

how the lives of different peoples and countries could be arranged so that their relations would not lead to future wars. He had discussed these concerns with, among others, a member of the Bavarian state council, Count Otto Lerchenfeld, an anthroposophist who was also concerned about the deep divisions among Europeans. In 1917, as the stalemate on the battle fronts continued and peace remained elusive, Lerchenfeld asked Steiner if he had any idea how a lasting peace could be established. “For three weeks, day after day, he and Steiner worked together over the ideas he had outlined until the entire organic structure for a new social order had been built up,” Stewart Easton wrote.¹⁴ The response Steiner gave was the outline of what later became the Threefold Social Order.

In July of that year Steiner considered how he could influence the Austrian government to start preparing for peace negotiations. He knew members of the government and submitted a memorandum that included this sentence: “When human beings become free, so will the nations become free through them.” The effort was not fruitful, however.¹⁵

The principal concern of these five lectures is the first Goetheanum building, that remarkable, innovative structure, first used in the fall of 1920 and still not completely finished when it was destroyed by fire on New Year’s Eve, 1922. They were given at the start of a murderous war that directly affected Steiner’s life in Dornach and in Germany. The lectures demand to be read because of the insight they give into Steiner’s understanding and creativity in the arts, but the fact that throughout those war years he was seeking for peaceful ways for people and countries to live together gives them an added and special significance.

¹⁴ Easton, pp. 230-232.

¹⁵ Terry Boardman, Afterword to Rudolf Steiner, *Towards Social Renewal: Rethinking the Basis of Society* (London: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1999), p. 123.