

The essential ideas which had been developed in the course of life through the application of spiritual science in the fields of biology and agriculture were now summarized by Dr. Steiner in the Agricultural Course which he gave between June 7 and 16 of this year. Reference has already been made to the first beginnings of what had developed now up to this level - suggestions and directives given to Ehrenfried Pfeiffer and me in connection with the Biological Research Laboratory at the Goetheanum. This occurred in the years 1921 and 1922. These intensive research efforts under the constant direction of Dr. Steiner, led to practical application by a courageous pioneer in agriculture, Ernst Stegemann. These scientific and practical experiments and their results naturally aroused manifold interest. The result was a request by agriculturists to Dr. Steiner to give an agricultural course of lectures. But the time had not yet come. When, however Count Carl von Keyserlingk sent his nephew to Rudolf Steiner in the spring of 1924 with the offer to make his manor house and extensive estate available for such a course, Dr. Steiner consented to give such a course of lectures between June 7 and 16 for a large circle of agricultural people near Koberwitz bei Breslau.

It was a unique experience in the development of this spiritual Movement to find at the home of Count Keyserlingk - in contrast with other programs attended by persons of various occupations - a selected gathering of practical farmers, all anticipating with the greatest intensity the united work of the following days. Count and Countess Keyserlingk had generously arranged for the use of all the rooms in the manor house for the accommodation of these guests.

The intense, warm-hearted, and eventful united work brought about during these days was aided essentially through the manner in which the days were organized. All attended in the forenoon lectures by Rudolf Steiner and then gathered in the great dining hall at mealtimes and in many of the surrounding rooms of the residence, and were also united in the periods of discussion and in trips around the extensive property, and in personal gatherings in the afternoons and evenings. Since the consciousness of all those participating was concerned with the significance of these hours, and with the spiritual substance that was being received and the duties being entrusted to us for the future, these days were characterized by a serious and yet joyful atmosphere of common thinking and willing, which remained forever impressed upon the hearts of all. In the periods between the lectures and the agricultural trips through the property, in the united daily life, in the evening trips together with Dr. and Frau Dr Steiner, Count and Countess Keyserlingk to Breslau for artistic programs, in the gatherings for the essential esoteric work, the socially creative art of life of Rudolf Steiner in its intimacy, its heartfelt openness for all fellow workers, and its

energizing power could be experienced in its noblest form.

In a social gathering at the end of this conference, Dr. Steiner made an exception from his usual practice and for once spoke about his personal destiny and experiences. He related that during the preceding nights, the only free time left to him, he had been engaged in writing two papers for the "Goetheanum" and the Members' News Sheet, and that these papers covered thirty-five years of his life. In one of these two reports, appearing in the "Goetheanum" as part of the series of papers entitled "The Course of My Life," he dealt with the time in his life when, during the 'eighties of the previous century, he was working at the editing of Goethe's natural scientific writings, and how he had the opportunity to speak about his spiritual goals during Christmas time in 1889 before a small, intimate circle. The other report, which he wrote during the last night of the Koberwitz conference, had to do with the multitude of undertakings of this agricultural conference. A straight line through the life of Rudolf Steiner leads from the lonely spiritual research in the 'eighties, through the editing of Goethe's natural-scientific writings, to the development of spiritual research as Anthroposophy, to the unfolding and testing of the natural-scientific work in the School at the Goetheanum, and to the agricultural course of the year 1924 and the "biological-dynamic agricultural methods."

This explains the retrospect which Rudolf Steiner shared with his friends on June 16:

"During the last two nights, as during every week, I have had to write here in Koberwitz two papers as I do otherwise in various places, chiefly in Dornach. The first was intended for the periodical 'Das Goetheanum,' the other for the Members' News Sheet. In the periodical 'Das Goetheanum' I had to describe a few steps in the course of my life belonging to the year 1889; and in the News Sheet for Members I had to describe what we have been experiencing here during this Whitsun festival. Between these two points lie thirty-five years, a lengthy space of time, which represents for me a sort of ascent in our Anthroposophical Movement. In those days there were no Whitsun festivals; there were Christmas festivals. I made the journey from Vienna to Hermannstadt in Transsylvania to give lectures. In other words, giving lectures was already at that time something which belonged in my spiritual calling ... Those also were beautiful days, beautiful Christmas days. Yet I must take into myself how these two reports - the report about a period thirty-five years ago and that about what has just occurred here - appear to me; must also take into myself what has occurred between the two. At that time it was also very delightful, though in a small circle. But at present what at that time no very extensive content – it was difficult to approach the world with what one had to say, - I must again and again permit to pass through my mind and to think how difficult it was at that time to bring before the world even a very little out of the spiritual content ... when the second night came, the last, preceding today, I then had so much to report – I did not know anymore longer where my head was, what all I should say in a

column or row. There had been so many lectures, so many programs, so much concentrated into these days.

"Let us just pass in brief review all that has occurred, We have had two poles of spiritual activity: the inner, intimate activity which leads directly into the form of the spiritual as this spiritual is present itself on earth. And we have had the other pole which just at this time and in this case I should like to say, to the great satisfaction of the Anthroposophists, has taken its place by the side of the first pole during these Whitsun days. Here we have something which could be drawn from the spiritual worlds for an element of the practical activity of life, for agriculture. It has been possible every day so to speak, to travel this way in the soul from the spiritually practical in the forenoon to the purely spiritual - which is, however, the ultimate fountain of everything practical - in the afternoon and the evening."

In the written report, the genesis of which is indicated in the above words, Dr. Steiner said in regard to the plan and the daily course of thing in the conference just ended:

"For a considerable period of time, it has been the desire of a number of Anthroposophists occupied with agriculture that a course should be given by me presenting the content of what is to be said out of Anthroposophical vision about agriculture. Between June 7 and 16 I was able to find the time to respond to this desire.

"Koberwitz bei Breslau, where Count Carl Keyserlingk manages in an exemplary manner a great agricultural property, was the suitable place for such a course. It was self-evident that lectures dealing with agriculture should occur where those assembled for these programs should have immediately around them the things and processes with which the programs were to deal. This gives the proper mood and colouring to such a program ...

"The period between 11.30 and 3 o'clock was devoted to agriculture. During these hours a considerable number of farmers could gather in the home of Count and Countess Keyserlingk... The forenoon was begun each day with a lecture. The content of these lectures had to do with the nature of the products which are rendered available by agriculture, and the conditions under which these products can come into existence. The purpose of these explanations was to arrive at such practical points of view for agriculture as would supplement what has been achieved through practical insight and scientific research at the present time with what can be provided by a spiritual consideration of the pertinent questions involved.

"The lecture was followed by the early luncheon period, at which the Keyserlingk household provided in the most thorough-going manner for the needs of those residents of Breslau who had come to Koberwitz to share in this course.

Then there followed a discussion about questions existing on each occasion. The intensity with which this proceeded testified to the most earnest interest of those assembled in the Anthroposophical way of dealing with things

Lack of space renders it quite impossible to deal here with the abundance of scientific knowledge and practical directives given by Rudolf Steiner in these eight lectures and numerous discussions. Beginning with the nature of the earth organism, the rhythms of the cosmic and terrestrial and elements, essential descriptions of the most important substances in the cultivation of the soil and the nourishing of the human being, he passed systematically over to a description of the sensible and the supersensible structure of plant, animal, and man, without a thorough knowledge of which the farmer cannot carry out any well planned activity. He set forth concrete measures necessary for the development of an agricultural undertaking as an organism with its own foundation, self-inclosed as a living unity and totality. He set forth the basic necessities for a sound cultivation of the soil and fostering of plants and animals; indeed, his lecture actually dealt in great illumination with every problem which is confronted by the practical farmer.

Out of the directives thus given there has come about at the present time a worldwide practice and also an extensive literature to which the reader must be referred. In those first beginnings, what was necessary was the creation of a circle of persons determined to devote themselves with all their strength, unwavering courage, and objective logical reasoning to the working out and practical application of these special types of knowledge and methods. For this reason, during this conference of June 1924. there was created a "Research Ring", including scientists and practical persons, who now undertook to bring into actual practice the new agriculture. Rudolf Steiner explained in his report that this would be a union of persons included within the Natural-scientific Section at the Goetheanum. He added: "What Anthroposophy has to say about agriculture will find its best fostering among agricultural specialists; and it must be left to them to proceed in conjunction with the Natural-scientific Section at the Goetheanum as they may think best."

In the final words of a comprehensive address during the agricultural course, Rudolf Steiner gave his directives for the future work:

*"If we are willing to work together in this way, this will be a genuinely conservative but also at the same time an extremely radical progressive beginning. This will always remain to me a very happy memory if this course becomes the point of departure, if the genuine, wise essence of peasantry – if I may so express myself - may be introduced into the deadened methodics of science; and Dr. Wachsmuth has, indeed, rejected this science which has really become dead, and has wished for a living science, which is to be fructified through*

*the wisdom of the peasantry. Let us grow together way like Siamese twins Dornach and the Ring. It is said of twins the have really identical feeling, identical thinking, let us have this identical feeling and identical thinking, and we shall then progress in the best our field."*

Since that time the Agricultural Movement has progressed the scientific research and experiment and practical testing to a point where a new agriculture has been developed very widely recognized for its valuable contribution toward the furtherance of present-day cultural and living conditions. This has been accomplished through more than two decade in spite of much external opposition, skepticism, and ridicule. When I recall those first years in the Research Ring, the first discussions and contacts with the outer world, there comes into memory the intensive united work of the first pioneers in the form of regular concentrated schooling in knowledge, exchange of experiences, and gradual working out of the initial statements of Rudolf Steiner. There remains in memory the united struggle in understanding and applying the theory of the formative forces, the dynamic and biological processes in the kingdoms of nature as laid bare by Dr. Steiner; memories of the first success but also of failures in experiments; the year by year gatherings which contributed so essentially to the clarifying of fundamental ideas, learning out of the results of the research, planning of further work in actual practice and in the representation and dissemination of the methods.

We then risked the first public conferences, at first with very few lectures, conducted on actual farms or in halls in country places, a practice which gradually changed the skepticism of peasants into confidence and cooperation, but which were opposed with every means at first by scientific specialists, disturbed in their calm, or by industrialists with business interests. In this way the number of enthusiastic cooperators was increased but also the opponents. Yet, in spite of everything, this obstinate opposition was gradually overcome to the extent that the results finally began to speak for themselves, confronting the most irreconcilable opponents with factual conclusions. Thus we owe to Rudolf Steiner, not only a new agriculture oriented according to spiritual science, but also the directives for carrying forward unwaveringly a new impulse and bringing it to practical realization.