

The Deed of Rudolf Steiner at 100

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The Christmas Conference is not the full name of that momentous event, or even its true name. That would be The Deed of Rudolf Steiner.¹

Or so I have always understood it – and the reason why I joined the Society back in 1972. As also the secret of my longevity as a member.

There are many ways to measure the ongoing relevance and purpose of this Deed, not least, of course, its clarion calling to the three realms of society: the Foundation Stone Meditation providing a link to the heavens; its Statutes giving orientation to rights life for all subsequent human history; and (its Cinderella or Sleeping Beauty aspect) the three financial calls concerning membership finance, the funding of research, and the protection that would be (and needs to be) afforded to our work were Herr Van Leer's "World Goetheanum Association" to be realized – a protection that also serves as a telos for materialism: to learn to serve the spirit, to drive out its denial, especially beginning in the wild, willed West where humanity (not just the Americans!) meets the challenges of "self-made man." But the measure above all is Willem Zeylmans van Emmichoven's image of the Deed of Rudolf Steiner as a replication, reminder, and reinforcement of the Deed of Golgotha, at precisely the moment, just prior to the 1930s, when the risk was real that humanity would lose sight of it.²

Understood in that way, on what ground can anyone, friend or foe, contemplate – let alone act as if – Rudolf Steiner did not know the import of his Deed or that inimical forces would seek to obliterate it? This latter-day Gethsemane notwithstanding, we are not only about to celebrate its centenary, but have also been granted a second chance to give it effect. Especially, the lecture of January 1, 1924: "On the Right Entry into the Spiritual World: The Responsibility Incumbent on Us."³ But will we take this chance? Is it a world we dare step into?

Understood as an endowment, the Christmas Conference has the unique quality that wherever and whenever it is taken seriously, it shines afresh, the gentleness of its permanent flame a kind of reflection of the one devoted to the Unknown Soldier. Only in our case, we know who the soldier was and what he expected of us.

Above all, we should celebrate and endeavour to match his insights and contributions through our own nano-versions of his Deed – evidencing that initiative-taking and its correct funding is the only thing that can tame the wild horses of modern economic and financial existence.

No wonder, then, that those who oppose the Good Gods of the Goetheanum are throwing everything they can at Rudolf Steiner's checkmate endeavours. From SARS to Covid, the 2008 financial meltdown and its semi-permanent aftermath, the "dissing" of Rudolf Steiner – despite all this and more to come, they can but try to lull us into sleep, sever us from our given will forces (as distinct from those we engender ourselves), and create today's screen stupor, bewitching us into thinking that it, though at best a facsimile, is the real thing, and leading us to believe that the surrogacy of online communication is in fact real life.

Independently of any outer responsibility I may have in our movement, my response to so much doubt in the facts, ways, and efficacy of the spiritual worlds is the *Hope.Springs.Eternal* project,⁴ minded as it is to redeem the general sarcasm of Alexander Pope regarding the reality of the spiritual world, at the same time as repudiating the specific sarcasm of those who would have us see the Christmas Conference as out of track and out of time – rather than as what it really is: the lone, because sole, beacon that can guide humanity into safe harbour.

¹ Also, the name of a book I first wrote in 1979 when I felt myself in condition to join the School of Spiritual Science (i.e., to take responsibility for anthroposophy, no longer just having that as my primary reference in life). Available at aebookstore.com, it includes texts from Jörgen Smit).

² See Meg Freeling's Truthening Our Finances, at http://www.hopespringseternal.world/fileadmin/pdf/essays_etc/MF_Truth_in_our_Finances.pdf.

³ *The Christmas Conference* (Anthroposophic Press, 1990), GA 260, January 1, 1924.

⁴ <http://www.hopespringseternal.world/about/>