

# NETWORK NEWSLETTER

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*Education for  
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## Please send us...

◆ short pieces expressing your insights into education and social renewal in the light of the threefold social order.

◆ descriptions of your initiative's experience.

◆ questions which you would like others to answer or comment on.

◆ information about events in relation to the threefold social order, including study groups, seminars and conferences.

**“Upon the threefold educational basis must be erected what is to flourish for humanity's future”.**

*Rudolf Steiner, Education as a Force for Social Change*

### WELCOME TO THE SECOND ISSUE!

Sometimes one hears: “Rudolf Steiner's threefold social impulse didn't get anywhere!” Many pioneering efforts were made in educational institutions, curative homes and businesses, and it is true that quite a number of them faltered or simply petered out. But a great deal can be learned from these experiences and mistakes don't have to be repeated. New times call for new ways and there is certainly no formula for success. That's a good reason for forming a supportive network.

Editor

### A SCHOOL AS A LIVING ENTITY

The Waldorf School movement, a revolutionary education movement in the cultural sphere of society, has the potential to set new profound standards of operating that could be a model for a unique living systems approach to governance, and ultimately could have a transformative effect on all social life. The revolution quality inherent in the philosophical underpinnings of Waldorf education contains insights into how to create the governing organisational forms that will serve the manifestation of a truly living learning organisation. Rudolf Steiner, founder of the Waldorf School movement, said this in his address to teachers at the opening of the first Waldorf school in 1919: “We must be completely conscious that we have to accomplish a great cultural deed in every sense of the word”.

What are [these] new governance forms and structures? This is a question that has not yet been fully explored in the Waldorf movement despite having been suggested in the early nineteenth century by Steiner. Steiner's philosophical body of work called anthroposophy, translated as the wisdom of man, provides indications for new social forms for a threefold ordering at the macro level of society. While Steiner provided a vision for how society could be ordered in a threefold way, these new forms are easiest to understand by studying the principles that are at work both in society and in the human being, but particularly and specifically how they manifest in the three living human systems.

The challenge is that, unlike in the case of the physical structure of a living being that possesses living systems that we can actually see, in a social structure we cannot see the systems. However, studying physical living systems with our human senses, while utilising our capacities for thinking and feeling and developing sensitivity for what underlies the physical, can give us insights into social systems that we are not able to see or touch. The indications for the new social forms given by Rudolf Steiner have been further developed by many others and extended and applied to the understanding of social organisms as threefold entities. Much can be learned from the work of these others. Studying and penetrating the concepts in order to gain understanding also provides the opportunity for developing our own capacities to understand what we cannot see.

From: Rea Gill, *A School as a Living Entity*, Waldorf Publications, 2011, p.17.

## RUDOLF STEINER ON THE CULTURAL-SPIRITUAL SPHERE OF THE SCHOOL

Even though the handing over of the spiritual life and with it the school into the control of the state has been looked upon as an advance, we must learn to retrace our course in this matter. It will then be possible for the free human individuality to come to valid expression likewise in the sphere of the school. No one need fear that authority shall suffer in this process. On the contrary, where productive work is done by the human individuality these individuals crave the natural authority. We can see this already in the Waldorf school. Everyone is happy there when one person or another can be his authority, because he needs what the other produces out of an individuality.

*Rudolf Steiner, East and West*

Realms of Society	Cultural / Spiritual	Political (Legal-Financial)	Economic
Impulse	Freedom	Equality/Rights	Cooperation/ Brotherhood
Central Activity	Enhance the freedom & creativity of the individual	Administer to the law, legal norms & societal mores	Provide goods/services & generate capital that serve human needs
Human Being	Spirit	Soul	Body
Human Systems	Nervous-Sense System (Nerves + Senses)	Rhythmic System (Respiratory + Circulatory)	Metabolic-Limb System
Human Activity	Thinking head	Feeling heart	Willing hands

Figure 1: *Threefold Social Order – Threefold Human Being*

## THE THREEFOLD SOCIAL ORDER IN THE TEACHER TRAINING OF MELBOURNE RUDOLF STEINER SEMINAR

The principles of Threefold Social Order as outlined by Rudolf Steiner are absolutely central to the management of the Seminar. For example, key to our practical management is College of Tutors. The Threefold Social Order is also formally studied in the first year of the course as a stand-alone unit and as a key part of the second year "School Governance" unit.

In the first year the students study a complete unit on the history and nature of the Three Fold Social Order. In this unit they are given an insight into the causes of the 1<sup>st</sup> World War, its influence on moving Steiner and Molt (among others) to attempt to have the 3 Fold approach implemented and on how the same causal factors led to the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War and are indeed still present today. This, of course leads on to how the impulse, after failing to be adopted in Germany, moved onto to form a motivating factor in the formation of the first Waldorf school. "The Waldorf/Steiner school can be successful only if it is completely inspired by the spirit that aspires towards the threefold nature of the social organism". Rudolf Steiner, *The Spirit of the Waldorf School*.

In the second year, as part of our unit on School Governance, we look closely at the idea and ideal of the "College of Teachers". The Three Fold Social Order is, of course, a critical context for grasping the significance of this extraordinary innovation. In this sense our study of the College of Teachers in relation to school governance and management builds on the work studied in the first year of the course.

Jeff Onans

## ON COURAGE

If we are to contribute at all to human salvation, we must not be pessimistic; we must believe in our work. We must have the courage to believe we are really capable of bringing about what we think is right. To me it sounds self-destructive to say, "We have ideas that could be put into practice, but I don't believe that's possible".

Rudolf Steiner, *The Renewal of the Social Organism*, p.54.

## A CALL FROM A WALDORF TEACHER

I'm a Waldorf teacher who sometimes dreams of teaching in a very different kind of school. When I read Steiner's suggestion to not take up more than three and a half hours a day of the children's time for instruction, then to let them stay at school and play together in the garden\* (that's children up to 12); and when I compare that to the six hours of timetabled lessons, many of which are cut into little 40 minute blocks with different teachers in different rooms who have no idea what the previous teacher was working on and during which more time is often spent on behaviour management than teaching and learning . . . then I really began to feel we're a very long way from what Steiner intended. I'd love to be part of a group that wants to develop a farm school community, where the children are engaged in real work on the farm and their

academic learning is rooted in this practical work.

It would be a place where they can see adults also engaged in real work, as well as in study and artistic activity together on a daily basis. I think our schools would be transformed if we stopped teaching the children after lunch and let them play in the garden while the teachers studied, practiced and conversed together. We have one sanctioned hour and a quarter per week for faculty during which we set the goal of trying to fit in artistic activity, study, child study, curriculum development and day-to-day bits of business.

How healthy would the children and the adults be in a place where we are working, playing and studying in natural rhythms and natural settings and engaging with real life in our studies. To engage with the threefold social impulse in order to create a community that is not just a school that runs on fees and government subsidies, but has a broader cultural life and various economic initiatives working together would be very exciting. That's where my interest lies and I'd be most interested to hear from anyone who has similar aims and aspirations.

\* R. Steiner, *Discussions With Teachers*, Lecture 1, p.22, Anthroposophic Press, 1997.

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