

THREEFOLDING: 100 YEARS

Karl Heyer: Esoteric Foundations and Aspects of Social Threefolding

*Indications by Rudolf Steiner**



Karl Heyer (1868–1964)

Karl Heyer (1888–1964), lawyer and historian, was one of the foremost pupils of Rudolf Steiner. He was active in the threefold movement of 1919 and out of his experiences wrote a synopsis of the threefold impulse, from an exoteric and esoteric point of view. This appeared originally as an appendix in the book *Wer ist der deutsche Volksgeist?* (not yet translated). Heyer who had a key conversation with Rudolf Steiner in 1911 and wrote an inspired book on Kaspar Hauser (not yet translated) had a broad overview of this new social impulse. Heyer's text, which will be published as a series in the forthcoming issues, can serve as an excellent, profound introduction for anyone trying to grasp the relevance of this new social impulse, born of both physical and spiritual insights. We are very glad that this key text by Heyer is now accessible to our readers in English translation.

T.H. Meyer

I. Introduction

In what follows an attempt will be made to bring together and provide an overall view of what Rudolf Steiner said about the esoteric foundations, the deeper spiritual contexts and aspects of the impulse of social threefolding. This cannot of course be an *exhaustive* presentation. I intentionally restricted myself in essence to presenting Rudolf Steiner's indications, ordered in accordance with certain viewpoints and felt I should avoid explaining or commenting on many things, which would all too easily become superfluous. For of course, connecting lines can be drawn from statements by Rudolf Steiner infinitely on all sides, which would result in even further connections.

Some repetition in quotations from Rudolf Steiner cannot be avoided. However, I did not think I should even strive to avoid them since, as we know, repetition can have very positive effects, and moreover, what is already "known" can be further enriched by many repetitions through new phrasings, additions and viewpoints.

II. Viable Social Ideas Only from Beyond the Threshold

Something of fundamental significance, which forms a precondition for every striving after social ideas, social impulses and social forms, was expressed by Rudolf Steiner in the lecture of 8 October 1917¹ (a few months after the composition of his Memoranda of June 1917²), in which for the first time he set down the fundamental ideas of *social* threefolding), in the following words:

But now we must look at something that is very important. One can think about natural phenomena with the aid of the usual intellectuality; but one cannot think about social phenomena with the aid of the usual intellectuality; one cannot do that. Today, people believe that the thinking that enables them to think about the external course of the world of the senses can also be applied to finding social laws and political impulses. They do it for the time being, but the results are accordingly negative." [Rudolf Steiner adds that in olden times

people called on the gods when they wanted to set up state institutions, as, for example, Numa Pompilius, the second of the seven kings of ancient Rome, let himself be inspired by the nymph Egeria with regard to his state institutions³].

"They will have to be convinced", he says positively in a lecture of 24 November 1918⁴, that the social question can only be solved on a spiritual basis, and that today the solution is being sought without any spiritual basis. This expresses something extremely important for our time. You see, the ideas which are necessary for the social movement cannot be formed anywhere in the area that one can survey merely with the abilities of the senses and with the understanding that is bound to these abilities.

If they are to be seen in their direct effectiveness, these ideas lie wholly beyond the threshold, which leads from the physical sense world to the supersensible world. What is most necessary for the present and for the near future in relation to the development of human abilities is that certain ideas have to be brought from beyond the threshold; and the most characteristic

* Quotations from Rudolf Steiner are reproduced here with the approval of the Rudolf-Steiner-Nachlassverwaltung, Dornach, Switzerland.

phenomenon at present is this: that such a bringing over of ideas from beyond the threshold is just what is rejected. All work in this area must be permeated by the will to *overcome* this denial of drawing socially effective ideas from beyond the threshold of physical consciousness . . . Very few people at the present time have a proper estimation of initiation and initiation wisdom, which must actually become prevalent at the present ...”

“It is simply imprudent ...” , says Rudolf Steiner in his lecture of 29 November 1918⁵, “that effective, fruitful social ideas can be sought in the future on any path other than on the one that leads to truths beyond the threshold of normal consciousness. In the normal physical consciousness no effective social ideas can be found ... In the area of daily life, and also in the area of science people can still trot along for quite a while yet without becoming familiar with what is beyond the threshold of the spiritual world. One can just about get by that way. In relation to social life one cannot manage without becoming attentive to ... the threshold of the spiritual world.”

Just as bridges can only be built when one is a mathematician and has studied mathematics, so social structures can only be conceived when one has formed elementary concepts from the spiritual world” [17 November 1918⁶].

“One is only thinking in accordance with modern times who knows that everything which people try to say about any social configuration of mankind in the future, without the foundation of spiritual science, is quackery. Only one who fully grasps this is thinking in accord with the times” [26 October 1918⁷].

“Threefold socialism” was ... born from the most intimate knowledge of the development of mankind, from what has to happen if the goal of human development is not to be denied. This is why we fell into this terrible world catastrophe of recent years, because the difficulty consists in recognising a goal which is of a spiritual nature ... We have to work ourselves out of this chaos ... I therefore believe that only those people will be able to see properly the need for a social threefolding who start from Anthroposophical feelings, from the knowledge of what has actually been happening in the development of mankind.” [12 September 1918⁸]

In this fifth Post-Atlantean epoch, social life must be regulated through the nurturing of spiritual science, and every other effort to regulate it outside the area of spiritual science will only lead to chaos and to hyper-radicalism which will make people unhappy. It is precisely with regard to the social shaping of life that this fifth Post-Atlantean epoch in the most pre-eminent sense is reliant on spiritual science.” (Only through this can the anti-social drives, which come to the fore so starkly in the epoch of the Consciousness Soul, be subdued and incorporated in a real social life. Only the Spirit-Self, the light of which will arise in the sixth Post-Atlantean epoch, will work in a directly social way, to manifest what is ... “spiritually social”.) - 7 December⁹.

In direct relation to social threefolding, Steiner says in his Christmas lecture of 26 December 1920¹⁰: “There can be no going on in the old ruts. If things go on in such a way as can be done without the stimuli which come from the spiritual world then industry can go on, universities can exist at which all possible sciences can be taught, the other professions can go on – all will lead into decadence, into barbarism, into the downfall of civilisation. And one who does not want to put directly into life what can come from spiritual science is someone who basically does not want progress, but who wants decline. The majority of people today want decline and only lie to themselves that out of decline progress can still come.”

“This Anthroposophical knowledge should therefore actually be at the basis of all knowledge. All knowledge, especially social knowledge, should be brought from *this* Anthroposophical knowledge. For insofar as people learn that the light of Christ lives in them: Christ in me, insofar as they experience that fully, they will learn to see themselves as something other than what one gains when one only sees the human being as belonging to the corpse of nature.

From the view that the human being belongs to nature which has become a corpse, our anti-social, unsocial present-day society has arisen. A real view which can restore brotherhood to humanity, which can again bring real moral impulses to humanity, can only come when the human being advances to the understanding of the words: ‘Not I, but Christ in me’; when Christ, in the very relation of man to man, can be found as an effective power” [25 March 1922¹¹].

Without an understanding of the “...Christ impulse, no social demands will move towards any wholesome goal.”¹²

Notes

- 1 Dornach, GA 177.
- 2 See Roman Boos, “Rudolf Steiner während des Weltkriegs”, Dornach (1933) und Erinnerungen von Ludwig Graf Polzer-Hoditz, Prague 1937 (2nd ed. Dornach 1985, p. 74f.)
- 3 See K. Heyer, “Beiträge zur Weltgeschichte”, Vo. 1 “Von der Atlantis bis Rom”, Breslau 1939 (2nd ed. Stuttgart 1964), pp. 161-163.
- 4 Dornach: “Entwicklungsgeschichtliche Unterlagen zur Bildung eines sozialen Urteils”, GA 185a.
- 5 Dornach, GA 186.
- 6 Dornach, GA 185a.
- 7 Dornach, “Das Goetheanum” V 46 (14.11.1926), p. 362 in GA 185.
- 8 Berlin, GA 193.
- 9 Dornach, GA 186.
- 10 Dornach, GA 202.
- 11 Dornach, GA 211.
- 12 Lecture of 7.12.1918, GA 186.

THREEFOLDING: 100 YEARS

Karl Heyer: Esoteric Foundations and Aspects of Social Threefolding

Indications by Rudolf Steiner



Karl Heyer (1868–1964)

Karl Heyer (1888–1964), lawyer and historian, was one of the foremost pupils of Rudolf Steiner. He was active in the threefold movement of 1919 and out of his experiences wrote a synopsis of the threefold impulse, from an exoteric and esoteric point of view. This appeared originally as an appendix in the book *Wer ist der deutsche Volksgeist?* (not yet translated). Heyer, who had a key conversation with Rudolf Steiner in 1911 and wrote an inspired book on Kaspar Hauser (not yet translated), had a broad overview of this new social impulse. Heyer's text, which will be published as a series in the forthcoming issues, can serve as an excellent, profound introduction for anyone trying to grasp the relevance of this new social impulse, born of both physical and spiritual insights. We are very glad that this key text by Heyer is now accessible to our readers in English translation.

T.H. Meyer

III. To which historical period does social threefolding apply?

For which historical period in human evolution is social threefolding the appropriate social structure? This is a crucially important question. Another question is directly linked to this, namely: which spiritual beings are the ones that promote or essentially give the impulse for social threefolding.

We only need briefly mention here that the social threefolding represented today is of course not thought of as something that applies to the past (such that the past would have to be reproached, as it were, for not having been able to come up with threefolding!). An historical review¹ shows rather that at first, there was an ancient, justified unity in social life, in the age of theocracy, i.e. in the third post-Atlantean epoch, a unity, in which the life of rights and the economy were still directly governed by the spiritual life. Due to the emancipation of the legal and political life in the fourth post-Atlantean epoch, this social unity was followed by a social duality of the spiritual life and the legal-political life, and within the latter, the economic life was, as it were, still embryonically contained.

It was only the fifth post-Atlantean epoch that brought about the "birth" of the economic life, its emancipation as an autonomous member of the social organism, which is now even trying to absorb the cultural and the legal spheres. Social threefolding means the need, from now on, to create the right harmony and the right collaboration between the three members of the social organism. "From now on" – i.e. in the present and for the future. But for a period extending how far into the future? When one looks at Rudolf Steiner's various statements on this question one finds differentiated answers.

At times he contented himself with speaking of threefolding as something that sought to come about through "historical impulses". Thus, for example, in the lecture of 29 November, 1918, in Dornach², he mentions it in reference to his conversations with influential Central European personalities during the First World War: "I presented the matter in the following way to various people to whom I have spoken in the course of the last few years about this social impulse being a matter of necessity. I said that what is meant here, and what is by no means an abstract program, wills to be realised in the world through historical impulses in the next 20 to 30 years; you have the choice – that's how one could speak to people at that time who still had the choice (they no longer have it today) - you have the choice of either accepting reason and engaging with such things, or experiencing that they will be realised through cataclysms and revolutions in a chaotic manner. There is no alternative... for these things in the course of world events... Now is the time when the only people who are able to speak effectively about the needs of the times are those in a position to see that which is striving to be realised in the course of time."

He spoke in a similar way in his public lecture of 5 February 1919 in Zürich³: I said to some: these indications about human development in this sense are not a programme, or an ideal, but the result of observation of what wants to be realised in the next 10, 20, 30 years through what is already there, seed-like, within mankind; and, I said: you only have the choice either of working to bring these things about through reason, or to see yourselves faced with revolutions and social cataclysms, fearful social upheavals. There is no third option besides these. The war will perhaps be the time – I said to some - when reason can still be heeded. Afterwards it could be too late. Because it is not about

a programme that one can carry out or refrain from carrying out; rather it's a matter of recognising what is seeking to be realised, and what man must therefore realise, because it lies in those powers of growth within him that are needed in the present and in the near future."

"Cultural organism, state organism, economic organism – that is what one has to say the developmental forces of humanity are striving towards in the next 10 to 20 years. And one who sets himself against this development, sets himself against the possibilities of life for modern humanity" [public lecture, Zürich, 10 February 1919⁴].

Rudolf Steiner spoke of the "*spirit of the age*" in a lecture on 21 April 1919 in Stuttgart⁵: "...One has to look somewhat deeper into the development of humanity, if one wants to appreciate the whole, full, far-reaching praxis of what lies at the basis of this threefolding. Threefolding – I must emphasise this again and again – is not something that can just occur to someone. It is something that the spirit of the age and of the present definitely demands from people, something that the spirit of the age wants to realise, something that the spirit of the age... is actually realising. And chaos arises because mankind thinks otherwise and above all acts otherwise than the spirit of the age thinks and acts. In fact, this threefolding has been realising itself since the 1870s, only people have been behaving otherwise and have thus fallen into terrible contradictions in regard to what the facts are unfolding."

The Spirit of the Age since the 1870s (more precisely, since 1879) is, as you know, Michael as the Regent of the Age of Michael, one of those ... "archangelic ages" that last 3-4 centuries⁶. So a *first aspect* of the period of the applicability of social threefolding", if one may put it like that, is *the Age of Michael*.

This aspect is confirmed in the following words of Rudolf Steiner from his lecture of 28 September 1919⁷. He spoke here about questions which an American had put to him about threefolding: "..... Among the questions which he put ... was the following, which especially pleased me: 'Now, threefolding - one can very well see it for the present time; one can see threefolding is necessary now, that it has to replace the old unitary state. Are you of the view that threefolding is the final, the ultimate solution of the social question?'"

That was a very reasonable question. I was able to give the following answer: 'I do not believe so at all. In the course of historical development over the centuries the unitary state emerged more and more, but today, threefolding has become necessary through the demands of the times. There will come a time when threefolding will have to be overcome. But that is not the present time; that is the time 3-4 centuries from now. Then people will have to think how threefolding can be superseded.' – You see, this is the opposite of millenarian thinking, the opposite of the thinking that wants to establish a thousand-year Reich for ever; the thinking that says to itself: we must create a

blessed condition for mankind, then that can just be there, it can remain. – But life doesn't go so comfortably in the world. It is necessary that what is established as right for a particular epoch is replaced by what is relatively right for the following epoch ... This organic thinking in contrast to the mechanical thinking that dominates the present day, when people actually think that there is something that is absolutely right for all time. One thing is right for Stuttgart, another for New York, for Australia. One thing is right for 1919, another for 2350..."

The "3-4 centuries" mentioned here are the Age of Michael, and social threefolding is the demand of the Michaelic Spirit of the Age. After the failure of the first attempt at an outer social realisation of threefolding, Rudolf Steiner said on 2 April 1923: "When the threefolding impulse in social life was spoken of, that was a test, as it were, of whether the Michael Thought is already strong enough, that people can feel how such an impulse wells up directly from the forces shaping the age. It was a test of the human soul, as to whether the Michael Thought is strong enough in a number of souls. Well, the test gave a negative result. The Michael Thought is not yet strong enough, even in a small number of people, really to be felt in its full time-shaping force and power. And it will hardly be possible to link human souls for new uprising forces with primal world-shaping powers in the way that is necessary, if something inspirational such as a Michael Festival⁸ cannot get through, if therefore a new, reforming impulse cannot arise out from the depths of esoteric life." Through the Time Spirit forces, Michael Christianity is revealing itself in our time in new ways. "These things", said Rudolf Steiner [on 12 June 1919⁹ in relation to the need for a liberation of cultural life from the bonds of the State and the economy] "which today must be proclaimed in another form through the programme of the threefolding of the social organism – they are Christianity today, they are spiritual revelations clothed in outer forms."

Michael's activity from our time onwards has an inaugural significance far beyond the 3-4 century-long "Age of Michael" in the narrower sense¹⁰. In other lectures Rudolf Steiner gave a far-reaching aspect to social threefolding that goes well beyond the 300-400 years of the Age of Michael in the narrower sense. Here it appeared clearly as the social challenge for the entire *5th post-Atlantean epoch*, the epoch of the Consciousness Soul.

On 6 December 1918¹¹ for example, Rudolf Steiner expressed this when he said that the 5th post-Atlantean epoch was striving for socialisation in the form which he had explained. "For these things, which I have indicated, will come: either, if people bring themselves to carry them out through human reason, or, if they do not bring themselves to carry them out, through cataclysms, through revolutions. Human beings will strive for this threefolding in the 5th post-Atlantean epoch, this threefolding has to come. Our epoch is therefore aiming for a certain socialisation."

He also spoke expressly of the Consciousness Soul epoch in the lecture of 1 March 1919¹², when he said: "... the third thing, which from the depths of the human soul is pressing forward to be realised is *socialism*, which can simply be characterised by saying: in the epoch of the Consciousness Soul the modern soul's striving is for the individual to be able to feel that he stands within the social organism. People want to create the social organism as such; they want to feel themselves as members of this social organism ... "

On 21 April 1919¹³ Rudolf Steiner said (after rejecting ideas that mankind should be "forever" blessed through all kinds of "ideal conditions"): "As I have always explained here, in [human] development one particular epoch has followed another and above all, every major epoch of the post-Atlantean period has had its own concrete ideal, as also does ours and the near future ... And our time is urgently calling for ... the threefolding of the social organism."

That social threefolding in this sense is a developmental stage in the 5th post-Atlantean cultural epoch, will be confirmed later, when we come to the threefold ideal of the French Revolution and its esoteric background.

Perspectives on how social threefolding will have to metamorphose over the course of the 5th post-Atlantean epoch were given in a lecture by Rudolf Steiner on 23 March 1919¹⁴. He spoke then first about overcoming habits of automatic thinking which, for example, had at that time prevented many people from understanding the appeal he had issued, which was titled "To the German People and the World of Culture!" Then he went on to speak about the *Imaginations* that were necessary for social life. When these gradually emerge in human souls, he said, then those human souls will come to find it intolerable that cultural life, education, the life of schools and universities are dependent on the State or on the economy. People will more and more have to rely on having a *free spiritual life*. Because in this 5th post-Atlantean epoch we are moving towards a sensory-supersensory condition of the world in which the *angels* come down lower than before. They will enter into a much more intimate community with human beings than was previously the case. Just as they receive the rain from the clouds, human beings will have to learn to perceive the inspirations from higher regions given them by the angels, who will be moving more and more among human beings. Through this, the liberated spiritual life will become able, through its freedom of thought, to receive the influences that come down from a supersensory world. When people therefore call for a social order such as threefolding, they do so not in the sense of the political programmes that people make today; rather, what is called for comes from the revelations of the spiritual world, which will speak ever more clearly. And just as the angels will engage in more intimate community with human beings, so also will the *archangels*. They too will give

impulses even if they will speak much more gently: as gentle *Inspirations*, which will in the future found the inner substance of future states which will have separated out from themselves the cultural life and the economic life and will therefore really be autonomous *political states of rights*. States in the 3rd post-Atlantean epoch were theocracies; these have gradually disappeared. Theocracies will come again on earth¹⁵; in the earthly life of rights people will feel, as it were, the rule of the archangel.

The archangels too will come closer to human beings. Finally, the *Time Spirits* [archai] will become the bearers, the administrators of the economic circulation of human beings. There will be an associative [economic] life. Whereas since the middle of the 15th century there has been the tendency for people to look merely to the creation of goods, the accumulation of goods and of profits, in the autonomous economic circulation by contrast, it will be much more about the distribution and consumption of goods. – Thus appears from what will come towards us from the future, first the need for an autonomous *spiritual and cultural life*, through which the *angels* will come closer to human beings. This autonomous spiritual and cultural life has to advance as soon as possible, for that has to be complete - if mankind is not to experience a great disaster - by *the end of the 5th post-Atlantean epoch*. By the end of the 6th post-Atlantean epoch a new spiritual theocracy must have become completely autonomous, and by *the end of the 7th post-Atlantean epoch* a really *social community life* must have been developed, in which the individual will feel unhappy, if everyone else is not as happy as he is, if he somehow had to pay for his own happiness through the sufferings and deprivations of others.

Notes

- 1 See ch. 3.
- 2 GA 186.
- 3 GA 328.
- 4 GA 328. Similar in the lecture of 15 Feb. 1919 in "Die soziale Frage als Bewusstseinsfrage" (GA 189).
- 5 GA 192.
- 6 See K. Heyer, "Beiträge zur Weltgeschichte", Vol. III, "Die neuere Zeit", Breslau 1940 (2nd ed. Kressbronn, 1957), esp. pp. 69-76.
- 7 In Stuttgart (GA 192).
- 8 In Stuttgart (GA 223).
- 9 More on this subject from the same lecture of 2.4.1923 will be presented in article VIII of this series.
- 10 In Heidenheim (GA 193).
- 11 See K. Heyer, "Beiträge zur Weltgeschichte", Vol. III, "Die neuere Zeit", Breslau 1940 (2nd ed. Kressbronn, 1957), pp. 51-52 in the section: "Zeitgeist und Zeitgeister der neueren Zeit".
- 12 In Dornach (GA 186).
- 13 "Die soziale Frage als Bewusstseinsfrage" (GA 189).
- 14 In Stuttgart (GA 192).
15. In Dornach (GA 190).

THREEFOLDING: 100 YEARS

Karl Heyer: Esoteric Foundations and Aspects of Social Threefolding

Indications by Rudolf Steiner



Karl Heyer (1868–1964)

Karl Heyer (1888–1964), lawyer and historian, was one of the foremost pupils of Rudolf Steiner. He was active in the threefold movement of 1919 and out of his experiences wrote a synopsis of the threefold impulse, from an exoteric and esoteric point of view. This appeared originally as an appendix in the book *Wer ist der deutsche Volksgeist?* (not yet translated). Heyer, who had a key conversation with Rudolf Steiner in 1911 and wrote an inspired book on Kaspar Hauser (not yet translated), had a broad overview of this new social impulse. Heyer's text, which will be published as a series in the forthcoming issues, can serve as an excellent, profound introduction for anyone trying to grasp the relevance of this new social impulse, born of both physical and spiritual insights. We are very glad that this key text by Heyer is now accessible to our readers in English translation.

T.H. Meyer

IV The Third Hierarchy and Social Life

The lecture of 23 March 1919 just cited above shows and confirms from a particular aspect that it is the *Third Hierarchy* that is directly linked to human social life. It works, as we know, on the inner life of man: the Angel on that of the single individual, the Archangel on that of a people, the Archai on specific epochs. So we understand that the impulse for a free spiritual life, in the sense characterised, which has to be carried by individual human beings, is given by the Angels (for the 5th Post-Atlantean epoch), the impulse for a new life of law and the state, which is carried by larger groups of people, is given by the Archangels (for the 6th Post-Atlantean epoch), and a fully comprehensive economic life in the sense of social community is given by the Archai (for the 7th Post-Atlantean epoch).

So this will be the re-enlivening - in a whole new way - of man's ancient relationship to the beings of the Third Hierarchy, as it was in pre-Christian times (ultimately in the 1st-3rd Post-Atlantean epochs). Of this relationship in the time before the Mystery of Golgotha, Rudolf Steiner says, for example, in the lecture of 7 September 1918¹: at that time "mankind knew that the divine spiritual beings work into life on earth and influence and order what man does on Earth. Therefore in ancient times people were convinced, when they founded states (if one wants to use the word 'state' here, it's not really right to use it, but well, people today are used to speaking like this) - when they founded social structures ... they knew that those social structures were founded under the influence of the Third Hierarchy.

People felt that their institutions on Earth were the gods' institutions. You only need to study the history of Egypt ... to realise that the Egyptian was fully convinced that what people do in their ... social life together here on Earth is instituted by the beings of the Third Hierarchy. That was the situation before the Mystery of Golgotha; after the Mystery of Golgotha, there was only the memory of it." Rudolf Steiner then describes, how the institution of the church with its hierarchy (of deacons, archdeacons, bishops, archbishops, etc.) was seen as an image of the spiritual divine hierarchies.

Later, the awareness that above us is a world of divine individualities was replaced by abstract metaphysical concepts, which were merely intended to maintain order in human co-existence, to punish evildoers, etc., to make one man the superior of the other, and the like. This was essentially the situation in the Middle Ages. The modern period then brought disbelief in these abstract metaphysical concepts as well; one could only still believe in what was external and sensory, even in human social life. Industrialism in particular radically wiped out all consciousness of the spiritual basis of social structures. What was lost now has to be regained.

An example of how this can be achieved through a new spiritual understanding of the world and its relationship to it is what Rudolf Steiner presented in his lecture of 9 October 1918² about the work that the *Angels* are doing in human *astral bodies* in the present age of humanity (which began in the 15th century). Under the guidance of the Spirits of Form, says Rudolf Steiner, the beings of the hierarchy of the Angels form pictures in the astral

body. “If these pictures were not formed, there would be no development of humanity in the future which corresponds to the intentions of the Spirits of Form. What the Spirits of Form want to achieve with us until the end of the evolution of the Earth and beyond, they first have developed in pictures; and from these pictures a reshaped humanity will then later become reality. And these pictures in our astral body today are already being formed by the Spirits of Form through the Angels.”

“People may be reluctant to recognise that Angels want to stimulate future ideals within them; but it is so nevertheless. And there is a definite principle that works in this picture formation by the Angels: the principle is that in the future no man shall peacefully enjoy the pleasure of happiness when others beside him are unhappy. There is a certain impulse of absolute *brotherhood*, the absolute unification of the human race - of correctly understood fraternity - with regard to social conditions in physical life.”

“That’s one thing... But there is a second impulse, from the perspective of which the Angels do this formative work; it is that they also have ... certain intentions with regard to the human soul ... With regard to human soul life, through their pictures which they impress upon the astral body, they pursue the goal, which will be achieved in the future, that every human being will see in every other a hidden divinity To grasp the human being as earnestly, as strongly, as understandingly as possible, as an image that reveals itself out of the spiritual world - this is what is placed in the pictures by the Angels. This will ... have a very definite consequence. All free religiosity ... will be based on the fact that in every human being the Image of the Godhead is really there in the direct practice of life, not just in theory. Then there will no longer be any religious compulsion...; for then the encounter of every human being with every other human being will from the beginning be a religious act, a sacrament, and no-one will have need of a particular church that has external institutions on the physical plane, in order to sustain an upright religious life. The Church, if it understands itself rightly, can only have one intention: to make itself unnecessary on the physical plane, because the whole of life will have become the expression of the supersensory. This at least lies in the impulses of the work of the Angels: to pour out over humanity a complete *freedom of religious life*.”

“And there is a third thing underlying what [the Angels] are doing: they are giving human beings the possibility to reach the spirit through thinking, to cross the abyss through thinking and come to spiritual experience.”

“Spiritual science for the spirit, religious freedom for the soul, fraternity for human bodies - that sounds like a cosmic music through the work of the Angels in human astral bodies.”

But what is vital in the age of the Consciousness Soul is that gradually, this work of the Angels is *consciously* understood by human beings. (Steiner then goes on in the lecture to speak about how the Luciferic and Ahrimanic beings work against this revelation and what fateful consequences would have to result from sleeping through the revelation.)

So much for our representation of the lecture of 9 October 1918. We see how here an objective of the Angels is recognisable, which is directed towards the unfolding of proper social impulses in relation to the life of human beings in their body, soul and spirit. It becomes clear how this objective is deeply related to the impulses of social threefolding in the narrower sense, on the one hand, but on the other hand, goes far beyond it.

Perhaps one could say: we should also recognise here how social threefolding (in the sense presented in the book *Die Kernpunkte der sozialen Frage* [The Core Points of the Social Question - in English: “Towards Social Renewal]) is only a first shaping of something that is meant for the immediate present and it will grow further in the centuries and millennia to come (and this means it will be achieved against the resistance of the counterforces), which is described in the lecture of 9 October 1918 as the objective of the Angels for humanity.

Like a nuance added to what has been said here about the particular intentions of the Angels (or the Spirits of Form, by whom they are led) is what Rudolf Steiner expressed about two months later in the lecture of 7 December 1918³: “When socialism, which comes forward as an elemental impulse, appears as a demand within humanity, then this socialism *alone* will always lead to misfortune. Socialism can only become a blessing if it is coupled with two other things, which have to have developed in humanity by the end of our whole Post-Atlantean period, by the seventh Post-Atlantean epoch: if it is coupled with what one can call a free life of thought and insight into the spiritual nature of the world which lies behind sensory nature. Socialism without spiritual science and without freedom of thought is an absurdity.”

Notes

1. In Dornach (GA 184).
2. In Zurich (GA 182).
3. In Dornach (GA 186).

THREEFOLDING: 100 YEARS

Karl Heyer: Esoteric Foundations and Aspects of Social Threefolding

Indications by Rudolf Steiner



Karl Heyer (1868–1964)

Karl Heyer (1888–1964), lawyer and historian, was one of the foremost pupils of Rudolf Steiner. He was active in the threefold movement of 1919 and out of his experiences wrote a synopsis of the threefold impulse, from an exoteric and esoteric point of view. This appeared originally as an appendix in the book *Wer ist der deutsche Volksgeist?* (not yet translated). Heyer, who had a key conversation with Rudolf Steiner in 1911 and wrote an inspired book on Kaspar Hauser (not yet translated), had a broad overview of this new social impulse. Heyer's text, which will be published as a series in the forthcoming issues, can serve as an excellent, profound introduction for anyone trying to grasp the relevance of this new social impulse, born of both physical and spiritual insights. We are very glad that this key text by Heyer is now accessible to our readers in English translation.

T.H. Meyer

V. The Threefold Ideal of the French Revolution

The indications that Rudolf Steiner gave about the threefold ideal which forced its way into public life in the French Revolution, the ideal of *liberty, equality, fraternity*, are of infinite significance for a deeper understanding of what is seeking to become human and social in our times.¹

In the *Core Points of the Social Question*² (English title: *Towards Social Renewal*) pointed to the connection between these three ideals and the three members of the social organism: "From other foundations than those on which we live today, there appeared from the deep foundations of human nature at the end of the 18th century the call for a restructuring of the human, social organism. Three words were heard like a motto for this new organisation: *fraternity, equality, freedom...*" We have "to recognise that the cooperative working together of human beings in *economic life* has to be based on the fraternity that arises from associations. In the second member, the system of public rights, which has to do with the purely human relationship between person and person, one has to strive to realise the idea of equality. And in the cultural sphere, which is relatively autonomous in the social organism, it is the impulse of freedom that has to be realised. Seen in this way, these three ideals show their real value..." "Those people who raised the call for the realisation of the three ideas of liberty, equality, and fraternity at the end of the 18th century, and also those who repeated it later,

were able dimly to sense where the developmental forces of modern humanity were pointing..." [Steiner said similar things in the public lecture he gave on 22 June in Vienna.³]

On the other hand, however, as Rudolf Steiner had said earlier, the threefold ideal also corresponds to the threefold nature of the human being, the human trichotomy of body, soul, and spirit.

In his lecture of 19 October 1918⁴, for example, the "French Revolution brought up three...of the most important impulses in human life: the fraternal, the libertarian, and the egalitarian. But on another occasion I characterised how, contrary to the actual development of humanity the following triad appeared within the French Revolution: *fraternity, liberty, equality*. When one reckons with human development, one cannot... speak of these three without speaking in a way of the three members of the human organism. In relation to living together on the physical plane, in the age of the Consciousness Soul, humanity must gradually progress to a fraternal element. It would simply be an unspeakable misfortune and a regression in evolution if at the end of the fifth post-Atlantean epoch...fraternity had not developed among people to a high degree at least. But fraternity can only be rightly understood when, in thinking about it, one turns to the living together of human bodies in physical existence. But when one turns to the soul realm, then one cannot speak of freedom. One will always be in error if one thinks that freedom

can somehow be realised in outer physical life together; but freedom can be realised from soul to soul... and human beings can only be equal in relation to the spirit. The spirit, which grasps us spiritually, is the same for each person. It is striven for through the fact that the fifth epoch, the Consciousness Soul, strives for the spirit itself. And in relation to this spirit which is striven for, human beings are equal, just as the folk saying has it in relation to this equality of the spirit: in death all men are equal..."

"How does the French Revolution appear to us, considered symptomatically?" It is precisely from a symptomatic point of view that the French Revolution is so extraordinarily interesting. It represents - as it were in slogans that relate in a confused and undifferentiated way to the whole of mankind - what gradually has to be developed by all the means available to the spiritual evolution of mankind in the course of the epoch of the Consciousness Soul, from 1413 to 3573, so 2160 years or more. This is the task of this epoch - that during it, fraternity will be acquired for human bodies, freedom for human souls, and equality for human spirits. But without this insight, this innermost soul element of the fifth post-Atlantean epoch appears in the French Revolution in a tumultuous way in which everything is thrown amongst everything else in the form of a slogan. The soul of the fifth post-Atlantean epoch is there in three words, misunderstood..."

(This also confirms what we said in the previous section III that social threefolding, the meaning of which is the social realisation of the threefold ideal insofar as that is to be regarded as the developmental goal for the fifth post-Atlantean epoch.)

From the double relation of the threefold ideal on the one hand to the three members of the social organism and on the other hand to the three members of the human being in the sense of the trichotomy, arises the question as to what relation exists between this trichotomy itself and social threefolding in the light of the threefold ideal. The following answer can be given in brief: freedom as the living element of the human soul must be realised socially in the free spiritual life. Fraternity as the goal for living together between human bodies is the life condition of sound economic practice. The equality of every human spirit incarnated between birth and death in physical life finds social recognition in the sphere of law.

A further relation to the threefold ideal can be mentioned here which can throw further light on the different developmental phases of a single human life. Rudolf

Steiner spoke about this in a lecture on 25 December 1918⁵:

"At birth there is a culmination of *the idea of equality*, and equality thereafter moves in a *declining curve*. It's the opposite with *the idea of freedom*. Freedom moves in an ascending curve and reaches its culmination in death.

By this I do not mean to say that a human has reached the highest peak for a freely active being when he passes through the gate of death. But relatively, with regard to human life, the human being develops the impulse of freedom more and more as he approaches the moment of death, and in relative terms he has gained the maximum possibility to be a free being in the moment when he passes through the gate of death into the spiritual world. Whereas he therefore - in entering physical existence through birth - brings from the spiritual world equality, which then declines in the course of physical life, in physical life he develops the impulse of freedom and rises into the spiritual world through the gate of death with the highest level of freedom attainable for him in the course of physical life...

Now for the third of the impulses: fraternity; the character of this is that it reaches its culmination in a certain sense in the middle of life. The curve rises and then falls back again. One can express the matter by saying that in the middle of life, when the human being is in his most labile, i.e. his most fluctuating condition with regard to the relation between the soul and the body, the human being has the strongest inclination to develop fraternity. He doesn't always develop it, but he has the inclination, the predisposition for it...

The three impulses are thus distributed over the whole of human life."

Notes

- 1 See K. Heyer, *Die Französische Revolution und Napoleon*, Kressbronn/Bodensee, 1953, Ch. 1: "Freiheit, Gleichheit, Brüderlichkeit".
- 2 GA 23 (6th ed., 1976, p. 87f.).
3. In the lecture cycle *The Tension between the East and West at the Second International Congress of the Anthroposophical Movement* (Collected Works GA 83).
- 4 In Dornach, *From Symptom to Reality in Modern History* (the historical symptomatology course, Collected Works GA 185).
- 5 In Dornach, Collected Works GA 187.

THREEFOLDING: 100 YEARS

Karl Heyer: Esoteric Foundations and Aspects of Social Threefolding

Indications by Rudolf Steiner



Karl Heyer (1868-1964)

Karl Heyer (1888–1964), lawyer and historian, was one of the foremost pupils of Rudolf Steiner. He was active in the threefold movement of 1919 and out of his experiences wrote a synopsis of the threefold impulse from an exoteric and esoteric point of view. This appeared originally as an appendix in the book *Wer ist der deutsche Volksgeist?* (not yet translated). Heyer, who had a key conversation with Rudolf Steiner in 1911 and wrote an inspired book on Kaspar Hauser (not yet translated), had a broad overview of this new social impulse. Heyer's text, which will be published as a series in the forthcoming issues, can serve as an excellent, profound introduction for anyone trying to grasp the relevance of this new social impulse, born of both physical and spiritual insights. We are very glad that this key text by Heyer is now accessible to our readers in English translation.

T.H. Meyer

VI. The “Cosmic Cult” and Goethe’s Fairy Tale

In the spiritual background of the threefold ideal of freedom, equality, brotherhood and social threefolding is the “cosmic cult”, which Rudolf Steiner spoke about in his lectures of 1924 as an event in supersensible worlds. It was an event that played out under the aegis of Michael towards the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century or in the first half of 19th century. In it shone the great, progressive impulses of the age in the form of powerful imaginations. Rudolf Steiner characterised the Goethe’s *Fairy Tale of the Green Snake and the Beautiful Lily* as a kind of small, earthly image of this cult. In a lecture on 8 July 1924¹ he spoke of how in Goethe’s soul, stimulated by Schiller, the question was raised: how do reason and sensory nature relate to each other? “Everything,” says Rudolf Steiner, “touched on this question. This question opened up not doors – I would like to say – but sluiceways in this soul (i.e. Goethe) through which, for a moment, there came into his soul illumination from those regions of the world where mighty Imaginations were occurring. And there came, not through doors, not through windows, but through sluiceways – I would like to say – translated into miniature pictures, what emerged as the *Fairy Tale of the Green Snake and the Beautiful Lily*. Miniatures, small mirror images, sometimes even the most delightful images came down in that Fairy Tale of the Green Snake and the White Lily.”².

The “fairy tale” contains the most important germs of the future of our age. In a lecture on 22 November

1920 Rudolf Steiner said of it: “Goethe indicated that he was actually thinking about something like a future condition of social life. You find that well expressed at the end of the *Fairy Tale of the Green Snake and the Beautiful Lily*, but he did not want to go as far as characterising it too sharply”. Goethe does not say directly, for example, what lies in the figures of the kings: “Social life must be organised in a threefold way, which I represent by the golden king, the king of wisdom; the silver king, the king of appearances, of outer appearance, the life of appearance, the political life; and through the bronze king, of life in the material, in economic life. He also represents the unitary state in the mixed king, who collapses in himself. But Goethe does not go as far as this characterisation. It was not the time in which one could translate such fine fairy tale characters into the coarse characteristics of social life ... the time had not yet come to carry that which was half in fantasy, already half there living in the imagination, out into [social] life.”

Rudolf Steiner then speaks (after a reference to his own Mystery Drama ... *The Portal of Initiation*, which has a deep inner relation to Goethe’s fairy tale), of how, in the 20th century the time had come when one must go out into life with these things. “And so one did not just have to interpret the golden king, the silver king, the iron king and the mixed king, but one had to show how modern social life, in which the unitary state wants to take hold of everything, must be separated – how the spiritual/cultural life has to be cleanly and

separately articulated: the golden king; a separate legal/political life of the State has to be articulated: the silver king; and a purely economic sphere has to be articulated: the bronze or brazen king. The ‘core points of the social question’ are already Goetheanism, rightly understood, but Goetheanism in the 20th century.”

Thus, a line leads from the cosmic cult at the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th, as it were, on a path via Goethe’s “Fairy Tale”, which is a kind of image of it, into the present with its immediate demand for social threefolding³.

VII. Humanity is Crossing the Threshold

An important aspect of social threefolding was indicated by Rudolf Steiner, in that he pointed out the connection that exists between threefolding and the relative separation of thinking, feeling and willing that occurs when humanity and the individual human being crosses the threshold. (For example, he spoke about this in his lecture of 12 September 1919⁴: “From my account in the book, *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds – How Is It Achieved?* You know that when the human being looks into the spiritual world, in a certain sense he will have the experience which one calls ‘crossing the threshold’. I have portrayed *this crossing of the threshold* in this book by pointing out how the three soul forces of man – the force of thinking, the force of feeling, and the force of willing – become autonomous. When the individual human being crosses the threshold, these three forces become autonomous. In many respects, the whole course of the development of mankind is similar to the course of the individual human life. Things are only shifted. What the human being goes through consciously when he seeks to see into the spiritual world, the crossing of the threshold, in this fifth post-Atlantean epoch all of humanity has to go through unconsciously. It has no choice in this, it goes through it unconsciously – not the individual person, but humanity as a whole – and the individual human with humanity. What does this mean?”

What interacts in man in thinking, feeling and willing will in the future take a separate character and assert itself in different fields. We are in a process whereby humanity is passing unconsciously through a significant gate, which the power of the seer can perceive very well. Mankind makes this crossing of the threshold in such a way that the spheres of thinking, feeling and willing diverge. This lays obligations on us, the obligation to shape external life in such a way that man can go through this change in his outer life

as well as in his inner life. As thinking becomes more autonomous in human life, we must establish a ground on which the thinking can work in a healthier way, and furthermore, we must continue to create a basis on which feeling can be developed autonomously, as well as a ground on which the will can be especially cultivated. What has until now worked in public life in a chaotic way, we now have to articulate in *three spheres*. These three spheres in public life are: *economic life*, state or legal life and *cultural life* or *spiritual life*. This requirement of threefolding is related to the mystery of human evolution in this epoch.”

Before we introduce another statement by Rudolf Steiner that relates to all this, let us first briefly note the following:

1. The passage quoted, in so far as it concerns the unconscious crossing of the threshold by the whole of humanity in the **fifth post-Atlantean epoch**, constitutes further confirmation of a perspective gained earlier (in section III), according to which social threefolding signifies the structure required for social life, precisely in this fifth post-Atlantean epoch.

2. “What has until now worked in public life in a chaotic way, we now have to articulate in three spheres.” The chaotic interpenetration of the three functions of social life occurs in the *unitary state*. The image of this in the sense of Goethe’s “Fairy Tale” is, as we found in part VI, the “mixed king”. What corresponds to this in Rudolf Steiner’s Rosicrucian Mystery Drama *The Portal of Initiation*, which is so closely related to the “Fairy Tale”, is the character *Retardus*, who wants to prevent (retard) people from crossing the threshold.

3. From the order of the last sentences of the quotation, on the one hand, thinking, feeling, willing, and on the other hand, economy, law, and cultural/spiritual life, we have thinking assigned to the economy, feeling to the law, and willing to the spiritual life. This agrees with the fact that, as is also expressed in the book *The Core Points of the Social Question* [published in English with the title *Towards Social Renewal – Ed.*] the spiritual life performs a function within the social organism that can be compared with that of the metabolic and the limb system in the individual human being; the economic life can be seen in parallel with the nerve sense system, and the rhythmic system with the state’s life of law. Of course this did not prevent Rudolf Steiner from adopting another viewpoint and assigning the three members of the social organism to the three human soul forces of thinking, feeling and willing, when he said of modern humanity⁵: “... this

humanity has to find its thought life in an independent mental organism; its feeling life, that is, the relation of feelings that play between people, in an independent legal organism; its life of willing in the economic cycle, in the organism of the economy.”

Also, in the lecture of 25 December 1920,⁶ a Christmas lecture, Rudolf Steiner spoke about the relation between social threefolding and humanity’s crossing of the threshold. “Even if not for outer consciousness”, he says here ... “for inner experience humanity passes through the region that can be called the region of the Guardian of the Threshold This serious guardian says above all the following: Do not remain fixed on what has been transplanted from olden times; look into your hearts, look into your souls so that you can create something new ...

Just as the human being, as knower, must realise that his thinking, feeling and willing separate in a certain way and he has to hold them together in a higher sense, so will modern humanity have to understand that the spiritual life, the life of rights, and the economic life must separate from one another and a higher form of keeping them together must be created than the State as it has been up to now. No programmes, ideas, ... ideologies can bring individuals to recognise the need for this threefoldness of the social organism; it is a profound knowledge of the ongoing development of mankind that reveals to us that this development has reached a threshold area where the grave Guardian stands and that just as he demands of an individual who is advancing to higher knowledge: submit to the separation of thinking, feeling and willing, he also demands of humanity as a whole: separate what has up to now been interwoven in a chaotic unity in the idol of the State; separate this into a spiritual life, a legal state structure, and an economic sphere ... otherwise, humanity will make no progress, and the old chaos will burst asunder and collapse. If this happens, it will not take the form that is necessary for humanity but an ahrimanic or luciferic form. It is only through spiritual-scientific knowledge of the crossing of the threshold in our present time that can give to this chaos the Christ-form appropriate to it...

The old form of the state would have to burst apart if people did not organise it separately in a threefold way — and it would have to burst apart in such a way that it would develop on the one side a wholly chaotic spiritual life, completely ahrimanic and luciferic in character, and on the other side an economic life again with luciferic-ahrimanic characteristics. And both the

one and the other would drag the state in rags after them. In the Orient there will take place the development more of ahrimanic-luciferic spiritual states; in the West there will be more the development of ahrimanic-luciferic economic life — if man does not realise how he can avoid this by Christ’s permeation of his being, and how, out of his knowledge and out of his will, he can proceed to bring about the ‘threefolding’ of what is seeking to separate.⁷

This will be human knowledge permeated by Christ; it will be human willing permeated by Christ. And it will express itself in no other way than that the old idol of the unitary state will separate into its three members.

Notes

- 1 Dornach GA 237.
- 2 See lecture of 16 September 1924, Dornach, GA 238.
- 3 Stuttgart GA 197.
- 4 Berlin, GA 193.
- 5 11 April 1919, Dornach, GA 190.
- 6 Dornach GA 202.
- 7 The end of the quote is from the lecture of 25 December 1920.

Our Authors’ Publications



T. H. Meyer

D.N. DUNLOP A Man of Our Time

A Biography

Meyer’s compelling narrative of Dunlop’s life begins on the Isle of Arran, where the motherless boy is brought up by his grandfather. In a landscape rich with prehistoric standing stones, the young Dunlop has formative spiritual experiences. When his grandfather dies, he struggles for material survival, but devotedly studies occult literature. This second, enlarged edition features substantial additions of new material and an Afterword by Owen Barfield.

10 November 2014; 436pp (16 plates); 23.5 x 15.5 cm; paperback
£30.00

ISBN 9781906999667

 **TEMPLE LODGE PUBLISHING**

THREEFOLDING: 100 YEARS

Karl Heyer: Esoteric Foundations and Aspects of Social Threefolding

Indications by Rudolf Steiner



Karl Heyer (1868–1964)

Karl Heyer (1888–1964), lawyer and historian, was one of the foremost pupils of Rudolf Steiner. He was active in the threefold movement of 1919 and out of his experiences wrote a synopsis of the threefold impulse, from an exoteric and esoteric point of view. This appeared originally as an appendix in the book *Wer ist der deutsche Volksgeist?* (not yet translated). Heyer, who had a key conversation with Rudolf Steiner in 1911 and wrote an inspired book on Kaspar Hauser (not yet translated), had a broad overview of this new social impulse. Heyer's text, which will be published as a series in the forthcoming issues, can serve as an excellent, profound introduction for anyone trying to grasp the relevance of this new social impulse, born of both physical and spiritual insights. We are very glad that this key text by Heyer is now accessible to our readers in English translation.

T.H. Meyer

VIII. Various Triads

All triads or threefoldnesses in the world and in the human being depend in one way or other on each other and therefore relate to social threefolding, in which they are, as it were, reflected in the most various ways. However, in this area one cannot guard enough against a certain schematising of classifications. Rather, these have to be kept fluid in the most lively ways. This already results from the many ways in which the most varied triads relate to social threefolding, which were pointed out by Rudolf Steiner, and which we have seen partly in previous sections of this essay and will also get to know about in this present section. One should certainly not try, with a certain forcefulness, to bring the variety of these relations "under one roof".

The point here above all is to penetrate all being as universally as possible in a living way with the powerful archetypal impulses of threefolding. Then one will also stand within social threefolding in a manner that is full of life and learn to develop it fruitfully.

That one can hardly take this universally enough is clear, for example, from the deeply meaningful and compelling statements by Rudolf Steiner in his lecture on Easter Monday on 2 April 1923.¹ Here he speaks of the spiritual experience of the cycle of the year and the of the festivals, of the need from our time onwards, to add something new to the previously one-sided experience of the mood of Easter, namely the mood of autumn, of Michaelmas, so that the experience of Easter would also be transformed. If the Michael Thought could thus be

enlivened from esoteric fundamentals, this could, says Rudolf Steiner, have an enormous significance for the entire perception, feeling and willing of mankind and could inform the whole social life of humanity. For:

"...Everything that people hope for from a renewal of social life will not come from all the discussions and from all the institutions which concern themselves with what is of an external, sensory nature. It will only come when a powerful inspirational thought passes through mankind, when mankind is gripped by an inspirational thought in which the moral-spiritual element is felt to be directly related to the natural sensory element ...Nothing will actually come from all the dispositions and thoughts of reform in the world today; only with the mighty in-streaming of a thought impulse drawn from the spirit can anything be achieved."

In this lecture Rudolf Steiner describes the Easter mood, which, one-sidedly and careworn, has worked (for many centuries) as an inspiration for what people today think, feel and will. "This Easter mood is essentially the result of the sprouting, burgeoning life which makes everything rise up in a pantheistic unity. People are completely given over to the unity of nature and the unity of the world. That is the nature of our spiritual life today. People want to take everything back to a unity, to a Oneness; one is either a devotee of spiritual or natural unity ...Everything is conceived of as being in an indeterminate All-Oneness. This is essentially the mood of spring."

He goes on: "Look into the mood of autumn in which the spirit rises up and becomes free, and the sense world

... wilts and withers, then one sees the spirit as such, and the sense world as such.”

“Spring tends to interweave everything, to mix everything in an undifferentiated, indeterminate unity. When one ... contrasts the view of autumn with that of spring in the right way, one becomes aware of how the spirit works on the one side and the physical and material on the other, and one cannot then of course remain with regard to the one or the other. The Easter thought loses nothing when the Michael thought is added to it. On the one side one has the Easter thought, where everything ... appears in a kind of pantheistic mix, in a unity. Then [in the Michael thought] one has what is differentiated; but the differentiation does not happen in any irregular, chaotic fashion. We have a complete regularity.

Think of the cyclical progression: interpenetration, mixing together, unification; an interim condition, where the differentiation occurs, complete differentiation; then again the passing over of what is differentiated into what is unified, and so on. Then, besides these two conditions you always see a third: you see the rhythm between what is differentiated and what is undifferentiated, between the breathing in, as it were, and the breathing out there is an interim condition. You see a rhythm: a physical-material, a spiritual, an interpenetration of the physical-material and the spiritual: a soul element. In this natural progression you learn to see nature permeated by this archetypal threefoldness: by the material, the spiritual and the soul elements.

What is important is that one does not remain in the general human dream that one must reduce everything to a unity; that would lead back to the indeterminacy of cosmic night, whether the unity was spiritual or material ... What is vital is that, as human beings, we can unite ourselves with the cycle of the world in such a way that we can follow the living transition from the unity into the threefoldness and the return from the threefoldness into the unity. Then, when through adding the Michael thought to the Easter thought in this way we are in a position to feel the archetypal threefoldness in all its being in the right way, we will be able to absorb it fully into our soul. Then we will be in a position to see that all life is based on the movement and interactions of archetypal threefoldnesses. And then we will have ... an inspiration, an impulse of nature and spirit, to bring *threefolding*, the impulse of threefolding into the observation and shaping of all life. And it ultimately depends solely on the introduction of this impulse whether the forces of decline in human development can be transformed into forces of renewal.

One would like to say: when the impulse of threefolding was spoken of in social life, it was, so to say, a test as to whether the Michael thought was already strong enough...” (here we have added the words from Rudolf Steiner’s lecture of 2 April 1923 quoted in the third part of this essay (see *The Present Age*), in which Rudolf Steiner speaks about the negative result of this test.)

In the same lecture he spoke about the experience of the seasons in ancient times in the Orient, when people did not distinguish between *four* seasons but between three (e.g. in ancient India: the hot season, the rainy season and the cold season). “The cycle of the year was thought of as a threefoldness.” In his book “Theosophy” Rudolf Steiner also ordered the members of the human organism in accordance with the number three.

“And so”, he says in such contexts, “the human soul would permeate itself with the capacity to observe this archetypal threefoldness in all that weaves and moves; and also to weave it into everything that human beings create and form. One can say that to have pure ideas about the free spiritual life, about the life of rights, about socio-economic life is only possible when one perceives into its very depths this threefold pulse of the activity of the world, which also has to work through human activity.”

If we now turn to the single correspondences of the different threefoldnesses to the three members of the social organism, we can first recall what we said earlier (in Part V) about the relation of the Trichotomy (body, soul, spirit) to social threefolding in the light of the threefold ideal. With regard to their relation to the three soul forces (thinking, feeling, willing) and to the three systems of the physiological organism (the systems of the nerves, the circulation and the metabolism) reference can be made to what was said in Part VII (section 3).

In a public lecture titled *Anthroposophie und Sozialwissenschaft* [Anthroposophy and Social Science] given on 14 November 1917², Rudolf Steiner spoke about the particular connection between the three members of the social organism and the three higher modes of knowledge: *Imagination, Inspiration* and *Intuition*.

There, with regard to the *economic sphere*, he said: “Someone who wants to understand something of the way economic life is structured will have to have imaginative ideas drawn from the same soul impulse with which our ancestors created myths, with which - if I may say - through their phantasy which was related to spiritual reality - if I may use this expression - they created images of this reality. One cannot create myths [today], but one must be able to think of the geographical conditions, the

other physical conditions, the characterological relations of people and human needs altogether in such a way that this *thinking of things in the round* with the *same force* with which *myths were once created*, with the force which weaves and lives as spiritual imagination, and which appears in images in the economic structure.”

“A *second sphere* of the social life is the moral – the moral structure, the moral impulse which expresses itself in a wholeness. One again dives down into all possible unconscious spheres when one wants to study those impulses which appear in human moral – moral in the widest sense – aspirations. Anyone wanting to go into this – whether as a statesman or parliamentarian or only as someone who understands and directs a company – only understands the structure when he can master it with concepts which at least are based in *inspired knowledge* ...”

On the legal sphere Rudolf Steiner says: “As economic life can only really be studied when imaginative ideas are at the base of it, and moral life only when inspired ideas provide its base, *the life of rights can only be grasped with intuitive ideas* which again are gained from full concrete reality...”

These relations are especially instructive: in a rather schematic way of thinking one would expect to find an inspirational approach to knowledge for the legal sphere (i.e. the middle sphere) rather than an intuitive one. The relations given by Rudolf Steiner here are more comprehensible, however, when one sees them, for example, together with what was said earlier (in Part V) about the relationship between body, soul and spirit and economy, spiritual life and law.

We find yet another classification in what Rudolf Steiner said on 20 July 1919³ about the important subdivision within economic life of *goods*, *human labour* and *capital*. There, he says:

“Goods can ... be understood by no-one who does not have a concept of imaginative cognition. Therefore, there will be no definition of goods until imaginative cognition is acknowledged. I have taken account of these things in my book *The Core Points of the Social Question* [In English: *Towards Social Renewal*] It is not surprising that people say they don’t understand these things ... No-one can speak about human labour who does not know something of inspired cognition. ... The function which the power of labour has in the process of human development can only be found when one has a sense for inspired cognition; and as peculiar as it may sound: no-one can explain anything about capital who has no concept of Intuition, the highest mode of cognition. The Bible was aware of this when it said that Christianity should combat Mammonism ...”

A further important relationship of the three members of the social organism is that to the three phases of human life, i.e. to human pre-birth existence in the spiritual world, to life on earth between birth and death, and to life after death again in the spiritual world. Rudolf Steiner spoke about this relationship in the lecture of 7 March 1919⁴ as follows:

“While the actual State represents the complete opposite of the spiritual world, spiritual life [on earth] means a kind of continuation of what we lived through in the actual spiritual world before we came down into this earthly existence through birth. What we experience in religion, schooling, education, culture and the arts, science etc, amongst other things, what we develop in this regard between people is the earthly continuation, though only more as a mere reflection, a mere mirroring of what real spiritual life is before birth. And in economic life, in what is usually termed this material life, we have the origin of much of what we experience when we pass through the gate of death into the life after death. The State has no relation to the spiritual life. It is the opposite of spiritual life. This must be understood by those who wish to understand the present age, with all its dreadful happenings.”

To this one has to bring what one knows about how the character of one’s thinking points back to one’s life before birth, and the character of one’s willing, which works into one’s life after death, and what Rudolf Steiner said about this, for example⁵:

“Thinking, which rules our inner life as human beings – when we consider it not according to its content but according to its inner force, when we consider *the force of thinking* within us – is precisely something like shining into us of what we experienced in the spiritual worlds before birth and before conception. The being *of will* in the human being is something embryonic, something seed-like that only fully develops *post mortem*, after death.” “Within the course of human life, thinking, in the way it manifests within the human being, is only an appearance [*Schein*], for its true nature lies before birth and before conception; and willing is only a seed, for what develops from this seed only develops after death.”

How the three members of the social organism relate to the three phases of human life was described by Rudolf Steiner on 23 April 1919⁶:

In that ... a relationship is understood to exist between all the individual human capacities, whether intellectual or manual, in the development of the human head, one’s understanding then grows further, so that everything that comes from the individual human capacities leads

back to the life before birth.... Physical mental lifeis therefore here in the physical world because, as human beings, we bring something with us through birth. All physical mental life ... arises from those impulses which we bring from the spiritual world through our birth into physical existence ... That is the one thing.”

To characterise the *life of rights*, Rudolf Steiner proceeds from a description of what is the opposite of the rights life, namely, from the relations which exist in the spiritual world between human souls when these souls are in the disincarnate life between death and a new birth. “Soul is there in an inner relationship with soul, a relationship between soul and soul, which is called forth through the inner strength of the soul itself.” This can lead one to understand that “there is no greater opposition to the particular form of the supersensory life than political, legal life here on the physical plane. These are two great opposites ... Legislation ... which establishes what has to be established: legal relationship: because the human being has lost the relationship between souls that goes on in the spiritual world. These are the two poles: the supersensory relation of souls, and the relationship to the State here on the physical plane.” “The life of the State has the task to structure what is necessary for human relations in the physical world. It only has a meaning for life between birth and death.”

In *economic life* we dive down, as it were, into something sub-human. Economic activity goes on without much direct inwardly active thinking. Bodily activity has the upper hand vis-a-vis the soul and spirit. “But this spirit and soul then develops a strongly unconscious activity, and in this unconscious activity lies a seed. We carry this seed through the gate of death ... and we develop moral brotherliness in the economic life ..., we then carry a *good* seed through the gate of death precisely through what we develop as a human being for other human beings in economic life ... It is precisely in brotherliness that the human being plants the seeds for his life after death, while in spiritual culture he lives on the heritage of what he has brought from his life before birth.”

We find further relations of the three members of the social organism to various threefoldnesses in the lectures of 4-5 September 1920⁷. Here the relation to the three members of the human organism are spoken of: *the etheric body, the astral body, or the physical body, the etheric body, the astral body*. As this is probably less well-known, it will be reproduced here in rather more detail.

In the lecture of 4 September 1920 it is first shown how *the etheric body* has a certain relationship to *the animal world*. It has the inner tendency to become similar to those

animals with which the human being comes into contact. *The astral body* has an inner relationship to *the plant world*; when it confronts a plant, it has the tendency to become similar to it. With regard to *the I*, we are related to *the mineral world*. “we owe the entire content of our consciousness to this relationship to the mineral world.”

Now, the human being develops “his I through his repeated lives on earth. He thus transforms the content that is born of the mineral realm; out of it he makes his science, his arts, his religion. Everything that manifests itself in this way as the content of culture and civilisation is basically the transformed mineral realm.” The work of *the I* upon itself in its activities with other human beings is essentially the transformed content of the mineral realm. It forms from this a cultural life: arts, literature, science, the content of the faiths of religious communities etc. “All this, which is essentially encompassed by this transformative work of *the I* upon itself, all this sharply delineates what we call the spiritual or cultural sphere of the threefold social organism.”

But the human being also transforms his *astral* body, though obviously not in the same conscious manner. “If we look at the content of culture, the most conscious elements of this cultural content are those of the spiritual sphere, as we have now characterised them. Semi-conscious there where they have arisen most sharply, semi-conscious are those ideas which regulate the life of human beings, the ideas which encompass *the law*... Someone who does not grasp the difference between an idea that belongs to the religious, scientific or artistic sphere and one which belongs to the sphere of the law or the State, is certainly not a good psychologist, not a person who understands the soul. For we regulate social intercourse between people, we regulate this dull consciousness in a very different way: what is my duty towards others? What are my rights? What are my rights with regard to him?” This sphere, which cannot be determined in the way that individual human beings do in science, art and religion, but ... can only be determined through human beings living together, through human arrangements and agreements, is what encompasses the sphere of the life of law or the State, the legal sphere of the social organism.”

“The human being experiences a third, still duller sphere which arises through his transformation of his *etheric body* ... It is the sphere which is experienced by the human being almost asleep and which rises so little into full consciousness that cannot be illuminated by human understandings” (such as the legal sphere, for which full democracy is the ideal, “where all adults are equal and

see to their rights in agreement with each other.” Here the dullness of consciousness which is the content of the transformation of the astral body suffices for the individual human being, if he is supported by agreement with other individual human beings.) Where processes go on in the *etheric body*, however, “the human being as an individual does not just have to confront another individual but he has to confront the entire society. It is therefore necessary that associations are formed, that judgments are formed by associations of individuals, that they share their experiences and that deeds and works proceed from associations, not from single personalities.” This is the *economic* sphere of the social organism, which plays out within human society in this duller consciousness.

“As human beings, we therefore stand on one hand within the three realms of nature and on the other hand as human beings within social life in accordance with the three different members of social life: the cultural member, the legal member, and the economic member.”

Rudolf Steiner summed up what has been said in the following schema:

Physical body

Etheric life:	Animal world:	Economic sphere
Astral life:	Mineral world:	Legal sphere
Ich:	Plant world:	Cultural sphere.

But now social life, which flows in this way from the membering of human nature, now works back onto the human being. “Then we observe that the cultural sphere works back on the human physical body”, albeit only very sparingly on the physical body of the current earthly life. The influence on following earthly lives is all the greater. In those we shall bear very strongly that physiognomy which comes from the spiritual environment in this earthly life just as our present physiognomy is essentially the influence of the spiritual sphere in which we were in earlier earth lives.

“The legal sphere works back on the etheric body”. After death this passes over into the cosmos. What in the etheric body comes from the legal sphere works above all into the cosmos. Standing within social life, from the viewpoint of the legal sphere, “gives my etheric body a certain configuration which, when I die, is carried over into the cosmos.” Such things are unfortunately not at all considered by modern science. It has “no awareness at all of the more intimate connections between human life and cosmic life.” The ways in which wind and weather behave on earth today, how the rhythms of our external climate behave is essentially the continuation of rhythms

which were laid down in the political life of the social organism of past ages.” “What was at one time a cultural and social legal condition becomes at another time, obviously far in the future, a condition of nature.”

The economic sphere works on the *astral* body “directly on this innermost element of human nature” (as the cultural sphere does on the physical body and the political/legal sphere on the etheric body): “And precisely because the economic sphere affects the astral body, that brotherliness which should be in the economic life is carried through the gate of death. For the astral body accompanies the human being for a time, and what is grounded in the human soul through brotherliness is borne through the gate of death and works on further. Thus appears that which I have spoken about from other viewpoints⁸ precisely through this viewpoint also.” The point is “to shape this economic life in such a way that the spirit impresses its stamp upon it.”

We can therefore sum up as follows:

- Cultural life works on the physical body,
- Political/legal/rights life works on the etheric body
- Economic life works on the astral body.

Yet another classification, from a completely different perspective, is brought by the above-mentioned lecture of 5 September 1920, where the subject is *what is to become active* as a new element in social life *through spiritual science*.

Here Rudolf Steiner speaks about how our *cultural life* is basically only an out-of-date heritage from the ancient Orient. It has become ever more deadened. New life has to come into it (but this is only possible when cultural life is not dependent on the very differently organised structure of rights and the State or by economic life.) “We bring life into it, we permeate with an etheric body the cultural sphere around us from that which comes from the living human being.” “That is what has to be inwardly understood. One has to feel how life streams in: an unsuspected depth of soul [must come] out into autonomous cultural life! How we actually enliven this autonomous cultural life is by basing it on human individuality.”

The legal sphere, born from semi-conscious instincts in Roman times, has been further developed since. Legal paragraphs have been elaborated in which the *human being* has had very little participation. “We have to go back to a life which perceives that which is in the law in the way in which we perceive outer sense phenomena. We must relate in a living way to the organism of the law. This is the true meaning of democracy: that the human element can enter into the dead paragraphs, that compassion is felt in what otherwise lies there as dead paragraphs. And so, just

as in the cultural sphere, through what can be born out of spiritual science, *life* enters in, so through what is willed in spiritual science, *feeling* will enter into the legal sphere. Feeling will become that which lives between people.”

What will be important in the economic sphere is that it will be permeated by reason. The economic sphere operates very much in unconsciousness. The individual is not at all in a position to penetrate in a fully consciousness way what goes on in the economic sphere. Associations must be formed in which the experience of the one can be complemented by that of the other. Out of these associations, out of the formation of such groups [economic] judgments must then form and what then goes on in economic life must be the result of these collective judgments. In this way reason will prevail in economic life. “What we have developed individually in our I – reason – will become something that permeates the entire economic sphere when people work in associations in this way. Thus we will take the impulse in our etheric body out into the social order, into the cultural life by enlivening the cultural life. What pulsates in our astral bodies as feeling, we will carry into the legal sphere, and what pulsates in our I as reason we will carry into the economic sphere.”

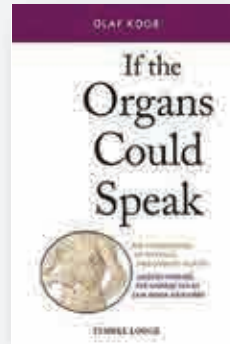
Rudolf Steiner provides the following schema:

1. Cultural sphere:	Life:	Etheric Body
2. Legal life:	Feeling:	Astral Body
3. Economic life:	Reason:	ich.

Notes

- 1 in Dornach (Collected Works GA 223).
- 2 Rudolf Steiner, “Anthroposophische und akademische Wissenschaften”, Zurich, Vienna, Stuttgart 1950, 4th lecture, pp. 126/127, 129.
- 3 in Stuttgart (GA 192).
- 4 The Social Question as a Question of Consciousness (GA 189).
- 5 on 14 December 1919 in Dornach (GA 194).
- 6 in Stuttgart (GA 192).
- 7 in Dornach (GA 199).
- 8 Compare this with what was said in Section VIII above on 7 March 1919 (n. 4 above) and 23 April 1919 (n. 6 above).

Our Authors’ Publications



Olaf Koob

If the Organs Could Speak

The Foundations of Physical and Mental Health

Understanding the Character of our Inner Anatomy

At a time of increasing volatility in healthcare provision, we are all having to become more responsible for our own well-being. This book – an imaginative, practical and accessible guide to our inner organs – is written for anyone who wants to improve their health and develop resilience against illness.

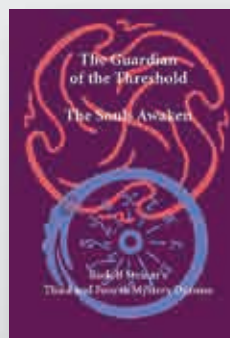
29 May 2018; 170pp; 23 x 15.5 cm; paperback

£14.99

ISBN 9781912230150



Our Authors’ Publications



Translated by Richard Ramsbotham

The Guardian of the Threshold

The Souls Awaken

Rudolf Steiner’s Third and Fourth Mystery Dramas

Since the 100th anniversary of Rudolf Steiner’s first Mystery Drama in 2010 there has been a wide revival of interest in his Mystery Dramas within the English-speaking world. There have been several productions in America and the UK and new Mystery Dramas have even been written imagining possible continuations of Rudolf Steiner’s dramas.

256 pages, paperback, 21 x 15 cms.

£14.99

ISBN 9780 946206 797



KOLISKO ARCHIVE
www.koliskoarchive.com

THREEFOLDING: 100 YEARS

Karl Heyer: Esoteric Foundations and Aspects of Social Threefolding

Indications by Rudolf Steiner



Karl Heyer (1868–1964)

Karl Heyer (1888–1964), lawyer and historian, was one of the foremost pupils of Rudolf Steiner. He was active in the threefold movement of 1919 and out of his experiences wrote a synopsis of the threefold impulse, from an exoteric and esoteric point of view. This appeared originally as an appendix in the book *Wer ist der deutsche Volksgeist?* (not yet translated). Heyer, who had a key conversation with Rudolf Steiner in 1911 and wrote an inspired book on Kaspar Hauser (not yet translated), had a broad overview of this new social impulse. Heyer's text, which will be published as a series in the forthcoming issues, can serve as an excellent, profound introduction for anyone trying to grasp the relevance of this new social impulse, born of both physical and spiritual insights. We are very glad that this key text by Heyer is now accessible to our readers in English translation.

T.H. Meyer

IX The Opponent

On many phenomena of the recent past and present, especially, however, on all the endeavours that will be made for social threefolding in the future, a most significant light falls which can make clear to us who the *opponent* is in the struggle for social threefolding, a light from what Rudolf Steiner said about the incarnation of Ahriman that lies before us.¹ The most important points about this incarnation will first be briefly recapitulated:

At the beginning of the 3rd millennium before Christ in the East, in China, there was an incarnation of *Lucifer*. Lucifer was incarnated in a man of flesh and blood, just as Christ was later incarnated in the man Jesus of Nazareth. This incarnation of Lucifer had given the ancient pagan wisdom its special colouring. But since the middle of the 15th century a new incarnation of a supernatural being had been in preparation. "And just," said Rudolf Steiner², "as there was an incarnation of Lucifer in the flesh and an incarnation of Christ in the flesh, so, before only a part of the third millennium of the post-Christian era has elapsed, there will be, in the West, an actual incarnation of *Ahriman*: Ahriman in the flesh. Humanity on earth cannot escape this incarnation of Ahriman. It will come inevitably. But what matters is that people shall find their right vantage point from which to confront this earthly Ahrimanic incarnation." Rudolf Steiner then speaks about which factors in present-day culture work in favour of the activity of the coming incarnation of

Ahriman [which will take place "in the West of the Earth" or in the western world³], for a being such as Ahriman "steers certain forces in human development such that they work to the very special advantage of this being. And it would be bad if human beings were to be asleep in regard to this and did not recognise that certain phenomena which occur in human life are a preparation for the incarnation of Ahriman. Only through doing this will human beings find the right standpoint to be able to recognise that in this or that series of facts which belong to human development, one must recognise how Ahriman is preparing his earthly existence." It would be most favourable for Ahriman "if he could arrange things that the greatest number of people had no idea about what could be advantageous to his existence", if people considered these preparations for the Ahriman incarnation "to be something progressive, good, and appropriate for human development." If, as it were, Ahriman could slip into a sleeping humanity, that would be the most pleasant situation for him."

One of the facts in human development which in this sense is clearly to be understood as an impulse of Ahriman Rudolf Steiner calls the spread of the belief that the mechanical-mathematical conception of the universe in the sense of Galileo or Copernicus is really understood to be at work out there in the cosmos. The Ahrimanic incarnation would also benefit if as many people as possible were to feel that it would be sufficient for public life if people were only to concern

themselves with the satisfaction of their economic needs. “Another stream in our life today which Ahriman needs in order to promote his incarnation” is the so-called national principle which bases itself in the blood. Furthermore, the tendency to apply modern intelligence (which is necessary for natural science) to social life and intellectual life as happens especially in the various [political] party opinions. So then the “simple devotion to the Gospels” wants to know nothing of any spiritual deepening of the Gospels, which our times sorely need.

In his lecture of 2 November 1919⁴ Rudolf Steiner then speaks in relation to the whole context of social threefolding, above all the need for an autonomous cultural/spiritual life, and says: “Either modern civilised humanity will have to become comfortable with accepting such an autonomous spiritual/cultural life, or modern civilisation will have to face its downfall, and something will have to emerge for the future of mankind from the Asian cultures. Anyone who still does not believe that things are so serious today also promotes in a certain way the preparation for the future Ahrimanic incarnation. ... the Ahrimanic incarnation will therefore be particularly promoted if people decline to establish an autonomous free spiritual and cultural life and instead further allow cultural and spiritual life to remain stuck in the circle of economy or in the life of the State. For the power that has the greatest interest in such a further amalgamation of the cultural and spiritual life with the economic life

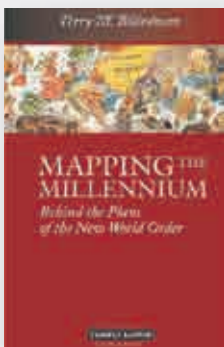
and the life of rights and law – that is precisely the Ahrimanic power. The Ahrimanic power will feel a free spiritual life to be a kind of darkness, and it will feel itself as if burnt by people’s interest in this free spiritual and cultural life - burnt by a fire of the soul, a strongly burning fire. It is therefore incumbent on people in the near future to establish this free spiritual and cultural life in order to find the right standpoint, the right relation to the Ahrimanic incarnation.” It is really necessary to “realise that the old unitary State as such, completely irrespective of what kind of constitution, what kind of structure it has, whether democracy or republic or monarchy or whatever else – if it is a unitary State, if it is not threefolded, then it is on the path to the Ahrimanic incarnation.”

Can it be more clearly expressed who the actual opponent of social threefolding is? And that the struggle for social threefolding is in the most direct sense a part of Michael’s struggle against the dragon?

Notes

- 1 Lectures of 27 October 1919 in Zurich (GA 193), 1, 2, 15 November 1919 in Dornach (GA 191) and 28 December 1919 in Stuttgart (GA 195)
- 2 In the lecture of 1 November 1919 in Dornach (GA 191).
- 3 Lecture of 28 December 1919 in Stuttgart (GA 195).
- 4 In the work mentioned in n. 2 (GA 191).

Our Authors’ Publications



Terry Boardman

Mapping the Millennium

Behind the Plans of the New World Order

In a quest to discover the truth behind the twentieth century’s disastrous record of conflict and war, Terry Boardman considers two contradictory approaches to history: so-called cock-up theory and conspiracy theory. Could there be truth to the often-dismissed concept of conspiracy in history: the manipulation of external events by groups and individuals mostly hidden from the public eye? In the work of philosopher and scientist Rudolf Steiner, Boardman finds convincing evidence of the existence of secretive circles in the West, which have plans for humanity’s long-term future. Steiner indicated that such “brotherhoods” had prepared for world war in the twentieth century, and had instructed their members, using redrawn maps as a guide, on how Europe was to be changed.

13 May 2013; 192 pp; 21.5 x 13.5 cm; paperback

£13.99

ISBN 9781906999483

 **TEMPLE LODGE PUBLISHING**