

Foreword

The following text is the written version of a presentation I had planned to give last December (2020) at a symposium on the developmental and educational problems and challenges of the Covid crisis. However, due to the second “lockdown,” the event had to be cancelled on short notice and has not been rescheduled since. On the appointed day of the symposium, however, I wrote down—for what it was worth—approximately what I had wanted to say.

Originally, I wanted to refrain from publishing it. The pressure on Waldorf schools and teaching staffs is already extraordinarily great—between parents who (until the school was closed again) demanded even more and stricter hygiene measures and, if necessary, reported their own child’s school to the authorities, and parents for whom the existing school rules went much too far and exceeded the pedagogical requirements. And all this under the scrutiny of a local and national press that once again takes aim at Waldorf schools and puts some of their critical teachers and parents in the category of contrarians, “Covid deniers,” and “covidiot,” or among right-wing “*Reichsbürger*” [citizens of the

Reich]* extremists, and once again puts the whole of Anthroposophy under general suspicion. Furthermore, it was, and is, clear to me that my thoughts and considerations by no means represent “the” point of view of Waldorf education, that I am not an upper school teacher, and that I do not work in the reality of a school under the conditions of the current crisis.

However, the other speakers of the cancelled symposium, to whom I sent the text, were *in favor* of its publication after reading it. Also, some other friends who learned of it in the meantime were of the opinion that shutting up and keeping silent cannot be the solution in a widely muddled situation, but only clear thoughts and dialogues can enable and shape the future. However, these undoubtedly presuppose a critical analysis of the present situation and its problems.

Thus, I have finally decided to publish the text, as a continuation of what has already been elaborated at a Stuttgart pedagogical colloquium in July 2020,¹ together with various other approaches and essays for understanding our present situation.²

I am also sure that in the near future, critical evaluations of the overall sequence of events since February 2020 will be formulated, and differentiated perspectives will be of interest. The anthroposophic movement has

* *Reichsbürger* is a term used in Germany for groups and individuals who reject the legitimacy of the modern German state, the Federal Republic of Germany, and maintain that the German Reich (1871–1945) continues to exist, governed by a *Kommisssarische Reichsregierung* (KRR, Provisional Reich Government) or *Exilregierung* (“government-in-exile”).

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something essential to contribute³ and little or nothing to do with how it is being characterized in the media.

Anthroposophy has nothing to do with the “AfD” and the “*Reichsbürger*,” with right-wing nationalist and right-wing extremist, racist and anti-Semitic circles and forces—these have been among its fiercest enemies from the beginning.⁴ It represents a genuine science of freedom, relies on wide-awake forces of individuality and the dignity of every human being, and helps to prepare a socially and ecologically oriented civil society of the future.

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