

ANTHROPOSPHICUM

1920-2020 Historical Symptomatology : 100 years after the Treaty of Versailles. 100 years after the opening of the First Goetheanum.

Shortly before 1920, Rudolf Steiner's impulse for a social threefolding had not been taken up. Rudolf Steiner opened the First Goetheanum in 1920 with a series of lectures that focused on three areas: Religion, Art and Science. In reaction to the catastrophe of the First World War, the former esoteric ritual work was transformed into First Class meditations.

September 26th is the 100th anniversary of the opening of the First Goetheanum. In the year 2020, with the coronavirus crisis, history presents us with a new great challenge for society, for our economy; and all this within a culture that is facing materialistic challenges as never before. Of course we may feel the urge to resist or contribute to changes in politics, economics and culture; but how can we do so if we want to remain faithful to a spiritual challenge?

Rudolf Steiner said after the catastrophe of the fire at the First Goetheanum that this was a consequence of the "sleepiness" of the anthroposophists. Similarly, leaders around the outbreak of World War I apparently "sleepwalked" into the catastrophe without being aware of the spiritual realities surrounding them.

This theme of "drowsiness" or "sleepiness" is part of a broader and deeper theme which has been raised in recent years in the anthroposophical world in a broad spectrum: the question of a return to esoteric work.

It may be well remembered that Sergei Prokofiev and Peter Selg called for a need for an esoteric deepening of First Class esoteric work. Even if one looks at the most recent publication "Steiner Studies", one can see similar demands for a more conscious and intensive engagement with questions of spiritual research and questions of the path of knowledge. The subject has recently been taken up further in Judith von Halle's work. It is a theme that connects.

The esoteric in our society must be seen in the light of the culture and the world we live in. The twentieth century saw dramatic changes in culture and society after the Second World War. The media changed, art changed, and our psychology changed. In fact, we all grew up in a world radically different from the world of the 1920s: before the devastation and catastrophes that followed. A world was built on ruins. A new world with ideologies, and new media had been added.

Should humanity continue to sleep through new disasters and challenges? The answer is undoubtedly and unfortunately yes. But, as always, history is led and changed by an avant-garde. As Rudolf Steiner has so often said, the important attitude to bring to esoteric work is first and foremost respect for the spiritual world.

This is to be our starting point to return to some of Rudolf Steiner's First-Class teachings and the Karma Lectures. With regard to art, we will see what two special stories can tell us about such a process of spiritual awakening. One is familiar to all: the fairy tale of Sleeping Beauty, but with a story that takes us back to the Arthurian era. The other is a wonderful alchemical mystery play by William Shakespeare "Pericles Prince of Tyre". Both stories will lead us deeper into the themes of the spiritual path, which we will complement with meditations from the First Class.

Anthroposophicum is an ambitious undertaking, but we hope to work together with others who feel the same drive and need to engage in such esoteric work in this challenging but hopefully bright future that is dawning around us. In this sense, it is a task of religious renewal with which we are bringing together art and humanities on Michaelmas 2020. We look forward to meeting people who wish to join us.