

Rudolf Steiner: From Theosophy to Anthroposophy (1902-1913)

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ABSTRACT

The Theosophical Society, founded in New York in 1875, was, at the turn of the Twentieth Century, a global phenomenon with 100,000 members. New Age philosopher Dr Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925) was appointed as the first Secretary General of the German Section of the Theosophical Society on 19 October 1902. The Theosophical Society offered Rudolf Steiner a platform, a ready-made audience, infrastructure, and the insider experience of the world's leading New Age spiritual society. The success of the Theosophical Society demonstrated that there was a public appetite to hear about reincarnation, karma, maya, kamaloka, and other Eastern and alternative spiritual ideas. The Theosophical Society provided Rudolf Steiner with a capable, multilingual, and determined personal assistant, Marie von Sivers (1867-1948). For Rudolf Steiner, the Theosophical Society offered the ideal training ground for what would be, a decade later, his life's work, the Anthroposophical Society. Rudolf Steiner grew the membership of the German Section of the Theosophical Society from 377 in 1905 to 3,702 in 1913. He earned cash from ticketing of his lectures and his Mystery plays, and from book sales of his personal publishing house, 'Philosophisch-Theosophischer Verlag'. Another enterprise, the 'Johannes-Bau-Verein' (Johannes Building Association) was founded in 1911, independent of the Theosophical Society, to build a theatre in Munich to present Rudolf Steiner's plays. The building application was rejected by the Munich municipal authorities in 1912. The resistance to the proposed building in Munich provided an impetus for the move to build in Dornach, Switzerland. The Anthroposophical Society was founded on 28 December 1912 in Cologne, Germany. Most of the members of the German Section of the Theosophical Society followed Rudolf Steiner into the Anthroposophical Society. The Theosophical Society expelled Rudolf Steiner from the Society on 7 March 1913. The foundation stone for the Goetheanum (then still called the 'Johannesbau') was laid on 20 September 1913. The Theosophical Society had served as the ideal prototype and springboard for founding and growing the Anthroposophical Society.

Keywords: Annie Besant, Anthroposophical Society, Esotericism, Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, Marie Von Sivers, Theosophical Society.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The New Age philosopher, Dr Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925), was the most prolific author and lecturer of the Twentieth Century on philosophic topics. He was "always" referred to as "the doctor" by his devotees (Landau, 1936, p.304).

It was only at age 51 years, at the end of 1912, that Rudolf Steiner 'found his swing' and founded the Anthroposophical Society. In the years that were then left to him, he seeded New Age movements in education, agriculture, architecture, dance, medicine, and art; movements that persist to this day.

The present paper considers the decade immediately prior to Rudolf Steiner's founding and development of the Anthroposophical Society. It was as Secretary General of the German Section of the Theosophical Society (from 1902 to 1913) that he honed his skills in organizational management and development, publishing, lecturing, mesmerizing audiences, and recruiting followers and funds. It was the decade in which he was teamed up with Marie von Sivers (later to be his wife Marie Steiner) (1867-1948) as his personal assistant and impresario. The decade-long apprenticeship served in the Theosophical Society, gave Rudolf Steiner the opportunity to refine a galaxy of skills that he would carry forward to build the Anthroposophical Society in the years remaining him, 1913 to 1925.

II. METHODS

The present paper draws on contemporary documentation as well as current scholarship, and especially on eyewitness and personal accounts of participants in, and observers and commentators on, the events under consideration. Verbatim quotations are used where this captures the spirit of the times and seems the most informative option. WorldCat (worldcat.org) and AbeBooks (abebooks.com) have been useful for published works. DeepL (deepl.com) and Google Translate (translate.google.com) are acknowledged for assistance in translating various texts.

III. RESULTS

“In his frock coat and his large black bow tie, Dr. Steiner suggested both a scholar and a poet” (Landau, 1936, p.46). On 19 October 1902, Dr. Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925) was appointed to the position of the General Secretary of the German Section of the Theosophical Society (Selg, 2015). This appointment was terminated when he was expelled from the Theosophical Society on 7 March 1913, having served a decade in this Theosophy leadership role. A Theosophical Society view would be of Rudolf Steiner's duplicity. While within the bosom of the Theosophical Society, Rudolf Steiner founded the Anthroposophical Society and migrated most of the members of the German Section of the Theosophical Society to his new entity. The Theosophical Society and the Anthroposophical Society have always shared much in common, including their parallel rise, and more recent decline.

A. Theosophical Society

The Theosophical Society was founded in New York, USA, on 17 November 1875. The founders included Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831-1891) (who liked to be known as ‘HPB’), Colonel Henry Steel Olcott (1832-1907), and William Quan Judge (1851-1896). In 1882 Blavatsky and Olcott moved the headquarters of the Theosophical Society to Adyar (Madras, now Chennai), India, where it remains to this day. Judge stayed in New York and led a breakaway group of US Theosophists. British social reformist, Annie Besant (1847-1933), met Blavatsky in 1890 in London, she became an ardent Theosophist, and she took over the Presidency of the Theosophical Society from Olcott after his death.

When Rudolf Steiner stepped in to the Theosophical Society in 1902, it was a flourishing international movement offering adherents a mashup of esotericism, mysticism, spiritualism, occultism, metaphysics, Buddhism and Hinduism. There were reportedly 100,000 Theosophical Society adherents (Lightfoot, 2019; The Register, 1907) with lodges and/or sections around the world, including in USA, Britain, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, France, India, Burma, Ceylon and China.

The Theosophical Society was proof that there was an appetite for such a quasi-religious entity. Blavatsky was the prototype leader - a theatrical, charismatic character. She was a prolific author of mystical works (Caldwell, 2019) that fuelled and funded the movement, and that mystified some and bamboozled others.

According to the Chambers Encyclopaedia of 1927: “Theosophy ... in our own day its messenger was a woman of Russian birth, Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831-91), who was initiated in Tibet, and whose works form the most complete exposition of the esoteric philosophy” (Patrick & Geddie, 1927, p.85). The Encyclopaedia continued: “The teaching of Reincarnation as the method, and Karma as the law, of evolution leads to the doctrine of universal brotherhood, which is the object of Theosophy to realise” (Patrick & Geddie, 1927, p.86).

Somewhat more critical than Chambers, was the Encyclopaedia Britannica of 1911: “If theosophy were to be judged solely by the published revelations of this ‘Secret Doctrine’ [book by Blavatsky] it would hardly be deserving of serious consideration; for the revelations appear to have been no more than a crude compilation of vague, contradictory and garbled extracts from various periodicals, books and translations. It was an article of faith with her disciples that the outward and visible Helena Petrovna Blavatsky was on certain occasions the vehicle of psychic powers of transcendent spiritual import. Although there is not much to justify such a proposition, it may be perhaps conceded that she was in many respects abnormal and that some of her work is characteristic of a process known to modern psychologists as ‘automatism’ ... the result of a spasmodic uprush to the surface of sub-conscious mental activities” (Fox-Pitt, 1911, p.790).

Religious scholar, René Guénon (1886-1951), declared in 1921 his view that the Theosophical Society is a “pseudo-religion” (Guénon, 1921, p.2-3). He stated: “the organization presently called the ‘Theosophical Society’... does not belong to any school related even indirectly to doctrines of this kind [i.e. theosophy]. Its founder, Mme Blavatsky, could have had a more or less thorough knowledge of the writings of certain theosophists, especially Jacob Boehme, and she may have picked up some of these ideas which she then inserted into her own writings along with a host of other elements of the most varied origins, but that is about all that can be said in this respect. Generally speaking, the more or less coherent theories issued or upheld by the leaders of the Theosophical Society have none of the characteristics just described

[as theosophical], apart from a certain pretension to esoterism; moreover, they are presented falsely as of Eastern origin, and if at a certain point some people deemed it necessary to add a pseudo-Christianity of a most peculiar nature, it remains no less true that their original tendency was frankly anti-Christian ... we can say plainly that between the doctrine of the Theosophical Society, or at least what is proclaimed as such, and theosophy in the true sense of the term, there is absolutely no filiation, not even on the level of ideas. Thus we reject as pure fantasy assertions tending to present the Society as the continuation of other associations ... In reality, the doctrines professed by the Theosophical Society are wholly modern, and in almost every respect are so different from those to which the name theosophy legitimately applies, that the two could never be confounded except as a result of dishonesty or ignorance: dishonesty on the part of the heads of the Society” (Guénon, 1921, p.2-3).

B. Rudolf Steiner and the Theosophical Society

At the beginning of his formal association with the Theosophical Society, Rudolf Steiner wrote: “The moment when I joined the ‘TS’ came after many years of inner development. I did not join until I knew that the spiritual forces that I must serve are present in the ‘TS’. From then on I knew that my place was in the ‘TS’” (Steiner, 1902, *as cited in* Selg, 2015, p.40).

Rudolf Steiner wrote of the 19 October 1902 meeting that: “in the presence of Annie Besant, the German section of the Theosophical Society was founded in Berlin and I was chosen as its General Secretary” (Steiner, 1928, p.286) (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1. Rudolf Steiner (standing), General Secretary of the German Section of the Theosophical Society, in the service of Annie Besant (seated) (circa 1907).

In his autobiography, Rudolf Steiner continued: “It was thus that the German section was established

under the patronage and in the presence of Mrs. Besant. At that time Mrs. Besant delivered a lecture in Berlin on the goal and the principles of Theosophy. Somewhat later we requested her to deliver Lectures in a number of German cities. Such was the case in Hamburg, Berlin, Weimar, Munich, Stuttgart, Cologne” (Steiner, 1928, p.306).

The Theosophical Society gifted Rudolf Steiner his first personal assistant. Marie von Sivers (1867-1948). She described her role: “I am the impresario who makes sure that the program can run with its complicated apparatus of dates, lessons, trains, places, rooms rentals and all kind of individual wishes” (Marie Steiner, 1905, in Selg, 2015, pp.68-69). Rudolf Steiner concurred: “Marie von Sievers [sic] made all this possible, not only because she made material sacrifices according to her ability, but because she devoted her entire effort” (Steiner, 1928, p.307).

In October 1903, Rudolf Steiner moved with his wife Anna Eunicke (1853-1911) and Marie von Sivers to a modest apartment at Motzstrasse 17, West Berlin. Anna Eunicke and Rudolf Steiner married in 1899. It had been a childless and likely a transactional marriage of convenience, Anna owned a large house at Prellerstrasse 2, Weimar (Selg, 2014) while Rudolf Steiner owned the clothes he stood in. Unsurprisingly, Anna did not find the new Berlin *à trois* residential situation tolerable, and she moved out after four months (Selg, 2015). This Berlin address served as home for a decade and, after he moved to Dornach in 1913, it continued for a further decade to serve as Rudolf Steiner's base in Berlin; the lease of Motzstrasse was finally relinquished in 1923 (Paull, 2019).

C. Members

Under the stewardship of Rudolf Steiner, the Theosophical Society grew from 377 members in 1905 to near tenfold that number, 3702 members in 1913 (Fig. 2). By the time Rudolf Steiner hived off the Anthroposophical Society from Theosophical Society, the membership of the German Section of the Theosophical Society probably mostly comprised his personal following, the members were certainly mostly recruited in his time into the Theosophical Society, and mostly by his personal endeavors.

Rudolf Steiner brought to his task an amalgam of charisma, theatricality, industry, and prolixity. In lectures, he mesmerized some and bewildered others. It was a winning formula.

Rudolf Steiner attracted loyal devotees, especially women: “Let us add that Steiner exercised an increasing influence on his disciples, and they, who in 1914 already numbered some four thousand and among whom there were many women had for him an admiration and veneration equal to what the ‘orthodox’ Theosophists - if one may use this word here - professed for Mrs. Besant” (Guénon, 1921, p.206-207).

The engineer Alexander Strakosch (1879-1958) wrote of his experience of Rudolf Steiner in the Theosophical Society years: “during the years 1908-1912 an overwhelming treasure-store of wisdom had been revealed from the spiritual worlds. During these years about 28 Lecture-Courses were given, as well as this, lectures were delivered every second or third day” (Strakosch, 1928, p.305). Polish author, Rom Landau (1899-1974), reported, as did others that: “At his lectures, he spoke without notes” (Landau, 1936, p.54).

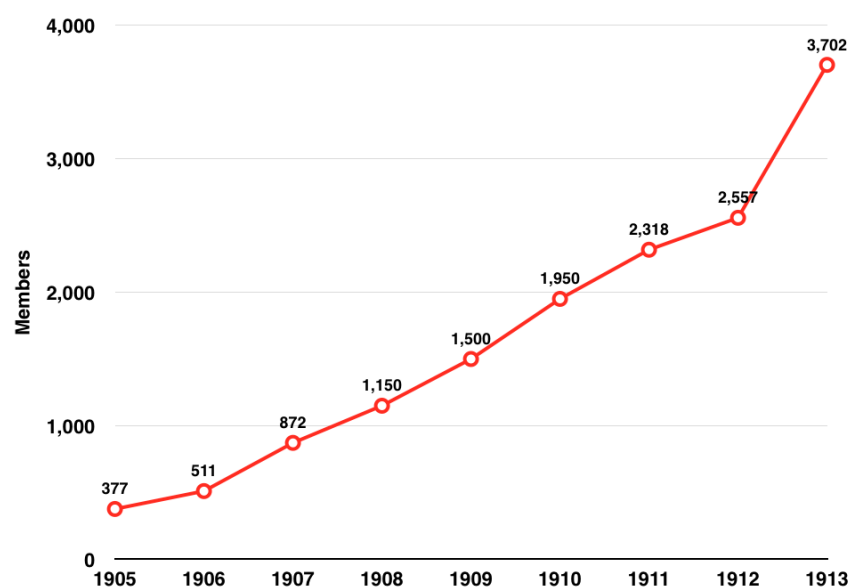


Fig. 2. Growth of 33% pa of the German Section of the Theosophical Society (1905-1913) under Rudolf Steiner as Secretary General (data source: Strakosch, 1928).

D. Publishing

Rudolf Steiner wasted little time spring-boarding several publishing ventures off his new appointment as a Theosophical Society functionary. By 1903 there was a new periodical and by 1904 there a new book, and shortly after that there was a new publishing house - albeit it was quite literally his own house, and mostly his own titles.

First was a periodical 'Lucifer', which took the name of a prior Theosophical journal of Helena Blavatsky started in 1887 but which was by then defunct (Blavatsky & Collins, 1887). "Dr. Steiner intends to publish a journal with the title 'Lucifer' of which the first issue is to come out in January 1903" (Vahan quoted in Selg, 2015, p.44).

Rudolf Steiner related in his autobiography: "At first we had to work under conditions truly the most primitive. I wrote the greater part of 'Luzifer'. Marie von Sievers carried on the correspondence. When an issue was ready, we ourselves attended to the wrapping, addressing, stamping, and personally carried the copies to the post office in a laundry basket. Very soon 'Luzifer' had so far increased its circulation that a Herr Rappaport, of Vienna, who published a journal called 'Gnosis', made an agreement with me to combine this with mine into a single publication. Then 'Luzifer' appeared under the title 'Luzifer-Gnosis'. For a long time also Herr Rappaport had a share in the undertaking. 'Luzifer-Gnosis' made the most satisfactory progress. The publication increased its circulation in a highly satisfactory fashion. Numbers which had been exhausted had to be printed a second time" (Steiner, 1928, p.306).

Lectures followed in the wake of the success of the new periodical, which: "in a relatively short time took such a form that I was called upon to deliver lectures in many cities. From the single lectures there grew in many cases cycles of lectures. At first, I tried to maintain the editorship of 'Luzifer-Gnosis' along with this lecturing; but the numbers could not be issued any longer at the right time - often coming out months later. And so there came about the remarkable fact that a periodical that was gaining new subscribers with every number could no longer be published, solely because of the overburdening of the editor. In 'Lucifer-Gnosis' I was able for the first time to publish what became the foundation of anthroposophic work. There first appeared what I had to say about the strivings that the human mind must make in order to attain to its own perceptual grasp upon spiritual knowledge" (Steiner, 1928, p.307).

In 1904, Rudolf Steiner's grandly titled book 'Theosophie: Einführung in übersinnliche Welterkenntnis und Menschenbestimmung' (Theosophy: Introduction to supernatural knowledge of the world and human destiny) was published by a Berlin publisher (Steiner, 1904). In 1910, the book appeared in English published by a New York publisher (Steiner, 1910b) (Fig. 3). The first English edition of 'Theosophy' states that: "This work, though now appearing for the first time in English dress, has not only passed into three editions in Germany, but has been translated into Russian, Swedish, Dutch, Czechish, and Italian, while a French translation is being prepared" (Steiner, 1910b, p.ix).

Rudolf Steiner forewarned his readers of his 'Theosophy' that: "One cannot read this book as one is accustomed ordinarily to read books at the present day. In certain respects every page, and even many a sentence, will have to be WORKED OUT by the reader. For only in this way can the book become to the reader what it ought to become. He who merely reads it through will not have read it at all. Its truths must be experienced, lived. Only in this sense has theosophy any value" (Steiner, 1910b, p.xii). This was a self-serving and pretentious stance by the author, which, in a nutshell, asserted that if the text was not understood, then the shortcoming lies in the reader. Considering that an author's traditional role, and a reader's fair expectation, is exposition and elucidation, Rudolf Steiner's special pleading is arguably a perverse 'cop-out'.

Rudolf Steiner argued for the exceptionalism of his book: "The book cannot be judged from the standpoint of science if the point of view adopted in forming such a judgement is not gained from the book itself" (Steiner, 1910b, p.xii). He continued: "the present age requires knowledge of the supersensible because all that a man can come to know by current methods about the world and life arouses in him numerous questions which can only be answered by means of supersensible truths" (Steiner, 1910b, p.xvi). In anticipation, he admitted that: "some people (...) cannot do otherwise than regard the contents of a book like this as a boundless absurdity" (Steiner, 1910b, p.xvii).

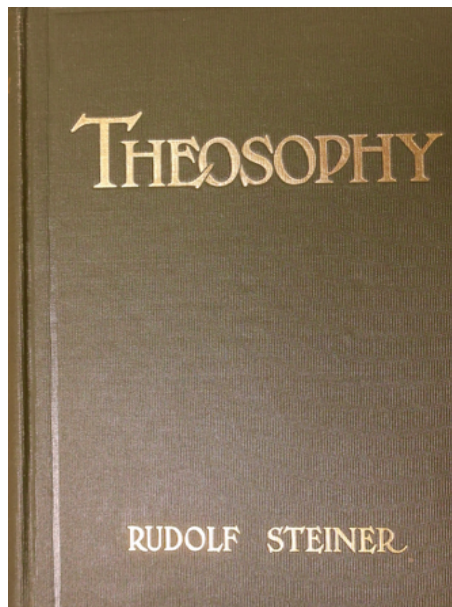


Fig. 3. Rudolf Steiner's book 'Theosophy', first English edition published in 1910 (German edition first published in 1904).

It appears that between the dates of the German (1904) and the English issue (1910) of 'Theosophy', Rudolf Steiner reasoned that while there was money to be made in books, the author was at the end of the chain in realizing funds from the process. This is a publishing truth, long justified by the publisher (generally) carrying the full financial risk of publication, and thereby expecting the benefit of the greater part of the sales if the book is successful in the marketplace, or to bear the full loss if the book flounders. In the present case, Rudolf Steiner's books sold well to devotees at lectures, conferences and the like, but poorly off the shelves of bookshops. This is likely still the case today.

Rudolf Steiner started the publishing imprint: 'Philosophisch-Theosophischer Verlag, Berlin W, Motzstrasse 17'. It appears to have begun circa 1908 and finished circa 1914 (e.g. Steiner, 1909a; 1909b; 1910a; 1910c). Rudolf Steiner was a prolific author, and from this point onwards the income from book sales appears to have been a substantial part of his income (and of his legacy and Marie Steiner's income after his death). Almost all the books published under this imprint were authored by Rudolf Steiner. The address for the publisher was Rudolf Steiner's residential address.

After the split from the Theosophical Society, and from circa 1914 to circa 1922, the new publishing imprint was tweaked to read: 'Philosophisch-Anthroposophischer Verlag, Berlin W, Motzstrasse 17' (e.g. Steiner, 1915; 1916b; 1919; 1921). During this period, with his primary residence by then in Dornach, Switzerland, the Berlin address was an address of convenience and was Rudolf Steiner's part-time residence (Paull, 2018a).

From circa 1919, the imprint was further tweaked to read: 'Philosophisch-Anthroposophischer Verlag am Goetheanum, Dornach, Schweiz'. This third iteration of Rudolf Steiner's personal imprint appeared contemporaneously with the Berlin imprint (e.g. Steiner, 1922b; 1924; 1926) for some time. The Berlin imprint ceased to be used after circa 1922. These three imprints were Rudolf Steiner's personal property, and the proceeds his personal proceeds (and not that of the Theosophical Society nor the Anthroposophical Society).

Rudolf Steiner's book of 1911, 'The Education of Children from the Standpoint of Theosophy' was published by the 'Theosophical Publishing Society', London (Steiner, 1911) (Fig. 4). The book was retitled and published in 1922 as 'The Education of the Child in the Light of Anthroposophy' now published by 'The Threefold Commonwealth', London (Steiner, 1922a) (Fig. 5).

Unsold copies of Rudolf Steiner's 1910 'Theosophy' book, issued under the imprint of 'Rand McNally & Company' were acquired and the original publisher details were overlaid with a pasted-on slip stating: 'Anthroposophical Literature Concern' (Steiner, 1910b). The book was later reissued by the 'Anthroposophic Press Inc., New York' (Steiner, 1943).

The Polish author, Rom Landau, reported that: "the sales of Steiner's books are growing; and yet his books are written in a style which does not make for easy reading" (Landau, 1936, p.309).

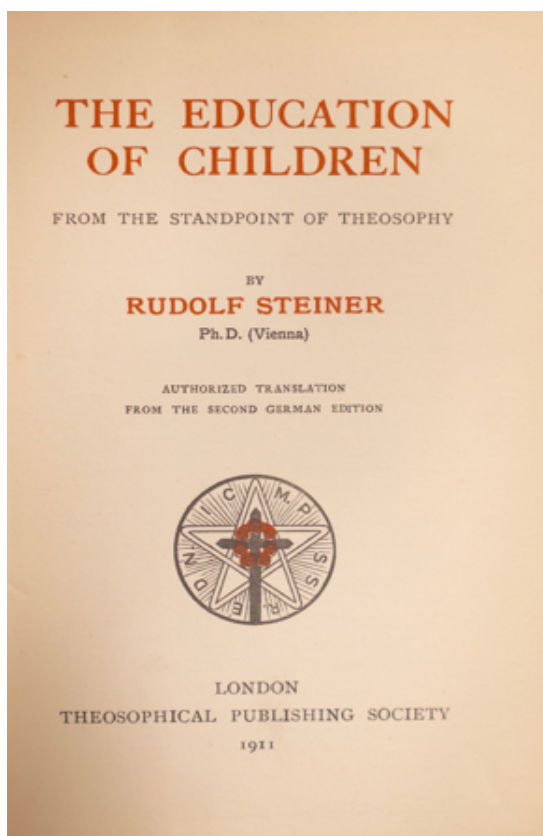


Fig. 4. Rudolf Steiner's 1911 book on Education "from the Standpoint of Theosophy".

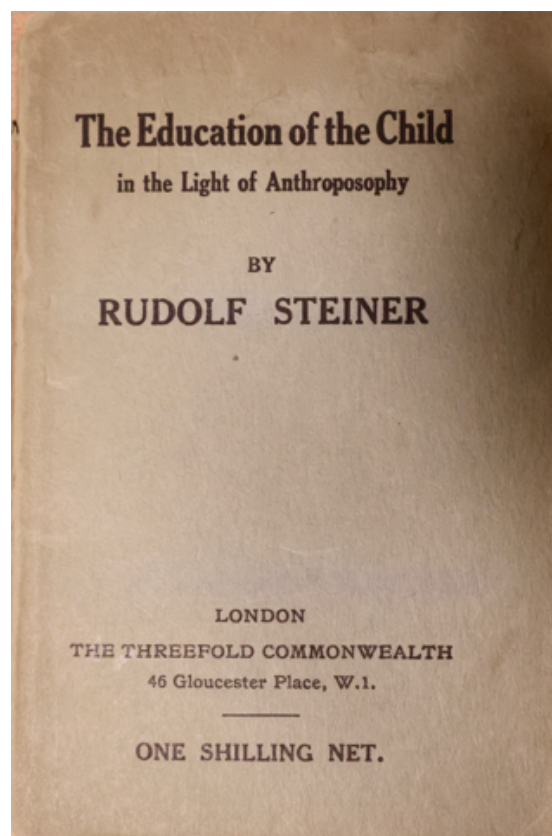


Fig. 5. Rudolf Steiner's 1922 book on Education "in the Light of Anthroposophy".

E. Building

In Munich, the building fund 'Johannes-Bau-Verein' (Johannes Building Association) was founded in April 1911 with the view to overseeing the build of a theatre for Rudolf Steiner's Mystery plays. After the split and the shift to Dornach, the Munich-based Building Association was dissolved and the 'Johannes-Bau-Verein' was reborn in June 1913 as a Swiss entity (Strakosch, 1928).

The task of the original, German, Building Association was to oversee a building in Munich. The task of the new, Swiss, Building Association was to oversee a build in Dornach,

During his Theosophical Society period, Rudolf Steiner lived in an unremarkable apartment in Berlin (Paull, 2019). The relocation to Dornach provided a pleasant upgrade for Rudolf Steiner to a fine home, two-storey freestanding with a garden (Paull, 2018a). Rudolf Steiner maintained his apartment in Berlin for a further decade. During World War I he divided his time equally between Dornach and Berlin.

Both Rudolf Steiner and the Anthroposophical Society flourished in Dornach. The foundation stone of the Goetheanum was laid on 20 September 1913 (Kisseleff, 2021). An ambitious construction program was undertaken for other Anthropop-style buildings to create an Anthroposophy colony in Dornach (Kugler, 2011). The Goetheanum opened on 26 September 1920 (Paull, 2020) (Fig. 6).



Fig.6. The Goetheanum, Foundation Stone laid 20 September 1913, opened on 26 September 1920, destroyed by fire 31 December 1922 (Paull, 2020).



Fig. 7. Motto of the Anthroposophical Society: "Wisdom is Only in Truth" (Steiner, 1916a, p.1).

F. Motto

The motto of the Anthroposophical Society was similar to the motto of the TS: "The Anthroposophical Society took as its motto 'Wisdom is only in the Truth', in imitation of the Theosophical Society's 'There is no higher religion than the Truth'" (Guénon, 1921, p.196) (Fig. 7).

G. Schism

Réne Guénon called it "Steiner's schism" (Guénon, 1921, p.191). After a decade of leading the German Section of the Theosophical Society, a confluence of factors led Rudolf Steiner to split from the Theosophical Society. New opportunities beckoned. There was Rudolf Steiner's growing confidence, skills, and ambition, already on the show with his private Theosophical publishing house and his plans for building a bespoke theatre for his Mystery plays in Munich, independent of the Theosophical Society. There was resistance to his building plans by the Munich authorities in 1912. There was frustration and differences with the Eastern and increasingly Indian direction of the Theosophical Society, whereas Rudolf Steiner's perspective was unabashedly Germanic, European, and Christian. There were divisive and controversial issues emerging in the Theosophical Society including the 'discovery' of Jiddu Krishnamurti in India. And finally, there was the pull factor of the opportunity of the gift of land in Switzerland, in Dornach, from Zürich dentist Dr. Emil Grosheintz (a Swiss location is incompatible with being home to a 'German Section' of the Theosophical Society, or of anything).

The Anthroposophical Society was founded on 28 December 1912 in Cologne, Germany, the first Committee comprised Marie von Sivers, Michael Bauer, and Dr. Carl Unger, the first Annual General Meeting was held 2-3 February 1913 in Berlin, and Rudolf Steiner was expelled from the Theosophical Society on 7 March 1913 (Rudolf Steiner Archive, 2021; Strakosch, 1928; Williams, 2010). Most of the members of the German Section of the Theosophical Society followed Rudolf Steiner into the Anthroposophical Society. The 'General Anthroposophical Society' was founded on 28 December 1923 in Dornach, Switzerland (Steiner, 1927).

The Theosophical Society was no stranger to splits and expulsions. Réne Guénon states: "All these more or less scandalous incidents could not but create trouble within the very heart of the Theosophical Society; the most celebrated split was that of the 'Rosicrucian' Rudolf Steiner, who led away most of the groups from Germany, Switzerland, and Italy, as well as a certain number of others, spread far and wide, and who formed with these elements a new, independent organization which he named the 'Anthroposophical Society. Following this split, which officially took place on January 14, 1913, Mrs. Besant re-formed a new and much reduced German section, comprising the few branches that still remained loyal to Adyar, and on March 7 to replace Steiner she named as Secretary-General of this section Dr Hubbe-Schleiden, director of the review 'Sphinx'. Hubbe-Schleiden had been involved with the Theosophical movement for a long time, and from 1884 had been favored with 'precipitated' communications from the 'Mahatmas', the first of which came to him on a train in the company of Olcott" (Guénon, 1921, p.190-191).

The Anthroposophical Society was not the first secessionist movement spun off the Theosophical Society. In 1887, writing from London to Judge, Helena Blavatsky referred to the "plot at Adyar" (Blavatsky in Gomes, 1995). In 1895, William Quan Judge, a cofounder of the Theosophical Society, and the General Secretary of the American Section of the Theosophical Society, split the Section off from the Theosophical Society based in Adyar (Carlson, 1993).

IV. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The Theosophical Society served as a blueprint for the Anthroposophical Society. When Rudolf Steiner, with the able assistance of Marie von Sivers, embarked on the creation of the Anthroposophical Society, they had the advantage of an intimate working knowledge of the blueprint. The Theosophical Society had evolved a successful *modus operandi* and organisational architecture beginning in New York in 1875. By the time of Steiner's appointment in 1902 there was some semblance of a mature, tested, proven formula of success to emulate. Rudolf Steiner worked the formula. After a decade under the umbrella of the Theosophical Society, Rudolf Steiner was ready to replicate (and evolve) the Theosophical Society formula in a creation of his own, the Anthroposophical Society.

Rudolf Steiner took the bulk of the German Section of the Theosophical Society membership with him into the newly minted Anthroposophical Society. The lecturing, the publishing of books, pamphlets and periodicals, the memberships, all carried across from the Theosophical Society to the Anthroposophical Society. The Theosophical Society had served as the ideal prototype for the Anthroposophical Society, and, what worked in the former worked in the latter.

Rudolf Steiner's interest in the Theosophical Society persisted for the rest of his life. Although he parted ways with the Theosophical Society in 1913, he continued to fastidiously acquire Theosophical Society publications. Rudolf Steiner's library contains Theosophical Society books dating from 1877 to 1923. Theosophy books dominate the Anglo-books in Rudolf Steiner's personal library. Half of the English-language books in Rudolf Steiner's library are Theosophy titles (there are 164 Theosophy books out of a total of 327 books in English) (Paull, 2018b).

There was never any reconciliation between the Theosophical Society and Rudolf Steiner. There was perhaps no motivation from either side. There was also the impediment of geography with Annie Besant relocated to Adyar, India (from London) and Rudolf Steiner relocated to Dornach, Switzerland (from Berlin). In the battle for hearts and minds, and donations, the Anthroposophical Society and the Theosophical Society were mining the same vein of seekers, using similar methods, and with similar materials.

Both the Theosophical Society and the Anthroposophical Society had charismatic leaders in their foundational years. Helena Petrovna Blavatsky and Rudolf Steiner were charismatic founders, engaging lecturers, and prolific authors. Although it appears that they never met, Blavatsky paved the way, and Rudolf Steiner was the ready vessel to receive the lessons that the Theosophical Society had accrued over its nearly four decades head-start. Helena Petrovna Blavatsky and Rudolf Steiner were of their time. They were each singular, remarkable, one-of-a-kind individuals, the like of which neither the Theosophical Society nor the Anthroposophical Society has seen since.

Both the Theosophical Society and the Anthroposophical Society have persisted into the present, although they are both in a state of decline. The Theosophical Society has no publicly available Annual Reports, data on memberships, nor email (ts-adyar.org). The Theosophical Society in America has 3,370 members, an increase of 4% from the previous year (Hebert, 2020). The Indian Section of the Theosophical Society has 9,039 members, a decline of 13% from the previous year (Gohil, 2021). The Anthroposophical Society has 42,800 members, and that is declining at a rate of one to two percent per year (Wittich *et al.*, 2021).

Rudolf Steiner spent comparable amounts of time within the Theosophical Society and within the Anthroposophical Society. The latter was informed by the former.

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