

2015 / 2016: Understanding Contemporary Events of the Christ-cycle.

By Richard Cooper

Introducing the Christ-cycle for the study of History

Significant events are taking place in Europe. Unprecedented numbers of people are undertaking long and perilous journeys to find work and hope of a better future. The existing balance of power in the world is increasingly being called into question. With 2015, we saw a mass influx of close to a million refugees and migrants to Germany, and on the 23rd June, the UK voted to leave the European Union. When new ideas are born, what ripens after 33 years, mirroring the life of Christ, will further develop through the following 66 years, to reach completion in the hundredth year. This process can be also seen reflected in the course of the year; an idea born in the depths of winter, reaches fruition in spring, then through summer and autumn culminates. The time span is based on the life of Christ, and acknowledges the important place of Christ's incarnation at the turning point of time and its continuing influence on history. Knowledge of this cycle can illuminate events undertaken for humanity and reveal connections between them. Conscious understanding of this process has become increasingly possible since Christ's return in the etheric from the 1930s. For further understanding of the relationship of Christ's return in the etheric and the connection to nature see Rudolf Steiner's Calendar of the Soul.

Contemporary Events

Contemporary politics is dominated by what can be characterised as a number of core themes, around which debate focuses, in Europe and America in more stark relief, but equally in the wider world. These core areas are: immigration, financial crisis, and democracy. These three topics receive their focus due to the key underlying principles of economy, culture, and politics, as outlined in the threefold social form of Rudolf Steiner. In each of the three areas, a crisis can be seen. The crisis of immigration highlights the crisis of defining borders in relation to multinational forms of organisation. The crisis of media, culture, and education, show the underlying need to ascertain truth in cultural form, and the long-term implications for moral ideas, tradition, and society. The crisis of democracy, exemplifies the political need to engage with new ideas for the construction of a society fair and creative for all of its participants.

When we look at the recent Brexit vote in the UK we can see a number of political figures that took on the role of 'provocateur': they provoked normally more docile sections of population to be politically active. A similar process is currently happening with Donald Trump in America. We have avoided the term 'agent provocateur' to carefully avoid the assertion of any particular political standpoint here. Figures in the UK such as Nigel Farage, Russell Brand, Boris Johnson, and Nigel

Lawson, were the most vocal in their exposition of reasons for leaving the EU – the remain argument in the vote also had various endorsements across the international media and political worlds. Indeed to highlight this changing political and increasingly polarised landscape, one must only look to UKIP, the United Kingdom Independence Party who came to take large chunk of the popular vote in the last general election, mirroring similar anti-EU developments in Germany (Alternative for Deutschland) and France (Front Nationale). The four figures above, in a way symptomatic of the current trend, spoke to cross party and cross class boundaries, by speaking to specific segments of the population. The vote divided the country on precisely the underlying core issues: immigration, finance, and democracy. Characteristic of both sides of the debate, and characteristic of changes in Europe and the world, is that politics has become intertwined with, and is facilitated by media. But perhaps more pertinently, we should recognize the political polarization.

From the Middle East to Europe: Dynamic Tensions

Going back in history, one hundred years before 2016, we can look for the source of the impulses reaching culmination around us. It brings us to 1916, two years before the end of the First World War. What happened in this year that can enlighten our understanding of the contemporary situation? In 1916 we find the Sykes Pikot agreement, or Asia Minor Agreement of 1916. Initially a secret agreement, not to be revealed to the public until 1917, it divided the Middle East into spheres of interest, between the presumed victors of the war, Britain and France, and with tacit approval from Russia. The Ottomans, present day Turkey, had fought on the side of Germany. The Sykes Pikot agreement is often referred to as the basis for the geopolitical understanding of the region in the twentieth century. But its contemporary relevance is seen to be coming to an end, especially with recent developments in Turkey. After 33 years how did this impulse reach fruition? When we move forward from 1916, 33 years into the century, we come to 1949, shortly after the founding of Israel in 1948, and close on the back of the end of the Second World War. What we see, at this time, is the founding of NATO: 4 April, 1949. The victorious powers Britain and France form agreements to maintain the balance of power and stability after the ravages of war. Notably, the split in 1949 has transformed from a split between France and Britain in 1916, to a split between Russia (later the Communist Bloc) and NATO that continues to this day. Germany post 1945, initially divided along the lines of the 'great powers', consisted of the French, British and American occupation zones, and the Russian, later transformed into the Eastern German DDR. West Germany was integrated into NATO on May 9th, 1954.

The British become, in the course of the twentieth century, increasingly more involved in Europe, while the Russian's become more involved in world geopolitics in the Cold War. How can we understand this enigma, that not only America, but also Russia should take on the global leadership in the twentieth century? The situation only becomes more understandable when we look to the term 'global governance'. We can see that with NATO, something is established that is the fruit of the conflicts and agreements surrounding the First, and Second World War's. That Christ-cycle fruition date of 1949, of the Sykes Pikot agreement of 1916, is expressed by the dialectic that plays out throughout the twentieth century as communism versus capitalism, East versus West. But more broadly, this fruition date of 1949 is circulated by events that act as satellites to this date: The United Nations was founded in 1945, and The Central Intelligence Agency was created on 26 July 1947. In

relation to the contemporary time frame 2015/2016, we are faced with the culmination of these key pillars of the world geopolitical system. We should therefore look to see our present imagination of the system emerges, aware of the aforementioned dynamics.

Can we find current events that reflect these dynamics or that act as 'satellites' to the present 2015/16 time span, as they did to the fruition date of 1949? Firstly, when we move on one hundred years from 1916 we come to 2016, date of the Brexit decision of the 23rd June. Secondly, the other notable event of the year 2015 was the immigration crisis in Europe, in summer 2015. Close to a million refugees were granted unrestricted access to move through Europe to seek asylum in Germany. Figures about origin are disputed; however, many claims for asylum can be clearly ascertained to come from the countries of the Middle East affected by the wars in Syria, while others have noted the influx from many African countries seeking work, i.e. economic migrants. When we move 66 and two third years from 1949 and the founding of NATO 4 April, we come to December 2015: The 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference. The form of world governance that was born in 1945 with the United Nations has found its echo in the present 2015/16 time frame. The Climate Change Conference was held in Paris, France, from 30 November to 12 December 2015. The International Trade Union Confederation called for the goal to be "zero carbon, zero poverty". We see 195 countries agree to a package of regulation that before had never been reached.

Yet, this is in stark contrast to the disparities and geopolitical tensions we see in the world today. As Rudolf Steiner identified, the development of humanity is a spiritual question, of politics and culture, as much as trade agreement and consumption. To go deeper into what is actually taking place in the world, we have to continue asking questions. One pressing question concerns how we, as world citizens, can come to take part in the political process, and policies developed by the United Nations. We must ask about the ideals underpinning the United Nations, and whether we can place our trust in them. Further, we must ask why debate centers on the politics of terrorism, religion, immigration, and trade, and so little about the politics of the United Nations. The contemporary world stands at a juncture when we can call into question the political and military agreements that, after a hundred years, stand in need of renewal. While conferences are conducted and their legitimacy is unquestioned, sources for new ideas for world governance, beyond environmentalism and sustainability are absent. How has this been achieved?

Media Magick on the World Stage

Rudolf Steiner spoke about the fall of the spirits of darkness, and the establishment of the Michael School in the spiritual world that ended in 1879. The advent of Michael as time spirit of the current age is one of the important spiritual historical facts behind the establishment of Anthroposophy, and we see a culmination of Anthroposophy as Rudolf Steiner spoke of, at the end of the twentieth century. At the same time as the school of Michael in the spiritual world, Rudolf Steiner spoke of an Ahrimanic school of magic being developed under the earth. Now, these are far reaching occult themes, which require some preparation and meditating upon, but their affects and consequences can be discerned. The primary aim of magic is to work with the will to affect change in the self or others. It works with symbol, ritual, and evocation. The growth of occultism, in its more traditional forms, was seen in the lodges, as discussed by Rudolf Steiner when speaking about the

background to the First World War. Rudolf Steiner spoke of the time we are living in now, as the time when Ahriman would incarnate in the West and lead this occult school of Ahrimanic clairvoyance. He warned that through the machinations of the media, changes both natural and psychological could be affected throughout the world that we would be hard pressed to recognise.

With the advent of technological advances, it has become possible to use the media to perform a kind of mind control. This will be apparent to many seeking to confront these questions of freedom in relation to the upbringing of children, and questions of education. For it is a kind of magic to be able to switch off the normal functioning of thought and feeling and supplant them with feelings of hype, trend, and spectacle. Symbols perpetuated through the media are taken in unconsciously, and thereby are able to work into the etheric body. In Hollywood, it is well known that actors, singers and stars, are initiated into occult lodges, and thereby partake in rituals that affect the etheric body to a greater degree. One phenomenon that can be seen in the world of pop and rap is that stars will invent a stage name. This name can come to embody an energy that is completely averse to the original character and personality of the person involved. Numerous examples can be found of this. Strikingly, many Disney child actors and child actresses have, after a certain point in their teenage years, developed markedly suggestive forms of behaviour, clothing and lifestyle, including drugs. They are indeed in psychological terminology 'sexualised'. This is the danger of the old forms of spiritual ceremony and ritual. Through participating in complex rituals, without adequate moral development, the astral body is so affected, that with time, another being can come to live inside the soul, undermining its morality. This process can come to be embodied in the society and culture at large. This is one aspect of what Steiner was warning about with his words on the advent of the Asuric powers in evolution.

Ritual Occult in the Lodges

If we look behind the seeming coincidental events that appear in the mainstream media and culture, we can then ask if there is anything in the symbolism of these events that might lead us to understand the course of geopolitics more intensely. For those unfamiliar with Freemasonry and Jesuitism, both organisations work with knowledge of ritual and magic beyond what is normally conceived. They are interested to a degree far beyond the normal theologian or professor in the developmental forces and impulses of humanity, to guide and control them. Rudolf Steiner represents that middle way, which sees that it is detrimental to any longer keep these things hidden from view. To exemplify these interweaving themes we shall take the example of 'Prince', which shall highlight the link to international politics, and the occult influence of media. Prince was a singer famous from the 1980s. He was notable for his pronouncement in 1998, three years before the World Trade Centre attacks of September 11th 2001, for saying at a concert "Osama Bin Laden's getting ready to bomb". He also explained in various talk shows his understanding of subjects such as the New World Order. How and why would such a figure be pronouncing on such events as 911 in advance?

Prince was found dead in an elevator April 21, 2016, with his socks, pants and shirt inside out. The cause of death was said to be an overdose: it was said to be a mistaken consumption of a drug 50 times the supposed strength. The student of fairy tale and folklore will recognise, that

wearing clothing inside out is the means by which one prevents oneself, in the forest, from being led astray by 'fairies'. It is one of the references in this symbolic construction. The heightened consciousness that would weave these symbols into a form of ceremonial magic, works on a level beneath the normal appreciation of reality. There are those in the entertainment industry intensely aware of these subjects. For the members of these Hollywood lodges the elevator symbolises the ability to rise and descend to different levels of spiritual reality. They place themselves in connection with an extremely intelligent form of super-consciousness; the drug that is 50 times stronger than intended is the media itself. The protection against its harmful, indeed fatal affect is to not allow yourself to be led astray by the fairies. To see things in their mirrored aspect means to read and learn the messages that underlie the psychodrama performed before us. It is indeed a profound knowledge to be respected here. From an anthroposophical perspective it is a warning about the powers of the Asuric beings. When we don't think through the impressions we see in the world around us; when we don't think with an awakened I, we slumber and are led 'unawares'; we are under the power of the elementals.

The traditions of Freemasonry encourage their pupils to undertake a thorough study of mythology, folklore, religion, and science. Their libraries and traditions contain a wealth of information on the pursuit of knowledge undertaken by humanity over thousands of years. The mysteries of number and letter, as dealt with in the Kaballah, the Tarot, are thoroughly studied, there is an awareness of how the dead work with humanity, and the effect of image and symbol on the human psyche. The tradition is aware, through many hundreds of years work in concealment, how messages may be transmitted by code through bodily gesture, sound, number, and image. This is how initiates may be informed of activities that may separate individual members physically. The following shall serve as an example. In one of the older traditions of folklore in Britain is the 'Greene King', a kind of 'Pan' figure. It is often seen as a pub name. Greene King is also a brewery in the UK. The release of the beer 'the purple reign' coincided with the death of Prince, famous for his song 'Purple Rain', and often seen to sport the colour purple. His death came shortly before the festival of 'Beltane' on May 1st. At the same time, 1000 fires to commemorate the 90th birthday of Queen Elisabeth 1st were lit throughout the UK. Those that know what may be hidden and communicated in events and numbers are able to read the links between various seemingly disparate events enacted on the world stage. Rudolf Steiner often said that many things may only be given out as indications, in order to encourage meditation, and hint at truths.

Karmic Relationships

With the 33 year rhythm of the Christ-cycle we can come to see how the growth of media through the twentieth century has increasingly shrouded the development of world governance. Although world governance is what the world needs, this should be developed on the basis of open and active political, scientific, and economic development. The assimilation of immigrants in the countries of Europe due to conflict in the Middle East, must be undertaken with humanity, yet the public rightfully wants to know the ideals and political impulses with which the causes have been brought about. Without a full appreciation of the spiritual context in which we live, this will inevitably appear confusing and lead to political resignation. It is no use to cry 'conspiracy', as this word has become the means by which an alternative view of reality is silenced. 2015/2016 presents the

possibility for a new start, and new socio-political ideas for the coming century, and the chance to call to memory the individuals connection to the spiritual world. Ludwig Polzer-Hoditz, a close student of Rudolf Steiner stated the following in 1939:

“Since the death of Rudolf Steiner, my great anthroposophical interest was devoted to understanding destiny as it plays out in people’s lives. The earth is the stage on which the human soul makes itself ripe for life in other planetary conditions.” 2

Rudolf Steiner focus on the subject of karma, in his series of lectures before he died, and the importance he placed on them, can be seen reflected here. We can find encouragement when we turn to the study of the Christ-cycle, for we then recognise, as Polzer-Hoditz did, the importance of understanding individual karma in relation to it. Can we therefore find, a specific individual within this Christ-cycle, a specific work of art from the cultural sphere, from the time of 1949, to enlighten us to what has ceased to be appropriate to the further development of humanity? Indeed we can, and it confirms the validity of the things one can see in the spirit: It was the publishing of 1984 by George Orwell. This work identifies the problems of state brainwashing, mind control, language and sexuality, and thereby enlightens the whole dynamic of interests in this unfolding history. It is a part of the karma of the British people, to bring these things to consciousness, and is quite fitting that it should lie on George Orwell’s path. Several of the British modernists of Orwell’s time were steeped in occultism, and Orwell’s most sustained critique of the occult’s intersection with politics is his essay on the poet Yeats in 1943:

“With their insistence that history moves in cycles, occultists bolster the ultra-right’s most deeply cherished hope that the modern values of liberty, equality and fraternity will shortly be superseded by an older commitment to discipline, hierarchy and charity: ‘It does not much matter if the lower orders are getting above themselves, for, after all, we shall soon be returning to an age of tyranny.’ 1

Much can be learnt from this heartfelt plea to modernity and criticism of the occult. Similarly, it is Orwell’s critic of the occult’s opposition to Christian values that can be seen to underpin his work of 1984. Winston, the main protagonist’s paranormal ability to see into the future is the great danger to the ruling party. The governing party’s obsession with rewriting history and its tyranny through an extreme form of philosophical idealism are symbolic references to the world he saw growing around him. When we look through his eyes, to present concerns, we can thus question the political debates placed before us, and look to what they may conceal from us. Anthroposophy is exactly the answer to the questions and fears lying in George Orwell’s soul. It lives, even in those men like George Orwell, who professed themselves to be atheists, but felt the needs of their fellow men. When we follow men such as these, who professed atheism in life, in the spiritual world after death, it is precisely the anthroposophical view that they are seeking in their communications with those incarnated today. With the hundred year centenary of the end of the First World War shortly upon us, the present day political situation in relation to the United Nations must be clearly understood, for this will inform our understanding of the spiritual and geopolitical context. 2015/2016 will see the beginning of a new chapter for the world and for Anthroposophy as soon as we can clearly identify that which has culminated. 3

1 George Orwell, Review of the Development of William Butler Yeats by V.K.Narayana Menon, Horizon, January 1943.

2 Ludwig Polzer Hoditz Ein Europaer Thomas Meyer Perseus Verlag 2008.

3 Rudolf Steiner's Zeitgeschichtliche Betrachtungen. Das Karma der Unwahrhaftigkeit – Erster Teil Kosmische und menschliche Geschichte, Band IV. Dreizehn Vorträge, Dornach 4. bis 31. Dezember 1916 und Basel 21. Dezember 1916