

The Social Future

Social Future: Lecture VI: National and International Life in the Threefold Social Organism

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VI

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LIFE IN THE THREEFOLD SOCIAL ORGANISM

IT is quite possible that to some among my audience my manner of dealing with the subject of these lectures may have appeared somewhat singular. Singular, inasmuch as it might possibly be said that these are isolated ideas and thoughts on a possible way of building the social structure, and that the catchwords so common in the social movements of today are noticeably lacking in these lectures. Certainly, thoughts and ideas must be a foundation, but I think it has been made clear that these thoughts and ideas differ considerably from much else that has been said on the subject. For instance, we often hear it said that there is no equal distribution of wealth, and that some evil is the cause of this; that such evils must be abolished, and so on. We often hear such remarks at the present day. It appears to me more important to act in this sphere just as in practical life. If we have to do with some commodity needed by human beings, and produced by a machine, it is not enough to draw up a program and announce that a meeting must be called and an organization founded in order that the commodity in question may be produced. This is the way modern social programs come into being. It seems to me far more important to indicate the way in which the machine, in the present instance the *social organism*, should be put together and utilized in order that it bring forth something which will meet the more or less conscious social demands of the present day.

And I think no one can say that these lectures have not dealt with the means by which bread, coal, or other necessities are produced. In my opinion they have dealt with such matters. They have dealt with the actual foundations of the social organism, with the manner in which men must live and work together within that social organism, in order to bring about the fulfilment of social demands. I wish to preface my lecture with these remarks, because such a reproach might possibly be made in regard to this, my concluding lecture.

Only those who see why the price of bread which appears on every table is connected with the economy of the entire world, and why the events taking place in Australia or America and the commodities these countries produce are related to the price paid here for bread or coal, will recognize the presence of an international problem which involves the whole social question. In view of the many prevailing opinions and prejudices, however, it is not exactly easy to speak of the international problem at the present moment. Have we not seen to what unheard of conditions international intercourse has led us during the last five years? Did not the belief prevail within the widest circles — pre 1919 — that international feeling, international understanding had been established in modern humanity? To what has this

international feeling, this international understanding led? It has led to the fact that over a large part of the civilized world the people have torn one another to pieces! (Twenty-six years later — 1945 — finds the condition even worse. Ed.) And even those ideas and idealistic aims whose greatest value lay in their international character have proved a failure, as their promoters themselves acknowledge. We need only recall the words, the pronouncements and views of international Christianity, for this is what it claimed to be, as it joined in so many cases in the chorus of international chauvinism. And we might cite many an instance of the shipwrecking of international impulses in late years. Also, when we speak of the international life of mankind, perhaps more particularly in reference to its economic aspect, we shall find it necessary to revise our thoughts and our judgments in this respect. It will be necessary to penetrate to these sources of human nature which can only be found when we look towards the spirit and the soul. To do so, to avoid the mere repetition of the words 'spirit' and 'soul,' to give heed instead to the actual dominance of the spirit and soul, this, in my opinion, has at least been attempted in these lectures.

All over the world the relations existing among human beings in their common work are governed by two impulses, about which it is of the highest importance that the truth should prevail among us, a true unvarnished conception, not disfigured by hackneyed phrases. Two impulses dwell in the human soul, which are related just as the north and south poles of a magnetic compass are related to one another. These two impulses are *egoism* and *love*. It is a widespread opinion that ethical law requires that egoism be conquered by love, and that in the progress of human evolution pure love should supplant egoism. This claim is put forward by many on the ground of ethics, and to-day also as a social need. But an understanding of the kind of opposition which actually exists between the two forces of egoism and love is certainly less evident in our day. In speaking of egoism, we should recognize that it begins with the bodily needs of the human being. We cannot understand that which arises from the bodily needs of the human being, unless we regard it as belonging to the sphere of egoism. The needs of the human being proceed from egoism. Now we must believe that it is possible to ennoble the feeling of egoism; and, therefore, it is not a good thing to form one's opinions from the phrases current on this subject. To say that egoism must be overcome by love does not help us much to understand egoism. For the point is, that he who meets his fellowmen with a purely human interest and understanding acts differently from one whose interests are narrow, and who gives no thought to all that fills the hearts and souls of his fellow creatures, and who is without interest for his surroundings. On this account, the former, who is truly interested in his fellowmen, need not be less egoistic in life than the other; for his egoism may be precisely his desire to serve human beings. It may call forth in him a feeling of inner well-being, of inner bliss, even of ecstasy, to devote himself to the service of his fellowmen. Then, as far as the outer life is concerned, deeds which are absolutely altruistic to all appearance may proceed from egoism; in the life of feeling they cannot be appraised otherwise than as egoism.

But the question of egoism must be extended much further. We must follow it through the whole life of the human soul and spirit. We must see clearly how the spirit and soul-nature arise out of man's inner being in various manifestations, just as the bodily wants arise. Thus, everything in the nature of creative fantasy, of imaginative

creation arises out of the inner being; likewise all creations in the sphere of art. If we proceed in our investigations without bias and seek a right understanding of such things, we shall find that which is the creator of man's imagination. All that rises out of the unknown depths of his being has the same source, but at a higher stage than the bodily wants. The life of imagination, of fantasy, which is developed in art, viewed subjectively, reposes on a feeling of inward satisfaction, more refined, nobler than the satisfaction of hunger, for instance, but not different in quality for the individual himself, even if what is produced thereby may have a different significance for the world.

But all human egoism is directed by the fact that man must agree with his fellows, that he should live and work together with them. Egoism itself requires that he should live and work with other men. Much of what we carry out in common with other men is absolutely founded on egoism, and still may be credited to the noblest human virtues. If we contemplate maternal love, we find that it is absolutely founded on the egoism of the mother; yet it manifests itself most nobly in the common life of humanity.

But that which is actually founded on egoism, because man needs his fellowmen for egoistic reasons, extends over the common family life, over the common life of the tribe, over the common life of the nation, of the people; and the manner in which a man conducts himself among his people and in his nation is nothing but the reflection of his own egoism. In the love of country, in patriotism, egoism doubtless rises to a high level; it is ennobled; it takes the form of an ideal and rightly so. But that ideal is, nevertheless, rooted in human egoism. Now this ideal must spring from human egoism, and it must be realized in order that the productivity of a people may be able to pass on something to humanity. And so we see how from that single impulse of the human soul — egoism, all that ultimately finds expression in nationalism is developed. Nationalism is egoism experienced by the whole nation in common. Nationalism is egoism carried into the spiritual region of life. Nationalism, for instance, is saturated with, glows with, the imagination of the people in which it finds expression. But this life of imagination itself is the higher spiritual development of all that constitutes human wants. We must go back to this root, in order to gain a clear understanding of it by right contemplation.

Of a very different species is that characteristic of human nature which develops as internationalism. We become national, because the feeling of nationalism arises out of our own nature. Nationalism is a blossom on the growth of the individual human being who is of the same blood as his tribe, or is bound by other ties to his people. Nationalism grows with the man. It grows into him as a certain bodily growth. He does not possess internationalism in this way. Internationalism is rather comparable to the feeling we acquire when we contemplate the beauties of nature; through this contemplation we are impelled to love, to reverence, to understanding, because it has become a reality to us, because it impresses itself on us, because we give ourselves up to it freely. Whereas we grow into our own nation because we are, so to speak, members of it, we learn to know other nations. They work on us indirectly through our knowledge of them, our understanding of them. We learn little by little to love them with understanding; and in proportion to our learning to love and to understand

mankind in its different peoples in their various countries, does our feeling grow for internationalism. There are two absolutely distinct sources in human nature from which arise, respectively, nationalism and internationalism. Nationalism is the highest development of egoism. Internationalism is that which permeates us more and more, as we give ourselves to a wide understanding of human nature. We must regard the common life of human beings all over the civilized globe in this light, especially if we wish to come to a clear understanding of the conflicting element in these impulses, nationalism and internationalism.

Even if the economic life were governed by its own conditions, and an attempt were made to understand it, it would still be necessary to point to the two impulses in the human soul just mentioned. What we have called the threefold human life element in these lectures leads us back to these two impulses in the human soul. Think of the economic system, for instance; consider how it pervades the whole national and international life of humanity. Let us examine this economic system. We are compelled to recognize its origin in human wants, in consumption. The satisfaction of these wants is really the whole task of economic life. Production and distribution of commodities, administration, human intercourse, and so on, are necessary to supply human requirements. And here again we may ask: What element of human nature lies at the root of requirement, of consumption? Egoism is at their root. And it is important that this fact should be properly understood. If it is understood, no one will feel impelled to ask with regard to the economic life: "How can we overcome egoism?" but rather: "How is it possible for altruism to meet the just demands of egoism?" Perhaps this question may sound less idealistic, but it is the true one.

When we turn our attention to production by which consumption is satisfied, we see at once that something else is necessary, The producer is of course at the same time the consumer. He whose business it is to produce must have an understanding not only of the process of production, but also of the life of his fellowmen, so that he can devote himself to the work of production in a manner corresponding to their needs. The producer must be able, indirectly or directly through institutions of which we have spoken, to see what men need for their consumption. He must then devote himself unselfishly and with understanding to some kind of production for which he has the capability. *It is only necessary to describe this, and people will be forced to see that the real motive-power of production is self-sacrificing love towards human society, even though the sphere in which it manifests may appear dry and uninteresting.* And nothing constructive will ever be said regarding the actual solution of the social problem, until it is understood that production can only be regulated in a social manner by the creation, through the spiritual and equity organizations, of a source from which unselfish love for the various branches of production can flow into the human soul, because of the producers' interest in their fellowmen and in life.

Between these two — consumption governed by egoism, and production in which love is the ruling principle — there is the distribution of commodities, holding the balance between them. Today this is brought about through the rise and fall of the market, through supply and demand, but in future times an association of men will substitute intelligence for the fluctuation of the market. Men will be there who will make it their task to regulate production in conformity with their observation of the

needs of the consumer. So that the market will consist in commodities which the associations, already mentioned, will be able to produce; these associations having first studied and observed intelligently the needs of consumption. All catchwords in this department of life will be discarded, and the attention will be wholly given to realities. Who has not seen that in modern times something has arisen which was bound to appear as a result of the continual widening of man's horizon all over the world? Instead of the former national economy, limited to small territories, we have a world-economy. It is true that so far this world-economy is only in the stage of a sort of demand; though it has developed to such an extent that in almost every part of the world commodities are consumed which are produced in other parts of the world. Here again human ideals and the feelings of the human soul have not kept pace with the world requirements which have become evident. Everywhere we see how urgent is the demand of modern times for a world-economy, for arrangements by which a world-economy could be rendered possible.

What are the conditions under which world-economy (Cf. *World Economy*, by Rudolf Steiner, Anthroposophic Press, New York.) is alone possible? Of a truth, this question can only be answered after we have first turned our attention to the form which the social order of the future must take from the present time on, if the order of the Commonwealth takes the place of the old despotic order — that of might — and of the present method of trade. The Commonwealth is the social order in which production will be carried on by associations, through contracts with other associations.

If this should really come about, where would the real difference lie between such a community, and the mere trading system of society, the ruling system today?

The difference shows itself in the fact that in the trading system the individual or the single group has, for the most part, to do with another individual or another group. What are the common interests of individuals or groups in their mutual relations? At present, whether they are producers or consumers, their production and consumption are divided from one another, as if by a chasm, by the chances of the market. And the chances of the market are the means of bringing about the distribution of commodities and of facilitating commerce. Whatever may be our opinion as to the justification or otherwise of the domination of capital, or of labor, and the like; as to the significance of capital and the significance of labor; it must be admitted that the essential fact in our system of exchange is that the distribution of commodities should be the ruling factor. *Distribution is the link between production and consumption; when these are sundered from each other by the abyss of the market, there is no means of communication between them through the exercise of intelligence.*

What will take the place in the Commonwealth of the system of distribution now prevailing? The whole domain of economic life will be drawn into the sphere of interest of every producer. Whereas it is now the interest of the producer to find out how he can procure and dispose of his products, which, however, he does out of self-interest, it will be necessary for every producer in the Commonwealth to have a full interest in consumption, distribution, and production. That is to say, it will be necessary that the entire economic process be reflected in the economic interests of the

individual man. This must be the essential point in the social order of the Commonwealth.

Let us see what would be the position of this commonwealth, (which also in the single State today is undoubtedly a demand of the future,) with regard to the international problem. How does this international problem present itself to us, especially with regard to the economic system? We can see that though a universal demand exists for a world-economy, the single nations stand separate within the circuit of the whole world-economy. These separate nations, apart from the other historical causes of their existence, are held together for a time by the feelings arising out of the egoism of the community. Even in the highest part of the life of a nation, in literature, art, science, religion, it is the imagination arising out of egoism which holds the groups of people together. The groups thus held together take their place in the sphere of world-economy, and in the course of the 19th century they have asserted themselves with particular energy, and ever more and more decidedly up to the beginning of the 20th century, when the climax was reached. We might describe what really happened by saying that while other interests which bore a much greater resemblance to those of the old despotic order of society formerly prevailed between the nations, the principle of exchange and barter became even more prominent, precisely in the mutual intercourse of nations. This condition of things, therefore, reached its height at the beginning of the 20th century. Just as production and consumption were carried on in the various states, so what was supplied, to other states or was derived from them was absorbed into the egoism of the various states. Thus value was attached only to that in which the single state, as a nation, was interested. The reciprocal economic relations established between the states were absolutely dependent upon the commercial principle, ruling the system of trade in regard to the distribution of commodities. In this sphere, but on a large scale, it was especially evident how the mere system of trade must lead ad absurdum; and the fact that this actually came to pass was one of the chief causes that led to the disaster of the World-War. (World-War I. Ed.)

That this great opposition existed between the demand for a world-economy and the influence of the various states against its realization is now becoming ever more and more evident. Instead of promoting a world-economy, these states closed their frontiers, shut themselves off by imposing customs and duties and by other measures, and laid claim to every advantage that might result from a world-economy, seizing all for themselves. This led to the crisis which we call the catastrophe of the World-War. There were, of course, other causes of the disaster but this is one of the chief causes. Therefore it is important to understand that the very first step towards the improvement of international relations is to be able to carry on commerce across frontiers, but on different principles from those on which the present system of exchange is based.

Just as every single person, if he wishes to share in the work of the community, must take an interest in production and consumption wherever it is carried on, just as every member of the community must be interested in the whole sphere of economy, consumption, production and distribution, so in every country in the world impulses must prevail which would lead to a genuine interest in every other country; so that

nothing resembling the chance conditions of the present market could prevail among the peoples of the earth, but a real inner understanding would prevail among them.

And here we come to the deeper sources of that which is being sought through the abstract ideals of the so-called League of Nations, the avowed object of which is the correction of certain evils in the common life of nations. But the principle underlying it is the same as that on which many other schemes are now founded. Many of those who at the present day ponder over the evils of life seize upon the first means at hand to carry out some reform or other. Some one sees that a certain luxury has wide distribution and feels impelled to impose a tax on it, and so forth. Such a reformer never thinks of going to the source of the evil in question, of devising a social structure for the community in which an undesirable luxury could not come into existence. But this is precisely what is necessary in the life of nations. Therefore we shall never attain sincere international social relations by regulations of a merely corrective character. There is no other way than by finding the source of a common understanding among the various peoples.

There can be no understanding of other nations as long as we keep to one thing which is as natural to the human being as his growth, so long as we look only to that which must lead to nationalism, to the division of peoples among themselves. What is there in the spiritual life of our day which is the only thing that bears an international character, and alone has not been lost during the War because it was impossible for men to take this character away from it? (For had this been done, the field itself would have been annihilated.) What is there that is truly international on the earth? Nothing but the field of modern science which is concerned only with the outer world of the senses.

Abstract science has acquired an international character. It has been easy to see in these times, when there has been so much falsehood in the world, that, whenever anybody did science the injury of misusing it in the service of nationalism, he robbed it of its true character. On the other hand, do we not see by this fact which I have quoted that this kind of spiritual life which expresses itself in intellectualism was not able to establish international understanding? I think it may be seen clearly enough that the powerlessness of this abstract trend of thought, which I have described from so many different points of view, has shown itself most distinctly in the relation of this abstract spiritual life to internationalism. Science was not able to pour into the human soul international impulses deep enough to resist the terrible influences of these last years. And where science attempted to evoke social impulses, such as those in the international socialist movement, it was found that international socialism was also unable to hold its own, and that it mostly flowed away into national channels. Why did this happen? Just because from among the old heirlooms of humanity it had only inherited intellectuality, and intellectuality is not powerful enough to work creatively in life. Thus we see how, on the one hand, this new scientific mode of thought, which arose simultaneously with capitalism and technical science, contains within it an international element, and yet at the same time proves its impotence to establish a true international relationship among men. In contrast to this, we must call to mind and apply here what I said in my fourth lecture regarding the mode of thought known as spiritual science, which is founded on perception and knowledge of the spirit.

This spiritual perception does not rest on outer sense perception; it is the result of the individual development of human nature. It springs from the same soil as imagination; but it is rooted in profounder depths of human nature. For this reason it rises not only to subjective, imaginative forms, but reaches to the objective knowledge of the realities of the spiritual world. This kind of spiritual perception is today very often misunderstood. Those who have no knowledge of it say what can be found in this way by spiritual perception is merely subjective, and cannot be proved. Mathematical truths are also subjective and incapable of being proved! No agreement among individuals can confirm the truths of mathematics. Anyone acquainted with the Pythagorean theorem knows that it is true, even if a million others contradict it. Thus, spiritual science is also presented as an objective aim. It takes the same way as imagination, and rises higher; it is rooted in the objective depths of human nature, and ascends to objective heights. Hence this spiritual perception rises above all that which, as imagination, inspires the nations. It is sought equally by one people or another, in one language or another. It is one and the same in the experience of all human beings all over the earth, if it is only sought deeply enough. Hence that spiritual perception which, as I have indicated, can actually enter into and inform practical social life, can, at the same time, enter actively into international life and form a bond of union between one people and another. The poetry of a people, its peculiarities in other branches of art, will be produced by it in its own individual way. To spiritual perception something arises out of the individuality of a people which is similar to that which arises elsewhere. The roots from which things spring are in various places. The final source of all results is the same over the whole earth. Many people speak of the spirit today who do not know that the spirit must be interpreted. When the spirit is understood, it is found to be something which does not separate, but unites men, because it can be traced back to the inmost being of man, and because one human being brings forth the same as another, and because he fully understands that other.

So that when we actually spiritualize that which otherwise finds expression as individualism in the imagination of one people, the single peoples will become simply the manifold expression of that which, to spiritual perception, is one. Then, over the whole earth, people will find it possible to tolerate the different national peculiarities, because there will be no need for an abstract uniformity everywhere; the concrete one, found through spiritual perception, will find means of expression in manifold ways. By this means the many will be able to understand each other in the spiritual unity. Then, from the many kinds of understanding of the unity, they will be able to frame articles for a League of Nations, and then, out of the spiritual conditions, out of the spiritual understanding, legal statutes can arise which will unite the nations. Then in the individual peoples that will appear which is possible to every people, namely, interest in the production and consumption carried on by other peoples. Then through the spiritual life, the legal and judicial life of the peoples, one nation will really be able to develop an understanding of other nations and peoples over the whole earth.

People must make up their minds to recognize the spirit in this department of life, or they will be obliged to renounce all hope of bringing about any improvement, no matter how well-intentioned their statutes may be. It is true, large numbers of people now express their disbelief in the working of this spiritual element; this is

comprehensible, because they have not the courage to approach this spiritual truth. It is truly hard for the spirit to gain a hearing; but when it can unfold, even in a small circle, in spite of hindrances, it shows itself to be all that I have just said of it. If only the feelings of the people in some of the belligerent states could have been known, if their thoughts about their enemies, their hatred towards each other, could have been seen, and the absence of international feeling existing in the countries at war been realized, you would understand why he who now addresses you returned again and again to the place which he has already mentioned in these lectures, in north-west Switzerland, where spiritual science has erected the Goetheanum, the University of Spiritual Science.

What sort of place was that during the years of the War? It was a place where, during the whole War, people of all nations worked together without intermission, without any lessening of understanding each other, in spite of many a discussion which may or may not have been necessary. This mutual understanding, since it was the result of a common grasp of a spiritual conception of life, has already become a reality, even though for the present only in a small circle. We may say that we have been able to make the experiment in this sphere. We have been able to show that those who met there from time to time were able to understand others. This understanding must not be sought by vague allusions to the spirit. It must be sought through the most intense, sincere self-conquest, by means of the impulse of the spirit. Men and women of today do not wish to hear that the spirit must be striven for by each one personally. There is much talk nowadays about the spirit, that the spirit must come and must permeate the purely materialistic social demands; but, beyond this appeal to the spirit, we hear little! If such people, who in other respects are well-meaning, full of insight and permeated by social ethics, would only reflect that we have indeed had the spirit! Can we appeal today to that same spirit which has been with us? It is that very spirit which has brought us into our present circumstances. Therefore, what we want is not a new situation created by the old spirit. An old spirit cannot bring us anything new! This has been proved to us. We need a new spirit. We must strive for this new spirit and it can only be won in an independent spiritual life. Therefore, if we picture to ourselves how the demand for a world-economy will be fulfilled — for fulfilled it will be, out of its own inner necessity — we shall find that within its scope one social form will take its place beside another, everywhere producing spiritual and legal conditions out of the human beings who live together in those social bodies. That which is brought forth in this individual manner will be precisely the means for the understanding of other social bodies, and will thus become the means by which true world-economy will be carried on. Unless such means are created, the old so-called national interests will arise again and again in world-economy, and will claim for themselves all that they can extract. And as every social body has the same desire, and will be void of understanding for the others, disharmony must of necessity again make its appearance. How, then, can a world-economy be carried on? Only in so far as political and intellectual organizations do not dominate the individual forms of the economic system; for they must have an individual form. They attain universality and unity in spiritual understanding alone, which over the whole earth is the other unity. In order that the earth may be freed from individualism that other unity must be everywhere recognized.

Even as it is true that, if we only descend deeply enough into human nature, we may develop to objective heights in which we find, as a spiritual perception, that which may also be found by anyone of any other nation, so it is also true that the needs of human consumption all over the earth are not affected by variations in nationality. Human wants are international; only they are the opposite pole of that which is spiritually international. The internationality of the spirit must furnish the understanding, must permeate with love that understanding of other nationalities, and must be able to expand that love to internationalism, in the sense already indicated. But egoism is equally international. Internationalism will only be able to establish a connection with world-production when the latter springs from a common spiritual understanding, from a common spiritual conception of unity. Never out of the egoism of the peoples will understanding of universal consumption arise. From a universal spiritual perception alone can that develop which proceeds not from egoism, but from love, and which, therefore, can govern production. What is the cause of the demand for world-economy? Owing to the growing complexity in the conditions of human life everywhere, and the consequent increasing similarity of human needs, it becomes ever more evident that human beings everywhere have the same wants.

How can a uniform principle of production be created to meet this uniform demand, one which will actively promote a world-economy? It can be created through our upward striving to the spiritual life, to a true spiritual perception, which is powerful enough to create a common world-production, for the common world-consumption. Then the balance can be struck, because unity in the spirit will work towards unity of consumption, towards unity of substance. Then the balance will be struck in the distribution of goods as mediator between production and consumption. Thus we must be able to look into the human soul, if we would understand how, over the whole civilized world — in reality out of many organisms — one uniform organism may arise. In no other way can this uniform organism be built up, this uniform organism which must be such that, in accordance with social demands all over the world, a true organic bond may be created between production and consumption, so that the piece of bread, or the coal required for the single household, or for the single person, may truly correspond with the social demands which are now making themselves felt in the subconsciousness of the human race.

I know very well that when such subjects are raised to this sphere of observation, many will say: But this is the height of sheer idealism! Nevertheless, in that sphere alone is to be found the impelling force for manifold things outside that sphere. *And it is just because men have not sought that driving force, which can only be found in this way, that the present social and political conditions now prevail over the whole civilised world.* People must come to realize that those who make it their task to create the inner impelling forces for the single social organism, such as the state, and for the social organism of the world, are the truly practical workers. They must come to see that many workers who are often called “practical” have only a rudimentary and merely abstract knowledge of their true sphere. Not until these two facts are recognized will the social question be placed on a healthy foundation.

One of those to whom all this has been a matter of most serious thought for a long

time, when he was lecturing on a particular aspect of human life, pointed out that the so-called idealists are by no means the most ignorant concerning the connection of ideals with real life. He was conscious of the folly of those who call themselves practical, and who consider that the thoughts of the idealist are very beautiful, but that practical life demands something quite different. The truth is that practicality actually demands these ideals, if it is ever to become true practicality. And the would-be practical people hinder the realization of these ideals, because they are either too lazy to understand them or have an interest in preventing their realization. The same man of whom I have spoken said: The idealist knows just as well as anyone that ideals are not directly applicable in practice; but he knows too that life must be shaped in conformity with those ideals. People who cannot convince themselves of this truth only show that their help has not been called upon in the shaping of events! One can, therefore, only wish them rain and sunshine in due season and — if possible — good digestion!

This is intended to show the relationship between idealism and actual practical life, which is called into service, for example, in the building of a bridge. The art of engineering which brings a bridge into being is certainly not controlled by ideas which originate in matter. As the finished bridge must first exist ideally and can only become a real practical bridge after it has been well worked out in thought, so must idealism be something practical, springing from inner practical perception. We must have the instinct, the feeling, which will enable us to carry into actual practical life such objective laws, for instance, as govern the art of engineering. Then it will no longer be asked: 'How can these things be carried out in practical life?' For when enough people understand these ideas, they will forthwith put them into practice in actions and deeds. We often hear people say that these ideas are beautiful in many respects, and if realized would be very fine; but humanity is not yet ready for them. The masses, they say, are not yet ripe. Let us see what is really meant by such an assertion. He who knows the relationship of idea to actuality, who understands practical life according to the character of its reality, judges the masses differently. He knows that there are enough people now who, if they only go deeply enough into their own inner nature, can bring full understanding to bear on the matters with which we have dealt. The greatest hindrance is the lack of courage. The energy is lacking to urge them forward to what they might attain, if they could only develop in themselves full self-consciousness. Above all, we need to correct something within ourselves; of this practically every human being is capable, if he only gives heed to reality. While, on the one hand, people fall into materialism and even take a delight in it, on the other hand, they fall a prey to abstractions, and will not penetrate to reality. Even in external life people are convinced that they are of a practical turn of mind, but they take no trouble to see things so as to recognize their real character.

For instance, suppose that someone comes across a new assertion and believes it. He accepts only its abstract content, and in doing so he may become estranged from life, instead of understanding it better. The writing of a fine editorial presents no great difficulty nowadays. For there is so much commonplace in modern civilization that only a small amount of routine is required to enable a person to write phrase after phrase. It is not the point whether or not we agree with the literal meaning of an article nowadays, but it is important that we should be able to judge the extent to which this

meaning accords with reality. In this respect there is much to be corrected in the present day. One is impelled to say: That which people should demand today above all things is truth which they should courageously unite with reality. Here are two examples of what is meant.

You may read statistical reports, perhaps of the Balkan States; for it has become usual to acquaint oneself with the conditions prevailing in the world, to pass judgments on political situations, and similar matters. We can judge of the way in which people gain their information by reading statistics, let us say, of the Balkan States. We read that there are so many Greeks, so many Bulgarians, and then we can calculate how far the claims of the various elements, Greeks, Bulgarians, or Serbians, can be justified. If we then examine more closely into the details, and compare what we have gained through abstract knowledge about the number of Bulgarians, Serbians, and Greeks in Macedonia, we often find that the father of a family is registered as a Greek, one son as a Bulgarian, and another as a Serb. Now one would like to know how this agrees with the truth. Can the family be really so constituted that the father is a Greek, one son a Bulgarian, and another a Serb? [The truth of this is to be found in the fact that in the Balkan States the blood tie is often not the thing that makes a man a Greek, a Bulgarian, or a Serbian, but his church-affiliation. Greek Church, Bulgarian Church, Serbian Church. (Ed.)] Can we learn anything as to the reality from statistics made in this way? Most of the statistical reports in the world are made after this fashion, especially in commercial life.

Because people do not always feel the necessity of pressing forward through the actual words to the truth of what they hear, they commonly misjudge things. They do not examine closely enough into facts. They are content with the mere surface of life, which is only a covering for the true reality. Today, the first necessity is not to waste time in discussing whether humanity is ripe or unripe, but to point out where the principal evils lie. Once discover and take the trouble to disclose these evils and indicate with sufficient energy the way to deal with them, then people will realize them quickly enough!

A second example: At the beginning of June 1917 the world could read the speech pronounced by the then Emperor Karl of Austria, on his accession to the throne. In that speech from the throne there was a great deal said, very appropriately at that time, about democracy. Again and again democracy was the theme. Now I have read a good deal about this speech, about the enthusiasm with which it was received by the people, and how splendid it was to proclaim democracy to the world at such a time. Taking this speech from beginning to end and looking merely at its literal content, from the journalistic standpoint it was a fine achievement, if we confine ourselves to the style and composition of the sentences, calculated to call forth feelings of pleasure and gratification. Very good! But let us look at the truth! Let us place this speech in its milieu. Then we must ask: *Who* is speaking thus and in what surroundings? There we may see standing in the medieval splendor of his coronation robes, glittering with jewels, the despotic ruler of bygone days, making no attempt to hide his magnificence, surrounded by his brilliant gold-laced paladins. The Middle Ages, complete in all the ceremonial, which, had it spoken truly, would have chosen another subject than democracy!

What is a speech on democracy, however beautiful the words, delivered in the midst of such medieval magnificence? A world-historical lie. From the literal content of the things of the present, we must go back to a perception of the reality. It is not enough to grasp things with the intellect; one must see things as they really are. This is just what spiritual science demands. We cannot deceive ourselves as to the outer reality without paying the penalty. He who would know the spiritual reality in the true sense of spiritual science, as it is taught here, he who would behold the spiritual world, must, above all things, accustom himself to the most absolute truth in the world of the senses; he must yield to no deception regarding all that takes place around him in the world of his five senses. Especially he who would penetrate into the spiritual world must use his five senses in a true and sane manner, and must not give himself up to fantastic thought, as do the many business men, the so-called practical people, so much admired, to whom the whole world defers. What we want is not a lamentation over the immaturity of the people, but to show them that we must be true in our inmost soul. Then we should cease to hear continually that untrue talk about the spirit, the spirit. Then will these falsehoods about the difference between right and might be no longer heard throughout the world, but we shall hear of work being done which consists in striving to attain the spirit. Then we shall hear that the spirit so striven after has been won and that men are living together a common life, in which they find equal rights for everyone. Only then can we speak of the manner in which an economic system, spiritualized throughout and pervaded with the spirit of equity, will be able to establish the true and real Commonwealth.

It is much more essential that we should recognize the fact that a sufficient number of people are here who at least look within and take themselves in hand, who can have an inner understanding of such hints as I have given. We must never weary of emphasizing these things. We must not, however, think that the mere repetition of phrases to the effect that the spirit must govern the world will bring about, as by enchantment, the coming of the spirit. No! By the work of the human spirit alone can that spirit come into the world. In this respect also we must be true. *We must not allow the falsehood to ring through the world, that the spirit must come. The truth must be proclaimed that the spirit will not appear until there are places in which not only the materialistic study of outer nature will be carried on, but in which a spiritual conception of life will be striven after.*

Out of that spiritual conception of the world must proceed a real social understanding of the habits of life of all humanity in the present and the near future. Everything depends on the fact that people become true with regard to the spirit and to their spiritual endeavor. For the spirit can only be found on the path of truth. It is no excuse, or, rather, it is only an excuse, to say that people are ignorant. In spiritual striving it is important to know that a lie, unconsciously persisted in, causes just as much harm as a lie, consciously repeated. For it is the duty of man at the present day to elevate his subconsciousness, in order to root out falsehood in every realm, even in that of the subconscious. For this reason I should like to conclude with words that are, indeed, truly and earnestly meant. I can well imagine that even after I have attempted to describe the structure of the social organism from the most varied points of view, as it must appear to the eye of the spiritual scientist in its relation to its threefoldness, I

can well imagine that there may still be people who will say: 'these are only ideas.' How is it possible, they ask, that people can now rise to such ideas? A gulf yawns between these; ideas and those generally understood at the present day. I would only remark that, with regard to such opinions, our answer must be: It need not concern us how advanced or otherwise people are. *We need only speak out over and over again what we hold to be the truth, and what we think is likely to bear fruit, and then wait till they have understood. If we do so, if we never tire of repeating this again and again, then, people will advance more rapidly than if they are continually told of their individuality. I believe that the world may very soon be ready for such things. I would, therefore, never tire of repeating over and over again that which I believe would hasten the advancement of humanity to maturity.*