifies the school"), the first lecture was presented the following morning.

In this lecture, with simple words, the significance and depth of which can be grasped only gradually, a link is established between a new form of education and human evolution. A connection is created to the spiritual world and to entities whose deepest concern is the development of human beings. Reference is made to the 15th century as the starting point of the development of which we experience the consequences today.

The concentration of intelligence on purely worldly aspects, which was necessary for human freedom to unfold, gave rise not only to science and technology, but also to materialism and egoism. "All of modern culture, right into the spiritual areas, is based upon human self-interest." Steiner points out that religions tend to focus on the after-life while forgetting about the time before birth. It is a teacher's task to explore the life before birth. "Our form of educating can have the correct attitude only when we are aware that our

work with young people is a continuation of what higher beings have done before birth."

How can this be achieved in practice? Think of a child study. The first step is the forming of a picture of the pupil as he or she appears in space and time. In order to understand this picture we have to go a step further. How did the pupil come to develop in this way? It is easy to find out as long as we avoid the temptation of superficial psychology. We come to an understanding of the inner essence of a pupil if we ask how etheric body and physical body, for instance, relate to one another, or how the soul (astral) works on the "learning body" (etheric body). How did spirit-soul (or soul-spirit) and life-body find each other? What expresses itself in which way? We experience immediately, if we practice this way of asking questions, how we move in a realm of "pure air" where we can sense the becoming and the essence of the human being. Those of us who attempt this, when meditating on a pupil, for example, know from experience that it works only if we manage not to put ourselves in the foreground. We have to be open, without preconceptions; this "not I, but the pupil in me" approach will allow us to develop a sense for pre-earthly intentions by observing the pupils.

I am faithful to a method that I shape in the truest possible way while constantly renewing it to keep my teaching alive.

If we manage to take hold of these intentions as ideas, we will be able to fuse them into an ideal. Pedagogical inspiration becomes possible, acting in harmony with what wants to come to life. It arises out of interest in pre-earthly aspects that reveal themselves in the different parts of the human organization. Steiner gives evidence of this capacity in the course of more than a hundred child studies.

We easily forget that understanding the pupils' temperaments is also a way of overcoming "cultural egotism," because temperament says something about how life before birth weaves into life after birth. When studying the pupils' temperaments, we have to withhold our own temperaments, and this allows us to build a bridge to the student. Then the student will approach us.

The last lecture of *The Foundations of Human Experience* (*Study of Man*) and of *Discussions with Teachers* deals with the surprising significance of images, of speaking in images, of keeping the intellectual flexible. The importance of imagination is emphasized, especially on the threshold of adolescence.

The process culminates on 6 September with the presentation of the seven virtues of the teacher. The first three are found at the end of the last lecture of *The Foundations of Human Experience* (*Study of Man*): "Imbue yourself with the power of imagination, have courage for the truth, sharpen your feeling for responsibility of soul." The remaining four are at the end of *Discussions with Teachers*: "The teacher must be a man of initiative, a man of interest in the being of the whole world and of humanity, a man who never makes a compromise in his heart and mind with what is untrue (especially in the way we present our subjects), and he must never get stale or grow sour."

The latter four virtues represent faculties of the temperaments; they are virtues that can be exercised in our daily work. Initiative: Shall I make the phone call tonight or wait until tomorrow? Interest: These parents are foreign to me; can I still summon up an interest in them? This colleague gets on my nerves, but that is interesting! This student walks in such a strange way, as if the ground beneath him was hurting him. What does that indicate? Am I really interested in the lesson that I have to present just now? Whether or not I have a strong interest in my subject matter affects the liveliness of my teaching and may lead to an unfortunate compromise: "He must never compromise with untruth, for if he did so we should see how through many channels untruth would find its way into our teaching, especially in the way we present our subjects."

This is a direct reference to teaching method, and many channels are open today through which untruth can creep into our teaching. Is it not much more practical to have an established method for teaching a foreign language? Should I not simply use exercises from these excellent publications on basic math, spelling, elementary physics? There are so many useful things. We could also call this the virtue of faithfulness. I am faithful to a method that I shape in the truest possible way while constantly renewing it to keep my teaching alive.

Every adult has some melancholy which, depending on her overall temperament, struggles with staleness and sourness to a greater or lesser degree. From a certain age it is always lurking around the corner. Am I sufficiently aware of it? Observing one another's lessons is good prophylaxis. Why do you work with the children in this way? Asking is appropriate, judging is not.

The first three virtues are of a different nature. They cannot be practiced in our day-to-day work. We all know from experience: imagination, speaking in images, being inspired—this I cannot develop while standing in front of a class. If I am imaginative, it is as a result of different processes.

Acquiring knowledge of the human being in the three stages described elsewhere by Steiner is one path to imagination, life, and the "profound power of ingenuity that you need when facing the child you are to educate."

Steiner urgently pleaded for a "new education appropriate to the time," an art of education drawn from life itself.

Again and again, we are faced with the immensity of the opening words of *The Foundations of Human Experience* (*Study of Man*). They resound as from other worlds:

> My dear friends, we can accomplish our work only if we do not see it as simply a matter of intellect or feeling, but, in the highest sense, as a moral spiritual task. Therefore, you will understand why, as we begin this work today, we first reflect on the connection we wish to create from the very beginning between our activity and the spiritual worlds.

We may ask ourselves whether or not the "moral spiritual" is the realm referred to as truth and responsibility in the first three virtues. For all that is spiritual surely entails responsibility, all that is moral surely is rooted in truth. We see a gleam of the future of humankind; goodness, beauty, truth as in Goethe's "Fairy Tale" or as in Christ's words, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." "Imbue yourself with the power of imagination" can be seen as "the way" in education, because Steiner once described education as a "form of normal life."

After presenting the latter four virtues in the closing words of the 15th discussion with teachers, Steiner adds, on a more personal note, "For me this Waldorf School will be a veritable child of concern." He exhorts the teachers to work together and to live in awareness of "the spiritual powers that guide the cosmos … they will inspire our lives." Shortly before the first Waldorf School opened he asked the teachers to promise him to keep this awareness alive.

The classrooms were not yet ready when the school opened with a festive celebration on 7 September. Lessons therefore began on 16 September, by which time Steiner had left for Berlin. During the first school year Steiner had 14 meetings with the teachers, and three more took place at the end of July 1920 in preparation for the second school year. The first school year started with 12 teachers, 8 classes, and 256 students, which means that the average class had 32 pupils, and there was one teacher for every 21 students. (Today the ratio is closer to 1:10.) The second year started with 19 teachers, 11 classes, and 420 pupils, which means the average class had 38 pupils and the teacher-pupil ratio was 1:22. These numbers alone may justify Steiner's expression, "a child of concern."

The Second Year

Five days before the beginning of the second school year Steiner gave four lectures to the teachers, lectures which were intended as a supplement to the introductory lectures on education given the previous year. Preparations for the second school year were so consuming, however, that he doubted that he could manage more than "scanty introductory words." He wanted to speak "about the teacher, the educator" and about "the nature of the esoteric." The first lecture deals with the "condition of misery" in the education of the young which had arisen due to the fact that humankind "in essential things really made itself dependent … on the kind of thinking and feeling peculiar to the West." Fichte, Herder, Goethe were no longer understood. What Herder and Fichte wanted, an art of education, had been turned into the opposite. Steiner offered examples of this view

and concluded the lecture with the words, "But with regard to what has to be given for the art of education, we have something to give the world from Central Europe which no one else can give." It hardly needs pointing out that he is not referring to geography or nationalism, but to spiritual streams.

Was it necessary to refer these Waldorf School teachers to the way Western people thought and felt? Did they no longer understand German Idealism? Did they, of all people, need to be told in depth that their success as educators depended on how much they themselves learned from their teaching? Did they need to be reminded that "inward humility" grows out of the insight "that the art of education must proceed from life and that it cannot proceed from abstract scientific thought"? Herder, Fichte, Jean Paul, and Schiller represented "a life-infused education," "a way of educating drawn directly from life." Steiner called this the "Central European education impulse." References to it will "annoy" scientific thinkers.

The lectures are not just intellectually pleasing; Steiner, with his subtle sense of humor, again proves himself an expert on the adolescent soul.

This was the situation after one year of Waldorf education. Reading this in 2010 or later, we know that it is still and again the main motif in the art of education. Probably due to the experiences of the first school year, Steiner urgently pleaded for a "new education appropriate to the time," an art of education drawn from life itself. Today the phrase "art of education" still ruffles feathers.

What were the consequences? In these lectures Steiner did not return to the seven virtues of the teacher, but spoke of three fundamental forces in teaching. If we bear in mind that the quality of an organism is determined by the sum total of forces that its members are able to summon, we may realize what Steiner achieved with lectures 2 and 3 of *Balance in Teaching*. He spoke to the teachers about reverence, enthusiasm, and the protective gesture: reverence for what the child brings with him from his life before birth, for what determines his existence, enthusiasm for what the pupil can become in future with our help, and protectiveness to ensure that the pedagogic reality in the here and now remains appropriate to the child's age.

What else did Steiner give the teachers with these few lectures? Next to the pedagogical contents he conveyed to them two ways of transforming their teaching by filling it with life inspired by the Central European spirit. He showed them how to realize their "power of ingenuity," that is, their pedagogical imagination and intuition. The first can be practiced with the help of inner pictures; Steiner called them meditative images. Intuition is practiced by following the "digestive" process that takes place after one has absorbed spiritual scientific contents.

The "vigorous power of ingenuity you need when facing the children you are educating" is kindled if we develop mental images of how visual and auditory perception relate to one another in a crossing-over process; how the audible is perceived in the will (or memory) region of the visible; how the visible is remembered in the perception region of the audible; how these two principles of time and space in fact form the human body.

Such pictures—meditative images—can also be derived from the second lecture by considering two streams: the sculptural and intellectual forces that come from the head (or use it as a locus of transition) and the musical forces that stream in from the outside world. The first of these forces works from the outside as attack and from the inside as defense. The latter, where the attack comes as from inside, are attenuated by music and speech instruction. Experience shows that such images, if they are placed again and again before the inner eye, strongly inspire the day-to-day work of a teacher.

The second important indication that Steiner gave to the teachers after one year of teaching referred to the threefold approach to attaining knowledge of the human being: studying contents, coming to understand what has been studied through meditation (calling up images again and again), "and finally we have a remembering of the knowledge of the human being out of the spirit. This means teaching creatively out of the spirit; the art of education comes about and takes form."

Practical examples illustrate how our teaching works on the relationship between the "I" and the

body. What seemed like an abstract request the year before ("the task of education conceived in the spiritual sense is to bring the soul-spirit into harmony with the life body") is now explained in detail, how this harmonization of the upper and lower human being proceeds: how the "I" settles in the body without being "caught" in it. It all depends on how elements of a sculptural, musical, and intellectual nature, and elements of memory and speech, alternate within a lesson. The impact of the various subjects is also explained, whether they help the "I" to "settle" or not. It is the ultimate description of an artistic approach to teaching.

In summary we can say that Steiner obviously deemed it necessary in September 1920, after one year of Waldorf education, to confer with the teachers on an educational impulse that is drawn from life and not from science. The seven virtues of 1919 were extended by the three forces that relate to the pupils' past, present, and future. On the basis of this he used higher considerations regarding the human being to point out two possible paths, one of which is more inspirational ("the vigorous power of ingenuity") and the other more intuitive ("teaching creatively out of the spirit"). Finally, Steiner demonstrated the artistic approach to education and how it "regulates" the relationship between the "I" and the body, which we may consider the essential task of education. I suggest that this was exactly what the teachers of the first Waldorf School needed after one year; it is what Steiner identified based on the experience of this first year.

Steiner called this outward agreement in conjunction with inner opposition the "Stuttgart system."

Are these qualities an inherent and identifying component of Waldorf school teaching today? Are they cultivated in the right way in teacher education and in faculty meetings? Have we understood that education has to be drawn from life, from the living experience of teaching, rather than from imposed parameters of whatever description?

These four lectures alone support what is said throughout the school movement, that, if Steiner had to do it all over again, he would drastically change course and steer toward the artistic. We need not worry about the authenticity of this statement; it is the essence of these lectures.

The Third Year

Another year later, eight days before the beginning of the third school year, Steiner gave eight lectures to the teachers, later published as *Waldorf Education for Adolescents*. Unlike those published in *Balance in Teaching*, these lectures do not explicitly tie in with *The Foundations of Human Experience* (*Study of Man*). At the beginning of this school year, the school had almost doubled in size: 540 pupils in 15 classes of approximately 36 students per class. The teacher-student ratio was 1:18. Steiner never complained about the rapid growth despite the fact that financial problems were enormous.

Can we assume that the lectures on the "Meditatively Acquired Knowledge of the Human Being" (that is, *Balance in Teaching*) had made an impact on the individual teachers? Steiner began by looking back over the first two years and concluding, "In order to prevent a possible misunderstanding of what I am going to say today, I can assure you that I have noticed and appreciated the progress made during these two years. The way you are teaching—the presentation of subjects—is already such that it can be said, you have, in an extraordinarily healthy way, fused with the goals of these tasks." This report for the teachers sounds much like one we might write about our students at the end of a school year.

The eight lectures embrace rich content, always in keeping with *Practical Advice to Teachers* and with frequent excursions to the study of the human being. The sense of urgency that prevailed in *Balance in Teaching* abates. The connection of memory and feeling, the work with children who have rich or poor imaginations, with cosmic and earthly children—the teaching methods are extended. This culminates in lecture 3, in which three essential steps of teaching are explained, steps that are taken over a period of two—not three—days so that "the three parts of the threefold human being can interact, they are allowed to harmonize in the right way."

The lectures that deal with adolescence, with the diverging male and female constitution, return to *The Foundations of Human Experience* (*Study of*

Man). The lectures are not just intellectually pleasing; Steiner, with his subtle sense of humor, again proves himself an expert on the adolescent soul. The presentation moves on to explain at a deeper level the "understanding of the world" that is needed for teaching adolescents. The teacher needs to become a representative of the world. Those teachers who have nothing narrow-minded about them represent the "wide world." Students begin to choose their own authorities and to develop their first ideals inspired by the authenticity of their teachers. Here lies, too, the secret of a fruitful living together of different generations.

The lectures end with the suggestion that one should feel as if the spirit dispersed itself among the college of teachers like a living cloud, as if living spirits were called on to help to instill spirituality in the souls, a "prayer-like" rising up to the spirit. "Life" or vibrancy is a recurring motif. The conclusion is a parenthesis to the first lecture of the *The Foundations of Human Experience* (*Study of Man*), which deals with the spiritual task of education. It returns in the form of a meditation:

> We have the will to work, letting flow into our work, that which from out of the spiritual world, in soul and spirit, in life and body, strives to become human in us.

In *The Foundations of Human Experience* (*Study of Man*), this idea was expressed: "The task of education conceived in the spiritual sense is to bring the soul-spirit into harmony with the life body." What is the difference between the two? The meditative version focuses on the teacher himself, "strives to become human in us." Education is self-education.

In summary, *Education for Adolescents* (*The Supplementary Course*) is in character closer to *Practical Advice to Teachers* because a 10th grade was about to be added to the high school. Detailed curriculum indications were developed in the teachers' meetings. The lectures mentioned introduce three essentially new practical methods with suggestions for their application: the cosmic and earthly orientation of the interest (the astral viewpoint); children with rich and poor imagination (which has more to do with the ability to remember, the etheric viewpoint); and the threefold approach to teaching—over two days—that applies to all lesson contents from the age when main lessons convey subject-matter as such. This is followed by an extended psychology of adolescence.

We can imagine that the teachers were delighted by these eight lectures. Not only was the review of the first two years encouraging, the lectures also opened up an unclouded, wider horizon.

The Fourth Year

When I turn now to Steiner's conferences with teachers, it is with the inner conviction that it is high time that this treasure of 70 teachers' meetings is published in a scientific edition in order to throw light on the development of the art of education in practice.

The teachers were evidently not able to apply in practice the indications that Steiner gave in the *Supplementary Course*. At the end of the third school year, the students of the 10th grade asked for a meeting with Steiner. They complained about their teachers, about the "lecturing," about the teachers' lack of interest, about "not having learned anything." Steiner looked into the situation and, based on his findings, he arranged for a change of teachers for most of the main subjects, right at the beginning of the fourth school year, for these students who were now in 11th grade. "We did not consider enough what I said at the beginning of the school year with regard to these children."

The teachers, in their turn, accused the students of showing a lack of will in their independent work. Steiner answered, "That is a problem that lies with the children, and that one we do not need to discuss. What is important now is how we cope with the children."

The situation continued, vehemently, into the following year. The students became morally neglected, got into trouble, and some of them had to be asked to leave. Steiner could see no other way but to blame the state of affairs on the teachers, their lack of interest in the pupils, the absence of contact, the lecturing instead of teaching that had become the rule, the general sloppiness. Neither teachers nor students were fully engaged in the lessons.

Social tensions made the situation worse when it was suggested that a small administrative circle should be established. Strong mutual distrust became apparent. The teachers' meetings as such were put into question. Steiner said, "I feel like I

have contracted lockjaw from the bad attitude toward the meetings."

Questions of discipline recurred because the teachers felt powerless. Steiner called on the foreign language teachers to work together to find a way of teaching instead of complaining to each other about students' lack of understanding. The meeting of 6 February 1923 is recommended to all who wish to experience how dramatic a situation it was. (This is the meeting at which Steiner spoke about large-headed and small-headed children. It is also the meeting at which a failed grammar lesson is described, including its effect on threefoldness.)

In the third school year, which had started so pleasantly, only seven meetings with teachers took place. During the difficult fourth and fifth years, Steiner attended 15 meetings per year. In the autumn of 1923 a crisis loomed as teachers struggled under the pressure of immense and, partly, new demands. Following a phone call, Steiner managed to fit in a visit to the school. He spent 15 and 16 October in Stuttgart, giving three lectures and meeting with the teachers. The exhausted teaching staff heard lectures that belong to the most difficult of Steiner's presentations on education. As with the opening lecture in *Balance in Teaching*, the beginning is unexpected. Gymnast, rhetorician, and professor—that is, those who live not in balance but act, talk, or think in isolation—have to undergo a metamorphosis. The weakness of a professor is described: "Today we usually think because we do not know what else to do, and that is why we have so few real thoughts."

The second and third lectures are given on 16 October with a teachers' meeting taking place in between. What is the main theme of these presentations? As Steiner spoke about curative education for the first time on 6 February, he explained, surprisingly, the difference between healing processes in medicine and in education. They work at different levels. New aspects arise regarding knowledge of the human being:

There are the movements of walking, grasping, the movement of the limbs, outer changes of location, the activity in the process of nourishment, the rhythmic activity—which is through and through a healing activity—and the perceiving activity if we regard it from outside. Regarded from within, educational activity is entirely a perceiving activity.

In short, all activities, apart from rhythmic ones, are adverse to health. Everything that is adverse to health has to be counteracted by higher healing processes, through education that is metamorphosed healing.

The forces inherent in education are metamorphoses of therapeutic forces: They are therapeutic forces transformed. The goal of all our educational thinking must be to transform this thinking so as to rise fruitfully from the level of physical thinking to spiritual thinking.

Steiner went on to describe a new way of judging that was not based on "right" and "wrong" or "true" and "false," but on "healthy" and "ill." This was followed by fundamental considerations regarding the effect of life-infused teaching on the child and on the physiology of the will.

In Europe, in wide parts of the world, thousands have been inspired by this impulse to develop education out of the art of life.

The third lecture concludes with a grim picture. Michael fights with the dragon while a black veil covers the picture. "Then one would realize that behind it there is something that must not be shown...." And the battle with the dragon that must not be shown is the battle with the dragon of the dead, of that which comes from the deadened knowledge of our times. "There the dragon becomes especially horrible. One might almost say that the correct symbol for institutions of higher education today would be a thick black pall...." Further,

> To live in the truth means to unite oneself with Michael. We must unite ourselves with Michael whenever we enter the classroom; only through this can we bring with us the necessary strength. Verily, Michael is strong.

On the next morning Steiner gave the teachers "a summary" of what had been said, known as the second teachers' meditation.

Let us summarize again. The fourth and fifth school years were riddled with crises. In the upper school contact with the students was lost, the teachers could not rise above lecturing and could not find a warm and interested approach to the students. Added to that was the deep lack of trust within the teaching faculty when a small administrative circle was about to be formed. Steiner helped as much as he could. On average he was with the teachers once a month.

He tried to help with the—interposed—lectures later published as *Deeper Insights into Education* (included in some editions of *Balance in Teaching*). The second sentence of the first lecture is this:

> After all, the fruitfulness of our activity in an institution like the Waldorf School depends ... on the ability of the teachers to develop the attitude that will enable them to carry through their work with assurance and be active in the right way. On this occasion, therefore, I would like to speak in a particular about the teachers themselves.

Did he ask too much of the teachers? The lectures are not about pedagogical questions but about questions of lifestyle, the overcoming of our inner gymnast, rhetorician, and professor. All three have to fuse into one whose actions are imbued with life. Further, the clear division between therapeutic and pedagogical healing touches us. Why? Had it become a habit to refer what could not be mastered pedagogically to medicine and psychology? Steiner's presentations on the physiology of the will relate to teachers as well as to the effect on children when a process between action and thinking is developed in a lesson.

Whenever we guide a child into some form of action while he is thinking, we call forth a state of balance between the formation of carbonic and cyanic acids. In human life everything actually depends upon symmetry being produced between these two things.

These great gestures all express the same thing: Dear teachers, take hold of these insights, use them to heal yourselves. Become alive and truthful in your doing. Gaining a personal relationship to teaching content is part of a teacher's self education. If the subject matter undergoes a certain process in the soul, one inspires creativity of teaching in oneself. Steiner calls this the "immediate source of inspiration" which allows the "right method to present itself." This description immediately preceded that of the veiled battle of Michael with the dragon, and it refers to Steiner's words about the sourness of the teacher in the classroom.

It seems that these words were especially called for in October 1923. Steiner's deeply felt pain was noticeable when he spoke of the criminal proceedings against Gandhi. Although the British judge greatly admired him personally, he sentenced him to years of imprisonment. Why did Steiner raise this here? Because it is a picture of a situation in which the truth cannot create the right conditions for itself. In truth there is a new art of education. Can it create the necessary conditions for itself?

The Fifth Year

After October 1923 Steiner ceased to give lectures to teachers alone. Between the lectures of 15 and 16 October he also attended a teachers' meeting that was devoted to the written notice, given prematurely, by a member of the administrative council (a kind of executive board) that had been so difficult to install. Inner opposition had been noticeable when teachers were appointed on 30 March 1923 and was apparent again now. On the outside, people acted according to their agreements, while inwardly they rejected them, as they rejected the school's Director, Steiner himself:

> The general opinion has been that I should select the teachers. We should continue with that, but now the problem is that although that opinion has not changed in fact, it has changed in feeling, in how we look at the situation. I may have to pose the question now of whether the faculty members want to select the teachers themselves.

Steiner called this outward agreement in conjunction with inner opposition the "Stuttgart system." Many of Steiner's suggestions met this kind of opposition, such as his ideas concerning more efficient foreign language teaching or the initially

failing preparations for the final examination (Abitur). Important indications for the now complete curriculum followed in the fifth and sixth school years. The form and content of language lessons were revised, but problems with students reappeared. Teachers were unable to engage students in a fertile pedagogical relationship.

The sixth school year brought more failings that Steiner had to blame on the teachers. In the second to last conference he severely criticizes the teachers' tiredness in class. "Inner opposition" became apparent in the fact that lecturing, an academic teaching style, had increased rather than decreased. Contact with the students was lost. "I have often mentioned it, but you have not really done much to relieve the situation...."

Helplessness speaks from these words. Again and again Steiner mentioned the lack of interest in the students and of enthusiasm for the task in hand. One teacher asked whether the "Doctor" could not help to establish contact with the pupils. Steiner had to repeat that it was a question of interest, of affinity with the students, of enthusiasm, and not of lectures. We can feel how he came to the conclusion, "I need to give things a new direction" (15 July 1924). The last recorded sentence of the last meeting with the teachers on 3 September 1924 is: "I want to give some lectures later in September or early October about the moral aspects of education and teaching." It was his last visit to the school.

The Sixth Year

"I want to give some lectures ... about the moral aspects of education and teaching." One often hears this sentence quoted out of context as if it were something that was still objectively missing from Steiner's guidelines for an art of education. This is not the case. The sentence was spoken in a particular crisis at the school and referred to the pedagogical abilities of, primarily, the upper school teachers. "Moral" implies a personal relationship of the teachers to the students that benefits the latter.

This concern comes to expression in a moving way in the farewell letter Steiner wrote to the teachers two weeks before his death. The "child of concern" to which Steiner referred at the end of the teacher training course in the last discussion with the teachers ("For me this Waldorf School will be a veritable child of concern") was mentioned again in this farewell letter, with his urgently expressed hope that the teachers should not let go of what they had built together. If the college of teachers was united by the "active power of thought" (which was not possible during Steiner's lifetime), it could be done. What had been achieved so far would "strongly work among the teachers of this school."

The Waldorf School is truly a child needing special care, but above all, it is also a visible sign of the fruitfulness of Anthroposophy within the spiritual life of mankind.

If all teachers faithfully carry within their hearts the awareness of this fruitfulness, the Good Spirits, watching over this School, will be able to work actively; then divine spirit-power will prevail in all the deeds of the teachers.

The Stuttgart Miracle

Steiner had to say farewell to the school because he had no "wings free to fly." But the school was in a dire situation: It was in danger of losing its identity. The words, "I need to give things a new direction," only make sense in this context.

Despite all these difficulties, enough persons in and around the school carried within them the living impulse of the art of education. After Steiner's death in March 1925 they were able to work on in his spirit so that the art of education could grow triumphantly all over the world. Not even the atrocities of the Nazis could stifle this impulse. In Europe, in wide parts of the world, thousands have been inspired by this impulse to develop education out of the art of life. Wherever we are in the world, we may have an immediate experience of the healing effect of education if it unites itself with life and allows itself to be nourished by it. If life is understood as the expression of spiritual processes, the art of education can bring about the healing and renewal of our cultural life. We can therefore say that what Steiner critically referred to as the "Stuttgart system," namely the reluctance to comply with his suggestions, was turned into its opposite after his death and became the "Stuttgart miracle." His educational impulse had risen and come to life again, spreading around the globe.

We should be clear that the topics of this paper do not constitute simply a historical exer-

cise, but that the problems experienced during the first six years of the Waldorf School are essentially the same as those we face today, albeit in different contexts and circumstances. We should also be clear how Steiner, with his power of judgment, his advice, and his unconditional loyalty to the impulse initiated by Emil Molt, tried to help. These can also give us direction today.

Resources

1. From Rudolf Steiner's opening address of 20 August 1919, the evening before the teacher training seminar began (first published as *Study of Man*, later as *The Foundations of Human Experience*, CW 293). Also in *Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner* (CW 300a) and *Towards the Deepening of Waldorf Education*, Pedagogical Section.
2. Rudolf Steiner, *The Foundations of Human Experience* (CW 293), Lecture 1, 21 August 1919.
3. Rudolf Steiner, *Discussions with Teachers* (CW 295), Discussion 1, 21 August 1919.
4. Rudolf Steiner, *The Foundations of Human Experience* (CW 293), Lecture 14, 5 September 1919.
5. Rudolf Steiner, *Discussions with Teachers* (CW 295), Third lecture on the curriculum and 'Closing Words'.
6. Rudolf Steiner, *Balance in Teaching* (CW 302a), Lecture 3, 21 September 1920.
7. Rudolf Steiner, *Balance in Teaching* (CW 302a), Lecture 1, 15 September 1920.
8. Rudolf Steiner, *Discussions with Teachers* (CW 295), closing words to discussion 15. 6 September 1919.
9. See note 7.
10. See note 6.
11. See note 2.
12. Editor's note: The author refers here to a statement among Waldorf teachers that seems to trace only to Karl Ege's recollection of a conversation with Steiner in his brief book, *An Evident Need of Our Times*. Any reference to such an intimate communication, especially if it is used to criticize work based on Steiner's more than 300 lectures on education, should be considered with great care.
13. Editor's note: It is a disservice that these lectures have been published as *Education for Adolescents*, limiting their study, perhaps, to upper elementary and high school teachers. As Wiechert demonstrates, their content was meant for all teachers.
14. Rudolf Steiner, *Education for Adolescents* (CW 301), Lecture 1, 12 June 1921.
15. *Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner* (CW 300b), 20 June 1922.
16. *Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner* (CW 300b), 6 February 1923.
17. Rudolf Steiner, "Deeper Insights into Education" in: *Balance in Teaching* (CW 302a) and the corresponding meeting of 16 October 1923 in *Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner* (CW 300c).
18. Rudolf Steiner, *Balance in Teaching* (CW 302a), Lecture 3.
19. See note 16.
20. *Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner* (CW 300c), 30 March 1923.
21. *Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner* (CW 300c), 15 July 1924.
22. In *Towards the Deepening of Waldorf Education*, Pedagogical Section.

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